

Brazilian Neopentecostal Religiosity and Music Performances

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Introduction

In the studies about religion in the Brazilian Social Sciences, neopentecostalism has been one of the main objects that draws the attention of researchers. A large variety of works have sought to understand the phenomena that, with significant growth in the last census of the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), challenges the so called traditional religions, amongst which, mainly, is Catholicism (PIERUCCI, 2004). Before understanding the variety of scientific answers to this new scenario, part of which is considered in this text, one can affirm, beyond the notorious transformation in the national religious field, the ability these groups have to adapt to a peculiar type of modernity in the Brazilian context. (TORRES, 2007; SANCHIS, 1997).

One of the main characteristics of Brazilian neopentecostal religiosity is the importance given to the *praise* element, defined as the stage of the ritual in which the congregation sings chants guided by religious specialists, also known as *praise ministers*. This article presents the relationship between the musical action of this religious segment and its doctrinal content as observed at the *Igreja Fonte da Vida*², in Goiânia, Brazil, which was used as a fundamental part of the research written in a Master's Degree dissertation defended in March of 2011 in the Postgraduation Program of Sociology at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). The interest of this investigation was in the adaptability of the neopentecostal phenomenon to the ways of contemporary modernity. Specifically, it is concerned with the affinity that neopentecostalism has, through its doctrinal axis - the *Theology of Prosperity*, with the established *consumption culture* in a society marked by globalization.

Music and the emotional expression in the rituals

By studying the musical action in the religious context, one's starting point is the understanding of Clifford Geertz about religion as a social phenomena. Looking to give his contribution to researchers that search to accomplish a *thick description* of culture from religion, his definition is:

a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (GEERTZ, 1973, p.90).

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² Church's name meaning "Fountain of Life Church"

This way, the Fonte da Vida Church is a good example of the new genre of religious practices in Brazilian territory. Generated in the pentecostal movement, the neopentecostal churches fit the characteristics shown by Mariano (2005) - such as the importance given to the *spiritual warfare* theme, emphasis on prosperity, liberalization of stereotyped uses and observances of holiness and the business model of the institution.

The picture which is drawn in a typical neopentecostal worship service is notoriously favorable to intense emotional expression by the faithful. The practice of giving one's testimony, which is very common, serves as a showcase of abundance and concrete nature of *miracles* throughout one's daily battles. In a worship service observed by the researcher in december of 2010, the apostle César Augusto, the highest leader of *Fonte da Vida* church, before beginning his sermon, challenges five followers amongst the audience to make their way to the altar and tell their fellow churchgoers a special blessing they have received in the last few days. Once the challenge was accepted by the followers, the narratives report several achievements, such as: passing a government test, climbing the corporate ladder, the closing of a successful judicial process, the success of a private enterprise and freedom from debt.

Always related to fidelity in religious purposes, which includes the zeal of tithing and offerings, the testimonies express the belief in the *best world among all possible*, translated as the *best from God for my life*, concept which is clearly adjusted to individualism and the understanding of time in a consumption society. One notices God in the intimate and, once aligned creation and creator, the feelings of men are worthy of praise and their aspirations and desires are noble. Freed from the vision of a tyrannical god, people can and will make moral choices that will guarantee their eternal salvation. Virtue and reason will inevitably triumph over human temptations and corruption of society (FORRER, 1986).

In this way, the concentration of religious experience in the subjectivity of the followers has important elements of the musical practice in neopentecostalism. The musical action in religious rituals emphasizes the liberty given to the follower to one's emotional expression and the unrestricted experience of religious feelings. Accordingly, the figure of the artist is important in two ways, be it in the outwardly projection of his own experience as a model for his audience, and be it as an encourager of free expression in singing and praying. The musical rhythms are varied and are taken from the pop culture, selected in accordance to the liturgy. The words of the songs express a personal divinity and a desire to establish relationships with human beings. Part of a song written by pastor Lucas Amorim, one of the participants of the research, shows the perception followers have about this relationship:

*Vou deleitar-me no Teu rio de amor
Beber da Tua fonte meu salvador
No Teu colo deitarei*

