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PENTECOSTALISM AND POLITICS.
GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: The present article aims to explore the complex relation between global and European Pentecostalism and politics. The self-evident scarcity of studies on this particular topic, despite the global prominence and the dynamic growth of Pentecostalism, and the tendency to collapse strikingly opposing tendencies under a generic terminology call for a serious examination of the approaches Pentecostalism adopts in relation to political involvement. Throughout the three main sections of this paper, political, historical, cultural and theological concepts will be employed in order to: firstly, provide a qualitative and quantitative overview of global Pentecostalism; secondly, explore worldwide different political preferences of Pentecostal churches and denominations that range from apolitism, to full-fledged political involvement, or to the preference for an alternative *polis*; thirdly, to analyse European Pentecostalism and the particularities of its relation with politics.

Key Words: Pentecostalism, Politics, Neo-Pentecostalism, Charismatics, Third Wave Pentecostals, post-denominational independent charismatic groups

Introduction

Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity¹, a branch of Protestantism that emphasizes personal experience with God and places varying importance on the manifestation of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, including glossolalia,² faith-healing,³ dream-visions, prophesying⁴ and/or miracles, is a dynamic religious movement that is quickly expanding worldwide, being considered the fastest growing sector of Christianity and “the predominant global form of Christianity of the 21st century.”⁵ Since the beginning of the 20th century,⁶ Pentecostalism and later on the Charismatic movement spread not only on the North American continent, but also in Europe, Australia/Oceania, Latin America, Africa and Asia, and attracted a large number of adherents – around half a billion believers.⁷ Unsurprisingly, it has been successively described in terms of a “global culture”⁸, a “religion made to travel”⁹, or as a religion whose parish is the world.¹⁰ By employing methods of interdisciplinary research, at the intersection of history, politology and theology, our aim in this paper is to assess the political impact of this extremely prolific movement both in geographical areas where it is numerically well represented (such as Africa and Latin America, or the United States), and in areas that were less touched by the successive Pentecostal waves, such as Europe. With this purpose in mind, we have structured the present article into three main sections. The first part, an overview of Global Pentecostalism, aims at rendering the reader familiar with the major distinctions that operate within Pentecostalism, with its historical developments and with its basic tenets. The second part constitutes an analysis of the main positions and perspectives that global Pentecostalism embodies with respect to politics and political involvement, by highlighting the historical, cultural, contextual and theological elements that might explain the different approaches. The third section explores the relation between Pentecostalism and Politics in the European context and attempts to identify the main political trajectories taken by Pentecostals on the Old Continent. The final part of the article is dedicated to the conclusions, and it proposes a number of predictions concerning the evolution of the relation between Pentecostalism and politics both worldwide and in Europe.

Overview of Global Pentecostalism

When it comes to establishing the number of Pentecostal/Charismatic believers worldwide, most scholars invoke the difficulties incumbent. Though the term “growth” constitutes an unchallenged consensus between researchers, it also functions as the

lowest common denominator in the on-going disagreement concerning the factual figures and the actual rate of growth. In 2002, David Barrett suggested that there were over 500 million Pentecostal believers,¹¹ whereas more conservative scholars, such as David Martin, proposed a number below 300 million. More recently, some “statisticians claim that there were 614,010,000 ‘Pentecostals, Charismatics, Neocharismatics’¹² in the world in 2010 (a figure projected to rise to 797 million by 2025).”¹³

Assessing the number of Pentecostal believers worldwide is an arduous and highly complex task, as difficulties arise both from the very goal of the surveys as well as from the convoluted nature of Pentecostal history, and from the ensuing confusion of the terminology employed. Surveys on religious belief and belonging are often targeted at: assessing the number of Christians in general, compared to that of believers of other religions;¹⁴ exploring the numerical evolution or involution of more historically prominent denominations (i.e. Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant) or at ascertaining the degree to which believers still adhere to the traditional Christian doctrines (God, sin, hell, redemption, salvation, etc.). Such surveys are therefore often quasi-impervious to the variety of smaller or newer denominations; therefore it is somewhat understandable that many general attempts at quantifying the number of Christian believers have not included Pentecostalism as an independent survey variable, placing it instead under the broad umbrella of Protestantism.

These lacunae are somewhat countered by smaller scale investigations, usually country or region-specific, especially in places where Pentecostal presence is more notable, such as: Ghana, Brazil, Chile, the United States, etc. These investigations place the greatest number of Pentecostal believers in the global South, especially in Latin America and Africa. The most salient study, an attempt at a comparative perspective between ten countries in Africa, Asia, North America and Latin America was the 2006 “Spirit and Power. A 10 Country Survey of Pentecostals”¹⁵ focusing on the United States, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, India, the Philippines and South Korea.

The second difficulty resides in the very history of the movement that has already known three major periods known as the three waves of Pentecostalism, namely: the classical Pentecostal first wave; the Charismatic second wave; and the Neo-Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal third wave mainly represented by the so-called post-denominational or independent charismatic groups. A sweeping look at the existing surveys indicates a lack of precision concerning the usage of these terms, a preference for various generic, inclusive or “all-embracing” terms such as Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity that include the third wave but do not explore it in depth, or for the Revivalist or Renewalist movements, which encompasses all three of them – such is the case for the above mentioned survey. As Anne Dyer noticed, this fact “makes it difficult to

calculate the total number of those who might be reasonably described under this heading.”¹⁶

Circumscribing each wave to its particular cultural and historic context, and understanding some of the most salient distinctions between them is vital for comprehending and interpreting the data available globally and locally. Therefore, a brief history of the Pentecostal/Charismatic/Neo-Charismatic movement presents itself as indispensable.

A short history of a dynamic movement

The “wind of movement that the wider Pentecostal movement has brought to Christianity from the beginning of the twentieth century has never stopped blowing;”¹⁷ yet, we cannot speak of Pentecostalism in the singular, for there is no singular Pentecostalism, but rather many “pentecostalisms” under the large umbrella known as Pentecostalism.¹⁸ Pentecostalism is in fact a movement which comprises various congregations and fellowships, each with its own specificities, the common denominator being the emphasis on the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” and the accompanying supernatural gifts endowed by the Holy Spirit.

