

The Pentecostal Re-Formation of Self: Opting for Orthodoxy in Yucatán

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ABSTRACT *This article examines the dialectical relationship between religious worship and the sense of self. Even while the postmodern self is fragmented and shifting, people may seek religious experiences that oblige them to enact integrated ways of being. In Yucatán in the 1990s, competing values of relationality and autonomy created psychic and social friction. Through their religious worship and life narratives, Yucatecan Pentecostal converts resolved some of this tension by constructing themselves as individuals. Rather than playing with hybridity, they opted for discipline, orthodoxy, and integration.*

Christian reads in a Book that his town will be destroyed by fire from Heaven, the realization of which places a heavy burden on his back. Advised by Evangelist, he leaves his wife, children, and neighbors behind, and sets off on a "straight and narrow path" to escape the City of Destruction, relieve his burden and find eternal life in Celestial Glory in the Kingdom of Mount Zion. His journey is not an easy one, though. Along the way, he is delayed by the Slough of Despond, the temptations of Vanity Fair, and Doubting Castle. He is waylaid by such characters as Obstinate, Pliable, Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, Sloth, Mr. Money-love, and Ignorance. However, Good Will, the Interpreter, and Faithful come to his aid, and he eventually reaches the promised Kingdom.

—John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*

John Bunyan (1644–1688) wrote this allegory of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1675–76 while imprisoned under the English Restoration for his Nonconformist preaching. Three hundred and fourteen years later, in 1990, on the tourist resort island of Isla Mujeres off the coast of the peninsula of Yucatán, Mexico, I watched a Hollywood film interpretation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in English with Spanish subtitles in the tiny Pentecostal Temple of Ebenezer. The service dislodged all of my preconceptions about Yucatán. The parishioners were migrants to the island in search

of jobs in tourist service, and most had been raised in the traditions I had read about in the ethnographic literature: They were from smaller, Maya-speaking farming villages in the interior with traditions of collective Catholic festivals characterized by feasting, dancing, and processions in honor of the saints. Yet here, in this tiny temple cobbled together from wood scraps and slathered with a can of blue paint, the people anxiously listened to the sermon of a preacher from Central Mexico. They knelt down in front of their wooden benches, some prostrating themselves on the packed dirt floor, praying audibly, and loudly, crying, even wailing, confessing their sins and begging God's forgiveness and the strength to lead holy lives. Why, I wondered, would someone reject the religion of his or her childhood and choose this lonely Pilgrim's Progress through life? This paper is a partial answer to that question.

Within the last 20 years, the notion that a culture promotes a singular conception of self has been laid to rest. Instead, selves are shown to encompass a multiplicity of identities and self-evaluations, to change over time, and to change according to context (Battaglia 1995; Crapanzano 1979; Ewing 1990; Kondo 1990; Mageo 1995). The recognition of the fluidity, fragmentation, and contingency of self is directly related to the recognition of the fluidity, fragmentation, and contingency of "culture." However, what is typically missing from these discussions is the practice of self-creation, how a person might actively undertake practices and seek out experiences that reconfigure the self, that downplay certain aspects and highlight others and thereby achieve, if only momentarily, a measure of integration. Converts to a new religious tradition are an apt example of people seeking out new experiences that oblige them to act in new ways. Pentecostal worship in Yucatán offers a set of practices through which former Catholics can play with, rework, and re-form their selves. Converts undertake the pilgrim's progress and imagine and practice individuality.

This paper discusses processes of fragmentation and integration of self in Yucatán in the 1990s. Various social and economic changes occasioned a crisis of self for many Yucatecans, in which they felt pulled between values of autonomy and community. Those for whom religion (either Catholic or Pentecostal) played a central role in their life narrative are also those who appear to a greater degree to have resolved this crisis of self by adhering more strongly either to values of community (Catholics) or to values of autonomy (Pentecostals). On the whole, Pentecostal rituals, discourses, and religiously motivated everyday practices oblige the person to act as and to imagine him- or herself as an individual. The homologies between individualism in practice and self-representation do not explain why certain people convert and others do not, but they point to a general process of self-fashioning through religion. Whether Catholics act and imagine themselves as people wrapped up in community networks or

whether Pentecostals act and imagine themselves as autonomous individuals, the point is the same—that religious practice can be a means of integrating a self divided by contradictory values.

THE FRAGMENTED SELF

Before considering how people may “practice” an idealized self through religion, we must ask why they might ever want to do such a thing. Clarification of terms is important at this point. *Self* and *personhood* are terms that have been used in anthropology, psychology, and sociology to refer to a wide variety of psychological and physical elements, both culturally defined and individually experienced (Fogelson 1979; Harris 1989). Following in one tradition, I use the term *self* to refer to how an individual envisions him- or herself. The self is one’s self-conception, a subjective experience. By *personhood* I mean an understanding or a model of what it means to be a human being: the basic essence, agency, roles, potentialities, and limitations. Earlier generations of cultural anthropologists proposed that one’s self-image is shaped by (unified) cultural representations of what it means to be a person (Geertz 1984; Hallowell 1955:76; Mauss 1985). Certainly, one’s self is influenced by rhetorics of personhood, but the overlap is never complete (Battaglia 1995; Mageo 1995).

In the postmodern era, the self is said to be fragmented, fluid, and contingent upon social interactions. The ever-quickening pace of life, the ever-increasing scope of people’s movements, the ever-increasing span across which objects move, the ever-increasing number of images to which we are exposed by electronic media, all increase the multiplicity of our experiences and the types of people we may envision ourselves as (Deleuze and Guattari 1977; Jameson 1991). Postmodernists celebrate the play of signs, the creative hybridity with which people represent themselves (Anzaldúa 1987; Bhabha 1994; García Canclini 1995). They do not associate hybridity with psychic discomfort; on the contrary, Lyotard proclaims: “Let us wage a war on totality” (1993:46).

The existence of multiple options for self-fashioning does not necessarily cause psychological discomfort. Hybridity can be a source of play, freedom, and creativity. However, if two different behaviors imply values that are fundamentally contradictory, then a person cannot regularly practice both without eventually recognizing the conflict in values. Recognition of the conflict in values may lead to a crisis of self, marked by the questions, “What kind of person am I?” and “What kind of person should I be?”

These basic existential questions were being asked in Yucatán in the 1990s. Although it is doubtful that there was ever a time when Yucatecans (or anyone, for that matter) felt completely sure about their place in the

world, a variety of social and economic changes (described below) introduced practices that contradicted more established understandings of personhood. The basic conflict was one between an individuated versus a relational model of personhood. As such, this difference speaks to a long-standing debate across many disciplines about whether conceptions of *self* or *personhood* (both terms have been discussed) sort into two categories: individuated and relational. Many researchers have seen fit to categorize (public) representations of personhood as generally individuated or generally relational. In the first, the person is envisioned as essentially an autonomous individual, and in the second, the person is envisioned as essentially linked to others in networks of relations. These two gross categories have also been labeled egocentric/sociocentric and individualistic/holistic.¹

However, since no single sense of self holds true across an entire “culture” but, rather, different notions of personhood are conveyed in a variety of public discourses and practices, we need not insist that selves (self-conceptions) are wholly relational or individuated. Instead, a more fruitful approach would be to examine particular sets of discourses and practices (such as specific rituals, ritualized practices, and doctrines) to tease out the variety of notions of personhood they convey. This should be done without assuming that those representations will be uniform, without assuming that those representations will mirror those of other practices and discourses in which a person participates, and without assuming a one-to-one correspondence between a (public) representation of personhood and the (subjective) sense of self at any given moment. Our method should be deconstructive—ever attentive to disjuncture, disagreement, and contradiction. Only then can we detect the tensions between public representations and individual sentiments, and only then can we detect the ways people might try to patch up, heal, or integrate their selves.

A Yucatec Maya-speaking village in central Yucatán (pop. 900), which I give the pseudonym of Balancah, was the setting for the fieldwork that informs this paper.² At the risk of oversimplifying the complexity inherent in past and present, the historical and ethnographic literature, accounts of elders, and contemporary conventional practices lead one to conclude that in general, throughout much of the 20th century, public practices and discourses represented the ideal person as a relational person. This is predictable, given the political and economic history of Middle America. During the colonial period, prehispanic political hierarchies were collapsed, dispersed populations were concentrated, and the new compact villages were made to be the loci of colonial political, economic, and religious activities. Each village was given collective ownership over lands for farming and was named for and protected by a patron saint assigned by the missionary friars. Village officials settled internal disputes, collected tithes

and taxes, and organized villagewide fiestas in honor of the saints who in turn protected and gave favor to the village as a whole. Given the economic, political, and religious pressures for cooperation within the community, it is not surprising that in indigenous communities throughout Middle America, an explicit political discourse of community corporatism developed (Farriss 1984; Monaghan 1995; Watanabe 1992; Wolf 1955, 1957).

