



The Radical Roots of Peruvian Adventism

Just when you thought Adventism was safe and predictable, along come Fernando and Ana Stahl. Charles Teel tells the story of this indomitable, revolutionary missionary couple.

by Charles Teel

A version of Charles Teel's article appeared in the journal of Andes studies, Allpanchis (No. 33), 1989, pp. 209-248. Read by the bishop of Puno, the article played an indirect role in the 1990 Peruvian presidential election. After the archbishop of the capital city of Lima denounced Protestants as "outsiders" for supporting the eventual winner, Fujimori, the bishop of Puno responded in a widely covered news conference. Parting company with his superior, he declared that Protestantism in the highlands boasted a proud tradition of work-ing for the betterment of the Peruvian people.

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—The Editors

DASHING FIGURES SITTING ASTRIDE POWERFUL steeds and tilting at windmills are the stuff of which great literature and less-great cinema is made. Enliven the scene with a sea of oppressed indigenous peoples and a scattering of bishops, judges, and *mestizo* overlords, and the possibility of an arresting plot emerges. So much the better if the setting can feature colorful costuming, blue sky, barren plains, and a majestic mountain lake. Scholars of the Andes, no less than playwrights and cinematographers, have been captivated by these ingredients, which characterize both the Andean altiplano and its vast Lake Titicaca Basin. Numerous distinguished and diverse persons of letters—historians, anthropologists, sociologists, theologians, ethnographers, poets, politicians, and missiologists from three continents—refer to a most unlikely pair of characters on this Andean stage: a self-taught, steed-riding, pistol-packing Seventh-day Adventist missionary couple from North America named Frederick (“Fernando”) and Ana Stahl.¹

At the turn of the century, a near-feudal social system dominated the Peruvian highlands. Geo-

graphical barriers kept the altiplano isolated from the rule of law promulgated in the nation's capital. Cultural barriers created a caste system in which 8 percent of the population—the *mestizo* and white minority land-holding families, with the support of political and religious functionaries—kept the other 92 percent, Aymara and Quechua peoples, in total subjection. These indigenous peoples were illiterate, had no opportunities for education, and maintained virtually no contact with the world beyond the Lake Titicaca Basin.² Land expropriations, forced labor, and arbitrary taxation were the chief tools of oppression. These abuses gave rise to a series of violent revolts that erupted throughout the altiplano well into the 1930s.³ Such was the social context in which a far-reaching Adventist educational endeavor came to flourish.

The Missionaries Arrive

Fernando and Ana Stahl, converts to Seventh-day Adventism as young adults in the midwestern United States, volunteered for a mission appointment to South America during the first decade of this century.⁴ When the church told them it could not finance their passage, the Stahls paid their own way and that of their two children.⁵ The family left Main Street, U.S.A., and landed in Bolivia in the year 1909. In the capital of Bolivia, La Paz, and its environs, Ana bartered her professional skills as a nurse to the social elite and served the destitute. Fernando stumbled about indigenous villages, intuitively exploring what it meant to be a missionary.⁶ He first attempted to missionize by selling religious magazines. He soon discovered that the indigenous population could not read. More importantly, he came to realize that the privileged classes, in order to maintain their social and economic advantages, had every reason to keep these peoples uneducated.⁷ By 1911 magazine peddling had taken a back seat to establishing schools. It was in this same year that the Stahls located on the Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca and linked up with

Manuel Camacho, an indigenous visionary and early Adventist convert.⁸

Cacique Amauta Manuel Zunega Camacho Alca⁹ lived no ordinary life.¹⁰ Accounts identifying him as a descendent of revolutionary Tupac Amaru are open to question, but that he embraced revolutionary causes, filed countless memorials, and led numerous delegations on behalf of the indigenous movement is beyond dispute. No less indisputable is the fact that his early forays beyond the altiplano to Iquique, Arequipa, Meyieu, Culiluinia, and Chile offered contacts with Protestantism and education, reinforced his fiercely independent spirit, and fed his passion to mediate salvation to the peasants or campesinos of the altiplano: "The only sure way of salvation from the subjugation in which we find ourselves is learning to read," he wrote.¹¹

Accordingly, Camacho returned to the Platería soil of his early years to enact his vision. Immediately he faced fierce opposition from the *mestizo* overlords. In 1898 Camacho had the temerity to conduct classes for 25 adult indigenous peoples, albeit behind closed doors—"de una manera clandestina."¹² About four years later he founded a free school in his Utawilaya, Platería, home.¹³ Valiantly but vainly he tried to keep the school open in the face of bribes, threats, terror, beatings, arrests, and imprisonments.¹⁴ (An Aymara-speaking Maryknoll priest in Platería—who assisted the local Adventist pastor at the funeral of Camacho's son, Victor—volunteered that contemporary Catholics as well as Adventists view Camacho as a "Christ-figure." They still vividly remember ecclesiastical and civil authorities confronting Camacho at his school and leading him to jail with his "hands lashed together behind his back."¹⁵ Stahl's editor makes a spiritual as well as temporal statement in identifying this indigenous activist as "the beginning of the Lake Titicaca Mission."¹⁶

The Stahls set up housekeeping initially in Camacho's mud brick house and embraced Camacho's vision of education for the indigenous population. During that first year, Camacho focused on the Utawilaya school.¹⁷