As a branch of conservative Protestantism or Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism in its broadest understanding relies heavily on the belief in a salvific experience known as being “born again” through repentance from sin, and on a “cognitive profession of faith that Jesus Christ is savior.”¹⁹ To this experience of re-birth, or regeneration of the mind, believed to bring humans into a close union with God, Pentecostals add “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, which refers to the receiving, by the believers, of the *charismata* or “spiritual gifts” as reported in the book of Acts and some Pauline writings, including glossolalia (speaking in tongues), words of knowledge and wisdom, prophecy, miraculous healing and other miracles. The baptism in the Holy Spirit and the *charismata* were traditionally considered by Pentecostals as means of empowering and equipping believers for evangelistic outreach.²⁰ This emphasis upon the “second blessing” of Spirit baptism added to the “first blessing of salvation” distinguishes Pentecostalism from the other evangelicals.²¹

Historically, the beginnings of modern Pentecostalism can be traced to two events: the first one occurred in Topeka, Kansas, on January 1st 1901,²² when Agnes Ozman, one of Charles F. Parham’s²³ students, began speaking a language, seemingly identified as fluent Chinese, after a prayer session; the second one is the Azusa Street Revival that lasted from 1906 to 1909 and was tied to the activity of William J. Seymour.²⁴ Allen Anderson identified several movements within classical Pentecostalism which are not to be confused with the subsequent waves, namely: the Holiness Pentecostals; the Finished Work Pentecostals; the Oneness Pentecostals; and the Apostolic Pentecostals.²⁵

The second wave, between 1960 and 1970, brought Pentecostalism into mainline Christian denominations, under the form of Charismatic Christianity. Yet, many of these mainline denomination Christians who had Pentecostal-like experiences „retained membership in mainline churches and often formed charismatic subgroups within them.”²⁶ According to Robbins, “by 1970, it was estimated that 105 of clergy and one million lay members of mainline Protestant churches had received the baptism of the Spirit,”²⁷ a number that continued to grow steadily in the subsequent decades. As well, the numeric evolution of the Catholic Charismatic community indicates an obvious growth from 40 million to 119 million believers in the year 2000, according to Barret and Johnson’s data.²⁸

The numerous manifestations of renewalism after the ‘70s place scholars in difficulty as to finding a way to coherently categorize them. Allen Anderson uses the terms “Neopentecostal or Neocharismatic Churches” in order to refer to “Charismatic independent churches, including mega-churches, and consisting of many, often overlapping kinds: Word of Faith – physical health and material prosperity; Third Wave churches – they conflate Spirit baptism with conversion and see spiritual gifts as available to every Christian believer without there being a necessary ‘crisis’ experience; New Apostolic churches, which have reintroduced an apostolic leadership to their governance not unlike that of the earlier Apostolic Pentecostals; all other different independent churches, difficult to categorize.”²⁹ Anderson further states that some “of the churches in the ‘new church’ category are among the largest Pentecostal churches in the world, among them the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (from Brazil) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (from Nigeria),”³⁰ churches that classical Pentecostals would not consider as having something in common with their own congregations. They are joined by international modular healing schools, such as Ellel Ministries that started in the US but expanded to Africa, Australia, Canada, Hungary, France, Germany, Norway, India, the Netherlands, Sweden, Singapore and the USA³¹ and by numerous other Christian centres and organizations that share the same profile. According to some estimates, there are 50,736,451 Neo-Charismatics only in the USA³² but it is difficult to estimate their worldwide numbers due to the above mentioned tendency to lump all manifestations under a broad category of Pentecostalism.

One of the results of these “outpourings of the Spirit” was a new openness of some of the previously rather insular classical Pentecostals to ecumenical relationships, to an “ecumenism of the Spirit”, while others, on the contrary, were concerned about the impact that the “doctrinal errors” of the Charismatics would have on the classical Pentecostals’ doctrine and cautioned against an uncritical joining of hands “with everyone who claims a charismatic experience.”³³ This was the time when some of the Pentecostal magazines began to distinguish between

“classical” and “new” Pentecostalism and to publish articles against the Charismatic manifestations: New Pentecostalism “is not a denomination, not a doctrine, but an experience, and can be accommodated within the framework of any doctrinal persuasion”, argued in this sense Ray H. Hughes, in the March issue of *The Evangel*.³⁴ This accommodation has been somewhat criticized by “the older Pentecostals with the jibe that there was a tendency for the Charismatics to be too worldly and lacking in puritan attitudes.”³⁵

Although in 2001 David Barrett and Todd Johnson estimated that about 27% of organised global Christianity was under the Pentecostal umbrella - they counted “740 Pentecostal denominations, 6,513 non-Pentecostal denominations and 18,810 neo-Charismatic denominations or networks”³⁶ - these categories were repeatedly reorganized.³⁷

Pentecostalism in Europe

Although the term “growth” can be applied to Europe too, in comparison with other continents, the Pentecostal/ Charismatic/ Neo-Charismatic movement is not as numerically dynamic. In 2000, estimations rose to a “total of 37,568,700 Pentecostals/Charismatics/Neocharismatics, out of which about 8% (= 3 million) refers to the classical Pentecostals, 56% to the Charismatics and 36% to the Neocharismatics.”³⁸ However, a 2011 statistic on the number of Pentecostals and Charismatics in Europe pointed to a significantly smaller number of adherents, namely 17,005,486,³⁹ which begs the question of what kind of denominations were included in the count. According to William Kay and Anne Dyer, who quote D. Jakobsen, the European countries with the highest numbers of Pentecostal/ Charismatic believers are: France (1,210,000, which amounts to 2% of the population), Italy (1,740,000, namely 3%); Germany (1,660,000 that amounts to 2%); the Ukraine (1,860,000, namely 4%); the Russian Federation (2,860,000, totaling 2%); and the United Kingdom (2,950,000, namely 5% of the population). In terms of percentage of believers when compared to the total of the population, Jakobsen identified a high number of believers in the countries like Norway (8%); Finland (6%); Sweden (5%); Netherlands (4%); Switzerland (4%).⁴⁰

Nevertheless, scholars agree that the country with the most prominent growth is the United Kingdom where the Charismatic movement became a strong influence as a result of having merged with traditional churches. The Third Wave was also successful, fact which is seen in the large number of independent charismatic churches and also in the rapid growth and development of migrant churches established by African, Asian and Latin American immigrants, churches that present the characteristics of this type of Neo-Pentecostalism.⁴¹

Pentecostalism and politics. The importance of distinctions

Historically speaking, Pentecostals have been perceived as apolitical and “other-worldly oriented”, being more concerned with international mission, with getting people saved, rather than with international and national politics. This could be one of the reasons for the scarcity of studies dedicated to Pentecostalism and politics.⁴² The Pentecostal rootedness in the Holiness and Revival traditions, which were built on Pietism, and which sought a more profound spiritual life and a close personal relationship with God, coupled with their belief that the experience of being regenerated through the Holy Spirit leads to a life-reformation, which separates the believers and their community from the corrupt world determined Pentecostals to have a rather *contra mundum* position;⁴³ this position distinguished them from other Christian traditions that are known for their durable relation with politics. However, the conclusions of the most comprehensive cross-national survey to date, conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2006, which explored Pentecostals’ views on a series of socio-political and economic issues, along with their religious beliefs and practices in ten countries⁴⁴ question and challenge this perception of the non-involvement and lack of interest of Pentecostals towards politics. According to Luis Lugo, the Director of the Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life, the findings of this survey show that “Pentecostals are at least as politically oriented as other Christians in these societies, and on several measures even more so.” His conclusion was that the growing numbers of Pentecostals “will almost certainly guarantee that the movement will be a major force in shaping the political as well as the religious landscape of the 21st century.”⁴⁵

The conclusions of this survey thus raise the question of whether Pentecostalism is truly detached from politics, as some of its representatives and scholars suggest, or if it is a “political giant just now beginning to awake.”⁴⁶ Finding the answers to this question is not a straightforward enterprise, given the complexity and the numerous avatars of global Pentecostalism. A careful look at the relation between global Pentecostalism and politics reveals a diversity of Pentecostal views with respect to politics, ranging from apolitism to active political engagement, covering numerous intermediary stances. In the next section we will briefly describe these positions that can be met within Pentecostalism, seeking to identify the historical, cultural, contextual or theological elements that might explain the different approaches.

