THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

PROGRAM IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

RELIGIOUS *MESTIZAJE* IN GUATEMALA AND ITS SOCIOPOLITICAL IMPACT

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SPRING 2021

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees
in International Politics and Latin American Studies
with honors in Latin American Studies

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ABSTRACT

Maya Catholicism in Guatemala fuses elements of indigenous spirituality and Western Christianity and reflects the complex sociopolitical history of the region. Traditional Maya theology emphasizes the existence of many deities, who are venerated through the maintenance of effigies as part of a covenant between humans and the divine. Upon European contact in the sixteenth century, Spanish missionaries attempted to establish Catholicism as the dominant religion and eliminate all indigenous religious practices; therefore, religion served as a signal of power wielded by the Spaniards. However, the Maya maintained their religious and cultural traditions in secret, and they intentionally incorporated select elements of Catholicism into their preexisting *cosmovisión*, thus establishing a religious *mestizaje*. *Cofradías* exemplify this religious fusion because members of these confraternities venerated Catholic saints according to the Maya *cosmovisión* and covenant. In the civil unrest of the late twentieth century, brutal Guatemalan governments backed by the United States persecuted rural Maya communities in attempts to eliminate the insurgency. In response to the terrible conditions the Maya were facing, the Catholic Church adopted liberation theology, leading the government to label the Church as dangerous and to offer Pentecostalism as a spiritual alternative. Indigenous pride movements in the late twentieth century proved that Maya cultures had not been eradicated but also indicated that Maya spirituality had become irrevocably tied to Catholicism. In this paper, I argue that religion has symbolized power, identity, and resistance throughout Guatemalan history and therefore has often been leveraged as part of a political agenda. I also argue that the Maya developed a religious *mestizaje* by intentionally melding their own *cosmovisión* and traditions with compatible elements of foreign religion.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank-you to my incredible family: to my parents, Patrice and Mark Mull; to my sisters, Theresa and Natalie; and to my grandparents, Henrietta and Lloyd ("Mike") Mull and Betty and Carmine Taglieri. Thank you for your unconditional love and support, for nourishing my body, mind, and soul, and for always encouraging me to read (just not at the dinner table). I am so grateful for all the ways you have shaped me into the person I am today.

Thank you to Dr. Solari and Dr. Restall for your patience, encouragement, and insight throughout this process. This thesis would not exist without you! I also owe a big thank-you to the Schreyer Honors College, especially Debra Rodgers and Richard Stoller, for their guidance and support.

Finally, many thanks to my fantastic housemates at the co.space, who put up with my stress and nonsense all year. You're all champs.

Positioning of Text

There have been many critiques of Western anthropological studies of indigenous communities and traditions, as exemplified by the backlash regarding Elizabeth Burgos and David Stoll's involvement in Rigoberta Menchú's story. It is important to acknowledge the long history of Spanish colonialism and U.S. interference in the region, and even today there lingers a power imbalance between Western researchers and the native peoples of Guatemala.

As a white American scholar, I am cognizant of my own privilege in being able to research a culture foreign to my own, especially one that has experienced so much trauma and violence at the hands of Western nations, namely Spain and the United States. Throughout my research and writing process, I have taken great care to be respectful and sensitive, and I have avoided framing my work in a way that exoticizes or infantilizes the Maya, as has been common throughout history.

INTRODUCTION

Religion and politics – the two forbidden dinner-table topics – have walked hand-in-hand throughout Guatemalan history as foreign powers (namely, Spain and the United States) have weaponized Western religion literally and figuratively against the indigenous peoples of Guatemala. However, despite centuries of persecution and forced assimilation, Maya cultures and religions have survived, melding with the dominant culture in some ways while still retaining uniquely a Maya worldview, or *cosmovisión*.

This thesis explores the following themes: traditional Maya religious practices; the cultural and religious impact of Spanish contact; political changes in Guatemala from 1820 to 1996; theological developments within the Catholic Church in the twentieth century; the political and religious significance of Pentecostalism; and Maya identities in the modern world. These themes will answer questions including: Why did the Maya adopt Catholicism and later turn to Protestantism, particularly Pentecostalism? What political factors, especially those involving Western powers, were at play in these moments? Which elements of Maya religion have been consciously retained until today?

It is clear that Maya peoples in Guatemala have accepted Catholicism and Christianity on their own terms and according to their own *cosmovisión*. This is demonstrated by the emergence of a localized Catholicism, which blended European and indigenous traditions in festivals and daily life. As a prime example, members of *cofradías* venerate Catholic saints using methods that replicate Maya understanding and worship of traditional indigenous effigies. Attempts by Catholics and Protestants in the twentieth century to reform (that is, to Westernize and

standardize) this religious *mestizaje* were greeted with resentment and refusal, as were attempts to decolonize Guatemalan religion at the turn of the twenty-first century. Maya Catholicism has become *costumbre* (the custom).

In addition, religion has been used a weapon of power, often accompanied by violence. Spaniards used forced conversion to Catholicism upon their arrival in the sixteenth century to assert their dominance, weaponized their religion through inquisitory means, appropriated indigenous religious sites, and forbid the practice of indigenous religions, which they considered idolatrous, pagan, and dangerous. Similarly, late twentieth-century genocidal campaigns overwhelmingly targeted rural Maya communities and the Catholic Church, so when U.S. and Guatemalan governments promoted Pentecostalism, it became a politically safe alternative to "leftist" Catholicism. In this case, Pentecostalism was more than just a religion: it served as a strategic choice to signal loyalty to the Guatemalan government.

In this thesis, I argue that indigenous groups in modern-day Guatemala accepted and practiced Spanish Catholicism in accordance with their pre-existing worldview, thus creating a religious *mestizaje* which blends Catholic saints and worship with Maya traditions and *cosmovisión.* I postulate that Spanish and U.S. governments used Catholicism and Protestantism (namely, Pentecostalism) to subjugate indigenous peoples, yet Maya cultures have persisted and reclaimed these religions as their own. Therefore, religion often serves a political agenda as a symbol of dominance, identity, or resistance.

Terminology and Identity

How do the people(s) of Guatemala identify themselves? It is important to first distinguish between the terms "Maya" and "Mayan." The former refers to the "people, places, and culture" of the Mesoamerican civilization, while the latter refers specifically to nearly three dozen languages spoken by different groups of Maya people; thus, one is not a grammatical modifier of the other, as many people incorrectly assume.[1] It is equally important to note that "Maya" is not a typical self-identifier among these peoples, who come from distinct groups and traditions. Rather, they tend to identify themselves using the general terms "*indígena*" or "*natural,*" or more specifically by their village or language. There are twenty unique Mayan languages spoken by groups in Guatemala, and almost thirty if Maya groups in Honduras and southeastern Mexico are included.[2] The *movimiento Maya*, or "pan-Maya movement," of the late twentieth century created a space to unify beneath the umbrella term "Maya" and to celebrate and preserve indigenous cultures in Guatemala.[3]

It is also important to understand the word "*ladino,*" meaning a person of European or mixed descent.[4] Early twentieth-century anthropologist Sol Tax argued that the difference between ladinos and the Maya is cultural, not biological, stating that language, clothing, religion, and political participation distinguished one from the other.[5] Ladinos and the Maya have had a

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[1] Maestri, Nicoletta. 2019. "Should We Call It the Mayan Civilization or Maya Civilization?" ThoughtCo. November 4, 2019. https://www.thoughtco.com/ancient-maya-mayans-most-accepted-term-171569.

[2] David Stoll. *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2008), 16-17.

[3] In this paper, I have chosen to use the terms "indigenous" and "Maya" to refer to the autochthonous people of Guatemala; though these are not perfect terms, they are widely accepted as neutral (i.e., bearing no social or political sigma) and can refer broadly to the various languages and cultures of the many ethnic groups of the country. When relevant I will refer to specific groups by name (e.g., K'iche', Kaqchikel).

[4] Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú,* 16.

[5] Carol A. Smith, "Anthropology Discovers the Maya," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 187-188.

complicated relationship in Guatemalan society because ladinos have always wielded more sociopolitical power,[6] and they served as intermediaries between Spaniards and the Maya at times. However, reducing the social makeup of Guatemala to a ladino-indigenous dichotomy is problematic because it dismisses the long history of enslaved and free Africans and their descendants in the region, as well as many other nuances in the socioeconomic hierarchy.[7]

[6] Bruce J. Calder, "Interwoven Histories: The Catholic Church and the Maya, 1940 to Present," in *Resurgent Voices in Latin America: Indigenous Peoples, Political Mobilization, and Religious Change*, ed. Edward L. Cleary and Timothy J. Steigenga, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 94.
[7] Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, eds. "Invasion and Colonialism," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 40-41.

