

"RELIGIOUS CONSUMERS" IN A CHANGING "RELIGIOUS MARKETPLACE"

Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino
Lehigh University

- FAITH IN THE BARRIOS: THE PENTECOSTAL POOR IN BOGOTA.* By Rebecca Pierce Bomann. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999. Pp. 161. \$35.00 cloth.)
- MORE THAN OPIUM: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PENTECOSTAL PRAXIS.* Edited by Barbara Boudewijnse, Andre Droogers, and Frans Kamsteeg. (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 1998. Pp. 323. \$55.00 cloth.)
- BLESSED ANASTACIA: WOMEN, RACE, AND POPULAR CHRISTIANITY IN BRAZIL.* By John Burdick. (New York: Routledge, 1998. Pp. 246. \$75.00 cloth, \$21.99 paper.)
- WOMEN, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BRAZIL'S POPULAR CHURCH.* By Carol Ann Drogus. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997. Pp. 226. \$26.00 cloth.)
- SPIRITUAL BONFIRE IN ARGENTINA: CONFRONTING CURRENT THEORIES WITH AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF PENTECOSTAL GROWTH IN A BUENOS AIRES SUBURB.* By Daniel Miguez. (Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos, 1998. Pp. 204. \$25.00 paper.)
- RELIGIOUS POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA: PENTECOSTAL VS. CATHOLIC.* By Brian H. Smith. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998. Pp. 126. \$16.00 paper.)

What is intriguing about the study of Latin American religion and politics today is that the field is still vibrant. Social scientists' attention first turned to religion in Latin America, Catholicism in particular, in investigating the ability of religion to foster or hinder "modernization." The central assumption—that religious beliefs and institutions are worth studying in terms of their potential impact on larger social, economic, or political processes—has guided most work since Ivan Vallier's pioneering research on Catholicism and modernization in the 1960s. The dependent variable has changed according to historical circumstances—ranging from modernization to redemocratization to democratic "deepening" to civil society. Yet today, Catholic hierarchies throughout the region are withdrawing to a more circumscribed traditional and sacramental role in society, publicly es-

chewing involvement in “politics.” Pentecostal churches, which have been growing exponentially in the region, also tend to understand themselves in terms of separation from the formal political sphere. From these trends, one might conclude that the impact of religious institutions on larger political and economic developments is declining in Latin America. If so, then why do the authors to be reviewed here and others continue to investigate the nexus between religious belief and politics in Latin America? Is the relationship between contemporary Latin American politics and religion still significant, and how has the field changed?

From Mass Mobilization to Civil Society

Reflecting broader trends in Latin American studies, the focus in this body of literature has shifted from whether religious belief can be used as a tool for mobilizing the masses in revindicalist movements to whether participation in religious institutions can be perceived as contributing to a “denser” and potentially more democratic civil society. It is clear why this shift in focus has occurred. The combination of the post-cold war disappearance of a Marxist economic alternative, the apparent neoliberal consensus among political elites, and the weakness of post-transition leftist parties and trade unions all suggest that the politics of mass mobilization characterizing much of the twentieth century are now waning. Hope for progressive democracy has been transferred to the strengthening of “civil society,” or the proliferation of more locally based organizations through which individuals mobilize around specific issues while learning more participatory values and building “associative networks” among groups and the state (see the work of Douglas Chalmers et al.). As Brian Smith points out in his work under review here, Catholicism and Pentecostalism are the two most vital cultural movements among the poor in most Latin American countries. Therefore, one of the first places researchers might choose to look for evidence of a strengthening of civil society is grassroots religious organizations. At the national level, the role that churches choose to play in Latin America’s future could significantly influence the nature, shape, and scope of Latin American democracy.

