

# Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity<sup>1</sup>

## *Preliminary Approaches to Spiritual Warfare and Worship in Latin America* by Dr. Mariano Avila

### **Introduction.**

The research I am presenting before you today attempts to respond to questions that as pastor intrigued me and as a professor have been with me since the mid nineties. At that time I was pastoring in Mexico City a large Presbyterian church. Our youth group will go every Saturday to a meeting of a neo-charismatic church in the neighborhood and at the same time will participate on Sunday of the worship service in our church and in their youth meeting in the early evening. That practice confused them in terms of their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit today. One of the main lessons these young members of our church learned was that worship was meant to be the battlefield of the church. It was in the proper way of worship (neo-charismatic) where the main battles of the church were fought. It was especially and dominantly through prayer that any social and cultural change was going to happen. Being salt and light for the world was basically achieved through the spiritual warfare we had to fight in our worship practices.

As a person committed to the transformation of Latin American societies, that was a for me not only a challenge but also a concern in terms of how to live responsibly in the world. If the ministry of the church is almost reduced to prayer and worship, then my reading of Scriptures and the part of Reformed faith and Latin American theology that in my opinion were more significant to our starving for justice societies, were useless and irrelevant.

For the last ten years I have had the privilege of working in the preparation of a commentary on Ephesians. Being a commentary written in the context of social and ecclesial realities in Latin America, this has given me the opportunity to research and exegete not only the biblical text but also the Spiritual Warfare (SW) practices throughout the Americas. For three years I served with a Synodical committee of the Christian Reformed Church in North America exploring the Third Wave phenomenon present in our churches in US and Canada. This was another significant resource to understand the phenomenon here. For the last year I have been doing on site research in different cities in Latin America.

### **Description of the Study.**

This study represents perspectives of 42 apostles, pastors, and leaders (four of them women). Was done in 10 countries: 8 of them Latin American countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina), United States (Hispanic Pentecostal churches), and Spain.

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<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful for the Fellowship that the Nagel Institute granted to me that made possible the research here described. I want to express my gratitude to the students of the 2008 generation of the Doctoral Program for Latin America that did most of the interviews and to Rosy Robles for her assistance in processing the consultation and panel in Perú and México.

The field research was done by means of one long week consultation with ten pastors and leaders in Lima, Peru; a panel discussion with six pastors in Mexico City; 22 in depth interviews with practitioners of Spiritual Warfare (SW), mainly apostles and pastors in the countries mentioned, and careful reading of four of the main books on the topic produced by Latin Americans.

### **Historical background for Spiritual Warfare in Latin America.**

The experience of what we call today Spiritual warfare is quite old in Evangelical churches in Latin America. Pentecostal pastors, as early as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, report cases of deliverance of individuals from evil spiritual beings. Also many pastors and leaders from historical churches testify of practices of spiritual deliverance of people by the power of Jesus and the gospel. Particularly in countries like Haiti, Brazil and Mexico (Catemaco, Veracruz), traditional places where magic, sorcery, witchcraft and many cults and religions from Africa or from the primal religions of their area have had a strong influence. Pastors who live in some of those areas have been forced, regardless of their theological tradition, to face demonic forces in the lives of their church members.

An important reality we need to be aware of is that there is an oral history and experiences of many pastors who have developed significant SW ministries, out of their own pastoral practice. Due to their limitations of resources, time, and means those pastors were never able to write and document their own experiences. Some of them were not even interested. And yet, many have developed out of their pastoral challenges, an acute awareness and wisdom in this kind of practices. And these pastors have placed their gifts to the service of their churches and congregations. I became aware of some of these pastors that have been faithful servants to their churches and have never gone to the extremes and extravagances of more “famous” representatives of this multi-faceted movement.

