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**ENACTING PENTECOSTALISM:
SPIRIT-FILLED DEVELOPEMNT AND THE HONDURAN *COUP D'ÉTAT***

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ANTHROPOLOGY

by

William Maurice Girard

September 2013

The dissertation of William Maurice
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Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

William Girard

Enacting Pentecostalism:
Spirit-Filled Development and the Honduran *Coup d'État*

This dissertation explores how Pentecostal Christians in the small town of Copán Ruinas, Honduras strive to remake both individual subjectivities and the national body as part of a drive towards development and modernization. In the process, these Spirit-filled Christians, which today make up as much as 35% of the Honduran population, fuse what are conventionally regarded as distinct religious and secular formations. The resulting politically charged practices and imaginaries draw on, but also significantly transform, long-standing and interwoven regional discourses of nationalism, progress, and race/ethnicity. Those engaged in this Pentecostal project also work to draw to their pastors the trust that is more commonly given to the state or translocal non-governmental organizations to develop the nation. The dissertation argues that this Pentecostal program is part of a far broader project of neoliberal governance, and that it is brought into being through the two types of power Foucault described as constitutive of modern life: discipline and security.

The hybrid and explicitly political nature of this Pentecostal project came into sharp focus after the June 28th 2009 Honduran coup, the first successful coup in Latin America since the end of the Cold War. In response to the coup, these Christians engaged in their own form of geopolitics, which aimed at defeating the deposed

Leftist president, Manuel Zelaya, and the malicious demons they understood to be his allies. These efforts included praying to God to purify Honduras, imploring angels to defend the country's borders, carrying out "spiritual warfare," and currying favor with Israel, which they envision to be God's most beloved country.

Investigating this secular/religious project required that I not explore Pentecostalism as a discrete entity or imagine it as a preestablished whole, but rather that I trace how a range of modalities (forms of knowledge production, practices, sensibilities, technologies, texts, objects, and discourses) come together within diverse "enactments" of Pentecostalism. This perspective allowed me to identify the ways in which Pentecostals transform ostensibly secular projects of governance as they bring together previously disparate entities.

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Mark Anderson has been exceedingly giving with his time and comments. Much of my thinking about Honduras and Central America more broadly can be traced back to long conversations with him. He was a key part of my decision to focus on race/ethnicity and continually reminded me what was really important. He has also been an amazing friend.

From my qualifying exams to his final comments on the dissertation, James Ferguson has been remarkably generous as he pushed me to think in new ways and to question what I thought I knew. In addition, when I could no longer see the forest for the trees, he reminded me what the point was.

Andrew Mathews opened countless doors, suggested essential references to help me out of the knots I'd tied myself into, gave thoughtful feedback, and treated me like the scholar I hope to become one day.

Danilyn Rutherford provided me with comments that were both lightening quick and brilliant. She pointed me in important directions, helped me to reframe chapters, and did it all while (somehow) remaining simultaneously very serious and very funny.

There are not thanks enough in this world for everything Susan Harding has done. From her course "Ethnographic Practice," to ethnographic trips to churches around Santa Cruz, to conversations around her dinner table, to walks with her dog, Susan has shaped the way I think about virtually everything. I formulated, researched, and wrote up this entire project while continually carrying on conversations (both real and imagined) with her. Among many other things, she taught me how to slow down my thinking, to pay attention, to read like a pirate, to do theory through ethnography, and not to reach for the most readily available categories or conclusions. Through it all, the only times she seemed to grow impatient with me were the moments when I showed a lack of generosity towards others or myself.

While at UCSC, I also benefited tremendously from the intellectual guidance of Donna Haraway, Lisa Rofel, and Anna Tsing.

Allyson Ramage and Fred Deakin are as close to superheroes as you can get. They helped me to jump through every bureaucratic hoop at UCSC, oftentimes

reminding me that I needed to jump in the first place. I have no doubt that without them I would still be trying to figure out how to file my first-year review.

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After returning from fieldwork, I served as a visiting research scholar at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign for two years. I met a number of scholars there who both had a significant impact on my dissertation and became close friends. When I first arrived, I took part in a dissertation-writing group with Kora Maldonado Goti and Isabel Scarborough. I cannot imagine two better people to have been partnered with as I started writing. Their insights, especially on the two geopolitics chapters, were invaluable. Faculty members Ellen Moodie and Gilberto Rosas provided important guidance and made me feel like a member of the University's scholarly community. Andrew Orta and Nils Jacobsen gave me critical feedback on

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While living in Champaign, I also began to correspond with Jon Carter, who, at the time, was in the process of finishing his own dissertation on Honduras at Columbia University. Although our relationship developed almost exclusively through email (sometimes a dozen a day), he has been an indispensable interlocutor over the past two years on all things Honduras and otherwise. Jon has also read more of the dissertation than anyone outside my committee, and his feedback has been invaluable.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my amazing father.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION: ENACTING PENTECOSTAL GOVERNANCE

One evening, halfway through my fieldwork in the small town of Copán Ruinas, Honduras, I had a conversation with Rosa that helped me feel like I was on the right track. She taught at a Spanish language school for foreigners, and every one of her students I met adored her. It was easy to see why. She was cheerful, funny, and dedicated to her work. Over the years, she had taught at every Spanish school in town, moving on when she could negotiate a better salary. She had once even started her own Spanish school out of her house, but it never made enough money, so she went back to working for other people.

Rosa had been an acquaintance for years, but we had never discussed her deep involvement with her Pentecostal church. That evening we had talked for nearly two hours, and her description of Pentecostal Christians' essential role in overcoming Honduras's problems with poverty, drugs, violence, and corruption fit well with how I was coming to understand these Christians both ordered their world and worked to transform it. Rosa articulated with particular clarity how Pentecostals like herself planned not only to overcome this widely agreed upon set of national problems, but also to bring prosperity to individuals and the nation as a whole—to develop and modernize Honduras. In the process, Rosa invoked a number of interwoven and politically charged narratives about Honduran national history, race/ethnicity, development, and international geopolitics. She also linked actors across scales and

(at least in secular modern terms) ontological realms. This far-reaching Pentecostal strategy for modernizing Honduras, the practices they engage in to bring this change about, and its consequences for their responses to the Honduran coup d'état of 2009—all of which I analyze as a form of what Foucault called “governance”—are the subject of this dissertation.

At the beginning of our conversation, Rosa told me that Honduras's heritage (*herencia*) was its greatest obstacle. In the United States, she said, Protestants (*los cristianos*), people who lived according to His principals, had established the country. As a result, she continued, God had blessed the United States with great prosperity. She then contrasted this history with Latin American history, a place where she claimed that Catholics had established an order in which the priests and politicians kept all the wealth for themselves, leaving the people with nothing. She maintained that this foundation had set the stage for the contemporary condition of Honduras, which she described as overcome with corruption and greed, and within which people turned to trafficking drugs or other crimes because they desired wealth, but were unwilling to work hard or trust in Him to provide it.

The volume of her high voice rising a bit, Rosa delved deeper into the past, insisting that Honduras's troubled heritage began even well before the Spanish, during the time of the ancient Maya. They had gods for everything, she said—god of the wind, god of corn, god of the sun—and they prayed to all of them. However, what the Maya didn't know, she quickly added, was that these weren't gods, but rather demons (Meyer 1999). Waving her hand in the direction of the Mayan Ruins

of Copán, which lie only a kilometer outside of town, she detailed how the Mayas' rituals, especially human sacrifices, drew these demons into the region, where most of them remained today. As a result, for Rosa, these dark forces, along with earthly, bureaucratic institutions, such as the Catholic Church and the Honduran state, further promote laziness, corruption, and a lack of initiative among people in the area.

Rosa then jumped to the Maya-Chortí, the contemporary descendants of the ancient Maya, many of whom live in extreme poverty in small villages in the hills outside of Copán Ruinas. As with many indigenous peoples throughout Latin America, over the past two decades the Maya-Chortí have advanced a series of political demands by mobilizing around their indigenous identity. However, for Rosa and many other Pentecostals, the Maya-Chortí's revival of indigenous rituals has meant that demons are once again being drawn into the area, making people lazy and preventing them from becoming "productive people" (*gente productiva*).

From there, Rosa linked the Maya-Chortí to Manuel Zelaya, the recently deposed president of Honduras who was removed from power in a *coup d'état* led by the country's military and economic elite. She told me that the Maya-Chortí only backed Zelaya because his corrupt government purchased their support with land, food, and money. While my own understanding is that Zelaya's support for indigenous people had been largely rhetorical, Rosa said these political gifts pleased the Maya-Chortí because they allowed them to avoid work. Again, such a description did not match my own experiences with the Maya-Chortí, who, every time I was in

one of their villages, always seemed to be engaged in back breaking labor and for what I was told was little pay.

Rosa then backtracked for a moment. She wanted to make sure that I understood. She had voted for Zelaya and supported him during his first two years in office, but that was before he became close with Hugo Chavez, the Leftist president of Venezuela. This relationship, Rosa insisted, had taken Zelaya, and Honduras as a whole, down the wrong path, away from God's desires for Honduras, and remaining on God's path was critical to a prosperous future for Honduras. According to Rosa, if the problems of poverty, violence, and corruption were to be overcome, and Honduras was to develop, His blessings would be essential.

To be clear, I asked, "And Chavez, many people have told me that he is the anti-Christ, from the book of Revelations, do you think he is?" (*Y Chavez, varias personas me han dicho que el es el anti-cristo de este libro de Revelaciones, usted piensa que el es asi?*)

"Sí," she replied, "probably" (*es probable*).

I asked Rosa this question to be sure that she, as with most Pentecostals I knew in Copán Ruinas, was framing the coup within Bible-based chronologies of the Last Days. Indeed, even before the coup, in sermons, emails, texts messages, and informal conversations, Pentecostals had situated contemporary events in Honduras and around the world within these prophecies. In addition to Honduras, Venezuela, and the United States, they paid careful attention to events in Israel, the place they

regard as the central stage for the End Times, and which, in the wake of the coup, they took to be Honduras's most critical ally.

For those unfamiliar with Pentecostal Christianity, this analysis of Honduras and the sources of its contemporary troubles may be jarring. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these are not the views of a small minority. Pentecostalism has grown at a breakneck pace throughout Latin America and much of the Global South over the past few decades. While I am hesitant to describe Pentecostalism in terms of statistics, numbers do tell part of the story. Recent polls have shown that 35-45% of Hondurans identify as Protestants, the vast majority of which are Pentecostals (Holland 2012). In Copán Ruins alone, a town of only 8,000 people, there are at least a dozen Pentecostal churches, almost all of which were built in the last thirty years.

Those familiar with the United States' history of military intervention and colonialism in Honduras and Central America more broadly might expect this legacy to be included among the causes Rosa detailed for her country's problems. However, most people I knew in Copán Ruinas, both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals, regarded the United States as a "friend" of Honduras, even if, at times, they resented its heavy hand. People are, by and large, grateful for the economic aid that the United States has provided and, for those old enough to remember, for its military support during the 1980s against what were taken to be "Communist forces" in Honduras's neighboring countries. This positive opinion of the United States began to change after the coup, which the United States government was generally understood to oppose. For many *Copanecos*, the majority of whom supported the coup (in my

view, in large measure as the result of the predominantly rightwing national media's misleading account of Zelaya's intentions), this amounted to the United States turning its back on Honduras.

In addition to how widespread these ideas are, when considered within a broader historical context, they are not particularly novel. For example, a longstanding Latin American, Liberal analysis of the region's lack of wealth in comparison to the United States traces the roots of this disparity to its "barbarous" populations and to the Catholic Church. In relation to the former, indigenous people were often said to "live in idleness" and to be incapable of carrying out "hard and protracted labor" (Sarmiento 1845, quoted in Cowen and Shenton 1996: 67). While Liberal elites generally viewed these supposed characteristics of indigenous people as rooted in biology rather than, as Rosa would have it, the nefarious actions of demons, they too asserted that these ostensible indigenous dispositions adversely affect the national body as a whole. Further, Rosa's racist views of the Maya-Chortí are not limited to Pentecostals, but are widely shared among *mestizos* (the mixed race, unmarked racial category in Honduras) in Copán Ruinas, even among many on the political left.

Nevertheless, while this Pentecostal analysis can be connected to longer histories and broader ideologies, it is distinct in important ways and these differences matter. Part of what differentiates this Pentecostal account from those of other projects working to improve and modernize Honduras, such as the state or NGOs, is the sources of agency they regard to be responsible for both alleviating and

exacerbating the country's problems. While the state or NGOs might consider the consequences that rates of unemployment have on crime or how the quality of soil determines how many people can be sustained from a given acreage of land, for Pentecostals the intensity of the Holy Spirit's presence within a place and peoples' relationships with Him determine levels of crime and soil quality. In this way, only by filling individuals and the nation with his presence and establishing the correct relationship with Him will Honduras be able to develop.

Pentecostals' account of Honduras's national troubles also diverges from those of non-Pentecostals in the leaders who they believe can successfully initiate this transformation. Or, more accurately, they believe that anyone can initiate this transformation. While the politicians and development workers make similar claims about their capacities to improve Honduras, almost no one I know in Copán Ruinas, Pentecostal or otherwise, believes that they can fulfill their promises. People have simply heard such promises too many times to expect them to amount to much. As a result, they tend to view politicians and development workers as either hopelessly corrupt or well intentioned, but ineffective. Non-Pentecostals generally consider Pentecostal pastors in similar terms, as willing to make big promises about improving peoples' lives, but, in the end, as hopelessly corrupt and self-interested. Pentecostals, however, typically believe their pastors can overcome these limitations because they hold expert knowledge of how God has structured the universe (found in His Word, the Bible) and, because of His strong presence in their hearts, they can act in an unselfish and incorruptible way. In this way, Pentecostals view pastors (or, at least,

pastors from their church) as the proper trustees of Honduras (Cowen and Shenton 1996: *x*, Li 2007: 5).

Based on its connections with state and NGO-based projects of governance, this dissertation analyzes Pentecostalism in Copán Ruinas as a similar project of governance. For Foucault, governance involved the management of:

Men in their relationships, bonds, and the complex involvements with things like wealth, resources, means of subsistence, and... the territory with its borders, qualities, climate, dryness, fertility, and so on. [This also includes] men in their relationships with things like customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking. Finally, they are men in their relationships with things like accidents, misfortunes, famine, epidemics, and death (2007: 96).

This dissertation argues that dimensions of Pentecostalism, what I call pastoral governance, also entails “complex involvements” with all of these entities. Indeed, in relation to “wealth, resources, [and] means of subsistence” pastoral governance strives to increase both individual and national prosperity by both filling individuals with the presence of the Holy Spirit and entering into a relationship of exchange with God. In addition, for Pentecostals, the “qualities, climate, dryness, [and] fertility” of a territory, are not the result of “natural processes,” but rather, a range of characteristics found in the populations that inhabit an area. These include the purity of the populations’ hearts, the intensity of His presence, and the routing of demons, all of which a pastor is taken to improve or facilitate in relation to his flock. Finally, as Rosa described, Pentecostals understand a radical break away from “customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking,” the experience of being born again, as essential if both individuals and Honduras as a whole is to move forward.

Here again, in addition to the agents taken to carry out these transformations, pastoral governance diverges in another important way from the modes of secular governance that Foucault is most interested in. In relation to “accidents [and] misfortunes,” Pentecostals simply do not believe in these things. For them, there are no accidents. People who believe in “accidents,” or, the word they tend to use, “coincidences” (*las coincidencias*), are the butt of jokes in much the same way that people who believe in the existence of God are punch lines for outspoken atheists. In both cases, these people are taken to misunderstand the most basic facts about the world and how to navigate it.

While Foucault’s analysis of modern governance ignores the contemporary role of “religion,” he views the Christian pastoral as an essential precursor to modern governance. Indeed, Foucault dedicated the next five weeks of lectures that followed his often-cited lecture at the *Collège de France* on governmentality (2007: 87-114) to a genealogy of pastoral power (ibid.: 115-254). Over the course of these lectures, Foucault describes how the entry of pastoral governance “into politics at the end of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, marks the threshold of the modern state” (ibid.: 165, cf. 184-185, 193). Nevertheless, while Foucault details the pastoral as a “prelude” (ibid.: 184) to governmentality, he does not consider the continuing significance of the pastoral as a form of contemporary governance. Such an analysis is the goal of this dissertation.

In order to highlight the connections and ruptures between secular and pastoral modes of governance, each chapter of this dissertation considers Pentecostal

governance in Copán Ruinas through a literature whose purview is generally limited to secular phenomena. Chapter 2, “The Spirit-filled Constitution,” takes up Bruno Latour’s analysis of the Modern Constitution, which he describes as an effort at purification, the separation of humans, the Divine, and nature into three cordoned off realms. The chapter begins with a consideration of how, rather than dividing up these three ostensibly distinct types of entities, Pentecostals strive to produce particular hybrids and avoid others in order to both save individuals souls and modernize the nation. That is, Pentecostals strive to increase the presence of the Holy Spirit within humans while decreasing the presence of demons or “the world.” At the same time, the natural world is not taken as separate from the actions of humans and God. Natural events, such as bad weather or earthquakes, are understood to be the consequences of God’s displeasure with human actions. The chapter ends with a consideration of how these dynamics play out in local practices of knowledge production.

Chapter 3, “Spirit-filled Development,” examines the imbrications of secular and Pentecostal development efforts, focusing on the two matrices of power that Foucault described as constitutive of modern life: discipline and security. First, as Rosa’s phrase about the need to create “productive people” alluded to, the pastoral works to transform individual subjectivities, to produce individuals who are hard working, honest, frugal, and obedient to secular authority. At the same time, it also insists that these subjects should never be satisfied with their present circumstances, but should continually search for opportunities to improve their financial situation by

taking risks. To work honestly and obediently in the service of one's boss is necessary and expected, but to only act in this way, without ever setting one's sights higher, would demonstrate a lack of trust in God's ability to transform people's life. In this way, the pastoral form of individualization combines the Methodist imperative to industry and frugality described by E.P. Thompson with the neoliberal drive to produce "enterprising individuals" (Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Foucault 2008, Ong 2003, Rose 2006 [1996]). The chapter then details how pastoral individualization is set off from other contemporary regimes of individualization because, rather than striving to locate and fix a subject's inner truth (Foucault 1990), the pastoral aims to fill the subject with an external truth—the Holy Spirit.

In addition to individualizing power, pastoral governance is also engaged in what Foucault called security. Foucault divided security into two broad apparatuses, both of which the Pentecostal pastoral engages in, bio-politics and the diplomatic-military system. The former will be taken up in this chapter while the next two chapters will examine the latter. Bio-politics targets populations with the goal of "improving" them, bolstering a nation's "internal forces." More conventional bio-politics works primarily with humans' biological existence. Meanwhile, the Pentecostal pastoral, which largely shares the goals and targets of secular bio-politics, diverges in the "vital" substance (Rabinow and Rose 2006) it engages with in order to "improve" populations. Rather than humans' biological existence, it strives to intensify His presence within the population. That is, through a series of practices (e.g. reading the Bible, prayer, receiving the Holy Spirit), Pentecostals work to

increase His presence within the population, while simultaneously decreasing the presence of demons.

The final two chapters focus on Pentecostal responses to the Honduran coup of 2009 through the scholarly literature on geopolitics. In addition to developing a nation's "internal forces," Foucault also describes the other primary element of security as "the military-diplomatic apparatus," which is charged with the management of external relations. While modern theories of the state frame warfare and diplomacy as exclusively the legitimate purview of the state, pastoral governance has developed its own set of strategies and practices of warfare and diplomacy. As with secular geopolitics, this pastoral geopolitics is both a matter of engaging with external actors in order to benefit the nation and instructing a broad community to think in geopolitical terms (Dittmer 2010). For Spirit-filled geopolitics, it is not on physical battlefields or within diplomats' temperature-controlled meeting rooms where engagements take place, but rather in Pentecostal church within which congregants carry out in spiritual warfare, cultivate God's blessings for their nation, and struggle against the demons that continually strive to control secular states. At the same time, within Pentecostal churches, these Christians learn (and have reinforced) a set of analytics that applies equally to secular and pastoral geopolitics: defining the nation-state as the primary actor within international politics, sorting nations within a global hierarchy (what Ferguson [2006] calls their "place-in-the-world"), categorizing other nations as either "friends" or "enemies," and defending national boundaries. I examine this Spirit-filled geopolitics in relation to the Western

Hemisphere across chapter 4, while Chapter 5 focuses on the Middle East, especially Israel.

This dissertation focuses on pastoral governance because I find it to be the most politically relevant aspect of Pentecostal life that emerged from my fieldwork. Nevertheless, I want to stress that this is not only dimension of Pentecostalism or the only one with significant consequences for *Copanecos* everyday life. In the vignettes that follow, I aim both to show pastoral governance in action and to give a broader sense of Pentecostalism in Copán Ruinas. Following the vignettes, I will take up these multiple enactments of Pentecostalism to argue that Christianity is multiple in practice. Indeed, even within this handful of vignettes, Christianity is a narrative used to explain events, a performance, an embodied knowledge, the product of gossip, a criteria for intervention, a set of experience that sticks with someone, and one among a set of actors working, at times, towards a more or less common goal.

“Things are getting worse in Copán”

Located on the far western side of Honduras, Copán Ruinas (or simply Copán as it's often called) is a placey kind of place. Because of its proximity to the famous Mayan Ruins of Copán, the local economy is largely based on tourism. In an effort to appeal to tourists, the town has cultivated a “colonial” feel. Noting its cobblestone streets and brightly colored buildings, travel guides often describe the town center as “charming” and “timeless.” Visitors regularly assume that most of the town was built

in the 16th Century, rather than, as was largely the case, at the end of the 20th Century (Figure 1).

Figure 1:



Near town Center, Copan Ruinas. Source: Photograph by author

Whenever I return to Copán, Karen is one of the first people I visit. I met her in 2000 when we worked together at the same school. I taught junior high, and she taught social studies to all the grade levels. Karen is almost fifteen years older than I am, and I remember feeling intimidated by her at first. Everyday, when the time came for her to teach my students, she would walk into the classroom with a severe look on her face, high heels clicking on the concrete floor. The students bolted

upright in their seats when she came through door, and they were always sure to follow her every instruction.

As the school year went on, Karen and I began to chat in the school's tiny teachers' lounge during our breaks. I soon discovered that her strict demeanor was reserved for the students and that outside of class she was good-natured and funny. Later on that year, we became especially close when we organized the school's Father's Day celebration together (a big hit by all accounts).

After teaching at the school for a year, I left Copán, and shortly thereafter Karen quit her secure job to start a small business that shuttles backpackers from Copán to other popular tourist destinations in Honduras and Guatemala. There were already a number of similar services in town, but the proximity of Karen's office to the *parque central* provided it with a visibility that many of the others lacked. Even so, as I made trips back to Copán over the years—at first to visit friends and later to carry out fieldwork—Karen's business was never booming. When I stopped by her office, she would tell me that she was making enough money to support herself and her three children, but that it was always a struggle to keep up.

When I first visited her at the beginning of my fieldwork in 2009, she was under more pressure than ever. After joking and reminiscing for a while, her tone changed when I asked her how things were going. In a phrase I would hear countless times during my first few weeks back in town, she said simply, “Things are getting worse in Copán” (*Las cosas en Copán se estan poniendo peores*).

I had always heard complaints about tourism-based development, which became increasingly central to Copán's economy in the 1990s: it hadn't produced enough good jobs; the Honduran state and NGOs who promoted tourism were riddled with corruption, nepotism, and incompetence; and the same traditionally wealthy families in town were reaping the vast majority of the wealth it brought. Nevertheless, even among all of the criticisms, there remained a current of optimism. Tourism had boosted the local economy, and no one longed to return to the days when the cultivation of tobacco was the primary form of employment in the region. There was also always hope that Copán was on the verge of taking off as a major tourist destination and that life would soon begin to improve in earnest.¹

By 2009, the boom had not come, and drug trafficking and drug-related violence was rapidly increasing in the area around Copán.² Any remaining optimism that the town would become the next tourist hotspot had all but evaporated. During the first few months of that year, there was already good reason for still greater pessimism. As the result of the global economic downturn that began in the United States real-estate market and the outbreak of the H1N1 virus, tourism around the world had declined sharply, and businesses in Copán were feeling the effects. Even so, at this point, no one imagined just how bad the economy would get. There was

¹ For a detailed history of the tourism industry in Copán Ruinas see (Mortensen 2005).

² As the result of a massive shift in international drug smuggling routes and Copán's proximity to the border with Guatemala, the area around Copán has recently become a significant transit point for cocaine on its way from South America to the United States.

some talk of the *cuarta urna* (lit. fourth ballot box),³ shorthand for president Manuel Zelaya's initiative to rewrite the Honduran constitution, but there was no sense that this effort would soon lead to his ouster from office in the first successful coup d'état in Latin America since the end of the Cold War.

In the early morning hours of June 28th 2009, on the day a nonbinding referendum to gauge Hondurans' support for the *cuarta urna* was scheduled to be held,⁴ the Honduran military stormed the presidential palace, seized Zelaya, and deposited him on a plane bound for Costa Rica (as almost everyone notes, while still in his pajamas). Zelaya hails from a wealthy ranching and logging family and was elected as a business-friendly, center-right candidate from the Liberal Party.⁵ However, after his first year in office, Zelaya moved sharply to the political left. He raised the minimum wage by 60% and joined two of Hugo Chavez's international initiatives: *Petro-Caribe*, which allows poor countries to receive oil at low interest rates and *ALBA* (*Alianza Bolivarianan para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*), which provided funds for development assistance. Zelaya also developed close relationships with other Left and center-Left leaders that had recently come to power in Latin America, often collectively referred to as the "Pink Tide." These moves (with the possible exception of joining *Petro-Caribe*) angered much of the Honduran military leadership and economic elite. For them, the referendum—which the Honduran

³ This initiative was called the *cuarta urna* because the vote to determine if the constitution should be rewritten was to take place along with regular elections, when there would be three other ballot boxes in which Hondurans voted for president, congressional representative, and mayor.

⁴ In other words, a vote to see if there should be a vote.

⁵ Both of the main political parties in Honduras (*Liberal* and *Nacional*) are center-right, but the *Partido Liberal* also has a small progressive wing.

Supreme Court had declared illegal and many viewed as Zelaya's effort to run for a constitutionally prohibited second term—was the final straw. In the wake of the coup, tourism in Honduras fell off a cliff. Local business owners reported that revenue was down as much as eighty percent from the previous year. Everyone began to refer to the period after the coup as simply *la crisis*.

Karen's business suffered a great deal during *la crisis*. Like many small businesses owners in Copán, Karen had taken out a loan to get started and now, with tourism down to a trickle, it was impossible for her to make the payments. In our conversations during those months, it was clear that her financial predicament was becoming increasingly desperate. Although she never directly asked, Karen often hinted that I should give her a loan.

Throughout these trying months, Karen insisted that God would see her through. As she explained it, she had good reason to trust Him. He had helped her to overcome a series of impossible obstacles: ensuring that she received a loan to start the business, a normally corrupt official not asking her to pay a bribe when she registered her business, and, a number of times, large groups of tourists arriving just as she ran out of money. Some of these events either Karen or a close friend, a woman from the North Coast who she called "the prophetess," had foreseen. Indeed, the ability to see into the future is a gift that the Holy Spirit provides to some Pentecostals, like Karen. For example, when Karen bought the van for her business, she purchased it in Guatemala because automobiles are less expensive there. However, she was worried because Hondurans are often not eligible for credit across

the boarder. At the dealership, when the time came to discuss payment, the owner assured her that the credit would not be a problem. He explained that her daughter, who was attending university in Guatemala, could sign the necessary documents. She was so overjoyed when she left the dealership that she was laughing. At that moment, she remembered that the prophetess had told her good news was on the way—she had a vision in which Karen was walking out of a building made out of glass and laughing. Glancing back over her shoulder, Karen told me, she saw that the dealership's façade was made entirely of glass.

Karen would often describe *la crisis* as a test, and not only for herself, but for Honduras as a whole. She said that it was an opportunity for both to turn towards God, and if they did, to enjoy the rewards He would ultimately provide.

Anti-Zelaya

It is hot. The sun is beating down on Copán's *parque central*. Almost a week has passed since the *coup*. Around sixty-five people are sitting in the stone bleachers that surround the park's stage. The *Liberal* candidate for mayor in the next elections, which are now five months away, delivers a speech on the stage. The *Nacionalista* candidate for the same office stands in the wings. He will speak next. Along with the rest of the park, this section was redesigned a decade ago to resemble the Mayan Ruins in an effort to make it more attractive to tourists. The same stone found in the ruins covers larger portions of the bleachers and the back of the stage. More than a

dozen people will speak throughout the morning, all of them members of Copán middle and upper class and rallying support for the coup.

Everyone gathered around the stage wears white shirts. In these days just after the coup, white shirts became a symbol of support for Zelaya's ouster as thousands of those who backed the military's actions marched through the streets of Honduran cities wearing them. At the same time, the newly formed FNRP (*Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular*, National Popular Resistance Front), a coalition of grassroots organizations who opposed the coup, marched through the cities wearing red and black, demanding that Zelaya be returned to Honduras and reinstated as president. While Copán is a small town, its proximity to the Mayan Ruins, which occupy a central place in the imagined Honduran patrimony, provided this rally a symbolic weight when reported in other parts of the country. Such an event in other towns of comparable size around Honduras would not carry the same weight.

No one knows what is going to happen next. The United Nations has condemned the coup. The World Bank has paused its lending to Honduras. The Organization of American States has suspended Honduras's membership. Not a single country has recognized the government of Zelaya's replacement, Roberto Micheletti. A curfew remained in effect at night, and media outlets that support Zelaya have been off the air for long stretches at a time. Cell phone service has come and gone. Rumors swirl around town: the Venezuelan army will invade Honduras (from Nicaragua...or maybe Guatemala) to reinstate Zelaya; the Honduran military is

rounding up young men in brazen acts of forced conscription; a civil war is about to erupt between the military and those battalions still loyal to Zelaya.

There are also rumors circulating about the marches. Some claim that those taking part in the FNRP protests demanding Zelaya's return are all gang members. Others claim that those marching in support of the coup are almost entirely people who are employed by the national elite and are being forced to march. While I am not sure about the marches in the big cities, almost everyone attending this rally is either related to one of the speakers or employed by one of Copán's traditionally wealthy families and has been released from work to attend the rally. Indeed, without these employees, there would be almost no one there. This is not to say that most *Copanecos* oppose the coup. They do not. In my conversations with people, large numbers of them from all classes support Zelaya's removal, but a general sense of support and attending a public rally are two different things.

His speech now over, the *Liberal* candidate hands the microphone back to the M.C., who begins a spontaneous riff. He insists that today's rally is not about politics but about something they all shared as Hondurans: love of their country. How could the point be clearer, he asks, with candidates from both parties speaking on the same stage? He rails against the international organizations and foreign media, who he claims have been overly sympathetic to Zelaya, calling the former president's removal from power a *coup* (*golpe de estado*) rather than the legal succession (*sucesión legal*) they knew it to be. After all, he points out, the military had not taken power. The president of the national congress who became Zelaya's constitutionally

mandated successor, Roberto Micheletti, was now the president. What the international media has failed to report, he asserts, is that in removing Zelaya from the country, the Honduran government had acted to save them from the control of Hugo Chavez, the puppet master behind all of Zelaya's recent Leftist actions. The audience applauds as the M.C. pauses for a moment. Indeed, this notion that Chavez had been on the verge of controlling Honduras is the reason most people in Copán support the coup.

The content of the M.C.'s comments fits perfectly with the twelve other speakers, but his performance makes him stand out. He is energetic and enthusiastic. He bounces around the stage, and his voice builds and speeds up as he makes his way through a sentence. The other speakers are somber. They speak in measured tones and seem to carry a weight on their shoulders. Part of the difference might be the result of his responsibilities as the M.C., but there is something else: he is one of the few speakers that had ever been a member of a Pentecostal church.

The M.C.'s performance is the only aspect of the rally that day that might warrant the adjective "Pentecostal." All of the other performances are better described as "Catholic." A number of the other speakers read prayers written on paper that they pulled out of their back pockets or from a folder. One speaker, a local businesswoman, passes around copies of *Oración del Hondureño* (Prayer of the Honduran). Before beginning the prayer, she says that they should all pray (*rezar*) in unison. Another man, considered to be among the wealthiest people in town, reads a story out of the Bible. Standing at the center of the stage, he flips back and forth

through the Bible, searching for the story. If the speakers' comportments witness a certain Catholic-ness, this does not mean that they are devout Catholics. Most of them, as far as I know, do not attend mass regularly, in part because they oppose the local priest's embrace of liberation theology. In fact, many of them are regularly the targets of his sermons.

These actions, especially, the prayers and handling of the Bible, would rub Pentecostals the wrong way. They never pray from prewritten prayers. For them, only spontaneous prayers, leaping directly from one's heart, are meaningful to God. When Pentecostals pray, words seem to tumble out of their mouths, without a filter. They would also never use the Spanish word *rezar*, which has the connotation of "recite." Instead, they use the word *orar*. For them, each prayer must be unique, a product of the moment, not something that is mindlessly recited. Pentecostals also do not wander through their Bibles searching for a verse. Their movements through the Bible are like Olympic gymnast dismounting from the parallel bars. They land exactly where they intend, with little movement afterwards. As I discovered many times while flipping back and forth through my Bible after a Pentecostal pastor asked the congregation to find a specific verse, such behavior draws attention to you as a novice and marks you as someone in need of assistance. Finally, the weight the speakers carry also had a Catholic-ness to it. Bearing such a weight is part of how Catholics comport themselves during a mass, of how they approach God. In contrast, during their services, Pentecostals are up and out of their seats, dancing, singing, and praising God. There is a weightlessness to their movements.

While at the national level the Honduran Catholic hierarchy and prominent Pentecostal pastors had spoken out in favor of the coup, there were no local representatives of either at the rally in Copán Ruinas. While, based on his Leftist politics, it is clear why the local priest wouldn't attend, at the time, I didn't understand why no Pentecostal pastors spoke or even showed up to watch. As far as I knew, almost all of them supported the coup. Only months later did I come to understand that at the services I was attending at night they were carrying out their own political efforts against Zelaya, efforts they saw as more effective because they confronted the true threat to Honduras, not Zelaya, or even Chavez, but the Devil and his demons.

Indeed, in the Pentecostal churches I attended during these first weeks after the coup, the congregations carried out spiritual warfare against the demons they understood to be Zelaya's allies. They prayed that God would banish them from Honduras, so that their country could escape this Leftist trajectory and return to His path.

“You Have No Idea What You're Talking About!”

I'm sitting with Nanci and Valentina at Nanci's house, and we're all laughing. This is the first time we've all gotten together since I returned to Copán. Over the past 10 years, these two young women have gone from being my students to being good friends, and in that time a repertoire of stories has developed that we tell almost every time we're together: the time they cheated on a math test; the time I fell out of a tree on a class fieldtrip; the time their classmate Elvin, with his gravelly voice and

indifferent manner, suddenly jumped into the middle of Nanci and Valentina's conversation about Winnie the Pooh to declare, with uncharacteristic intensity, "I hate that fat-stomached bear!"⁶

After a while, I tell them a bit about why I'm back in town and my research. This sets them off on a long stream of *chismes* (gossip) about the different Pentecostal churches in town. Valentina considers herself Catholic, but rarely goes to church. Nanci, who comes from a Catholic family, attended a Pentecostal church for a number of years, but, along with half the congregation, left the church when a sex scandal erupted a number of years ago with the pastor at the center.

They laugh as they tell me stories about corruption in the churches, pastors having affairs, and the overall hypocrisy they associate with church members (cf. Gupta 1995). They roll their eyes as they joke about the pastor who arrived in Copán with a beat up old car and now drives a shiny black S.U.V. It's a familiar story that almost inevitably comes up whenever someone in town wants to characterize Pentecostal pastors as taking advantage of their congregations.

After a brief lull in the stories, Valentina tries to get us laughing again. "Yeah," she says, "those churches are crazy. People act like they're on drugs, dancing all around and blabbering." Doing an impression of someone filled with the Holy Spirit, she jerks her hands all around her head and throws her tongue around in her mouth, saying "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."

⁶ This conversation with Nanci and Valentina took place in English.

Nanci isn't laughing as her friend mocks this gift from the Holy Spirit. "Shut up!" she shouts, clearly furious, "You have no idea what you're talking about!"

Nanci no longer calls herself a Pentecostal, and she no longer attends church, but some things that she experienced in them are no laughing matter.

Whose Gift?

There are currently no foreign missionaries working in Copán Ruinas, and this has been the case for most of the town's history. By and large, Protestantism travelled to Copán through the efforts of Hondurans from other parts of the country and Guatemalans who crossed over the border (who themselves were converted by missionary organizations from the United States). Paul Bradley, a gregarious Southern Baptist missionary from Texas, breaks with this tradition because he lives in Copán, but he makes no effort to win souls in town. In fact, many Pentecostal *Copanecos* don't even know that a Protestant missionary lives in *Copán* because he largely keeps to himself and he only works with the Maya-Chortí in the *aldeas* (villages) to the south of Copán. He does not evangelize in *mestizo* (the racially unmarked, majority population in Honduras) *aldeas*. Within the Chortí communities, there is often a desperate level of poverty; six in ten children die before their second birthday, and life expectancy is only fifty-two years.

With the permission of CONIMCHH (*Consejo Nacional Indígena Maya Ch'ortí de Honduras*), the organizational and political structure of the Chortí, Paul has worked in these villages since 2002. His efforts have focused on agriculture,

implementing terracing techniques that increase crop yields and slow the rates of soil loss. These methods are especially helpful in the steep terrain and poor quality soil that characterizes many of the areas where the Chortí live. According to his agreement with CONIMCHH, if Paul teaches community members this form of terrace farming or carries out other projects (such as providing them with portable water or building a school), then he can hold a regular Bible Study meeting in the village. Paul's ultimate goal for these meetings is to convince attendees to convert from their liberation theology-based Catholicism to his theologically conservative Protestantism.

In addition to Chortí villages, there is one other limitation Paul places on the *aldeas* where he works. If a community already has a "like minded" church, Paul will not carry out a project or hold a Bible study meeting there. This is part of his effort to avoid what he views as unnecessary competition. For Paul, "like minded" means that a church is evangelical, that it teaches certain doctrinal positions: the Bible is literally true, Jesus was literally the son of God, salvation can only be achieved through faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal savior (which is understood to take place through a process of being "born again"). Pentecostal churches meet these doctrinal criteria, so Paul largely steers clear of villages that have them. This does not mean that Paul agrees with everything Pentecostal pastors preach. As a Southern Baptist, Paul has a number of strongly held differences with Pentecostals, most centrally, his broadly Calvinist view of salvation, according to which salvation, once achieved, is permanent. This stands in opposition to Pentecostal's Arminian position,

which regards salvation as a state that can be lost if a once-saved person takes part in sinful behavior. In addition, Paul does not engage with the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are central to Pentecostal practices such as speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecies, among others (what Karen once referred to as “all the fun stuff”). Indeed, he is deeply skeptical of their authenticity. Nevertheless, in his view, there is enough overlap for competition to be unnecessary.