*E nos Teus braços eu me entregarei.*³
(AMORIM, 2010, Meu prazer)

In another song by the same author, the same idea is expressed:

*A noite cai e cada vez mais reconheço
não vivo sem Ti, por isso te peço senhor
vem me abraçar, quero Te adorar meu Rei
Não vivo sem Ti, sem Tua presença meu Senhor.
Fica Senhor, fica Senhor!
Fica comigo em minha vida, minha casa é Teu lar
fica Senhor, fica Senhor!
Quero dialogar, vamos passear pelo jardim
meu Pai, meu amigo.*⁴
(AMORIM, 2010, Fica Senhor)

This has been the predominant tendency of the Brazilian evangelical artistic movement. The evangelical christian music, nationally known as *gospel*, is not a musical genre as one could be reminded of the well known *gospel* with origin in the African American communities of the USA. The term shows, in fact, an endless variety of appropriations of secular rhythms sacralized by words inserted there. For this reason one can see this happening with *rock gospel*, *funk carioca gospel*, *samba gospel* and *pop gospel*, among others. Curiously, the genre is defined by doctrinal contents and not aesthetic-artistic elements. This is why the analysis of musical action shall be concentrated in the words of the songs and not in the genre itself. A good example of such content is the notion of reiterated affirmation, in which god is perceived as someone that searches for proximity and with whom the follower can have an intimate relationship, as shown in the words of a song from the Diante do Trono band.

*Posso tocar-Te,
posso mover o Teu coração,
posso atrair os Teus olhos
com minha adoração.*⁵
(DIANTE DO TRONO, 2003)

During the performance, singer Mariana Valadão proclaims a prayer, being led by the

*3I will delight myself in Your river of love
Drink of Your fountain my saviour
On your bosom I will lie
And in your arms I will give myself
4The night falls and I recognize I need more and more
I don't live without you, that is why I ask you Lord
Come embrace me, I want to worship my King
I don't live without you, without your presence my Lord
Be with me Lord, be with me Lord
Stay with me in my life, my house is your house
Be with me Lord, be with me Lord
I want to talk, let us walk through the garden
My Father, my Friend
5I can touch You,
I can move Your heart
I can attracte Your gaze
With my adoration*

intensity of the song. This practice among the evangelicals is known as *spontaneous adoration*. Her words were:

*Amado, Amado,
eu sei que Tu estás aqui pertinho de mim.
Eu posso Te tocar, Te abraçar, Te beijar amado.
Sem medo eu vou, sem medo eu vou, pro Teu colo.
Eu sei que o Senhor me abraça.
Eu sei que o Senhor me recebe, eu vou, eu vou,
pra mais perto pra mais junto.
Eu, ali pertinho de Ti
bem juntinho no Teu colo de amor.
Assim não temo, não tenho medo
assim juntinho eu confio,
assim juntinho de Ti eu alegro o Teu coração
e me preencho.
Só em Ti sou completo.⁶
(DIANTE DO TRONO, 2003)*

This kind of relationship with the divine is a reminder of what Max Weber (1982) understood: the desire to possess and be possessed by god, which is an evidence among others that the fundamental religious concern is in worldly matters, once perceived the emotional value of the states of mystical union for devotees. For Weber, such states are found both in rationalized religions, as is the case of this analysis, and, in worship services which have components such as drunkenness, banquets and orgies of magical and animist character. According to the author, the main difference between the two types is the degree of religious pragmatism reached by rationalized religions that enables the sublimation of *orgy* in *sacrament*.