PRE-CONTACT MAYA

The Maya civilization stretched across what we know today as Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, the Yucatán Peninsula, and Chiapas, Mexico. The first evidence of a city-state in modern-day Guatemala appeared around 250 B.C.E.[8] The Maya Classic Period occurred across the region from 300 - 900 C.E., and it was during this era that the majority of Maya cities were constructed.[9] The Maya can be credited with innovations such as calendars, mathematics, astronomy, and a complicated writing system with hundreds of glyphs, which was only deciphered recently by Soviet linguist Yuri Knorosov and other epigraphers.[10] Many of these innovations were used by Maya religious specialists to understand the world and its history, as well as predict the future based on patterns or cycles of the past.[11]

It would be erroneous to assume a sense of nationhood across the region prior to European contact because the Maya civilization was conflict-ridden, and alliances frequently shifted and reformed.[12] By the time the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century, most of the larger city-states had fallen, and the civilization had reformed into smaller independent kingdoms.[13] This lack of unity between the many Maya groups, along with the decision of several Maya and Méxica groups to ally with the Spaniards, were critical factors that enabled foreign forces to invade and conquer quickly and violently during the sixteenth century.

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[8] Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, eds. "The Maya: Before the Europeans," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 11.
[9] Britannica, s.v. "Guatemala," by Charles L. Stansifer, accessed October 1, 2020, https://www.britannica.com/place/Guatemala.
[10] Michael D. Coe. "Breaking the Maya Code," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics,* ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 19.
[11] John D. Early, *The Maya and Catholicism: An Encounter of Worldviews*. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 68-69.
[12] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "The Maya: Before the Europeans," 11.
[13] Personal communication, Amara Solari, March 24, 2021.

The Maya *Cosmovisión*

Maya theology recognizes an ultimate divine power, or "cosmic force," as the source of life for all things, including the various deities.[14] Though the Maya believe in this one superior power, they pray to many supernatural beings, a belief system which theologians have dubbed "monotheistic but polypraxis."[15] Maya religions revere nature and pay great attention to cycles as symbols of birth, death, and rebirth. Cycles can be found in many aspects of life: the sun, corn, and even the Spaniards' conquest was thought to be part of the "cycles of calamities and recovery."[16]

Maya theology also emphasizes dualism (or "complementary opposites," as historian Virginia Garrard calls it), which divides the world into distinct binaries: left and right sides of the body, woman and man, red and brown.[17] More importantly, the existence of two coexisting worlds – one tangible and human, and the other intangible and godly – is a key element of Maya theology and exemplifies this idea of dualism. Bridging the gap between the "surface sky-earth" and the "internal sky-earth," founding ancestors could connect with deities in dreams and in sacred locations such as caves,[18] and in turn, deities could use effigies to materialize on earth.[19]

Deities live in the invisible "internal sky-earth," but they are not viewed as perfect, immortal, or even self-sufficient beings, as they rely on human rituals and sacrifices to survive. Historian Nancy M. Farriss compares them to "extremely powerful infants" who "had to be

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[14] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 62-67.
[15] Virginia Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here When Columbus Arrived': Inculturation Theology and the Mayan Movement in Guatemala," in *Resurgent Voices in Latin America: Indigenous Peoples, Political Mobilization, and Religious Change*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 137.
[16] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 194.
[17] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 138-139.
[18] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 62-67.
[19] Amara Solari. *Idolizing Mary: Maya-Catholic Icons in Yucatán, Mexico*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 38.

housed and cared for, diverted with music, dance, and colorful paintings and—most especially—fed."[20] Their food was the incense, candles, alcohol, blood (human and animal), and oral veneration that the human worshippers left at their altars; in exchange for these offerings, the deities granted protection and sustenance to their devotees. Anthropologist John D. Early refers to this mutualistic symbiosis as a sacred "covenant" between the Maya and their gods.[21]

Effigies are an important element of Maya spirituality because they serve as a vehicle through which the divine enter the material world. Many people – from artists to elected community members to religious specialists – participated in the creation of these images, which were shaped from wood, stone, clay, and other materials through specific processes. Many of these effigies possessed features to make them more alive; the censer genre, for example, animated the effigies by including open cavities with which to stomach offerings (e.g., incense) and mouths through which smoke could escape, producing a message for the supplicant. Contrary to what Catholic Spaniards would later accuse, these effigies were not idols or graven images, but rather material manifestations of the divine.[22] These effigies also represented dualism; as art historian Amara Solari explains, "These images of deities … spoke to the fused nature of the human and divine realm, of the physical and spiritual universe. As such, these were animated and active members of communities, participants in ritual events that ensured the cosmic health of its earthly inhabitants."[23] Thus, images form a critical part of Maya spirituality by bridging the earthly and the supernatural worlds and by permitting the fulfillment of the Maya covenant with the gods.

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[20] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 66.
[21] Early, 69-70.
[22] Solari, *Idolizing Mary,* 45-46, 49.
[23] Solari, 49.

The Christian preoccupation with salvation and the afterlife was not part of precontact Maya religions, and their rituals were never intended as a way to save one's soul. Yes, the Maya believe in the dualistic nature of humans, who have a body abiding in the visible world and a soul emerging from the invisible world. However, there is also a deep fear of death, so the sacrifices and rituals were meant to persuade the gods to grant them good health and prosperity during their allotted time in the surface sky-earth, not to rescue them from eternal damnation or cleanse their souls — these latter concepts are very Judeo-Christian in nature. There is no clear consensus in Maya theology about the afterlife or reincarnation, except a general understanding that the human soul re-enters the cosmic force to be reused in a new form. As a Maya religious specialist explains, "death is a journey, or a change of clothes, because the spirit never dies."[24]

The *Popol Vuh* and the Creation Story

The *Popol Vuh*, nicknamed the "K'iche' Bible," is one of the few remnants of Maya religious traditions to have survived centuries of religious persecution and cultural eradication. The *Popol Vuh* was secretly written down in the K'iche' language in the mid-sixteenth century by indigenous scribes in Santa Cruz, Guatemala and only revealed to the Spaniards in 1702.[25]

The creation story in the *Popol Vuh* describes the covenant between humans and gods. First, earth and sky come into being out of an enormous body of water. Then, the gods seek to create something that will worship and nurture them. Their first several attempts are unsuccessful: they create animals, but animals cannot praise them; they shape humans out of

[24] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 68.
[25] "Popol Vuh," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics,* ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 13-14.

mud, but these creatures crumble; they try to use wood, but these beings have empty heads and hearts and eventually die in a flood. Finally, the gods use corn and water, and they finally succeed in creating beings that can praise and feed them.[26]

The *Popol Vuh* retains its cultural and religious importance today; as Garrard asserts, "the *Popol Vuh* is, arguably, the most enduring, comprehensive, and influential Mayan narrative."[27] Some inculturation theologians in the twentieth century encouraged the reading of the *Popol Vuh* during Catholic Mass, referring to this text as the *ojer tzij*, or the holy "prior word" which preceded the Christian Bible.[28] Indigenous activists also quoted *Popol Vuh* in speeches during the civil unrest in the late twentieth century, as this text symbolizes the resilience and endurance of the Maya throughout history.[29]

[26] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism.* 63-64.
[27] Virginia Garrard-Burnett. "'God Was Already Here When Columbus Arrived': Inculturation Theology and the Mayan Movement in Guatemala," in *Resurgent Voices in Latin America: Indigenous Peoples, Political Mobilization, and Religious Change*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 141.
[28] Virginia Garrard-Burnett. "'God Was Already Here'," 141.
[29] Betsy Konefal. "Blood in Our Throats," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 330-333.

MAYA-SPANISH CONTACT AND EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

In 1524, Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado invaded modern-day Guatemala, which at that time was splintered into various groupings and alliances of K'iche', Kaqchikel, Tz'utujil, Mam, and other Mayan-language groups. There was no united Maya polity to prevent Alvarado from taking over, which he did piece by piece with the help of México troops from the north.[30] History remembers Alvarado as one of the most bloodthirsty conquistadors; Bartolomé de las Casas estimated that he was responsible for the deaths of five million indigenes, stating, "the enormities perpetrated by himself especially … are enough to fill a particular volume, so many were the slaughters, violences, injuries, butcheries, and beastly desolations."[31] The Kaqchikel allied with Alvarado briefly to defeat their K'iche' rivals, but upon witnessing Alvarado's brutality and desire to enslave indigenous groups, the Kaqchikel turned against the Spanish forces and fought for six more years. However, by 1527 the Spaniards had taken over, establishing a capital in Almolonga.[32]

Disease had travelled faster than the conquistadors, so by the time Spaniards arrived in Guatemala, smallpox, measles, pulmonary plague, and typhus had already swept south from Mexico and decimated the Maya. W. George Lowell estimates, "Between 1520 and about 1680, native populations declined by more than 90 percent, falling from perhaps 260,000 to a nadir of about 16,000."[33] Thus, though the bloodthirstiness of the Spaniards should not be understated, another critical factor that aided their military victory was the ravaging spread of disease.