Paul has not been a successful missionary. In all of his years working with the Chortí, he has never converted anyone, a fact that weighs on him. One obstacle has been his Spanish, which is almost impossible to understand. He speaks with all of Texas in his voice and often inserts random English words into a sentence, “*Yo voy a ir* over to the *casa por un momentito*” [I’m going to go over to the house for a minute]. He told me that he once began speaking, in what he understood to be Spanish, with a man from a Chortí village, but after a minute the man stopped him and apologized, explaining that he didn’t speak English.

A few times a year, Paul hosts short-term missionaries from the United States. These groups (whose numbers have skyrocketed around the world in recent years) usually consisting of 15 to 20 participants who spend a week working in Chortí communities, often providing free medical care or conducting “prayer walks.” In April 2009, I spent time with one of these groups as they built a school in a Chortí community, *San Juan*, which had only recently been established on land the Honduran state acquired for CONIMCHH.

The week before the short-term missionaries arrived from Iowa, I tagged along with Paul as he prepared for their visit, mainly purchasing supplies and shuttling them up to the *aldea*. Paul's greatest challenge was transporting 1500 cinderblocks and dozens of bags of cement from Copan Ruinas up to the village. The *municipio*—what Paul calls “City Hall”—donated \$1000 to have a pickup haul the blocks as far as it could carry them. Unfortunately, between the end of the road and the village there was a 100 yard walk, followed by a 50 yard descent into a ravine, followed by a 75 yard climb out of the ravine, and finally a 100 yard walk to the site of what would be the new school. In conversations between Paul and the community leaders, they decided that carrying the 1500 blocks and the bags of cement this distance would be the community's contribution to their new school.

Put simply: this was an unearthly task.

A couple days before the team arrived, when the community's astounding efforts had convinced Paul that they were sufficiently committed to the project, he hired two horses to haul the rest of the blocks.

On the first day of construction, the short-term missionaries were excited and anxious to get to work. The morning's events officially began as they would every morning—with one of the short-term missionaries leading a prayer meeting. All of the missionaries and members of the community attended (Figure 2). Speaking through a translator, the leader of the prayer session emphasized what he understood to be single most important difference between the missionaries' evangelical

Christianity and the indigenous community's Catholicism—that faith alone, belief in Jesus Christ as one's personal savior, is the only road to salvation.

Figure 2:



Morning Prayer Meeting. Source: Photograph by author

After these morning meetings, the community and the missionaries spent almost no time together. The men from the *aldea* returned to working in the fields of a local landowner, anxious to make up for the days of work they lost moving the blocks, and the missionaries concentrated on building the school. As the missionaries worked, their conversations and other activities were largely centered around practical tasks: trying to get the cement mix just right, keeping the block walls level, and putting together makeshift scaffolding as the walls rose higher.

When I spoke with them, both Paul and the short-term missionaries were clear that their goal was to save souls, and not—at least not primarily—to improve the education of the children in the village. From their perspective, the pains, frustrations, and cruelties of this world only last for lifetime. Far more critical is whether the members of the community's souls will spend eternity filled with unknowable, unspeakable joy or tormented in a lake of fire.

They were equally straightforward about their strategy for conversion. Their aim was to create a sense of debt among the community, a feeling that they owed the missionaries something. Paul's continued presence was essential for this effort, as was his agreement that if they built a school, then he could hold a Bible study meeting there. The missionaries' goal was that the community's sense of indebtedness would make them more likely to attend these Bible study classes and more receptive to the message Paul preached there.

In order for this plan to succeed, the Chortí had to recognize the missionaries' efforts as specifically evangelical (and not humanitarian or American or a huge range of other options). In their attempt to articulate their work as evangelical, the missionaries practiced two main activities. First, they narrated events as evangelical, for example, as they did during the morning meetings. Second, the missionaries performed evangelical-ness, as a way of marking themselves. In practice, this meant not complaining about work, smiling and laughing a lot, never cursing, and generally being nice. Indeed, more than just a sign of the missionaries' evangelical-ness, this apparent joy and ease in the world was also intended to lead the unconverted to the

conclusion that the missionaries' happiness emerges from their evangelical-ness and, thereby, to create within the Chortí the desire to convert in order to share in this happiness.

This effort to distinguish the debt as evangelical is simultaneously an attempt to marginalize or eclipse the work of all other actors—both human and nonhuman—without whom the school could not have been built. Among these were the state-funded roads that provide access to the village; the indigenous political movement that acquired the land; the *municipio* that paid to have the blocks transported; the horses who hauled the blocks; to name but a few.

Of course, such efforts to direct debt are not always successful. On the last day of the project, I spotted the village director of education, a charismatic young man who had been working hard to improve education in the *aldea*. He was standing off by himself, and I went over to talk with him, anxious to see what he thought about the new school. After chatting about the school for a few minutes, he surprised me when he asked, “Do you think Hermano Paul would help us raise the funds to build a church here?” [*¿Usted piensa que hermano Pablo nos pueda ayudar a recaudar fondos para construir una iglesia aqui?*]

I was unsure what he meant. Had the missionaries' work been so successful? I had to ask, “An Evangelical church or a Catholic church?”

Seeming a bit confused by just how obvious the answer was, he hesitated for a moment and then said, “Catholic.”

Enacting Pentecostalism

The aim of these vignettes has been to introduce Copán Ruinas, Honduras and pastoral governance, and also to lay the groundwork for my own conception of Christianity. Simply put (and with apologies to Feuerbach), Christianity does not have an essence. That is, as scholars have shown for a wide range of ostensibly unified objects in recent decades (i.e. the state, race, sex, nature), there is no common essence that unifies diverse manifestations of Christianity throughout history and across cultures. The fact that there is no Christian essence does not mean that Christianity does not “really” exist. It does. Nor does it mean that Christianity is an epiphenomenon, mere window dressing that covers over “deeper” social forces such as the economy or politics. It isn’t. Rather, Christianities come into being through multifarious relationships between countless entities—people, discourses, beliefs, objects, temporalities, disciplines, geographies, as well as economies and politics—but none of which ever sits firmly in the driver’s seat or is ever-present.

Before considering Christianity as decentered and heterogeneous in greater detail, I want to clear some ground by focusing on what both many secular scholars and Christians themselves (especially Protestants) take to be the essence of Christianity: belief.⁷ In recent years, “belief” has received a great deal of scholarly attention.⁸ Two elements of this literature are important for dislocating belief from

⁷ Or, if not specifically “belief,” than “meaning” or other forms of “interiority.”

⁸ Within this scholarship on belief, three arguments in particular have shaped my thinking. First, Talal Asad’s discussion of the Protestant genealogy of contemporary conceptions of belief (1993)—more on this argument shortly. Second, Danilyn Rutherford details how belief is not limited to religion alone, but is rather a way for people (both “secular” and “religious”) to “get things done.” In the process she

the center of Christianity. First, scholars have noted that belief is ever-changing and has been practiced in countless ways. As Talal Asad notes “the form, texture, and function” of Christian belief has varied a great deal throughout history (1993: 47).⁹

Christian belief also varies in the contemporary moment. Indeed, during my fieldwork in Copán, it took me months to realize that what *Copanecos* meant by the verb “to believe” (*creer*) was not what I had always assumed it to mean. Through a series of awkward conversations, I eventually figured out that they used that word in the sense of trust, as in trusting in a friend. God’s existence is completely taken for

encourages us to avoid the binary distinctions belief/action (instead, thinking of belief as “practices of belief”) and belief and knowledge (by describing how both Hume and Locke—key figures in establishing our modern understanding of these terms—regarded belief as central to knowledge, not as its opposite) (2008). Third, for Bruno Latour, “belief” has been a way for moderns to denigrate other ways of knowing, especially in relation to their colonized others. “A modern,” he argues, “is someone who believes that others believe” (2010:2). However, while this may be one way “belief” works, it is not the only work it does. Most critically, such a characterization of belief ignores the ways in which groups have used their beliefs to elevate themselves above other communities, as Webb Keane argues, the “emphasis on belief is...one of the ways religious reformers actively defined themselves against the unreformed” (2007: 87). Or, as Winnifred Sullivan documents, within courts of law in the United States “belief” is an essential element in defining acts or groups as “religious,” and, therefore, as eligible for a variety of protections and benefits (including tax exempt status) from the state (2007). Writing earlier than any of these authors, Needham sums the discussion on belief nicely, “the concept of belief is complex, highly ambiguous, and unstable” (1972: 43) and “more than two hundred years of masterly philosophical application have provided no clear and substantial understanding of the notion of belief” (ibid.:61).

⁹ Ruel outlines (with very broad strokes) a history of Christian belief. While this history follows a certain Protestant narrative, and ignores the multiple ways of believing, it is, nevertheless, clarifying. Ruel notes that for the early Christians, belief, in addition to “trust,” came to mean the “confidence or conviction [that] an event (the resurrection and all that it signifies)...had actually taken place. [This] belief is not just open-ended, oriented to what God may or can do: it is rooted firmly in what God has done” (1997: 40). Although developing beforehand in the early baptismal creeds, Ruel points to the Council of Nicaea as a decisive turning point in which an official statement of Church teaching was produced in the form of a declaratory creed. It was in the development of the creeds that “the shared conviction of a scattered community of Christians becomes the confirmed orthodoxy of the conciliar church” (ibid.: 41). These creeds would not only establish who was and who was not a Christian, but also the “true believer from the heretic” (ibid.: 43). Ruel regards the next significant turning point to take place during the Reformation, when Protestants placed an emphasis on how belief was “subjectively appropriated,” the ways in which it transforms an individual’s internal life, as opposed to a shared “Catholic faith,” understood as a declaration one made to the Orthodox teachings of the church. Finally, Ruel turns to the contemporary moment, in which Christian belief is regarded more as an existential experience rather than a body of doctrines. He argues, “Belief...has *almost* become the honest opinion of anyone who declares himself a Christian” (ibid.: 50).

granted. For almost everyone I knew in Copán (with only one exception I could find in my notes), “to believe in God” means to trust that He will be present in their lives, that He has a plan for them, that He will fulfill the promises contained in scripture, and, especially for Pentecostals, that He can be trusted to return (with interest) the tithes they give to Him in church.¹⁰

Further, what we might clumsily call the “objects” of Christian belief (i.e. Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit, or the Church) have also had diverse manifestations. Even within the Gospels, the portrait of Jesus found in *The Gospel of Mark* is not the same as in *The Gospel of John* (or in *The Gospel of Luke* or *The Gospel of Mathew* for that matter).¹¹ In addition, the Holy Spirit of sixth century Christians is not the same as the Holy Spirit of twenty-first century Christians, nor is the Holy Spirit of mainline Protestants in the United States the same as the Holy Spirit of Pentecostals around the world. Not only do these communities understand the Holy Spirit in different ways, but the Holy Spirit acts in different ways in these times and places.

The notion of a distinctive Christian belief is also undermined by the similarities between contemporary forms of Christian belief and other religions’ ways

¹⁰ Within anthropology, scholars have worked in various ways against a conception of “belief” as (or as only) an interior state of mind in which an individual holds that an entity exists without objective evidence of that entity’s existence (Bloch 2002, Coleman and Lindquist 2008, Needham 1972, Ruel 1996, Pouillon 1982). Terry Eagleton has called this “the Yeti view of faith” (2009: 110-111). A common point of reference for many of these scholars working against this idea of belief (first detailed by Bultmann and Weiser 1961) has been the distinct meaning that belief held for the ancient Greeks, Hebrews, and early Christians. For them, “belief” (Greek: *pisteuo*, Hebrew: *’mn*) commonly meant “trust” or “confidence,” especially in business dealings. In relation to the gods or God, this sense of belief indicated trust that God(s) would maintain their side of an ongoing exchange with humans, and not a question of whether God(s) existed.

¹¹ In this way, perhaps Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are best thought of as “boundary objects” (Star and Griesemer 1989) or “axioms of unity” (Tsing 2005).

of believing. For example, liberal Christians in the United States “believe in God” in much the same way that liberal Jews and Muslims “believe in God.” At the same time, liberal Christians believe in a rather different way than Pentecostal Christians in Central America. In addition, Christians are not alone in “believing in” Jesus. Both Muslims and Baha’is also “believe in” him, at least in the sense of regarding him as a supernatural being.

The contemporary anthropological attention to belief has been inspired, in part, by Talal Asad’s argument that the centrality of belief to “religion” is the product of a specific Protestant history in which, “the only legitimate space allowed to Christianity by the post-Enlightenment society, [was] the right to individual *belief*” (1993: 45). Asad describes how, as part of the history of secularization in Europe, Christianity was actively made into a matter of belief as it was removed from the working of other realms (politics, economy, law). Asad’s stake in this argument emerges from a later development, when during the early twentieth century, a vision of Protestantism as essentially a matter of belief became the basis on which scholars established “religion” as a universal category. For Asad, the framing of diverse social processes around the world as “religions” (understood as rooted in individuals’ private beliefs and set off from politics) is an element of modern liberal governance, which often depicts any political formation that combines the supposedly autonomous spheres of “religion” and “politics” as illegitimate.

However—and this is the second point—even within majority Protestant countries, the effort to limit Christianity to individual belief was never entirely

successful. It was (and is) a goal, not an outcome. Asad seems to acknowledge this point, although he doesn't pursue it, when he argues that a vision of religion as focused on belief can be viewed "in large measure in the context of Christian attempts to achieve a coherence in doctrines and practices, rules and regulations, even if that was a state never fully attained" (ibid.: 29). The last clause is critical. While there were powerful efforts to make Christianity exclusively a matter of private individual belief, in practice, Christianity has always remain far more heterogeneous, multi-sited, and entangled with other "spheres." That is, even the prototypical religion, Protestantism, has never been a religion.

But then what is Christianity?

Annemarie Mol's *The Body Multiple* has been an important book for me in thinking through how an essence-less Christianity works in practice. Mol's ethnographic research was carried out in a place quite distinct than my own (a Dutch hospital) and considered a rather different topic (the disease atherosclerosis), but I nevertheless found it helpful for considering how Christianity holds together. Mol follows Judith Butler in shifting away from an essentialist identity to an emphasis on identity as *performance*. Rather than imagining an ever-present, essential element that determines identity—for example, genitals (sex), skin color (race), or sexual orientation (sexuality)—a focus on performance highlights the ways in which the "*pervasive and mundane acts*" people engage in make them who they are (Mol 2002: 37).

Rather than using Butler's term "performance," Mol finds the word "enact" more helpful in describing how atherosclerosis comes into being. Among other things, Mol argues that the word 'enact' conveys the sense that worlds are assembled, put together in practice, but, unlike the word "performance"—which often connotes human performances—it leaves open the specific actors involved in the process (ibid.: 32-33, 41). In Mol's ethnography, the reader comes to see the disease atherosclerosis not as only or essentially a thickening of the artery walls (the perspective of pathology), but rather as an entity that is enacted in concert with a range of knowledges, practices, technologies, materialities, and discourses—and, critically, as enacted in distinct ways in different places.

This is what I understand Christianity to be: an enactment.

As I've just described, within many analyses of Christianity, individuals' beliefs are often understood to be the essential element that defines someone as Christians. In the process, beliefs become similar to thick artery walls, genitals, skin color, or sexual orientation—lone entities taken to anchor reality, to indicate *a priori* what are Forms and what are shadows. As part of this move towards focusing on enactments, I consider beliefs as practices that Christians do (Rutherford 2008), that different Christians do differently—both between and within denominations—and that are not always central to enactments of Christianity at a given moment.

The diverse entities that enact Christianity can be almost anything, material and/or semiotic. Roman roads and well-protected sea-lanes made it possible for early Christian missionaries and texts to move across great distances. As such, they were

and are critical to enactments of Christianity. Plato's Great Chain of Being was adopted into Christian theology, and has been present in countless enactments of Christianity. Webb Kean has shown how the "moral narrative of modernity" has been a key feature in enactments of Protestantism (2007). Kevin Lewis O'Neill documents how the concept and practices of "Christian Citizenship" contribute to the enactment of a form of Neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala City (2009). James Bielo describes the key role of "authenticity" in enactments of the "emergent church" in the United States (2011). In the vignettes above, discourses of corruption, horses, the state, encounters with the Holy Spirit, among many other things, all take part in enacting situated Christianities.

Indeed, with the myriad of actors and practices that make up Pentecostalism and other Christianities, it is remarkable how their apparent unity is maintained. One way an ostensibly unified Christianity is stabilized is through the word "Christianity" itself. In this way, Christianity is similar to Abrams's description of the state as "a unified symbol of an actual disunity" (1988: 79). Just as "the state" (or, in the United States, "the government") makes it possible to imagine a unity between the daily, bureaucratic work of local food inspectors and the secretary of state's diplomatic missions, so too "Christianity" makes it possible to envision a ministry student in a library using the historical-critical method to analyze the Bible, missionaries planting crops in Brazil, and a business professional encountering the Holy Spirit in a suburban megachurch as all aspects of a single, preestablished whole.

Christians are not alone in the work of stabilization through the word “Christianity.” Secular scholars (including anthropologists), states, NGOs, militant atheists, and other religious traditions all participate, even if they have different conceptions of what it means for something to be Christian.

Language is not the only way that Christianity is stabilized. For example, world maps of religion, with large swaths covered in a single color for supposedly “Christian” or “Buddhist” or “Muslim” places, also take part in this effort, making it possible for us to imagine Christianity as an element of populations. Here we are back to an essentialist vision of Christianity. Christianity is once again like prevalent notions of sex, race, or sexuality—something that someone is, rather than a set of actions that are done and done differently at different moments. Christianity in this conception can be quantified and measured, like bushels of corn or head of cattle, and then mapped onto space.

Statistics also take part in the process of stabilization, reporting, for example, 30% of the world is Christian, 35-45% of Hondurans are Protestants, and 25% of Americans are Catholic. However, here again, exactly what makes these people Christian remains unclear. One might assume that they are the beliefs people are assumed to hold or what respondents report to pollsters. However, as we have already considered, belief is not a universal practice, easily comparable across cultures (or even within the same culture), and identity is not singular, but always relational. In addition, such a view of religion depends on a specific, non-confessional perspective. For example, while a Seventh Day Adventist or a Mormon

might consider herself to be a Christian, a Southern Baptist might disagree. In this way, some processes of stabilization can also be processes of secularization, indeed, secular enactments of Christianity.

Rather than imagining Christianity as an already established unity (or perhaps unities—Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox) and then investigating specific examples of Christianity in the world, it is more fruitful for scholars to consider how diverse entities and practices come together and then, through a process of association with certain entities (e.g. the Bible, Jesus, missionaries, a specific narrative of history, the United States, Israel, a “break from the past,” eternal truth) and disassociation from other things (e.g. “the world,” alcohol, rituals, Satan), they enact Christianities.¹² These examples are largely taken from Pentecostal enactments, but (with the possible exceptions of Jesus and Satan) the lists of associations and disassociations could be reversed and still apply to certain enactments of Christianity.

Among other advantages, this perspective allows us to think more ably through how Christianities are partially constructed through entities and imaginaries that are often considered outside its purview, but without imagining their coming together as the mixing of two pure essences, for example, religion and politics or

¹² This focus on diverse Christian enactments and the work done to establish a unitary vision of Christianity does not mean that different Christianities cannot be compared. However, there are two important caveats. First, bringing two (or more) Christianities into comparison is part of a process of producing the category Christianity. Comparison is a matter of creation, of making something, not of uncovering essences that necessarily belong together. Second, often times the most intellectually productive comparative work that can be done with Christianities is to place them in relation to other social formations. Sometimes Christianity can be bad to think with, and instead of “Christianity” or “religion” scholars must consider the ways in which it is better to think of the work of diverse Christianities in relation, for example, to the state or NGOs.

religion and violence. In this way, scholars can analyze a Christian engagement with politics not as a religious/political hybrid, which often invokes a whole series of questions about the “proper” role of “religion” and the “influence” of private belief on public action. Instead we can examine the ways in which enactments of Christianity come together through diverse and disparate elements that are themselves changed in the process of coming into relation. In chapters two, three, and four, we will see how elements often associated with geopolitics and development are transformed as they form part of Pentecostal enactments.

This view also helps us to understand the consequences of Christianity beyond “religion.” Often times when I’ve described my research with Pentecostalism to other anthropologists they respond by saying, “Oh, they’re in my field site too.” Such a vision of Christianity as optional when investigating anthropological topics of study, such as race/ethnicity, the state, or development, ignores the numerous ways in which Christianity often transforms understandings and engagements with these categories even if the people one is working with do not consider themselves to be Christians. For example, while it is commonplace for scholars interested in processes of racialization to examine the role of the state in producing racial categories, they often overlook the ways in which churches are engaged in similar work. In this way, anthropologists often reveal their own secular biases, both viewing religion as optional and finding it more pleasant to spend time with people who either share their secular views or whose religious commitments can be easily translated to secular values (social justice, equality).

It might all seem that we are now far away from Rosa and the people in the vignettes. Rather than distancing us from them, my goal has been to provide a framework for understanding how Pentecostalism is lived and experienced in Copán Ruinas. I maintain that thinking about Pentecostalism as a series of enactments can help us to analyze both the moments when Pentecostalism tightly holds together—acting as a form of governance, transforming subjectivities and mappings—and the instances when it is far looser, an identity that one vaguely defines herself against or a sensibility that is maintained long after someone stops attending a Pentecostal church. Such a perspective also aids us in tracking the dispersed and heterogeneous consequences of Pentecostalism (and, indeed, all forms of Christianity), moving us away from a vision of it as a discrete realm “over there” or as existing within individuals, and instead drawing our attention to its role in shaping diverse worlding processes of all kinds.

CHAPTER 2:
THE SPIRIT-FILLED CONSTITUTION

In this chapter, the role of pastoral governance in Pentecostals' efforts at development and their mobilization in favor of the 2009 coup will not be considered as directly as they will be in the following chapters. Instead, this chapter outlines Pentecostals' conception of agency as dispersed, a vision of the world that will be critical for understanding pastoral governance in later chapters. Unlike what Latour calls the "modern constitution," within which humans are taken to be the sole actors in the world, for the Pentecostal Christians I worked with in Copán Ruinas, there are three possible sources of agency—God, humans/the world, and the Devil—all of which can act alone or (in the case of God and the Devil) in conjunctions with humans/the world. I call this schema for attributing agency the "Spirit-filled constitution."

In what follows, I examine the Spirit-filled constitution in three ways. First, I consider a series of distinctions between the modern and Spirit-filled constitutions, detailing how, unlike Latour's vision of moderns as working to purify the human realm, Pentecostals work to produce mixtures between humans and God in an effort to overcome what they regard as the moral and financial limits of human's fallen nature. For them, these limits are readily apparent in the sinfulness and laziness of their non-Pentecostal neighbors and the corruption and self-interest that characterize human-led institutions, particularly the state and Catholic Church. Nevertheless,

while the Spirit-filled constitution mixes realms that the modern constitution works to keep separate, the ends it works to achieve in this process, the overcoming of these limits, are modernizing. They strive to make a sharp “break with the past” (Meyer 1999), not a return to a “glorious past” or the maintenance of contemporary structures. That is, for pastoral governance, modernization is not a process of purification, but rather a matter of managing hybrids.

Second, I detail the importance of the Spirit-filled constitution in relation to the central figure of Pentecostal authority, the pastoral. I draw on Foucault’s analysis of the early Christian pastoral in order to both describe contemporary pastoral governance and to highlight noteworthy distinctions between them. Most critically, while Foucault describes governance as the management of, “Men in their relationships, bonds, and the complex involvements with things” (2007: 96), such as wealth, territory, climate, and traditions, contemporary pastoral governance involves the management of not only the relationship between “Men” and “things,” but also between “Men” and the Holy Spirit, and even the Holy Spirit and “things” such as the environment or national resources.

In the final section, I detail how the three possible agents in the Spirit-filled constitution become legible to Pentecostals and the ways in which these Christians strive to make the presence of the Holy Spirit apparent to the unconverted. In the process, I also consider how both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals bring into question whether a specific manifestation is truly Him or simply human action.

As with “Spirit-filled development” and “Spirit-filled geopolitics,” which will be considered later in this dissertation, the “Spirit-filled constitution” is my own term. No one in Copán (or anywhere else for that matter) would refer to the Spirit-filled constitution, and yet, I coin the term because I find that it helps to both clarify this cluster of assumptions, practices and habits and to place them in dialogue with Latour’s description of modernity.

Constitutions

Bruno Latour describes modernity as an effort at partition, as a project that seeks to cordon off the worlds of humans, non-humans, and the Divine into distinct spheres. In Latour’s view, moderns work to separate, or, to use his term, purify, each realm from any contamination with the others. Indeed, he argues that the emergence of distinct non-human and Divine realms is the often-unacknowledged counterpoint to the widespread narrative of modernity as the birth (or death) of man (1993: 13). “Man” is understood here to mean a liberated, independent subject “free of located interests with a will and agency that originates from within himself” (Rofel 1999: 10). That is, according to Latour, in order for autonomous “man” to be born, everything else—everything that was not man—had to be swept away into separate spheres. Only then could humanity, especially human’s minds, come to be regarded as ontologically distinct from other entities, eclipsing the agency of all other actors.

Within the terms of this three-way division—what Latour calls the modern constitution—the modern world is one “in which the representation of things [non-humans] through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the

representation of citizens [humans] through the intermediary of the social contract” (Latour 1993: 27). In this process, the third type of entity, God, becomes the “crossed-out God,” descending “into men’s heart of hearts without intervening in any way in their external affairs” (ibid.: 33) or, for that matter, the affairs of nature. Citizens would now determine the heads of state rather than God and the actions of non-human objects would be described through reference to the universal laws of nature, not God’s direct action. Anyone who envisioned God as directly intervening in the ostensibly purified human or natural realms was in violation of the modern constitution, and would be regarded as premodern or antimodern.

Despite moderns’ efforts to produce this “Great Divide,” Latour insists that reality has always remained an unpurified, heterogeneous mash of actors, none of which ever stand alone or propel themselves forward with their own momentum alone. Rather, as Harmon describes, “We ourselves, just like Neanderthals, sparrows, mushrooms, and dirt, have never done anything else than act amidst the bustle of other actants, compressing and resisting them, or giving way beneath their blows” (2009: 58). Humans are not different in kind from these other types of actors. “Man” is inescapably emerged in a world of things in which every thing has the potential to be an actor. That is, within Latour’s ontology, not only humans, but any entity that makes “a difference in the course of some other agent’s action” (Latour 2005: 71) should be considered an actor.

This does not mean that moderns’ efforts at purification have had no consequences. In fact, according to Latour, we can see the ramifications of

purification everywhere. Indeed, the moderns' denial of mixes has not stifled hybrids, but has promoted their proliferation. Latour argues that the contemporary threat to the stability of the modern project, the reason this division now appears under threat, is the deluge of hybrids that modernity itself has made possible. He insists that in the face of processes such as global warming, the depletion of the ozone, and deforestation—all of which have emerged as the result of hybrid “cultural” and “natural” processes—the modern vision of a break between man and nature is no longer tenable (Latour 1993: 49-51). In fact, even the term “hybrid” does not capture Latour's meaning, because it would seem to imply a mix of essentialized “culture” and “nature.” Instead, according to Latour, every actor is a complex mix of essence-less entities.

In this way, Latour argues that moderns participate in two types of practices. First, they engage in the theoretical work of purification, dividing the world between supposedly human actors and things. Second, they take part in everyday practical tasks in which the actions of diverse agents are enmeshed. For Latour, as long as people alternate between these two activities, purification and hybridity, they can continue to consider themselves modern. However, the moment they acknowledge the simultaneous work of both, it becomes clear that we have never been modern (ibid.: 11). Those who are aware of this condition, the condition of not ever having been modern, Latour calls amodern.

Of course, there have always been communities who, to use Schmidt's phrase, “played by different rules,” including evangelical and Pentecostal Christians (2000:

30). Indeed, for the modern constitution-violating Pentecostals that I knew in Copán, God was not the modern, crossed-out God who spoke only to individuals' hearts. Their God is fully engaged in both politics and nature. According to the Spirit-filled constitution, while God speaks to individuals' hearts, He also directly determines the destiny of nations and where and when earthquakes will take place.

At the same time that Pentecostals regard the spaces of God's interventions in the world as far broader than the modern constitution allows, the ways in which God acts in the world are understood to be far less inscrutable. By and large, theirs is not an infinitely remote, precarious God. Rather, God is taken to work in a knowable and predictable manner (Coleman 2000: 40, 149; Gifford 1998: 79). If you know where to look (the Bible) and who to listen to (your pastor), God's actions are rather straightforward and hold for His engagements with actors across a range of scales, from individuals to nations. In addition, the meaning of the Bible is supposed to be clear to anyone who approaches it with an open heart. Most Pentecostals assume that anyone who puts in a bit of effort and does not approach the text from a strongly ideological perspective should be able to grasp its meaning.

Particularly in the Bible study groups I attended, members would grow frustrated that I had not converted. I had read the Bible. I had heard the pastor's sermons. What else was left to understand? I was like a child who they were helping with a basic math problem (although one with eternal consequences), and, somehow, no matter how many times they laid it out for me, I was still not getting it.

The Spirit-filled constitution also breaks with the modern constitution's efforts at purification. While Pentecostals are deeply concerned about purity in the sense of physical and spiritual cleanliness, the mixing of ostensibly separate realms does not necessarily trouble them, so long as the right kind of mixing takes place—God dwelling within humans. However, this mode of organization is also distinct from Latour's amodernity, according to which any thing can be an actor. Within the terms of the Spirit-filled constitution, only three possible essences can act or be mixed together: God, humans/the world, and the Devil. The word "essence" here is intentional. From the Pentecostal perspective, these mixes are true hybrids, combinations of pure essences.

According to the Spirit-filled constitution, any of the three possible sources of agency can and do act alone.¹³ For example, humans, whether as individuals or as collectives, are regularly taken to carry out their affairs without the involvement of God or the Devil. However, humans acting alone are understood to sin and their collective actions are taken to inevitably lead to corruption, because humans (since Eden) are understood to be part of the fallen world, beings of the flesh (*carne*) who are unable not to sin.¹⁴ This truth becomes evident to Pentecostals both through the

¹³ However, from an ethnographic perspective, none of these agents can ever be seen to act alone. First, humans only ever act in concert with other entities. As Donna Haraway argues, "To be one is always to *become with many*" (2008: 4)." Second, if God or the Devil are indeed acting, an ethnographer can only ever apprehend such action as taking place with and through some other entity, such as humans. Perceiving invisible entities like the Devil and the Holy Spirit only ever take place through mediators, just as distant solar systems or microscopic particles are only ever perceptible to humans through mediators.

¹⁴ Indeed, it is probably not completely accurate to write that human can act alone, because Pentecostals divide individual humans into three parts: soul (*alma*), spirit (*espíritu*), and flesh (*carne*). In this way, for Pentecostals, human becoming is always a "*becoming with many*" (ibid.).

everyday sinful behaviors of their unsaved neighbors and in the corruption and self-interest within the institutions that they describe as human-led: the Catholic Church, the state, and secular NGOs.

Humans can also act in concert with the Devil or demons as these beings enter into individuals, groups, or geographic spaces and begin to guide peoples' behaviors. The presence of these entities is taken to lead to much bolder human rebellion against the will of God than the flesh alone. In my own experiences, I never heard any Pentecostals definitely assert that the Devil or demons were at work inside of a specific local person. Although, for example, they would probably get the sense that someone passed out on the sidewalk with a bottle of liquor in his hand (something that often happened on weekends) was struggling against more than the typical urges of the flesh. In addition, it was often suggested that the Devil or his demons were responsible when especially dedicated members of the congregation left the church or when pastors acted in sinful ways (for example, committing adultery). These individuals were said to be so pure that demonic forces made sure to target them. Many Pentecostals also related stories to me of times when demons had attacked them. For example, Karen once told me that a demon, who appeared as a man with deep, inhumanly black skin, began to strangle her one night while she was in bed. The attack only stopped when she called out, "The name of Jesus!" (*El nombre de Jesús!*), and the demon disappeared.

In contrast, Pentecostals were far more certain in their accusations that the Devil and his hoard of demons existed within either communities or, as will be

considered in Chapters 3 and 4, political leaders. These forces of darkness were regularly said to be present among the Maya Chortí. Pentecostals insist that the spirits and gods that the Chortí claim to engage with in their indigenous religious practices are not the products of human's imaginations. However, Pentecostals also do not take them to be gods and spirits, but, instead, demons (Meyer 1999).¹⁵ During sermons and in my conversations with Pentecostals, the presence of these demons was said to be part of the reason that the Chortí faced such desperate poverty.

In addition, Copán itself was taken to have a large population of demons, in part because the Chortí were said to have drawn them into the region, but also because the Chortí's ancestors, the Maya who built the ancient city of Copán, had long ago attracted the demons into the region through their prayers and rituals, especially human sacrifices. According to many Pentecostals, these demons make people lazy and backward thinking, and, therefore, they are in part responsible for the fact that Copán's has not enjoyed greater economic prosperity.

The ideal hybrid form that Pentecostals seek is a mix between humans and God. Indeed, they work to open their hearts to Him, so that He can guide their actions in accordance with His will, something that humans alone, because of their fallen nature, can never accomplish. Once God lives inside a person, cultivating His presence should be easier because He now guides one's behavior. Nevertheless, even with God's presence within someone's heart, the human element of the mix remain

¹⁵ This Pentecostal move to assert the reality of the gods and spirits but shift them to another realm within their constitution parallels secular moderns' process of organizing in which gods and spirits are taken to be real, but are relocated to the human realm where they are described as the products of (displaced) human consciousness.

fallen and forever susceptible to “the world.” Hence, Pentecostals must remain ever vigilant of the entities they associate themselves with.

In order to understand how the presence of the Holy Spirit is taken to transform individuals and groups, it is critical to grasp Pentecostals’ own conception of what takes place in this process. For them, the words and images one encounters, whether from the Bible, a pastor, a magazine, or a popular movie, are simultaneously signifiers and a quasi-substance. Someone can listen to the words of a pastor or read the Bible, grasp their meaning, and then apply that knowledge to their everyday conduct, management of their families or business, and so on. However, at the same moment, as someone reads the Bible and listens to a pastor, he or she is being filled with His presence. Indeed, Pentecostals often compare this process to eating. As one pastor said during a sermon, you can either eat His food (e.g. the Bible, sermons) and be spiritually healthy or you can eat the food of “the world” (e.g. popular movies or music) and end up with a huge (spiritual) gut (*una panza muy grande*). In this way, individuals are not only transformed through the Bible or a sermon’s message or meaning. Rather, simply by reading or listening to the words, the Holy Spirit is entering into the hearts of the saved. Through this process, people are understood to be transformed, not only “spiritually,” but also their physical bodies, manner of speaking, and desires.

Such a conception of what takes place during services helped me to finally understand why no one would talk about the sermons afterwards. Indeed, whether on a car trip back from *Jerusalén*, a walk back to our neighborhood, or late at night

during a retreat, no one ever seemed to want to talk about the message of the sermons. For me, such conversations were the whole point: to talk through the ideas presented, to consider their relevance for my life and circumstances, and to obtain other perspectives in order to better understand the message. However, from their conception of the sermon, the event had already taken place, talking about it would not make a difference. It would be like talking about a meal in order to improve digestion.

In relation to the third realm of the modern constitution, nature, Divine and human actions are taken to be separate from the laws of nature. God may have created these laws, but He is not longer engaged in maintaining them. They run on their own, like clockwork. Meanwhile, humans can work to understand these laws, but they cannot change them. In contrast, within the Spirit-filled constitution, natural phenomena are often the direct result of human, the Devil, or God's actions. One way this can take place is as a sign. That is, a natural phenomenon can be a sign of God's desires. Towards the end of my fieldwork an especially hard rain led the Copán River to overflow, almost completely covering the grounds of *Jerusalén* Church. The next Sunday, the pastor preached a sermon that explained how the flooding was a sign from God that too many members of the congregations were gossiping.

More than signs, powerful natural phenomenon is often regarded as a consequence of human action. For example, when a massive earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, most Pentecostals I knew attributed it to Haitian Vodou practices, which they

regard as active engagement with demons. However, a relationship with God, rather than the Devil or demons, is taken to have beneficial natural consequences. If a community or even large portions of a community follows His will, it is taken to be rewarded with abundant harvests and natural resources. One afternoon I was visiting a Pentecostal informant in his house and a news story came on the T.V. about the enormous oil reserves recently discovered off the coast of Brazil. When the program went to commercial, he turned to me and explained that the oil was a gift from God, a reward for Brazil's rapidly growing Pentecostal population.

This section has outlined the terms of the Spirit-filled constitution and the processes through which I observed Pentecostal Christians dividing up the world and ascribing agency during my fieldwork. With these basic tenets established, the remainder of the chapter will examine the role of this Spirit-filled constitution in the central figure of Pentecostal authority, the pastoral, and then the ways in which these Christians produce knowledge about the three possible sources of agency: God, humans, and the Devil.

The Pastoral

In considering the Pentecostal pastoral, it is critical not to imagine this form of authority as fitting into a preestablished category of "religious authority." Rather, the pastoral must be thought of in its own terms, both because, much like the authority of the state, pastoral authority extends beyond the theoretical space allotted to it, and also because, even in its own terms, it reaches far beyond the realm of "religion."

Indeed, an ability to transform church members' everyday actions and thoughts is regarded as essential if pastors are to succeed in their charge of providing their flock access to heaven.

Pastors' capacity to affect these changes within their flocks and to guide them to eternal happiness is taken to be the result of pastors' uniquely close relationship with God. Indeed, the distance between pastors' level of spiritual advancement and that of their congregations is not one of degree. A gulf is understood to exist between a pastor and his flock that can never be overcome. Pastors are taken to be special people who God calls to fulfill this vocation and who He prepares from birth to carry out their responsibilities.

Shortly after I returned from fieldwork, I read *Security, Territory, Population*, a collection of Foucault's lectures from the *Collège de France*. As I made my way through Foucault's analysis of the early Christian pastoral in that volume, I was shocked by how well his descriptions matched my impressions of Pentecostal pastors' authority in Copán. Indeed, the margins of my copy are covered with comments like, "That could be coming out of Pastor Cardenas's mouth!" and "Exactly like pastors in Copán!" Of course, in the end, a late twentieth century social theorist's analysis of the early Christian pastoral does not "exactly" describe the everyday practices of twenty-first century Pentecostal pastors. Therefore, I will use aspects of Foucault's analysis to frame my discussion of the Pentecostal pastoral, but each time I will quickly move on to describe how these enduring notions of the pastoral work in practice among Pentecostals in Copán today.