Of the works under review here, Brian Smith’s *Religious Politics in Latin America: Pentecostal vs. Catholic* exemplifies best the legacy of preoccupation with religion’s impact on larger political (particularly democratic) possibilities in the region. Smith posits three possible scenarios for Catholic and Pentecostal roles in future Latin American democratic development: “mutual flight from the world,” “conflicting religio-political agendas,” or “prophetic social catalysts” (pp. 15–19). In the first scenario, Smith suggests that the traditionalist trend in Catholic hierarchies away from the social commitments of liberation theology and the seemingly inherent separatism of many Pentecostal groups could lead both Catholic and Pentecostal

churches to an exclusive religious emphasis on one's personal relationship to God, the moral mandate to evangelize to obtain new church members, and the command to obey church authorities. Such a traditional religious focus would downplay the importance of belonging to other social or political organizations, thus creating "a powerful dampening effect on citizenship" and resulting in "lay leaders in the next generation [who] may be much less willing to exercise a prophetic voice on behalf of the poor and against abuses of power" (p. 16). If Catholicism and Pentecostalism both engage in such a flight from the world, Smith asserts, "the moral framework necessary for a stable democracy could lose some important reinforcement in the public forum" (p. 16).

In Smith's second scenario of conflicting religio-political agendas, Catholicism and Pentecostalism could become identified with opposing political visions on critical issues such as "citizen participation in politics, community service to promote the common good, nonviolent strategies to achieve social change, the sacrosanct nature of private property, equity for the poor, the inviolability of fundamental human rights, and the desirability of representative government" (p. 17). If Catholics and Pentecostals become identified with opposing sets of political values and organizations, Smith suggests, religion might simply become something to which partisans appeal to justify their own positions. Such a manipulation of religion for partisan ends "would seriously limit [religion's] capacity for articulating the moral underpinnings of a stable and just democracy in Latin America" (p. 18).

Finally, Catholicism and Pentecostalism could converge in a shared ecumenical project that most closely resembles a strengthening of civil society around a progressive concern for the poor that would result in a deepening of democracy. In Smith's opinion,

If Pentecostal congregations and Catholic base communities alike train increasing numbers of working-class laity who have come to an appreciation of their own self-worth, have begun to better themselves economically, and in the process learned communication and leadership skills, such persons might then for the first time take active roles as citizens and demand that society take their views seriously. If so, their sheer numbers could make the difference in creating a sound basis for democratic reform politics for years to come. (P. 19)

The middle chapters of *Religious Politics in Latin America* trace the broad outlines of current trends in Catholic retrenchment and Pentecostal growth in the region, finding both good news and bad news about the likely impact of religion on democracy. Smith concludes that progressive Catholics, although no longer dominant in national hierarchies, are alive and well in the trenches. Furthermore, increasing reports of Pentecostal involvement in political parties and the grass roots of national civic organizations indicate that neither the Catholic Church nor the Pentecostal churches are joining in a mutual flight from the world. Instead of a damp-

ening effect on citizenship, high voter turnout in both groups suggests that religious identification may encourage believers to make their voices heard in public affairs. Moreover, no evidence exists of either Catholic or Pentecostal inclination to espouse or to justify radical political positions or projects of either the Left or the Right. Both Catholic and Pentecostal churches appear to support broadly democracy, moderate critiques of unbridled capitalism, and gradual reform on behalf of the poor. Even so, Smith holds out little hope for a Catholic-Pentecostal convergence around a progressive "prophetic project." Historical animosities, lingering constitutional discrimination against Pentecostal churches, and contrasting values make an alliance on behalf of the poor unlikely. On the question of religion's overall impact on civil society, Smith concludes that any attempt at prediction would be "complex."