It is important to emphasize that the weight given to the element of subjectivity in a large part of the traditional protestant beliefs – in contrast, for example, to the dogmas of Catholicism before the Reformation – dwells basically on the possibility of free interpretation of the sacred texts. Neopentecostalism, on the other hand, augments the role of subjectivity in religious life as the individual is encouraged to enjoy his experience on the emotional level, of intuition, of *hearing God*, discovering him in his inner life. The orientation of the life of the follower happens, according to the preacher, as much by what is written in the christian scriptures in the form of a suggestion to

⁶*Beloved, Beloved
I know that You are here very close to me
I can touch You, embrace You, kiss You Beloved
Without fear I go, Without fear I go, to Your bosom
I know that the Lord embraces me
I know that the Lord receives me, I go, I go
To closer and more together
Me, there close to You
Very very close in Your bosom of love
This way I am not afraid, I am not afraid
Like this, very very close I trust,
This way very very close to You I am overjoyed in your heart
And I am filled
Only in You I am complete.*

be followed, as by the sensibility the individual has to discern what will be interpreted as *impressions of the Holy Spirit* directed to his conscience. This very content is fervently chanted by the faithful in the worship services at Fonte da Vida Church.

*Uma nova história Deus tem pra mim,
um novo tempo Deus tem pra mim.
Tudo aquilo que perdido foi,
ouvirei de sua boca: te abençoarei!*⁷
(Service at the Fonte da Vida Church, recorded in december, 2010)

An ode to divine benevolence

On the occasions observed by the researcher, the main theme of the worship services was the *double honor* that God would concede to individuals who exercised their faith. Everything that would happen during the service would concentrate around this theme: the preaching, prayers, songs, testimonials and the remaining ritual elements. Below are the words of a song in its entirety, sung at the church by the whole congregation in a service attended by the researcher.

*Onde era tristeza se verá
A dupla honra me ornar
Com boas novas proclamar
Uma nova história celebrar
É chegada a minha hora
Meu silêncio já acabou
Ouça o som da minha grande festa
Eu vou viver uma virada
Em minha vida, eu creio
Eu vou viver uma virada
O que eu achava estar perdido
E tinha desistido de sonhar
Meu Deus já decretou este é o meu dia
Minha virada festejar*⁸
(Service at the Fonte da Vida Church, recorded in december, 2010)

In another song performed during the same service, those very elements are noted:

*Hoje Deus está mudando a minha sorte
Me tornando forte me fazendo um vencedor*

*7 A new story God has for me
A new time God has for me
Everything that was lost
I will listen from your mouth, I will bless You
8 Where there was sadness, will be seen
The double honor bring beauty to me
With good news proclaim
A new story celebrate
My time is come
My silence is finished
Listen to the sound of my grand party
I will live a turning point
In my life, I believe
I will live a turning point
What i thought was lost
And had quit dreaming
My God has already decreed this is my day
My turning point celebrate*

*E ouço a sua voz dizendo: filho não temas
Em lugar de tua vergonha
Te darei dupla honra⁹*

(Service at the Fonte da Vida Church, recorded in december, 2010)

Clifford Geertz challenges the researcher to relate cultural content to the social dynamic that revolves around them. “Analysis, then, is sorting out the structures of signification... and determining their social ground and import” (GEERTZ, 1973, p.9). In this case, the vision shown in the words of the songs aligns itself to a perception of the benevolence of the christian divinity studied by Colin Campbell (2001) in the theological refutations directed to the late 17th century and early 18th century Calvinism. Arguing that the calvinist doctrine and its determinism did not logically and historically exhaust the problem of theodicy, as defended Max Weber (CAMPBELL, 2001), the author investigates theological clashes that would have driven the theological rationalization process in the protestant theodicy field, with effects in the very construction of the conscience of individuals in Europe in that context and, as a consequence, of western civilization. Categorically, the author insists that Calvinism did not represent the highest point of theological rationalization of the protestantism, as Weber suggested (CAMPBELL, 2001, 2007). The main imperfections of calvinist theodicy, in the point of view of its critics, started to find space in the puritan environment itself (CAMPBELL, 2001). Following the rupture with orthodoxy led by Arminianism in the decade of 1580, when the greatest issue was affirming that if God had predestinated Adam and Eve to sin then he should be the one to be blamed for that very sin (CAMPBELL, 2001). Since then, the base of calvinist doctrine has been attacked by philosophers and theologians. As Campbell goes on, he mentions that Arminius himself defended a principle that in the future would be of fundamental importance in John Wesley's methodism, categorized by Weber as an “emotional religion” (WEBER, 1999a, p.99): the idea that the exercise of free will was necessary for salvation, which would lead the way to the belief that God is interested in the redemption of all human beings.