What is new with the SW movement, according to its own practitioners, is the awareness of the cosmic dimensions of SW. The common language used by its practitioners is that *“we are about to or already started a war of cosmic proportions, an offensive one, in which the church has to claim and conquer territories, nations, and areas that demonic forces are controlling that are already under the Lordship of Jesus and his kingdom.”* ***This is the uniqueness and definition of the SW movement in Latin America.***

Given the nature of my research and the wide extension of SW practices in Latin America and the Caribbean, this presentation is more like a collage, in which I attempted to put together several pictures I was able to take (with the help of some good friends and students). I tried to make some sense of my findings but they still are preliminary and tentative. I made a special effort to let people and practitioners to speak by themselves and explain to us their beliefs, practices, successes and shortcomings. Yet, there are significant differences among them to help us avoid unfair generalizations.

No doubt, there is a great need to develop serious biblical theological reflection of SW as a new theological locus. And this task needs to be done with the collaboration of different

Christian traditions, by theologians, lay leaders, professionals in the social sciences and members of churches with significant experiences in this area.

At the end of this document, I pose some questions and indicate the challenges that we face. As an exegete of the biblical text, and having worked with the text of Ephesians for more than a decade, I point out to some of the insights of the biblical text as ways to enrich and be even more effective or powerful in our daily warfare with evil in all its forms.

### **Recent History of Spiritual Warfare and its unique new emphasis.**

Many of the leaders of this movement, trace its beginnings to the 1980s, and point to Peter Wagner as a highly influential person in it. They speak of him as their Guru. Wagner was already involved in this area with the Signs and wonders movement in the 1980s.

Wagner explains that in 1985 he learned for the first time about SW through an Argentinian pastor, Omar Cabrera. Then in 1989, during the second Lausanne Congress he offered five workshops on territorial spirits and thus coincided with key evangelical leaders who also spoke on the same theme: Jack Hayford, Yonggi Cho, Omar Cabrera, Edgardo Silvano, and Tom White among others.

As a member of the Lausanne Committee and coordinator of the Movement A.D. 2000 Wagner traveled extensively and influenced many people. He launched "The Holy Spirit Program for the 90s". On 1990, in Pasadena, California, there was a meeting of men and women with experience in SW. Wagner called the meeting. Some participants were Larry Lea, John Dawson, Jack Hayford, Charles Kraft and several more.

A year later, in 1991, Wagner was the keynote speaker in the First Congress for the revival and growth of the Church in Nuremberg. Some see this event as the official world launching of the SW movement. Church growth and SW were united as a missiological strategy. It was an international gathering and many leaders took the idea back to their countries.

Organizations such as "Youth with a Mission", "Mobilization Movement," "Campus Crusade for Christ" and especially "March for Jesus" and "International Intercessors" started using SW as their ministry methodology, now beyond the boundaries of Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Christian bookstores in all of Latin America sell today many books on the theme.

So it is fair to say that while the new peculiarities of SW are indigenous to Latin America, at least in their basic form, their development and no doubt the popularization and diffusion have been done by people like Peter Wagner and those associated with him. There are different modalities and emphasis that can be noticed in those involved in the SW movement, but to a greater extent thanks to the resources, connections, and infrastructure from those coming from the US, Wagner and company have been able to influence many people in Latin America and the rest of the majority world.

## **Most Influential Books and persons.**

### ***From the US***

Peter Wagner  
Neil Anderson  
Bill Hamon  
David Bryant. Prayer concerts.  
Cindy Jacobs. Intercessor Generals.  
Dick Eastman. Each home for Christ  
Steve Hawthorn y Graham Kendrick on their strong emphasis on prayer walking.  
John Wimber, Vineyard movement and its missionaries in LA.

### ***Important bibliographical resources translated and read in Spanish.***

Ed. Murphy. *Handbook on Spiritual Warfare*. The Bible on SW.  
Rebecca Brown, MD. *He came to set the captives free*.  
Gregory Boyd. *Satan and the problem of evil*.

### ***American Missionaries in Latin America***

Victor Richards, a missionary in Mexico since 1960, is a key promoter, by means of his program *New Wine and Families in conflict*. A radio program with listeners in Mexico and Central America. He leads the movement "Intercessors for Mexico", and "Guards of the city" in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. With the main emphasis on SW.

### ***Latin American prominent Representatives***

Carlos Annacondia in Argentina.  
Paolo Bottari, a pastor who works with Anacondia.  
Cesar Castellanos. Colombia. G12 movement.  
Rony Chavez, Costa Rica.  
Harold Caballeros. Guatemala.  
Morris Cerullo, Brazil, Evangelist, Apostolic prophet.  
Hector Torres, apostle.  
Neusa Itioka, Brazil, an apostle.