From Religious Belief to a Religious Marketplace

The question of why individuals are drawn to religious communities went largely unexplored until observers turned their attention to the rapid spread of Pentecostalism in the region. The role of liberation theology, base Christian communities, and progressive hierarchies and laity captured the imagination of scholars, most of whom assumed that a transformative and prophetic church would attract the poor and cause them to appreciate Catholicism's relevance as never before. But as it happened, Pentecostal churches exploded, especially among the poor, at precisely the same time that Catholic hierarchies inspired by liberation theology committed to the role of "voice of the voiceless." The recognition that individuals make choices among religious alternatives highlighted for the first time a new set of questions. Why do individuals choose Pentecostalism, Catholicism, or any other form of popular religion? What does religious identity, perhaps in contrast to other membership identities, offer to believers? Are religious choices or conversions permanent or fluid? These questions stem from the tendency to focus on religion's potential impact on larger political, economic, and social developments. After all, religious institutions must be able to attract believers who express religious values in personal choices in order for religious belief to have an impact on larger political, economic, or social developments. Recognition of Pentecostal growth changed the question from whether the Catholic Church can prove the institution relevant to the masses who are assumed to be at least "cultural Catholics" to why individuals choose one religious identity over others in a pluralistic religious marketplace.

The most unabashedly sympathetic answer to the question of why the poor choose Pentecostal churches is found in *Faith in the Barrios: The Pentecostal Poor in Bogotá*. Author Rebecca Pierce Bomann completed her field research while an undergraduate at Hamilton College. As a deeply

committed Pentecostal, Bomann resents the idea that “social scientists have explored every issue pertinent to the causes and effects of Pentecostalism in Latin America, without actually studying the faith itself” (p. 41). In her view, “the faith must be examined from within, through the believers’ perspective, instead of from without, which is the secular perspective, to truly depict the strength of the faith in the believers’ lives” (p. 41). Bomann overstates the lack of scholarly attention to the meaning of religious conversion and belief in individuals’ lives. In reality, it is precisely this question that has inspired several of the works to be reviewed here. Moreover, it is not clear why a researcher who is not a Pentecostal should be disqualified from conducting valuable research because of a “secular worldview.”

Nevertheless, Bomann’s passionate description of the process of conversion and maturation in a life of Pentecostal faith offers insights into the appeal of Pentecostalism in the larger religious marketplace. She likens conversion to the phenomenon of falling in love and explicitly critiques a simplistic model in which the poor turn to Pentecostalism for straightforwardly opportunistic or strategic reasons (such as access to social welfare assistance). Bomann’s unwavering focus on the profoundly spiritual nature of Pentecostal religious experience will remind researchers from outside the faith that what the poor “get” out of Pentecostalism is always more complex than “a mere exchange of goods and services, as though the church were a country club or bank” (p. 68). She also emphasizes (along with many other scholars) that conversion is in many ways the easiest phase of Pentecostal belief to achieve and to explain.

The more difficult accomplishment for a Pentecostal convert is what Bomann calls “faith maintenance.” Many who “convert” backslide. Bomann’s focus on the daily choices that a believer must make to grow in faith adds dimension to increasing understanding of Pentecostals’ lives. She finds that converts who create a constant “evangelical environment” tend to be the most successful at faith maintenance. Examples of an evangelical environment include constant playing of a Christian radio station, furnishing and decorating the home with devotional items, a running “dialogue” with God through prayer, a strong emphasis on daily Bible study, regular fasting, and a social life filled with evangelical home visits throughout the neighborhood.

Another attempt to explain the attraction of Pentecostalism is Daniel Miguez’s *Spiritual Bonfire in Argentina: Confronting Current Theories with an Ethnographic Account of Pentecostal Growth in a Buenos Aires Suburb*. This book focuses on Villa Eulalia, a blue-collar suburb of Buenos Aires. The author’s case study, the Centro Cristiano, was founded in 1970 by a pastor who has guided the church through dramatic growth culminating in construction of a temple complex that can seat up to 450 worshippers and employs seven full-time pastors. Miguez asks why “people were not eager to take part in political parties or community organisations” when “local Pen-