In the churches I attended in Copán, the relationship between a shepherd (*pastor*)¹⁶ and his flock (*rebaño*) is the central figure for describing the proper relationship between a pastor and his congregation. One critical element of this relationship, which Foucault notes, is that the shepherd, “Does everything for the totality of the flock, but he does everything also for each sheep of the flock” (ibid: 128). In terms of guiding the flock as a whole, pastors in Copán (in dialogue with the Holy Spirit) determine, for example, the specific “spiritual sustenance” the congregation needs to receive through his preaching, when and how the congregation should invest money, or when the congregation should fast or increase the time they spend reading the Bible. Guiding the congregation can also involve a pastor castigating his flock for a variety of reason: not praying enough outside the church, not tithing enough, or not attending church events.

The flock is not only a scale for pastoral intervention, but is also often the scale of the consequences for adherence or rebellion from the pastor’s instructions. That is, the congregation is understood to be a single body that in part advances or diminishes as a unit. In this way, the actions or inactions of a few members can have significant consequences for the entire flock. For example, a small group within the church who gossips can lead to the intensity of Holy Spirit’s presence decreasing in the church.

In relation to guiding individual sheep, the pastoral has a separate set of responsibilities. The pastor, just as with a shepherd, must protect each sheep from

¹⁶ Indeed, note that in Spanish “shepherd” and “pastor” are the same word: *pastor*.

harm. While the shepherd protects his sheep from wolves, the pastor must protect his congregants from the devil and his minions as well as their own fleshly desires. This protection has a number of forms, from building up a member's spiritual defenses to expelling a demon from a congregant's body or home. In addition, any significant life decisions that a member of the congregation makes, whether related to the family or finances, should be discussed first with the pastor.

The pastor also serves a consular, providing advice to the members of his flock. If a congregant has a personal problem—financial troubles, alcoholism, domestic abuse—he or she would be expected to come to the pastor for advice.¹⁷ Because of the sensitive nature of these discussions, I was never present at one. However, in talking with both pastors and members of the congregations, I learned that a pastor's first advice would often be prayer, which he would immediately do along with the church member. Then, depending on the problem, he would offer different solutions. For financial problems, he would most likely suggest giving more money to the church. This strategy would be in accordance with the “law of the harvest” (*la ley de la cosecha*), which will be considered in detail in the next chapter, but, briefly, this law holds the more money someone gives to the church the more money God will give back. For alcoholism, the pastor would recommend prayer, reading the Bible, and possibly exorcism to banish a demon that is most likely the root cause of the problem. In a case of domestic abuse (which, in every instance I

¹⁷ In the case of *Jerusalém*, if a woman has a problem she would like to discuss with the pastor, her husband or, if she is not married, her father, must be present during the conversation.

heard about, was always men abusing women), the pastor would almost never recommend that a wife leave her husband. Pastors regard the family as too sacred to break up, even if someone's husband is not a Christian. Therefore, if a woman's husband is a Christian, the pastor would probably have a conversation and pray with him in an attempt to have God touch his heart, thereby changing his behavior. If her husband is not a Christian, the pastor would probably advise that the wife pray for God to transform her husband's heart and for her to make efforts at converting him.

In addition to these meetings, which church members would most likely initiate, the pastor is also responsible for watching over each of his sheep and intervening when necessary. This can lead to all manner of specific directives: more prayer, more time reading the Bible or with one's family, a change in diet, or new responsibilities in the church. The pastor must also monitor each congregant for signs of misbehavior, most often poor language, immodest dress, or arguing with other Christians. If he spots such actions, he will take steps correct them, often with a simple conversation. Also, if a member of the flock has not attended services for a few weeks, the pastor would also probably visit the congregant's home to find out the reason for the absence and encourage him or her to return to church. Overall, in my own conversations with church members, they did not resent these interventions or find them intrusive, but rather expressed appreciation for the times their pastor had warned them about their behavior, explaining that it was a relief to know that someone was watching over them.

As Foucault also notes, the pastoral is based on “pure obedience” (ibid.: 174); it is “a relationship of the submission of one individual to another” (ibid.: 175). It would be difficult to overstate how central this notion is within Pentecostal churches. One simply cannot be a good Christian without obeying the pastor. Indeed, to disobey the pastor is taken to be disobeying God. Pastors expect obedience without question, and they often invoke a discourse of disobedience to explain a wide range of problems in their churches. I have heard pastors attribute everything from uneven tile on a church’s floor to a lack of prophecies during services to disobedience. One Sunday, as is quite common, the pastor at *Asembleas de Dios* broke the flow of his sermon to illicit a response from his congregation with the simple phrase, “Amen *hermanos?*” When the congregation’s response came back less energetic than he desired, the pastor slammed his hand down on the pulpit and shouted, “How can you expect to obey Him if you can’t obey me!”

By and large, church members take this obedience to their pastor quite seriously. Once, when I was visiting a member of *Jerusalén* at his home, we were discussing the section of the Bible in which God orders Abraham to kill his son Isaac. As we talked about Abraham’s remarkable acceptance of God’s command, he placed his hand on my shoulder and told me that Christians had to obey their pastors in exactly this way, without question.

At the same time, while obedience is central to pastoral authority, and a member of the congregation should consult the pastor about any major decision in his or her life, there is also a sense that a church member should not trouble the pastor

with minor problems. Indeed, pastors will often grow impatient if congregants rely on them too much, for example, calling him about mundane daily decisions. Pastors do not preach this aspect of the pastoral from the pulpit or discuss it in Sunday school classes. Instead, the difference between a problem that should be brought to him and one that should not is calibrated through personal exchanges between the pastor and his flock. And yet, the line between a minor and major decision can be difficult to navigate, because, at times, pastors will instruct congregants to consult with them about aspects of their life that could easily be understood as minor. For example, the pastor at *Jerusalén* often told the members of his church that they should not gossip, and, if they had a question about whether a bit of information was gossip, they should call and ask him.

As Foucault notes, the ultimate goal of pastoral authority is to lead the flock to eternal salvation (ibid: 126). In one sense, the congregation's acceptance of pastoral authority is a matter of sacrifice and self-control while on earth in order to receive eternal rewards in heaven: a practice of delayed gratification whereby a Christian forfeits immediate pleasures in pursuit of a long-term goal. However, because the prosperity gospel has so influenced contemporary Pentecostal, there is also the sense that every sacrifice one makes for God is quickly replaced by an improved version of what was sacrificed. A Christian sacrifices her worldly friends, but immediately gains a community of Christians friends. A Christian sacrifices drinking alcohol, but gains the "spiritual wine" that the Holy Spirit provides during services. A Christian sacrifices ten percent of his salary every month to the church (*diezmos*), but God

readily multiplies that money and returns it to him. Hence, at the same time these are practices of delayed gratification, they are also practices of instant gratification.

The system of reciprocity that is often said to compensate both the pastor and the congregation for the contributions each makes to the other is also articulated through reference to the figure of the shepherd and his flock. Just as a shepherd receives his livelihood from his flock in the form of the sheep's milk and wool, and the sheep receive guidance to safe and fertile pastures, so too, within Pentecostal churches, the pastor is understood to sustain himself and his family from the tithes (*diezmos*) that the human flock provides him in return for guiding them to a more secure and prosperous life in this world and then next.

At the same time, the pastor's debt to the congregation is often downplayed, and, instead, the pastor performs (both rhetorically and through other practices) separation from the flock. In this description, the pastor's close relationship with God motivates his actions on behalf of the congregation. That is, the pastor is said to follow God's will in carrying out his responsibilities in exchange for the salvation Jesus provided through his death and resurrection.

This separation from the congregation is enacted in a number of ways. First, knowledge can only flow one way, from the pastor to the flock. This norm holds except in reference to the most pedestrian matters: where to buy the best cake for a celebration, which carpenter will offer the best deal on the new addition to the church, where the church could rent a bus for an outing. Otherwise, pastors inform congregations, they do not receive information from them. Indeed, almost every time

I ever heard a member of the congregation attempt to tell a pastor about a more significant matter—an understanding of a Biblical verse or details of a significant world event—the pastor was quick to either correct that person or explain why the information was incomplete.¹⁸

Second, the separation of pastors from their congregations is also enacted through the distance they maintain during services. Indeed, pastors are often removed from the events of the service until they begin to preach. While not the case at *Jerusalén*, where the pastor would sing along with the congregation during the period of *alavanza* (praise), at the other two churches, the pastors would be explicitly removed from the services until he strode up to the podium. These pastors would often sit off to one side of the stage as the congregation sang, reading the Bible or preparing their sermons, rarely looking up to see take note of events. Even during the heights of intensity of praise before a sermon, pastors might be found fiddling with a speaker or reattaching a poster that had come unstuck from a wall.

In addition to his separation from his flock, the pastor also performs his separation through his relationship to the Copán community at large. Pentecostal

¹⁸ In fact, in a way that does not cohere as closely with the figure of the shepherd and his flock, part of the pastor's authority derives from a perception of him as set apart from both his flock and the community at large. As a counter example, in the *Book of Jerry Falwell*, Harding excerpts a section from Falwell's (ghostwritten) autobiography in which he describes how Lewis, an African-American man who regularly shined the pastor's shoes, transformed Falwell's views on segregation when he asked why he was not able to join his church. In Lewis's voice, Falwell claims to have heard, "God's still small voice," which brings him on "a new journey towards higher moral ground" (2000: 27). This could never happen in a conversation between a Pentecostal pastor and a member of his congregation (much less with someone who was not even a member of his congregation). Pentecostal pastors in Copán do not hear the voice of God through other people (or, at least people who are less spiritually advanced), but rather from God Himself or the Bible.

pastors rarely interact with people outside of their congregations, and, indeed, they boast about this distance from “the world.” This stands in contrast to the non-Pentecostal, Evangelical pastors in Copán, who could often be seen in the *parque central*, chatting and laughing with *Copanecos*. For me, these non-Pentecostal, evangelical pastors were much more pleasant to talk with, generally being quite warm and welcoming. The Pentecostal pastors are almost exactly the opposite, stern and distant, always slightly distrusting or uninterested. Rather than making you feel at ease, they put you on guard. Part of this attitude could be accounted for by the fact that none of the Pentecostal Pastors I worked with were from Copán. All of them grew up in larger cities, and considered *Copanecos* to be a bit backwards and unsophisticated. Indeed, for all of them working in Copán was a considerable sacrifice.

Knowing the Spirit

This final section details various ways in which the presence of the Holy Spirit becomes known to Pentecostals in Copán through mediators (oftentimes people) and how Pentecostals strive to reveal His presence to non-Pentecostals. These modes of perceiving the Holy Spirit rely on both the senses of sight and hearing. Indeed, the privileged place that evangelicals and Pentecostals continue to give to hearing as a means of establishing truth is one of the reasons that Schmidt argues they “played by different rules” than moderns.

In addition, I suggest the similarity between non-Pentecostals criticism of Pentecostals’ identification of the Holy Spirit’s presence and the criticisms

Pentecostals themselves make about their own members. I divide this investigation into three parts. First, I consider how His presence is identified within Pentecostal churches. Second, I examine Pentecostals efforts to show His presence to the unconverted. Finally, I describe how some of these dynamics played out in soccer tournament between four Pentecostal churches.

Seeing the Spirit in Pentecostal Churches

The Holy Spirit becomes legible within Pentecostal churches in a variety of spectacular ways, and I witnessed a number of these during my fieldwork—speaking in tongues, prophecies (*profecias*) (in which God speaks through members of the congregation), laying on of hands (wherein the power of the Holy Spirit shoots from a pastor’s hand as he places it on someone’s head, usually causing the person he touches to pass out).¹⁹ However, the most common way that the Holy Spirit’s presence becomes perceptible is far less dramatic: a congregant’s hand shooting up into the air when she or he feels His presence.

Another way that the presence of the Holy Spirit becomes perceptible within Pentecostal churches is the altar call, which takes place at the end of most services. During this period, the pastor, often energized from the sermon he has just preached,

¹⁹ Another dramatic act that Pentecostals told me about, but which I never saw myself was healing. I heard stories of how people were healed from dysentery and myopia through God’s power. There were also many stories that circuted about acquaintances and friends of friends being cured of far more serious conditions, including cancer and AIDS.

invites those who experiencing His presence in a particularly strong way up to the altar (a space that is understood to be infused with the power of the Holy Spirit). Once there, the Holy Spirit will either enter a person's heart for the first time (the process of "conversion" or "being born-again") or, because Pentecostals hold that salvation can be lost, reenter someone's heart as she recommits to Him.

Those who approach the altar are almost always weeping. The pastor, his wife, or a church leader will embrace them, slowly swaying back and forth as they whisper affirmations of God's love and His ability to overcome any obstacle into their ears. Once the weeping has subsided, their hugs will cease, and the pastor will approach each of them, lay his hand on their heads—providing them with an extra *porción* (portion) of His power—and they will fall back into the arms of church leaders.

These are among the most powerful moments in Pentecostal services, and many congregants, even prominent members, will occasionally approach the altar to recommit themselves to God. However, seeing an individual go through this experience is not necessarily evidence that the Holy Spirit is alive within that person. Indeed, there is the possibility that while it appears He is acting, it may in fact be the individual's own emotions—part of this world—that are driving this behavior. That is, perhaps the music or the sermon have stoked the emotions of one or more of those who approach the altar, and, while such people may legitimately believe that they are encountering Him, they are in fact experiencing their own worldly feelings. One indication that someone's emotions, rather than the Holy Spirit, are drawing him to

the altar is if he goes up to the altar too frequently. A number of pastors and church leaders told me that those who came up to recommit themselves every week or every other week often ended up leaving the church after a few months, frustrated that their lives had not changed.

As Pentecostals become increasingly filled the Holy Spirit, a whole series of physical transformations are expected to take place, and anyone, Pentecostal or not, are expected to be able to recognize these changes. As His presence increases within them, congregants will become more attractive; their health will improve (for example, acne should disappear); posture and poise will straighten; and an increase in energy should be apparent. Indeed, if these transformations do not take place it may serve as evidence that someone's emotions, rather than the Holy Spirit, are at work.

One Sunday, the *Jersusalén* pastor reiterated this point during his sermon. He first had a member of the congregation read aloud 2 Kings 4: 8-10, in which the prophet Elisha arrives in the town of Shunem, and a wealthy woman, just by looking at him, recognizes that he is "a man of God." The pastor then told a story set in his native El Salvador during that country's Civil War, which he used to illustrate the possibility of not only identifying "a man of God," but also those who were not "people of God." He said that an army platoon had gone to a small village where it had been reported that Communists were meeting. When the soldiers arrived, a number of villagers were walking into a building. The platoon leader instructed them to stop, and he asked what they were doing. They replied that they were Pentecostals on their way to church. Upon hearing this, the platoon leader immediately declared

that they were all Communists. One of the other soldiers asked the platoon leader how he could be sure. He answered simply, “Christians don’t walk like that” (*Los cristianos no caminan así*). That is, their bodily comportment had not corresponded with the erect back and confident stride that the platoon leader associated with the Spirit’s presence, so he felt certain that they were lying about what they planned to do in the building.

The Spirit’s presence within members of the congregation is also said to be visible through their engagement with the sermon. Even though the Spirit is present throughout most of the service, during the sermon members of the congregation are not singing and dancing, so it is less likely that their emotions would be stirred. Rather, their engagement would more likely come directly from the Holy Spirit, whose presence within individuals is said to be attracted to Itself as It emerges through the words of the pastor. Therefore, to appear bored during a sermon reflects poorly on a congregant’s level of spiritual advancement. Drooping in your seat, idly flipping through the Bible, or staring out through a window, might all indicate a lack of His presence within you.

More than any of the other churches I attended, there was the most pressure to be engaged in the sermon at *Jerusalén*, and, indeed, almost everyone was always highly attentive, sitting up in their chairs and focused on the pulpit. The pastor even once bragged that he and his wife had heard a ten-hour sermon, and enjoyed every minute of it. He added that for some people this might be boring, but not for him and his wife, because they enjoyed being in His presence. At the time, this seemed to be

both a declaration of his advanced spiritual accomplishments and a critique of the congregation, who, he seemed to imply, would be bored by a ten-hour sermon.

Months later, I thought back to this statement when we were watching a video one evening at *Jerusalén* of Marvin Byers, the head pastor of the entire church network of which *Jerusalén* is a part, describing in incredible detail every aspect of how music should be orchestrated in church. He explained in what, for me, were painfully specific terms about how each instrument should be played and how the sound system should be set up. Such videos, which I imagine were originally intended for church leaders, particularly those responsible for the music, were not common at *Jerusalén*, and I never saw anything of that sort at other Pentecostal churches. Showing the video seems to have been part of the pastor's attempts to more directly expose the congregation to Marvin Byers. In any case, this video marked the limit of the congregation's powers of attention. Many congregants, even some of the church leaders, were slouched in their chairs and holding their heads up with their hands as Byers criticized playing drums in church and instructed us on acceptable tempos for the music.

After the video ended and the *Jerusalén* pastor made a few summary comments, we all milled about the church for a while. I stood next to two of the church leaders, but we weren't saying much. We were slowly decompressing, unsure of how to act. I felt like a lead vest was draped over my shoulders. Of course, we could never say that it had been boring, and I doubt that thought ever even crossed the

two leaders' mind. To say that the video was boring would be to question the pastor's authority or admit that the Spirit was not inside of us.

Suddenly, Francisco, another church member, rushed up to us. Francisco was middle-aged and handsome, but, unlike almost all of the other men his age in the church, the pastor had never promoted him to a leadership role. I was never sure why that was the case, but this lack of a leadership position did make him stand out. Francisco had a huge smile on his face, and he seemed excited. His hands darted all around his body as he gushed about how much of a blessing (*una bendición*) the video had been. The three of us were all taken back a bit, and the two leaders flashed a quick, uncertain look each other. None of us seemed to know how to respond to him. He was trying too hard.

In addition to God, Pentecostals also insist that miraculous events within churches can have another non-human source, the Devil, but such an insinuation would only be about a church that was not one's own. During interviews, as Biblical proof of the Devil's abilities to act in similar ways to God, a number of church members gave me the example of Aaron and Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh (Exodus 7: 8-13). During this encounter, God turned Aaron's staff into a snake. Shortly thereafter, the Pharaoh's magician accomplished the same feat, turning his own staff into a snake. As with all forms of magic, the Pentecostals who told me this story understood such an act to be the work of the Devil. However, while at first these transformations might appear equal, God's snake proved more powerful when it swallowed the magician's snake.

In this way, Pentecostals sometimes implied that the ostensible gifts of the Holy Spirit at other churches were in fact “gifts from the Devil”—similar in appearance and sound, but from a completely different source. In my experience, such accusations about other churches were vague and never explicitly directed at a single church. For example, at *Jerusalén* the pastor regularly asserted that the Devil worked through music with drums. All the other Pentecostal churches in Copán used drums in their music, but the pastor never said that the Devil was present in any specific church. And, in fact, he was willing to attend these churches on certain occasions and even organize events with them.

Inside/Outside

During my fieldwork, I rarely drank alcohol in public because I was concerned with what the Pentecostals I worked with would think if they saw me. However, at home or at non-Pentecostal friends' houses I would occasionally have a beer or two. One Saturday night over at my friend David's house, a few empty beer bottles sitting between us on the table, I summoned the courage to ask him what he thought of my research. David is not a Pentecostal. In fact, he is the only person I know in Copán who calls himself an atheist, something even his closest friends find beyond the pale and quite possibly dangerous. He is someone I've always admired and whose approval I've always sought, in part because of his sharp and thoughtful critiques of foreign development workers and wealthy locals alike.

Thinking back, in asking David about my research, I wanted him to not only tell me that he thought my research was worthwhile, but, in so doing, to tell me that I was different than all the other foreigners who came to Copán to “do something” for the community, but who, in the end, only ended up “doing something” for themselves. I wanted David to tell me that I was different than them (the tourists, the archaeologists, the development workers, and the hotel owners), that I was doing important work for Copán.

He did not oblige. Instead, he told me that there was no point in studying Pentecostals. He explained that the only thing that was different about them was that they said they were different, but, in the end, they acted like everyone else—lying, cheating, stealing, and having affairs. He added that they only acted differently when they were in church and trying to impress the pastor. In short, he said they were hypocrites. As for speaking in tongues and passing out when the pastor touched them, he said that was just the power of suggestion, along with the fact that their emotions were all worked up because of the music and the dancing.

Other non-Pentecostals often echoed David’s general attitude about Pentecostals. Their main criticism being that Pentecostals acted one way in church and a completely different way outside of church. Of course, many Pentecostals would agree with this assessment, especially if the people in question attended a different church. Again, they might even make similar comment about someone from their own congregation, but, in this case, they would probably argue that, rather than hypocrisy (although such an assessment would not be out of the question) the reason

for the difference in certain Pentecostals' behavior inside and outside of church was that they were not truly encountering the Holy Spirit in church. They might also suggest that these members whose behavior changed so dramatically inside and outside of church were only attending church for the things of this world that it offered, friends, entertainment, music, the possibility of finding a boyfriend/girlfriend.²⁰

For Pentecostal pastors and their congregations, this difference between how members act inside and outside of church is a significant problem. Of course, in part this concern emerges from worries about the state of members' souls. However, perhaps more importantly, this presents a problem because Pentecostals' behavior outside of church—their comportment, their morality, their happiness, their success with money—is supposed to draw people into the church. Indeed, pastors often preach that showing the unconverted the difference that conversion makes in one's life is the most effective form of evangelization. That is, Pentecostals are expected to behave in such a way that the unconverted will see the Holy Spirit at work within them, see that something is different about them, and begin to desire that the same transformation take place within their own lives.

As a result, many Pentecostals express a desire for non-Pentecostals to see them so that they might witness to the unsaved through their Spirit-filled everyday actions. However, on the other hand, Pentecostal in Copán also often told me about

²⁰ Both non-Pentecostals and Pentecostals from other churches often make this final criticism about *La Cosecha* Church, which has a large population of young people.

their frustrations that everyone in town was always watching and judging them, just waiting for them to make a mistake that would further confirm their view of Pentecostals as hypocrites.

Between Pentecostal Churches

Although events in which a number of Pentecostal churches came together were rare, I will detail one now—a *fútbol* tournament between four churches—because I think it provides a sense of both the unity and division between the Pentecostal churches, often accompanied by a sense that the foundation of other churches might not be God, but rather humans or even the Devil. The tournament was held in mid-February on the soccer field at *Jerusalén* Church, and two of the other churches where I regularly spent time, *Asembleas de Dios* and *La Cosecha*, also participated. A fourth Pentecostal church, *Manos de Jesus* (Hands of Jesus) also took part.

It was a beautiful day as I walked over to *Jerusalén*. The sun was shining, but it wasn't too hot. Despite the nice weather, I felt nervous about the tournament. In general, members of one church always seemed to be displeased when I would mention spending time at another church. Indeed, I usually tried to avoid discussing other churches all together when I was with a congregation. However, at the tournament, all of these separate worlds would come together. I was anxious that members of one church might feel resentful if they saw me chatting and laughing with members of another church. What would the members of *La Cosecha* think if I was taking pictures with members of *Jerusalén*, whose strict rules had led a pastor to

say that they were “like the Taliban” (*tipo Taliban*) during an interview. Or, what would the members of *Jerusalén* think if I was eating with a congregation that played drums? “What,” I imagined them thinking, “was inside of Bill that attracted him to that church?”

Arriving at the church grounds, I immediately saw scores of people I knew, and I began strolling around and chatting with them. If I hadn’t been to someone’s church in a week or two, she or he would inevitably begin the conversation by asking why they hadn’t seen me in church. This wasn’t a playful question. They wanted a serious answer, and having been at another church the past couple Sunday was not a sufficient answer. After a while, I headed over to the field to watch the first game: *La Cosecha* against *Jerusalén*.

Walking along the length of the field, where plastic lawn chairs had been set up, I waved and smiled as I saw familiar faces. About halfway down, a waving hand caught my eye at the far end of the field. Focusing my eyes, I saw Rosa, a member of *Asembleas de Dios*, whom I had known since my earliest days in Copán, calling me over. I picked up my pace, trotting over to where she was sitting with her family. I already knew her two children and mother-in-law, but I had never met her husband, Ramón, who was sitting on the grass a bit further up the field. After I greeted everyone, Rosa gestured towards an empty seat and suggested that I sit with them.

On the field, *La Cosecha*’s large number of young people—a population every church hoped to bring in—was proving to be a significant advantage. In fact, possibly in an effort to counteract this advantage, there were a couple of younger

players on the *Jerusalén* team who I had never seen in church. Nevertheless, *La Cosecha*, in their sharp red and white matching uniforms, was running circles around the older *Jerusalén* team, who were dressed in a mash of black shorts and white T-shirts.

Rose lightly tapped me on the arm to get my attention. Aware that I had spent some time at *Jerusalén*, she asked me in a whisper, while pointing down at the ground, “What do you think of this church?”²¹

Unsure of where she was headed and nervous about offending anyone, I responded with a non-committal, “It’s nice.”

Not missing a beat, Rose quickly offered her own opinion, “One thing I really like about the church is that they do things with the whole family. I really like that. But I don’t like the rules they make up, like with guns. They say that Christians should have guns, but my husband doesn’t have a gun. None of the other churches say that you should have a gun.” Indeed, this was a teaching at *Jerusalén* that non-members often disapprovingly commented on.

Just then, we heard an uproar down at the other end of the field. Word spread down to us that one of the referees, a member of *Jerusalén*, had made a questionable call that favored his own team. *La Cosecha* players and fans were accusing him of being biased. There were calls for a new referee, someone who wasn’t on either the *La Coshecha* or *Jerusalén* team. Some people pointed down at Rose’s husband

²¹ This conversation, along with the other statement in this section, took place in Spanish, but, since I did not record the conversations, these are not actual quotes. The dialogue comes from my field notes, which I wrote the next day.

Ramón, who was still sitting by himself on the grass. He resisted for a minute, but then, shaking his head and letting out a big sigh, he stood up to stand in as the referee.

“He doesn’t want to do this,” Rose told me. “He doesn’t want to get into the middle of it.”

Ramón took off his shirt to use as a flag, which referees always did at the public *fútbol* field. However, as his shirt came off, a rush of chatter went up from the sideline.

“No, *hermano*,” a member of *Jerusalén* told him, “you have to put your shirt back on. You don’t want the women to get excited.”

Ramón stared at him for a moment with a mix of disbelief and annoyance. Then, shaking his head even more dramatically, he slowly slipped his shirt back on.

A big smile came across Rose’s face and she let out a chuckle, calling out, “Who would even want him?”

The game continued, but much rougher than before. Players were pushing off each other and slamming their bodies into members of the other team. “Why are they acting like this?” Rose asked me, “They’re supposed to be Christians.”

Suddenly, Fernando (the same person who was trying too hard after the video about music at *Jerusalén*), rushed at a player from *La Cosecha*, his arm cocked back to throw a bunch. His teammates grabbed him, and the *La Cosecha* players quickly surrounded his target.

The pastors ran out onto the field to talk with their players. I felt embarrassed for Fernando, but, at the time, I felt even more embarrassed for the church and the pastor. This did not reflect well on them.

Rose turned to me and said, “I’m sure glad neither of them is from my church. They have all of these rules here, but they don’t change anyone’s heart.”

Word of what happened trickled down to our end of the field. There had been tension since the bad call, but for a reason I never quite understood Francisco told a *La Cosecha* player that he should get off the field. The player replied, “Why don’t you come make me?” That’s when Francisco rushed at him.

“Well,” Rose joked, “he’s a good Christian, he obeyed! The guy said to make him, and that’s what he did! He’s just obeying the wrong person!”

After the game, which *Jerusalén* lost, the two players involved in the fight walked out to the center of the field, their pastors at their side, and hugged one another.

By that point, I had left Rose and her family, and I was standing next to one of the *Jerusalén* leaders. After the two men hugged, he turned to me and said, “This is what makes a good Christian—your ability to forgive. We all get mad, but a Christian can forgive.”

Conclusion

This chapter has examined what I call the Spirit-filled constitution, which, much like Latour’s description of the modern constitution, divides the world into

three separate realms. However, unlike the modern constitutions' partition of humans, nature, and God, the Spirit-filled constitution often regards its own three realms—God, humans, and the Devil—as mixed together. In fact, in the terms of the Spirit-filled constitution, God's presence within humans is essential for a prosperous life and access to heaven. Humans become filled with the Holy Spirit as they take in His presence through reading the Bible or sermons. These practices are essential if one hopes to avoid the temptations of the worldly flesh or the Devil's rebellious action. Indeed, by in large, humans are seen as unable to shun these temptations on their own. They require a pastor, someone close to God and chosen by Him, to guide them through the dangers of this world.

There are a number of ways within Pentecostal churches in Copán that these three agents become legible. While He is not regarded as a distant, precarious God, there are nevertheless controversies about whether a presence in church is truly Him. A congregant would almost never doubt that He was present in her pastor's words and actions, but within other members of the congregation what might appear to be His presence could end up being human emotions. Indeed, such suggestions that individuals' own emotions drive ostensibly Divine actions often parallel non-Pentecostals criticisms about Pentecostal churches. Such accusations take place not only within churches, but are even more common between Pentecostal churches. In fact, while it is almost never directly stated, Pentecostals in Copán often imply that the Devil may be behind what appears to be Divine actions in other churches.

CHAPTER 3:

SPIRIT-FILLED DEVELOPMENT

During my fieldwork, I spent a lot of time at *Jerusalén* Church. About a week before I was set to return home, not trusting my memory, I walked over to the church to take some final pictures. I drifted around the spacious grounds, snapping pictures in the hopes of capturing every detail. I fixed the camera lens on a white sign that read “Hebron Street” (*Calle Hebron*) and pressed down on the shutter release. The sign had always confused me because it was clearly a street sign, but it was on the edge of a field, nowhere near an actual street. In fact, there were a number of such street signs planted all over the property with no corresponding streets (Figure 3).

Figure 3:



Street-less street sign. Source: photograph by author

Then, something clicked in my head that helped me understand the streetless street signs. I remembered a walk I had taken with the *Jerusalén* pastor's son, Pablo, when we were in Guatemala City attending a retreat at the *Zion* Institute, the headquarters for the hemisphere-wide church network of which *Jerusalén* is a part. As we were walking down a road with beautifully landscaped, modern buildings on either side of us, Pablo told me that when his parents studied at the institute, he and his sisters used to play in that exact spot. He explained that back then there was plenty of room for them to play because there had been no buildings; the space had just been empty. He then said that this was why they sometimes called *Jerusalén*—their much less affluent church in Copán—a “mini-*Zion* Institute,” because, just as the institute had once been empty, but later filled up with all kinds of important buildings, so too *Jerusalén* was empty today, but would one day be filled with busy, productive buildings.

It was this comment that I remembered as I stood at *Jerusalén* with my camera in hand, and I understood that for the members of the church the street signs around the church grounds marked streets that were not there yet, but that would be there in the future, when the church developed just as the institute had. The street signs marked the way to that future.

Until recently, scholars rarely associated this temporality—a future that emerges over the progressive time of development—with Pentecostals or Evangelicals more generally. Indeed, Pentecostals have long been opponents of progressive time, insisting that humanity is so fallen and sinful that humans are

incapable of improving conditions on earth. Instead, conservative Protestants have stressed that humans must wait for the return of Jesus for a better world to come into being. While these two temporalities have certainly been in conflict within the history of Evangelical Christianity (Marsden 1980, Sizer 2004, Weber 2004), at Pentecostal churches in Copán the two temporalities largely run on parallel tracks, invoked at different moments. They are rarely made into a contradiction.²² Hence, while I want to emphasize that Pentecostal Christians exist in multiple times, I focus here on progressive time.

This chapter considers the strategies these Christians utilize to bring about this better, more prosperous future. That is, as a development project. The word “development” may conjure up a number of images: Peace Corps volunteers assisting local business owners market their products, micro-finance institutions providing loans to local entrepreneurs, or translocal non-governmental organizations, such as the World Bank, partnering with states to carry out large infrastructure projects. With some exceptions, these are not the type of development projects that Pentecostal churches in Copán engage in, nor, by in large, do their development initiatives involve “faith-based” versions of these secular development practices (cf. Bornstein 2005). Within the terms of Pentecostal development, and in line with the Pentecostal constitution, greater prosperity for both individuals and Honduras as a whole requires

²² Living in multiple times or with multiple discourses is certainly not exclusive to “religious” people or evangelicals. One simply needs to think of many secular people, who, almost certain that global warming will soon lead to planetary catastrophe, nevertheless continue to wake up every day and go about their lives. In addition, secular development workers often also exist in multiple times, including “five-year plans” or “new beginnings.”

God's direct intervention. Rather than give seminars on how to manage a small business, Pentecostals strive to make God the manager of their financial lives. Rather than starting up small banks to provide micro-loans, Pentecostals invest their money with God, trusting that He will multiply and return their investments with interest. Rather than carrying out large-scale infrastructure projects to bring economic development to the region, Pentecostals work to encourage God to bless certain places and to cultivate the presence of the Holy Spirit within them.

Pentecostal development is far from the only form of development in Copán. The entire tourism-based economy of the town could be seen as a textbook case of neoliberal economic development, based on the “economic correctness” of a region pursuing its “comparative advantage.” On a smaller scale, more conventional neoliberal development projects—from an art program for children to efforts to provide clean water—abound in Copán. Even trying to keep track of them all can be dizzying. During my fieldwork, I made an effort to be aware of all the development organizations operating in Copán, but, even so, I was often surprised when a new white pickup truck, branded with the logo of an unfamiliar NGO, would pass me in the streets.

Pentecostals in Copán are not generally opposed to either these small-scale projects or the tourism-based economy. Nevertheless, as with most *Copanecos*, while Pentecostals do not outright oppose such efforts, they tend to be pessimistic that they will improve the conditions of people's lives. While tourism has certainly boosted the local economy—and no one longs to return to the days when the cultivation of

tobacco was the primary form of employment in the region—in recent years, there has been an increasing sense that the economic benefits of tourism have not lived up to the promises that the Honduran state and NGOs began making almost thirty years ago, the moment when large-scale tourism in Copán was first promoted. In addition, many *Copanecos* insist that the bulk of the profits from tourism have ended up in the hands of the few historically wealthy families in town. As for smaller-scale projects, most *Copanecos* have simply seen too many come and go with little lasting benefit to the community to put much faith in their success.

In addition to a widespread pessimism about these forms of secular neoliberal development, Pentecostals and *Copanecos* in general tend to share a common analysis of why these projects have failed: corruption, laziness, and lack of education among their fellow Hondurans.²³ However, while many non-Pentecostals in Copán have become cynical that things will ever improve, Pentecostals articulate a vision for how these ostensible deterrents to development can be overcome. For Pentecostals, surmounting these obstacles requires eliminating their ultimate source: human (as opposed to divinely) led institutions and nefarious demons. In relation to the former, these supposed barriers to development are said to emerge from large, traditional institutions—the Catholic Church, the Honduran State, and indigenous organizations—that supposedly promote thoughtless, ritualized behaviors and, as a

²³ Development workers themselves, largely from North America and Europe, rarely receive much blame for projects' failures with the exception of occasional claims that they do not understand how things "really work" in Honduras. However, even in these cases, the weight of the blame is placed on Hondurans for supposedly being unable to comport themselves in a manner that would allow them to take advantage of the skills and knowledge that development workers bring.

result, has produced a citizenry that is both immoral and unwilling to take initiative. In the case of the latter, Pentecostals maintain that both individuals and Honduras as a whole are infested with demons that sap people's energy and lead them to act in immoral ways.

As a solution to this predicament, Pentecostals work to promote God's unmediated engagement in peoples' lives, viewing God's power as the only force capable of breaking with the centuries of accumulated sin and habituation. Once free, individuals can then cultivate both His direct blessing and the personal values of honesty, hard work, and entrepreneurialism, all of which are understood as leading to economic development. The practices Pentecostals engage in to encourage this divine intervention are not ones that secular scholars would often associate with development: prayer, fasting, avoidance of sin, spiritual warfare, and tithing to one's church. Through these actions, Pentecostals work to realize the development that the Honduran state and NGOs have so long promised, but have largely failed to deliver.

Development efforts never exist in a vacuum, but always in comparison, no matter the scale. Indeed, scholars have noted that figurations of modernity (understood here as a status [Ferguson 2006: 189]) are always comparative, both temporally and a spatially. In relation to time, some places are seen as already modern, while others are "on their way," but "not yet" modern. In terms of space, specific places, mainly in North America and Europe, are viewed as modern, while countries in many parts of the global south are regarded as situated outside of modernity. Further, the units of development—the very things whose progress

towards modernity is compared—have also been spatialized in the form of nation-states (Chakrabarty 2000, Ferguson 2006). That is, in terms of the discourse of development, we can think of a unity called “The United States” as modern and developed, ignoring both parts of the country that still experience staggering rates of poverty and the numerous ways in which the “The United States” only became developed in the process of actively making other places (Honduras, for example) underdeveloped.

James Ferguson calls this sense of a country’s status within this global hierarchy its “place-in-the-world.” Based on his fieldwork in Africa, Ferguson details the experience of living in a place at the bottom of this hierarchy, describing the ways in which such emplacement is not only a matter of rank, but also of both membership, the sense of belonging to a poor or underdeveloped country, and longing—the desire to be modern, to move up the scale (ibid.). These feelings of membership and longing reflect quite well the experience of not only Pentecostals, but many people in Copán. Indeed, constructing a vision for how not only individuals or Copán can become more prosperous, but how Honduras as a whole can escape its “place-in-the-world” is a critical aspect of Pentecostal Christianity (Figure 4).

Figure 4:



El Segundo País Mas Violento del Mundo. Source: *El Tiempo*

The sense of frustration about Honduras's "place-in-the-world" is captured in this darkly humorous political cartoon. The text at the top reads, "Honduras is the second most violent country in the world, after Iraq." The man with the guns yells, "Why can't we be first place in anything?" Sadly, the next year, the same United Nations report listed Honduras as the single most violent country in the world (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011).

In the following sections, I discuss two different ways in which Pentecostal development is enacted. First, I situate Pentecostal development within recent discussions in the anthropology of development that consider development as a Foucauldian project of governance. In contrast to the vast majority of this literature, I examine Pentecostal pastors, rather than the state or NGOs, as guiding this effort at development. In order to describe how this form of governance is deployed in practice, I then provide an ethnographic narrative of a retreat with *La Cosecha* Church. Finally, I frame the pastors' development work in terms of the two types of power Foucault described as central to modern life: discipline and biopower.

Second, I return to where the chapter began, the grounds of *Jerusalén* Church to consider how Pentecostal development also emerges through diverse materials and distributed agencies. Through a series of ethnographic fragments I examine how a hierarchy of places is formed as church members experience a correspondence between the level of prosperity, intensity of the Holy Spirit, and the location of three churches that are members of *Zion Ministries*. In order to track the differences between these churches, I focus on the textures one encounters at each place.