### **Nature of Spiritual Warfare.**

Three levels (Peter Wagner)  
(1) terrestrial warfare: exorcisms  
(2) Occult levels: warfare against organized evil forces such as sorcery, New Age, witchcraft, etc  
(3) Strategic level: High authority warfare against territorial spirits.

## **Modalities of Spiritual Warfare.**

*Prayer walking*

*Prayer Caravans.* In cars. Visiting strategic places.

*Prayer vigils.* One night, the local church.

*Massive prayer meetings.* Sometimes with political authorities to overcome fortresses of evil  
So that God's blessings will flow to the area.

*Harp and bowl.* Based on Rev. 8, this worship practice means that warriors must flood heaven with their prayers so that he answers by pouring his bowls of judgment upon the earth.

*Prophetic movements.* By means of symbolic and representative actions evil spirits are exorcised. Prophetic declarations on behalf of the city and against evil; wearing special robes, swords, shophar trumpets, special clothing (military), White robes, golden belts, diadems, flags, dances, armors, maps and prayer using as a guide spiritual cartographies to identify territorial spirits, etc.

**Strategy for warfare.** It seems that this is already a well-established methodology.

- 1. Form a team of intercessors.** Women play a major role for this task and they have the appointment and blessing of apostles. Musicians have also a strategic place since they fight the “war of David”, and through their gifts contribute to win the warfare.
- 2. Choose a field for war.** It may be a city, a town, a building, and a neighborhood. Specific prayers for specific sins and situations. Prophets play a major role in this stage since they are the ones who can write the cartography for the spiritual warfare. They detect the kind of spiritual forces and their domain and territory.
- 3. Appoint an intelligence team for historical spiritual research.** In this context it is quite interesting to notice that items for the research have to do with any association with masons, Jesuits, eastern religions, New Age, Jewish community, occultism, political covenants in the past, ancient deities worshipped.
- 4. Acknowledge and identify ancestral covenants that enslave geographical areas.** God’s army is the true representatives of the judicial power of God and they can undo ancient or recent demonic covenants and agreements, by their vicarious intercession.
- 5. Send special combat teams.** They are the executive power of God’s kingdom, its elite military forces. They have the power and authority to anoint places from air, sea and land, destruct

idolatrous sites, perform prophetic speeches and actions and claim new territories for the Kingdom. Oil, shophar trumpets and other means are use for these symbolic actions.

### **Forms of of spiritual warfare.**

1. *Deliverance* from demonic forces of individuals.
2. *Defensive warfare*. Within the church where the devil works to impede the ministries.
3. *Offensive warfare*. Territorial claim of regions where “dominant sins” are obvious. Mapping of spirits.

### *Important Distinctions.*

*Doors* of entrance to the enemy. Personal sins, traumas, massacres, social injustices and social evils.

*Means* by which the devil controls people: cultures and subcultures, governments, power structures, religions, cults, ideologies and philosophies.

*Ties* are the effects of all kind of addictions and grave sins.

***Main weapon: Prayer, intercessory and warrior. Also fasting and openness to visions and words and revelations from the Lord.***

### **Main Biblical and Theological basis and Teachings**

#### *A new hermeneutics of the biblical text.*

The Bible is read now from the perspective of the new revelations on SW that is at the core of the movement. Given its global, cosmic perspective, all narratives, prophecies and psalms are read in that key.

***Biblical Narrative.*** Thus for example, the call to Abraham is explained in light of the territorial spirits (Enlil according to Wagner) controlling the city of Ur. The conquest in the days of Joshua is also a battle against the territorial spirits that in the guise of gods and divinities controlled the land of Canaan. The narratives of the Conquest of Israel of the promised land are used as paradigmatic of the new Conquest of nations, cities, neighborhoods.

The idolatry of the conquered nations and the way the dealt with them is dangerously also paradigmatic of what the church must do today. Danger of ideology of conquerors in the Americas to annihilate peoples in the name of God’s Kingdom. Thus far, we only have examples of damage done to archaeological pieces in Tabasco, Mexico where a colossal Head of the Toltec’s was painted and anointed to exorcise its demon.