tecostal churches [such as the Centro Cristiano] were generating . . . spontaneous and dynamic forms of organisation and participation" (p. 1). Much of Miguez's account is based on statements made by *creyentes* about their conversions and the relevance of their Pentecostal belief to their daily struggles. His findings do not differ substantially from those of many other scholars. Miguez finds that such belief serves followers' religious, personal, and sociopolitical needs. Pentecostal belief helps reduce doubt, which "makes the collaboration of sacred forces seem more imminent" (p. 127). On a personal level, beliefs such as the doctrine of prosperity are "multi-faceted" enough to offer a great deal of flexibility for individuals struggling to cope with persistent economic worries or health and family problems. Socially and politically, Pentecostalism offers individuals a sense of belonging to a larger community of believers who share the burdens of everyday life, a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem, a vehicle for "social upgrading," and perhaps even a framework for undertaking larger political commitments.

Miguez warns, however, that there are limits on Pentecostal growth in the region, which in turn limits the degree to which Pentecostalism will influence larger social or political developments, particularly beyond the local area. Referring to works voicing the hope that Pentecostal growth would lead to economic and political transformation in Latin America, Miguez comments, "although I do admit that personal transformation and quotidian actions of 'small people' do play a role in the constitution of society, I think these studies overestimate the potential for social change they may have" (p. 140). First, Pentecostal conversion rates have inherent limits because many Latin Americans will continue to find their religious, personal, and sociopolitical needs met by Catholicism. Others will become disillusioned with Pentecostalism when their lives fail to improve or even worsen. And Pentecostals themselves make no claim to broad-based social or political movements. As Miguez explains, "[M]embers' actions in relation to the world are always actions they develop 'towards' that world—the clearest example of that, of course, is evangelization. Rarely do they develop actions 'with it.' Thus, Centro Cristiano actions are hardly developed in coordination with other neighborhood institutions or groups. In that way the identity further excludes the possibility of channeling socio-political demands of those that are not able to embrace the religious part of the Centro Cristiano identity" (p. 159).

Although Miguez's conclusions in *Spiritual Bonfire in Argentina* are shared fairly broadly in the literature, he claims that his main contribution to the field is situating his research in "practice theory," by which he means a theoretical framework that fully explores both the macro structural causes of Pentecostal growth and the agency that is expressed in an individual's decision to convert. Miguez criticizes studies that assume that macro structural processes in Latin America—such as the debt crisis, dictatorships and

transitions to democracy, and neoliberal economic models—deterministically produce religious outcomes such as the development of liberation theology or Pentecostal growth. Miguez argues further that actor-centered studies “such as those of [Cecilia] Mariz, [John] Burdick or [Samuel] Canales . . . usually do not clearly establish the connections between the local contexts in which they do research and the more global trends that affect them” (p. 164). Here Miguez’s study is weakest, partly because his review of the literature is incomplete and selective and partly because his survey of the larger macro structural trends affecting Villa Eulalia is no more detailed or penetrating than those of the studies he rejects. Miguez also criticizes studies assuming that Pentecostalism is either a force for rationalizing modernization or a typical Latin expression of irrational and magical forces: “I think this reified perception produced the false dilemma of whether Pentecostalism was a ‘modern’ or ‘traditional’ force that confronted [Emilio] Willems with [Christian] d’Epinay first, and [David] Martin and [David] Stoll with [Jean-Pierre] Bastian later” (p. 164). Although perceptive in his criticism, Miguez offers no substantive discussion of the relationship between Pentecostal belief and society at large that helps move the literature beyond this “false dilemma.”

The question of what attracts the poor in the Latin American religious marketplace is also explored in the essays in *More than Opium: An Anthropological Approach to Latin American and Caribbean Pentecostal Praxis*, edited by Barbara Boudewijnse, Andre Droogers, and Frans Kamsteeg. Many of the essays in this volume were published in an earlier edition, and several seem dated and superficial in light of current trends in the literature. Andre Droogers’s introduction, however, offers an interesting overview of alternate models for explaining Pentecostal growth and also the rise of the Catholic Charismatic movement, an underexamined development in the religious field. In contrast to some U.S.-based authors’ work, Droogers’s review of the literature does a better job of encompassing Anglo-American, European, and Latin American scholarship on the rise of new religious identities. He divides the field according to three general explanations of religious identity: an expression of anomie, a manifestation of class oppression or protest, or a product of failed modernization. Droogers argues that all three explanations are grounded in observations of contemporary religion, and therefore any close examination of Latin American religion must choose an eclectic model that takes into account the contradictory and paradoxical impulses operating within any religious identity.