During the mid-19th century, the liberal reforms that made communal lands alienable, the experiment with plantation agriculture and debt peonage, and the Caste War seriously disrupted all village life in central Yucatán (Reed 1964; Rugeley 1996). Balanah was a site of Caste War rebellion, massacre, and abandonment but was resettled at the beginning of the 20th century by a new generation of Maya peasant farmers (many of whom were descendants of the pre-Caste War inhabitants). According to elders, an ethic of community cooperation survived that devastating period, and villagewide cooperation continued to be sought in internal politics, in the protection of community lands, and in villagewide fiestas. After the village was granted an *ejido*³ (an official land grant guaranteed after the Mexican Revolution) in 1940, the pressures to cooperate intensified. I was incredulous at the beginning of my fieldwork when villagers would tell me, in mantralike fashion, “We’re all equal here” and “Everything is tranquil here in the village.” Gradually I began to recognize the gravity and sincerity of this political discourse.

In fact, numerous everyday and ritualized conventional practices that are directed toward other goals (of personal health and reputation) have the indirect effect of bringing about some degree of civility and cooperation at the village level. All of these practices imply a relational personhood, the notion that people are inextricably tied up in networks of family and community and that happy, healthy, and admirable people are ones that respect and work to maintain these relationships. The various everyday practices that imply a relational personhood are: a system of health based on the premise that the health of one’s body is linked to the health of one’s relationships; obligatory food sharing; postures and gestures of respect and respectability; and mutual vigilance and gossip. These everyday practices are mirrored by a host of Catholic doctrines and practices that also represent the person as relational and oblige people (with the sacred weight of moral authority) to uphold basic relationships within the community.

Social and economic changes that have taken place beginning in the 1970s have seriously complicated understandings of personhood. On the one hand, pressures to cooperate in order to protect common economic resources have increased. On the other hand, diversification of economic activities, competition within the market, higher education, and labor

migration have increased the economic autonomy of individual people, and numerous circulating images (from television, consumerism, tourism, and Protestant missionaries) have promoted the notion that an independent, individuated life is ideal.

Ironically, pressures to cooperate have intensified in certain ways with the opening of the region to the global economy. As part of Mexico's effort to amass foreign exchange through mass tourism, the tourist city of Cancún was built on the eastern coast of the peninsula and was opened for business in 1974. Balancah is conveniently located on the main highway that stretches across the peninsula, linking Cancún in the east to the ancient Mayan ruins of Chichén Itzá, the colonial capital of Mérida, and other tourist destinations to the west. Balancah villagers cashed in on the increasing tourist traffic and set up their own tourist site. The attraction is a beautiful underground pool (a *cenote*), formed by a cave that opens up into a crystalline-clear underground river. Since the cenote is located on ejido lands, the tourist site is collectively owned and maintained, requiring villagers to cooperate in these efforts. In addition to day-to-day cooperation, they have had to struggle to hold on to this collective resource. In 1994, the county government planned to take over control of the cenote and backed off only after truckloads of villagers angrily stormed municipal offices.

Another threat to collective resources has triggered greater cooperation at the village level. As part of the federal government's increasing adherence to neoliberal economic policies, in 1991, Article 27 of the Constitution was reformed, making it possible for ejido lands to be parceled out and sold. Those villagers who remain farmers or those who simply want to protect those lands for future generations feel at a loss without government protection. They worry that some men, under pressure of debt or the loss of a crop one season, will sell a portion of the ejido lands, alienating it forever. Most of the adults banded together and made a pact to not sell ejido lands. A final test of community cooperation was made in 1997, when farmers from a nearby village planted on Balancah lands. The community chest (proceeds from the cenote admissions) was depleted to pay lawyers' fees in a protracted court case to reclaim those lands.

Despite these increasing pressures for economic cooperation, other regional economic changes have led to economic autonomy and even competition within the village. As Cancún grew to become Mexico's most popular tourist destination and an "economic miracle," it offered temporary and permanent jobs to thousands of (mostly) men from throughout Yucatán and other parts of Mexico. One-third of men in Balancah ages 15 to 70 have at one time or another worked in Cancún or one of the spin-off resort towns. With access to rural villages made easier by the extension of roads, Balancah's school now offers the full six years of primary school in

contrast to having offered only first and second grades up until around 1980. With more education (especially Spanish-language skills), the first generations of young men and women are able to work in offices and stores in the (Spanish-dominant) nearby county seat. Relative ease of travel has made it possible for many to take advantage of secondary schooling in town and even plan for professional jobs in accounting, nursing, and teaching. In 1992, an industrial park for offshore assembly factories (*maquiladoras*) was erected just outside the village. By 1993, 19 young villagers were sewing intimate apparel for Maidenform, and by 1999, probably three times as many were working in new factories for Gap, Jordache, and Banana Republic labels. The final way in which villagers lead autonomous economic lives is through sales to tourists at the cenote. Sixty percent of village women sew and/or sell traditional embroidered dresses, and others sell snacks and nouveau “ancient Mayan” wooden carvings and other crafts. Pricing as well as places to display their wares have led to serious arguments between villagers, sometimes angry outbursts, and at other times a seething undercurrent of tension. The autonomy of economic activities was also given a boost by the increasing neoliberalization of federal agrarian policies since the late 1980s, including reductions of price supports for corn and fertilizer. These policies in combination with the steady decline of the peso since 1982 mean that peasant farmers can no longer sell their corn at a price that would justify their efforts. In droves, men who had any other economic opportunities abandoned farming. None of the men below age 30 farms, indicating the decline of peasant farming. With fewer men interested in farming, the importance of protecting collective lands might come into question. Since individuals can lead autonomous economic lives through wage work, the pursuit of a career, and entrepreneurship, and since competition in sales at the cenote rips tears in the social fabric, villagewide cooperation is more difficult to envision, much less bring about.

At the same time that villagers began living more independent economic lives, other circulating images and discourses conveyed the notion that an independent, individuated life is an acceptable, even desirable, way of life. Foreign and domestic tourists—with their cameras, expensive clothes, jewelry, sunglasses, snorkeling equipment, rented automobiles, and (seemingly indulgent) purchases—imply that one can construct or embellish a new self through commodity purchases. In addition, they introduce goals for consumption that are nearly impossible to achieve on Yucatecan salaries. The first village television was purchased in 1988, and by 1999, almost all households had one. Television programming reinforces the goal of self-creation through consumption, as do popular music, fashion magazines, and the return of migrants home from Cancún where the practice of self-fashioning through personal consumption is everywhere

evident. These expectations for self-fashioning through consumption have been facilitated by the florescence of imported goods stores after NAFTA. Consumption of course does not have to be an individualistic activity, but the kinds of purchases that Yucatecans are making tend to be so. People under age 25 are at an advantage in this new economy, since they have more education, more freedom to travel to the coastal resorts, and their labor is more valued by maquiladora managers. They earn much more money than their parents, and especially if they are not already married, they have many fewer obligations. Their purchases tend to be self-oriented, including clothes, make-up, accessories, electronic gadgets, music, and items for their weddings. One of the most telling signs of a decline in communal values is that the fiesta of the village's patron saint has devolved into a mere shadow of its former self. The day comes and goes with little fanfare, and many hardly even note its passing. The problem, as people tell it, is that no one wants to foot the bill. In the midst of this struggle between communal versus individual values, the Protestant message about individual salvation (discussed below) is just one more discourse that justifies a life apart.

The tension between relational or individuated models of personhood is apparent in village conversations, in diverse statements such as "No one shares anymore" and "You cannot do anything without everyone knowing and saying something to you." I heard: "I am different from everyone here" and "Here in the village, we're all the same."