To investigate the trajectories of religious explanations is of great relevance to understand the culture of a certain group, once that

sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos... in religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well-arranged to accommodate such a way of life (GEERTZ, 1973, p.89,90).

According to Clifford Geertz (1973), aesthetic and moral preferences, as those related to

⁹*Today God is changing my destiny
Making me strong making me a winner
And I hear his voice saying: son, do not be afraid
In the place of your shame
I will give you double honor*

music, are conditioned by the worldview, as common sense molds that reality and confers to it an unalterable shape of reality. Furthermore, intense aesthetic and moral experiences will work as evidence of this very reality. Soon it will be possible to note how this process happens in the context of the studied group, once that the religious experience that deals with the desire of the individual reaffirms the perception of reality that validates such experience.

Retaking the historical investigation of religious transformations connected to Brazilian neopentecostalism, it is interesting to verify how Colin Campbell (2001) sees the protestant notion of free examination of the holy scriptures as an effect of the intellectual environment of the Cambridge Platonist movement that, according to the author, performed a fundamental role in the development through which protestantism came to legitimate the quest for emotional pleasure, a basic ingredient of modern consumerism. Dealing specifically with the British context, in which he analyses the emergence of a consumption revolution parallel to the industrial revolution, Campbell goes on reporting that the Platonists vigorously turned against the calvinist doctrine of predestination, considered a set of worthless and dishonorable opinions about God, in view of the absence of benevolence of such a divine being thirsty for judgement (CAMPBELL, 2001).

The intellectual route of this group was to search for elements in the classic greek philosophy to respond to Calvinism, which has set a decisive mark on the basis of the *sentimental deism* in the eighteenth century (CAMPBELL, 2001). The doctrine of Eros, as elaborated by Plato, and his teachings of a moral, self-sufficient life were taken by Cambridge Platonists in order to deny the calvinist doctrine of total depravity. The emphasis on the grace of God was relocated to that of his love. Faith, then, was no more an enemy of reason, but its ally. This reason came to be understood as the spiritual capacity of discernment (CAMPBELL, 2001).

This way, a concept begins to occur in a few branches of protestantism which is also present in Brazilian neopentecostalism: the idea that knowledge of the divine will be acquired as much as through doctrinal conviction as through an apprehension of the divine by a subjective discernment. The purpose is to understand God as a live principle in the intimate, which changes the focus from conquering eternal salvation to the means of living a true spiritual life in this world (CAMPBELL, 2001).

Colin Campbell (2001) proceeds to exposing what arises; the necessity of elaborating a new theodicy, task assumed by Gottfried Leibniz and others. In his effort, Leibniz affirms the logical necessity of an imperfect universe in order to preserve the possibility of distinction from his own creator, the only perfect being. Moreover, by elevating the goodness of God over his attribute of omnipotence, Leibniz concludes that, considering greater goods and lesser evils, the present world is incontestably the best world God could ever create.

Thus, the sovereignty of God receives ethical limitations (FORRER, 1986). One escapes the

former bad judgement of human nature once the condition of the creation is the best among all possible. Here it is ratified the *optimistic theodicy of benevolence*, which added to the effort of matching the neoplatonic philosophy to the hegemonic protestant doctrine, creating an emotionalist ethic of christian sensibility (CAMPBELL, 2001).