The “apolitical” Pentecostals

The early Pentecostals were premillennialists - believing that the second coming of Christ will occur before the Millenium, meaning the

thousand-year reign of Christ – and dispensational in their eschatology – awaiting for the pre-tribulation rapture, when believers would be taken to heaven, before the seven years of the Great Tribulation and the Armageddon. Following a paragraph in the book of Joel 2:28-29,⁴⁷ they believed that the baptism in the Spirit was a sign that the last days had come and that the accompanying spiritual gifts, most notably the tongues, were means to assist believers in their mission to spread the gospel throughout the world, and thus prepare the second coming of Christ, in accordance with another biblical text found in Matthew 24:14.⁴⁸ This “eschatological hope” and the perceived imminence of the return of Christ dominated early Pentecostalism and was the main motivation behind their evangelistic, missionary efforts, as they would hasten the return of Christ.⁴⁹ The early Pentecostals’ “futurist premillennial framework”, with its dispensational accents, has fundamentally shaped their political views and still constitutes the norm for many – if not most – classical Pentecostals today.⁵⁰ The perceived imminent return of Christ provided the feeling of urgency to save as many human souls as possible, in the detriment of matters of social concern. Since they believed that politics, a human activity that they regarded as inherently sinful and corrupt, would disappear once Christ’s reign over the entire earth was established, and once the Millennium commenced, they considered that their essential contribution to human history resided not in the field of political endeavor but on the mission field, saving souls.

Besides their theological views, there were other reasons for the political detachment of early Pentecostals, such as: their humble origin – believers were often from the outskirts of society; their widespread poverty; and the lack of the means and social connections that could propel them to the center of the political sphere.

In time, the intensity of the early Pentecostals’ millennial zeal decreased, and upward social mobility has affected, at least partially, “the apocalyptic fervor and urgency as the world looks a little better to contemporary (...) Pentecostals.”⁵¹ However, generally speaking, the view that churches/denominations that are associated, thanks to their theological nuances, with classical Pentecostalism tend to avoid direct political implication continues to be dominant.

Politically engaged Pentecostals

Besides those Pentecostals who display no interest in politics at all, we encounter others who are deeply involved in the political process, supporting various political parties, coalitions (such as the Religious Right in the US) or candidates, or running for political office themselves. This phenomenon is obvious in several countries of the southern hemisphere, where the presence of large Pentecostal groups is reflected in the presence of Pentecostal politicians in decision-making state forums and in

the creation of numerous political parties that include a significant number of Pentecostals/Charismatics. Their success was fairly limited, though, and the public perception of Pentecostalism was altered due to certain incongruences between the said and the done, as the political involvement of some Pentecostals, though claiming to have been motivated by the desire to render politics “moral” – as it is often the case with renewalist believers involved in politics – was not always beyond reproach.⁵² Another reason for their relatively limited success is that even in countries that have a large number of Pentecostal believers, such as Brazil, for instance, one cannot speak of Pentecostal electoral blocks, as the Pentecostal churches are very fragmented, both concerning their political involvement and their political preferences. Consequently, as Paul Freston observes, “Pentecostals are often unable to develop a more universalist reflection on public life.”⁵³

The fact that, in most countries, Pentecostals have been politically active only for the last two or three decades at the most means that they are still becoming familiar with the patterns of political undertaking that, in turn, are in continual change. Consequently, there is no political orientation that is specific to Pentecostals: they can adopt either a left wing or right wing view – or anything in between. In some parts of Latin America, for example, Pentecostalism migrated towards the political left, or at least center-left; this orientation is at least partially determined by the fact that the Catholic Church, the main competitor for Pentecostalism on the continent, is no longer perceived as being overly leftist. Another cause for this variety consists in the implications and consequences of belonging to different social classes;⁵⁴ therefore, upper, middles or lower class politically involved Pentecostals opt for different political orientations. In fact, one of the significant contributions of Pentecostalism in the political sphere is precisely that of having opened the way towards political participation to marginal social categories, such as ethnic minorities, black people, mixed races that are well represented in Pentecostalism. From this point of view, Freston argues that someone can talk of a potential role that Pentecostalism can play in the process of democratic consolidation by including and integrating grassroots sectors into the democratic process and by conferring political visibility to individuals of lower social origin.⁵⁵ Considering these facts, some authors even speak of the possibility of dialogue between Liberation Theology and Pentecostalism in Latin America.⁵⁶

In this category of political Pentecostalism we include that component of global Pentecostalism generically called Neo-Pentecostal/Neo-Charismatic Christianity. The profile of this new orientation within Pentecostalism is radically different from that of classical Pentecostals – hence the labels of non-denominational, independent or Neo-Pentecostal/Neo-Charismatic. C. Peter Wagner reunited the groups that display such characteristics under the broad label

of New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), which determined some commentators to consider him as the founder of the movement. Although it is inaccurate to consider Wagner as the founder of NAR, he did more than name it by becoming one of its “apostles,” being actively involved in it and mentoring a new generation of “apostles” and “prophets.” NAR is different from classical Pentecostalism through the changes that it promotes in the field of church governance;⁵⁷ through its optimistic view of the future (postmillennialism);⁵⁸ through its emphasis on extra-biblical revelation, not only at the level of the individual’s life – this tendency exists among some classical Pentecostals – but at the broader national and international levels as well;⁵⁹ and through its emphasis on Prosperity theology (also known as health and wealth gospel)⁶⁰ and Word of Faith theology⁶¹ (also known as “positive confessionism”⁶² or as the “name it and claim it” teaching)⁶³ and on “spiritual warfare”⁶⁴ (the practice of “claiming/taking the land” is very widespread, practice which comes in the form of opposition to and exorcisms of territorial and generational demons.)

Critics argue that through a “predilection for eisegesis”⁶⁵ and the practice of a “selective hermeneutic,”⁶⁶ the new charismatics’ creeds represents, in essence, an amalgamation of some Pentecostal beliefs with other ideas and theologies borrowed from different sources.

