# 1 ‘WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS’

## 1.1 Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Em Cristo, em Cristo</th>
<th>In Christ, in Christ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nós somos mais que vencedores</td>
<td>we are more than conquerors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Em todas as coisas</td>
<td>in all things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nós somos mais</td>
<td>we are more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Que vencedores em Cristo</td>
<td>than conquerors in Christ</td>
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| Se estás doente, algo te aflige | If you are ill, if something afflicts you |
| Não sabes que Cristo morreu por ti | Don’t you know that Christ died for you |
| Existe um versículo a Biblia diz: | There is a Bible verse saying: |
| Pelas suas pisaduras | through his lashes |
| Nós fomos sarados | we have been cured |
| Em todas as coisas | in all things |
| Nós somos mais | we are more |
| Que vencedores em Cristo | than conquerors in Christ |

| Te falta dinheiro | You are short of money |
| Não tens providência | you cannot support yourself |
| Não sabes da lei | Don’t you know about the law |
| É semear e colher | of sow and harvest |
| Jesus sempre supre a Biblia diz: | The Bible says that Jesus always provides |
| Em abundância deitarão | In abundance [your wants will be] |
| No vosso regaço | thrown into your lap |
| Em todas as coisas | in all things |
| Nós somos mais | we are more |
| Que vencedores em Cristo | than conquerors in Christ |

| Qualquer situação | Whatever situation |
| Ou qualquer problema | or whatever problem |
| Oh está escrito | oh, it is written |
| Lançai sobre Ele a ansiedade | put your troubles down on Him |
| Uma vida nova Cristo nos dá | Christ gives us a new life |
| Eu vim p’ra dar vida | ‘I have come to give life |

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1 *Hinário*. Book of hymns of Igreja Maná, song number 344, pg. 101. Translated into English by author.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E com abundância</th>
<th>and with abundance’</th>
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‘We are more than conquerors.’ This expression is typical of Pentecostal spirituality, which is known for being powerful and immediately connected with daily life. It echoes a verse from the Bible, Paul’s letter to the Romans.²

This thesis is the result of a comparative research project about two Pentecostal migrant churches in the Netherlands. While conducting fieldwork in these two churches, I frequently heard these words, or sang them myself, as I joined the enthusiastic singing crowd at Sunday services. As I gradually became more familiar with the day-to-day life of believers, this exclamation impressed me. I saw it as a symbol of the seriousness and dedication with which the believers of both churches ‘live’ their faith.

Notwithstanding its common use, in my view the expression ‘we are more than conquerors’ does not hold precisely the same meaning for every Pentecostal believer. As the song suggests, in this interpretation the exclamation is connected with divine healing and prosperity, which is supposed to be part of Christian life. The song asks: ‘Don’t you know?’ To know where and how to find healing and prosperity is a key element in the doctrine of Igreja Maná, one of the two churches studied here.

In the second church, Calvary Christian Center, the expression ‘we are more than conquerors,’ is also uttered often, but more in ‘in spite of’ terms: ‘although we suffer now, in Christ we are more than conquerors, because He will give us victory.’ Calvary Christian Center believers say that in their church, they have come to know how to approach the throne of God, to seek his attention, and to struggle and fight in order to be victorious.

This thesis is embedded in two research programs. Firstly, it is entrenched in the Dutch NWO funded research program ‘Conversion Careers and Culture Politics in Pentecostalism: a Comparative Approach in Four

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² Romans 8:37: ‘No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.’ (Holy Bible. New International Version)
This research program on worldwide Pentecostalism departed from the understanding that rapidly growing Christian movements must be viewed as a global phenomenon (Martin 2002; Jenkins 2002), with common trends, as well as internal differences. The Christian movement can best be studied in a local context (Droogers 2001: 41-61). Secondly, this thesis is part of a VU University research program ‘De multiculturele samenleving’ (Multicultural Society) on religious pluralism and social cohesion in Dutch society. Both programs deal with the question of how global religious movements stem from local movements. In the program ‘Conversion Careers’ the religious movement (Pentecostalism) is the starting point. The program ‘De multiculturele samenleving’ departs from Dutch society as a locus of implementation.

Based on finding a nexus between both programs, this thesis focuses on Pentecostalism in relation to migration, as a central aspect of globalisation. The two above mentioned churches are migrant Pentecostal churches located in Rotterdam, one of the largest cities in the Netherlands. At the time that I conducted my fieldwork in Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, it was the largest of ten Igreja Maná churches in the Netherlands affiliated with the Portuguese Igreja

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3 Within anthropological and sociological studies of religion, the Pentecostal Movement has become a significant area of research. The Movement has experienced rapid growth globally and is increasing in social and political influence, particularly in societies in the Southern Hemisphere. NWO sponsored an international research program, ‘The Future of the Religious Past.’ The VU University Department of Social Cultural Anthropology has been funded to conduct an anthropological study ‘Conversion Careers and Culture Politics in Pentecostalism in Four Continents’ (Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America). The European part of this program concentrates on the Netherlands.

4 In 2004, the VU University started a research program ‘De multiculturele samenleving: cultureel-levensbeschouwelijk pluralisme en sociale cohesie,’ which addresses the question of social cohesion and the potential of sharing social values in a religiously differentiated society. My comparative study of two Pentecostal migrant churches is one of the projects of this research program.
Maná in Lisbon, a Neo-Pentecostal church. In the Netherlands it mainly attracts Angolan asylum seekers.

Calvary Christian Center is affiliated with the Brazilian Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte, a classic Pentecostal denomination. It is the only local community church in the Netherlands with this affiliation. Calvary Christian Center is international. The majority of the community are Brazilians, but it also includes a considerable number of Portuguese speaking Africans as well. Both churches are the locus for this study of two different kinds of Pentecostalisms, understood here in terms of a particular dynamic between church, adherents and society. I view society as a conglomerate of intersecting social fields that contain social networks and relationships. As Nina Glick Schiller (2005a: 442) puts it, ‘social fields are networks of networks,’ in which power structures, not in the least those of the nation-state, play a definite role. Within the globalised world, many (and especially western) societies have become transnational spaces, in which a considerable number of citizens, if not all, dwell in social fields that surpass national boundaries. Pentecostalism as a global religious phenomenon develops in transnational ways. It emerges as a social field that surpasses the nation-state to which its believers belong. Both church organisations studied here are transnational, since they are each embedded in a

5 The two Pentecostal churches of this study reflect the historical diversity within the Pentecostal movement. Most Pentecostal churches that emerged during the first rise of the movement, at the beginning of the twentieth century, differ theologically and organisationally from the so-called Neo-Pentecostal churches that are exponents of the new Pentecostal wave of the 1970s and 80s (following the Charismatic Movement of the 60s). As the next chapters will show, the comparison between the two churches reveals the depth of these differences.

6 Allan Anderson advocates a broad definition of Pentecostalism based on the diversity and dynamics of its origins and development. ‘I think that the term “Pentecostal” is appropriate for describing globally all churches and movements that emphasize the working of the gifts of the Spirit, both on phenomenological and on theological grounds—although not without qualification’ (Anderson 2004: 13). In principle, I follow this approach, especially because it avoids a crude dichotomy between ‘authentic’ and ‘non-authentic’ Pentecostal doctrines. However, for this in-depth study of two Pentecostal churches, it is important to add another criterion: these Pentecostal churches should see themselves as Pentecostal.
larger global church structure, albeit existing in a complex of social fields in the Netherlands. They are attended by migrant adherents whose life is inherently transnational. Transnationalism is present in society, the church and individual believers.

Where most authors writing about Pentecostalism have focused on the expansive qualities of the movements thriving within an environment of global technologies and global movements, this thesis will examine the complexity of, and contentions within, Pentecostalism’s transnational existence on the local scale. The aim of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, it contributes to the contemporary debate on the phenomenon of migrant churches by studying them in terms of powerful social and political dynamics of society as a transnational space. Secondly, it explores a particular notion of time in Pentecostalism, related to personal conversion, and regularly depicted and analysed in terms of ‘a break with the past.’ This time aspect is studied in relation to transnationality and migration. Finally, by challenging the common explanation of Pentecostalism’s success as a movement of ‘empowerment,’ this thesis offers a more nuanced explanation of the dynamic between spiritual power, individual migrants’ lives and internal and external institutional processes.

1.2 Theoretical framework

1.2.1 Globalisation and migration

Globalisation is a broadly used term, which basically refers to the observation that people, places, ideas and goods throughout the world become increasingly connected because of the development of transportation and communication technologies and infrastructure, thereby affecting all aspects of human life on the planet. For those who have access to connecting technologies, the world is experienced as one global society, held together ‘as a system of mutual dependency in which people, nations, corporations and religions are all condemned to each other’ (Droogers 2001: 51). How this phenomenon is evaluated depends on the epoch and the background of the people employing the term. Following the collapse of the Iron Curtain, theories of globalisation
breathed in the optimism of western political, economic and sociological liberals, who expected that globalisation would provide access to a global utopia of democracy (the open market), prosperity and civilization (Kalb 2004: 11-16).

In the last decade, this view has been replaced by a more critical approach that acknowledges that globalisation cannot be viewed in isolation from increasing power inequalities between continents, nations and even regions, nor as separate from processes of economic, political and social exclusion. The so-called global open market has had unforeseen damaging effects on local economic orders, for example ‘large-scale de-peasantisation, (sub)proletarisation, informalisation of markets’ (ibid.: 40), in local societies, local political regimes and especially in developing countries. The populations of former African colonies experience the current global market as precarious, because their livelihood is related to the delivery of raw materials. Wealthier western countries are in the position to make money through the production and trade of consumer goods, c.f. (Meyer 1998a).

In this respect, there is an unmistakable connection between globalisation and the rise of large migration movements, currently transforming the western world. Stephen Castles (Castles and Miller 2009: 1-18; Castles 2010: 1565-1586) argues that since the 1980s, international migration, as a ‘central dynamic within globalisation’ (Castles and Miller 2009: 3), encroaches upon societies more deeply than migration ever did in the course of history. It distinguishes itself from older forms of migration because movement occurs in all directions, involving all regions of the world. The movement of goods and capital all over the world brings about large-scale movements of people, and vice versa. This phenomenon is expected to continue into the future. Castles has observed several general tendencies in recent international migration, for instance the ‘globalisation of migration’ (ibid.: 10). By this he means that ever more countries will be influenced by migration, i.e. both emigration and immigration movements.

Furthermore, Castles discusses the ‘acceleration’ and ‘differentiation’ of migration (ibid.: 11), the latter meaning that there are multiple simultaneous motivations for migration within one migration movement. He observes a growing ‘ politicisation’ of migration as well, meaning that migration increasingly
becomes a supra-national political issue for governments, requiring international or even global decision making, in other words, global governance (ibid.: 12). Unlike other global developments that have contributed to the rise and strengthening of global governance institutions, international migration to the western world has not led to the creation of a global institution with responsibility for global collaboration with regard to international migration, or for the regulation of migrants’ rights (ibid.: 13).

The impact of migration on societies, and increased political debate on migration, must be viewed in relation to the transnational aspect of migration, meaning that many people who have migrated will simultaneously belong both to the country of their settlement and their home country (Levitt 2007: 22). This influences not only migrants themselves and the residents of the host countries in which they settle, but also the thoughts, ideas and practices of those who stay behind. In their ‘being condemned to each other,’ people in general and migrants in particular, living within Diaspora\(^7\)- search for (new) orientations and boundaries, in order to make sense of themselves and the complexity of their social fields. One of the processes with which societies have to deal, is growing religious diversity, caused by this transnational aspect of migration. Religion transcends territorial boundaries because migrants bring their religious traditions, symbols, rituals and narratives with them, and build new sacred spaces where they settle. These new sacred spaces are part and parcel of imagined global communities of connection. Both old and new countries are implicated. As Gertrud Hüwelmeier and Kristine Krause put it, ‘religion has contributed to those transnational networks just as much as it has been shaped by them’ (2009: 1). This means that in this process of globalisation and migration, religious practices show processes of continuity and change.

\(^7\) ‘Diaspora’ is not used here in a theological context, which refers to nostalgia for the home country and a perception of life in the new country as exile. The anthropological signification of the word ‘Diaspora’ is more neutral. It means that migrants live in and are connected with a complex range of environments, related to their mutual relationships with the home country and the current lived environment (Van Dijk 2001a: 201-234). As will become clear, in this reading, it can be viewed as a synonym for transnational citizenship.
1.2.2 Migrants and migrant churches in a transnational space

The concept of transnationalism, focusing on ‘migration within a globalising economy’ and emphasising ‘the institutions and identities that migrants create by being simultaneously engaged in two or more countries’ (Mazzucato 2004: 133), is helpful in studying particular networks such as the global Pentecostal movement. Transnationalism distinguishes itself from globalisation in its narrower focus of analysis. Where concepts of globalisation operate on a macro-level, transnationalism in the social sciences focuses on concrete institutions and networks (ibid.: 134). The concept of transnationalism elucidates the complicated effects of the flow of ideas, goods, money and people across borders, on the way people create new identities through transnational communities and mobile livelihoods, while also undergoing cultural reorientations. It recognises that physical, social and political spaces do not coincide with geographical areas (ibid.: 131-146). In the process of transcending and crossing boundaries, identity construction occurs via ‘creating new boundaries through the pursuit of exclusive rights to a territory, institutions or domains of knowledge’ (ibid.: 142). In relation to globalisation, a tension is frequently recognised to exist between the universal experience of a new world and the desire for frames and boundaries. At this point it must be stressed that although this study recognises the existence of an intrinsic relationship between transnationalism and migration, both concepts do not necessarily coincide. For example, Piet Jansen, in the small Dutch town of Mijdrecht, might participate in a transnational Pentecostal community, without having ever crossed the Dutch border.

Employing the concept of transnationalism, in this study I aim to go beyond the scientific approach criticised by Andreas Wimmer, Peggy Levitt, Ayse Çalar, and Nina Glick Schiller as ‘methodological nationalism’ (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1007-1012; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Glick Schiller and Çalar 2009). Wimmer and Glick Schiller define 'methodological nationalism' as ‘an intellectual orientation that assumes national borders to be the natural unit of study, equates society with the nation-state, and conflates national interests
with the purposes of social science’ (Glick Schiller 2005a: 440).\textsuperscript{8} Inspired by these authors, I conceptualise the Dutch nation-state critically as a transnational space, in which multiple and complex power processes are at work, which in turn heavily mark the lives of migrants and their churches. Migrants live within transnational social arenas, which means that they are tied to multiple settings, in several nation-states, with different regulatory powers and cultural hegemonies. Migrants are subject to this transnational complexity of powers, but (re)shape, change and produce it as well, while making sense of contradictory ideas and behaviour in the different social arenas in which they engage (Glick Schiller 2006: 8-9). They enter local social arenas, including schools, medical care, insurance, pension companies, legal institutions and local churches in their new country. They may also continue to do business with their country of origin, enlist the services of the consulate, stay connected to church networks and family, etc. In each of these arenas they loose and gain, sometimes confronted with new and challenging race, gender, social class and status differences (Levitt 2007: 27-65). As Glick Schiller points out, as ‘transborder citizens,’\textsuperscript{9} they may lobby and organise to persuade either their host government, or the government of their homeland of their interests (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001: cited by Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1025). They are informed by several concepts of personal rights, citizenship and international rights, providing them with a broader repertoire for the re-conceptualisation of their relationship to the state.

In sum, I view the Dutch nation-state as a transnational space, meaning that its internal processes are permeated with external political and social processes that shape ideas, social interests and power shifts, which influence the day-to-day life of its citizens. In chapter two and three, I use the term

\textsuperscript{8} The term ‘methodological nationalism’ is coined by Herminio Martins (1974: 276) as referred to by Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002: 327). The influence of methodological nationalism is also recognised in history, geography and sociology (Beck 2000; Rodgers 1998; Bender 2001; Taylor 1996: referred to by Wimmer and Glick Schiller).

\textsuperscript{9} The term ‘transborder citizen’ stands for ‘those who may or may not be citizens of both their original and receiving polities, but who express some level of social citizenship in one or both’ (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1025).
transnational space is a key concept through which I examine a significant event in both churches.

As will become clear through the detailed discussion of both Pentecostal migrant churches in chapter two, their adherents’ religious ties are based on transnational networks rather than state-based connections. In the case of Igreja Maná, this is because the church presents itself as a worldwide church, in which Angola and the Netherlands play only a partial role. An annual world convention, held in Lisbon, demonstrates this in a very concrete way, by flying the flags of all participating countries and the solemn display of all national bishops. Calvary Christian Center, although affiliated with a Brazilian Pentecostal denomination, includes typical African elements in the service, such as songs, dance and clothing. This shows an awareness of being part and parcel of a global religious community. These two churches therefore provide ‘an empirical window into ways of being and belonging that cannot be encompassed by a nation-state’ (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1027).

1.2.3 Pentecostalism as a transnational phenomenon

As stated earlier, Pentecostalism has developed as a global religious movement. In going global, Pentecostalism needs to be considered a transnational phenomenon as well, since it crosses nation-state and cultural boundaries on a global scale. Although Africa and Latin America differ profoundly in ethnic, cultural, social and economic respects, the quickly growing Pentecostal movements of these regions, while adapting to local forms, seem to maintain some general manifestations that are recognisable everywhere. In its historical, social, cultural and political diversity, as André Droogers (2001: 54-55) argues, Pentecostalism’s openness to the experience of the Holy Spirit fits into a globalising world. Although converts to Pentecostal churches say that to experience being baptised in the Holy Spirit is very physical, personal and intimate, at the same time they convey a strong sense of feeling part of a universal body. Conversion, considered to be a defining characteristic of Pentecostalism, is a personal experience that simultaneously incorporates the believer in a universal social and political ‘body.’ Another central characteristic of Pentecostalism is its dualistic worldview. This provides the believer with a universal answer to questions of good and evil and to his/her personal misery
and suffering. On the other hand, the social, political and organisational diversity of Pentecostalism show dexterity in meeting with local circumstances. Following Droogers’ argument about Pentecostalism simultaneously having common traits and being diverse, I suggest that precisely in its local articulation, by providing an awareness of a new individual self and a new collective global identity, Pentecostalism facilitates this encounter between the global and the local in migrants’ transnational lives (ibid.: 54-56).

As Birgit Meyer recently convincingly argued, Pentecostalism has its own ways of relating to the neo-capitalist hegemony of the global market, especially Neo-Pentecostalism, which is at ease with materiality and the pleasure of material prosperity. In some cases however, it treats money and consumer goods as potential channels of demonic powers, which in turn create a need for spiritual cleansing (Meyer 2010b). In this thesis, the dynamic complexity of difference and uniformity within Pentecostalism will become visible. It will show not only the sustaining qualities of Pentecostalism, but will also reveal the difficulties and contentions it evokes.

1.2.4 Pentecostalism opening up transnational space

So far we have approached ‘transnationalism’ from two points of view. First we approached it as a certain ‘space,’ transnational, like the nation-state, or as a complex of social fields in which migrants are involved. Second, we approached the term as a religion, transnational in its outlook and practice. I will now discuss two local or national contexts in which Pentecostalism, as a transnational religious movement, is able to provide a transnational space for the adoption of new ideas and behaviour, and for an evaluation and criticism of traditional values.10

10 Within the broader field of Evangelicalism, there are also examples of evangelical movements opening up transnational space. Oscar Salemink describes for instance, how evangelical Protestantism among a marginalised group of indigenous Highlanders in Vietnam created a common language of protest and human rights, together with other repressed groups. This human rights discourse individualised and transnationalised the Highlanders’ identity and broke through the isolation of these people, in spite of the attempts of the communist regime to halt and even reverse that trend by forcibly reviving traditional cultural practices that would militate against individual notions of human rights. The universal human rights discourse appeared to be effective in that the Vietnamese Party-State was forced to engage with it (Salemink 2006: 32-47). Here, the
Brazilian Pentecostal churches such as the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, provide the opportunity for Mozambicans to transcend national boundaries by taking a critical attitude towards certain local cultural practices. Educated women especially, working in the capital city Maputo, where they strive to build financially independent middle-class lives, question existing gender relations and kinship structures. They are able to do this precisely because these Brazilian Pentecostal churches, while criticising local forms of marriage and kinship, provide an image of alternative life-styles concerning marriage, love, family, and sexuality. It is this transnational Pentecostal space within Mozambique that allows believers to transcend and transform national spaces (Van Dijk and Van de Kamp 2010; Van de Kamp 2011).

Similarly, Ghanaian migrants establishing Pentecostal communities in Botswana, in this particular context, form transnational spaces as well. Despite the fact that government policy in Botswana is increasingly negative towards immigrants, and that Pentecostal churches in general have a negative image, the local population of Botswana has become progressively more interested in becoming members of Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. This is due to the transnational image and transcultural practices of the churches. Many of these Ghanaians run hair-dressing salons, which turn out to be a transnational space where locals and Ghanaians mingle. These salons, where all sorts of moral values are exchanged, function as metaphorical maternity rooms for the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. In this transnational space, the shortcomings of the nation-state and its neglect of the interests of citizens are re-interpreted through the image of the spiritual superiority of Pentecostalism, which claims to offer better paths to prosperity and well-being for locals (Van Dijk 2006: 101-124). It is the entrepreneurial verve and success of these Ghanaians, combined with their claim of spiritual power and knowledge, which opens up this transnational space in Botswana.

These examples of in-depth studies of particular Pentecostal groups within a particular cultural and political setting show the dynamic between the introduction of evangelical Protestantism (by US missionaries) opened up a transnational space in which political and traditional realities were questioned and changed. See also Tam Ngō’s study on massive, radio-driven evangelical conversion among the Hmong in Northern-Vietnam (2010).
global and the local in terms of Pentecostal transnational spaces. Later I will show that the encounter between migrant Pentecostal groups and local Dutch society illustrates a different transnational reality in which Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center have to hold their ground.

1.2.5 Time and conversion in Pentecostalism

Broadly put, global Pentecostalism, as any religion, ‘transcends the boundaries of time because it allows followers to feel part of a chain of memory, connected to a past, a present and a future’ (Levitt 2007: 13). More specifically, global Pentecostalism shares a particular notion of time with other evangelical movements within Christianity, especially those that promote personal conversion as a premise for redemption and salvation.

This conversion doctrine deconstructs Christian life in a temporal sense, where the break between an ‘old’ and a ‘new’ life not only forms the central point of orientation, but simultaneously has to be negotiated within an ongoing process of conversion (Meyer 1998b). The complexities that are involved in this notion of change and continuity in conversion processes are recognised and debated in recent anthropological research on conversion processes, but this area still needs further investigation. According to Joel Robbins (2003: 231), anthropological research is inclined to focus on continuity, rather than doing justice to the ambiguity in claims of rupture and dramatic change in converts’ lives on the one hand, and the ongoing inevitable ‘dialectic’ between the past and present on the other (Maxwell 1998: 44; Hastings 1976: 7-8 cited by Engelke 2004:106).

It might be anticipated that Pentecostal migrants undergo and shape their own transnational dialectic through continuity and change, negotiating their personal memories and the collective memories brought with them from their home country, and meanwhile redefining their boundaries of (religious) belonging. Besides past and present temporalities, Pentecostal conversion doctrine, with its victory oriented theology, seems to open up a promising future, not only intensified by eschatological expectations of an afterlife, but also located in the immediacy of today’s worldly material life. In this thesis,

11 Refering to Danièle Hervieu-Leger (2000).
through offering a comparison between the two migrant churches, I aim to show how Pentecostalism, in the contingent transnational encounter between the global and the local, generates huge internal differences with reference to this dialectic between the past, present and expectations of a victorious future.

1.2.6 **Spiritual Power in Pentecostalism**

The Pentecostal doctrine outlined above, involving a break with the past in becoming a new human being, cannot be understood without considering the Pentecostal notion of the power of the Holy Spirit. The sacred power of the Holy Spirit is seen to empower the individual believer to overcome the difficulties of daily life. Personal conversion, a characteristic of most evangelical movements, in Pentecostal doctrine is followed by a baptism in the Holy Spirit. The individual believer is said to be filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit, often expressed in glossolalia,\(^{12}\) or prophecy. The believer is expected to gain personal access to spiritual power and spiritual gifts, such as the power to heal, the power to exorcise, and the power to overcome sin. This gives the individual believer the responsibility and authority to live in the Holy Spirit, to make the right choices and gain victory. The experience of the tangible presence of this divine power within the community of believers, however, is not an isolated phenomenon. It influences other power mechanisms that exist in all social groups. On the one hand, this sacred power formally equalises all members of the community: each person is equal before God; each member has the same calling to obey God; and each believer has equally access to the charismata, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand however, social power relationships within the community are influenced by a claim on divine authority through the Holy Spirit. For example, when a pastor makes a demand based on a personal divine revelation from the Holy Spirit, his audience would obey his demands. In terms of Max

\[^{12}\text{Glossolalia is a theological term, which means the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues, according to I Corinthians 14:2: ‘For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no-one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.’ (Holy Bible, New International Version) ‘If you speak languages that others don't know, God will understand what you are saying, though no one else will know what you mean. You will be talking about mysteries that only the Spirit understands’ (Contemporary English Version).}\]
Weber’s analysis of leadership, it is said that Pentecostalism’s emphasis on spiritual power creates charismatic\textsuperscript{13} leadership (‘charismatischen Charakters’), rather than traditional or legally based authority (1988: 500-560). Power, or more precisely social power\textsuperscript{14} within the community, is legitimised and made sustainable by spiritual power.

Furthermore, external relationships are endorsed or discouraged in the way this divine power is understood by believers, influenced by the context and the power of the community within society. Droogers has suggested a useful concept for understanding the inter-relationship between the following three power dimensions (Droogers 2003: 265):

a. the power dimension in relation to the sacred;

b. the power dimension in internal relationships; and

c. the power dimension in external relationships.

This concept is helpful to understanding the role of both church communities of this study in society, and their effect on individual believers’ spiritual, social and economical life, because the three dimensions are interconnected and influence each other to a certain degree. For example, when access to divine power and the battle between divine and satanic powers are more strongly emphasised, the more indisputable the power claims of the leaders appear to be and the stricter the rules for church members in confronting the outside world. The impact of social power relationships in a migrant Pentecostal church, as one of the transnational social fields migrants engage in, needs particular examination. That is one of the aims of this thesis, especially with reference to the complexities and tensions of ‘transborder citizen’ life, partaking in a multiplication of social fields, which extend far beyond the Dutch nation-state.

\textsuperscript{13} Here the word ‘charisma’ is used in its sociological Weberian sense, although often the charismatic aspect of Pentecostal leaders cannot be viewed separately from endowment with the ‘charismata’ (gifts of the Holy Spirit), in the theological sense of the word.

\textsuperscript{14} ‘Macht bedeutet jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen Widerstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht’ (Weber 1976: 28)
1.2.7 The term ‘migrant church’ as an analytical concept

What, exactly, is a migrant church? And who is talking, when the term is invoked? What kind of lens is used when speaking about ‘migrant’ churches? During the last decades, the Netherlands has become a multicultural society. According to government statistics, the Netherlands is considered one of the most secular countries in the world (Stoffels 2008: 13). Migrant churches have become an increasingly important part of what is left of the Christian community. Whereas mainstream Dutch churches are facing ongoing decreases in membership, migrant churches are increasing in number and expanding in membership. The recent scientific attention to migrant churches is related to the debate on the societal impact of what is called Dutch multi-culturalisation, and therefore is informed by a nation-state perspective (WRR 2007; Vroom 2000, 2004).

What does the term migrant church mean? The earliest work in the Netherlands (Jongeneel, Budiman, and Visser 1996: 18) speaks of ‘allochtonous’ Christian groups, churches or communities, as distinct from ‘autochtonous’ churches, based on the terminology used by the Scientific Council for Government Policy. In chapter three, I will problematise the term

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15 See as well Paul Scheffer, ‘Het Multiculturele Drama’ NRC Handelsblad, 29 January, 2000. In his critical reflection on ‘autochtony’ and ‘allochtony’ in Dutch political discourse, Peter Geschiere particularly discusses Paul Scheffer’s publications in the Dutch media (Geschiere 2009: 130-141). For further elaboration, see chapter three. ‘Multi-culturalisation’ is the process of becoming gradually a society, which includes people of different ethnic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds.

16 The book’s title says: Community Formation of Asian, African and Middle and Latin American Christians in the Netherlands (translated from Dutch by author).

'allochtonous’ further, but for now it is sufficient to say that this term is biased by the fact that the Dutch government sees ‘allochtonous’ groups as a social ‘problem’ in need of ‘policy.’ Kathleen Ferrier, former coordinator of SKIN, uses and defines the term ‘migrant’ church, but admits that it evokes many questions (Ferrier 2002: 14). Ferrier describes migrants as ‘people who for whatever reason have left their country in order to build a life somewhere else, people who are ‘on the move’ so to speak: with a knowledge of different worlds, to a certain extent familiar with finding a way in divergent realities’ (2002: 33). Claudia Währisch-Oblau, formerly the contact and consultant for migrant churches on behalf of the Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland und Westfalen, considers the term migrant church not unproblematic from a theological point of view (2005: 19-20): ‘If the Church by definition is a wandering people of God, a community of people with their civil rights located in heaven (Phil.3:20), then all are “Strangers,” making the term migrant church a pleonasm.’ (ibid.: 20). In Robert Calvert’s ‘Guide for Christian Migrant Communities in Rotterdam’ (2007), the term is employed as a matter of fact. In a publication about migrant churches edited by Mechteld Jansen and Hijme Stoffels, the term ‘immigrant’ churches is used (2008). Stoffels defines immigrant churches as ‘churches in which the immigration aspect plays an important role, in the social composition of the congregation, as well as in language, culture, and religious rituals, practices, and beliefs’ (2008: 18).

This definition is partly based on Sjoukje Wartena’s efforts to draw into question the term ‘migrant’ church and to find a definition that takes into account the churches’ definition of itself (2006: 13-29). Wartena advocates for

18 SKIN: Samen Kerk in Nederland (Church Together in the Netherlands). See chapter three for a more elaborate description of the organization. www.skin.nl

19 Translated from Dutch by author.

20 Bible text in Paul’s letter to the Philippians: ‘But we are citizens of heaven and are eagerly waiting for our Savior to come from there. Our Lord Jesus Christ has power over everything, and he will make these poor bodies of ours like his own glorious body.’ (Holy Bible. New International Version)

21 Translated from German by author.

22 ‘Migranten in Mokum’ is published by the VU University, as a present to the city Amsterdam, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the university. Four master
a definition for ‘migrants’ that excludes those people for whom the term ‘migrant’ has no significance anymore, but which includes subsequent generations who still feel like migrants and who experience it as an important aspect of their life. According to Wartena, a migrant is someone who lives in the Netherlands and wants to settle temporarily or permanently, with a view to economic and/or social development possibilities. Non-Dutch nationality, ethnic and/or cultural elements play an important role in the experience of identity and the daily life world.

I respect Wartena’s efforts to recognise the need among migrants for self-definition. Still, this definition sustains an ‘integration problem’ sensibility, in which goals are confined to economic and upward social mobility and the cultural background is viewed as something that still exists, or has not yet been overcome. In other words, this definition does not recognise that people on the move are transnational, meaning that they create new identities through transnational communities and mobile livelihoods, and perhaps even move further, all the while undergoing cultural reorientations. The problem with the term ‘migrant’ is that it assumes that the people being defined are different from those who define them as migrants. The term aims is to depict a certain group of people in a particular way, by trying to elucidate what makes them different from ‘us.’

Many representatives of migrant churches express their dislike of being approached as migrants, as Wartena points out (2006: 24-26). They feel the term negates and neglects the brotherly equality of all Christians. Nevertheless, interest groups like SKIN and the Kerkhuis use the term without qualification (Stoffels 2008: 18). Even when used as a secular term, it should be noted that from a broad historical point of view, no one could be excluded from the term, since we are all (descendants of) migrants. But then it loses analytical significance. Therefore, I accept Währisch-Oblau’s suggestion that we cannot put the term aside in a study of groups that are grounded in the fact of their being

students studied migrant churches in Amsterdam, investigating the question of how these churches ‘contribute to wellbeing and prosperity, to solidarity and the process of building together the city of Amsterdam’ (Eusser et al. 2006: 1)

23 Kerkhuis: service office for migrant churches in Amsterdam, initiated by De Schinkel, an organization of the Protestant Church Amsterdam (PKA) in Amsterdam. www.7maal7.nl
migrants. I also choose to defend the use of the term ‘migrant’ above ‘allochtonous’ or ‘international.’ It is not at all clear to me what the term ‘international’ means. Does it mean an international population, or an international affiliation? Besides, there are international churches that started as Dutch churches. Pentecostal churches are known for their transnational embeddedness, which makes the term ‘international’ inappropriate. In order to differentiate between Pentecostal churches and Pentecostal migrant churches, my argument is as follows. Migrant churches are churches that cannot be understood without taking into account the fact that their adherents are migrants. Hence, the struggle over the term migrant church does not bring us to a ‘best definition,’ but above all shows how Christian groups use exclusionary terminologies in depicting others. As I gradually came to realise during my research, the encounters between mainstream white Christians and other Christians appear to be complex and difficult. One of the aims of this thesis is to unpack the meaning of the term ‘migrant’ churches by problematising the impact of the churches studied for different contexts, including ‘white’ and ‘western’ (Pentecostal) Christianity.

1.2.8 A Typology of migrant churches?

Besides there being a huge diversity in ethnic backgrounds within migrant churches, there is also an enormous variety among Christian denominations, with diverse historical, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and organisational affiliations (Van den Broek 2005). As I have outlined, there have been rudimentary and more elaborate attempts to categorise migrant churches in the Netherlands; one based on ecclesial structure (Jongeneel, Budiman, and Visser 1996: 41-62) and another based on historical criteria (Ferrier 2002: 33-42). Cees van der Laan (2005: 67-81) suggested a third typology, based on Ferrier’s

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24 Later on, Claudia Währich-Oblau (2006: 33), follows Rufus Ositelu (primate of the Nigerian Church of The Lord (Aladura)), who suggests the term ‘New Mission Churches’ instead of ‘migrant churches.’ In her view, the term acknowledges that these churches are part of the same body as ‘autochtonous’ churches, and recognises the definite missionary self-understanding of these churches. I do not follow this suggestion, see my discussion of the ‘missionary impetus’ of migrant churches on the next page and in chapter three.
historical categorisation, combined with a finely inter-woven typology for migrant churches in Germany (Währisch-Oblau 2005: 19-39), aiming to do more justice to the Dutch situation. In this approach a distinction is made between historical and new migrant churches:

- **Ecumenical mainstream migrant churches**, such as Roman Catholic parishes, (Oriental) Orthodox churches, such as Russian, Serbian, Syrian and Ethiopian churches and mainline Protestant churches, for example The Scottish International Church, mostly connected to ecumenical networks in the Netherlands;
- **‘Reversed mission’ migrant churches**, part of mother churches in foreign, mostly African, Latin American and Asian countries, such as the Church of Pentecost and Living Bread Ministries, mostly Pentecostal and charismatic. These churches have no connections with ecumenical networks in the Netherlands;
- **Independent migrant churches**, founded in the Netherlands, such as the Everlasting Salvation Ministries, the House of Fellowship International, most of them being African, some Latin American. These churches are very fluid and varied when it comes to organisation and membership.
- **Denominational migrant churches**, independent churches that have developed into a denomination, or migrant churches that started as part of, for example, the Assemblies of God, in the Netherlands. It is a member of the Dutch Assemblies (Verenigde Pinkster- en Evangeliegemeenten), but is tied to the Assemblies of the home country as well, mostly Pentecostal and charismatic. El Encuentro con Dios is one of such multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Pentecostal Churches.

Hijme Stoffels does not attempt to improve this categorisation, but states that it is ‘almost impossible to classify these churches along denominational or ethnic lines’ (2008: 19). I tend to agree with him, because if I attempted to place the two churches of my research into these categories, I would have difficulty doing

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25 Within Währisch-Oblau’s typology, migrant churches can be divided by several dimensions of comparison, such as language, ethnic composition, migration status of members, type of missionary impetus (high, low, towards their own ethnic group or towards the whole country), different types of organisational inter-wovenness.
so. In reference to Van der Laan’s distinction between one category of historical migrant churches and three categories of ‘new’ migrant churches, it could be said that neither of the church studied here could be classified as an historical migrant church, since their adherents are ‘new’ migrants. Nor could they be classified as ecumenical mainstream migrant churches, since they are Pentecostal, nor as independent migrant churches, since they are both affiliated with a larger church. But are they denominational church-mission communities or reversed mission churches?

Calvary Christian Center, which started as a sister church of a Spanish speaking Pentecostal church in Amsterdam, ended up as a mission church of the Assembléia de Deus, a Brazilian Pentecostal denomination like the US Assemblies of God. In that sense it would be a denominational migrant church, but as it is not tied to a Dutch denomination, such as the Dutch Assemblies of God, it does not meet the criteria. Igreja Maná could be classified as a reverse mission church, according to Van der Laan’s definition, however it emerged for a different reason. There was an influx of Angolan asylum seekers in the Netherlands, several of whom were members of the church in Angola. Soon after opening, the church community in Amsterdam connected with the mother church in Lisbon. Out of this move a ‘church seedling’ strategy was developed in the Netherlands. But without the former process, the latter probably would not have eventuated.

I will discuss the term ‘reversed mission’ in chapter three, designating the evangelising attempts of the migrant churches of my research in the Netherlands as a transnational space. But here I wish to stress that the term all too easily labels all non-western churches, said to desire the (re)Christianisation of Western Europe, (the pre-eminent ‘Christianisers’ of the colonial epoch). There are churches that indeed have a deliberate reverse mission policy and strategy. Kim Knibbe and others convincingly demonstrate this with reference to the Nigerian Pentecostal Church, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (2009; Burgess, Knibbe, and Quaas 2010). But in the case of Igreja Maná, its expansion policy can hardly be defined as reversed mission, since the founder and apostle is a European born citizen of Portugal, who targets all Portuguese speaking people (descendants of the colonisers and the colonised) in the world. To me, Igreja Maná in Rotterdam is an African migrant church, because of its
population. In view of its affiliation, it could also be called a European migrant church.

The main effect of developing typologies in this way, is that I have become more aware of the many criteria available and of the complex nature of a phenomenon. However, besides all the factors that hinder easy classification, a more fundamental objection against developing a typology must be made. In every typology of migrant churches, however construed, a form of methodological nationalism lies hidden. By announcing a departure from Dutch church history and Dutch denominational distinctions, migrant churches are located within boundaries of otherness.\(^\text{26}\) Therefore, at the start of this thesis, I distance myself from any attempt to create new typologies to fit the churches of my research. I thus give full recognition to the multiplicity of foci involved in the examination of these local church communities.

1.3 Research question and structure of the thesis

1.3.1 Research question

This thesis, premised on the theoretical discussions raised earlier, will attempt to answer the following general questions. How do both churches’ Pentecostal discourses and practices, with regard to space, time and power, reflect the complexities of their transnational existence? What is the impact of these discourses and practices on their adherents’ self-perception and life experience in Dutch society?

The first elaboration of this general question will deal with the transnational aspect of Pentecostalism and the transnational spaces that both Pentecostal migrant churches are enmeshed within. This elaboration consists of two sub-questions, which focus on transnational space:

\(^{26}\) Comparably, a typology which tries to distinguish African Independent Churches from Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Africa is problematic, because of its essentialist understanding of ‘African’ and what is not (Meyer 2004). This neglects the dynamics and ongoing exchanges within the complex field of Christianity in Africa. ‘Scholars should understand [these classifications] as part and parcel of a politics of self representation’ (ibid.: 452).
What impact does the Netherlands, as a transnational space, have on the social, political and material existence of (both) migrant churches?

How is the church building, a transnational space on the local level, involved in the cross-cultural encounter between churches of different denominational, historical and (trans)national backgrounds?

The second elaboration of the general question concerns the churches’ Pentecostal discourses and practices relating to time:

- What discourses and practices do both churches have in relation to the past in general, and their adherents’ pasts in particular? What is the impact of these discourses and practices on their adherents’ self-perception and on the way they make their ‘livelihood’ in Dutch society?
- What discourses and practices do both churches have in relation with the tension between difficulties in the present and the promise of (future) victory? What is the impact of these discourses and practices on their adherents’ self-perception and on the way they make their ‘livelihood’ in Dutch society?

The third elaboration of the general question concerns the churches’ Pentecostal discourses and practices in relation to power. What role does the authoritative position of church leaders play in the discourses and practices of adherents’ lives in Dutch society? This question is divided into two perspectives.

- What kinds of processes of authorisation can be determined and distinguished in the organisational structure and practices of both churches?
- What is the impact of these discourses and practices on their adherents’ views on the church and its leadership on the one hand and on themselves as both Pentecostal believers and inhabitants of Dutch society on the other?

Livelihood in this context is ‘a concept used in the social sciences to refer to the totality of resources and agency that people draw upon to make a living,’ while acknowledging that migrants mainly make transnational livelihoods, creating transnational economic spaces (Mazzucato 2004: 135).
1.3.2 *Structure of the thesis*

Following this introductory chapter, chapter two provides a detailed presentation of both Pentecostal migrant churches. Chapter three deals with the first sub-question concerning the impact of the Netherlands as a transnational space on migrant churches. In this chapter, I aim to show that the Dutch nation-state is far from being a virtual, imagined or harmless reality. Dutch political and public debates on immigration and religious freedom in the public space are marked by a complex set of external and internal developments. The dominant discourses on immigration and religion, influenced by these developments, produce a lived social reality for migrant churches and their adherents, since they result in the making of legislation, rules for public order, and policing. The chapter opens with a discussion of a significant event that takes place in the Calvary Christian Center.

Chapter four focuses on the church building as a transnational space. It starts with another meaningful event, this time in the Igreja Maná Church. In this chapter I argue that the contentions revealed in chapter three, come to a climax in this case, on the local level. The events in both chapters show that, for all their differences, both churches fundamentally share the same experiences as migrant churches in the Netherlands as transnational spaces. In this chapter, two forms of analysis, relational and material, expose the potential for conflict between two church communities, in which different historical, political, social-cultural and theological processes play an important role.

In chapter five, I delve into the question of how the past is dealt with in both churches. This chapter will show how both churches differ *theologically* in their discourses. At the same time, through the reflections of their adherents, it becomes clear that the impact of these theological emphases cannot be understood without taking into account their social-political and cultural-traditional backgrounds. How background plays a role in the way adherents reflect upon their past is explored via narratives of who they are now (Christians, converted). The chapter pivots around what is and is not or cannot be said, and the ambivalences that this evokes in the process of conversion.

Chapter six will examine how in their discourses, both churches approach current difficulties in the lives of their adherents, given the victory-oriented worldview of most Pentecostal movements. As the title of this thesis
makes clear, being ‘more than a conqueror’ is a central aspiration of both churches. However, the two churches differ in their discourses of suffering. In the Maná church ‘suffering’ is hardly discursive, nor openly spoken about. At Calvary Christian Center, on the contrary, there is scope for speaking about suffering and for emotional/bodily expression, such as crying, sobbing and prayers of begging. Primarily, this difference highlights the limitations of the generalising and stereotyping assumptions that imply that Pentecostalism is not able to deal with suffering. Suffering and the bodily expression of suffering have a broad historical basis in Christianity, especially in Roman Catholicism. An examination of the way adherents do or do not internalise these expressions and bodily practices, uncovers some potential acculturation processes that these churches have undergone in the homeland, and which undergo further transformation in the Netherlands. This chapter once again highlights the view that in both churches not everything can be said. This opens up a space for ambiguity, in which adherents manage to connect these discourses with their personal life.

In chapter seven, I approach ‘power’ from the perspective of church leadership and organisation. Here, I demonstrate how the impact of church discourse also occurs through a variety of processes. In both churches, the authority of spiritual leadership is based on charisma, legacy and bureaucracy. It will be shown that both churches differ greatly in their structural outlook and discourses on authority and subjection.

Chapter eight deals with the powerful impact that processes of authorisation in both churches have on their adherents’ way of thinking, speaking and living. In this chapter I examine how these discourses are reflected in their members’ narratives and behaviour. Here I also discuss the frictions and potentials that these reflections reveal in relation to the daily lived power structures that these members are subordinated to.

By unfolding the three themes, ‘space,’ ‘time’ and ‘power’ in this comparative research project, two different pictures will emerge, and these will contribute to the scholarly debate on Pentecostalism as a transnational religion. As I will show, the impact that these two churches exert on their migrant adherents’ way of life and self-perceptions cannot be underestimated. Discourses are a powerful tool of the church. This power of discourse will
become clear, especially in relation to diversity. The more outspoken they are, the more vigorously such discourses will affect the lives of adherents. Nevertheless, since these discourses often find resonance in their adherents’ transnational background and context, their power should not be considered to be entirely self-grounded. In personal reflections on these discourses, there is always room for ambivalence, conflict and resistance.

1.4 Methodological considerations and choices

1.4.1 Comparison

This research project can be defined as a double and comparative case study. Case studies always have comparative elements, since the discoveries made through them are supposed to be connected and compared with those made in other case studies. Moreover, in case studies there is a comparative movement back and forwards between empirical data and theoretical debates (Lijphart 1975: 161). In this case study, however, by taking two different groups as research objects, comparison is primarily part of the internal design of the research.

This research on two Pentecostal migrant churches aims to discover and unravel complexities, rather than seeking standardising analyses. The churches are taken as entry points for research, but I aim at putting forward and thinking through their entanglement with their social environments, which consist of many complex layers of national and international developments, processes, virtual networks and social relationships. Instead of subjecting this study to a stringently designed framework of theories and hypotheses in order to find expected similarities or differences, a combination of deductive and inductive approaches have been chosen, best defined with grounded theory (Flick 2009; Glaser and Strauss 1977). I started my fieldwork with an initial theoretical framework and some preliminary questions. Subsequently, I collected data and discovered salient elements through conducting interviews, by attending church services and via personal contacts. Based on this process I rethought my framework and my central research question. Initially I had been more interested in the strong prosperity theological character and the language of
power of Igreja Maná, which seemed to be less present in Calvary Christian Center. My initial central question was:

What is the role of prosperity theology and power dynamics in two Portuguese speaking local migrant Pentecostal Churches in Rotterdam, in terms of

A. The churches’ influence on the identity construction of its members, and

B. The churches’ influence on the way members experience prosperity in gaining their livelihood in Dutch society?

During the course of my fieldwork at Igreja Maná, I gradually discovered other theological discourses that were more germane to my research. This led me to reformulate the basic questions for my fieldwork in Calvary Christian Center. There, I went through the same process of discovering new salient theological discourses. This was not a linear, but a circular research process. I continually compared data from both churches with other comparable research projects and relevant theories. I added other relevant and more probing questions as I went. Comparisons derived in this way revealed differences and common features in the way transnational processes are at work in the (theological and social) strategies that these churches employ in order to offer their migrant adherents a way of life in Rotterdam.

In comparative analyses, the constant back and forth movement between data and theory is even more important than in monographic studies. Comparative analysis aims at much more than the confirmation of a hypothesis or theory. The advantage of this comparative study is that it will elucidate the complexity of the cultural and social context of religious beliefs and people’s lives. In chapters five to eight, where comparison itself is at issue, I examine differences in doctrinal discourse as the first level of comparison. The second level of comparison undertaken relates to the way these discourses are reflected in the narratives and expressions of adherents. In attempting to answer the question ‘what is the impact of these discourses for certain groups of believers?’, I try to map social-cultural factors in both churches. Although this level of comparison indicates directions for further research rather than final conclusions, I am convinced that this discussion belongs within this thesis, since it deals with migrant Pentecostals.
1.4.2 Interdisciplinary research

The central research question of this thesis, as elucidated in the previous section, is basically a social science question. It focuses on human responses to religious discourses, the impact of social relationships in a church community, and the influences of a local society. Nevertheless, the research program ‘Conversion Careers,’ in which this project is embedded, aimed to become genuinely interdisciplinary by appointing researchers who bring different scholarly perspectives as well.

In my case, having completed a Master’s Degree in theology and undertaking PhD research in anthropology, I work in an interdisciplinary way. This raises the question of how I deal with interdisciplinary work, especially given that I am a Pentecostal pastor. My Christian theological background has not only drawn my attention to significant discourses within the two Pentecostal churches, but has led me to value the search for historical and doctrinal development of these discourses within the Christian tradition as well. As a theologian, I have paid attention to multiple doctrinal issues within both churches, based on my wide-ranging interest in theological science. These issues include, but are not limited to questions of methodological explanations of Biblical Scripture (Biblical Theology), and questions of doctrinal development and its embeddedness in different theological traditions (Systematic Theology) (McGrath 1999: 137-159).

In my theological view, the question of how both churches speak about the past in a doctrinal way, as described in chapter five, cannot be discussed in isolation from wider discussions in which the past can be viewed as a multifaceted concept in Christian theology. The biblical sources of Christianity, written as sedimentary layers developed in a certain past, require recurrent hermeneutical interpretation over and over again, thus contributing to what are called Christian traditions. Within these Biblical sources there is a notion of past and present as well, for instance in the words of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew (5:21-48): ‘You have heard that it was said to the people long ago ….. But I tell you……..’

Theological debates about how ‘old’ and ‘new’ must be interpreted, and how continuity in biblical history must be understood in the light of what is
‘old’ and ‘new,’\textsuperscript{28} has been going on since the first century. The Old Testament, read in the light of the New Testament, can be seen as belonging to the ‘past’, which raises the question to what extent the Old Testament still is prescriptive. When Pentecostal practices of healing and exorcism are criticised by theologians, these questions play an important role. For example, should Old Testament curses, with which the Israelites were threatened by the prophet Moses, be considered to contain contemporary reminders of illness and misfortune among Christian believers? Or must this threat be dismissed as wrong-minded and no longer Biblical?\textsuperscript{(Perriman 2003: 80-103)}

Furthermore, in Biblical Scripture, the notion of past and present refers to personal faith, for instance in Jesus’ declaration to the Pharisee Nicodemus that only a human being who is born again can see God’s Kingdom (John 3:3), a notion which is echoed in 1 Peter 1:23-2:1:

‘For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [...] Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice [...].’ The notion of conversion in terms of being born again, as it is central to evangelicals and Pentecostals, is subject to theological debate as well.

It is not my aim to discuss or contribute to such theological debates, but in my view there is a significant parallel between them and the tension between ‘continuity and break with the past,’ highlighted in anthropological research concerning Pentecostal conversion. In chapter five, which explicitly deals with this theme, I have added an excerpt of Pentecostal views on ‘a past’ towards which Pentecostalism has positioned itself, in order to give insight in the more general roots of a particular Pentecostal (doctrinal) discourse concerning ‘the past’ in Christian life.

This thesis therefore is not intended as a contribution to theological debate. Rather it employs theological debates as tools to clarify and sharpen my analysis of particular anthropological research questions. In those instances where I considered it necessary, or useful, to take a theological position myself, I have made this explicit (mostly in footnotes).

\textsuperscript{28} ‘Do not think that I have come to \textit{abolish} the Law or the Prophets,’ Matthew 5:17. (Holy Bible. New International Version)
1.4.3 **Ontological and epistemological considerations**

Interdisciplinary research on religious subjects, especially where theology is involved, requires the researcher to take an explicit ontological and epistemological position. As a Christian theologian,\(^{29}\) I follow Hendricus Berkhof, who defines the phenomenon of religion in a monotheistic theological manner as ‘the relation to the Absolute’ (2002: 6); the ‘human consciousness of being related to a reality other than the sensorial world, but unknowable outside it, i.e. an ultimate ground of existence.’ In this definition, polytheistic religions are considered to understand the Absolute in a polytheistic manner. Since the questions posed and the answers found are always related to the phenomenological world, religion is inherently infused with anthropological and cultural conditions (ibid.: 7). In this theological definition, atheism is not the opposite, or a denial of religion, since its concern is the ultimate grounds of existence as well. In this view atheism itself differs from theistic worldviews only in that it builds on different answers. As a Christian theologian, I subscribe to the Biblical revelation of God as the Absolute, the ultimate transcendental reality, in which all reality is grounded. Thus, from an ontological point of view, as a researcher, my starting point is a reality that exists independently of human experience and understanding. However, this reality is knowable only through the channels of the sensorial or immanent world. Hence, phenomenologically, from a Christian theological view, not only in Christianity, but in all religions, the relationship to the Absolute depends on human reception of revelation. As a Christian theologian, I view the divine revelation in Christ as normative and ultimate, which means that I view the relationship between Christianity and other religions as dialectic, acknowledging that their religious content contains traces of divine revelation as well. Nevertheless, all divine revelation is inherently mediated in earthly forms, as human knowledge is confined to the phenomenal world. Therefore, Christianity is fundamentally and inherently exposed to opposition, obscurity and blurring from inside its representative forms (churches, leaders, theologians, members). It is an inherent task of

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\(^{29}\) I add the adjective Christian here, because other religions, such as Islam, have theologians, too. My academic training in theology has been confined to the Christian sources of revelation (the Bible), the Christian doctrines and the Christian tradition.
systematic theology (the study of doctrine) to methodically deal with the dialectic between divine revelation and human experience. Moreover, in this dialectic space, there is overlap between social science (for instance cultural anthropological) and theological questions.

As an anthropologist, I acknowledge that representatives of other religions or worldviews do not necessarily share the epistemological view described above. From a social science point of view, I am convinced that all knowledge is a social construct, a construct in which I as a researcher take part. As an anthropologist I do not share the social scientific constructivists’ idea that reality itself is a construct, because I cannot distance myself from my theological point of view, that there is a reality that exists independently of human consciousness.

I agree with André Droogers, who argues that a social science definition of religion ‘cannot be isolated from the position of the definer in the context of global society, the science paradigm and the secularization debate’ (2009: 276). Droogers views the ontology of defining religion in the social sciences as an attempt to grasp religion as a distinctive category within human reality (ibid.: 265). How this is undertaken depends on the science paradigm of the person doing the defining. A positivist scholar will come up with an alternative definition to a constructivist. In addition, researchers differ in their choice of methodological positions while researching religion. They may choose methodological theism (accepting that religious truths are essential to scholarly discourse), methodological atheism (rejecting inclusion of religious truths in scientific study), and methodological agnosticism (claiming neutrality with regard to religious truth) (ibid.: 267). These different methodological approaches produce different definitions of religion as well. This brings Droogers to the conclusion that every definition of religion, built from whatever position or dimension, is arbitrary. Above all, the practice of defining religion and religious debate has always been situated in a particular time and place. The current debate is located in a changing globalised world.

1.4.4 Methodological ludism: the researcher’s stance

The first thing I learned when attempting to make anthropological research skills my own, was that the researcher is her own research instrument. This
realisation alerted me to many questions during the course of my fieldwork. Would I be able to reconcile my personal beliefs, and the ontological positions they entail (for example, that God exists, Jesus is my Saviour, the Holy Spirit speaks to me, the realities I live with and which determine my view of the world), with a social scientific attitude, which does not know, but rather asks questions about what it means to live with religious convictions? When undertaking my fieldwork, would I observe the same things as anyone else, someone who holds a different personal worldview? And if not, what are the epistemological consequences of this? Would I be able to keep enough distance from what I would encounter in both churches? Would I be able to take an analytical, and even a critical position? Would I not take for granted what I saw? On the other hand, what role would my own (moral) views about a good and healthy churches play? How would I respond when confronted with things I disapproved of? These questions crossed my mind on numerous occasions, for instance when participating in prayer and bible studies, when hearing respondents tell conversion stories, when writing fieldwork reports, or when discussing my papers and chapters with my research team. I was aware of the reality that in spite of the deliberate distinction I draw between my theological and anthropological background, and the interdisciplinary position I wanted to take, in fieldwork situations, implicit things like feelings, sensitivities, emotions and deep-rooted customs might play a role.

In hindsight, I must say that in becoming part of these two church communities for more than thirty months, I could not avoid being touched and changed by them. It is not that I intentionally set out to avoid this, but nor did I seek out personal change. The congregation of the Dutch church to which I returned following my fieldwork, tells me I have changed. I have become more generous in my bodily expression, especially while leading worship or delivering a sermon. Both churches apparently succeeded in getting under my skin. In the meantime, my greater awareness of cultural differences has made me more critical of some aspects of my own Dutch church. Sometimes I miss the devotion that I found within so many adherents of both migrant churches, although I recognise that my analysis of spiritual life in both churches is not without critical distance.
I did not expect to be confronted with personal challenges during this research period, since I thought that my field of research would be close to my personal worldview. During my fieldwork, I found that there certainly were lines that I drew. I only once responded to an altar call, and in both churches I hesitated to receive the laying on of hands. I decided to interview a traditional healer (kimbanda) in Angola, but chose not to witness his healing practices. In Brazil, I had no opportunity to visit Candomblé sessions, but I would not have done so anyway, because I believe that the spirit-possession rites in this religion are a spiritual reality, and cannot be reduced to people’s constructs.

What is the impact of all this on the research analysis I offer in this thesis? As Hans Tennekes has convincingly argued, a methodological agnostic approach in the end reduces and devalues the religious phenomenon of its study, because it only focuses on the social cultural aspects of religion (1999: 89-93). The neglect of religious content eventually involves a negation of the religious reality that believers live with. Therefore, as an anthropologist and theologian, in my research on a religious phenomenon such as two migrant Pentecostal churches in Rotterdam, I did not aim to explain this locally elaborated form of religion in non-religious terms only. I did not opt for an agnostic or atheist approach, although I describe the religious discourses and practices I encountered in both churches from an etic (outsider’s) position. I did not aspire to legitimise religious truth claims through social scientific methods either. In other words, if I did not decide on methodological atheism or agnosticism, what approach would be appropriate?

André Droogers aimed to overcome the dichotomy between agnosticism and religionism (his synonym for theism), and between religion and science, by introducing an approach that does right to the human potential to deal with different realities, as in play: methodological ludism (2006: 89-92). Droogers’ definition of play is ‘the capacity to deal simultaneously and subjunctively with two or more ways of classifying reality’ (1996: 53). ‘Subjunctive’ here refers to the ‘as if’ form of meaning-making, a capacity of pretending that is characteristic for play. Droogers suggests that this idea of a human capacity or antenna for the perception of an extra dimension in reality includes the possibility of a corresponding sacred force. He argues that if researchers draw on this same capacity while conducting fieldwork, this will
provide them with the opportunity to take as seriously as possible the religious reality experienced by adherents (Droogers 2006: 91).

However, Peter Versteeg has revealed a complication in this methodological ludism, by describing what happened to him in a prophetic meeting of a charismatic community (2006: 99-101). The meeting was full of play, but in the end, for the prophets this play had become indicative ‘as is’, although experienced as a subjunctive reality in which God was participating. As Versteeg states: ‘Playing moves beyond representation and becomes presence. [...] The anthropologist cannot enter into the spirit of the thing, i.e. engage in playing as the Vineyard prophets understand it, without crossing the line of belief’ (ibid.: 101). In this respect, in religious contexts where religious events are experienced as being real by believers, the gap between religious playing and religious experience cannot be bridged. In Versteeg’s view, methodological ludism will become reductionist as well.

Kim Knibbe’s (Knibbe and Droogers 2011) experience of methodological ludism goes in another direction. Knibbe participated in healing sessions led by the famous Dutch healer Jomanda, adopting a ludic approach, in which she pushed herself to learn to experience the presence of the ‘other side’ in her body as the believing visitors did. In the end, this resulted in Knibbe having to go through a process of unlearning in order to be able to make a sound analysis. Moreover she could not avoid noting that her ontological worldview had changed by this process of learning. As Knibbe and Droogers put it, methodological ludism carries the existential risk of personal change in which the experienced sensations become ‘as is,’ instead of ‘as if.’ When taking ludism seriously as a methodological approach, there is no simultaneous experience of ‘as if’ and ‘as is,’ but a movement back and forth between the two. In their conclusions it becomes clear that methodological ludism is meant to be useful for research based on ontological and epistemological constructivism. From this perspective, I can follow the conclusions of Knibbe and Droogers. But would a ludic approach be useless for research not necessarily based on ontological constructivism? My conclusion is that no, it wouldn’t be.

Especially in instances where the researcher shares the ontological position of the people she studies, methodological ludism can be helpful. Because I do share the main ontological position of the churches I studied (belief
in God and Biblical Scripture), I expected that an explicit methodological theist position would hold me back in order that I keep a scientific distance. Conversely, an explicitly methodological agnostic position would not be helpful in the theological perspective of this research project.

In conclusion, methodological ludism helped me to engage and participate in the churches’ practices to the extent that I was able, without being hindered by theological or scientific prejudices. On the other hand, methodological ludism did restrain me from forming a legitimising attitude. I was able to observe critically what happened in the churches. This methodological approach enabled me to move back and forth between theism and agnosticism when necessary. But, as I said, at some occasions I drew a line. This had everything to do with the fact that I, as a human being and as a researcher, choose not to play with my ontological position.

1.4.5 The researcher and the field

When I introduced myself in the two churches, I was clear about my dual roles, as a theological and anthropological scholar of the VU University, and as a Pentecostal pastor. Especially in Igreja Maná this was helpful to gaining the confidence of the leaders and core adherents. Igreja Maná had been publicly criticised as being a controversial church, and it took a long time to obtain permission to undertake fieldwork there, almost nine months. My first conversation in October 2005 with pastor João was very friendly and informative, but when I asked for his permission for my research in the church, he answered: ‘for me it is no problem, but I am not the one who can make the decision. You will have to go to the national bishop.’ A few weeks later, I had a conversation with the national bishop. He said the same thing. He had to first ask permission from the european bishop. In January 2006, I went to the church service in Rotterdam, where I met the national bishop again. I asked him whether he had received an answer from the european bishop. He answered: ‘The european bishop told me: no.’ I asked: ‘What are his objections to my research? Is there anything I can do to alleviate the bishop’s concerns?’ The national bishop said: ‘It is not possible yet. We have to get to know you first. We have a World Convention in Lisbon, in August. Why don’t you go there? Afterwards, we can talk further.’ I went to Lisbon in August 2006, but not before
having attended several church services in Rotterdam during the first half of the year. The church crowd got used to seeing me there and soon I was in friendly contact with some young girls. In Lisbon, I submitted a recommendation letter from the VU University with the office of the European bishop. At the convention, I met the national bishop, who promised to introduce me to him. Yet this did not happen. On one of the last days of the conference, I took the initiative to approach him myself, when he was backstage after the Convention meeting. At the end of this brief conversation, during which I repeated my request for permission to do research in Rotterdam, the European bishop said: ‘You will hear from the national bishop.’

Back in Rotterdam, I decided to begin my fieldwork and see what happened. The national bishop never gave me an official answer, but during every service in Rotterdam, in which he was present, he confirmed my presence from the pulpit, by saying things like ‘our Dutch sister, who will be our bridge to the Dutch people.’ I was given a name and a position, and it worked. Still, when the national bishop was replaced a few months later, I decided not to introduce myself as a researcher to the new national bishop, fearing that he would start the permission process all over again. The local pastor agreed with me on this.

In the Spring of 2007, when I decided to travel to Angola for a brief period of fieldwork with Igreja Maná of Luanda, the pastor advised me to go unofficially, because the permission process would have to be instigated from Rotterdam, via the national bishop, via Lisbon to Angola and vice versa. I followed his advice. Fortunately, one of the female members of Igreja Maná in Rotterdam arranged my lodging in Luanda. I was invited to the house of her parents for one month. Via my hosts, I came in contact with another female member of Igreja Maná, who took me into the church. As the only white skinned, blond person in the mass of thousands of black-skinned adherents in Igreja Maná in Luanda, it was impossible to stay incognito. My female friend enthusiastically introduced me to the head pastor of the church, who immediately gave me lots of opportunities for fieldwork in the church in Luanda. Although I sensed that my role as a researcher might cause inconvenience, during my fieldwork in Igreja Maná in Rotterdam as well as in Luanda, I certainly was intrigued by this church from the start. I was fascinated with its reluctant attitude to strangers, its structure and its atmosphere. I did not want to give up
on it. I was also really impressed by the people I met, pastor João, and many, mainly young, Angolan adherents who appeared to be so serious and dedicated to their faith. After a few visits I genuinely wanted to know more about them.

In 2005, I also visited Calvary Christian Center, seeing it as a potential church for my research. Because I had learned from my experiences in Igreja Maná, I decided to go there several times without making my intentions known, before asking for a conversation with the pastor. In the first half of 2006, I returned several times more, and found out that the pastor had returned to Brazil. I decided to concentrate on Igreja Maná first and renew contact with Calvary Christian Center in the summer of 2007, hoping that the church would still exist then. When I returned to the church, which to my relief still was to be found at the same address, some adherents recognised and welcomed me enthusiastically. There was another pastor now, named Celso, who approached me warmly as a new visitor. In no time, I felt that it would be no problem making my intentions clear, and I asked for an appointment with him. When I told him about my research project, he agreed to give me all the scope I needed to do my research. He gave the impression of being very open and asked engaged questions about the rules and regulations of the Dutch Assemblies of God. It was very clear that this local pastor was empowered to make such decisions himself, although the church is affiliated with the Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte.

I started my fieldwork in Calvary Christian Center in September 2007 and concluded it in December 2008. In October 2008, I made a brief fieldwork trip to Brazil, where I stayed in several places, hosted by relatives of adherents and the pastor in Rotterdam. I visited the states of Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Bahia.

In Calvary Christian Center I was treated as a researcher, but also as a pastor, which means that every now and then I was invited to say a prayer, or to deliver a brief word of God. At the end of my fieldwork in Rotterdam, the evangelist who leads the church on a daily basis, invited me to deliver a sermon in the Sunday Service, and I did.

In order to be able to undertake fieldwork in two Portuguese-speaking churches, I prepared myself by studying the language for one year. At the end of that year, I went to Lisbon for intensive training at a linguistic institute. From that moment, I began my fieldwork in Igreja Maná. During this first period of
fieldwork, I experienced the impact that the language barrier has on one’s 
spiritual experience and on the feeling of connectedness with the church 
community. It was really hard. Many times I had to ask friends in the church for 
explanation, when jokes were told, or when complex illustrations were made by 
the pastor. But language was not the only barrier. I had not realised prior to 
beginning, that my fieldwork would replace my usual church life for more than 
two and a half years. Apart from the fact that I had to make a great effort to 
understand everything that was said and done, in Igreja Maná there was almost 
nothing I could take for granted, because virtually everything that happened 
there was different from what I was used to. The typical theological themes, the 
rituals concerning the themes of ‘to walk in love’ and ‘to sow and harvest,’ the 
broadcast with apostle Jorge Tadeu, the flow of books and DVD’s, the typical 
prayer sessions, were all different. This made me more sensitive to the 
emotional importance of language and of a sense of the importance of 
familiarity in sharing faith with others.

When I returned to Calvary Christian Center, I heard simultaneous 
translation in Dutch from the pulpit. I was so deeply touched hearing these 
Dutch words that I had tears in my eyes, although I could understand the 
Portuguese words perfectly well. It was not only the Dutch I was touched by, it 
was also the religious language, which suddenly sounded so familiar. Calvary 
Christian Center seemed to be closer to my own spirituality and theology. Aside 
from my personal sense of relief, in hindsight I was pleased with my chosen 
sequence of churches. Having experienced an unfamiliar Pentecostalism in Igreja 
Maná, I was able to look differently at what must have seemed so familiar in 
Calvary Christian Center.

1.4.6 Research methods: participant observation and in-depth 
interviews

Participant observation is a strategic method in fieldwork used to collect data 
that could not easily be collected in any another way (Russel 2002: 323-364). The advantage of participant observation has to do with the reduction of 
‘reactivity.’ The researcher, to some extent, becomes a member of the group, 
with the consequence that the people being researched become less aware of 
his or her presence. Subjects become less self-consciousness in this process.
Although I was the only white person in Igreja Maná, after a few months, in the eyes of adherents, I had become part of the community and not a visitor anymore. At Calvary Christian Center this process occurred even faster. Through participation I was able to witness situations that normally would not be accessible to outsiders. In order to study church discourses and practices in relation to believers’ daily lives, it was necessary to get involved in private/familial situations.

Furthermore, participation allows the researcher to ask better questions from the perspective of the researched. By participating, I became aware of the unsaid things going on in a specific setting, things needed to obtain a good understanding of the meaning of an observation. This was true of group-settings like Sunday services and family group meetings, but especially true in the family households of those church members whom I visited, because increasingly we entered into a friendly relationship. Of course, in this research there was no opportunity for continuous involvement (ibid.: 390-426), but I did not experience this as being problematic, because adherents also participated within and left the church regularly.

The interviews that I conducted in Igreja Maná proved to be unlike my expectations. I had prepared myself with an interview protocol of interview topics, expecting that my respondents would be stimulated to freely tell their life story. However, from the first interviews I found that I received only ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers, or reactions such as ‘I don’t know anymore,’ or ‘I don’t want to talk about this.’ This observation needs further explanation, and it is given in chapter five. For now it is enough to say that I had to change my interview strategy completely, starting with the ‘here and now’ in the church. Regardless of how hard I tried, I could never completely avoid creating an atmosphere free of any sense of interrogation. In Calvary Christian Center this was not at all the case. There I could follow my interview protocol as I had prepared it and sometimes even felt compelled to re-direct the extensive narratives of my respondents. In chapters five and six, I delve deeply into this difference between the two churches.
1.4.7 The church community as locus for research

Does it make sense to take a church community as the primary locus for a case study of non-western migrant Pentecostalism in the Netherlands? This question is justified for two reasons. First, many Pentecostal migrant churches, as those scholars who have tried to make inventories of them have found, are quite fluid. They arise, move, disappear and reappear somewhere else. Second, the adherents of Pentecostal churches move beyond local church walls, since they take part in and move back and forth within a transnational Pentecostal space, which consists of networks of churches, preachers, prophets and healers.