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[30] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Invasion and Colonialism," 39.
[31] W. George Lovell. "Great Was the Stench of the Dead," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 62.
[32] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Invasion and Colonialism," 39.
[33] W. George Lovell. "Great Was the Stench of the Dead," 63-64.

The Spanish asserted their dominance through various means. They relocated many rural Maya to *pueblos de Indios* ("Indian towns") and demanded tributes and labor through an *encomendero* system, which in many cases forced men to work nine-month rotations in harsh conditions on Spanish plantations.[34] In addition to the benefits of tributes, the act of relocating the Maya into towns *(reducciones de indios)* was intended to help foreign missionaries to more efficiently evangelize the Catholic Faith. However, these forced migrations created unhygienic living conditions and aggravated the spread of fatal foreign diseases.[35] Conditions in colonial Guatemala were so terrible that indigenous communities wrote to Spanish authorities, even the viceroy or king at times, begging for relief. One such letter reads, "Help us, Your Highness, our King don Felipe, King of Castille … The *macehuales* [commoners] live naked. People suffer greatly. They only raise tributes on them."[36]

During the colonial period, Catholicism was proselytized across Guatemala, and various colonial actors attempted to violently eradicate indigenous traditions. Wherever the conquistadors appeared, they were required by the Spanish Crown to recite (in Spanish) the *Requerimiento*, a demand that the local indigenous populations submit to the Catholic Church and the Spanish Crown. If the indigenous peoples submitted willingly, the conquistadors promised to reward them with fairness and freedom and would not force them to convert unless they chose to do so. However, if they refused, the Spaniards threatened to declare war and enslave them. Whether the Spaniards meant what they said regarding fair treatment can never truly be known because the *Requerimiento* was read in Spanish to non-Spanish-speaking

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[34] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Invasion and Colonialism," 39-41.
[35] Bishop Francisco Marroquín. "Good Government," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 65–67.
[36] "For the Eyes of Our King," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics,* ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 68.

populations, rendering it meaningless.[37] In consequence, Spaniards oppressed the Maya through decades of forced labor, religious persecution, and cultural eradication in the time following their arrival in the Americas.

Despite the ferocious Spanish attempts to make Guatemala Catholic, the region at large developed a form of localized Maya Catholicism, tightly interwoven with Maya worldviews. This blend of local and introduced religions – henceforth referred to as religious *mestizaje* – would have an enormous effect on Guatemalan culture as a whole.

The Beginnings of Evangelization

The Maya's first introduction to the Spaniards' religion was on the battlefield. Maya groups like the K'iche' carried sculptures or banners in battle to represent the gods, while Spaniards carried banners decorated with Christian iconography, including the Virgin Mary, doves, and crosses.[38] As mentioned previously, effigies and images play a critical part in Maya spirituality as vehicles for the divine, so it is likely that the Maya understood the foreigners' deities within their own *cosmovisión* and therefore were willing to add them into the Maya covenant. However, this acceptance of the Spaniards' gods should not be interpreted as acceptance of the Spaniards themselves. Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby report, "Maya communities remained hostile to priests as late as the close of the colonial period, despite mass baptisms, even while fusing many Christian figures and concepts with their own."[39]

[37] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 101-105.
[38] Early, 105-106.
[39] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Invasion and Colonialism," 40.

Spanish missionaries shirked their religious duties for the first generation following their arrival, and it wasn't until Bartolomé de las Casas wrote to the king and the Council of the Indies in 1540 to complain about the lack of religious instruction in the Americas that evangelization efforts began in earnest and lasted over four hundred years.[40] Friars used *doctrinas*, or Christian manuals that had been originally written to convert Muslims and Jews in Europe and which were translated into indigenous languages including Nahuatl and Kaqchikel. The most common *doctrinas* are those of Alonso de Molina, of Bishop Marroquín, and of Pedro de Córdoba. Although the *doctrinas* did not mention the saints, friars still proclaimed their importance to the Maya, who quickly adopted them into their own traditions.[41] These saints would become an essential part of the localized Catholicism developing in the region.

In towns that were large enough to merit a resident clergyperson, friars engaged in daily liturgy and instruction, and a talented few preached in Mayan languages. However, Guatemala received a mere six percent of missionaries from Spain, so rural Guatemala was chronically underserved by the local priests, who visited once a week in the best cases or once every several years in the worst. (To contextualize these numbers, Early estimates a ratio of 325 five-person households per one priest.[42]) Time-consuming daily routines practiced by monks and friars and ever-changing regional assignments also prevented them from adequately ministering to their congregants.[43]

Language barriers were another challenge in evangelization efforts. A 1582 letter from Bishop Gregorio de Montalvo of Yucatán reported that only nineteen of the forty-two priests

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[40] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 115, 117.
[41] For more information, see Mark Z. Christensen, *Translated Christianities: Nahuatl and Maya Religious Texts,* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).
[42] Early, 162.
[43] Early, 132-133, 138, 140, 167-168.

spoke enough Yucatec Maya to hear confessions and preach, while fourteen of the priests could do neither and the remaining nine could only hear confessions.[44] There were debates about whether to use Latin, Spanish, or Mayan languages to preach and teach, and translation failures were numerous, including inadequate translations for the concepts of "sin" and "God." Early notes, "Literal translation is often impossible between languages that are based on radically different worldviews."[45]

However, despite the lackluster religious education they provided, the Spaniards were determined to completely eradicate indigenous religions. The Spaniards forbid the practice of Maya religious traditions and took extreme measures to establish Catholicism as the region's only religion. In 1562, Catholic missionaries led by Bishop Diego de Landa in Yucatán, Mexico began burning Maya books and images and torturing indigenous people in a Spanish Inquisition-inspired campaign. Over 4,500 Indians were tortured during this three-month-long attack, resulting in 158 deaths and at least 13 suicides.[46]

In addition, Spaniards sought to conquer and remake Maya religious sites to prove their dominance and to force the Maya's eyes toward Christian deities. To describe this efficaciously symbolic conquest, Solari writes, "It is apparent from sixteenth-century accounts that friars recognized the indigenous understanding of religious structures as powerful and thus intentionally attempted to usurp that sacrality as a means of transferring native veneration to the Christian structure, religion, and godhead."[47] Furthermore, Spanish missionaries destroyed countless effigies and images to wipe out the supposedly idolatrous traditions of the region.[48]

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[44] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 170.
[45] Early, 170-171.
[46] Early, 45.
[47] Amara Solari. *Maya Ideologies of the Sacred: The Transfiguration of Space in Colonial Yucatan*. 1st ed. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2013), 14.
[48] Solari, *Idolizing Mary*, 38-39.

Unorthodox Catholicism in Europe and the Americas

Ironically, many Spaniards were also practicing unorthodox Catholicism during this era. Many Europeans performed rituals and made vows to patron saints in hopes of gaining a miracle, security, or magical powers.[49] Renaissance scholar Erasmus condemns these practices, saying, "Some ask the saints for a healthy mind as if they are not simply intercessors" — which is the orthodox role of the saints in Catholicism — "but the source of such things" — thus deifying the saints.[50] Though Jesus and the Virgin Mary were seen as the most powerful saints, this overblown devotion to patron saints was still a far cry from orthodox Catholicism.[51]

Across the ocean, the Maya began to adopt their own unorthodox version of Catholicism, one that incorporated Christian figures into a Maya *cosmovisión*. The beloved saints of Spain were added to the list of Maya deities, and they were often considered a valued addition in the face of all the troubles the Maya peoples were facing. Climatologist Robert H. Claxton reports, "Between the arrival of the Spanish and independence in 1821, the area which comprises the modern nation of Guatemala experienced *at least* seventeen volcanic eruptions, thirty earthquakes, seventeen locust infestations, numerous epidemics, a half-dozen frosts and droughts, as well as floods."[52] Thus, Early postulates that the Maya welcomed Spanish deities into their belief system in order that these new divine powers might offer them additional protection, assuming the proper Maya rituals were performed to honor them.[53] He explains the situation further: "The saints reside in the church and are perceived as similar to the ancestral

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[49] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism*, 100-101.
[50] Desiderius Erasmus. *The Enchiridion*, ed. Raymond Himelic, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), as quoted in Early, *The Maya and Catholicism*, 123.
[51] William A. Christian, Jr. *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.)
[52] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism*, 196.
[53] Early, 196.

gods living in the mountains … Like the ancestral gods, the saints watch over the communities and their observance of the Mayan *[sic]* covenant."[54] Since the saints entered into the preexisting Maya *cosmovisión* and covenant instead of completely reshaping religion in Guatemala, it is clear that the Maya accepted Catholicism in specific and intentional ways without sacrificing their own beliefs.