Use of textual variants that are a good support for the SW theology is shown in the case of Dt 32:8.

**Prophetic literature.** The empires that subjected Israel were not only powerful nations but behind them there were powerful territorial demons. The book of Daniel, ch. 10 especially, is a strong evidence of those territorial, national and even imperial spirits.

**Psalms.** Psalms about the cosmic dimensions of prayer are taken literally to show how the whole creation is shaken by spiritual forces. Ana Mendez.

An example of a reading from the Psalms, (Mendez' book): Ps. 18: 6-8, 13-15.

*In my distress I called the Lord...  
From his temple he heard my voice...  
The earth trembled and quaked,  
And the foundations of the mountains shook...  
The Lord thundered from heaven...  
He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies...  
The valleys of the sea were exposed,  
And the foundations of the earth laid bare  
At your rebuke, Oh, Lord.*

**The gospels** provide further evidence of the territoriality of the warfare. For example, the temptations of Jesus in the Synoptic gospels are taken at face value to affirm the dominion of the devil over the entire world.

**Acts of the apostles** and the several instances of demonic forces are read as indications of territorial spirits. Diana of Ephesus was a territorial spirit that controlled Ephesus and Asia Minor.

**Ephesians** 6:12 is a key verse that clearly indicates the hierarchy in demonic forces and is a strong indication of the range of control of such evil spirit. "Principalities," the first term used is term that describes princes, emperors who ruled a whole nation or even empire. Therefore, applied to demons, it is a reference to that kind of authority or dominion over large territories on earth. The list is given in a descending order and thus indicates also spirits with authority over smaller territories.

### **Literalistic interpretation of Scriptures**

Four categories of Spirits in Eph 6:12. Four winds, four elements, four cardinal points. So there are spirits for each cardinal point in creation. In the North it manifests in fame, richness, vanity, hedonism. In the south it shows itself in terms of hunger, poverty and sickness. There are night powers and day powers.

### **A New Theological paradigm.**

In a sense SW, for those convinced of its reality and committed to it, represents a new theological paradigm. If it started linked to church growth, it is now a lens through which everything is seen and understood. Evangelization, pastoral care and inner healing, missions,

ecclesial, social, cultural, and political realities are understood in the framework of SW. *It is indeed a “new” cosmivision, world and life view, that for many is a dominant perspective.*

Theological reflection and explanation of practices is limited and the main content is testimonials of deliverance. Ana Mendez, for example, devotes one of his chapters to describe her visit to hell (literally) and also to heaven.

***Some basic theological assumptions:***

Not everything is written or predetermined. God left some margin for us to write history and make changes, by means of prayer and fasting.

There are different categories and hierarchies of demons (Eph 6:12); we need to detect against what kind of force we are fighting.

Representative confession of sins for nations and races is a key weapon. This is the way to achieve social and global transformation, going to the spiritual roots of all forms of social evils, poverty, drug addictions, prostitution, pornography, etc.

Danger between overemphasis of demonic activity in the world and no emphasis at all.

**Link to Apostolic and Prophetic movements.**

The apostolic network includes some of the main promoters and representatives of the SW movement. In this apostolic network, composed mainly by men, we found an exception of a woman, Neusa Itioka, from Brazil who is an apostle.

Democracy is not biblical and therefore, in the apostolic movement, and the churches associated with it, no democratic forms of government are allowed. It is more the charismatic leader (Weber) that concentrates power and authority and passes the robe or covers with it others.

Because of this highly hierarchical structure, the power and authority of the prophets and apostles is very strong. Is this the emergence of an Evangelical papacy? One of the outstanding notes in our research is that the authority of apostles is quite significant and usually those under their leadership are submitted to them without questions. A good number of times the interviews were conducted, or not, under the authorization of an apostle.

## **Link to Prosperity Gospel (health and wealth Gospel).**

For many of the practitioners of SW, the concept of holistic salvation implies the material prosperity of the person. So this Gospel is taught very clearly and strongly although practiced with different degrees and modalities. A few of the interviewed people rejected their connection with it.