Together with Ana Stahl, he shepherded a student body of 150 students, ranging in age from young children to middle-aged adults.¹⁸ That same year, land was purchased in nearby Platería at a cost of “treinta dólares de oro,” and buildings were erected through pooled community effort.¹⁹ In 1913, the Platería Adventist School opened its doors with coeducational offerings in reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as hygiene and religion.²⁰ When the titled professors imported to operate the school returned home in the face of altitude rigors,²¹ Ana Stahl stepped in to administer the institution.²² As demands mushroomed for village schools in the surrounding countryside, teacher-training courses were instituted, occupying classrooms on a year-round basis.²³ The result was La Escuela Normal de Platería.²⁴

Stahl might not have been able to articulate a cogent academic definition of a “near-feudal social system,” the term employed by historians to describe the altiplano at the beginning of the century. Yet in his book, *In the Land of the Incas*, published in 1920 in English and later in Spanish, Stahl clearly pinpoints an unholy and unjust alliance of town judge, village priest, and wealthy landowner.²⁵ Leaving Ana in charge at Platería, assisted by Manuel Camacho and his young protégé Luciano Chambi,²⁶ Fernando embraced the indigenous altiplano as his parish. For a full decade, the Stahls traveled by muleback, horseback, and later on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, to establish schools, chapels, clinics, and free-standing markets.²⁷

In the schools, only the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught. Still, as one chronicler pointed out: “That was enough to enable the Indians to read God’s word and to

avoid being cheated in the marketplace.”²⁸ In the clinics and in the mud huts of the Aymara and the Quechua peoples, the Stahls together set bones, soothed fevers, pulled teeth, lanced boils, amputated limbs, and delivered babies.²⁹

In the free-standing markets established by the Stahls, entrepreneurial students not only utilized their newly acquired mathematical skills, but also escaped the domination of their *mestizo* overlords and the hacienda company store.³⁰ In the chapels, worshipers were invited to accept the Good News that God loved them on the basis

of their own personhood, rather than on the merit of religious systems and intermediating functionaries. Imbibing alcohol at the fiestas and paying taxes to the village priests for feast days, baptisms, weddings, christening, and other rites, were replaced by clean living and simple worship.³¹

A tabulation of students, schools, churches, and members suggests

that vast numbers welcomed the Stahls’ ministry. The Adventist educational system came to entirely encircle Lake Titicaca and include as many as 200 schools.³² These ranged from humble village home schools to large boarding institutions.³³ By 1916, 2,000 students were registered in 19 schools; by 1924, 4,000 in 80 schools; and by 1947, a high of nearly 7,000 students in 109 schools.³⁴ Stahl’s successor, E. H. Wilcox, reported that on one unforgettable day, 12 requests for schools arrived from indigenous villages.³⁵

The Camacho site in Utawilaya effectively functioned as boarding house, school, and church, as Adventism was birthed on the altiplano. A full-fledged congregation organized on this Utawilaya site on May 21, 1911.³⁶ One decade later the weekly attendance at Platería was 700,³⁷ with thriving churches in places such as Umuchi,

Stahl might not have been able to articulate a cogent academic definition of a “near feudal system,” but he clearly pinpoints an unholy alliance of town judge, village priest, and wealthy landowner.

Pomata, Quenuani, and Puno.³⁸ The baptized membership in the Lake Titicaca Mission numbered 445 in 1916; 2,255 in 1920; 5,963 in 1924; and 7,340 in 1927.³⁹ By 1940, mission membership rolls had been purged of nonattending church members and showed a total of 6,579. That year's national census showed that in the Lake Titicaca area alone there were fully four times that number of self-professed Protestants (virtually all of whom would have been Adventist).⁴⁰

The Adventists Assert

Yet numbers only partly communicate the indigenous response to Adventism. Personal commentaries flesh out statistical skeletons. One Adventist believer responded to a 1920 Pro-Indigenista Commissioner who was investigating alleged abuses by the landed classes: "All this is due to our own ignorance, and this is why we have become Evangelists [sic]. The pastors protect us and teach our children to read and write."⁴¹ The assertion of this believer that Adventism addressed the practical problem of collective ignorance is borne out by educator Ruben Chambi, the son of a Stahl and Camacho protégé, Luciano Chambi—a graduate of La Escuela Normal de Platería Adventist school, and eventually the recipient of a doctorate from Cusco University. "The Adventist school system opened the way for the indigenous population of the Highlands to achieve self-hood and self-sufficiency," he has asserted. "The Stahl gospel both converted hearts and changed the social fabric of the highlands."⁴² The fact that Dr. Chambi—just one generation removed from Puno's near-feudal past—came to be elected by

Puno voters to represent their province in the National Legislature demonstrates the rapidity of social change experienced in the altiplano.⁴³

Ricardo Chambi, younger brother of Ruben and an Adventist minister, contends that once the indigenous peoples learned to read and write, they not only became aware of their rights under law, but they also learned how the legal system could aid them in securing such rights. Ricardo Chambi's point is supported by government records of large numbers of memorials (formal complaints that citizens could file at the local or national level) filed by indigenous peoples in the altiplano. These invited authorities to investigate alleged abuses of power.