Sacred Spaces

The Maya fused their *cosmovisión* with Christianity in many ways. For example, the belief in cycles and the Maya covenant continued, but new practices like attending Mass and participating in *cofradías* (see below) became additional ways to fulfill the Maya covenant with the divine. The churches built by Spanish missionaries became important sacred spaces in Maya communities, even when no priests were consistently around.[55] One interesting anecdote regarding the role of churches comes from an account written by writer and explorer Lindesay Brine, who traveled through Guatemala in the mid-nineteenth century and documented his findings. He writes,

> ...We passed by the little church whose bell we had heard upon the previous night. The door was closed, and I noticed that it was charred by burning and blackened by smoke. I was told that this remote church was frequently closed during the time that the priest was away in other parts of the district, and when the Indians came here, they stuck lighted candles upon the door as nearly as possible in the direction of the image to which they wished to make their offerings. The church door was consequently deeply marked by the flames. Here, as also before the closed doors of other chapels in the mountains, the Indians have the custom of raising a temporary altar outside, before which they place offerings, and sit patiently in silence for many hours. They then fill a brazier with chips of resinous wood and light their candles and the brazier and go away to their huts, leaving

[54] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism*, 205.
[55] Early, 200-202, 214, 221.

> the incense burning. This is possibly a survival of the ancient usage of burning copal incense before their idols.[56]

Brine's reflections suggest that the Maya made their traditional offerings of copal incense to the saints, which indicates that they had incorporated the saints into their belief system without necessarily adopting a Christian worldview. His description here shows a devotion to the newly-introduced Catholic saints and places of worship as well as a determination to fulfill the Maya covenant, even when locked out of the aforementioned places of worship.

Brine also describes the existence of "*santo*" houses and "*adoratorios*." A "*santo*" house is "a small round hut, within which there was an image, which had been removed from the church and placed there, in order that it should receive special honor and devotion."[57] Dances and "Indian festivals" occurred near the "*santo*" house, but interestingly enough, Brine also describes being welcomed by a nearby priest, who must have been aware of the not-strictly-Catholic festivities nearby. Similarly, "*adoratorios*" were mountain shrines with effigies inside, cared for by attendants via rituals and sacrifices. These sacrifices and shrines demonstrate that material images and effigies were still significant for the Maya, and by venerating Catholic gods using Maya traditions, it can be assumed that these deities had already been brought into the Maya covenant and *cosmovisión*.

***Cofradías* and Maya Catholic Festivals**

As previously mentioned, saints became essential parts of Maya Catholicism. *Municipios* (administrative units similar to counties) were assigned patron saints to guide them, and

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[56] Lindesay Brine, "Travels amongst Indians," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 112.
[57] Brine, "Travels amongst Indians," 113.

numerous saints were displayed inside churches or private homes, often so many that the average person could not name them all. One priest in the town of Jacaltenango remarked, "In this church there are more saints than in heaven."[58]

The maintenance of saint effigies requires devoted human caregivers, which were provided by the institution of confraternities or *cofradías*. This institution was established in 1559 as a way to engage Maya communities in religious activities, and their members, termed *cofrades* or *cargadores*, viewed their labor as a form of community service to care for the deities. In Maya regions of Mexico, for example, there are over 40 year-long ritual positions, each with many assistants, who are arranged into a hierarchy that the most dedicated of believers can ascend.[59] Some scholars postulate that this structure allowed elite Maya to maintain or reassert their authority within the community, which was diminished upon the Spaniards' colonization.[60] The multitude of volunteers is necessary because communities hold dozens of festivals (approximately 166 days total) throughout the year, the most expensive of which can cost several years' wages.[61]

During three to four-day festivals, *cofrades* honor the saints by cleaning and adorning their altars, reciting loud praises and songs, and (sometimes) consuming liquor. On the third day, the priest arrives for the apex of the festival: the Mass. Although laypeople are not generally attentive to the Mass itself, it is considered an essential part of the festival because baptisms are performed after the Mass and because the wrath of the patron saint might be provoked if the Mass was not performed, resulting in punishment for the town. Therefore, in smaller towns that

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[58] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism*, 14.
[59] Early, 17-20.
[60] Solari, *Idolizing Mary,* 72.
[61] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism,* 17-20.

do not have a priest of their own, elders are sure to collect money to invite and pay a priest from a larger area to complete the Mass. There are also ceremonies that do not involve priests, such as the triannual church-mountain pattern in Maya regions of Mexico, in which religious specialists pray and give offerings in order to retain the protection of the saints.[62]

Cofradías were and still are incredibly important within Maya communities because they exemplify the religious *mestizaje* of the region. This act of saint veneration is a Catholicized version of the care and maintenance given to traditional Maya effigies; thus, the Maya intentionally combined their own worship practices and *cosmovisión* with Catholic figures and holidays. However, because of the strong Maya influence in these religious celebrations, the Catholic Church's reforms in the mid-twentieth century included attempts to eradicate *cofradías* and standardize religion according to European Catholic orthodoxy.

[62] Early, *The Maya and Catholicism*, 23-40.

INDEPENDENCE (IN NAME ALONE)

Independence was finally achieved in 1821, and Guatemala became a sovereign nation in 1847. During the next century, the country would be faced with issues of land reform, U.S. interest in the coffee industry, development, and simultaneously militarization, political oppression, and the rise of "Liberal" dictators.[63] Some reforms enacted by Liberal dictators mimicked Spanish rule. For example, in an attempt to stimulate coffee production, President Justo Rufino Barrios instituted a *mandamiento* in 1877 which forced communities to volunteer workers during the harvest, a measure which had strong undertones of the *encomendero* system.[64] Politicians also pushed for "Ladinoization," which was essentially synonymous with "Westernization." Indigenous people were expected to assimilate to standards of the West, but barriers were simultaneously constructed that promoted segregation and reinforced inequalities between the Maya and ladinos.[65] Political leaders in the 1870s diminished the power of the Catholic Church by appropriating its land holdings and assets and reducing the number of clergy. Thus, it wasn't until the mid-twentieth century with the resurgence of Catholic missionaries and emergence of liberation theology that the Church would again play an important role in Guatemalan society and politics.[66]

In 1944, the popular movement nicknamed the October Revolution overthrew the dictatorship of Jorge Ubico and replaced it with two consecutive democratically-elected governments. For ten years, in a period which has been nicknamed "Ten Years of Spring,"

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[63] Britannica, s.v. "Guatemala."
[64] Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, eds. "A Caffeinated Modernism," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 108-109.
[65] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "A Caffeinated Modernism," 107-110.
[66] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 94.

Presidents Juan José Arévalo and Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán implemented various reforms: suffrage for women and the Maya, the creation of healthcare and social security programs, the opening of schools in impoverished areas, and the enactment of labor, land, and agrarian reforms. Arévalo himself condemned the previous administrations, calling them "a shell of a republic, the fundamental objective of which was to conserve the Spanish way of life."[67] He sought to establish a "spiritual socialism" in the country, one that preserved the inherent dignity of its citizens. In a 1945 speech, he explained,

> "Our socialism is not oriented toward the naive redistribution of material goods, toward the idiotic economic equalizing of men who are economically different. Our socialism seeks to liberate men psychologically, to return to them all of the psychological and spiritual integrity that was denied them by conservatism and liberalism … to turn every worker into a man who can live as a complete psychological and moral being."[68]

Despite these ten years of progressive reforms, many rural Maya continued living in extreme poverty with minimal resources. U.S. anthropologists encouraged the establishment of the *Instituto Indigenista* in 1945 as a means to Ladinoize Guatemala's indigenous population. Ladinos and foreigners still associated the Maya with a lack of "health, sanitation, education, capital, food- and wealth-producing capacity" and therefore sought to integrate them more fully into Guatemalan society during this period.[69]

One reform during the Ten Years of Spring which triggered significant adverse impact was the confiscation of over seventy percent of United Fruit Company's land holdings. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this U.S. company had enjoyed

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[67] Juan José Arévalo, "A New Guatemala (Excerpt from Juan José Arévalo's Speech 'Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists')," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, trans. Kirsten Weld, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 207.
[68] Arévalo, "A New Guatemala," 208-210.
[69] Carol A. Smith. "Anthropology Discovers the Maya." 188-189.

immense power in Central America, so the loss of land threatened the power and economic potential of United Fruit Company (and by proxy, the United States) in the region. In retaliation, the CIA staged a coup in 1954 to oust President Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán's government and to establish a brutal regime in its place.[70] This coup set the stage for the military violence, popular movements, guerrilla warfare, and liberation theology which would characterize the next several decades of Guatemalan history.