The so-called “Dominion theology”, for instance, which accounts for much of the new charismatics’ political involvement, was de facto borrowed from Christian Reconstructionists who, incidentally, are essentially different from Pentecostalism since their theology rests on cessationism.⁶⁷ The Dominion theology takes the form of the Seven Mountain theology in the New Apostolic Reformation’s discourse. The “seven mountains dominion theology” (7MD) or the seven mountains mandate promotes the idea that Christians have to pursue dominion of the seven “mountains” of society: family; church; education; government; arts and entertainment; business; and media. These areas are almost identical to those theologian Rousas Rushdoony called Christian Reconstructionists to engage in and with, in his work *Institutes of Biblical Law*. According to New Apostolic Reformation motivational speaker, Lance Wallnau, “these seven fields of influence are so powerful that he who occupies the top of these mountains can literally shape the agenda that forms nations.”⁶⁸ According to this line of thought, Christians have the mandate not only to preach the Gospel, but also to transform the nations by reclaiming these seven mountains. Wallnau highlights the contrasts between the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the kingdom: when one preaches the former, one actually encourages people to flee, says Wallnau. Implicitly, this constitutes a critique of premillennialism, a doctrine that characterizes classical Pentecostals, critique that is often and aggressively uttered by the NAR representatives. Instead, Wallnau argues that Christians should be taught to assume their apostolic assignments and occupy the most

influential places on these mountains; they should heal and deliver nations by taking up the six major strongholds of the demonic powers that are tormenting the earth and neutralize them: sex, racism, poverty, AIDS, undrinkable water, illiteracy.⁶⁹

This mentality, which can be described as triumphalist, is exemplified in the attempts of some leaders in positions of power to “Christianize” the state, since this mindset dictates that Christians, as the rightful children of God, should be governing in the name of God. For example, immediately after having been elected president, the Charismatic Frederick Chiluba declared Zambia “a Christian nation.” As Paul Freston records: “Saying ‘a nation is blessed whenever it enters into a covenant with God’, he repented on behalf of the people of Zambia: ‘of our wicked ways of idolatry, witchcraft, the occult, immorality, injustice and corruption ... I submit the Government and the entire nation of Zambia to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I further declare that Zambia is a Christian nation that will seek to be governed by the righteous principles of the word of God. Righteousness and justice must prevail in all levels of authority, and then we shall see the righteousness of God exalting Zambia.’”⁷⁰

This had no practical follow-up, observable in an increase of righteousness and justice; neither did it lead to the exaltation of Zambia. Actually, in Freston’s words: “The declaration of a Christian nation seems to have been politically empty, since it did not introduce new substantive laws or establish any church. It was purely symbolic, in tune with much charismatic political theology which talks of benefits accruing mystically from such acts.”⁷¹

A similar example of this triumphalistic mentality is that of the Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano Elias who, as a member of a Charismatic “new elite church”, during his 1990 presidential campaign “was promoting a ‘spiritual warfare’ project of national exorcism known as ‘Jesus is Lord of Guatemala’, to free the country from a curse relating to pre-Christian religion.”⁷² In essence, as Paul Freston notes: “Recent middle-class charismaticism tends to reduce the solution of political problems to ritualism; complex power relations embedded in political systems are ignored in favour of expressive solutions related to ‘territorial spirits.’”⁷³ Thus, “Spiritual warfare becomes an ideology through which believers take command of society.”⁷⁴

It was such political exuberance of some Neo-Pentecostals and their effect on public life that drew the attention of social scientists as, “In contrast to the Pentecostals’ asceticism and modesty, the behavior 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 Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson.”⁷⁵

We must not operate, however, under the impression that the churches that were identified as belonging to Neo-Pentecostalism are homogenous from the point of view of their approach to politics. A study conducted by Miller within some of the most representative of such congregations in the US has showed that political views vary from church leader to church leader and from one member of the congregation to another member of the same congregation. This study also indicates that leaders tend to be more radical than the members; nevertheless, their radicalism is not reflected in their actions, as the majority of them prioritize spiritual problems ahead and to the detriment of political issues.⁷⁶

The cases discussed so far are relevant for the argument that we have advanced namely the diversity and the extraordinary complexity of the Pentecostal approach to political issues. Therefore, the amalgamation of all these under the large umbrella of Pentecostalism fails to consider the fundamental differences between the various types of renewalists, not only in their class backgrounds and lifestyles, but in their theologies, and consequent political orientations as well.

Pentecostalism as an alternative polis promoter

Between the two main positions we already discussed, there exist numerous options that Amos Young includes in the category of “Pentecostalism as an alternative *civitas* and *polis*;⁷⁷” this category is comprised of the various ways in which Pentecostal actions and practices are indirectly political, determining changes at the socio-political and/or economic level.

The alternative politics of Pentecostalism is made manifest in the counter-cultural communities built around Pentecostal spirituality. In this train of thought, Yong mentions Daniel Míguez’s ethnographic study of Pentecostalism in Argentina, which reveals that “Pentecostal churches provide companionship and solidarity in the form of ‘family’ or ‘sisterhood’ that is an alternative to existing neighbourhood patronage networks and clientelism” and observes that “within this ecclesially constructive public sphere, Pentecostal congregations allow ‘independent neighbourhood inhabitants to bypass the clientele networks that political parties establish, and provide free space to local organizations.’” Consequently, “Pentecostal communities function as alternative ‘cities’ that either intentionally ignore the broader political realities or simply set out to provide forms of socio-political and economic solidarity for people who otherwise find themselves on the margins of the *polis* conventionally defined.”⁷⁸ Gifford describes the same phenomenon in terms of the creation, by the Pentecostal churches, of a “free social space”, of a “new world” in which believers find “shelter, psychological security, solidarity”

and can “forge a new notion of the self, for here they can begin to make personal decisions [and] interact as equals.”⁷⁹

It is within this “new world” or new *polis* that believers learn new patterns of interaction and new behaviors, acquire new values and habits that have implicit social and economic consequences. Through the accent it places on personal morality – understood as no smoking, no drinking, no drugs, no promiscuous sex, no family violence, etc., on personal transformation and empowerment, on behavioural changes, Pentecostal churches generate a type of social change without which, as Freeman observed, “it is difficult for economic change and development to take place.”⁸⁰ This is precisely the reason why some scholars noted that Pentecostal churches often function as “more effective change agents than are development NGOs (...) because they focus on some key aspects of change that secular NGOs continue to ignore.”⁸¹

Although one cannot speak of direct political action on the part of these Pentecostal actors, one cannot speak of their “otherworldliness” either. A significant social contribution of Pentecostalism relates to the numerous social projects that it develops. In some parts of the world, Pentecostal churches are actively involved in marginal areas, neglected by the state or by other sectors of civil society. According to Freston, in Brazil it is said that “only two institutions really function in shanty towns: organized crime and the Pentecostal churches” and he calls this social involvement of Pentecostalism as its “civilizing mission”, providing people ways of escaping criminality, prostitution and drug addiction.⁸²

A study conducted in 20 developing countries by Miller and Yamamori also revealed that a very significant number of Pentecostal churches are engaging in social projects, in areas such as health care, education and economic development, not only within their churches, but in the larger community as well.⁸³ In Mozambique, for example, Pfeiffer noted that Pentecostal churches have performed social services among the poor more efficiently than international NGOs.⁸⁴

Another way of promoting social development is the Pentecostal influence on economic attitudes, in the sense that the conversion to Pentecostalism often results in economic advancement. As Miller and Yamamori observe, Pentecostals confirms the Weberian thesis of the existence of a Protestant ethics that lies at the foundation of an entrepreneurial spirit. According to them, “the lifestyle of Pentecostals does not differ substantially from Weber’s description of the Puritans. Consequently, Pentecostal converts who are not wasting their money on alcohol, drugs, and partying now have surplus capital that they can invest into their businesses or the education of family members,” thus ensuring their upward social mobility.⁸⁵

Finally, it has been noted that through its internal characteristics and its liturgical practices, Pentecostal churches can serve as real “schools of democracy.” Cleary for instance notes that a major innovation of