Chambi cites a notable example. Around 1915, an Adventist woman named Tomasa Mayta, from the village of Pomata, valiantly sought an investigation of the murder of her husband. Finding no authorities in her village or elsewhere in Puno Province willing to investigate this case, Señora Mayta severed her husband's head from his corpse, wrapped the head in a linen napkin, placed it in a basket, and—accom-

panied by Camacho—carried her evidence to the capital of Peru, Lima. There she filed a memorial. "Imagine the transforming power of the Gospel!" enthused Chambi in reporting this account. "Before the Adventist schools were established it was rare to find common persons from the indigenous population who would stand erect and assert their rights; but after we learned to read

the Bible and discovered a sense of self-worth, women as well as men were imbued with a sense of bravery!"⁴⁴

Stahl and his Protestant band drew mostly rave reviews from *indigenistas* and other progressives of that time. Gamaliel Churata,

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cofounder of the avant garde literary circle, Grup Orkupata, and son of the cofounder of Puno's first Seventh-day Adventist congregation, described the indigenous educational developments in Platería as "la revolución de la Platería."⁴⁵ Former San Marcos University Rector and National Congress Deputy José Antonio Encinas, identified as "el maestro Puneno que inició el indigenismo en el siglo XX,"⁴⁶ pledged solidarity with these missionaries in "a work of human redemption."⁴⁷ This tie between José Encinas and the Adventists is borne out in José Tamayo Herrera's definitive survey, *Historia Social y Indigenismo en el Altiplano*. There, Adventist educators are singled out by name:

From the foundation of the celebrated school 811, where Encinas molded a generation of immortal Punenos, until the arrival of the Adventists in Puno, with the first school founded in Platería, founded originally by Manuel Zuniga Camacho Alca [spelling varies], and afterward spread through the altiplano thanks to the efforts of Fernando A. Stahl and Pedro Kalbermatter, indigenous education was initiated in Puno with unexpected and transcendent results.⁴⁸

Tamayo concludes this rare excursion into transcendence with an equally rare unqualified generalization: "For the first time, the Indian acceded to letters, hygiene, and a consciousness of his own dignity."⁴⁹

Numerous progressives remarked about the contrasts between the Stahl's method of evangelization and that of the priests'. Francisco Mostajo, a liberal spokesperson from Arequipa, observed that while Puno's priests planned religious feasts, their Protestant counterparts established clinics and schools.⁵⁰ Mostajo's colleague Ernesto Reyna agreed that while the Protestant leaders taught and healed, their Catholic counterparts sang masses and planned fiestas.⁵¹ Anticlerical Manuel Gonzalez Prada—in a rare compliment to organized religion of any stripe—noted approvingly that whereas the Jesuits contented themselves with teaching the wealthy elite while enjoying the comforts of Lima, the Adventists braved the rigors of the altiplano to teach

the disinherited classes.⁵² Educator and politician José Antonio Encinas wryly observed that whereas the village priests worked to save souls, Stahl worked to save lives.⁵³ And in 1916, after a particularly savage attack in which the Stahls barely escaped with their lives, Catholic citizens took to the press in the Stahls' defense. They disparagingly contrasted the "two Yankees, who generously cure sickness, dispense remedies, and teach the people to read, gratis," with "the priests [who] have kept the native race in the most deplorable and inhuman conditions" for more than three centuries.⁵⁴

The Power Structure Represses

Retaliation from the entrenched power interest against Camacho, the Stahls, and the other Adventist believers, was nothing if not decisive. Clerical opposition reached an apex on March 3, 1913, when Puno Bishop Monsignor Valentin Ampuero personally led a mob of 200 men, many or all mounted, to rout out the Protestant heretics.⁵⁵ The group first broke into Camacho's house and, not finding him at home, abducted his 11-year-old son.⁵⁶ Similar havoc was then wreaked at the residence of other Protestant adherents before the marauding band reached the home of the Stahls.⁵⁷ In the absence of the Stahls, the mob sacked their dwelling, broke furniture,⁵⁸ and scattered books and medicines to the winds.⁵⁹ Adventist believers were denounced for not participating in feast days⁶⁰ and tauntingly told to kiss the bishop's hand, which they refused to do.⁶¹ The huddled group was instructed that "all who were not of the evangelical belief should go to one side, and that the believers should be seized."⁶² In turn, eight men⁶³—including Camacho—were bound together with leather thongs and led off by a force of gendarmes on a 21-mile march to jail. As they stumbled on foot, "hatless and coatless," the Adventists were repeatedly assaulted.⁶⁴

Happily for the Adventists, the press tended to side with the Stahls and their converts. The Ad-

ventist educational complex was hailed as demonstrating “the altruism of a Yankee”⁶⁵ and the bishop’s actions derided as exhibiting the mentality “of a new Atilla.”⁶⁶ Eventually the prisoners were acquitted and released. Commentators on the history of religious liberty in Peru cite this incident as the impetus for the passage of a constitutional amendment on October 20, 1915, guaranteeing freedom of religious expression.⁶⁷