Pastoral Governance: The Pastor as Trustee

The term trusteeship has been used in recent scholarship in the anthropology of development as a way to describe forms of authority that seek to “improve” others. Following the work of Cowen and Shenton, I understand trusteeship to be “the intent, which is expressed, by one source of agency, to develop the capacities of another” (1996: x). To this broad definition, Li adds that trusteeship is also often rooted in claims to possess specific kind of knowledge, “to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need” (2007: 5). In addition to the intent to develop others and claims to possess a specific form of knowledge, trusteeship has also long been rooted in a trustee’s claim to possess a superior morality to those who are supposedly in need of development.²⁴

²⁴ The presence of a moral component within discourses of trusteeship is not the exclusive realm of conservative Christians or the political right. For example, the Sandinistas based their claims to trusteeship in part on a process of moral purification they were said to have undergone as revolutionaries battling against the Somoza dictatorship (Cabezas 1986, Zimmerman 2000).

In what follows, I theorize the Pentecostal pastoral as a form of trusteeship. Indeed, Pentecostal pastors aim to “develop the capacities of others,” claim to possess knowledge about “how others should live,” and describe themselves as having a superior moral purity and proximity to God.²⁵ In addition to these points of commonality, framing the Pentecostal pastoral as a type of trusteeship also allows me to highlight the links between ostensibly secular development projects and Pentecostal pastors’ efforts to improve their flock. In order to accomplish this, I return to the previous chapter’s Foucault-inspired analysis of the pastoral, but here I frame the discussion in a way that allows me to describe in greater detail how Pentecostal pastors take part in modern governance.

According to Foucault, the contemporary significance of the Christian pastoral lay in the variety of techniques and assumptions it produced that, centuries later, would become central to modern governance. Indeed, in the weeks following Foucault’s often-cited lecture at the *Collège de France* on governmentality (2007: 87-114), his talks focused on a detailed genealogy of this form of power that began with the pastoral (ibid.: 115-254). In these lectures, Foucault maintained that the early Christian pastoral “gave rise to an art of conducting, directing, leading, guiding,

²⁵ Such a grounding of trusteeship in moral claims might sound anachronistic in relation to the most dominant versions of trusteeship today. Indeed, the most familiar forms of contemporary trusteeship are not based on morality, but rather on expertise and technical knowhow in specific fields: soil science, engineering, agriculture, health, among others (Ferguson 1994). In fact, this form of contemporary trusteeship is often explicitly “demoralizing,” rooted in the supposed cold scientific and objective “economic correctness” of (largely neoliberal) policies and programs (Ferguson 2006: 69-88).

taking in hand, and manipulating men, and art of monitoring them and urging them on step by step, an art with the function of taking charge of men collectively and individually throughout their life and at every moment of their existence” (ibid.: 165). He asserted this “art of governing men” entered into politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, inaugurating the birth of the modern state (ibid.).

However, while Foucault viewed these elements of the pastoral as critical to modern governance—writing that it was “doubtless something from which we have still not freed ourselves” (ibid.: 148)—he does not seem to have considered contemporary Christian pastors as engaged in these efforts. Instead, he focused on how the techniques of governance were carried out by state officials, prison guards, social scientists, and psychiatrists, among others. Foucault, like many 20th century secular academics, writes as if religion has no force in the modern world. In contrast, I detail here how present-day Pentecostal pastors continue to practice the “art of governing men” as they strive to develop both individuals and Honduras as a whole. In order to accomplish this, I consider how Pentecostal pastors carry out the two types of governance that Foucault describes as constitutive of modern life: discipline and biopower.

As with other forms of trusteeship, the goal of the Pentecostal pastoral’s deployment of these apparatuses is the improvement of individuals or populations. However, rather than regarding humans’ biological existence as the “vital” substance that must be cultivated within both individuals and populations in order to improve them (Rabinow and Rose 2006), the Pentecostal pastoral aims to foster the presence

of the Holy Spirit on both of these scales in order to increase their prosperity. That is, for the Pentecostal pastoral, the Holy Spirit—not biology—has the capacity to make life more than just life, to make living more than “just living” (Foucault 2007: 326-327). The following example of a Pentecostal retreat offers a useful example of how pastors work to produce both individual subjectivities and dynamics within the Honduran population that will bring about development.

El Peniel

One of the most important rituals within *La Cosecha* Church is a weekend-long retreat called *El Peniel*, which I attended in the spring of 2010. These retreats take place about every six months, and new members of *La Cosecha* are often excited to attend. However, before setting off on the retreat, much of what takes place during these weekends remains a mystery. Before I went on the retreat, when I asked returning *penielistas* (those who undertake the ritual) about the weekend, they would tell me that it was a beautiful and powerful experience, but something I just had to do myself. They would also explain that they had taken a pledge not to discuss what takes place on the retreat. One young man, who I have known quite well for a number of years, told me before I left, “I can’t tell you much, but what I can say is that when you come back you’ll feel so clean, so pure.” Members desiring to attend could catch a glimpse of the transformation that occurs over those weekends during the Sunday night services that coincide with the return of the *penielistas* to Copán. These services are largely dedicated to welcoming them home. As they walk onto the

church stage to energetic applause, the *penielistas* always seem to be overflowing with joy and energy, their arms around each others' shoulders, bouncing around as they are reintroduced to the congregation.

The trips are not open to just anyone (cf. Li 1999: 305-306). A member of the congregation who wants to attend *El Peniel* must first complete a four-class series in the church's education program. This corresponds with the first workbook in a long series of such books that are produced at the central church of *La Cosecha* in San Pedro Sula. Before each class meeting, students are expected to complete one chapter in the workbook, which largely consists of reading the rather sparse text, copying large sections of the Bible, and completing activities such as crossword puzzles or multiple choice questions relating to the main points of the chapter. These chapters spell out the theological positions and general norms of the church on issues of repentance, salvation, baptism, as well as critical role of obedience to both God and pastor. Class time itself entails rereading the lesson as a group, with instructors providing additional context or practical details. Little mention is made of students' own experiences or the path that led them to the church. Both instructors and students are a mix of men and women, though on the actual *Peniel* retreats the sexes are separated, attending on different weekends.

While these classes serve as an entry point to *El Peniel*, they also limit who can attend. For example, making the classes a requirement means that someone who works or has family obligations during the seven p.m. meeting time on Mondays would be unable to participate. This includes many people employed in the lower

paying positions within the tourism industry. After my first night of class, I walked home with a woman who lived close to my house and worked in a cafe that catered to tourists. She was also beginning the class, and during the fifteen-minute walk back to our neighborhood, the usually reserved woman gushed with excitement that she was going to attend *El Peniel*. However, she missed the next two classes, and, when I eventually ran into her again in the cafe, with a disappointed look on her face she told me that her work schedule had changed and so she could no longer attend class.

The cost of the workbooks could also be prohibitive to taking part in the classes. The first book costs *70 Lempiras* (\$3.50), which could be the daily wage earned by many people aspiring to attend (and certainly was for the woman who worked in the coffee shop). Finally, the centrality of the workbooks to class participation meant that participants had to be literate to complete the course. Again, during the first night of class, of the eight attending there were two women who could not read. They were clearly embarrassed when the instructor asked them to read aloud from the workbook and never returned to class.

Similar limitations also exist after the classes are completed for those who wish to attend *El Peniel*. Taking part in the weekend retreat costs *700 Lempiras* (\$35.00), which many people might not make in two weeks of work. Also, the retreat requires that the *penielistas* are away from work and family responsibilities for a full weekend, from Friday at noon until Sunday evening, a luxury many people simply cannot afford.

Along with twenty-one other *penielistas*, I arrived at the church around noon to begin my trip to *El Peniel*. As I walked through the door, a church member took my backpack and placed it in a pile of other bags. He assured me it would be sitting on my bed when I arrived at the site of the retreat, which was about an hour and a half drive east of Copán. Even though my bag wasn't heavy, having someone else take responsibility for it made me feel like I was on a cruise, or in the military. Indeed, the pastor had instructed us to pack lightly, with only a couple changes of clothes and a toothbrush, not even bringing along our Bible. Traveling light was part of a larger vision for the weekend, in which the *penielistas* were not supposed to engage in mundane tasks that could distract us from the serious work we were there to accomplish. To aid in this effort, we were accompanied throughout the weekend by a group of "servers," members of the church who had already been *penielistas*, and now, just as other servers had done for them, would perform a wide range of tasks for us so that we could concentrate on our encounter with God.

Almost all of the other *penielistas* from Copán were teenagers, and the idea that this group of seven people who all had much higher status in the church would be serving them was both exciting and funny. As we waited for everyone to arrive before heading out for the weekend, I sat next to Ramon, a young man with whom I had attended the classes that precede *El Peniel*. We chatted with Tomas, one of the servers who had been one of our instructors, and Kike asked him about the role of the servers. "So, what if we want a drink of water? You'll just get that for us?"

“Yeah, no problem,” Tomas replied, as if such a request was completely normal. “We’ll fan you if you get hot, and if you feel uncomfortable we’ll even give you a massage.”

With a little smile, Kike lowered his head and shook it in disbelief.

I rode to *El Peniel* in pastor Cardenas’s black SUV, sitting in the passenger seat while four other young men crammed into the back seat. One of them blasted Christian pop songs from his cell phone, songs that were always played during church services. I had told the pastor during our first meeting that I was Jewish, and so he spent a great deal of the trip lecturing to me about how the sacrifice of Jesus had replaced the Law of Moses. According to his view, I no longer needed to follow the law, but only accept Jesus as my savior. In my time in Copán a number of pastors have skillfully brought me “under conviction” as they narrate my life in Biblical terms, bringing me to a state where I had “no spare inner speech...to rework what [they] said into my own words” (Harding 2000: 57). This was not the tact the pastor was taking. Rather, he was dictating hard facts to me, and growing ever more frustrated when I was not getting it.

In an attempt to change the topic of conversation I asked him questions about *El Peniel*. I knew that what happened there was somewhat secretive, so I asked if it would be alright if I took notes. He looked at me and let out an amused snort. Rolling his eyes, he replied, “If you think you can keep up.”

All of the *La Cosecha* branches in Western Honduras hold their *Peniels* together in a former hospital that is now rented out for large events. Our group was

the first to arrive, but members from three other churches soon joined us, putting the number of *penielistas* at around sixty, with twenty servers, and five pastors. The *penielistas* from other churches had more men in their thirties, forties, and fifties. While overall the majority of *penielistas* were still under the age of twenty-five, the division was now much more even.

By and large, the hospital had a stark, antiseptic feel, but the former lobby where we were to spend almost all of our waking hours over the weekend had a bit more life. The walls that faced the outside of the building were made of red brick with windows that gave some natural light. The other walls had bright posters from the *La Cosecha* megachurch, one with the head pastor laying hands on a young man, and another with the head pastor and his wife, arms around each other, that read “Welcome to your *Peniel!*” There was an advertisement for the main church’s men’s group, with a smiling man in a business suit giving a thumbs-up. Still another poster had an image of a trend line shooting up, a man standing at the top of the line reached down to pull up another man. Along the side of the trend line it gave one of the *Cosecha* mottos (Figure 5), “Win (souls), Strengthen, Discipline, Send Out (*Ganar, Consolidar, Discipular, Enviar*) (for more on such lines and development cf. Ferguson 2006: 176-193).

Figure 5:



Ganar, Consolidar, Discipular, Enviar. Source: Ministerio Internacional "La Cosecha"

During our first evening Pastor Cárdenas had to attend to responsibilities back in Copán, and left the hospital soon after we arrived. Before leaving he collected all of our cell phones and all of our watches. He spoke to us in a severe tone, demanding that we behave well in his absence, emphasizing that it would reflect poorly on him if we did not.

Around an hour later we all met together for the first time in the lobby, sitting in metal chairs laid out for the *penielistas*. The servers formed a half circle around the chairs in a type of reverse panopticon. In front of us was a small area that served as a stage. A short, muscular, baldheaded pastor with just a shadow of a beard walked out onto the stage and began to preach. He held the microphone close to his mouth, shouting into it. The volume of his voice combined with the enormity of the speakers meant that each time he spoke it felt like an ocean wave hitting us. There were no coincidences in the world, he explained, and we were there for a reason. God was going to bless us over the next few days. He told us that over the weekend

we were going to see a lot of things that we had never seen before, and that our lives would change forever. He asked how many of us had spoken in tongues before. No hands went up. He assured us that by Sunday many of us would, insisting that Sunday would be an important day, when a lot of powerful transformations would happen.

As would happen throughout the weekend, when the pastor finished preaching the Holy Spirit descended. Servers cleared the folding chairs and the Holy Spirit filled the hearts of the *penielistas*. Their arms shot up into the air, revealing the presence of the Spirit. When someone began to weep, a pastor or one of the servers took the crying man into his arms, inevitably bringing on even stronger weeping, and whispered into his ear, “God loves you. He has a plan for your life. He forgives you.” Then, the embrace would end and a pastor would stand in front of the person as two servers scrambled behind him. The pastor would place his hand on the man’s forehead and a blast of the Spirit’s healing power would shoot from the pastor’s hand, traveling through the *penielista*’s body and knocking him unconscious. With the slightest tap the pastor would send the man’s limp body falling backwards, slain in the Holy Spirit, and into the waiting arms of the servers. They would gently lay the man’s body on the ground where he would soon wake up and rise, as if from the dead, stronger than ever.

This movement—from preaching to the descending of the Holy Spirit—was a cycle that would repeat itself throughout the weekend. A pastor would preach on a specific topic, with all of the *penielistas* sitting in the chairs, and then the servers

would clear the chairs and an event would take place where the Spirit would fill everyone's hearts. The sermons focused on a range of topics: the proper relationship between a pastor and his flock, the sin of homosexuality, the nature of the Holy Spirit, and the importance of Baptism. However through almost all the sermons the importance obedience to God and the pastors was continually stressed.

The events when the Holy Spirit would descend were also varied. They might take the shape that I have just described, or they could involve committing oneself to the pastor, dancing, or in the final event, speaking in tongues. In fact, this structure is almost the exact same as the final two movements in a Pentecostal service. As such, the entire weekend could be thought of as a series of 25 services in rapid succession. After each event had run its course, the servers would return the chairs to the center of the lobby, and we would sit back down, preparing for the pastor to preach another sermon.

The first morning we had to be back in the lobby by 3:30 a.m. ready for the preaching to begin. The servers woke us up and we stumbled out of bed, taking a quick shower and brushing our teeth. As the first few pastors preached, all of us were exhausted. When one of the *penelistas* would begin to nod off, almost immediately a server would arrive to wake him up with a massage. On the first day, the massages had seemed to be a bit of a joke, and a few bold *penelistas* had requested them with big smiles on their face. Now, no one wanted them. By that point in the weekend, it was embarrassing to have a server massage you. The totality of my notes for that morning was a single sentence: "The Spirit is not moving."

A few hours later we heard a sermon that woke us all up. The man who preached was one of the leaders at the San Pedro Sula megachurch and a former major in the Honduran military. He looked the part. In his late forties, he had broad shoulders and a stern face and swung his fist down when he wanted to make a point. He would preach four times before the end of the weekend. That morning his topic was sin, and he told us how he came from a violent and sinful family. He explained that certain forms of sin existed in the blood, in our genes, and were passed down through the generations. Pointing out the audience he declared that we were there to break with that past.

After the sermon, the major had us line up in three rows facing the front of the room. The servers then came around with stacks of newspapers and laid a few sections on the floor in front of each of us. They also handed us a sheet of paper with a long list of sins grouped into different categories. A powerful drumbeat began to blast out of the speakers, and the major ordered us to march in place, “Left! Right! Left! Right!” He ordered us to repeat after him and then shouted “I renounce!” and read off all the sins in one category on the paper “prostitution, homosexuality, bisexuality, and bestiality!” We then shouted back, in time to the marching. “I renounce prostitution, homosexuality, bisexuality, and bestiality!”²⁶

“I renounce avarice, love of myself, love of the I, and conceit!”²⁷

²⁶ ¡Yo renuncio a la prostitución, homosexualismo, bisexualismo, y bestialismo!

²⁷ ¡Yo renuncio a la avaricia, al amor a mí mismo, al amor al yo, y a la vanagloria!

As we marched and shouted, some of the *penelistas* began to cry. One man, a few spots down from me, wept uncontrollably, like an infant.

“I renounce occultism, witchcraft, spiritualism, black magic, and white magic!”²⁸

Other men began to weep, and the servers and pastors went over to them, hugged them, pat and rub their backs, and straitened them up.

“I renounce poverty, scarcity, misery, and mediocrity!”²⁹

The pastors placed their hands on the weeping men’s stomachs, and suddenly, the men began to vomit onto the sheets of newspaper, regurgitating all of the sin and iniquity that had built up within them over their lives and over the generations.

“Lord! I ask you to forgive my iniquity, the iniquity of all my ancestors that have sinned against you!”³⁰

We continued to march, left, right, left, right, looking strait ahead at a poster with an image of the *La Cosecha* symbol, an image of the globe, with Honduras shooting out above the rest of the world (Figure 6).

²⁸ *¡Yo renuncio, al ocultismo, brujería, espiritualismo, magia negra, y magia blanca!*

²⁹ *¡Yo renuncio, a la pobreza, a la escasez, a la miseria, a la mediocridad!*

³⁰ *¡Señor te pido perdón mi iniquidad, la iniquidad de todos mis antecesores que hemos pecado en contra de ti!*

Figure 6:



Figure 7. *La Cosecha Symbol*. Source: *Ministerio Internacional “La Cosecha”*

“Today, I repent for all of my ancestors, and I ask you to clean my spirit and soul!”³¹

And then, after about twenty minutes, the music shifted. The sturdy drumbeat was replaced by one of the upbeat, energetic songs we often sang in church. The mood transformed, from stern, controlled, and serious to joyful, exuberant and light. The *penielistas* started dancing all over the room, jumping up and down in the air, throwing their bodies back and forth. It all resembled a bit of a mosh pit, young men running into each other and then springing off in another direction. Meanwhile, the pastors quickly moved around the room, slaying people in the Holy Spirit, sometimes with the servers arriving just in the nick of time to catch a falling *penielista*. So many

³¹ ¡Hoy, yo me arrepiento, por todas mis líneas generacional, y te pido que limpies mi espíritu y mi alma!

people were lying on the floor that servers began to carry them off to one side of the room for safety, one server holding an unconscious man's arms and another his legs. I began to feel like I was in a war zone with medics carrying wounded men off the battlefield.

When it was over, the servers again returned the chairs to their positions, and we gathered to hear another sermon. A pastor who had not yet preached explained that we were not only there to transform our own lives, but to transform the future of Honduras as well. Cycling his voice between loud and quiet, fast and slow, he promised that we were becoming men imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit who could "raise up" (*levantar*) the country. Whatever problems Honduras faced, from poverty and gangs to drugs and violence, we could solve them in alliance with Holy Spirit. As the sermon came to a close, the official song of *La Cosehca*, 'Save Honduras' [*Salvemos a Honduras*], a 50/50 mix between a 1980s power ballad and smooth jazz, began to flow from the speakers. We all placed their arms around one another and began to sing.

*Honduras sube a las alturas
con Cristo sentado
confiado estarás.
Unidos... salvemos a Honduras
y juntos veremos la gloria de Dios.*

Honduras rises to the heights
with Christ seated
confident you'll be.
United...we'll save Honduras
and together we'll see the glory of God.

*Sanidad de naciones
hay en El.
Bendito el país
cuyo Dios es Jehová.*

Health of the nations
there is in him.
Blessed is the country
whose God is Jehova.

*Dios grande,
levanto mi voz
bendiciendo esta tierra hondureña.*

Great Lord,
I raise my voice
blessing this Honduran land.

*Honduras sube a las alturas
con Cristo sentado
confiado estarás.
Unidos... salvemos a Honduras
y juntos veremos la gloria de Dios.*

Honduras rises to the heights
with Christ seated
confident you'll be.
United...we'll save Honduras
and together we'll see the glory of God.

*Honduras.... sube a las alturas
Honduras.... sube a las alturas
y juntos veremos la Gloria de Dios
setado con Cristo ya no temerás
anymore.
Honduras... Levántate.*

Honduras... rise to the heights.
Honduras... rise to the heights.
And together we'll see the glory of God.
Seated with Christ, you won't fear
Honduras... arise...

That afternoon, the Major gave the sermon that inspired the most conversation among the *penielistas* over the entire weekend. He told us that Honduras, like many countries in Latin America, had a serious problem: men often hit or otherwise abused their wives. He insisted that Christian men should not behave in this way and that such violence was against God's wishes. Rather than hurting women, the Major insisted that we love our wives and girlfriends and try to understand things from their point of view. Over dinner, a number of my fellow *penielistas* brought up this sermon and how accurate it had been, how much spousal abuse was a problem, specifically in Honduras.

Later on that day, as a pastor described how *La Cosecha* Church needed to spread beyond the borders of Honduras, to Guatemala and even the United States, a number of the *penielistas* began to chuckle. The pastor quickly silenced them. With a furious tone in his voice he shouted that they needed to change their attitude (*actitude*). He said that they were accustomed to the United States always giving and Honduras always taking, but that was going to change.

The final day of *El Peniel* was packed with poignant moments. The same short, muscular pastor who gave the first sermon again preached about the relationship between a pastor and his flock, after which all of the *penielistas*, with the pastors standing at the front of the room, dedicated themselves to following their specific pastor. After this pledge, the *penielistas* ran up to their pastor and embraced him in a large group hug. Later in the day, we all signed a pact to remain abstinent until marriage, or, for those that were married, to remain monogamous. In the only event that took place outside, the pastors baptized almost everyone in a large kiddie pool. During one especially moving moment, we received letters that had been secretly written before we left from our families, neighbors, and friends congratulating and encouraging us. My neighbor who was a member of the church, and a young woman I was friendly with at the church, both wrote letters for me. For the young men, a number of who had never spent a night away from home and were already homesick, these letters were overwhelming. During the final event, as the pastor had promised during the first sermon at *El Peniel*, many of the *penielistas* spoke in tongues. As we danced around the lobby for the final time, what sounded like baby talk poured from the mouths of more than half of the *penielistas*.

On the car ride back to Copán, one of the young men who drank too much of the spiritual wine as he spoke in tongues could not sober up. He was mostly unconscious, but would occasionally babble a few unintelligible words. The pastor told me that this was the language of the angels, and tried to communicate by repeating Jesus' name in Hebrew. The other young men in the car were not as pious.

Laughing, they tried to provoke a response from him by repeating his girlfriend's name. Watching them joke with their half-conscious friend reminded me of any group of young men messing around with a friend who had too much to drink, down to tickling his face and then laughing as he smacked himself. Of course, these young men had committed themselves not to drink alcohol, but as with all things that one sacrifices for God, He returns it, even drinking with friends.

About a mile outside of Copán the pastor pulled his SUV over to the side of the road and said a prayer for us. He said that we were about to reenter the world, and asked God to protect us, and to help us change Copán and Honduras. As we drove back into Copán, I was shocked by how dirty it looked. Not dirty in a conventional sense, but spiritually dirty. A town where I had lived off and on for over a decade appeared as it never had before—filthy. A dark muck seemed to radiate off of everything. As we rode past bars, they seemed to secrete grime. Members of *La Cosehca* had told me that I would feel clean and pure when I returned, but I never imagined it would actually happen. But it did. I saw people walking on the street, and I felt sorry for them. I thought, “They have no idea that they're surrounded by filth.”

I did not enjoy my time at *El Peniel*, and overall my transformation was not what the pastors and other *penielistas* would have hoped for. There is a Pentecostal reason for this: I had a hard heart. In order for the Holy Spirit to enter someone's heart they must open it, even, as they say, the size of a pinprick. I was unable to do that, and throughout the weekend my condition as someone with a hard heart became

ever more apparent to me. I could feel the tightness in my chest, and I saw the consequences. As the Spirit was supposed to bring me into communion with my fellow *penielistas*, I became frustrated and annoyed with them. As I was supposed to feel a great love and loyalty to the pastor, I began to resent him. On the ride home, I even pretended to be asleep, just to avoid further conversation with him. Instead of feeling greater love for my family, when I returned home in Copán I was short with my partner and picked fights with her. Rather than feeling joy, I fell into a depression that lasted for a couple weeks.

Discipline

Having detailed within this extended example the workings of the Pentecostal pastoral as a form of trusteeship at *El Peniel*, I now highlight the two types of power that Pentecostal pastorals deployed there as they endeavored to develop both the individual *penielistas* and Honduras as a nation: discipline and biopower. In Foucault's terminology, discipline is an "individualizing power," centering on "the optimization of [the body's] capacities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase in its usefulness and its docility" (1990: 139). It utilizes "techniques that could be used to take control of bodies. Attempts [are] made to increase their productive force through exercise, drills, and so on" (2003: 242, see also *ibid.*: 249-251, 1999: 117, 2007: 44-49). Secular examples of discipline could include military or martial arts training, yoga classes, factory discipline, surveillance of prisoners, or psychotherapy. Such disciplinary practices were prevalent at *El Peniel* as the *penielistas* were

subjected to the surveillance of the servers, marched in formation, and were slain in the Holy Spirit. All of these practices worked to produce a subjectivity that could not only avoid sin and achieve salvation, but, as with an enormous range of other modernizing projects, form a subjectivity that is capable of development.

According to Foucault, disciplinary power largely emerged from the practice of Catholic confession, which he viewed as an effort to locate and fix subjects' inner truth (1990, see also 2007: 184, 2008: 34-35).³² However, the Pentecostal pastoral does not aim to track down the truth of individual congregants, nor do pastors encourage members of their flock to pinpoint such an inner truth for themselves. Instead, the Pentecostal pastoral works to enact a different relationship between the subject and truth. Rather than locating truth within individuals, the Pentecostal pastoral strives to fill church members with truth in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Within his larger body of work, Foucault recognizes both of these relationships between the subject and truth—fixing and filling—as existing within Christian history. Using Augustine's terms, Foucault refers to the relationship between the subject and truth that is found within confession as *facite veritatem* ("to make truth within oneself"). On the other hand, the relationship between an individual and truth that the Pentecostal pastoral works towards would be classified as *venire ad lucem* ("to get access to the light") (1999: 170). As far as I am aware, Foucault only ever considered the former as an important aspect of modern discipline.

³² Of course, while those involved may have experienced this process as revealing the truth of an individual, Foucault viewed such processes as always producing this internal truth.

Nevertheless, I argue here that “filling the individual with truth”—in this case the Holy Spirit—is a critical element of the Pentecostal pastoral’s disciplinary project, while “fixing the truth of oneself” is for the most part a secondary or a side effect.

This is not to suggest that the Pentecostal pastoral does not regard people as individuals with unique personalities and biographies. Indeed, much of the work of the Pentecostal pastoral is individualizing: fashioning narratives of individual conversion, describing each individual’s gifts, and surveillance. However, while these practices are individualizing, their methodology for “optimizing” these individuals, making them agents of development and modernization, is not to locate a truth within him or her, but rather to encourage the Holy Spirit to dwell in that person’s heart, to allow Him to carry out the work of improvement.

Before moving on to consider in greater detail the subjectivity that the Pentecostal pastoral strives to enact, I would like to provide more details about what this subjectivity is not. Most critically for my purposes here, this subjectivity is distinct from the liberal subjectivity that scholars such as E.P. Thompson have so famously used as the basis of their analyses of Protestantism. According to Gershon, liberal subjects perceive themselves as owning “their own bodies and their capacities to labor, capacities they can sell on the market” (2011: 539). Such a conception of the self would correspond to the labor regime that dominated in Copán until the 1980s, when *Copanecos* largely earned a living by selling their labor as workers in

the tobacco fields.³³ Of course, such a liberal subjectivity has not completely vanished. Indeed, such a vision of the self still presides in much of the tourist-related service industry. In Thompson's analysis, the Methodist ethic helped to ensure that factory workers in 19th century England carried out their labor in the efficient manner that factory owners desired. According to Thompson, Methodism made such factory discipline possible because adherents conceived of factory labor as a space in which "sober and industrious behavior" could be regarded as a "visible sign of grace." Meanwhile, indiscipline might not only mean losing one's job, but also spending eternity in "the flames of hell." Hence, Thompson maintained that in this context God became "the most vigilant overlooker of all" (1963: 369).

Such a familiar Protestant Ethic is an element of the Pentecostal pastoral's disciplinary efforts. Indeed, adherents are expected to not only work hard, but also to be honest in their business dealings, remain sober, maintain a close eye on their finances, and submit themselves to earthly authority. However, unlike the 19th century Methodists that Thompson describes, Pentecostals do not envision God as desiring them to carry out relentless labor in this life, only to be rewarded in the next. Rather, they insist that God wants them to prosper in this life, and slaving away for one's employer is rarely seen as a path that will lead to the affluence that God desires for His people. What this means in practice is that while employed by someone else, pastors insist that their congregants should work hard and obey their bosses.

³³ In addition to wage labor in the tobacco fields, liberal subjects were also fashioned in Copán's recent past through regimes of citizenship and Catholicism.

However, such employment should only be regarded as a temporary position as Pentecostals pursue greater opportunities and investments.

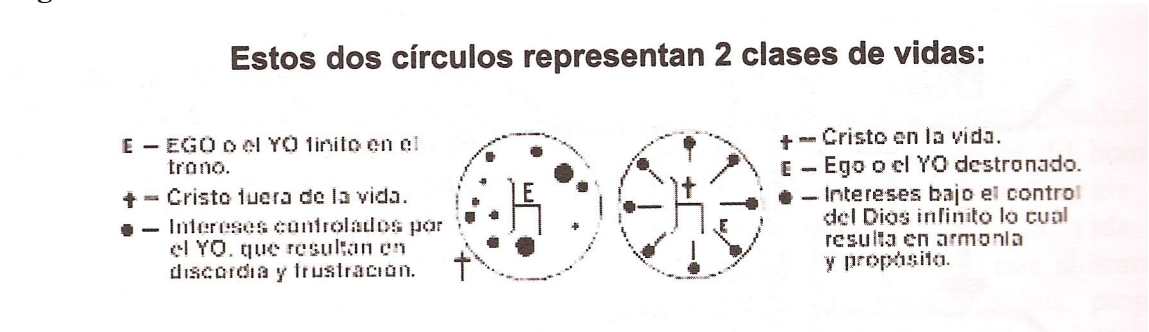
In this way, the ideal subjectivity that Pentecostal pastors work to instill in their flock is best described as neoliberal rather than liberal. Such broad and clunky terms as a “liberal” and “neoliberal” can hide much more than they reveal. However, I find these terms useful here because they allow me to both frame an important distinction and link up this ideal Pentecostal subjectivity with a wide range of other contemporary projects of development. To this end, I highlight two aspects of neoliberal selfhood that Pentecostal pastors strive to enact within their congregants through a series of disciplinary practices: self-management and risk.

First, according to Gershon, the neoliberal self is taken to be a “reflexive manager” for who “managing the self involves taking oneself to be a collection of skills or traits.” This self-as-manager is understood to exist prior to “relationships and contexts” and as continually calculating the most profitable ways to “connect with other people, institutions, contexts” (2011: 539-540). A similar “reflexive manager”—a locus of individual decision making called the spirit (*espíritu*)—is also understood to lie at the center of the Pentecostal self. However, in contrast to Gershon’s description of the neoliberal subject, the spirit is not regarded as a rationally calculating subject. Rather, left on its own, this preexisting manager is taken to be fallen and sinful, only (or at least predominantly) capable of making decisions based on the desires of the flesh (*carne*). Pentecostals regard this as an individual’s “old nature” (*la naturaleza vieja*), with which everyone is born into the

world. For them, this nature must be transformed if someone is to become capable of proper self-management, of making decisions that will be both pleasing to God and lead to individual and national development.

This transformation from the “old nature” to the “new nature” (*la naturaleza nueva*) takes place in part through the pastor’s training of individuals’ character (*carácter*) or will (*alma*). For example, a pastor will watch over his flock and correct a congregant when she or he is acting inappropriately or teach classes to instill Biblical values with the goal of transforming an individual’s comportment, thoughts, and desires. However, while pastors engage in such efforts to train individuals’ wills, overall, humans’ thoughts and desires are understood to be frail and easily overcome by the power of Satan. Hence, even more importantly, the Pentecostal pastors strive to fill his congregants’ hearts with the Holy Spirit, a process that requires both purifying them and directly filling them with the Spirit through activities such as laying on of hands and preaching sermons. This process begins at the moment of conversion, when one’s “old nature” is replaced by the “new nature.” Then, once the Holy Spirit dwells in someone’s heart, He guides the individual’s choices. Within this vision, God is not a severe “overlooker,” but rather a loving manager who works to ensure earthly prosperity.

Figure 7:



E	“Ego or the finite ‘I’ on the throne.”		†	“Christ in one’s life.”
†	“Christ outside of one’s life.”		E	“Ego or the ‘I’ dethroned.”
●	“Interests controlled by the ‘I,’ which results in discord and frustration.”		●	“Interests under the control of the infinite God, which results in harmony and purpose.”

Dos Clases de Vidas. Source: Ministerio Internacional “La Cosecha”

The above chart (Figure 7), taken from the *La Cosecha* workbook that congregants must complete before attending *El Peniel*, is helpful for understanding this transformation. Within these two circles the throne is comparable to the place of the “reflexive manager,” the source of decision-making. In the circle on the left, representing the “old nature,” one’s fallen ego sits on the throne, controlling the individual’s interests. This arrangement can only lead to “discord and frustration.” However, on the right side, God Himself sits on the throne, where He places the individual’s interests into proper order. In this second circle, the ego is not completely removed from the self (note the small E), but is no longer in a position of control.

The Pentecostal pastor’s work towards not only saving souls, but also shaping agents for development, does not end with conversion. The pastor must strive to

maintain the presence of the Holy Spirit within his congregants. Unlike the Calvinist conception of sin and salvation, whereby once an individual is saved he or she will always be saved, Pentecostals take an Arminian perspective on these matters. Even after their conversion, Pentecostals maintain that people can always “backslide” towards their old natures: God can start to slip from the throne of one’s heart. In order to prevent this, individuals must continually refill their hearts with the presence of the Holy Spirit. A popular analogy from the Keswick Movement—from which Pentecostalism in part descended—described this vision of sin in the following way:

Our sinful nature is like an uninflated balloon with a cart (the weight of sin) attached. Christ fills the balloon and the resulting buoyancy overcomes the natural gravity of our sin. While Christ fills our lives we do not have the *tendency* to sin, yet we still are *liable* to sin. Were we to let Christ out of our lives, sin would immediately take over. Hence the state of holiness must be constantly maintained and renewed (Marsden 1980: 78).

Filling individuals’ “balloons” or hearts allows them to float above their sinful nature, but in their everyday encounters with the fallen world, God’s presence tends to diminish. Hence, one of the responsibilities of the Pentecostal pastoral is to help continually foster this presence within the members of his congregation by encouraging them to pray, read the Bible, speak in tongues and fast, as well as, more directly, by laying on hands and preaching (which, ideally, is the Holy Spirit speaking directly through the pastor.)

Along with the “reflexive manager,” the second aspect of a neoliberal subjectivity Gershon notes that also resonates with the subjectivity that Pentecostal pastors strive to enact is risk. Gershon, drawing on O’Malley, argues, “from a

neoliberal perspective, risk is not inevitably a negative but a necessary component of opportunity and achievement. Without risk, the neoliberal actor could not succeed” (2011: 540). This coincides with a number of scholars’ observations about the ways in which neoliberal forms of governance promote “enterprising individuals” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Foucault 2008, Ong 2003, Rose 2006 [1996]). Indeed, pastors often encourage their congregants to take greater risks, to start a new business, to act as entrepreneurs. Even during the depths of the economic crisis following the coup, pastors would insist that congregants could still become wealthy if they were creative. From the pulpit they would tell stories in which, even during difficult economic times, inventiveness produced great wealth. One story I first heard preached at *Jerusalén* church and a few church members later repeated to me detailed how the hotel chain Holiday Inn was founded in the United States during the Great Depression.³⁴

However, more important than this general instance on greater creativity and risk in private business, Pentecostal pastors strive to instill within their flock the practice of investing directly with God. Within the pastoral vision of development, this is the most important and profitable investment a person can make. In this way, achieving greater wealth and prosperity is understood to be dependent on a continuing gift relationship with God, whereby God is said to multiply and return any gift (most often money) that a member gives to the church. Called “the law of the harvest” (*la*

³⁴ According to the Holiday Inn Wikipedia page, the first Holiday Inn was not actually built until 1952 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holiday_Inn).

ley de la cosecha), this principle is described through an analogy to agriculture: when a farmer places a single seed in the ground, the seed multiplies as the plant grows, and then, during the harvest, the farmer collects back many times what was originally planted. So too, when someone gives money to the church, God is said to multiply that money and then return an increased amount to the giver. This return can take place in a number of ways, a surprise gift from a relative, a raise at work, or increased success in one's business.³⁵ Hence, while members are required to tithe (give ten percent of their salary to the church [*diezmar*]), pastors will often encourage their congregations to give additional money in order to further increase the members' wealth. As Coleman notes, Pentecostal pastors frequently urge congregants to give even more than they believe they can afford, trusting that God will reward them for this act of faith (2000: 197; 2004: 431-432). In fact, far more than any other topic, pastors "get on" their congregations about the need to give more so that they will receive more. In this context, God is not a harsh "overlooker" or even a loving manager, but an ideal business associate.

Even during the height of *la crisis*, pastors encouraged to take advantage of the law of the harvest. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, Pastor Aguilar, the pastor at *Asambleas de Dios*, preached a sermon in which he described the *crisis* as a Divine punishment that all Hondurans were enduring together. However, a month later his framing had shifted. The pastor now explained that, rather than a shared

³⁵ Indeed, while conducting my fieldwork I received an unexpected research grant, and my first thought upon hearing the news was, "It's because I've been giving money to the church."

condition of *crisis*, there was no *crisis* for those individuals who believed. While neither the pastor nor any members of the congregation ever mentioned this change to me, my own sense is that it was not as much a move towards invoking individual subjects and away from invoking a shared Honduran-ness (although it was that as well) as it was a shift in relation to what the word *crisis* had come to signify. During the previous sermon, there had still been an enormous anxiety about what was going to happen in Honduras. Among other events, the president had just been thrown out of the country, a national curfew was in place, and Hugo Chavez had threatened to invade the country to reinstall Zelaya. This is not to say that all of this anxiety had dissipated a month after the coup or that there were no moments when tension would spike—such as when Zelaya attempted to reenter Honduras through Nicaragua towards the end of July or when the murders of the former president’s supporters or journalists would be reported—but, overall, by the time Pastor Aguilar asserted that there was no *crisis* for those who believed, the *crisis* in Copán had come to refer to an economic crisis. Huge numbers of people had lost their jobs in town, and many of those who still had jobs, especially those who were employed by the large hotels, had their hours (along with their incomes) cut in half. In this context, what the pastor was insisting when he said that there was no *crisis* for those who believed was that for those who placed their trust in God there need not be an economic crisis. In a sense, he was chastising his congregation for concentrating too much on the secular

economy and not enough on the divine economy, rooted in the law of the harvest (*la ley de la cosecha*), the true source of wealth.³⁶

This process of risk (giving) and fulfillment (return) is also understood to increase congregants' faith. As noted in the Introduction, faith in this context does not mean belief in the existence of God. Virtually everyone in Copán believes that God exists. The opposite of faith for these Pentecostals is not trusting that God has a plan for your life or not believing that he will fulfill His promises. Hence, by continually encouraging congregants to engage in the Law of the Harvest, pastors aim to instill trust in their flock that God will always reciprocate. Pastors are attempting to demonstrate to their congregations that this law works just as they describe it. They are encouraging their flock to take a risk, certain that God will reward them for it. This is similar to other development projects in which the trustee must elicit participation in order to prove that his or her plan functions as promised. Just as a secular development worker must convince a peasant to abandon a certain style of agriculture in favor of an innovative method that promises a higher yield, so too must the pastor persuade his congregation to take a risk in order to reap a greater reward.³⁷

³⁶ It is important to note, as was considered in the previous chapter, the pastor's income also depends on congregants giving to the church as part of the law of the harvest, so he may have had his own financial incentives for encouraging people direct their attention towards the economy of God.