A Catholic Reformation

Amid this political turmoil, the mid-1900s marked a "Second" or "New" wave of evangelization in the Catholic Church. The Liberal dictators of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had enforced various anticlerical measures, but the governments of Arévalo and Arbenz were neutral toward the Catholic Church. Therefore, Calder reports increasing numbers of foreign missionaries in the 1940s, building up to a veritable "flood" after 1954; this influx was large enough that "by 1966 foreign religious workers had come to constitute 85 percent of the clerical population of Guatemala."[71] The new influx of missionaries condemned the work of their predecessors, who had failed to eradicate Maya traditions, and they sought to replace the *cofradías* and deified saints with more orthodox beliefs and practices. Priest Thomas Melville was shocked to discover that the Maya were sacrificing chickens in churches and *chimanes* (medicine men) were misappropriating Catholic vestments and chalices for their own

[70] Edward T. Brett, "Prophetic Martyrdom in Modern Latin America: Two Definitions of Christian Martyrdom," in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Christianities*, ed. David T. Orique, Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and Virginia Garrard, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 244-245.
[71] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 95, 97.

ceremonies.[72] Missionary Jacques Monast of Canada lamented that indigenous groups across Latin America had been "baptized but not evangelized."[73]

Following the direction of Archbishop Mariano Rossell y Arellano (appointed in 1939), missionaries sought to replace *cofrades* with *catequistas* (catechists), indigenous religious leaders who would teach their neighbors proper Catholic orthodoxy and administer the sacraments. Though the archbishop had envisioned this to be a way to combat the popular organizing that was beginning to emerge in rural Guatemala, catechists would eventually succeed in becoming the active leaders in popular movements of the 1970s and 1980s as their social roles became increasingly political.[74] In addition to instruction about Catholicism, priests provided indigenous catechists instruction to read and understand their country's constitution.[75] Catechists also spread the message of *concientización* (consciousness-raising), which would become an important element of liberation theology.[76]

Although indigenous rites and localized Catholicism were banned, the new wave of missionaries supported the translations of religious texts and hymns into indigenous languages. However, even with these measures, the *catequistas* were not always embraced by indigenous communities, who preferred Maya Catholicism and considered this new orthodoxy "other," like Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses.[77]

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[72] Thomas Melville, "Whose Heaven, Whose Earth?" in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 296-297.
[73] Andrew Orta, "Indigenous Christianities: Commensuration, (De)Colonization, and Cultural Production in Latin America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Christianity*, ed. David T. Orique, Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and Virginia Garrard, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 90.
[74] Melville, "Whose Heaven, Whose Earth?" 295.
[75] José Manuel Fernández y Fernández, "*Campesinos* in Search of a Different Future," in *The Guatemala Reader : History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 312.
[76] David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 140.
[77] Andrew Orta, "Indigenous Christianities." 91.

The Catholic Church did not initially respond well to the October Revolution and Ten Years of Spring. Fearing that the poor rural population would be hurt by the reforms, many clergy opposed the land redistribution and communism in general. Archbishop Mariano Rossell y Arellano warned U.S. audiences, "A peasant without land is half of a whole, and is unconsciously within the orbit of communism," and the Catholic Church initially supported the CIA coup that pushed Arbenz out of power.[78] However, from the 1940s through the 1960s, more and more clergy across Latin America moved to rural impoverished areas in an attempt to literally draw nearer to the poor in a movement called *Acción Católica Rural*.[79] This led to theological movements like liberation theology and collaborations with communist organizations toward common goals, as capitalism was dubbed a "social sin."[80] Eventually, the Catholic Church aligned itself with the poor in the civil unrest of the late twentieth century, and many priests and congregants of the Church were ultimately martyred for the cause.[81]

The Appearance of Protestantism

Presbyterians, Quakers, Methodists, and other Protestant denominations arrived in Guatemala in the late nineteenth century and began building schools, hospitals, and printing presses.[82] Since these missionaries were working with communities that were mostly illiterate,

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[78] Mariano Rossell y Arellano, "Enemies of Christ (Excerpt from Archbishop Mariano Rossell y Arellano's Speech)," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 226-229.
[79] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 95.
[80] Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, eds., "Roads to Revolution," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 283.
[81] Brett, "Prophetic Martyrdom," 245.
[82] Virginia Garrard and Justin M. Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism in Latin America: Two Case Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Christianities*, ed. David T. Orique, Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and Virginia Garrard, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 291–308.

they developed innovative strategies to teach and evangelize, including lantern projectors, phonographs, radio programs, and tape recorders. Missionaries also translated the New Testament into Mayan languages and published written Bibles and cassette tapes. However, the written translations were met with little eagerness because of the oral nature of most Mayan languages and cultures. Additionally, most missionary work was done in Spanish for the first half of the twentieth century since few missionaries learned Mayan languages. The use of Spanish was also encouraged by the Guatemalan government during this era; it wouldn't be until the late twentieth century that Maya traditions and languages were celebrated and encouraged.[83]

Protestant conversions were few in the Catholic-majority country, numbering only a few thousand by 1950. However, Pentecostals arrived in Guatemala in 1916 and were so quick and successful in converting Guatemalans that various Protestant denominations teamed up to try to prevent the spread of Pentecostalism. Their efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, and Pew Forum reported that by 2006 eighty percent of Protestants in Guatemala identified as Pentecostal. In addition, some Protestant, Catholic, and Maya groups began to incorporate Pentecostal elements into their religious practices.[84] How was this charismatic belief system so successful when other denominations were not, especially considering that Catholicism had dominated the country for centuries?

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[83] Rachel M. McCleary, "Protestant Innovative Evangelizing to Oral Cultures in Guatemala," in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Christianities*, ed. David T. Orique, Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and Virginia Garrard, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 347-350.
[84] Garrard and Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism," 291-292, 299.

CIVIL UNREST

As mentioned above, Jacobo Árbenz Guzman was forced out of power in 1954 by a military junta aided by the CIA.[85] In the years following, guerrillas called *Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes* (Rebel Armed Forces) emerged out of a group of *arbencistas*, supporters of the overthrown Árbenz administration. In 1966, the U.S. intervened again in Guatemala by sending out death squads. In the following year they assisted the Guatemalan government's first "scorched-earth campaign," which reportedly killed "about eight thousand civilians in order to defeat an estimated three hundred guerrillas."[86] Starting in the 1960s and lasting until the signing of the peace accords in 1996, the Guatemalan government committed horrible atrocities against its people in attempts to shut down the guerrilla insurgency. Most of the violence targeted rural Maya communities, who were supposedly more susceptible to guerrilla recruitment.[87] However, this may have been an untrue assumption; many scholars and activists argue that rural communities wanted little to do with the guerrillas, who were often just as brutal to civilians as the death squads were. Nicolás Tomá from the town of Cotzal stated, "The guerrillas only provoke the army and then they go. We are the ones who suffer the consequences."[88]

By the late 1970s, bloodshed had escalated significantly. During Romero Lucas García's administration in the late 1970s, death squads in large cities were "killing or disappearing an average of two hundred people per week."[89] Though President Carter had halted direct military aid during his administration, his successor Reagan sought to provide "soft aid" in support of the

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[85] Britannica, s.v. "Guatemala."
[86] Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, eds., "Ten Years of Spring and Beyond," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 197-200.
[87] Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, eds., "Intent to Destroy," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 361–65.
[88] Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?,* 197.
[89] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Roads to Revolution," 284.

Guatemalan government via foreign proxies, American private organizations, and right-wing evangelical missionaries.[90]

Guerrilla armies built themselves up throughout the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the state-sanctioned violence of the Guatemalan and American governments. In 1980, a police attack that targeted indigenous protesters at the Spanish embassy triggered a turning point for the insurgents, who finally came out of the shadows against the military.[91] Simultaneously, state-sanctioned violence continued in the countryside and accelerated during Ríos Montt's scorched-earth campaign in the early 1980s. The army wiped out 440 rural Maya villages by 1983,[92] and the *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico* (Commission for Historical Clarification) reported "more than six hundred massacres committed by government forces against civilians in predominantly Maya areas between 1981 and 1983."[93]

This period was particularly cruel to women and children. Women were used as bait to lure their guerrilla husbands into the army's hands, raped in public within earshot of their children, and sold into sexual slavery to the army as young as eleven years old, while children were murdered in ways too gruesome to describe here. Historian Matilde González Izás writes, "In San Bartolo, the rape of women was so serious and systematic that the majority of these women will not even talk about, much less denounce, these incidents … Some women erase the experience from their conscious memory because the pain of remembering the trauma is unbearable."[94]

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[90] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Intent to Destroy," 362.
[91] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Roads to Revolution," 284.
[92] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 127.
[93] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Intent to Destroy," 362.
[94] Matilde González Izás, "Arbitrary Power and Sexual Violence," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics,* ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 405.

