

Quichua Pentecostalism in Ecuador*

Interviews with Rosendo Guaman and Francisco Pilataxi, June 25, 2006

Nolivos: Can you tell the story of the movement of the Holy Spirit in your church February 1982 or 1984?

Pilataxi: We asked the cabildos if we could build a small church on our own property [after losing the other with the storm]. They allowed us to do it. The founding pastor was Jose María. We began to worship here at this church. The institutes of the association [the Gospel Missionary Union] where they taught in Quichua were basic and not in depth. So we searched deeper teachings with Spanish seminaries that would come and teach us Pastoral theology and we brought the materials. I attended to that study with my nephew and others, a total of four of us from here. There were students from all parts here in our community studying. At this time, . . . [the Gospel Missionary Union and its leaders] were saying we were studying another doctrine, other religions. This we were not supposed to be doing. This is when we discovered fasting, prayer and divine healing.

Pilataxi: Let's continue. Fasting, praying and divine healing was a new doctrine for us who did not know it. When others heard the doctrine, our very own church, pastor Jose María, came against us, the four of us who were learning it. We wanted to preach this new doctrine but he would say that's another doctrine, a false one and he went and commented it to the association. Brother, at this point begins a great critique and a time when we suffered greatly as they accused us of a false doctrine, saying this should not be and we should not be doing it. As we shared it with the church, some were in agreement with us while others were with Bro. Jose María. There was a division arising in the church. We continued in our studies while the association took a stand against the students that were studying.

Nolivos: You were preaching what you learned?

Pilataxi: Yes. When we would go and preach outdoors. People would begin to invite us here and there in other communities. . . Some of the deacons agreed while Pastor Jose Maria and others not. Pastor Manuel Aucancela (was not a pastor back then) supported us and my father-in-law. . . So the brothers began with the fast and they notified us to help with fasting and praying by putting the youth in the hands of God. So when we come back from the revival people tell us something is happening we don't know what it is happening to the brothers. It had been two days already that they were in there, in the church, when we arrived.

Guaman: I was in my home and when I went outside to the street I could hear sounds of screaming and squealing. I live just a little ways up from here and I could hear these sounds clearly. I drew near the street and Aaaayyyyyy!!!! There were some screaming others with loud voices crying out to God. I asked myself what is this.

Nolivos: Do you remember what they were saying?

Guaman: Yes, they were saying, "Father, thank you, thank you father for this manifestation, thank you!" And the people across the street and all over came out as if there had been an accident. Everyone came to the church to see. When we came down from our house to open the door of the church, we saw people screaming, others jumping, and others sprawled out on the floor and on their backs receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Pilataxi: See, something happens here. Brother, when we arrived at the church, at the door, there was so much fire that people broke out! Then we went in and there had been a lot of people on the outside looking in through the windows. When we entered, I said thank you Lord.

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I had been fasting.

Nolivos: How many people were inside?

Pilataxi: Approximately 15 or 20, there was not many inside. When we entered, we thanked God for what he was doing according to the Bible. Because we still did not know what the manifestation was or what the power of the Holy Spirit was. . . . We were concerned because we did not know what this was, what was happening. Then we notice a sister, Rosa Guaman, speaking in tongues. And there was another sister that grabs the Bible. She is illiterate, yet she begins to read it. Other brothers were prophesying “This is going to happen...; this is what the Lord is saying...; to this young people, God is going to speak to them.” Some were singing and jumping and saying “Glory to God.” We did not know this phrase “glory of God” until that moment or Hallelujah.

Nolivos: You had not heard this before?

Pilataxi: No, it was prohibited by the association and the pastors would not allow it or clapping because the *mestizos* do this and that is another doctrine. They would tell us we can’t do this, it was prohibited. So then back in the church people were singing, clapping and saying glory to God. We only had instruments and they began to play them and people began to worship, to sing, to dance and spoke in tongues these things took place brother. At this point Brother Rosendo seriously doubted everything that was taking place. He entered and saw the people and said you should not be doing this. But how could he stop this? Because no one can stop the power of God. He was afraid of what had never taken place among us before: the praising, the glorifying and the kneeling.

Guaman: Not only was the manifestation taking place at the church but in various homes. Those who were afraid and doubting at home would be saying, “Dear God how is this possible I have never seen anything like this before?” And the Spirit started to move in their homes, so they realized the manifestation was true. A few days later they went to the church and shared these experiences that God had given dreams, visions demonstrating it

Pilataxi: We didn’t know anything about the tongues, how were we supposed to know about this. So we decided to visit people’s homes that had doubts and pray with them so we went here and there visiting. We already knew about the imposition of hands in the theological studies we had learned earlier. We said: “Help us understand in what language are they speaking in, speak to us Lord.” We put it in his hands and this gave the brothers and sisters a little bit of peace. They would come to the church, to the worship services that were very long. Prayer meetings ended up lasting two to three hours. There were many commentaries that had arrived at the Association of churches. They became our enemies on the radio: “Those in Pulucate Centro are crazy, they are fanatics, and they have another doctrine (false).”

* I conducted these interviews in Ecuador, as part of my research for a PhD dissertation on the Quichua Christian tradition and examines the indigenous discovery of Christianity through Catholic, Protestant, and Pentecostal Evangelizations. See Eloy H. Nolivos, “Quichua Christianity: An Indigena History from the Cross and the Sword to Pentecost” (Ph.D. Diss., Regent University, 2011).