Pentecostalism is the freedom of expression in worship and the affirmation of each believer's worth within community: "In sharp contrast to what takes place in traditional Catholic or Protestant worship, almost anyone accepted by the Pentecostal community is allowed to interpret Scripture during worship, to moralize about the conditions of life, to preach about the changes needed in personal conduct, to pray spontaneously, to offer suggestions for the community's response to an evil world, and to vote on questions of importance such as large expenditures of community assets."⁸⁶

The concept of the priesthood of all believers, their equal participation in liturgy (regardless of age, gender, race or social condition) and its anti-authoritarian stance determined some authors to identify a "profoundly democratic spirit" within Pentecostalism.⁸⁷ Miller and Yamamori for instance consider that "there may be a parallel between the right to full participation by Christians in Pentecostal worship and the right of all citizens to participate in the democratic process."⁸⁸ Also, they observe the "populist" nature of Pentecostalism – in the sense that anyone can serve as a pastor, with or without formal theological training – which can also be transferred to the political arena.⁸⁹

Other studies have emphasized the sociability of Pentecostal and evangelical churches in general (that enjoy high rates of weekly participation in church services, and even several times a week), which "makes the churches models of voluntary associationalism."⁹⁰ Burgess considers that "Pentecostal emphasis on integrity, accountability and participation, and the inculcation of civic skills such as peaceability, inter-ethnic cooperation, leadership skills, and critical thinking may ultimately prove crucial to the development of sustainable democracies."⁹¹ All these features of Pentecostal churches may give credit to Miller and Yamamori's conclusion that "Pentecostal churches potentially function as miniature schools for democracy, especially if they stay true to the idea of the priesthood of all believers and the equality of all persons before God."⁹²

There is obviously more to be said about the Pentecostal's social and political engagement within their societies, but the issues explored above are sufficient to sustain our foundational argument, namely that in order to adequately assess the role played by Pentecostalism in politics, it is crucial to keep in mind the distinction between various streams of Pentecostals, as each of them presents a specific theological profile and a specific model of interaction with politics.

Pentecostalism and politics in Europe

The origin of European Pentecostalism was traditionally associated with the work of Thomas. B. Barratt and Andrew G. Johnson who preached in Norway, Denmark (1907), England (1907), Switzerland (1908), Finland (1911), Russia (1911), Iceland (1920),⁹³ etc. While Johnson focused more on

the Nordic countries, Barratt came to travel all over Europe. They were soon joined by many figures such as Alexander Boddy in England, Jonathan Paul in Germany and Austria, Gerrit Roelof Polman and wife Wilhelmine J.M. Blekkink in the Netherlands, etc, who helped set in motion a first wave of classical Pentecostalism.⁹⁴

The experience of World War II and the subsequent reconstruction period, coupled with the advent of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, an ideology that was openly hostile to religion in general, made European Pentecostalism a very fragmented phenomenon where the three waves made their presence felt at different stages. For instance, after the war, while in Western Europe the Charismatic movement was touching mainline denominations, the Iron Curtain functioned as a powerful obstacle in the way of renewalist waves in Eastern Europe. The quasi-ermetic boundaries, religious persecution and the systematic control of religious phenomena restrained the dynamic and the influence of renewalism, discouraged possible prozelytes from joining for fear of repercussions, and helped perpetuate prejudices and mistrust towards religious “others,” attitudes that still linger in many post-communist countries, especially where predominant religion is deeply entangled with national revival. Post 1989 freedom of religion led to a realization of a delayed encounter with Charismatic and Neocharismatic manifestations but, as seen above, the numbers of believers are small compared to the total population or to the number of adherents to other denominations within Christianity.

The relatively small number of Pentecostals in Europe, coupled with the fragmentation of the movement constitute impediments in the way of their significant political visibility in Europe. Starting from previously mentioned figures and from the analysis of the three main ways Pentecostals approach political involvement, it is reasonable to state that at least classical Pentecostals do not display a major interest to politics. Besides the premillennialist eschatology, which discourages the attempts to make the earth a better world through political means and efforts, the withdrawal mentality of a significant segment of European Pentecostalism can be explained through the historical, social, political and religious context. Thus, in the conditions in which European Christianity was for centuries closely related to national and ethnic identities,⁹⁵ with many of the European states officially having state religions, Pentecostals “had to fight the stigma of being a Christian sect”⁹⁶ opposed to national interests ever since the very beginning.⁹⁷

The withdrawal mentality among classical European Pentecostals is indicative of a suspicion towards political power that has directed their attention and energy towards evangelizing – spreading/communicating the Gospel⁹⁸ - and/or towards various social projects, done in or outside Europe, from church planting to humanitarian actions or to building

schools and hospitals meant to improve the welfare of various communities.⁹⁹

Within European Pentecostalism, we can detect a direction that, at least from the point of view of the theology promoted, is more favourable to active involvement in politics: namely the Neo-Charismatic element. An important component of this Neo-Charismatic segment is given by the immigrant communities found in Central and Western Europe,¹⁰⁰ but that can be found in Eastern Europe as well,¹⁰¹ seen “by some observers as the evangelization of the western world by Africans.”¹⁰² In 2002 already, Philip Jenkins found that half of London’s church parishioners were blacks immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean.¹⁰³ In fact, “wherever there are migrant African communities there are Pentecostal churches” scholar Allan Anderson believes; therefore African (Nigerian, Ghanaian) Pentecostalism “is an important feature of European Christianity today,”¹⁰⁴ not only in the UK but also in France, Germany, the Netherlands, etc. In Spain, Portugal and Italy this dynamic presence is added to that of the already thriving renewalist congregations of Latino immigrants.

To our knowledge, the only study dedicated to the Neo-Pentecostal/Neo-Charismatic communities, which included interviewing over a hundred pastors of immigrant churches, belongs to Währisch-Oblau in Germany; its conclusions, which we believe can be extrapolated to other European countries, confirm the primordially missionary vision of these immigrant communities,¹⁰⁵ cropped in the terms specific for “Third Wave theology” with its emphasis on spiritual warfare and Word of faith teaching. The framework that defines their mission to re-Christianize Europe pertains to “spiritual warfare” dialectic, which involves exorcizing all sorts of territorial demons, such as the demons of racism, for instance, which, in their view, is one of the “territorial demons which oppresses Germany.”¹⁰⁶ Politics is thus interpreted in spiritual terms, the world is described “as a battlefield between the life-affirming power of God and the lifedestroying powers of demons/the devil”, and evangelization means more than communicating a message: it means becoming involved in the spiritual battle to free Europe from under the spiritual powers that oppose God. This battle practically translates into the practice of the authoritative prayer, into reclaiming the land for Christ, and into declaring the the freeing of specific territories from the dominion of demons.¹⁰⁷ Terms such as “occupy”, “take control”, “reign” are found in the speeches of some of the leaders of these immigrant churches; however, the instruments through which they oppose evil are prayer, “prophecy and deliverance,”¹⁰⁸ and not through the means of political struggle.¹⁰⁹ “It is striking how West African pentecostal/charismatic migrants who, on a social and political level, are considered among the most marginalized and powerless groups in Germany, perceive themselves as extremely powerful in the spiritual realm and thereby expect to effect positive changes on the social and material level”, says Währisch-Oblau.¹¹⁰

Even though in other contexts, this sort of theology might encourage an active implication in the political space, as we have seen is the case in some African or Central Latin American countries, the marginal position of these immigrants within European societies, the lack of political rights that come through having a citizenship drastically reduce the possibility of a direct political influence of these immigrants in the European context in the immediate future. The triumphalistic ideas to “re-Christianize” the state, ideas which resonate with some Neo-Charismatic African immigrants – still deeply influenced by the African mindset where, despite colonial attempts to relegate religion to the private sphere, the political culture is strongly penetrated by the religious¹¹¹ – have little if no future on the Old Continent, that has already witnessed atrocious religious wars and conflicts and that went through Enlightenment, which has dramatically altered the role that religion can play in the public sphere.