The valuable and complex consideration made by Colin Campbell, here only briefly presented, about the movement of a predestination theodicy moving towards an optimistic theodicy based on divine benevolence and, by communication, human benevolence, unleashes a process that will flow into *sentimentalism*, of great importance to the construction of a *romantic ethic* that will be connected by Campbell (2001) to the *spirit of modern consumerism*. To the old confirmation of the state of grace by deeds, one now adds the conviction of salvation which is necessarily linked to self-investigation and the recognition of one's own emotions. The argument of Colin Campbell (2001) is that in order to understand the development of the *autonomous imaginative hedonism* that marks contemporary consumption, one must pay attention to the place of emotional forces in the religious context of the 18th century. Clifford Geertz has a valuable perception of the importance of the emotional domain to the human species:

Thus, as 'man is the most emotional as well as the most rational animal', a very careful cultural control of frightening, enraging, suggestive, etc., stimuli – through taboos, homogenization of behavior, rapid 'rationalization' of strange stimuli in terms of familiar concepts, and so on – is necessary to prevent continual affective instability, a constant oscillation between the extremes of passion (GEERTZ, 1973, p.80).

In the case of the Puritans, for example, their experience was not of lack of emotions, but the presence of very powerful and special ones; the distinction was their negative attitude towards the expression of these emotions (CAMPBELL, 2001). With such an argument, Campbell shows that this attitude works as training to the religious individual, which enables him to deal with his own feelings and to extract the maximum of the experience with them, making it possible to exercise his own subjectivity which ought to be able to generate pleasure in the imaginative and sentimental dimension of the individual. The doctrinal clash in the core of the calvinist environment maximizes the dimension in the post-Calvin generations, in which a tendency would be developed to search for signs of the state of grace in character traces, which are internal, and not exactly in one's exterior conduct. Thus, feelings are also signs of devotion (CAMPBELL, 2001).

What is remarkable in this argument is that an extremely personal and subjective experience is being taken as a crucial proof of religious merit. It is not one's conduct or knowledge that are under investigation, but the nature and quality of his own inner existence (CAMPBELL, 2001, p.185). It is now indicated how protestantism sheltered a transformation on the belief-emotion dynamic that conditioned believers to wish and appreciate strong emotions of religious order, that

would be later found in wider cultural spheres. Paul Tillich, protestant theologian and existentialist philosopher remarks that one of the most common terms in eighteenth century literature was 'tears', indicating the spread of emotionalist ethics towards secular culture (TILLICH, 1999). At this point, one can now glimpse into the theological equivalences between Brazilian neopentecostalism and protestant doctrines affirming human freedom and capacity for it to happen. The similarity is also notorious for the weight given to emotions at the cultivation of religious life. In fact, the very roots of the Brazilian pentecostal movement are set in that protestantism of missionary fervor that takes emotions as an important propeller of the propagation of faith.

That was how the revivalist proposals of John Wesley, so well succeeded in England during the time of Industrial Revolution, were also retaken by the populars, in the English colonies in North America, in the years before and after the American Independence, during the moving of the frontiers toward the west and in the decades after the Civil War (CAMPOS, 2005). The author proceeds by showing the way in which revivalist communities, in an urban and industrial context where individuals dealt with multiple possibilities, both of success and failure, ended up bringing to existence new groups, generally the fruit of conflicts from within the established churches. Some of these churches, which adopted the name of *holiness* churches, would come to be an important mark in the establishment of the pentecostal movement in the United States (CAMPOS, 2005). In this way, Campos links American pentecostalism to the puritan and revivalist protestantism of European origin, as already seen, possessing the optimistic beliefs toward human nature and toward the possibilities of free exercise in service of a benevolent and loving god. This is the pentecostalism of the United States, highly influenced by european revivalist proposals, that overcome the frontiers of North America and reached Brazil in the decade of 1910 (CAMPOS, 2005). Ricardo Mariano also attests to the bond of Brazilian neopentecostalism to the American, generated from the *holiness* movement under influence of the european revivalist movement (MARIANO, 2005). In the case of neopentecostalism, specific influences from the United States sowed, from the 1970's, the Theology of Prosperity, of wide acceptance in the Brazilian scenario (TORRES, 2007).

In trying to comprehend such cultural practices, one has tried to identify the process of the phenomena, stimulated by Clifford Geertz, who points out the value of the historical element in the constitution of culture by affirming that such concept “denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” (GEERTZ, 1973, p.89).