Cecilia Loreto Mariz’s contribution to *More than Opium* exemplifies well the spate of new studies focusing on the question of what draws individuals to certain religious beliefs. Interested in the high percentage of Pentecostal men who report having overcome alcoholism, Mariz seeks “meaningful connections between recovery from alcoholism and the Pentecostal worldview” (p. 204). Consistent with Mariz’s other work on women, this

essay finds that “deliverance from evil” enables a Pentecostal “to perceive him or herself as an individual, with a certain degree of autonomy and freedom of choice, and to reject any self-conception that restricts individuals to traditionally prescribed roles,” such as that of a macho heavy drinker (p. 205). She notes that while deliverance gives a believer a sense of autonomy that allows him or her to choose ethical behavior, it is not the same thing as contemporary individualism. Pentecostal freedom must be understood in the context of an absolute mandate to submit to God’s will. This middle road between traditional fatalism and contemporary individualism is attractive because it allows for asserting control over one’s actions and life amid a cohesive community of “brothers” joined in mutual submission to a larger power.

Other contributions of note in *More than Opium* are those by Barbara Boudewijnse and by Maria das Dores Campos Machado. Boudewijnse examines the refusal of some Charismatic Catholic women in Curaçao to recite the Hail Mary because of their perception that devotion to Mary, associated with traditional Catholicism and its valuing of submission and obedience, reinforces the silencing of women in Latin American culture. Boudewijnse argues that the shift from worshipping Mary to the Holy Spirit “implies that women are no longer principally addressed as ‘women’ but as ‘individuals.’ If ‘Mary’ emphasizes their ‘womanhood,’ the ideology of the Holy Spirit emphasizes their ‘personhood’” (p. 112). In this sense, Pentecostalism and Charismatic Catholicism can be perceived as vehicles for women’s protest.

Machado’s essay compares the effects of Pentecostal and Charismatic Catholic beliefs on sexuality and family planning, an example of the kind of useful comparative work that furthers understanding of the relationship between religious belief and society. Machado argues that a kind of “Pentecostalization” of religious practice is taking place, with Catholic and other churches adopting the more ecstatic and physical forms of religious expression that have been so successful in Pentecostal churches. She wonders if the spread of more physical and even sensual religious expression found in many church services leads to greater openness about sexuality and issues like family planning among participants. Machado finds that couples who share religious convictions, whether Pentecostal or Charismatic Catholic, demonstrate a greater openness to talking about and teaching their children about issues of sexuality. Yet Pentecostals differ from Charismatic Catholics, especially among the lower classes. Pentecostals view moral lapses as the work of Satan and therefore tend to be less judgmental of the sinner and more likely to rely on exorcism to deal with the sin. Charismatics are more constrained by traditional Catholic moral condemnation of the sinner and disdain for sexuality beyond what is necessary for procreation. The contributions by Mariz, Boudewijnse, and Machado are based on observations of localized small populations. Their

value consequently lies less in their generalizable conclusions than in their heuristic value as examples of the diversity and complexity of individual motivations at any given time.