## **Results of Spiritual Warfare in the life of churches.**

It is obvious that in the majority of the cases of people interviewed the growth of their churches has been significant and even spectacular. People come and are attracted to a new way of worship that promises immediate results. Many of them come from other churches.

1. Unity among leaders, pastors.
2. Spiritual growth in members of the church. Renewed vitality.
3. Loyalty to their own churches.
4. Financial prosperity in churches.
5. Increase of spiritual gifts, especially in terms of apostolic and prophetic gifts.
6. 35% growth in four years of churches involved in SW. In some cases it has been extraordinary.
7. Leadership training in several areas as "Sidekicks of prayer"

## **Social**

8. Reduction of delinquency (kidnapping) and gangs.
9. Increase of commerce, educational opportunities, and business opportunities.

## **Some Final Observations**

1. Reading of modern social realities as univocal. But they are open to different readings and interpretations. For example, a prominent central American pastor that was detained in the US due to some problems, said that Katrina came to the US as a judgment to the country for detaining him.
2. It is quite interesting that territorial spirits are only located in the South of the Americas, not in the North.
3. The limited perspective and understanding of sin(s). The usual list has to do usually with the traditional conservative Evangelical code. Even when they want to identify global problems, the list and strategies go back to the typical list of sins related to sexuality, alcohol, drugs, prostitution, pornography, gay marriages, and abortion. The perspective is usually informed by a right wing mentality even in the diagnosis of social ills like poverty. Rarely you hear SW practitioners to do spiritual warfare against the evils of war, militarism, world hunger, ecological destruction, abuses of political, economic and military power.
4. Another question has to do with the almost exclusive use of prayer (in many different modalities) and fasting to do SW. If Ephesians 6:10-20 places a great emphasis in putting on **all**

**the armor of God, in** light of present day practices, we could say that people are going to battle naked but praying! The emphasis on the ethical qualities of the armor are ignored.

### **The politics of the movement.**

Because of the militaristic and warlike language and ethos of the warriors, it is almost natural to adopt a hierarchical militaristic structure and chain of command. In Chiapas Mexico, for example, some of the neo-charismatic churches have as their name The Army of God. They dress in military outfits and are under the authority of apostles. In that sense, even in groups that do not go as far as that, the hierarchical structure and chain of command is quite strong. A new papacy is being established in LA, that even the Pope could envy given the strong sense of obedience and submission of the members of these churches.

Due to the strong link of SW with the apostolic movement, and their explicit rejection of democratic church and state governments, opting for a more theocratic (hierocratic) model of power and control, the incursion of some of this leaders in different countries is really a matter of great concern, at least for some of us.

How to contribute to the democratization of Latin American societies when some of the more influential Evangelical leaders are promoting charismatic (Weber) dictatorial understandings of power?

### **Ideological Influence from American Civil Religion Evangelical mentality.**

Like in the cold war days when many US Evangelicals could not make a clear difference between the US and the Kingdom of God, and identified God's enemies with the communist world, today many Evangelicals associate the Arab world with the axe of evil and act in their spiritual warfare according to this theological ideology. In some ways, a broader cultural phenomenon<sup>2</sup> that recent manifestations of civil religion have exacerbated.

Some forms of American Messianism are quite evident in some of the promoters of SW, especially American missionaries. Linked to this is the ethnocentric and ethno phobic attitude against other cultures that make many missionaries quite iconoclastic without acknowledging positive elements in other cultures.

When SW is reduced to a technique it comes very closely to magical practices of primal religions in the Americas and the Caribbean countries. The biblical matter is not so much the how to but who does it and why.

### **The violent and militaristic language.**

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<sup>2</sup> As clearly demonstrated in the Book and documentary *Reel Bad Arabs. How Hollywood vilifies a people*, by Jack Shaheen, (2001) where he surveyed more than 900 film appearances of Arab characters. Of those, only a dozen were positive and 50 were balanced. Shaheen writes "Seen through Hollywood's distorted lenses, Arabs look different and threatening."