Conclusions

Until recently, Pentecostalism has been almost entirely ignored in social sciences; however, the place it occupies within worldwide Christianity makes it absolutely necessary to evaluate its social and political impact. This fact is starting to be recognized by some scholars; hence their increased preoccupation for the subject. There are several researches made in states with large Pentecostal population that have highlighted the significant role Pentecostalism plays in local politics and in the political cultures of some countries in Africa and Latin America; yet, the majority of these have a number of shortcomings, from our perspective. One of the shortcomings of such studies is that the majority of them have been ethnographic and descriptive and there is very little empirical data to work with, as most of them do not include variables that distinguish Pentecostalism from other strands of Protestantism, and even less make distinctions between the different types of Pentecostalism. Therefore, we are in need of empirical/statistical studies to check the theses proposed by these studies. Another point where these studies fall short is the absence of an analysis of the different theologies that lead to different “pentecostalisms” and that serve to explain, at least partially, the different ways they approach politics. In this article, we tried to sketch a few distinctions between the major forms embodied by Pentecostalism, each with its own theological specificities that translate into different attitudes and behaviours concerning politics.

As for the Old Continent, there is a deploring lack of rigorous studies dedicated to the social and political role of European Pentecostalism. We hope this present article will draw attention to the need to bring about such studies that explicitly analyze the political opinions of Pentecostals and that allow for more accurate analyses and for more or less informed predictions concerning Pentecostalism and European politics. Increased

attention should be paid to the different forms of Pentecostalism, as lumping them all under broad categories, such as Pentecostalism or Renewalism, can alter the final results.

The difficulty of analyzing the relation between Pentecostalism and politics resides, above all, in the extreme diversity within the movement. Without a Mecca or a Rome to instill a general, unitary direction, Pentecostalism generates a variety of political perspectives that tend to be moulded in local, national or ethnic terms, concepts and specific issues.¹¹² Taking all these aspects into account functions as a warning sign to us of the dangers of generalisation with respect to Pentecostalism's relation to politics. We cannot generally speak of a Pentecostal politics, as, beyond its global aspects, each church/denomination is immersed in a local reality that determines both its internal organization and its political performance.

In the conditions in which the proliferation of Pentecostalism does not seem to slow down, it is very possible that, in the next decades, we witness an increased visibility of Pentecostals/Neo-Charismatics in politics, especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia. We sense that the disappointment entailed in the process of becoming aware of the limitations of what can be achieved in this worldly kingdom through political efforts, and the lack of congruence between the what numerous self-proclaimed Pentecostals politicians say and do will orient Pentecostalism towards the political quietism that has historically characterized it.

As for the European continent, the specific traits of European Pentecostalism – reduced number, small degree of homogeneity, relatively marginal social and ethnic positioning of its adherents, etc. – as well as its historical, political and religious European contexts – minority status, the degree of perceived legitimacy towards national myths – will not enable scholars to talk about a significantly direct political role of Pentecostalism in Europe. Even though there have been – and will continue to be – adherents to Pentecostalism involved in European politics,¹¹³ their impact will not be potent enough to generate a cultural polarization of society or large scale noticeable effects. Thus, numerous small scale – local or regional – social Pentecostal enterprises and projects in Europe will bear a political impact that could, at the most, be labeled as indirect, and that could unwittingly belong to the category of Pentecostalism as an alternative *polis*.

Notes

¹ *Acknowledgements*: This paper is a part of our work for the research grant CNCS–UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0481

- ² Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and Politics" in *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations*, edited by Linda Woodhead et al. (London: Routledge, 2002), 374.
- ³ Margaret Poloma, *Main Street Mystics. The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2003), 15.
- ⁴ Joel Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity" in *Annual Review of Anthropology* (33, 2004), 117.
- ⁵ Jose Casanova, "Religion, the New Millenium and Globalization", in *Sociology of Religion* (62.4), 435.
- ⁶ See Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal...", 120.
- ⁷ Peter Berger, "Pluralism, Protestantization, and the Voluntary Principle" in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*, edited by Thomas Banchoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19-20.
- ⁸ Karla Poewe ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1994).
- ⁹ Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, and Douglas Peterson, *The Globalisation of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999).
- ¹⁰ David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).
- ¹¹ David Barrett estimates a worldwide total of 532 million affiliated members. See David Barrett, "Global Statistics" in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, edited by Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 284.
- ¹² We are aware of the various ways of writing the terms "Neocharismatic" - neo-Charismatic, Neo-Charismatic, etc. - and "Neopentecostal": neo-Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal. Throughout this article, we will consistently employ Neo-Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal, unless variants of the two are encountered in quotes, in which case we will not alter the original textual form.
- ¹³ Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.
- ¹⁴ One of the many examples would be the World Christian Database, 2005, available at http://www.thearda.com/QuickLists/QuickList_125.asp (accessed on March 28th 2013).
- ¹⁵ The survey is available on the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life <http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Spirit-and-Power.aspx> (accessed on March 5th 2013).
- ¹⁶ Anne Dyer, "Introduction" in *European Pentecostalism*, edited by William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011), 2.
- ¹⁷ Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton and Tony Walter, "Introduction" in *Charismatic Christianity. Sociological Perspectives*, edited by Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton and Tony Walter (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 2.
- ¹⁸ Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green. *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 3.
- ¹⁹ Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God...*, 4.
- ²⁰ Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God...*, 4.
- ²¹ Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God...*, 5.
- ²² Miller, Donald E. and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism - the New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 18.