Mariz's, Boudewijnse's, and Machado's essays contrast sharply with others like Allard Willemier Westra's "Market Behavior among Brazilian Consumers of the Divine." This piece is perhaps the most explicit but also most superficial treatment of what religious belief (Catholic, Pentecostal or Candomblé) has to offer "consumers." In viewing religious participants as "religious consumers" in a "religious marketplace," Westra resorts to a few well-worn generalizations. For example, "the official Roman Catholic church, or the base communities attached to it . . . appeal more to common sense and public decency than to a need for release of religious emotion" (p. 123). Elsewhere he asserts, "people in various echelons of society realize that a Pentecostal believer has better job opportunities . . . [and] can look forward to a life without fear of magically induced violence" (p. 129). Westra also claims that Candomblé "serves as a means to exert pressure upon members of the local economic and political elite, inducing them to grant favors of all kinds" (p. 133). Such generalizations, unsubstantiated by any systematic data, typify what Rebecca Bomann criticizes in *Faith in the Barrios* as a reduction of churches to a mere exchange of goods and services.

Of the studies exploring what various religious beliefs may offer followers, John Burdick's *Blessed Anastacia: Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil* stands out as a particularly sensitive work. Burdick focuses on the ways in which women of color in Brazil experience three separate forms of Christianity: the inculturated Catholic mass, Pentecostalism, and the cult of Anastácia, a Brazilian symbol of black female slavery. Brazil is known for its myth of racial harmony, which Burdick confronts in his opening lines: "Devastating and quotidian, malignant and normal, attitudes of prejudice and acts of discrimination against nonwhites in contemporary Brazil infiltrate city halls and executive suites, corner bars and beauty salons, kitchens and bedrooms, hospital waiting rooms and public school classrooms" (p. 1).

Given the pervasiveness of Brazilian racial discrimination, Burdick wonders why the *movimento negro* has failed to draw widespread support among the black population: "Are there men and women in Brazilian society who identify themselves as *negro*, perceive color discrimination in their everyday life, yet steer clear of black movements?" (p. 5). He points out two religious movements, Pentecostalism and the cult of Anastácia, that most male black activists openly dislike. Yet both groups draw large numbers of people of color, particularly women. Burdick hypothesizes that social movements like the *movimento negro* simultaneously articulate and marginalize issues and practices, highlighting some while obscuring others. Themes, issues, identities, and practices spotlighted by social movements may resonate with some potential followers but fail to inspire others. Be-

cause movement activists may not be particularly adept at recognizing what resonates with or alienates potential constituencies, Burdick shifts his "focus away from the social movement organization itself, to the constituency it is striving to serve," in this case women of color (p. 11). A real strength of this book is Burdick's "sensitive ear" in dealing with his subjects' responses on their experiences as women with racial issues in Brazil. Extensive citations of the women's comments in this study eloquently capture the "devastating and quotidian, malignant and normal" experience of negritude in Brazil.

The preferred religious expression for black activists in Brazil is the inculturated Catholic mass through which Brazilians of color can "salvage the history and culture of Afro-Brazilians from the oblivion to which racist society seeks to consign them, by imparting knowledge about African culture, especially its dances, rhythms, instruments, dress, and food; its relations to nature and the earth; and about the history of slavery, especially the names and stories of the great martyrs" (p. 57). This kind of mass is accompanied throughout by loud rhythmic drums called *atabaques*, and young women perform sensuous dances at various points in the service to convey a conception of "African female beauty" as an alternative to the dominant European standard. Yet Burdick finds that the inculturated mass marginalizes many women's experience in several ways. First, the focus on sensual female dance, while perhaps leading to a revaluation of standards of beauty, also emphasizes women's bodies rather than their spirituality. Women continue to be defined as the location of men's desire. Moreover, the insistence on African beauty translates into heavy pressure not to use beauty products like hair straighteners, and it offends some women who want to be free to express their own beauty in ways of their own choosing. Second, the rituals that are designed to celebrate things African fail to recognize the reality of female pain and suffering, which leads to the third problem: the refusal to acknowledge issues of the sexual division of labor, sexism, and domestic violence lest the black movement undermine the already precarious position of black men in Brazil.