De jure change does not, of course, translate immediately to *de facto* reform. As the Protestant schools multiplied, so did the opposition. On June 5, 1916, priests Julio Tomas Bravo and Fermin Manrique violently attacked the Stahls as they were inaugurating a school in Quenuani in Chucuito Province.⁶⁸ The Stahls barely escaped with their lives. Stahl reported that a few weeks later, after being run out of a village near the town of Sandia, 50 of the villagers who had entertained him were beaten and placed in stocks or jailed.⁶⁹ Toward the end of 1920, 12 Adventist believers were murdered at Pedro Kalbermatter’s Laro Mission Station in Azangaro Province.⁷⁰ Later, in the same area, as many as 15 believers met the same fate.⁷¹ Schoolhouses were burned, Adventist teachers were assaulted, and one student in an

Adventist school was reportedly beaten to death.⁷²

Attacks in the reactionary press abounded. The pages of *El Herald* were laced with alleged misdeeds and crimes of the Adventists and those in charge of the Adventist schools. The perceived threats to the social order presented by these schools for the indigenous peoples are made explicit in a memorial filed from Azangaro in 1923:

These false evangelical schools bring together daily large numbers of the suggestible, individuals of suspect social desires, and ignorant Indians attracted through false and fantastic promises.

At these schools they teach the most depraved and heretical practices, and preach a war of extermination against faithful Catholics and the Church itself.

At these schools they work a labor of dissolution. They spread doctrines of the most crimson communism. They attempt to destroy patriotism and spirit of the nation by inculcating the most extreme and dangerous socialist concepts of social organization, class and racial equality, and unbounded liberty in the ignorant masses. . . .

At these schools, finally, they openly attack our property system. . . .⁷³

For the very reasons that the privileged classes saw the Adventist schools as a curse, such indigenous leaders as Camacho saw them as a blessing. “Alphabetization” helped learners to view a world beyond their provincial state, to recognize that they were being exploited, to learn their rights, and—ideally—to discover how the system might function to their advantage.

Near the end of the



Photo courtesy of Charles Teel

Fernando and Ana Stahl rode many miles over the altiplano on horseback.

Stahls' tenure in the altiplano, José Antonio Encinas led the call for a commission to investigate local abuses and instigate reforms. The call was answered affirmatively by an executive decree of June 19, 1920.⁷⁴ The Stahls appear to have seized upon the arrival of the visiting commission as an opportunity to showcase indigenous students and to teach them how to lobby for social change. Commission member Erasmo Roca, head of the Labor Bureau in the Ministry of Development reported on the "spectacle:"

What a beautiful spectacle it was for us, just a few days after our arrival in Puno, to see nearly two thousand Indian evangelists from the region of Platería . . . , who, in correct military formation and led by two musical bands, paraded before the commission.⁷⁵

The indigenous peoples from the town of Azangaro may well have taken a cue from the "evangelists." A few days later, when the commission arrived in a tense Azangaro, they were met by fully 8,000 such greeters, also massed in military formation. Nervous landowners wired Lima for troop reinforcements and at least one local *Indigenista* leader was placed in preventive detention. Newspaper accounts report that the local power interests debated whether the same fate ought not to befall Fernando Stahl.⁷⁶

The Stahls doubtless took no small satisfaction in contrasting the conditions that marked the 21-mile forced march in 1913 from Platería, with the demonstration that they had been able to stage just seven years later. The same course was now traversed by a throng of disciplined Aymara and Quechua peoples intent upon showing the visiting dignitaries that an integrated presentation of the gospel had liberated them from those internal and external principalities and powers that had formerly held them in bondage. This demonstration must be characterized as the climax of the Stahls' work around Lake Titicaca. These self-taught North American Seventh-day Adventist "missionaries, visionaries, and revolutionaries" would now mount their steeds for the last time in the Andean altiplano in favor of the Amazon jungles for the next two decades of their lives.⁷⁷

The Adventists Are Studied

In recent decades, researchers from South America, North America, and Europe have swarmed upon the altiplano to pursue research in disciplines ranging from anthropology to zoology. A number of these investigators, while pursuing their particular areas of study, have given more than a nod to Adventism's presence in Puno. Within the past decade, two researchers—Ted Lewellen, a University of Colorado anthropologist, and Dan Hazen, a Yale University Latin Americanist—have denoted the most extensive attention yet to the Adventist experience. Three other scholars have done interesting, if less comprehensive, research on the topic: Merling K. Alomia Bartra, professor of religion at Inca Union University in Naña, who has written a thoroughly documented article on Adventist education in Peru; Jean Baptiste August Kessler, Jr., whose research has produced the definitive work on early Protestantism in Peru and Chile; and Samuel Escobar, Latin American theologian and author of *La Fe Evangélica y las Teologías de la Liberación*.

Lewellen's social-science investigation is entitled *Peasants in Transition, The Changing Economy of the Peruvian Aymara: A General Systems Approach*. Lewellen draws upon systems theory to provide a framework for isolating and analyzing such characteristics of the social system as its boundaries, the plasticity of those boundaries, the openness of the society to change, and how input and output is filtered. Central to his analysis of the Aymara Indians around Lake Titicaca is what he refers to as the Protestant elite (Adventists)—a "pool of variability" that has adaptive value for a community in the process of transition.⁷⁸