In the case of Rotterdam, for instance, many adherents of Calvary Christian Center, and several of Igreja Maná, had previously been adherents of Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus. If this church organised a special event, some adherents of Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center returned, in order to profit from the message and ministry offered. When in 2007 Benny Hinn, a famous Pentecostal preacher from the US, gave a conference in Rotterdam, a large number of Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center adherents went to hear his message of healing and victory. Several times, Calvary Christian Center was in contact with the well-known evangelist Morris Cerullo. Hence, the boundaries of a local church as a field of research are not fixed. This is not to say that Pentecostals view faith as an entirely individual matter. For many, the experience of ‘togetherness’ is not confined to a local community. Pentecostal

30 In this respect, the two migrant churches discussed in this study do certainly operate in a competitive religious market (Stark and Finke 2000). At the empirical local level, this in concrete terms means that they compete with other lusophone migrant churches in Rotterdam, who are active within the same ‘brand’ context. During the period of my fieldwork in Calvary Christian Center, I observed competitiveness among leaders who distanced their church from other churches, and discouraged or even prohibited adherents from ‘serving’ other churches. In Igreja Maná, in line with its style of silencing, leaders did not refer to the existence of other churches in Rotterdam at all. This mode of operation raises theoretical implications regarding the future of the pluralist religious environment. How do these churches deal with forces that act to commodify them, or reduce them to the level of a ‘commodity’?
migrant churches have their place in that transnational space, where they aim to win religious seekers.

Having said all that, I still advocate the value of taking the local church as a locus for research, because only in that local place the contextual dynamics between doctrinal discourse, ecclesiastic authority, scripture, structure and boundaries on the one hand and spirit, personal belief, empowerment, bible reading and living one’s faith on the other can be made visible, without playing them off against each other.

1.4.8 Undocumented people as subject of this research

A controversial element of this research is that many of my respondents were without residency documents, or were still in the process of seeking asylum at the time I interviewed them. As a researcher, I wish to provide my insights and information about these people, with the hopeful aspiration that my contribution will help balance out the social political weighting against them and positively contribute to decision making concerning migration and cultural pluralism. Although I intend this research to be as transparent as possible, in the interests of the people from whom I received my information, I guaranteed and respected their anonymity. To maintain the readability of the text, I have given them fictitious names. Furthermore, in order to preserve the integrity of this research project, and my position as a researcher, I felt obliged not to divulge information that might lessen the quality of life of these respondents. In Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, I interviewed twenty people, of whom thirteen were female and seven were male. In Calvary Christian Center, I interviewed twenty people as well, including fourteen females and six males. In both Angola and Brazil, I interviewed ten church adherents.

1.5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have outlined the content of this thesis concerning two Pentecostal migrant churches in the Netherlands. First, I discussed the central terms and theoretical debates, building a theoretical framework for the central research question of the thesis, which I then presented and elaborated on. Next, I described the methods and techniques that I applied in order to find answers
to the questions posed. Interdisciplinary research and qualitative comparison are key elements. In that same section, I paid attention to my ontological and epistemological stance as a PhD student in Anthropology, as a Theologian (MA) and a Pentecostal pastor as well. Finally, it can be said that the keyword for the topic and design of this thesis is ‘complexity.’ As a researcher I have been challenged to get grip on a phenomenon with numerous dimensions and aspects. ‘We are more than conquerors,’ is what my respondents proclaim, standing in the midst of the transnational complexities that they live every day. My aim in writing the following chapters is that this exclamation will be given flesh and bones.
2 Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the nuances of the two churches central to this research project will be introduced. In the first section, I explain how I chose these churches as subjects for my research. Subsequently, a description of both churches will follow, paying attention to their founders, their historical development, the process of their development in the Netherlands, their ecclesiastic structure and the role of women in the church. I also describe Sunday church practices, typical theological characteristics, and finally the missionary impetus of each church. These descriptions are based primarily on information obtained from the churches themselves, such as books, booklets and websites. Secondly, they are derived from interviews with church pastors. Thirdly, they result from my own fieldwork. The final source for these descriptions is external literature.

2.2 The churches chosen for this research project

What were my rationales for choosing Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam? To link in with the Conversion Careers program, which studies Pentecostalism in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, the assignment for this project was to focus on African and Latin American Pentecostal migrant churches. The study of the South-South-movement within Pentecostalism, as in Mozambique, where the influence of Brazilian Pentecostal churches has been studied by Linda van de Kamp (2011), would receive an extra dimension by studying the South-North movement of Pentecostalism. Both Pentecostal churches of this research project are Portuguese speaking and represent a fairly new phenomenon in the diversity of Pentecostal migrant Christianity in the Netherlands.

At the time of the 1996 inventory, due to the strong ‘immigration wave’ of the nineteen seventies and eighties (Jongeneel, Budiman, and Visser 1996: 176-180), a large number of English speaking African churches had emerged,
mainly Ghanaian, some Nigerian. Most were concentrated in Amsterdam, but the larger communities, often retaining a strong relationship to an African Mother church, have expanded towards other large Dutch cities, as later inventories by Van den Broek demonstrate (2005). French speaking African churches were rare, Portuguese speaking Africans and Latin Americans were too small in number to warrant separate analysis (Jongeneel, Budiman, and Visser 1996: 229). Until now, most academic literature on African migrant churches in the Netherlands has been confined to the English, French and Spanish speaking populations (Ter Haar 2001; Van Dijk 2001a, 2002, 2004; Jansen 2004; Jansen 2008; Ter Haar 1992, 1997). I recognised that research on Portuguese speaking Africans, coming from Angola, Mozambique, Guinea and the Cape-Verdean Islands, would broaden the field. Small numbers of these migrants are to be found in the large cities in the Netherlands. Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin Americans live for the most part in Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Jongeneel, Budiman and Visser, 1996, pp. 234-236). Most of the existing limited research had been conducted in Amsterdam, which made Rotterdam a more appropriate location for further research.

By the time of Van den Broek’s latest inventory, Rotterdam had six Portuguese speaking migrant churches (2005: no page numbers). Two years later, Robert Calvert counted eight in the same city (2007: 11; 172). These included:

- Deus é Amor (Brazilians and Portuguese speaking Africans),
- a Portuguese speaking Roman Catholic Parish (mainly Cape Verdean),
- Comunidade Cristã (Portuguese, Brazilian),
- Ministère de Victoire Armée Crétien (Congolese, Angolans; French and Portuguese speaking),
- Calvary Christian Center (Brazilians and Portuguese speaking Africans),
- Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Brazilians and Portuguese speaking Africans)
- Igreja Maná (mainly Angolan),
- Kerk van de Nazarener Rotterdam-Emmaus (Cape Verdean).  

31 The church has a Dutch name, because it takes part in the Dutch ‘Kerk van de Nazarener.’
Five of these are Pentecostal, of which two are African and three Latin American, or more specifically Brazilian. I chose one from each continent: Igreja Maná representing Africa and Calvary Christian Center, representing Latin-America. My practical rationale for this choice was that both had existed for several years, both were part of a larger foreign church and both had enough adherents for an in-depth study. In addition, together they represent two different streams within Pentecostalism, one stemming from a classical Pentecostal denomination (Calvary Christian Center), the other belonging to a new Pentecostal mega-church (Igreja Maná). Both are Portuguese speaking and shared the same former colonial ruler.

2.3 Igreja Maná

2.3.1 The founder: Jorge Tadeu

Jorge Tadeu was born in 1949 to a Portuguese Roman Catholic family (Krol 1997: 155), which lived in Nampula, Mozambique, and moved to the capital city, Maputo, when he was two months old. Tadeu grew up in Maputo, became a civil engineer and worked at the Civil Architectural Laboratory, owned by Lourenço Marques. He married Maria Manuela Silva Amaral. Because of the political instability of Mozambique after independence, in 1975 the couple moved to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Tadeu converted to Pentecostal Christianity, attended a Rhema church and studied at the Rhema Bible Training Centre in Johannesburg, which is affiliated with the Word of Faith Movement. At that time, South African society was still formally living under the policy of apartheid. The Rhema church and Bible Training Centre in Johannesburg were known advocates of apartheid and as supporters of the white leadership of the country. This was not so much based on a natural order theology, but rather related to its prosperity theology,

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32 Most information about Jorge Tadeu is based on the Family Group Manual of Igreja Maná, and an article by Nuno Guerreiro in the Portuguese journal VISÃO.

33 The Word of Faith movement originated in the United States under the leadership of the founding fathers and mother Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth and Gloria Copeland (Perriman 2003).
which considers power and wealth a biblical blessing. According to Vinson Synon, ‘Rhema is the best known for its strident preaching of the gospel of prosperity, which certainly has a political role in South Africa, diverting attention from the system [of apartheid] which disproportionately favours the Whites, and telling good Christian Whites that faith will bring them even more wealth’ (1997 [1991]: 36; cited by Czeglédy 2008: 289). Nevertheless, after 1991, Ray McCauley, initiator of Rhema in Johannesburg, openly apologised for never having opposed the injustice of the apartheid system and started to support the new government led by the African National Congress, although his own church organisation did not succeed in creating a truly integrated church community of blacks and whites (Balcomb 2004: 17-19). Without question, however, Jorge Tadeu’s Christian convictions must have been formed in a pro-apartheid context.

In 1982 Tadeu and his wife moved to Lisbon, Portugal and started the Maná church in 1984, while he still was an engineer, working at the company Construções Técnicas SA. After two years Tadeu became a fulltime pastor. At the end of 1988, Tadeu divorced his wife, who had been one of the co-founders of the church. According to the Portuguese reporter Nuno Guerreiro of the Portuguese Journal VISÃO, who investigated Igreja Maná in 1994, their marriage had come under pressure because of Tadeu’s changing church policy.34 His two oldest children, Ricardo and Tania, stayed with him, while his youngest daughter Ana stayed with her mother. Currently Ricardo and Tania work in the church as bishops. In 1989 Tadeu was invited to visit by some pastors of the Dutch Rafael church, a small Pentecostal Denomination. During this visit, in the house of pastor Krale, one of the pastors of this church, Tadeu met Krale’s daughter Christel, whom he married in June 1990. One of the strategies of the founder of Igreja Maná is his writing and publishing of books and manuals meant to educate the church members.35 Nowadays he is called the Apostle of the church.

34 ‘Manna.’ Nuno Guerreiro. Journal article translated into Dutch and distributed by the Werkgroep Terug naar de Bijbel, a group of Dutch theologians, who critically comment on new movements within Christianity. www.terugnaardebijbel.nl. I tried to get in contact with the reporter during the period of my fieldwork, but I did not succeed.

35 Tadeu’s earliest books are Cura Divina (Divine Healing), Quem somos em Christo? (Who Are We in Christ?), Origem dos Problemas (The Origin of Problems), Manual Grupo Familiar (Manual for Family Groups). Tadeu also immediately started recording church services on VHS and audio cassette.
He is the absolute leader at the top of its strongly hierarchical structure (see below 2.3.6).

2.3.2 History

Igreja Maná is a large international Pentecostal church. Its headquarters are in Lisbon, Portugal, where the mother church is located as well. Initially, the church remained small. Tadeu hired an office building in Brancamp (a neighbourhood of Lisbon), where he began by offering pastoral care and teaching to people after they finished work each day. After a while, he started Sunday celebrations in an amphitheatre in the same area, but soon had to move to a larger place. This happened several times. The church bought its first building at the Praça de Espanha in Lisbon, with 750 seats, and subsequently opened another church, in the Alvalade area, with 2000 seats. During the time of my fieldwork, which lasted from May 2006 until September 2007, the church claimed to have over ninety local churches in Portugal and over 200,000 adherents. It did not grow this quickly without conflict. As I mentioned earlier, in 1994, Nuno Guerreiro investigated the church, which by then had twenty-seven local churches. His critical article, which was founded on internal documents of the church and interviews with current and ex-pastors of the church, focused on theological doctrines and especially on the financial policies of the church. Alleged financial irregularities were said to have caused troubles with the Bank of Portugal (*Banco de Portugal*). From the outset, the church began to grow in Portugal, but soon its development surpassed the frontiers of Portugal and Europe.

2.3.3 Igreja Maná in Angola

In Angola, Igreja Maná emerged in 1988, as a result of Angolan migrants in Portugal sending videotapes from the church to their relatives in Angola. The church emerged at first in the capital Luanda, where it got hold of a large terrain. A huge temple with over 15000 seats is still in a building process. Some respondents in Rotterdam told me that the church had received the plot from the government. According to the online newspaper Ango Notícias, there is a relationship between Igreja Maná and the Angolan authorities, which seems to have its ups and downs. In 2004, Igreja Maná and the political party MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*), the dominant party in the
government, declared a partnership intended to solve the social problems in Luanda. In the same period, the provincial government of Uíge (a Southern province of Angola) put a piece of land at the disposal of Igreja Maná for the construction of a school and a medical service point. Yet, when an army general, who was also a local governor, terminated the rental contract of a building that Igreja Maná rented in one of the eastern provinces of Angola, the national Bishop exhorted all church adherents to pray against the life of this general, whom they accused of nipping the expansion of the Gospel in the bud.

On its website, the church claimed to have over 800 local churches in Angola. The same number of churches were listed as existing in all Angolan news articles about Igreja Maná. In 2008 however, the Angolan government forced Igreja Maná in Angola to separate from the Portuguese mother church, because of a money scandal that had started in 2006. The National Bishop of Igreja Maná had received one million dollars from Sonangol, the powerful oil company in Angola, which is said to have strong ties with the government.

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36 www.angonoticias.com ‘MPLA e Igreja Maná estabelecem parceria para resolução dos problemas de Luanda.’ 11 May 2004. (MPLA and Igreja Maná put their hands together in order to solve the problems in Luanda.)

37 www.angonoticias.com ‘Uíge: Igreja Maná vai trabalhar com Governo no domínio social.’ 9 August 2005. (Uíge: Igreja Maná will collaborate with the government in the social domain.)

38 www.angonoticias.com ‘Igreja Maná quer matar general do exército.’ 27 sept, 2006 (Igreja Maná wants to kill an army general)

39 www.igrejamana.com this part of the website is under revision at the moment.


41 Sociedade Nacional de Combustíveis de Angola (Sonangol). Established in 1976 as the national oil company of Angola. Fully owned by the state and serves as the business arm
From the moment Jorge Tadeu heard about this, he ordered the National Bishop of Angola to send the whole sum to Lisbon. The National Bishop refused, arguing that this money was intended for Angola and not for Portugal. As a consequence, Tadeu suspended this National Bishop and his friends and started a legal case against Sonangol in order to claim the money. In reaction, the Angolan government refused Tadeu a visa when he intended to travel in order to lead the Angolan Maná Conference in May 2007 (which I attended during my stay in Angola). Eventually, the Angolan Department of Justice forbade the Angolan Igreja Maná Church to continue to work with the Portuguese Church, on charges of violating the law and the public order. In order to regain its formal recognition, the Angolan church decided to split off, and chose a new name: Arca de Noé. Since 2009, Tadeu has relaunched the church in Angola under another name: Igreja Josafat. By the time of the developments of 2008 of the Angolan government. Sonangol is the sole concessionaire for oil exploration and production in Angola. www.submitreports.com/angola/sonangol/html

42 Nuno Guerreiro’s article reports a comparative event in 1992, when Tadeu accused the Angolan pastor António Lameira in Luanda of misappropriation. This accusation and the subsequent media-offensive almost led to closure of Igreja Maná in Angola by Francisco Lisboa Santo of the Governmental Department of Religious Affairs.


45 www.angonoticias.com Ministério da Justiça revoga reconhecimento da Igreja Maná Cristã. 31 January, 2008. (The Department of Justice revokes recognition of Igreja Maná Cristã) Igreja Maná deve separar-se do Apostolo Jorge Tadeu. 18 February, 2008. (Igreja Maná will have to separate from Jorde Tadeu) Feis da Igreja Maná podem pedir novo reconhesimento – ministro da Justiça. 29 February, 2008. (Believers of Igreja Maná may apply for new recognition – Department of Justice)

46 www.angonoticias.com Arca de Noé não é a solução. 16 June, 2008. (Arca de Noé is not the solution)

47 http://www.opais.net/pt: Maná ‘ressuscita’ como Igreja Josafat. (Maná rises again as Igreja Josafat)
and 2009, I had already finished my fieldwork in Igreja Maná, but still followed the local news in Angola.  

2.3.4  Igreja Maná in the Netherlands

In the early nineties, Jorge Tadeu attempted to start a Dutch Maná church, when, due to his missionary elan in Eastern Europe- attracted the attention of a few leaders of the Dutch Rafael church. In 1989 they had invited him to their church in order to let him share his ideas about Pentecostal churches. In 1991, a few people left Rafael in order to start a Dutch Maná church, under Tadeu’s leadership. Tadeu bought a house in Gorinchem and turned it into the headquarters for all European churches outside Portugal. In 1996, however, the Dutch Maná church had already closed its doors, because of an ongoing exodus of members. According to the then European leader, a Dutchman, the church was too business-like and lacked the pastoral warmth Dutch Christians are in need of. It is said that the death of a female member, who suffered from breast cancer, caused the exit of many members (Krol 1997: 158). Tadeu transferred the headquarters of European churches to Lisbon and sold the house in Gorinchem. In the same period, a group of Portuguese adherents started an Igreja Maná church in Amsterdam, which still exists.

In the meantime, large numbers of Angolans had passed through Dutch borders. Many of them ended up in Rotterdam. There, the first Angolan community of Igreja Maná opened its doors in 1996, when a number of Angolans and some Cape-Verdeans, members of this church in their home

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48 In 2008 I had the opportunity to ask some Angolan members of Igreja Maná in Rotterdam how they felt about the conflict between the church in Angola and the apostle Jorge Tadeu. On March 13, 2008, I visited the newly wed pastor João and his wife in Rotterdam. I asked them and the relatives who were in their house how they felt about the conflict. In fact, they reacted in quite a relaxed manner: ‘it is the devil who attacks the church. These things happen.’ When I asked: ‘but how about all those brothers and sisters who have lost their church in Angola?’, the reaction was: ‘Well, they just have to go to another church, which talks about Jesus, until the problems are solved. We at best not to make a big deal of it.’

49 Interview with a Dutch ex-co-worker of Jorge Tadeu in Igreja Maná, February 7, 2007.
country, started to organise church services, first in a private house and later in a building near the central railway station.

During the first period services were informal, without much involvement by Jorge Tadeu, except the fact that he sent a young Portuguese couple, Miguel and Cristina Monteiro, as pioneers to the Netherlands with an assignment ‘to build’ new churches. Miguel Monteiro later became the national bishop of Igreja Maná in the Netherlands. Igreja Maná Rotterdam grew quickly and more than once had to look for larger housing. Angolans became the major population from the moment that reunions were held on Sunday. In 2003, Igreja Maná Rotterdam rented the church building of a Presbyterian church in Rotterdam. In June 2006, right after the start of my fieldwork, the church was forced to find another place for its services, which it found in one of the Seventh Day Adventist church buildings in Rotterdam.  

2.3.5 Igreja Maná in Rotterdam

During the time I undertook most of my fieldwork in Igreja Maná, a young Angolan, then 21 years old, who I call João, was the pastor of the congregation in Rotterdam. On 15 November 2005, during my first interview with him, he gave me a general background of the church. More than ninety per cent of the adherents were under forty years. Over eighty per cent came from Angola, others came from Spain, Mozambique, Cape Verdean Islands, St. Domingo and Portugal. The church did not register visitors. About forty per cent of the visitors were fulltime students and student-employees, either unmarried or with families. Thirty per cent were employed and thirty per cent unemployed, some with and others without social benefits. Visitors were encouraged to attend introductory courses and family-group meetings. Pastor João said that he was convinced that a majority of the members had converted to Pentecostal Christianity in this church and that a minority were already members of Igreja

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50 In order to guarantee the privacy of the Presbyterian church, its name will not be published. In chapter three, the conflict case behind this event is analysed, based on confidential information provided by the pastor of this church, on condition that his privacy be respected.

51 In this research, all respondents of the local church have been given fictitious names in order to guarantee their anonymity.
Maná in their home country. Based on my interviews I support this estimate. All of my respondents claimed to have had a non-Pentecostal Christian background, most of them Roman Catholic, some Baptist or Methodist. The language of instruction is Portuguese. Visitors who do not speak Portuguese receive simultaneous translation through one of the members.

Although the church regularly attracted new converts, it lost many believers as well, due to their (mostly forced) return to Angola, or due to waning enthusiasm for church practices and doctrines. In spite of these fluctuations there was, however, a strong core group of believers that attended the church from the beginning or at least for the past five years. During my fieldwork in 2006 and 2007, the weekly Sunday reunion was attended by more or less a one hundred believers, while in 2004 the average number was 160 (Hoekema and van Laar 2004: 41). With this number it had become the largest Maná church in the Netherlands. The average age within the church community is similar to the general population data about Angolans in the Netherlands. Fifty-four per cent were under the age of eighteen in 2002 (IOM 2002: 19). Many believers are young and single, between sixteen and twenty-two years old. There are many young families with small children. The social and political circumstances of the visitors, however, seem to differ to some extent. The percentage of believers that eventually received a residency permit seems larger than the general average of twenty per cent of Angolans in the Netherlands (IMES 2006: 22).\(^\text{52}\)

Regardless, the believers of this church do form a mix of:

- young and single people who have the opportunity to study and build a life in the Netherlands,
- those who still have to wait for an outcome from the visa procedure,
- those who have been rejected and now live as illegal immigrants,
- families that have a rather established life with children at school,
- families that have lived in the Netherlands for over thirteen years, still have no residency permit, whose children go to school temporarily, but

\(^{52}\) My personal assessment based on interviews with the local pastor and twenty adherents. The nationwide average of twenty per cent: Of 11521 asylum applications, 2222 were accepted.
who will have no permit to work or study from the moment they reach the age of eighteen.

2.3.6 Ecclesiological structure

The Igreja Maná website states that the structure of the church is based on a passage in the bible, namely I Corinthians 12, and that the church consists of the following basic hierarchy.\(^{53}\)

- Brethren, people who go to church, but as yet do not serve God,
- Deacons, people who go to church and serve God as musicians, stewards, Sunday school workers, bookkeepers, Family Group Leaders, and booksellers,
- Elders, who are directors of departments within a local church,
- Pastors, who are classified into grades of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 depending on their position: a grade 1 pastor leads a small community, and does all the work to be done, or is in traineeship. A grade 2 pastor leads a church where several deacons are appointed and Family Groups are in development. A grade 3 pastor leads a larger church with elders and deacons and develops other church communities. Pastors of grade 4 and 5 are bishops,
- Continental, National and Regional Bishops, who supervise nations and regions respectively, who are classified into grades 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 in accordance with their level,

\(^{53}\) As said, this information is to be found on the website of Igreja Maná www.igrejamaná.com, but is also written down in the Manual of the Family Groups, which is one of the basic manuals of the church (Tadeu n.d.f.: 200-202). I Corinthians 12: 26-30: Together you are the body of Christ. Each one of you is part of his body. First, God chose some people to be apostles and prophets and teachers for the church. But he also chose some to work miracles or heal the sick or help others or be leaders or speak different kinds of languages. Not everyone is an apostle. Not everyone is a prophet. Not everyone is a teacher. Not everyone can work miracles. Not everyone can heal the sick. Not everyone can speak different kinds of languages. Not everyone can tell what these languages mean.
• One Apostle, who starts churches, establishes the leadership and supervises.

In his book ‘Prédio Espiritual. Como construir?’ Jorge Tadeu builds his church vision on a different image than the Body of Christ in I Corinthians 12. There he develops the principles needed for the construction of a building. In his view, the pastors are the pillars of the building, the elders and deacons are the rafters. The ‘brethren’ are the bricks, according to the image of the living stones in the first letter of Peter in the New Testament (n.d.c.: 11-12). According to this image, a pastor who wants to lead a church without elders and deacons, creates a weak construction. Leadership is the secret of the growth of the church of Jesus Christ (ibid.: 12). Based on this model, it might be said that Igreja Maná has an episcopalian church structure, propagating one-man leadership.

Besides the highly hierarchical organisation of local, regional, and national church communities, Igreja Maná has special international departments, located in Lisbon, the headquarters of the church. It has an education department, which consists of a bible school, a ministry school, a training centre, and a ministry academy. The department of communication and media runs the satellite broadcast called ManaSat. In many countries the church has programs for Radio and TV which can be followed via satellite. The publishing department publishes books, courses, CD’s, cassettes and videos. The internet department takes care of the church website. The civil engineering department builds the large church buildings of igreja Maná. The music department produces CD’s for gospel groups. The travel department organises travel for international church leaders (the church owns an aeroplane to transport its leadership all over the world).

In addition, the church has a computer assembly department, a youth and children’s department, a campaign department, and finally a businessmen’s department that ‘aims to pastor businessmen at their level and in an environment that they are familiar with’ (Tadeu n.d.f.: 211).

2.3.7 The local church structure

In Rotterdam, João was a pastor grade 3, according to the website of Igreja Maná where the names of all leaders and workers were listed alongside their position in the church. Since the Angolan Igreja Maná separated from Jorge
Tadeu, this page of the website, called ‘leadership’ (liderança), is under revision. As said, a pastor with grade 3 is considered to be able to lead a church that is large enough to have different departments, led by elders (Tadeu n.d.f.: 202). A full local church is made up of at least the following departments:

- worship (departamento de louvor)
- stewards (departamento de assistentes)
- youth (departamento de jovens)
- family groups (departamento de grupos familiares)
- children (departamento de crianças)

Elders (presbíteros) are the directors of these departments, where deacons (diáconos) work as either stewards (assistentes), worship group singers/musicians, Sunday school workers (Igreja infantil), or co-leaders or leaders of family groups (ibid.: 200).

2.3.8 The role of women in Igreja Maná

Jorge Tadeu’s teaching concerning the relationship between husband and wife is that the husband is the head of the household. His wife is subordinated to his leadership and must serve and obey him.\(^{54}\) During the period of my fieldwork a lot of attention was paid to these marital issues. In 2006, Tadeu’s wife Christel published a DVD course about marital and family issues, in which she confirms and elaborates on this hierarchical gender relationship, based on the principle of ‘the bank of love.’ \(^{55}\) A loving attitude towards a spouse increases the bank account of love, bad behaviour decreases it. The elaboration of what constitutes ‘loving behaviour’ shows a romantic role model for the husband and wife. A husband should bring home flowers and chocolates, and buy beautiful clothes for his wife. A female loving attitude consists of a happy face when the husband returns from his work, good cooking, a clean house and well-behaved children.

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\(^{54}\) This gender issue within Pentecostal and broader evangelical circles has been subject of study for several social scientists. (See for instance (Brusco 1995; Deno 2004; Griffith 2000)

\(^{55}\) DVD Familia I: Casamento. Familia II: Tarefas do Casal. Familia III: Relacionamentos no Casamento. (Family :. Marriage. Family II: Tasks of the Married Couple. Family III: relation issues in Marriage)
While the DVD’s were promoted during the Sunday services in October 2006, their subject matter was implemented in a series of sermons. In spring 2007, these sermons were repeated over several Sundays.

Interestingly, this articulation of the subordinate position of women in the family was not followed in the articulation of female roles within the church. For women it was possible to obtain leadership positions, such as elders and pastors. Family group meetings were generally led by women. During Sunday services I saw women on the pulpit, giving instructions or delivering sermons. In Luanda, I visited a Thursday evening meeting (Reunião de 5ª Feira), a weekly meeting that was obligatory for all workers in the church, where female leaders preached and led prayer. In chapter seven I deal with questions of leadership and power in the two churches, where the role of women explicitly comes to the fore.

2.3.9 The Igreja Maná church service

During my fieldwork in Igreja Maná, I soon discovered that all church services, whether a Sunday Service, a Family Group service, or the annual World Conference in Lisbon, responded to a strict format, which ran as follows. The service started with a number of up-tempo songs, initiated by a worship band, which invited the congregation to join in by standing, clapping, shouting and dancing. After this, the pastor or leader made the announcements for that

56 Besides the fact that in Igreja Maná female leadership is accepted, in Rotterdam the leadership is also strikingly young. As previously stated, the local pastor was twenty years old when he was ordained. Elders are mainly young couples in their twenties, significantly younger than the small group of older male and female adherents. This goes against what in Angola, and in most African societies, is considered to be acceptable. However, in an interview with a representative of the Angolan lobby group, Mãos Livres (Free Hands), it was mentioned that young Angolan politicians struggled with the unassailable position of older leaders (Fieldnotes Luanda, April  29, 2007). The church community in Rotterdam is too small to draw general conclusions for now. Future research should address how age is or isn’t implicated in leadership matters, when today’s young Angolans have grown older and new generations have emerged. My sense is that the lively ongoing interaction with Angola and Angolan cultural notions will continue.
service, which always consisted of book recommendations, recommendations for CDs and DVDs, all written and recorded by Jorge Tadeu. Sometimes announcements extended to an exhortation to attend Family Groups, and the announcement of upcoming events like baptisms, crusades, etc. Sometimes, the announcements also included a new assignment for the congregation, such as evangelism, accompanied by the distribution of leaflets among the adherents.

After the announcements, the pastor generally gave a small lesson about ‘walking in love’ (andar em amor), after which the worship band played and sang a song about walking in love. During this song, the members of the congregation embraced each other, saying: ‘I love you with the love of our Lord’ (te amo com o amor do nosso Senhor). This was followed by a broadcast from Jorge Tadeu from his church in Lisbon, containing a brief message, a forecast of his apostolic travels, and a few testimonies about divine healing and prosperity, read out by a female assistant. This broadcast took about ten to twelve minutes. Following this, the pastor or leader gave a small lesson about the principle of sowing and harvesting, after which the congregation was invited to come forward and give offerings, while the worship band played and sang a song about tithing and sowing. Next the congregation sang a number of worship songs, uttering emotional exclamations.

The sermon followed, after which there was time for ministry, with musical accompaniment by the worship band. The adherents came forward at the invitation of the pastor or leader. Several stewards stood behind them with light blue blankets, with which they covered the people who fell down after the pastor’s hand touched them. At the end of this time of ministry, the pastor declared that salvation is the greatest miracle of all and invited the congregation to come forward in order to give one’s life to Jesus (entregar a vida para Jesus). This invitation was always followed by a collective sinners’ prayer, irrespective of whether there were converts present or not.\(^{57}\) Finally, the pastor declared the

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\(^{57}\) A sinner’s prayer is a prayer that makes someone a new convert. The term is well known in evangelical and charismatic circles, and has a more or less fixed content, consisting of:

- a confession of sorrow for sins committed,
- an expression of faith in Jesus’ sacrifice at the cross as a payment for these sins,
- an expression of willingness to give one’s life to Jesus.
Sunday service finished. There was no blessing formula. All these different stages were interspersed with interactive prayer sessions, led by the pastor or the leader of that particular Sunday.

2.3.10 Theological emphases

Both Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center include in their creeds many elements of the traditional Apostolic Creed: Trinity, sin of man, salvation and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, the second coming of Christ, final judgment, resurrection, eternal life/eternal punishment. In addition, they both include typical elements of Pentecostal belief, such as baptism in the Holy Spirit, Spiritual Gifts, and the infallibility of Scripture. In the faith declaration on Igreja Maná’s website, Jorge Tadeu’s theological education in Johannesburg is described. Here the characteristics of a Word of Faith theology, especially concerning health and prosperity, are made clear:

Health:

‘It is the Will of God to cure people today and always, whether they are saved or not, from all types of illnesses. We believe that, with faith in the Promise of God, it is possible to receive healing for physical and psychological ailments and to remain in good health. We believe that no one is able to impose upon another a measure of faith that that person does not already have, and therefore we would never hinder anyone wishing to consult a qualified doctor or go to a hospital, or hinder someone wishing to take any prescribed medicine. Divine healing is manifested through the word of faith, by the laying on of hands or through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and has been made available by the sacrifice of Jesus and is the right of every Christian today. (James.5:15-16; Mark 16:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:17; 1st Peter 2:24; Psalm 103:3; Psalm 107:20).’

Prosperity:

‘At Calvary, Jesus was our substitute in everything. He himself became poor so that in exchange we can be prosperous. We believe and practice the Laws of Prosperity by honouring God with our Tithes and Offerings. (Malachi 3:1-12; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Proverbs 3:9-10; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11).’

58 www.igrejamaná.com/english/faithdeclaration
Besides these characteristic creeds, Igreja Maná has a specific article about the universality of the Church, and an article about false prophets.

2.3.11 Missionary impetus

One of the characteristics of Igreja Maná is its expansionist policy, focused initially on the Portuguese speaking population all over the world (Tadeu n.d.e.: 17). However, at the annual world conference in Lisbon, 2006, Jorge Tadeu exposed a missionary vision for ‘all heathens in the world,’ charging his followers with the task of learning the vernacular languages of the places where they live, ‘as Paul became Greek with the Greek.’ In November 2005, when I met the national nishop of Igreja Maná, Miguel Monteiro, in his office in Amsterdam, I saw a map of the Netherlands on the wall, with drawing pins on every city where Igreja Maná had opened its doors. ‘We want to convert all Dutch people. Holland for Jesus (Holanda para Jesus!),’ exclaimed the bishop, when I asked him about the map. Like other transnational Pentecostal churches, such as the Nigerian RCCG (Redeemed Christian Church of God), Igreja Maná applies geographical strategies in order to win new converts (cf. Knibbe 2010). The first and most important strategy for ‘planting’ new churches is the Family Group (see Appendix B at the end of this book), a locus and canal intended for potential converts. National evangelising activities, called ‘miracle crusades’ (cruzadas milagres), are a second strategy for attracting new followers. Since the mid 1990s the church has opened its doors in fourteen Dutch cities, spread over the central and northern parts of the country. Several of these have subsequently closed because of decline in membership. The reason for this decline has not become apparent and was never discussed in the church. At the time of my fieldwork, Igreja Maná had local churches in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Dordrecht, Utrecht, and Zwolle, as well as Almelo, Leeuwarden, and Almere.

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59 RCCG: One of the largest Nigerian Pentecostal Churches, which has several local churches in the Netherlands.
2.4 Calvary Christian Center

2.4.1 The Founders, Elizabete and Bernard Berens

In 1970 Elizabete, a Brazilian woman who lived in Rio de Janeiro, met her future husband Bernard Berens, a Dutch ship mechanic, who had travelled to Brazil a few years before and worked on a dredger. They moved to São Sebastião, where Bernard worked for Petrobras, a Brazilian oil company. In 1973, when Bernard was in South Africa on a temporary job, Elizabete converted to Pentecostalism in an Assembléia de Deus church. When Bernard returned from South Africa, he refused to be converted as well, because he did not agree with some of the rules of the church, such as the prohibition of adultery and alcohol. In 1974, after their first child was born, they got married. They lived for a short period in the state of Bahia, and then moved to Belo Horizonte, where they lived for many years. Elizabete continued to go to the Assembléia de Deus church, although Bernard strongly opposed to her dedication to the church.

In 1981, Bernard worked for a few weeks in Vila Redonda, and one Wednesday he passed an Assembléia de Deus church. The church was holding a party outside the building, celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. ‘Look, this is the church of my wife,’ he told his colleagues. The people of the church invited them in, but Bernard responded: ‘no thanks, my wife is a believer (uma crente), that’s enough for me.’ The next Sunday he passed the church again and decided to attend the church service. When the pastor asked who would like to give his life to Jesus, Bernard felt a power that kept him on his chair, hence nothing happened that day. The next Wednesday he went to the church once again, and when the pastor, as is usual, asked who would like to give his life to Jesus, Bernard tore himself away from the chair, walked forwards and fell down before the pulpit, crying. Two days later he returned to Belo Horizonte and started to attend the Assembléia de Deus church with his wife.

In 1989 Bernard and Elizabete moved to Salvador, the capital city of Bahia, where Bernard worked for a dredge company. He started a children’s

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60 The life story of the founders is based on notes from several interviews with both of them, taken during my stay in their house in Medeiros Netos in Bahia, 14-17 October, 2008.
project in one of the slums (favelas) in the city. Elizabete worked as a supervisor of the Sunday school in one of the local Assembléia de Deus churches. In that year, a Dutchman, a member of one of the independent Dutch Pentecostal churches, came over to Salvador to help with the children’s project. He stayed in the Berens’s house for four months. In the meantime, one of the church elders had delivered a prophecy about Bernard’s life: ‘God sends you to Holland to do great work there.’ The Dutchman proposed that Bernard return with him to the Netherlands, which Bernard did in September 1990. He went ‘impetuously,’ as Bernard put it.

In the Netherlands, Bernard ended up in Rotterdam, without housing, work or money. He remembered that one day he stood in front of the Central Railway Station in Rotterdam, asking: ‘My God, what am I doing here?.’ Bernard was 50 years old at that time. Elizabete, who could not bear the thought of her husband being alone in the Netherlands, decided to sell their house and furniture in Salvador and take a flight to the Netherlands, together with their four children. She arrived in February 1991. They asked Bernard’s parents and brother for help. Their two eldest sons went to live in Bernard’s brother’s house; the couple and their daughter and youngest son stayed in Bernard’s parental home. They lived like that until they found a house in Rotterdam in 1993. It was a very difficult period, in which they suffered from separation from their children, poverty, hunger and feelings of disdain of their personal living environment.

From 1991 until the beginning of 1993. Bernard and Elizabete attended a Dutch Pentecostal church ‘Kom en Zie.’ Elizabete started to evangelise in the streets of Rotterdam, near the Central Railway Station and at the square ‘Marconiplein.’ Although she was treated ungenerously and sometimes even violently by the people she tried to convert, she continued. She also went to school in order to learn Dutch. There she met other migrants, to whom she preached the gospel as well. At the end of 1992, Elizabete heard about a conference of the Spanish Pentecostal church ‘Philadelphia de Apocalipse’ in Amsterdam, where Rubin Luiz was the head pastor. She went there and tried to contact him, but he refused to talk to her. Elizabete told me, that he changed his mind when he received a message from God telling him that he should listen to
what she had to say. Soon afterwards, under his leadership, Elizabete started organising church meetings in their private home.

2.4.2 History of Calvary Christian Center

Their first adherents, students of the language school that Elizabete attended, came from a large variety of countries, including Russia, China, Japan, Romania, Turkey, Brazil and Nigeria. Gradually, the population was transformed into a majority of Portuguese speaking people. After six months, they started to rent a room in a community centre. Soon, they moved to a monastery, owned by friars of an order named ‘Fraters van Maastricht’ (Friars of Maastricht). From there they moved to a larger place, called ‘Pier 80,’ after which they rented a place in the Coolhaven neighbourhood. There, Bernard built a baptismal font. Finally they moved into their current building at the Montaubanstraat, a former garage.

At the end of 1993, Bernard and Elizabete separated from the Spanish Pentecostal church Philadelphia de Apocalypye, after several conflicts with them. They decided to get in contact with the Assembléia de Deus church in Belo Horizonte, having been members for a long time, in order to receive formal recognition. It all worked out. Initially, Bernard was ordained as an elder by the church in Belo Horizonte. In December 1994, he became the official pastor of the church in Rotterdam. For ten years, Bernard and Elizabete led this local church, which they gave the name Calvary Christian Center. This name is based on a message Bernard Berens received from a co-worker of Morris Cerullo, who was having a revival campaign in the Netherlands at the time. He told Berens that God wanted the church to have this name, because Calvary was the place where God had waged his ultimate war.

In 2004, Bernard and Elizabete returned to Bahia in Brazil, where Elizabete took care of her aged mother. They left the church in the hands of a Brazilian Pastor, who, at their request, was sent from Belo Horizonte. He acted as a coach for their youngest son, who was expected to succeed his father as the pastor of this church.

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61 Based on interviews with the founders, their son and adherents of the church.

62 Morris Cerullo is a well known American Pentecostal evangelist, who held many campaigns in Europe as well as in Africa (see Schaefer 1999, 2002).
In 2006, this Brazilian pastor was expelled from the Netherlands when his temporary residence permit had expired. His departure from the church brought about an exodus of many adherents. The mother church in Belo Horizonte twice sent new pastors to re-establish the church. The second of them, pastor Celso, is still the Pastor President of the church, while Bernard and Elizabete Berens’ youngest son, John, has been ordained as the evangelist. During the course of my fieldwork, which lasted from September 2007 until December 2008, the church had on average one hundred visitors each Sunday. It is the only Assembléia de Deus church in the Netherlands that is affiliated with the church in Belo Horizonte. According to my estimates during my fieldwork, the population in the church was roughly sixty per cent Brazilian, thirty per cent African (Angolans, Mozambicans, Cape Verdeans) and ten per cent others (Colombians, Indonesians, Dutch).

In 2008, the church leaders made a few attempts to register their adherents as members, but many of them appeared reluctant to hand over their addresses and telephone numbers for fear of the Dutch immigration authorities. As in Igreja Maná, in this church many adherents did not have residence papers and lived their life outside of formal Dutch society. In Calvary Christian Center the average age of adherents is higher than in Igreja Maná, for the most part due to the presence of a large group of older Brazilian and Cape Verdean women.

2.4.3 **History of Assembléia De Deus in Minas Gerais, Brazil**

The Assembléia de Deus church in Brazil has a long history, which started in 1911, one year after the arrival of two Swedish Baptist missionaries, Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren, in the city of Belém in the state of Pará. Before coming to Brazil, they both independently had experienced Baptism in the Holy Spirit, while speaking in tongues, and had met each other in 1909 in Chicago, where

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63 This historical overview is based on Alan Anderson’s summary (Anderson 2004: 71-72) and an internal historical account, published by the CAPD, publishing house of the Assembléia de Deus (Oliveira 1997).

64 One of the central traits of the Pentecostal Movement. In the classical mainstream of the movement this ‘speaking in tongues’ experience is viewed as the initial evidence of
they attended a conference. During this conference, a Pentecostal believer told them that he had seen them in a dream, in which they went together to a place with the name Pará. Soon, they found out that this place was a Brazilian state. Accepting this message as a divine calling, they went to Brazil together.

In Belém they were welcomed and sheltered by a Baptist pastor, who was Swedish. For a year, Berg and Vingren prayed and worked in the Baptist church, led by the Swedish pastor. The internal records of the Assembléia de Deus detail the first Baptism in the Holy Spirit, of a Brazilian woman, named Celina Albuquerque. Earlier in the same week, she had been healed of cancer of the face, which was experienced as a divine manifestation. Celina Albuquerque is considered to have been one of the pioneers of the Assembléia de Deus in Brazil.

In June 1911, Vingren and Berg were expelled from the Baptist church, because the Swedish pastor could not agree with their doctrines. With eighteen followers, they started their own church in Celina Albuquerque’s house, named Apostolic Faith Mission (Missão de Fé Apostólica), of which Vingren became the pastor. In 1918 Vingren proposed changing the name of the church, following the Americans who had adopted the name ‘Assemblies of God.’ In the same year, the church was registered officially as ‘Assembléia de Deus,’ but without any external affiliation. As early as 1913, the first missionary was sent to Portugal, where the Assembléia de Deus denomination officially started in 1924.

In 1927, the Assembléia de Deus had congregations in five more states of Brazil: Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco. In 1930 the church’s headquarters moved to the then Federal Capital city, Rio de Janeiro. In that year, the first General Convention of the Assembléias de Deus, including all states of Brazil where the church already existed, took place in Natal, where Vingren handed over the leadership of the whole Assembléia de Deus church to Brazilians. Over the following decades, the church spread to all states of Brazil, initially attracting members from the lower classes, with a concentration of black, Amerindian and mulatto people.

being baptised in the Holy Spirit. Both the Assembléia de Deus church and Igreja Maná hold on to this practice and particular doctrine.
Clímaco Bueno Aza, who in 1913 had converted into the church in Belém, travelled to Belo Horizonte as a missionary. In 1927, the first church meeting took place in his private house. With the help of two Swedish missionaries, Nils Kastberg and later, Algot Svensson, the church grew and within a few years it had several local communities, such as in Venda Nova and Santa Efigênia. In 1958, Svensson died, and co-pastor Anselmo Silvestre took over the leadership of the mother church in Belo Horizonte, which in the meantime had built a large temple in the city. Under Silvestre’s leadership, the church expanded through the whole State of Minas Gerais, and now claims to have over 1600 local churches, over 120 000 members and over 4000 ministers (pastors, elders, deacons and evangelists). Anselmo Silvestre still is the head pastor (Pastor Presidente) of the Assembléia de Deus church in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.

The affiliation of Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam with the Assembléia de Deus Church in Belo Horizonte is characterised as a mission relationship, meaning that Calvary Christian Center is a mission church, classified under the mission department of Belo Horizonte. Calvary Christian Center is an Assembléia de Deus church, insofar as it declares that it is in its recently published constitution, which is based on the Assembléia de Deus model. Besides that, its church organisation and church services are similar to

65 See the website: www.templocentral.com.br/
66 ccc-assembleia.com/Estatuto da Igreja Art. 3º: Calvary Christian Center in the Netherlands has an agreement on spiritual principles, which it practices and confesses, and shares rules of faith and doctrinal practices, acknowledging the Ministry of the Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, the denominational convention COMADENG of Minas Gerais and the General Convention of the Assembléias de Deus in Brazil, meanwhile being autonomous and competent to solve its own internal and external ordinal, administrative and spiritual issues, which emerge in its headquarters, branches or its congregations. (A Calvary Christian Center em Holanda, tem por afinidade os princípios espirituais que professa, compartilha as regras de fé e práticas doutrinárias, reconhecendo o Ministério da Assembleia de Deus em Belo Horizonte Minas Gerais, a Convenção denominada COMADENG de Minas Gerais Brasil e a Convenção Geral das Assembléias de Deus no Brasil, sendo, entretanto, autônoma e competente para, por si mesma, resolver qualquer questão de ordem interna ou externa, administrativa ou espiritual, que surgir em sua Sede, Filiais ou Congregações.)
those I saw in Minas Gerais, although there are differences as well, as we will see.

2.4.4 Ecclesiastic structure

The General Convention of the Brazilian Assemblies of God (Convenção Geral das Assembléias de Deus no Brasil), is in essence a congregational church, with regional and state councils (Diretorias Gerais). Every ordained pastor or evangelist must be a registered member of the general convention and has the right to vote. The general convention, in which the Assembléia de Deus of Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais takes part, is expected to deal only with central issues, those affecting the whole church. The statutes and by-laws of the General Convention are binding. When the Assembléia de Deus church Madureira wanted to establish its own national councils in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro,

67 www.capd.com.br The churches of Assembléia de Deus act locally without being tied administratively with a national institute. The national link between the churches exists through the pastors who are affiliated with the General Convention of the Assembléia de Deus in Brazil (CGADB), with its headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. In every state the pastors are affiliated with regional conventions or ministries. In general, these conventions recommend evangelists and pastors, and deal with the subjects of leadership and the administration of churches. Such conventions operate as a regional leadership between the local church and the general convention. The CGADB is led by a board, elected bi-annually by a general assembly. For several specific areas of activity the board uses a council or committee. (As igrejas Assembléias de Deus atuam em cada lugar sem estarem ligadas administrativamente à uma instituição nacional. A ligação nacional entre as igrejas é feita através dos seus pastores que são filiados à Convenção Geral das Assembléias de Deus no Brasil (CGADB), com sede no Rio de Janeiro. Em cada Estado os pastores estão ligados às convenções regionais ou a ministérios. Essas convenções, em geral, credenciam evangelistas e pastores, cuidam de assuntos da liderança e de direção das igrejas. Essas convenções operam um tipo de liderança regional entre a igreja local e a Convenção Geral. A CGADB é dirigida por uma Mesa Diretora, eleita a cada dois anos numa Assembléia Geral. Para várias áreas de atividades da Assembléia de Deus a CGADB tem um conselho ou uma comissão).

68 www.cgadb.com.br. Constitution article 7: those are the rights of CGADB members: 1. Access to the ordinary or extraordinary general assemblies, according to the prescriptions in the clauses III and IV of article 8. (Estatuto: Art. 7º. São direitos dos membros da CGADB: 1 - ter acesso às Assembléias Gerais Ordinárias ou Extraordinárias, atendido o disposto nos incisos III e IV do art. 8.º deste Estatuto)
The General Convention did not agree. This left the Madureira of Rio de Janeiro no other option than to separate from the General Convention in 1988, (Oliveira 1997: 137-138).

The head pastor of a state council apparently has the power to handle resolutions of the General Council as he chooses. An interesting example is the resolution on normative customs, agreed upon during the General Convention in 1975, which in 1999 was adapted to developments in the two last decades of the twentieth century (Fonseca 2009). The rules still defined ‘healthy principles based on the word of God’ (sádios princípios estabelicidos na palavra de Deus), but omitting to include the term ‘doctrines.’ The reformulation aimed to expand some rules and to rescind others, including those restricting the wearing of make-up and short hair for women (ibid.: 12-13). As I observed during my fieldwork in Brazil, the head pastor of the state council of Minas Gerais, however, stands firmly for the earlier doctrine that prohibits these customs entirely. His point of view is law in the churches of Minas Gerais, and it is upheld very strictly.

One of the aims of the Assembléia de Deus, is to create and maintain unity in doctrine and to develop the spirituality of its affiliated churches. To this end, in 1937, the Assembléia de Deus opened a publishing house, called Casa Publicadora das Assembléias de Deus (CPAD). Over the years this publishing house has become the largest publisher in Latin America (Oliveira 1997: 143) and has produced not only journals (a.o. Mensageiro de Paz) and tracts, which spread over Brazil and beyond, but a large number of doctrinal works and bible studies as well.

The local Assembléia de Deus church in Brazil, commonly holds two services each Sunday. The morning service consists of bible study, or Sunday School (Escola Dominical) for all ages, and the evening service is a worship service (Culto de Adoração). Even non-affiliated churches such as the Assembléia de Deus das Missões in São João del Rei, use the annual study manuals of the CPAD. Apart from their influential role in proselytising and the spread of Pentecostalism, a task David Maxwell recognises as one of the general traits of

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69 The old definition was: ‘sádios princípios estabelicidos como doutrinas na palavra de Deus.’
Pentecostalism (2006: 27-35), these materials reflect the existence of an authoritative power within the General Convention of the Assembléia de Deus, located in the collaboration between this publishing house and the council of theologians of the CGADB. External publications, must be authorised before they are translated and published by the CPAD.

Nevertheless, at the state level, for instance in Minas Gerais, it is possible to publish local material. The bi-monthly journal *Mananchial de Paz* was an initiative of the Assembléia de Deus – *Ministério Belo Horizonte*. The Chairman of the journal is the head pastor, and the editor is his son. It has been published by Editora Fé in Belo Horizonte, since 2002. In terms of music and songs, the publishing house of CPAD is influential as well. There is one hymn book, which is used in all Assembléia de Deus churches: the Christian Harp (*Harpa e Corinhos*), containing over 500 songs in its latest edition.71 Yet, in all churches I visited in Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Bahia, the choirs and soloists, who are central to the style of the Assembléia churches, use modern soundtracks with worship songs from popular Brazilian worship singers, in addition to this hymn book.

Besides the publishing house, the General Board of the General Assembly administers a council of Education and Religious Culture, a council of Doctrines, a tax council, a mission council, a national secretary of mission and a school of mission.

2.4.5 The local church structure

According to the constitution of Calvary Christian Center, it is led by a ministry team (*o ministério*), consisting of a head pastor (*Pastor Presidente da Igreja*), and assistant pastors (*Pastores Auxiliares*), evangelists (*Evangelistas*) and elders (*Presbíteros*). The ordinance of a head pastor must be approved by a general assembly of the church members. This general assembly has the authority to dismiss a head pastor as well. In addition, the church has a committee,

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71 The word ‘corinhos’ is very difficult to translate into English. It means ‘small songs, sung by the congregation.’ In Dutch, aged Pentecostals also talk about ‘koortjes’, which has the same meaning. This hymn book is used in all Assembleia de Deus churches in Brazil, published by the publishing house CPAD (Casa Publicadora das Assembléias de Deus).
responsible for the administration of the church, of which the head pastor is chairman. Members of the committee are chosen by the general assembly of the church members. In Calvary Christian Center, which is a relatively small community, the ministry team consists of three persons: A head pastor, who is the president of the committee, an evangelist, who is the vice president of the committee, and an elder, who is the secretary of the committee. Under the leadership of this ministerial team, deacons are appointed to manage several tasks, such as Sunday school, choir leadership, and treasury duties. During 2008, the head pastor, pastor Celso, wrote the local constitution for Calvary Christian Center, based on the general constitution of Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte. When it had been completed, John Berens, the evangelist of the church, read it out aloud, in several parts, during three Bible Study evenings in the church. He explained that he did this in order to ‘let all know the rights and duties of church membership.’ The constitution is published on the local website.

2.4.6 The role of women in the Assembléia De Deus

In Brazil, the Assembléia de Deus church was founded by men, but according to the church records, the first Brazilian person who was baptised in the Holy Spirit was a woman. As described in section 1.4.1, Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam, was founded through the missionary activities of a woman, Elisabete Berens. Although these historical facts are acknowledged by the church, women are not allowed to become elders or pastors. It is men who take up authoritative positions within the church. During the course of my fieldwork, I did not witness any particular teaching on the relationship between husband and wife. Regardless, gender roles became a significant subject of conversation among women in the church, in Brazil as well as in Rotterdam. The normative customs for women, as described in section 2.4.4, became an important theme in my contact with women as well. In Calvary Christian Center, most of these rules were abolished since the Berens couple had returned to Brazil. Under the leadership of successive pastors, girls started wearing trousers, jewellery and make-up. Several Brazilian women told me that they had decided to join this Assembléia de Deus church, because the rules for women were different from those in Brazil.
2.4.7 A Calvary Christian Center church service

Before the start of the service, adherents entered the building and started praying on their knees, in front of their pew or chair. About ten minutes before the start, the ministry team entered the pulpit and prayed, also kneeling in front of their chairs, one of them using the microphone. As the service started, the pastor offered the common greeting: ‘I greet the church with the peace of the Lord (Saúdo a Igreja com a paz do Senhor),’ followed by the lecture based on a psalm. Then the pastor started a hymn, from the hymn book ‘Harp and Small Choruses’ (Harpa e Corinhos), and followed with several prayers. Then the worship team, consisting of three young women, sung a few songs, modern worship songs, with the aid of a Brazilian soundtrack CD. Many members had bought these in Brazil, where huge evangelical music stores keep such soundtracks in stock.

Next followed a varied sequence of choir performances, introduced by words, such as: ‘now, the women’s choir, Rose of Saron (Rosa de Sarão), will worship the Lord with their song.’ Sometimes there were personal testimonies or a brief ‘word from God’ (palavra de Deus), delivered by a visitor or one of the deacons. These were rewarded with exclamations, hallelujahs and applause by the congregation. Then, the offerings were collected, introduced by a brief exhortation, and once in a while accompanied with a bible text. At this point, all new visitors, whose names had been registered as they entered, were called by name and asked to rise from their chairs, after which they were welcomed with a song and handshakes from the members seated near to them.

The sermon followed, frequently interrupted by shouts, amens and hallelujahs, which finally led into a time of ministry, when congregants were invited to come forward for healing and a liberation prayer. The pastor ended the service with the announcements about the upcoming week and the blessing formula.

With this structure, the Sunday Services of Calvary Christian Center roughly mirror ‘the Brazilian Assembléia way.’ However, there are also striking differences. What I discovered when I visited Assembléia de Deus churches in Brazil, was that people there do not physically move during the service, apart from merely putting their hands up and shouting amens and hallelujahs. In Calvary Christian Center, it was very common to stand up and move with the
music, or to jump in exalted prayer, or to bend forward, or kneel down, while others sat. Sunday services are held in Portuguese, but are simultaneously translated into Dutch from the pulpit, in order to serve the Dutch adherents (mostly partners of Brazilian adherents) and visitors. Because of the enthusiastic reactions of the congregants, which started even before the Portuguese version had been read, the Dutch translation was often drowned out, which made it hard to follow what is said. The female choir and the worship team sang Dutch songs now and then, in order to become closer to the Dutch people. During my fieldwork in this church, a group of Angolan and Cape Verdean men started a small choir, which performed a mix of African and Portuguese songs weekly, giving the service an African touch.

2.4.8 Theological emphases

As said, Calvary Christian Center’s creeds are similar to those of Igreja Maná, concerning those parts of the Apostolic creed that they both follow in their own words, as well as their emphasis on Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the actuality of the Spiritual Gifts.\textsuperscript{72} Calvary Christian Center lacks the typical Word of Faith

\textsuperscript{72} Both churches believe in speaking in tongues as initial evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Calvary Christian Center: ‘We believe in the biblical baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is given to us by God, through the mediation of Christ, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues, as He wishes (Acts 1.5; 2.4; 10.44-46; 19.1-7). Igreja Maná: We believe that every true Christian must be endowed with Power from Above, which consists of Baptism with the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues.’ With reference to the Spiritual Gifts, Igreja Maná is far more specific in its formulation than Calvary Christian Center, whose declaration is as follows: ‘We believe in the actual presence of the spiritual gifts, poured out by the Holy Spirit to the church, in order to build it, conform His sovereign will (1 Cor. 12.1-12).’ Igreja Maná: The Gifts of the Holy Spirits are: Gifts of Power, Gift of special Faith, miracles, gifts of healing, gifts of inspiration, variety of languages, prophecy and interpretation of Tongues, gifts of revelation, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discernment of spirits. These gifts belong to the Holy Spirit and it is He who grants their manifestation to everyone according to His will. www.igrejamana.com/ quem somos/declaracao Fé. And ccc-assembleia.com/ o que cremos.
elements of Igreja Maná, but includes elements of the Holiness Movement, which is one of the precursors of the Pentecostal Movements in the USA.\textsuperscript{73} One of the articles of its creed states: ‘We believe in the necessity and possibility of living a holy life, through the work of penance and the redemption of Jesus Christ did at Calvary, and through the renewal Power, Inspirator, and Sanctifier the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live as faithful testimonies of the power of Christ. (Hebr. 9.14 and 1Peter 1.15).\textsuperscript{74}

2.4.9 Missionary Impetus

From the start, Calvary Christian Center was built on the missionary dedication of its founder Elizabete Berens, who evangelised on the streets of Rotterdam. Elizabete and Bernard had a vision for their great work in the Netherlands. This has been taken over by the current Brazilian pastor Celso, who has been a missionary in several countries, including Angola and Portugal, and is now doing missionary work in Italy in addition to his ministry in Rotterdam. During one of our interviews, pastor Celso told me about the intention of the church to start social projects in Rotterdam in order to bring people to Christ. As said, for the Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte, the church in Rotterdam is a mission church, like all other Assembléia de Deus churches in Europe. Its core adherents, with whom I spoke regularly, are convinced that the Dutch are in need of the gospel, and that their wealth and prosperity distracts them from the biblical truth. The women especially, make efforts to convert people on the street with tracts and conversations. The efforts to translate Sunday services into Dutch, and sing Dutch songs, also reflects the desire of the church to attract potential Dutch converts.

\textsuperscript{73} The Holiness Movement was a movement within nineteenth century Methodism, initiated by John Wesley’s ‘perfection teaching,’ as a second blessing after conversion. After these teachings became denounced in mainstream Methodism, separate Holiness denominations emerged. In early Pentecostalism, this ‘perfection’ was seen as sanctification, which came along with Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and was intensified by a vital eschatological expectation (Anderson 2004: 25-29).

\textsuperscript{74} See the website: ccc-assembleia.com/ o que cremos
2.5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have introduced and described the two churches of this research project. I have also compared them by looking to their founders, historical development, organisations and practices, the role of women, theological particularities and missionary impetus. Out of all these comparisons emerges the image of difference. The churches are significantly different in almost all respects.

What both churches in Rotterdam share, is a self-identity as being Pentecostal and that they meet the broad definition given by Anderson. Furthermore, they have in common histories in which both churches were influenced by Dutch leaders. Jorge Tadeu’s wife Christel, and Elesabete Berens’s husband, a former pastor of Calvary Christian Center, were both Dutch. In addition, both churches have taken transnational roles in their local contexts, while simultaneously taking part in a worldwide church structures and supra-church global Pentecostal networks.

With the conclusion of this chapter, the introductory section of this thesis is also complete. The following two chapters will examine the transnational space in which both Pentecostal migrant churches have acquired their concrete daily existence.

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75 See footnote on page 8.
3 THE NETHERLANDS AS A TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

3.1 Introduction

Spring 2006.
It was my second visit to the Sunday morning service at Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam. At some point in the service, the worship leader announced that one of the brothers had something to say. I saw a man and a woman walk to the stage. He, the man, took the microphone and said: ‘Some of you have accused me of having gone to the police to denounce pastor Paulo. But I have not, it wasn’t me. I want to declare this here, in front of you all. I am innocent. But because of these accusations, my wife and I cannot stay in this church anymore. We will leave now.’ The woman stood there, in silence, her head bowed. Together they walked from the stage and left the building. The crowd in the church, typically very loud and enthusiastic, had fallen into silence. The worship leader took over the microphone and said: ‘Don’t be sad, church. God knows everything and He will do justice. We have to hand it over to Him. Let us continue our worship.’

September 2007.
When I began my fieldwork, many of the believers I interviewed told me about a significant event in their church. They said: ‘since pastor Paulo was arrested in the church and expelled to Brazil last year, the church is different.’
‘What happened?’ I asked.
‘Someone in our church had told the police that Paulo had no residency permit and one Sunday, while we were worshipping, four or five military police officers entered the church, and took him away. We were left behind terrified. Many of us have no residency permit as well, you know.’

76 This chapter is an elaboration of parts of two book chapters published earlier (Smit 2009b, 2009c).
This event places the precarious position of many Pentecostal migrant churches and their leaders in the Netherlands at the heart of the matter. The arena into which migrant churches come, is not simply an exciting and neutral global space, where Pentecostals are connected within social and virtual networks that enable them to participate in an open world. On the contrary, these churches come into existence within a particular context. This context, or arena, is determined by a specific social and political climate, with rules and regulations, authority and power. The Netherlands is just such an arena, with its own characteristics, which shape the encounter between migrant churches and their surrounding world. Migrants do indeed take part in global networks, but the ways in which these networks intervene in lives of believers, and the role they play in the making of their own self-identification, can only really be understood within the context of their local existence.

In this chapter, I aim to answer the question regarding the impact that the Netherlands exerts on the social, political and material existence of (both) migrant churches. I analyse the Netherlands as a transnational space, in the senses explained in chapter one. I suggest that the local is not only mediated by transnational processes, but is transnational in itself (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Local day-to-day processes are shaped through transnational processes and phenomena. I will examine how transnational and global processes affect people, in this case Brazilians, Angolans and Cape Verdeans, situated in a particular place and time, Rotterdam and taking into account the impact of the nation-state and the national(ist) mechanisms prevailing in the Netherlands.

First, in the sections 3.2 and 3.3 I examine the Dutch political attitude towards foreigners, especially asylum seekers and other non-western immigrants. Secondly, (3.4) I examine the current climate in the Netherlands in relation to religion and the public sphere. Thirdly, (3.5) I focus on the city of Rotterdam, the concrete location for the two migrant churches of my study. Rotterdam, significantly is also viewed as the policy laboratory of the Netherlands (Schinkel 2009: 56) when it comes to ‘integration problems’ with foreigners. Finally, I will take up the discussion around migrant churches as ‘reversed mission’, subsequently giving my impressions of how the migrant churches in question view the Netherlands as their host country.
3.2 The Historical development of Dutch migration politics

The Netherlands has a long history of immigration, but for the purposes of this thesis, the period since World War Two is the most important. After 1945, several post-colonial groups entered the Netherlands, such as Indonesians, Chinese Indonesians, Indo-Europeans and Molluccans (Jongeneel, Budiman, and Visser 1996: 21-23). During the second half of the twentieth century, the Netherlands, among other countries in Western Europe, became an important destination for migrants, due to its increasing prosperity. Technological, transport and communicative developments facilitated this migration process and created the perception of a better world here.

Although the Netherlands actively attracted guest workers from Turkey, Morocco and Southern Europe in order to solve its labour market problems, the authorities continued to define it officially as an emigration country (Geschiere 2009: 138). After World War Two, there was a common feeling that the population had reached its limits economically, and Dutch citizens were encouraged to find a new life abroad (Ibid.: 139). In the 1970s the number of immigrants from Turkey and Morocco increased heavily due to processes of family reunification, enabling them to postpone their return to their home country. It later became clear that most Turkish and Moroccan people would stay indefinitely in the Netherlands, mainly because they lacked the finances to return permanently (Sunier 1999: 71-75). The arrival of Surinamese immigrants, both before and after the declaration of independence of Surinam in 1975, as well as an influx of refugees from African and Latin American countries and the Middle East in the 1980s, caused a strengthening of the sentiment that immigrants were a threat, mainly for economic reasons. In the nineties, public opinion supported the view that the influx of immigrants from outside the European Union should be restricted. As a result of this, in the Netherlands, the Foreigners Law of 2000 (Vreemdelingenwet 2000) came into being. Based on this law, immigrants from outside the EU must prove their vital importance for Dutch society in order to be permitted to stay, or alternatively make their appeal
on humanitarian grounds. This means, among other things, that immigrant numbers are restricted by notions of ‘priority based supply.’ If in the labour market, other (read Dutch or European) workers could foreseeable be forced out of work by an immigrant, the latter will not receive a permit for work nor stay in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands, like all countries in the world, has experienced the consequences of the credit crisis in the USA, the economic debate around immigration has become sharper. In July 2009, the Dutch journal Elsevier published a report, suggesting that over the last forty years, immigration has cost the Netherlands 200 billion Euros.

Dutch migration policy is transnational in the sense that it shows a complex interrelationship between both internal factors, such as the independence of Surinam, economic fluctuation, and the influx of non-European immigration, with external processes like the politics and policies of the European Union, and global economic developments, such as the finance crisis. The two church populations explored in this research project are deeply implicated in current Dutch political debate concerning non-western immigrants.

3.2.1 Angolans in the Netherlands

The treatment of Angolan refugees in the Netherlands has led to criticism by the Council of Europe (Hammarberg 2009). The abbreviated asylum procedure (a decision made within forty-eight hours), extended detention before expulsion, as well as child interrogation and child detention have raised questions and recommendations by political interest groups and organisations such as ‘Vluchtelingenwerk.’ The IND (the Dutch Immigration Service) makes decisions on the validity of asylum applications mainly on the basis of official reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the accuracy of which has been criticised by many NGO’s. As the 2002 International Organisation for Migration report shows (IOM 2002), in comparison with other West European countries, the

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78 Wet arbeid vreemdelingen, artikel 8, eerste lid, onder a.
79 Telegraaf, August 1, 2009; ‘Elsevier: Niet-Westerse allochtoon € 3400 per jaar. Immigratie kost ons miljarden’
Netherlands have been by far the most common destination for Angolan asylum seekers. Since 1998, following the last severe outburst of violence in Angola’s civil war, \(^{80}\) statistics show that there was a great influx of Angolans to the Netherlands, most of them young people. More than fifty per cent of the registered Angolan population in the Netherlands was under eighteen. In the period between 1999 and 2001, the Netherlands accommodated almost 8000 Angolan asylum seekers, twice as many as between the years 1991 and 1999 (IOM 2002: 17-18). \(^{81}\) That number represents almost one third of the total number of Angolan asylum seekers in the Western European countries over the same period (Van Wijk 2007: 121). Since Angola has been at peace, following a complicated peace process that resulted in 2002 in an agreement between the government party MPLA and the rebel party UNITA (*União para a independência total da Angola*), many Angolan asylum seekers did not receive a residence permit or could not prolong their temporary permit (Ambtsbericht 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006). Even before the peace agreement, in reaction to the large flow of young asylum seekers from Angola, the Dutch government changed its policy in order to discourage foreign minors from deciding to come to the Netherlands. Before 2001, care for foreign children and youngsters was focussed on education and integration. Since 2001, however, official policy has been directed towards returning them to their country of origin (KRC 2002: 24). \(^{82}\)

For the current group of Angolan minors in the Netherlands, especially for those whose application for residence has been rejected, this means that the majority will have to return as soon as they have reached the age of eighteen. In collaboration with Angola, the Dutch government built an orphanage in Luanda in order to be able to use ‘adequate day care’ as an argument for expelling Angolan minors as soon as they reach the age of eighteen (van Wijk 2005). Compared to other African migrants in the Netherlands, in statistical overviews, Angolans are described as young, poorly educated, and without a strong or self-
organised community. Angolan individuals do however build their own networks from the moment they meet in asylum camps and seek to live together (Heelsum 2006: 23-25). Stichting ‘JAN’ (Jonge Angolezen in Nederland), an Angolan organisation for youngsters who are obliged to return to Angola, and SAMAH, a Dutch organisation for AMA’s in general, do play a certain advocacy role for this specific Angolan group.

An important and informative study on the migration process of Angolan minor refugees by Joris van Wijk, broadens this general picture of young asylum seekers (2007: 301-354). He found that Angolan minors in the Netherlands were mainly the sons and daughters of prosperous families in Angola, who had organised their exit visa with the intention of finding tertiary educating for their children in Europe. The Angolan refugees who fled from Angola to neighbouring African countries far outnumber asylum seekers in Europe (Jacobsen 2002: 102), which supports the idea that the latter somehow might have been privileged. Due to its very positive image, produced by the first Angolan migrants in the early 1990s, young people chose the Netherlands as their host country. At Dutch borders, they were confronted with the need to make up a refugee story in order to apply for asylum. The tragic effect of this, is that they were forced (by the friends who brought them across the border) to pretend that that were barely educated. As a consequence, in the Netherlands they were classified among those people with little education. Eventually they exceeded the duration of their visas, often without having had the opportunity to gain a diploma, let alone having had the chance to attend university. Family and friend networks were strongly valued components of the migration stories told to me my respondents. Nevertheless these networks often proved to be unreliable, and many respondents were diddled of their documents, diplomas and money, in their attempts to stay in the Netherlands.

Whatever their social background, Angolans in the Netherlands generally have to contend with uncertainty and a lack of access to the resources needed to build a new life, such as education, formal jobs, etcetera. Since 2004,

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84 See www.jongeangolezen.nl; see www.samah.nl.
more than 400 Angolans annually have returned ‘voluntarily’ to Angola with the support of IOM, mostly because they do not expect to have a future in the Netherlands (IOM 2006: 8). According to the most recent statistics of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Central Bureau for Statistics) the number of registered Angolans in the Netherlands has decreased in the period 2004-2009 from 12281 to 9015.  