This violence would only increase during the greater part of the next three decades until peace accords were finally signed in 1996, by which point more than 200,000 individuals had been killed, over 80 percent of whom were Maya.[95] Hundreds of widows and well over a thousand orphans were left to fend for themselves,[96] and over a million individuals had been internally or externally displaced.[97] An article by the New Yorker referred to the civil unrest as "the Western Hemisphere's bloodiest conflict of the twentieth century,"[98] and some historians go so far as to refer to this period as the "Mayan holocaust."[99]

Liberation Theology

The emergence of liberation theology within the Catholic Church influenced and supported guerrillas and popular movements. (However, Calder emphasizes that liberation theology often went by a different name *(Iglesia de los pobres)* in Guatemala because of the country's "extremely polarized and dangerous political environment."[100]) Liberation theology brought social, economic, and political justice into the work of the church by combining *concientización* (consciousness-raising), the preferential option for the poor (accompaniment), and inculturation theology. Since *concientización* and the preferential option for the poor are two strategies that encourage those living in poverty to champion themselves, organize, and rise above the conditions into which they were born, liberation theology made Catholicism seem very

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[95] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 127.
[96] Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú*, 2008.
[97] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Intent to Destroy," 361-365.
[98] Rachel Nolan. "A Translation Crisis at the Border." *The New Yorker*, January 6, 2020. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/01/06/a-translation-crisis-at-the-border.
[99] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 127.
[100] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 103.

dangerous to the communist-fearing, U.S.-supported authoritarian regimes that governed Guatemala in the late twentieth century, and they treated it as a threat.[101]

Phillip Berryman postulates that liberation theology spread across Central and South America in three periods, two of which are relevant in the context of Guatemalan civil unrest. The first period was birthed by Vatican II and CELAM II (the Medellín Conference) in the 1960s and early 1970s in response to revolutions and coups in Cuba, Chile, and Brazil. The Catholic Church denounced the violence and poverty that raged across Latin America and saw liberation theology as a means to restore society, a "continuum that moves from meeting basic needs and overcoming injustice, to promoting human unity and peace, culminating in union with God."[102] Catholics promoted *protagonismo*, which Grandin defines as "an understanding of poor people not as victims but as protagonists who are capable of changing the exploitative conditions of their own lives."[103] To accompany this new worldview, Catholic clergy practiced *evangelización concientizadora* (consciousness-raising evangelization), which sought to uplift the "submerged consciousness" of the poor, catalyst their dignity and anger at injustice, and encourage them to unite against their oppressors.[104] These theologies were utilized by insurgents and local labor organizers alike, including the creators of the *Comité de Unidad Campesina* (CUC).[105] In this period, "liberation" was synonymous with peace and economic development, and this theology would soon come to walk hand-in-hand with socialist and communist movements of many Latin American countries.

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[101] Phillip Berryman. "Liberation Theology: History and Trends," in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Christianity*, ed. David T. Orique, Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and Virginia Garrard, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 157–74.
[102] Berryman, "Liberation Theology," 158.
[103] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Roads to Revolution," 283.
[104] Berryman, "Liberation Theology," 162.
[105] Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú*, 96-97.

By the mid-1970s, military dictatorships ruled over two-thirds of Latin America, including Guatemala. Berryman marks the mid-1970s to early 1990s as the second period of liberation theology, and at CELAM III (the Puebla Conference) in 1979, Catholic leaders officially adopted the "preferential option for the poor," which sought to transform poor people into "agents of their own destiny" by accompanying them in their fights for liberation.[106] Latin American clergy began distancing themselves from the European lens, focusing their efforts and attention on poverty and evangelization instead of "bourgeois" issues that were being debated in Europe, like abortion, ordination of women, and papal infallibility.[107] Scripture was read and interpreted at face value to make it most relevant to its readers, and *iglesias populares* (people's churches) emerged in private homes and base communities because of the idea that the Church was among the people, not in gaudy cathedrals across the world.[108]

The third period, starting in 1992 and extending to the present, is marked by sustained economic growth in most of Latin America, widespread democracy, and the election of Pope Francis. At CELAM V (the Aparecida Conference), bishops established a goal of "missionary discipleship," a renewed effort to evangelize outside of church buildings.

Inculturation Theology

The Maya had already fused indigenous worldviews with Christian beliefs in many ways, a movement which the Catholic Church dubbed "*teología Maya*."[109] Inculturation theology was another movement within the Catholic Church that arose in this era to reconcile Western and

[106] Berryman, "Liberation Theology," 160, 167.
[107] Berryman, 160-161.
[108] Berryman, 164.
[109] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 137-139.

Maya worldviews and beliefs. Loosely based on early missionaries' attempts to find "seeds of the divine word" within Maya belief systems, this theology sought to make Christianity more relevant to the indigenous groups of the Americas by recontextualizing it outside of a Western lens. According to this theology, Jesus operates specifically in his lived historical context but also bridges the gap between the past and present, and his "indigenous apostles" continue his work through their own native languages and practices.[110] The *Popol Vuh* is also regarded as a sacred text, and many indigenous Catholic clergy argued that the similar themes in both the Christian Bible and the *Popol Vuh* signify that the Maya were "carrying a faith in the kingdom of God" long before the Spaniards arrived.[111]

However, inculturation theology still emphasized Western Christianity above other religions because it centered spirituality within a Christian framework; for example, though Jesus may exist in many cultures, he was still seen as the absolute savior of the world.[112] Pope John Paul II wrote in 1979, "Inculturation signifies the intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values through the means of their integration into Christianity, and to Christianity's taking root (*radicación*) into diverse cultures."[113] Thus, Christianity (and more specifically, Catholicism) was still seen by the Catholic Church as the source of ultimate truth, and the Maya *cosmovisión* was never truly acknowledged as legitimate.

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[110] Andrew Orta, "Indigenous Christianities," 93-94.
[111] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 141-142.
[112] Garrard-Burnett, 139-140.
[113] Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1979), as quoted in Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 132-133.

The Catholic Church and the Guerrillas

During this period, the military regimes in Guatemala targeted the Catholic Church because they believed that the Church inspired guerrillas and incited violence. Fifteen priests and thousands of catechists and laypeople were murdered by the army between 1978 and 1985.[114] Though likely an overexaggerated threat, most rumors originate in a grain of truth, so it's important to examine the relationship between the guerrilla insurgents and the Catholic Church.

By calling themselves *la Iglesia de los pobres* (the Church of the poor), the Catholic Church vocally declared their support for the oppressed and marginalized voices in society. Radical theologies of liberation and inculturation sought to undermine systems of power that had kept wealthy ladinos in power, and instead lift up those who had undergone generations of rural poverty and cultural eradication. In addition, the Catholic Church created schools, hospitals, and cooperatives to support local communities.[115] Since Catholicism had become the dominant religion in Guatemala, the Catholic Church wielded considerable influence when it decided to vocally support the poor, and Calder notes, "The Maya most often became involved [in popular organizations] because they were active Catholics."[116] Popular organizations like the CUC were heavily represented by catechists and faithful Catholics, and guerrillas were quick to point out the similarities between liberation theology and Marxism. Documents from the *Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes* explain the link between leftist ideology and liberation theology: "Liberation Theology and Marxism coincide on many points, not because they are the same but because they take reality as a starting point and therefore arrive at similar conclusions … Christians and Marxists

[114] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 107.
[115] Calder, 103, 108.
[116] Calder, 106.

have common objectives: the liberation of the people, the liberation of exploited and oppressed men."[117]

The Power and Politics of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is a belief system that can operate independently or within other denominations. It emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit and encourages "experiencing" faith via "bodily signs" like speaking in tongues and healing. In David Stoll's book *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?,* he postulates that this movement gained so much attention and popularity in Guatemala because it "obviously rechannel[s] the popular religiosity of folk Catholicism."[118]

The Pentecostal movement boomed in the early 1980s, the same era which is referred to as *la violencia* because of the unthinkable quantity of state-sanctioned violence. General José Efraín Ríos Montt came to power in 1982, and despite his Decree of Amnesty, he continued to perpetrate human rights abuses and genocide of Maya groups.[119] Ríos Montt also identified as Pentecostal and very publicly preached about his faith, even calling his scorched-earth policy a "holy war,"[120] one that was supported by millions of dollars donated by U.S. evangelicals.[121] Is it pure coincidence that Guatemalans converted to the religion of a brutal dictator, especially when the Catholic Church was supporting the guerrillas and being martyred for it?