To carry out his research, Lewellen put down roots in Lake Titicaca's island of Soqa, an ideal laboratory setting for studying Catholic and Protestant control groups. Before Lewellen descended on the altiplano, he had already learned of William Carter's conclusions that Adventists in the Bolivian community of Irpa Chico constituted

an elite—an elite now passing from prominence to marginality, but “frustrated and disillusioned” because they had repudiated their tribal traditions.⁷⁹ Lewellen aimed to test on Soqa’s Protestant and Catholic control groups his thesis that “people with a more capitalistic orientation, who want to escape the costs of the fiesta system in order to more productively invest their money,

“Adventism offered educational opportunities not available elsewhere, and thus attracted a group of people more progressive, independent, and intellectual than the norm.”

are attracted to Adventism, thus forming an economic elite.”⁸⁰

But Lewellen has not been able to confirm his thesis. Selected findings from this study establish that of the two control groups, the 18 percent Adventist minority on Soqa:

- holds the bulk of the political power;
- has more, and considerably better, schooling;
- has larger families than Catholics;
- has almost the same per capita income;
- shows significantly higher pro-education sentiments;
- chooses education over profit;
- surprisingly, shows itself as more traditional on some questions designed to measure this factor.⁸¹

Lewellen then advanced a counter-hypothesis based on the proposition that the active selective factor in the formation of the Adventist church in Soqa was not money but education: “Adventism offered educational opportunities not available elsewhere, and thus attracted a group of people more progressive, independent,

and intellectual than the norm.”⁸²

This anthropologist argues that his second hypothesis holds, by contending that Adventism has traditionally been embraced on the basis of the schooling opportunities it offered, not on the basis of opportunity for financial gain.

Adventism both tapped and created a pool of variability. It served to select out of the mass of oppressed and ignorant humans that meager group of deviants to whom education had an almost addictive appeal, a group who were not satisfied to be slaves to their *mestizo* oppressors or their own ignorance.⁸³

Manuel Camacho and Pedro Cutipa (a Soqa Island chief who studied at Platería, returned to Soqa, started a school and church, and experienced much of the ostracism and persecution that fell Camacho’s lot) are cited as examples of individuals who valued education. They did so, not because turn-of-the-century Puno rewarded literate indigenous persons with a prospect of upward mobility and financial gain, but precisely because attending school allowed the deviants to act out the independent will and inquiring spirit that characterizes inner-directed persons. Historical developments thus demonstrate, argues Lewellen, that the selective factors operating here are independence and individuality, expressed through educational enrollment.⁸⁴

Not content to appeal to history alone in support of his education hypothesis, Lewellen points to statistical data documenting the greater schooling of Adventists in Soqa by more than a full grade. He contends that even these data understate the difference. Adventist schooling on Soqa is far superior to the state schooling by virtue of the caliber of staffing appointments, and the far more rigorous supervision made possible through local community control.⁸⁵

How is it that these Protestant believers, persecuted and marginalized for decades, became leaders in the communities of Soqa and elsewhere on the altiplano? Lewellen contends that the original deviance demonstrated by those few who were willing to suffer persecution and defy the status quo was in turn markedly increased by

those within this pool who adopted the new Protestant religion. Thus, in “repudiating the *fiesta* system, learning to speak Spanish, and becoming literate, these people became the most valuable part of that pool of variability which biologists recognize as essential to the processes of evolution.”⁸⁶ Lewellen concludes that while such deviance sidelined the Adventists for some decades in the relatively close world of the Aymara, when modern, corporate, governmental structures were finally instituted after 1950, this group of deviants was in a position to hit the ground running. They were literate, possessed language skills (Spanish), and—most significantly—they possessed that self-knowledge that characterizes those who deviate from the norm.

Dan Hazen’s *The Awakening of Puno: Government Policies and the Indian Problem in Southern Peru, 1900-1955* examines responses to the changing economic and social conditions in the Department of Puno during the first half of this century. Hazen concludes that although such developments as transportation and communication advance, national reconstruction, social ferment, political activity, and intellectual commitment gave impetus to social engineering designed to move Puno from its caste-based system to a class-based system, “the ultimate result was frustration,” with most change having occurred by the end of the first quarter of the century. Among the “would-be reformers,” Hazen accords high marks to Manuel Camacho and Fernando Stahl.⁸⁷

In documenting Adventism’s impact on Puno, Hazen asserts that “Adventists have consistently been in the forefront of change in the altiplano.”⁸⁸ Hazen thinks that Adventists enjoyed an edge in achieving reform because “the missionaries combined appeals for individual salvation with a broad-based program of medical, educational, and market facilities open to all.”⁸⁹ Moving from the subject of programs to implementation, Hazen cites the Adventist “organization, attitude, and ability to get things done” as factors that enabled Adventism to be “one of the major inputs for change in early-century Puno.”⁹⁰ He supports

this assertion by explaining that: (1) the missionaries minimized imposition by only expanding on villager requests; (2) doctrinal controversies were played down in favor of new standards of hygiene, temperance, health care, and morality; (3) literacy was actively fostered as students read from the Bible and Peruvian texts; (4) religion was taught, but it did not dominate the curriculum; (5) Adventist instruction was generally better-regarded than state efforts; (6) native workers were quickly trained and put to work in schools and churches; and (7) finally,

Adventist missionaries carried with them a willingness to seek new answers. They also embodied a less status-conscious life style than local *mestizos* and whites, resulting both from more democratic national and religious heritages and from their necessary alliance with Puno’s underdogs, the Indians, against abusive church and civil authorities.