Pentecostalism is anathema to black activists largely because Pentecostals' emphasis on individual salvation through the universal Holy Spirit is considered antipathetic to ethnic identity and also because Pentecostals are openly hostile to Candomblé and Umbanda, religions with African origins. Yet darker skinned Brazilians are converting to Pentecostal churches over historical Protestant denominations at a rate of between two and three to one. Burdick finds, "In Brazilian society there are few places where a dark-skinned black can feel treated more equally than in a pentecostal church" because for Pentecostals, there is complete equality in the eyes of God. Black Pentecostals draw near to God as black believers, not as some "whitened" version of the chosen. For Pentecostal women, self-esteem is conferred by one's personal relationship with God, not by adherence to so-

cial norms of “the world,” such as traditional images of beauty achieved through hair straightening, makeup, or seductive dress. Perhaps even more important, young men and women ideally look past worldly beauty to the spirituality of a potential partner, making white Pentecostal women more accepting of black partners and even white Pentecostal men more accepting of black female partners—combinations that are unusual in Brazilian society. The use of “black” musical forms reinforces the image of mature black church members as vital resources at the center of the Pentecostal community, not merely members who are tolerated around the margins. Burdick describes an increasing movement within the black Pentecostal community to fight racism explicitly, within churches and in the community at large, based on a moral stance strengthened by an evangelical understanding of the equality of all believers.

The cult of Anastácia is a recent phenomenon that first arose in the 1970s among poor blacks in Brazil and picked up steam with a deluge of white middle-class followers in the 1980s. Various widely distributed popular accounts of Anastácia’s life explain in part her overnight fame. Depending on the account, Anastácia was either a native African sold to slavery in Brazil or the Brazilian-born daughter of a slave woman and white father. In all accounts, she was a remarkably beautiful black woman. Her image, which is enshrined in her statues at four main pilgrimage sites, shows Anastácia muzzled by a “Flanders mask” (face iron) and wearing a neck iron, gazing intently but serenely at observers with clear blue eyes. In some accounts, Anastácia successfully resisted attempted rape by her master, for which she was cruelly tortured and left to die an agonizing death in prison. In other accounts, she was the daughter of a white master whose wife, furious at his tender treatment of Anastácia, accused her of fomenting a slave rebellion, for which she was tortured and killed. In both versions, it is easy to see how Anastácia could serve as a symbol of black struggle and pain for poor black Brazilians. Unlike the inculturated mass, devotion to Anastácia provides the space for dealing with issues of sexual abuse, domestic violence, and sexism, especially in the context of a deeply racist society. Anastácia’s serenity and her ability to endure and even forgive are what empower her image for both black and white women. Burdick also finds that some white followers begin to confront their own racism after appealing to Anastácia to save them from violence from black men.

Blessed Anastácia is a model for research into why and how individuals are attracted to particular religious forms and expressions. The danger for studies that focus on only one religious form (like those of Miguez and Bomann) is the assumption that because individuals seem to be converting, the central elements of the faith and its ritual expression must resonate and appeal. It may be particularly easy to make such claims in speaking about “the poor” as if they were a monolithic “them.” Comparative work like that of Burdick and Carol Ann Drogus allows scholars to shift the focus to po-

tential constituencies and to ask, what does and does not resonate and with whom? Who are attracted and who are marginalized? Once researchers can move to a more sophisticated understanding of large concepts like “the poor,” we can then think in more meaningful ways about the potential impact of religious belief and practice on larger political, economic, and social developments in Latin America.