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[117] Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes, "Guerrilla Armies of the Poor," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 336.
[118] David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 113.
[119] Brett, "Prophetic Martyrdom in Modern Latin America." 246.
[120] Garrard and Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism," 297.
[121] Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?,* 182.

Politics certainly played a role in religion in this era. Still wrapped up in the Cold War, evangelical celebrities from the United States like Billy Graham, T.L. Osborn, and James C. Beaty promoted revival movements across the Americas, and U.S. evangelical missionaries under the encouragement by the Reagan administration traveled to Guatemala to provide a "spiritual alternative to communism."[122] Whereas the Catholic Church had begun to align itself with left-wing ideology, evangelical and Pentecostal churches remained firmly on the right end of the spectrum, using John Osteen's "prosperity gospel" and other conservative theologies to promote capitalism.[123] Pentecostalism also conveniently discouraged revolution, unlike liberation theology, and the two belief systems were inherently incompatible: "Whereas Christ located sin in the hearts of men, … liberation theology attributed it to social structures. And whereas Christians believed that salvation was achievable through personal rebirth, liberation theology reduced it to revolution, to the idea that only a social upheaval could redeem humanity."[124] Though evangelical leaders freely admitted that "corruption, disrespect for authority, communism, and evil were on the increase," they firmly believed that "their kingdom was not of this world," and Ríos Montt himself proclaimed it would be a transformation in men's hearts, not a revolution in society, that would save Guatemala.[125] In this way, Pentecostalism encouraged a focus on issues of personal shortcomings and sins, not societal issues.

Due to the increasing persecution of the Catholic Church, who sided with the poor, it is possible that many people in rural areas fled to Pentecostal churches to align themselves with Ríos Montt and distance themselves from Catholicism. A "vigilante" interviewed in David

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[122] Garrard and Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism," 296-297.
[123] Harold Caballeros, "Spiritual Warfare," in *The Guatemala Reader : History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 552–58.
[124] Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?,* 137.
[125] Stoll, 180-181, 185.

Stoll's book *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* hypothesized as much, stating, "Every day there were twenty to thirty [catechists] on the road … This is why so many left for evangelical churches, because the priests got involved in so many things."[126] The timing certainly lines up—only five percent of Guatemalans were Protestant in 1960, but this number increased to over twenty-five percent of the population by 1980, two years before Ríos Montt came to power, and plateaued there even after the violence ceased.[127] It's also possible that Pentecostalism conveniently filled a void; once the Guatemalan military attacked rural areas in full force, using scorched-earth campaigns to wipe out entire towns, the Church tended to retreat, and their projects fell apart.[128]

In addition, Pentecostalism by its nature appealed to a war-torn people. Garrard and Doran write, "There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the strong attraction that Guatemalans have felt for Pentecostalism that began in the mid-1970s, instead, had more to do with the promises of the faith—its claims to heal, to pour supernatural balm over hurting souls, and to provide a clear salvation narrative in the midst of an unfolding crisis of literally biblical proportions—earthquake, war, and terror, but soon to be redeemed by the imminent return of Jesus Christ."[129] Though evangelical Guatemalans were more outspoken about societal issues, they were less likely to revolt because of the Pentecostal belief that suffering was an integral part of the human experience.[130]

Environmental factors could also be a possible explanation for the surge in Pentecostalism. As mentioned previously, an important reason why Catholicism was welcomed

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[126] Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú,* 144.
[127] Garrard and Doran. "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism." 296-297.
[128] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 109.
[129] Garrard and Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism." 297.
[130] Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?,* 114-116.

into the Maya covenant was due to the large number of natural disasters in 1821. Similarly, Guatemala experienced a devastating earthquake in February 1976 which killed over 22,000 people and cost over a billion USD in losses.[131] The earthquake inspired an influx of missionary aid, and Garrard and Doran report, "Although cynics quipped that such pragmatic intervention offered an example of *lámina por ánima*—free corrugated roofing in exchange for one's soul—Guatemalans, especially in the most affected rural areas, ignored their critics and flocked to Pentecostal churches in droves."[132] Thus, the initial embrace of Pentecostalism might have been motivated by environmental, economic, and political factors, and its popular religiosity could explain its continued popularity in subsequent decades.

[131] "The Guatemalan Earthquake of February 4, 1976, A Preliminary Report." U.S. Geological Survey, 1976, https://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/1002/report.pdf.
[132] Garrard and Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism," 297.

POST-CONFLICT PEACE AND MAYA IDENTITY

After close to forty years of civil unrest and state-sanctioned violence, peace accords were finally signed in 1996. Catholic and non-Pentecostal Protestant churches were essential actors in the negotiations, as they served as a third-party moderator between the insurgents and the government. In these post-conflict talks, many Maya activists debated breaking from Catholicism altogether in order to resurrect exclusively-indigenous spirituality, but ironically, what had become known as *costumbre* (customary) was a Mayanized Catholicism.[133]

The peace accords granted more rights and recognition to indigenous groups, which would shape identity, religion, and politics across the country. However, to explain indigenous pride today and its ties to religion, we'll begin by backtracking to the origins of the *movimiento Maya* (Maya movement).

Movimiento Maya

In the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous pride took on a more visible form through beauty pageants, radio programs, and other events designed to celebrate Maya identities. Political representation began to shift by the late 1970s when Maya individuals were elected to local offices and groups like Rigoberta Menchú's *Comité de Unidad Campesina* (CUC) organized to defend the rights of rural peasants.[134] It is important to acknowledge the growing recognition and celebration of Maya identities during this period as proof that neither the Catholic Church, Pentecostal traditions, nor the U.S. or Guatemalan governments succeeded in erasing the cultures

[133] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 130.
[134] Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby, "Roads to Revolution," 283.

of the Maya. The Maya also fought for their cultural rights (including religion and *cosmovisión*) to be recognized, which pushed back against the attempted Ladinoization of previous generations.[135]

Indigenous pride and rural uprisings took shape in an unusual form during this period: through annual national indigenous beauty pageants, which were started in 1971 as a way for the government to publicly show support to indigenous communities, despite the state-led massacres occurring at the same time. The government brought together contestants from all over the country to wear Maya clothing, perform traditional dances, and in general celebrate the Maya "soul" of the country.[136] At the 1978 Folklore Festival, indigenous pageant queens took a stand against the recent massacre in Panzós. Using the platform that their government had inadvertently given them, many contestants filled their speeches with messages of justice and human rights, and others wore traditional Maya mourning clothes. One contestant likened Maya people across the county to those massacred in Panzós, saying *"Hermanos de Panzós, su sangre la tenemos en la garganta"* (Brothers of Panzós, we have your blood in our throats).[137] Another pageant queen was quickly disqualified at a local level for refusing to perform a traditional dance as she publicly mourned the massacre at Panzós, asking "Tomorrow it could be us, *¿verdad?*" She then invoked the words of the *Popol Vuh,* saying, "May, not one, nor two be left behind, may all rise up together."[138] Thus, even during periods of extreme violence against the Maya, their culture was not extinguished, and their *cosmovisión* shaped their political and societal participation.

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[135] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 128.
[136] Konefal. "Blood in Our Throats," 328.
[137] Konefal. 331.
[138] Konefal, 330-333.

Religion was an important point of contention in dialogues about indigenous culture and pride. The Maya *cosmovisión* had persevered through centuries, and the peace accords afforded the Maya the cultural right to fully and publicly practice their religions without fear of persecution. An anonymous Maya citizen quoted by Virginia Garrard emphasized, "You don't revive something that has never been dead … We have practiced our religion and observed our calendar without interruption since the time of the Conquest. But we have kept it to ourselves, hidden from outsiders. Now, after the destruction of many of our communities and the scattering of thousands of our people across the face of the earth, the time for secrecy has passed."[139] However, for most Maya (excluding elites and intellectuals), what they recognized as their authentic religion was the Maya-Catholic *mestizaje,* involving *cofradías,* ritualized healing, saint adoration, divination, and other rites that had elements of each religion. Some Maya religious leaders considered themselves Catholics and others considered themselves *brujos*. Thus, it became difficult, even undesirable, to separate the two in attempts to decolonize. Most Maya, even if they maintain a Maya *cosmovisión* and practice Maya rituals, still consider themselves Christian (whether Catholic or Protestant).[140]

The Catholic Church (Finally) Accepts Maya Catholicism

The Catholic Church responded to the indigenous pride movement with specific shifts in the 1970s to be more welcoming and supportive of indigenous communities. Priest Jim Curtain worked to create a *pastoral indígena,* which Calder describes as a "sensitive and coherent

[139] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 131.
[140] Garrard-Burnett, 130-132.

pastoral policy for working in Mayan communities."[141] Though it had been created with the focus on using indigenous languages for hymns, homilies, and the Mass,[142] this policy grew to include educating clergy and communities about Maya cultures and issues as well as establishing cultural centers to celebrate their heritage and offer services.[143]

In the wake of *la violencia,* the Catholic Church noticed how their past attempts to reform Catholicism had isolated Maya communities, and they pushed their *pastoral indígena* once more, this time seeking to embrace Maya culture more fully by accommodating *cofradías* and other popular faith expressions, by appropriating Maya musical instruments and clothing into Catholic ceremonies, by using Mayan languages in religious activities, by welcoming more indigenous candidates into seminary, and by helping their pastors become more familiar with the communities they served. In short, they embraced Maya Catholicism and the idea of "*una Iglesia auténtica Madre-Maya*" (an authentic Mother-Maya Church),[144] a religious *mestizaje* that the Maya had already informally established.