³⁷ As with any other project of governance, the results of the Pentecostal pastoral's efforts are often not what pastors intended. Congregants fall away from the church or start their own churches. As Li argues, "Men in their relations, their links, their imbrications are not easy to manage" (2007:5). In Li's discussion of such limits she points to two factors—the multiplicity of actors with which humans are intertwined with and the inevitable constraints on trustee's knowledge—as important reasons why projects of governance so often fail to realize trustee's goals (ibid.). While the rest of the chapter does not dedicate much space to how these projects of governance play out in practice, instead focusing on the perspective of the Pentecostal pastoral, I would like to note here that within the terms of the Pentecostal pastoral the reasons for these "failures" tend to be either human's fallen condition or the

Bio-political/Spirito-political

As with most Pentecostal pastors I met during my fieldwork, Roberto Cárdenas was not an easy person to interview. As someone who spends a great deal of his time preaching, the back and forth rhythm of an interview did not come easily to him. Indeed, before I even had a chance to ask my first question, he started to explain why Honduras is a poor country, “One of the problems that we have [here in Honduras] is what we’ve inherited from the past. The ancestors who conquered us, and the ancestors who conquered you [in North America] were very different. You see, the Spanish conquered us. They came to destroy, to plunder, to steal, to rape. They brought a religion, not the Gospel. They brought a religion, and that set back development here.” He quickly added that this was not the only legacy that had impeded development, but that the indigenous heritage had similar consequences for Honduras. He said that the laziness of indigenous people as well as their promotion of the community spirit rather than an individual, entrepreneurial spirit had become part of the national character. Even worse, he continued, the indigenous people had drawn demons into the area, holding Honduras back from God’s desire for it to be a

workings of demons. Indeed, those Christians who are the most advanced, the most pure are often described as the most susceptible to demon attacks. In addition, unlike many other projects of governance, there is little direct resistance to the Pentecostal pastoral. Generally, congregants tend to regard their views that differ from those of the pastor as their own errors in need of correction. If a significant difference in perspective did arise, and a church member did not have familial or other ties connecting him or her to the church, that person would probably stop attending that church altogether rather than openly oppose the pastor.

wealthy and prosperous country (cf. Meyer 1999). He emphasized that this was especially the case in Copán because the ancient Maya had attracted so many of those malicious spirits to the area, promoting vices in the local people, even those who were not indigenous.

In Pastor Cárdenas's analysis of poverty in Honduras, we can see the other major form of power that Pentecostal pastors employ in their role as trustees, which I regard as a form of bio-politics. In contrast to discipline's focus on individuals, Foucault describes bio-politics as targeting groups, and rather than concentrating on discrete bodies, bio-politics is concerned with discovering the dynamics of populations with the goal of improving them (1990: 139, 1999: 117, 2003: 242, 249-251, 2007: 44-49, 104-106). Examples of the bio-politics Foucault outlines might include national health and sanitation initiatives, analyses of birth and mortality rates, projects to prevent the spread of diseases, or programs of "improving" a population's "racial stock" (such as 19th and 20th century efforts in Latin America to "whiten" populations). However, as with our discussion of discipline, what differentiates the bio-politics practiced by ostensibly secular states and NGOs from that of Pentecostal pastors is largely a matter of the "vital" substance with which these forms of governance understand themselves to be engaging with. While states and NGOs tend to focus on the biological existence of a population, pastors concentrate on promoting the presence of the Holy Spirit within a population. In order to mark this distinction, I refer to the Pentecostal form of bio-politics as spiritio-politics.

It is critical to emphasize that bio-politics/spiritio-politics do not easily map

onto an objective/subjective relationship to the “vital” essence each aims to improve. Pentecostal pastors and their congregants do not envision themselves as making a Kierkegaardian “leap of faith” as they employ the various methodologies of spiritio-politics. Rather, those engaging in both understand themselves to be interacting with universally valid and predictable laws (Coleman 2000: 40, 149; Gifford 1998: 79). Just as a bio-political project, for example, an immunization initiative, is understood to have largely predictable consequences based on the dynamics of populations, so too spiritio-political practices are regarded as improving a population in a predictable way based on the workings of the Holy Spirit revealed in the Bible. Once again, as with discipline, pastors and congregants engaged in the spiritio-politics strive to fill places with the Holy Spirit, to increase His presence within certain locals. In order to accomplish this, they must, first, chase away demons through practices such as speaking in tongues, prayer, fasting, and spiritual warfare. Second, they must attract the Holy Spirit to a place through their praise of Him.

The size of the places Pentecostals attempt to fill can vary a great deal—from a single church to the entirety of Latin America—but most often the scale they invoke is the nation-state. Of course, Pentecostals hold to the conventional theological position that God exists simultaneously in all places. However, His presence is understood to be more intense in places that He favors. This greater intensity is then regarded as bringing with it wealth and prosperity to those who reside in that location. Further, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not only understood to increase wealth in a region, but also to improve it in a number of ways that a secular perspective would

envision as autonomous. In addition to a better economy, places where the Holy Spirit's presence is strong are also said to have more stable governments, more abundant natural resources, and fewer natural disasters. An example of the unity of these elements that many Pentecostals discussed during my fieldwork was the horrible 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The fact that Haiti had undergone such a horrible disaster, had a corrupt government, and was also an incredibly poor country was all attributed to the practice of voodoo (taken to be engagement with the Devil) in that country.

Through this type of comparison with other nations, those both "above" Honduras (i.e. The United States) and "below" it (i.e. Haiti), spiritio-politics is centrally a matter of both locating Honduras's "place-in-the-world" and articulating a vision for how Honduras can move up this global hierarchy. However, this reasoning as to why Honduras occupies such a lowly "place-in-the-world" is not wholly a Pentecostal creation. Rather, in large measure it is a reworking of the Black Legend, a longstanding narrative about the supposed inferiority of Catholic Latin America in relation to Protestant North America.

The emergence of the Black Legend dates back to 16th century England and the Netherlands, where Protestant anti-Catholic sentiments mixed with elite interests in depicting these countries' own colonial ambitions in the Americas as both morally and economically superior to those of the Spanish. Centrally, the Black Legend portrays Spanish colonialism in the Americas as uniquely brutal in comparison to other forms of European colonialism, and also incorporated a portrait of the Spanish

as lazy and detesting manual work. Both of these supposed deficiencies—brutality and idleness—were said to have emerge from Catholicism. Further, just as other Europeans characterized the Spanish population as lazy and barbarous, Europeans (including the Spanish) described the indigenous population of the Americas in similar terms, as lacking both industry and morality (Adelman 1999; Greer, Mignolo, and Quilligan: 2007; MacKay 2006).³⁸

This narrative not only gained purchase among Europeans, but also many in Latin America as well, where it largely became associated with the politics of Liberal Parties throughout the region. For example, after independence from Spain in 19th century, the *'pensadores,'*—liberal reformers deeply influenced by the philosophical positivism of Comte—viewed the relative lack of progress in Latin America to be the result of domination by its own “traditions.” These “traditions” included both the “barbarous” non-white populations—Indians, *mestizos*, and blacks—and the Church, which they regarded as unable maintain social order and as defending theology over positive science (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 63-74, Dunkerley 1998: 25, Wade 1997: 31).

In the late 19th century, a generation before the writings of Max Weber, these same themes were present as the powerful Liberal president of Guatemala, Justo

³⁸ Somewhat ironically, the Black Legend was shaped and given an increased sense of urgency by the publication of *Brevissima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias* (A very short account of the destruction of the Indies), written by Bartolomé de las Casas, himself a Catholic Bishop, which was quickly translated into many European languages and widely read (Greer, Mignolo, and Quilligan: 2007, MacKay 2006). In addition, this charge of sloth and brutality was not only connected to Catholicism, but could also linked to a supposed “taint” of Moorish and Semitic blood within Spanish ancestry.

Rufino Barrios, allowed for the open practice of Protestantism in his country. Barrios hoped this move would encourage German Protestants to emigrate to Guatemala, which he believed would aid in national progress by both “whitening” the population and introducing the Protestant beliefs and values that were associated with northern European and North American “civilization” (Garrard-Burnett 1998: 11-13).

More recently, at the 2009 Summit of the Americas, Oscar Arias, then president of Costa Rica and himself a Catholic, argued that part of the reason for the difference in the economic prosperity between North America and Latin America was that:

Reading the history of Latin America, compared with the history of the United States, you understand that Latin America did not have a Spanish or Portuguese John Winthrop [an English Puritan, and leading figure in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony], who came [to the Americas] with the Bible in his hand, ready to build a “city on a hill,” a city that shines, as was the intent of the Pilgrims who arrived in the United States (Arias).³⁹

Here again, while there is no mention of race in these remarks, one of the primary reasons Arias (a Catholic president of a majority Catholic country!) lists for the economic discrepancies between the two regions of the Americas is the different religion of the first Europeans to arrive on their shores.

While spiritio-politics has incorporated much of the Black Legend to explain why Honduras (along with other countries in Latin America) occupies such a lowly “place-in-the-world,” it pursues a different program for bringing about a break with

³⁹ *Leyendo la historia de América Latina, comparada con la historia de Estados Unidos, uno comprende que Latinoamérica no tuvo un John Winthrop español, ni portugués, que viniera con la Biblia en su mano dispuesto a construir “una Ciudad sobre una Colina”, una ciudad que brillara, como fue la pretensión de los peregrinos que llegaron a Estados Unidos.*

Catholicism and indigenous practices (which they refer to as “religions” [*religiones*] or “traditions” [*tradiciones*]) as part of their effort to improve the lives of the Honduran population. Rather than the ‘*pensadores*’ efforts to break with tradition by governing society based on positive science, or Barrios’s efforts to promote “whitening” and “Protestant” beliefs and values, or Arias’s plan (which he articulates later in the speech) for a series of liberal reforms, Pentecostals implore the Holy Spirit to inhabit a place in order to directly make a break with the past.

In Copán, this spiritio-political reworking of the Black Legend entails an engagement with two dominant—and rival—discourses of race in Honduras, and, indeed, much of Latin America: *mestizaje* and multiculturalism. Throughout much of the twentieth century in Honduras the Mayan Ruins of Copán have acted as a central node in the production of the simultaneously national and ethnic identity championed by *mestizaje*, which maintains that all Hondurans are the descendents of both the Spanish and Maya (Euraque 2004). Proponents of *mestizaje* have asserted that social inequalities are the result of class or cultural differences and can be ameliorated through a program of national development that emphasizes “proper” education, wage labor, and engaged citizenship. As with many indigenous groups across Latin America, the Copán-based Maya-Chortí indigenous movement challenges this vision of national homogeneity by engaging in a more recent and currently state-supported discourse, multiculturalism, which defines the Honduran population in terms of ethnic and racial diversity rather than as a uniform national body (Anderson 2009).

Few non-Pentecostal *mestizos* from any economic background or political leaning in Copán would accept that the Chortí are indigenous. Instead, they would insist that, until recently, the Chortí identified as peasants, just as other peasant communities that live in the hills surrounding Copán, and, following a specific, *mestizaje*-based vision of indigeneity, that the Chortí could not be indigenous because they lack a distinct language, dress, dances or other traditional markers of indigeneity. Contradicting the discourse of multiculturalism and the Honduran state's designation of the Chortí as indigenous, these *mestizos* maintain that those who now call themselves Chortí never did so until foreign aid workers convinced them in the early 1990s that they were indigenous. Since this time, their argument goes, the Chortí have been portraying themselves as indigenous in order to receive benefits from the Honduran state and international organizations (cf. Peterson 2006, Tilley 2002).

While I disagree with those *Copanecos* who view the Chortí's indigenous identity as mere opportunism, the Chortí have benefited (although nowhere near as much as *mestizos* imagine) from state sponsored multiculturalism and their political mobilization around an indigenous identity. Through high-risk actions such as blocking entrance to the ruins, the Chortí have achieved guarantees from the Honduran government for much needed land. While the vast majority of this land remains to be transferred to Chortí communities (the subject of ongoing Chortí protest), the relatively small plots that have been signed over have produced resentment among *mestizos*, Catholics as well as Pentecostals. They argue that those who call themselves Chortí are both undeserving of the land and unable to properly

cultivate it because they are lazy and lacking in intelligence. This transfer of the land is also held to negatively effect *mestizos*, because, they insist, otherwise productive land is not being properly utilized.

As part of their effort to break from the past, Pentecostals in Copán rework both the discourse of *mestizaje* and multiculturalism. In relation to the former, rather than glorifying a combined Mayan and European past, they describe the Mayan and Spanish legacy as an inheritance that must be overcome if Honduras is to develop, arguing that the ancient Maya both drew demons into the area and that the ritualized practices of both contributed to a contemporary culture that is lazy and unimaginative. In relation to the latter, Pentecostals are more willing to identify the Chortí as indigenous, accepting the discourse of multiculturalism to a limited degree. However, rather than celebrating cultural difference, Pentecostals tend to condemn the Chortí, asserting that their continuation of indigenous traditions maintains a stream of demons into the region, who, in turn, sow laziness and addiction among the population at large.

Just as the previous iterations of the Black Legend have all had their concomitant “solutions” for how to “overcome” the indigenous past—“whitening,” education, wage labor, citizenship, racial mixing—the spiritio-political works to “overcome” this past in its own way. By and large, Pentecostal strategies do not specifically target indigenous people. Among the churches I spent the most time with, members almost never travelled to Chortí villages, except on rare occasions with short-term missionaries from the United States. Informal efforts to convert

Chortí may be more common, for example, a *mestizo* Pentecostal attempting to convert a Chortí housekeeper, but no one ever mentioned such attempts to me. Rather, Pentecostal practices for improving the Honduran population as a whole, defeating demons and filling the country with His presence, are taken to also be effective in counteracting the consequences of past and present indigenous rituals. In this way, increasing the presence of the Holy Spirit can be thought of as similar to how, within Liberal economic models, an improving economy is understood to benefit an entire population. That is, just as a growing economy is said to ameliorate various “social problems” (e.g. crime, domestic abuse) without targeting specific groups, so too an increase in His presence and banishment of demons is seen to make conditions better for everyone, including the Chortí. However, certain places, such as Copán, where the indigenous legacy is understood to loom especially large are regarded as especially difficult projects (again, not unlike a region that is economically depressed).

This is not to say that Pentecostals do not believe that the Chortí should convert (and, indeed, some Chortí are already Pentecostals, although *mestizo* Pentecostals in Copán rarely mention this fact). Among other things, Pentecostals insist that with conversion the Chortí would discover the law of the harvest, from which they would learn that rather than “taking” land from the Honduran state, they must begin to “give” in order to increase their prosperity.

Enacting Hierarchies of Place

While the previous section has focused on how a Pentecostal vision of development is enacted through a project of governance, this section examines how it is also enacted through distributed agencies that come together to create a sense of place, or, more specifically, differences between places. That is, part of what I value about Mol's definition of "enact" is that it leaves open the actors who take part in enactments. This point opens the door for me to consider how material objects contribute to the enactment of Pentecostal development, often in ways that Pentecostals did not intend. Specifically, this section describes how Pentecostal development comes into being, in part, through a correspondence between, on the one hand, churches' level of prosperity, which is, in large measure, determined by the materials out of which the church is constructed, and, on the other hand, the intensity of the Holy Spirit's presence within each of them. In addition, these differences between churches also coincide with the relative levels of development associated with the regions and nations in which they are located. In this way, every step "up" or "down" this imagined (but also very real) scale—such as from the church in Copán to a church in a large city—involves a shift in a number of these closely linked elements: wealth of members, quality of church, and intensity of the Holy Spirit's presence. By considering Pentecostal development in this manner, I have two goals. First, I aim to both assert the importance of physical reality in enacting "religious" worlds in a way that does not regard it as only the outgrowth of human meanings, codes, or structures. Second, I intend to extend my analysis of how Pentecostalism is

“partially connected” with other modernizing project through an examination of their common ranking of materials and places within a hierarchy of development. This ranking is not only the product of human meaning imposed on the physical world, but also a consequence of the ways in which a range of neoliberal forces and materials’ own properties have molded the physical world.

In order to describe how this hierarchy comes together, the ethnographic section below moves “up” from *Jerusalén*, the modest church in Copán Ruinas, in which the intensity of the Holy Spirit is rather low, to *Bethel*, a beautiful and comfortable church in San Pedro Sula—Honduras’s main industrial city—where the Holy Spirit speaks through a number of members during most services. Then, the ethnography ascends to the flourishing *Zion* Institute in Guatemala City—the capital of a country that is often considered more developed than Honduras—where the head pastor has had to stop the overwhelming number of people the Holy Spirit speaks through. Otherwise, the incredible volume produced by all the voices would make it impossible to begin services.⁴⁰

While judgments such as the quality of church buildings might seem to be a matter of diverse preferences or tastes, there would be almost no disagreement about these rankings in the communities where they are located. Virtually no one in these places would prefer to attend church in a hot building with exposed cement block walls rather than in an air-conditioned building with large, bright windows and

⁴⁰ I am not arguing that this clear hierarchy and coherence between place and prosperity holds for all Pentecostal churches. There are certainly churches in the city of San Pedro Sula or Guatemala City that are less prosperous than Pentecostal churches in Copán Ruinas. Rather, I am highlighting a noteworthy correspondence within this church network, which I hope will have broader resonances.

comfortable seats. While scholars attuned to the brutal history of colonialism and other forms of domination may wish to celebrate the persistence of difference (such as the differences between these churches), for many peoples whose histories are scarred by such horrors, these differences are not proud symbols of their uniqueness, but rather harsh evidence of their lower status (Ferguson 2006: 20-21; see also Anderson 2009: 44-50).

While I argue that the ranking of these churches are fairly straightforward, there is one quality that I track in order to ground the differences between them: texture, or, rather, Bora's distinction between *texxture* (two Xs) and *texture* (one X) (1997). Sedgwick, in her discussion of this difference, describes *texxture* as "dense with offered information about how substantively, historically, materially, [something] came into being" (Sedgwick 2003: 14). With its grainy, cinderblock walls and splinter-filled wood poles, *Jerusalén* church is filled with this kind of *texxture*. What the members of *Jerusalén* want for their church—and what the *Bethel* and the *Zion* Institute churches possess—is the second type of texture, which refuses the historicity and materiality of *texxture*: for example, smooth walls and seats, and state of the art technology. Sedgwick characterizes this type of texture as "glossy if not positively tacky, [it] insists instead on the polarity between substance and surface, texture that signifies the willed erasure of history" (ibid). Unlike *texxture*, which invokes a past in which other agents (people, natural forces, machines) brought an object into being, *texture* (at times literally) glosses over history, erases it. Indeed, we see in this move from *texxture* to *texture* an important version of the modern figure of

a radical “break with history,” which itself emerged from a Christian history (Cannell 2006; Keane 2007; Meyer 1998), and which the members of Zion Ministries strive for. While I find Bora’s distinction helpful, the similarities between the words texture and texxture can lead to confusion. As a result, in what follows I will simply use the words texture (in place of texxture) and gloss (in place of texture).

Before turning to the ethnographic portraits, I would like to make a couple of final notes. First, one of the goals of this section is to highlight how Pentecostal development emerges through dispersed agencies. Therefore, in my depiction of these three churches I attempt to de-center people a bit. That is, my aim is to “turn down the volume” on the people and the things they say, and “turn up the volume” on objects, textures, and the workings of the Holy Spirit. Clearly, people and language are a significant part of the construction of this hierarchy, and they are certainly present in what follows, but I attempt to focus more on the other agents that are active in these churches.

Second, I have spent much more time at *Jerusalén* church and in Copán Ruinas than I have at *Bethel* or the *Zion* Institute. Hence, my perspective tends to be that of someone going “up” this scale, and the sections are arranged accordingly, but I also mention moments where people—especially pastors—understand themselves to be heading “down” (often with the goal of bringing others “up”). All of this up and down has a long history, going back at least as far as Plato’s Cave (Lovejoy 1936). We begin on the grounds of *Jerusalén* church.

Jerusalén

Enrique, one of the *Jerusalén* leaders, once told me that when their pastor selected the piece of land outside of town and across the river for the new church, it did not make any sense to the congregation. He said that previously their “tradition” had always been to walk to church in town. Indeed, many *Jerusalén* members had previously attended another Pentecostal church in the center of Copán, but almost all of the church leaders and about half the congregation had left that church to form their own group after a scandal erupted. After many months without a pastor, the congregation began the process of affiliating themselves with *Zion* Ministries. When Nelson Rodriguez, a pastor from *Zion*, arrived in Copán from Guatemala City, building the church outside of town had been one of his first ideas. Enrique explained to me that he now understood why the pastor made this decision: Pastor Rodriguez had the vision to see beyond their small town imaginations, to build the church on a large piece of land outside of Copán so they would both be separated from the town’s worldly ways and have plenty of room to grow and expand. And, indeed, Pastor Rodriguez arrived in Copán with the notion that he had his work cut out for him, envisioning a struggle against not only the congregation’s small town ways, but also against the demonic spirits that lingered around the Mayan ruins.

The land on which the church sits today is certainly spacious and beautiful, resting on an idyllic spot between the green hills and the slow flowing river. However, contrary to the pastor’s prediction, the large space has not yet been necessary. The various buildings that he claimed would be required to accommodate

the flock of new members that he foresaw joining the congregation have not materialized, much like the new members themselves. And, in fact, today the *Jerusalén* church is one of the least impressive church structures in all of Copán.

The church is a long, single room built out of exposed grey and gritty cement blocks with two small storage rooms in the back.⁴¹ Serving as the room's only windows, the upper half of one of the walls has been left empty, with only cement beams to divide the space. The roof extends far over that side of the church to help prevent rain from entering, but it also blocks nearly all the sunlight that would otherwise stream in, leaving the room dark and a bit gloomy even on the brightest of days. Throughout the church, coarse wood beams rise from the cement floor at regular intervals to hold up the tin roof. The floor is far from smooth, with many uneven and grainy spots. Before services, church members set out around a hundred scuffed plastic lawn chairs in neat rows in front of the pulpit, filling only about a third of the available floor space.

The area around the pulpit has the most ornamentation. A number of red and pink rugs cover the slightly raised, twelve-by-six foot platform on which the pulpit stands. Large green plants sit on either side of the platform. A wavy maroon curtain hangs directly behind the stage, covering most of the back wall. Directly in front of

⁴¹ Buildings in Copán only began to be constructed out of cement blocks around twenty-five years ago, but today almost all structures are built in this way. Previously, homes were made from either adobe (mud bricks) or *bajareque* (a bamboo or wooden frame with walls made from a mixture of straw, soil with a high clay content, and water). Some buildings are still built in these ways, and, indeed, these types of homes are stronger and remain cooler, but, for a number of reasons (cost, time of construction, availability of people trained in these forms of building, and association with a traditional past), new adobe or *bajareque* structures are rare. On the modernity of cement block houses, see Anderson (2009: 45), Ferguson (2006: 18-20).

the curtain and at the back of the platform are three of the same plastic chairs, where church leaders will often sit as the pastor preaches. The pulpit itself is a thin wooden stand with an angled top where the pastor can set his Bible or sermon outline. There are a number of places on the pulpit where oil from speakers' hands has slowly worn away the dark brown finish.

As is hopefully clear from this description, *Jerusalén* church is filled with textures, highlighting the space's materiality, history, and unfinished quality. However, towards the end of my fieldwork, the church began to fill with more gloss around the pulpit. The platform was raised higher and covered in shinny, off-white tile. The walls in that area were covered with plaster and painted white. Where previously there had been coarse cement beams in the walls every ten feet to stabilize the blocks, there were now smooth, peach-colored columns slightly set off from the rest of the wall. The church began to feel more like the modern "*Café Americano*" on the *parque central*. A literal line on the wall now divided the old texture and the new gloss, the dark past and the shiny future. The trajectory—although progressing slower than many members had hoped and expected—was clear. No one that I spoke with lamented the change. No one lauded the older version as having been more humble, more authentic, or more traditional. It had simply been inferior, and the changes were seen as an improvement (Figure 8).

Figure 8:



Before and After; Texture and Gloss. Source: Photograph by author.

The outline for services at *Jerusalén* was basically always the same, and this format was consistent at all the Zion churches I attended. After about a half hour of praying silently in our chairs, we would stand up, and a church leader would jump up to the pulpit to direct a period of singing and praise. Three or four teenaged musicians would be sitting off to stage right. While not the most well trained at their instruments—a guitar, a violin, and a keyboard—these young people were always very earnest and committed to playing. On the back wall, between the musicians and the leader, was a medium-sized white board that was turned on its side to function as a screen. Song lyrics were projected onto this makeshift screen from an overhead projector, the type that I always associate with middle school. Hermano Emilio, a short, round, and balding man had the difficult task of locating the correct transparency out of a large pile whenever the leader began a new song. His face

would always turn deep red and sweat would begin to pour down his face as he rifled through the stack to find the required sheet.

Members of the congregation often told me that this was the most important part of the service, because it was in response to their songs of praise that the Holy Spirit would enter the church. However, the arrival of the Holy Spirit was not guaranteed. If the members of the congregation were not sincere in their praise or were carrying sins with them, the Holy Spirit would not come. The songs would always begin slightly upbeat and melodious with the entire congregation clapping in rhythm. But then, at the leader's cue, the music would suddenly become discordant and the congregation would begin to praise God more spontaneously and directly, with their hands raised in the air and their faces tilted upwards as they shouted their praise. If the Holy Spirit was going to arrive, His presence would become clear in these moments, most often through prophecies: the Holy Spirit speaking directly through someone. In the case of *Jerusalén*, the Holy Spirit would almost always pour forth from a single person, Hermano Alex. After the prophecy ended, the individual praise would continue briefly, and then, once again at the leader's cue, the congregation would begin to clap a shared rhythm and unite their voices in song. This cycle was usually repeated three or four times before the period of praise ended. At that point, the pastor would take the leader's place behind the pulpit and begin to preach his sermon.

Iglesia Bethel

When the taxi turned off the paved road onto the bumpy dirt path, I thought there might be a problem. I hadn't even known that there were dirt roads in the city, even here on the outskirts. Rather than being in San Pedro Sula—Honduras's economic center and one of the two largest cities in the country—I suddenly felt as if I was in one of the small impoverished villages in the hills around Copán. The driver turned around in his seat and, making a face, said, “How ugly, right?” (*Qué feo, ¿verdad?*). He drove forward about a hundred yards and then pulled off to the side of the road, next to a tall white wall with a sign that read: *Iglesia Bethel*.

I paid the taxi driver, walked up to the large, black metal gate, and pressed a buzzer. After waiting a moment while someone inside determined—via a security camera on the wall—that I looked suitable enough to enter, I heard a motor kick on behind the wall, and the gate began to open automatically. As with most Central American cities, San Pedro Sula has an astoundingly high rate of crime and violence, making such security gates a common sight. Walking onto the church grounds, I was shocked by the contrast between the two sides of the wall. While outside there were shacks built out of used sheets of tin and wood that hung together in nonsymmetrical and uneven ways, inside was a large, green lawn with a soccer field and a lovely church building with a façade of flat, white rocks perfectly fitted together. San Pedro is extremely hot, and I had been sweating profusely on the drive over, but when I opened the church door, a welcome rush of cool, air-conditioned air hit me: a luxury few in the city could afford.

As I entered the church, smiling members immediately greeted me with warm handshakes, pats on the back, and refrains of “God bless you” (*Que Dios le bendiga*). The congregation was well dressed, with designer clothes and shoes, shiny jewelry and hip, modern haircuts made slick with hair products. Three of the walls of the church were almost entirely made out of glass windows. At that moment, vertical blinds covered the windows, but sunlight still managed to pour into the room through gaps in the blinds. At most Pentecostal churches I have attended in Central America the congregation sits in individual chairs, but *Bethel* had smooth wooden pews finished with a dark stain that shined as the light reflected off of them. This was a place that contained little texture. Rather, it was a place dominated by gloss.

An usher soon led me to a seat up front, near the pulpit. As I sat down, I noticed that large blue cushions lined the pews, making them especially comfortable to sit in. After a few minutes, a thin but energetic church leader bound up on stage to lead the period of praise. As he began to sing, the congregation joined him and the twelve-person orchestra that was situated off to his right started to play. Made up almost entirely of adults, the orchestra—composed of flutes, clarinets, violins, cellos, and two organs—sounded beautiful. To the leader’s left was a digital projector that hung from the ceiling and cast the song lyrics onto a wall-mounted screen. Meanwhile, another leader controlled the projections from a computer at the back of the room.

I joined in singing with the congregation, and we all sang and clapped our hands with a great deal of purpose. Then, as at *Jerusalén*, the leader slowed the pace

of the song, and the music became discordant. He raised his arms into the air with his palms tilted upwards and began to call out his praise to God. The rest of us followed suit. Suddenly, a voice emerged from the pastor's wife and rose above the tumult of cries. The rest of the congregation quickly became quiet as the Holy Spirit spoke through her, commanding the congregation to follow His word. As soon as the voice trailed off, it jumped to a woman in the back row, where it once again exhorted the congregation to remain on God's narrow, but ultimately rewarding, path. Then, when that voice died down, it began to pour out of a third woman. In all, the voice of the Holy Spirit flowed through six women that day.

When the service was over, I hung around for a while, chatting with church members. Glancing down at my watch, I realized that it was getting late and that I needed to head to the station before I missed my bus for the three hour trip back to Copán. I asked the pastor how I could get a taxi, and he generously offered to drive me himself. After saying some goodbyes, we climbed into his shiny black SUV and headed off.

As we drove, I asked the pastor if he was originally from San Pedro. He looked askance at me—almost as if I had offended him—and said no, that he was from Guatemala City. I asked if things were a lot different in Guatemala, and he gave me another look, this one a bit more on the incredulous side. He told me that Guatemala was much different, and that when he first arrived in Honduras thirteen years earlier things were really horrible. He said that even the members of his church used to throw trash on the ground (which for Evangelicals in the region is a true sign

of backwardness and a lack of development). He told me, in language that reminded me of expat business owners in Copán complaining about their employees, that Hondurans were lazy, and that they could only think about the present, never the future. Fearing another one of the pastor's looks but wanting to hear more of what he had to say, I asked him why he thought this difference existed between the two countries. *Guatemaltecos*, he said, had their eyes on the things of God, while in Honduras soccer was their God.

Zion Institute

Just as I finished registering for the five-day conference in a large hall at the *Zion Institute*, the *Jerusalén* pastor's three twenty something children, including Pablo, ran up to me with excited looks on their faces. Although they were all younger than I am, I had grown quite close to them during my time in Copán, and, at that moment, I was especially happy to see them. Knowing almost no one besides the small group from Copán that I had driven with to Guatemala City—the region's most modern urban area—I had felt lost in the sea of people from all over the hemisphere who had gathered together for the conference and seeing their familiar faces made me feel more relaxed. In addition, while the six-hour drive from Copán had started off fun, with everyone laughing, joking, and sharing food, when we entered Guatemala City the mood turned serious and almost no one in the van talked. Then, while we were registering, I felt as if the group from Copán was right on top of me as we moved between the various desks to sign in and collect our materials. They were

constantly checking to make sure that I was doing everything correctly and that I had received everything I needed. While I appreciated their concern, at the same time, I felt as if they were revealing their own uneasiness more than they were actually helping me avoid problems, and, in the process, they were increasing my anxiety. As a result, I was relieved to see the pastor's children—who all looked very comfortable—and I was happy to take them up on their offer for a tour of the institute.

As members of the church in Copán had been promising me for some time, the grounds were indeed beautiful. Level sidewalks divided bright and lush landscaping—deep greens, reds, and oranges—as they linked buildings that combined sharp lines with dramatic arches. We walked through the institute's publishing house, Bible school, restaurant, and bookstore. On our way through the parking lot, I saw a number of polished Mercedes, BMW, and Lexus SUVs, and, as I was looking at the cars, my guides told me that, because of a purification system, you could drink the water right out of the tap at the institute. I had never been anywhere in Central America where that was the case.

As we walked through the cafeteria, where we would eat all of our meals for the next five days, I noticed that everyone serving the food was wearing latex gloves and the type of face masks that my dentist usually puts on before he starts to examine my teeth. I remembered that back in Copán a church member had included in a long list of impressive aspects of the institute that the food was very hygienic (*higiénico*). Indeed, as O'Neill notes, hygiene has long been an important aspect of modernizing

projects in Central American and around the world, including contemporary Pentecostal modernizing projects (2010: 161).

Continuing the tour, we soon ran into my guides' father, Pastor Rodriguez, sitting on a cement bench in a nicely landscaped area and staring out into space. As we walked up to him, he gave me a big smile as he shook my hand and asked me what I thought of the institute. When I told him that it was very impressive, at first he responded with just a series of small knowing nods. Then, after a moment, he said that many of the students at the institute never want to leave when they graduate because God is so close there that they hardly need to search for him, and they know it will be more difficult to find him elsewhere.

That night, sitting in the cushioned chairs at the institute's church, waiting for the welcoming service to begin, an administrator was standing behind the pulpit, reminding us, among other things, not to go outside the institute's high walls—that while the grounds were completely safe, the neighborhood surrounding it was quite dangerous. The church, which could seat around 2,000 people, had a high, arched roof, made of smooth concrete that stood around 50 feet at its highest point. All of this open space, along with the powerful lights that hung from the ceiling, gave the room a light and airy feeling.

Just as Pablo had told me that the grounds of *Jerusalén* were like a “mini-Zion” in the ethnographic fragment that began this article, the area around the pulpit at this church seemed to be a “*Jerusalén*-MAX.” The layout was almost identical to the other two churches, but the status, value, and condition of the objects on stage at

the Institute were all vastly superior. Behind the darkly stained pulpit were four elegant leather chairs, all in a row. Two enormous screens stood to the right and left of the stage, ready to display the song lyrics. Off to stage right stood a shiny black grand piano. There were almost no signs of texture.

As we continued to wait, Enrique—the same *Jerusalén* church leader who had explained to me why his congregation built their church on the other side of the river in Copán—tapped me on the knee and leaned in towards me. “There aren’t any prophecies here,” he said.⁴² I was surprised to hear that, and when I asked Enrique why, he explained that the church had reached a point where there were so many prophecies that the pastor could not begin his sermon. So, he had to prohibit them. Hence, while the intensity of the Holy Spirit’s presence was not made evident at the Institute through prophecies as it had been at *Jerusalén* and *Bethel*, it became clear when, among other events during the week, three nights later over one hundred and fifty people spoke in tongues for the first time, including three people in my group from Copán. In the brief time I spent at *Bethel*, I did not hear anyone speaking in tongues, and in my years of attending *Jerusalén*, I had only ever heard a few people speak in tongues.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Pentecostal Christianity as a form of development. To this end, it has considered two different (although closely imbricated) ways in

⁴² *Aquí no hay profecías.*

which Pentecostal development becomes “really real” for those who engage in it. First, I described Pentecostal development as a project of governance with Pentecostal pastors acting as trustees. In order to show how such a development project plays out in practice, I provided an extended example of a retreat to *El Peniel*. As part of an effort to highlight the links between this Pentecostal development project and other modern, ostensibly secular projects of development, I considered how these efforts employ the two forms of power that Foucault described as constitutive of modern life: discipline and bio-politics. However, I also highlighted the ways in which the Pentecostal pastoral’s deployment of discipline and bio-politics differed from Foucault’s depiction of them. Most centrally, the Pentecostal pastoral works to cultivate the presence of the Holy Spirit within individuals and populations in order to improve them, rather than focusing on their biological existence. In addition, in relation to discipline, the Pentecostal pastoral strives to improve individuals by filling them with the truth that is that Holy Spirit rather than fixing an interior truth of the subject. Then, I considered how Pentecostal spiritio-politics reworks the centuries old Black Legend as part of its effort to change Honduras’s “place-in-the-world.”

Second, I focused on how Pentecostal development emerges in relation to a sense of place. In order accomplish this, I detailed the materiality of three churches (all part of the same larger ministry) arguing that this vision of development becomes real as members of the churches travel between these places. Indeed, members can see, hear, and feel progress taking place as texture becomes gloss, tasks (such as

changing transparencies on a projector) are taken over by computers, and the presence of the Holy Spirit becomes more intense.

CHAPTER 4:

SPIRIT-FILLED GEOPOLITICS: WESTERN HEMISPHERE

In Copán Ruinas, the first full day after the 2009 Honduran *coup d'état* felt deeply uneven, a mix of weight and weightlessness. That evening, I walked to a Pentecostal neighborhood meeting that I had attended every week for the past few months. As I made my way along the cobblestone streets, life went on as usual—my neighbor was perched on the concrete step outside of her shop, kids were playing ball, and old men brought wood into town on the backs of skinny horses—but a heaviness hung over everything. I had felt that weight for most of the day as I raced around town, stopping in homes and offices to collect impressions. However, in an instant the weight of the moment could shift to weightlessness, a sense that anything was possible. Most people hadn't thought that a coup could happen, but then it did. What other things that had previously seemed impossible were about to happen? Was there going to be a civil war? Was Chavez going to invade the country to restore Manuel Zelaya as president? If he did, would the United States military enter Honduras to oppose him? And, could it be true that the people protesting the coup in the big cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula were gang members? Or, was it true that those demonstrating in favor of the coup in those same cities were factory employees whose bosses were forcing them to march?

When I arrived at the meeting, which was held at the home of *hermano* Nelson, one of the leaders of *Jerusalén* Church, the couches and chairs were turned,

as usual, from their normal positions to form a circle. Ten church members were sitting quietly with their Bibles in their laps. Instead of exchanging cheerful greetings with everyone as I normally would have done, I gave a small nod as I walked into the room and quickly found an open seat. There were plenty available—only half of the usual participants were there.