Obviously in Spiritual Warfare violent language dominates. However, in the context of Muslim cultures, this warfare language is a real obstacle for missionary work. The crusades are as present in Arab consciousness as if they happened yesterday, and the recent wars from the US lead coalition in Iraq have increased this repudiation.

When SW is brought to the evangelization of Arabs and Muslims then the violent language is a huge obstacle for those who want to show the love of Christ to their Arab neighbors, who are well aware of the violent and army like strategies of many Christian missionaries, or even of short term mission (spiritual tourists) who spend their vacations doing spiritual warfare in Muslim countries.

This issue has been so damaging to Christian mission that in 2000 in Pasadena a conference was held on the use of language in Missions, and a strong declaration was made to prevent such practice. School of World Mission: Fuller Theological Seminary, *Consultation on Mission Language and Metaphors*. 2000.<sup>3</sup>

As Samuel Escobar indicates:

A thin line has been crossed when nationalism and patriotism lead us to demonize People and nations as enemies of our own nation. My suspicion is reinforced when I see this militaristic view of the world expressed also in worship and music that use almost exclusively the warlike language of the Old Testament. (2003:59-60).<sup>4</sup>

To conclude, Spiritual Warfare as a worship practice is very significant in neo-charismatic churches, and a good number of mega churches. And no doubt this practice explains to a large extent the growth of most of these churches.

Among its virtues we find the fact that SW makes of every member an active and central participant of a key cosmic battle against the forces of evil.

A significant strength is that it promises immediate results to major problems. At an individual level many people claim to have experienced miraculous signs. With demonic liberations the reality requires more careful analysis and documentation.

The interpretations of reality must be taken with a lot of care. Katrina in New Orleans, Liberation of hostages in the Japan Embassy in Peru, Liberation of Ciudad Juarez and Mexico City.

Iconoclastic practices have created many legal problems like last year in Tabasco, Mexico where a group of spiritual warriors anointed a colossal head of the Toltecs in a public museum.

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<sup>3</sup> The Theology Commission of the Evangelical Fraternity of India issued a similar declaration later that year, as the *Statement on Mission Language*. EFI, 2000. [Accessed 29 Jun 2007]. Available at [http://www.imaIndia.org/press/EFI\\_Press.htm](http://www.imaIndia.org/press/EFI_Press.htm).

<sup>4</sup> *The New Global Mission: The gospel from everywhere to everyone*. Downers Grove, IL, USA: InterVarsity Press.

Many theological traditions, mainly from historical churches, reject this new trend of neo-charismatic churches and mega churches. But it requires serious thought and analysis and sound theological reflection. Above all, we need to instruct our churches with biblical teachings to help them face evil in its many forms, to put on the whole armor of God, in their every day life.

## **Cases**

**Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl.** "Guards of the City". Last Friday of each month, young people from different churches meet to have practice Spiritual Warfare. The Tuesday before, pastors meet to determine the needs to pray for. Instead of praying for personal needs, they pray against the main spirits that oppress society such as *división, witchcraft, black magic, idolatry, corruption, drug trafficking and addictions*. They are described as "satanic fortresses".

### **Results.**

10. Unity among leaders, pastors.
11. Spiritual growth in members of the church. Renewed vitality.
12. Loyalty to their own churches.
13. Financial prosperity in churches.
14. Increase of spiritual gifts, especially in terms of apostolic and prophetic gifts.
15. 35% growth in four years of churches involved in SW
16. Leadership training in several areas as "Sidekicks of prayer"

### **Social**

17. Reduction of delinquency (kidnapping) and gangs.
18. Increase of commerce, educational opportunities, and businesses.

### **Guatemala.**

Ricardo Castillo is an apostle and his brother is a prophet. Closely connected to Rony Chavez and Bill Hamon and their school of prophets and spiritual warriors.

Pastor Alex Alvarado, Costarican, pastor of the Iglesia Ciudad de Dios. He has an attendance of 1.000 persons. Converted to SW by Peter Wagner in 1980. First SW helps to transform the cities, then we can change lives, cultures and habits.

Territorial warfare is key for the battle. A key element is to take the place of sinners and ask for forgiveness of nations, races, and peoples.