From rejection to religious affirmation of the world

With a strong ascetic character on the occasion of its arrival in Brazilian lands, the

pentecostalism here installed in the first two waves will have in its new version, the neopentecostalism, the disruption of the search for salvation through asceticism (MARIANO, 2005). Such rupture, which questions rigid norms of behavior, also rejects the classical pentecostal conviction that the state of grace of the believer reverts to ascetic distinctions in his own outward appearance. Thus, the practice of rejection of the world is substituted by its affirmation and the confirmation of God's favor, which is set in large in the plan of subjectivity.

By the affirmation of the world one can understand the intense presence of neopentecostals, verified in various social spheres, such as politics (ORO, 2003), media (CARRANZA, 2005) and the business community (PASSOS and MOREIRA, 2010). In this context of rupture with ancient practices the American influences are reaffirmed through varied means, such as literature, music and the interchange of theologians and preachers (MARIANO, 2005). An important mention, specially in the case of Fonte da Vida Church, is the loss of space suffered by the contents of ascetic nature. In fact, the asceticism is not only rejected but is also, in some cases, condemned. Speaking about Christians who value the ascetic element in their spirituality, apostle César Augusto teaches his flock:

By not understanding what the Word says, people end up assuming an extreme position that one needs to offer a sacrifice to God to become accepted by him. Even if the sincerity of those who act in such a way is understood, deceived by this enslaving doctrine, they ignore the true sense of the Gospel of Grace. (SOUZA, 2008a, p.12, free translation)

By substituting this belief in renunciation, the group that was researched shows in its content of beliefs the fundamental element to the comprehension of the affinity between neopentecostalism and the consumption culture: the appreciation of *daydreaming*, around which orbits all motivation attempts to the faith of the individuals by the institution. For the Fonte da Vida Church the year of 2011 is the year of the *double honor*. This was the theme chosen by the leadership of the church with the intention of giving structure to a series of various preachings and activities programmed for that specific year. In a specific week of December of 2010 in which the researcher observed meetings and services of this church, on each day of that week prayers were made in order that one specific month of 2011 would be the month of *double honor*. It was a sequence of twelve services that would *plan 2011*, turning the attention to the twelve months that would come. In a pamphlet to spread the news of the year of *double honor*, it was written the bible verse which is the foundation to this religious belief.

*Instead of your shame you shall have double honor;
and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion.*

Therefore in their land they shall possess double;

Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

(Isaiah 61:7, New King James Version)

By taking place in the month of december of 2010, the *double honor* theme is intensely repeated throughout the entire religious ritual and will guide the plans for 2011. On pieces of paper the faithful were encouraged to write their dreams and projects to be accomplished in the year of *double honor*. This ritual of writing leads the individuals to stimulate their own imagination, emulate the desired realities and believe in the materialization of their aspirations, similarly to what happens in the moment dedicated to the congregational music. The subjective labor which takes the *desire* as the starting point of spirituality is a central part in this type of religious experience.

In a circumstance that might seem to take too long, do not succumb to the temptation of murmuring. Use your mouth to declare a promise, giving worship through the Word. Hope is like a precious and unique seed. The words of faith work like the water for the germinating of this seed. The time between the promise and the blessing is a period separated by God so that you work the land of your heart for the seed to develop. (SOUZA, 2008b, p.61, free translation)

It is important to emphasize the attributed sense, in Weberian terms, by the the subject in the action of religious character. The artist, while expressing his faith and encouraging the religious experience of his audience, deals with his own desire and of others as his performance has the purpose of moving the congregation from immediate experience in their objective conditions to the imaginative experiences of their desired situations. It is, therefore, challenging to step into such constructions in order to understand the role of imaginative manipulation of artists and believers in the context of the religiosity in question. “Looked at this way, the aim of anthropology is the enlargement of the universe of human discourse... as interworked systems of construable signs” (GEERTZ, 1973, p.14). To develop such a task, even recognizing the unchangeable condition of the external observer, it is essential to understand culture not as “a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; [the culture] is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is, thickly – described”. (GEERTZ, 1973, p.14).