The tensions between relational and individuated ideals of personhood are also apparent in life stories. Twenty people, Catholic and Protestant, male and female, young and old, dictated their life stories to me. The narrative naturally reflects the relationship between the narrator and the interviewer (Crapanzano 1980), but the narration of a life story is also a process of self-construction. The narrative reflects the feelings of the narrator about him- or herself at the moment of the telling. It reflects the narrator's self-conception, both the self-as-remembered and the self-as-idealized. All of the life stories told to me conveyed elements of relationality and of individuality. The criteria used to identify these different self-conceptions included: frequency of accounts of individual action versus collective action; relative positioning of self as protagonist; relative focus on personal achievements; frequency of discussion of other people; frequency of discussion of relationships, whether these relationships were characterized as strong or weak; and explicit discussion of separation or alienation. Most people did not construct a wholly individuated or a wholly relational self but, rather, indicated in various ways that they felt pulled between two different ideals.

Most interesting was the fact that the people who constructed a more unified sense of self (either more relational or more individuated) were

those for whom religion played a major role in their life narrative. They were also the people whom I knew to be the most religiously active, in that they participated more often in religious services and more often took leadership roles. Of the narrators, the people whose narrated selves were the most relational were Catholics and the people whose narrated selves were the most individuated were Pentecostal converts. It seems their worship enables them to integrate a divided self—to excise one part of the self and elevate another. Catholics could imagine themselves as relational and Protestants could imagine themselves as individuated.

In fact, hybridity is only one option in self-fashioning. Orthodoxy, purity, or integration is another. Rather than seeking to fashion the self as a pastiche out of various signifying practices and objects, people may seek experiences that afford them, if only momentarily, a unified, meaningfully integrated sense of self. In particular, both Catholic and Pentecostal worship offer sets of discourses and practices with which people may effect self-transformations.

In contrast to the postmodern discussion of the liberation of hybridity, some psychological anthropologists have asserted that self-fragmentation is an uncomfortable experience and that people create an illusion of wholeness in the stories they tell about themselves (Crapanzano 1980; Ewing 1990). Ewing suggests that “in all cultures people can be observed to project multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are context-dependent and may shift rapidly” (1990:251). She attributes the shifts to the fact that different “self-concepts” are “associated with incompatible goals,” causing “inner turmoil” (1990:253). One’s different identities—for example, as “mother,” “Latina,” “Catholic,” “lover,” “working class,” and “poet”—dictate different, often contradictory, behaviors, generating in turn competing self-evaluations. This suggestion that different self-conceptions can be contradictory—at times uncomfortably so—is similar to what I have suggested about individuated and relational ideals of personhood. Certainly, whether fragmentation of self is a comfortable experience and an impetus for the play of hybridity or whether it is uncomfortable and prompts self-integration is an empirical question. Self-processes will of course always vary by time, place, and individual.

RELIGIOUS TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

A number of researchers have shown that people construct a unified, orderly self through the process of telling stories about themselves. Ewing suggests that people use the Freudian processes of condensation, displacement, transference, and identification as they “string [together] memories” in order to create a unified self-representation (1990:267). Others have demonstrated the rhetorical strategies through which people create

order within the self in their life stories (Linde 1993; Rosenwald and Ochsberg 1992).

And yet, in discussions of the creation of a unified self, the word dominates. With a few notable exceptions (Babcock 1986; Battaglia 1995), there is little discussion of *practices* by which people construct selves or a comparison of the construction of selves in narrative and in other practices. In particular, the anthropological literature on religion is relatively silent on the topic of self-construction. Even very important works on self-construction in Christian conversion narratives (Lawless 1991; Saunders 1995; Stromberg 1993) leave unexplored the practices of the converts that might effect similar, even parallel, transformations.

The ritual transformation of the person is not a new idea, however. Rites of passage (van Gennep 1960) are intended to bring about a transformation, but whether the sense of self is altered is another question. At the end of his life, Foucault turned to an examination of “technologies of the self . . . which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (1988:18). It is no accident that he explored ritual technologies of the self, in particular early Christian spirituality. In a similar vein, Asad (1987, 1993) has examined medieval Christian monastic practices that were expressly intended to cultivate certain attitudes and habits.

Others have written specifically about religious unification of a fragmented self. At the turn of the 20th century, James (1982) argued that religious conversion is a psychological healing of the “divided self.” “Healthy-minded” people are happy and self-assured. In contrast, “sick souls” are “twice-born,” or conflicted in their views with an “incompletely unified moral and intellectual constitution” (1982:164). The division inside the self creates unhappiness, pessimism, a feeling of moral unworthiness. This unhappiness can be alleviated by the rejection of one part of the self and the elevation of the other, especially through acceptance of an integrated religious doctrine. The conversion experience, of course, is a one-time practice (or twice for those “born again”). What about the transforming effects of ongoing religious practices?

Comaroff (1985) investigates the historical production of divided selves and their symbolic healing in rituals. In precolonial South Africa, she argues, Tshidi subjects were built up by the things they created and with which they created social relationships. Capitalist practice alienates the subject from the object it produces so that the object may be set into free circulation. The healing rituals of Tshidi Zionism symbolically reintegrate persons and the things alienated in capitalism, and in this way heal the divided self. This paper departs from Comaroff’s approach by suggesting

that Yucatecan Pentecostal practices do not reintegrate two aspects of a divided self. Rather, they elevate one aspect of the self: They transform the self by obliging the person to enact, to put into practice, certain meaningfully integrated ways of being.

In an exemplary work, Csordas (1994) describes how healing rituals among North American Charismatic Catholics create a sacred self and thereby effect healing. He takes a cultural phenomenological approach, attempting to grasp the ritual as it is experienced by the supplicant's embodied mind, filtered through the meanings embedded in the habitus. The different ritual elements such as visualization, laying on of hands, healing of memories, forgiveness, and binding of spirits bring about a sense of self as healed, spiritually and physically. As is this article, Csordas is concerned with religious practices that generate an integrated sense of self.

The relationship between religious worship and sense of self is surely dialectical. A practice approach to ritual (e.g., Bell 1992:69–117; Bourdieu 1977) would consider how the ritual obliges (or provides the opportunity for) people to move their bodies in such a way as to practice, to enact, idealized selves and social relationships. Ritual, sometimes, perhaps most of the time, does more than represent a social world—it creates a social world. People move their bodies in specific ways, inhabiting ways of being. Ritual obliges groups of people to come together, and coordinate their movements and their goods at regular points in time, and to perform submission, hierarchy, opposition, community, and/or gender. Alternatively, it may provide people the opportunity to act as isolable individuals, to act independently of others, to focus inward, to establish relationships directly with the sacred. Rappaport hints at a practice approach in his example of how kneeling not only communicates submission but also creates a submissive person: “The use of the body defines the self of the performer for himself and for others. In kneeling, for instance, he is not merely sending a message to the effect that he submits in ephemeral words that flutter away from his mouth. He identifies his inseparable, indispensable, and enduring body with his subordination” (1979:200). Bell adds that “ritual communicates by ‘modeling’: strictly speaking, it does not send messages but creates situations” (1992:111).

In examining religious worship, then, we can look to the kinds of relationships (or nonrelationships) that are modeled and enacted in obligatory religious practices. As will be discussed below, there is a homology of form between Pentecostal religious worship and the Pentecostal narrated self in that both configure the self as individuated. Using an idiom of power, we might say that the ritual “disciplines” people into ways of being and thinking about themselves. An alternative idiom would posit that ritual provides an opportunity for people to enact their ideal selves. The relationship is surely dialectical. People may choose to participate (or participate

more) in a religious tradition that communicates a notion of personhood with which they identify more closely. In turn, through participation in the obligatory religious practices, they may internalize those understandings of personhood, hence transforming their senses of self. This comparison of religious worship and sense of self need not (and most likely does not) occur at a conscious level. Rather, the homologies in form may be “sensed” as sympathetic vibrations.⁴ Because of the homology with the sense of self, the worship “feels” right. The religious tradition is liable to be more logically integrated than the shifting, fragmented sense of self, precisely since it has had time to congeal as a “tradition.” Because of this measure of integration, the participant is given the opportunity to slough off certain aspects of the self and thereby achieve, if only momentarily, a sense of meaningfully integrated purpose and action. Pentecostals can achieve a sense of self-integration through acting and imagining themselves as individuals through their religious worship.