November 22, 2007, Dutch election day.
I attended a family group meeting of Igreja Maná. From the moment I had entered the room, the Angolan participants pounced on me with the question: ‘Which party did you vote for?’ Without a doubt, they wanted to know if I had voted for a party that advocated the ‘General Pardon,’ a collective measure to legalise long staying asylum seekers, which had been heavily debated during the election campaign.

One of the women at the house had already lived for over thirteen years in the Netherlands and was still ‘being processed.’, She was living in a flat owned by COA, and was obliged to visit the COA counter for her weekly money. Her three children were allowed to attend school, but were deprived of all sorts of supplies. The fourteen-year-old daughter for instance told me: ‘Since I have no residence permit, my mother does not receive child support.  

Do you know what all these other children can do with that money? Because I have no citizen service number, I cannot become member of the school library. For subscriptions you also need that service number. I go to school, but still I am an outsider because I cannot take part in so many things!’

This family finally received a residence permit as a result of the elections: the newly established government decided to include the ‘General Pardon’ in its governmental program. Not everyone was so lucky. Moreover, for those undocumented immigrants who were not able to meet the criteria for the ‘General Pardon,’ the situation became even worse. In order to overcome

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85 See www.cbs.nl/statistieken/Angolezen
86 COA: Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers (Central organization for the shelter of asylum seekers)
87 What the girl meant was that her mother was not entitled to receive the standard financial child support every Dutch citizen receives, when having a child. She knew about this child support from fellow school students.
accusations of making a precedent in favour of new asylum applications, detention and expulsion of ‘illegals’ became the government’s policy spearhead.

3.2.2 Brazilians in the Netherlands

So far, the Brazilian population in the Netherlands has not been a subject of investigation. Its registered number increased from 6079 to 13394 in the period 1996 until 2010.\(^88\) Incidentally, there have been news reports of large numbers of irregular immigration (i.e the person has entered the Netherlands without an official residence permit), sometimes with the involvement of human trafficking organisations.\(^89\) One of my respondents during my fieldwork in Calvary Christian Center, a young male Brazilian, was indeed recruited by an organisation in Brazil that promised to provide documents and a job in the Netherlands. He paid them a lot of money. When he arrived in Rotterdam, all his dreams fell apart. He was placed in a house with many others and every day he was brought to a work place. Eventually he got picked up and sent back to Brazil. Nevertheless, three weeks later, he was back in the Netherlands. Finally he ended up with a residence permit because a Portuguese woman was prepared to provide a reference for him. I spoke with a number of Brazilians, mostly women, who lived in the Netherlands without a residence permit. Compared with Angolan asylum seekers, their narratives reflected more acceptance of their ‘illegal’ status as a *fait accompli*. They did however reveal that it was not easy to cope with their precarious life circumstances and the constant fear of being rounded up. Most women dreamt of having a Dutch or legal husband, who would legalise their status. Others prayed and waited for a miracle. Some returned voluntarily with help from IOM.

Those who succeeded in obtaining registered status were confronted with a second dimension of transnational angst: integration into Dutch society.

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\(^89\) See for instance the apprehension of twelve Brazilians by the SIOD in 2005, one of which was suspected of being a key figure in a criminal human trafficking organisation that recruited Brazilians on a large scale, providing false ID’s and illegal jobs in the Netherlands, [www.om.nl/siod/](http://www.om.nl/siod/)
3.3 The Dutch integration debate

It is not possible to understand the Dutch integration debate without locating it within a wider geographical and political context, Western Europe and the European Union. The nation-states that belong to Western Europe are not only struggling with their so-called ‘capacity limits’ to accommodate large numbers of immigrants, but are also caught in the tensions caused by cultural and religious diversity that go along with international immigration. Western Europe is not unique in experiencing these developments, but has its own way of undergoing the present day ‘global conjuncture of belonging,’ a term coined by Tania Murray Li (cited by Geschiere 2009: 6). The term means that ‘all sorts of apparently unrelated trends converge into turning belonging into a pressing issue’ (ibid.: 6), for example, the global attention given to indigenous people and disappearing cultures, ecological issues, loss of biodiversity etc.

According to Peter Geschiere, in Europe it is popular dissatisfaction over increasing immigration and the idea that the second generation of immigrants refuses to ‘integrate’ that triggers similar concerns of belonging (ibid.: 6)\(^90\). Jan van der Stoep (2009: 120-123) emphasises that migration, globalisation, and the development from industrial to post-industrial societies in Europe has created more interaction between cultures and (religious) worldviews, and has downplayed national borders, which in turn has given rise to the emergence of right wing parties. The Dutch, Austrian, Flemish, French and Danish extreme right parties are not completely alike, but share the general conviction that the achievements of the national culture must be preserved against what are considered degenerating influences by other cultures. This view was termed ‘culture-theoretical racism’ by Marc de Kesel (2003: 158). A second trait of (extreme) right wing movements is their emphasis on returning self-government to the people, as a solution for the sense of loss of control, and the distrust of the political establishment, due to the above mentioned transnational processes (the arbitrariness of national borders, being forced to confront the otherness of the stranger, increasing immigration) (Van der Stoep 2009: 121). Within this

\(^90\) See (Garssen and van Duin 2009) for the expected growth of the allochthonous population in the Netherlands.
broader context, the Netherlands in particular had to face the reality of its highly developed social welfare system coming under pressure, due to slowing economical growth, and the aging of the population. This has resulted in a sharp political division between those who were once and those who were not entitled recipients.

Pim Fortuyn was the first politician to define the immigration problem as a Dutch political failure. Gaining enormous support quickly, he transformed the Dutch attitude of anti-racism and tolerance in one split second, by insisting on depicting immigrants in a newly negative light. The subsequent assassinations of Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Theo van Gogh (2004), together with the deadly fire accident in the Schiphol prison (2003) showed where the official and popular emotional concern had become focused, and it was certainly not with the victims of the latter event. As Geschiere puts it: ‘It was not their socioeconomic marginalisation but rather their ‘refusal’ to be culturally integrated that was now seen to be at the heart of immigrants’ problems’ (Geschie 2009: 135). However,

‘the very fact that the growing concern over immigrants in the Netherlands corresponds to the general pattern of fear in North-Western Europe, suggests that this should be seen first and foremost as a global problem that can hardly be explained by looking to how earlier Dutch governments mismanaged immigration policy, or how Dutch neglect of national culture and history can be seen to be to blame’ (ibid.: 138).

It is striking that the myth of the existence of a Dutch homogeneous community in the past, with common values and a shared Dutch identity underlies contemporary Dutch immigration policy still, and has not been debated widely in the media. After all, historical evidence shows how the Dutch ‘pillarized’ society was marked by deep mutual exclusion at the group level (Droogers 2008; Lijphart 1968, referred to by Geschiere 2009: 140). Ton van Prooijen (2009: 39-58) shares Geschiere’s critique on the negation of historical plurality and conflict in Dutch society. Neo-republicans, in his view, are inclined

91 The neo-republican view is defined as a modern version of the classic republican ideal of a political community of citizens, in which citizenship is a highly official issue (Van Prooijen 2009: 41).
to solve (religious and cultural) differences by expunging them from the public sphere, whereas communitarians\(^2\) tend to frame these differences in a moral and historical ‘common sense.’ Still, from the seventeenth century until the second half of the nineteenth century, the Dutch Federal Republic and the development of the Dutch Nation-State were coloured by a nationalist ideal, initially cultivated by the Dutch Reformed Church and later through the Protestant hegemony on (moral) education. Only the implementation of the Constitutional Law of 1848 and the rehabilitation of the Roman Catholic Church in 1853 led to fragmentation of religious identity. From that time, national identity was no longer understood in terms of one moral community, but as a conglomerate of different communities with mutual xenophobic and populist tendencies, accelerated by Abraham Kuyper’s political strategy (Rosenthal 2009: 66-67 referring to P. van Rooden 1995:15-30). These two dominant images of national identity in Dutch history are central to the current Dutch integration debate.

Halleh Ghorashi suggests that in the process of ‘de-pillarization’, which started in the 1960s, the ‘habitus’ of pillarization paradoxically continued with the arrival of new immigrants (2006: 10-11). Especially Muslim immigrants were treated as a new pillar, but with the underlying question whether this pillar would become a source for emancipation, or for resistance to integration. This habitus continued minority thinking and categorical thinking with regard to migrants, while in the meantime, with the emergence of the welfare state, a form of equality-thinking developed, which problematised societal backwardness (ibid.: 12-13). The political rhetoric surrounding migrant problems is said to be caused by the non-conformism and cultural otherness of migrants themselves. But even ‘successful’ immigrants, as in the case of Iranian migrants for example, who arrived in the Netherlands after the revolution in Iran in 1979, mostly as asylum seekers, do not feel able to create a sense of belonging (Ghorashi 2009: 75-90). This makes them different from the Iranians who started new lives successfully in the US, particularly in California. Ghorashi attributes

\(^2\) The communitarian interpretation of citizenship is described as being based on shared moral values in a social, cultural or ethnic community, from which individuals derive their identity (Ibid.: 41).
this different experience of the two groups to several major differences between
the US and the Netherlands. In the US, perspectives on immigration have
developed away from an assimilationist standpoint towards a more
differentiated view, due to the heterogeneity of numerous new groups of
migrants. In addition, discourses on American national identity are ambivalent
about the nation state and these discourses are ideologically construed instead
of cultural. Finally, the US has a long history of struggle for multi-faceted identity
formation, of which the Afro-American struggle is one example. As Ghorashi
puts it, these factors mean that the US to has a ‘thin’ notion of national identity,
in which there is room for thick particularities,’ or thick cultural differences
(ibid.: 80). In the Netherlands, however, the current national discourse focuses
on the ‘incompatibility of ‘other’ cultures,’ from which immigrants are expected
to distance themselves. There is a thickly entrenched notion of Dutchness, which
makes hybrid, or ‘hyphenated’ identity formation nearly impossible (ibid.: 85).

The use of the terms ‘autochthonous’ and ‘allochthonous’ in public and
political discourse reveals the naivety of the assumption of the existence of an
historically existing Dutch identity, since nobody ever felt the need to define the
word autochthonous, unlike its counterpart (Geschiere 2009: 153-154). Paradoxically,
every attempt to provide allochthonous people with an inventory of the characteristics of ‘the Dutch’ population, with whom they need to
integrate, such as the so-called ‘Dutch Canon’, the ‘normen en waarden debat’
(norms and values debate)93, or the ‘inburgeringscursus’ (integration course for
foreigners), has failed. Fiercely defended ‘Dutch’ culture seems to evaporate into
thin air once one tries to explain it in concrete terms. André Droogers (2008)
associates essentialist views on ‘Dutch culture’ with power, because essentialist
points of view facilitate access to power. Power is exerted by precisely those
people whose essentialist views will never be challenged by neighbours and local
residents, from countries such as Morocco, Sudan or Somalia, for example.

Geschiere, observing Dutch integration politics, is astonished about the
persistence of essentialist thinking in relation to Dutch culture. He follows
Appadurai’s notion of identities becoming ‘predatory,’ meaning that they
cannibalise other identities in order to turn immigrants into recognisable citizens

93 a debate launched by the leading confessional party CDA
(Geschiere 2009: 166). He questions whether giving such a great substance to the national culture will make the integration of immigrants easier.

De Kesel (2003) is even more pessimistic in his analysis of the kinds of ‘identitarian hate’ behind racial reflexes and social exclusion. Integration policy aimed at bringing about assimilation with the dominant culture, will only increase feelings of hatred towards the Other. Drawing on psycho-analytical insights, De Kesel argues that human identity exists always outside the ‘ego,’ it is located within the Other, who will always be different; therefore identity will never surpass the stage of ‘longing for what is not there.’ This shortage of self-identity is projected on to the Other, who will get the blame. The hatred felt for the stranger, is a means for pushing away one’s own shortcomings and simultaneously maintaining them, as a means of retaining a sense of one’s identity. The danger of racism lies in this paradoxical pushing away and attachment to ‘the stranger.’ Assimilation and successful integration, therefore, will only strengthen the hatred and disgust felt towards an ‘Other.’

De Kesel considers democracy the only political concept able to channel hate in a constructive way, because democracy’s essence lies in disensus instead of consensus. It is possible to hate the community, the society and the state, to fight against it, to despise its politicians and distrust every democratic decision. Democracy does not do away with the tendency to exclude others, but in theory provides the scope to disagree with each other. It enables verbal violence and even tolerates negative and malicious attitudes against democracy itself to be aired. This is not because democracy affirms hatred in itself, but because it recognises the need to channel hatred. In this way, democracy affirms that ‘its identity is only based on a longing for identity’ (ibid.: 19). Although to a degree I agree with De Kesel, I still foresee this hatred-channelling quality of democracy coming more and more under strain. Due to public pressure, even within democratic structures and within the Dutch constitutional state, the rules and regulations relating to so-called non-integrated as well as non-documented immigrants become ever more repressive.94

94 For example in 2011, the Dutch Government intends to penalise illegal residents in The Netherlands, despite objections from the European Committee. See several articles in www.nrc.nl, such as: EC: illegaliteit strafbaar stellen is disproportioneel (EC: penalization of illegal residence is disproportional). A Roman Catholic secondary school in Volendam
The Dutch integration debate is inherently transnational, since it is catalysed by the fear of losing the nation, the national, the Dutch. For the migrants I met in two migrant churches in Rotterdam, the pressure of assimilation is a daily experience, whether at school, at work, or shopping at the supermarket. Several of my respondents did not even possess the legal status that would have made them legitimate subjects in the integration debate. For Dutch society they simply don’t exist. From their point of view, assimilation means to have to live by remaining invisible. But the Netherlands, and more precisely Rotterdam, do exist for them.

3.4 The Dutch religion debate

It goes without saying that the 9/11 terrorist attacks have drawn attention to the religious views of immigrants in almost all Western European countries. Since then, there have been increased fears of the too substantial presence of immigrants and their religions in the Netherlands. Refugees and asylum seekers have been subjected to increased control and limitation. Although negative concerns about religious views are mainly directed towards Islam, the debate also relates to Christianity, as can be seen in media fuelled, heated public debates. In fact, there are almost as many Christian as Muslim migrants in the

 forbade a female Muslim student to wear a headscarf, based on arguments premised on safeguarding the Roman Catholic identity of the school. On April 4, 2011, the district court upheld this policy. As Martijn van Dam, member of the Second Chamber states: ‘before this verdict was handed down, only fundamental religious schools were allowed to restrictions the admission of students….Now the judge has taken a step further…… This gives all protestant and catholic schools the opportunity to keep out students of other religions. …..This will enforce segregation of education.’ www.republiekallochtonie.nl

95 In October 2008 the media paid huge attention to the practices around AIDS/HIV healing in two Pentecostal churches in Amsterdam, one of which is Surinamese. The council of Amsterdam and COC, the Dutch lobby group for Homosexuals, requested an investigation by Governmental Health Inspectors of ‘especially black Pentecostal churches. In these groups homosexuals have problems with coming out.’ These practices are overstepping the boundaries of religious freedom in the eyes of COC. See for instance: http://www.medicalfacts.nl/2008/10/03/onderzoek-naar-omstreden-homo-
Netherlands. In several publications since 2002, the number of Christian migrants in the Netherlands has generally been calculated to be between 600,000 and 800,000 (Ferrier 2002: 30; Van der Laan 2005: 69; Guerra, Wijsen, and Steggerda 2006: 12). Hijme Stoffels’ recent estimate is much higher, namely 1,314,500, of which 516,500 are non-Western and 798,000 are Western Christian migrants (2008: 15). Many non-western migrant Christians are from countries where religion is a public affair and where the separation between state and church, if any, is not experienced in daily life (Levitt 2007: 12). They are used to hearing Christian music resounding from market stands, seeing huge church buildings with their messages on the front, television channels broadcasting the Christian message and watching Christian soaps twenty-four hours a day. In the Netherlands, Christian migrants risk being sent away by the police when they evangelise spontaneously on the street, because they cannot produce official ‘evangalisation licences.’

These migrants are confronted with the fact that in Dutch society, religion is considered a private affair, as a consequence of the division between state and church. As Sophie van Bijsterveld puts it (2008: 10-17), classical fundamental rights are grounded in the protection of the citizen’s private sphere in which the state as public organism has no place. In that sense, indeed, religion is private. Freedom of religion, is one of the fundamental human rights guaranteed under Dutch Constitutional Law and by several international treaties to which the Dutch state has committed itself.96 Citizens are free in their choice of religion, and the state treats every citizen alike, irrespective of their religion. This division in public and private is a legal construction, which, however, has become an experienced reality. It is the result of a development, that in the Netherlands, came into being in the second half of the 20th century: the secularisation and ‘subjectivisation’ of religion (Roeland 2009: 43-65).

96 See the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 18; the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, (23 March, 1976 article 18); the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental ?, (1950), article 9; Freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the Dutch constitutional law, article 6. (Vrijheid van gedachte, geweten en godsdienst in de Nederlandse Grondwet, artikel 6.)
There has been a dramatic decline in adherence to almost all denominations and modalities of Christianity, and a simultaneous growth of numerous new spiritualities that lack institutional forms and that are experienced in individual and sometimes eclectic ways (bricolage). The idea that religion might have a societal dimension has gradually vanished. Collective forms of religion, still existing in spite of secularised society, are viewed in the same way: as groups of citizens who have the private right to practice their religion. The broad common perception of the public domain, here defined as society, was of a secularized public sphere (i.e. de-churched) (Van de Donk and Plum 2006: 27-54), in spite of empirical and theoretical objections. As Van Bijsterveld points out, ideologically driven organisations who take societal responsibilities in terms of care, culture or education do inevitably have a public dimension (2008: 18). As long as this public dimension does not explicitly grate with the general public opinion, it is neglected. However, since Dutch society has undergone a process of profound cultural and religious pluralisation as described above (1 million Muslims, +/- 600,000 non-western Christian immigrants), this constitutional right comes under pressure as soon as it is experienced as threatening other rights, such as the right to equal treatment (Kuiper 1995: 249-251; Bijsterveld 2008: 1-8). Requests for limiting the freedom of religion are heard more and more frequently. In particular, the sense of fear regarding religions presumed divisive elements, those said to cause segregation in society, evoke calls for an explicit and legally sanctioned rigorous privatisation of religion (Bijsterveld 2008: 23-42). Even state support for Christian education and Christian political parties, or the building of a mosque, are more and more broadly considered to blur the division between state and religion.

3.4.1 Governmental authorities and migrant churches

It is not surprising therefore that governmental authorities are not inclined to facilitate migrant church activities. Dutch public opinion favours a ‘negative commitment’ to freedom of religion, which means that state interference should

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97 See for instance Trouw, July 1, 2006, Letter&Geest, ‘Weg met de religieuze privileges’ by Patrick van Schie.
be limited to defending this right only when it is threatened.\textsuperscript{98} Dutch law does not oblige city authorities to support or aid churches in their material needs, or to accept immigrants for religious reasons. However, in its report in 2005, the Advisory Committee of Foreign Affairs, recognised that well-functioning church communities, operating legally, are of vital importance for Dutch society (ACVZ 2005: 35). Based on this report, ordained priests and pastors from outside the EU may be permitted to stay in the Netherlands, although under restriction, and the church community is held responsible for all expenses. Standing in the midst of this public debate and sometimes becoming its target, migrant churches experience a relationship with the Dutch authorities that is problematic. Migrant churches do not receive positive attention or support from the authorities and most of the time have severe difficulties in finding their way to official agencies for housing and registration of the church.

A glaring example of this can be seen in events regarding some migrant churches in The Hague, as described in a research report by Stichting Oikos (Van der Sar and Visser 2006: 10).\textsuperscript{99} In 2004, the congregations of six migrant churches were suddenly refused entry into their prayer houses. In some cases this happened because of fire safety rules, in other instances the buildings were destined to be demolished due to an intensified preservation of city development plans. This incident aroused political debate within the local Christian parties, who made a moral appeal to the city government to at least allow the churches to celebrate Christmas in an alternative building. Finally this incident brought local political attention to the existence and role of migrant churches, which led to an investigation of their societal relevance and their significance for The Hague. The results of this research by Stichting Oikos showed that the migrant churches of The Hague made a profit of more than seventeen million Euros a year for the city. Based on these figures, Stichting

\textsuperscript{98} The Advisory Committee of Foreign Affairs (Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken ACVZ) circumscribes this ‘negative commitment’ to ‘respect’ and to ‘protect,’ and only in extraordinary cases the duty to ‘fulfill.’ Advies ‘Toelating en verblijf voor religieuze doeleinden, Den Haag 2005: 25.

\textsuperscript{99} Stichting Oikos is a ecumenical non-government organisation. Its main focus is on stimulating processes of change in the Netherlands, and its main target group is Dutch society. See the website www.stichtingoikos.nl/
Oikos was able to formulate some recommendations for developing a more accommodating policy towards the activities of migrant churches.

Another instructive example is the demolition of the large apartment buildings in the area Amsterdam Bijlmer in the years after 2000. This Amsterdam area includes over a hundred church communities and only four church buildings (Goossen 2006: 115). Most of these churches had found places for worship in the parking spaces and basements that were part of these four buildings. Not the local authorities, but rather the ‘Stichting Evangelisch Werkverband’, an evangelical foundation affiliated with the largest Dutch Protestant church, represented by Hans Eschbach, initiated a national plan of action in the Dutch churches, called ‘houd de Bijlmer in de kerk’ \textit{(keep the Bijlmer in the church)}. This plan of action brought about the erection of some new church buildings in this part of Amsterdam. In May 2005, the first stake of the first building was driven into the ground. The plans for two more buildings are in preparation (www.bijlmerkerk.nl). But meanwhile, some churches are literally on the street and try to rent any possible public building in the area, including schools, sports-centres and community centres. Especially those church activities that take place during the week are badly affected by this lack of space (ibid.: 116). The local authorities, however, have recently become aware of the societal relevance of these churches in this disadvantaged area of Amsterdam, which experiences many social problems. Financial support and the cooperation of urban development engineers mean that new projects will support new developments. But even this rescue plan in the Bijlmer appears to have turned into a complex game of political and financial interests, causing mixed feelings among the migrant pastors involved (Van der Meulen 2009: 170-173).

3.4.2 Migrant Churches and WMO (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning)

The abovementioned research project by Stichting Oikos in the Hague had a precursor in Utrecht and there have been other projects begun elsewhere in the Netherlands since then. Each project defends the churches’ right to exist in terms of societal/financial gain. This approach is embedded in another recent development in the Netherlands: the state withdrawing its involvement in social affairs, in accordance with the political adage of civil responsibility and
participation. In this context, the law WMO (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning/Law on Societal Support) was implemented in 2007.\(^{100}\) This law delegates state social support activities to the local authorities. Local authorities define fields of achievement for which churches, voluntary organisations and individual citizens should take responsibility. Migrant churches could benefit from this opportunity to gain societal recognition, but the underlying presumption that all participating organisations in the WMO are subordinated to European Laws, such as no discrimination in contracting employees, makes participation difficult for religious organisations.

This dilemma is illustrated in the case of the Christian Youth For Christ organisation in Amsterdam.\(^{101}\) Youth For Christ was contracted by Amsterdam local authorities through an open call for tenders. As soon as it became known that only Christian workers were recruited, newspapers and television broadcasts jumped on the question of whether this was an infringement of the separation between church and state. Several members of the local council tried to propose a motion against the contract with YFC, but failed. A few months later Oikos estimated the societal profit of this organisation in Amsterdam to amount to 6,2 million Euros a year, which means that for every Euro Youth For Christ receives from the city authorities, the organisation gives back 5 Euros in return in terms of societal activities. Meanwhile it has become clear that this Oikos report has failed to exert any influence over the decision not to prolong another contract with YFC in another part of Amsterdam\(^{102}\).

If migrant churches wanted to benefit from WMO-grants, they would stir up a hornet’s nest of rules and regulations, in which they might become entangled. Although most confrontations with the Dutch authorities happen at the level of the church organisation, it must be noted that these confrontations affect individual migrants directly. It is they who loose access to church activities and support when the building is suddenly closed. It is they who experience

\(^{100}\) See http://www.minvws.nl/dossiers/wmo/default.asp

\(^{101}\) Seewww.parool.nl/.../Politieke-aanval-Youth-for-Christ-faalt.dhtml; www.parool.nl/.../Youth-for-Christ-bespaart-maatschappij-miljoenen.dhtml

feelings of fear and insecurity when the building is entered by external authorities.

Up to this point, I have discussed Dutch society as the arena in which migrants and migrant churches exist and where a complex amalgam of transnational processes influence local public debate, political change and authoritative power. The city of Rotterdam, for the two migrant churches under discussion in this study, is the concrete space that happens to be transnational in its own right.

3.5 Rotterdam as a transnational space

Rotterdam is one of the four large cities in the Netherlands. Its non-western immigration rates have been much higher than in the rest of the Netherlands (SCP 2003: 23). In 2009, Rotterdam had 587,161 inhabitants (COS 2009: 37), of whom 214,046 are defined as non-western ‘allochthonous people’, i.e. thirty-seven per cent of the total population. This number is expected to enlarge towards 263,874, i.e. forty-three per cent in 2025 (ibid.: 33). In some neighbourhoods, the percentage of non-western ‘allochthonous people’ is over fifty per cent (SCP 2003: 24). As mentioned, Rotterdam is considered to be the Dutch laboratory for integration politics. It is the city where Pim Fortuyn lived and developed his political rhetoric about immigrants. It is the city with the highest rate of non-western citizens. It is also the city where the ethnic background of criminals is registered, and this has had some contentious consequences in the media.

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103 COS (Centre for Research and Statistics in Rotterdam) uses the same definition for ‘allochthonous’ as the CBS (Central Statistics Office): every person with one foreign parent is considered allochthonous.

104 ‘Politie kent helft jonge Marokkaanse mannen Rotterdam.’ This news item speaks of terrifying crime rates among Moroccans, Surinamese and Antillean allochthonous people. The opinion of criminologist Frank Bovenkerk, that not only cultural issues are at stake, but also that social-economic aspects are involved, led to protest and questions in the Lower House. www.nu.nl/algemeen/, 4 June, 2009.
3.5.1 Local Politics

In Rotterdam the local political party ‘Leefbaar Rotterdam’ (Liveable Rotterdam), founded by Pim Fortuyn, gained popular support and takes part in the city council. It is the city on which Gabriël van den Brink (2006) wrote the book ‘Culturele Contrasten’ (Cultural Contrasts), based on a social cultural investigation of the cultural contrasts in Rotterdam between six migrant populations, i.e. Turkish, Moroccan, Antillean, Surinamese, Chinese and Cape Verdean, in relation with the Dutch. In spite of the author’s stated intention to let migrants speak for themselves in this book, its points of departure are four tendencies that the author considers characteristic of the modernity of North-Western Europe. These tendencies, borrowed from Geert Hofstede (Hofstede 1998: cited by Van den Brink 2006: 27), are:

1. A high degree of equality between man and woman,
2. High value given to individual independence,
3. Rejection of authority and authoritatively exercised power, and
4. A strong inclination to avoid uncertainty.

Van den Brink uses these tendencies as parameters for a strength-weakness analysis of the migrant groups and to determine the extent to which their profile is similar to the Dutch. In his conclusions, Van den Brink predicts that immigrants from the Caribbean will have the highest potential to integrate quickly into contemporary Dutch society, whereas Chinese immigrants will have more difficulty. His predictions for Turkish and Moroccan immigrants is the least favourable (ibid.: 330).

This book is a prototype for contemporary Dutch integration policy, as advocated by the Rotterdam City council. It is striking how this discourse, even when immigrants come up with legitimate objections and criticisms, has already been internalised in their thinking and reasoning. It is as if it has

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105 20 January, 2006: ‘Rotterdam: spreek op straat Nederlands.’ This article says that the mayor and city counselors of Rotterdam want all citizens to speak Dutch on the street. This rule is part of the ‘Rotterdam Code,’ a collection of norms for citizens set out in order to solve potential problems due to cultural contrasts.

www.nrc.nl/binnenland/article1649054.ece/Rotterdam. See also the ‘Rotterdamse Burgerschapscode’, College van Burgemeesters en Wethouders, 17 January 2006.
colonised their consciousness. Here I refer to what Jean and John Comaroff have called the *colonisation of consciousness*, i.e. in the process by which indigenous people were Christianised. The latter resisted the Christian doctrines that they were confronted with, but in formulating their arguments they had gradually absorbed the language and reasoning of the western missionaries (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989). The City counsellor Hamit Karakus, Turkish by origin, complained that his children were completely ‘integrated,’ but still not accepted.

‘My children don’t get it. No one can accuse them of not speaking Dutch, for lacking understanding of Dutch habits and culture, for being poorly educated and especially not of behaving badly. Still they have the feeling that they are not accepted. They too wonder whether they will have a future in the Netherlands!’

I found the same internalisation of the integration discourse in the words of a seventeen-year-old Angolan girl, whose asylum application had been rejected and who was facing possible expulsion. She said:

‘I really do understand why these Moroccan and Turkish people should leave the Netherlands. They don’t speak Dutch properly, they don’t go to school and they behave like criminals. But I speak Dutch fluently, I want to study and make something of my life. I have never done anything wrong. But they can stay and I have to go...’

During the period of my fieldwork in the Brazilian Calvary Christian Center, I found out that pastor Paulo indeed had been betrayed by church members (though not the one accused and cited in the introduction). Those members felt that a Pastor should not live illegally in the Netherlands. Their explanation to me was: ‘He created turmoil in the church... Things should be done conforming to rules and regulations of the Netherlands....’ Such incidents

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107 Fieldwork notes, June 2007. This girl frequented Igreja Maná weekly because she was taken into the house of a female member. That day I drove her to the Refugee Support Service in Rotterdam, where she learned that her case was hopeless. See the vignette included in Chapter four.
show how complex and ambivalent people’s positions and loyalties are, because of their multiple senses of connectedness. These are complexities that their churches have to deal with as well.

3.5.2 Rotterdam as labour market for migrants

As a comparative sociological study on Rotterdam and Amsterdam by Jeroen van der Waal (2009) shows that immigrants are not only viewed as rivals in the labour market, but are even seen to limit the ‘autochthonous’ persons’ wealth. In Rotterdam, twenty-two per cent of the population works in the industrial sector. This sector is experiencing a decline in the number of available jobs. Competition between immigrants and ‘autochthonous’ citizens is visible in the lower segments of the labour market. Unemployment rates among migrants are two and a half times those of ‘autochthonous’ workers. Van der Waal has shown that in Rotterdam, low income jobs (including those held by ‘autochthonous’ employees) are subject to intense competition (ibid.: 100-101). This downward pressure on income occurs particularly in cities where a developed service industry segment is lacking. This leads Van der Waal to the conclusion that the globalisation of labour is doing harm to the same (‘autochthonous’) populations as the globalisation of capital does, i.e. the lesser educated populations of cities with an industrial character, where many lower level jobs disappear because of international competition (ibid.: 103). The above-mentioned study reveals how the ‘autochthonous’ is taken as the point of reference for considering the spaces that immigrants are allowed to share, irrespective of economic, behavioural or other considerations.

Some of the migrants in the churches I studied are confronted with this competitive formal labour market in Rotterdam, but many of them are not even able to surmount the walls of the informal labour market. Most Angolan minors in Igreja Maná were still attending school when I interviewed them. When they do enter the labour market, some of them will have to fight for a middle-class job, in a nursery or an office. Some adult male Angolans with residency permits work in industrial companies as production workers. Some are contracted workers, others are employed via via temporary labour agencies. It is very difficult for them to earn a stable income. The adult Angolan women I spoke with had domestic cleaning jobs, or no work at all. In Calvary Christian Center I
spoke with a number of Brazilian adult women, who do not take part in the formal labour market. They came to the Netherlands in order to take care of the children of a relative, or family member. In all of the cases I came across, this led to a conflict. Frequently these women have had to leave the house in which they had worked without any income and without a residency permit. Some of them live with old Brazilian or Cape Verdean women they met through the church, and earn a room, food and some pocket money, in return for their company. Others try to make some money in the informal labour market, mostly doing clandestine cleaning work. They often hire a room through the clandestine housing market. Cape Verdean men and women in both churches generally have lived for longer in the Netherlands and a have more established positions within Dutch society. They have stable jobs (in home care, childcare or education) and obtain housing through official housing channels.

3.5.3 Rotterdam and migrant churches

As was the case in other cities, the local authorities in Rotterdam paid very little attention to churches and Christian religious organisations, let alone the 110 migrant churches, or more, in the city (Calvert 2007: 7). Until recently there was minimal contact between urban authorities and religious institutions.

In 2005 however, the urban advisory commission, named ‘Multiculturele Stad’ (Multicultural City), came up with a suggestion to involve representatives of religious institutions in the process of improving social cohesion in the city of Rotterdam. The central question was whether beliefs or religion could be a connecting factor in a multicultural city such as Rotterdam. In 2006, this resulted in a study of the societal contribution of the daily work of Christian organisations and churches, taking the WMO as the underlying framework. NIM108 and Kaski109 conducted this study together, based on the

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108 NIM- Centrum voor Studie van Wereldchristendom en interreligieuze Betrekkingen (Research Centre for World Christianity and Interreligious Relationships)

109 Kaski Instituut voor Onderzoek en Advies over Religie en Samenleving (Research and Advisory Institute of Religion and Society)
societal profit approach, developed by Oikos in The Hague and Utrecht.\textsuperscript{110} Their conclusion was that the societal benefit of all churches in Rotterdam lies between 110 and 113 million Euros a year (Guerra, Glashouwer, and Kregting 2008: 7, 54-58). A selection of migrant churches has been included in the research, which led to the conclusion that there was no difference in societal benefit between ‘allochthonous’ and ‘autochthonous’ churches (ibid.: 54). The efforts made by migrant churches in terms of their collaboration with the urban authorities and between ‘allochthonous’ and ‘autochthonous’ churches are even higher than those of the ‘autochthonous’ churches (ibid.: 2). Therefore ‘Count your Blessings!,’ became the apt title of this research project. The study made the recommendation that ‘autochthonous’ churches should make greater efforts to collaborate with ‘allochthonous’ churches, for example, by creating a volunteer pool from which both types of churches can benefit, but also by providing professional education for migrant pastors and church workers in order to increase the number of paid workers in ‘allochthonous’ churches.

In my view, the conclusions of this study regarding ‘allochthonous’ churches were too optimistic, because it used quantitative research methods and (closed) questions. In the first place, the returned questionnaires, all in Dutch, show a relatively high representation of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, Western-European evangelical/Protestant and Dutch led evangelical/Pentecostal churches. There is a large group of non-western migrant churches that has not participated in the research because these churches did not complete the questionnaire. This was true of the two churches I studied. Secondly the closed questions of the survey needed to be answered with categorical answers, such as: good, reasonable or bad. These answers only offer a self-evaluation of the church, without conveying any additional information. Above all, the tenor of the information about migrant churches derived in relation with Dutch city authorities and autochthonous or established churches, does not resonate with the complexity of such an encounter as described in in-depth case studies. Hence, my suggestion is that the data and conclusions of this

\textsuperscript{110} Social Capitol approach: this approach measures the hours of work, done by church volunteers, which is classified as relevant for societal wellbeing. See for an extensive explanation (Scholten 2003).
approach should be read with caution. The results imply that the relationship between migrant and Dutch established churches is charitable. I will examine the problematic aspects of this premise in the next chapter.

3.6 The myth of ‘reversed mission’

It is said that non-Western Christian migrants in the Netherlands consider themselves as Christians who have a lot to offer to Dutch churches. They preach a gospel that brings personal and ethical salvation. They view their arrival in the Netherlands as a calling to liberate people from eternal hell. And because they perceive themselves as being ‘the haves,’ it is not surprising and even quite natural that they have their own opinions and judgements about what is going on in Dutch churches. Often, they perceive them as being half-hearted and unenthusiastic. Tom Marfo is one of the African pastors in the Netherlands who is intensely involved in developing relationships with Dutch churches. He is a board member of SKIN and makes a case for developing a fruitful relationship between Dutch or established and migrant churches. He says:

‘… But I wonder where the church is, while souls are dying around the church. So many people in the Netherlands do not know God. And the Christians just go and create a little heaven together in their church, close up and go home. I think that the church has become an institution and not an instrument to spread the Gospel ….’ (Van der Maas 2004: 157).

According to Marfo:

‘… On a few occasions, I have been invited to a church services to preach or to sing, but I noticed that some members did not feel at ease in the church, so I was not invited for a second time. My experience is that although on the surface some churches might be open to me, they are not really open in their hearts. I do not think that migrant churches and Dutch churches are coming together this moment. There are not many contacts in terms of worship. This has to do with stereotyping, fear and mindsets …’ (ibid.: 159).

From the perspective of pastors like Marfo, the literature about a ‘reverse mission’ taking place in Western Europe, due to the influx of non-western
Christian migrants, (such as, for instance, ‘The Next Christendom’), makes sense. It certainly is the aim of many Christian migrants and migrant churches to bring the gospel to the Dutch, German or British heathens (Ferrier 2002: 40-41; Van der Laan 2005: 67-81, 2006: 56; Währisch-Oblau 2006: 32-40, 2009; Kalu 2009; Adogame 2004), although not all of them are exponents of a ‘new’ Christianity (Bediako 2004: 30-40). Paul Freston, however, employs the term ‘reverse mission’ critically, stating that as a theoretical term it is used too eagerly, without a clear definition (2010). He poses the question of what the ‘reverse’ stands for. Are Japanese, when trying to convert Dutch, practicing reverse mission? Or does this only count for Nigerians evangelising the British, because the British Christianised them in an earlier epoch? Freston also asks questions concerning the success of non-western migrant churches in Western Europe, referring to considerations such as financial difficulties, incompatible worldviews, and negative perceptions about the countries from which they come.

Indeed, looking at the Western European or more specifically the Dutch attitude towards these attempts, it must be concluded that migrant churches are not welcomed as the bearers of something valuable that might widen or enrich the Dutch perception of life. In my view, nor are they bringing about a transformation or a shift within Dutch society that could sustain a comparison with what was going on in colonial processes of Christianisation. Neither is there any similarity with what is going on in countries like Mozambique, Vietnam or Botswana, where charismatic or evangelical Christianity from abroad is received as something that opens up national or regional boundaries by making converts aware of new ways of thinking. This process results in a critical reflection about their own traditions, cultures, or political situation, as I described in detail in chapter one. In those countries, even if governments try to limit these foreign influences through even stricter immigration policy, the local people involved see the presence of immigrant missionaries as being of benefit.

In the Netherlands, however, even well funded Nigerian churches that pride themselves on being attended by highly educated and well paid Nigerian expats, able to buy expensive church buildings in Amsterdam, and having the same reversed mission rhetoric and practices, are not able to win Dutch converts. Instead, they are negatively associated with women trafficking, drug
dealing, and money laundering (Knibbe 2009: 150-153). In a similar way, a
Ghanaian sister branch of the Dutch Seventh Day Adventists, in close contact
with their denomination in the Netherlands, does not have the ability to pass on
its authentic Christianity to the Dutch sister church (Koning 2009: 220-225).

However, there is actually one counter example that could be viewed as
reversed mission. The Nigerian Pastor, Sunday Aleyada, established a huge
Pentecostal church of ‘autochthonous’ Ukrainians in Ukraine, also has
‘autochthonous’ branches in several Western European countries. In the
Netherlands, the Pentecostal Berea church is affiliated with Sunday’s ‘Gods
Embassy of all Nations.’ After Berea collapsed as a consequence of financial
irregularities, which in turn caused personal losses to many adherents, three
Berea churches maintained their affiliation with ‘God’s Embassy of all Nations.’
In Utrecht, the church even adopted its name. Sunday Aleyada and his church
attracted attention from several social scientists (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Wanner
2007; Freston 2010).

Nevertheless, in my view, as this entire chapter shows, the Dutch
reaction towards newcomer churches is in fact disinterested. If any attention is
paid to these non-western Pentecostal immigrant churches and their missionary
ambitions, the tone describing their limited significance is more derisive than
pitying. In this sense, Dutch society is quite a unique transnational space.

3.6.1 Nevertheless: A missionary discourse

Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center have a similar perception of Dutch
society as many non-western migrant churches. They have heard of the
Netherlands as a historically Christian nation and are astonished about the lack
of interest in the gospel among Dutch people. In both churches I studied,
members asked me pressingly how it had come to this in the Netherlands. Their
own explanation mostly went in the direction of looking to the apparent wealth

111 Article in daily newspaper Trouw: ‘Asubiaro bekeert geen Nederlander,’ 26
September, 2007. Citation (translated from the Dutch): ‘Due to mission and
evangelisation many Africans are converted. Now they come to the ungodly West and
bring the gospel. But here they are stuck with it’ (ze raken het aan de straatstenen niet
kwijt).
of the country, its long history of peace and the prosperity of its citizens. For those reasons, in their eyes, Dutch people have become beguiled victims of their own good fortune. And before it was too late and God’s punishment would rescind all the blessings conferred earlier, the Dutch people should be evangelized. In sermons, the pastors of both churches often refer to ‘Bible-busting’ Dutch laws concerning abortion, euthanasia and homosexual marriage etc. as a patently obvious sign of the Dutch decadent path to apostasy. I did not hear any nuance in the hyperbolised depictions of the Netherlands in the sermons I witnessed. A remark made by a Brazilian Pastor is typical of what I often heard: ‘when I first came to Rotterdam, I knew immediately that this was the most sinful city I had ever visited in the world.’

Although individual believers did not seem questioning in their views of the Dutch apostasy, I did see that they also held positive opinions about Dutch society. Many spoke with appreciation about their children going to school from a very early age (in comparison with their home country), others discussed benefits of the democratic system in the Netherlands in comparison with their own country, or told me how they were helped by the Dutch health care system. In addition, I saw how living in the Netherlands made many of them aware of negative customs and behaviour in their homeland and how some people had become critical of them. For example when I had visited the Angolan consulate in Rotterdam for the first time and was not treated very politely, pastor João of Igreja Maná reacted in the following way:

‘Ah yes, that is Angola. It is so annoying, how those people behind the desk let you wait for hours and then, when they see a friend enter the waiting room, shout: come, I will assist you directly! And everybody accepts it! That is how Angolans treat Angolans. I have lived in the Netherlands for years now and am used to being helped when it is my turn, just like Dutch people! I really hate going to the consulate these days.’

To offer another example, a young woman in Calvary Christian Center told me that she would never be able to live in Cape Verde anymore. ‘I have become too Dutch,’ she said. ‘I hate it, when things cannot be done efficiently. There you always need to know someone, who knows someone, who knows someone, before you get things done.’
Nevertheless, every single migrant Christian believer introduced in my study, showed a deep conviction about having been called by God to bring the Gospel back to the Dutch heathens. Several of them mentioned the fact that their homeland had been Christianised by colonial powers and that the situation now had completely reversed. Their main thought is that ‘the Dutch have money and all the wealth of the world, but we have the Gospel.’ In that sense, in spite of their structural vulnerability, they all feel compelled to do better than those that they perceive to be godless, since with Christ ‘we are more than conquerors.’ As mentioned, this is a view shared by members of both churches.

3.7 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have made an initial analysis of the Netherlands as a transnational space. I have shown that this nation-state cannot be viewed as a virtual, neutral or innocent public space in which transnational networks such as Pentecostal churches exist freely. I started by discussing two vibrant debates, i.e. the immigration debate and the religion debate, which are shaped by a complex set of processes that transcend the borders of the nation-state. These debates produce dominant discourses to which both churches and their adherents are subjected and which permeate the consciousness and self-perceptions of migrants and the religious groups they belong to. Following this, I focused on Rotterdam, which can be considered a transnational space in its own right (Glick Schiller 2005b). Social ties, economic possibility and political power mechanisms become even more real in the lives of non-western migrants who aim to make a living there. Finally, the enthusiastic depiction of the emergence of non-western migrant churches in the Netherlands or Western Europe as ‘reversed mission’ must be drawn into question. The Netherlands as a transnational space does not offer the same opportunities for openness to reflection on local traditions and customs, as countries like Mozambique Ghana, Vietnam, and Japan do. This will become even clearer in the next chapter, where the local church building itself will be examined as a transnational space.
4 THE CHURCH BUILDING AS A TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

4.1 Introduction

Sunday July 1, 2006. When I arrive at the church building where Igreja Maná holds its church service, I find the church crowd standing outside on the square. I join several young women I have met before and ask them what is going on.

‘We cannot enter the building, because another church has rented it now,’ they say.

‘Do you know what happened?’, I ask.

‘It has something to do with the rent, we have heard. But we don’t really know. You will have to ask the pastor,’ they answer.

‘Where is the Pastor?’ I ask.

‘He is inside, trying to find another church building for us.’ For almost an hour we wait. Some people seem to be through with waiting and leave. Then the pastor comes outside and tells us that he found a church for this afternoon. Slowly the crowd moves to the tram stop in order to travel to the new address.

‘What is going to happen now,’? I ask the pastor.

‘Well, we are going to praise the Lord. We have no choice but to take it from there. At least we have found a place for today.’

In the previous chapter, I depicted the Netherlands as a transnational space, arguing that it is shaped by political, historical and cultural processes that transcend territorial boundaries. Starting at the abstract level of state policies, by addressing specific debates in the public domain, I ended up describing Rotterdam as a concrete space particularly shaped by transnational processes. The migrants who belong to the two churches I base my research on, live in Rotterdam and hence have to deal with this transnational space in their daily lives. Simultaneously, they take part in shaping it, by being involved in all kinds of transnational networks and social relationships.
In this chapter, I shift my analysis to evaluating an even smaller transnational space: the local church building. Here encounters between real people happen at the most tangible level. I pose the question of how the church building, a transnational space at the local level, is involved in the cross-cultural encounter between churches of different denominational, historical and (trans)national backgrounds. In order to show just what is at stake, I analyse only one case, in order to gain an insight into the complexity of sharing a transnational space with others. The next chapters are comparative, and will focus specifically on the differences between the two churches.

The case study, foreshadowed in the fragment above, will form the point of departure in this chapter. We will see that within the transnational lies the potential for conflict. In the local setting, transnationalism comes to the foreground in its most outspoken way. In the first section of this chapter, I describe a conflict arising within the church building. I discuss how the conflict developed and ended with the termination of the rental agreement by the council of the church that owns the building. I call this church the ‘Holy Chapel,’ and it is a Western European Presbyterian church. The church that finally had to move out is Igreja Maná. In the second section, I analyse the conflict as a cross-cultural and transnational encounter in which the materiality of the church building is the central point of analysis (Smit 2009a: 182-202). I argue that theological differences are at stake in the ways that the building is perceived as a place of worship, but that these differences themselves have not been driving the conflict. Differences in aesthetic sensibilities, in relation to architecture, materials and beauty, differences in emotive responses, as well as differing perceptions of the relationship between building and human, strongly influenced the development of the conflict. In addition, differences in unconscious morals of conduct at the level of hygienic seem to have added a significant dimension to the processes of ‘Othering.’

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112 This chapter is based on two earlier published articles by the author (Smit 2009a, 2009b).

113 As mentioned in chapter two, the name of the church is fictitious. The pastor of the church gave me the information and correspondence relating to the conflict, on the condition of anonymity.
In the third section, I interpret the conflict from another perspective, namely the relationship between the two church communities in terms of reciprocity (cf. Smit 2009b: 83-116, 2009c: 45-83). I pose the question of whether the rental issue, which, based on first impressions seemed to be the breaking point in the conflict, was the real cause of the failure to ‘give and take,’ between the two churches. Starting from Mauss’s classical concept of the ‘gift’ and the work of others who have reflected on reciprocity, I argue that in the end, there was a lack of mutual recognition that resulted in the failure to see the gift that was offered. In my conclusion, I explore the consequences of viewing the church as a transnational space.

4.2 The conflict

On Sunday July 1, 2006, due to a misunderstanding regarding the rental period, Igreja Maná found the church door closed. Another church community had already taken possession of the church building by the time Igreja Maná usually held its service. The rental contract with the new church took effect from this first Sunday of July.

Later when I asked him to, the pastor of the Holy Chapel told me what, in his opinion, had constituted the ins and outs of the entire process. He said that when representatives of Igreja Maná had contacted him to hire the church building three years earlier, he had been very happy to help them out with space, just as he had with other migrant churches. He had not asked too many questions about the way this particular church carried out its practices. But soon it became clear that the adherents of this church produced more noise than those of the other churches that used the building. Little by little, Igreja Maná also began to make more use of the building, which in the end led to an almost daily intensive occupation. Meetings were held on the first three evenings of the week for Bible study, on Thursday evening for Praise and Worship, on Friday evening for intercession with exorcism, on Saturday afternoon rehearsal were held and on Sunday from four to nine p.m., the reunion service itself. In the view of the proprietors, the way the church adherents used the building caused damage and neglect, visibly so in the case of the holes made in the wooden floor of the church hall, caused by worship dancing in stiletto heels (Smit 2009b: 93).
Over the years, the pastor of the Holy Chapel talked many times with the Igreja Maná pastor about these problems and they always managed to solve issues in a cooperative way.

The pastor of the Holy Chapel himself had no problem at all with the migrant pastor and considered Igreja Maná a good church to work with. The church council of the Holy Chapel, however, gradually became more irritated by to these kinds of matters, which in their view, were too numerous. The pastor’s impression was that the elders of Igreja Maná must not have sensed the urgency of the complaints, because these were always communicated via the Igreja Maná pastor and not directly. In addition, the pastor said that he had needed increase the rent substantially, because the heavy usage of the church building by Igreja Maná created higher costs. This he claimed, resulted in a letter being sent to the migrant church, in which all the points of dissatisfaction were outlined and the rental increase announced.

Here follows the first letter sent to Igreja Maná by the pastor of the Holy Chapel:

To the leaders of Igreja Maná.
Your church in Rotterdam is using the church building of …………….. at …….
While we welcome this, we are also very concerned about a number of issues. They need to be resolved properly if we are going to continue our relationship.

1. The heavy use of the building (often seven days per week) is not reflected in the monthly rent amount that you pay. You should pay more or use the building less.
2. We need to be fair to others who need the use of the church (e.g. for weddings) and ensure that the building is at these times available.
3. Your time-keeping is poor. Frequently your members arrive earlier or stay later than the time agreed. This makes it difficult for others to use the building.
4. Some of your services are very noisy which make it difficult for other meetings to take place or to allow you to have an overnight prayer meeting. Eight people are sleeping in other parts of the building and

Written in English.
you also disturb the local residents.

5. The wearing of high-heel shoes is a problem in the church where there is much jumping on the wooden floor.

6. No food should be taken upstairs, but we frequently find discarded items of food or wrappings in the bins which do attract flies and mice.

7. The clock in the lower hall is regularly removed from the wall and taken upstairs (without permission), and on some occasions it has been lost or damaged.

8. The magazine rack of the church is used by you (without permission) to display books and cassettes for sale. The magazines that are removed are often damaged or not put back properly.

9. Black [trash RS] bags that are filled by your church are not removed and some parts of the building are not left in a clean state (e.g. crèche).

10. On many occasions, there is nobody present at the front door of the church when it is left open. This is a security concern.

Many of these concerns are about respect for other people that use the same building. We expect you to resolve these issues satisfactorily. A new contract stating times and conditions of use needs to be agreed. Our idea of a fair monthly rent would be ..... euros for Sunday and ....euros for weekdays Monday -Thursday and .... euros Friday -Saturday.

Signed by the pastor on behalf of the church council.

At this stage in the process, the national bishop of Igreja Maná, responsible for all Igreja Maná churches in the Netherlands, intervened. He answered the letter written by the Holy Chapel, reacting to all the complaints, point by point. This letter of reply did not go down very well with the church council of the Holy Chapel, particularly because it expressed criticisms of the Holy Chapel. In his letter, the national bishop of Igreja Maná expressed his disapproval over the fact that the Holy Chapel rented the church building not only to other churches, but also for the purposes of celebrating worldly events, such as weddings and parties.
See below the letter of reply from the national bishop of Igreja Maná:

......(name of the pastor),
Before everything, the fondation ......, want to thank u, for allow us to use your facilities for our activities.
To anserwer your letter we want came clean with some points that you have mension:
1° Timetable: We admite that we have not followed our part of the deal, is that why, from now we going to be carefull about it, if we need more time, before of after the service we are going to deal in time with u.
2° When u say that we are noise of luide, is true, couse we live like the book psalm say, to prise the Lord with happiness, and our service is like this, like any Church who prise the Lord Jesus Crist, couse psalm 150 says to celebrite the Lord, with happiness and all kind of nstrument of music, with our hands en voice.
Still in our point of eyes is that "bad" to mix religios services with party with luid and noise music in the same time, this is what we think that disrespectfull is.
We understand, when someone complains the noise in time of our service, otherwys is religios perseguition, probably no one complens about the noise of other party makes.
3° About the hils on bad condition, we have taken precaution to avoid it, but: the some information schould be given to others who rents the church also; seem's to be all charges is on us, to be the bigste group can not say that we schould take all responsibility, on all things that happend on the facilities.
About this subject, we have told to our members all about to be carefull with floor of church, but we remember that the church is a public place, where all kind of people comes in and is completely impossiball to have 100% control.
4° Food on the main room, did happened once on Christmas and was with, the permition from on of your members responsable of church. We did take \ the food upstairs only to keep, couse douwn stairs was been used.

115 This letter, written in English by the national bishop, contains many grammatical errors. The members of the church council found the letter hilarious, the pastor told me. This led him conclude that the language barrier had played a certain role in the decline of this relationship.
But we never did it again.

5° The trash, we want to come clean, that we have groups to clean and; collect the trash on end of our service, but who is before us, they leave the trash, and we are the one who have to collect and clean it.

Most of time is impossible to collect the trash and to take outside, cause de door is locked, is that why we can't take the bags outside, we want to ask access to the door to put the trash outside.

6° Since the time u have told us not to use the clock without permission, we don't use anymore. But we will make a favor to replace with a new one to often to the church.

7° The books: What we where doing is only collect them from the floor, who have been left by other groups before us, we don't want talk bad about others, but is the true. 'If they are dirty (magazine) and been on the floor, we put on the trash, — And from now we are going to put it (magazine) back.

8° Missing someone in the door: We informe that we always have someone:

Recently in one of our last meeting on Friday, the invited from party down stairs, they occupied the hall of the door, smoking, drinking and we had to leave the door. With it, we want remember u, that the Church Should be holy place for party for GOD and to his children, and not to party for someone who don't even love of known GOD, with bad things like cigar, alcool, and I don't known els.....

To be truly we have been in the church Saturday, and we have found trash almost everywhere, we smeling very bad.

We did come with the conclusion, it didn't matter the way that we did found the church and we didn't complain. That was our main mistake, after if we don't left in good condition all the charges going to be on us.

From now we will report always that we find something wrong to protect us from the charges.

9° The last point we want to say that we will do better on the situation that we have to deal with us to be faithfull to our obligations, cause we are not perfect we make mistake also.

10° Review de contract: We agree on that, and we agree with amount of €..... like u say on the letter.

[Signed by the name of the church]

First the kingdom of God and his justice, and all the rest will be added.
Meanwhile, the national bishop of Igreja Maná negotiated directly with the pastor and council of the Holy Chapel about the rental increase, which he considered too high. This verbal contact with the national bishop of Igreja Maná, who repeatedly reiterated his criticisms, was an unpleasant experience for the pastor and the council of the Holy Chapel. The pastor of the Holy Chapel reacted to the letter from the national bishop of Igreja Maná, on behalf of the church council. In his letter he gave Igreja Maná the choice of either paying the increased rent, limiting their activities, or leaving.

Here follows the final letter sent to Igreja Maná by the pastor of the Holy Chapel:\footnote{Written in English.}

\begin{quote}
Dear Sir,
Thank you for your letter of 20 February. I discussed it fully with the leadership of the church last night. Unfortunately you do not seem to understand us well. We notice that there is a clash of values, and you did not hear or interpret correctly the financial costs of renting the building. To put it briefly, the monthly costs of using the building is …. € for every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, …. € for every Friday and Saturday, and …. € for Sundays. By my calculation, that means you should pay …. € per month for your current use of this city-centre building. It is possible, of course, to reduce the amount by using the building less. Another consideration must be to move to another building (if you can find one that is suitable) in order for ….(name of the church) to pursue its activities.

We cannot continue talking while the costs are mounting. Therefore we require you pay …. € per month for each of the next three months (April, May, June). At the end of June, we will review the situation. If you cannot do this you must either reduce your activities in the building or move elsewhere. We are glad that you are witnessing to Jesus Christ which is one of our chief aims. It is our desire that all who use these premises will respect other people who are different from them and contribute realistically to the costs of maintenance.

Yours, sincerely
\end{quote}
The national bishop of Igreja Maná made a final offer. He asked to hire the complete first floor of the building for an annual lump sum. The church council did not expect any good to come of this. Finally, the bishop sent a furious letter containing the message that Igreja Maná was planning to leave for another building and would reduce its activities substantially in the meantime. The pastor of the Holy Chapel then delivered an ultimatum to the migrant church concerning the end of the rental period. The church had to leave on June 15. When pastor João of Igreja Maná did not succeed in finding another building, the pastor of the Holy Chapel allowed the church to stay one week longer. One day during that week, he asked pastor João how he was doing in finding other accommodation. Pastor João answered: ‘In fact I’m feeling pretty hopeless at the moment. Today I wasted 200 Euros on phone calls without any result.’ Out of compassion, the pastor of the Holy Chapel offered him the use of his own office for making those phone calls. This went on for another week until the Sunday on which the new church entered the building. The pastor of the Holy Chapel did not know how it could have happened that pastor João was not informed about this. He told me that his personal contact with this local pastor had always been pleasant and that it was his impression that pastor João would have been prepared to pay the higher rent if he had had the authority to decide in this matter.

At the end of our conversation, the pastor of the Holy Chapel told me that after this, the council had said: ‘Anyhow, in the future we should rent our building only to churches that share our own values.’ When I asked him if he thought differences in values had played a role day to day, he looked at me and said: ‘How interesting that you ask me this, because the answer is ‘no.’ Neither the church members nor the pastor had ever said anything critical to any one of us.’ I finished our conversation by telling him that to me it seemed striking that it was the issue of ‘values’ that the council had ended up becoming stuck on. The conflict and the breaking of the lease seemed to have been about the rental increase, and the relationship between this and the (extensive) use of the building. In my view, this intriguing use of the notion of ‘values’ implied that such a prosaic conflict might have many more layers.
4.3 The church building, a material source of conflict

This story illustrates how a conflict was provoked by a difference in perception regarding the building as a material object. In a second conversation I had with the pastor of the Holy Chapel, this aspect came to the foreground even more. The church building held quite a different meaning to both churches. To the members of the Holy Chapel, the building symbolises the community. It is the place where the church is formed and shaped, and it even represents the self-identification of the church and its relationship with the surrounding world. Therefore it is cherished as a place that needs to be open to the world. It shelters the homeless as well as offering cultural initiatives in the neighbourhood. Respectful treatment of the building and modest claims over its facilities are regarded as an outward sign of respect for human beings, for the church and for God. To the members of the Holy Chapel, negligent treatment of the building and the infringement of agreements about its use, signify that core values such as ‘respect’ and ‘honesty’ are being undermined.

The adherents of Igreja Maná in contrast, view the church building as a thing that derives its value from the fact that human beings make it a place of worship. From their point of view, a church can do no better than being constantly used for worship; the bodily presence of worshippers sanctifies the floor, the walls and the benches. Accordingly, the signs of wear and tear are like medals of honour. The more the better! Of course, agreements are necessary and should be followed. But stretching the rules, or forgetting about time in the presence of the Holy Spirit, could not be further from showing disrespect or dishonesty. Anyone is invited to join in and celebrate with them. The building, which Igreja Maná considers a place that derives its value from elsewhere, has personal and inalienable value for the Holy Chapel, the proprietor of the building.

4.3.1 Different theological perceptions

This difference in perspective stems in the first place from the different ecclesiological origins of both churches. The Holy Chapel belongs to a Calvinist or Reformed tradition, in which the church building theologically has a different signification than it does in the Pentecostal movement. Both traditions oppose
the idea of the church building as a sanctuary (*domus dei*), a place where a deity dwells permanently and which is materially organised according to levels of holiness, related to proximity to the deity and divine power (H.W. Turner 1979: 11-12). Both herald the idea that the church is a meeting place (*domus ecclesiae*), where there is no organised holiness or permanent special divine presence (ibid.), repeating an earlier shift that Christianity made from the Judaic idea of the Temple. Similarly in the Roman Catholic tradition, church buildings gradually became more sacred, as they became the burial places of martyrs. Accordingly a typical liturgical organisation developed directed towards the altar and tabernacle as the ‘sacred centre’ (Uytenbogaardt 1998: 359-371). The Reformation broke this trend, although pragmatic attitudes saw only moderate modification of the internal spaces within Roman Catholic church buildings (H.W. Turner 1979: 214-226).

In the Netherlands, reformed communities hired factories or other available buildings for their gatherings, as Abraham Kuyper remembers in his theological reflections on the church service (Kuyper 1911: 111). As a result of this, newly built Protestant churches were rare in Western Europe, until the nineteenth century. Kuyper, one of the Dutch exponents of Calvinism, showed a clearly Calvinist reflection on the role of the church building, by stating that it is nothing more than an earthly court for a heavenly ‘tabernacle’ (ibid.: 106-110). Nevertheless, in his view the building played an important role in leading hearts to heaven. It was the appropriate place from which to hear ‘the word’ during the church service, but it was also the neighbourhood space that would facilitate activities that would sustain collective daily life. I see a similarity between this attitude towards the church building with that shown by the pastor of the Holy Chapel. In our conversations, I did not ask explicitly for his theological views on the building, but his spontaneous sentiments resembled Calvinist thinking, in addressing its importance for the people, the homeless and the neighbourhood. He never referred to the building as sacred or as a sanctuary.

Pentecostalism, having developed from several protestant traditions, developed a similar pragmatism concerning the use of buildings (Gold 2006: 74-88). While renting retail outlets and other secular buildings, Pentecostal churches initially took over the traditional word-centred style of church design. Over time these churches changed their design to accommodate their own
Pentecostal theological emphases, such as worship and ministries, including healing and liberation prayer. However, many Pentecostal churches, and especially migrant churches, still are in the situation of gathering in a school, a cinema or factory, without the possibility to redesign these structures permanently. Without explicitly reflecting theologically on church design as such, they are aware of the need to change worldly places into a place of worship by covering up worldly things, like bars and inappropriate paintings, with banners and a cross. Besides this, prayers are said to purify the building of evil, based on a dualistic worldview in which there is a strong division between places and people filled by the Holy Spirit and those that stand under the dark forces of the opposing spiritual world.

Especially in Pentecostal churches in many African countries, like Igreja Maná in Angola, a strong sense exists that there is a local susceptibility towards evil spiritual forces (Meyer 1998a, 2006a; De Witte 2008). Although both Reformed and Pentecostal thinking opposes the idea of the church as a sanctuary, there is a difference in their theological perception of the building. Pentecostal thinking requires worship spaces to go through a process of consecration. The (desired) intensity of divine presence in the Holy Spirit is viewed as being dependent on the level of sacredness of the place, the latter being realised through the believers’ praying and the capacity of this prayer to expell evil spirits. Manifest in the adherents’ bodies, bringing about emotional expressions, enthusiasm, bodily healing, and liberation from evil spirits, the intensity of the Holy Spirit is experienced. If these manifestations do not occur, purification prayers are intensified.

These theological differences played a role in the conflict described above, in so far as the Holy Chapel’s openness to the world did not harmonise with the need for consecration felt by Igreja Maná believers.

4.3.2 Differences in aesthetic appraisal

Apart from the theological differences that were involved in the conflict between the two churches, we must look at another aspect of the dynamics between a building and the people, namely its capacity to influence social relationships, including power relationships, and aesthetic sensibilities and related emotions.
A powerful example of this capacity to transform can be seen in relation to the revival period in North America when Charles Finny turned an amphitheatre into a church (Kilde 2002: 55-65). Jeanne Halgren Kilde argues that the internal design of that church building changed the power relationship between the preacher and the audience, into a more interactive process, the latter being invited to be expressive and to respond bodily. Eventually this shift in emphasis towards the individual believer, endorsed by Finny’s revival message and the spatial organisation of the church building, created a community of self-identified Christians, who invested their new awareness in social political engagement. As soon as the church came under pressure, caused by the US economic panic in 1837, internal controversies arose, fuelled by a mix of social classes. This turned the building into a critical space that catalysed an internal political struggle against slavery (Kilde 2002: 58-59).

As said, Abraham Kuyper, a vigorous neo-Calvinist, gave full acknowledgment to the aesthetic power of a beautiful church building (1911: 140-150). The Dutch architect B.T. Boeyenga, who adopted Kuyper’s ideals, became famous for his characteristic exteriors and warm and cheerful interiors, with bright colours, beautiful ornaments and stained glass windows (Grootenboer 2006: 58-77).

But as Finny’s amphitheatre already showed, a church building possesses not only the capacity to touch the individual heart, but to constitute religious practice, ritual experience and interaction between leaders, adherents and those on the threshold, in a dynamic and enabling way. This constitutive capacity is not only expressed theologically, but is manifest aesthetically (Coleman and Collins 2006: 41-42). In this sense, the church building of the Holy Chapel has evoked an aesthetic interest among the church community over time. It was built after World War Two, after the first church building had been destroyed by the bombing of Rotterdam in 1940. Thanks to the financial support of church members, who numbered about a hundred at the time, the church could be built free of loans or debts.

The minister of the day gave a description of the church that resonates with his self-perception of the church as a community that is connected to the world. In a letter he described the church’s endeavour to create a building that ‘could become a spiritual and social centre for our scattered assembly and many
visitors, [...] who were always welcome to participate in their fellowship.’ With this concept in mind, the church asked the architect to create a plan for a Church and halls that could be used not only for worship on Sundays, but during the week as well, in order to intensify the fellowship by meetings of clubs and societies within the congregation. In another part of his description, the minister referred not only to the functional aspects of the building, which should reflect the church’s identity, but he also described the church from an aesthetic point of view, expressing the need for delicacy, beauty and attractiveness. He described the ornaments and decorations for the stage of an upper room, and these inspired church members to perform biblical dramas. He mentioned windows that would produce a sense of airiness, the remarkable light of the church, by day as well as at night. This letter shows a warm appreciation of the material aspects of the building, the walls, the pillars, the pews and the floor. It spoke of how the brilliant colour of the mahogany pews and pulpit would combine nicely with the cream walls and table.\textsuperscript{117}

For the Holy Chapel, the aesthetic design of the building symbolises the community. It is the place where the church is formed and shaped. It even provides the basis for the self-identification of the church and its relationship with the surrounding world. Over time, a relationship has emerged between the building and the church congregation, who love its walls, its floor, its colours.

It is conceivable that the people of Igreja Maná did not have this kind of emotional attachment to a building with which they had only a temporary relationship, merely appreciating its utilitarian value. Moreover, the Angolan Igreja Maná church in Luanda, and the Lisbon Igreja Maná mother church, do not show much affinity with design qualities or art, as far as the building itself is concerned. Nevertheless, Igreja Maná shows a greater interest in aesthetics in relation to worship performance, stage design during conferences, and cultural theatre performances. The temple in Luanda outdoes many American mega-churches in terms of the use of sound and television equipment.

In Roman Catholicism, aesthetics were closely related with ‘holiness,’ as the altars and tabernacles of many famous cathedrals demonstrate. Although

\textsuperscript{117} This letter is placed on the website of the church. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the church, I do not quote it here.
the Reformation tried to break with the idea of the church as sanctuary, as described above, in many cases this nexus between aesthetics and a sense of holiness still exists. For instance, in the case of contemporary African Independent churches, many of them having emerged out of Protestant mission churches, such as the Nigerian Cherubim and Seraphim church and Jackson Hlungwani’s altars. In the Cherubim and Seraphim church, designs of prayer garments are said to create a sense of holiness in the ones who wear them. These designs were revealed in dreams, believed to be communicated by the divine, before they received their material form (Renne 2009: 77-78). Jackson Hlungwani’s site with his art and design was

‘orchestrated as a pilgrimage through a holy place and back again. Following Turner’s\textsuperscript{118} notion of pilgrimage as a journey in which the traveller moves through various stages of separation from and reaggregation into normal social life, one could see Hlungwani’s architectural structure as a ‘liminal’ space containing both ancestral sanction and Christian spiritual authority with mystery concentrated on the two altars at its heart’ (Nettleton 2009: 58).

Although Kuyper insisted that the aesthetic is not holy in itself, these examples show that the distinction is not always so clear. Harold Turner’s criticism of the Reformed attempts to change the church building into a genuine ‘meeting place,’ was directed at the desire to create specially designed places for the sacraments and preaching, which he saw as ‘creating an atmosphere of sanctity ’ (H.W. Turner 1979: 257) that blurs the distinction between the domus dei and the domus ecclesiae.

Because the high emotions arising from the conflict discussed in this chapter were so closely related to tactile and emotive aspects of the building, I suggest that while the core members of the Holy Chapel might not consider their building a sanctuary in a theological sense, in an emotional and material sense they do. Here I claim that aesthetic considerations and beauty can evoke a sense of holiness. From the Holy Chapel’s side, this emotional ‘sanctification’ of the building catalysed the conflict with Igreja Maná far more than theological

\textsuperscript{118}Victor Turner (1978).
differences ever did. This brings me to my last point in this analysis of the material dimension in this conflict.