The romantic pleasure of daydreaming

If the period between the *promise* – moment in which the individual takes possession by faith of a divine blessing not yet materialized – and the *blessing* is fundamental to the dynamic of the subjectivity of the faithful, the same can be said about the importance to the modern consumer in the time encapsulated between the *desire* to consume a specific object and its *acquisition*. Colin Campbell (2001) understands that in this exact time lapse the importance of the *romantic* ingredient is in the contemporary consumption culture. Thus, what calls the attention of the author in the consumption culture is less of an innovation in the use of resources and more a modification of the satisfaction model of the individuals. In order to comprehend this peculiarity, Campbell develops an analysis model that takes contemporary consumption as fundamentally hedonist, rejecting utilitarian bases for the explanation of the phenomena and understanding it as centered in the dimension of a

pleasant enjoyment of a specific experience (CAMPBELL, 2001).

The singularity of hedonism which characterizes the contemporary consumption culture is defended through the contra-position with another ideal type forged by the author, *traditional hedonism*. Such analysis shows that the source of pleasure of contemporary hedonism is in fact the individual himself, while traditional hedonism depends on external stimuli, such as food, drinks and other individuals to give pleasant experiences to the hedonist (CAMPBELL, 2001). From the vast complexity of concepts and conclusions of the analysis made by Campbell, a few elements can be taken to show the close connection between consumption culture and neopentecostalism in the case of Fonte da Vida Church. These elements are centered around that which the author defines as *daydreaming*.

To apprehend what Colin Campbell understands as daydreaming it is necessary to briefly retake the discussion about post-Calvin theological development. Understanding that the dynamic in the religious protestant field in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had generated a christianity where emotions played a vital role, be it by denial and repression of such emotions in the case of the puritans or, be it by their affirmation and appreciation, in the case of the groups influenced by the optimistic theodicy of benevolence. Campbell draws the course of this dynamic and understands it as leading to the development of *sentimentalism* (CAMPBELL, 2001). This process that will later turn into *Romanticism* aggregates the aesthetic concern of nobility, bringing to the middle class circle the value of beauty that will even be misunderstood in some occasions with the notion of goodness itself.

In this context, the pleasure shown in emotional terms would come to serve as an indicator of both goodness and aesthetic beauty. However, Campbell sees that what marks the final transition to Romanticism is the change from a passive definition of the preferences related to pleasure or taste, to an elaboration of active emphasis for the same phenomenon: the artistic intelligence. Here, the theodicy of benevolence is overcome by what the author calls *theodicy of creativity*, a metaphysical paradigm shared by a large part of the romantics (CAMPBELL, 2001). In summary, this theodicy shifts the emphasis given to sentimentally perceptible benevolence and emphasizes the creative power of the individual as a divine gift. So it is created a *theodicy of individual life* by excellence, which accentuates the singularity and the creative power of the individual. In a certain way, this [the individual's right to self-expression] logically came from the concept that creativity was the main characteristic of the divine, once the capacity to generate something is responsible for everything that is new. This is why the romantic is fascinated by the distinctive nature of his own ego, as well as by the powers of imagination (CAMPBELL, 2001).

The importance of the *daydreaming* element in contemporary consumption culture will be understood, therefore, by the culturally transmitted psychic capacities beginning in the time of

Romanticism. Such movement, aware of the distinction between the *real world* and the *imagined world*, created by the creative power of the individual, takes pleasure as the crucial means to recognize the power of art in spiritual enlightenment and in the moral evolution processes (CAMPBELL, 2001).

The way is open so that the search for experiencing the imaginative pleasures in reality becomes culturally legitimate. In fact, one can not understand religious music in the neopentecostal context without facing the labyrinth created by the imagined power of artists and followers. This specially applies to the perception that Geertz shows about field work: “doing ethnography is like trying to read a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior” (GEERTZ, 1973, p.10). Campbell affirms that *daydreaming* could be understood as a imaginative elaboration in a pleasurable direction of a real event yet to come that, as a consequence, requires that the incidents must be maintained inside the possible limits even if highly improbable (CAMPBELL, 2001). This psychic process will only be possible when the *stock of knowledge* (SCHUTZ, 1979) of the individuals are amplified to a point where they would be capable of not only controlling their emotions but mastering and manipulating them skillfully in order to obtain pleasure (CAMPBELL, 2001). Another important element is that *daydreaming* is different from pure fantasy because of the characteristic of plausibility: the possibility of transition between the real world and the imaginative world must be present (CAMPBELL, 2001). Therefore, the modern consumer will be the one who consumes ideals projected over the desired object and not only the object itself. The product – or service – is just a receptacle of the projection of daydreams; its only characteristic is that it must be capable to present itself to the conscience in the condition of *novelty* (CAMPBELL, 2001).