PROTESTANTS IN YUCATÁN

Protestantism has a relatively short history in Mexico. During the colonial period, Roman Catholicism was the official religion and religious liberty was not permitted. The first Protestant evangelization efforts in Mexico, beginning in 1846, centered on the sale and exegesis of the Bible. Then, in the 1850s, elite liberals, fearing the power of the Catholic Church, restricted its income and the activities of the clergy, and the Constitution of 1857 declared religious freedom (Brown 1936:807–824). In late 1872, the first Protestant missions were set up in Mexico by the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) (Brown 1936:766). The PCUSA sent the first Protestant missionaries to Yucatán in 1885 (Board of Foreign Missions 1886:30). In 1936, two graduates of Camp Wycliffe (the predecessor to the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics) went to Yucatán to begin the work of translating the Bible into Maya (Dame 1968). After decades of collaborative work, the first edition of the Maya New Testament was published in 1960 (Sociedad Bíblica de México 1960). But in spite of the outreach to the Maya-speaking people and in spite of the institutional and financial support of the PCUSA, the Presbyterian evangelists continually met with rejection. In 1966, after 94 years of evangelization, the Presbyterian Church in all of Mexico boasted only 30,549 members (Commission on Ecumenical Missions and Relations 1967:50). The missionaries faced not only cool reticence but aggressive resistance, including threats, banishment, even jailings, stonings, whippings, beatings, and the burning of their houses and churches (Board of Foreign Missions 1886:29, 1920:298,

1929:176, 1941:91, 1947:97–98; Dame 1941:187–195, 1968:75; Mathews 1946–72; Passler and Passler 1945; Wallace 1916).

Other Protestant sects did not challenge the Presbyterian monopoly on Protestant worship in Yucatán until the 1950s.⁵ Although the Pentecostal movement dates back only to 1906 (Anderson 1979:4), by the 1950s such sects had spread rapidly from the southeastern United States and California into Mexico and were catching up with the older missions very quickly. In a survey of non-Catholic churches in rural Yucatán in 1981–82, non-Catholics accounted for 3.95% of the population. The “historical denominations” (including Presbyterians and Baptists) claimed 38.1% of non-Catholics. Thirteen Pentecostal denominations claimed 34.8%. Finally, 23.3% were among seven nonbiblical sects, such as the Seventh Day Adventists, the Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses (Fortuny Loret de Mola 1982). Thus, in three short decades between the 1950s and 1981–82, Pentecostal churches had managed to catch up with the Presbyterian Church in membership. According to one calculation, in southern Mexico, Pentecostals have a 15.2% annual congregation growth potential, the highest of all religious groups in the region (Bowen 1996:67). In the 1990s, wherever I traveled in the peninsula, the Pentecostal churches seemed to outnumber the other non-Catholic churches, leading me to believe that, as in other parts of Latin America, now the majority of Yucatecan Protestants are Pentecostals.⁶

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

In Balanah, the only Protestant church is the Church of God of Prophecy (CGP). Before an analysis of CGP worship, I place the CGP within the context of Christian traditions and briefly describe the worship services. The CGP has its origins in a meeting of Baptist missionaries in Tennessee in 1886 (Crews 1990:8–9) and joined the Pentecostal movement in 1908 (Anderson 1979:115). In 1987, it had 74,588 members in the United States and 172,153 additional members spread over 89 countries (Burgess and McGee 1988:209). The CGP began evangelical work in both northern and southern Mexico in 1944 (Stone 1977:69). The CGP may be characterized as fundamentalist, evangelical, Holiness, and Pentecostal. It is fundamentalist in that it teaches biblical inerrancy (or infallibility) and the Bible as the rule of daily practice. It is evangelical in that it teaches that one of the primary responsibilities of Christians is that “Great Commission” of spreading the Gospel to all lands. It is of the Holiness tradition (Anderson 1979:32–33; Crews 1990:8–9) in that it teaches that sanctification (or a removal of the tendency to sin) is a second act of grace following baptism, and in that it seeks Wesleyan perfection and asceticism in daily behavior. It is Pentecostal in that speaking in tongues is considered

a sign of Baptism by the Holy Spirit, a sign of the Second Pentecost of the church, and a sign of the imminent Second Coming of Christ (Anderson 1979:4). The CGP has identified “Twenty-Nine Important Bible Truths” (Church of God of Prophecy 1980:12–13; Stone 1977:232–257) that form the core of its doctrine and that are anchored in specific biblical passages, and these Bible truths are distributed in pamphlet form and preached in Mexico.

Like Protestants elsewhere in Latin America, those who attend the CGP distinguish themselves from Catholics by calling themselves *hermanos* (brethren) and by calling their place of worship the *templo* (temple) in contrast to the *iglesia* (Catholic Church). In 1984, an evangelist from the county seat began going from house to house in the village, talking to people about the Bible, and the first conversions were made. In 1994, 7% of the village’s adult population (total 900) were hermanos. While this is a small percentage, it is comparable to the 16% that regularly attended the Catholic mass. By way of comparison, in 1990, Protestants accounted for 4.9% of Mexicans, 9.3% of Yucatecans, and 6.7% of the county (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática 1992). During a return visit in 1999, an estimated 12% of the village was then Pentecostal.

Becoming an hermano involves a serious commitment of time. Hermanos attend nightly *culto* (worship) services two hours a day, six nights a week. Each culto service includes various periods of prayer, singing, testimony, a sermon, and a collective reading of a Bible chapter. The singing is loud and enthusiastic, accompanied by clapping. During mournful songs, the right hand is extended upward, reaching out to God. Often between songs, the group is asked to give three shouts of “Glory be to God!” each time thrusting the right hand upward to the sky. In testimonies, individual people may voluntarily talk about the different challenges in their daily lives with which God has helped them. In between songs, the group may be called to prayer. During prayer, the men will kneel at their places, and the women go forward to the platform and kneel. They clasp their hands together and place them on the step, and bend, placing their head on their hands, almost lying on the ground. The prayer is supposed to be spontaneous and unique, very vocal, and characterized by emotions of great joy and shouts alternating with deep sorrow, weeping, and wailing. The sermons are interactive, as the pastor refers the congregation to biblical passages that everyone turns to and reads together out loud, and the words of the pastor are met with spontaneous shouts of “Amen!” “Glory be to God!” and “Hallelujah!” from the congregation. Typical sermon themes are the imminent Second Coming of Christ, the need for repentance and reconciliation with God, the almighty power of God and the fury of his judgment, the works of the Holy Spirit, and the wickedness of the “world.”

Hermanos also participate in other, intermittent forms of worship, including regional church conventions, Bible Schools, and seminars. Every few months, “missionary troops” will go around to Catholic houses to talk about the Bible. Most eagerly anticipated are the revival meetings held in various towns at least once every other month, which last for days and can draw hundreds of hermanos from the region. The revival meetings are very enthusiastic, with emotional, charismatic pastors, hymns set to popular music played by electronic instruments and blasted on speakers, trance dancing, laying on of hands, testimonies by people who had been cured during the week, and baptisms of the Holy Spirit marked by speaking in tongues.

THE PENTECOSTAL RE-FORMATION OF SELF

My observations in temple services and revival meetings puzzled me. Other research in Latin America had suggested that the emotional release and fervor of the ecstatic singing and dancing in Pentecostal temples are a key attraction for converts (Nida 1969:8–9). But rural Yucatecans are typically restrained emotionally and physically, and even though hermanos in Balancah are more expressive in their worship than are the Catholics, they are still more restrained than hermanos from other towns. I never saw any of them trance dance, and none have spoken in tongues. Overt emotional and physical catharsis was not the primary attraction for them.

Further, I saw the sacrifices in physical pleasures that the converts made as part of their religion. Hermanos are not allowed to drink alcohol, smoke, dance, or dress up so as to attract attention. All of these activities play an important role in most family and community gatherings in the Yucatán, and so when hermanos abstain from these activities, they in effect alienate themselves socially as well.