Post-Conflict Pentecostalism

Even after the conflict in Guatemala ended, Pentecostalism retained much power in Guatemala, and Pentecostal leaders found themselves in positions of authority. Grandin explains, "[Pentecostal leaders] see themselves as redeemers not just of souls but of nations," and they sought to fight against the "demons that cause social ills" (which sometimes included the

[141] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 105.
[142] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 133.
[143] Calder, "Interwoven Histories," 105-106.
[144] Calder, 110-114.

Catholic Church) to bring about the kingdom of God.[145] During the period of *la violencia*, Pentecostalism in Guatemala was apocalyptic and promised better things after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ; however, after the violence ceased, neo-Pentecostalism emerged and focused more on earthly life, including the preaching of prosperity gospel. Neo-Pentecostalism did not advocate for the poor, as the Catholic Church had done, but it did enchant many people with promises of wealth and peace.[146]

It is impossible to reconcile Pentecostalism with Maya spirituality, as has been done with Catholicism to some extent through inculturation theology and Maya Catholicism. Because the Pentecostal tradition emphasizes baptism in the Holy Spirit as one of its key tenets, it's impossible to accept any form of non-Christian or pre-Christian spirituality as legitimate.[147] In addition, the Pentecostal tradition rejects Maya Catholicism, viewing it as sinful idolatry and a "double paganization."[148] Pastor and politician Harold Caballeros describes a town called Almolonga, where the people were very loyal to their patron saints: Saint Peter and a clay and wood statue called Maximón. Caballeros and his colleague Mell Winger describe how Pentecostalism arrived to save the people of Almolonga, stating, "In 1974-75 the Kingdom of God dramatically started clashing with Maximon and the ruling powers of darkness controlling Almolonga."[149] The authors describe in detail the "spiritual warfare" that occurred as a result of this conflict between the human and the divine. Casting out demons and conversion to Christianity were hallmarks of this battle, and though Caballeros describes early resistance to his

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[145] Harold Caballeros, "Spiritual Warfare," in *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 552-553.
[146] Garrard and Doran, "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism," 298.
[147] Garrard-Burnett, "'God Was Already Here'," 143-144.
[148] Garrard-Burnett, 143.
[149] Mell Winger and Harold Caballeros, eds., "Almolonga, the Miracle City," *Renewal Journal 16: Vision*, 2012. https://renewaljournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/16-Vision.pdf.

work, he believes that the miracles of Christ through Pentecostalism transformed the area from a crime-ridden, impoverished city ridden with domestic abuse and alcoholism to one where its citizens had been "redeemed" and lived in harmony.[150]

The influence of the United States is still apparent through the preaching of American-rooted theologies like prosperity gospel and through Caballeros' goal to achieve "Manifest Destiny" in Guatemala.[151] Caballeros seeks to "transform" Guatemalan society, but these social goals must not be viewed as isolated from the influence of the powers-that-be, namely the United States.

Pentecostal leaders have also been tied to drug trafficking on several occasions in the last few decades. Asier Andrés hypothesizes that the social prestige and power of religious leaders (or even regular churchgoers) can explain the relationship between drugs and religion because attending church signals respectability and upstandingness. Additionally, church communities are then able to vouch for one of their own. It's also difficult to follow the movement of money in churches, since few regulations exist to monitor cash flow in churches.[152] In this way, religion continues to be tied to power and politics in the modern era.

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[150] Winger and Caballeros, "Almolonga, the Miracle City."
[151] Caballeros, "Spiritual Warfare," 558.
[152] Asier Andrés, "Narcos y pastores en Guatemala: traficar cocaína en nombre de Dios," *Nómada, Guatemala*. August 19, 2020. https://nomada.gt/pais/la-corrupcion-no-es-normal/narcos-y-pastores-en-guatemala-traficar-cocaina-en-nombre-de-dios/.

CONCLUSION

Throughout Guatemalan history, religion has been used as a symbol of power, identity, and resistance. The Catholic Church was a key actor during the contact and colonial periods, and the religious persecution carried out in the name of the Catholic God against indigenous spirituality further proved the close-knit relationship between religion and power. However, despite centuries of colonialism and foreign influence, the Maya held on to their identity by practicing their religious traditions in secret, by passing down the *Popol Vuh* and other stories, and by imbuing foreign religions with their own *cosmovisión*. Pentecostalism, in contrast, arrived and remained in Guatemala for largely political motives, inspired by the anticommunist and anti-insurgency sentiments of the U.S. and Guatemalan governments. Even the modern ties between drug trafficking and the church show that power can subtly be upheld and abused within religious structures.

Despite the power and violence of Spanish and American forces in Guatemala, the Maya have accepted Catholicism – and later Protestantism – on their own terms. The Maya developed a localized Catholicism out of their own *cosmovisión* long before Catholic clergy gave a name to *teología Maya* and stumbled upon inculturation theology. The fused nature of Maya Catholicism can be seen in worship because the Maya veneration of effigies came to include Catholic saints, and *cofradías* maintained traditions of religious community service and care for the deities. In addition, the Maya *cosmovisión* was never abolished, though elements of Catholicism were welcomed in.

It took centuries for the Catholic Church to realize that "God … is infinite and is not to be bound by the particulars of our Greco-Roman symbolism," as written by Thomas Melville in the

late twentieth century.[153] However, the Maya had long been cognizant of this fact and expressed their distaste at the Eurocentrism of spirituality. Humberto Cholango sums it up well in his letter to Pope Benedict XVI in 2007: "It's inconceivable that in the 21st century, God still has to be defined according to the European standards … We think the life of Jesus is the Great Light coming from Inti Yaya … The Pope should note that our religions NEVER DIED, we learned how to merge our beliefs."[154]

Catholicism and Maya religions have been intertwined, irrevocably, and the religious *mestizaje* occurring in the wake of intercultural contact has become *costumbre* in the region. Despite protests from Maya intellectuals during the *movimiento Maya* to decolonize Guatemalan religion, rural Maya groups began to resort back to *cofradías* and other fused traditions in the wake of *la violencia*. Additionally, the popular religiosity of Pentecostalism continues to attract a large portion of the population and affects worship practices in other denominations, including Catholicism, which indicates that this religion is also being welcomed into the fused Guatemalan spirituality. Thus, Christianity has been reclaimed and reshaped throughout Guatemalan history, and political events strongly shaped this process.

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[153] Melville, "Whose Heaven, Whose Earth?," 301.

[154] De la Cadena, "Indigenous," 334f.; Benedict XVI, "Inaugural Address to the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean," May 13, 2007. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070513_conference-aparecida.html, as quoted in Andrew Orta, "Indigenous Christianities," 96.

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University **Class of 2021**
Schreyer Honors College, *College of Liberal Arts (Paterno Fellow)* *University Park, PA*
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Schreyer for Women **March 2020 – March 2021**
Service Director *University Park, PA*
- Created collaborative service partnerships for collegiate honors organization with local and international organizations, including Days for Girls, Girl Scouts, and local school districts
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Department of Spanish, Italian & Portuguese **February 2021 – April 2021**
Undergraduate Research Assistant *The Pennsylvania State University*
- Research code-switching in New Mexican Spanish-English bilingual communities with Dr. Rena Torres Cacoullos
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Mission Development Intern *Centre County, PA*
- Meet the material and spiritual needs of Spanish-speaking communities through the creation of a Spanish-speaking church in Centre County, PA
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Legal Intern *Lancaster, PA*
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Mennonite Central Committee **June 2019 – August 2019**
International Affairs Intern *Washington, D.C.*
- Prepared reports on congressional hearings, panels, legislation, and conferences related to US foreign policy
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AFS Intercultural Programs: Guaranda, Ecuador **August 2017 – June 2018**
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AWARDS & HONORS

Student Marshal, *Latin American Studies*	*2021 (Commencement)*
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President's Freshman Award	*2019*