4.3.3 Different standards of purity and pollution

From a material point of view, the conflict is mainly conveyed through the use of words like ‘damage’, ‘food’ and ‘rubbish,’ words related to the tactile and sensory aspects of the building. The Holy Chapel council experiences this as Igreja Maná ‘not having the same values,’ since for Holy Chapel, food and rubbish represent ‘matter out of place’ (Douglas 1966: 48), informed by its members’ aesthetic relationship with the building. Mary Douglas developed her famous concept to explain the coexistence of purity and danger within different societal contexts, showing that in all of them, there exists a particular mechanism that is capable of ‘excluding the Other.’ Others have criticised its presumed universality and neutrality of this view by focussing on historical cross-cultural settings like colonialism, where these mechanisms led to painful processes between the ‘superior clean’ and the ‘inferior dirty’ (Boddy 2005: 168-189; Durham 2005: 190-212). Notwithstanding a broad Calvinist resistance against a spiritual ‘elite,’ by heralding the sovereignty of each individual human being, the societal order, including respect for the dignitaries within the church building, should be honoured (Kuyper 1911: 130-140). Standing in the same tradition, Presbyterian churches in North America honoured the bourgeoisie with luxurious rented pews (Kilde 2002: 24). I suggest therefore that the building of the Holy Chapel, with its material qualities, forms part in what Bernice Martin calls the ‘life world’ of a religious movement. This means that it identifies and enacts itself with and is recognised through its ‘distinctive, materialized and embodied aesthetics.’ (2006: 145). Its impact ‘always operates through the sensations of the feeling, perceiving and thinking body’ (ibid.: 146).

Referring to the conflict itself, discussed here in its material dimension, I suggest that this embodied aesthetic still exists in relation to the ways western churches in general perceive their beautiful and rich buildings as being part of who they are. This then becomes the lens to judge and evaluate the Other, in this case the Angolan adherents of Igreja Maná. I am convinced that our perception of the Other is determined by our senses, more than by our rational thinking. I base this view on Jojada Verrips’ plea for the use of the Aristotelian
concept of *aisthesis* in anthropological studies, which refers to *all* the senses’ capacity to gain knowledge of the surrounding world, whereas in the western world sight and hearing have been classified as of a higher order than tactile senses, such as taste and touch. Even more important is the idea that in social groups, social classes or ethnic and religious groups, aesthetic experiences are formed or put to sleep, which Verrips calls ‘an-aisthetized.’ In his view, the social-cultural mechanisms of exclusion should be studied from this point of view as well (2007: 27-33). Because this conflict is part and parcel of a broader phenomenon of the relationships between established and especially African migrant churches in the Netherlands and abroad, in my view, the constantly emerging issues of food and rubbish point to a broader cultural stereotyping of Africans by Europeans as being ‘incorrigibly dirty’ (Ligeon 2003; Durham 2005: 191).

Let us now turn to Igreja Maná and its own standards of purity and danger. Departing from Mary Douglas’ concept, it is clear that through the eyes of Igreja Maná believers, the soiling of the church building stems from different actions. This is shown in the way the church is upset by the fact that non-believers are allowed to feast, drink and smoke in the church building. Although the Holy Chapel is apparently satisfied as long as the church is left spotless after a party, Igreja Maná nevertheless considers the church polluted by this activity. This pollution is of a different order, a spiritual order, and is seen to endanger the spiritual power and presence of God in the Church. With reference to the notion of susceptibility of the building, similar to the human body for evil spirits, this renting practice of the Holy Chapel must be perceived as horrifying and literally dangerous. Igreja Maná calls this: ‘abrir as portas para o Diabo’: to open doors for the Devil.\(^{119}\) It is not the cigarette ash, or the smell of spilt beer on the church floor in itself that pollutes the building, but a rebellious spirit makes people enemies of God by doing things that are considered forbidden, a spirit that has been allowed to enter the church and unleash its powers. I recall that several Igreja Maná believers told me that the Holy Spirit cannot work in the Netherlands, because bad spirits have too much room to move in this country. I suspect that they though that bad spirits had free reign at Holy Chapel.

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\(^{119}\) This expression is used in each and every sermon, book and DVD of Igreja Maná. It correlates with every type of sin.
Considering all this, it would make sense that when Angolan church members encounter difficulties in the Holy Chapel, like a closed door (as they mentioned in the letter), when they want to empty their garbage, they might accept the fact that they have to leave the garbage inside the building. They might not feel this as disrespecting the building, due to their limited aesthetic affinity with its material dimension. What they wholeheartedly protested against were wedding parties, although the building would have been cleaned afterwards. From their perspective Igreja Maná leaders do not perceive the Holy Chapel to be a proper church, or at least not one that is genuinely Christian: ‘We want to remember [remind] you that the church should be a holy place…..’ In other words, the church, perceived under these conditions it is not as it should be. Looking at these differing perceptions of purity and pollution, in this case, within a cross-cultural setting, there exists a clash that resides deeper than at the discursive level, since our deepest concerns go hand in hand with awkwardness, shame and silence (Elias 1978: 86-87).

4.4 The relationship between the two churches in terms of reciprocity

Based on the sentiments expressed by the pastor of the Holy Chapel, one could conclude that the common sense view of give and take, important in any relationship, had gotten out of balance. For a time, Igreja Maná was allowed to use the building of the Holy Chapel and pay rent in return, all of this by mutual agreement. Apparently the Holy Chapel held a certain view regarding what constituted reasonable and righteous usage. As the story goes, it appears that Igreja Maná did not attempt to uphold this unspoken equilibrium. It used the building for longer than the allocated time, it used facilities not included in the rental agreement, and took up even more ‘space’ by making too much noise. All of this annoyed the council members of the Holy Chapel. As a consequence, time after time the pastor of the Holy Chapel needed to talk to pastor João of Igreja Maná. These conversations resulted in new arrangements, although the arrangements did not seem to last for long or were only reluctantly implemented across the whole community. The rent became unrealistic; it was too little to reasonably compensate Holy Chapel for the constant use of the
building. Over this issue both parties needed to come to a new agreement. And there it faltered. Igreja Maná refused to pay the rent increase. Thus: the whole picture shows a one-sided imbalance of a relationship that should have been based on give and take. The Holy Chapel stipulated reasonable requirements that were not met by Igreja Maná until the relationship broke down. However, a closer look at the communication in writing between the two parties highlights a few other things.

The first thing that attracted my attention was that the first letter written by the Holy Chapel was rather exaggerated, compared with the verbal evaluation offered later by the pastor, during which he concluded that the church had always been good to work with. This letter showed no appreciation whatsoever for this migrant church. It contained words like ‘honest’ and ‘respect,’ the effect of which was to imply that the migrant church had not acted honestly or respectfully. The conversation was all about what ‘is’ or ‘is not allowed.’ This letter was written in a business-like manner, as if Holy Chapel felt no affection at all towards Igreja Maná. It did not state that both churches shared anything in common, and there was no reference to the fact that Igreja Maná was a sister church, or even a church at all.

Secondly, it is noticeable that Igreja Maná in its letter of reply did address the Holy Chapel as a partner with the same calling: as a church. The letter referred several times to shared ground: ‘do we not have the same calling to serve God?’ The letter also started with a word of thanks. It replied systematically to the points raised by Holy Chapel and stated that Igreja Maná was not the only tenant in the building. Last in line to use the church most days, it had had to contend with the mess that other groups had made earlier. At this point Igreja Maná sees itself as having been forced to act in a less than big-hearted manner by reporting the behaviour of other users. The church accepted some criticism and promised to mend its ways. The clock would have been replaced. And yes, Igreja Maná made comments about the fact that the Holy Chapel rented out the building for weddings and parties, even to people who ‘do not even love God.’ But this criticism had a particular context: the migrant church wondered why it received complaints about noise, when weddings and parties are noisy too. And from this the most worrying issue followed: how could a church building be made available for such ‘unholy things’? Igreja Maná
seemed to experience a double injustice here: its own characteristic way of being a church was not recognised, in spite of whole-hearted efforts to follow the Scripture and to honour God, while partygoers, in smoking and drinking were accorded freedom and rights. It was regarding this point that Igreja Maná called the Holy Chapel to account: is a church supposed to sanction this behaviour?

Thirdly, the manner in which Holy Chapel reacted to these comments is striking. The letter of reply made no comment in relation to the content of Igreja Maná’s points of critique. Furthermore, there was no acknowledgement of the trouble Igreja Maná had experienced as a result of being inconvenienced by other users of the building. Finally, a reaction to the context in which Igreja Maná comments on the commercial exploitation of the building is absent. Instead, the church council jumped to the conclusion that ‘there is a clash of values’ and that Igreja Maná ‘does not seem to understand us well.’

4.4.1 Mauss’s concept of the Gift

Looking to the matter of the imbalance in the relationship between Igreja Maná and the Holy Chapel, the question arises as to whether the outward conflict about rules of behaviour and rental increase was really representative what had been going on. On second thoughts, there might have been an imbalance in reciprocity at the level of how the relationship itself is construed and interpreted or felt. But if this was the case, what caused this imbalance? Mary Douglas’ introduction to the famous essay by Marcel Mauss about ‘The Gift’ might offer some insights. Douglas states that charity creates wounds and that the recipients of charity do not like their givers most of the time (Douglas 1990: vii). The destructive aspect of charity is that it limits the giver from receiving in turn, as a consequence of which the gift is placed outside the existing social rules and bonds that balance out human relationships. Meanwhile, however, from the perspective of the receiver, the idea of a free gift that demands nothing in return, is an illusion. As Douglas puts it (ibid.: vii-viii), the receiver will always feel a debt and accordingly will not consider himself equal to the giver.

Although the relationship between Igreja Maná and the Holy Chapel cannot be defined as a charity relationship, after all it was a business arrangement, I suspect that nevertheless, there was a one-sidedness that
resembled charity. Besides business motive, the Holy Chapel’s willingness to make the building available for migrant churches was inspired by the idea of helping them out. As stated in the previous chapter, many migrant churches do experience difficulty in finding proper premises, often caused by the lack of means to do so. If they just stuck to the rules and paid their rent, nothing else was expected from them in this relationship. Except from rent, the Holy Chapel was not supposed to receive anything in return. The interesting thing about Mauss’s theory, however, is that he breaks through the illusion of charity by stating that ultimately the free gift always includes the expectation of reciprocity (1950; 1990: 3). Mauss understood the process of giving, receiving and returning a gift as a constitutive element in what he calls Archaic societies, set in train by the thought that everything exists to be passed on in order to create an ongoing balance in accountability and responsibility between coexisting human beings. This ongoing balance is shaped by the fact that in the act of reciprocating, the original giver ultimately becomes the latest receiver, which makes him indebted to the giver in his own turn. And thus the gift exchange goes on and on.

Marcel Mauss does not discuss or reflect explicitly on one significant aspect of this process that I consider to be extremely important to understanding this particular conflict. In his description of the gift exchange process, the idea of what I would call, ‘role-exchange’ arises. This means that at the moment that a gift is returned, the relationship between the parties has not become neutralised (the debt paid off, they are equal), but has instead entered the next phase in the relationship of mutual dependence. The initial giver becomes the ‘receiver,’ by which means she steps into the same position of indebtedness that the receiver of her gift was subjected to previously (ibid.: 12). It is precisely this ongoing alternating mutual dependency and mutual recognition that makes this concept so fascinating for rethinking interpersonal relationships. It creates a fluctuating ethical balance in mutual relationships, in which both parties have the obligation to give and the right to receive, as well as the right to give and the obligation to receive.

This idea of role-exchange in reciprocity seems not to have been the explicit subject of sociological or anthropological studies of the gift exchange. Most of the thinking about reciprocity in relationships has been primarily focused on examining the conditions for the gift itself, as the first step that starts...
the process (Wels 2000: 9-49; Godelier 1999: 1-107). The question is then asked why someone makes the decision to give. Subsequently, elements such as context, the identity of the givers, the type of relationship between giver and receiver and the tension between uncertainty and trust, come to the foreground as important for analysis. Secondly, other theorists have paid attention to the implications of being a receiver, as Pierre Bourdieu did by pointing to the role of ‘time’ (Bourdieu 1980; 1990: 98-111). He states that as long as the gift stands out in time, there is always an uncertainty as to whether it will be returned (the indebted receiver, for instance, might die beforehand). On the other hand, the interval of time between the reception and the return is essential for the qualification of the gift. Time is needed to recognise the value of the initial gift. An immediate return trivialises its value and is experienced as offensive, as is the return of exactly the same gift. Hence, the receiver is obliged to bear the debt for a period (for as long as he has not returned the gift). In this period he owes the giver gratitude and is expected to endure the fact that is obliged to him. Bourdieu acknowledges fully the humiliation that goes along with receiving and not being able to return a gift. But when the mutual parties are well matched, this ‘time handling’ in the gift exchange is a subtle play, with which the receiver can send hidden messages in relation to his appreciation of the relationship, by over-extending the time, or by rushing the return a bit, etc.

In contextual psychiatry, the ethical dimension in interpersonal relationships, consisting of the balance in giving and receiving (or taking), is considered existential in reciprocal relations (Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner 1994). This balance can only be realised when role-exchange takes place and both persons are alternately giver or receiver. This is necessary because with reception, ‘debt’ is involved, which is fine in a healthy relationship since it creates commitment. A gift creates ‘justified entitlement,’ with which the giver ‘earns’ the care given by the other. In a sound and lasting relationship, this justified entitlement is a motive for sustaining and nurturing the relationship. It is important that the gift is recognised and consciously received by the other and vice versa. As a consequence it builds a constructive and potentially long-lasting relationship. This ethical balance stems from an existential and profound motivation among human beings for justice and good in mutual relationships. In contextual psychiatry, this counts in the first place for the relationship between
parent and child, marked by existential loyalty. No matter how young a child is, even in babyhood, her/his motivation to give to the parent already exists. The child has a right to give to its parents, because if the possibility to return a gift is denied, the child lives with an ongoing burden of debt towards the parent. But this existential dimension also exists in chosen relationships, in which both parties share equal responsibility for their relationship.

Aafke Komter (2005), who pays considerable attention to the psychological dimension in the process of giving, receiving and returning, comes close to reiterating Nagy’s concept of ethical balance in her discussion of the concept of ‘gratitude’ as symbolising the momentum between the gift and return. In her view, it is the experience of gratitude that drives us to return a gift and that sustains the process of giving and receiving. The recognition and memory of the gift by the other, constitutes and continues the social ties between giver and receiver. Komter (2005: 56-75) quotes Barry Schwartz, arguing that sincere gratitude carries the opportunity to let the balance between giving and receiving constantly switch from one side to the other, by means of which the relationship moves forwards. The switching temporal imbalance, which is inherent in the exchange process, should not exceed normal proportions, so that the other is capable of showing his gratitude adequately. Nevertheless, there is no such thing as a neutral stance. Komter brings the process of giving, receiving and returning gifts into a broader context than family or chosen relationships. She uses the typology, introduced by Alan Page Fiske (1991), with regard to human relationships in general. I will give a short outline of this typology, as Komter (2005: 21-30) describes it, because of its relevance to my case study. Fiske discerns four basic models in human relationships. The first model, named ‘community sharing,’ refers to long-lasting and close relationships, in which collective identity is prevalent. The second model is called ‘authority ranking,’ as it regards relationships characterised by asymmetry and inequality. In the third model, equality plays the central binding role in the relationship, as shown by its name ‘equality matching.’ People feel drawn towards each other because they share something in common. The fourth and last model is ‘market pricing,’ a relationship in which rational choice and personal advancement are the most important motives. Fiske makes clear that these models should be seen as dimensions, existing in all kinds of relationships.
in a more or less dominant way. People seem to employ these models as an unconscious grammar in positioning themselves and others in their relationships.

Komter’s interesting conclusion is that differing perceptions of a relationship, as well as perceptions of the gift and the identity, once revealed of the giver, can evoke conflict. It is possible that a giver experiences the receivers’ (lack of) gratitude as inappropriate, or that a receiver experiences a gift as perverse or abusive, that s/he fears being humiliated, or losing identity. Nagy’s examination of the ethical dimension in inter-personal relationships, as well as Komter’s elaboration, appear to me a very fruitful reflections on the role-exchange Mauss saw at work in the system of gift-exchange in Archaic societies. Let us now take another look at the conflict case with the help of the theoretical framework described above.

4.4.2 A different understanding of the relationship

In our case study, it was the inflexible attitude of the national bishop of Igreja Maná that eventually caused the break in the dispute about the rental increase. On this issue both pastors afterwards came to similar conclusions. Pastor João of Igreja Maná confided his conviction that if he had been in charge of the process, he would have been prepared to pay more and solve the problem with the church council of the Holy Chapel. What does the attitude of the bishop and the way he was perceived by the Holy Chapel reveal about both parties’ understanding of the relationship?

Although the pastor of the Holy Chapel personally put considerable effort into sustaining a constructive relationship with pastor João of Igreja Maná, he acknowledged that the council members perceived the relationship with the migrant church as being purely financial: it was advantageous that the costs were shared, but there was no interest in fostering other aspects of the relationship. On several occasions, the pastor of the Holy Chapel organised a shared lunch on Saturdays with all the migrant churches that used the building, a gesture that met with varying success. Apart from this, from the side of the Holy Chapel, the motivation for building a ‘communal sharing,’ or even an ‘equality matching’ relationship was missing. In fact, this relationship could be defined as a ‘market pricing’ relationship, in which, in addition, the authority of
the Holy Chapel increasingly played a dominant role, because the relational ‘benefit’ came under pressure. In the first letter, authority was asserted through the repeated use of terms like ‘without permission.’ In terms of ‘order,’ the established church determined the rules to which the migrant church was obliged to adapt. Meanwhile, the pastor of the Holy Chapel expected behaviour from the leaders of Igreja Maná based on the presumption of the existence of an equal relationship.

From the exchange of letters it appears that Igreja Maná had never complained previously about the behaviour of other church users. The pastor of the Holy Chapel told me that, when talking informally with the migrant pastor about individual incidents, he had often urged the latter to report to the church council officially about other users causing inconvenience. But this never happened. This, according to my view, could be explained by the fact that from the perspective of Igreja Maná to do so would have seemed reprehensible. This migrant church has a very strong hierarchical structure in which only the highest rank person has a right to speak up. Speaking ill of each other, of leaders, or of outsiders, is considered a serious sin. The manner in which Igreja Maná treated other users (by not reporting conflicts as they arose) is typical of its views on relationships with brothers and sisters: accept and forgive each other. This behaviour also reveals that the migrant church perceived its relationship with the Holy Chapel as mainly ‘authority ranking’ (see the previous section). The tone of the letter of reply for the most part shows a flexible attitude, although in several places there is also evidence that the church felt backed into a corner because of the power exerted by Holy Chapel in the relationship. It is striking, in this context, that Igreja Maná still felt the urge to call the Holy Chapel to account for its church practice. This might demonstrate how strongly Igreja Maná had felt compelled to utter its objections.

The behaviour of the national bishop of Igreja Maná might be caused by his differing perception of the power structures in this relationship, both with the pastor and the church council. Being a national leader, his authority was higher than the authority of the local church. On the other hand, his internal position in the international church hierarchy was subordinate, which restricted his freedom of movement in financial negotiations. His situation, in fact, was impossible. He had to obey orders from those above him in his own church,
which forced him to make demands in the negotiation process with the Holy Chapel, without having any authority at all in that external relationship. Pastor João in turn, saw that his superior was behaving inappropriately, but was not in the position to correct him. Because of all this, the national bishop broke with the existing power structure, a behaviour which was regarded as unacceptable by the Holy Chapel and which was therefore disastrous for the migrant pastor. In other words, although the conflict was enacted at the level of ‘commodities,’ there was also a hidden world of conflicting perceptions, values, and experiences on both sides of the relationship.

4.4.3 A lack of mutual recognition

Based on my conversations with both pastors and on my reading of the letters, I cannot avoid the impression that there was a deeper layer of conflicting emotion at stake. This conflict remained unspoken within this inequitable relationship and were concealed in a discourse of ‘different values.’ The furious reaction by the Holy Chapel to the criticisms made by Igreja Maná revealed an angry undertone: how dare they! This stemmed from the lack of an ethical balance of reciprocity between both parties in this relationship. Nagy emphasises more strongly than Komter, that in unequal relationships (asymmetry is sometimes inevitable), this ethical balance of reciprocity is indispensable for the healthy development of the relationship. What I mean by ‘lack’ is that neither the Holy Chapel nor Igreja Maná got around to exploring the particular aspects of the ‘other,’ which is strange for the ‘self.’ Nor did either come to speak about these issues prior to the confrontation, about, for example, the many hours that the believers of Igreja Maná spent in the church building. Had the Holy Chapel had any idea about the spiritual and social motives behind this behaviour, they might have accepted that the purpose of it was the enrichment of church life. Without this information they perceived only the inconvenience caused. Regarding noise levels during prayer meetings and services, was Holy Chapel ever inspired to ask Igreja Maná what their thoughts were about their worship practices and the significance of going about it in this way? What spiritual dimensions were there that Holy Chapel could have learned from for its own singing and praise on Sunday morning? And how about the problems Igreja Maná had with partygoers smoking and drinking in the church
building? Why not have a conversation about it and ask Igreja Maná’s opinion about what it means to be a church? The same goes for Igreja Maná’s apparently disinterested attitude towards the church building: would it not have been worth exploring more deeply the migrant church’s perception of what a church building is?

The other way around, one could ask Igreja Maná precisely the same questions. The migrant church showed no more interest in the Holy Chapel. Among other things, this is illustrated by the fact that its leading members seldom showed up at the organised lunches. They made no attempt whatsoever to understand the perceptions of the Holy Chapel and regularly commented negatively about those so-called Christians that were only in the church one hour a week. They had no regard for the untiring efforts of members of the Holy Chapel for social projects in the neighbourhood. In this sense, Igreja Maná did not take up the opportunity to let itself be enriched by the ‘otherness’ of the Holy Chapel. And the Holy Chapel’s reaction to this was very clear: it did not feel recognised at all for the gifts it had given to the migrant church.

In conclusion, I argue that there was a lack of the ‘role-exchange’ of giving and receiving. Role-exchange could have provided the opportunity to both parties to stand in debt and in credit from time to time, based on what they both had to offer in practical and spiritual terms. The existential and religious aspects of the relationship were not given the opportunity to develop, and at the same time were a particular cause of uneasiness. Even more importantly this ‘role-exchange’ might have provided the scope to take up the real issues that caused the conflict, instead of shifting the blame to the rental increase.

According to the available literature on this subject, this lack of recognition is embedded in a broader phenomenon (Van der Laan 2005: 67-81; Währisch-Oblau 2006: 32-46; Adogame 2004: 493-522; Van der Maas 2004: 150-162). In 1998, an African Kimbanguist church was sent out of the building by a Dutch church, on first impressions due to seemingly insignificant things such as food being eaten, or left, in the church building, music being too loud and celebrations being too drawn out. A deeper look into the situation revealed that

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120 I noticed these comments during my initial conversations with the national and regional bishops of Igreja Maná.
profound differences in social and spiritual perceptions had caused the split (Ligeon 2003). In the last decade, the Dutch media has drawn attention several times to conflicts arising between churches that use the same church building. Many disputes have involved a migrant church who rents space and an established church, that owns the building. For instance, in 2006, the Nederlands Dagblad\footnote{Nederlands Dagblad, 8 September, 2006. Radio-oproep trekt Ghanezen. Jan van Der Meuelen treedt aan als predikant Ghanese gemeente. pages 1 and 2.} referred to a conflict between a Ghanaian Presbyterian Church and two Protestant churches in Amsterdam, which resulted in the departure of the Ghanaian church to another building. The Ghanaian believers felt ruled by the Dutch, whereas the Dutch felt that the Ghanaians distanced themselves from the Dutch. By the time the newspaper article appeared, both parties had agreed to begin a reconciliation process in order to establish a friendly relationship. In the same year, IKON broadcast a documentary about cooperation between a Dutch Protestant church and a Nigerian migrant church. The broadcast itself resulted in a conflict between the two. The very fact that the broadcast discussed the financial problems of the migrant church publicly, seemed to be the breaking point.\footnote{IKON, De God van Nederland: De Make-over van God, 26 July, 2006.}

Instead of looking at the powerful aspects of non-western migrant churches in order to learn from them, many Dutch churches base their experience of migrant churches on the problems these churches encounter in the Dutch context. They jump into the helping role, becoming fully preoccupied with assisting with accommodation needs, material problems and the marginal social positions of many migrant Christians.\footnote{In this respect, for instance the ecclesiastic ordinance of the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland, the largest Dutch Protestant church, in its texts about the missionary, diaconal and pastoral work of the church, is rather revealing. In its fifth clause, this ordinance speaks of cooperation with other [read: Dutch, RS] denominations in order to accomplish these tasks. In the sixth clause the words ‘seeking contact’ are chosen in reference to church communities with members from other cultures, ‘with an eye to the accomplishment of the same comission, seeking a way to make the insights and experiences out of these contacts fruitful for the church in Dutch society.’ Kerkorde en Ordinanties van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland, www.pkn.nl PDF document: 57, 58.} Jan van Butselaar, likens the
treatment of new African churches by the Anglican church in the United Kingdom, to the way the church used to treat the old migrant churches who had engaged in slavery. In my view, this illustrates that the failure to learn from past mistakes is not only a Dutch problem. The Anglican church keeps on making efforts to comfort other churches with a social and liberation gospel, not showing the slightest awareness of the totally different self-perceptions of these new Africans (Van Butselaar 2004: 185-186).

Hans Visser, however, referred to a positive experience in Rotterdam Kralingen, where several local communities of the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN) (the largest Protestant Church in the Netherlands) celebrated Pentecost together with the Korean Reformed Church, the Evangelische Broedergemeente (Moravians), the Methodist Church of Ghana and other churches (2006). In the same publication Visser advocated for more structural cooperation between the PKN and migrant churches, and took the Dutch Assemblies of God (Verenigde Pinkster- en Evangeliegemeenten) as an example, since the latter church was recruiting a minister for establishing contact with migrant churches. In 2010 the PKN established a covenant with the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church, which can be viewed as a positive outcome.

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124 J.J. Visser is the former Principal of the Hendrik Kraemer Institute, the missionary training Institute for global ministry of the largest Dutch Protestant denomination, Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN).

125 There is hardly any literature available concerning the relationship between Dutch Pentecostal churches and their foreign fellow churches. But the VPE (Verenigde Pinkster en Evangeliegemeenten) has indeed ordained the Nigerian minister Immanuel Olumobi, as an ‘ambassador’ for Pentecostal migrant churches in The Netherlands. In 2010 the VPE organised an appreciation conference, where over one hundred foreign Pentecostal pastors were invited to join and where the VPE leaders gave thanks to the contribution of the Pentecostal migrant churches in spreading the gospel in The Netherlands. Because of the congregational structure of the church, in which the autonomy of the local church is maintained, it is quite easy for Pentecostal migrant churches to become a member church. Since 2010 the VPE has more than ten migrant churches in its membership file. Apart from cultural differences, there appears to be a mutual affinity in orthodoxy and spirituality between both Dutch and migrant Pentecostal churches, which makes cooperation and incorporation easier than seems to be the case in more traditional denominations.
In the field of theology, opinions about migrant churches oscillate between recognising and resisting their particular theology and spirituality. Theo Witvliet (2003: 71-78) makes a plea for a renewed awareness that all Christians are ‘strangers and guests’ in the world, which should make them intrinsically connected with present day migrants in the Netherlands. He recognises that the churches oppose intolerance towards migrants in society, but at the same time points to the fact that relationships with migrant churches develop with difficulty. As suggested in chapter one, even the term ‘migrant church’ is a symptom of this complex encounter between established and migrant churches. Witvliet diagnoses this situation as a signal that established churches see these migrant churches as a threat to their own church identity. Therefore the churches are inclined to approach the migrant churches in a diaconal way, in order to make their own identity stronger. He (ibid.: 75) suggests a different approach, namely an ecumenical relationship with migrant churches, since such a relationship requires a self-reflective attitude and the acceptance of critical questions. He senses on both sides an inclination to take a safe distance, which hinders more profound mutual contact.

But in the end, Witvliet, in his own turn, falls into the pitfall of prejudice when he waves aside the ‘fundamentalist bible reading’ of migrant churches as something that needs to be addressed, because ‘they [my ital.] lack the insight that all gospel preaching is contextual’ (ibid.: 77). In this put down, which implies that bible reading by migrant churches is problematic, Witvliet is apparently not aware of the superior and subjective tone that underlies what he says. It implies that ‘we’ nowadays know better than that and fortunately have overcome this naivety. From a theological point of view, I argue that Witvliet could have asked the question of what there is to learn from a ‘fundamentalist bible reading’ by migrant churches, as an opportunity for Dutch established churches to reconsider what babies have been thrown out with that undoubtedly dirty bath water of misunderstanding and mis-recognition.

126 www.kerknieuws.nl. PKN sluit overeenkomst met Ghanese kerk. (PKN concludes an agreement with a Ghanaian church) Friday September 17, 2010.

127 From 1987 until 2000, Theo Witvliet was Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Amsterdam (UvA)
In his reaction to Peter Jenkins’ book ‘The Next Christendom,’ the missiologist Werner Ustorf (2006: 5) adds nuance to Jenkins’ typology by adding a distinction between secular and liberal Europe and the orthodox southern hemisphere and America, and in my view he is right to do this. Yet, when Ustorf reproaches Jenkins for his over-enthusiasm regarding how radical Southern Christianity will conquer the world, he in turn fails to offer a nuanced interpretation in speaking about the ‘nightmare of Christian barbarism’ emerging out of Jenkins’ depiction of Southern Christianity (ibid.: 7-8). In his article, in talking about violent religion, Ustorf does not refer to the growth of migrant churches in Western Europe, but limits himself to images of Southern Christian Theocracies and Northern Christian power exerted via mighty advisors of the US President.

For many established churches and western theologians it is hard to recognise non-western migrant churches as ‘haves,’ from whom there is anything to receive, although there have also been exceptions and positive developments.

4.5 Concluding remarks

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, transnationality comes to the foreground in its most explicit form at the local level, in this case, the church building of the Holy Chapel, in Rotterdam. Although the conflict ended in a split because of a disagreement concerning a rental increase, (i.e. a common and universal reason to end a tenancy), this analysis has highlighted the complexity of the background to the very real cross-cultural encounter that took place between the two churches and their leaders. Two kinds of analysis, both material and the relational, show how, on both sides, historical, political, social-cultural and theological processes informed this conflict, surpassing national boundaries. The emotional relationship with the material aspect of the building, as found in the Holy Chapel, can be viewed as partly construed by traditional roots that go back to a history of European and North American Reformism. The Pentecostal ecclesiastic roots of Igreja Maná are connected with Angolan traditional world views, from which the believers inherited their fear of the building being permeated by evil spirits, which caused their deep dislike of
people that ‘even do not love God’ having parties in the church building. Igreja Maná’s perception of the imbalance of the relationship with the Holy Chapel is highly influenced by its being part of a hierarchical worldwide church organisation, shaped by social/cultural factors in Portugal, as well as Angola. The Holy Chapel’s business-like attitude towards Igreja Maná was informed by a lack of recognition of the equality of the other church, which prevented the Holy Chapel from viewing the migrant church as a sister church with its own ‘right to give.’ This attitude is deeply informed by a self-understanding, embedded in the history of Western Europe as teacher and missionary, i.e the ‘giver’ to the other parts of the world.

In the previous chapter on the Netherlands as a transnational space, an incident in Christian Calvery Centre was used as a vignette. In this chapter, Igreja Maná has been given centre stage. This does not mean that Calvary Christian Center does not face similar difficulties concerning their church building. Calvary Christian Center has always rented premises for services, ever since it moved from the private house of its founder (see chapter two). Their rented building was a former garage in a residential apartment block. Calvary Christian Center encountered many problems related to its activities. People complained to the police about noise levels during church services, about groups of members standing in the street talking, and children playing in the street after the church service. During the period of my fieldwork, the young assistant pastor who had daily responsibility for the church, was called to the local police station at least three times, because of these complaints. Although the conflicts are different, and the way Calvary Christian Center responds to difficulties with neighbours will be different, and even though underlying ideas, perceptions and feelings will differ, Calvary Christian Center, like Igreja Maná, experiences the complexity of intercultural encounters in a transnational space.
5 THE PAST IN CONVERSION: SILENCE VERSUS CONFESSION

5.1 Introduction

Igreja Maná
October 2007

Ana is a seventeen-year-old Angolan refugee, whom I met in Igreja Maná. She and I visit the Refugee Support Centre in Rotterdam together. Ana lives as an undocumented person, since she fell out of the asylum system. She had lied about her age when she was thirteen, because she didn’t like the house for children where she was sent as a minor asylum seeker. One of her older girlfriends had advised her to tell her mentor from NIDOS that she had lied during her interview with the IND and in fact was fifteen years old. Ana did this and her mentor ordered her to inform the IND about her real age as soon as she was invited for the second interview. In the short term, Ana achieved her goal: she moved to the house of teenagers where her girlfriends lived. But in the long run, the result was that she was supposed to turn eighteen last year and should have returned to Angola since her asylum application had had been declined. Last summer, she was caught in the Rotterdam metro without a travel card and taken to the police. There Ana showed her ID-card that still has the first date of birth, which made her a minor. The police contacted the local youth support institute and Ana was introduced to a contact person there. Since then, Ana has made an effort to be recognised by the system as a minor, with a right to receive material and social support from the Dutch state. The contact

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128 Centrum voor Dienstverlening Rotterdam, afdeling Vluchtelingen Steunpunt.
129 NIDOS: the custody institute for minor refugees in the Netherlands.
130 IND: Immigratie en NaturalisatieDienst; responsible for the implementation of the immigration policy in the Netherlands.
131 Bureau Jeugdzorg Rotterdam.
person of Bureau Jeugdzorg advised Ana to go to the legal advice centre for youth, where she was referred to the local Refugee Support Centre. And that's where we are now.

In the car, on the way here, Ana told me that she feels that she will get the residence permit and everything will be all right. That is because of the dreams she had earlier, in which God had told her He would help her. But here, in this office, Ana sees all her hopes fade away. The lady that attends to her makes it clear that Ana has no chance at all to get back into the system, since Ana had already consulted one of the best asylum lawyers in the neighbourhood, who had refused her case. The lady's most important argument was that Ana had told a lie during the asylum process. This lie could also have been the main reason why Ana's application for asylum was rejected in the first place, as the lady explained. Ana has no other option than to return to Angola, or to go underground. 'That is possible,' the lady said, 'I've met people here who have lived illegally for over twenty years. But remember this: You won't have any rights whatsoever! You cannot become ill, because you can't go to a doctor or hospital! And if someone hurts you, no one will protect you. Do you want that kind of life?'

After the interview at the Refugee Support Centre, Ana and I walk to my car. She is crying and says: 'It would have been better if I had stayed in Angola and died then, like my mother and sister!' In the car we sit together for a while. I ask her if it would make sense to make an attempt to find her father. He had fled the moment that Ana's family was killed. But Ana shakes her head and says: 'I don't know my father anymore! I lived with my mother, sister and brother. Only once in a while he visited us. I was twelve when I came here. I don't even remember his face. And I'm afraid that if I go in search of him, someone else will pretend to be my father and then take me away and abuse me! What am I going to do now? In Angola I have nobody. I don't know where to start, I really don't know!' I feel tremendously helpless and sorry for her. I take her home and go with her into her apartment, because I don't want to leave her alone now. Ana sits down at the window and says: 'I will stop with these negative thoughts, because if I go on like this, I will kill myself. For a long time I longed to kill myself, as I have told you before.' I nod. 'These people can say what they want, but only God has the real power to decide what is going to happen to me. He has a good future in

132 Kinder en Jeugd wetswinkel Rotterdam.
mind for me. And if it is in Angola, then he will make it right over there.’ I ask her what she is planning to do. ‘The only thing I am going to do now, is pray’, Ana says.

Calvary Christian Center
Patricia, a thirty-six year old Angolan woman, enters the church building on Sunday. Her long dress would not look bad at a wedding party, her usually free-flowing hair is pinned up for today. At the beginning of the service, the pastor announces that Patricia is allowed to give her testimony, which will be filmed by the integration department of Rotterdam. ‘She is a blessed woman, because God has opened a new life for her in the Netherlands. She had no residence permit, but is now allowed to stay here. Patricia has been appointed as an ambassador for immigrants, with the task of stimulating them to attend integration courses for foreigners and Dutch classes. The department is preparing a promotional film on the subject. In order to portray Patricia, she will be filmed in church.’ Patricia steps on to the stage and starts her testimony in Portuguese, simultaneously translated into Dutch: ‘I greet the church with the peace of the Lord. I want to say that I give all honour and glory to God. I was captured in a life full of lies and sin. I have made so many mistakes. I was severely ill. If God had not come into my life, I would be dead now. But God liberated me, He healed me and taught me how to live in truth. He still tells me not to forget the mistakes I have made. I do live a completely new life now and I thank the church for its care and support in the previous period, when I had nothing, not even a roof over my head. But I thank God even more, because He planned it all. Hallelujah.’ The church community applauds and shouts hallelujahs. The film crew subsequently takes a few shots of the singing community and leaves the building. Like all church members, I congratulate Patricia after the service. ‘Oh, Regina, I

133 ‘Saudo a igreja com a paz do Senhor’ (I greet the church with the peace of the Lord) is the common introduction given to whatever contribution a church member, elder, worshiper or pastor makes to the service. Even when someone is asked to say a prayer, this greeting is offered first.
cannot tell you how blessed I am at the moment,’ Patricia shouts while
embracing me warmly. Then I ask her if she would be willing to have an
interview with me and she immediately agrees. We make an appointment to
meet in her room a few weeks later.

In this chapter and the next, I take up the notion of ‘time.’ An interest in the
concept is central to Christianity, as I argued in chapter one, but it has a
particular meaning and significance within the Pentecostal and evangelical
movement. Conversion, an indispensable part of Pentecostal faith, is generally
considered to represent a (dramatic) rupture from the past. Igreja Maná and
Calvary Christian Center are no exceptions in this respect. It is broadly
recognised that Pentecostal spirituality is focused on the believers’ present and
future life. Theologically, the Pentecostal claim on the present outpouring of the
Holy Spirit is a pledge for the future victory of the Kingdom of God. This places
an eschatological expectation on the present lives of believers. In both churches,
this simultaneous orientation towards the ‘here and now’ and the future is
unmistakably present. Chapter six will go into the way both churches deal with
the daily troubles their adherents encounter at the present time, in light of this
eschatological future orientation. This chapter examines how in both churches,
this ‘here and now’ spirituality is related to the lived past of adherents.

Central to both chapters is the question of what appeal this present and future
orientedness holds for the members of both churches, who live their life in
difficult circumstances on the margins of Dutch society.

Conversion in Pentecostalism in general generates a particular attitude
towards the past. Conversion involves turning away from the old life and taking
up a new one. This means that ‘the past’ and ‘the old’ life carry negative
connotations, including sin, suffering and backwardness. ‘The new’ and ‘the
future’ life are strongly associated with holiness, progress and a better life (or
victory). In the case of those Pentecostal converts who have a past in which a
migration process was involved, the experience of rupture, or at least a
reinterpretation of one’s past, might have a particular dimension. Migration

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134 This chapter is an elaboration of a previously published article (Smit 2010).

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itself can be an experience of disruption, as it involves being uprooted from a daily life and being separated from relatives and a wider community.

The title of this chapter reveals the complexity of the theme. It refers to the role the past plays in individual processes of conversion, but also to the fact that the past itself undergoes a conversion in these processes. This means that there is not only a lived past, but also a past as (re)construction, through memories, photographs, files, religious experience and discourse. The two fragments at the beginning of this chapter reveal both layers of meaning of ‘the past.’ Both women are Angolan, which is part of their lived past, but one has a future in the Netherlands, while the other (still) has not. In the first fragment, her lived past is haunting Ana, and she is determined to turn away from it by silencing it. In the second fragment, Patricia is introduced by the pastor as being a blessed woman, because she can make a new life, no longer restrained by her past. Still, she refers to memories of her sinful past in order to keep her present and future life on track. The story of Ana locates us immediately in the midst of one point of contention in thinking about time and temporalities: the lived past still keeps a grip on the present, notwithstanding the belief to have broken with it through conversion. Although conversion is thought of as a kind of momentum, as said in chapter one, the break between an ‘old’ and a ‘new’ life has to be negotiated as an ongoing process, as is discussed intensively in anthropological literature (ibid.: 32; Meyer 1998b; Robbins 2003, 2007; Maxwell 1998; Engelke 2004). Precisely how Pentecostal migrants undergo and shape their own dialectic of continuity and change, negotiating their personal memories and the collective memories brought with them from their home country, while also redefining their boundaries of (religious) belonging, needs further research.

In this chapter, I will explore the differences in the strategies followed by churches in their teaching and pastoral care, based on particular theological discourses concerning the past. I will show how these discourses not only construct the past as a theological notion, but frame a particular attitude to their adherents’ personal past as well. These differences, one depicted as ‘silence,’ the other as ‘confession,’ will be examined in relation to their implications for the personal narratives of my respondents. In searching for direction and answers to the question regarding the extent to which the appeal of both
strategies is related to their adherents’ lived past as migrants, I employ a theoretical framework regarding ‘memory.’ Finally, I delve into Igreja Maná discourse from a theological point of view, searching for more insights into the question of how the way ‘time’ is construed in Pentecostal thinking is related to notions of injustice, victimhood, resentment and reconciliation.

5.2 Conversion discourses and the past

5.2.1 Igreja Maná: a church of Angolans

In order to understand what conversion means for Angolan members of Igreja Maná in terms of their personal pasts, it is important to acknowledge that they share a painful past in Angola, even if the individual circumstances of their

135 Angola was a Portuguese colony for almost five centuries, from 1483 until 1975, an epoch in which slave trade, internal displacement and violence were common features (Bender 2004; Oyebade 2007). From 1955 onwards, a significant movement of several liberation forces emerged from different ethnic Angolan kingdoms and started a war of liberation. In 1974, Portuguese colonialism collapsed. Sudden independence almost immediately turned into a civil war between the largest nationalist movements MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (União Nacional de Independência Total de Angola, the National Movement of Total Independence of Angola), which lasted for three decades and resulted in the death of 1.5 million Angolans, 4 million displaced both internally and externally, and 80,000 mutilated by land mines (Council 2003: 9). The Angolan MPLA-led government initially embraced a Marxist system, which did away with, in particular, traditional land rights in both rural and urban areas, because all land that had no obvious owner (mostly because of the war) was immediately confiscated by the state. In 1992 the government adopted a free market system, but most of the land is still owned by the government. The civil war ended in 2002 and the peace has lasted until today, although at the cost of much suffering by the most vulnerable sections of the population: women and orphans (Cohen dos Santos 2000). In 2003, 1.4 million Angolans were still internally displaced by the civil war (Council 2003: 9). Organisations like NIZA, UHNCR, HRW critically observe increasing inequality in Angola. The vast majority of the population live in dire poverty while the enormous wealth of government members increases (HRW 2004, 2003). One striking example of ongoing corruption has been forced evictions undertaken in poor areas of Luanda, because of rising land prices. By law, civilians have the right to be compensated with new housing, but this has not happened (Foley 2007: 14).
lives were dissimilar. The narratives I employ will show this. However, one long-term consequence of the civil war in Angola was shared by most of my Angolan interviewees in Rotterdam. They had lived in Angola with their mother and siblings (sometimes from different men), and hardly knew their own fathers.

They also have a shared past in the Netherlands, a past that involved undergoing police interrogation, living in asylum centres, facing severe language problems and living with uncertainty. However different their present situation may be, these experiences are similar. Over eighty per cent of the church members of Igreja Maná come from Angola. Minor Angolan asylum seekers share a sense that they themselves did not consciously choose separation from their homeland and family, but that parents or relatives made this decision for them during the most severe outbursts of civil war. Ana had been brought to the Netherlands by a former neighbour, when her mother and sister were killed. Older refugees came of their own volition, but were nevertheless forced to abandon parents, brothers and sisters etc. This shared aspect of their past influences relationships among the Angolans in Rotterdam, who care for each other by providing shelter to homeless compatriots and by helping each other financially or practically. Ana was given shelter by Dita, a mother with two young daughters, who lived in an apartment of COA\textsuperscript{136} in Rotterdam, because her asylum application still was in process. Dita did not have permission to work or gain income, but depended on a weekly minimum allowance for her family, provided by COA.\textsuperscript{137} When Ana asked her for help, Dita shared her apartment for the weekend and even fed her from this minimal budget, but sent Ana out to babysit the children of an Angolan couple through the week.\textsuperscript{138}

When another member of the church, Bela told me about joining the church, she said: ‘You know, Regina, for me the people in the church are my only family. And this is true for so many of us in the church.’ \textsuperscript{139} One of the young

\textsuperscript{136} COA: Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers. A social welfare organisation for asylum seekers

\textsuperscript{137} Interview with Dita, March 11, 2007.

\textsuperscript{138} Interview with Ana, June 18, 2007.

\textsuperscript{139} Interview with Bela, February 13, 2008.
male respondents, Geraldo, said: ‘I was invited by a friend who told me that Igreja Maná was an Angolan church. I liked that, because I was on my own in Rotterdam. It was nice to meet other Angolans. At first I was not so much interested in God.’ Pastor João, a young Angolan himself, having come to the Netherlands as an asylum seeker when he was sixteen years old, is part of this shared past. In one of our conversations, he talked about the difficulties many members of his church faced as asylum seekers still waiting for a determination, or as illegal citizens who had had their application had been rejected. He told me that after a long period of fear and uncertainty he himself had finally been given a residence permit. He said:

‘As for me.... I have been given a residence permit, but I really don’t know why. When I turned eighteen, the IND told me: ‘Now you are on your own. No one will take care of you anymore.’ But I went on praying and working in the church. And one day, there was a letter from the IND. I thought: ‘O God, they are going to catch me.’ But it was a permit. I could not believe my eyes, because it was not logical that I would receive one. But it was God who had done it. Without God I would have been dead by now.’

Although my respondents described Igreja Maná as an Angolan church community, during my fieldwork in the church itself, I heard few references to Angola. The weekly broadcast of Jorge Tadeu in his greetings linked all the continents where the church existed: ‘Hello Europe! Hello Africa! Hello America!’, sometimes followed by the names of individual countries: ‘Hello

140 Interview with Geraldo, December 12, 2006.

141 My second interview with pastor João took place on 2 November, 2006.

142 Only in the margins, are there Angolan elements in Igreja Maná. Short theatre plays, Christmas celebrations, or a miracle crusade, contain Angolan elements, like clothes, music and dance. In addition, there is one Kimbundu song, which is sung during the worship, every now and then. When Angolan couples of the church get married, if both still have a family in Angola, Angolan traditions like the pedido (bride price) are upheld. In the church, I never heard a (theological) comment on this tradition. In contrast, many Pentecostal churches in African countries are against such traditional customs. See for instance Van de Kamp’s thesis on Brazilian Pentecostal churches in Mozambique and their struggle against the Mozambican ‘lobolo’ (bride price) (2011).
Angola! Hello Brazil.’ But during the local church services I frequently attended, ‘Angola,’ ‘being from Angola,’ or ‘having family in Angola’ was not mentioned in sermons, prayers or announcements. To me, it did not seem to be central to the identity of those participating in services. Hence, I began to suspect that any sense of being Angolan in Igreja Maná must have been experienced in other ways.

5.2.2 Conversion in Igreja Maná: Don’t look back!

One of the most important things a new convert has to learn in Igreja Maná is to forget the past and to look forward. This urgent instruction sounds repeatedly in a number of popular Igreja Maná songs. For instance:

Tira os olhos do passado que passou. Esquece todo o que te magoou. E perdoa como Deus te perdoou. Tu vais ganhar, tu vais vencer, vais conseguir. (turn your eyes from the past that has passed. Forget everything that hurt you. And forgive as God forgave you. You will win, you will be victorious, you will succeed)\(^{143}\)

Não olhes para trás. Toma a tua cruz, tudo o que tens entrega a Jesus. Nega o teu ser e encontrarás a vida eternal. Não olhes para trás. (Don’t look back. Take your cross, everything that is yours, give it to Jesus. Deny your existence and you will have eternal life. Don’t look back)\(^{144}\)

Nostalgia and longing for past times has no place in the church’s urgent message to forget about the past. Life prior to becoming a born again Christian is regarded as inherently negative. Speaking about pre-conversion life is seen at best as irrelevant, and at worst as damaging. This has to do with a very strongly elaborated view on the dichotomy between the church as the Kingdom of God and the world as the kingdom of Satan. Even the good things in the life before conversion are said to be regarded as a bad odour to God, because they were experienced under the power of the enemy, Satan (Tadeu n.d.a: 22-44). In order to introduce a new convert to the basics of the Christian faith, a first course is offered, consisting of four small booklets and ending with a short test. In the

\(^{143}\) Part of song 345 ‘Sonha’ (Dream) in Hinario (the Igreja Maná book of hymns).

\(^{144}\) Part of song 354 ‘Vem e segue-me’ (Come and follow me) in Hinario (the Igreja Maná book of hymns).
initial instructions of the course, converts have to admit that every prior solution for their problems had worsened their situation. Hence the basic logic is as follows: life outside the Kingdom of God means having unsolvable problems. As soon as converts have accepted Jesus Christ as their only and ultimate ‘solution’, their former life becomes a past that should be forgotten and expunged from memory.

This typical theological understanding of conversion as a process of problem solving diminishes the notion of personal ‘sin’ in the past and the need to reconcile with God. This is generally a strongly held notion within Pentecostal circles.145 This understanding was absent however in the narratives of Angolan church members. The commonly articulated view was along the lines: ‘I was in trouble and when I gave my life to Jesus, he solved my problems. Now that I still have problems, I have to convert again.’ Personal testimonies of conversion, as read out during the Sunday broadcast, sent to all Igreja Maná churches in the world from the Mother Church in Lisbon, rigorously reiterate the church's framework of conversion.146 The typical testimony runs like this: ‘Sister so and so had lost her job. Everything she tried did not help. Then she read the book ‘The Origin of Problems’ (A Origem dos Problemas) by apostle Jorge Tadeu (n.d.a.). She gave her life to Jesus and now she has even a better job than before.’

145 Richard Shaull (Shaull and Cesar 2000: 144-146) in his study of Pentecostalism among poor urban Brazilians, speaks in terms of two paradigms in this respect. The mainstream Church is the church of the rich, which represents the ‘sin’ paradigm. The Pentecostal church as the church of the poor, which represents the ‘problem solving’ paradigm. Pentecostals preach a message to those who have no self-esteem, nor social or economic perspective. Their self-perception is that of lack of ability and lack of dignity. They are convinced that they cannot achieve anything. Pentecostalism brings a loving God who whishes them a full life in this world.

146 In Igreja Maná, spontaneous (conversion) testimonies during the local church service on Sunday are not allowed. The reason offered by Pastor João for this prohibition was that he did not want to make personal testimonies too important for the faith of his adherents.

147 For example on 10 December 2006 in a broadcast, Jorge Tadeu’s female assistant Celeste said: ‘We received a testimony from Mara in Lisbon. She suffered from a disease in her pancreas. The doctors could not help her, and things got worse. But then someone
The notion of sin is not absent in Igreja Maná’s church services, but almost exclusively made present in a general and collective way. As long as life appears to be difficult, converts need to improve their request to God, in order to move away from their problems. Making progress with self-disciple is depicted with the biblical concept: to bear fruit. When I asked the pastor how he knew when someone bears fruit, he answered: ‘to bear fruit means to commit to faithful church attendance, thorough tithing, attending courses in order to become a deacon, coming in time for every meeting, attending home family groups and fulfilling one’s tasks faithfully.’ Positive deeds in the past and even past steps towards belief have no permanent value on their own. Even baptism in itself has no intrinsic value. If converts still experience problems after conversion, then perhaps their attitude during baptism had not been good enough (perhaps because they were too young). This brings about a need to repeat the action, in order to have a ‘proper’ baptism, one that really makes a break with the past. Hence the past in Igreja Maná merely functions as a causal category for a present problem. This does not mean that adherents of Igreja Maná do not reflect on their behaviour as Christians. In several family group meetings (Grupos Familiares) I heard people talk about about last week’s experiences, when they had to change their attitude because of the word of God. This happened especially in relation to the ‘walk in love’ (andar em amor) ritual, repeated not only at each Sunday service, but at each family group meeting as well. Luzia, who had prepared a word from the Bible, illustrated this with a brief testimony:

‘Last week I was at Dutch class. I had prepared well, but when the teacher asked me to answer a question I made a mistake. She behaved very nastily towards me in front of all other students. I went home, feeling very angry and insulted. But then God spoke to my heart and said that I had to forgive her. ‘It is not her who is your enemy,’ He said. I decided to forgive her and you know what? In the next

class, the teacher apologised to me. So if we want to walk in love, we have to forgive the people who harm us and then God will bless us.¹⁴⁹

Forgiveness as a means to make a break with the past is a central doctrine in Igreja Maná. One of the songs at the beginning of this section relates forgiving to forgetting: ‘forget everything that hurt you, forgive as God forgave you.’ Jorge Tadeu’s booklet ‘The Origin of Problems’ (n.d.a: 53-57) points to the lack of forgiveness as a direct cause for problems. ‘A person who does not forgive is in the hands of the devil’ (ibid.: 53),¹⁵⁰ because she does what the devil wants. According to Tadeu, forgiveness is a rational choice, which can and must be made in spite of emotions such as anger and resentment. This decision must be followed by spoken words that bless the offender. As a result of this act, the believer will be set free from the clutches of the devil. Notably, Tadeu does not make a direct reference to the past here, but since the devil in his view has everything to do with the ‘old life’ of the convert, being tied to the devil undeniably means ‘still being tied to the past.’

I suggest that the problem-solving oriented notions in Igreja Maná underline the explicit motto to forget the past. They implicitly lead converts away from a reflection on how the past plays a role in their present. By dramatising the past in general as something that one should not think and speak of, the church aims to offer a persuasive and particular template for adherents in relation to how they should understand their own biography.

5.2.3 Calvary Christian Center: an international church

From the beginning, Calvary Christian Center was an international church, that included a diverse range of languages and nationalities, as described in chapter two. This diversity lessened over the years, and the church is mainly attended by Brazilians, Angolans, Cape Verdeans and Columbians. During the time I attended the church, there was one family from Indonesia and a few Dutch members. This means that, unlike the members of Igreja Maná, Calvary Christian Center¹⁴⁹ Luzia is a co-leader of one of the Family Groups. I never could persuade her to give an interview, but I visited her several times and spent some time with her in a shopping centre in Rotterdam.

¹⁵⁰ Translated in English by author.
adherents do not share a collective national or ethnic identity, or a collective past. Calvary Christian’s Sunday church services are bilingual, in Portuguese and Dutch. Because of its official affiliation as a mission church with the Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, its Brazilian head pastor, and the Brazilian majority of its adherents, it is virtually a Brazilian church. Nationality and culture, as well as the difficulties of migration, are commonly discussed themes in this church, especially in sermons, but also in testimonies and songs. The first time I heard pastor Celso preach, he spoke about the story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar from the book of Genesis. When he arrived at the point of the story where Sarah decides to give her slave Hagar to Abraham in order to provide him with offspring, pastor Celso said: ‘then, Sarah did something very Brazilian: ela dava um jeito!’ (‘Dar um jeito’ means ‘to fix something by any possible means’). In this context, he explained Sarah’s action as her way of enabling God’s promise to Abraham. He then offered the following explanation to his audience: ‘We Brazilians always try to fix things up if our life is not going the way we want it to. And aren’t we often standing in God’s way, when we try to give Him a hand?’

This way of humorously interspersing a sermon with anecdotes based on Brazilian habits or expressions is typical at Calvary Christian Center. The audience usually responds to these stories with warm and enthusiastic laughter and applause. Because pastor Celso lived for nine years in Angola as a missionary, he sometimes refered to Angola and the Angolans in the church in the same way. For this church it is common to invite along Brazilian missionaries and pastors visiting Europe. They are invited to deliver the sermon or offer a ‘word of God’ in the first part of the service. In these sermons, travell and migration, and associated difficulties, such as languages barriers and cultural clashes, form a structural part, securing the speaker the recognition and approval of the audience.

Members of the church sometimes return to their home country to visit family, or to arrange their residency permit. When they return, they usually give a testimony of their journey and tell stories about their families and ask for

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151 Church Service of Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam, 9 September, 2007.
prayers if relatives are ill, or not doing well.\footnote{For example: in the Church Service of 4 April, 2008, Lena, who returned from a family visit to the Cape Verdean Islands, asked for prayer for one of her grandsons, who suffered from a depression and seemed to be suicidal.} It is also common practice to ask for prayers in case of difficulties with papers and procedures in the Netherlands. If someone has to return permanently, as in the case of Elisa, that person does not leave without delivering an extended testimony about her period spent in the church and in the Netherlands, and receives a prayer of blessing. In other words, in Calvary Christian Center’s church life, personal pasts, viewed in terms of migration, homelands left behind and separation from families, are recognised vividly through sermons and testimonies.

5.2.4 Conversion in Calvary Christian Center: confess your past sins!

The pastor at Calvary Christian Center once said: ‘we prefer not to think of our past, we don’t want to be reminded of how we lived a sinful life, but we should remember it, to keep us on the right path. It is so easy to neglect the transgressions we have committed and complain to God when we encounter difficulty. But we need to confess the things we have done wrong, in the first place towards God.’\footnote{Fieldwork notes, Church Service Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam, 24 February, 2008.} In response to what pastor Celso said, in her testimony Sister Sonia made a confession, in which she said: ‘I always give my tithe to the Lord, but two weeks ago I did not give any money. Therefore, I thieved from God!’\footnote{Fieldwork notes, Church Service Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam, 24 February, 2008.} The audience reacted with applause and shouted hallelujahs. Confession of sin is an important part of conversion in this church, not only with regard to the pre-converted life, but in the present as well. In this church, unlike Igreja Maná, it is common to give testimonies. I heard many testimonies during my eighteen months of fieldwork, only some of which were conversion testimonies. They always described sinful behaviour, such as drinking, crime, imprisonment, or sexual promiscuity. Bad behaviour was never described in detail, but referred to in general terms.
This emphasis on confession of past sins, however, does not make the church more past-oriented than Igreja Maná. During church services everything is orientated towards what happens now. Bible studies and prayer meetings, every single act by those on the pulpit, like bible reading, confession, a word of God or a worship song, are linked with an act of God at that very moment. All that is presented is said to have been prepared by the Holy Spirit for this moment. ‘God has chosen you to hear these words this afternoon. He planned for you to come here. It was not your idea to come here, it was His. He is here! As you hear these words, put your hand on your heart and I will declare God’s blessing over you.’ Usually the sermon is followed by a call to come forward to receive a prayer in which God’s promises are proclaimed, here and now, by the laying on of hands.

Unlike Igreja Maná, at Calvary Christian Center this belief in the immediacy of God’s action is brought in relationship with someone’s past, sometimes even in a therapeutic way, for example: ‘maybe you have lived for years doubting that someone loved you, now God brought you here and tells you that He loves you.’ In Calvary Christian Center discourse, the central aspect of conversion is that, in the encounter with the divine, human beings can be liberated from the negative elements of their past, not by forgetting, but by confessing that they were wrong and by accepting that God has forgiven them. ‘Now I know that I was a sinner, and that drinking and stealing are sins. Before, I cared only about myself.’

It must be said, however, that the emphasis on confession as a public act of detaching oneself from the negative elements of the past, does not mean that everything is said. Public confessions of past sins are framed in a discourse of general terms like, ‘I was a bad husband, I committed many sexual sins,’ accompanied with the assurance that ‘Now I have changed. The Lord taught me

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155 Fieldwork notes Church Service Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam, 28 October 2007. The elder of the church said these words after his short sermon about Acts 3:4-6, right at the start of the service.

156 For instance: on 13 January, 2007, the pastor preached about the story of Mefiboset (II Sam. 9:13), who for years had lived as a forgotten and neglected person, but who finally was recognised and blessed as a member of Saul’s family. In the sermon the pastor invited everyone who had felt abandoned or lonely to come to God.
how to live a chaste life.’ I never came across a confession of present sins, through which a church member wanted to convert by confession. An interview with the assistant pastor of Calvary Christian Center made it clear that this would not fit within the church strategy. He told me that if someone came to him and said: ‘Pastor, I have fallen into sin,’ his answer would be: ‘Be quiet for some time, just sit in the pew and don’t make testimonies, until you have reorganised your life.’ In other words, present sins should not be confessed and are silenced. Only past sins, which have been done away with, or overcome, are allowed to be heard in the community. This leads to the suggestion that there is an underlying element of legitimisation in these confession narratives, not so much in terms of approval, or even acceptance of the past sinful life, but in the unspoken request to confirm the disconnection between the present person and his past deeds. Confession in Calvary Christian Center asks for judgement based not on one’s past, but on one’s present.

5.2.5 Two conversion discourses. A preliminary comparison

The conversion discourses of Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center have in common the fact that they both refer to a break with the past. They both frame the past as something negative from which the convert should be disconnected and made free.

However, in Calvary Christian Center, this negative framing of the past is confined to personal sin in the past, which makes confession the central concept of transformation within conversion. In this church, being migrants with memories of a lived past in a former homeland, who currently maintain relationships with that past, forms a vivid and positive part of its communal spirituality.

In contrast, negative connotations regarding the past are more integral in Igreja Maná. The past is considered a fatal path, strangled in devilish cords, on

157 Sometimes a testimony was more concrete, for example, on 25 November, 2007, during the Church Service of Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam, one of the attendees gave his testimony about how God changed his profession. Before his conversion he was a sex-shop owner. Now he exports ‘decent products to Rome, Brussels and Portugal.’

158 Interview with assistant pastor John of Calvary Christian Center, 22 April, 2008.
which problems inevitably get worse. Believers are told to turn away from their past and to forget. Forgiveness, a strong aspect of conversion discourse in Igreja Maná, is similarly framed in terms of choice and forgetting. Consequently, conversion is seen as being a break with the devil and the origin of all problems in the ‘old life,’ which makes forgetting the central concept of transformation. In the light of this, it is remarkable that although the church is almost homogenously Angolan, Angola is almost entirely absent in communal church practices. Conversion in Igreja Maná apparently involves forgetting Angola as a past from which one should be freed. This is striking when we consider the adherents’ depiction of Igreja Maná as an Angolan community. For them, being Angolan apparently is not separated from their current religious life, as something that should belong to their past.

5.3 Frames of the past in conversion narratives

In this section the conversion narratives of adherents of both churches will be described and linked to the dominant conversion discourse of each church. The questions of if and how these different discourses are reflected in how believers think and speak about their pasts are answered here.

5.3.1 Conversion narratives in Igreja Maná

As I mentioned in chapter one, at Igreja Maná I needed to redesign my interview protocol in order to make my respondents more comfortable. The discomfort I saw my respondent experiencing in the first interview was definitely connected with their past. In that first interview I began with a questionnaire about their life history: ‘when were you born,’ ‘where were you born,’ ‘did you have brothers and sisters,’ and so on. I immediately felt that I had created an uneasy atmosphere, and my the respondent answered mainly with ‘Yes,’ ‘no,’ or ‘I don’t remember.’ Later I opened my interviews with the question: ‘tell me, how did you arrive at Igreja Maná?’ This worked much better and my respondents started to tell their stories without any hesitation. I found that they had no problems whatsoever talking about their pre-conversion life and the difficulties they had been going through. However, as soon as I touched on their past life in Angola and their migration to the Netherlands, the same uncomfortable
atmosphere arose again. This was true for women respondents as well as for men, and although most respondents were quite young, older respondents reacted in the same way. Four conversion narratives will follow here. Paula and Mano had both attended Igreja Maná in Angola, as children before coming to the Netherlands. Paula told me without any hesitation about her years of severe illness as a young Igreja Maná believer. Mano in contrast has hardly any memories of his childhood in Igreja Maná in Luanda.

Paula, a twenty-six year old at the time of the interview, who came from Lubango in the south of Angola, had attended Igreja Maná, together with her mother, sisters and brother.\(^{159}\) Previously, they had been members of the Roman Catholic Church. Paula did not know why her mother decided to attend Igreja Maná. At the end of the service when the pastor made an altar call, her mother went forward, together with her children, Paula included. There, they all gave their life to Jesus. She was eleven years old at the time. ‘I was small and did not understand much, but when I grew older I managed to understand more about the faith.’ One year later, Paula decided to be baptized, like her mother. But when she was thirteen, Paula fell ill. She was diagnosed as having a severe heart defect. For three years, she lived on medicine daily, but eventually she would need a pacemaker, which had to be renewed every year, because of her young age. Paula told me: ‘I did not want a pacemaker.’ I asked her: ‘Why not?’ ‘Because I was afraid of the annual surgery. And it would cost a lot of money, which my parents could not afford.’ One day she went to the church and told the pastor about her problems. He told her to buy the apostle’s book ‘Cura Divina.’ ‘I read it and started to confess the words of divine healing. The pastor told us that my father should come to the church as well, as the head of the family, in order to pray with me.’ Her father complied with this request and from that day her parents and Paula went to the church on a daily basis for prayer over her illness. After one year she felt better. ‘Did the doctor know that you stopped taking your medicine?’ I asked. ‘Yes’, Paula answered. ‘What did he say?’ ‘He said, “if you stop taking medicine, you certainly will die”.’ ‘Have you seen the doctor since you felt better?’ I inquired. ‘Yes, he saw me once. But I was only really certain when I visited a doctor in Dordrecht, after I had arrived in

\(^{159}\) Interview with Paula, 12 March, 2007.
the Netherlands. He did a check on my heart and did not see anything abnormal.’ Paula declared that this event provided her with proof that God really does exist and that what is written in the Bible really happens. ‘Then I really knew,’ she said. ‘But these four years were really troublesome.’

Mano, seventeen years old at the time of our interview, was born in Luanda. Concerning his involvement in the church, he told me that when he was a small child of seven years, he already attended Igreja Maná in Luanda. ‘I went there with my mum, I guess,’ he said, ‘but I was not really serious. I was too small, but life started to become better then.’ When I asked him to tell me a bit more about it he said: ‘I was a Catholic before, just as my mum was. Then I went to church, but there was not anything Christian in my life. But in Igreja Maná, I learn how God wants you to behave.’ He could not tell me anything more concrete than this, because in his own words: ‘I did not know then. I was nobody. In the Netherlands, it was my sister who searched for a church. She took me with her. I did not make any decisions. But later I started to discover that God is the most important thing in my life. Then I decided to go by myself, although I had many friends who did not go to any church. That was when I was thirteen. I helped every Sunday at the children’s church (Igreja Infantil).’

When I asked him if he had ever made the decision to convert himself, as is typical in Igreja Maná, he said: ‘Oh yes, but I already did that in the children’s church of Igreja Maná, in Luanda. I remember that I made the prayer there. After that moment, I never went forward [to be converted] in the church again, neither in Luanda, nor in Rotterdam. But in myself, I renew that prayer every day.’ Mano is an ordained deacon and one of the musicians at Igreja Maná. When not at church, he is studying at the Rotterdam Pop Academy.

Manuela and Isa became adherents of Igreja Maná after their arrival in the Netherlands, while they lived in Rotterdam. Manuela was taken to the church by her older half-sister and became gradually more involved. Isa’s conversion story in contrast includes strong elements of rupture.

\[160\] Interviews with Mano, 28 March and 4 April, 2007.
Manuela, eighteen years old at the time of the interview, was born in the province of Biè. She arrived in the Netherlands with her half-sister, when she was nine years old. Manuela told me that at first she did not realise what had happened to her. When she had grown a bit older, and was about twelve, or thirteen years old, she started to think and to feel bad about what she had done, since she had left her family behind. At the children's house, managed by NIDOS, where she was sheltered after her stay in one of the asylum centres, a psychologist took care of her and helped her deal with these memories. During the following years, the Red Cross had made several attempts to locate her mother, brother and sister, but at the time of interview, they had not been found yet. At some point during the interview Manuela showed me her file, which contained forms for all the houses where she had lived under the supervision of NIDOS. In Angola, as a young child, she had attended a Methodist church, together with her family, and was raised with strict Christian values. ‘Then you know that God exists, of course, but you do not really understand, you don’t realise what faith is all about,’ Manuela explained. In Rotterdam, her half-sister Andrea took her to several churches, among which they finally found Igreja Maná. They stayed because it felt very nice to have church services in Portuguese and to be among other Angolans. ‘At that time I did everything Andrea did. I could not decide for my self,’ Manuela stated.

The gradual change came when she had passed the Igreja Maná basic courses (Curso Básico) and Bible School (Escola Bíblica). She decided to be baptized when she was fourteen, during the churches’ annual tour to Germany. At the age of fifteen she was ordained as a deacon, after which a period her motivation declined, because of conflicts with the church elder she was subordinated to. Every Sunday she was late to church in order not to be given work during the service. She liked to sit at the back. One Sunday, the pastor delivered a sermon about moments of weakness and overcoming them. She

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162 This is one of the rules in Igreja Maná: be on time on Sunday. In chapter seven, this issue will be discussed extensively. Manuela claims to have ignored this rule when it suited her. Others feel over-burdened by it and regret that they cannot meet the demands of the church.
decided to go forward. ‘There, for the first time I really made the decision to go with God. Life is not always easy, it has its ups and downs. I realised that it was no problem to fall down for a moment, it would only be a problem if I would stay there on the ground. What mattered was to standing up again.’ From that time on, things improved, especially from the moment she received a task she liked in the church. Manuela registers the monthly contributions made by deacons, elders and the pastor. The rest of the time she studies at a professional institute to become a nurse, in Rotterdam.163

Isa, 21, born in the capital of the province Biè in the southern part of Angola, is also one of those respondents who converted in Igreja Maná in Rotterdam.164 At the age of thirteen or fourteen, she was transferred to a teenagers’ house in Amsterdam via an asylum centre in Eindhoven. This went very well, but when at the age of sixteen, Isa had to move to an apartment with three other girls, life became difficult. She had to make too many decisions by herself. She would have liked to have been able to stay on at the lyceum165 but ended up in the fourth year of MAVO.166 ‘In the end,’ Isa said: ‘I did not finish the MAVO, because I got pregnant. During that time the other girls and I had started to talk about boys. And we went to a discotheque in Rotterdam frequented by many Angolans. There I met Antônio. We went together and I got pregnant. I wanted an abortion. But when I was at the clinic, I could not do it. ‘Maybe this child will be my only family, someone of my own,’ I thought. But after my decision to keep the baby I felt so bad. I wanted a normal life in this world and now everything was destroyed. I was rejected by the girls, the teachers, everyone.’ Isa asked Antônio’s mother for help and began to live in her apartment. Yet, because Antônio lived there as well, Isa had a hard time with him.