As I sat down, *hermano* Nelson started the meeting by reminding us that we would be ending earlier than usual because the national curfew imposed after the coup required us to be in our homes by nine. Then, taking a deep breath, he continued, encouraging us in this difficult moment to find comfort in the fact that God was ultimately in control of everything. He reminded us that the pastor and the leadership of the church had been paying close attention to Honduras's relationship with the socialist countries in Latin America, wondering if this would be a problem for Honduras, the greatest problem being if these alliances placed Honduras against the ways of God. And then he continued:

Because the Bible says that salvation comes from the Jews. So, in the end, this is the thing that didn't suit Honduras, that these countries put Honduras against Israel, the chosen people of God. We as Hondurans love this country where God has placed us, and we also have a love for Israel. God has ordered us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And now Honduras has arrived in a situation of being against the people of God. So, now we're going to ask the Lord for peace in Jerusalem, and we're going to ask Him for peace in Honduras so that God will give peace to our nation.⁴³

⁴³ *Porque la biblia dice que la salvación viene de los judíos. Entonces eso era lo que Honduras no le convenía al final, que lo pusieran en contra de Israel, el pueblo escogido de Dios. Nosotros como hondureños amamos nuestro país donde Dios nos puso, y también le tenemos amor a Israel. El Señor nos dice así como una orden diciéndonos pedir por la paz de Jerusalén, y al final Honduras llega a una situación de estar en contra del pueblo de Dios. Entonces nosotros vamos a pedir por la paz de*

As *hermano* Nelson finished his talk, that is what the group did. They stood up, and with Nelson's voice leading them, they prayed for Israel, so that God would bring peace to Honduras.

The goal of this chapter and the next are to examine a set of practices and forms of knowledge production—of which these prayers are a part—that make up Spirit-filled geopolitics, the primary Pentecostal political response to the Honduran coup. As made clear by *hermano* Nelson's remarks, in many ways Israel lies at the center of Spirit-filled geopolitics. However, the current chapter focuses on the left and left of center nations in the Western Hemisphere, the other political bloc that concerned those assembled for the meeting. The following chapter will take up the place of Israel and the Jewish people within Spirit-filled geopolitics.

As with the Spirit-filled constitution and Spirit-filled development, Spirit-filled geopolitics is not a term that Pentecostals in Copán use. Rather, it serves as a heuristic for describing how these Christians interpreted and worked to shape events after the coup. Thinking in terms of a Spirit-filled geopolitics helps to illuminate a number of the key points of this dissertation. First, a focus on Spirit-filled geopolitics and its imbrications with conventional geopolitics once again highlights Pentecostalism as an enactment that comes together from a broad range of sources: Biblical narratives, prayers, newspapers, maps, temporalities, nationalism, Cold War discourse, among many others. Indeed, many of these sources were never intended to

Jerusalén y también hoy vamos a pedir por la paz de Honduras, y así Dios nos dará paz a nuestra nación.

be part of Spirit-filled geopolitics, but, because of the way Pentecostals have taken them up, they become a part of it.

Second, Spirit-filled geopolitics opens up the possibility of exploring Pentecostal's version of what Foucault calls "the military-diplomatic apparatus," the division of security that works to manage a nation-state's "external relations" (2007: 296-306). While Spirit-filled geopolitics lack a conventional army, they engage in spiritual warfare, targeting the demons that they regard as the agents guiding those nations that act against God's will. In addition, because there is no Spirit-filled geopolitical equivalent of the state apparatus, this investigation provide insights into how certain forms of geopolitical common sense are established, at least in part, outside the purview of the state. Finally, through heuristic of Spirit-filled geopolitics, this chapter will once again detail how, in order to improve them, Pentecostals work to fill entities with the Holy Spirit and bring them into relationship with God, rather than striving to create autonomous actors that rely only on themselves. For Spirit-filled geopolitics, the entities Pentecostals strive to infuse with God's presence are not humans, but rather nations as a whole.

Geopolitics

The intimate setting of the meeting at *hermano* Nelson's house might invoke the sense of an isolated private sphere. However, for the Pentecostals who prayed for their country that evening—along with the hundreds of thousands of other Pentecostals throughout Honduras who engaged in similar activities after the coup—

these actions constituted a form of political mobilization with critical consequences for the entirety of Honduras. Within the terms of Spirit-filled geopolitics, such prayers are far more significant for determining the outcome of the coup than the actions of the Honduran military, Supreme Court, President Zelaya, or President Chavez. Hence, these chapters examine not only the conventional political activities of Pentecostal in the wake of the coup, but also what counts within their world as a political act and a political actor.

Understanding how these prayers can be regarded as a form of geopolitics first requires a consideration of geopolitics more generally. Geopolitics is a tradition within the wider fields of international relations or international politics. The specific term “geopolitics” is slippery, and it has changed a great deal in its 100 years of its existence. However, geopolitics can generally be described as an apparatus and set of practices that seeks to both produce knowledge about and engage with the forces—especially geographical features and natural resources—that are understood to constitute a nation-state. The goal of geopolitics is to maximize a state’s international power and national prosperity. In addition, a certain tone characterizes geopolitics, a “hard nosed assessment of the way the world really is, without any pie-in-the-sky illusions” (Dittmer 2010: 3, see also Ó Tuathail 1996: 13).⁴⁴ While there may be

⁴⁴ Dittmer is characterizing this geopolitical vision of the world, not endorsing it. On this same point, see also (Parker 1998: 2), and consider the following representative geopolitical depiction of the world from O’Sullivan:

Whether we like it or not, the crux of international politics is war. We punctuate history with the violent contests of power. The immediate circumstance of these outbreaks of killing and destruction is most usually over some contested turf.

some broad similarities, such an analysis differs markedly from the goals and modes of analysis employed by other forms of international relations. As a ready comparison, one might think of how it diverges from a Marxist or postcolonial conception of the primary origins, forces, dynamics, and ends of political relationships between powerful actors around the world.

Histories of geopolitics often begin with Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), considered to be the founder of geopolitics (although he never used that word). Ratzel combined his interests in Darwinism and geography to argue that the state was a natural organism and, as a result, subject to the laws of nature and development. Ratzel was concerned with how this model could bolster states' power—particularly for his own country, Germany—and secure for a particular state a position of supremacy over other states. According to Ratzel, this domination could be achieved as states developed through a number of stages, first becoming a “great power” and later a “world power.” For him, the key to progressing through these stages was to maximize territory in order to provide the state with sufficient “living space” (Parker 1998: 11-17, Dittmer 2010: 3-4). From the beginning, Ratzel's theories and those who took them up were controversial because of their close association with German imperialism, but they were almost completely discarded after the Second World War when the Nazis had appropriated them. In the 1970s, during the Cold War, there was

Political authority is conceived of as extending over some portion of the earth's surface and the competition of those with power is over whose writ runs where (1986:1).

a resurgence in geopolitics—led largely by the American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger (Cohen 2009:26-27, Parker 1998: 1-5).

This might all sound rather distant from the small group meeting in Copán the night after the coup, but, even in these general terms, their prayers can be thought of as a form of geopolitical action as, based on a geopolitical analysis carried out by their pastor and church leaders, they engaged with what they encounter as an immanent force (the Holy Spirit) in order to bolster their country within an international context. However, one the characteristics that differentiates these two forms of geopolitics is that, unlike with conventional geopolitics, Spirit-filled geopolitics (at least in Honduras) mostly does not direct its efforts towards state policy, but rather towards the Holy Spirit and against the Devil and his army of demons.

In addition to this broad characterization, these two forms of geopolitics share four points of geopolitical common sense.⁴⁵ Indeed, part of the task of Pentecostal experts—pastors, church leaders, and preachers with an international reach—is to educate their communities about these points and accompanying practices. First, the fundamental units of geopolitical analysis, the things that are understood act in this “hard nosed” world, are territorial nation-states (Agnew 2003: 11-12, Dalby 2003: 64,

⁴⁵ My characterization of geopolitics relies heavily on a group of geographers who, over the past twenty years, have developed the sub-discipline of critical geopolitics. Rather than considering geography as “natural,” these scholars (most prominently Agnew, Dalby, and Ó Tuathail) examine the manifold ways in which the world has been actively constructed under certain conditions and by participants with particular interests, paying specific attention to the ways in which geography as a discipline came into being as an element of European colonial projects.

Parker 1998: 2). That is, while in the early twentieth century the founders of geopolitics rooted their depictions of states in a transcendent nature—envisioning nation-states as living organisms engaged in a Darwinian struggle for survival against other nation-states (Ó Tuathail 1998)—Spirit-filled geopolitics regards nations as transcendent theological entities, as divinely established units (e.g. O’Neill 2010: 6). While nations such as Honduras and the United States are regarded as important actors in Spirit-filled geopolitics (as we will see in this chapter), the most consequential nations for the movement of world history are those that appear in the Bible, especially in Biblical prophecies (as we will see in the next chapter).⁴⁶ Second, conventional geopolitics envisions the world as composed of a hierarchy of nations in which Europe and the United States are generally viewed as standing at the apex (Agnew 2003: 11, Dalby 2003: 64), and Africa as well as large parts of Asia and Latin America as languishing at the bottom. Spirit-filled geopolitics employs a similar hierarchical figure, with the positions of various nations within the hierarchy lining up closely with those of academic and state-based geopolitics versions. However, within many churches, this general alignment has one crucial difference, the position of Israel, which, from the perspective of Spirit-filled geopolitics, is regarded as on a trajectory to soon become the most modern and developed nation in the world. In relation to this hierarchy, what also differentiates conventional geopolitics from Spirit-filled geopolitics are the reasons why the various nations of

⁴⁶ Equating polities in Biblical times with modern polities—an element of what Sizer has called an ultra-literalist hermeneutic—entails a slippage between ancient nations or tribes and contemporary nation-states (i.e. ancient Egypt is read as modern day Egypt or the Philistines read as Palestinians) (2004: 128).

the world are understood to occupy the positions they do, which, according to the latter is largely a matter of a correspondence between national prosperity and a citizenry's willingness to follow God's will.

Third, another part of the work of geopolitics is establishing political alignments, dividing the world into "dangerous" and "friendly" places (Schmitt 2007 [1927]), those that are considered to be a nation's enemies and those places that are regarded as its allies (Agnew 2003: 70; Dalby 2004: 62-63; Ó Tuathail 1996: 16). No matter their political leanings, most Hondurans envisioned the coup as taking place within a hemisphere-wide division between two political blocs: the left and the right. However, they disagreed about which side contained Honduras's "friends" and which made up its "enemies." Much of the national media and the Micheletti government viewed those countries to the right of center (most prominently Colombia) as allies, and blasted countries with governments to the left of center (particularly Venezuela) as dangerous and bent on controlling Honduras. The vast majority of Pentecostal churches in Honduras and in Copán shared this vision of a divided hemisphere. However, unlike conventional geopolitics, Spirit-filled geopolitics extended the network of important allies and enemies beyond nation-states to include other actors, such as the Holy Spirit (understood to be allied with the right) and the Devil and his minions of evil spirits (all understood to be allied with the left). These entities are taken to require a different form of engagement than foreign states, instead of

diplomacy or conventional warfare, the strategies for cultivating allies or attacking these enemies are prayer, fasting, proper moral conduct, and spiritual warfare.⁴⁷

Finally, geopolitics is centrally a matter of producing and enforcing boundaries, trying to make sure that what is “out there” does not get “in here” (Agnew 2003: 70). After the coup, there was a great deal of worry in Honduras about the country’s borders and making sure that certain things—“Venezuela,” communist infiltrators, the former president—stayed “out there.” However, at the same time, there was also anxiety that certain things would continue to flow into Honduras: tourists, foreign aid, and goods from neighboring countries. In this way, the discourse about Honduras’s national boundaries was not simply a matter of halting the stream of everything into the country, but rather of promoting desirable forms of circulation and blocking undesirable forms. In addition, for Pentecostals engaged in Spirit-filled geopolitics, these desirable and undesirable forms of circulation also included encouraging the flow of the Holy Spirit into Honduras and blocking demons from entering the country.

Once again, it is important to keep in mind that the two formations I consider, here, conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics, do not map neatly onto to categories

⁴⁷ This is not to argue that a broader Evangelical geopolitics does not have its own diplomats. For example, just as Jerry Falwell was helping to lead Fundamentalist Christians out of the political wilderness in the United States in the 1980s (Harding 2000), he was also developing a close relationship with the conservative Likud government in Israel. Indeed, in 1981, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin asked for Falwell’s support after Israel preemptively bombed an Iraqi nuclear reactor (Weber 2004: 218-219). A second example of how spirit-filled geopolitics and diplomacy are not mutually exclusive is the case of the International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem, a Christian Zionist organization based in Israel, which in the 1980s established an embassy in Honduras and Guatemala and was granted official diplomatic status. (Wagner 1995: 109).

of “secular” and “religious,” nor should the latter be thought of as reducible to the former. Both conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics invoke a transcendent power; require popular media, mappings, and specialized practices; and emerge from what would conventionally be considered a Christian history. These are partially connected worlds: more than one, less than two (Strathern 2004).

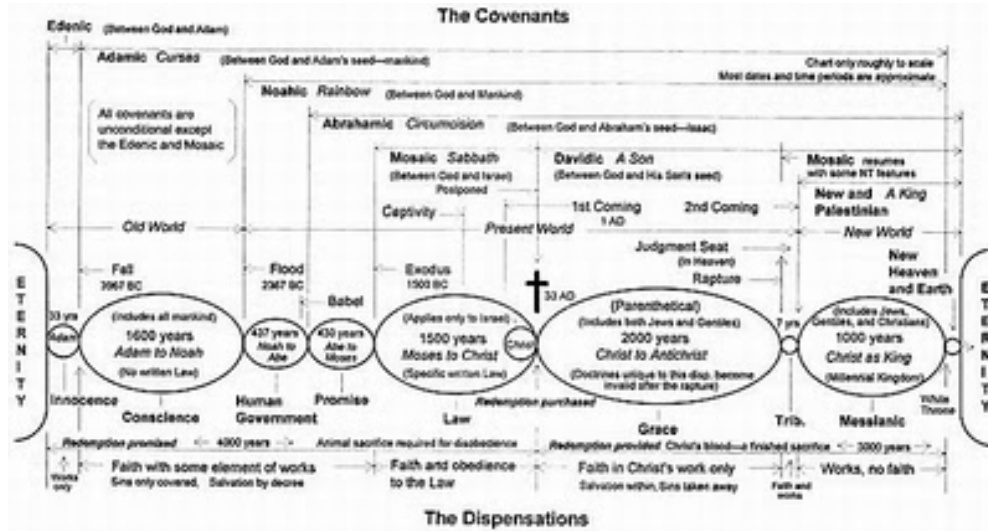
Specifically in relation to the history of geopolitics, Ó Tuathail notes that scholars have long viewed the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) as a decisive break away from a “vertical hierarchy” (oriented in relation to God) and towards a horizontal relationship between competing territorial states. However, he argues, “Rather than a clear and clean rupture, the already existing relationship between the secular and spiritual, the territorial and the ecclesiastical was re-organized and re-conceptualized at Augsburg and Westphalia and numerous other historical moments since” (2000: 187, see also Foucault 2009: 296). Ó Tuathail insists that rather than Christianity disappearing from this system of international relations, Christianity and geopolitics, “are more often than not deeply interwoven and mutually constitutive” (ibid.: 188).⁴⁸ In order to ground this theoretical point, Ó Tuathail documents the critical role of the Jesuit training of Father Edmund Walsh, the founder of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and influential theorists of Cold War, in shaping his geopolitical

⁴⁸ Goldschmidt makes a similar point in reference to nationalism, critiquing Anderson’s claim that “Western Europe in the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought” (1983: 11). Goldschmidt insists that instead of a clear transition from religion to nationalism that the two forms of imagined community continued to have important connections (2004: 15). In addition, Lomnitz-Adler argues, “A fundamental error in Anderson’s account of the history of nationalism is his insistence on associating it with secularization. In the case of Spain, whose formation as a nation is certainly one of the earliest, the opposite is the case: national consciousness emerges as an offshoot of religious expansionism” (2001: 14-15).

vision, just as other scholars have shown for numerous Protestant foreign relations experts who were active in the United States government during the Cold War (Foglesong 1999, Kirby 2003, Rotter 2000).

One feature that distinguishes conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics is their temporalities. While conventional geopolitics takes place within secular, homogeneous time (although, with notable exceptions, for example, “mutually assured destruction”), Spirit-filled geopolitics occurs within the time of Dispensationalism. Based on a specific mode of Biblical interpretation, Dispensationalists argue that the entirety of time—from God’s creation of the universe until its end—can be divided into seven consecutive eras or dispensations, each of which is rooted in a specific Divine covenant. God initiates a new dispensation every time humanity ultimately fails to live up to the terms of the covenant. According to the most popular dispensationalist schemas, we are currently at the end of the dispensation of grace, which began with Jesus’ death and resurrection, and are quickly approaching the Tribulation, the violent days before the return of Jesus, when he will establish himself as king of the world and rule for a thousand-year period of peace called the millennium (Figure 9). As scholars have noted, conservative Protestants often read contemporary events as sign of this imminent End Time (e.g. Harding 2000), just as Pentecostals in Copán interpreted the coup or the presidency of Barak Obama as fulfilling Biblical prophecy.

Figure 9:



Map of Dispensations. Source: The Peterist Archive, 2011.

While often acknowledging deeper roots, historians point to the doctrines of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) as the intellectual beginnings of dispensationalism.⁴⁹ A former Anglican priest living in Great Britain, Darby developed a number of the prophetic theories that would come to serve as the basis of this doctrine.⁵⁰ In an effort to spread his ideas, Darby made seven trips to the United States during the last twenty years of his life, spending almost half of his time on the American side of the

⁴⁹ The history of dispensationalism I outline here is largely based on (Clark 2007, Marsden 1980, Sizer 2004, Weber 2004). Scholars have noted other histories that were essential for the development of dispensationalism when it did: a general interest in Palestine at the time “largely due to a succession of archaeological discoveries, military adventurism and a growing number of travelogues published which fired the popular imagination” (Sizer 2004: 33); other Christians (particularly Edward Irving) whose writing on Biblical prophecy influence Darby, but who Darby never acknowledged (ibid: 51); and tremendous social upheaval in Europe as the result of the French Revolution (1789-1793) and the Napoleonic Wars (1809-1815), which many read as signs of the end of the world (ibid: 30-31).

⁵⁰ Darby also established the doctrine of the rapture, which holds that all saved Christians will be instantly transported to heaven at the beginning of the tribulation, thus avoiding the seven tumultuous years.

Atlantic. Darby enjoyed a great deal of success on his trips as his ideas travelled through Bible schools, prophecy conferences, and seminaries. As a result of these efforts, he came to have a powerful influence on a number of conservative Christian leaders, including the prominent evangelist Dwight Moody. However, probably the most important convert to Darby's schema for its later success was Cyrus I. Scofield, who went on to produce the *Scofield Reference Bible*, the single most significant source for the popularization of dispensationalism in the United States.⁵¹ In this Bible, Scofield wrote detailed notes next to the Biblical text that carefully guided readers through the dispensationalist system. Indeed, Scofield's comments became so influential that they were often conflated with the Biblical text itself. Aided in large measure by the *Scofield Reference Bible*, by the time of World War I dispensationalism in the United States, "had become nearly synonymous with fundamentalism and Pentecostalism" (Weber 2004: 13). Because dispensationalism had become so integrated within the larger assemblage of Pentecostalism in the United States, as Pentecostalism moved into Central America, dispensationalism moved with it.

Dispensationalists have had a long-standing opposition to socialism and communism, as they did with any attempt to improve the fallen condition of the world that was rooted in human's—rather than God's—power. However, dispensationalists' vision of Russia as an evil force during the Last Days actually

⁵¹ Interestingly, Scofield also established the Central American Mission (C.A.M.), one of the first Protestant efforts to missionize Central America. C.A.M.'s first missionary, A.E. Bishop established himself in Santa Rosa de Copán, the capital city of the department of Copán, within which Copán Ruinas is located.

predated the Bolshevik Revolution. Indeed, when Russia was a member of the Allied Powers (which, while the United States had not yet entered the war, it was nevertheless leaning towards backing), the dispensationalist journal *Our Hope* identified Russia as the “power of the North” that would attack Israel just before the return of the Messiah. In fact, as far back as the 19th century scholars had identified Russia as Magog, a power referenced in Ezekiel 38-39 and regarded by dispensationalists as an ally of Satan during the Last Days. However, this connection between Magog and Russia did not become widely accepted until it was included as part of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, but, with some adaptations, this link has remained strong throughout the Cold War and up to the present day.

Among other advantages, taking dispensationalism and Spirit-filled geopolitics seriously provides the opportunity to rethink why Pentecostals throughout Latin America overwhelmingly oppose the left and left-leaning governments that have recently taken power in much of Latin America. I suggest that Pentecostal tendency towards conservative, anti-left politics is not only the result of what Weber described as a Protestant “elective affinity” with capitalism (2002 [1905]) or a more contemporary resonance between neoliberal economics and the Pentecostal “prosperity gospel,” but also an End Times-oriented vision of international politics that has been dominant within conservative Protestantism for over a century.

Honduras and Borders

La Cosecha was packed. In fact, I had never seen it so full. The church was holding a weekend-long workshop on spiritual warfare, and the organizers had made a push to attract as many people as possible to the Friday night kick off, especially those who were not already members of the church. Colorful posters hung on telephone poles all over Copán had advertised the event for the past month. At the moment, one of the local church leaders stood behind the pulpit, leading the congregation in singing familiar upbeat songs with tunes so catchy that they usually looped in my head for a full day after a service. Everyone seemed energized and ready for the weekend as they poured out their voices, swayed their bodies, and thrust their arms into the air.

As a song trailed off, pastor Cárdenas confidently strode up to the pulpit. After welcoming everyone and making a few comments about his high hopes for the weekend, he called out, “Oh Holy Spirit! Just as the spirit of God moved over the waters [before He created the world], You move tonight in Honduras, in Copán, and in the entire world! Lord in heaven, we praise you in the name of your beloved son, Jesus. Amen!”⁵² Looking over the congregation and holding his hand out towards them, he shouted, “Who lives?”

“Christ!,” everyone shouted back.

“And his name?” the pastor asked.

⁵² “*El espíritu de Dios se está moviendo esta noche en Copán, en Honduras, y en todo el mundo! Padre en el cielo te bendecimos y te exaltamos en el nombre de tu hijo amado Jesús! Amen!*”

“Glory!”

Dropping his hand to his side, the pastor began to pace across the front of the stage. Continuing to build the level of excitement, he rhetorically asked, “How many of you want to see your nation saved?” Over a wave of clapping and shouts of “amen,” he yelled, “Well, the church has to wake up! Because if it does, the gates of hell will not prevail against the church of Christ!”

The pastor then shifted gears, slowing things down, to introduce a guest for the workshop, the musical director from the La Cosheca megachurch in San Pedro Sula, who sang a version of La Cosecha Ministry’s official song, “Save Honduras” [*Salvemos a Honduras*]. As her voice trailed off, a new song burst from the speakers. The sudden shift in tone was jarring. “Save Honduras” is a 50/50 mix between a 1980s power ballad and smooth jazz. The heavy thud of drums and trumpets driving this new song forward. Suddenly, from the back of the room, a column of young men, all members of the church’s youth group, began to march towards the stage. They were dressed as soldiers, wearing medieval-style helmets and carrying plastic swords in their belts. Their jaws were set and their eyes humorless. When they reached the stage, they all pivoted 180 degrees in unison, swinging to face the audience. Eyes forward, they continued to march in place, ready to do battle on behalf of Honduras.

As with any scale, from the individual to the global, the nation-state is not given in the way of things, but must be enacted. Among other things, this kickoff to the spiritual warfare workshop reproduced Honduras as an independent entity, the

first point of geopolitical common sense. Indeed, in these two performances Honduras was invoked as a specific type of entity that those in the audience should have a specific relationship with. Marisol's singing helped to summon a sense of affection for and a tender attachment to Honduras. Meanwhile, the spiritual warriors inspired the feeling that Honduras was under siege and that those assembled needed to defend it.

Pentecostal churches were not alone in this process. Among those who supported the coup, which included much of the popular media, Honduras was often portrayed in similar terms, as under threat and in need of protection. In political cartoons at the time, Honduras's simultaneous autonomy and vulnerability were produced through depictions of Honduras as an individual under attack. In one example, the international community strangles Honduras, which is represented as a poor peasant (Figure 10). For pro-coup Hondurans, powerful international bodies' unfair treatment of their country after Zelaya's removal was a primary reason for the crisis.

Figure 10:



Que Injusticia. Source: El Tiempo

This widespread sense of being punished by the international community emerged as the result of a series of sanctions that were issued against Honduras shortly after the coup: the World Bank stopped dispersing loans of up to \$270 million and the Inter-American bank paused their lending the next day; the United Nations passed a resolution condemning the coup and calling for the reinstatement of Zelaya as president; Honduras's neighboring countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) sealed off trade for 48 hours;⁵³ many countries, including France, Spain, Italy, Chile, and Colombia recalled their ambassadors (before long, of all the countries in the Western hemisphere and the European Union only the United States had an ambassador that remained in Honduras); the Organization of American States suspended Honduras's membership (the first time the body had taken this dramatic

⁵³ A longer blockade would have been almost impossible because, as the result of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)—these other nations' exports are first transported to Puerto Cortes in Honduras before they are shipped to other countries. Hence, these nations' exports largely relied on moving goods through Honduras. As a result, a longer blockade would have severely crippled the other Central American nations' economies.

action since Cuba was suspended in 1962); and the United States suspended \$16.5 million in military aid (but continued \$180 million in humanitarian aid). As a result of these actions, both in everyday conversations around Copán and in much of the national media, Honduras was routinely described as “isolated” (*aislado*) from the rest of the world (Figure 11 and 12).⁵⁴

Figures 11 and 12:



La Bandera. Source: *El Tiempo*



La Fractura. Source: anon.

General: ¿What happened to the flag? [The Honduran flag usually has five stars representing the five nations of Central America].

Micheletti: It represents how alone we are.

The figure in the raft above is Micheletti. The caption reads, “The fracture of a continent takes nature millions of years. The groups in power in Honduras achieved it in a week.”

⁵⁴ Of course, in practice “Honduras” was never fully isolated. While there was a period when the international community attempted a policy of non-engagement with Micheletti, talks led by Oscar Arias, the president of Costa Rica, were later initiated. The United States continued much of its humanitarian aid, and trade with other countries only halted for a handful of days. In addition, both prominent Hondurans (including the former Honduran president, Ricardo Maduro) and well-connected Washington insiders (most notably Lanny Davis) actively lobbied the United States congress in favor of the Micheletti government, and a number of congressional Republicans went on “fact finding missions” to Honduras.

These international condemnations and their political and economic consequences did little to sway the opinions of those, including many Pentecostals, who supported the coup. From their perspective, what had taken place was not even a coup, but simply a “legal succession” (*sucesión legal*), the result of Zelaya’s illegal attempt to hold a national referendum to determine if Hondurans supported the drafting of a new constitution. Many of those who held this view would insist that, while the military should not have had Zelaya flown out of the country, the events did not constitute a coup because the Honduran Supreme Court had ordered the military to arrest Zelaya and the military had not taken power once he was removed. Rather, Roberto Micheletti, the president of the national congress, and, thus, according to the Honduran Constitution, the next person in line to assume the presidency, had taken Zelaya’s position.⁵⁵ In addition, most people who supported the coup understood Zelaya’s push to rewrite the Honduran constitution as rooted in his desire to serve another term as president, which is prohibited in the current the Honduran constitution. Indeed, much of the national media, which was strongly anti-Zelaya, relentlessly pushed this notion, often by simply referring to the referendum as a vote on “*continuismo*.”⁵⁶

All of this was so obvious to those who supported Zelaya’s removal, that, at first, it was difficult for many of them to understand why the international community

⁵⁵ I do not find these arguments convincing in terms of Honduran law. For what I view as the definitive refutation of these arguments with reference to the Honduran Constitution, see: <http://hondurascoup2009.blogspot.com/2009/10/inaccurate-arguments-about.html>.

⁵⁶ Again, for a number of reasons (including the fact that the vote on whether or not to rewrite the constitution was to be held on the same day as Zelaya’s successor was to be elected), I do not find the idea that Zelaya was attempting to continue serving as the Honduran president convincing.

had reacted with such strict measures. While they might have expected Hugo Chavez, who they saw as the puppet master behind Zelaya's move to the left, to claim that there had been a coup, they were shocked when such a wide range of international actors responded in this way. A common answer among the opponents of Zelaya for the discrepancy between what they understood to be the case and the international response to events was that those who knew the truth remain inside Honduras while Zelaya was outside of the country, spreading his version of events, most prominently during a speech to the United Nations on June 30th, two days after he was flown out of the country.

Those who supported the removal of Zelaya were similarly surprised by *CNN en Español*'s depiction of events as a coup. Many people in Copán told me that while they had always believed that CNN reported the truth, they now knew that other interests guided the network. In pictures of the rightwing demonstrations in national newspapers, protestors held handmade signs that read (in English) "Chavez News Network," the first letter of each word much darker than the other letters. Their evidence that *CNN en Español* lacked accurate knowledge about events inside Honduras also had a cartographic support. Those who opposed the network's coverage would often point out that the map of Honduras the channel used in its broadcasts showed the country's capitol, Tegucigalpa, in the wrong place, much further to the East than where it is located. They would ask how people could trust anything the network said about Honduras when CNN didn't even know where the country's capitol was located?

This discourse of inside/outside was not only a matter of enacting Honduras as an isolated place, but also a discourse about Honduras's borders and desirable and undesirable forms of circulation through them, another point of geopolitical common sense. For many of those who supported Zelaya's removal, the most important entity to keep out of Honduras was Zelaya himself. They feared that if the former president returned to Honduras he would either assume the presidency once again, now with no need to hide (what they viewed as) his true authoritarian intentions, or bring about a civil war. In fact, Zelaya made two unsuccessful attempts to reenter Honduras, once by plane on July 5th, and then a second time on July 24th, when he crossed the Honduran/Nicaraguan border on foot and, largely symbolically, remained in Honduras for thirty minutes. The fact that Zelaya was talking on his cell phone for almost the entire thirty minutes did little to counter the image that outside forces were controlling him. As will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter, Zelaya finally did reenter Honduras on September 21st, sneaking into the country and taking refuge at the Brazilian embassy.

In addition to Zelaya, those who supported the coup were also concerned about agents of leftist nations, particularly Venezuela and Nicaragua, entering Honduras. They often saw these interloping figures as the real force behind the Resistance movement, and the rightward-leaning media would occasionally report that "Nicaraguans" or "Venezuelans" were arrested at Resistance protests.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The Honduran state was not the only state that sought to limit the movement of particular people involved with the coup. Indeed, the United States and the European Union revoked the visas of a

Those who supported the coup did not regard all circulation through Honduran border as dangerous. They were anxious to ensure that certain things, including capital in the form of aid and loans, continued to flow through its border. Especially in Copán, everyone was anxious to see tourists continue to arrive into town. In response to the reduction in these desirable forms of circulation, there were attempts to bolster Honduran nationalism, a move to fortify and develop “internal” resources as a way to compensate for the “external” resources that were being held back. Within Honduran newspapers, this effort to stir Honduran nationalism took a number of forms. *El Tiempo* printed a series of supplements on a range of topics, from “patriotic symbols” to “national heroes.” *La Prensa* ran advertisements under the title “My Country,” with pictures of happy Honduran children and families. All of the newspapers ran advertisements for a “Made in Honduras” campaign run by the Honduran National Business Council, which called on readers to buy Honduran products to offset the economic sanctions. The tag line for the advertisements was “We’re not alone, moving forward together!”⁵⁸

Throughout his brief term as president, Micheletti also sought to fortify an internal Honduran strength and self-reliance in the face of external opposition, often performing these characteristics through his own bluster and tough talk. In early

number of wealthy and prominent Hondurans understood to have participated in carrying out the coup. Their limits on mobility outside of Honduras became especially visible in the middle of September 2009, when Adolfo Facussé—a member of the powerful Facussé family and head of the National Association of Industries, an organization said to have help financed the coup—was denied entry into the United States. Pictures of the obese Facussé, drenched in sweat, covered the front pages of the country’s newspapers, and made their way into political cartoons and Resistance art.

⁵⁸ *No estamos solos. ¡Unidos adelante!*

August of 2009, he told a reporter from Reuters, “We don't accept anyone imposing anything on us. There is no country—no matter how powerful—that is going to tell us what to do” (Rosenberg 2009). Later in the month, in response to the various sanctions and international pressures, Micheletti defiantly claimed that Honduras had enough food to face any crisis that would come as the result of the suspension of international aid, “We have a guaranteed food supply. Basic grains in the country will last until February of next year, possibly March, so we are not afraid of being hit by shortages” (Hernandez 2009).⁵⁹

Pentecostal churches’ participated in these same broad descriptions of Honduras in the wake of the coup, describing it as an isolated place and stressing the importance of protecting the country’s border from nefarious outside forces, but produced them in their own terms. Days after the coup, pastor Aguilar, the pastor at the *Asambleas de Dios* church, preached a sermon in which he compared Honduras to the Israelites as they fled from Egypt. Standing behind the pulpit, he reminded the congregation that at this moment the Jewish people were alone and isolated in the desert. The pastor read from the Biblical account of these events, “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night

⁵⁹ While most people I knew in Copán, even those who supported the coup, did not have a favorable view of Micheletti in general, his brash comments and overall resistance to international pressure was appealing to many who felt that Honduras had always been “pushed around” and dictated to by other countries. They insisted with pride that Micheletti had finally “stood up for” Honduras. In fact, even many Zelaya supporters displayed this concern for the independence or internal integrity of Honduras, explaining that while Zelaya was the best president the country had ever had and the only one who ever truly cared about the poor, he had made a critical mistake in allowing forces from outside of Honduras, primarily Chavez, to control him. While I doubt that Chavez ever had much “control” over Zelaya, this point is important because it indicates how central nationalism was to those on the left after the coup. At least in Copán, nationalism was not the exclusive domain of the right.

in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people” (Ex 13: 21-22). Pastor Aguilar asserted that just as the Jews had been alone in the desert, Honduras was now in the desert as well, but, just as God had been with His people then, guiding them and protecting them, so too was He with Honduras now. He shared in the widespread language that described this as a moment of *crisis*, but insisted that God was protecting Honduras, “He has his hand extended over Honduras, over every citizen of Honduras.”⁶⁰

However, according to the pastor, the fact that God was protecting Honduras and its people did not mean that Hondurans were innocent in bringing about *la crisis*. In contrast to other nationalist narratives in the wake of the coup, which portrayed the Honduran people as the innocent victims of either the nefarious plans or naïve misunderstandings of those “outside” of the country, in pastor Aguilar’s sermon, Hondurans had created *la crisis* by falling into a cycle of sin (*ciclo de pecado*). Following a cyclical trope in the Hebrew Bible, in which Israelites’ sin is followed by Divine judgment, which is then followed by repentance, the pastor insisted that their country could only escape this Divine judgment if Hondurans repented of their sins. The pastor explained that this could be accomplished in two ways: through individuals’ own moral reform and by begging God for mercy.

⁶⁰ “*Dios tiene su mano extendida sobre Honduras, sobre cada ciudadano de Honduras.*” The general portrait of Honduras as isolated from the rest of the world, as possessing a truth that the powerful could not grasp (among both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals), always seemed to me to resonate with a vision of truth in the Gospels. Indeed, the Gospels portray Jesus and his followers as possessing a truth that powerful people (whether Romans or prominent Jews) cannot grasp and, as a result, they are punished.

In addition, pastor Aguilar also emphasized the need to defend Honduras's borders. In his sermon he called on his congregation to say to God, "Lord, make a fence of angels there on the borders. Lord, make a fence of angels there on the border with Nicaragua, there along El Salvador, and here along Guatemala."⁶¹ Such a fence, the pastor explained, would prevent the spiritual enemies of Honduras, demons and other agents of Satan, from entering the country through these leftist nations to lead Hondurans astray. As the result of these efforts, the pastor assured his congregation, God would heal the people of Honduras on an ever widening scale, "First, my own life. Second, the life of my family. Third, the church. And, number four, the nation."

The pastor's invocation of these four scales highlights the ways in which enacting the nation-state within Pentecostal churches is also a process of spatialization, a final point on conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitical productions of the national and national boundaries, which once again, demonstrates the ways in which they are more than one, less than two. Ferguson and Gupta have charted how the nation-state becomes spatialized along both a vertical and horizontal axis, labeling the former encompassment and the later verticality (2002). In fact, the pastor's spatialized description of how Honduras would come to repentance through progressively larger scales is an almost perfect example of what Ferguson and Gupta call "encompassment": the process in which, "the state (conceptually fused with the

⁶¹ *Señor haz un vallado de ángeles allí en las fronteras. Señor haz un vallado de ángeles allí en la frontera con Nicaragua, ahí por El Salvador, aquí por Guatemala.*

nation) is located within an ever widening series of circles that begins with family and local community and ends with the system of nation states” (ibid.: 982).

In relation to the other axis, verticality, Ferguson and Gupta explore “the central and pervasive idea of the state [here in the sense of “government”] as an institution somehow ‘above’ civil society, community, and family. Thus, state planning is inherently ‘top down’ and state actions are efforts to manipulate and plan ‘from above’” (ibid.). Ferguson and Gupta note that this sense of verticality now also appears in relation to the various institutions of global governance. That is, these organizations (such as the U.N., IMF, and The World Bank) are increasingly regarded as “above” nation-states in the same way that the state has been taken to exist “above” civil society, community, or the family.

By drawing attention to these spatial dimensions, we can look back at the conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitical articulations of Honduras after the coup from a slightly different perspective. In the political cartoon where the international community is strangling Honduras, the international community is positioned “above” Honduras, reaching down to attack it. In addition, the national body, represented as an individual person, is depicted as innocent, the artist’s attitude toward the situation revealed in the phrase above the drawing, “What injustice...”⁶² Similarly, in pastor Aguilar’s sermon, *la crisis* is also described as coming from “above,” God. However, in his description, the people “below” are not innocent of this judgment from on high. Rather, their sins are the ultimate cause of this Divine

⁶² *Que Injusticia...*

judgment. In addition, unlike the “Made in Honduras” campaigns or Micheletti’s attempts to bolster Honduran nationalism, there is no sense that the Honduran people should cultivate an inner strength as an antidote to the *crisis*. Instead, the pastor preached that the situation required the Honduran people to put themselves into a proper relationship with God above, to rely on His strength for improving the status of Honduras, not their own. Within these broadly similar spatializations, agency and blame are organized in different ways.