In underscoring the social leveling factor, Hazen concludes simply: “The members addressed one another as ‘hermano’ and ‘hermana’ or ‘brother’ and ‘sister.’”⁹¹

Hazen’s research enables the Puno Adventist experience to be viewed in the context of the 20th century and the “near feudal” social system then existing. In addition to demonstrating that Adventism’s integrated and contextualized programs of evangelization met felt needs, he also suggests procedural approaches that led to this success.

Merling Alomia’s article, “Comienzos de la obra educativa Adventista,” copiously documents the history of Adventist educational development. Placing his investigation in the setting of the larger Protestant experience, Alomia traces the evolution of Adventist education to Camacho’s Utawilaya school and demonstrates that “the Adventist schools have played a key role in the establishment and development of the Adventist work in Peru.”⁹² Alomia clearly recognizes the indebtedness of the Adventist educational endeavor to the social vision of Manuel Camacho and other *indigenistas* of the altiplano.

Missiologist Kessler’s work, *A Study of the Older Protestant Missions and Churches in Peru*

and Chile With Special Reference to the Problems of Division, Nationalism, and Native Ministry, notes that by 1946 there were more Adventist believers in Peru than all other evangelical groups combined.⁹³ He attributes “the impressive success achieved by the Lake Titicaca Mission” under the Stahls to “creating a willingness to listen to the Adventist message throughout Peru and Bolivia.”⁹⁴ In analyzing the reasons for these developments, Kessler points out the following factors:

Theological base. Kessler flatly asserts that there “was no sectarianism in Stahl,” judging that this understanding of the gospel placed the Stahls “well ahead of most Adventists of their time.”⁹⁵ Stated positively, Kessler concludes that “Stahl preached salvation by grace and in this he set a stamp on the whole Lake Titicaca Mission.”⁹⁶ Kessler supports these characterizations of Stahl’s ecumenical theological grounding by noting that although he was a confirmed Adventist, “his book contains no reference to Adventist tenets on the second coming and apart from occasional reference to Sabbath Schools does not even use the word Sabbath.”⁹⁷

Integrated Witness. The Stahls were informed by a doctrine of the nature of humankind that called for salvation to be mediated to the totality of the human experience.⁹⁸ (Recall Encinas’ observation, noted above, that while the priests were concerned with saving souls, Stahl was interested in saving lives.)⁹⁹

Contextualized praxis. Kessler stresses that for the Stahls, evangelization was contextualized in direct response to felt needs of the population that the missionaries had come to serve. Camacho, et al, wrote the agenda for redeeming the indig-

enous peoples of the altiplano, not two Anglo missionaries from the North American Midwest. In turn, schools and clinics and markets came to incarnate the gospel in at least as forceful a manner as did chapels. And this evangelization was contextualized in a manner that bore witness not only to individual hearts, but also contributed to the change of social structures.¹⁰⁰

Indigenous leadership. Kessler identifies the Stahls’ immediate involvement of local indigenous leadership in the schools and churches as one reason why Adventism became firmly rooted in the altiplano soil. Kessler concludes that all evangelical missionary groups in Peru painted a picture of God as “One who had come to serve, but only the Adventists made it possible

for the Indians to share in the social application of the Gospel.”¹⁰¹

Samuel Escobar, a Latin American Protestant theologian, in his book *La Fe Evangélica y las Teologías de la Liberación*, undertakes the laudable task of articulating a theology of liberation that is capable of dialoguing with those outside the evangelical tradition. The task is formidable, for the “liberationist” and the “evangelist” tend to talk past one another—if they talk at all. Indeed, many would contend that the liberationist simply dismisses the evangelist as irrelevant while the evangelist dismisses the liberationist as irreverent.

The extent to which Escobar is successful in facilitating ongoing dialogue will be chronicled by subsequent religious commentators and historians. However, of particular interest to students of a social history of Adventism in the altiplano is how he chooses to begin his book. After laying out the thesis that the “gospel that

The experience of Adventism in the altiplano offers “a dramatic example” of the personal, social, economic, judicial, and political consequences that can be evoked by an authentically evangelical faith.

came to Latin America with Protestantism came with liberating force because it brought with it the power of the biblical message,"¹⁰² Escobar immediately takes his readers to Platería to introduce them to the work of Manuel Zuniga Camacho and Fernando and Ana Stahl. The reason he makes this pilgrimage is clear: the experience of Adventism in the altiplano offers "a dramatic example" of the personal, social, economic, judicial, and political consequences evoked by an authentically evangelical faith.¹⁰³

The activities of the Adventists in the Lake

Titicaca basin provides valuable insights into how Protestantism has been a force for social change in predominantly Roman Catholic Latin America. Here, beginning with the leadership of Camacho and the Stahls, Adventism functioned as a reforming and progressive movement, which contributed to reordering the social and political structure of the Peruvian highlands. In effect, this altiplano Adventism—grounded in indigenous schooling—may demonstrate for Latin America an alternative to both an authoritarian status quo and violent revolution.

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Essay Notes

1. As far as is known only Fernando ever carried firearms.

2. The indigenous percentages are likely conservative in that they are based on the 1940 census: Ministerio de Hacienda y Comercia (Dirección Nacional de Estadística) *Censo Nacional de Población y Ocupación 1940*.