Finally, I saw that hermanos were shunned by the Catholics. The hermanos are expected to evangelize, and in so doing, they warn Catholics of the sins of their actions, including devotion to the saints (which is seen as idolatry), drinking alcohol, smoking, dancing, wearing jewelry and make-up, infant baptism, and belief in the sacredness of the clergy. The Catholics are offended by many of these critiques, saying that dancing, drinking, smoking, and dressing up are “natural” and “just fun,” that “they don’t hurt anyone.” They express resentment that the hermanos “think that they are better than other people.” In a place where, according to long-standing political tradition, people are expected to try to agree, when hermanos declare that they are the only ones that know the real Word of God, the statement stings on two levels. But others of the Pentecostal messages are seen as dangerous, not just arrogant. One dangerous message is that

the saints are not to be venerated: Among Yucatecan Catholics, the Virgin Mary, as the saintly mother of God Incarnate, receives more attention than Christ. When *hermanos* convert, they tear down the altars for the saints in their homes and throw away, even break or burn, their saints and crucifixes. Another dangerous Pentecostal message (according to the Catholics) is that people should not be baptized as infants but only as adults, when they are old enough to believe. According to the Catholics, this is dangerous because if a child dies without being baptized, it will be condemned to hell. For their arrogance and their dangerousness, Pentecostals are shunned by Catholics in the village. They are greeted coolly, friendships gradually fall away, they are criticized when out of ear shot, tempers sometimes flare, and marriages of Catholic children to Pentecostal children are thoroughly discouraged.

I wondered what about Pentecostal worship converts found so compelling as to alienate themselves socially. Many of the *hermanos* expressed social alienation to me, but rather than regretting it as loneliness, took it as a sign of their moral righteousness. The independence and autonomy of Pentecostal worship may in itself be attractive to them.

Since Weber, Protestant worship has often been said to promote individuality. Weber suggested that what characterized the Reformation was an “unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual” (1992:104). Salvation was placed in the hands of the individual and was dependent upon the inner development of faith, divorced from any mediation of the sacraments or the church. The individual’s duty was to avoid complications with the inherently sinful world except insofar as finding one’s personal “calling” and laboring dutifully in that activity for the glory of God. This individual labor in the service of God facilitated the hard work, asceticism, and productive investment of emergent capitalism (Weber 1992: 104–109). Other historians have concluded that (in a relative, but not an absolute, sense) Catholicism privileges a relational model of personhood and Protestantism an individuated one (Lukes 1973:94–98; Shanahan 1992; Troeltsch 1931). Religious historian Troeltsch (1931) examined how at various historical moments, Catholic doctrines and practices in general have promoted ideas of corporatism, in which the fate and fortune of the individual person hinges upon his relationships with other people. The salvation of the individual soul is secured through the person’s “works,” through the charity expressed in his social relationships. Salvation is secured not by the individual alone but through the mediation of the church, priests, and saints versus a direct relationship with God. Catholic corporatism is also symbolized in the doctrine of “the body of Christ,” which represents both the community of the church and the physical body of Christ that is ingested in the sanctified host, creating an

actual physical communion between the deity and the group of communicants.

While general differences can be detected, I do not want to reify Catholicism or Protestantism as monolithic entities. In different times and different places, people have given preference to different religious ideas and practices and elaborated new ones along the way. The uniqueness and complexity of the different local traditions deserves full attention.

In the Church of God of Prophecy in Balanchah, converts are inducted into a new way of thinking about personhood and a new way of acting as a person. Although Pentecostal worship does contain relational elements, generally speaking, the person is configured as an isolable entity. The focus of religious activities is on an interior, spiritual core of the person, and salvation is understood to be the result of independent, personal action and belief.

In the CGP, salvation is thought to be worked upon a spiritual core inside the person. This core is variously described as the heart (*corazón*), soul (*alma*), and mind (*mente*),⁷ and these terms are often used interchangeably. Salvation does not hinge on works or sacraments (as in the Catholic Church) but, rather, on a mental act of the individual: faith. Inside his or her own mind, a person is supposed to make a conscious, agentive decision to “accept Christ as his or her personal savior.” Many temple songs express the dependence of salvation upon faith that stems from the heart, including “Sinner, Come to Christ Jesus”:

Sinner, come to Christ Jesus.
Give him your heart and He will give you light.
Liberty your soul will enjoy
If with faith you accept the Lord.

[Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía 1987:376]

The emphasis on individual faith as the path to salvation stands in contrast to the emphasis among Yucatecan Catholics on the importance of “works,” or actions that the person does, including kindness and generosity toward others, that can bring about the Kingdom of God on Earth. The Pentecostal focus is inward while the Catholic one is outward.

The first nine of the “Twenty-Nine Important Bible Truths” of the Church of God of Prophecy are the “order of salvation.” These stages of salvation are the internal experiences of the workings of the Holy Spirit within the mind/heart/soul. They include repentance, justification, regeneration, rebirth, sanctification, holiness, baptism by the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues. Of the first nine “Bible Truths,” only water baptism is a physical sign, external to the inner self. The sacraments of the CGP—water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Washing of the Saints’ Feet—are purely symbolic, not actual vehicles of grace (as are the Catholic sacraments). Baptism is a sign of one’s faith and of a commitment one has previously

made, unlike in Catholic infant baptism, where the baptism is a collective effort by parents and godparents. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the atoning death of Christ, and the Washing of the Saint's Feet is a commemoration of the humility of Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can impart grace, and does so directly in the heart of the person. Participation in the sacraments, like all other works in this lifetime, cannot save a person who does not believe and whose heart is not sanctified.

Temple discourses emphasize a spiritual deity, mirroring the spiritual core of the person. Temple doctrine stresses the spiritual aspect of God (the Holy Spirit) paralleling its focus on the spiritual core of the person. In contrast, the Yucatecan Catholic Church stresses the incarnate aspect of God (Christ) paralleling its focus on action within a social world, and rarely is mention made of the Holy Spirit. In the CGP, Christ made possible the salvation of humanity by becoming flesh and dying to atone for our sins, and yet salvation is impossible without the workings of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works grace within the heart of the individual, making it possible for him or her to believe, repent, be justified and sanctified, and also confers the special powers of speaking in tongues and healing.

In the CGP, the spiritual aspect of the deity enters the spiritual aspect of the individual person in the "infilling" of the heart or soul by the Holy Spirit. Hermanos hope to be filled with the Holy Spirit to receive faith, spiritual strength, and guidance. Many prayers plead for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and sermons and personal testimony at revivals reveal the powers of the Holy Spirit as experienced in people's lives. Many popular temple songs anticipate the infilling of the Holy Spirit, including "God, Send Your Spirit":

God, send your Spirit to my poor heart.
 Fill it with your presence and make me your dwelling.
 Fill today, fill today, fill today my heart.
 Holy Spirit, descend and make me your dwelling.
 You can give me your grace by enveloping my heart.
 I am weak, oh yes, very weak, prostrate at your feet,
 Waiting for you to fill me with your grace and strength.

[Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía 1987:52]

One hermano explained that of the three aspects of the Trinity (God, Son, and Holy Spirit), the Holy Spirit is the aspect of the Trinity that dominates this historical era:

The Holy Spirit is really present right now. He works new tongues. Before you know it, you'll notice that you don't understand what someone is saying. I've seen it happen in conventions and revival meetings. First there was God, and he made the creation. He saved the Jews from Egypt. Then came Jesus. Jesus went around preaching. He was seen directly and personally. He went to heaven, but he said that he would send us our consoler, our guide. That one is the Holy Spirit that is inside the hermanos who have truly believed.

Temple discourses also insist upon salvation as a personal effort. Because the individual is supposed to make an individual decision to accept Christ, *hermanos* reject the infant baptism of the Catholic Church and insist that a person should make the decision to be baptized by his- or herself as an adult. Thus, even though converts were baptized as children in the Catholic Church, they must be rebaptized by a CGP pastor. One *hermano* explained,

Baptism is your decision. The Bible says that if you are ready and anxious to accept Jesus Christ, if you have repented of all your sins, you may do it. If you accept Jesus Christ as your only Savior, your only path, you may be baptized. . . . If you have decided, you have to follow the same steps as Jesus, and you are baptized. Your conscience has been purified. It [baptism] is a sign that you are accepting Jesus as your Savior, as your only salvation.

Temple discourses also represent the person as an individual in his or her insistence upon a direct, unmediated relation with God. In contrast to Catholics, *hermanos* do not have godparents as overseers of their spiritual development. Similarly, they do not participate in prayer services for the souls of the dead because salvation is completely dependent upon one's holiness within this life, not on anything anyone else does on one's behalf. They do not pray to the saints for intercession, saying that the saints were holy people but, after all, just people, and they have no special power to act on our behalf. Besides, they say, the first of the Ten Commandments is that we put no other gods before God, and devotion to the saints is idolatry. Finally, they say that the priests cannot intercede on our behalf because they have no special powers, and besides, they do not reveal the whole Word of God to parishioners and even contradict some of the teachings of the Bible. The *hermano's* relationship with God is direct. As one *hermana* (female convert) told me: "My faith is directly in God. I figure, God hears my thoughts the most directly."