Then a boy she knew invited Isa to Igreja Maná. To her surprise, there she felt completely accepted, although she was pregnant. The words of the

163 HBO-Verpleegkunde.

164 Interview with Isa, 30 March, 2007.

165 Lyceum is a conglomerate of high caliber secondary school in the Netherlands, which give entrance to high-level professional academies, or the university.

166 MAVO: ‘Middelbaar Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs,’ one of the types of secondary school in the Netherlands, at a lower level than the Lyceum.
sermon told her that with God she had a future. This made her respond to the altar call. ‘I had suicidal thoughts at that time. I thought, this is no life. In Angola I had no life. And even here, while everything seemed to be normal, I have completely ruined my own life. But then, in that church, I went forward and decided to stay alive, not for me, but for God.’ Isa told me how the birth of her daughter forced her to take a new step in her faith. When the birth took a long time and she wasn’t making any progress, the pastor’s wife visited her in the hospital. “You must forgive Antônio”, she told me. “The child won’t come out, as long as you don’t forgive him.” I decided to forgive him and we prayed together. After a while the baby came.’ At the time of the interview, Isa and Antônio were seriously involved with each other and wanted to get married that year. Meanwhile she returned to school, attending evening courses.

What these narratives have in common is the absence of a sin-salvation concept, and the emphasis on personal choice, in accordance with the discourse in Igreja Maná. Even Isa, whose situation comes close to the experience of shortcoming and sorrow, does not frame her conversion in terms of having sinned and being forgiven by a merciful God, but in terms of despair and help given. Her story and Paula’s reflect a problem-solving concept, as is common in Igreja Maná. The way Isa connects her problems while giving birth with the urge to forgive the father of her child, resembles the way in which Igreja Maná connects the lack of forgiveness with being tied to the devil (darkness and death). Remarkably in Manuela’s narrative, however, she does not connect the problems she had in her teenage period with her conversion process in Igreja Maná. It was a psychologist who had helped her at that time.

The narratives show differences in the way time is described in relation to conversion. Paula, Mano, and Manuela, who grew up in Igreja Maná from a young age, describe their conversion as a process. The way Manuela reflects on her conversion is similar to Mano’s story, as a process of growing in consciousness and ability to decide for one self. This echoes the Igreja Maná teaching that past acts of faith must be renewed if it is clear in the present life that it was not done properly. Mano seems to consider his childlike ‘sinner’s prayer’ in the past as a sufficient public ‘step in faith’, although he was ‘nobody’ then and the prayer needs constant private renewal. Isa’s conversion refers to a
rupture with the past, although her problems continue and further decisions needed to be made.

But above all, these narratives contain memories of how life looked before conversion had taken place. However, when I asked questions about what had happened to them in Angola before and while on the way to the Netherlands, the respondents reacted as follows:

Paula: ‘I don’t know. I was too young.’ She only recounted in one short sentence how she had had to flee on her own, leaving her family behind. ‘I don’t want to think about it, because it is difficult. I don’t want to think about my past.’

Mano: ‘I don’t remember. I was too small.’ His sister had simply taken him with her. He hardly had any memories of his father and mother. He kept repeating that he did not want to talk about these things, because they made him sad.

Isa: ‘I don’t want to talk about it because it hurts too much.’ The only information she gave was that she was brought to Luanda on a UNICEF aeroplane. She kept herself alive by cleaning apartment buildings. Isa said she did not remember how she travelled to the Netherlands.

Manuela: ‘One day I was at the house of a friend of my mother, after school. Andrea (her half-sister from her father’s side, who lived with her and normally picked her up from there to go home, RS) came to me and told me that war had broken out. We stayed at the house of my mother’s friend. After a few days we tried to contact my mother’s house. We never managed to reach my mother. Then this friend of my mother wanted us to travel with her to Luanda. There, she managed to get in contact with a man who knew a half-brother of mine, who was already in the Netherlands. Meanwhile we tried to get in contact with my mother. But Cabinda was taken by the soldiers of Savimbi.\(^{167}\) That man was

\(^{167}\) Cabinda is an Angolan province, in the North, geographically separated from the rest of the country. It is one of the richest provinces with regard to the oil supplies, the oil company Sonangol is located there. Cabinda has been one of the battlegrounds in the civil war. Long after the official ceasefire in 2002, violent conflicts continued to flare repeatedly. There is still a political contention between the Angolan government and the province, which desires independence. As Van Wijk found in his research, several Angolan asylum seekers were advised to declare they had fled from Cabinda, because that story still seemed to convince the Dutch authorities (Van Wijk 2007: 315-320).
prepared to arrange for us to travel to the Netherlands, if we wanted. Andrea wanted to go to her brother and I did not want to stay behind alone in Luanda, so I went with her. We went by plane, but I don’t know to which country. But it was not the Netherlands. We had to travel a long time by bus.’

These interview fragments reveal that the ‘don’t look back’ discourse in Igreja Maná does hold some appeal for its adherents, particularly concerning memories of what happened in Angola before they arrived in the Netherlands and how they travelled. In the interviews I heard that some did not think and talk about these things because they forgot, others did not want to think and talk about these things because they wished to forget. Unlike the other respondents, Manuela was prepared to talk about her memories of what happened in Angola. Although she started almost every answer with the sentence ‘Oh, I don’t know anymore!’ she in fact told me far more details about her situation in Angola than any of the other respondents did. She giggled and laughed while speaking about her painful memories. Several of the respondents described here had a residency permit at the time of our interview, and were enrolled in professional study programs. It is not likely that these people kept up their silence because they feared the immigration authorities. It is perhaps possible though that they may have lied to the authorities in the past in order to obtain their residency permit. Subsequent feelings of guilt might have be conducive to silencing the past and increasing the desire to forget.

5.3.2 Conversion narratives in Calvary Christian Center

In several of the conversion narratives given by Calvary Christian Center adherents, migration to the Netherlands itself was part and parcel of their conversion process. As mentioned earlier in chapter three, female Brazilian migrants often share similar migrant stories concerning childcare in a Dutch households, especially those in which the mother is Brazilian. The idea of finding a husband in the Netherlands is also a repeated theme in women’s stories. The narratives of Josina and Elisa described soon show that both could point to a moment of conversion in the past, when they were young, but that migration and the problems involved were part of the ongoing process of conversion. Josina needed to break with her arrogance and pride. Elisa had to re-convert from what she afterwards considers a sinful path, a mistake.
Josina, thirty-seven years old, lived for more than thirty years in São Paulo as the oldest daughter of a wealthy family. Her father was a highly ranking military officer, of whom she has always been very fond. The family of her godfather lived on a large fazenda, where she spent many long holidays with her nieces and nephews. At the time Josina recounts these memories, she has tears in her eyes, tears of ‘saudade.’ She went to university, but quit after a few years because she wanted to start a career in fashion. Her father and mother became evangelicals in her childhood, but Josina was never interested. But then her father suddenly died of a heart attack. A girlfriend who had not stopped talking to her about Jesus for three years, picked her up one Sunday to go to church. Josina tells me that she liked the discussion about love and so on, but was not very impressed. She became awe-struck, however, when she visited the mega-church ‘Renascer em Cristo.’ In this beautiful building, at the end of the service, she heard an altar call for those who wanted to be baptized with water. Josina immediately went to the water basin and let herself be baptised. After that moment, she gradually found that she disapproved of her own behaviour. Accordingly, she stopped smoking and drinking.

But, as Josina puts it, at that moment God had not even got started with her. Josina views all the events in her life from that period on as God’s way of enabling her to break with her arrogance. She is convinced that she had to sink, deep into poverty, loose her job, and start to work in a very poor, small church in a favela, in São Paulo. Then a girlfriend who lives in Delft with her Dutch husband invited her to move to the Netherlands, in order to look after her children. When she had started to live with that family, the husband did not like Josina and her friend separated from her husband. Hence, she was homeless and illegal in the Netherlands. Finally she came into contact with pastor Berens in Calvary Christian Center who invited her for a ‘vigilia’, an overnight prayer in the church. The next day, a woman of the church gave her a room in her own house. Now, Josina has a cleaning job to earn some money. She tells me: ‘I

168 Interview with Josina, adherent of Calvary Christian Center, 17 March, 2008.

169 ‘Fazenda’ is a large Brazilian farm.

170 ‘Saudade’ is typical for Portuguese and Brazilian culture and has a very broad range of meanings. Here, in my view, it means homesickness, melancholy.
would never have humiliated myself by doing this work in Brazil. I mean cleaning! But God will only give me prosperity and a husband when as I am ready for it. I see every moment in my life resting in His hands.’

Elisa, twenty-six years old at the time of the interview, lived with her mother in Minas Gerais. Her father had left them. She also had a sister, who lived with an aunt, because her mother was not able to raise two children. Elisa converted in an Assembléia de Deus church at the age of fourteen. Her mother was already a member. Elisa saw how her girlfriends only had eyes for boys and ended up with children without having a husband. She had decided to live another kind of life. She wanted a husband first and children afterwards. Therefore, she spent all her time in the church, which was always open, every day. Sometimes she visited a lady from the church, who once had a word of God for her. ‘You will not find your husband in this country, but somewhere else,’ the woman said. ‘You will receive a letter.’

A few years later, her mother died. Elisa was twenty-two years old then. She was mourning very deeply, because she felt that she had nobody left to live with. Then, a letter came from the Netherlands, from a girlfriend who had a Dutch husband and lived in Rotterdam. She invited her to come and look after their children. Elisa remembered the word of God about a husband abroad and a letter she was to receive. She made the decision to go. In the Netherlands she felt very unhappy, because the family she had to live with was not converted. At some point they even wanted her to leave their house. But then she met a man in Calvary Christian Center and fell deeply in love. She was convinced that this was the man God had planned for her. Since it was difficult to arrange the marriage papers, she started to live together with him in Amsterdam. But things went wrong. The mother of her boyfriend succeeded in driving a wedge between Elisa and her boyfriend. When her boyfriend put an end to their relationship, Elisa returned in despair to Rotterdam and to Calvary Christian Center. She said, ‘Then I renewed my relationship with God.’ Now she sees that her impatience had taken her on the wrong path, away from God. Elisa is still very much in love with her ex-boyfriend. She is convinced that God will reunite her with this man, but not before she is ready. Now she lives in a very small

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room, because God told her to. In this room she experiences God’s presence continuously, because there is nothing to distract her. In Elisa’s view, her life in Brazil and her migration to the Netherlands happened completely according to God’s plan.

Unlike the preceding believers, Constantino, one of the Brazilian men I interviewed, was converted in the Netherlands. His migration story is full of problems, which continued for some time after he converted.

Constantino, thirty years old at the time of the interview, views his migration to the Netherlands as God’s preparation for his conversion.\(^{172}\) He needed to be far away from home in order to ‘come home’ to God. Constantino was born in Maranhão, a North Eastern state of Brazil, where he found he had no future because there was no work. He tried to improve his situation by migrating to Paraná in the South, where he worked on a bus. There he had a colleague who told him about an opportunity to work in Europe. This colleague knew someone who could arrange a ticket, a job and documents. Constantino paid this person with help from his family and arrived in the Netherlands in 2003, where he encountered many difficulties since most of the promised arrangements had not been made. His papers were fake, he had to live in a room with four other men, slept on the floor and was sent to do bad work via a temporary work office. Things went even worse when there was no work. He ran out of money and could not afford to pay the rent.

That was the moment that he thought about the God of his mother and grandmother, who were members of an Evangelical church. In his childhood he had joined them at church services, but as soon as he started his own life in Parana, he never went to church again and forgot all about it. Now he felt so lonely, far away from everyone he knew, without any friends or money. One evening he started to cry and pray for help. Suddenly he remembered the words of Psalm 121:1-2: ‘I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.’\(^{173}\) As Constantino puts it, ‘God started to open doors for me.’ The landlord gave him

\(^{172}\) Interview with Constantino, adherent of Calvary Christian Center, 18 October, 2008.

\(^{173}\) Holy Bible. New International Version.
five days respite for payment. Constantino prayed even harder. Then he found work. And this made him search for a church, because he knew he had found the God of his youth again. Since then he has belonged to Calvary Christian Center. But his trials were not over. Because his papers were false, he was arrested by the police and expelled to Brazil in 2006. But three weeks later he entered the Netherlands again and found a job in the kitchen of a very expensive restaurant. And now he has a job in a distributive centre of a large supermarket. Constantino now sees the things that happened to him as having been shaped by the hand of God. By leaving his country and his family, he was confronted with difficulties that made him return to the God of his mother who had prayed for him so much. He had to learn to trust in God in difficult times.

Miguel and Patrícia are Angolans, who have both made an asylum application, similar to the Angolans in Igreja Maná. They both recall how they experienced a lot of problems in the Netherlands (and other European countries), before they had their conversion experience. Remarkably, they connect these problems with what they call wrong and sinful behaviour.

Miguel describes his youth in Angola in a matter of fact manner. His father had never been around, his mother had to work for an income and therefore she had brought him to his grandmother. When he grew up, he moved to the house of an uncle in Luanda, who was a member of the Baptist church and was very strict on church attendance. He stayed at his uncle’s house until the age of eighteen. Then he gradually became attracted by the idea of traveling to Europe. When I asked him about the war, Miguel answered that he had had not much experience with the war. Leaving Angola for him was just a boy’s dream. He managed to obtain a plane ticket and travelled to Portugal. But out of restlessness, as he depicts it now, he wanted to move on again. Together with his brother he travelled by bus to the Netherlands. But Miguel was too restless to stay, so he decided to go to Germany to see what was going on there. In the years that followed he kept on travelling back and forth to Portugal and to the Netherlands. His asylum application outcome was negative. He became involved in criminal activities. His relationships with women were short-lived. He did

\[174\] Interview with Miguel, 5 February, 2008.
everything that was not right, as he sees it now. Sometimes he felt, ‘This is not right. This is not who I am.’ Then, a friend invited him to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. He agreed to go. That was the beginning of his converted life. He made radical changes in his life. As Miguel puts it ‘Before, I used to think that life was meant to be all about pleasure, although I was never happy. Now I know that I was unhappy because I did not live with God.’ He remembers that in his darkest moments he sang the church songs he had learned in the Baptist church, because ‘they stay in your heart.’ Now in his view, ‘it was God who had brought me to the church of my uncle, when I was a young boy.’ Miguel still has no residence permit and lives in the house of a friend. His hopes are focused on the possibility of proving that he is in fact Portuguese, since one of his grandfathers was Portuguese. He gave me a copy of his letter to the Portuguese authorities with his request to pray over it.

Patrícia, thirty-eight years old at the time of our interview, and born in Malange, the capital city of the homonymous province in Angola, told me how fearful she was when a medical exam undertaken during her asylum application revealed that she was HIV positive. She never told anybody around her, not even the boyfriend with whom she started a relationship in the Netherlands. Over the years, after her asylum application was rejected, she broke with this friend and started a new relationship. During this relationship she fell ill. During that period she came into contact with a member of a Pentecostal church. Several times she ended up in a hospital in Rotterdam, the last time severely ill. One night in the hospital, she cried out to God because she could not breathe. Then words entered her heart, telling her that she had to live in truth. The next day the doctors, who did not know that she already knew, told her and her boyfriend that she was HIV positive and therefore suffered from many afflictions. She did not have the courage to tell the boyfriend that she had known this already for years. But then, as Patricia told me, the Holy Spirit urged her to tell the truth about her disease. Finally she told her mother and sister in Angola, and at last also her boyfriend. This message caused their separation. At the time of our interview Patricia did not know how he is doing and whether she had shared her disease. But, as Patricia said ‘The Holy Spirit told me, now you

175 Interview with Patricia, 15, January, 2008.
can see the truth about yourself. And I began to see all the bad things I had done ... I had told so many lies about my situation when I entered the Netherlands! I planned to leave the hospital to tell the IND\textsuperscript{176} about my lies. I could not live with them anymore. But the doctor said ‘don’t do that! When you have to go to Angola, you will die!’” Patricia did not go to the IND. She still receives medical treatment for HIV and her physical condition has improved markedly. Finally, she was given a permanent residency permit, based on her long stay in the Netherlands.

What the narratives of the believers from Calvary Christian Center have in common is that they all reflect a moral interpretation of the lived past. In that respect there is no difference between the Brazilian and Angolan narratives. What happened in the past is mainly framed in terms of explanations of why things went that way. Strikingly, in some narratives, God was directly involved in the problems the respondents encountered (God wanted to break my arrogance), or in the memories of church life in childhood (it was God who brought me in the church of my uncle). In other narratives, problems were explained in terms of the moral or spiritual condition the respondents found themselves in (I was restless, I lied).

5.4 Conversion narratives and the past. A comparison.

In this section, a comparison will be made between the conversion narratives in Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center. The comparison will work on two levels. First, a comparison will be made with regard to the way respondents frame their lived past, i.e. how they remember what happened in their lives and to what extent the church discourses are internalised within these personal memories. Second, a comparison will be made concerning the way respondents talk about the past as an issue, in relation to the discourses and practices of their church.

\textsuperscript{176} IND: Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst, the Dutch immigration authorities.
5.4.1 Conversion narratives and ‘reemption’ of memories

The conversion narratives of respondents in Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center all consist of memories of the time in their life in which their conversion took place. All these stories were unique, however, several patterns or frames can be distinguished. In all these narratives, in which some things were told and others were not, memory, in essence a social process (Antze and Lambek 1996: xi-xiii), plays an important role.

Paul Connerton is opposed to the idea that forgetting is the negative side of remembering (2008: 59). In his view, forgetting is a constitutive part of the social process of remembrance in which some things are remembered and others are forgotten. Individual memory therefore can be seen as a process of remembering and forgetting, embedded in a dynamic collective memory, a framework in which one’s past experiences are eclectically remembered, understood and from time to time redefined, as the social environment is not homogeneous and changes over time. Conversion can be seen as part of this social process of remembrance. Especially in the process of making a new identity as a convert, the more or less explicit dominant discourse of the church or group with regard to a non-converted past, will gradually be internalised (Carsten 1995; Connerton 2008).

The ways in which processes of remembering and forgetting can work in identity formation, is shown by a study of support group sessions of second generation Holocaust survivors. In these sessions, participants learned to do what Carol Kirdron has coined as to ‘reemplot their personal narratives’ (2004: 514). Kidron illustrates how in memory group work, these participants were guided through a process of recognition of parent-child ‘trauma transmission’ in their own lives, in order to construe a new identity (ibid.: 524). The supervisors organised each session with a scenario, in which personal experiences, such as ‘lack of intimacy,’ became framed in the concept of ‘trauma transmission,’ as in these examples: ‘survivors experienced loss and suffering ....and they therefore raised us.....without showing ....intimacy. Do we know how to be intimate?’(ibid.: 522) ‘As a parent, I can't show my kids physical signs of affection either’ (ibid.: 523).
With the idea of ‘reemplotment’ in mind, I see several differences between both churches in terms of the way memories of a lived past were construed in conversion narratives.

First, conversion narratives in Calvary Christian Center show a stronger ‘reemplotment’ of past events into the direction of their moment of conversion, than conversion narratives in Igreja Maná do. What had happened was planned in order to lead the convert towards her conversion. This notion of God, at work in the pre-converted life of a person, is strongly present in the conversion narratives in Calvary Christian Center. They are almost absent in the conversion narratives in Igreja Maná. This cannot be explained only by differences in theological discourse, but by differences in practice as well. Calvary Christian Center adherents are simply more skilled in telling their conversion narrative as a story with a plot, because they have learned to do so in church.

Second, the fact that migration and being migrants is a lively aspect of church life in Calvary Christian Center, is reflected in the ‘reemplotment’ of memories in conversion narratives in this church. In many stories, migration is part of God’s plan. In the stories of respondents in Igreja Maná, this notion is completely absent, just as it is in the discourse and practices of that church.

Third, although the narratives of adherents in both churches contain a strong sense of problems in the pre-converted lives, the way these problems are framed in the memories of the story tellers is different. In the narratives of Calvary Christian Center adherents, these problems are framed mainly as a moral concept, reflecting church discourse on sin and salvation. In some cases, God was depicted as the author of problems, in others narratives, it was the sinful state (distanced from God) of the person, which caused all the trouble. The narratives of Igreja Maná adherents show little effort to reflect on the cause of remembered problems. They happened (illness, pregnancy) as a matter of fact and caused despair or made life difficult. Here again there is a connection with theological differences. In Igreja Maná discourse, it is not possible that problems come from God. Problems always come from the devil. Calvary Christian Center discourse is more varied and less clear-cut in this respect and therefore requires more reflection. One flagrant exception is Isa’s narrative, when she tells the story of the birth of her baby. The need to forgive, as a
condition for her child to be born, is a reflection of Igreja Maná discourse on the origin of problems.

Based on the preceding demonstration that the differences in narratives cohere with differences in church discourses and practices, I see a parallel between these narratives and the way in which second generation Holocaust victims learn to ‘reemplot their personal narratives’ (Kidron 2004: 514). There is also a parallel with the ways in which discourses and practices during church services, bible studies, prayer meetings and friendships within the church work as a constitutive framework. The encouragement to confess and testify in Calvary Christian Center can be seen as a possibility for linguistic performance, which is continuously exchanged with the others in church, and through which one’s identity is negotiated and gradually internalised (ibid.: 525). Although the adherents of Calvary Christian Center show stronger linguistic performance skills than those of Igreja Maná, I suggest that both churches in their own way provide their adherents with a ‘meaning-laden vocabulary with which they can re-evaluate and reorient their lives’ (ibid.:525).

5.4.2 Conversion narratives and ‘the past’ as an issue

Much of what is said about the conversion discourses and practices of both churches refers to conversion as a break with the past. Generally this does not mean that the past itself is mentioned as an issue in church discourse, but rather, what is said in conversion discourse implicitly construes a particular attitude towards the past. In the second section of this chapter, I recalled one sermon given by pastor Celso in Calvary Christian Center in which he talked about the past as something we do not like to think about. That was the only moment in this church that I heard the past being discussed directly. Likewise, in Calvary Christian Center, I did not come across songs that refer to the past as a theme. Hence, I suggest that ‘the past’ in a direct sense, is not an issue in Calvary Christian Center. Accordingly, during interviews, I never heard a respondent talk about the past is this way. Nor did I hear expressions such as, ‘I can’t remember anymore, that is too long ago, I was too young then’ or ‘I don’t want to talk about it.’ Although some respondents shared painful memories, which even evoked emotions such as sadness at the moment of telling, I did not encounter any hesitation to re-experience them through speaking.
It is clear that Igreja Maná’s conversion discourse contains a more negative attitude towards the past than that of Calvary Christian Center, as I pointed out earlier. Strikingly, during my fieldwork, I observed that ‘the past’ as a subject is much more present in Igreja Maná discourse and practice than in Calvary Christian Center. Every time the church sings ‘don’t look back’ or ‘forget the people who hurt you,’ the past as subject is made present through negation paradoxically. Even more striking is my observation that ‘the past as issue’ comes to the foreground in my interviews, only and particularly in relation with my questions about what happened in Angola and how migration to the Netherlands had taken place. Painful memories were shared, and, as was the case with interviews at Calvary Christian Center, sometimes emotions flowed too. For example, when Isa told me about her final decision not to commit suicide, tears fell down her cheeks.

5.4.3 **Silencing as church politics**

This section aims to gain more insight in the complex dynamics between the Igreja Maná practice of continuously signalling ‘the past’ by discursively negating or silencing it. This practice includes the non-discursive negation of Angola as being part of the identity of its adherents, and the articulation of the past as a problem in interviews as soon as Angola and migration were addressed. Above all, it must be kept in mind that according to my respondents, they were attracted to this church because it was Angolan.

In one of my interviews with pastor João, I asked him why the church services of Igreja Maná contained hardly any Angolan elements. He said, ‘We want to tell them that they are in the Netherlands now and that they better build a future here.’ One possible interpretation of Igreja Maná’s efforts to make an issue of the past by silencing it, is to determine this practice as a ‘conspiracy of silence’ (Kidron 2004: 517; McKinney 2007: 265-273; Connerton 2008). Similar to what Rijk van Dijk (2001) discovered in Ghanaian churches in the Netherlands, at Igreja Maná, asking members about their pasts is not done, because the migration process often contains painful and shameful aspects. Pastor João said, ‘we never speak about what happened in Angola, because some of us were UNITA, others were MPLA. We do not want to develop new hostilities within the
church community, based on what happened in the past.\textsuperscript{177} Since over eighty per cent of adherents are Angolans, the chance that some of them may have been the descendants, or relatives of, enemies in the Angolan civil war is not unlikely. Especially the older (male) adherents of Igreja Maná might have been involved in the violence. Dita, one of my female respondents, divorced her husband who had been a UNITA soldier in the province of Huambo, a UNITA bastion at the time of the war, in the Netherlands. Other Igreja Maná adherents told me that they had been born in this province of Angola as well. The church’s emphasis on the need to forgive and forget one’s past offenders might similarly be enforced by the aim to keep the community at peace. The fact that almost all of my Igreja Maná respondents made an issue of not talking about what happened in Angola might refer to their own fear of being confronted by former enemies.

For the young Angolans, who arrived in the Netherlands as minors, the church’s politics of silencing the past might serve another goal. As described in chapter three, many of these young people had been given instructions in order to prepare them for the asylum process. Many had been told, ‘don’t tell who you really are,’ or ‘tell them your parents are dead.’ The young Angolans I interviewed, who found a new way of living and surviving in the Maná church, might fear the IND because their residency permit had been acquired on false pretences. Ana’s story at the beginning of this chapter is illustrative of the Dutch government’s policy towards asylum applications, as Joris van Wijk showed in his study (2007: 304-336). At the age of thirteen, still a child, she had told a lie, just because she wanted to live with her older girlfriend. In telling that lie at such a young age, she could not foresee future consequences. This lie caused the best lawyer to reject her case as unwinnable.

Silencing the past, as Igreja Maná church policy, has wider implications beyond the church in Rotterdam, since it is a transnational church. Igreja Maná in Angola has the same church policy.\textsuperscript{178} In Angola, the policy of silencing the

\textsuperscript{177} Interview with Pastor João, 8 February, 2007.

\textsuperscript{178} As the next chapter will demonstrate, in Igreja Maná in Luanda, I encountered moments in which pastors referred to current problems in Angolan society, but mainly in connection with the church’s theology of victory.
past might be experienced as a confirming response towards Angolan powerful elites, who tell ordinary Angolans to forget the past and look forward to the future (Pearce 2005: 166-174; Ruigrok 2007: 86, 2011: 30-34). In her doctoral thesis concerning the processes involved in Angola’s post-war state formation, Inge Ruigrok (2011) notes that, unlike other African countries, after the civil war, Angola did not put any effort into doing justice in terms of becoming accountable, or working through the past. There weren’t any tribunals, or any efforts to find or punish war criminals, mainly due to the fact that the end of the war did not bring about a change of governmental power. The government prolonged an amnesty, negotiated at an earlier stage of the war, which included the adage that ‘all Angolans should forgive and forget (italics added RS) the offences resulting from the Angolan conflict and face the future with tolerance and confidence’ (ibid.: 32).

5.4.4 Silence and a traumatic past

The fact that Angolan respondents put ‘forgetting the past’ so selectively into practice, namely only with regard to their past in Angola and their migration to the Netherlands, might suggest that this is their strategy employed to cope with particular experiences. In Medical Anthropology, ‘silence’ and ‘forgetting’ are recognised as ways to cope with recent traumas, especially when social/cultural systems are broken and reconciliation and recovery are not possible (Tankink 2000b, 2009). Among Angolans who fled an extremely violent civil war in Angola, and who attempted to build a life in the Netherlands in the face of great difficulties, this might be the case.

The expression of memory is a multi-faceted process, and explicit narratives are only one kind of narrative, among many. As a study on ‘traumatic storytelling,’ conducted in the context of apartheid in South Africa shows, there are many cultural and political complications when people talk about their past (Colvin 2006). Sometimes, the ideological agenda behind the institutions that offer therapy to trauma victims might even unconsciously ‘work against the restoration of the full agency of their clients,’ rather than developing it (McKinney 2007: 265). This means that the ideology that insists that a client must tell the trauma story because the conspiracy of silence must be broken, might obscure the social needs of the client in the therapeutic relationship. In
McKinny’s case study, therapists were suspected of ‘counter transformation’ if they gave their client the room to remain silent. In other occasions, for instance in the case of post war Serbia, experiences are just too painful to give words to them (Van de Port 1993: 14-17). In Mozambique, child soldiers were reconciled with their community by a cleansing ritual that was silent, but symbolised a ‘locking away’ of the past. In this ritual, the former child soldier needed to enter a hut in his dirty war clothes, undress himself, change clothes and leave the hut without looking back, while the hut was set on fire (Honwana 2008: 15-16).

On the other hand, among Angolan refugees in Namibia, there was a deep need to recount the horrifying terrors that happened in the war zones of South East Angola (Brinkman 2000: 2). Pamela Reynolds shows in her study of Zimbabwe, how after the War of Liberation in 1980, ritual specialists healed children who had taken part in the guerrilla activities. In these rituals, the child had to reveal the truth about what s/he had done, or gone through. In this social and cultural context, ‘silence’ seemed no option and healing mostly had to do with reconciliation (Reynolds 1990: 15). However it is achieved, after times of war or other traumatic events, there is a need to reconcile and reintegrate people into a community, as the abovementioned authors show.

Pentecostal churches seem to have their own role in these processes of dealing with traumatic pasts, civil war and violence. As Marjan Tankink points out in her research on the role of Pentecostal churches in post-war South-West Uganda, where society is destroyed and social/cultural systems are broken, believers continuously give the past a new significance by describing how God helps them in the present and the future. In these churches, the conspiracy of silence is broken by providing an *inter-subjective space* in which converts can testify about their war memories within a framework of ‘what God did for me’ (Tankink 2000a: 103-109; 121-127). In this cultural model, in which testimonies take place and an audience is available, memories can become meaningful and accessible (Kirmayer 1996: 193 cited by Tankink: 105). An example of how an inter-subjective space makes memories meaningful, is the moment in my interview with Isa, described above, in which her tears started to trickle down her cheeks. Tankink also suggests that these testimonies ‘externalise’ pain by reframing memories as actions by God and the devil (2000a: 123). In a Pentecostal church in Sierra Leone, plays and movies mediate a translation of
the civil war into a spiritual war, another way for young members to deal with a violent past (Shaw 2007: 85-86). Pentecostal churches thus show variety in their pastoral strategies intended to assist with coping.

It is said that within societies that have suffered decades of social and cultural fragmentation, it is hardly possible to construct a collective ‘social memory.’ As Inge Ruigrok has described, the long war in Angola has uprooted society so severely, that even ‘social activists are convinced that an institutional response to human rights abuses [...] would not be an option in Angola today’ (Ruigrok 2007: 85).

Angolan immigrants in the Netherlands apparently do not possess an Angolan ‘social memory.’ Moreover, they have no opportunity to deal with the past in Angolan society, but will have to frame their memories in a new life context in the Netherlands. Some of them certainly do have memories that are terrifying. Speaking about a traumatic past requires that certain preconditions exist. It is not always beneficial to talk about traumatic pasts, as the preceding examples show. So how does Igreja Maná enable such a process, with its strategy of silencing the past?

5.4.5 ‘Forgetting’ as ritual and ‘Implicit social knowledge’ in Igreja Maná

From the preceding sections it has become clear that Angolan respondents might have internalised the politics of ‘forgetting the past’ as a coping strategy. It might have been their situation of insecurity and fear of the IND, or their too painful memories of their period in Angola and their emigration experience to the Netherlands, that made them put ‘forgetting’ into practice. Still, the fact that respondents did tell me that they were attracted to the church in the first place because of the other Angolans who went there and the Portuguese language, convinced me that ‘being Angolans as a way of togetherness’ somehow must be part of this church community, although apparently not in a discursive way. Furthermore, the fact that the expression ‘don’t look back’ is repeated almost every week in Igreja Maná, means that ‘the past’ as a topic is continuously evoked in the present.

These two features pointed me in the direction of Michael Taussig’s notion of ‘implicit social knowledge’ (1986: 367). Based on his research in South
West Colombia, Taussig describes how in ritual healing, envy always is present, as an obvious and barely discursive aspect of social relatedness (1986: 393-412). It is a kind of knowledge, based on collective experiences, which penetrates a society or community, without needing to be said or written. Having grown up in that atmosphere is the only way to take part in this ‘knowledge.’ Mattijs van de Port studied war victims in Serbia, whose painful memories had been erased by dictator Tito (Connerton 2008: 60-62). He suggests that the way these victims find a hidden memory ceremony in gypsy music, can be interpreted as ‘implicit social knowledge.’ For these victims, gypsies and their music embody ‘the total loss’ they experience because of the past war (Van de Port 1993: 32-36). It might be suggested that this ‘implicit social knowledge’ is mediated through ritualised forms that make it accessible.

I interpret the weekly repeated instruction to forget the past, as it is mentioned in lessons, in sermons, in prayers and in songs, as the Igreja Maná adherents’ ritual to deal with the past, addressing and remembering it without having to re-live what had happened. There are expressions and rituals that allude to something that is there, without saying it. It is there in the intensity of certain verbal expressions. It is there in moments where there is a particular collective mood, in certain face expressions. For instance, a common greeting in the church is: ‘sempre em frente,’ which literally means ‘always (going) forward.’ I already mentioned the singing of songs with this element of not looking back. It is likely that in this church the axiom to forget the past might open up a space, where people ‘know what it is all about,’ without the need to articulate it or argue over it. This, in my view, counts as well for those young people who have been forced to ‘forget’ about their parents and their history in order to construct a refugee story, bearing the psychological damage, caused by this forced amnesia every day.

Another ritual form in which Angolan war experiences might be evoked as ‘implicit social knowledge,’ is a remarkable custom in Igreja Maná: the ‘andar em amor’ (walk in love), practiced at every meeting, both Sunday reunions or family group meetings. This means that the pastor, an elder or a family group leader preaches about how to love one’s fellow human being, the latter being either a friend or an enemy. Such a sermon may contain words like:
‘We must love our enemy. We must answer evil with good, curse with blessing. If not, God cannot bless us. When a brother treated you badly, forgive and bless him and pray for him! Answering evil with evil brings us nowhere!’

After the words, the deed follows. As demanded by the preacher, all people in the church rise and embrace each other with the words: ‘I love you with the love of Jesus.’ Sometimes the believers are invited to say to their neighbour: ‘How beautiful you look today!’ or ‘you are a blessing, God is glad with you!’ More than this, the almost daily ritual of ‘walking in love’ is done within the context of Jorge Tadeu’s literal definition of love as a ‘war weapon’ (Tadeu n.d.b.: 19-33). According to Tadeu’s teaching, God will let the Angolan adherents win a war (against the devil) if they ‘forget’ what people have done to them. Hence, without addressing it directly in words, this structural love ritual might provide a way to handle the painful and violent past for those who lost their loved ones in the war, or had to abandon them by fleeing.

5.4.6  A theological reflection on Igreja Mana’s silence politics

As said in one of the previous sections, Igreja Maná’s adage to forget the past and to forgive acts of injustice, might be viewed as church politics, which confirm the current Angolan state policy. On the other hand, the ideologies that hide the urge to make people tell their stories might be as politically laden as their counterparts. From a social science point of view, it is acknowledged that these processes are far too complex to easily judge them as either right or wrong. At this point, a theological reflection on Igreja Maná’s church discourse concerning the past is needed.

Characteristic of Pentecostalism, in all its diversity, is its orientation towards the future, which is theologically rooted in the experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This experience is perceived eschatologically as the last stage of the epoch before Christ’s second coming, a stage in which God is doing something ‘new’ (Kärkkäinen 2009: xv). The adage that God is doing something new, for a long time kept Pentecostal theology from a thorough dialogue with earlier pneumatology, and systematic theology as a whole. Although a century of Pentecostal movements has resulted in numerous written theological reflections, Pentecostal academic theology has developed only in the past two decades (ibid.: xviii). This theology focuses mainly on the Holy Spirit
within the church, and discusses doctrinal points of view concerning typical Pentecostal topics such as Spirit baptism, spiritual power, and divine healing. As far as the Holy Spirit’s work in the world is involved, in most Pentecostal theologies it is mainly confined to mission and conversion, as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen’s (2009: 155-180) overview of Pentecostal pneumatology confirms. For instance, this concern with the role of the Holy Spirit in the church is visible in William and Robert Menzies (2000) discussion of Gordon Fee’s interpretation of Paulinian Spirit theology (1996). Their discussion highlights pneumatological notions in the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. A central point of this discussion is whether the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is meant to empower Christians, for mission, or for sanctification. Although Menzies and Menzies briefly refer to the fact that God is concerned with the world as a whole (2000: 182-184), in their publications a creation-theological approach of the Holy Spirit is lacking. In contrast, Kees van der Kooi (2006: 27-33), a non-Pentecostal systematic theologian, involved in the charismatic movement in the Netherlands and former professor of Charismatic Theology at the VU University, begins his theological reflections on the Holy Spirit with creation. This view gives room for the idea that God as Creator and Redeemer through the Holy Spirit, still does restorative and blessing work throughout the whole world, thus diminishing a theological depiction of the world as antithetical to the ‘church.’

In my view, the Pentecostal eschatological emphasis on God doing something new (every day), combined with the reduced perception of the Holy Spirit as a divine power within the church has three implications, which need further theological reflection. First, both notions together enforce a dualistic worldview, through which contextual social political developments are interpreted, namely as pro-, or anti-Christ. One example of such an interpretation, is the South-African Pentecostal Apostolic Church’s long lasting view on the South African anti-apartheid movement as a communist (and therefore anti-Christ) movement, which had to be eliminated (Horn 2008). Second, they have the potential to lead Pentecostal church leaders away from

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179 An exception to this church-centred approach is the Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong (2005: 235-266), whose interpretation goes in the direction of an interreligious outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
reflecting on their own past deeds, i.e. these notions reduce their accountability concerning earlier thoughts, decisions and actions. To take the example further, within a few decades between World War One and World War Two, the South-African Pentecostal Apostolic Movement’s pacifist standpoint turned into the affirmation of military service, first confined to non-combatant service, but later on extended to combatant service, without any reflection on earlier points of view, other than that ‘pacifism had been a false doctrine’ (Horn 2006: 15). Third, these notions emphasise the urgent need to forgive others unconditionally as an inevitable part of conversion, too often at the cost of the acknowledgement of committed injustice from the side of offenders. In such a one-sided view of forgiveness, in which resentment is rejected as fundamentally sinful and even instigated by satanic forces, Pentecostalism has a potential to become, unconsciously and unwillingly, a handmaiden for those (governments and other powerful parties) responsible for violence and injustice, in whose interest it is to let time heal the wounds and for whom being reminded of injustice, committed in the past, is inconvenient.

Igreja Maná’s silencing the past and its urgent discourse to forgive and forget ‘all that hurt you,’ in order to become entirely ‘new,’ clearly is in harmony with Angola’s contemporary state sanctioned policy. It might also been seen in regard to the fact that the church has never been a member of COIEPA, Comité Inter-Eclesia para a Paz em Angola (inter-ecclesiastic committee for Peace in Angola), founded in the 1990s, which put severe injustice, caused by the civil war, on the public agenda. Yet, as the theological reflection offered above points out, this urgency to look away from what happened in the past, might be related to a particular pneumatological emphasis on the church as locus for divine restoration.

180 The church umbrella organisations—the Council of Christian Churches of Angola (CICA), the Angolan Evangelical Alliance (AEA) and the Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé (CEAST)—formed the Inter-Ecclesiastical Committee for Peace in Angola (COIEPA), encompassing Protestant and Catholic churches. In May 2007, I interviewed Baptist Rev. Ntoni-Nzinga, one of the board members of COIEPA.

181 Although beyond the scope of this study, it might be argued that within the breadth of Christian theology the notion of resentment needs rehabilitation, as an undeniable part of a process of reconciliation. Resentment regularly has a negative connotation, like revenge and hatred. However, as the philosopher Theo de Wit (2011) points out,
5.5 Concluding remarks

Although Pentecostal churches in general see conversion as a ‘complete break with the past,’ research on ongoing church practices and the narratives of their converts shows a more dialectical process, in which ambiguity and ambivalence towards the past prevail (Klaver 2011; cf. Meyer 1998b; Engelke 2004). The two Pentecostal migrant churches in Rotterdam are no exception, but, as discussed in this chapter, they do show differences in their discourses and their strategies of pastoral care. Furthermore, the analysis and comparison of the conversion narratives of the adherents show that the discourses and practices in both churches have been strongly internalised. The most salient internalisation in the narratives of Calvary Christian Center adherents, is related to the way migration was construed as part of the road to initial or ongoing conversion, and how the conversion story was built as a confession plot: as Gods plan. The most striking internalisation in the narratives of Igreja Maná adherents, was the case in which ‘the past’ became an issue. Respondents said they did not want to talk about, or had forgotten, what happened in Angola and in their migratory journey to the Netherlands.

The internalisation of Igreja Maná discourse, with the motto ‘don’t look back,’ has been examined further, with regard to the respondents’ declarations to have been attracted to Igreja Maná precisely because it was Angolan. In other words, the most attractive element comes very close to what simultaneously is not talked about and should be forgotten. As discussed in this chapter, there is a collective element in the Angolan past, about which Igreja Maná members share the inability to speak about, either because of too much pain, or too much fear for the immigration authorities. The almost daily rituals of telling each other to

resentment as expressed in the self-reflections by the Shoah-victim Jean Améry, has a compelling existential meaning, namely the desire for acknowledgement by the wrongdoers of the past violent deed as a moral reality. Only then can offenders and victims become human fellows again (2000 [1966]: 114-144). It might be worthwhile to make this signification of resentment a topic of Christian theological reflection. It might create a beneficial interruption of the human (and societal) inclination to focus on progress, too easily making resentful victims ‘the problem.’ The Pentecostal theologian Miroslav Volf (1996) attempted to do so, addressing the Balkan-war in terms of otherness, sin and reconciliation from the perspective of an ethnic conflict.
'forget the past' and to ‘walk in love,’ put the past into the present and bring about the implicit social knowledge of what is collectively not talked about.

In their different conversion discourses and practices, both churches offer their adherents what I call an *inter-temporal space* in which they can move back and forth from the past into the present, either by confession or by silence. This space is not only inter-temporal, but transnational as well, as it brings together the complex mix of social, cultural and historical threads in the lives of their migrant adherents.
6 THE PRESENT IN CONVERSION: ‘ACT LIKE A WINNER’ VERSUS ‘GOD BROUGHT YOU INTO THE DESERT’

6.1 Introduction

Calvary Christian Center
In October 2008, I met Elisabete Berens, the Brazilian woman who founded Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam. I visited her in her current house in Bahia. She shared many memories with me about her time in the Netherlands. One day, she told me what she had experienced during her first visit of a Dutch Pentecostal church in Rotterdam. ‘I entered the church hall fifteen minutes before the service started. I kneeled on the floor and started to pray as usual, weeping before the eyes of the Lord. An usher of the church immediately approached me and asked what my problem was and if he could be of any help. I answered: ‘I have no problem. I am just praying.’ Then the usher told me either to stop crying, or leave the church hall. ‘This is not how we behave here, it disturbs the other people,’ he explained. I stopped weeping and praying, very much embarrassed. From that time on, I prayed at home first and went to the church after I had prayed.’

Igreja Maná
September 2006 in Igreja Maná. The national bishop talks about being a winner. ‘You only can be a winner if you take the attitude of a winner. Look at you! Look at how you slouch in your chair! You should sit differently: upright! Don’t keep your head down! You are children of God (filhos de Deus), so you should act accordingly! There are many Christians who act like babies. They lament and cry to the Lord, as if they are helpless. But they don’t understand that God is waiting for us to take our position as a winner’!

This is the second of two chapters that deal with the notion of ‘time’ in Pentecostal conversion and converted life. Characteristic of Pentecostalism, within its diversity, is its orientation towards the future, which, as stated in the
previous chapter, is theologically rooted in the experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This experience is perceived eschatologically as the last stage of the epoch before Christ’s second coming, a stage in which God is doing something ‘new’ (Kärkkäinen 2009). The perception of this last stage is part of the theological tension between ‘already’ and ‘not yet,’ with which the Christian tradition has had to deal from the beginning, that is, for almost 2000 years. Put in theological terms, with the resurrection of Christ as the firstborn, salvation was begun, but still waits for completion. This ‘not yet’ is acknowledged as being grounded in God’s will, meaning that sin, trouble, illness and misfortune are still part of ‘creation’s groaning, as in the pains of childbirth.’ In Pentecostal theology, the perception of the Holy Spirit as a pledge for the Kingdom of God puts a much higher eschatological expectation on the converted life in the present. Baptism in the Holy Spirit anticipates victory over ‘the old human nature,’ i.e. sin, personal weaknesses, or illness. Nevertheless, this eschatological expectation has come to include several features within the hundred years of development of the Pentecostal movement. As stated earlier, both Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center are exponents of the Pentecostal movement in their theological emphasis on personal victory and a better life in the future.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the notion of ‘time’ in regard to those discourses and practices of Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center that refer to ‘the past’ in conversion. In this chapter, I pose the question of how, in their eschatological expectation of personal victory for every baptised adherent, both churches deal with the experience of trouble in the present lives of their adherents, such as illness, sorrow, pain, unhappiness, and misfortune. The theological focus on the Holy Spirit as a pledge for the Kingdom of God, in which all evil and harm will have vanished, puts these present experiences under pressure. Given that this is the case, which discourses and practices do these churches employ to negotiate this tension between ‘present’ (trouble) and ‘future’ (victory)? In this chapter, the central question concerning the attractiveness of these future-oriented churches for migrants, many of whom

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live a troublesome present life in the margins of Dutch society, becomes even more compelling.

In the next section, I will present the differences between the two churches in their (future) victory orientedness in relation to trouble, which come to the foreground not only in their discourse, but in their typical prayer practices as well. The two fragments at the beginning of this chapter lift a corner of the veil on this issue. In Igreja Maná, the national bishop urges the believers to take the attitude of a winner, depicting crying as inappropriate behaviour. Elisabete Berens, on the other hand, was used to praying, while kneeling and weeping ‘before the eyes of the Lord,’ a practice that she claims had nothing to do with an urgent or particular problem. In this section I aim to put the different discourses and practices within a historical context, in order to reveal the continuity between Pentecostalism and older Christian traditions, and to investigate to what extent these discourses and practices are influenced by social/political and cultural notions.

Subsequently, I will demonstrate how these discourses and practices are internalised and reflected in the narratives of their adherents. While interacting with adherents of both churches, I invariably came across the different ways in which they expressed personal troubling situations. In this section, I analyse the correlation between discourse and prayer, i.e. how they influence each other.

In the last section, I focus particularly on weeping, which is mainly a form of female prayer expression practices at Calvary Christian Center. I take up the question of how this bodily and emotional expression must be seen in relation to a victory oriented Pentecostal church, in which women are placed in a subordinate position, as briefly described in chapter two.

6.2 Discourses of suffering and communal prayer

In this section, I describe discourses on suffering and communal prayer practices at Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center.

6.2.1 Igreja Maná discourse: A good Christian is a strong soldier

Igreja Maná discourse emphasises the ability of converted and Spirit-filled Christians to become masters of their own lives, capable of overcoming trouble.
In church services, suffering is regularly referred to as the weakness of Christians who do not understand the message of the Gospel. Apostle Jorge Tadeu often creates theatre, showing how these Christians act. He starts crying out loud: ‘Boo hoo, God help me……I can’t help myself, boo hoo……!!!’ Then he says, ‘But these Christians don’t understand that God is waiting for them to step outside of the problems they suffer from. By giving us the Holy Spirit, God already has given us everything we need to solve the problems in our lives and to transform the world around us.’

Jorge Tadeu’s book, ‘A Origem dos Problemas’, is often referred to in the church’s broadcast testimonies. Central to this book is the idea that problems, which cause people to suffer, should be seen as curses, coming from the devil. The only reason a person suffers from problems, is that s/he, one way or another, has opened the door to the devil. There is no suffering without cause, and because there is no evil in God, it must come from the enemy, Satan (Tadeu n.d.a: 6). Suffering, therefore, is a state of being out of God’s grace. God wants to help the suffering human being, but He cannot, because the devil stands in His way. The only one who can cast out the devil is the human being herself, by repenting over ‘dead works’ (obras mortas) (n.d.e.: 129), and standing up against the devil. In this book, Tadeu describes ten essential causes of problems including, occultism, idolatry, manipulation of others, judging others, spreading discord, as well as, engaging in disputes, being unforgiving, keeping bad company, living with fear, or using evil words, such as death, illness, and poverty (n.d.a: 7-8). The last two causes especially are mentioned regularly in church services. A true Christian shows no fear and abstains from the use of words that sow evil.

An overarching image, which includes all these ideas about suffering, is that of a Christian as a strong soldier. The struggle against trouble and strife is to

183 In his lessons for pastors, Tadeu rejects showing emotions in ministry: ‘There are pastors who preach based on emotions. Especially the Brazilians are cracks at this. Weeping over this, and tearful over that. I never saw Jesus teach: ‘Brothers and sister, boo hoo!’ You see some television programs in which those pastors act like a newborn baby in diapers: Boo hoo, boo hoo!’ (n.d.e.: 278).

184 In his ‘Senhorio de Jesus,’ Tadeu dedicates two chapters to ‘dead works’ (n.d.e.: 129-174).
be considered a spiritual battle against the devil. But there is more. Jorge Tadeu rejects the idea of the church as locus for managing the troubles of its adherents. In his view, the church of Christ has no time for such introspective and all-consuming attitudes, since it is already involved in the heaviest spiritual battle against the devil ever. A good Christian knows that the price of salvation is complete dedication to this spiritual war. The church is depicted as an army and the individual believer a soldier, according to the images used in sermons, as well as in the books of Jorge Tadeu, recommended by the church (cf.n.d.e.: 359-378). Next, I have provided an overview of the sermons in which this suffering discourse is central.

In a sermon about how to behave as a wife, the pastor stresses that women must always speak positively about their husband. If his behaviour is poor, she must pray for him. If she wants a better husband, she is told that she must ‘Speak positively of your husband and your marriage, and you will have victory. If you don’t, you will open the door to the devil and you will become ill.’

In a sermon about tithing the pastor asks, ‘Who wants a salary of 2000 Euros gross? Ten per cent of this 2000 Euros belongs to God. If you don’t give it, God cannot bless you. We are not allowed to rob heaven. We must all do this, every month! Only when you keep the devil outside of your life will you become prosperous.’

‘Illness is a mask of the devil,’ the pastor explains in another Sunday Service. ‘It is God’s will that we are healthy. He wants to bless us in all things. Because of sin, there is illness. It is sinful to pretend that illness belongs to life. That is the devil’s mask. He wants you to accept your illness. He gives you the thought that you are going to be ill. Illness does not come from God, but from the devil. As soon as you disobey God, the devil will curse you with illness.’

In another sermon the pastor declares that God can liberate a faithful Christian from every situation. With regard to the beginning of the Exodus narrative in the Bible, he explains that God offered his solution as soon as the

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186 Sermon Sunday Service Igreja Maná, 19 November 2006.
people began to call Him. But the problem of the people was that, as soon as they got into trouble in the desert, they started to murmur against Moses.

‘God can liberate you from anything! Do you live under the curse of poverty, illness, as your forefathers did? God can liberate you! Do you watch porn movies? God can liberate you. But it is you who has the choice to submit yourself to God. Permit Him to come into your life. If you don’t trust him, and act accordingly, He won’t do anything.’

‘Don’t you know that you already have the future in you? God has planted it in you, from the moment you committed your life to Jesus. Keep your eyes on that future instead of thinking about your problems. It is only you who can realise your future, by starting to live the laws of God’s kingdom now!’

During my visit to Igreja Maná in Luanda, the sermons I heard during more than ten church services, were based on three books Jorge Tadeu had published recently: Fé do Tipo de Deus (God-like faith), Evangelização (Evangelisation), and Convertido à Discípulo (From convert to disciple) (n.d.i.; n.d.j.). All three themes contained the same underlying message, that people who do not live the faith, live under a curse and therefore suffer problems, such as illness, misfortune and poverty. The only way to be liberated from this curse is by living God’s promises, while confessing them positively and ‘acting’ them every single day. To convert to Jesus is not enough. A Christian serves God by making new disciples. This is not an option, but a condition for salvation. When I returned to Rotterdam, I learned that the same sermons had been delivered there. Reading the books afterwards, I learned that the sermons had literally been read from these books. As stated previously, in Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, the leaders hardly referred to Angola in a discursive way. In Luanda, this is


188 Sermon Sunday Service Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, 22 July, 2007. Sermon by the Bishop of Europe, who had visited Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, on the occasion of the annual Igreja Maná football tournament, organised in The Netherlands.

189 From 19 April until 19 May 2007, I stayed in Luanda and attended over ten Igreja Maná church services.
different. Preachers make references to the Angolan war and its destructive social effects. However, instead of confirming the worrisome circumstances that their adherents have to live through, the bishops urge them to understand that they do not have to live in misery if they follow the laws of God’s kingdom.

‘No matter where you live, if you do God’s will, you will prosper. You don’t need to be unemployed, you don’t need to be ill. The bureaucratic system in Angola is not normal. It is not normal that you have to wait for years to have your land registered. It is not normal that you have to pay the police in the street, because they force you to do so. But if you follow the law of God, all these things won’t touch you.’

As the sermon fragments provided earlier demonstrate, Igreja Maná discourse on suffering is not unambiguous. Actually the word ‘suffering’ or ‘to suffer’ does not appear in most of the sermons and teaching. It is mostly the word ‘problem,’ that is referred to. The term ‘suffering’ refers to a particular experience of problems. Due to problems, a person suffers. In Igreja Maná this experience is rejected as emotional, and immature.

Sometimes the human believer is the only actor active in solving problems, and sometimes it is God who acts as the Liberator, after the believer has submitted to Him. Sometimes, problems occur because God cannot or will not give His blessings, sometimes problems arise because the believer has let the devil come into his/her life. In spite of these differences, throughout all these sermons and teachings, the main message is that having problems inevitably means that the devil has a grip on that person. A notable part of this discourse is that negative speech is one way to open oneself to evil forces. Central to this discourse is the continuous appeal to adherents to overcome their present troubles by working towards a future solution: do this now and you (or God) will solve your problems.

6.2.2 Igreja Maná: prayer as war weapon

This appeal to ‘enact’ future solutions into the ‘here and now’ is not only emphasised in Igreja Maná discourse, but also in the prayer practices that I encountered during my fieldwork. In the account that follows, I have depicted a

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regular Sunday service. I have attended over forty Sunday services at Igreja Maná Rotterdam.

Half an hour before the start of the Sunday service, deacons and elders are gathered in the church building. The pastor gives them instructions for the upcoming service and then the elders delegate tasks between their deacons. They pray together in tongues to invoke the Holy Spirit of God, and to expel all rebellious powers that aim to prevent God’s powerful presence from entering the building. Some deacons, whose task it is to prepare the upper church hall for the church service, install a beamer and a projection screen on the pulpit. The band picks up the set of drums from the store room and transforms the front space into a stage, building up the set, together with the electric guitar and microphones for the singers. In the meantime, the sound mixer tests the equipment. In another church room, deacons responsible for childcare and Sunday school make their own preparations. In a third room downstairs, the intercession group has started its prayers. This group will pray continuously during the service to keep the dark forces away, so that God's Spirit can touch the people attending the service with his healing and liberating power. Pastor João told me that if the congregation seems lifeless and unenthusiastic, he sends more intercessors downstairs, in order to win the spiritual battle. In his view, the more power these prayers bring to bear against the dark forces, the more powerfully the Holy Spirit can work among the believers.

In the meantime, the church members enter the church and subsequently stand in small groups, chatting, or they take a seat, while the band starts to play. At a certain moment, the lead singer invites the church to ‘louvar a Deus’ (praise God). Everyone stands up and starts singing. The lead singer guides the church through six or seven praise songs, sung in one big medley, without a break. Then the pastor or bishop opens the service with a prayer, with the words: ‘vamos orar, diga comigo’ (let us pray, say it with me). A prayer follows which is typical of all prayers in the service. Usually, the prayer is led by a single person and followed by the group in a rhythmic cadence, in which the

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191 In Igreja Maná discourse, all spiritual evil forces, such as the devil and demons are rebellious, since they act against God. Demons try to influence church members to become rebellious as well. Rebellion is defined as among other things, complaining, murmuring, criticizing, and disobeying.
leader’s words are repeated. This seemed quite strange to me when I experienced it for the first time, especially because of the speed with which the church followed the leader, who often had not finished his sentence yet. After a while it became clear to me that a lot of sentences belonged to a fixed formula, which were repeated in many prayers. Learning to follow the prayer therefore is achieved quickly, but leading the prayer not only means knowing the specific words and phrases, but also knowing how to bring them into a particular rhythm, which has a bodily dimension as well because hands and feet are joining in.

This ability is not only required of leaders. Every believer is expected to learn it in the Family Group meetings, as soon as he or she has shown an interest in partaking of the group. One of my interviewees, a young male adult, told me that he was particularly attracted to this church because he admired those persons who knew how to pray like that. But when he was asked to lead a prayer for the first time, he failed. He felt so ashamed of his initial failure that he started to practice these prayers at home, day after day. The next time he was asked to lead a prayer, the whole group was amazed with the progress he had made. A young girl in my family group had to practice a prayer almost every week. I felt that it was the rhythm of the words that made her fail every time. It is like sitting on a tandem bicycle, where the wheels are being turner the other rider and you have to keep up with the tempo. At the invitation of the family group leader, I tried several times, but even in Dutch, although the other believers followed me obediently, I could not get the rhythm.

Besides the rhythm in the words, and in the body, the position of the arms expresses who is addressed in the prayer. To God one prays with hands held upwards. When the devil is addressed in prayer, mostly with the beginning words ‘Satanás, venho contra ti’ (Satan, I come (stand up) against you), one shouts, slapping ones hand (mostly the right hand) downwards.\textsuperscript{192} The importance of order and discipline in these collective prayers was made clear to me, when I was corrected by a member of the church because I had my hands up, while the rest of the community was slapping the devil. Suddenly I felt

\textsuperscript{192} These proclamations against the devil are part of the communal prayer. After these proclamations, hands lift up towards heaven again, and the prayers continue.
someone lowering my hands, saying: ‘Irmã, o diabo está lá em baixo’ (Sister, the devil is down there!). In the battle, the army must be a united force.

On many occasions, but particularly during intercession prayers, this prayer cadence is alternated with an outburst of simultaneous prayer in tongues, introduced by the last prayer sentence in the cadence: ‘e por isso oramos em línguas’ (and therefore we will pray in tongues). It stops, when the leader starts again with: ‘diga:…’ (say:....), followed by the first sentence to repeat.

Taking part in this prayer, embodied in its rhythm, sound and gesture, evokes a sense of capability, mastery and massive empowerment. At the end of one intercession evening, where this prayer pattern went on and on, the national bishop said, very satisfied: ‘I know that tonight we have reached a breakthrough. There was a spirit of victory among us, because we prayed with real power.’ The communal character of this prayer is very important, not only because it is not possible to pray individually in this manner, but moreover because it creates the massive spectacle that generates sensation.

This massive spectacle struck me as even more powerful, when I joined prayers in Igreja Maná in Luanda, surrounded by about 10 000 believers. The moment that the whole community shouted: ‘victory is ours!’ (a vitória já é nossa), with their fists in the air, repeating the words of leader on the stage, I felt astonished. Unlike Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, here prayer in tongues was accompanied by applause and stepping back and forth. Subsequently the enraptured mass started to slap the devil with their right hands, shouting and screaming: ‘Satanás, venho contra ti! Quebro todo o teu poder em nome de Jesus! Em nome de Jesus! Em nome de Jesus! EM NOME DE JESUS!!!’ (I stand up against you. I break all your power, in Jesus’ name, in Jesus’ name, in Jesus’ name, IN JESUS’ NAME!!!!), after which the mass broke out in a deafening cheer. All of this happened in an ongoing and rhythmic alternation between the leader and the worshiping crowd, just as I had experienced in Rotterdam.

The common prayer posture adopted in Igreja Maná is to stand. Kneeling occurs in individual cases, but rarely so. Standing upright not only expresses an attitude of respect for God, but reflects a sense of power and self-esteem as well. A Christian needs to know who she is, as the second vignette with which I began this chapter demonstrates. She is supposed to live out this
knowledge by declaring war against the devil, and victory over the problems in her life.

Interestingly, in sermons, the spiritual war discourse mostly directed towards the adherent as a participant in the battle, rather than towards the need to be set free via the exorcising actions of others. Even in the case of problems, the adherent should liberate himself through proper prayer, as instructed in Tadeu’s book. Accordingly, the Igreja Maná alter call, which takes place at the end of the Sunday service, and in which the adherents are invited to ‘pick up a miracle of God’ (‘vem buscar um milagro de Deus’!) or the touch of Jesus (uma toca de Jesus), does not include a distinctive exorcism, at least not as far as I observed during my fieldwork. The touch of Jesus would bring about ‘a fall in the spirit’, as it was explained to me. From the moment the altar call was made, a number of stewards stood behind the crowd with blue blankets in their hands, ready to catch and cover those adherents who fell down after the laying on of hands. People fell on a regular basis. During the altar call, the crowd prays aloud, but not militantly, while the band sings a number of soft worship songs, in which the Holy Spirit is invited to come and touch those who chose to come forward.

6.2.3 Calvary Christian Center discourse: ‘God takes you into the desert’

Suffering is a dominant part of the theological discourse in Calvary Christian Center, and the discourse acknowledges that suffering is a substantial element of daily life. During the Sunday services and bible studies, the same biblical metaphor sounds repeatedly: ‘If you experience suffering, know that it is God taking you into the desert. There He leads you, in order to let you grow

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193 In Igreja Maná in Luanda, I attended a number of services during my fieldtrip in Spring 2007. There I only once witnessed an explicit invitation to come forward in order to be delivered from evil spirits. People, who had visited ‘kimbandas’ (traditional healers) or ‘feiticeiros’ (wizards), were told that this was wrong in the eyes of God, and that they had been overtaken by the power of the devil. At that moment I saw a few people among the crowd had come forward, who appeared to have manifestations of evil spirits.
The right attitude to adopt when being brought into the desert is said to be to make a humble search for God, who will be moved by the tears of his child. It is out of order to argue with God. Thus the pastor preaches that it is a human being’s natural reaction to resist the person who hurts him, and be angry with him. This would express the wrong attitude, not only towards God, but also to life. Using another metaphor, in telling the crowd that their life should be built on rock instead of sand, the pastor declared:

‘To build on rock is tough, it hurts! In fact, all we want is an easy life, as a reward for our faith, isn’t it? But I tell you, a Christian life is not easy, because that would make us superficial. With superficiality we won’t grow spiritually. Then, if something happens to you, you are only capable of begging for pity. Being brought into the desert will hurt you, but God will make something good out of this. He will transform you into mature and faithful Christians. The Devil hurts us, but he wants us to fall. God is different. He acts out of love. He wants us to live.’

On certain occasions, it was acknowledged that believers experience trouble and worries for years, which might result in a decline of faith.

‘Be honest. When you were newly converted, your faith was more vibrant than it is today. You say, “God did nothing in my life. I am exhausted, I have struggles, I don’t feel that I am loved, I suffer.” Look at the woman who suffered from bleeding. She bled for twelve years. She did not have any hope left. But she saw Jesus and knew that she only needed to touch his clothes. You don’t know when

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194 There are several biblical texts and narratives in which the metaphor of ‘the desert’ is employed, including the exodus of the people of Israel and their forty years in the desert of Sinai, moments of anxiety in the desert as written in several psalms, Jesus who was brought in the desert for forty days in order to be tempted. These texts were important in the early theology of the desert fathers and mothers (Burton-Christie 1997; Chryssavgis and Ware 2008). However, I did not encounter much theological reflection on the desert motif through bible studies or sermons. It was merely the expression ‘God takes you into the desert,’ and the combined reflections on suffering, that caught my attention, because it was repeated over and over again.

195 Parable in Mathew 7:24-27.

you will meet God. But you will. Because He, the Lord, will come to you, and he will change your life. You will have to wait. In the meantime, stay in the crowd where Jesus is. Do not forget that Moses lived in the desert for eighty years, without seeing the promised land. And he was a friend of God.’

Suffering often is described as the feeling of being attacked by the enemy, which arouses corresponding senses of fear and anxiousness. The answer to suffering is trust, trust in God’s promises. Biblical narratives in the Old Testament appeal very much to these experiences of fear and suffering, followed by trust in God’s salvation. In sermons, these narratives are regularly applied to contemporary problems. In one sermon, the pastor said, ‘You don’t have the documents to live here, you don’t have enough money to live, you have spiritual problems. I woke up very early this morning and God spoke to me: “tell my people that they have to trust in me and the prophets!”’

Some testimonies, given during Sunday Services, reflect the acceptance of trouble in the life of a converted Christian. A female adherent told the community:

‘We must love each other. That is Gods commandment. I should see God in you, not because you are perfect, but because you are God’s image. Once I was worried about a friend who suffered a lot. I talked to God about her misery. God told me: “you should not focus on her suffering. You should see my glory in her life. I take care of her, I am with her too.” We tend to judge each other, instead of bearing the yoke together. Gods yoke is His Word, words that bear truth. The truth hurts, but gives life!’

However, as the desert metaphor reflects, troubles and pain do not always come from the devil.

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197 Sermon, Sunday Service Calvary Christian Center, 28 October, 2007. (Moses lived forty years in the desert before he received his calling to lead the people of God out of Egypt, after which he spent another forty years in the desert as their leader)


‘If we experience pain,’ the Pastor said in a sermon, preparing the community for Holy Supper, ‘we think it is the devil who attacks us, but we might feel the knife of God, who is separating us from our sins. We always want to forget this, but this is what it means to take part in the brokenness of Christ’s body. He saw my life and yours, then saw the bread and thanked God for it. He broke it, as it was his body, for us. We have to take the bread. We have to accept the kingdom of God. Many Christians don’t do that. ’

The discourse of suffering in Calvary Christian Center thus relates affliction to being a sinful person (a person who is in need of becoming closer with God). Some testimonies during the Sunday Services associate trouble in the same way, especially when experienced after conversion. One of the male adherents confessed to the community:

‘Some time ago I stopped attending church, because I was unfaithful to the word of God. For about two months, I went back to Angola, my home country. There I was imprisoned, although I had done nothing wrong. I called my wife in the Netherlands and asked her if she would arrange for a solicitor. She answered: “Your solicitor is in heaven.” I started praying and I had a dream in which I was in the desert. I saw Philip there, who asked me: ”what do you want from me”? Then I started reading the bible and found the book Philippians.

In that book, I read about everything that was happening to me. I started crying, because I knew that the name of Jesus must be exalted, and I had not done this in my life. Then it happened: I was released and free to go. Brothers and sisters, I tell you: if you take the wrong path, you will experience what I experienced. God brought me into the desert, where He changed my heart.’

Once, after the service, when we had a chat, drinking coffee, the young assistant pastor told me: ‘I told my sister last week, “if you do not come to


201 Acts 8:4-39.

202 Of course, Paul’s letter to the Philippians has no relationship whatsoever with the person of Philip in the book of Acts. In the adherent’s view, however, the name Philip was a guide for the book he needed to read.

203 Sunday Service, Calvary Christian Center, 6 April, 2008.
church weekly and do not act faithfully towards God, you will suffer. Because God wants to bring you back to Him”.

The descriptions contained in this section show that Calvary Christian Center discourse on suffering is not unambiguous, especially with regard to its cause. In some testimonies, problems and suffering are connected with sin, others downplay this notion (look at my glory in her life). The devil causes problems and troubles. On other occasions it is God who causes pain directly. Hence, suffering is a means of finding God, thus also having a positive connotation, implying hope, grace, coming to one’s destination and spiritual growth. Accordingly, the discourse of suffering as related to being brought into the desert, does not involve a passive or fatalist attitude towards life. It is mostly related to ‘lutur’ (fight, struggle). ‘Lutar’ in this context means, ‘pray in order to achieve victory,’ as I will show now.

6.2.4 Prayer in Calvary Christian Center: a collective lament

When I enter the church building of Calvary Christian Center, fifteen minutes before the start of the service, it is still quiet and the room seems almost empty. However, it is not empty, since about thirty church members, a few men, but mostly women, lie on their knees in front of their pews and pray silently. At some moment, one of the women starts to pray in a low and weeping voice. Most of the time the sentences start with: ‘oooooooh, Jesus… oooooooh meu Deus’ (oh Jesus, oh my God), followed by begging words, uttered plaintively. Others join in and after a few moments there is a whole choir of mournful, sobbing and weeping voices, accompanied by sniffing into handkerchiefs. Some men and women at some point finish their prayer and sit down in the pew. Others enter the room and join in with the prayer, kneeling in front of their chair or pew. Others sit down and wait. A few start chatting quietly. About five minutes before the start of the service, the pastor and elder enter the room and kneel before their chairs on the stage. One of them starts praying through the microphone, with the same begging tone as the others, starting every sentence with ‘oooooooh.’ Finally the pastor or the elder gets up, walks to the pulpit.
and opens the service with the words: ‘I greet the church with the peace of the Lord.’

During the service, there are many prayer moments, all initiated by the pastor or the elder, depending on who has the lead on the pulpit. Sometimes he leads the prayer himself, sometimes he asks a brother or sister to lead in prayer. But the whole community regularly joins in, and as a consequence the leading prayer is drowned out by the sound of the community. Many members put their whole heart and soul into that prayer, with hands raised, their bodies moving, and their voices crying. In case of intercession, for instance in a difficult situation, the prayer is even louder and some members start clapping their hands and jump up, their faces contracted as if in pain. Others swing their body back and forward or rock from side to side. Some shout so loudly ‘oooooooh Jesus,’ that they are heard above everything else. One woman bends her body and rocks with her head down and her arms spread. Others stand still with eyes closed and arms spread. Others only whisper. Some sit down and watch the whole scene. Some, mostly women, start shaking while praying or worshipping. Once I sat next to a young girl, who shook so hard, that I was not sure that she was all right. But when I touched her, she opened her eyes, laughed and said joyfully: ‘don’t worry, this is the Holy Spirit!’