SW as an strategy for social transformation. change of values, change of social conditions. The leaders fought with the spirit of Jezabeel in their church for several years. They develop a special sensitivity in order to interpret normal experiences from a spiritual perspective.

There is a connection with prosperity gospel and also with apostleship. They understand that the apostles have a higher authority over pastors and people acknowledge this fact. Democratic churches are not tolerated in the apostolic movement.

### **Fruits.**

Church growth. In 10 years they went from 100 to 800 members. Direct fruit of SW. Discipleship is made teaching people how to fight "the strong man." In six months they must show the fruits. Freeing individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools, new city developments.

War terminology and strategies is very powerful. Depending on the ideological leanings, people will read reality.

### **More Cases.**

The apostle Sergio Henriquez was severely sick; heart artery was blocked, due to a spell of a witchdoctor. A prophet in Uruguay revealed the fact and reason for the apostle's sickness, and the great strength of the evil forces against him and then they were able to revert the evil spell towards the witchdoctor and he was the one who died.

Some times warriors evacuate people from their homes, destroy furniture, places, etc. They already have had several legal problems in their countries.

*In Madrid* a serial killer was perturbing the city. After careful research of a team of spiritual warrior they established a connection with a concert about to take place in the city by Marilyn Manson. Teams were organized to fight, the concert didn't happen due to technical reasons and the same day the killer was put in jail by the police.

**Ana Mendez. Book, "Los cielos seran conmovidos."** Under the coverture of an Apostle, Rony Chavez. She uses basically a testimonial approach to make her points and theology. A completely new world and life view, a new cosmovision in which all of reality is read from a very different perspective.

Starting with the OT evidence of the belief of local deities and/or territorial spirits (i.e. 1 Kings 17-20, Ez 38, Isaiah 14, Daniel 10) they look at Ancient civilizations and their worship of gods (demons) becomes a key strategy to deliver nations and cities. The NT is also rich of examples of territorial demons. (Mt 4, Acts 13, q6, 19, 27:14 *Euracylon*, god of the seas). *Principalities* is interpreted as territorial demons on the idea the the Greek term means literally a prince of an an area (country or empire). along with biblical texts, quotes of the prophet Rony Chavez are introduced in the same page, intended to have the same authority.

The destiny of nations is due to their ancient covenants with deities and demons. Mexico city is an example. It has already (1990s) being delivered from ancient demons and patron regional gods. Indication of ancient beliefs in local, territorial spirits, to fight them. We live at the gates of the greatest battle in the history of humankind. We must be ready.

First SW helps to transform the cities, then we can change lives, cultures and habits. Territorial warfare is key for the battle. A key element is to take the place of sinners and ask for forgiveness of nations, races, and peoples.

SW as an strategy for social transformation. change of values, change of social conditions. They fought with the spirit of Jezabeel in their church for several years. They develop a special sensitivity in order to interpret normal experiences from a spiritual perspective.

There is a connection with prosperity gospel and also with apostleship. They understand that the apostles have a higher authority over pastors and people acknowledge this fact. Democratic churches are not tolerated in the apostolic movement. That is not correct.

### **Influences.**

Cesar Castellanos from Colombia.

Peter Wagner. (Writes the prologue of Ana Mendez, influences practitioners).

- A. Alvarado (Costa Rica) considers him his mentor.
- B. Harold Caballero (Guatemala) a politician using spiritual warfare.

### **Guatemala. Rev. Charles Stephen Cobb interview two apostles, Norman Parish and Romeo Guerra.**

### **History.**

In 2000 some apostles from US went to Guatemala and ordained 14 apostles. They meet every month since then.

**Romeo Guerra** is founder of the Sion Church and president of the pastor's alliance of Guatemala.

When he started his ministry around 1979 there were in his neighborhood 18 bars and 5 churches. As a result of SW now all the bars are closed and there are 18 churches. The kidnapping of one of their deacons and his liberation as a result of SW was a major experience for the church. This was in 1986. In that year he moved to San Antonio, Texas and by 1994 they had planted 6 churches in six different cities. All this thanks to SW.