- ²³ Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal...", 120.
- ²⁴ Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal...", 120.
- ²⁵ Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 5-6.
- ²⁶ Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal...", 121.
- ²⁷ Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal" ...", 121.
- ²⁸ David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200. Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2001), 275.
- ²⁹ Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 6.
- ³⁰ Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 6-7.
- ³¹ See ***, "History of Ellel Ministries", <http://www.ellelministries.org/about> (accessed on April 15th 2013).
- ³² See ***, "North America", <http://www.glopent.net/global-pentecostalism/north-america> (accessed on April 15th 2013).
- ³³ Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analyzing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Boston: MA: Brill, 2009), 145. See also pages 144-147.
- ³⁴ Ray H. Hughes, "The New Pentecostalism: Perspectives of a Classical Administrator", *The Evangel* 33, 2 (March 1976): 5-6, apud. Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition*, 146.
- ³⁵ Hunt, Hamilton and Walter, "Introduction", 2.
- ³⁵ Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God...* 9.
- ³⁶ Dyer, "Introduction", 2.
- ³⁷ Dyer, "Introduction", 3.
- ³⁸ See ***, "Europe" <http://www.glopent.net/global-pentecostalism/europe> (accessed on April 15th 2013).
- ³⁹ See Appendix : Statistics for European Pentecostalism per Nation, in *European Pentecostalism* edited by William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011).
- ⁴⁰ See Appendix: Statistics for European Pentecostalism per Nation, in Kay and Dyer (eds.), *European Pentecostalism*.
- ⁴¹ See <http://www.glopent.net/global-pentecostalism/europe> (accessed on April 15th 2013).
- ⁴² The majority of the works concerned with the relation between Pentecostalism and politics are concentrated on Latin America and the Southern hemisphere in general, and some on Asia and Africa. There is no work, to our knowledge, about Pentecostalism and politics in Europe, apart from Stephen Hunt's comparative analysis of US and UK Pentecostals' political activism: "Pentecostal Political Activism in the USA and the UK: A Comparative Analysis", *Politics and Religion*, Vol.II, 1(2008):101-126.
- ⁴³ Edward L. Cleary, "Introduction: Pentecostals, Prominence, and Politics", in *Power, Politics and Pentecostals in Latin America*, edited by Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).
- ⁴⁴ Pew Research Center's 2006 survey, *Spirit and Power. A 10 Country Survey of Pentecostals*. http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Orphan_Migrated_Content/pentecostals-08.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,0,793 (accessed March 5th 2013).

⁴⁵ Luis Lugo, "Preface to the Pew Research Center's 2006 survey, *Spirit and Power*. http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Orphan_Migrated_Content/pentecostals-08.pdf (accessed April 5th 2013).

⁴⁶ Jack Miles, moderating the conference *Spirit in the World: The Dynamics of Pentecostal Growth and Experience*, October 6, 2006, <http://crcc.usc.edu/blog/videos/pentecostalism-and-politics/> (accessed April 2013).

⁴⁷ "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." (Joel 2:28, 29)

⁴⁸ "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Mt. 24:14)

⁴⁹ See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 217.

⁵⁰ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 217.

⁵¹ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality. A Passion for the Kingdom* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 71.

⁵² See Paul Freston, "Pentecostals and Politics in Latin America", paper presented in the conference "Pentecostalism and Politics" Conference, held October 6th 2006; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx7Pvt1bdrM> (accessed April 25th 2013).

⁵³ Freston, "Pentecostals and Politics ..."

⁵⁴ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics ...*

⁵⁵ Freston, "Pentecostals and Politics ..."

⁵⁶ Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 9-19, 58, *apud* Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism...*, 267.

⁵⁷ NAR emphasizes the Five-Fold Ministry doctrine, which means a restoration of the offices of Prophet and Apostle, and believes that its leaders are apostles in the same sense as the twelve apostles.

⁵⁸ As opposed to classical Pentecostals, these Neo-Pentecostals teach that the end times are going to bring a great victory for the church, which will defeat evil on earth by taking dominion over all sectors of society and government, therefore establishing the "Kingdom of God" on earth.

⁵⁹ It is believed that certain aspects about the way and future of world nations are revealed to the prophets.

⁶⁰ Prosperity Theology claims that God's will for humans is for them to be permanently happy, healthy and financially blessed, and the way to obtain these is faith and positive speech. Poverty, disease and illnesses are seen as signs of the curses that must be broken through faith.

⁶¹ The Word of Faith theology entails claiming and receiving emotional health, the healing of all physical illnesses, wealth, prosperity, and success on the basis of the "Abrahamic covenant" that believers are seen to have inherited through conversion. [Russell Morris, *Truth Matters...*, 211]. The Word of Faith theology is, actually, recommended by some of its supporters as "the true liberation theology", as it "promises that anyone can 'activate' his or her faith to receive health and finances." Thus, the argument goes, "for members of marginalized

communities for whom political action offers little hope of ending the endless cycles of poverty, undereducation, chronic sickness, and political marginalization, the Faith message promises a unique solution.” [Arlene Sánchez Walsh, “Santidad, Salvación, Sanidad, Liberación: The Word of Faith Movement among Twenty-First-Century Latina/o Pentecostals”, in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown (New York: Oxford University Press), 151-2.]

⁶² It means literally “bringing into existence what we state with our mouth, since faith is a confession,” [Russell Sharrock, *Covenant Theology. A Critical Analysis of Current Pentecostal Covenant Theology*, (Morrisville: Lulu, 2006), 45.] Differently from classical Pentecostals, who emphasize its soteriological significance, the Neo-Pentecostals use the Word of Faith theology to support expectations of perfect personal wellbeing [Paulo Romeiro “Protestant Education in Brazil” in *International Handbook of Protestant Education*, eds. William Jeynes and David W. Robinson (New York: Springer Science, 2012), 410.]

⁶³ Sharrock, *Covenant Theology...*, 45.

⁶⁴ According to the NAR apostles, the obstacles that stand in the way of establishing God’s Kingdom on earth are represented by demonic beings who control peoples and groups and even geographic territories, being the sources of corruption, illness, poverty and any other individual and social evil. Accordingly, the believers who received supernatural powers are to fight these demons through the so-called “Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare.” According to Freston: “Many charismatic communities have a political vision based on ‘spiritual warfare’. The recipe is ritualism (exorcism of demons which govern a certain area of life, such as the ‘demon of corruption’, or of hereditary curses on the country caused by social sins like slavery or spiritist religions) and the placing of Christians in power.” [See Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 16].

⁶⁵ Russell A. Morris, *Truth Matters - A Pastoral Assessment of Word of Faith Theology* (Bloomington: CrossBooks, 2012), 199.

⁶⁶ Morris, *Truth Matters...*, 203.

⁶⁷ According to Reconstructionists, modern society should be entirely governed in accordance with the biblical law and Christians are mandated to occupy and transform secular institutions before Christ returns. As opposed to theocratic Reconstructionists, the New Apostolic Reformation apostles claim, at least on a declarative level that they are in favour of democracy because, as Wagner says: “democracy has worked very well, at least for us, for over two hundred years.” Democracy works well, in Wagner’s view, because “the rules of the democratic game open the doors for Christians, as well as for non-Christians who have Kingdom values, to move into positions of leadership influential enough to shape the whole nation from top to bottom. When this happens and the people of God begin to advocate, propagate and implement their values, this is not theocracy. It is simply a normal outworking of democracy. Biblical principles will, of course, penetrate society if the government is in the hands of the right people.” Therefore, “taking dominion comes about by playing by the rules of the democratic game and, fairly and squarely, gaining the necessary influence in the seven moulders of culture to ultimately benefit a nation and open society for the

blessings, prosperity and happiness God desires for all people.” [All quotations are from C. Peter Wagner’s book: *Dominion! How Kingdom Action Can Change the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2008.)] Basically, what Wagner is promoting is a way of “employing democratic procedures to institute theocracy by means of an elected oligarchy” [(See P.J. Tierney, *Theocracy: Can Democracy Survive Fundamentalism?: Resolving the Conflict Between Fundamentalism and Pluralism*, (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2012), 152.)]