On stage, a tissue box has a permanent place. Sometimes during the service, women have a growing pile of used tissues lying next to them on the pew. All prayer seems to manifest itself spontaneously. There is no explicit instruction, only initiation and regulation (at some point the leader ends his or her prayer, and the community follows). This style of prayer is repeated every Sunday and at every meeting during the week. However, Calvary Christian Center prayer practice is much less homogenous than prayer in Igreja Maná. This is true, not only in terms of how adherents use their voice and words, or how their body moves, but in terms of participation as well. Some adherents do not move and pray aloud at all, but sit in the pew and watch, or have their eyes closed. Even the prayer of lament, offered before the service begins, is not made by everyone who enters the church.

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204 As mentioned in chapter two, this is the common greeting in Calvary Christian Center (Saudo a igreja com a paz do Senhor).
6.2.5 Two church images compared

The images that arise from the description of both churches’ discourses and prayer practices show sharp differences, especially concerning the validation of the experience of suffering. Both churches share a dualistic worldview in which the devil rules the kingdom of the world and uses the weaknesses of believers to get a hold on them through their problems and troubles. Both churches share the conviction that the presence of the Holy Spirit makes the believer ready for living a life of victory. In this respect, Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center sustain a shared Pentecostal inheritance. Nevertheless, their different kinds of validation of the experience of suffering need clarification in relation to their historical roots and general characteristics.

Thus discourse and practice at Igreja Maná, as described above, would classify the church within the category of Neo-Pentecostal mega-churches, mainly characterised as being oriented towards this-world, towards health and prosperity, and possessing a determined exorcism ministry with which the forces of evil are confronted.205 Looking at it more precisely, it might be argued, that Igreja Maná is an amalgam of the characteristics of different movements within Pentecostalism, some are more present than others. One particular trait is the use of images of the church as an army, and Christians as soldiers, at war with the devil and suffering, with which Jorge Tadeu enlarges the Pentecostal idea of spiritual warfare into one of the models for his church.206 Such a clearly articulated militarism motif is rare among Pentecostal churches, although the military discourses and prayers of the Glorious Revival Church International in Ghana (Heuser 2011: 128-130) and the existence of organisations such as the ‘Aggressive Mission Training Corps’ (Van Dijk 2001b:114) resonate with what I observed in Igreja Maná.207 The war motif as such is no stranger to the

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205 It is run like a multinational firm, including a CEO and marketing and PR branches, as will be discussed in chapter seven.

206 As described in chapter two, Tadeu primarily uses the model (or metaphor) of the building in his descriptions of church organisation.

207 In the Glorious Revival Church International in Ghana, ‘armour bearers’ serve as a protective shield for the church leaders as a counter strategy against the devil. The idea of putting on one’s armour originates from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians 6:10-13a.
development of Independent Christianity in Africa. The Congolese Kimbanguist church, and the South-African Zion Christian Church for instance, are known for their Khaki-uniformed regiments (Müller 2011:41-42). In ZCC, mokhuku’s perform regimented dances in Khaki-uniforms, walking into the church, while leaders use a whip to drive away dark forces. Interestingly, the Independent Tocoist church, which developed from the Kimbanguist church in Congo as a religious anti-colonial force in Angola, has preserved a salient pacifist character, following in the footsteps of its founder Simão Toco (Grenfell 1998). What is more, notions of suffering in the Tocoist church (Blanes 2009) reveal a closer resemblance to Calvary Christian Center than with Igreja Maná.

According to Russell Sharrock (2007: 138-150), spiritual warfare has its origins in restoration teaching in early Pentecostalism, i.e. the idea that the church in the New Testament should be restored in the Pentecostal church of the last days. This early teaching of restoration was initially rejected by most Pentecostal churches, but gained many followers after the decline of the charismatic movement in mainstream churches. In the 1970s, within North American Pentecostalism, a restoration movement of independent churches emerged, together with the 'shepherding' movement (Anderson 2004: 155-156). The restoration idea gave high regard to authoritative roles, such as apostles and prophets. This idea was adopted in the 'shepherding' movement, which elaborated the concept of Christian discipleship into a church model in which the authority of apostles, prophets and other church leaders over their disciples was emphasised. These prophets and apostles were not only supposed to lead the church in ‘the final harvest,’ but also to establish the kingdom of God on earth. The latter concept was fuelled by the notion of spiritual warfare, in which two territories are at stake: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil. In chapter seven, I return to this theme of the church as a military force, and the effects of this on Igreja Maná’s ecclesiastic structure.

Another Igreja Maná trait, at work in its discourse on suffering, is its emphasis on positive confession, which has origins in the Word of Faith

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208 Pacifism did not prevent Simão Toco from making an overt statement against the Portuguese colonial authorities in 1958, in which he declared that God had returned the power to the black because of the sins committed by white men (Heywood 1998:163-164).
movement, historically a movement in its own right, as both Anderson and Sharrock confirm. Andrew Perriman’s (2003: 58-77) historical investigation of Word of Faith teaching, shows that positive confession has a larger history than Pentecostalism, and originates in the perfectionist doctrine of Methodism in the eighteenth century, as advocated by John Wesley, and elaborated by Charles Finney’s teaching on ‘effectual prayer’ in the nineteenth century. Phoebe Palmers ‘altar theology,’ included the idea that ‘faith had the predictability of a ‘spiritual law,’ which needed to ‘be confessed and acted upon’ (ibid.: 59). In the Holiness Movement, this positive confession teaching was coupled with faith in divine healing, with emphasis on the need to overcome symptoms of disease after healing prayer. Eighteenth Century exponents of this teaching included E.O. Allen, Elizabeth Mix, Charles Cullis and A.J. Gordon. It might be said that by the end of the nineteenth century, the Holiness Movement’s divine healing theology already invoked the desire to establish God’s kingdom on earth. This can be seen in J.A. Dowie’s foundation, ‘the City of Zion,’ a church, which was intended as a ‘godly society’ (ibid.: 62). This church was eventually taken over by Charles Fox Parham, who ‘fused the doctrine of divine healing with the Pentecostal belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit’ (ibid.: 63). The Word of Faith Movement, as founded by Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, emerged out of post-war Latter Rain revivalism, in which blessing and prosperity became financially oriented. From this movement, Jorge Tadeu directly inherited his theological ideas, as was shown in chapter two.

Sharrock, who studied spiritual warfare within Pentecostalism from the inside, states that the spiritual warfare movement, which developed from the restoration and shepherding movements, and is epitomised by Peter C. Wagner, implicitly re-introduced Word of Faith teaching in Pentecostal denominations and churches that had rejected it before (2007: 138).

I suggest that Igreja Maná is one example of how this amalgam of movements and doctrinal developments is manifest.\footnote{However, there is no literal evidence for this reasoning, because in all his writings and oral teachings, Jorge Tadeu barely refers to written sources, apart from the bible. The only book by an external author that I found in the Igreja Maná bookshop was John Avanzini’s, ‘Powerful Principles of Increase’ (30 60 cem vezes tanto. Libertação da sua Colheita Financeira), translated and published by the Igreja Maná publishing house.} From my fieldwork
findings at Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, spiritual warfare ideology was barely visible in terms of exorcist deliverance practices, although this according to other research, is a common feature in African Pentecostal churches (cf. Hunt 1998; Gifford 2001; Onyinah 2002, 2004; Asumang 2008). But the church’s expansionist strategy, as briefly depicted in chapter two, combined with the repetitive military aspects of prayer, in which the future establishment of new churches is key, and Tadeu’s modelling his church like an army, unmistakably suggest a territorial dimension within this church’s interpretation of spiritual warfare.

Can Igreja Maná discourse and prayer practice be traced back to distinctive Pentecostal movements and their Protestant precursors, the ‘desert’ motif, as well as the lamenting prayer before the start of the service, which I found in Calvary Christian Center, is more at odds with mainstream Pentecostal spirituality. Based on the fact that the founders Elisabete and Bernardo Berens had been converted and ‘made disciples’ in the Brazilian Assembléia de Deus, it is likely that they introduced Assembléia de Deus discourse and prayer practice at Calvary Christian Center. During my field trip to Brazil, I visited ten Assembléia de Deus churches, where I encountered the same desert discourse and the praying practice of lament, as being even longer and more intense than in Calvary Christian Center, in Rotterdam.

Weeping itself is not un-Pentecostal, and regularly coincides with confession, sorrow and repentance. The Nazarene and Holiness churches enabled shouting and prayers ‘punctuated by sobs and tears.’ As Harvey Cox recounts (1995: 57), this practice, which continued with the rise of early Pentecostalism (ibid. 1995: 58), was intensified by the apocalyptic expectations within this movement. Other Protestant movements, like the Early Quakers, acknowledged weeping as one of the works of the Holy Spirit in spiritual life.

However, the fact that Tadeu had his biblical training at the Rhema Bible Training Centre in Johannesburg, reveals the origins of his Word of Faith teaching.

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210 There exists a massive body of literature on African Pentecostalism and deliverance. The above mentioned authors have in common that they specifically refer to Wagner’s strategic spiritual warfare and the notion of territorial spirits, i.e. demonic spirits possessing a particular city, a region or even a national territory.
(Anderson 2004: 23) and their theological emphasis on suffering is illustrated by many representatives of the movement (cf. Penn 1816: 30-33). In the Pietistic movement, tears were part of the performance on the pulpit, as well as the response to the message by the church public (Roodenburg 2009). Paula Kane refers to similarities between the notions of ‘pain’ in historical accounts of colonial protestants in North-America and Catholic medieval Mysticism (2002: 85). During the Second Great Awakening in North America, the crowd responded to the message of Charles Finney with mass conversions, public confessions and highly emotional expressions of struggle (Kilde 2002: 23-26). However, I could not find any examples of other Pentecostal churches with a desert discourse and prayer of lament, which makes this a rather unique or under-researched element of Pentecostal spirituality.\footnote{Among the early Independent Churches in Africa, the so-called ‘wilderness churches’ emerged, whose ‘wilderness motif’ was highly connected with labour flow and rural-urban migration in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the term ‘wilderness’ refers to the same biblical notions of God’s people scattered in the desert, it seems that the typical spirituality of these churches is slightly different from what I found in Calvary Christian Center. According to Richard Werbner (1989:299-335), wilderness spirituality has to do with embracing the disharmony of a situation, including chaos, exile and mobility, but with an undertone of social protest.}

Even Steven Land’s (1993) thorough study of Pentecostal spirituality does not include, or refer to the experience of ‘the desert’ in Pentecostal life. In his reference to suffering, he only relates suffering to the gospel (prosecution) (ibid.: 22, 156), the aims of the Holiness movement in transcending life’s difficulties, such as sin and suffering (ibid.: 190), and the missionary assignment of the Pentecostal church to spread the gospel and relieve the suffering of the world (ibid.: 180, 218).

Calvary Christian Center’s desert motif, however, in which suffering has a positive dimension in itself, unmistakably bears traces of early Christianity’s desert spirituality. According to the desert fathers, going through the desert was to be experienced as a spiritual journey, which did not have to be sought, because the journey ‘catches up with you. Everyone goes through the desert, in one sense or another. It may be in the form of suffering, or emptiness,
breakdown, breakup, divorce, or any kind of trauma that occurs in our life’ (Chryssavgis and Ware 2008: 36). It should be undergone voluntarily, only then can it be helpful and beneficial (ibid.: 36). I suggest that Pastor Celso’s repetitive sermon on humble obedience towards God when in the desert, is a powerful contemporary re-enactment taken from this early devotional movement.

The question remains regarding how desert spirituality became part and parcel of Assembléia de Deus Pentecostal spirituality. One possible answer might be its on time co-existence with the Brazilian Roman Catholic church, from which many believers converted to Pentecostalism. It is well known that Brazilian folk Catholicism carries a strong suffering spirituality. According to Bernardino Leers in *Catolicismo Popular e Mundo Rural* (Popular Catholicism and rural life), all daily suffering and hardship is carried into the cultural and church rituals of the yearly *Semana Santa* (Holy Week), when Jesus’ suffering and crucifixion is commemorated and re-experienced (1977: 60-62). The cross, worn around the neck, is the most prevalent mystic reflection of folk devotion, culminating in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. Jesus is the prototype of human suffering, in whom Catholics feel recognised and reconciled (Da Costa e Silva 1982: 58-68). Although in urban regions, public life has become increasingly secular, in rural areas societal life still involves the re-lived drama of God-and-Man during the Holy Week. There is no music in the streets, but the sound of rattling instead, and people talk with muffled voices. Everywhere in houses, the buzz of prayers is heard. Food and clothing is kept frugal (Azzi 1978: 114-119; Scheper-Hughes 1993: 443-445).

These elements of Brazilian (folk) Catholicism raise the question how they emerged and developed into such a particular suffering-centred configuration. In their description of Portuguese Catholicism, which emerged with the Portuguese colonial hegemony, Stuart Schwartz (1965) and Antonio Mendonça (1996) do not come up with a specific suffering-centred devotion. However, in addition to the patronage system of Portuguese Catholicism, which held a hierarchical view of the world, and which became a characteristic element of Brazilian society, Mendonça sees Islamic influences in Portuguese folk Catholicism, which he claims gave it a fatalistic and melancholic touch. He suggests that perhaps this melancholy fused with the West-African Muslim slave populations in Brazil, which were forcibly converted to Catholicism (Mendonça
He also mentions animistic aspects of the indigenous nations (the Amerindians). Their close contact with colonisers might have coloured Brazilian folk Catholicism (ibid.). Schwartz refers to the cult of saint veneration as the characteristic trait of Portuguese folk Catholicism, which Brazilian Catholicism has inherited, including the importance of shrines, pilgrimage, and the ceremony of the blessing (1965: 78-79). In his historical study of the African-Portuguese Diaspora in Brazil, James Sweet (2003) demonstrates that Brazilian folk Catholicism has undergone a strong influence from Central African (Congolese and Angolan) beliefs in spiritual powers. Thus, many white Catholic priests were convinced that they lacked the power to liberate blacks and even whites from the black spiritual curses they were afflicted with. Some condemned these forces as diabolical and sinful, others sent victims to African healers. As Sweet puts it, far from reasoning away black spiritual powers as unrealistic and idolatry, these priests believed in African witchcraft and sorcery (ibid.: 217-226).

Sweet suggests that the typical Portuguese folk belief in saints and their powers shared cosmological ideas with African religions. In addition, one of the central arguments of Sweet’s book is that those Central African spiritual rituals that survived their transfer to Brazil were inherently involved in resistance against the horrible sufferings of slave life. All these historical references point to a pluralist cultural and religious inheritance that shaped Brazilian folk Catholicism through the centuries, in which melancholic and resisting attitudes towards suffering seem to coexist.

Pentecostalism has for the most part been studied as a movement within Christianity with Protestant roots. Nonetheless, my ethnographic material on Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam (and the Assembléia de Deus churches in Brazil that I visited) suggests that in some specific instances there might be more of a relationship between Pentecostalism and Roman Catholicism than has been assumed. In the case of Latin America or more precisely Brazil, a few scholars have recognised this nexus already.\(^{212}\) In a brief depiction of Latin

\(^{212}\) Moreover, scholars did not fail to notice that in Brazil the underlying social problem of afflicted lives is poverty, a central issue in Brazilian Pentecostalism, in Roman Catholic base communities, as well as in other religious groups (cf. Mariz 1989; Chesnut 1997). Although these studies pay central attention to the way Pentecostal churches offer spiritual and moral strategies for coping with poverty, I did not come across a discourse
American Pentecostalism, Cecil Robeck refers to a shared common culture with Roman Catholicism, in which the concept of suffering would be exemplary (2006). Clara Mafra (2011) makes a similar claim, with reference to the enchanted aspects of Brazilian Pentecostal personhood, which seem to be inscribed by a Catholic legacy of ‘Saintliness’. Mafra argues that, although Pentecostalism has Protestant roots in shaping a ‘Pentecostal personhood’ which takes responsibility and makes choices based on sincerity, in Brazil Pentecostal personhood is also inscribed with a receptive openness to ‘agents;’ the Holy Spirit (for good), or an evil contagious power (for bad). Mafra connects this openness with the Roman Catholic notion of Saints, who mediate between the human and the Divine by performing miracles in the lives of devotees. Paul Freston, in an historical overview of Brazilian Pentecostalism, mentions the Swedish background of the founders of Assembléia de Deus, which might be informative in this respect (1995). Freston argued that ‘the Swedish missionaries’ posture of suffering and cultural marginalisation,’ formed by their earlier repressed position as Baptist dissenters in Sweden, had influenced Assembléia de Deus’s church structure, its emphasis on lay leadership, and its acceptance of social marginalisation (ibid.: 122). My suggestion would be that the founders’ posture of suffering also might have created room for a particular Pentecostal internalisation of suffering spirituality, brought along by their Roman Catholic converts.

Still, more research needs to be done in order to shed more light on this relationship. In addition, it must be kept in mind that especially the Neo-Pentecostal churches of Brazil do not share the suffering spirituality of Assembléia de Deus, as Paul Freston has also argued (1995: 132). For this research, it is important to refer to an important distinctive aspect of this internalised discourse of suffering in Calvary Christian Center (and the Assembléia de Deus in Brazil): that suffering is primarily perceived as a path to victory. In the laments and the sobbing, in being brought into the desert, the

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of suffering that caught my attention and that seems to be characteristic of the Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam and Assembléia de Deus in Brazil.

Enchanted here means ‘open to external spiritual forces.’
convert proclaims her privileged intimacy with God. It is expected that her current problems will disappear, and will enable her to advance into the future.

In conclusion, whereas Igreja Maná’s future victory oriented discourses and practices can be seen to have derived from historical Pentecostal (and Protestant) roots, and do not suggest particular African or Angolan elements, Calvary Christian Center’s future victory oriented suffering discourse and practice seem to contain elements of folk Roman Catholicism, which can be viewed as typically Brazilian.

6.3 Suffering, reflected in the narratives of adherents

In this section, adherents’ narratives about the way they reflect personal troubles and difficulties will be analysed with regard to the churches’ discourses and practices. I investigate the impact of these discourses and practices on people’s self-perceptions.

6.3.1 Suffering, reflected in the narratives of Igreja Maná adherents

In my contact with adherents of Igreja Maná, the word ‘suffering’ or the expression ‘I suffer’ was hardly ever uttered. This does not mean that affliction is not felt, or experienced. My informants would only talk about having experienced difficulty when I asked them specifically about their problems. The first home visit that I made during the course of my fieldwork in Igreja Maná, was to a room that Tera rented. It was an old, shabby room, with torn wallpaper and a worn out floor covering. There was hardly enough space for furniture. Behind a wardrobe, I saw a bare mattress. Tera told me she was praying and searching for a better room with a private kitchen and bathroom. I met with her on several other occasions. Because I knew that she was in the process of looking to rent a new room, I asked her if she had found somewhere to live. She told me one Sunday that something had gone wrong. She had agreed to rent a new room and had ended her lease with her old landlord. But she soon discovered that the new room had been given to someone else. She then moved

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214 Fieldwork notes, 6 September, 2006. I had an appointment with Tera, who had agreed to introduce me to the family group I wanted to attend.
temporarily to a friend’s house. ‘I was sick of it,’ she said. During the tithing moment in the church service, I observed as Tera put twenty Euros in her hand, raised it up, and closed her eyes in intense prayer. She did this in order to pray for prosperity, as the pastor had taught her to.

In the following weeks, I visited her several times at her friend’s house and went with her when she looked for another room. Although our efforts did not result in her finding a room, Tera kept saying that God would help her. For the Sundays that followed, Tera was not at church. Her friends told me that ‘Tera is not here. (A Tera falta!) She is still lying in bed.’ When I telephoned her, Tera told me that she did not feel like going to church. She did not know why.

One Sunday, a few weeks later, I saw her again. When I asked her how she was doing, she told me that she had found a room. She seemed happy as she told me this. She had walked down a street in the centre of Rotterdam, desperately praying to God: ‘I don’t know what to do. Please give me a room, here in this street. Let someone offer me a room.’ She had rung every doorbell in the street, without any success. But suddenly a man approached her and asked her what she was looking for. He offered her a room in that same street. When I helped her move from her friend’s house, I saw that her new attic room was even worse than her previous room, although it had a kitchen. But Tera looked happy, and said that God had helped her out. It occurred to me that it must be difficult to keep up with the expectation in Igreja Maná to live the life of a ‘winner,’ when daily experiences include hardship. When I asked the friends she had been living with about her situation, their answers sounded almost indifferent: ‘She must have faith,’ or ‘God will help her.’ On other occasions, I felt their disapproval when I expressed sadness in relation to similar situations. I was told not to worry too much (Regina, não preocupe-se demais!).

However, these reactions to my questions do not mean that experiencing ongoing trouble is not acknowledged among adherents and their friends in Igreja Maná. Leona, one of the elders of the church married in February 2007. She and her husband already had a young daughter at the time. In May, when I returned from Angola, I suddenly missed seeing her at the church service and asked where she was. ‘Leona lives in Wageningen now,’ was the answer I was given. ‘It is too far for her to come to church.’ In the meantime, her husband had remained in Rotterdam. In July 2007, I saw Leona again at an
international football festival, organised by Igreja Maná. I saw that she was pregnant again. I asked her how she was doing, and she answered: ‘mais ou menos’ (more or less OK, so-so), but would not go into it. ‘Deus é fiel’ (God is faithful), was her only comment. A year later I met Leona and her husband again in a town near Tilburg, where they both lived in a shelter for homeless people. Leona answered with mono-syllabic answers, when I asked her how she had been doing the months before.

I asked, ‘did you have a home when you were pregnant?’
‘No,’ she said.
‘Where were you then?’
‘In Wageningen, but I was told to move out.’
‘What did you do?’, I asked.
‘I prayed and waited.’
‘What happened next?’
‘They kept telling me that I had to move out.’
‘And when the baby was born?’
‘I was in the hospital.’
‘Did you have a place to go?’
‘No.’
How did you feel about this?’
‘It was hard.’

Fortunately Leona’s husband finally received a residency permit and an apartment in Rotterdam. Now they could start a new life, although Leona’s application was still pending. Leona told me that the most important thing for her was to return to the church, where all her friends were. It became clear to me that during the last year Leona had received ongoing support from many of them. Although adherents do not use words such as ‘suffering,’ and even though empathy cannot be displayed by speaking about suffering directly, it is clear that there exist ways and means for friends to support each other through difficult situations. A way of conveying a sense of one’s difficult situation was, for instance, accomplished by the use of the word ‘cansado’ (tired). When I started my study of Portuguese, this was one of the first words I learned. Staying in Lisbon for two weeks of intensive language practice, I found that many women in Lisbon were ‘cansada,’ as they complained about daughters-in-law, deceiving
husbands and daily obstacles. I also came across this word among Angolan women in Rotterdam. ‘I am a bit tired,’ was Luzia’s regular answer, when I visited her at home. In general she only talked in positive ways about her life as a daughter of God. But when I stayed with her for a longer period and went with her to the city centre in the afternoon, where she only could gaze at the consumer goods because she had not even enough money for a meal that day, before my eyes her word ‘cansada’ was given that same connotation of struggle and suffering as I had heard in Lisbon. Dita, who had lived for over fourteen years in the Netherlands, waiting for residency, told me that she was ‘cansada,’ living like that. Once, when I visited her apartment, where Family Group meetings were held later in the evening, Dita trudged around, cleaning, and sighing. She said, ‘I’m tired today.’ Suddenly she asked me if I would be prepared to lead the Family Group meeting, saying: ‘Sometimes I feel like it, sometimes I don’t. Today I am too tired of everything.’

6.3.2 Suffering reflected in the narratives of Calvary Christian Center adherents

During my interviews with Calvary Christian Center adherents, the desert was often mentioned in relation to their own difficulties. One of the women told me: ‘I felt that God wanted me to come to the Netherlands, but once I was here, He brought me into the desert. I suffered a lot here. At first, because the friends that invited me to nurse their children did not appreciate me anymore, as a result of which I was put on the street. And there I was, without documents, without my family, without anyone. Now, I am still suffering, although I have a room in my sister’s [a female church member, RS] flat. I have to take care of her and have no time of my own. But God knows that I really search for Him. He wants me to only depend on Him. I only want to live for Him and He will give me victory over all my problems.’

To many Brazilian women in Rotterdam, the Netherlands was the desert they had been brought to. Poverty, vulnerability, and unhappy love relationships were the main themes I heard in the stories of the women. ‘Estou sofrendo muito’ (I am suffering a lot) was a daily expression that I heard in

215 Interview with Zula, January 24, 2008.
conversation with the women in Calvary Christian Center. It was also common to
speak about the other women in the church as suffering. ‘You know, Regina, the
women in this church suffer a lot. They all suffer, but therefore they live very
close to God.’

When I made an appointment with Lana for an interview, she stressed
that I should not have unrealistically high expectations of her home: ‘Regina, we
live in a ‘barraco’ (shack).’ I thought she was just being modest, but when I
arrived at her address in Rotterdam, I could not even find a doorbell. Lana and
her husband lived in the attic of an old and filthy house. In order to arrive at
their room, I had to pass through the room of other inhabitants. Lana was born
in Bahia in Brazil. At the age of thirteen, her parents gave her away to a man. At
fourteen she had her first child. This child fell ill, because of the heat and the
lack of clean drinking water in Bahia, and because Lana did not know how to
take care of the child. In her distress, she went with a neighbour to the
evangelical church. She made a vow: if her daughter was healed, she would live
a devout life. As her daughter seemed to recover that very day, she decided to
give her life to Jesus. But this was not the end of her difficulties. Her husband
was violent towards her and to the other three children they had together. They
lived in severe poverty, because her husband spent all his money. ‘I suffered
tremendously, but I never quit serving Jesus,’ Lana assured me. Her children live
in the faith as well, but they are gravely traumatised by the violence their father
subjected them to. According to Lana, they survive because God is blessing
them. Lana’s life story is a string of disastrous events, ending up in Rotterdam
with her second, current husband. They met in Portugal, where Lana tried to
start a new life. Her current husband is Portuguese. Since he became
unemployed a few years ago, because of a severely diminishing labour market in
his profession, they are trying to make a living in the Netherlands. Although he is
a EU-citizen, he is obliged to work in order to prolong his residency permit. But,
in the Netherlands as well, work is very hard to find. Now they live off informal
jobs they find every now and then. Lana repeatedly describes how they live in
the desert, but standing firm in the faith. ‘The only way I honour my Lord is on

216 ‘Barraco’ is the common word for the houses of the slums, (favelas) in Brazil.

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my knees. I tell Jesus everything, I cry before him. We fight in prayer and He will give us victory.’

Like Lana, all women I interviewed, without exception, declared that they pray on their knees every day, bringing all their worries to God. They told this with gleaming eyes, with pride and confidence that they were awaiting ultimate victory, in spite of the hardships they suffered in present times. It even seemed that they thought it an honour that God paid so much attention to them. ‘If God leads me into this much trouble, I must be being prepared for a very special task in his Kingdom.’ I never sensed a feeling that believers doubted God’s love, even when the experience of trouble was perceived as being a punishment from God. Sônia, a female Brazilian missionary, who lived for a year in Rotterdam, told me:

‘God is so good. At the time that I wanted to stop working for Him, because I was tired of everything, God said to me, ‘if you stop, I’ll take your child away from you.’ When I came into the room, my son was attacked by fever. I fell down on my knees and promised God that I would never leave Him again and would always obey Him. And my boy recovered. Since then I only live for God, because He wants me to.’

Whereas I interpret this threat by God against her son as having been cruel, and as having most likely caused her great sorrow and grief, this believer felt honoured instead. One day, one of the women of the church asked me how I liked the church. In reaction to my positive answer, she said ‘Yes, you must have seen that in this church we really search the face of God. Only then can we know what is His will for our lives. Without searching Him out, victory will never come!’

According to the adherents of this church, this intense and tearful prayer, made on their knees, is what makes all the difference. As I began to discover during my fieldwork in Calvary Christian Center, that a particular group of women show a self-perception that they are the spiritual motors of this church, meeting every Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, kneeling, praying, crying and sobbing for their families, for the unsaved souls in

\[\text{217 Interview with Lana and her husband, 19 December, 2008.} \]

\[\text{218 Field work notes. Elena’s house, 6 May, 2008.} \]
Rotterdam, for the church and its leaders. They are the ones in this church who have best internalised the discourse of suffering, making them the Pentecostal ‘Margery Kempes’\textsuperscript{219} of today (Bhattacharji 2005). Not all suffering, however, appears to be easy to talk about. A woman in Brazil told me confidently about her son in Rotterdam, who has a leadership position. She said, ‘Last week my son and daughter-in-law were crying on the telephone when I called them. They told me: “Mama, this week we have only a bit of rice, to feed our children with.” They suffer, but they don’t tell anyone there in the church. But God knows, and He is faithful.’

6.3.3 A comparison: discourse and prayer practice as aesthetics of persuasion

In both churches I regularly encountered adherents singing songs of affliction. Their troubled lives, especially the parts of their lives spent in the Netherlands, show similarities, especially concerning basic needs. Many adherents of both churches live in poverty, uncertainty, and insecurity. I came across physical complaints, as well as expressions of grief and unhappiness. As I explained earlier, both churches take different approaches concerning the troubling aspects of life. Both churches also sustain bodily and vocal practices that correspond with the dominant discourse of each church.

In Igreja Maná as well as in Calvary Christian Center, words and texts are repetitively heard and rehearsed at every church service. Texts are performed in bodily movements, expressing emotions. In other words, the means by which to express emotions are learned through these dominant discourses and prayer practices. Looking at individual responses to troubles in both churches, I find the discourses and prayer practices of both churches persuasive in their ideological transformative effects.

Following Birgit Meyer (2006b, 2008, 2010a), I suggest that both churches have their own particular aesthetics of persuasion, as ‘part of ‘lived religion’ on the level of everyday experiences, offering sensational forms that

\textsuperscript{219} Margery Kempe was a medieval English Mystic, who was known for her ministry of weeping, for her own sins, for the sins of others and in compassion for the suffering of Christ.
repeatedly persuade people of the truth and reality of their sensations’ (2010a: 756). Aesthetics here is viewed as the human capacity to gain knowledge of the world through all the senses. Hence, the process of meaning making, central to religion as it is, is not confined to the rational, but also encompasses the mind, soul and the body. Form, sensation, and content converge in this process of meaning making, and their persuasiveness lies precisely in this convergence. The repetition of certain words and discourses in both churches, accompanied with the rhetorical performances of the preacher, his voice, vocal expression and body talk, as well as the repetition of particular communal prayers, together form one powerful process in which thoughts, desires, emotions and experiences of truth are produced and channelled. This study complements Meyer’s theoretical concept, by showing how strongly these particular aesthetics seem to differ within the Pentecostal movement.220 Thus, Calvary Christian Center adherents seem to have incorporated the discourse of suffering, bodily expressed in their tearful and humble prayers, whereas Igreja Maná members are much less explicit in expressing pain and trouble. Members of this church imply that they are experiencing sorrow and other emotions, by invoking the generic word ‘tired’ (cansada).

Strikingly, there seems to be a nexus between Igreja Maná’s approach to ‘the past,’ and its attitude towards ‘troubles in the present.’ Both concerns are silenced within this church, in order that adherents are set free from influences that make them backslide. Rhetoric is directed at the future, to keep believers on track. In a similar sense, Calvary Christian Center’s confession practices, in which ‘the past’ undergoes processes of ‘reemplotment,’ corresponds with its more receptive attitude towards ‘troubles in the present,’ in which God plays a leading role. As with its view of the past, in Calvary Christian Center’s desert discourse, the experience of suffering is positively re-

220 Meyer’s conceptual thinking can be related to earlier observations, such as Gregory Starretts observations on the Jewish tradition (1995: 7-8), who argues that in order to get more insight into the different and sometimes highly institutionalized ways in which believers express and perform their beliefs, bodily practice should not be separated from discourse. Similarly, Saba Mahmood (2001) found in Islamic traditions that spontaneous and sincerely felt pious emotions, such as joy and sorrow in prayer, are the result of, or at least interplay with, daily repetition and rehearsal.
emplotted into God’s plan, leading to future victory. In this respect, the name *Calvary Christian Center*, should be considered well chosen.

6.4 Weeping in Pentecostalism: a predominantly female affair

As the previous sections on Calvary Christian Center show, the prayer practice of lament, undertaken before the start of the service, i.e. the vocal expressions and begging voice, as well as the kneeling body posture, were shared by men and women. However, a closer look at this prayer practice made me aware that men did join the lamenting way of prayer in their bodily expression, their vocabulary and their vocal expression, although I hardly witnessed them weeping during the service. The shedding of tears, and the associated pile of tear-stained handkerchiefs, was the work of *women*.

To be more precise, among women, it was Brazilian and the Cape-Verdean women who shed the most tears. Some Angolan women joined this weeping, as Patricia did, while others did not. This raises the question of whether female weeping in this particular Pentecostal church is part of a broader gender issue within Pentecostalism.

Within the Christian tradition, weeping and suffering have not always had the same theological connotation. There are cases of weeping related to personal broken heartedness, weeping related to repentance, weeping related to craving for union with Christ, weeping and substitutionary suffering, weeping and the making of vows, and weeping related to daily worries. In some traditions weeping has no (clear) gender connotation, in others, especially Roman Catholicism, it certainly is confined to female spirituality. In the medieval Roman Catholic tradition in Europe, alongside the official liturgical spirituality dominated by a male clergy, a female spirituality of suffering and ecstasy developed, which was recognised and despised at the same time (Bynum 1992: 119-150). This female spirituality was deeply intertwined with a widespread mystical and bodily interpretation of the Eucharist: union with Christ-being-eaten, an encounter with Christ’s humanity, his body and his blood. These devotional women craved this union through which they could ‘fuse’ with Christ’s body, living the life of the ascetic and enduring physical suffering,
including self-torture, self-crucifixion, a desire for leprosy, and self-mortification, in which ecstatic joy and even erotic sensations were simultaneously at play (ibid. 1992: 129-133). In this female spirituality, the gift of tears shifted from the classic motives of brokenness, penance, death and Judgement towards a commemorative embodiment of the passion of Christ (Benke 2002: 204-212). From an anthropological point of view, it can be understood as not only a response to the clericalisation of the church, in which men and women were more and more divided into different sex-based roles, the first being the clerics and the latter being the laypeople. It was also as a response to their social and psychological context as well, i.e. their suffering within a misogynist society (ibid. 1992: 139). In the late medieval period, women like Margery Kempe provoked controversy because of the particular form that their religious weeping took (Bhattacharji 2005: 229-231).

In the nineteenth century, French women’s mystical devotion expressed through suffering, similar in many respects to medieval spirituality, was trifled with by the rise of psychiatric science. The Church was quick to see women’s religiosity as resulting from hysteria or frustrated female sexuality (Burton 2004: 180-183). This battle can be viewed as exemplary of the broader conflict between the Church and the French Republic that eventually led to the formal separation of Church and State in 1905 (ibid. 2004: xi). ‘Substitute weeping,’ i.e. weeping for the sins and the loss of the world, had developed as an aspect of ‘the gift of tears’ in late medieval Roman Catholicism (Benke 2002: 213-248), but received a particular signification in this nineteen century political environment.

In Portugal, the contemporary Roman Catholic pilgrimage to and veneration of ‘Our Lady of Fatima,’ which is mainly confined to women, has similar traits. The ‘promessa de joelhos’ (vow of the knees), which means that the pilgrims crawl towards the sanctuary on their knees, covered with leather or cotton breeches (joelheiras), is deeply involved with self-violence and self-inflicted pain (Murat Yel 1999: 66-68, 86). As Ali Murat Yel puts it, this is an act of bearing the sins of the world, imitating the suffering of Christ, but a sacrifice made in order to be blessed and healed by Holy Mary as well (1999: 83-84). Although this pilgrimage started after 1917, its (female) spirituality of suffering and sacrifice must be embedded in a broader historical Roman Catholic perspective. Lena Gemzoë, who wrote an interesting ethnography of catholic
female religiosity in a Northern Portuguese town, including their pilgrimage to Fatima, describes how the yearly re-enacted apparition of Mary during a local festa, as among the pilgrims in Fatima, evokes high emotions accompanied with sobbing and weeping (2000: 59-6, 187). As in other European countries, in Portugal, in the past, young Catholic women have chosen to starve themselves. For example, Alexandrina de Balazar, only took the Eucharist for food and felt the crucifixion of Christ in her own body, having taken up suffering as a divine calling (Bynum 1988: 242).

6.4.1 Female weeping

In Pentecostal movements, weeping in general is not fundamentally a female act, as it is connected with repentance and being touched by the Holy Spirit. But when it comes to weeping related to suffering, especially where husbands, marriage and family issues are involved, one might speak of different motivation.

Strong support for this observation is provided by Ruth Marie Griffith’s thorough research on ‘Women Aglow,’ a twentieth century interdenominational American evangelical women’s movement, which spread over Europe and other continents of the world (2000). A vast majority of its female members have charismatic or Pentecostal backgrounds. One of the basic beliefs that women seem to share in this movement, is that life hurts, and women suffer, especially within difficult or even abusive marital relationships. In their meetings, women provide each other with room to speak out, to seek intimacy (physical and spiritual), and to experience healing and liberation through weeping, embracing each other in prayer and exorcising rituals.

Griffith studied this organisation, focusing on the ways in which it ‘reflected and refracted American culture’ (ibid. 2000: 21), discerning three different contexts, namely the rise of the Christian Right Wing in post-war America, the boom of self-help healing movements as exponents of the ‘therapeutic culture’ in twentieth-century America, and a growing awareness of particular female illnesses, labelled ‘nervousness’, ‘depression’, or ‘unhappiness’ (ibid. 2000: 28-46). Distinctive from feminist movements, in Aglow groups, women exhort each other to live out their calling to submit to their husbands, through sustaining an intimate relationship with God, construed in terms of
daughterly, motherly or even erotic emotions, continually surrendering their wounded self to the other women and God. Although the theological views on husband-wife relationships softened over the years, and the influence of therapeutic thinking gradually replaced words such as ‘sin,’ ‘shame’ and ‘guilt’ with words like ‘hurt,’ ‘victim,’ etc., a strong discourse of suffering has remained central to Aglow spirituality.

Taking Griffith’s study into consideration, it might be suggested that the predominantly female Pentecostal practices of weeping and sobbing, as encountered in Calvary Christian Center, are part of similar tendencies within a wider range of female Pentecostalisms.

However, as demonstrated in this chapter, in Igreja Maná in Luanda, as well as in Rotterdam, female weeping as a collective spiritual practice does not exist. Of Mozambiquan women in Pentecostal churches it might be said that they find acknowledgement of their troubled life in these churches, but that collective weeping prayer practices are lacking (Van de Kamp 2011: 180). Women’s incidental moments of collective emotional outpouring, sobbing and weeping included, for instance in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches, do not seem to imply the existence of collective rituals of female solidarity (Soothill 2007: 142-148). Maria Frahm-Arp’s (2010) study on professional women in two South African Pentecostal churches, focuses on women’s subordinate position in the public sphere as well as in the church and family, but does not refer to collective female weeping rituals.

6.4.2 Female submission

Reminiscent of the research by Frahm-Arp, Soothill and Van de Kamp, other studies are concerned with Pentecostal women encountering marital afflictions and abuse, without especial attention to collective weeping. Meredith Fraser (2003) describes how white Pentecostal women in Australia, who suffer from abusive husbands and unhappy marriages, silenced by the andro-centric authoritative voices in the official church, engage in female networks for mutual support. From a feminist ‘theoethical’ point of view, Fraser criticises the lack of feminist voices in these female networks, where female submission, even when painful and experienced as abusive, seems to be legitimated and endorsed as biblical. For instance, in the Pentecostal glossy magazine ‘Women by Design,’ an
evangelist’s wife describes how her husband rebuked her for not having ironed his shirt properly, but how wonderfully God used him that same night. The wife interpreted her endurance of suffering as ‘a personal Calvary’ (ibid.: 164). In other words, the female readers of this glossy were taught that God had placed her in this position.

Additionally, it is broadly recognised in research that, as in African Pentecostal churches, in Latin American countries, conversion to Pentecostalism for the most is a female affair, and that in Pentecostal churches these women seek healing for their afflicted marriages and families (Brusco 1995; Slootweg 1998: 56-64; Martin 2002: 98-106). In other words, if it is not generally true for weeping, female suffering with regard to marital problems seems to be a broadly experienced feature within Pentecostal churches, which has attracted academic attention, both positive and negative. As briefly mentioned in chapter two, Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center share the same view on female submission within marriage. As the following discussion reveals, the churches apparently differ however in the way their leaders and women interpret this doctrine of submission.

Based on my fieldwork in Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, it is my impression that the church takes an ambivalent attitude towards women. Apostle Tadeu paid a great deal of attention to family life and the different roles men and women, according to the Bible, should play. As mentioned earlier, in 2006, his second (Dutch) wife Christel, who is twenty years his junior, had produced six DVDs containing her lessons on marriage. These lessons include a great deal of practical advice on how to choose a partner for life, as well as discussions about the meaning of marriage, family and raising children. An important issue is ‘authority’ in family life. The husband and father is the head of the family, which means that all other family members, including his wife, must obey him. This obedience extends to every aspect of life. Wives must take care of all her husband’s desires, from clothing, to food, to sex. The lessons on sexual relations presume that men need sex more than women, and that it is the wife’s responsibility to satisfy her husband’s need for sex in order to prevent adultery. As far as I have seen, in (Angolan) Igreja Maná family life in Rotterdam, it is indeed the woman who does the cooking and cleaning and takes care of her husband when he needs food, a drink, or anything else. The sex-role differences
between men and women prescribe that the wife is to be economically dependent on her husband. She is not supposed to work outside the home, unless it is financially necessary, in which case the husband has to give his permission. Moreover, women are not allowed to keep the money they earn for themselves, it is to be handed over to the husband. All these rules, which are exhaustively explained in the DVDs and sermons, were repeated in the marriage ceremonies that I witnessed.

This subservient rhetoric is in flagrant opposition to the general message of Igreja Maná, which is focused on building a successful economic future with the help of God. I observed in the church that many young and single women, even the single mothers, are very ambitious and go to great lengths to attend school and learn Dutch, so that they can obtain proper jobs in the future. In contrast, the women I met in the church who are married or who have lived with a man since they came to the Netherlands, hardly speak Dutch and are tied to their homes and children.

On the other hand, women can obtain a spiritual position in the church, in which the husband actually has no say. Similar to the adage in the early days of US Pentecostalism, as Vivian Deno (2004) described it convincingly in her historical article, in Igreja Maná women are told to submit to their husbands except in the area of their worship and beliefs. As a wife, one should put God in first place and the husband second. Young, single female Angolans in the Netherlands have the ambition and motivation to educate themselves in order to have a career. I expect that this generation of women, even if they get married and have children in the future, will not give up that position. This independent attitude can be seen in Bela’s life.221 Having remained unmarried, she lives with her partner and two children, but the house is hers and she still wants to build her own future. ‘As for me, Regina, I would have ended this relationship ten times over, if I did not have the church. To live with a man is very hard. But I will go on, I will finish my study and find a well paid job.’ I interviewed a few second-generation girls in the church who told me that they do not intend to get married, because they do not want a man lording it over them. I suspect that these girls will incorporate values that they encounter in school, into the doctrine about family they have been taught in church.

221 Interview with Bela. February 13, 2008.
Unlike Igreja Maná, Calvary Christian Center’s views on female submission towards men is only sketchily articulated in church services and sermons, but is expressed nevertheless in the stories of the women I interviewed (in Rotterdam, and even more in the Assembléia de Deus churches in Brazil), and is addressed directly in the collective female prayer practices I participated in. The women in this church view weeping as an empowering experience of ‘coming really close to God,’ who will give them spiritual victory over their husbands and their familial problems. Their weeping is experienced as being glorious, as a sign of their privileged position in the eyes of God. In Rotterdam, I saw that opposition to the church rules was articulated most often by women, expressed as suffering, in personal conversation. In Brazil I witnessed several occasions in which women discussed their disaffection with their female subordinate positions in the Assembléia de Deus church, in terms of female suffering. Nevertheless, as at Igreja Maná, in this church I saw a shift in the attitude of second-generation Brazilian girls, with high aspirations, who questioned the church’s teaching on the role of women in the church and in the family.

Both Calvary Christian Center as well as Igreja Maná place female adherents in subordinate positions, while simultaneously challenging them to be dedicated to a victorious future. In Calvary Christian Center, like Assembléia de Deus in Brazil, women’s position is articulated, not so much in church discourse, but via female collective spiritual practices, framed in terms of suffering and spiritual struggle. In Igreja Maná in Rotterdam, women have no female space in which their particular troubles are articulated and shared. Their personal troubles are framed in terms of the church’s spiritual war discourse and practice. In both churches, young and unmarried women’s aspirations to build a successful future are construed within a transnational space in which European liberal notions coincide with the contextual religious values they internalise in their church.

6.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter, by exploring the notion of ‘time’ in Pentecostalism, dealt with the question of how Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center, in their authoritative
discourses and religious practices negotiate the eschatological (future oriented) expectations of Spirit Baptism (as evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) with regard to their adherents’ daily (present) troublesome lives.

As demonstrated, in their discourses and prayer practices, both churches urge their adherents to seek future victory, through spiritual struggle. Nonetheless, they differ fundamentally in their theological appreciation of the experience of suffering (as antagonism towards the proclamation of salvation in Christ), in their regular communal prayer practices, as well as in their authoritative discourses. In Igreja Maná, suffering has a negative connotation and is silenced by the way its word of faith theology is framed, depicting adherents as spiritual and powerful warriors, who abstain from expressing sentiments of weakness, in order that they can anticipate a glorious future. In Calvary Christian Center, suffering has a positive connotation in the context of desert discourse, which nevertheless has a stronger future victory orientation than the original Christian desert spirituality of the first centuries. As we have seen, the particular approaches to the experience of suffering in both churches is derived from different theological and (social/cultural) historical roots. In my view, the historical roots of Calvary Christian Center’s discourse are more socially and culturally inscribed than those of Igreja Maná, and this difference is striking. Combined with the outcomes discussed in the previous chapter, Igreja Maná emerges more and more as a non-Angolan, or even non-African Pentecostal church, although its adherents in Rotterdam (and in Angola) are almost homogenously Angolan. Calvary Christian Center’s inheritance of Brazilian folk Catholic suffering spirituality opens up a new field of research concerning the (historical and spiritual) relationship between Roman Catholicism and Pentecostalism.

The personal accounts given by adherents in both churches reflect how the latter’s ongoing vocal discourse is persuasively enforced by accompanying prayer practices, in which language, vocal performance and bodily posture seem to possess powerful significance in a highly sensorial way. The degree of correspondence between what the churches preach and practice on the one hand, and what their adherents tell and how they act on the other, is truly remarkable.
Special attention has been given to the notion of female submission, which is relevant to both churches. In Calvary Christian Center, suffering is experienced in female collective prayers of lament and weeping, whereas in Igreja Maná, it is intensively and deliberately articulated in church discourse. In spite of these differences, in both churches, young and ambitious female adherents seem to by-pass prescribed and accepted notions of female submission in the church with their secular experiences in school and society, enabling them to dream of independent and successful future lives.

I argue that in dealing with the contemporary troubles and afflictions experienced by migrant adherents living in the margins of Dutch society, churches and their followers, both in their discourses and prayer practices, continuously anticipate a glorious future.
Women praying in a local Assembléia de Deus church, October 2008, Bahia
7 DISCOURSES, SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND POWER

7.1 Introduction

Igreja Maná
Sunday Service, October 8, 2006.
The national bishop, who leads the service, apparently is not well disposed. At a certain moment he seems to tremble while praying for the offerings and hardly finds the words he needs to speak. Suddenly he calls for the local pastor to come, who is not present in the church room at that moment. He says: ‘I do not feel well at the moment. I ask the pastor to take my place. I apologise for anything (qualquer coisa) I may have done. I ask the church to pray for me.’ The bishop leaves the church room and the pastor takes over, without any comment.

November 2, 2006, interview with local pastor
‘How is the Bishop doing’? I ask.
‘Do you really want to know?’ the pastor asks me.
‘Yes, I really do’, I answer. ‘I saw that he collapsed at the pulpit that Sunday. That worried me quite a bit. I sincerely want to know how he is doing.’
The pastor keeps silent for a while. Then he says: ‘He is not a bishop anymore. He did not recover. In fact, he got worse, he became totally mad. Look, that is what happens with someone who is a leader and does bad things. He did not die, but only because God had compassion for him. But the demons really had taken him, they could have killed him, for sure.’
‘Where is he now’? I ask. ‘He is back in Lisbon. We phoned his wife to come and take him with her. I was with him those days, but he had lost his mind. He did not react anymore. He screamed “no!, no!” when I proposed to pray for him. That man was really possessed. He definitely had opened the door to Satan. I have foreseen that this would happen for months. At one time I got a revelation from God, ‘In two months it will happen’.’
The pastor explains to me, ‘this is part of the Gospel too, the tough part. If people in church, who are Christians, do bad things, God kills them, just like Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts. This is what happened to the Bishop too.’
I ask the pastor what bad things the bishop had done.
‘The bishop did not listen to anyone. If you are ordained as a leader of others, you have to bow your head and serve these people. That is what I do. I bow my head and I am open to everyone. The people I work with are all friends of mine. They can always call me after work, even at night. They know that. They have a key to my house, because I trust them. But he had no sympathy, nor respect for the people. He forced them to do things they did not want to. Because of him the number of churches in the Netherlands has diminished from sixteen to seven. A lot of people have left the church, because he only wanted to rule them.’

**Calvary Christian Center**
7 January, 2008. Meeting for church leaders.
Pastor Celso starts with a bible study about church leadership. He lectures about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to make leaders capable of doing their jobs in church. These gifts are ministerial gifts, distinct spiritual gifts and the gift of being a servant. The latter gift is especially for deacons. Every leader should seek God's wisdom himself, and he or she should not depend on the pastor in this.

After bible study, the pastor discusses a number of practical problems in the church:

The pastor has heard that a few new members were invited by the choir leader to join the women’s choir. The problem is that these new members are not baptised yet. The pastor asks the choir leader if she knows about this.

‘Oh no, Pastor. I did not know!’ she answers.

‘Would you want to have choir members who are not baptised yet?’ the pastor asks.

‘Oh no, Pastor. If only I had known that they weren’t baptised, I would never have invited them!’ the choir leader responds.

‘Let us decide then, that you come to me first, when you consider inviting new choir members to join. Only the pastor knows about the people’s lives. He talks with them and knows their problems. So I can tell you who you can or can’t invite. Now I will have to disappoint these people. That should not be necessary.’ The choir leader agrees and apologises.

‘This counts for all of you. An invitation to anyone to join in the work of the
church should be authorised by the pastor first, just like our payments. Our bookkeeper never pays a bill without my authorisation. That’s how it should be,’ the pastor concludes this point. The pastor mentions another problem. He is annoyed by the fact that too often the children disturb the church service. Especially during the sermon they cause enormous trouble, running around and screaming loudly. The Sunday school teachers should have more control over them.

‘Pastor, it is very difficult,’ one of them responds. ‘The room for the children is far too small and we can hardly keep them from running away through the door into the church room. Besides, the children are very disobedient. If we warn them, they just don’t listen to us.’

‘Are you telling me that you cannot keep those children under control? I do not accept that! You are supposed to have authority over them,’ the pastor responds quite irritated.

‘I do not mean to be recalcitrant, pastor, I just want to say that the children do not obey us. It would be necessary to seek the help of the parents in this.’ The pastor agrees to address this issue at the next Sunday service.

Then the pastor tells that he is worried about the number of church adherents who live together unmarried and even have children together. There are many barriers for marriage, he admits, especially among undocumented immigrants. One of the leaders remarks: ‘But then we should tell those people that it is not acceptable to live together. It is not appropriate!’

‘But if I do so, they will not come to church anymore’, the pastor responds. ‘We will have to be patient with these people. We must give them room to change over time. They will have to learn for themselves that it is not appropriate to live like that.’

The church leaders agree, but not without emphasising that taking part in the Holy Communion would be out of the question for people who live in sin.

Throughout the previous chapters, it has become clear that Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center discourses have a powerful impact on their adherents’ personal reflections, their narratives of self, and the way they locate themselves in relation to the day to day circumstances of their lives. This impact has been defined and explained in multiple ways. In chapter five, the impact was shown to be connected with social/historical aspects of the adherents’ pasts, which made certain words or phrases meaningful and which gave them the sense of ‘truth,’
as became evident in Igreja Maná’s maxim, ‘don’t look back!’ In Calvary Christian Center, it was the practices of confession, and the discourse of God’s plan for each individual personal life, that enabled its adherents to re-emplot their own past experiences in new words and thoughts. In chapter six, it was argued that the congruence between a discourse on suffering and its embodiment in prayer practices, shaped a powerful aesthetic of persuasion. Examples could be found in both churches, albeit profoundly different examples, both in content and form. Whereas Igreja Maná’s discourse of being a good warrior was reinforced by its military prayer practice, Calvary Christian Center’s desert discourse was catalysed by its embodied prayer practice with regard to lament. In this sense, both churches proved to be powerfully capable of ensuring that their discourses were internalised within personal experience.

Building on my argument about the impact of discourse in both churches, cannot be done satisfactory without asking the additional question; *to what extent is the authoritative power of these discourses based on the authority of the people who preach them*. I address this question in this chapter and the one that follows. At this point, I take up André Droogers’s view on social power (positions) and spiritual power within religious groups in general and Pentecostal churches in particular, due to their emphasis on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in believers. Droogers suggests that there is an intertwined relationship between three power dimensions (2003: 265); the power dimension in relation to the sacred, the power dimension in internal relationships, and also the power dimension in external relationships. In this chapter, attention will be paid to these three dimensions of power, in relation to my question about the extent to which the churches’ discourses rely on the authority of the people who produce and preach them, i.e. those people who have leadership positions in the churches.

Connecting Max Weber’s approach to legitimised authority with Droogers’s view, it might be argued that in Pentecostal circles, ‘charisma’ is Weber’s sociological term ‘charisma,’ as one of three types of legitimate authority, means the exceptional character of an individual person, based on which other people become devoted to this person and his normative order. This term must be distinguished from the theological Pentecostal term ‘charisma,’ which means a gift of the Holy Spirit, with which an individual can be endowed.
considered to be the main source of social power (1968: 46), cited by Thomas Kirsch (2008: 4). In the Igreja Maná vignette included at the start of this chapter, according to the local pastor, the national bishop’s spiritual authority apparently had diminished or had even disappeared in the eyes of his subordinates, although he still exercised power over them. The pastor explains the national bishop’s ‘downfall,’ in terms of his access to God having been rescinded and his having been overpowered by evil forces.

In the second vignette about Calvary Christian Center, however, the pastor shows his power by saying ‘only the pastor can decide who is allowed...,’ or ‘only the pastor authorises a payment,’ but it appears that the leaders gathered around him accept this, because they acknowledge his (legitimated) authority. In other words, in their reactions they seem to value the pastor’s opinion highly, even if they utter their own comments or objections. His authority is not necessarily ‘charismatic,’ but might also be informed by ‘traditional’ or ‘legal’ power. The differences between the two churches, as shown in the vignettes, asks for a more complex and dynamic approach to understanding power, via which being forced to choose between Weberian types of authority is avoided.

It is not sufficient to presume that authority depends only on the willingness of subordinates to acknowledge it. If it is true that power cannot be exerted in the absence of legitimisation and acknowledgement, in the dynamic between leaders and followers, and between organisations and individuals, other processes must be found to build this authority. In Pentecostal churches this authority is deeply embedded in the recognition of a leader’s access to the power of the Holy Spirit. According to Birgit Meyer (2006b, 2008, 2010a), these processes of authorisation are to be found in Pentecostal churches’ sensational forms, in which the transcendental divine becomes experiential in the sensorial world. All believers are supposed to embody these sensorial forms. However, because leaders are in the position to synchronise their being overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit with their moments of leadership, the power of the spiritual

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223 Thomas Kirsch, whose work I will introduce on the following pages, refers to Weber’s distinction between three ‘pure types of legitimate authority.’ Legal authority, based on rules and norms, traditional authority, based on the sanctity of tradition, and charismatic authority, based on devotion to an individual person.
becomes more visible in them and through them, than through others. Perhaps they become more important mediators between the transcendental and the immanent world than the adherents in the pews.

It would be remiss to fail to point out that Pentecostal churches (like other Christian traditions), also have another source of authorisation: the authority of a book, the Bible. The complicating element in terms of leadership authority is that this source of authority is considered accessible to every Pentecostal believer, irrespective of her/his position (Meyer 2010b: 122). This gives the Pentecostal believer the capacity to examine and judge whether what happens and what is said and done by spiritual leaders is biblically sanctioned or not, based on the broadly accepted notion that all believers should 'test everything and hold on to the good.'

Yet, as Walter Hollenweger stated in 1990 (154-155), in the Pentecostal belief in the private judgment of the individual believer, the role of the community in the theological process of discernment remains diffuse and even obscure. I want to stress here that, in spite of the insistence on the ultimate authority of the individual, there are social processes of authoritative ranking within the Pentecostal church organisation, that in practice limit this personal interpretative space. Therefore, it is worthwhile to pin down and analyse those processes that produce the spiritual authority of leaders in relation to this biblical source, i.e. the processes through which the two churches deal with reading and interpreting biblical texts. This sub-question does not in the least sit beyond the scope of theorising the question of access to spiritual power, as Thomas Kirsch (2008) shows in his ethnography, which is mainly concerned with the Pentecostal Zambian Spirit Apostolic Church.

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224 There are exceptions, such as the Zimbabwean Friday Masowe Church, a church of ‘the Christians who don’t read the Bible’ (Engelke 2007).

225 A theological reflection on this topic has been elaborated in the International Dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals. See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (1998).

226 Holy Bible. New International Version. 1 Thessalonicans 5:21. This is a well known and beloved Bible verse among Pentecostals, just as 1 Corinthians 14:29 ‘Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.’ On the other hand, leaders find legitimising texts in the same authoritative source.

227 ‘Spirit Apostolic church,’ is a pseudonym (Kirsch 2008: xii).
Kirsch encountered a phenomenon that did not fit into the widespread idea that processes of literacy and bureaucracy entail routinisation and the disappearance of charisma. In this church, charismatic and bureaucratic practices were unified in one and the same person. Taking this observation as a point of departure, Kirsch aimed to deconstruct the Weberian dichotomy between charisma and institution, paralleled in the dichotomies between spirit and letter, orality and literacy, which has gradually become a major analytical framework for social investigations of (book) religions. Through this analytical framework, African churches, as well as Pentecostal churches in general, are approached as being at a pre-literate stage, i.e. in terms of orality, spiritual performance, charismatic leadership, and organisational fluidity, whereas texts, reading and writing, and institutional elements were neglected or framed in terms of the church having reached a later (more developed) stage of routinisation.

Kirsch makes reading (Biblical Scripture and other Christian publications), and writing (instructions, records, plans), the central focus of his analysis, arguing that the ‘text’ or ‘letter’ cannot be seen as fixed, material, or able to generate autonomous meaning independent of the reader and writer. Moreover, churches differ profoundly in their perception of the dynamic relationship between (divine) revelation through Scripture, access to biblical reading and practices of reading and hearing. In the case of the Spirit Apostolic Church, the Bible is brought into motion by the Holy Spirit, while being read aloud with exaltation, a quality which gives the preacher spiritual authority, i.e. text, Spirit and reader are brought into play. In the same way, Kirsch describes how in this church, written instructions, records, schedules and plans shape a structure for the presence and working of the Holy Spirit, arguing that an increase of institutionalisation does not necessarily cause the spiritual and charismatic to be diminished.

Although it is not Kirsch’s overall argument, in his detailed description of the interplay, firstly between Biblical text, reader, preacher, Spirit and audience, and secondly between the established bureaucracy and the working of the Spirit, he reveals how such processes effectively soak church leaders of the Spirit Apostolic church in spiritual power and authority. Thus, processes of institutionalisation and bureaucratisation do not necessarily change leadership
from charismatic to more de-personalized, rational-legal or tradition-based types, but rather meld them together to create a hybrid process of authorisation, in which the spiritual endowment of the leader still plays a definite role. Accordingly, in order to address the central question in this chapter, in both churches I will examine the reading, speaking and writing practices as sensational forms, which mediate the three-way relationship between the divine (Spirit), the text, and the human who reads, speaks and writes, i.e. the leaders.

The next two sections of this chapter highlight the processes of authorisation in both churches, exploring the processes of spiritual authorisation, that can be identified and discerned within their ecclesiastic structure, and their sensational forms, of which reading and writing are the most prominent. Attention will be paid to the question of how, in both churches, leaders view personal spiritual authority in connection with the Pentecostal theological emphasis on spiritual gifts. Both sections will deal briefly with the question of to what extent both churches’ external relationships and their view of the surrounding world intertwine with internal power dimensions, i.e. influence the process of authorisation of discourses.

In the fourth section, an analytical comparison will be made between the two churches. Finally, I discuss the extent to which the processes of authorisation within both churches indeed do contribute to the powerful impact of church discourses.

The next chapter will address the same question, but from the perspective of the adherents. In that chapter, another position of the scale of spiritual authority will be examined: if Pentecostal Christians are considered to be filled with the Holy Spirit, what consequences does this have for their reflection on their own authority in the church and in the world? And finally: what kind of personhood emerges out of all these notions of spiritual power in social scientific terms?
7.2 Igreja Maná’s processes of authorisation

As described in chapter two, Igreja Maná has a finely delineated hierarchical church structure, both in terms of the way the local church is organised, as well as in the structure of the worldwide church empire, which Jorge Tadeu regularly compares with an army. It goes without saying that to maintain such a structure requires that church adherents acknowledge the spiritual authority of the leaders, meaning that what the latter say is experienced as authoritative, bearing ‘truth,’ and of higher value than what others say. In this section I show how this spiritual authority of leaders is produced, what kind of sensational forms are involved, by focusing on reading, speaking and writing practices.

7.2.1 A centralised training-system

In order to grow his church and to simultaneously consolidate its structure, Jorge Tadeu has developed a system of obligatory training, which all adherents who intend to become a deacon (the lowest hierarchical level in Igreja Maná), elder, pastor or bishop must participate. These training courses are run regularly throughout the course of the year, and the schedule is the same for all Igreja Maná churches, the world over. Tadeu is the only teacher, via course books written by himself, via Manasat, the TV broadcast system of the church, or via DVD’s that are played according to a set schedule. The composition of these training courses puts all students in a dependent and subordinate position, because there is no interaction with the teacher. He is not even present in person among the students. They sit and watch television, meanwhile reading the passages in their course book, and writing down notes. Or they listen to a DVD, while reading and writing. Whether the course is given to a larger group in the church, or to a few students in a private room (I have encountered each of these scenarios at Igreja Maná in Rotterdam and in Luanda), the dynamic is the same. Only one voice is heard. There is no discussion, no asking questions, no drawing the material into question. Each training course includes a section about hierarchy and authority in the church, and I provide two excerpts here:
Course for pastors and bishops:

‘Who is the Lord of your church? Of course you will say: Jesus is. But is this really true? Isn’t it in fact the case that you are the lord of the church? But if you stick with your answer, how is Jesus ruling your church, then? The answer is that Jesus leads the local pastor via the Apostle. Just like an army, which has a supreme commander and underneath there are generals who command others in their turn. In the case of Igreja Maná, Jesus rules the church through me’ (Tadeu n.d.e.: 309)\(^{228}\).

Jorge Tadeu’s rhetoric matches perfectly with the sensorial composition of his training-system. He is the mediator between Jesus and the church.

Course for Deacons:

‘What is the definition of authority? Authority is the right, or the power to make oneself be obeyed. It is the legal, military or political entity, which within its own terrain has the right to make others obey them. God has authority over the entire universe. He delegated this power to the human being, through his law. With Jesus’ coming, God introduced the law of love. Jesus, who always obeyed the authority of his Father, delegated his authority to his church in order to bring the message of salvation. But, only obedience to the authority that God delegated to his church, will give the Christian his own personal authority in Christ’ (Tadeu n.d.c.: 126-128).

Notably, Tadeu makes regular use of army metaphors in his interpretation and explanation of spiritual authority, not only in terms of individual spiritual authority of a Christian in the worldly and spiritual realms, but also in terms of authority and church leadership. In the first perspective all Christians are generals, in the second there is only one supreme commander, followed by a hierarchical order of rank. Obedience towards higher leaders is a condition for maintaining one’s own authority in the universe.

\(^{228}\) The book ‘Senhorio de Jesus’ (Dominion of Jesus) is a publication of a series of training meetings for pastors, that Jorge Tadeu started in Brazil. Text translated into English by author.
7.2.2 Design of time and space

Not only the composition of all training, but the worldwide organised synchronization of it, can be viewed as a sensational form, (re)producing Jorge Tadeu’s authority. The collectively shared experience of being his student or disciple reinforces the logic of his being in charge.

And more than this, each and every meeting, no matter what its intended purpose or nature, has been prescribed in detail by Tadeu, not only in terms of content, but also in terms of timing. Appendix A shows a detailed prescription of how a Sunday service should run. The forty Sunday services I attended in Igreja Maná in Rotterdam and and those in Luanda followed the same fixed pattern, which (in comparison to Tadeu’s course manuals), local church leaders and worship groups punctually obeyed.

In appendix B, a few introductory pages of the Grupo Familiar Manual (Family Group Manual) are translated in order to show how precise Jorge Tadeu aims to be in his initiation process for new converts. The manual describes fifty-two meetings in detail, which are dealt with in all family group meetings at the same time, every year (Tadeu n.d.f.). In Rotterdam, I attended numerous family group meetings with different groups. These meetings followed exactly the schedule prescribed in the manual for that particular week. Family Group leaders told me that they had been following this manual for several years. When I asked if they would have preferred more freedom in choosing alternative subjects or other material, they shook their shoulders and assured me that it was very important to hear these lessons over again. In these group meetings, just as in the Sunday service, the only freedom was in the choice of bible text for ‘a palavra de amor’ (the word of love) and for ‘a palavra de finança’ (the word of collection). Regardless, I never heard a bible text that had not been read previously in a church service, or other meeting.

In appendix C, a detailed prescription of weekly worship department meetings has been translated from Tadeu’s manual (Tadeu n.d.c.: 217-246). Here, the time schedules and instructions are even more detailed, for instance prayer moments of one and a half minutes, such as the Lords prayer, followed by ‘the Ephesians prayers’ (Eph. 1:16-19 and Eph. 3:16-20), and prayer in tongues. It might be suggested that through such a detailed and prescribed use of time, time itself becomes a sensational form, embodied in Tadeu as mediator.
In addition to this, in Jorge Tadeu’s composition of all meetings in his worldwide church, not only time, but space also, is designated as a sensational form, producing authority. All adherents of Igreja Maná, of all ranks, are continuously confronted weekly with the ‘Sunday presence’ of the Apostle through the broadcast of ManáSat. Although not in real-time, nor physically present, Tadeu’s ‘perpetual presence,’ reminds every member that only he is the real leader of the church. Just as the synchronisation of time shapes the sensorial experience of collective wholeness, the compression of space, achieved via this weekly broadcast, shapes this capacity as well. They both sustain Tadeu’s exclusive and untouchable position.

This compression of space breaks into the local spatial design of any Igreja Maná church. Igreja Maná in Rotterdam rents a church building, which gives the leaders little scope for exerting control over church space. There is a stage, where the pastor and the worship team perform. At the beginning of the Sunday service, only the worship team is on stage. During the last song of the first part of the service, the pastor steps on to the stage and takes the lead. In other words, the stage is where leadership is located. In Igreja Maná in Luanda, however, this spatial design is far more pronounced, because the stage in that huge temple is very large and high. Possibly in Rotterdam, a church member could make herself heard in the church, whereas in Luanda this would be almost impossible. He or she who is not on stage, and has no microphone, has no (individual) voice. Moreover, the walls surrounding the stage in Luanda’s temple are covered by large projection screens, on to which images of the church leaders standing on stage are projected. At the right side, chairs line the stage (set in profile for the rest of the church to see). There, the highest local leaders and their wives are seated. Everything in the temple in Luanda is directed towards this stage. Although there is much interaction between the leaders on stage with the church crowd, I never saw anyone step on to the stage from the

229 Compression of space is an element of contemporary global society, meaning that spatial distance has become indifferent due to technological developments such as internet, skyping, broadcast etc. According to David Martin (2002: 23), compression of (time and) space is ‘one of the niches that favor Pentecostalism’ as a global movement. In the case of Igreja Maná the compression of space is a powerful sensorial form, which enables Jorge Tadeu to surpass the human limitations of physical presence.
main floor, or vice versa. But as soon as the Manásat broadcast came on 
(although this moment is locally orchestrated), all the screens on stage projected 
Tadeu’s face and local leaders sat down and watched and listened.

The composition of time and space through the worldwide church of 
Igreja Maná is centralised and directed towards one man: Apostle Jorge Tadeu. 
As a result, these non-verbal processes continuously confirm his authority. His 
presence and his words interdict all the other voices.

7.2.3 Practices of reading and speech

As described before, Tadeu has prescribed precisely what a Sunday Service, or 
any other church meeting) will look like. Even during Sunday Service 
announcements, the books and DVD’s to be advertised, the church activities will 
be mentioned, are prescribed. And what is more, the weekly sermon is written 
by Tadeu and preached in all Igreja Maná churches during that Sunday. In 
addition to this, particular practices of reading and speech seem to sustain the 
hierarchical rank of spiritual authority in Igreja Maná.

As soon as a (regional or national) bishop enters a local church on 
Sunday, and their presence is not necessarily communicated in advance, the 
local pastor is degraded to a lower role in that Sunday service. The higher ranked 
person will give the sermon and the ministry at the end of the service. He can 
give the local pastor permission to lead the first part of the service, the 
announcements, including the ‘word about love’ and the ‘word about the 
collection.’ However, something else happened during the final weeks prior to 
the dramatic exit of the national bishop as described in the vignette at the start 
of this chapter. During three Sunday services, I witnessed the national bishop 
enter the church, and pastor Joao disappear. Afterwards, pastor João explained 
to me that he had decided to join the intercession group downstairs, because 
the national bishop told him, ‘I will lead the entire service.’ At the moment that 
he became unwell, pastor João indeed had to be called up from downstairs. João 
had experienced the national bishop’s presence on previous Sunday services as a 
form of power abuse, abuse that he could not resist, because he had to obey. He 
had been willing to take over the service immediately, because, as he explained, 
every pastor is obliged to be ready any time. More than this, he had been 
expected the imminent downfall of this national bishop.