Strategy. His favorite model is the conquest of Jericho. Prayer walking in key places in the cities to bind and overcome spiritual forces of evil. Ephesians 6 and OT passages that speak of the return to Zion are used to call for the return of peoples from all the world to the church.

He speaks of the experience of being called to Peru, when a guerilla group kidnapped a lot of people in the Japan Embassy from December 1996 to April 22, 1997. He claims that it was his prayer that led to the release of the hostages. ???

No connection to prosperity gospel.

**Parish** explains the beginning of this movement in 1963. He was the pastor of El Calvario church. By 1978, fifteen years later, it was a denomination of 100 churches.

**They established a Bible Institute that prepared many persons and sent them all over the world.** He started then a new denomination with the name "Cristo Centro".

**Theology.** There are two levels of SW. The cosmic and the personal. In the first one, by means of prayer and fasting, territorial spirits are bound. In the second step persons are liberated from spiritual forces.

Helpers in this ministration are good angels who serve those who are the heirs of salvation. They are the “secret agents of God”. Parish receives visits from angels in human form with messages from God. Also he receives evil spirits who have attempted against his life. The theology of the kingdom is central in all this endeavor. There are apostles who use SW as a key strategy, other do not.

An important issue is that sources for the insights and perceptions of SW people are Scriptural verses within the context of prophetic revelations received by prophets. For example, how do we know that God has released an extraordinary power over the church to expel Satan and his hosts from territories they occupy now? By the word of prophets like Morris Cerullo.

He declared: “Hay un nuevo poder divino desatado en la tierra; y es tan grande, que hace que, los "gobernadores" de este mundo tiemblen. Esta expresión denota que Dios ha soltado un poder y autoridad maravillosa sobre la iglesia para desalojar a Satanás y sus huestes de territorios ocupados por él. El poder divino en la iglesia es para poseer territorios donde el enemigo hasta hoy tenía establecidas sus fortalezas”

The same can be observed in Ana Mendez’ book. Quotes of Scripture appear in the same passage with quotes from prophets, under the same authority.

## **Field Research and Bibliographical Information**

## **The Field Research.**

**México City.** A panel with 6 practitioners, pastors of different denominations. Interviews to “Guards of the City” in Netzahualcoyotl.

**Lima, Perú.** A consultation with 10 leaders and pastors.

## **Interviews.**

**Guatemala (4)** Interview by Stephen Cobb: Two apostles, Norman Parish and Romeo Guerra.

Interview by Roberto Aldana: Abdiel López. Leader de la iglesia Ebenezer, Ministerios Rehma.

Dr. Harold Caballeros. Apóstol and Pastor of Iglesia El Shadai in Guatemala City.

**México.** Arturo Delgado. Study on the movement: “Guards of the city.” Interdenominational reality. Historical, Pentecostal and charismatic members of churches get together to do spiritual warfare, for cities, and nation.

Amos Cauich interviewed three pastors: Apostle David Chi Hoil, Alberto Tut Pantí (under the coverage of a Colombian apostle) and Roy Kantun.

**Costa Rica (2).** Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez and Ruben Fernandez of the Nazarene Church. Interviewed:

Apostle and Pastor Ricardo Castillo lleva 15 años en la Iglesia Asambleas de Dios “Vida Abundante”, localizada en El Alto de Guadalupe, San José, Costa Rica. In 1997 Joined Cesar Castellanos in Colombia and the G12 movement.

Pastor Alex Alvarado. It is not the ministry around which the church moves but is an important part.

**Ecuador.** Missionary Young Lee interviewed three pastors. One Korean missionary, Kyu Dae Kyung, and two indigenous pastors: Ramiro Yancha and Water Silva.

**Paraguay.** Ruben Driedger interviewed three anonymous pastors.

**Spain.** Giordano Christiani interviewed Karen Chambers.

**Brazil.** Eder de Melo interview two persons: Sherydan Luiza de Oliveira (disciple of Neusa Itioka) and Durvalina Barreto Bezerra.

**United States.** Javier Kosacki interview Rev. Silvina Kosacki, M. Div. Co-Pastora de la Iglesia “Arbolde Vida de la ciudad de Pomona”, Co- Pastora de la Iglesia “Arbol de Vida de la ciudad de Chino”

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