3. See, for example, Tamayo Herrera and Kapsoli.

4. Key narratives about the Stahls include:

Alejandro Bullon Paucar, *El nos amaba* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana 1976). Barbara Westphal, *A Bride on the Amazon* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1948). Barbara West-phal, *Ana Stahl of the Andes and Amazon* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1968).

5. Robert G. Wearner, "Fernando Stahl, Missionary to Perú" *Adventist Heritage*, 12.2 (Summer 1988): p. 17.

6. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 67. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, pp. 85, 291.

7. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 105ff.

8. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 68ff.

9. Interviews with Camacho's son, Jorge Gerardo Camacho Salas (and referenced by numbers and notes) indicate that the title "Caique" was earned when he clandestinely assumed the role of teacher to the 25 adult students he supervised in 1898: "Es así que el 15 de febrero lo eligen como Cacique, bajo estricta promesa de no hacer mención en ningún documento y juramento." (No. 4) Interviews with Jorge Camacho, December 23, 1988, in Juliaca, Perú.

10. Limited biographical accounts of Manuel Camacho can be pieced together from the following sources:

Platería: Bocera eventual de las inquietudes culturales del campesinado puneño (subtle varies) 2.2 (November 1958): pp. 7, 8.

Justo Roman Taina C., "Manuel Z. Camacho," *Platería-Revista Extraordinaria en Homenaje cincuentenario de Platería* (March 9, 1961): pp. 5-8.

El Progreso 23.61 (November 1962), pp. 4-7. *La Voz Del Obrero* 3.48 (November 15, 1916) includes a memorial signed by Camacho on behalf of the Moho illiterates.

Stahl, *En el País de los Incas*, has information on Camacho as well as a letter he wrote from prison to Puno lawyer Señor Doctor Don Isaac Deza dated March 7, 1913, in which Camacho details the Platería attack by Puno Bishop Don Valentin Ampuero, p. 139ff.

F. A. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 174ff.

Luis Gallegos, *Manuel Z. Camacho, El campesino rebelde del altipampa* (Puno: Centro de Estudios y Reflexión de Altiplano, 1974) is an account that is high on narration and low on documentation.

11. Interviews with Jorge Camacho, December 23, 1988, in Juliaca, Peru (No. 25).

12. Jorge Camacho indicates that Camacho's formal teaching began in a clandestine manner in 1898 in the home of Don Filipe Sales with 25 adult students, the subject matter including reading, writing, hygiene, temperance, and "la sana religión evangélica Metodista." (No. 43) Interviews with Jorge Camacho, December 23, 1988, in Juliaca, Peru.

13. Camacho was released from Puno's jail December 24, 1901 and appears to have taught children in the open air during at least a portion of 1902. (No. 62) "El 25 de julio de 1903 se inauguró la primera escuela rural evangélica de Uta-laya con una brillante actuación sujeta a un modesto programa." (No. 65) Interviews with Jorge Camacho, December 23, 1988, in Juliaca, Perú.

14. Jorge Camacho names persons, places, and dates of numerous attacks and arrests—and links same to the names of prefects, subprefects, priests, and national presidents. Interviews with Jorge Camacho, December 23, 1988, in Juliaca, Lima, Peru; Barbara Westphal, *Ana Stahl*, p. 129; See sources in note No. 9 above.

15. Interview with Jim Madden, June 2, 1989, in Miraflores, Lima, Peru.

16. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 286. (Not in Spanish edition.)

17. A. N. Allen, "Peru," *Review and Herald* (July 13, 1911), p. 15; J. W. Westphal, "The Work among the Indians of Peru," *Review and Herald* (August 19, 1915): pp. 10-11.

18. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 152; Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, 187.

19. A. N. Allen, "Peru," *Review and Herald* (July 13, 1911): p. 15; J. W. Westphal, "The Message among the Aymara Indians of Peru," *Review and Herald* (August 10, 1911): p. 13.

20. Chambi y Ch. p. 38.

21. Westphal, "Work" pp. 10, 11.

22. *Ibid.*; Westphal, *Stahl*, p. 39.

23. J. M. Howell, "School Work Around Lake Titicaca," *Review and Herald* (January 18, 1917), pp. 11, 12.

24. W. E. Howell, "Titicaca Indian Schools," *Review and Herald* (October 5, 1916): p. 49.

25. Stahl, *En el País de los Incas*, p. 85ff (chapter entitled "Una Raza Oprimida" discusses at length the abuses perpetuated by the wealthy landowners, as well as the prefects, subprefects, and priests; for the English version, see Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 105ff.

26. Chambi y Ch. p. 39.

27. Hazen, p. 121, offers a concise summary of the Stahls' endeavors quoted later in this article: "Adventists have consistently been in the forefront of change in the altiplano—the missionaries combined appeals for individual salvation with a broad-based program of medical, educational, and market facilities open to all."

28. Westphal, *Fords*, p. 25.

29. See note 2 for general references on the life and work of the Stahls.

30. Hazen, p. 113; see note 27.

31. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 129ff (chapter entitled "Un 'Cristianismo' que no es Cristianismo"); for the English version, see Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 157ff (chapter entitled "Christianity That is Not Christian").