Left/Right

In that same sermon from the previous chapter in which Pastor Aguilar shifted from insisting that Honduras was in crisis to declaring that there was no crisis for those who believed, he asked a direct question to the congregation, “Who confesses tonight that you are in crisis?”⁶³

Members of the congregation looked around the church a bit uncertain, and then the pastor repeated himself in a firmer tone, “Who confesses tonight that you are in crisis?” adding “raise your right hand,” but then he stopped and corrected himself, “no, even better, raise your left hand.” Looking around, no hands were up in the air. “OK” he said with a smile on his face, “now, those who believe that there is no crisis for Him, raise your right hand!”⁶⁴ Everyone’s right hands shot up into the air, and

⁶³ *¿En esta noche quién confieza que está en crisis?*

⁶⁴ *Ahora, levante su mano derecha el que cree que no hay crisis para El.*

pastor Aguilar shouted, “Haleluya! Glory be to God! There is not crisis for us! Amen! There is no misery for us! There is prosperity! There are blessings!”⁶⁵

In addition to an emphasis on nation-states as the primary actors in world events and concerns about beneficial and detrimental forms of circulation, this division between right and left, “friend” and “enemy,” that pastor Aguilar invoked in his sermon was another key element in both conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitical commonsense after the coup. While pastor Aguilar would regularly frame events through this left/right binary, this focus was even more prominent at *Jerusalén* church, and in both churches this division was placed in the context of the imminent Last Days.

Beginning a few weeks before the proposed referendum and continuing for a couple months after the coup, the pastor at *Jerusalén* Church, pastor Carrillo, gave a series of sermons laying out a scenario for the End Times. These sermons provided little information that the congregation would not have heard previously, but the content was presented with an order and clarity that I had not encountered before. In the sermons, the pastor divided the Western Hemisphere into a Manichean dualism. On one side of the geographic and ideological split were the Socialist and left of center governments throughout Latin America (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, El Salvador, along with many others), often referred to as the “pink tide.” On the other side were the countries with governments to the right of center,

⁶⁵ *Aleluya! Gloria a Dios! No hay crisis para nosotros! Amen! No hay miseria para nosotros! Hay prosperidad! Hay bendiciones!*

most prominently Colombia. Pastor Carrillo explained that a Latin American Socialist alliance would soon provide the armies of the Antichrist during the End Times, and that, in contrast, the countries with governments to the right of center would receive divine blessings. That is, the armies of the final battle were beginning to form; nations were choosing sides, and it was imperative that Honduras end up on the right side.

Particularly during election times, it is common in the United States to see maps that divide the country into red states and blue states: red for those states that vote for Republicans, blue for states that vote Democratic. In national newspapers, I would occasionally see maps that divided up Latin America in a similar way, only with the colors coded to be opposite political wing to those maps in the United States: red for left, blue for right (Figure 13). However, within *Jerusalén* and other Pentecostal churches, these maps represent not only the different political ideologies that are currently guiding state, but also the spatialized unfolding of the events of the last days. While I doubt that those at the *Agence France-Presse* who produced the map below intended it and others similar maps to contribute to enactments of Spirit-filled geopolitics, they nevertheless worked in this way.

Figure 13:



El mapa político de América Latina. Source: AFP ⁶⁶

At this moment, just after the coup, the pastor positioned Honduras as existing between these two sides, in a liminal space, neither right nor left. For the congregation, Zelaya had been taking the country towards the Left, away from God’s hopes for Honduras. In fact, in the days immediately after the coup, I received a number of similar bulk text messages from Pentecostal Christians suggesting that Mel Zelaya was one of the “many antichrists” referred to in 1 John 2:18, “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”⁶⁷ In line with the dominant Arminian, rather than Calvinist, conception on the relationship of will

⁶⁶ This particular map was published in the summer of 2011, well after the events being described. I lost all of the similar maps I had cut from Honduran newspapers in the airport as I was returning from fieldwork. This was the only similar map I was able to locate online.

⁶⁷ New International Version.

and grace among Pentecostal Christians, God is understood to provide all nations (as He is understood to provide all people) with grace and the capacity to follow His path, but nations (as, again, with individual people) can always deny this grace and head in the wrong direction, away from the path He desires for them. Would the presidency of Mel Zelaya prove to be just a moment of temporary backsliding for Honduras that would soon be corrected with a new, right leaning government? Or would Zelaya come back to Honduras, placing the country once again in opposition to God's desires as the Last Days approached?

Zelaya's presence was not viewed as the only factor in determining the fate of Honduras. Besides indicating a number of individuals, the term "many antichrists" is also understood to refer to an overall spirit that will come to dominate humanity in the run up to the Last Days, a spirit that is literally anti-Christ, against the messiah and the work he came to earth to accomplish. Indeed, more important than Zelaya's leadership in determining Honduras's path for the End Times was the presence of this spirit within the national body: the spiritual purity of the nation. A common phrase within Pentecostal churches is "a country gets the president it deserves." While there is certainly a democratic aspect to this statement, it does not (or at least not primarily) refer to the consequences of voting for a president, in the sense of "We as a country were dumb enough to elect this person so now we have to live with it." Rather, in a Pentecostal reworking of nationalism "a country gets the president it deserves" because a country's leader is regarded as a type of spiritual outgrowth or manifestation of the nation's spiritual body. A just and moral nation will receive a

just and moral leader, while a nation dominated by the forces of evil will receive an evil and corrupt leader who is anti-Christ.

While absent from the red and blue map above, the United States was viewed as a central player within both conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics in the wake of the coup. In fact, the political position of the United States and President Barack Obama within the red/blue, evil/good binary division of the hemisphere was more fraught than with any other nation or leader in the hemisphere. As indicated, in the first few days after the coup, almost everyone I spoke with, regardless of his or her political leanings, assumed that the United States would support the Micheletti government. A few people even suggested to me that if Chavez mobilized troops to invade Honduras in order to restore Zelaya, then the United States would respond by sending its own forces to counter the Venezuelan military. However, within a couple weeks after the coup, among many who supported Zelaya's removal, the United States had shifted from the "friend" to the "enemy" camp. This revision came about as the United States made a series of diplomatic moves: Obama described events as a coup (June 29, a word the Obama administration quickly stopped using because of its legal implications), the United States' representative voted to suspend Honduras from the Organization of American States (July 4, although the United States worked to weaken the final resolution), and the United States government halted \$16.5 million in military aid to Honduras (July 8, continuing another \$180 million in humanitarian aid). Nevertheless, unlike the positioning of every other nation in the hemisphere, there was no consensus within Honduras about which "side" the United States was

on. For example, while everyone would have agreed that Hugo Chavez was on the left and supported the Honduran Resistance, both the left and the right envisioned the United States as aligned with the other camp. Those who supported Zelaya's removal tended to view the United States and Obama as aligned with Chavez. At the same time, those who opposed Zelaya's removal often saw the hand of United States imperialism as one of the causes of the coup.⁶⁸

Within the Pentecostal churches, pastor Carrillo took the most strident position of any pastor in Copán against Obama. In a sermon he preached a few weeks after the coup, he laid out an argument that Obama was the single antichrist, not one of many. The sermon was largely based on an email sent out by Melvin Bauer, the founder and head pastor of *Jerusalén* Ministries, to all of his churches. Carrillo and Bauer's basis for identifying Obama as the antichrist was largely rooted

⁶⁸ My own view is that United State government's response to the coup is best characterized as muddled. While the United States certainly has a history of nefarious intervention in Honduran politics, there is no evidence that the United States government was involved in planning or carrying out the coup. In fact, sources reported that United States officials worked to avert the coup (Lacy 2009; Kiernan, Cordoba, Solomon 2009, Ruhl 2010), and even that the United State's Honduran ambassador's rejection of the coup plot delayed it from taking place three days earlier, on June 25th (Salomón 2009). President Barack Obama initially declared the events "a coup" and insisted, "America supports... the restoration of [Manuel Zelaya,] the democratically elected president of Honduras." However, this bold stance was quickly toned down, and throughout much of the process the United States government sought to work behind the scenes, first with the Organization of American States (OAS) and then through talks led by Oscar Arias. With that said, two additional points are important to note. First, the United States government, as with any state, is not a unitary entity. As was clearly visible with the United States congress (where a number of Republican representatives claimed that no coup had taken place), and less visible within the State Department, there were a plurality of views within the United States government about both what had taken place in Honduras and what should be done to resolve the situation. Second, at a number of key moments after the coup, the United States government worked to water down joint international action. For example, while the United States voted in favor of the suspension of Honduras from the OAS, it opposed including economic sanctions as part of the measure, a move favored by many South American countries. In addition, the United States government was slow to suspend military aid to Honduras and never ended humanitarian aid. This stood in sharp contrast to "the nearly immediate and total cuts in aid to Madagascar and Mauritania, both of which [had] recently underwent military coups" (Main 2010).

in prophetic texts from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament as well as a number of widely circulated conspiracy theories about Obama in the United States. For example, Carrillo identified both the lion and the leopard as Obama in the following passage from Hosea 13:7-8, “So I will be like a lion to them; Like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside. I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, and I will tear open their chests; there I will devour them like a lioness, as a wild beast would tear them.” Carrillo established Obama as the leopard by asserting that the animal represented the continent of Obama’s true place of birth, Africa, and then as the lion by arguing that this creature represented Great Britain, the colonial power that controlled Kenya, the supposed country of Obama’s birth, at the time he was born.

During this sermon, pastor Carrillo also linked Obama to leftist leaders throughout the hemisphere, preaching that Obama “is someone a lot more leftist than anyone else in this hemisphere, and possibly in the world. What’s more—and this is no rumor, it’s been in the news—that Hugo Chavez said to Fidel Castro, ‘Look, Obama is even more to the left than us!’”⁶⁹ It is important to note, however, that this vision of a fallen United States under the sway of Satan-inspired forces was not new to *Jerusalén* church or *Jerusalén* Ministries. Even when George W. Bush was president, the church viewed the United States as on a path of moral decline. Indeed, they regard the United States as increasingly having fallen into the hands of evil since

⁶⁹ *Este es un hombre mucho más izquierdista que cualquier otro en este hemisferio y tal vez en todo el mundo. Es más—y esto no es rumor, salió mucho en las noticias—que Hugo Chávez le dijo a Castro, ‘Fíjate, Obama es más izquierdista que nosotros!’*”

the presidency of John F. Kennedy (the country's first Catholic president). The election of Barack Obama was simply viewed as the culmination of this trend.

It is important to note that all of the Pentecostal churches in Copán where I conducted research asserted that their activities were not “political.” Unlike in Guatemala, where there is a history of Evangelicals pursuing and occupying prominent positions in state politics, including the presidency (Garrard-Burnett 1998, O’Neill 2010), this has largely not been the case in Honduras. Pentecostal Christians in Copán tend to frown upon such involvement in elected office. For example, a popular Pentecostal pastor in Copán entered the political arena, attempting to become the representative to the national congress from the region, and, as a result, a substantial portion of his congregation left the church. Indeed, there is a long history within Pentecostal and charismatic churches of discouraging this type of involvement with the state, politics, or programs of social uplift (Marsden 1980, Wacker 2001). However, as in Guatemala, there are and have always been notable exceptions.

To understand how pastors can preach that Zelaya is an antichrist and still argue that their churches are not political requires a consideration of what the word “political” (*politico*) means in this context, which can in part be summarized in a single word: corruption. It is almost impossible to have a conversation about anything referring to the Honduran state without the word corruption coming up, and with good reason.⁷⁰ As an example in Copán, after the elections of 2010, when Pepe

⁷⁰ Numbers tell part of the story: According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), in 2010 Hondurans had the fifth highest level of perceived corruption of all the countries

Lobo was elected president of Honduras, there were many rumors in Copán that the *Nacionalistas*, Lobo's party and the party that won the municipal elections, had engaged in electoral fraud that included ballot marking, bussing in voters from other parts of the country, and paying for votes. In a small town, there are always rumors and, at first, I only heard these accusations from *Liberales*, so I assumed that such claims were just sour grapes. One such rumor was that people up in the small villages around Copán had been given 500L notes (a little over \$25) to vote for the *Nacionalista* candidates, but that, in the end, the bills had actually been counterfeit. My take of the validity of such claims began to shift a few days after the elections when I was talking with a staunchly *Nacionalista* friend, and I asked her if it was true that her party had been giving out fake 500L bills. She responded with a sharp and slightly insulted tone in her voice, "Those bills weren't fake!" As I came to discover, members of both political parties are clear about their uses of such forms of electoral fraud. The debate between the parties does not revolve around which party employs such tactics, but rather which party used them first, a move that is taken to have required the other party to respond in kind. It is this sense of politics, in which the word is more or less a synonym with corruption, from which Pentecostals want to be distinguished. Rather than working to change Honduras through the corrupt state and political system, they work with a different, incorruptible ally, the Holy Spirit.

in the Western Hemisphere. In 2008, a year before the coup, only 24 percent of Honduras expressed satisfaction with democracy (Coleman and Argurta 2008, cited in Ruhl 2010).

Perhaps more importantly for the question of why Pentecostal Christians do not consider their efforts to be political is the distinction between politics and ideology. Indeed, between the two major Honduran political parties there is not a great deal of ideological difference. Both parties are ideologically center-right, although the Liberal party has a progressive faction from which Zelaya garnered much of his support. When discussing party politics, people in Copán never discuss ideological differences. In over twelve years of living off and on in Copán, whenever I've asked someone why he or she is voting for a political party, that person has almost never given me an ideological reason in response.⁷¹ Party loyalties are matters of kinship ties and systems of patronage rather than ideology. One's political affiliation is often passed down through families, and if a couple from two different political parties gets married, the wife will often (although not always) align herself with her husband's political party. Hence, when pastors or congregants argue that the churches are not political, besides indicating that they are not involved in the corruption that is assumed to be inherent to the state, they are also indicating their distance from the "political" in the sense of patronage networks that make up the parties, not political ideologies. In fact, churches are often equally mixed between *Liberales* and *Nacionalistas*.

Hence, while churches claim not to be "political," and in terms of what the word means locally, they are not. Rather, they are clearly and proudly ideological, in

⁷¹ The only exception to this characterization I have encountered took place after the *coup*, when progressive Liberals argued that their party should continue with Zelaya's left leaning program.

the sense of having a more or less systematic set of ideas about how the state, economy, and society should be organized and run (cf. Coleman 2000: 213). God as well is understood to take a side in these ideological matters. As pastor Carillo explained during a sermon one Sunday morning, “God says to those who are on his right side... He says, ‘come with me.’ And to those on his left—they’re discarded... God doesn’t commune with that. You need to analyze it yourself. You have to take a position. Right? What are you going to do? Whose side are you going to be on?”⁷²

In Honduras, critical roots of this division lie in the Cold War, particularly in the geopolitics of the Reagan Administration. In the wake of World War II, during the early days of the Cold War, evangelical Christians did not play a large role in formulating the foreign policy doctrines of the United States. However, a number of devout Mainline Protestants powerfully shaped Cold War geopolitics: DeWitt C. Poole, co-founder of the National Committee for a Free Europe, George Kennan, “architect” of the United States’ “containment policy,” and the three most influential States Secretary of State between 1947-1964 (Dean Acheson, Dean Rusk, and John Foster Dulles), among many others had biographies strongly marked by either missionary or pastoral experiences. These men’s backgrounds shaped their articulation of Cold War doctrines in strict binary terms of “Christian Civilization” against “Godless Communists,” a “holy war” against the irreligious, and a struggle for the “souls of men” (Foglesong 1999, Kirby 2003, Rotter 2000). While a number

⁷² *Dios dice que a los que están a su derecha... les dice, “vengan conmigo.” Y los de la izquierda: son desechados... Dios no comulga con eso. Pero hay que analizarlo, tú como persona. Tú debes tomar una posición, ¿Ok? ¿Qué vas a hacer tú? ¿Del lado de quién vas a estar?*

of the underlying theological and political assumptions of these framers of United States Cold War foreign policy would have been quite different than those of dispensationalists, this shared Christian-inflected, binary-based framing made it possible for them to reinforce each other through a type of “looking glass validation” (Piekut N.d.).

After a lull in such absolutist rhetoric, the Reagan Administration strongly reasserted it as part of United States foreign policy. Indeed, in a 1983 speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, Regan referred to the Soviet Union as the “Evil Empire.” In addition, he also almost doubled the United States defense budget, and militarized conflicts around the world (Ó Tuathail: 1998). In a sharp break from the Carter Administration’s policies towards the rebellions in Central America, which viewed them largely as a response to authoritarian governments unwilling to institute reform, Reagan saw in them the long arm of international communism and sought to “rollback” both the leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Indeed, Central American became somewhat of an obsession for Reagan (Figures 14 and 15), and in order to accomplish his goals in the region, the Administration funneled millions of dollars to the El Salvadoran military and sought to overthrow (or at least severely undermine) the Sandinista government by shaping the remnants of the former Nicaraguan National Guard into a counter-revolutionary army called the *Contras*, who established military bases within Honduras (Schulz and Schulz 1994). From these bases, the *Contras* would enter Nicaragua to carry out brutal missions, often against civilians, and then retreat back into Honduras. In an

effort to drum up North American support for the *Contras*, the Reagan administration and the religious right referred to them as “the moral equivalent of our founding fathers” and “Christian freedom fighters.” They also sought to portray the liberation theology-based Sandinistas as anti-religion and as persecuting Nicaragua’s small Evangelical minority (Stoll 1990).

Figures 14 and 15:



Figure 14. Cover of *Time* Magazine, March 31, 1986. Source: *Time*.

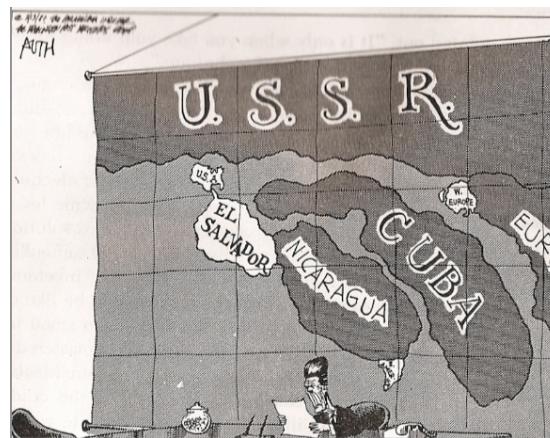


Figure 15. A representation of Reagan’s geopolitical map. Source: *Philadelphia Inquirer*

In this context, Honduras became viewed as geopolitically significant because of its strategic position between Nicaragua and El Salvador in addition to its border with a third Central American nation in the midst of a Civil War, Guatemala. As a result, the United States government increased its military aid to Honduras from almost \$4 million in 1980 to \$77.4 million in 1984. Thousands of United States troops headed to Honduras for training missions and to participate in joint exercises

with the Honduran military, and the United States military built a number of airbases, the largest of which, Palmerola, was located just north of the Honduran capitol. In addition, the C.I.A. began to conduct large-scale operations throughout the country. As the result of this military domination, Honduras became known as the USS Honduras, a United States battleship.

Within Honduras during this time, the country officially ended a long period of military rule when Roberto Suazo Córdoba was elected president in 1982. However, while the country was officially a democracy, political power was largely seen to still reside in the hands of the military, the national elite, and the United States embassy. Gen. Gustavo Adolfo Alvarez Martínez, head of the Honduran military and the power behind the presidency, aggressively promoted an anti-communist national security doctrine in which “the enemy” was described as both the “external threat” of the Sandinistas and the “internal enemy” of leftists within Honduras. Alvarez Martínez initiated a brutal crackdown on what were viewed as dangerous forces within Honduras, spearheaded by the infamous Battalion 3-16 and based on methods Martínez learned from those who had carried out Argentine’s “dirty war”: secret prisons, “disappearances,” and torture. During the 1980s at least 200 Honduran civilians were killed as part of these operations. As Leticia Salomón, a Honduran sociologist and economist wrote in 1984, “Defense lost its internal-external contradiction and [the two] appeared as one and the same thing: defense of the Western and Christian system” (201).

Within the international media coverage and much of the national media that

was opposed to the coup, the period after Zelaya's removal was often described as a "return to the 1980s." At times, the resemblances between the post coup and the Cold War geopolitics were uncanny: the Sandinista leader, Daniel Ortega, was once again the president of Nicaragua; Oscar Arias was once again the president of Costa Rica and attempting to broker a peace treaty, as he had done in the 1980s; Billy Joya, the former head of the brutal death squad, Battalion 3-16, returned to the national spotlight just hours after the coup, and Honduras seemed once again to be at the center of a region-wide struggle between left and right. However, the "return to the 1980s" also referred to the return of the internal brutality of the 1980s, the Honduran military's central role in national politics, censorship of the media, and, most painfully, the return of extrajudicial killings and "disappearances" of leftist leaders and journalists.

Of course, there were also countless ways in which Honduran geopolitics in the wake of the coup were different than Honduran geopolitics in the 1980s. The "pink tide" had created a large left and left of center political bloc throughout Latin America (including all of the countries with which Honduras shares a border) that were strongly opposed to the coup. In addition, while it is certainly the case that the United States military has recently become more actively involved in Honduras as drugs originating in South America now overwhelmingly travel through Central America, Honduras and the region in general are no longer viewed by the United States government as a key geopolitical asset. No leaders in Central America make Obama "see red" as Ortega did for Reagan, and a drawing of Obama's geopolitical

world map would hardly include the region. Other places, particularly the Middle East and East Asia, would take up a far larger portion of Obama's map. Nevertheless, this Cold War history, dispensational history, and the imbrications between them loomed large after the coup as Pentecostal Christians divided the hemisphere into binary terms (Friend/Enemy, God/Devil, Right/Left, "Democracy"/Communism), merged an internal and external "red threat," and dreaded what it would mean for their country if it ended up on the wrong side.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined a Pentecostal form of political engagement, which I have called Spirit-filled geopolitics, as it was mobilized in the wake of the 2009 Honduran coup. My goal has been present Spirit-filled geopolitics as fused with and yet distinct from conventional geopolitics in a number of critical ways, to describe them as "more than one, but less than two." In considering the commonalities between Spirit-filled geopolitics and the conventional geopolitics practiced by nation-states, think tanks, and secular academics, the chapter focused on four points that apply to both forms of geopolitics. First, both emphasize the nation-state as the fundamental unit of international politics. Second, while Pentecostal efforts to spur national development were considered in greater detail in the previous chapter, this chapter examined how Spirit-filled geopolitics also aims to improve the nation, but in this case through cultivating international allies and Divine blessings. Third, both types of geopolitics sort other political actors into the categories of either "friend" or

“enemy.” Finally, Spirit-filled and conventional geopolitics are both concerned with what circulates through the borders of the nation and with encouraging the flow of what they view as beneficial for the country and blocking the entrance of those things they view as harmful.

At the same time, I want to insist that these are both forms of geopolitics (“less than two”), this chapter has also focused on the differences between them (“more than one”). Indeed, both regard nation-states as actors on an international stage, but while conventional geopolitics tends to imagine these actors as natural or legal entities, Spirit-filled geopolitics envisions them as theological beings that God relates to, deals with, punishes, and blesses. In addition, Spirit-filled geopolitics extends the types of entities with which a nation can ally itself or set as its enemy; these include God, the devil, angels, and demons. Conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics also tend to engage in distinct practices to ensure their goals. While the former employs the apparatus of the state (i.e. diplomacy, military, border guards, police) to help achieve its political ends, the latter works through prayer, spiritual warfare, fasting, and moral reform. Finally, while conventional geopolitics is rooted in empty, homogeneous time, Spirit-filled geopolitics largely looks towards the imminent Last Days.

This chapter has also aimed to continue the exploration of a series of core assertions: Pentecostalism as a form of modern governance, Pentecostalism as an enactment, and Pentecostalism as an effort at modernization through hybridization. The next chapter will continue to detail these arguments and Spirit-filled geopolitics,

but, rather than focusing on the Western Hemisphere, it will consider Spirit-filled geopolitics in relation to Israel.

CHAPTER 5:

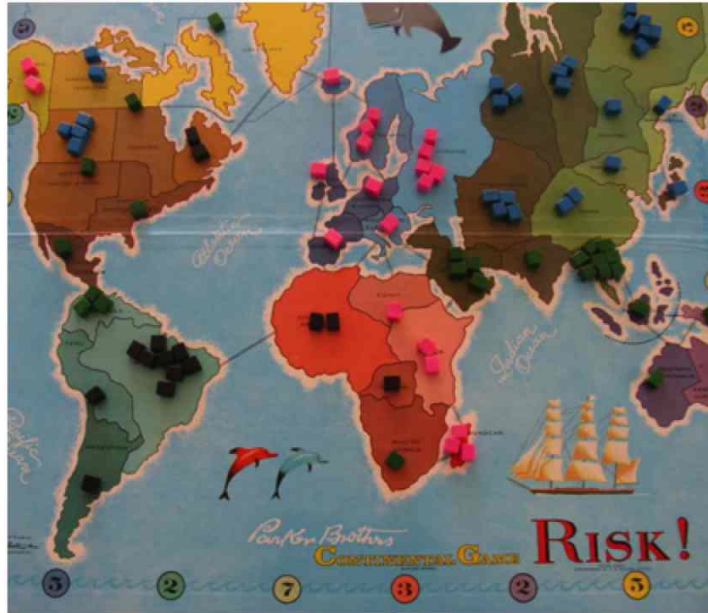
SPIRIT-FILLED GEOPOLITICS: CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Israel's "Place-on-the-Board"

For years I had been talking trash with my Belgian friend James, the owner of a popular hostel and restaurant in Copán Ruins. He is a gregarious guy with a puffy and unkempt haircut that often elicits comparisons to Bon Jovi. We used to argue about who was the better Risk player. Several times we tried to set up a game, but something always came up at the last minute. Finally, one sunny afternoon in 2006, along with two young Dutch backpackers, we laid out the game board on the front patio of James's restaurant to see who was the best player.

The Risk board is a map of the world divided into smaller regions or territories (Figure 16). Each player is given a certain number of "armies"—little plastic Roman numerals in the 1980s version that I am most familiar with. These armies are then strategically placed on the board. The goal is to use these "armies" to conquer all the other players' territories—to control the world. The irony of three Europeans and an American playing a game with the tag line "A game of world conquest" in the middle of Honduras was not lost on us. To absolve ourselves from our countries' colonial sins, we took part in the secular purifying ritual of sarcasm. Biting jokes about former empires and current wars flew across the table.

Figure 16:



Risk Board, 1968. Source: Parker Brothers.

Then, just as we were about to play, Enrique, a friend from *Jerusalén* Church, spotted me from the street and walked over. Looking down at the game board, he asked what we were doing, and we explained the basic rules of the game.

“So, it’s like Monopoly?” Enrique asked.

“Yeah, it’s more or less like Monopoly,” James responded.

“But, it’s a war game?”

“Yeah, war,” James told him, “the goal is to be the most powerful country in the world.”

“Ahhh,” Enrique said scanning the board, “Where’s Israel?”

Introduction

This ethnographic fragment reveals two different visions of geopolitics. More specifically, it reveals two different mappings of the core of geopolitical power in the world. For those of us in Copán who had gotten together at James's restaurant to see who was the best Risk player, the centers of world power were Europe and the United States, which, as the result of colonial projects over the past five centuries, had come to dominate much of the rest of the world. Meanwhile, for Enrique, Israel is rapidly becoming, and, in many ways, already is, the center of geopolitical power in the world as the result of God's love for the Jewish people. While the last chapter considered Spirit-filled geopolitics in relation to the Western Hemisphere, the present chapter examines the organization, strategies, and practices of Spirit-filled geopolitics in Copán after the coup. In addition, just as the previous chapter detailed how conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics were "more than one, but less than two," so too this chapter will consider both how the four points of geopolitics common sense apply to Pentecostals framing of Israel and the importance of Honduras's Cold War relationship with Israel for both Spirit-filled and conventional geopolitical imaginings.

Premillennial dispensationalism, the conservative Protestant map of the entirety of time that was examined in the previous chapter, is critical to Spirit-filled, Israel-center geopolitics. Within this narrative, Israel will be the central stage for the

events of the Last Days and will rise from this devastating period as the most powerful nation on earth. While Enrique certainly holds this vision of the future, he and many other conservative Protestants around the world additionally regard the Jewish population of Israel, and Jews more generally, as a people who enjoy unique blessings from God, and, further, that Christians can share in these blessing if they strive to support Israel. This conception of Israel, along with efforts to bring this future about, is called Christian Zionism. While all Pentecostal churches in Copán are dispensationalist, they are not all Christian Zionist, although most are. At times, this difference can fuel animosity between churches, and Christian Zionists can be critical of churches that do not share their views on Israel. However, at times, they also express sympathy for their fellow Christians who have not yet experienced this powerful source of Divine blessings.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in academic attention to Christian Zionism (e.g. Clark 2007, Dittmer and Strum 2010, Sizer 2004, Weber 2004). However, this research has focused almost exclusively on the history of Christian Zionism in Great Britain and its contemporary manifestations in the United States. While in many ways this emphasis is understandable, after all, Christian Zionists in the United States wield enormous influence over the foreign policy of the state, this chapter aims to investigate some of the diverse manifestations and consequences of Christian Zionism in one “out of the way” place (Tsing 1993), a place where the state lacks the international influence of the United States and where Christian Zionists seem to have relatively few consequences for foreign policy.

The current chapter continues the previous chapter's focus on how Pentecostal Christians engage in four fundamental aspects of geopolitical common sense: imagining the world as primarily composed of territorial nation-states; organizing countries into a hierarchy based their level of development and modernity; characterizing countries as either "friendly" or "dangerous"; and regulating boundaries and forms of circulation. In these terms, for the Christian Zionists, Israel is currently emerging as the most powerful and modern nation in the world, and Honduras can benefit from this Divinely driven development if its government and citizens maintain strong support for Israel. Hence, for them, Israel is the most important "friend" Honduras can have, and it is crucial that the circulation of these Divine blessings that support for Israel produces are maintained, especially after the coup. In part, this came to mean Pentecostal support for the right wing, post-coup government, which Israel was understood to back.

I also aim in the current chapter to further the central arguments that I have been developing throughout this dissertation, detailing Pentecostalism as a modernizing project of governance that seeks to improve both individuals and the nation as a whole through the cultivation of hybrids and relationships across ontological realms. However, unlike in previous chapters, I focus on a single church: *Jerusalén*. Of the three churches where I spent the most time in Copán, *Jerusalén* put the greatest emphasis on and had the most systematic articulation of Christian Zionism. *La Cosecha* was not a Christian Zionist church, and while *Asembleas de Dios* was Christian Zionist it did not play as central a role in church life. Other

Christian Zionist churches in Copán were certainly as committed to Israel as *Jerusalén*; one even had a number of members who had traveled to Israel⁷³ and regularly went to the small villages surrounding Copán to gather signatures for petitions in support of Israel.

I begin with a broad consideration of the history of dispensationalism and Christian Zionism and then moves on to examine their role in *Jerusalén*'s construction of geopolitics. I place this geopolitics within a larger legacy of pro-Israel attitudes more generally in Honduras, dating back to Israeli support for rightwing governments in Central America during the Cold War. Next, I consider how the history of ethnic/racial formation in Honduras, in which minority Arab (called *Turcos*) and Jewish communities occupy a dominant position in the national economy, has consequences for *Jerusalén*'s version of Christian Zionism. Finally, I link the two chapters on Spirit-filled geopolitics through a single event in which, a few days after he secretly returned from exile, the former president, Mel Zelaya, claimed that Israeli mercenaries were trying to kill him.

Christian Zionism at *Jerusalén* Church

Among the most significant innovations in John Nelson Darby's premillennial dispensationalism was a vision of the Bible as containing two major narratives, rather than just one: one plan for His "chosen people," the Jews, and another plan for

⁷³ Christian Zionist tourists from Latin America make up a substantial and rapidly increasing portion of Israeli tourism revenue (Oster 2010).

Christians. According to Christian Zionists, this way of approaching the Bible is an essential doctrinal correction against what they call “replacement theology,” the idea that God abandoned the Jews as His “chosen people” and “replaced” them with Christians after the Jews failed to recognize Jesus as the messiah. Rather, for Darby and those Christian Zionists who follow him, God’s covenant with the Jews is eternal and can never be broken. This assertion is based on their reading of Genesis 17:3-7, in which God establishes His everlasting covenant with Abraham (often regarded as the first Jew):

God said to [Abram], “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.”⁷⁴

In addition, based on their reading of Genesis 12:2-3, Christian Zionists also understand God’s covenant with Abraham to contain the promise that He will bless the Jews as His “chosen people” and also bless anyone who blesses the Jews: “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”⁷⁵ Hence, not only do Christian Zionists envision God as continually blessing the Jews, but also

⁷⁴ New International Version.

⁷⁵ New International Version.

Christians themselves are depicted as able to share in these blessings if they support the Jewish people.

The members of *Jerusalén* were dispensationalists and Christian Zionists well before they broke off from the local *Amigos* church and became part of Hebron Ministries, and their overall views were not dramatically altered as they became part of Hebron. Rather than significant doctrinal changes, their dispensationalist schema received a greater specificity and systemization, and their focus on the Jewish people and Israel became more intense. Marvin Byers, the American founder of Hebron Ministries, concentrates a great deal of his preaching and writing on dispensationalism and Christian Zionism.

Almost every adult member of *Jerusalén* has read a number, if not all, of Byers books, many attend the annual weeklong seminar that Byers leads each Fall in Guatemala City, and a handful have attended Hebron's two-year ministry program at the Hebron Institute. If members were not able to participate in any of these forums, they would be exposed to Byers teachings at least a couple times a week through the local pastor's sermons and occasionally by watching DVDs of Byers's sermons projected in the church. In addition to his ability to produce interpretations of the Biblical text that strike those in his churches as particularly authentic and unadulterated—*pura Biblia*—Byers derives his authority on matters of Jewish people in general and Israel in particular from his “discovery” as an adult that both of his parents are of Jewish descent, which places him in the particularly privileged position of being both Jewish (in Byers's own language a “natural” person of Israel, a

descendant of Isaac) and Christian (a “spiritual” person of Israel, someone who has been “born-again”). He also lives in Israel for part of each year.⁷⁶

In his teaching, writing and speaking, Byers is a relentless producer of binary oppositions. Of course, the binary figure is common within Evangelical Christian discourse, and, indeed, within Christian discourse more generally. However, even in this context, Byers is particularly committed to describing the world as composed of a series of binary relationships and in deriving meaning from the associations of these binary pairs. One of the most significant of these pairs within Hebron Ministries is the opposition between Jews and Muslims.

The members of *Jerusalén*'s antipathy for Muslims, Arabs and especially Palestinians can be thought of as a negative image of their affection for Jews and Israel. Palestinians are often depicted as completely lacking in morals, guided only by their fleshly desires, and capable of focusing on little else but their hatred and jealousy of the Jews. As with many Dispensationalists, the contemporary conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is understood as yet another iteration in a continuing clash that began with the Biblical patriarch Abraham's two sons: Isaac (the son promised to him by God with his wife, Sarah, and viewed as the progenitor of the Jewish people) and Ishmael (Abraham's son with his Egyptian servant Hagar, who was banished along with his mother after the birth of Isaac, and is often regarded to be the progenitor of Arabs) (Gen. 12:1-22:18). Within the terms of this narrative,

⁷⁶ During my fieldwork, the pastor of *Jerusalén* also “discovered” that his mother was of Jewish descent. He explained to me that he was thinking about taking his family to Israel to make *aliyah* (when Jews “return” to Israel).

Ishmael's jealousy over God's blessing of Isaac has been passed down in the "blood" of Arabs, just as God continues to bless the Jews, those who possess the "blood of Isaac."

In addition to enjoying this Divine blessing as descendants of Abraham, members of *Jerusalén* also insist that Jews prosper because they understand "the law of the harvest." Rooted in Prosperity Theology, "the law of the harvest" is a central practice in Pentecostal forms of exchange, holding that when a person gives a gift (particularly to his or her church) he or she will in turn receive back more than was originally given. Among the most widely discussed examples of this supposed Jewish generosity⁷⁷ that circulated during my fieldwork began after the massive earthquake in Haiti during January 2010. As reported in both secular and Christian Zionist media, the Israeli Defense Force established a field hospital in the aftermath of the disaster far more quickly and of better quality than any other country, including the United States. Repeating a phrase that first appeared in a CBS News report that was then picked up by a Spanish language, Christian Zionist website (Yanai 2010), a member of *Jerusalén* proudly described the Israeli installation to me as the "Rolls Royce" of field hospitals.

In stark contrast, while Jewish people are said to prosper as the result of their generosity, members of *Jerusalén* often describe the deprivation that many Palestinians in the Middle East suffer to be rooted in their jealousy of the Jews as

⁷⁷ This notion of Jewish people is particularly interesting because it goes against the grain of a common and longstanding anti-Jewish stereotype, present in Honduras as well as the United States—that Jews are stingy.

God’s chosen people and, as a result, their continual desire to take that which rightfully belongs to the descendants of Isaac.⁷⁸ Indeed, this supposed Jewish willingness to give and Arab or Palestinian desire to take is illustrated in a series of maps at the end of Marvin Byers’s book *Yasser Arafat: An Apocalyptic Character?* in which Israel is portrayed as continually ceding land to Arabs (Figure 17).⁷⁹

Figure 17:



Supposed Loss of Israeli Land. Source: Byer 1996.

In addition to being a story of Jewish generosity and prosperity, the “Rolls Royce” of field hospitals is also a story about Israeli modernity, about its “place-in-the-world.” Pentecostals in Copán tend to view the United States as a nation in decline, a place that the Holy Spirit is leaving. However, in accordance with aspects of the dispensationalist schema, they envision Israel as a nation on the rise: currently more or less on par with the United States, but positioned to soon surpass it in the global hierarchy of nation-states. This trend was clear in the case of the field

⁷⁸ This explanation of poverty as rooted in a groups desire to take rather than to give parallels the church’s explanation of Chortí poverty in Chapter 3.

⁷⁹ For a map that shows the opposite process, Israel continually seizing additional land, see http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_cHUAUH3aEcl/TRdK3zbuWhI/AAAAAAAAAEbQ/mnAYQScHzq4/s1600/israel-palestine_map.jpg .

hospital, where Israel displayed not only greater global mobility than the United States by establishing the first hospital in Haiti, but also they built a more technologically advanced hospital (Figure 18).⁸⁰

Figure 18:



No Diga Silicon Valley. Diga Israel! Source: *Unidos por Israel*
A Facebook post from an organization called *Unidos por Israel*. Referring to Israel’s flourishing high tech industry (and implying that it is even more advanced than that of the United States), it reads “Don’t say Silicon Valley, Say Israel!”