Yet *hermanos* do not just talk about individuality. They also bring about individuality through their religious practices inside and outside of the temple, including prayer, Bible reading, purification of the body, and withdrawal from the "world." These practices enact individuality by (1) animating the inner spiritual core of the person and (2) vilifying and disciplining the body and the body's ties to the social and material world.

Temple prayer isolates and exercises that spiritual core of the person. Prayer is the most important religious practice in the temple and the most important part of the temple service. There are scheduled prayer sessions at the beginning, at different intervals during the singing, after the sermon, and again at the end of the service. Prayer marks the beginning and end, and each of the other main activities. *Hermanos* also mark the beginning and end of each day with prayer. They get out of their hammocks, kneel on the floor, bow with their head in their hands, and thank God for the day

and their health, asking for forgiveness for their sins and spiritual strength in the day to come.

Temple prayer is not the recitation of standardized prayers as in the Catholic Church. The difference is marked linguistically: The repetition of standardized prayers is called *rezar*, and temple prayer is called *orar*. Orar is supposed to be a spontaneous and unique prayer, in which the person decides individually what he will say. Every word, every sentence, is supposed to come from the heart, to express one's deepest emotions. It is considered very important that the person think for himself what he will say. Orar is addressed directly to God, not through a saint as intermediary. As one hermano explained: "It's better if you pray on your own. All that comes forth from your heart. If you want to thank him [God], or confess all the sins you have made. It's better if you send it all directly to God. Not to the priests. Not to just go and confess it to the priests." The person prays out loud, usually begins by praising God for his goodness, generosity, and holiness. He denounces himself as a sinner—not worthy of addressing God—and confesses his sins. He begs forgiveness and asks for strength and guidance in order to be free from sin. He then may ask for help in his personal life or the lives of his family members. In a culto service emerges a cacophony of loud, plaintive voices, each expressing the pains and desires of individual hearts. The cacophony of individual voices in the temple stands in direct contrast to the unison of voices repeating standardized prayers in the Catholic Church.

The second most important temple practice is Bible reading, another mental exercise that exercises that inner spiritual core. The Bible as the "Word of God"—not the pope as the head of the church—is the ultimate authority on the will of God available on this earth. Therefore, the hermano should read and study the Bible a little every day separate and apart from nightly services (and those who cannot read should study with another who can). Hermanos' emphasis on Bible reading reveals a confidence that the individual mind can think critically and directly interpret the Word of God. The Bible is interpreted literally, and it is said to "speak for itself," not requiring the interpretation of the church or others. When new members are baptized, they are asked if they promise to take the Bible as their sole rule of action and are presented with their own Bibles in the ceremony. On Saturdays, Bible study substitutes for the sermon in the culto service. The previous week, the hermanos have been given a list of 20 verses to study along with specific questions regarding elements of faith or practice. The Bible study then begins with a "Bible Bee" game in which the leader of the service shouts out a verse number (not restricted to the assigned verses), and everyone quickly tries to locate the passage. The person who first locates it and reads it out loud wins one point; the winner for the evening is the person with the most points. Afterward, the congregation

discusses the assigned questions in light of the verses. The hermanos are very knowledgeable of the structure of the Bible and biblical history and can recite many verses, even entire chapters, by heart. When questioned about the Twenty-Nine Important Bible Truths, nearly everyone can cite the Bible chapters and verses that document those truths. Again, the difference with the Catholic Church is significant. Although Catholics also recognize the Bible as the “Word of God” and most households do have Bibles, which are guarded as sacred objects, biblical practice for most Catholics consists of listening to the priest or a catechist read a passage from the Bible selected by the archdiocese for the weekly mass. The more devout Catholics attend weekly Bible study, but again, the passages are selected for them, and they do not engage in intensive, independent Bible study as do the hermanos.

A notion of the isolability of the person is reinforced through ritualized practices that isolate the soul, which may be purified, from the “flesh,” which is inherently weak and sinful. Hermanos quote that “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41), and “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). One hermana explained: “But just our flesh wants to sin, not our spirit. They are struggling with one another. The spirit is suffering. It wants to serve God.”

The soul is purified through strict discipline of the body. Hermanos are prohibited from the pleasures of the “flesh,” including dancing, drinking, and smoking. One hermano explained about alcohol: “It contaminates you. The same with smoking cigarettes. The Bible says that if you put just a little bit of leavening in dough, it all turns sour. Because your heart is the temple of God. All those things contaminate your heart.”

Fornication and adultery are other “pleasures of the flesh” denied to hermanos, as is the display of the body in such a way as to tempt another to commit those sins. Such display includes wearing cosmetics, jewelry, revealing or fine clothing, or fancy hairstyles. These things are also criticized as “vanities” that are a form of self-idolatry and distract one from loving God above all. One hermano explained: “Curling your hair is just vanity. The same with make-up. God says: ‘I want you to serve me, but you should be clean, clean, clean—without make-up, without curled hair.’ ”

The convert’s body is regularly purified through fasting. At least once a month, and always before revival meetings, the hermanos fast. They do not eat anything for an entire day, and the only liquid they ingest is the water with which they brush their teeth in the morning. This keeps their hearts pure, they say, and prepared for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Again, the interior spiritual core is purified through a strict disciplining of the body.

The entire set of practices that vilify the body and glorify the inner spiritual core reinforce the notion that the hermano's focus should be inward rather than outward toward other people. The vilification of the body is the first step in drawing firm boundaries between the individual person and others. The next step is the vilification of the social world around them.

The hermano is distinguished, set apart from the social and material world, through a separation from the "world" that is inherently sinful and sin-provoking. The things of the world are "temptations" that keep Christians from concentrating on God and purifying their souls. A Bible passage often recited in sermons, Bible study, and pamphlets defines the world as inherently evil: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Hermanos are restricted from most of Yucatecan social occasions because of their "temptations." Hermanos cannot attend dances, fiestas, or bullfights. They cannot attend weddings and baptisms of Catholic family members because this would require them to enter the church. They are permitted to go to the wedding receptions of family members, so long as they do not dance or drink; when in attendance, they tend to sit at a separate table and mingle little. They may not watch television or listen to the radio and popular music because of their sinful messages. Further, obligatory attendance at nightly services prevents hermanos from participating in all the usual evening social activities such as sports, chatting on the square, or watching soap operas. All of these restrictions have the effect of making it difficult for hermanos to socialize easily with Catholics.

Moreover, social relationships outside of the temple are viewed as dangerous. The social world is also demonized as part of that evil "world." The "world" is full of people who merely try to tempt you from the "straight and narrow path." Hermanos are warned that they will be rejected by the larger society as they reject the things of it but that they should rejoice in this: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke 6:22). And also, hermanos are to turn away from those who reject their teaching: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them" (Mark 6:11). Hermanos avoid entanglements with this "world" and instead look forward to the Second Coming of Christ and a life beyond this one. On one level, this rejection of the "world" is a form of boundary maintenance,

of reminding people of correct rules of action. Yet on another level, this rejection of the “world” is a form of individualism in that it is an act of separation of oneself from others. And the separation is truly significant. Since the “world” includes the Catholic majority, hermanos are in effect separated from most of the people who surround them.

In many ways, hermanos are alienated from other villagers. Excluded from most conventional social activities and without godparent networks, they lead more solitary lives. What is more, they are expected to evangelize, and in their evangelization to directly confront the Catholics by pointing out the evils of their behavior. The Catholics resist such proselytizing, and the hermanos earn their name as “separated brethren” (*hermanos separados*). Hermanos cannot necessarily even find a safe haven within their homes. Conversion often divides households. While husbands and wives may convert together and bring along their children, there are plenty of couples in which one converted and the other did not. In other cases, a married son and his wife have converted yet still live with his or her Catholic parents. In these cases, the difference of opinion eventually brings about confrontation since Pentecostals and Catholics, each doing what they believe they should be doing, engage in behaviors that the others view as dangerous. As in other parts of Yucatán (Fortuny Loret de Mola 1984; Goodman 1982:277; Santana Rivas 1984:353), the evangelicals are shunned by the village at large, and their lives, like that of Christian in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (Bunyan 1941), are often characterized by lonely, introspective struggle.