In a scenario where the conscience is put as a mediator between realities, one can say that the prosperity theology studied among the believers, leaders and musicians could be called a *theology of daydreaming*, seeing the emphasis on the creative power of the individual faith and in the pleasurable character of the imaginative act located between promise and blessing, the desire and its consummation. The order of the *domains of relevance* (SCHUTZ, 1979) in the religious group in question dictates the hedonistic value of the aptitude to treat imaginative data *as if* they were *real*, even though they are known to be *false*, or without objective form (CAMPBELL, 2001). The pleasure which is found in the practice of daydreaming was also verified as the *inexorability of hedonistic needs* (CAMPBELL, 2001) was shown on moral condemnation of stagnation (TORRES, 2007), understood as the lack of faith in the context of the studied religion and in the presence of the hedonistic consumption cycle *consummation – frustration – desire* (CAMPBELL, 2001) in the individuals' *flux of conscience* (SCHUTZ, 1979) that is manifested in religious language through the

idea that *the best from God is always to come*. Always wishful, the believer experiences the mentioned cycle in a way that the experience of pleasure does not necessarily and exclusively be found in the *miracle* received. In fact, this consummation moment brings an element of frustration, because, as big as it may be, the miracle often does not correspond to the pleasurably idealized expectations, fact that will demand new aspirations and will restart the daydreaming cycle (CAMPBELL, 2001).

Neopentecostalism and consumption culture: elective affinity

As these contemporary consumption characteristics are observed, as well as the field research results, the *elective affinity* is settled between neopentecostalism and the consumption culture. The term *elective affinity* is considered the most appropriate to relate both spheres, given its capacity, already present in Weber as indicated by Michael Löwy (1999), to overcome the search for simplistic casualties and to avoid the traditional dichotomy between the *spiritual* and the *material* which induces an infertile search of primacy of one element over the other.

Löwy understands the concept, not specifically defined by Weber, as a process by which two cultural forms – religious, literary, political, economical, etc. - enter into a relationship, mutual attraction, convergence, symbiosis and even, in some circumstances, fusion, through certain analogies or structural correspondences (Löwy, 1999). Following a elective affinity classification of levels proposed by Löwy, the relationship between neopentecostalism and the consumption culture can be classified as that of second degree, in which certain interaction and reciprocal stimulation are configured in a situation of analogies and dynamic correspondences in which the structures remain separate (Löwy, 1999). According to the classification of the author, the rest of the levels would be: the first degree marked by an analogy between static phenomena, that does not necessarily create a dynamic convergence; the third degree has elements that enables different types of union; in the fourth and last occurs the creation of a new element by the combination of the former elements.

In both spheres, consumption and neopentecostalism, the ancient moral value of postponement of satisfaction is swallowed by the pleasure extracted from imagination. The postponement, ascetic in other times, is now to be also hedonistically experienced. At the contemporary modernity, the daydreaming associated to each act of consumption is religiously formulated in terms of the eternal promises of God, which encourage the believer to dream, to desire, to glimpse the blessings yet to come in a cyclic process. The *fountain of life*, inexhaustible to the conscience of the believer, is within himself. The redemption, key element in any theodicy, in this case are *multiple redemptions*. One for each circumstance and manifest accordingly to the peculiar story of each individual, once the creativity of the divine redemption must be manifested in a plurality of events, not in a single, standardized and monotonous final judgment, reserved only to

those who did not enchant their inner world as a response to the disenchanted reality presented by modernity.

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