From Religious Marketplace to Religious Consumers

Carol Ann Drogus’s *Women, Religion, and Social Change in Brazil’s Popular Church* extends trends in the literature one step further. After years of heightened scholarly optimism that liberation theology would transform not only Latin American Catholicism but also Latin American politics, observers are now noting several sobering developments: Pentecostal explosion precisely among “the voiceless,” the absence of a transformative political sweep even in countries known for their progressive hierarchies, and the evident retreat of many Latin American churches to traditional moral and primarily sacramental concerns. Yet new and significant channels of popular organization were achieved during the struggles against dictatorship, and the lives of many individuals were transformed through participating in popular religious groups. Does hope lie not with the progressive positions taken by church leaders but with the personal liberation of individuals who mobilized through church-inspired and church-protected organizations? If so, then scholars need to know the answers to two questions. Did the faithful take from their participation in popular religious groups the beliefs and values intended by the formal leaders? And can it be expected that believers, like congregants in parishes imbued with liberationist teachings and reflection, become progressive and politically active liberationist agents of social change? Base Christian communities (CEBs), which were grassroots groups where liberating reflection on the Bible led to massive organization for economic survival and political opposition to repressive authoritarian regimes, were always populated largely by women. Drogus therefore asks a new question: “What happens to the doctrine of intellectual male clerics when it becomes the faith of working-class women?” (p. 12). This question shifts the research emphasis from the relative attractions of different religious institutions in the religious marketplace to an even clearer focus on the “religious consumer.”

According to Drogus, casual or infrequent participants in CEB activities might not be expected to adopt the progressive political beliefs associated with liberation theology. She concentrates on the women making up the core group of religious participants in the life of the CEB and parish in her case study, San Antônio in the city of São Paulo. Only five of the thirty women interviewed for this project were not lifelong church attendees, and the majority had also been involved in various lay activities over time.

Drawing on Peter Benson and Dorothy Williams's previous work on "religious personality types," Drogus found that her respondents fell into three categories of religious identification and belief: traditionalists, liberationists, and samaritans (a combination of the previous two). Traditionalists emphasize the personal and moral aspects of religious belief. Liberationists adopt a more communal social-justice model in keeping with liberation theology. Samaritans link their personal relationship to God to a requirement to express one's love for others through specific actions. Drogus establishes in her case study that roughly equal numbers were traditionalists and liberationists, even though they were all active participants in a CEB known for its liberationist character.

What can be concluded about "religious consumers"? Drogus's findings are consistent with other researchers who have argued that the reception of the message of liberation theology has been mixed. It cannot be assumed that members of religious communities absorb the doctrine espoused by formal religious leaders in exactly the same way, to the same degree, or at all. Drogus concludes, "Religious *behavior* appears to be significantly gendered . . . , but religious *personality* does not" (p. 108, author's emphasis). In other words, gender relations in Brazil assign to women caregiving roles and parameters for "womanhood" that frame their religious expression or behavior, regardless of the content of their individual religious identification. But the range of religious personalities (traditional, liberationist, or samaritan) found among these respondents mirrors the range found among men who participated actively in CEBs and other church activity. This distinction between behavior and personality is important because Drogus finds that female liberationists are less likely than male liberationists to express their religious identity through partisan activism because of the confines of Brazilian gender stereotypes. At the same time, women's issues associated with mothering and caregiving can unite women across political and religious personalities in broad-based and non-partisan social movements. This more sophisticated model of "the religious consumer" that distinguishes between gendered behavior and nongendered identification will help analysts understand that individuals take away from religious participation different values and commitments and that social or political movements draw from different and often gendered potential constituencies.

Conclusion

Why is the study of religion and politics in Latin America still lively? At the descriptive level, increased religious pluralism resulting from dramatic growth in non-Catholic, primarily Pentecostal groups has raised intriguing questions about how competing religious identities function in the Latin American religious marketplace. But if Latin American religious

identity were simply a matter of residual individual belief separated by a post-enlightenment wall between public life and private belief, these discussions would be arcane. Yet as all the authors just reviewed note, religious identity remains one of the most vital Latin American cultural phenomena. Examination of such issues as how and why individuals convert, what conversion or religious group membership means in daily lives, and why some religious identities appeal and others do not all help us understand more fully several critical landmarks in Latin American popular culture. Most churches (Catholic and Pentecostal) currently eschew political organizing, but religious symbols, belief, and identity remain powerful tools in social and political efforts to mobilize. As such, private religious identity will continue to have a larger, albeit often indirect, public impact. Thus for observers interested in Latin American political development, the relationship between a changing religious marketplace and politics remains a significant question.