Pentecostals do not act as individuals all of the time. In fact, the temple forms a community of a sort. Hermanos can look to one another for companionship. In the worship services, they also do some actions collectively, including a collective Bible reading during every service. They call one another “brother” and “sister” rather than by name. They have a “thanksgiving” ceremony in the temple each year (which they say is their substitute for the fiesta), in which they cook a huge meal, play hymns to popular music tunes, and drink soft drinks. Hermanos undoubtedly derive some sense of community from their interaction with other hermanos in the region. And Protestant churches in other parts of Latin America have become community centers, especially where temples form a substitute for village communities divided by rebellion and counterinsurgency (Green 1993; Hernández Castillo 1989; Stoll 1993). However, the number of hermanos in Balancah and the surrounding region is very small; in 1990, only 6.7 percent of the people in the county were evangelicals, and those of many competing denominations. And because the Catholics are so protective of homogeneity within their community, on a daily basis the hermanos face more alienation than they do community. What is more, to assume that hermanos seek a feeling of belonging and community within

a new temple community might be to attribute to them a desire not their own. In fact, the ways that hermanos talk about their lives and their worship suggest that they derive comfort from their very distinctiveness and autonomy.

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

At any given time and place, multiple religious traditions may coexist. Within certain constraints, people may enter these traditions and use them in their lives as befits their psychological proclivities. This does not mean, of course, that religious discourses always meet psychological needs. Certainly, they are often confining, restraining, and stress-inducing. Moreover, people are not always given a choice about religious worship. In other words, we cannot assume that all religious practitioners participate out of their subjective needs. However, all of the adult hermanos in Balan cah chose to convert, and they find something in these practices that resonates with the kind of life they want to lead. The ways in which they talk about their worship are therefore suggestive of how they would like to feel about the world and their relationship to it.

CGP temple doctrines and practices provide a convert with symbols and signifying practices to reconfigure the self. Again, while most of the people who shared their life stories with me displayed feeling pulled between values of relationality and values of autonomy, the people who displayed the most resolution were those for whom religion played a major role in their life narrative. The relationality of Catholic worship appeared to give the Catholics the symbolic tools for reconfiguring their selves as relational selves. In contrast, the individuality of Pentecostal worship appeared to give the Pentecostals the symbolic tools for reconfiguring their selves as individuated selves. In their narratives, many of the Pentecostal converts talked about laying to rest problematic relationships with others and talked about their lives as individual struggles. For Pentecostal converts, even if their self remains divided, torn, conflicted during most of the day, they can, through recollection of temple discourses or participation in temple services, imagine themselves—if only momentarily—as independent and autonomous.

As an example, I offer a condensed version of Don Faustino's (pseudonym) life story. Don Faustino, one of the first converts to the temple, is the most eloquent of the hermanos and seems to enjoy mixing conversation with preaching. In 1994, Don Faustino was 55 years old and a peasant farmer.

The first 20 minutes of Don Faustino's narrative are about his separation from his mother. He grew up on an isolated ranch far from the village. At the age of 18 months, his parents separated, and he was raised largely

by his paternal grandparents. His mother remarried, moved to another village, and he never saw her when he was growing up. From time to time he thought of going to see her, but he did not, not knowing what to say. Every time he walked to the fields, he would walk by her settlement, but he would walk on an outlying path so he did not have to see her. Then, at the age of 15, "I decided I must go and see her." He went to her front door and introduced himself. They visited for a short time, but afterward he heard that her husband thought he was a lover visiting her, and then beat her. Now, Don Faustino visits his mother only rarely, because he does not want her to be beaten.

Don Faustino backtracks to talk about his schooling. Because they lived so far from the village, he did not attend school until he was 12. He then had to live by himself in his grandfather's house in the village. He cooked his own food, washed his own laundry, and collected and sold firewood to the teachers so that he could buy his pencils and notebooks for school. "I was all by myself," he says. He says the other children "hated" him, though he never understood why. The school only offered first and second grades, but he proudly reports that he learned to read and write. Throughout his childhood, in his spare time, he would read storybooks because he liked the stories and did not want to forget how to read.

Don Faustino then moves onto his adult life and his strategy of conflict resolution. He mentions his marriage only briefly, to say that he realized that he needed someone to "look after" him. Soon after the wedding, however, domestic problems arose. His aunts did not seem pleased that he and his wife were living with them. His wife would cry, but he says: "I told her, 'Don't worry about it. Let it go.' Because every problem has its solution. I never argued with my grandparents nor my father. I said, well no. The solution to the problem is to separate yourself from the problem, and you're okay." He and his wife then moved away and built their own house. He returns to the topic of conflict resolution as he reports proudly that all four of his children attended primary school. Just the oldest daughter had difficulty, and she finished only first grade. He says that another girl "hated" her, tore her notebook, and made fun of her. He took his daughter out of school, telling her, "Leave it! Let the studies go. And that's that!"

Don Faustino talks about another struggle that he resolved on his own. He says he began drinking when he was 17 years old, and he takes full responsibility for his actions: "I don't blame the older people or anything. I blame my own self because I did not pay attention to what I was doing." He was the sacristan in the Catholic Church and so was responsible for buying the alcohol for all the fiestas, since "alcohol is really what men think about when they think of the fiestas." He recalls one time when his drinking got the best of him. He had taken some corn to sell in a neighboring town. He met up with some friends, who invited him to a beer. He had

to follow suit and so bought them a round. They then purchased a bottle of rum for the three of them, and then another, and another. He blacked out and does not remember anything from that point on, including how he got home. He passed out on the bed without having bathed or eaten (truly horrific in Yucatecan terms). When he woke up, he opened his coin purse, and there was nothing inside; he had somehow lost all the money. This incident made him realize that his drinking was not “noble,” and he says: “And so I decided all by myself that I had to quit drinking. Since that time, I have not drank. I quit, all by myself.”

Don Faustino then launches into talking about his religious beliefs. He says that when he was a child, evangelists would pass through the settlements from time to time, but his grandfather warned him that they just travel around lying to people, that they are false prophets, even the Anti-Christ. But then, God interceded and put him on the path of discovery: “God gave me a calling. He sent me his Word. He took pity on me, because I was, well, lost. My thoughts were with this world. He sent me one of his children who brought me a New Testament. The New Testament that he brought me is the one that I read today, as I’ve told you. But at that time, I didn’t read it because I was told that it was not good.”

But Don Faustino’s relationship with the Bible grew. People had been saying that the Protestant and Catholic Bibles were different and that the Protestant Bible was full of lies. Trusting his own judgment, he bought a Bible from a Catholic missionary to see if that were true. Over a period of months, whenever he had time, he sat down with his two Bibles and compared them word for word, chapter for chapter, verse for verse. He reports: “And I saw that they were the same. Exactly the same. And so I put my faith in it.” Faith follows empirical observation, it seems.

The Bible then became his rule of action. If he read something in the Bible, he felt that he should follow it. He told his wife: “The Bible says that all of the desires of the flesh, all of the concupiscence, all of the pleasure, we must not continue. We must repent and leave behind all of that.” He read that drinking was a sin, and so he felt stronger in his abstinence. He read that there is no place for idolaters in heaven, and he came to recognize prayers to saints as a form of idolatry. “That’s when I saw that everything I was doing was contrary to the Word of God; it was all in vain.” He told his wife, “As for me, I have decided to give myself to the service of God.”

At that time, he still did not attend any temple services (none were held in the village), but he continued reading his Bible. He stopped going to mass except to hear the priest read the gospel. He would take along his Bible and compare what the priest read to what was in his Bible. He noticed, with shock, that the priest would not read the entire passage. He was dismayed that the priest would tell the congregation things contrary to

what he had read in the Bible; the priest told the men that they could drink, if in measure, and that the girls could go dancing, as long as they returned home in time to sleep enough to be alert during the next day's mass.

Don Faustino first attended temple services in 1985 at the invitation of a friend. He liked the singing, the preaching, and the readings from the Bible. The faithfulness to scripture impressed him, and he decided to follow temple worship: "Since I was more or less used to reading it [the Bible], well, I listened. And I saw how it was. Everything that he read, he talked about, he explained, I had read. I didn't sense that it was odd. I liked it. And so I said, I will decide to continue with [attending culto], too. Because it was talked about biblically. And so, I go!"