⁶⁸ Lance Wallnau, “Taking the Mountain”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNjkhQruT1U&feature=relmfu>, (accessed April 23th 2013).

⁶⁹ Wallnau, “Taking the Mountain...”

⁷⁰ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics...*, 158.

⁷¹ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics...*, 160.

⁷² Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics...*, 274.

⁷³ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics...*, 318.

⁷⁴ Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics...*, 279-280.

⁷⁵ Cleary, “Introduction: Pentecostals...”, 9.

⁷⁶ D. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 118-120.

⁷⁷ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar. Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 11.

⁷⁸ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar...*, 13.

⁷⁹ His study refers to African Pentecostalism specifically, yet his conclusions are valid worldwide. See Paul Gifford, “Ghana’s Charismatic Churches”, *Journal for Religion in Africa* (1994): 241-65.

⁸⁰ Dena Freeman, “The Pentecostal Ethic and the Spirit of Development”, in *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa*, edited by Dena Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

⁸¹ Freeman, “The Pentecostal Ethic...”, 3.

⁸² Freston, “Pentecostals and Politics...”

⁸³ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism Global Pentecostalism*. The New Face of Christian Social Engagement (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 170.

⁸⁴ James Pfeiffer, “Civil Society, NGO’s, and the Holy Spirit in Mozambique”, *Human Organizations* 63.3 (2004): 359-72.

⁸⁵ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 165.

⁸⁶ Cleary, “Introduction: Pentecostals, Prominence, and Politics...”, 7.

⁸⁷ As Miller and Yamamori observe: “Pentecostalism has been one of the more egalitarian movements within Christianity. Pentecostal congregations were racially integrated in the early days of Azusa Street. Women have had access to leadership, including the right to serve as clergy. And, in principle, the lowliest members of the congregation can prophesy or receive a word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit.” (Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism...*, 177)

⁸⁸ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 177.

⁸⁹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 178.

⁹⁰ Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics...*, 304.

⁹¹ Richard Burgess, “Pentecostals and Political Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa”, in *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, ed. Michael Wilkinson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 39- 41.

⁹² Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 178.

⁹³ William Kay, “A Sociological Perspective on Pentecostalism in Europe,” in *European Pentecostalism* edited by William Kay and Anne Dyer (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2011), 387.

⁹⁴ Kay and Dyer, *European Pentecostalism*.

⁹⁵ For an eloquent discussion of the relation between the majority Orthodox Church and national identity in the case of Romania, see Constantin Schifirnet, “Orthodoxy, Church, State, and National Identity in the Context of Tendentia Modernity”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 12 issue 34 (2013): 173-208.

⁹⁶ Jean-Daniel Plüss, “Pentecostal Theology and Protestant Europe”, in *European Pentecostalism*, ed. W.K.Kay, A.E. Dyer, 2011, 294-5.

⁹⁷ In Romania, for instance, during the interwar period, Pentecostals were accused of being pro-communists – at a time when state authorities outlawed communism – only to be accused, after the war, of being foreign elements and representatives of American imperialism, once the “reds” seized power. This prejudice persists in the Romanian mentality and, after the demise of communism, this became evident in the accusations that were made against a handful of Evangelical politicians by vocal journalists and representatives of the opposition who spoke of “the Pentecostal Mob” that does not bear national interests in mind and that promotes American interest. (Cornel Nistorescu, “Despre mafia pentecostala” July 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=babuw6uhw2I> (accessed 25th April 2013).)

⁹⁸ This mention is important in light of the discussion concerning the way Neo-Charismatic immigrants to Europe understand the process of evangelization.

⁹⁹ The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway, for instance, has over 20 development projects that involve over 280 local Pentecostal churches, and operates, besides missionary projects, humanitarian and emergency aid, especially where there are natural disasters, famine or wars, operates a Children Aid Fund that assists children in some of the poorest areas of the world etc. Such projects are assumed by numerous Pentecostal churches/associations in Europe.

¹⁰⁰ Allan Anderson, “Independent Churches and Global Pentecostalism. Historical Connections and Common Identities.” In *African Identities and World Christianity in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Klaus Koschorke in cooperation with Jens Holger Schjorring (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2005), 66.

¹⁰¹ Sunday Adelaja, for instance, a Nigerian immigrant, founded The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations, a megachurch of more than 30,000 members, in Kiev, Ukraine, and claims that he has already started more than 600 churches in dozens of nations.

¹⁰² Anderson, “Independent Churches...”, 66.

¹⁰³ See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 97.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, “Independent Churches...”, 66.

¹⁰⁵ “They have a task here (in Europe), which is to win new and lost souls for Jesus Christ. If you want, you may call this “mission reversed,” for those to whom

Christ was once preached have now come back to the areas from which the original preachers set off, to preach Christ in all His goodness to all inhabitants of these areas.' This is how the former Frankfurt pastor and now primate of the Nigerian Church of the Lord (Aladura), Rufus Ositelu, describes the mission of migrant churches in the European context. With this, Ositelu speaks for hundreds or even thousands of African, Asian and Latin American Pentecostal and Charismatic migrant churches which do not see themselves so much as 'diaspora churches,' as a 'home away from home' for their members; but rather as part of the outreach movement of the *missio Dei*. That their churches came into being due to migration is just accidental; it does not define them. The real reason for their presence in Europe (or North America, or Russia) is God's mission." [Claudia Währisch-Oblau, "'We Shall be Fruitful in this Land:' Pentecostal and Charismatic New Mission Churches in Europe," in *Fruitful in this Land. Pluralism, Dialogue and Healing in Migrant Pentecostalism*, ed. André Droogers, Cornelis van der Laan, and Wout van Laar, (Uitgeverij Boekencentrum: WMC Publications, 2006)].

¹⁰⁶ Währisch-Oblau, "'We Shall Be Fruitful in this Land...'", 30, 44, 279.

¹⁰⁷ Währisch-Oblau, "'We Shall Be Fruitful in this Land...'", 284.

¹⁰⁸ Währisch-Oblau, "'We Shall Be Fruitful in this Land...'", 277.

¹⁰⁹ "Though often marginalized, migrant Pentecostals and charismatics do not see themselves as victims. They may have no political influence, but they pray for changed government policies and even confront the "demon of racism" in their spiritual warfare. Problems that are constructed as political in a Western rationalized framework are defined as spiritual in a Pentecostal/charismatic religious paradigm. And while they may not be agents in the political arena, they are definitely agents in the spiritual arena." (Währisch-Oblau, "'We Shall Be Fruitful in this Land...'", 31, 32.)

¹¹⁰ Währisch-Oblau, "'We Shall Be Fruitful in this Land...'", 282.

¹¹¹ Burgess, "Pentecostals and Political Culture ...", 17.

¹¹² See Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics ...*, 286.

¹¹³ For a discussion on the political activism of Pentecostals in UK, see Stephen Hunt, "Pentecostal Political Activism in the USA and the UK: A Comparative Analysis", *Politics and Religion*, Vol.II, 1(2008):101-126.

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