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During the short period in October and November 2006, when Igreja Maná in the Netherlands had no national bishop, pastor João allowed some of his elders to give the announcements, or a brief lesson on the collection. This stopped immediately after the arrival of the new national bishop, who attended the Sunday service in Rotterdam on a regular basis and who then took over the sermon and ministry.

Kirsch points out the ambivalent significance of ‘presence’ and ‘absence’ of higher ranked leaders, as in the Spirit Apostolic Church in Zambia (2008: 197-199). A junior leader profits from the absence of a senior, because this gives him room for exerting spiritual power and showing spiritual qualities in healing, and exorcising demons. In small local churches, junior leaders have more opportunities in this respect than those in larger churches, where seniors are more frequently present. On the other hand, it is through senior leaders that junior leaders are endowed with the Holy Spirit, therefore junior leaders cannot do without their superiors. The case of Igreja Maná shows that Tadeu’s highest authority is powerfully confirmed, not only by his ever presence via the weekly broadcast, but through the performance of the prescribed sermon. Every person in the church hierarchy is known to copy Tadeu’s message and to follow his interpretation of the biblical verses used in the sermon. Habitually, the person who delivers the message starts with a word of thanks to the apostle for the fine lesson he has prepared for the church. In the performance of the sermon, later on, the preacher incorporates Tadeu’s spiritual authority in a personal way, by using the first person, just as Tadeu does, when he wants the audience’s approval: ‘Posso ouvir um amen?’ (‘Can I hear an Amen?’). In the meantime, however, the interplay of absence and presence between higher ranked persons and local pastors gives rise to conflict, especially when it surpasses boundaries of what is considered suitable.

7.2.4 Writing practices

Another manifestation of Tadeu’s spiritual authority is the strategic obligatory distribution of his books in order to enable church adherents to understand and read the Bible and gain personal spiritual authority over their lives. In Igreja Maná, adherents are urged to read the bible and turn into disciples and servants of God, first and foremost by using a body of literature that systematically
guides the reader through a fixed number of themes with connected bible texts, repeated in each and every book. The most telling example is the daily preparation, which Igreja Maná adherents are obliged to go through. Therefore they must buy a book, named Preparação Diária de um Cristão (Daily Preparation of a Christian), which contains the same set of themes taught in all courses, and repeated in services and family group meetings.

This systematic approach, supported by songs about ‘doing my PDC,’ means that Igreja Maná adherents constantly cycle through the same limited selection of Bible extracts, which prove Tadeu’s doctrines to be true, perfectly in line with his conviction that it is not necessary to read the entire Bible, as long as one knows which Bible verses are most important for a successful Christian life. In placing his adherents within such a compelling system, Tadeu desires that his adherents become filled with the Holy Spirit, have divine anointment and come to know God in an intimate way by praying and meditating over his word. ‘I use these verses every day in order to remain filled with the Holy Spirit,’ he claims. According to Tadeu, through this daily preparation, he was anointed for his leadership of 1000 churches across twenty nations, and for the miracles brought about through his ministry (Tadeu n.d.d.: 10-11).

With regard to the miracles Tadeu refers to, his spiritual authority is nurtured through all his writings, of which the book ‘Cura Divina’ (n.d.g) (Divine Healing) and ‘Acerca de Finanças’ (n.d.h.) (About Finance) are of a select kind. As shown in chapter five, in testimonies, miracles, such as healing or sudden financial prosperity, are experienced in direct connection with his books. These particular books state that in Igreja Maná, personal access to the Holy Spirit, available to every Christian, is channelled through Tadeu himself.

**7.2.5 A discourse of obedience and submission**

In order to maintain a sense of discipline in the church, Tadeu has defined each position in the church, and also specified how leaders should uphold authority over others. Here I have included an example of how Tadeu instructs directors of the worship teams to keep their departments well disciplined:
It is the task of the director to uphold spiritual and ethical discipline in the group. This can be done via small corrections, a more serious sanction, or through disciplinary action, which means that the person is discharged from his task for a certain period.

How should a director solve more general problems of discipline in the group? For instance: what if there is a no-show at rehearsals, a no-show one hour before the church service, grumbling over the uniform, grumbling about the decisions of the leader, a member not completing his/her PDC (*Preparacão Diária de um Cristão*), a no-show on the weekly meeting for deacons, or no-show on the family group meetings?

Solution: no one is allowed to serve in the Church without meeting the biblical requirements or without repenting. Inform the pastor about these persons in order to prevent them from destabilising the church with gossip, before they have time to be pitied, to claim that they are not loved, or that they have undergone injustice.

How to maintain discipline: by keeping attendance lists during all these meetings. Check with the director of family group meetings to ensure that everyone visits a family group meeting (Tadeu n.d.c.: 383-389).  

According to Tadeu’s teaching, the higher the position in the church, the higher the anointing that is produced by this daily ‘training’ of the Igreja Maná believer’s spirit. This anointing is broken as soon as the leader shows disobedience towards a higher leader. Tadeu reinforces this view with the bible story of Mirjam becoming a leper, after having opposed Moses. Based on this story, there is one type of disobedience that Tadeu opposes the most: subordinate leaders who claim that, since they are Spirit filled too, God speaks to them directly, especially when they refuse to obey their superior by stating that the Holy Spirit has told them to do otherwise. In one of his sermons given via TV -broadcast, Tadeu rebuked such rebellious utterances by saying that this behaviour is akin to witchcraft. Using a military metaphor again, he explained why it is wrong:

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230 Text is summarised and translated into English by author.

‘If you are in the army and your commander tells you what to do, are you going to answer, “no, I’ll call the general first, to see if he gives me the same order?” I don’t think so! Of course the Holy Spirit speaks with you as well as with me, but on a different level! The Holy Spirit will tell you the details of how to lead your elders and deacons at the level appropriate to your needs. But He will tell me when you must go to another part of the world to serve the church there. To think that you can judge my decisions by claiming the Holy Spirit leads you to, is seen as rebellious and an abomination in the eyes of God.’

This discourse of obedience and submission, which Tadeu repeats in every course book, is enforced by additional exhortations and discourses, used by his subordinate leaders during national meetings and regular Sunday services. In Luanda, the preaching pastor once told the audience: ‘Do you know who Apostle Jorge Tadeu really is? Do you know? I do. To me, he is the new Moses, the one whom the Bible says will come to lead the church through the end of time.’

In my view, this exaltation, which elevates Tadeu above all other living mortals, confirms the sense of awe with which the personality of Jorge Tadeu is surrounded. All other leaders derive their own spiritual authority from him.

7.2.6 The dispersal of spiritual gifts

In Igreja Maná, every Christian is taught to become Spirit-filled and to have the capacity to expel demons and heal their own body and those of others. As described in chapter six, praying in tongues, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is practiced very intensely in Igreja Maná among the entire congregation. However, other gifts, such as the gift of healing and (far less common) exorcism, are practiced only by those who are authorised to lay hands on the believers and


233 Sunday Service, 6 May, 2007. Probably, the preacher referred to Deut.18:15: ‘The Lord your God will raise a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to him.’ However, this bible verse is commonly understood to refer to Jesus as the new Moses, with Deut. 34:10, and the New Testament verses Hebr. 9:11-24 and John 1:18 as arguments. See for instance (O’Toole 1990; Allison 1993; Croatto 2005; Ratzinger 2007: 14-29).
pray for them in the moment of ministry, the part of the Sunday Service in which the Holy Spirit is expected to heal and touch the adherents who have come forward. In terms of sensorial forms, these gifts of the Holy Spirit are mediated by those who are declared to have more spiritual power than others, based on their hierarchical position within the church. It is their voice, and their bodily posture through which the presence of the Holy Spirit is made sensorial.

During the family group meetings, the last part is saved for intercession prayers. At the end of these prayers, the family group leader always asks if anyone in the group needs prayer. The answer is almost invariably ‘no.’ Only on one occasion did we pray for Ana, who had been introduced to the family group that evening. She asked for prayer because she suffered from grief, because of the loss of her family. The leader agreed to pray for her. Hence, although the prayer group meeting could have been an occasion for the laying on of hands, and practicing spiritual gifts like healing, this didn’t happen.

Notably, the spiritual gift of prophecy, which biblically is considered an important spiritual gift, is not entirely absent in Igreja Maná, but is confined to the personage of Tadeu. The only prophesy I heard during my fieldwork period, was at some point in the annual Convenção de Fé in 2006, when Tadeu delivered a special prophesy concerning his wife Christel, who would receive a special ministry for the women of Igreja Maná. Besides that moment, I never witnessed prophecy in any aspect of church life, nor heard any talk of it.

7.2.7 Processes of authorisation and their vulnerabilities

In Tadeu’s insistence on the divine origin of the hierarchical ranking of spiritual authority, he aims to grow the work and power of the Holy Spirit among Igreja Maná servants on the one hand, and to limit the authority of his subordinates, based on their spiritual qualities on the other. One might suggest that, although Tadeu shows no ambiguity in his views on spiritual authority, there remains a vulnerable element in the hierarchical ranking of leadership in Igreja Maná.

Once, the pastor in Rotterdam did an altar call during the first part of the Sunday service, while the new national bishop was present. This was against

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234 See the vignette of chapter five.
the prescribed order, which he usually followed precisely. Later I asked the pastor why he had done this. His answer was: ‘If the Holy Spirit tells me to do so, I cannot ask the national bishop first before obeying Him, can I?’ He told me that the bishop had asked him for an explanation afterwards and finally had seemed to agree with the pastor. Yet, shortly after this incident, the pastor was removed. When I returned from my short trip to Angola, the new national bishop had transferred pastor João to a small church in Dordrecht. When I interviewed pastor João about this event, he assured me that he accepted this transfer as a divine assignment. Yet, later in the interview he said:

‘It is so difficult to be a national or regional bishop. The higher you come, the weirder you get. You cannot trust anyone. These people are so lonely. They don’t speak Dutch, they have no friends, because it is impossible to keep any in this position. I think that they just want a place to belong. Therefore the national bishop has taken Rotterdam for himself, although it is forbidden to have a local church in that position […] Why do you think that bishop … [name of a regional bishop RS] has spent fifteen years a regional bishop at stage one? He will never improve his position, because he sometimes protests against taking new assignments to make people give money. “We must think of the people. They must have a life, too,” he says. Because he says such things, he will never go any higher in the church.’

This incident shows that, when spiritual authority is challenged by subordinate leaders, who claim that the Holy Spirit has compelled them to act, higher authorities fall back on their hierarchical (social) power, in order to restore the balance. However, having a supra-local position brings its own tensions, as the following quotation shows. A former local pastor of Igreja Maná in Rotterdam had been ordained as a regional bishop. However, after one year, he quit this position and turned into an ‘ordinary brother.’ After a few months he returned to Angola to make a living for his family. When I interviewed him later in Luanda, he told me, that he could not cope with the pressure ‘from above’ anymore. He said:

‘Regina, this church has so much money! The national church receives a lot of money from the local churches, every month! But I was obliged to open

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new churches and to drive hundreds of kilometres in the region and did not receive one penny, although I asked several times! I just could not financially afford to be a bishop anymore.’

Even Tadeu’s ‘omnipresence’ appeared to be vulnerable too. In Rotterdam, the technical equipment sometimes failed, as a result of which the broadcast was stopped. For some weeks the equipment did not even appear on stage, because it seemed not to work. It is up to the local leadership to give priority to repairing the technical equipment.

7.2.8 Spiritual authority and external relationships

As the chapters three and four have already shown, the position of migrant churches in Dutch society in general might be defined as vulnerable. Igreja Maná in Rotterdam found its church building taken over by another tenant, right before its regular Sunday service. Such incidents raise the question of what impact events such as this have on the authoritative position of leaders, who were visibly exposed to and overpowered by others. In the local church in Rotterdam, the incident with the Holy Chapel was barely discussed within the community. Furthermore, the Dutch government or society in general is rarely talked about. Igreja Maná’s mission discourse deals with the power of the outside world by framing it as ignorant, sinful and in need of the gospel. The church is depicted as possessing a higher power than the world. Confrontations with the outside world, involving finding or losing jobs, an unfaithful business partner or boss, a broken-down car, are framed in spiritual terms: ‘You think that your boss/business partner/mechanic is the problem. But he is not, it is the devil who is at work here.’

There has been one incident in Igreja Maná, however, which is worth considering in more detail here. It concerns a letter written 11 April, 2005 by Jorge Tadeu. It was written in poor Dutch, and directed to the governmental department of Internal Affairs. I found the letter on the Internet. Copies of this letter were sent to the CJIB, the Governmental Justice Department, the Dutch embassy in Portugal, the Portuguese embassy in the Netherlands, the


237 Centraal Juridisch Incasso Bureau (Central Legal Debt Collection Agency)
Dutch Prime Minister, Queen Beatrix, and the European Parliament. The letter protests against the way the police in Rotterdam had treated Tadeu’s national bishop. According to the letter, one night the police had ordered the national bishop to stop his car on the side of the road. After he had shown them his papers, they pulled him out of the car and took him handcuffed to the police station, leaving his wife and children behind in the car. At the police station he was forced to sign a document, although he did not understand what he was signing. A few weeks later he received a CJIB penalty document for forty Euros, because he had shown the wrong documents. And six months later he received a penalty notice for 220 Euros from the police, because he had resisted the authorities that particular night.

In his letter, after outlining what had happened, Tadeu demands the following from the Department of Internal Affairs:

‘In accordance with this account, and because I am a man of God, I give you fifteen workdays to send to me and mr. [...] a letter, translated into Portuguese, with a formal request for forgiveness, posting them to the following addresses [...] If this will not happen, I will be obliged to start a criminal procedure against the two police officers [...] [and] the head of the police department in [...].

Because we are owners of television broadcasts, radio broadcasts and satellites in several parts of the world, we will have to make the following information about you public. We will claim that you are guilty of the following;

a) religious harassment: the two police officers knew from the beginning that this man belongs to Igreja Maná

b) racism: in general, by the police against the African people and other foreign people. The facts as described above are broadly known in the Netherlands, among many witnesses.

c) power abuse, violence by the police, and coercive pressure to sign documents. [...] We, Igreja Maná, are peaceful people, but I can assure you that without any doubt, I will use our television channels, radios and satellites to expose this neo-Nazi attitude in the following countries: [...] We look forward to receiving your reply and with the best regards,

Yours faithfully Apostle Jorge Tadeu.

238 Quotation of several parts of the letter, translated in English by author.
The precarious situation faced by the national bishop described in the letter shows the helplessness and anxiety that the national bishop must have gone through, being a foreigner, without knowing what was asked from him, or what to say or do. In flagrant contrast with this disempowering experience, Tadeu’s approach reveals his sense that his own supreme power has been contravened. To him, the Dutch authorities are an enemy, a slur on the church’s and his position. Although I never heard anything about this incident, which happened before I entered the church, it must have impacted personally on the national bishop.

Collaborative relationships with other churches take place at the level of the personal friends leaders of Tadeu. These relationships serve to confirm Tadeu’s spiritual authority. When invited to preach during annual conferences, visitors invariably start their sermon with an ode to Tadeu. Each reminds the audience that Tadeu is a powerful man of God, who deserves the support and faithfulness of all his adherents. Tadeu is specifically supported by another well-known church leader named John Avanzini, whose personal recommendation is to be found on every book cover of Tadeu’s books. It reads; ‘The Apostle Jorge Tadeu is, no doubt, one of the most anointed church leaders of our time. He is also one of the most highly organised men in Christianity today. This man is a giant among Portuguese speaking people and the peoples of other nations throughout the world. His ministry is to establish churches by training and disciplining high quality church leadership. His agenda brings him regularly all over the world, helping every church that wishes to experience growth and worldwide evangelism.’

Igreja Maná’s external relationships for the most part are directed towards a confirmation of Tadeu’s powerful position. At the local level, however, this use of power seems to be of little support to those exposed to the realities of external power hierarchies.

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239 In Igreja Maná, only Tadeu uttered overtly negative comments about the surrounding world. During a baptism celebration in Amsterdam in October 2006, a broadcast ceremony, led by Tadeu in the mother church in Lisbon, at some point in his sermon he started to scold the governments of several countries, which he called thieves, robbers and witches.

240 Fieldwork notes of Convenção de Fé, August 2006, in Lisbon.
7.3 Calvary Christian Center’s Processes of authorisation

Any person who enters the Sunday service of Calvary Christian Center for the first time, at first sight encounters an egalitarian congregation, where anyone is allowed to speak up. The internet-site lists the bylaws in an open manner. Calvary Christian Center, like the Brazilian Assembléia de Deus church, formally has in place a democratic congregational structure. As pointed out in chapter two, its structure is based on a constitution that sets out the decision making authority of the annual assembly, and processes for the periodical election of leaders. However, according to my observations in Rotterdam, as well as Brazil, the church simultaneously has an atmosphere of hierarchical authority. Through implicit sensational forms and explicit organisational processes, the leaders’ spiritual authority is built and maintained. These processes appear to be stronger than the formal democratic structure itself, as we will see. They are only comparable in part with those of Igreja Maná, since Calvary Christian Center lacks a centralised training-system such as Igreja Maná’s. Nor has the church an overarching design of time as sensational form, or an ‘omnipresent’ one-man leadership at the top.

7.3.1 Spatial design

One appealing aspect of the production of spiritual authority through reading and performing practices in Calvary Christian Center, is the way ‘space’ is organised in the church. Calvary Christian Center’s church hall is made up of a space for the adherents and visitors, which is divided into several sections. The left rows located at the front are intended for the members of the female choir ‘Rosa de Sarão’ (Rose of Saron), and its director. During its musical performance, the choir is directed to face the stage, and not to the church crowd. Alongside the stage, on the right side, there are rows of chairs. These rows are for the youth choir and the youth leaders. During their performance, they are directed to face the stage as well. The church crowd sees this choir from the side. The stage itself is designed with a row of more luxurious chairs. The elder, assistant pastor and senior pastor, sit on these chairs, throughout the entire church service.
In general, this design corresponds with the Assembléia de Deus churches I visited during my stay in Brazil. All these Brazilian churches had large stages with luxurious chairs, compared with those of the ordinary members. Commonly one of these chairs was larger that the others, serving as the pastor’s chair. With their faces looking out into the crowd, sitting on a higher level, the board and the pastor could literally ‘oversee’ their followers. This is what happens too in Calvary Christian Center. However, unlike the churches in Brazil, the pastor’s chair is no larger than the other chairs on stage. For practical reasons, the female simultaneous Dutch interpreter permanently sits on one of these chairs too. Visitors from the sister church in Brussels, or from Assembléia Churches in Brazil, are invited to sit on stage with the pastors and elders, if their position allows for such an invitation to be made. Wives and other companions (assistants) are seated in the ordinary church rows, and are only invited to step on stage for a brief message or musical performance.

Hence, although slightly less articulated than in Brazil, in Calvary Christian Center the position of the leaders seems to be prestigious. This is reinforced by the stage-centred organisation of space, and the implicit authority that is yielded by the decision to allow fellow leaders to sit on stage, to allow others to step on stage for a certain moment, or to let others speak or pray at the floor level, in front of the stage. Although Calvary Christian Center breathes an atmosphere of spontaneity through the testimonies and performances of church adherents, this spontaneity is channelled through decision-making processes, which confirm the unequal level of spiritual authority between leaders and adherents. More than this, the variety of forms concerning the use of the stage mirrors a more nuanced ranking of spiritual authority into higher and lower positions.

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241 This prestige must be maintained carefully, as I witnessed during one of my visits to a local pastor in Brazil. He told me that ten years ago he had visited the Netherlands and afterwards had received a postcard from his Dutch hosts, written in English. He took the occasion of my visit to ask me to translate the message, the meaning of which he had not known for all those years, although a few members of his church speak English quite well. Apparently, the pastor did not want to rely on his adherent’s knowledge of English, which would reveal that his own education had been limited, which might diminish his authority.
### 7.3.2 Reading and speech

In Calvary Christian Center, as described in general terms in chapter two, the Sunday service includes Bible reading by many contributors. Nevertheless, there are differences in status. The leader of the service is the highest in rank on a Sunday. This might be the head pastor, the assistant pastor, or the elder. This leader mostly starts by reading a psalm. If it is a long psalm, he can decide to let the congregation read together, or command that particular verses are read by different people. Everyone who is fast and brave enough adds his or her voice to this reading. Then, one of the younger leaders, or a visiting lower ranked leader from Brazil, is asked to deliver a short ‘word of God,’ based on a Bible text. If it is a local leader, he or she has been asked to prepare this ‘word of God’ the week before. After that, the worship leader, throughout her worship performance on stage, interlaces the songs with short Bible texts and personal comments.

Those who give short ‘words’ or testimonies are not allowed to pray for the congregation or lay hands on them as an actualisation of the promises in the text they read. The spontaneous testimonies and the soloist who sings are enabled to perform by the leader. Everyone who desires to perform a testimony or a song has to ask for the leader’s permission before the beginning of the service. Sometimes the request is denied, for one of several possible reasons. The sermon is reserved for only a few leaders: the senior pastor, the assistant pastor or the elder, or high-ranking visitors from Brazil. Only they are permitted to put the sermon into a ministry practice with an altar call and laying of hands, in which the Holy Spirit is invoked and invited to heal, to empower, and to deliver those who are in need. This higher and lower authorisation is implicitly based on the assumption of privileged endowment by the Holy Spirit, related to position.

However, these reading and speech practices in Calvary Christian Center cannot be viewed without the sensorial performances, in which the Biblical text and the sermon are spoken aloud. Without exception, be it a female adherent giving her testimony, or the pastor delivering his sermon, these oral performances are full of pathos, are loud voiced, emotional, climactic, and enforced by bodily posture and gestures. Importantly, the congregation, participating in the sermon by shouting and clapping, sometimes standing up and raising their hands in which they hold their Bible, seem to mirror the
preacher’s flows. They mirror his outbursts and subsequent softening of voice, together with his bodily movements. In the words of Kirsch (2008: 150-153), the Bible verses are made true, made to happen and even fulfilled, in this process of adding spirituality to the written words. These words are freed from their materiality and imbued with spiritual power, while they are brought into action by the speaker’s sermon and prayers, whose performance is accompanied with loud voice, and energetic movements of the body. In spite of the construed immediacy of God’s presence and action, as typical within Pentecostalism, the textual element in this performance is indispensible. In order to understand the three-way relationship between text, Spirit and human, it is necessary to give attention to performativity and experiential dimensions of textual reception. Kirsch uses the concept of ‘aurality’\textsuperscript{242} to describe ‘the reading aloud of written literature to one or a group of listeners [...]’, as distinguished from ‘orality’ [...] by its dependence on a written text as the source of the public reading.’ To the idea that the physical presence of the book emphasises its authority, Kirsch adds his observation that ‘the performer confers authority on the text by transforming scriptural latency into relevance for the audience’ (ibid.: 146). Based on Kirsch’ analysis it might be argued that in Calvary Christian Center, this relationship between text, Spirit and human, has the effect of levelling out spiritual authority, since the audience’s affirmative reactions to the testimony of an ordinary adherent and to the pastor’s sermon are alike.

Yet, despite the three way dimension of authority, the overall picture is determined by the ranking processes, which determines who has higher spiritual endowment than others, and by the decision making processes, which divides the community into those who allow others to speak and those who are allowed to speak.

7.3.3 The relationship with Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte

The relationship between the local Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam and the Assembléia de Deus church in Belo Horizonte is defined by its status as a

\textsuperscript{242} The concept of ‘aurality’ was coined by Joyce Coleman (1996), quoted by Kirsch (2008: 145).
‘mission church,’ which gives the church in Rotterdam a great deal of independence.

As the director of the Mission Department (Departamento de Missões Desafio Pentecostal) in Belo Horizonte told me, mission churches have no financial obligations towards their headquarters.243 Some of them join an Assemblies of God church in the country of their mission, others decide to remain independent, besides their affiliation with the ‘sending’ church in Belo Horizonte. The relationship with the more than a hundred mission churches outside Brazil is of a facilitating nature. The mission department has a monthly budget of 66.000 Reais (about 28 000 Euros), financed by the Brazilian Assembléia de Deus churches, for financial support of missionary projects, insurance policies for missionaries, and a disaster fund, which makes it possible to evacuate or repatriate missionaries in the case of war, accidents or severe illness. In their turn, the missionaries return quarterly reports of their work. In the case of Europe, the mission department of Belo Horizonte ordained pastor Celso as a European overseer, who not only took over the local leadership of Calvary Christian Center in Rotterdam when the former pastor was expelled from the Netherlands (see chapter three), but also became the superior of the mission churches in Belgium (Brussels), Italy (Milan) and the mission project of fourteen churches in Ukraine. The Mission Department supports him financially only in relation to his missionary work in Italy. The rest of his income is the budgetary responsibility of Calvary Christian Center. As far as I can see from my own fieldwork observations, the ordination of an in-between layer in leadership has caused controversy and confusion within facilitating and hierarchical elements between Rotterdam and Belo Horizonte. This can be explained as follows.

In 2007, when pastor Celso entered Calvary Christian Center as European overseer, the church was in a leadership crisis due to the sudden departure of the former pastor. The assistant pastor, who is a son of the founder of the church, was accused of betraying the pastor for his own interests. He and his wife were the couple that left the church in the dramatic scene I described in

243 Interview with the director of the Mission Department, Belo Horizonte, 20 October, 2008.
chapter three, as I found out in my interview with him. In fact, there had been difficulties in the collaboration between the former pastor and the son of the founder. At the time the founder handed the church over to his successor, they had agreed to ordain the son, who was already an assistant pastor at that time, as an official pastor as soon as he had grown sufficiently in leadership. But according to the assistant pastor, the successor excluded him from important decisions, thereby damaging the latter’s reputation within the church.

Pastor Celso rekindled the relationship with the assistant pastor, who had been outside the church for about six months, and gave him the title of ‘evangelista.’ He told the members of the church that the accusations of betrayal had turned out to be false and that the church in Belo Horizonte wished to re-establish and recognise the leadership of the founder’s son. Hence, the former assistant pastor regained an authoritative position over the church, based on the authority of the mother church in Belo Horizonte, embodied in the person of pastor Celso, the European overseer. Over time, during the period of my fieldwork in Calvary Christian Center, the mission church in Milan ran into trouble, as a result of which pastor Celso needed to stay in Italy for several long periods. He handed the daily leadership over to the evangelist, making him ‘assistant pastor’ again, but without giving him the official position of pastor. Until the end of my fieldwork this process continued, leaving the assistant pastor in an ambivalent and vulnerable leadership position, loaded with responsibility, but without financial support or official authority. Since his relationship with Belo Horizonte is determined via the European overseer, the assistant pastor has no way out of this situation.

The historical development of leadership in Calvary Christian Center shows that despite the formal processes of the election of leaders, as defined in the constitution of the Assembléia de Deus, the community had little influence on the local process of succession of leadership. When things went wrong between the son of the founders and the Brazilian pastor, it was the Assembléia de Deus in Belo Horizonte, that sent another pastor to lead the community. Unlike the situation in Igreja Maná, where among higher levels of leadership, the pressure from above sometimes becomes unbearable, in the case of Calvary

244 Interview, 22 April, 2008.
Christian Center, the supra-local position of the European overseer is a quite powerful one, experiencing limited control from headquarters abroad.

Nevertheless, when a pastor from the church in Belo Horizonte visits Calvary Christian Center, pastor Celso steps aside and declares that he considers him his pastor, whom he will give the lead and the opportunity to deliver the sermon from that moment on. This phenomenon of higher authority taking over, common in Igreja Maná, seems to exist in Calvary Christian Center as well, but the difference lies in the initiative and the discourse involved in such moments. In the case of Calvary Christian Center, the shift in authority seems a matter of courtesy, more than a real takeover. Yet, as in the case of the authoritative ranking of speech on the local level, such gestures produce and become signs of an implicit assumption of privileged endowment by the Holy Spirit, related to the privileged position. This does not mean that the dynamic of presence and absence of higher leaders is nor felt within the local leadership of Calvary Christian Center. If in Rotterdam, during a Sunday service pastor Celso was present, he regularly was the one who delivered the sermon. And during the holiday period of the assistant pastor, the elder once gave his wife permission to lead the first part of the service, which had never occurred before.

7.3.4 Writing practices

As pointed to in chapter two, the Brazilian Assembléia de Deus works via a centralised publication and distribution system of Bible Study materials for the weekly 'Escola Dominical' (Sunday School). Calvary Christian Center does not. Calvary Christian Center has no bookshop, and it does not habitually sell or advertise Christian publications. In this sense, Calvary Christian Center seems to lack processes that would provide any Christian author or book with more authority than others. A few times I came across situations in which church adherents mutually exchanged or advertised Christian writings. For instance, during my second visit to Patricia, one of the Angolan church adherents, she

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245 Church Service, Calvary Christian Center, on the occasion of a solemn presentation of bible school diplomas, 29 September, 2007.

246 Church Service Calvary Christian Center, 17 August, 2008.

told me about the spiritual troubles of her relatives in Angola, and that a particular evil spirit, with the name ‘mamamoshima,’ was involved. Another Angolan church adherent had prepared photocopies for her from a prayer book, in which powerful prayers against all kinds of evil spirits were given. Patricia told me that with help from these copied prayers, which she showed to me, every night she prayed against the evil spirit that hurt her family. According to Patricia, this kind of trouble only existed in Angola, and that therefore only Angolan adherents recognised them and were able to help. For her it was of no use to consult the pastor in relation to this kind of problem. This incident makes it clear how particular (in this case culturally/ethnically informed) processes of spiritual authority apparently thwart formal hierarchical structures.

Nevertheless, the authority of the local pastor over the other leaders is unquestioned when decisions have to be made. In fact, when subordinate leaders have taken too much freedom, they are subsequently corrected by a procedure that reinforces the formal power of the pastor. This procedure is written in the records of the meeting of leaders, in which this topic is discussed. Thus, as in most (Pentecostal) churches, at Calvary Christian Center, writing practices, involved in processes of authorisation, are not absent, but are subject to contextual dynamics, as the following examples will show.

In his conversations with me, pastor Celso, who was in a process of writing the by-laws for Calvary Christian Center, explained how some resolutions about customs and behaviour, which he knew from the Assembléia de Deus in Brazil, in his view, were of no use in the Netherlands. He even would have preferred to give believers permission to share the Communion before they were baptised in water, but he had decided to copy the article from the Assembléia de Deus, because he was afraid that the other leaders and the core adherents would not accept this. Yet, this was undoubtedly his decision, which he had not brought into discussion with the congregation before. The writing of the by-laws was a typical top-down process, in which the church adherents only had the role of listeners. When the by-laws were finished and discussed afterwards with the leaders, the assistant pastor introduced them during a bible study meeting on Wednesday evening by saying:

‘As you all know, pastor Celso has been writing the by-laws for Calvary Christian Center. They are finished now. We will read them aloud in three parts, during
several bible study meetings, starting today. After that they will be placed on the internet site. In the by-laws you can hear and read what your duties and rights are.’

During the bible study evening in which the last part of the by-laws were read aloud, the assistant pastor said: ‘Members of this church do have the right to go to the pastor if they have questions, or if they do not agree with something they have heard. If your criticisms contribute to enhancing the by-laws, they might lead to change. But it is also possible that further explanation will suffice. And if you are not so interested in by-laws, then the only matter of importance for you to remember, is that you should serve the Lord.’

The vignette of this chapter, which provides some fragments of the meeting of leaders of 7 January, 2008, offers another example. Pastor Celso defends his indulgent approach towards unmarried couples living together, based on the argument that in the Netherlands these people would leave the church if he was less tolerant. The discussion during the leadership meeting reveals an awareness and sense of mutual dependence, not only between the different levels of leadership, but between leadership and ordinary and new adherents as well.

This particular process of decision making and writing is experienced as being in natural accord with Spirit filled authority and leadership. After all, although the choir leader must leave the final decision to the pastor, she is the one who must possess the spiritual gifts and wisdom to find new singers for the choir. At the moment the childcare leader makes an objection against pastor Celso’s remark about the children causing chaos during the church service, the pastor is not so much irritated about the objection itself, but about the underlying message of the subordinate leader being unable to take charge. In the next stage of the discussion, the subordinate leader makes a plea for parents to accept responsibility for the behaviour of their children, without which she cannot execute her authority as a leader. The pastor finally acknowledges this, but assumes personal responsibility to confront the parents about their own authority and responsibilities.

248 Wednesday evening Bible study, Calvary Christian Center, 2 April, 2008.
The process of (bureaucratic) writing in this church, except for the by-
laws, is ad hoc, undertaken ‘on the job,’ by trial and error, with discussion and
decision, in which all participants have their own role, although it is clear that
the pastor is in charge. As stated earlier, although it is obvious within Calvary
Christian Center, that obedience is viewed as a spiritual quality, a discourse on
submission and obedience, so central to Igreja Maná, is absent here. Ideas about
spiritual power and anointment are much more implicit and diffuse, although
related to levels in the social hierarchy.

7.3.5 The dispersal of spiritual gifts

In Calvary Christian Center, as in Igreja Maná, during the Sunday service the
practice of spiritual ministry happens on stage and is confined to the leaders.
Only they are entrusted to lay their hands on those who need to be touched by
the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, during women’s meetings, it was women who laid
their hands on their sisters in need, accompanied by the same vocal power and
bodily performance as the male leaders usually exhibit. Here, however, glimpses
of authority ranking were visible as well. The women who led the meeting were
those who practiced the ministry. Because I was known to be a female pastor, I
was once asked to minister the female adherents. The female leader of the
meeting followed up on all my prayers in order to achieve the right effect:
encouraging the trembling and shaking of the body that had been touched. Since
typically this gesture was not repeated, I suspect that I was not thought capable
of performing in the same way as they did. My voice was not very loud, my body
did not move emphatically, and the women on whom I laid my hands did not
begin to tremble. Afterwards, the female leader referred to what had happened
by telling me that the spiritual problems of Brazilian and African women are
different from those of Dutch women. The woman dealt with the idea that I
could not perform in the way that she had expected me to, by framing my style
of ministry in terms of cultural difference. Notably, at the end of every women’s
meeting, it was the pastor’s wife, and later on the assistant pastor’s wife, who
was asked to deliver the blessing formula. In other words, even within the
informal and low-key setting of the women’s meetings, authority ranking
processes are involved. Nevertheless, during my interviews with women in
Calvary Christian Center, I found that they sometimes attributed special gifts to a
particular woman, who had no leadership position at all: ‘Sister so and so has a special healing gift. She knows my problems, and she has prayed often for me. Since then I am much improved.’

During all church meetings, the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues was abundantly present among the whole community, in all kinds of individual responses to testimonies and sermons, and as contributions to prayers. Although not framed as a communal prayer ritual, the individual freedom of performing prayer in tongues was limited by correction by the leaders, if someone’s prayer was too loud and therefore judged to be out of place. This correction did not take place in public, but in a personal conversation afterwards. In the next chapter, I take up this matter in greater detail, from the perspective of an adherent, who is corrected in this way.

The spiritual gift of ‘receiving visions and prophecies’ came forward mainly in testimonies and in interviews, in which these visions played a role in the individual conversion process. The only occasion that pastor Celso testified about a vision he had received, it was of a personal kind, too. He had seen a vision in which the marital bed was split up and moved out of the house. Only the bed of their youngest son stayed in the house. Celso told the community that through this vision, God had warned him that the devil was planning to destroy his marriage. Therefore he asked the church to pray for him and his wife.

Visions and prophesies with a message for the whole community were not shared in the period of my fieldwork in Rotterdam. However, during my visit in Brazil, I came across a few moments in which women’s visions and prophecies might be viewed as a criticism and corrective force against male leaders, although these spiritual experiences were shared only with other women. While I was drinking coffee with female friends of the church I was visiting at the time,

249 Sunday Service, Calvary Christian Center, 16 November, 2008. Within Pentecostal circles, it is a common thought that ‘men of God’ always have to beware of the devil attacking their marriage. It is considered the Achilles heel of a servant of God, an idea enforced by many well-known cases of ‘fallen leaders,’ who commit sexual sins and are dismissed from their role in the church.
one woman described a vision she had had about the highest leader of the church:250

‘I saw our community celebrating the Holy Communion. But they wandered about like sheep without a shepherd. The pastor, was sitting in a chair with dark sunglasses, hiding his eyes. He did not pay attention to the flock at all. He was watching a large television screen.’

The woman had told her husband about this vision and he in his turn told her that another member of the church had had a vision, in which the highest leader of the church lay in a coffin. She told us:

‘My husband and I, we are convinced that God knows that the leadership of this church is not living according to its divine calling. We are placed in this church to do ‘greater things’ in God’s time. But meanwhile, ‘o nosso papel’ (our assignment) is to be silent and pray for God’s intervention.’

This fragment shows how despite all kinds of deliberate and more subtle processes, which produce a ranking in spiritual authority, an inherently acknowledged random dispersal of spiritual gifts (as is the case in Calvary Christian Center and the Assembléia de Deus in Brazil) forms a potential for processes of levelling out and putting spiritual authority into perspective.

### 7.3.6 Processes of authorisation and their vulnerabilities

As the previous discussion highlights, the position of local pastors is quite vulnerable, in spite of the hierarchical certainty surrounding their position. This is visible in the ease with which adherents of Calvary Christian Center utter overt criticism with regard to the local leadership, as the next chapter will reveal. These criticisms are prompted in part by the pain adherents still feel, due to the forced departure of the earlier Brazilian pastor and the schism this event caused in the church. In Calvary Christian Center, the pressure comes from below rather than from above, especially when official ordinance is lacking, as in the case of the assistant pastor. Leaders in this church dwell in the three-way relationship

250 Fieldwork notes, 22 October, 2008.
between spirit, text and human, while the processes of authorisation are too subtle and implicit for the production of stabile authoritative power.

7.3.7 Spiritual authority and external relationships

As discussed in the previous section, Calvary Christian Center had its own experience of exposure to the power of external authorities. The arrest and expulsion of the former Brazilian pastor caused the departure of many adherents, who lost their confidence in the church. The fact that a number of church adherents live without the security of permanent residency, also limits the leadership in planning spiritual initiatives. For example, one of the leaders asked me: ‘Regina, do you know the place to go to, for our youth department? We want to organise a spiritual weekend, but we must organise it somewhere in the Netherlands, because we have a lot of undocumented people.’

I will try now to answer the question of how the experience of ‘having to avoid or even hide from the Dutch authorities’ is implicated in the church leaders’ discourse about the world outside the church.

During Sunday services, the Calvary Christian Center leaders’ tell their follower that the Dutch government and the civil authorities are appointed by God and need to be respected and obeyed, as long as they do not demand behaviour that opposes the gospel. The pastor and other leaders regularly pray for the Dutch government, and several songs are dedicated to intercession for the national authorities. This good will towards the national authorities seems to be absent in church practices at Igreja Maná.

In addition, Calvary Christian Center leaders told me they wished to find ways to cooperate with other churches in Rotterdam. The main threshold for cooperation is the Portuguese language. The assistant-pastor however, who was raised in the Netherlands, expressed his desire to join the council of Pentecostal pastors, of which his father once was a member.

In several hymns of the Harpa e Corinhos, the Brazilian nation, the republic or authorities are mentioned. But in Calvary Christian Center, the church leaders have substituted these words with the Dutch equivalents. For instance hymn 636 Por nossa Pátria oramos, (for our nation we pray) the words are changed in por Holanda oramos (For the Netherlands we pray).

Interview with the assistant-pastor, 26 May, 2008.
7.4 A concluding analysis

Based on the preceding descriptions, it has become clear that both churches differ profoundly in the processes of authorisation at stake in their church practices. What stood out most is the one-man leadership in Igreja Maná, and the absence of it in Calvary Christian Center. The description of authoritative processes in Igreja Maná highlights the reality that everything happening in this church serves in the construction and maintenance of the ‘Jorge Tadeu personality’ which makes him almost unassailable as a ‘Man of God’ (cf. De Witte 2008: 189-194). I suggest that in Igreja Maná, through media technologies, as well as through the circulation of printed books and DVD’s, and through the time and space compression, which goes along with the organised synchronization and the homogeneous sound of all prescribed sermons and lessons, the presumed three-way relationship between Spirit, text and human (Kirsch 2008), is mediated and channelled through the sensorial presence of Jorge Tadeu.

All my interlocutors, even if they criticised local or higher ranked leaders, expressed an unbreakable loyalty to Tadeu, a real man of God. A Dutch couple, who had been hurt by him personally, refused to give an interview if it were to be used against him or the church. One of the female church attendants, who left the local church in Rotterdam after one year, disappointed because her autistic son had not been healed, continued to watch ManáSat and spoke only with respect for Tadeu.

Apart from the personage of Tadeu, in general, due to Tadeu’s strict doctrine of obedience, which evaluates murmuring and criticism as a sin towards the Holy Spirit, I rarely heard any spontaneous or public utterance of criticism regarding church leaders. And if criticisms were voiced, the speaker was stopped immediately by others. For instance during a family group meeting of 20 June, 2007, the leader uttered her frustration with the fact that the churches in the Netherlands requested special financial contributions from their adherents for a ticket for the European Bishop to visit the Igreja Maná football tournament in the Netherlands. ‘Why should we pay for his ticket! Doesn’t Lisbon have enough money to pay for it?’ But she was immediately corrected by others who told her that she should not speak like this, and that it was an issue of honor to welcome the European Bishop by paying for his ticket. Fieldwork notes 20 June, 2007.
local pastor, but with church members as well, I came across statements of feelings of being oppressed and comforted by the regime at the moment adherents applied to be ordained as deacons. I explore this in the next chapter.

In Calvary Christian Center, the authoritative processes appear to be much more diffused, because they are spread over a wide range of different leaders. Moreover, because the official church structure is congregational, church leaders have no formal hierarchical position, which demands more implicit processes of authorisation. This is most visible in the practices of reading and speech, in the dispersal of spiritual gifts, as well as the way space is designed and used during church services. All these sensational forms enable the participation of ordinary adherents as well as church leaders, but the differences are there, in terms of gradation. Nevertheless, despite its congregational structure, and behind its soft differentiation in spiritual authority, compared to Igreja Maná, Calvary Christian Center, and the Brazilian Assenbléia de Deus even more so, breathes a hierarchical atmosphere. In Calvary Christian Center this comes to the foreground in the described supra-local leadership issues. According to Roberto Damatta (1991), this mixture of informality and horizontality on the one hand, and formality and verticality on the other, is a typical feature of Brazilian social life. At first sight, daily societal life in Brazil is informal and equal, as I experienced while traveling through several states by public transport. Events like Carnival seem to enlarge this informal, equal and communal component of the Brazilian social order. In fact, however, the formal social structures and organisations in Brazil are bounded by strict hierarchical power and class based rules, which can only be broken by a clever use of the well understood Brazilian ‘Jeitinho,’ the social mechanisms that allow people to break the rules (Duarte 2006). This verticality of Brazilian society is represented in extreme form in highly formal military events like Independence Day (Damatta 1991: 26-60). In that sense, it might be argued that Calvary Christian Center offers a glimpse of this horizontal and vertical dimension of Brazilian culture.
Miracle Crusade in the Netherlands, Igreja Maná, April 2006
8 POWER AND PERSONHOOD: WILLFULNESS
VERSUS RECEP TIVITY

8.1 Introduction

Igreja Maná
Wednesday, 9 November 2006.
Luzia and I walk around the supermarket in Schiedam, where she buys her regular groceries. She puts some goods in her shopping basket and together we walk to the checkout. The saleswoman of the checkout charges Luzia two Euros and thirty-four cents.
Then, Luzia, who speaks Dutch poorly, protests. ‘No, it should be one Euro and eighty-five cents.’ The saleswoman looks at the goods and the prices she has rang up, and concludes that Luzia is right. She apologises and returns forty-nine cents.
When Luzia and I leave the supermarket, I say: ‘Good for you! How did you spot the saleswoman’s error so fast?’
Luzia answers: ‘Of course! When I do my groceries, I always tally the prices of my goods carefully, before I get to the checkout. If I don’t, I might pay too much. That is not right. I am a daughter of God! I should not pay too much for my groceries. It is my duty to be alert.’

Calvary Christian Center
During my interview with Lucas, he explains to me the reason why he left his non-Christian girlfriend, who is the mother of his son. The separation came about two weeks after the first time he attended Calvary Christian Center, about six months ago.
‘That night, I woke up and saw a light behind the door of my sleeping room. I walked to the door and opened it. In that tremendous light I saw Jesus. He said ‘come, come to me through the door.’ From that moment I knew that I had to change my life completely. The next day I told my girlfriend I had to leave. ‘I have to go,’ I told her, ‘because God has another plan for my life.’ Then I left.’
‘How did you know that God demanded you to leave your girlfriend? For how long had you lived together?’, I asked.
‘We had lived together for eight years, of which three years were spent in the Netherlands. I knew that I could not continue the life I had been living. My girlfriend does not believe in God. Moreover, we are not married, which is a sin. I told the pastor and he said: ‘there are two kinds of believers. Those who just become Christians and are saved, and those who receive a special calling for life. I am someone who has received a special calling,’ Lucas said.

‘Don’t you find it hard to live without her?,’ I asked.

‘Yes it is hard, because I still love her. But my family life is God’s business now. If He wants us to be together, He will give her the same calling. God takes care of the family I will have. It is his business now, not mine anymore.’

The previous chapter dealt with the question how, and to what extent the impact of church discourses are informed by the authoritative position of those who preach in them. This question was posed from the perspective of the church leaders. I departed from two presumptions, namely, that the legitimisation of power takes place in processes of authorisation in which sensational forms play an important role, and that in Pentecostal churches these processes take form in the three-way relationship between Spirit, text and human. Consequently, I showed which processes of authorisation take place in Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center and how fundamentally different they are, partly by virtue of cultural particularities.

This chapter deals with the questions raised in the previous chapter, but this time, I address them from the perspective of the adherents of both churches. Based on several interview fragments obtained in both churches, I will elaborate on the adherent’s perception of these processes of authorisation, and the associated practices that these adherents are subsequently subjected to. I investigate how, with regard to the contentions and frictions that these practices sometimes cause, these adherents view the leaders, the work of the Holy Spirit, and themselves as Spirit-filled believers, who participate in church relationships (internal dimension), and meanwhile live within the world (external dimension).

The vignettes included at the beginning of this chapter show diversity in relation to ‘life within the world.’ Luzia of Igreja Maná is fully aware of her position as a ‘daughter of God.’ In this position, she should not be a victim of ‘worldly damage.’ It is not simply that these forty-nine Euro cents certainly make
a difference in her life. During the time Luzia and I were together, she walked several times a day to the cash points in the city to check whether money had arrived, and it never did. For Luzia, living her life ‘as a daughter of God with a faith that conquers the world,’ is a very serious matter. What is more, she sees that adopting and maintaining this position is up to her and no one else.

This Igreja Maná outlook differs from the sense of personhood that emerges in Calvary Christian Center. In Calvary Christian Center, personal authority as a Christian believer is referred to as well, but in a softened way. Importantly, in Calvary Christian Center discourse, the agency of the Holy Spirit is given a more prominent role, more in line with a key concept in mainstream Pentecostal belief that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is something that overwhelms people, who do not know when it will happen to them (cf. Nathan and Wilson 1995: 15-34; Marshall 2009: 150-159). Lucas’s narrative is illustrative in this respect. According to his belief, he ‘is not in charge anymore.’ He interprets the vision that he had during that one night, as a request to surrender to Jesus and leave his normal life, as Jesus’ disciples did in the New Testament. This is not only a rational process, although it is surrounded with reasoning. Lucas received an awareness, which he could not ignore. It was too strong, as he told me. The reaction of the pastor is interesting as well. He recognises the extraordinary step Lucas has made, by stating that Lucas might have received a special calling. Such a dialogue between adherent and pastor requires a theoretical reflection on Pentecostal personhood, which emerges from the particular discourses and practices of which both churches are composed. Moreover, it also requires a reflection on what might be concluded to be eligible in these ‘ideal’ personhoods, due to which adherents maintain their involvement in the church, even when they feel contention and friction.

As Ruth Marshall (2009: 128-135) puts it, the individual believer is not only subjected to the doctrines and practices of Pentecostal churches, but is in the meantime the active subject, who, through these practices, as techniques in the process of ‘subjectivation’\textsuperscript{254}, gains a new perception of the self and the surrounding world. Marshall, whose study of the explosive rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria points to the socio-political implications of

\textsuperscript{254} Marshall refers to Foucault’s notion of subjectivation here.
Pentecostalism’s individualised spirituality, stresses that conversion in Pentecostalism does not entail submission towards institutions, nor partaking in communities, but rather seems to be mainly an individual process of self-government, in which submission to Pentecostal doctrines and techniques is involved, and which simultaneously is exposed to mystical or spiritual external forces (for the good or the bad) (ibid.: 134-141, 160-165).

‘Subjectivation implies that the individual is always worked upon by a historically specific series of relations of power and knowledge that determines the particular field of his or her actions, and the recognition of a certain truth about the self and about the world. At the same time, this process implies the active engagement of the subject, such that the subject recognises himself or herself as not only the agent, but also the moral subject of his or her action’ (ibid.: 131).

Marshall pays less attention to the institutional impact of Pentecostal churches than I do. In her view, Pentecostalism’s authoritative discourses are ‘mediatized’ (ibid.: 137) through delocalised forms, which go beyond the church as an institution. Johan Roeland (2009), who studied evangelical youth in the Netherlands comes to the same conclusion as Marshall, stating that their choice to submit to a moral life, nourished by charismatic leaders and charismatic practices that surpass the church institution, is shaped not only through a subjective experience of surrender to God, but also through a realm of ambiguous teachings, attitudes and lifestyles. In my approach, however, processes and techniques of subjectivation will be discussed as the flipside of processes of authorisation within both churches, although the adherents of these churches as well seem to dwell in a larger Pentecostal space than the local church.

I find Marshall’s emphasis on subjectivation, as ‘experiences of interiority and techniques of the self’ (2009: 142), fruitful as a means of analysing the dynamic between subjection and subjectivation within Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center, because it leads to the questions of if, how, and to what extent the processes of authorisation in the same time become techniques in the process of subjectivation. And as we will see, precisely at the moment where the authoritative discourses and practices of the church seem to conflict with adherents’ personal circumstances and desires, subjective internal dialogues.
appear to occur. Taking subjectivation as an analytical concept at the level of individual church adherents, I demonstrate that this general concept inhibits a great deal of differentiation, which has been under-examined so far in Marshall’s approach. This chapter thus addresses the question of where the spiritual power of the Pentecostal individual believer is located, given this dialectic relationship between processes of authorisation and the processes of subjectivation.

8.2 Igreja Maná: subjectivation through frictions caused by authoritative processes

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Igreja Maná’s processes of authorisation pivot around the personality of its apostle Jorge Tadeu. This results in a centralised system of practices, in which time is designed as a compelling sensorial form. In the narratives of adherents, the question is how the aspect of time is involved in the process of conversion and discipleship. Less discussed in the previous chapter, is the subject of money, which is implicated in the church practices of Igreja Maná, especially in the obligatory purchase of books and DVD’s etc, for those who take the step to become deacons and get involved in the centralised training system. In discussing the narratives of adherents, the question is what role money plays in their process of conversion and dedication to the church, in the light of their marginal position in Dutch society and difficult life circumstances. The practices of speech as processes of authorisation, as well as the authoritative processes in external relationships are subsequently elaborated as practices that, from the adherents’ perspective, seem to have become techniques in the process of subjectivation.

8.2.1 Time

The way Jorge Tadeu has built his church shows a strong similarity with the structures of companies. This makes his church similar to many Neo-Pentecostal mega-churches in organisation, such as for instance Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Freston 2001; Roca 2007). In his general teaching Tadeu includes typical business-like concepts, such as ‘time management.’ He uses a very popular model, which can be found in most time-management courses, which he applies
to an effective Christian life. In the book PDC (Daily Preparation as a Christian) we read:

‘Time is a commodity that all of us have at our disposal in the same quantities: twenty-four hours a day. If we are successful in using our time well, we will have greater success in our lives. In our lives we have to deal with a lot of issues. In order to use our time well, we will have to categorise the things we have to do in terms of priority. In general, all the things that need doing can be categorised into four quadrants:

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255 It might be said that Igreja Maná, like the Neo-Pentecostal churches previously mentioned, is active in encouraging their members to engage in the liberal market economy and to become successful. The church models successful behaviour by continuing to exist within a competitive economic environment by employing business-like time management and financial principles. Rijk van Dijk has coined the term ‘social catapulting’ to describe this process of building competitive personhood in the context of migrant positionality within a neo-liberal economy (Van Dijk 2009: 102). Besides the issues dealt with in this chapter, this phenomenon invokes larger themes concerning Weber’s Protestant ethics and capitalism (Weber 1958) in connection with particular and contextual features within the Pentecostal movement (see Meyer 1998a, 2006a, 2010b). In this respect, the migration context raises another significant issue, namely whether class differences in the country of origin are accentuated or blurred within the local migrant church. As argued in chapter three, based on Van Wijk’s study, I question the presumption that all Angolan refugees in the Netherlands are street children of the lower classes. The few respondents who mentioned their parents’ profession described jobs such as ‘journalist’ or ‘NGO chairman’. For many young Angolans, the migrant church (also) functions as a wedding market. In Igreja Maná in Rotterdam I observed young couples who had met in the church, who probably would not have been together in Angola due to geographical distance or class difference. In a church determined to silence the past, class differences might remain relatively obscured. It would be interesting to explore these processes more closely over the course of several years, in order to observe the existence or development of an elite in Igreja Maná, and how this elite might be connected to legacies of social stratification in Angola. In the aftermath of the civil war, Angola lacked a middle class. In the last few years, however, this is changing. It would therefore also be useful to consider the extent to which, compared with other African Pentecostal churches, Igreja Maná remains relevant to members of new, upwardly mobile, middle classes,
The ideal time-management strategy is to spend most of your time in quadrant two: important and not urgent. Therefore we will have to plan our lives and our time. In planning our lives, we will have to take into account our priorities and our goals’ (Tadeu n.d.g.: 81-83).

As a result of Igreja Maná’s design of time, discipleship and discipline is not only directed to an amount of time, but to the organisation of time as well. As we will see, spending enough time, but also being ‘on time’ are non-negotiable demands, which appear hard to fulfil, especially for female members who have to take care of a husband and children, besides going to school and work.

Here I have included a fragment of an interview with Isa, where she talks about being a deacon in Igreja Maná.

Isa: ‘The last months I have not served [in church] very often, because I usually arrive five minutes late due to the increased travel time since we moved to this flat, and therefore I am not allowed to serve.’

RS: ‘How is it that you are excluded from serving for being five minutes late?’

Isa: ‘Everyone in our church must arrive precisely on time, at nine-thirty a.m. If you are late, you are not allowed to serve, because you are not blessed. And they tell me, ‘you should get up earlier.’ But you know, Sunday is the only day of the week I can sleep in a bit. I still have to take the tram at eight-fifteen from here. Because I have to transfer at the Central Railway Station and then miss the connection, I arrive five minutes late. And then I am not allowed to serve.’

RS: ‘How do you feel about this?’

Isa: ‘In other churches they say: ‘You are blessed in the prayer of others.’ But in this church it is not so. To me it’s a pity, because I really want to serve the Lord and I cannot do so. My life is very busy already and at the end of the week I am often exhausted.’

Translated into English by author.
Although Isa was not allowed to serve on Sunday morning for being late, she never considered quitting being a deacon. Every Wednesday evening she prepared and led a Family Group meeting, although her daily schedule was very crammed. Isa had a residence permit and therefore went to school. She received a student allowance and social benefits. After school, she has a part-time cleaning job, in order to have some more money to spend on her family. Her husband to be, Antônio, is the son of Dita who, at the time of my interviews, was still waiting for an outcome of her and her children’s asylum procedure. Therefore, he did not work, nor study. Based on Igreja Maná doctrine, however, which coincides well with the typical relationship between Angolan couples, he is the leader of the household and must be served by his wife. According to Igreja Maná’s gender doctrine, it is a shame if a man does not work for his family, but this was an unavoidable reality in Antônio’s life. Still, Isa did the cooking, the cleaning and the childcare, in addition to all her other responsibilities, because that is the woman’s role. Hence, Igreja Maná’s doctrine on gender roles is in conflict with its synchronised time management recommendations for deacons and elders.

For another female respondent, Laila, the strict synchronization of time became a serious barrier to her taking the step to become a deacon.

Laila: ‘When I was baptised, I started with the courses in Igreja Maná and was to be an assistant. At the end of the course, when I was expected to show that I was ready and prepared to come to the church frequently, I did not go so often anymore and my bible reading diminished as well.’

RS: ‘Why was that?’

Laila: ‘I still believed in God, but had lost the deep love for Jesus that I had in the beginning. That’s why I decided that I would not become an assistant. I did not feel prepared to serve in the Church and this feeling persists even today. [...] This does not mean that I have lost my faith, but it has not such an important place anymore. My faith has become half-hearted.’

RS: ‘Can you tell me what made your faith seem half-hearted?’

Laila: ‘I don’t know precisely, but in those days deacons had to take on a lot of responsibility. They were obliged to do all the things the leaders told them to do.
They were forced to do things, although I saw that the deacons did not agree. But if you didn’t do it, you were disobedient. I felt that for some this was very heavy. [...] Then I thought: ‘I won’t do this, because if I cannot work for Jesus out of love and only do things because I am fearful of losing my task….. ’ [...] But all the time people came to tell me that I would manage, if I had enough love for Jesus. I was obliged to do so, because of my love for Jesus. And God would make things easier if I just did it. But I couldn’t see it. [...] I talked with my husband about it, and although he says that I have to decide for myself, he expects me to serve the Lord in church. Everyone expects this from me.’

RS: ‘Could you give me an example of things that deacons had to do, although they did not agree with doing them?’

Laila: ‘One of the sisters, a leader of a worship group, was to be married. [...] But, that day, the bishop had planned that the deacons of one department of the church had to listen to a DVD by Jorge Tadeu. [...] Several deacons asked whether they were allowed to listen to the DVD on the next day, in order to be able to attend the wedding. But the bishop refused and told everybody to come.257 Those who protested were accused of being disobedient. As a result, no one from that group attended the wedding service of this sister. [...] I guess, if one already is a deacon, one is used to it. They have grown spiritually and know that they have to be obedient. Maybe I haven’t grown that much yet, since I don’t want to be put in such a situation. My husband says: ‘You have to obey. Everything that has to do with God must be put in first place.’ He has grown spiritually, he understands these things.’

RS: ‘Has listening to a DVD anything to do with God?’

Laila: ‘Well, they think it has. Because this DVD is about the Word of God. And it is very important to learn more about the Word of God. But I don’t know if God agrees with the fact that his servants cannot attend a wedding of a friend and colleague deacon, because of a schedule for listening to a DVD.’

RS: ‘How do you feel about your diminished love for Jesus?’

257 Laila apparently did not know that the bishop had to follow the central schedule and perhaps would have been ‘disobedient’ himself, by giving in.
Laila: ‘I worry about that. I mean, I know what Jesus has done for me. I feel bad about it. I blame myself, because I know that if I wanted to, I could regain this deep love for Jesus. If I read the bible more, if I pray more, if I visit people who have this love as well. But I don’t do it. I’ll have to take that step in order to get closer to God.’

In her reflection on her inability to meet the conditions for serving in the church as a deacon, Laila in the end puts the blame on herself. It is she who should grow further spiritually. The others might have grown further than she has, she says. But she says that she does not take the steps necessary to make that growth possible. It struck me that in her story she had internalised the whole discourse of Igreja Maná, although she did not go with the flow (yet) and still resisted the social and spiritual pressure. Laila kept telling me that she does not put Jesus in first place. This is a commonly heard expression in Igreja Maná: ‘you must put Jesus in first place’ (*tens que pôr Jesus no primeiro lugar*). Isa is more distanced from the verbal ‘threats’ of her superiors, but in the meantime keeps feeling that it is necessary to stay a servant and pay the obligatory extra contribution.

In the case of both Isa and Laila, it becomes clear how submission and loyalty towards the church is part of an internal dynamic, in which not only resistance and doubts are involved, but a strong self-awareness of an individual who makes deliberate choices as well. Different from Ruth Marshall’s reference to ‘self-government and government of others’ (2009), as part and parcel of the Born-Again conversion process, in these individual accounts it becomes clear that this self-government generates various outcomes. Here, to follow, the account of Sandra, a Portuguese female former elder of the church in Rotterdam, whom I interviewed after she had left the church. She depicted the church as spiritually harmful, by stating that her youngest child ‘was frightened every time we went to the church. But since we left the church, she has calmed down.’ Sandra told me how spending time to serve the church had become more and more problematic for her.

S: ‘In June 2007, I was ordained as an elder by the national bishop, after he had transferred pastor João to Dordrecht. I did not want to become an elder, but I had to. The bishop requested that all financial matters would be my responsibility, not only from all the churches in the Netherlands, but also from
those in Germany and Belgium. [...] Hence, I was soon up to my ears in work. Now and then I worked until two or three in the morning at the bishop’s house. I hardly had time for my family.’

RS: ‘What made you leave the church?’

Sandra: ‘The bishop said that children have to take care of themselves, but that is not true! If God gives us children, he wants us to take care of them! [...] But the Bishop took more and more time from me, from all the work that had to be done. In January [2008, RS] I did not feel well. I started thinking about the role of the woman, how it should be like this. Isn’t it the woman’s role to stay at home and take care of the children and the husband? In our situation it was the other way around. I did nothing in the house and it looked filthy. The children looked shabby. My son was not doing well at school, but I hadn’t noticed. I was always working at the Bishop’s house. [...] In April [2008 RS] I told the bishop that I wanted to quit working for the church. He answered: ‘If you stop working for the church, you will go to hell.’ That day I left the church and never returned.’

RS: ‘What made you tell him that you wanted to quit your work for the church?’

Sandra: ‘I had met the pastor of Igreja Paz, who I knew from South Africa. I had been thinking about priorities. Shouldn’t it be right that God came first, then the husband, then the children, next the job and finally the church? I asked this pastor and he said exactly the same! Putting God in first place is not the same as putting the church in first place! That is why I told the Bishop that I wanted to quit.’

What is most interesting about Sandra’s story is that apparently she needed another church authority (the pastor of Igreja Paz) to sustain her doubts about Igreja Maná. On the other hand, her story also shows that even in a church where dedicated members are prepared to make great sacrifices for their faith, there is a limit to where a powerful leader can go in terms of applying sanction. Telling Sandra that she would go to hell, transgressed that limit for Sandra. That was the moment in which she suddenly ‘saw’ that the words of the national bishop did not contain divine truth, because they negated her self-perception of being a converted and Spirit-filled Christian.
Not only the demands of dedicating time, and being on time, cause tensions in the lives of Igreja Maná deacons and higher leaders. Their obligation not only to tithe, but give special offerings, pay extra contributions, and buy the printed and recorded materials Tadeu continually fills his churches with, conflicts with their daily budgets as well. As we saw in the previous chapter, running out of money gave a former regional bishop no other way than to quit his ministry, because the church would not support him financially. He decided to return to the position of 'brother,' because he did not want to leave the church, nor end up in a conflict with his superiors. Here, I have included another fragment from the interview with Isa.

RS: ‘As a deacon you have to pay ten Euros extra a month, isn’t that right’?

Isa: ‘Yes. I am in arrears now with this monthly payment. In January I paid, but since I stopped serving in the church in February, I forgot to pay, as I did in March too. I will have to catch up with that. But God knows that I am honest with this. I don’t keep anything from Him. I do what I am supposed to do every week: the First Sunday I give my tithes, the second I give the ten Euros, the third I give my special gift. This special gift is for our wedding in September, for which we will need a lot of money. I sow for that money every third Sunday. God knows. So if they threaten me because of my delay, I am sure that God understands the situation.’

Although she did not meet the standards of Igreja Maná with regard to the obligatory gifts, Isa is convinced of her own sincere intentions and attitude. In her self-consciousness she has fully internalised the idea that being a faithful Christian means tithing, paying and sowing in order to harvest. Even the comments or ‘threats’ by others in the church like Manuela, whose task as a deacon it is to keep a record of the extra monthly offerings made by all deacons, elders and pastor in Rotterdam, as well as which books and DVD’s they have

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258 With this expression Isa says that she expects the monthly offered money to multiply by thirty, sixty or one hundred percent, according to the prosperity gospel doctrine of ‘sow and harvest.’
bought,\textsuperscript{259} are put aside by Isa in terms of her private and intimate relationship with God.

Interestingly, in her role as a family group leader, Isa uttered personal experiences that on the one hand confirmed the Igreja Maná discourse about tithing, and on the other hand emphasised the ultimate value of personal communication with God through the Holy Spirit.

‘Do not forget to give your tithes to God as soon as you have your money! Do not start spending your money before doing so! Last month I had put my tithes aside from the salary I received, but I forgot to put the money into the basket of the church the following Sunday. Guess what happened! The day after, I locked myself out from my house! So I had to buy a new key. And the price of this key was exactly the amount of my tithe! I had opened the door to the devil, who took my money away immediately.’\textsuperscript{260}

At the same family group meeting, when we were working through a lesson about the parable of the talents, the question was asked regarding whether our talents were only to be exploited in the church.\textsuperscript{261} Then Isa told us: ‘We have to dedicate our talents to the church and to beware of spoiling our talents for the sake of the devil. But this does not mean that the pastor or bishop always can tell us what to do. A few months ago, the pastor told me to go to the church in Amsterdam. But in my heart, I did not feel any confirmation of this request. So I did not go. Guess what! Not only the pastor knows Jesus, I know Him too! The Holy Spirit is in my heart too! And if my heart does not convince me, I do go my own way.’

Both brief accounts reveal how Isa’s internalisation of Igreja Maná discourse not only reflects submission/resistance to the practices that formed her ideas of being converted as a disciple of Christ. It also reveals the existence of a wilful and active moral self, even in the experience of being robbed by the devil during a moment of inattention. In spite of her troubles living up to the rules, Isa did not show a sense of inability or loss.

\textsuperscript{259} Interviews with Manuela, 24 January and 28 February, 2007. Manuela told me how she enjoyed monitoring everybody’s financial obligations.

\textsuperscript{260} Family group meeting, 8 November, 2006.

\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.
Sandra, reflecting on her period in Igreja Maná, after she had left the church, told me during our interview, that at a certain point she and her husband could not pay their bills anymore and got into debt.

Sandra: ‘I had to buy all the books and DVD’s, in the end I had everything but money. My husband and I travelled almost every week to Igreja Maná in Amsterdam, in order to assist there. But the costs of the fuel started to overcome us. At some point debt collection agencies started to visit us, because we could not pay our bills.’

RS: ‘What did this mean to you and your family?’

Sandra: ‘It caused a crisis in our marriage. Fortunately, my husband has a good job in pipefitting. He works for a Dutch company. We are getting out of financial trouble now. Recently, we were even able to buy a car again.’

RS: ‘Did the church make any effort to make you return?’

Sandra: ‘My husband hesitated for a long time over leaving the church. When I had left the church, initially he continued to serve as a deacon. Once, one of the elders visited our home with the request that I come back. He said: ‘One does not attend the church for the people, you should come to the church for God.’ But I answered him: ‘But it is God who is absent in the church. Therefore, I want to search for a church where God is present.’ That was the last time I ever saw a person from Igreja Maná. Meanwhile we have started a family group of Igreja Paz in our house. We never stopped dedicating our lives, our time and our money to God.’

Even in the separation process between Sandra and Igreja Maná, it is evident that she has been influenced by its discourses and practice of offering time and money. These discourses and practices are still meaningful and powerful in her life. However, instead of changing her self-perception as a sincere and genuine Christian, she has changed her view on the church that she left. A church where God is absent is a church where the Holy Spirit cannot work. But in her perception, the Holy Spirit has directed Sandra and her husband to another church.

Laila never mentioned money during her reflections on why she decided not to be consecrated as a deacon. Probably as an ordinary ‘sister’ she
had not yet experienced the obligation to purchase church materials, or been required to pay extra financial contributions.

8.2.3 Speech

In the previous chapter I showed how all reading and speech in Igreja Maná is channelled through prescribed scripts. Notably, in the chapters five and six, speech also came to the fore as being problematic in Igreja Maná. In my view, in the background of all the salient Igreja Maná discourses, one red thread stands out: ‘mind your words.’

This instruction seems to be deeply rooted in the theological idea that ‘there is power in your words’ (há poder nas tuas palavras!). Neo-Pentecostal churches, such as Igreja Maná inherited this idea of the power of the word from the Word of Faith Movement (see chapter six for more details on these historical origins). This discourse emphasises that the believer has to grasp the laws of this kingdom with the power of her words, claiming the promises of the Kingdom into being. If the believer does not know how to do this, God can do nothing. Although the believer entered the kingdom of God via her sinner’s prayer, she might open the door to demons in her own and others’ life unknowingly, simply by the words she utters. She can withdraw herself from God’s protection without intending to do so. The only solution for this problem lies in her own hands: she has to confess her sins to God, break the power of the devil by speaking the right words to the demons and claim victory over her problems. When a human being speaks negatively about another person, about herself, about her job, her health etc., these spoken words are certainly going to become reality at some time, because the word is a seed in the spiritual world, that will grow to reality in the material world. Besides, it is suggested that the spoken negative word brings demons into motion and sends them towards the object of these words. In other words, when someone says that his boss may get cancer, he places a seed of cancer in the spiritual word, that will grow in the life of the boss, and he sends cancer-demons to him, with the power to harm him. But the same thing counts for the believers’ own situation. When the pastor, or the bishop, ministers the believer because of a disease, and later this believer says that he still feels ill, the seed of divine healing which was planted by the words of the minister will have been destroyed, because the believer invoked the seed of illness and disease-
demos into his body. The positive power of the word is described according to
the same logic. The positive confession of belief in good fortune, health and
happiness will bring these things into reality. Positive words are seeds as well,
and they send angels instead of demons.²⁶²

It goes without saying that such a discourse, which stresses the factual
efficacy of spoken words, for the leaders of the church, entails the need to
maintain full control over what is said. Nevertheless, I stress that the adherents I
met in family group meetings, or at their homes, declare that they experience
this spiritual efficacy of spoken words as a physical reality, every day. To them, it
is real in every single experience. During one of the family group meetings I
attended, I asked about this power of the word. The believers immediately
started to explain that since they had chosen to take God's side, the devil is
constantly after them. They claimed that the devil will not be satisfied until the
believer has stepped outside the church, away from God. They can feel the devil
and his demons and know that the devil always tries to give them bad thoughts,
inappropriate feelings, or makes them say bad things. These attacks are said to
focus on the weak aspects of the believers' lives. Because they as human beings
are highly permeable to these diabolical attacks through the senses and the
mind, they need constant protection from anointment in the Holy Spirit.