Don Faustino then begins a theme that characterizes the rest of his narrative: the idea that the life of a Christian is a lonely one. He talks about the early period after his conversion, when his friends presented him with temptations. People would invite him to dances, but he would not go. His friends would invite him to share a drink on the square at night, and he would have to decline, even though he felt the urge to drink: "It called after me." At first, he was embarrassed to be seen with his Bible in public. He would not walk through the center of town on his way to the temple (the most direct path) but would take the side roads so as not to be seen and ridiculed. Sometimes his friends would detain him along the way, saying, "Why are you walking so fast? Let's smoke just one little cigarette." He knew, though, that "We must renounce the things of this world, even though it is a struggle."

Don Faustino takes comfort in the thought that his lonely struggle will lead to eternal reward. He compares the Final Judgment to school: Just as a teacher assigns a grade in a class, God assigns grades to our lives. But how he judges us is according to whether or not we truly have faith. He says that we face many struggles during our lifetime, and these all are tests of our faith. He proffers an example:

And then, along comes a man with a knife. He says: "If you say that you will stop serving God, you are free to go. But if you continue to say that you serve God, I will kill you." And you will die by the point of a blade. If you get scared, you say, "Well, then I won't serve God." You have saved your body, but you know what, you've lost your soul. . . . But God says, "Whoever gives his life on my behalf will be saved." And that's why, if your life here on earth is difficult because you're serving God, you know that you will go to be with Jesus.

Don Faustino uses the biblical metaphor of the straight and narrow path (Matt. 7:13–14). He talks about how God sent his son to atone for our sins because he wants us to be saved. But God created two places for the afterlife:

He made two places, and for that reason, it's said that there are two paths. One of the places has eternal joy. Everyone that obeys will reach that eternal joy. Everyone that

does not obey, God says, will perish along with the Enemy [Satan]. But it's not as if God puts people in the eternal torment. On their own, people choose their path. God says that the wide path is the road to death. The narrow path is the road to the joy. But people won't listen! They don't care—if it's a wide road, they like it better. People say: "Well, it seems as if everyone prefers the wide path." But about the narrow one: "How could we possibly go? Only with great pain!" Because the wide road, that's this world. People say, "It's spacious, beautiful, agreeable in every way!" They take in all the pleasures of the world. . . . But the narrow path bears affliction and anguish. No one takes that path. Just a very few go. But the truth is, that's where the joy is.

Don Faustino even prefers to belong to a small group of people. If he regretted his alienation as a child, he has accepted that as a necessary state, because it signals his eventual salvation. He says:

God wants us to arrive [in heaven], even if it be only one person. For that reason, he says, "If there are two or three, they won't fit in my hand." It can't hold many. . . . Consider the example of Lot. Four of them left—were taken out of—the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah. But his wife did not arrive at the destination. She turned around, and became like a statue. For that reason, if there are three people, God says, he is there among them. So many people were left behind in the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were so sinful. They all perished. . . . For that reason, if you see just a few people, you know that they are following the Word of God.

Don Faustino is a loner. He feels that he grew up alone emotionally and became self-reliant. He thinks independently and critically, and he is most comfortable with a religious tradition that allows him to judge for himself what is proper behavior through his solitary, reflective reading of the Word of God. His worship alienates him from those few who were his friends, but if that fact bothers him, he puts aside feelings of loss. Instead, he draws comfort from the fact that his alienation may be the key to eternal salvation, as his God is not found in crowds. However else Don Faustino may feel about himself during the course of the day, his new religious tradition gives him the symbolic and pragmatic means to reconstruct himself as an individual. The parallels between Don Faustino's narrative and John Bunyan's pilgrim are striking, attesting not to an unbroken continuity of religious sentiment but to the continuity of religious potentialities for self-construction.

CONCLUSIONS

Giddens (1991) suggests that the subjective experience of "modernity" (what others might call "postmodernity") is one of self-reflexive choice. Traditions fall by the wayside, and a person must choose among lifestyle options. Moreover, in "modernity," the person chooses self-consciously—aware of himself as an individual making an individual decision. In Yucatán, it is doubtful that there was ever a "pre-modern" time in which decisions about self and society were clear-cut and unproblematic. Nonetheless, the

postmodern bombardment of signs from a multiplicity of sources—such as characterizes Yucatán today—makes these decisions all the more difficult and perhaps all the more self-conscious. Self-fashioning is something that everyone must participate in, either through hybridity or orthodoxy.

People in Balancah in the 1990s faced an especially difficult problem. Many of them were leading more independent economic lives and pursuing individual self-construction through commodity consumption. At the same time, a political discourse of community cooperation, the Catholic tradition of cooperative salvation, other quotidian practices of relationality, and new threats to communal resources urged them to think of themselves as members of a community. Life stories and public debate reflected the tension of competing values.

Those who were more religious appeared to have resolved the tension to a certain degree. While self-fashioning through hybridity would involve a celebration of the tension, self-fashioning through orthodoxy resolves the tension through integrating the self. In an orthodox mode, people may enter into sets of practices that oblige them to lay to rest certain aspects of self and exercise and elevate others. Not everyone in the world has the freedom of religious choice, and indeed, conversion is not “free” even for those who choose it. Yucatecan Protestants make serious sacrifices of social and physical pleasures. However, those Yucatecans who feel more comfortable imagining themselves as individuals may find emotional satisfaction in Pentecostal traditions. The Pentecostal practices the life of a pilgrim, one who rejects the temptations of family, friends, and the world and walks independently down the narrow path to eternal salvation.

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NOTES

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1. The individuated model has variously been linked to “modernity” (Giddens 1991; Taylor 1989), “Western” culture (Doi 1986; Geertz 1984; Lukes 1973; Mauss 1985; Morris 1972), and Christianity (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Dumont 1985; Shanahan 1992; van der Veer 1996). Indeed, the notion that “Westerners” are “individuals” is widespread in academic discourses and popular opinion, even while recent research has challenged that notion. In fact, relational, holistic views of the self are often revealed by “Westerners”

(Shweder and Bourne 1984) and notions of individuation are revealed by “non-Westerners” (Battaglia 1995; Stephen 1996).

2. The fieldwork was conducted for a total of 21 months, spread out from 1990 to 1999.

3. Yucatec Maya speech is peppered with Spanish words, in particular in linguistic domains introduced by Spanish speakers (Christianity, education, national government). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

4. Hoyt Alverson suggested the phrase “sympathetic vibrations.”

5. Competition from other sects is not noted in any of the papers of the BFM housed in the Department of History of the PC(USA) or any of the annual reports until 1954, when the annual report reported that Pentecostal churches were on the rise in Yucatán and suggested that “the emotional, deeply spiritual, and basically friendly nature of the Latin is drawn to the pentecostal type of worship, to the emphasis on faith healing, and to the warm and intimate fellowship of these sects” (Board of Foreign Missions 1954:91).

6. Throughout Latin America, while ecumenical churches such as the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists had the earliest and best endowed Protestant missions, they have been abandoned in favor of the Pentecostal churches time and again, and in the 1980s, three-quarters of Latin American Protestants were Pentecostals (Gutiérrez and Smith 1996; Stoll 1990:101).

7. Maya terms for “souls” do not neatly correspond to *alma* and *corazón*. The *óol* is the emotional “heart,” distinguishable from the organ of the “heart” (*puksi’ik’al*) and the rest of the “body” (*wtinkilil, kweerpoj*). Although it has a physical dimension, it is perhaps better understood as a spiritual element, a “soul” in the sense that it is “roughly the will and the capacity for involvement and sensate experience” (Hanks 1990:87). John Lucy glosses it as the “center of awareness and intention” (personal communication, 1995). In addition to the *óol*, people also have two *pixans*. *Pixans* are “souls,” but they lack conscious awareness and intention. Rather than being strictly contained by the body, the *pixans* float in and around it. The *pixan uts* (good *pixan*) is not very active here on earth but, according to Catholics, ascends to heaven after death. The *pixan k’áas* (bad *pixan*) roams around at night, and in fact the images you see in dreams are images of what the *pixan k’áas* is actually doing. The *óol* and the bad *pixan* do not map onto the *alma* or the *corazón*. When pressed, people would say that the good *pixan* is the same thing as the *alma*, but in general, in Pentecostal discourses, people talk exclusively about the *alma*.

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