This Christian Zionist geopolitics is rooted in the cultivation of an affective relationship with an object called Israel. Indeed, every definition, delineation, and narration of a geopolitical object is simultaneously the development of a particular set of affects in relation to that object. The ways in which the members of *Jerusalén* define Jews as a people God loves above all others, mark them off as a generous

⁸⁰ While it may seem contradictory that a nation whose very existence is depicted as fragile in the above map is simultaneously regarded as on its way to becoming the dominant nation in the world, for the members of *Jerusalén* this seeming contradiction highlights the role of God’s power in Israel’s prosperity and “place-in-the-world.” God harmonizes contradictions. He makes the impossible possible. Indeed, both this Christian theological claim and a general Christian poetics can be seen in Christian depictions of Jesus. Jesus himself was a contradiction, both human and God at the same moment. And, in a similar manner to *Jerusalén* members’ vision of Israel today, Jesus appeared weak, but was, in reality, strong because of God’s power.

people, and tell the story of their rising modernity is, at the same moment, to imbue them with a sense of delight and pleasure, and to instill a desire to be associated with them, to be close to them, to be allied with them. The same holds for those this geopolitical object is defined against, what Latour broadly calls “anti-groups” (2005: 32), in this case the Palestinians and Arabs. To say that the Palestinians take rather than give, that they are jealous instead of generous, and that they go against the will of God is simultaneously to cultivate a sense of disgust towards them and a desire to distance oneself from them.

Members of *Jerusalén* develop these affective relationships with Jews in their everyday lives, paying close attention to news reports about current events in Israel, both in the national press⁸¹ and Spanish language web sites that presents news from Israel and the Middle East from a Christian Zionist perspective.⁸² Juan, the son of *Jerusalén’s* pastor, who is involved in the church and attended the Hebron Institute for two years, has his bedroom decorated with Israeli flags, a menorah, and a *shofar* (the horn of a ram or other animal that is blown like a trumpet during Jewish services). The church even celebrates Hanukkah most years.

One day, Luis, a church leader, asked me if I could stop by his house to help him with a computer problem. I told him that I probably knew as much about computers as he did, but that I would be glad to take a look. When I arrived at his

⁸¹ Although, within *Jerusalén*, Honduran national media is often assumed to be untrustworthy in its reporting on Israel because they claim that it is dominated by Arabs. See below.

⁸² The most popular Christian Zionist web sites at *Jerusalén* are “El Reloj” www.elreloj.com/ and “Aurora” www.aurora-israel.co.il/.

house the next night, I sat down in front of his computer to discover that his “problem” was that he could not figure out the controls for a game that he had recently purchased in San Pedro Sula called “Israeli Air Force”. After about an hour of us hitting random buttons on the keyboard and then noting what happened to the plane on the screen, we more or less had things figured out. I stayed for a while, watching Luis sit at the controls of an Israeli jet, engaging in battles with Arab nations, and flying missions from the Six-Day War, as well as possible “future wars.”

In addition, just as groups such as *Jerusalén* cultivate affective relationships with geopolitical objects, those same objects take part in forming the members of *Jerusalén* into a group. As Sara Ahmed argues, “The social bond is binding insofar as feelings are deposited in the same object, which may then accumulate value as happy or unhappy objects: a group may come together by articulating love for the same thing, and hate for the same thing” (2010: 38). For members of *Jerusalén*, Israel is just such an object. Often times when I would mention non-Christian Zionist churches to members of *Jerusalén* they would tell me that they did not like those type of churches, or they would express pity for the churches because they were not able to share in the blessings God provides when they pray for Israel. Indeed, they would even define themselves against Christian Zionist churches that they viewed as not possessing a proper affective relationship with Israel. One time, after I had just discovered *Ministerio La Higuera*,⁸³ a large Christian Zionist organization in the capital city, Tegucigalpa, I asked the *Jerusalén* pastor if he was familiar with them.

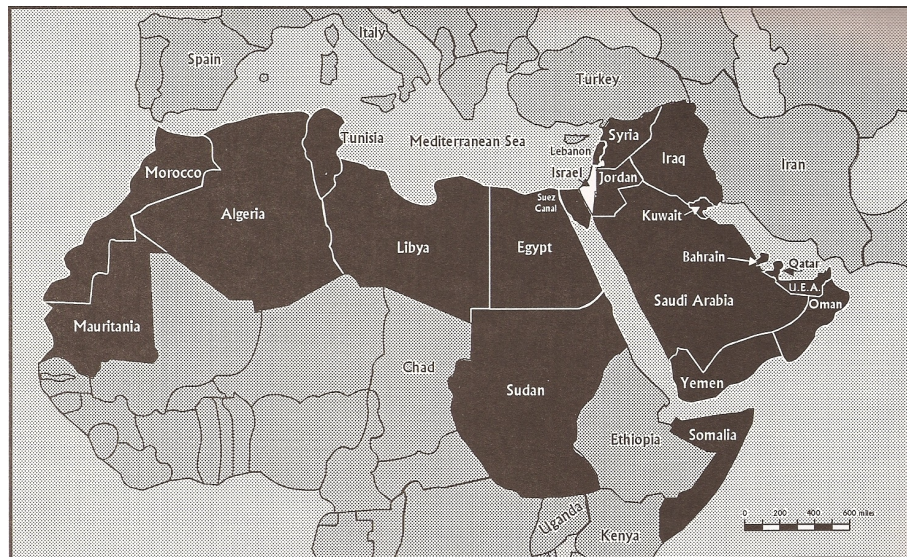
⁸³ www.asociacionlahiguera.org.

He told me that they had some contact with them previously, but that he had cut off the relationship because they had the wrong type of feelings towards Jewish people, one based on “romantic love” (*amor romántico*).⁸⁴

The sense of Israel’s geopolitical position held by *Jerusalén*’s members also had consequences for how they discussed Honduras after the coup. They had long portrayed Israel as a country surrounded by hostile enemies and isolated from international support. Indeed, this sentiment has been geographically represented in a number of Byers’s books. However, in the wake of the coup, members began to describe Honduras in the same terms, often making direct parallels between Honduras and Israel. They argued that just as hostile Arab enemies surrounded Israel (Figure 19), hostile leftist enemies now surrounded Honduras, and, after the series of international sanctions and Honduras’s removal from the Organization of American States, that just as Israel was internationally isolated, so too now was Honduras.

⁸⁴ Although I never asked him, I understand the pastor to have been pointing to a division among Christian Zionists by his use of the phrase “romantic love” in which some Christian Zionist maintain that in order to be saved Jews must still be born again (this is the position of *Jerusalén*) while others maintain that Jews are already saved as the descendants of Abraham (*La Higuera*’s position). Hence, the later love Jews as they are now—romantic love.

Figure 19:



Israel and the Surrounding Arab World. Source: Byer, 1996

Interestingly enough, Honduran Christian Zionists were not the only ones making these parallels between Honduras and Israel after the coup. A number of right wing Jewish bloggers in the United States, Israel, and Canada made similar comparisons.⁸⁵

Members of *Jerusalén* were often anxious to display for me, a Jewish person myself, their knowledge about Jews, particularly by telling stories that demonstrated their awareness of a supposedly specific Jewish inventiveness, modernity, wealth, and influence. Most often these stories were innocent, but simply not true. Bill Gates is not a Jew, nor did Israelis invent the cell phone, although, at times, and much to my surprise, their stories would be accurate. A true hero in Honduras, the soccer player on the United State's national team who scored a goal in the final seconds of a game

⁸⁵ Among a larger number of them, see <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=35718>.

against Costa Rica to qualify Honduras for the 2010 World Cup, is Jewish.⁸⁶ At other times, the stories would not only be false, but also echo a history of potent anti-Jewish sentiments. For example, one Sunday the pastor explained that while most people think that the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States is run by the Jews.

This last, conspiratorial claim is not uncommon among members of *Jerusalén* or among Christian Zionists in general (Weber 2004: 129). Many Christian Zionists reiterate a conventionally anti-Jewish vision of the world in which Jews, either outwardly or in secret, control the majority of powerful institutions around the world. Further, it is important to remember that for these Christians the Jews are the chosen people of God as the result of His will, not anything the Jews did or could do to deserve such a status. The gifts and wealth that the Jews are said to receive are understood to be the result of God's choice and His covenant with Abraham, not some inherent goodness or worthiness of the Jews. While it is true that members of *Jerusalén* describe Jews as generous, drawing on a Biblical theme, they also often depict Jews as rebellious and sinful, and unable to live up to their covenant with God. Indeed, it was not uncommon to hear the pastor of *Jerusalén* preach about pervasive sin and perversion that supposedly characterize contemporary Israel. Still, the congregation is called to love and bless Israel, not because Israelis are necessarily morally good, but because they are God's chosen people.

This vision of a shadowy Jewish domination of the world economy differs from more conventional forms of anti-Semitism in one important respect. Jewish

⁸⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Bornstein

people are considered allies of Christian Zionists, rather than their enemies. That is, Jews are not positioned as a group whose supposed all-pervasive influence and wealth comes at the cost of “the people,” “folks,” or the national body. Rather, for the members of *Jerusalén*, by understanding the Biblical command to bless the Jews, they are able to benefit from God’s love for them. Standing with the Jewish people through prayer for Israel is a key element for achieving not only individual prosperity, but also national prosperity on behalf of “the people” of Honduras. Indeed, this seems to be part of the pleasure of Christian Zionism, the sense of “knowing how things really work” and capitalizing on this knowledge to gain a powerful ally for both themselves and their country.



The Cold War, the Coup, and Israel

In 2004, long before I even knew that a thing called Christian Zionism existed, I was sitting in a bar with Marcus and a few other *Copaneco* friends. As usual, Marcus was the center of attention and had us all laughing, telling us stories

about his drunken escapades. At one point, when there was a brief lull in the conversation, Marcus turned to me, seemingly out of nowhere, and asked, “You’re Jewish, right?” I was a little shocked; this was before being asked if I was Jewish became a common occurrence in Copán. I nodded my head, and I told him that I was indeed Jewish. “Those Jews in Israelis are amazing,” he said, putting his hands on his knees and turning back to the group, “They can take a weapon from anywhere and make it better. They’re so smart.” I had known for a while that Marcus had an interest in the military, and particularly the Honduran military. Pictures of Honduran Air Force jets decorated his office, and he loved to talk about different weapons—guns, tanks, bombs—about which he seemed to have encyclopedic knowledge. But, I never would have imagined that he knew anything about, or would even care about, the Israeli military.

In line with my own politics and vision of my Jewish identity at the time, I responded to Marcus rather sharply, insisting that there was a vibrant Jewish intellectual, ethical, and artistic tradition that went back centuries, and that it was sad to me that this is what Jews are known for today—building great weapons.

“No, no, no, it’s not just weapons,” Marcus responded, brushing away my protests with a wave of his hand. “They’re creative in other ways, and they work hard. Just look at how far Israel has come in... What is it? Fifty years? They’re much more developed than Honduras, and we’ve been a country for almost two hundred years! And Israel’s in the middle of the desert! We’ve got lots of natural resources, and we can’t even take advantage of them to develop this country!”

Marcus is not a Christian Zionist or even a Pentecostal. He is what might be called in English a “lapsed Catholic.” He identifies as a Catholic, but he rarely attends Mass, and when he does, so his wife has informed me, the local priest treats him like “a little devil.” He has become aware of Christian Zionism in recent years through some relatives who attend a Pentecostal church, but he finds their ideas about Israel to be strange. And yet, during our brief conversation in the bar, Marcus displayed similar sentiments to those of the Christian Zionists at *Jerusalén*: a general enthusiasm towards Israel, an insistence on a particular Jewish intelligence and cleverness, and that, in comparison to Honduras, Israel has been able to develop rapidly. Rather than Christian Zionism, Marcus’s visions and enthusiasm for Israel is part of a more conventionally geopolitical discourse about Israel as an ally of the political right in Honduras and Latin America in general that can be traced back to before the founding of the state of Israel, but which solidified in the Cold War struggles of the 1980s when Israel supported rightwing governments in Central America. This narrative circulates through Copán and, it appears, much of the region, and within *Jerusalén* it serves to reinforce a vision of God’s support for both Israel and the political right in Latin America and provides an important link between the two.

Writing early in the 1980s, Dunkerley claimed that Israel had become such an integral part of Central American politics that later historians would have to take account of its participation in any analysis of this period (1982). While later historians generally do not appear to have complied with Dunkerley’s suggestion,

Israel, and particularly the Israeli military, certainly had a substantial impact on the region during that bloody decade, providing arms, advisors, logistical equipment, and military training to rightwing regimes in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, as well as to the Contras.⁸⁷ In a number of cases, the Israeli government filled a gap in military aid when the United States congress prohibited the executive branch from providing arms to these governments because of human rights violations.

Specifically for Honduras, Israel equipped the country's ground forces with Israeli Galil rifles and Uzi submachine guns. Israeli military assistance was also essential in making the Honduran Air Force the strongest in Central America (a particular point of pride and symbol of Honduran modernity). Israel sold Honduras French Dassault Super-Mystère B2 jets equipped with American engines (the first supersonic jets fighters in the region) and also sent Israelis to train the Honduran pilots (Beit-Hallahmi 1987, 88-89; Jamail and Gutierrez 1986, 34-36).

In December 1982, Ariel Sharon, then Israeli Defense Minister and later prime minister,⁸⁸ made a prominent visit to Honduras that was covered by all the major Honduran daily newspapers (*El Heraldo* 1982, *El Tiempo* 1982a, *El Tiempo* 1982b, *La Tribuna* 1982). During his visit, Sharon signed an arms agreement that

⁸⁷ The Contras were largely the remnants of the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza's national guard who, after the Sandinistas took power in 1979, reconstituted themselves (in large measure through military aid from the United States, Israel, and other nations) and carried out attacks from bases in southern Honduras, largely on Nicaragua's civilian population. They were a favorite cause of the Religious Right in the United States during the 1980s. Pat Robertson even reviewed Contra troops in the jungles of Honduras, and his Christian Broadcast Network donated millions of dollars to the Contras.

⁸⁸ Amazingly, this visit took place less than three months after the infamous massacre of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon, atrocities for which the Kahan Commission later ruled Ariel Sharon bore "personal responsibility."

provided Honduras with additional planes, tanks, rifles, and training, and he went to a number of military bases, including those run by Contras (Jamail and Gutierrez 1986, 34-36). The Honduran military seems to have viewed the trip as a success: one “government functionary” in comparing Sharon’s visit to that of Ronald Reagan (another prominent supporter of rightwing governments in the region) two days earlier told *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Sharon's trip was more positive. He sold us arms. Reagan only uttered platitudes, explaining that Congress was preventing him from doing more” (Morgan 1982).

Why was the Israeli government building relationships with and arming rightwing Central American regimes in the late 1970s and 1980s? Jamail and Gutierrez suggest a number of reasons, including longer-term associations between Israel and Central American nations, the desire for profit in the expanding Israeli arms industry, and strategic pressure from the United States. In addition, Israel’s involvement in Central America during this period was also the result of its position within the imaginary, but also very real, Cold War geopolitics in which the Israeli government viewed possible leftist Central American governments as potential allies of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, as, indeed, Nicaragua under the Sandinistas had become. This, in accordance with Israel’s alliance with the United States, placed Israel firmly on the “anti-Communist,” “democratic” side on the Cold War binary (1986: 7-22).

While not all Hondurans share Marcus’s enthusiasm for Israel or celebrate that fact that Israel was “on Honduras’s side” against the Sandinistas and other leftist

movements in the region during the 1980s, this general geopolitical framing of Israel as an ally of the right in Latin America continues to have a resonance for those Hondurans that maintain an interest in international politics, and this framing was dramatically reasserted after Zelaya's removal from power. Just a few days following the coup, after the United Nations General Assembly had requested that no country recognize the new government, Micheletti invoked and amplified this geopolitical vision of a deep and continuing Honduran/Israeli alliance at a press conference when he announced that the Israeli government had offered its support to his government. For the rest of my fieldwork, I would often hear people—on both the left and the right—claim that Israel was the only country in the world that had recognized the Micheletti government. Even Hugo Chavez, when speaking at the United Nations at the end of September 2009, said, “Israel recognized the [Micheletti] de facto government; I think it is the only government in the world that has recognized it” (*cited in Anti-Defamation League 2009*).⁸⁹

The problem with the claim that Israel “supported” or “recognized” the Micheletti government is that it wasn't true. At least officially, Israel never recognized Micheletti's government (*El Tiempo 2009*). Although this was not an easy fact to track down, because so many media sources simply repeated Micheletti's claim, including the Resistance's own website.⁹⁰ In large measure, this notion was

⁸⁹ In a comment that merges the geopolitical focus of the previous chapter and the current chapter, in late July 2009, in response to the Colombian government permitting the United States access to four military bases, Hugo Chavez asserted that Colombia is “the Israel of Latin America” (McDermott 2009).

⁹⁰ <http://hondurasresists.blogspot.com/2009/08/honduran-resistance-to-world-organize.html>

probably so widely held for the simple and obvious reason that Micheletti had reported that it was the case. However, it also seems probable that this idea achieved such wide purchase because it invoked the Cold War geopolitics of the 1980s when Israel was an ally of the Honduran and other anti-Communist governments in Latin America at the exact moment of a resurgent Cold War-based, right/left geopolitics in the region.

So an enthusiasm for Israel and conception of Israel as a “friend” of Honduras is not held exclusively by Christian Zionists in Copán, but, rather, is a discourse that circulates more widely. Guided by the teachings of Marvin Byers, Christian Zionism at *Jerusalén* reworks, reinforces, intensifies, and systematize a pro-Israel stance that is already present among many conservative Hondurans. Indeed, *Jerusalén* members are well aware of this more conventional history, particularly the Israeli government’s arm sales to El Salvador and Honduras during the Cold War, and regard them as having been a great blessing. However, in addition to playing such a central role in their own identity and a much more active cultivation of an affective relationship with Israel, there is at least one important way in which their views of Israeli support for Honduras differ from that of other Hondurans. While non-Christian Zionist Hondurans may regard Israel as a strong and modern ally and be thankful for its support, for members of *Jerusalén* having Israel as an ally also adds force to the idea that Honduras as a country is on the right track in the eyes of God. To be an ally of Israel is not the same as being allies with any other country, it is to be allies with

God's chosen people, those who will fight on His side in the final battle, and will emerge victorious from that battle.

Palestinians and Jews

As noted above, the members of *Jerusalén* harbor a deep antipathy towards Arabs in the Middle East, especially Palestinians. They regard Arabs as forever jealous of the blessings God has given the Jews, just as Ishmael, the supposed progenitor of Arabs, was jealous that his father Abraham recognized Ishmael's half brother, Isaac, as his legitimate heir. While these views towards Arabs are common among Christian Zionists around the world (Sizer 2004: 247; Weber 2004: 17), this section examines *Jerusalén* members' attitudes towards the Jewish and Arab minorities within Honduras.

It may be a surprise to learn that a significant number of Hondurans are of Palestinian descent, with the majority of them living on the country's north coast. They are often called *Turcos* because when they first began to arrive in Honduras at the beginning of the twentieth century they carried Ottoman passports. Based on the 1989 census, Honduran historian Dario Euraque argues that 4% of the Honduran population is "of Palestinian descent" (*de descendencia palestina*), which he claims is greater than the country's indigenous population (*población indígena*) (1996a: 50).⁹¹ In her ethnography of the Honduran-Palestinian community, Nancy González

⁹¹ The term of "of Palestinian descent" may be too vague to provide any clarity Honduran-Palestinians' position within processes of racialization in Honduras.

calculates that 25% of San Pedro Sula, the country's main industrial city, are people of Palestinian descent (1992: 10). Since the early twentieth century this Palestinian community in Honduras has asserted significant control over large-scale commerce and, especially, the import and export commercial sector, as well as manufacturing (Euraque 1996b: 30-35; 2003:2; González 1992: 68-72, 99). Hence, while numerically Honduran Palestinians are a small minority, their presence has had significant consequences for the country's economy and the history of Honduras in general.⁹²

The vast majority of Palestinians who immigrated to Honduras were not Muslims, but rather Orthodox Christians, and over the years many of them have converted to Roman Catholicism. González argues that people of Palestinian descent “are neither residentially segregated nor phenotypically distinguishable from other Hondurans. Thus, they tend to fade into the general fabric of Honduran life when... viewed casually by outsiders” (1992: 10). Nevertheless, González also notes that this type of assimilation is rather recent, and that there continues to be a general sentiment within Honduran *mestizo* culture that Honduran-Palestinians are not quite “real” Hondurans, but rather, “foreign, exclusive, arrogant, and above all, extravagantly rich” and that many Hondurans believe “they acquired their wealth solely in Honduras and at the expense of Hondurans”(143).

⁹² Indeed, Euraque argues, “The fact that non-European immigrants achieved control of the country's elite commerce seem[s] an issue that merit[s] as much attention as the infamous imperialism of banana companies, especially when exploring issues of twentieth-century elite racial and ethnic identities in politics” (2003: 2).

There is a small but prominent Honduran Jewish community as well. Much smaller than even the Palestinian community, an estimated 100 Jewish families live in Honduras (Malkin 2009), and they have in many ways mirrored the commercial success and social position of Honduran Palestinians (González 1992: 138). Jamie Rosenthal, often called the wealthiest person in Honduras and perennial candidate in the Liberal Party's presidential primaries, is of Jewish descent, as is the former Honduran President, Ricardo Maduro (2002-2006).

In general, González description of *Turcos* as largely blending into Honduran society at the same time that they are understood to be a distinct ethnic group characterized by wealth, exclusivity, and arrogance tracks well with my impressions of non-Pentecostals' attitudes in Copán towards Honduran-Palestinians and Jews. As evidence for their "blending in," the topic of *Turcos* or *Judíos* rarely came up and most people I spoke with viewed them as living elsewhere, in San Pedro Sula or somewhere on the north coast, even though two prominent *Copanecos* are of Palestinian descent. On the other hand, when I would specifically ask someone outside of the Pentecostal communities about *Turcos* or *Judíos* or in the rare instance that the topic would spontaneously come up in conversation, most people from Copán would report that these two groups were both wealthy and stingy, and that they were not concerned about the lives of other Hondurans. Indeed, often times when I asked *Copanecos* about the reputation of *Turcos* or *Judíos* in Honduras they would respond

by tapping their elbow with their hand, a gesture that means someone is cheap.⁹³ Once, when I was talking with someone who runs a restaurant out of a small rented space in the center of town, she told me that she was worried about the owner of the building increasing the rent, because the owner was a *Turca* and therefore did not care about poor people, only money. Also, when I would go out with friends in Copán they would occasionally joke that they were going to have to pay for everything that night because I was Jewish and, therefore, cheap.

My first experience with Christian Zionism at *Jerusalén* came when I was conducting preliminary research in the summer of 2006 and renting a room in a house owned by members of *Jerusalén*. One night at dinner, no doubt in response to my endless questions about his church, the family's father asked me if I was *Evangelico* or *Catholico*. I told him that I was neither, but that I had been raised Jewish. He slowly stood up from his chair, stretched his arms out to his sides, and, even though I had been living with him for a week at that point, enthusiastically exclaimed, "Welcome to my home!" He spent the next couple hours explaining to me the basics of Christian Zionism. He described a number of times when he had discovered there were Jewish tourists in town, most often when they were renting rooms in friends' houses, and he would walk across town to meet them. It was a few days later, when the family's father, who was also a church leader, loaned me one of Marvin Byers's books that I became aware of the church's vision of Palestinians in the Middle East.

⁹³ A notable exception to this common response occurred when I conducted a more formal interview with someone who had been a close friend for almost a decade. When I asked him about his impression of Jews in Honduras he told me that until he met me he had always thought that Jews had tails.

My understanding of these views increased as I began to attend church services with the family and hear the pastor's vicious sermons about Arabs.

Although I never heard anyone from *Jerusalén* refer to people of Palestinian or Jewish descent in Honduras during those months of preliminary fieldwork, as I was formulating my research project back in California, I assumed that the church members would translate their discourse about Palestinians and Jews in the Middle East in a rather straightforward way and with a similar intensity toward Honduran Palestinians and Jews. I imagined that *Jerusalén* members would regard *Turcos* as an internal threat, whose anger and jealousy of the Jews placed Honduras in a dangerous position in which God might withhold His blessing from or even curse Honduras. In addition, while I thought that they would consider the presence of Jewish people in Honduras as a great blessing for the nation, I assumed that members of *Jerusalén* would also argue that the "lack of development" and poverty in Honduras was a result of a Divine punishment for Honduran Palestinians' acting in ways that went against both Israel and His will.

And yet, as I conducted my fieldwork, I waited for months for the pastor or members of the congregation to mention Honduran-Palestinians or Jews, but they never did. This absence seemed so conspicuous that I finally started to ask members of *Jerusalén* what they thought about the role these minorities in the country's history and contemporary life. While the answers I received about Jews conformed fairly closely to my assumptions, that they were a great blessing for Honduras and had helped the country to develop, the answers I received about people of Palestinian

descent were far from uniform and never particularly lively. Indeed, even the same person would give me different responses at different times.

While the responses were quite diverse, they did follow certain tropes. There was in fact the trope of the internal enemy that I had expected. One member of the community told me, “The Palestinians here are always against Israel. They carry with them the same spirit of the Enemy [like those in the Middle East].” In this same vein, another member of *Jerusalén* told me that part of the reason Honduras was so poor today was because, as the result of *Turco* influence, Honduras abstained from voting in favor of the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (which established Jewish and Palestinian states). However, other members claimed that the Honduran Palestinians had been good for the country and helping it develop. One church leader told me, “They’ve brought a lot of progress to Honduras, and a lot of money.”⁹⁴ Although, one of these members who expressed this view added that he was unsure of which side Honduran Palestinians would end up on during the Last Days, and all of the members expressing this point of view were always quick to add that the Jews in Honduras were much wealthier than the Palestinians. Finally, there was trope of individual salvation: “It depends on the person. If he has been born again he will be like any other Christian.”

So, what accounts for this diversity of sentiments about Honduran Palestinians in contrast to the unified and clear portrait that the members of *Jerusalén* present

⁹⁴ On this point, these members of *Jerusalén* are in line with anthropologist Nancie González, who argues that Palestinian immigrants enhanced “development in both their original and host communities” (1992: 4).

when discussing Jews in Honduras or Palestinians in the Middle East? Certainly, there would be a much more coherent vision if the pastor had spoken about Honduran Palestinians from the pulpit, which I never saw him do. But this seems to beg the question: Why didn't he speak about them?

However, framing questions in this way can also be misleading. In a sense, I am simply asking: "Why are things different than the way I thought they would be?" And that answer for that question is fairly obvious: I was wrong. And, in addition, it is generally more ethnographically fruitful to focus on what did take place rather than to guess as to why something did not. Nevertheless, this absence seems so conspicuous, particularly in contrast to the intensity of *Jerusalén* members' sentiments towards Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East, and also because this absence occurred in the wake of the coup, a moment in which there was a proliferation of discourse about Honduran Palestinians and Jews in the country more generally, that I think it is valuable to dwell on some possible reasons for the overall lack of references to Honduran Palestinians as well as the diversity of the relatively few comments that I solicited from members.

First, as I mentioned, Honduran Palestinians are overwhelmingly Orthodox or Catholic, not Muslim. Certainly not only the discourse about them at *Jerusalén*, but the entire history of Honduran Palestinians would be quite different if they were Muslims. However, this is at best a partial answer, because, at least from the perspective of those at *Jerusalén*, this distinction between ethnicity and religion is not so clear. For them, what compels Arabs to live so much in their flesh and act in such

violent ways towards God's chosen people is not Islam, but rather their descent from Ishmael, their blood. In these terms, Islam is more of a manifestation of this primary hatred and jealousy, rather than its cause. In addition, while being Orthodox or Catholic might in some ways be "better" for the member of *Jerusalén* than being a Muslim, these would still be "religions" and lack the power of born-again, Protestant Christianity to release them from the power of their fleshly existence.

Second, another reason that may in part explain both the relative lack of discussion about Honduran Palestinians as well as the diversity of opinions about them at *Jerusalén* is that, unlike images of Palestinians in the Middle East, Honduran Palestinians have a reputation for being wealthy, and, as a result, do not fit well with the church's imaginary of people who go against the will of God. While *Jerusalén* is not the strongest proponent of the "prosperity gospel" in Copán, the church maintains that God provides wealth to those who deserve it, generally those with great faith in and obedience to Him. Hence, the pastor and members of *Jerusalén* may pass over Honduran Palestinians because their reputation of being wealthy is not easily assimilated into their conceptions of the causes of prosperity. Although, again, this answer is at best only partial, because, while this may appear to be a contradiction from an outside perspective, Marvin Byers and the Hebron pastors excel at harmonizing narratives for their members that may appear as contradictions.

Finally, unlike indigenous and black Hondurans (or indigenous/black Hondurans), Honduran Palestinians are generally regarded as falling on the "civilized" rather than the "barbarian" side of a civilized/barbarian binary. While not

viewed as *mestizo*, they are certainly within its orbit. This may not have always been the case (e.g. Euraque 1996a), but today Honduran Palestinians tend to be associated with hard work, prosperity, intelligence, and a type of cosmopolitanism. In this sense, they are firmly “civilized.” If other Hondurans view them as having in some way held back the nation, it is generally not understood to be rooted in a biologically or culturally inherited laziness or lack of intelligence, but rather to be the result of their supposed exclusivity and selfishness. Or, put in terms of a Pentecostal system of exchange, while they may not “give” in the ways they should, they are also not viewed as “taking” in the manner indigenous people are.

Hence, the discourse within *Jerusalén* of Arabs and particularly Palestinians in the Middle East as an external threat does not scale down in the relatively smooth, frictionless manner as I had imagined to the national scale. Rather, a Pentecostal geopolitical link is rarely made between Palestinians in the Middle East and Honduran Palestinians, and even when such a link is made, it is not emphasized or made a matter of passionate concern. As I will consider in the next section, a link between an external and an internal threat is not articulated as rooted in a common Arab-ness, but rather as a connection between two un-Godly forces: (external) Muslims and (internal) communists.

Importantly, in the wake of the coup, a great deal of anti-*Turco* (as well as anti-Jewish) discourse emanated from the leftist Resistance, not the Pentecostal churches. The anti-Semitism (here including both Jews and Palestinians) that emerged from the Resistance was rather conventional, describing Jews and

Palestinians as an alien and parasitic presence within the nation that was sapping resources from the authentic *pueblo* or people. Hence, while *Jerusalén* did not regard Honduran Palestinians as an internal threat, for many in the Resistance they (along with Honduran Jews) were just such a threat.

Figures 20 and 21:



Figure 20. Resistance Graffiti I. Source: Photo by Adrienne Pine, <http://quotha.net/node/441>.

Graffiti reads, “Jews, Palestinians, and Arabs out of Honduras.”



Figure 21. Resistance Graffiti II. Source: Photograph by author.

Graffiti in the central park of San Pedro Sula reads “Rule by *Turcos* [Palestinians] and guns.”

I did not personally hear any of this anti-Semitic discourse in Copán, but I also did not spend a lot of time with people who were members of the Resistance. My friends who called themselves members of the Resistance or were sympathetic to the Resistance never made anti-Semitic comments, but this might have simply been the result of my presence or the fact that knowing a Jewish person (me) made them think differently about Jews in general. However, there was a great deal of Resistance graffiti in San Pedro Sula that was anti-Semitic (Figures 21 and 22), and

people I knew who were actively involved with the Resistance or leftist politics more generally told me that they were bothered a great deal by the persistent anti-Semitism they encountered, and numerous bloggers (mostly Americans) involved with the Resistance noted this anti-Semitism as well.

Adrienne Pine, an anthropologist who spent a great deal of time with the Resistance, wrote in a blog post that the Resistance tends to not equate Honduran Palestinians with Palestinians in the Middle East either, often regarding the latter as being similar to themselves as the result of their common experience of oppression (2010).⁹⁵ If this is the case, it appears that for the most part neither the Honduran Resistance nor *Jerusalén* church describe Palestinians as a single geopolitical entity, but rather divide them between Palestinians in the Middle East and those in Honduras.

Connecting The Western Hemisphere and the Middle East

On the twenty-first of September 2009, I was sitting with Karen, the friend who I had taught with a decade before, in her office when her cell phone buzzed, indicating that she had received a text message. After pulling the phone out of her purse and reading the message, she looked up at me and, with a small laugh, said “Cesar says that Mel is back in Honduras.” We both shook our heads and chuckled. We didn’t believe it. There had been too many wild rumors since the coup to believe

⁹⁵ Interestingly enough, a Palestinian group in the Occupied Territories, The Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, issued a press release in support of the Honduran Resistance, which linked the two groups through their common oppression by the United States and Israel. <http://stopthewall.org/analysisandfeatures/2057.shtml> .

it was true, and, in fact, there had been too many rumors that Mel was back in the country to believe this one in particular was true. Nevertheless, just to be sure, Karen turned on the television in the office. And there it was: Zelaya was indeed back in Honduras, inside the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa. As we watched, the embassy was surrounded by Honduran military and police. Mel was trapped, unable to leave the building for fear of being arrested.

A number of tense days followed. The Micheletti government once again established a curfew. Almost everyone I talked with thought there would be a civil war. While trapped in the in the Brazilian Embassy, Zelaya seemed to be constantly on the phone giving interviews.⁹⁶ Just a few days after his arrival at the embassy, a story based on one of these interviews ran in the *Miami Herald*, which quoted Zelaya as saying that “Israeli mercenaries” were torturing him and others in the embassy with “high-frequency radiation” (Robles 2009).

When I heard that Zelaya had made this comment I was shocked. I thought Israel would be among the last things on Zelaya’s mind a few days after returning to Honduras and while trapped in the Brazilian Embassy. My own sense of the world and the place of various geopolitical objects in it was shaken, and the world of *Jerusalén* church, a geopolitics that I had often imagined to be mostly in the members heads, was unfolding before me. Their map of the world had predicted something

⁹⁶ Zelaya remained in the Brazilian Embassy until January 27th, 2010, the inauguration day of the next president, Porfirio Lobo. Lobo was elected on November 29th, 2009, in an election that was scheduled well before the coup. That is, Mel Zelaya only had six more months in his term when the coup took place. After Lobo’s inauguration, Zelaya went into exile in the Dominican Republic. He returned to Honduras on May 28th 2011 based on an agreement called that Cartagena Accords that was brokered by Hugo Chavez and Juan Manuel Santos, the president of Colombia.

that seemed impossible in my own (e.g. Rutherford 2003: 179).⁹⁷ For the members of *Jerusalén*, Zelaya's comment was simply another example of a geopolitical alliance between leftist governments in the Western Hemisphere and Muslims in the Middle East.⁹⁸

Indeed, thinking back to Nelson's comments that anxiety-filled night after the coup, he explained that the church leaders had been paying attention to Honduras's relationship with the left leaning countries of Latin America specifically with the concern that these alliances would lead Honduras on a path towards opposing Israel. Although *Jerusalén* members regard these leftist governments as dangerous for a number of reasons and as carrying out a number of projects that contradict the will of God, their *greatest* transgressions are understood to be their hostility towards Israel and their partnership with Muslim nations. Both in everyday conversation and from the pulpit, this alliance is most often discussed by references to Hugo Chavez's close and widely publicized relationship with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran.⁹⁹ Indeed, well before Mel declared that Israeli mercenaries were trying to kill him, *Jerusalén's* pastor had already positioned the former president as closely allied with Muslim nations, which he maintained were already shipping weapons into left leaning Latin America nations in preparation for the final battle against Israel.

⁹⁷ The most significant Dispensationalist prediction to come true was the establishment of the state of Israel (e.g. Weber 2004: 155), which was predicted almost a century before it happened.

⁹⁸ The prediction of a Muslims and communists alliance during the Last Days is not uncommon within the Dispensationalist system more generally (e.g. Sizer 2004: 125).

⁹⁹ Of course, Iran is not a predominantly Arab country. Within *Jerusalén's* geopolitics "Arab" and "Muslim" can be rather slippery terms.

In this way, within the terms of *Jerusalén*'s geopolitical analysis, the Middle East contains two "Spirit-filled superpowers": Muslim nations and Israel. As with many state and academy-based analyses of the Cold War, these two superpowers are regarded as standing behind and orchestrating most of the geopolitical activity around the world. Also, as with Cold War geopolitical analyses, the superpower-based geopolitics at *Jerusalén* often minimizes the significance of local actors and histories. Indeed, when discussing the alliance between Muslims in the Middle East and their left leaning allies in the Western Hemisphere, members of the congregation would often tell me, "Islam is the hawk and communism, the talons" [*El Islam es el halcón y el comunismo las garras*]. For them, Islam was the real actor, the one that really mattered, whereas communism was more or less a tool that it utilized to achieve its goals.

Nevertheless, the conventional Cold War and *Jerusalén* superpower-based geopolitical analyses differ in their reference to the transcendental forces that are regarded as standing behind even these superpowers. Indeed, state or academic-based Cold War geopolitics also often link the two superpowers with supposedly transcendental forces, for example, freedom, or even God. However, what differentiates the two geopolitical worlding processes on this point is how active the transcendent forces were seen to be in worldly politics, and, as a result, how certain those carrying out the analyses could be about the final result of the conflict.

Conclusion

In the last two chapters I have presented a portrait of Spirit-filled geopolitics in Copán Ruinas, particularly as they took shape around events surrounding the coup of June 28th 2009. While the previous chapter focused primarily on the geopolitics of the Western Hemisphere, this chapter has concentrated on Christian Zionism as a form of geopolitics, and, as a result, has largely centered its attention on *Jerusalén* church's Spirit-filled analysis of the relationship between Honduras and Israel. In both chapters, although not as explicitly in the second chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate how, in a similar manner to more conventional geopolitics, the worlding process of Spirit-filled geopolitics is carried out in four ways: (1) a grouping of the world into territorial nation states, (2) a ranking of these nation-states based on their level of development and modernity, (3) a division of nation-states into those that are "friendly" and those that are "hostile" (4) and an emphasis on what should and should not circulate through a nation-state's boundaries. In addition, while insisting that they are both geopolitics, I have also tried to highlight critical differences between conventional and Spirit-filled geopolitics. These have included their relationships to the state and its resources, their conceptions of time, the actors each regard as making a difference in the world, and the ways in which they endeavor to mobilize these actors.

In pursuing this line of analysis I have had a number of goals. First, examining the worlding processes of Spirit-filled Christians in this way presents another opportunity to rethink an essentialized vision of Christianity. Instead of basing my

analysis on a sharp division between belief and science, religion and the secular, private and public, spiritual and material, I have endeavored to demonstrate how Spirit-filled geopolitical knowledge is made in practice and in relation to a wide variety of discourses and objects.

Second, in these chapters I present a dimension of the Honduran political crisis that journalistic and academic accounts have largely ignored. While I have mostly confined my analysis to Copán Ruinas, I imagine that many of my conclusions about Pentecostal Christians' views on the coup as well as their responses to it are generally applicable throughout much of Honduras. Not all Pentecostals in Honduras opposed Mel Zelaya as president and not all supported the coup. Indeed, I was at one pastor's house not long after the announcement that Zelaya had returned, and he was literally dancing with joy. With that said, the vast majority of Pentecostals did support the coup and part of the reason for that support has to do with the vision of Spirit-filled geopolitics that I have presented here, and not only an "elective affinity" between capitalism and Protestantism.

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