In my discussions and interviews with Igreja Maná believers, in their
urge to explain to me how the power of the word should be understood, some
of them spontaneously referred to Angola, where ‘people really believe that
words can be used to let something bad happen.’²⁶³ Guillermo told me that his

²⁶² In 2007, Jorge Tadeu delivered a series of five sermons about ‘ha poder nas tuas
palavras’ (there is power in your words). In these sermons he unfolded this power as:
‘planting a positive or negative seed in the spiritual world,’ as ‘bringing demons or angels
into action,’ thirdly as ‘destroying positive or negative seeds.’ I heard these sermons in
Rotterdam. A few months later, a DVD on the subject was purchased by Igreja Maná.
Critics of the word of faith doctrine, such as Dan McConnell (1988) point to its being
indebted to origins like Christian Science, New Thought and other so-called metaphysical
cults (Ibid.: 21-28). Unmistakably, there is a similarity between the word of faith way of
thinking and the ideas of other movements, like positive thinking in neuro-linguistic

²⁶³ Interview with Guillermo, 21 June, 2007.
grandmother recorded how in their neighbourhood somebody had been angry with someone else and had asked a witch (bruxo) to put a curse (praga) on that person. Something really happened to that person. He reassured me that sorcerers also use words to harm other people. ‘Only if you have Jesus, you are protected from these things,’ Guillermo told me. Bela told me that she suspected that her mother, who had suddenly disappeared when Bela was thirteen years old, had been bewitched.264

‘In Angola, these things happen, Regina, especially when you go to a diamond area.265 I think that she has become someone’s slave. My mother was a Christian and therefore she refused to protect herself from voodoo rituals, because it is only done with voodoo as well. [...] Only if you have really given your life to Jesus and know how to use His name and His power, you are protected as a Christian. But my mother did not know that. I only learned this in Igreja Maná.’ 266

I never came across Igreja Maná members who they themselves, or whose family had directly been involved with witches or sorcerers, but it became clear to me that they knew about it and easily made a connection with certain practices when we talked about ‘the power of the word.’ They also assured me that I could not understand these things, because I was Dutch.

On other occasions, I discovered that Igreja Maná adherents deliberately watched their words when I asked questions concerning the leadership of the church. For instance, when I asked Paula how she felt about

264 Interview with Bela, 13 February, 2008.

265 Cf. Michael Taussig’s (1980) argument that in societies, which incorporate capitalism, material wealth increasingly will be understood in terms of devilish interference. In his case study in Bolivia, a devilish feature became important during mine exploitation.

266 It is striking that Bela used the term ‘voodoo,’ which originated in West-Africa, and in not known in Angola. It might be the case that in her view, in the Netherlands, this term stands for what she wanted to explain to me, a person who, ‘being Dutch,’ could not understand these things. For the nature and origins of voodoo a body of literature is available. For recent publications, see for instance (Fandrich 2007; Vanhee 2002: 243-264). An even more interesting reflection of Bela’s use of this term would be that it has become the term for her to understand her experiences in the past, through which she is able to distance herself from it, comparable to Linda van de Kamp’s analysis of the use of the word ‘macumba’ among female Mozambican adherents of the Brazilian Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Maputo (2011: 93-100).
the national bishop having transferred pastor João to Dordrecht and personally taking over the leadership of the church in Rotterdam, she answered:

Paula: ‘As you know, Regina, if these things happen, we have to obey and accept this as God’s will. So, to me this is all right. We will be blessed if we go on serving in the church. Of course, we miss pastor João, but if he is ordained to serve in another place, then he and the church will be blessed there.’

RS: ‘But I as a Dutch outsider, feel embarrassed when I see a Portuguese white person standing on the stage, leading the black Angolan community. Don’t you feel anything about that?’

Paula: (after a short silence, turning her eyes down) ‘Yes, of course I have feelings about that. I sit there and think: “are you Portuguese planning to repeat history?” But the thing is that I do transcend this feeling. Whether I am in the church or here in my flat, I know that my dignity is based on my relationship with God. And as a daughter of God I don’t want to be seduced to speak disrespectfully about others. I want my words to spread positive things. That is how the Kingdom of God is. I am part of that Kingdom.’

In these personal accounts, it becomes clear that the authoritative processes in Igreja Maná that aim to control speech, simultaneously become part of the awareness of a self, which is capable of interior dialogue, self-mastery and spiritual ability, while in the meantime being permeable to external spiritual powers, for the good (the Holy Spirit) and for the bad (demons) (cf. De Witte 2008: 198-208). Having internalised the discourse of the power of the word, the experience of having the personal will to obey the laws of the Kingdom of God, gives the person a sense of dignity and independence, and the freedom to act in the mutual relationship with (higher ranked) leaders. In this act of obedience, the spiritual qualities, or authority of their leaders are not necessarily involved (cf. Kirsch 2008: 195-199).

8.2.4  External relationships

In the previous chapter, we have seen the flagrant contradiction between the anxiety and vulnerability felt by the former national bishop of Igreja Maná towards the Dutch Authorities, and the implied sense of power contained in Tadeu’s written document, directed to the Dutch authorities. Interestingly,
Tadeu threatens the Dutch authorities with his weapons of social power, his control of the media, in order to fight against them. Tadeu’s religiously informed self-consciousness (that he is a spiritual leader), and his religiously formulated arguments, should require him to act differently. Nevertheless, it has been made clear that in Igreja Maná, the depiction of the world outside, as a world under the power of Satan, inherently forms a driving force for the spiritual authority of Tadeu, his subordinate leaders, and his adherents in general.

It goes without saying that ordinary adherents, who live on the margins of Dutch society, have to engage in ‘worldly relationships’ without the protection of social power. If they get into trouble with their children’s school, see debt collectors approach their front door, or await the outcome of their asylum application, they are exposed to the social power of the ‘other.’ On the other hand, in our conversations, Igreja Maná adherents showed a more nuanced and positive attitude to their Dutch environment than church discourse would suggest. At this point, I return to Luzia’s behavior in the supermarket, as described at the beginning of this chapter. Her need to be attentive to the actions of the sales assistant at the checkout, shows that the surrounding world is not necessarily well-meaning. On another occasion, however, Luzia told me that she was very happy about the fact that her daughter was able to go to school at such a young age. ‘In Angola this would not have been possible,’ she said, ‘the Netherlands is good for children.’ She also told me how pleased she was because of the fact that six months earlier, the Rotterdam social housing association had allocated a flat to her and her partner Salomão. Like her reflection on the event in the supermarket, Luzia connected this positive outcome with her privileged position as a ‘daughter of God.’ In her view, from this position she was entitled to receive support from the local authorities. On yet another occasion, Luzia testified during a family group meeting:

‘Yesterday, Salomão and I opened an envelope and we saw a bill from my school. It was tremendously high! But we said to the devil: “this bill comes from you! It is not for us! We declare in the name of Jesus that you have no right to do this, it is written in the Word that in Jesus’ name you have no legal ground for taking us into captivity!” After we had beaten the devil, we threw the bill away.’

All these statements reveal how Luzia’s self-reflection and her reflection on her environment, is fused with a religious sense of certainty in an insecure
world, which sometimes is interpreted in social or material terms, and sometimes spiritually. To the church members, the discourses and practices that instigate and enforce Tadeu’s spiritual authority over the external world, become techniques of subjectivation, through which adherents like Luzia confront the obstacles and welcome the benefits of the surrounding world. But it is clear that her religious certainty is a deliberate act, which she needs to demonstrate through her vocabulary and behaviour (throwing a bill away), while the insecurity of the situation remains.

8.3 Calvary Christian Center: subjectivation through frictions caused by authoritative processes

As argued in chapter seven, the processes of authorisation within Calvary Christian Center are more implicit, and less clearly articulated in discourses about submission and obedience. This raises the question of what kind of processes and techniques of subjectivation are at stake among the adherents of this church. As we have seen in Igreja Maná, these techniques come forward where the processes of authorisation cause tensions and frictions from the side of adherents, who notwithstanding these tensions identify themselves as Spirit-filled Christians, and aim to position themselves in relation to the church. In this section, I focus on the design of space, reading and speech practices, writing practices, supra-local processes concerning leadership, and the external relationships in Calvary Christian Center, with the question of how they have been internalised in the processes and techniques of subjectivation.

8.3.1 Space

One would expect that the design of space is a non-discursive process of authorisation. Nevertheless, for adherents who, in this design of space, feel excluded from the dispersion of spiritual authority, for instance because they are not allowed to step on the stage, space itself becomes an element of friction. Surprisingly, these frictions were brought to the discursive level. The following interview fragments from my conversations with Eliezer, an adherent of Calvary Christian Center for many years, demonstrate his personal observations of the
current leadership’s use of space and his reflections on how he, as a born-again and Spirit-filled Christian, would approach space himself.\textsuperscript{267}

‘People talk about each other in this church. This is caused by the leaders. Have you seen how they step onto the stage? They just step onto it, indifferently, as if it is their domain. No, if I were to see myself stepping on the stage, I would bow my head and ask God to give me dignity and the capacity to stand there.’

‘They themselves have to step down from the stage, instead of exhorting the people in the church to make a phone call to those who were absent during the service. This is not the way to approach lost sheep! As a leader you must visit them, like Jesus did. You must go there and stand at their door, and ask: “I missed my sister today in the service. Is there anything I can do to help you to come next Sunday?” And then you will hear what is going on. Then you have won them for Jesus, because you treated them with respect and love, instead of letting others make a phone call to say “where were you?” That is what I would do!’

‘Have you seen how the choirs have to position themselves in relation to the stage? Why must we people see them from the back, when they are performing? I have tried to discuss this with the assistant-pastor, but to no avail.’

From these fragments it can be concluded that Eliezer’s observations point to a very sensorial experience of being ‘overpowered’ by the way leaders physically ‘take possession’ of space, by the way they step on stage, use their elevated position to delegate tasks, and by directing the singing choirs away from the people. In this personal reflection, however, Eliezer shows a self-perception of having the right insights and skills to act like an ideal leader. In his role as critic, he claims to have been put in this place by God, in order to improve the church. His techniques of subjectivation appear to give him the possibility of staying in the church as an adherent, while feeling neglected by the leaders.

\textsuperscript{267} Interview with Eliezer, 16 March, 2008.
8.3.2 Reading and speech

As shown in the previous chapter, Calvary Christian Center’s practices of reading and speech contain a finely nuanced ranking system, which benefits the spiritual authority of one preacher over others. Notwithstanding the ostensible arbitrariness with which the Holy Spirit seems to urge believers to read and speak, some leaders have the rank to enable them decide whether a request to read or speak will be authorised or not, while other believers are subjected to the decisions of others. Nevertheless, in Calvary Christian Center, it is stressed that every Christian believer should read the Bible and know it by heart.

‘Your knowledge must be yours! You cannot depend on what the pastor knows! If you don’t know the Bible, how can the Holy Spirit bring God’s word into your mind, when you are in a spiritual struggle? Don’t you know that God’s Word is the truth, and that only the truth makes you free? How can you stand up against the devil without it? The word of God is your sword and shield.’

In Calvary Christian Center, as in the Assembléia de Deus churches in Brazil that I visited, private Bible reading is a very significant practice. It is experienced as unquestionable that the Holy Spirit is the indispensible guide to understanding what is written, and what is more, in this church it is a common belief that the Holy Spirit guides the reading itself. This supposition gives Bible reading a very personal and even prophetic character. Adherents regularly witness that God has given them a specific bible text for that specific day or situation. It was not they themselves who decided to read this text, but their eye fell upon it, or the text reference came into their mind while praying, or the book fell open on that page. Bible reading often is preceded by the prayer: Lord, what do You want to tell me today? What do You have for me today? The text in this way becomes a gift, lifted from the whole test, experienced as an immediate reality, connected with a specific mostly difficult reality in personal life, such as a conflict with a relative, being hurt by others, or having lost a job. It is not only perceived as a direct gift from God, it is also felt to change the situation. The

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Biblical text is experienced to have efficacy. In reading, the text is *happening*, it gives the reader the assignment to call someone, or to go out and take action, or to wait and do nothing. In this private Bible reading practice, it is clear that the believer’s own interpretative authority over the privately read text is unquestioned. Even so, where adherents meet in a less formal setting than the Sunday service, it is common to ask someone: ‘Please, share with us a word of God, today.’ Apparently, a Spirit-filled adherent is presumed to have that spiritual quality.

As I found in several interviews, through this three-way relationship between Spirit, text and reader in the private sphere, a personal self-perception emerges, which in some instances conflicts with the experience to be disregarded or even silenced in the church.

Eliezer told me that he and his wife had been esteemed adherents in the church, until they had done ‘something wrong.’ After that, they had been excluded from public testimony and reading. According to my observations during the church services, however, Eliezer’s participation in the audience was always very loud and enthusiastic, with shouted halleluiahs and speaking in tongues. He said:

‘One Sunday I was asked into the pastor’s room for a conversation. The elder said, “brother, you know how we appreciate you and value you as a blessing for the church. But would you be so kind as to be a bit quieter during the service? Some people don’t understand and wonder if something is wrong.”’ I answered, “OK, brother, if you ask me to be more quiet, I will. But, brother, answer me this; Can a man control the work of the Holy Spirit? Isn’t it the Holy Spirit himself who gives people joy and delight? Shouldn’t the community be taught this, that the Holy Spirit must work in them?” One week later, the evangelist preached about exactly this subject. You see, Regina, the Lord blesses! He knows.’

This fragment shows how Eliezer had confronted the local elder with the authority of the Holy Spirit, thereby not only legitimising his behaviour during the Sunday service, but moreover questioning the leader’s endowment by the Holy Spirit as well. He interprets the leader’s affirmation of the

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269 Interview with Eliezer, 16 March, 2008.
inconvenience his behaviour evokes among the church adherents as a shortage of spiritual insight in the work of the Holy Spirit. Such outward dynamics between leaders and followers, instigated by the Pentecostal experience to be Spirit-filled, seem to be a result of, and simultaneously produce an inner dynamic of submission and subjectivation among church adherents. Eliezer promises to be quieter, meanwhile internally feeling affirmed of his spiritual qualities.

The next fragment shows how the awareness of a Spirit-filled self influences the adherent’s view of the sermon, transforming its collective feature, and with that, the authority of the preacher, into an individual and private working of the Holy Spirit.

Eliezer: ‘They always talk about the Bible as if they know everything, because they have studied. And at the end of the sermon they close the book and that’s that. But that’s not how it should be. A preacher should say: “this is what the Bible says, but let us pray together that God will effect these words in your hearts, because He alone knows what you need.” That’s what I would do.’

The last sentence is telling, exhibiting how an adherent imagines himself as a preacher, in his self-perception feeling the potential of being ordained by the Holy Spirit to take up that position. In other words, the presumption that the Holy Spirit has the potential to overwhelm the human person gives room to externalising personal desires to accepting the agency of the Holy Spirit. These interview fragments highlight how this presumed receptive aspect on the part of a believer to being filled with the Holy Spirit, puts the relationship between leaders and adherents under strain.

8.3.3 Changing leadership

Debora, aged eighteen years, is one of the second generation migrants in Calvary Christian Center, having a Brazilian mother and a Dutch father. She entered the church together with her mother at the time Bernard Berens still was the pastor. In that period, Debora did not like to go to church, because in her view, pastor Berens was very strict: ‘I was obliged to wear skirts in the church! And jewellery and make-up was not allowed!.’ At the time of Berens’ leadership, the restrictive rules for women, as at the Brazilian Assembléia de
Deus, appeared to have been an issue. Yet, according to Debora, the new pastor from Brazil was different. The years he ruled the church were the best in her life.

‘But then pastor […] came and he was so different. We loved him so much. Under his leadership, the church was one family. His daughter and I became close friends. During this period, God became most important to me. We had such a nice youth group. We did everything together. It is so good to have friends who think in the same way, whom you can talk with about God. I still have contact with pastor […]’s daughter. It is a shame that the youth group fell apart the moment pastor […] disappeared. I miss it so much. ‘

After the Brazilian pastor’s arrest, unlike many adherents, Debora stayed in the church together with her mother and sister. But she cannot help compare the new leaders with the pastor she loved so much. Her trust in their agenda and the motives governing their behaviour has disappeared. Moreover, Debora has her doubts about the assistant pastor, who at the time of our interview has the daily leadership.

‘Pastor Celso is all right as well. But I think that he has come to put [the assistant pastor RS] back in leadership. I think that he is absent so often at the moment, in order to put him back. I think his absence is a trick to put him back. But I don’t think that he has the gift of being a pastor.’

RS: ‘Why do you not think so?’

Debora: ‘I don’t know. It is just that he cannot give us the feeling that God is really present in the church. I know he is trying his very best. But it is so different from how pastor […] delivered his sermons and led the service. It is just for God, that I continue to go to the church, I know He wants me to go. My conversations with sister Benigna have helped me to understand this.’

Through her inner dialogue with the local leadership, in which feelings of being subjected to a process of conspiracy play a role (in my view informed by the anxious experience of being deprived of a beloved pastor), in Debora there

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270 See the vignette of chapter three.

271 Sister Benigna is a Brazilian female evangelist who lived in Debora’s house for almost a year at the time of the interview.
emerges a self-awareness that she is an adherent of Calvary Christian Center after all. In this case, it wasn’t the leaders, but a beloved sister who is involved in this process of subjectivation, via which Debora increasingly sees herself as an individual, to whom it matters that she is related to God in a personal way.

8.3.4 Writing practices

In the previous chapter, I showed how the (bureaucratic) writing practices in Calvary Christian Center were processes of authorisation, in which horizontality (a collective process of discussion and of trial and error), and verticality (the pastor claims decision making, the pastor writes the by-laws) are interspersed. The next interview fragment reveals how the experience of a clash with the vertical dimension in Calvary Christian Center produces specific techniques of subjectivation.

Rebeca is a long term Calvary Christian Center adherent as well. She was born in the Cape Verdean Islands. At most of the Sunday Services, she is the translator on the pulpit, a far from easy job, due to the enthusiasm of both speaker and audience. During our interview she told me that she had been the treasurer of Calvary Christian Center for several years, but recently had quit this task. When I asked her why she had decided to quit, Rebeca shook her shoulders, laughed out loud and answered:

Rebeca: ‘I don’t know. I think I have become too Dutch for this church.’

RS: ‘What do you mean by that?’

Rebeca: ‘I am used to do things via mutual communication. If I think I have found a better way to do my job, for me it is normal to discuss this, you know? Here in the Netherlands you are encouraged to do so. I am used to such an attitude at my place of work. But in the church, things are done the Brazilian way. If you are told to do it one way, that is the way it must be done. It is not appropriate to change it, or even to discuss it. Ah, I cannot cope with it! Therefore it is better to quit this task.’

Interview with Rebeca, 23 November, 2008.

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272 Interview with Rebeca, 23 November, 2008.
Interestingly, Rebeca relates her confrontation with the hierarchical characteristic of the church to her being ‘too Dutch,’ which means that she has become aware of the changes she has undergone while living in the Netherlands for a long time. Rebeca’s self-perception simultaneously depicts the church leaders’ behaviour as culturally inspired, rather than divinely authorised. As argued in the previous chapter, Rebeca’s observation is sustained by Da Matta’s study of the Brazilian paradoxical society, in which hierarchy and community go hand in hand. I suggest that this cultural interpretation indirectly questions the spiritual authoritative position of the leaders. And yet, Rebeca’s decision to quit a certain task within Calvary Christian Center does not keep her from remaining an adherent of the church. It seems that the pastor has respected her choice in this respect.

8.3.5 External relationships

The previous chapter discussed Calvary Christian Center’s sudden exposure to external social powers in the arrest of the Brazilian pastor, which harmed the community profoundly. Moreover, it complicated the leaders’ current authoritative position in the church. The church deals with the surrounding world through a mission discourse and practice, and the intercession prayers for the sake of the Dutch people outside, the Dutch government and civil authorities. These practices put the church and its adherents in a spiritually privileged position. They claim that the church stands between the almighty God and the surrounding lost world. At this point, the question remains as to what extent and how, from the perspective of the adherents, the personal frictions they experience in the church in connection with their own external relationships, bring about processes of subjectivation?

At another stage in the interview, Debora shared with me the tensions she had to deal with, while going to school, and attending a Pentecostal church. In her struggle, she was challenged to distance herself slightly from some of the worldviews of the Dutch Pentecostal church she had attended before coming to Calvary Christian Center.

Debora: ‘At school I was confronted with teachers who talk about the Bible with disdain. I had so many questions, about creation or evolution for instance. The pastors in the church back then [a Dutch Pentecostal church, RS] could not give
clear answers. But then, a teacher advised me to take the Bible texts not literally, but figuratively. For example: the disciples in the ship, and the storm came. That is your life, when you have problems.’

RS: ‘Do the preachers in Calvary Christian Center explain the Bible in a literal way as well?’

Debora: ‘Yes, most of the time they do. But then I think to myself, I don’t see it that way.’

Apparently, Debora feels that she has the space to have her own opinions about bible texts, although Calvary Christian Center with its doctrinal affirmation of the infallibility and divine authority of the Bible, would not approve of such interpretations. Debora does not refer to the Holy Spirit in order to legitimise her antithetical view, she simply accepts the alternative Bible approach offered to her by a teacher at school. But it might be the case that, since Calvary Christian Center (unlike Igreja Maná) lacks a literal discourse that would condemn disagreement with leaders’ opinions, a space is opened in which Debora can have an internal dialogue between her Dutch school environment and the church environment with its doctrines, thus putting the authority of the latter into perspective.

Eliezer, son of an Angolan business family, who has a lot of worldly connections, has his own view on the world outside the church, and the definition regarding who is allowed to come in, or has to stay out. He is used to a higher standard of living than most Calvary Christian Center adherents. At some point in our interview he expresses his dissatisfaction with the music in Calvary Christian Center.

‘The church has musical instruments, which just sit there, useless. But in the church we have to honour our God with music, don’t we? Shouldn’t we play the violin, the trumpet and all the instruments? Oh, I have so many contacts with musicians outside the church. They would make a wonderful orchestra! But they [the leaders, RS] will not allow it, because these people do not belong to the church. But in my view, God wants the church to open the door to people from

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273 Interview with Debora, 9 May, 2008.
outside, and give them room to explore their talents, in order to bring them to
the feet of Jesus.’

His dissatisfaction, and the experience of being powerless in this
respect urges Eliezer to develop a personal view on how the church should
approach the outside world, through which he is able to reconcile seeing himself
as a reborn Christian, to whom God speaks in a personal way, and at the same
time to keep in contact with his friends outside church. His inner sense of
independence gives him the scope to remain an adherent of the church, the very
church that he believes shows disregard for he and his wife. Interestingly, a few
weeks after the interview with Eliezer, the church celebrated Holy Supper. In
order to prepare the community spiritually for taking part in the celebration, the
assistant pastor urged everyone to be at peace with every brother and sister in
the church. To set an example, he stepped from the pulpit, walked towards
Eliezer and shook his hand, after which they embraced each other. 274

On other occasions, however, adherents seem to seek the authoritative
affirmation of the pastor in order to interpret and make sense out of the
frictions they experience in their external relationships. At this point I take up
the vignette of this chapter, in which Lucas told me that he had decided to end
his relationship with his non-Christian girlfriend. From his point of view, this
relationship has become an external relationship, since his former girlfriend was
someone outside the church. Contrary to Eliezer, Lucas draws the line of
demarcation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside,’ even more firmly than the leaders
of Calvary Christian Center would. If Lucas had continued his relationship with
his girlfriend, for instance by virtue of their shared parenthood, the pastor would
have accepted this, as the pastor’s discussion with the leaders in chapter seven
shows. Strikingly, according to Lucas’ account, the pastor seems to approve
Lucas’s decision, without pointing to the latter’s responsibility within a long term
relationship and to his child.

I suggest that this incident, once more, refers to how Calvary Christian
Center’s theology of the Holy Spirit, emphasising the latter’s potential to
overwhelm human individuals, influences the interaction between leaders and
adherents. Apparently, the vision Lucas shared with the pastor, contributed to

274 Sunday Service, Calvary Christian Center, 6 April, 2008.
the pastor’s reaction. Yet, since there seems to be a gap between the vision itself and the personal conclusions Lucas attached to it, the pastor could have asked questions in that direction.

8.4 A comparative analysis

The narratives of the Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center adherents demonstrate that in both churches several processes of authorisation are visibly reflected in the processes of subjectivation, through which church adherents develop a Pentecostal self-awareness. My different approach to the processes of subjectivation, i.e. analysed at the level of individual believers and taking into account the interaction between leaders and adherents, shaped through processes of authorisation, reveals a more dialectic character, compared with what Marshall (2009) and Roeland (2009) have shown. The processes of subjectivation discussed in this chapter appear to be deliberate inner dialogues, instigated by the moments in which authoritative processes of the church come into conflict with adherents’ personal interests and views. After all, precisely during a moment of friction, a person is forced to distance herself from authoritative discourse to the extent that she is able to take a position, whatever that position may be. What is more, in this chapter I have demonstrated that an individual approach to processes of subjectivation does more justice to ‘agency’ than Foucault’s general concept of ‘subjectivation’ does, because it illuminates individual differences and therefore the complexity of the dynamic between the poles of the three-way relationship between human, Spirit and Letter.

A comparison between the churches reveals that different processes of authorisation, which seem to cause their adherents’ frictions, generate different processes of subjectivation. In Igreja Maná, frictions commonly emerge where adherents experience difficulties in their aim to meet the sacrifices that the church demands. In Calvary Christian Center, to the contrary, frictions primarily come into sight where adherents feel obstructed in their aims to share their own ideas, or feel excluded from spiritual authority. In addition, the adherents of Calvary Christian Center show a larger range of views in their reflections on the leadership of the church, while the utterances of Igreja Maná members are mainly focused on a few salient processes. What all personal accounts about
Calvary Christian Center have in common is the ease and directness with which criticisms towards the church and its leadership are uttered. This differs hugely from how adherents of Igreja Maná formulate their words, when referring to their problems with the leadership of the church. This shows how meaningful the Igreja Maná discourse of ‘the power of the word’ seems to be for its adherents and how powerfully they have internalised it in their own speech.

In their authoritative discourses, both Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center depict an individualistic ‘ideal’ Personhood, which is common across the Pentecostal (and wider Evangelical) movement. Both churches stress individual conversion, individual Spirit Baptism and an individual path to sanctification and victory, for which personal spiritual authority is indispensible. This does not mean, however, that their ‘ideal’ Personhood looks exactly the same.

The ‘ideal’ Igreja Maná Personhood contains many of the traits of what James Bielo, characterising the American Prosperity Believer, calls a Born-again Personhood, with a New Mind, the Mind of Christ (2007: 315). This personhood understands itself as living a winning life, organising an economic logic (time, money and success) around a logic of Self (being God-like), the latter being indispensible to the first. Bielo argues that this contemporary personhood is not new to the extent that it is grounded in earlier Protestantisms, which have produced ‘a lengthy cultural model that anchors success in personhood’ (ibid.: 334). In other words: the Born-again Self is in charge of her own life.

Ruth Marshall, however, points to the overall Pentecostal doctrine and experience of being submitted to the external power of God and the Holy Spirit, and the convert’s ongoing vulnerability towards the influence of evil spiritual powers, which inherently makes problematic the Pentecostal’s ability for self-government. Although Igreja Maná discourse acknowledges this vulnerability of the Pentecostal person, the Born-Again personal ability to choose her thoughts, words and deeds in order to maintain her spiritual authority over spiritual (evil) forces, however, prevails. Tadeu constantly emphasises that his disciples should master their thoughts and their words, thus becoming Selves who rule the universe and even the divine laws, who are never overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit, but possess it. And yet, this New Mind personhood simultaneously needs to act to protect her porous state with regard with evil spiritual forces. Strikingly, in the Netherlands, the Igreja Maná church practice and discourse rarely connect
these evil forces to particular Angolan names or features, while in Luanda a more concrete reference was made to the work of *feiticeiros* (sorcerers) and *kimbandas*, or *curandeiros* (traditional healers). In Rotterdam, it was adherents who now and then referred to these features, but as ‘typically Angolan.’ In the Netherlands, evil spirits are represented by bills and the loss of money. In sum: ‘Ideal’ Personhood as understood within Igreja Maná’s sense of personal responsibility, appears to be extreme.

Calvary Christian Center’s ‘ideal’ Personhood resembles Clara Mafra’s (2011) Brazilian Pentecostal personhood of ‘saintliness,’ which is more open to spiritual external agency. This openness concerns the Holy Spirit, but also the evil spirits involved in Afro-Brazilian traditions like Candomblé and Umbanda, which are said to be fiercely rejected within many Brazilian Pentecostal churches (cf. Freston 1999; Burdick 1999; Birman and Lehmann 1999). Mafra wonders whether this ‘saintliness’ could be explained in terms of Roman Catholic spirituality, which has profoundly influenced Brazilian cultural life, and therefore Brazilian Pentecostalism as well. In Brazilian Roman Catholic spirituality, saints are considered to have agency over what happens in human life. Brazilian Pentecostals, according to Mafra, show the same receptivity towards the agency of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Calvary Christian Center’s ‘ideal’ personhood is a more receptive personhood, whose agency every now and then is overruled by the Holy Spirit as a divine agent. Mafra’s personhood of saintliness is quite appropriate in this respect, although again, in Calvary Christian Center in the Netherlands the fear for contamination by evil spirits of Candomblé or Umbanda is hardly mentioned, compared with the churches in Brazil that I visited, where this was the talk of the day.

As we have seen, difference in their processes of authorisation have generated different processes of subjectivation in each church. In both churches, these processes of subjectivation reveal individual difference. Still, it might be concluded that despite these differences, the individual narratives more or less reflected the churches’ ideal Personhood.

In chapter one, three and four, I discussed what it means for migrant churches to exist in a transnational space, constituted by conflicting powers, discourses and rules. One aspect of transnationalism, as convincingly depicted in Linda van de Kamp’s study of Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique, is the
creation of a transnational space in which individuals become aware of the contingency of their traditional and cultural past. In chapter three, I argued that migrant churches do not in the least succeed in shaping such a transnational space for the Dutch in the Netherlands, as the Brazilians do in Mozambique. However, during my interview with Rebeca, a Cape-Verdean adherent of Calvary Christian Center, a few moments of this signification of transnationalism came forward. Rebeca showed an awareness of standing across different national and cultural contexts, which provided her with a space for criticism and reflection concerning the church leaders. On another occasion, the statement made by an Igreja Maná adherent that ‘You as a Dutch person cannot understand these things,’ explains why ‘words do have real power,’ in relation to a certain understanding of contingency and contextuality of their own experiences. Moreover, in their answers, the adherents of both churches talked in a positive way about my ‘ignorance’ as a Dutch person. In their view, I was blessed to have been born in the Netherlands, where such spiritual problems seem to be absent. Hence, although put in a different way than I discussed it in chapter three, it might be said that both churches are in a process of providing space for the development of transnational personhood. It is not the Dutch, who, attracted by the ideas and ways of living of the foreign church adherents, enter a transnational space in which they become aware of the contingency of their own Dutch background. It is the migrants themselves, who, becoming adherents of these churches, enter a transnational space in which a complex mix of cross-cultural encounters takes place, which makes them aware of the contingency of their background. And perhaps, my temporary presence in these churches has been part and parcel of this transnational space.

8.5 Concluding remarks

In this and the previous chapter, I aimed to answer the question of whether, next to the complex set of factors already described in the previous chapters, the powerful impact of the salient discourses in Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center could be explained by the spiritual authority of those who preach them. Based on the data I collected in both churches, I argue that the explicit and more implicit processes of authorisation in both churches enforce
the power of leaders’ messages, which indeed is reflected in the utterances of their adherents. Even in the dialectic interactions between leaders and adherents, and the internal dialogues that are at stake in the tensions adherents experience while trying to live up the norms and values of the churches, these discourses seem to be strongly internalised. Nevertheless, in their individual processes of subjectivation, adherents make deliberate choices, thus creating space for doubt, resistance and even distance. In these interior struggles between what church regimes prescribe, and their own aspirations or life circumstances, adherents show that they have at their disposal more ideas and inputs than just those of the church they adhere to, interspersing them in a creative way.

Finally, as stated, the ‘ideals’ of Personhood that emerge in Igreja Maná and in Calvary Christian Center, are both saturated with individualism. According to Charles Taylor (1989: 251-289), the historical roots of individualism as a shared understanding of a separate ‘self’ or ‘subject,’ are to be found in ancient Greece. Its historical development is considered predominantly Western, via Enlightenment thinking and Romanticism in Europe and North America. Unmistakably, Pentecostalism’s individualist traits predominantly stem from Protestant predecessors, as Bielo stated. Strikingly, in non-western local contexts, Pentecostal movements and churches seem to succeed in implanting their individualist spirituality among their adherents, although not without creating major conflicts with the local environment as Van de Kamp argues in her work on Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique (Van de Kamp 2011). The two migrant Pentecostal churches of my study, as exponents of non-western brands of Pentecostalism, seem to fit quite easily into neo-liberalist Dutch

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275 Neo-liberalism is a market-driven approach to economic and social policy, based on neoclassical theories of economics that stresses the efficiency of private enterprise, liberalised trade and relatively open markets, and therefore seeks to maximise the role of the private sector in determining the political and economic priorities of the country. www.wikepedia.org. From individuals, Neo-liberalism ‘demands the constant production of evidence that one is in fact ‘making an enterprise of oneself’‘(Apple 2004) citing (Olssen 1996:340).
society, in which citizens are supposed to build their own life and strive towards their own ends, preferably without burdening the community, and while remaining responsible for others (cf. Becker 1996; Van Biemen 1996). Calvary Christian Center’s pastor’s affirmation of Lucas’ decision to leave his girlfriend in order to follow a divine calling reflects just such an individual understanding of Christian life, as does the Igreja Maná doctrine of dedication to discipleship, even if this dedication comes at the expense of children and household.
Baptism Service Igreja Maná, October 2006, Amsterdam
9 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have explored the complex transnational nature of the Pentecostal movement, focusing on migrant Pentecostal churches in the Netherlands. In my comparison of two Pentecostal migrant churches in Rotterdam, I detected and analysed three significant discourses and associated practices, which emanate from and give meaning to the complicated life experiences of transnational migrants from Angola and Brazil. The primary concern of this thesis, as explained in the introduction, centres on how these discourses and practices with regard to space, time and power, reflect the processes of negotiation that these churches and their adherents are engaged in within Dutch society. Second, this comparison of two churches, each of which attract believers of different backgrounds, demonstrates how deep-seated the heterogeneous character of the Pentecostal movement actually is.

Of course recently, the Pentecostal movement has increasingly been recognised as being historically, culturally and theologically diverse and changeable. And yet, some aspects of the Pentecostal movement are still regarded as being quite homogenous. I point here to the particular Pentecostal notion of time, related to personal conversion, regularly depicted and analysed in terms of ‘a break with the past.’ Although research on Pentecostal church practices and the narratives of converts shows a dialectical process in which ambiguity and ambivalence towards the past prevail (Klaver 2011; cf. Meyer 1998b; Engelke 2004), the Pentecostal authoritative discourse on conversion as ‘a break with the past,’ has remained underexplored. What is more, the common explanation of Pentecostalism’s success as a movement of ‘empowerment’ is limited by a one-dimensional view of leadership, authority and followers.

My comparative examination of these particular discourses and practices has strengthened my perception, expressed at the beginning of this thesis, that attempts to understand the Pentecostal movement, by framing its churches in terms of categories and typologies, are highly problematic.
9.1 Space

In chapters three and four, I argued that viewing the Netherlands as a nation-state misrecognises its transnational character. After all, lively Dutch immigration and religion debates continue, shaped by a complex of processes that transcend the borders of the nation-state. These debates produce dominant discourses to which both churches and their adherents are subjected, and which penetrate the consciousness and self-understanding of migrants and the religious groups that they belong to. On a city scale, in Rotterdam, the social ties, economic opportunities and the mechanisms of political power do become very real in the lives of non-western migrants who aim to make a living. Throughout the thesis we have met several interlocutors who lived each day with the risk of being arrested and deported, and who had to compete with others in the informal housing and labor markets in order to survive. Calvary Christian Center could not prevent the Dutch authorities from arresting and expelling its Brazilian pastor. Igreja Maná, in the role of tenant, could not enforce an extension of its rental contract with the Holy Chapel. Both incidents clearly reveal the vulnerability of both churches to more powerful parties.

Moreover, the transnationality of space came to the foreground in its most explicit form at the local level, in a church building in Rotterdam, which revealed the complexity of a tangible cross-cultural encounter between Igreja Maná and the Holy Chapel. This encounter resulted in conflict and finally in a break between the two. From both sides, historical, political, social-cultural and theological processes informed this conflict, surpassing national boundaries. Theological, emotional and perceptual/hygiene differences in ways of seeing the church building are the result of different traditional roots that go back to a history of the European and North American Reformed tradition in one church, and to a mixture of Pentecostal and Angolan traditional world views in the other. The mutual failure to recognise the ‘other’ as equal sister churches with their own ‘right to give,’ appeared to be shaped by deep differences in self-understanding and related feelings of prejudice.

At the same time, however, it has become clear that both churches, each in their own way, managed to find ways to move forward, although they experienced difficulty regaining or maintaining adherents after the incident. At
Calvary Christian Centre, we have seen how deeply implicated adherents became in what had happened. Some adherents had turned the pastor in to the immigration authorities because they disagreed with his disregard for Dutch rules. Others turned their back on the church because they had lost their trust and had become frightened, while others still stayed in the church and mourned. In Igreja Maná, most adherents were not informed about the basis of the conflict with the Holy Chapel, but regretted their forced exclusion from this church, because it had been better located than the new church building.

Both chapters expose how ‘sameness’ and ‘otherness’ were involved in the way both churches took positions in the transnational space of the Netherlands. The leaders and members of churches aim to be part of Dutch society, ‘as we live here, now.’ At the same time, they experience being seen as ‘migrant’ or ‘Other,’ while they wish to be accepted as ‘we are all the same.’ On the other hand, church leaders emphasise that their church is theologically ‘different’ because of the directive they claim to follow in the Netherlands: ‘go to the ends of the world and make all people my disciples.’ In this endeavor they depict Dutch society and Dutch people as stereotyped caricatures, as ‘Others.’ Meanwhile, their adherents, despite their own self-perception as missionaries, and while also experiencing hardships in making a life in Rotterdam, express a more nuanced view of their Dutch environment.

In light of this, I argue that the enthusiastic scholarly depiction of the emergence of non-western migrant (many of them being Pentecostal) churches in the Netherlands or Western Europe as a ‘reversed mission’ movement, is too simplistic and one-dimensional. In spite of convincing arguments against the secularisation thesis, which point to the emergence of a large variety of religiosities among Western Europeans, the Netherlands hardly offers migrant Pentecostalism the opportunity to open up a transnational space in which the Dutch can reflect critically on their own religious and cultural traditions and customs. Notwithstanding their efforts to evangelise and attract Dutch converts, both churches encounter great difficulties in what they experience as their great mission. Meanwhile it must be said that the churches and their adherents derive much strength from their self-awareness as missionaries, which makes their struggles and vulnerabilities theologically meaningful.
By describing the way these two Pentecostal migrant churches are part of the transnational space in the Netherlands, I have shown how this space shapes the possibilities and constraints for the survival of non-western migrant churches. Moreover, I have shown that the church building itself, as a locus for the cross-cultural encounter between churches of different denominational, historical and (trans)national backgrounds, is the space in which the tensions of such a transnational encounter are materialised and experienced through deeply conflicting emotions.

9.2 Time

Chapters five and six reveal how deeply the two Pentecostal migrant churches in Rotterdam differ in their discourses and practices, despite the shared need to ‘break with the past,’ and to ‘obtain future victory through spiritual struggle.’ Furthermore, the analysis and comparison of the conversion narratives of the adherents shows that the discourses and practices in both churches have been strongly internalised.

Igreja Maná’s motto ‘don’t look back,’ as I have argued, is related to collective elements of a shared past, namely a longlasting and violent civil war in Angola and difficult asylum experiences in the Netherlands. Igreja Maná members share an unwillingness to speak of difficult pasts, either because to do so would re-awaken painful memories, or because they fear the immigration authorities. We have seen that instead of talking about the past, the almost daily rituals of telling each other to ‘forget the past’ and to ‘walk in love,’ bring the past into the present and convey an implicit social acknowledgement of what is collectively not talked about. Conversely, in the case of Calvary Christian Center, migration was construed as part of the path to initial or ongoing conversion, and the conversion story was built as a confession plot: as part of Gods plan. This re-employment of their personal past in the narratives of Calvary Christian Centre adherents made migration to the Netherlands intensely meaningful. Notions specifically silenced in Igreja Maná’s conversion narratives, form the most significant element of Calvary Christian Center’s conversion narratives.

With reference to differences in the discourses and practices of each church in relation to present life difficulties, it has become clear that the
historical roots of Calvary Christian Center’s discourse are highly socially and culturally inscribed, carrying the inheritance of Brazilian folk Catholic suffering spirituality, probably as a result of the (historical and spiritual) relationship between Roman Catholicism and Pentecostalism. Conversely, Igreja Maná’s discourse on suffering and military prayer practice appeared to have a more direct connection with earlier ‘Word of Faith’ discourses and ‘spiritual warfare’ movements which originated in the U.S., than with particular African or Angolan notions of suffering. Even more surprisingly, this war discourse was never connected with Angola’s civil war history. In addition, in the content of their discourses, both churches differ in their theological appraisal of experiences of difficulty. In Calvary Christian Center, suffering has a positive connotation in the context of a discourse of the ‘desert,’ which nevertheless has a stronger future victory orientation than the original Christian ‘desert spirituality’ of the first centuries. Instead, in Igreja Maná, suffering has a negative connotation and is silenced in the frame of ‘Word of Faith’ theology, depicting adherents as spiritual and powerful ‘warriors’ who abstain from sentiments of weakness, facing a glorious future. What both churches, in all their differences, have in common, is that the personal accounts of the adherents of both churches reflect how their ongoing discourse is persuasively enforced by accompanying prayer practices, in which language, vocal performance and bodily posture are powerfully significant in a highly sensorial way.

In order to show how different discourses in both churches shape the particular means by which migrant Pentecostal churches position themselves in the Netherlands as a transnational space, I highlight two aspects, each discussed in one of the two chapters. The first aspect concerns both churches’ proclamation of the need to overcome anything that is or was, wrong or troublesome. Some migrants, during their asylum process in the Netherlands, told lies about what had happened to them in Angola, or about their age. In Calvary Christian Center, confession is regarded a means to ‘break with the past.’ Lying in order to receive a residence permit came forward in individual, personal narratives as a past sin, which had been confessed in church. In Igreja Maná, where conversion means overcoming the problems of life, and where silence about what happened during migration is a collective motto, lying in individual narratives was silenced, or depicted as a problem only when the lie
had become known by the authorities. In other words, in both churches, migrants with an asylum background are provided with different ways to live a converted life, while still carrying the lies of the past.

A second aspect of the thesis that highlights the transnational negotiation of particular doctrines within transnational lives in the Netherlands is the doctrine of female submission, applicable to both churches. In Calvary Christian Center this doctrine mainly comes forward as suffering in female collective lamenting prayer and weeping, whereas in Igreja Maná the submission of women is intensively and deliberately articulated in church discourse. In spite of the differences in both churches, young and ambitious female adherents seem to negotiate this predetermined and prescribed female submission with their secular experiences at school and in society, leading them to dream of leading independent and successful future lives. They may join in the collective lament in Calvary Christian Center, or support the comments in Igreja Maná against the Dutch women who ‘boss their husbands around.’ However, all the while their perceptions and points of view are undergoing change.

Via an ongoing focus on the local and the specific experiences of persons and groups, the dynamics of ‘time’ within a transnational space come most clearly into focus. In order to shed more light on the development of these dynamics in the lives of second generation church adherents, and the influences of these developments on young Pentecostal migrant churches in the future, more research of this type is needed.

9.3 Power

I have shown that the Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center discourses and practices, which focus so strongly on striving for personal victory, have a significant impact on their adherents’ personal reflections, their self-narratives, and on the way they position themselves in relation to the day to day realities of their lives. This impact has been defined and explained in numerous ways, but cannot be explained sufficiently without considering the ways in which Pentecostalism is a movement of spiritual empowerment. In scholarly debate on the Pentecostal movement, spiritual empowerment is often framed in terms of leaders, who exert social power, legitimised by their claim to be endowed by
the Holy Spirit (Weber’s notion of ‘charisma’), meanwhile operating as mediators between divine power and the sensorial experiences of their devoted adherents. This view is one-dimensional and offers little analytical insight.

As we have seen, in order to give full meaning to the differences between the two churches with regard to their social power dynamics, I had to broaden my approach by taking into account a threefold relationship between ‘Spirit,’ ‘Text’ and ‘Reader,’ and all the processes of interplay involved. Hence, I addressed the processes of authorisation in the organisational structure and practices of both churches, and their impact on their adherents’ view of the church and its leadership on the one hand and on themselves as both Pentecostal believers and inhabitants of Dutch society on the other. As a result, chapters seven and eight showed a hugely varied dynamic between spiritual power, individual migrants’ lives, and internal and external institutional processes.

First, in chapter seven, I showed that the explicit and implicit processes of authorisation in both churches enforce the power of leaders’ messages, which are reflected in the utterances of their adherents. Even in the dialectic interaction between leaders and adherents, and the tensions adherents experienced while trying to live up to the expectations and values of their churches, these discourses were strongly internalised. The authoritative processes in Igreja Maná served in the making and maintenance of the ‘Jorge Tadeu personality,’ which makes him unassailable, a ‘Man of God’ (cf. De Witte 2008: 189-194). All my interlocutors, even if they criticised local or more highly ranked leaders, shared an absolute loyalty to Tadeu. Igreja Maná’s strict doctrine of obedience, which views dissent or critical speech as a sin against the Holy Spirit, prevented church adherents from articulating criticism. However, statements about feeling oppressed or discomforted by the regime as adherents applied to be ordained as deacons were sometimes voiced. One-man leadership, of the kind that operates at Igreja Maná, is also found in many mega-churches (not necessarily Pentecostal), such as bishop Edir Macedo, leader of the Universal Church in Brasil, pastor Mensa Otabil, leader of the International Central Gospel Church in Ghana, and pastor Joel Osteen, leader of Lakewood church in the US.
In Calvary Christian Center, in contrast to Igreja Maná, authoritative power appeared to be dispersed among a wider range of leaders. Moreover, because the official church structure is congregational, church leaders have no formal hierarchical positions, due to which the processes of authorisation in this church seemed to be more implicit. The practices of reading and speech, the dispersal of spiritual gifts and the way space is organised and used during church services, provides ordinary adherents rather than only church leaders, with access to spiritual authority. Yet, subtle differences in power between adherents can be distinguished. Despite its congregational structure, and behind its soft differentiation in spiritual authority, compared with Igreja Maná, Calvary Christian Center breathes a hierarchical atmosphere, and this came to the fore most clearly in the particular supra-local leadership issues described in the thesis. It has been argued that the mixed nature of Calvary Christian Center, in which informality and horizontality, and formality and verticality go hand in hand, seems to be informed by typical features of Brazilian social life. Daily street life in Brazil is informal and egalitarian, while the formal social structures and organisations are saturated with hierarchical power and class rules. Thus, the emergence of two such different detailed pictures concerning the hybrid processes which shape spiritual authority within internal church relationships, provides a much more nuanced framework with which to investigate the dynamic of spiritual empowerment within the Pentecostal movement. In addition, this study of two Pentecostal churches in a migrant context sheds light on how differently the contentions of adherents located in marginal positions in the Netherlands are framed within discourses of power and authority.

Second, by taking the perspective of the adherent’s perception of these processes of authorisation, and the adjacent practices that adherents are subjected to, in chapter eight, I demonstrated that in terms of personal agency, the power of the processes of authorisation to enforce its power, has limits. In this approach, I discussed Ruth Marshall’s emphasis on ‘subjectivation,’ i.e. ‘experiences of interiority and techniques of the self’ (2009: 142), as the flipside of the processes of authorisation within both churches. I have argued that precisely at the moment where the authoritative processes that take place within the church seem to conflict with adherents’ personal circumstances and desires, subjective internal dialogues occur. Taking ‘subjectivation’ as an
analytical concept at the level of individual church adherents, I demonstrated that it renders visible a great deal of differentiation, which has not adequately been explored in Marshall’s approach. In their individual subjectivation of the authoritative discourses in their church, adherents make deliberate choices, thus creating scope for doubt, resistance and even distance. As I concluded in chapter eight, in these internal struggles between what church regimes prescribe, and their own individual aspirations or life circumstances, adherents show that they have at their disposal more repertoires than those sanctioned by the church, and that they combine and make use of these in creative ways.

Thus, in my opinion, both churches are in a process of providing space for the development of transnational personhoods. As pointed out, it is not the Dutch, who, attracted by the ideas and ways of living of the foreign church adherents, enter a transnational space in which they become aware of the contingency of their own Dutch background. Rather, it is the migrants themselves, who, as they become adherents of these churches, enter a transnational space in which a multifarious process of cross-cultural encounters takes place, which makes them aware of contingent aspects of their own backgrounds. What has become visible in the dialectical processes between submission and subjectivation in both churches, is that in the end, individual choice prevails, despite all the demands and pressure from the inside as well as from the outside the church. The ‘ideal’ personhoods that emerge in Igreja Maná and in Calvary Christian Center are saturated in notions of individualism, and coincide with the Dutch demand for independent and self-sufficient citizens.

9.4 To conclude

This study of discourses and practices of Igreja Maná and Calvary Christian Center, the two Pentecostal migrant churches studied within this thesis, works through complex questions of space, time and power, and the impact these questions have on their adherents’ self-understanding and lives. The thesis has contributed to the scholarly debate on Pentecostalism in several ways:

First, the discourses and practices reveal a broad variety of theological and ecclesiological origins. The comparison of both churches’ discourses and practices bring to the foreground the reality that the variety of older Protestant
and newer evangelical and charismatic origins is greater than previously thought (think of the particular Swedish Baptist context of the founders of the Assembléia de Deus in Brazil, and the typical warfare spirituality of Igreja Maná). Moreover, the study of both churches points to an under-investigated aspect of Pentecostalism’s theological legacy, for example, ancient Christian theology of the Desert Fathers and Roman Catholic folk spirituality as elements of the Assembléia de Deus theological notion of ‘suffering.’ Future research is needed to examine the possible Roman Catholic origins of the highly Episcopal character of Neo-Pentecostal churches such as Igreja Maná (and the Brazilian Igreja Universal). In even more general terms, until recently, the study of Pentecostalism has been obscured by looking at it through a protestant lens, and because of this Pentecostal affinities and historical similarities with the broader Christian tradition have been overlooked. This demands a different conceptualisation and a broader focus in future research on Pentecostal movements.

Second, the comparisons drawn between both migrant churches have demonstrated the ways in which very distinct ethnic, political and historical processes were involved in their conversion discourses and practices. The analysis of these differences revealed an even higher variety of components in the lives of adherents, which seem to enforce different church policies. Igreja Maná’s theological approach to ‘the past,’ and the way this approach seemed to be internalised in the narratives of adherents, was compelling in this respect. Moreover, it has become clear that concepts of evil and sin, related to conversion, have undergone change in the migrant context, since typical Angolan and Brasilian framings of evil, like local spirits and their mediators, while vividly present in the affiliated churches in both countries, had almost disappeared from church discourses in Rotterdam. They had been replaced with new words like ‘bills brought by the devil,’ or ‘the loss of money, caused by the devil.’ This means that in the scholarly debate on Pentecostalism as a global movement, the dynamics between theological concepts and discourses, and social transformations due to migration, should become a distinct area of study.

Third, my particular approach to exploring ‘transnational space,’ highlights the many-sided character of both churches’ transnational existence in a particular local context, i.e. Rotterdam. Both churches exist in a transnational
space, which consists of several levels, from the national level to the very local setting of the church building. On all these levels, this transnational space is influenced by a multiplicity of social and political discourses, rules and regulations, to which both migrant churches are subordinated. At the local level, however, both migrant churches themselves bring in their own transnational theological, and social-cultural perceptions, which interfere and sometimes clash with those of others. Finally, both migrant churches provide a transnational space for their adherents, in which they seem to negotiate their own particular background with their experiences in the church and daily life experiences in the Netherlands. I have highlighted the importance of research on a global movement like Pentecostalism, which brings into focus the most local and material level, for instance a church building. Precisely in its concrete reality, this transnational space condenses the difficult and multi-layered negotiations with Dutch society made by these churches and their adherents.

Fourth, in this study, the impact of the churches on their adherents’ self-understanding and lives has emerged as a highly composite process. From the perspective of adherent’s narratives, the impact of both churches cannot be overestimated. Clearly, these churches provide their migrant adherents, many of whom exist within insecure and marginal circumstances in the Netherlands, with vastly different discourses and practices that seem to succeed in creating meaningful religious experiences. However, it would be too simplistic to explain this impact in terms of coping strategies. This idea is challenged by the multifaceted interplay between the high demands made by both churches concerning dedication to the church and striving for personal victory, enforced by particular processes of authorisation on the one hand, and the individual responses towards these demands on the other, which reveal a variety of subjective ways of dealing with tensions, doubts and resistance. Therefore, future research on the Pentecostal movement in terms of ‘religion and human security’ and ‘empowerment,’ needs a stronger focus on locatedness and the character of agency in the dynamics between leaders, institutions, processes of authorisation in reading and writing, and individual adherents.

‘More than conquerors.’ The title of this thesis gives away a hint of confirmation. The first chapter opened with the lyrics of a song that says: ‘We are more than
conquerors.’ Do I, as a scholar, having studied two migrant Pentecostal churches and their adherents, consider them to be more than conquerors? I chose this exclamation, because it resonates with the central question posed by this thesis. ‘We are more than conquerors,’ is what my respondents proclaim, standing in the midst of the transnational complexities they have to live through. Although the song says: we are conquerors, this collective exclamation does not depict a community in which members are told to be responsible for each other’s victory. But those individual adherents, with whom I had the chance to get acquainted to a certain extent, see themselves as more than conquerors. Who am I to disagree?
Appendix A

Prescription of the weekly Sunday Service (n.d.c.: 377-379)

‘This is very important, because God put this in the Old Testament in order to explain to us in the New Testament how we should do it here. The people came to the house of God in order to serve Him and to receive their blessing from Him. Today, this happens in the same way. The tabernacle is divided in three parts; the courtyard, the Holy and the Holiest of Holy. The people come to the church service on Sunday to:

Serve God – the courtyard

Find spiritual food – the Holy

Receive ‘the touch’ of Jesus – the Holiest of Holy

The stage of the courtyard is the stage for actions of grace (Praise God for what He has done), meant for bringing the people from the world into a spiritual condition. ‘On this stage, people must be ministered in their body, because they come from the world and are not yet ready to praise and worship God in the spirit. Joyful and enthusiastic music is requested on the stage. We continually get in contact with the people, while stimulating them in different forms (through applause, dance, shouting, etc).

40 minutes: songs of praise, announcements, songs of worship, collection of tithes and gifts.

The stage of the Holy is the stage of Praise (praise God for who He is). This is the stage in which the people must be ministered in their souls. ‘We will minister the emotions, the feelings, the thoughts and the will of every single person. We must raise them up to express their love for their brothers and sisters and for God.’

40 minutes: teaching the word of God, by following a manual of sermons, which makes every preacher teach the same thing.

The stage of the Holiest of Holy is the stage of worship (give all the highest glory to God). At this moment each person must be brought to the feet of Christ and worship Him with all her powers, all her body, with her soul given over to God.
From this moment we need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. We must have faith in the gifts of the Spirit. At this stage every person is in a one to one relationship with God, and it is God who ministers every person individually. In this stage of the Service nothing is formulaic. Through the Holy Spirit we are lifted up in worship with grand reverence and joy.

40 minutes: the pastor ministers the people by prayer and the laying on of hands, for salvation, divine healing and liberation.

It is very important to control the schedule and never reduce the third part! If a pastor fails to keep to time for the third part, the people will be deprived of the power of God!\(^{276}\)

In order to be spiritually authorised to lead the Sunday service, each pastor should make the following preparations the day before the service:

‘Plan the music of praise
   Plan the announcements
   Plan the music of worship
   Study and prepare a small lesson about the collection, so that the people will sow the gift in the spirit of faith
   Study the lesson of that Sunday
   Seek the direction of the Holy Spirit for the operation of the Gifts of the Spirit
   Seek the direction of the Holy Spirit in order to receive the hallmark for this service.
   Pray to God and seek to know what kind of spirit the service should have:

   A service with the spirit of evangelisation
   A service with the spirit of the Lordship of Jesus
   A service with the spirit of repentance
   A service with the spirit of joy
   A service with the spirit of praise’ (Tadeu n.d.e.: 380).\(^{277}\)

\(^{276}\) Text quotation translated into English by author.

\(^{277}\) Text quotations translated into English by author.
Appendix B

Manual of Family Groups (*Manual de Grupos Familiares*) (Tadeu n.d.f.: 9-25)\(^{278}\)

**Why Family Groups? Part 1.**

1.1 A pastor must recognise the necessity of having Family Groups in his church.

1.2 In principle, it will not be easy for a pastor to combine his services, on Friday and Sunday, with those of the Family Groups, which will be held on Wednesday or Thursday.

1.3 The Pastor, as the eldest brother, must acknowledge that people, as babies in Christ, need help during the week, because the devil will try to steal the seeds that are sowed on Sunday.

1.4 It is in the Family Groups that our new converts will be rooted in the Word of God. It is where they can ask questions or discuss doubts concerning Scripture and start to build relationships with elder brothers and sisters.

1.5 Another goal of the Family Groups is to win the neighbourhood for Jesus, being created as small church structures. In this way they act as an assistant to the Pastor.

1.6 The Family Groups enable those persons, who surrender themselves to the church, to not loose themselves, but to triumph always in Jesus and in their church.

1.7 It is in the Family Group that people take their first steps in the relationship with Jesus, and have the opportunity to pray for issues the leader charges them with.

1.8 The brothers and sisters stop being a thing and become a person, because it is difficult for a brother or sister to be seen in the midst of 400 or 500 members (at the very least).

\(^{278}\) Text quotations translated into English by author.
1.9 The persons start to take note of and see God making signs and performing wonders through the brothers and sisters, like themselves. Through praying together and seeing the results of these prayers, they discover that Christianity and the Faith function (are effective).

1.10 The family Groups provide financial income for the church and a number of persons for the church.

1.11 The more Family Groups a church has, the more faithful membership a church will have and the more new leaders can stand up.

**Why Family Groups? Part 2**

More and more frequently, we have new persons in our church, and it happens often that the newest persons don’t know the reason for many things.

It is possible that over time, the pastors and leaders of Family Groups cease to understand the reason for the existence of Family Groups.

Many Pastors want to have FG’s, because:

1. They heard that it is good to have them
2. They think that it is in fashion
3. Etc.

Others try to find:

1. Manuals
2. Books
3. Mechanisms: “do this, do that....”
4. Write everything down, but have no success afterwards, because they do not understand the whys and wherefores.
What is the major secret of the Family Groups?

The Family Groups serve for:

1. Making disciples – the grand secret of Jesus
2. Maintaining the results of the SAVINGS
3. Letting the church grow – occupy the territory God gave you in your region or nation.

How do you make disciples? By spending time with them.

When people are saved, they must be channelled through the Family Group. And when the leaders spend time with them while teaching them, praying with them, accompanying them and visiting them, the results of keeping the people in the church will be better.

Do you want a church full of people who are always looking for bread and fish? Or do you want a church full of followers of Jesus, faithful etc.?

Many churches have many people, however, a year later the people are new. They enter the church at the front door and leave the church through the back door. What will make them stay? Discipleship!

A disciple is a faithful follower, a worker. Through the Family Group, the desire to serve God will be born, because of which new leaders will emerge, new musicians will emerge, and new pastors will emerge.

And it is with these people that you will occupy the territory that God has given you. Your church will grow via these people.
Organizational structure of the Department of Family Groups

Ministry and tasks of the department of Family Groups

1. Area leader
   a. Visits the family groups on a regular basis
   b. Sees if there are issues that need improvement
   c. Has a corrective role in certain situations
   d. Sees if the objectives of the Family Groups are met
   e. Sees if the goals of the Family Groups are reached
   f. Sees if the leaders and co-leaders collaborate in the church, in intercession, or in counselling
   g. Resolves problems that do not require consultation with the Pastor
   h. Hands over to the Pastor issues that exceed her responsibilities

2. Leader of the Family Group
   a. Leads the Family Group. Is authorised as such by the Pastor, within the established norms

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b. Fills out the attendance forms and submits them to the person in charge

3. Co-leader (treasurer)
   a. Assists the Family Group Leader
      i. Leads the songs at the invitation of the Leader
      ii. Leads the prayers at the invitation of the Leader
   b. Collects the offerings
   c. Puts the attendance forms, filled out by the Leader, and the forms completed by the workers in the official envelope, together with the collected offerings.

4. Workers
   a. Assist the Family Group Leader
      i. Visit one or two new families. Every worker chooses a day of the week for visits. Every worker has responsibility for the same families always.
      ii. Pray daily for these families, encourage them and bring them to the Sunday Service and the Family Group
   b. Fill out the record form and submit it every week.

5. New Converts
   a. Learn the biblical doctrines
   b. Learn to follow Jesus
   c. Learn to work for Jesus in the church

**How does a Family Group service run?**

1. Praise: about 15 minutes. The leader stays in charge, even if someone else leads the songs. She should make changes if she feels in her heart the need to do so.
2. Initial prayer.
3. Bible Study: about 30 minutes, following the lessons in this manual.
4. Intercession prayer: about 20 minutes. These prayers are led by the leader, or co-leader. The leader is allowed to delegate certain prayers to the members, making them participate and establishing in them the desire to intercede. The intercession must be dynamic:
   a. Bring up the subject
   b. Pray in tongues
   c. Break the power of darkness
   d. Praise God for victory. Don’t spend too much time speaking Portuguese. One should pray in tongues. And in talking against Satan one does not need long conversations.

5. Offerings: about 10 minutes. We should always collect offerings with a Bible verse or a mini-study in order to produce the effect. There are four types of offering:
   a. Tithes
   b. Offerings
   c. Special offerings
   d. Offerings for the poor and widows. The offerings are collected by the co-leader. The record form must be filled out and signed by the leader and the co-leader

6. Questions and answers

7. Informal meeting, in company: about 15 minutes in order to establish friendships. The service should not exceed 1.5 hours.

The envelope: there is one for every week. Write the date on it, after having put the offerings into it. Every Thursday the leader takes the envelope to church.

Company: is the task of the workers. Visit them, phone them, be company for them. The Pastor, who is the superior of the department, provides registration cards for new converts.

Keep in mind: The leaders must encourage the workers to visit, phone and accompany the “BABIES,” the new converts. This is a major responsibility. The leaders must be attentive to the growth among their sheep and, at the right time, recommend the Course for Deacons to them.

As soon as the Family Group reaches 12-15 persons, a new Family Group should be opened.
A vision for each Family Group leader

1. Set goals, for weekly attendance, salvation, finances, and the promotion of new deacons, when the church starts a course for deacons.

2. Multiply your family group, at least once a year. Every leader must reproduce disciples, as Jesus told us to do.

3. Delegate tasks to the workers and encourage them to have a list of 5-15 new converts
   a. Verify if the workers evangelise at least once a week
   b. Verify if all come to church, organising lifts for new converts, etc.

How to set goals for every Family Group?

How to set goals for the first time?

A leader who starts a Family Group for the first time, has no criteria on which to base goals. Therefore, that person must wait 2 or 3 weeks. Based on the results of these weeks, the goals can be set.

A GOAL = Real value + 30%-50%.

How to actualise goals?

As soon as the real value (people, money) come near the goals, these goals must be changed, in order to maintain a difference between the real value and the goal. If we didn’t do this, we would stop growing.

Faith in the goals.

Now that you have set your goals, it is necessary to put faith in these goals. The leader has to believe in the goals through a spirit of Faith, using her personal faith for reaching these goals.

A. Put your goals down on paper to confirm them.

B. Do the prayer of Faith (Marc 11:24). Faith means that you believe that you already have:
a. The desired number of persons in the Family Group, without seeing them yet
b. The desired number of Salvations “
c. The desired amount of income “

C. Take the course of Faith:
   a. Meditate about Faith;
   b. Pray in tongues.
   c. Confess your goals according to Romans 4:17:
      i. I already have the number of persons
      ii. I already have ............etc.
   d. Praise God, because:
      i. You already have........etc.

Keep in mind: Don’t be surprised when you are riddled with doubt, during the period of waiting. The mind is the fighting ground. The devil is like a dragon who inflicts thoughts of doubt and uncertain emotions in order to make you give up. Use the sword of the spirit to destroy the walls and castles the devil wants to construct in your mind. Don’t slacken when the circumstances get worse, as soon as you have done the prayer of faith (Marc 9:25). Remember that the devil only agitates you just before he will have to depart forever.

YOUR FAMILY GROUP STARTS TO GROW from the minute you start to believe you already have it.
Appendix C.

Practice of the worship groups (6 lessons) (Tadeu n.d.c.: 219-224)\textsuperscript{279}

Every Saturday, the worship groups gather in order to practice many things. Those practices should be done in the following order:

1. Entrance in which everyone prepares for the training: 10 minutes
2. Practice the different special prayers, led by one of the members: 10 minutes
   a. Practice the PDC 1.5 minute of meditation, 1.5 minute of praise
   b. Practice the Lord’s Prayer - Matthew 6, making it personal. 1.5 minutes
   c. Practice the Ephesians prayers. First Ephesians 1:16-19, followed by Ephesians 3:16-20. 1.5 minutes.
   d. Practice Ephesians 5: the pastor or director leads the musicians and singers into singing (salmodiar), first, in Portuguese, second, in tongues (1 minute)
3. Questions and answers: 15 minutes
   a. Question 1 is: how is the worship group composed?
      i. At this point the pastor or director lets different people answer the question in turn.
      ii. At this moment the members are not allowed to open their books. Only the pastor, or director, are allowed to have it open.
      iii. Note: The director or the pastor should change this part of the meeting in a dynamic way, which obliges all members to participate actively. Only in this way, the goal of this item will be achieved.
      iv. The pastor or the director reads the answer in the book. The answer is: 1. The leader, 2 musicians: violin, alto violin, percussion, …, 3 singers, 4 sound engineer.

\textsuperscript{279} The first of the 6 lessons translated into English by author.
b. Question 2 is: Which songs should be played during a Sunday Service?
   i. ditto
   ii. ditto
   iii. ditto
   iv. The answer: songs that are known by the people. Because if they are not known, the people will not participate in singing, as a result of which there will be no anointing. The songs must be played in the same way always, different arrangements are not allowed. Why? Because the people will not participate, as a result of which there will be no anointing. Making arrangements is making a show, it means that the praise group plays before an audience. But the goal of a praise group is not to make a show. The praise group must guide the people in a way that makes them praise God.

4. Part 4: practical exercise: 40 minutes
   a. Training the voices.
      i. Sing 3 known well songs, without instruments.
      ii. Control the volume
      iii. Change the tone
      iv. Change the tempo
      v. Change the intensity
      vi. Note: the singers must gain sensibility. Every voice must sing at a volume and in a way that it harmonises with the other voices without being shouted down, or without drowning out others.
      vii. A general misapprehension: many singers and musicians think that controlling volume is the job of the sound engineer. But this thought is wrong.
   b. The sound engineer must tune the voices and instruments before the start of the service. The volume and the ...... of the
instruments is the responsibility of the singers and the musicians.

5. Part 5: practical rehearsal: 45 minutes
   a. Rehearse the songs of the songbook, which are listed for the next Sunday service, with those singers and musicians who are on schedule for this Sunday.
   b. This list, prepared by the leader should follow the next pattern:
      i. Joyful songs (7 minutes)
      ii. One song about mutual love
      iii. One song about finances
      iv. Two worship songs
      v. One song about salvation, diverse songs for ministering divine healing and prayer.
   c. The members of the group should always be aware of the fact that they take part of a service that does not consist of music only. The number of songs outlined above is adequate. Deviation from this number and time allocation might affect the anointment during the service.

Rules for individual preparation for the next Sunday (Tadeu n.d.e.: 211-216)

Spiritual preparation: a member of the worship group does her PDC, the Lord’s prayer, prayer of Ephesians 1 and 3 and Ephesians 5 on a daily base.
Technical preparation:
1. Prepare the listed songs at home throughout the week.
2. The musicians rehearse the songs in the church separately.
3. The singers rehearse the songs separately.
4. Finally attend the joint rehearsal on Saturday.

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280 Text quotations translated into English by author.
Rules for the preparation on Sunday, before the service

- Arrive one hour before the start of the service
- Tune your instruments and microphones, this does NOT mean rehearsal! It is FORBIDDEN to rehearse before the start of the service.
- It is FORBIDDEN to tune or rehearse 45 minutes before the start of the church service. This type of action damages the church. When a service starts, this is the actual start.
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