32. Estimates vary in part, no doubt, due to differing definitions as to what constitutes a school. Key variables include home school, village building, church-owned building, mission-appointed teacher. The 200 figure is cited in Hazen, p. 122, although he recognizes that "official church statistics only indicated around eighty." Lewellen, p. 130 also cites the 200 figure.

33. La Escuela Normal de Platería and Colegio Adventista del Titicaca (under other names as well) in Chulunquiani, Juliaca, have been chief boarding schools in the school system.

34. *Statistical Report of Seventh-day Adventist Conferences, Missions, and Institutions* (title varies), 1918-1960; *Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (title varies), where *Statistical Report* figures are missing, and for 1941 school figures, for which the *Statistical Report* only repeats 1940. A table is produced in Hazen, p. 112, who notes that other works "offer different figures, though variations are generally minor."

35. E. H. Wilcox, *In Perils Oft* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn. 1961), p. 100. The following article titles communicate the skyrocketing demand for personnel: E. H. Wilcox,

"Indian Believers: Thirty Calls for Teachers Unanswered," *Review and Herald* (January 5, 1925), p. 8; see also F. A. Stahl, "Openings in the Lake Titicaca Region," *Review and Herald* (February 1, 1917), p. 13.

36. Westphal, "Message," p. 12.

37. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 290 (not Span. ed.).

38. Stahl, p. 295ff.

39. See note 35.

40. Hazen, p. 121.

41. P. Erasmo Roca S., *Por la clase indígena*, ed. Pedro Barrantes Castro (Lima: Biblioteca de la Revista de Economía y Finanzas, 1935), p. 203.

42. Charles Teel, Jr. "Missionaries, Visionaries, and Revolutionaries," *Adventist Heritage*, 12:2 (Summer 1988), pp. 6, 7.

43. Interview with Ruben Chambi on December 7, 1987 in Naña, Lima, Peru. Ruben Chambi was elected on the Demócrata Cristiana ticket in 1972 but a military coup prohibited him from taking office.

44. Teel, "Missionaries" 7, reporting on an interview with Ricardo Chambi, December 7, 1987, in Arequipa, Peru. (The Maya report was corroborated in all details in an interview with Jorge Camacho, on December 9, 1987, in Juliaca, Peru, and with Domingo Vargas and Luis Ibanez on June 13, 1989 in Collina, Pomata, Peru. This story is also cited in Chambi y Ch., p. 102).

Interestingly, in an obscure footnote of Dan Hazen's *The Awakening of Puno*, a newspaper story is quoted that reports the subversive activities of Tomasa's husband: "Andres Mayta of Pomata had been in prison twenty months for having formed eleven schools." *El Indio* 4:8 (July 1907), quoted in Hazen, p. 41.

45. Churata, p. vii.

46. Tamayo Herrera, p. 208 (face page).

47. José Antonio Encinas, *Un ensayo*, pp. 148, 149.

48. Tamayo Herrera, p. 95.

49. *Ibid.*

Dora Mayer Zulen, a naturalized Peruvian and vocal Puneño indigenista, has expressed apprehension that the Protestant missionaries constituted shock troops for North American imperialistic forces. Although she acknowledged the clear contributions of the Adventist missionaries, she suggested that Adventist success was chiefly due to the "corruption" of altiplano priests. Mayer de Zullen, pp. 161-167.

50. Mostajo, p. 38.

51. On Julian Palacios Ríos, see Hazen, pp. 122, 402-14.

52. Ernesto Reyna, "Evangelista," *La Sierra* (April-May, 1928), pp. 15, 16.

53. Prada, p. 119.

54. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, pp. 244-251, quoting an extended statement entitled "Concerning the crisis in one of the villages in the province of Chucuito," in *El Siglo*, p. 21, June 1916.

55. While the figure 200 is consistently reported, Stahl has all 200 mounted on horses whereas Camacho notes that only some were mounted. See Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, pp. 131-133, for both the Stahl and the Camacho reports.

Equally full reporting of this incident appears in Kessler, pp. 231, 232.

56. "El Encarcelamiento de los Protestantes," *La Unión* (March 10, 1913): quoted in Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 133. (The English-language edition specifies the son's age as one year.) Cp. Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 166.

57. Manuel Z. Camacho, letter to Sr. Dr. Don Isaac Deza, March 7, 1913, quoted Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 134; see the English version in Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 166.

58. Camacho letter to Deza.

59. Chambi, p. 37.

60. "El Encarcelamiento de los Protestantes," *La Unión* (March 10, 1913), quoted in Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 134; see the English version in Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 166.

61. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 140; Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 174.

62. Camacho letter to Deza.

63. Stahl lists six arrests whereas Camacho lists eight. See *En el país de los Incas*, pp. 132, 140. (*In the Land of the Incas*, pp. 163, 174.) Kessler notes six initial arrests with two additional arrests being made en route to jail (pp. 231-232). An eyewitness confirms this account, and adds that one of those arrested on the way to jail was Camacho himself (interview with Gabriel Chambi, June 11, 1989, in Platería, Puno, Peru). In "A Footnote in Adventist History," *Special Studies Journal* 1 (1984): pp. 4-7, Floyd Greenleaf notes that the records of the Department of State (U.S.A.), 823,404.14, consists of a dispatch from the then-U.S. minister to Peru, H. Clay Howard, and an enclosed news clipping from Lima's English-language newspaper, the *West Coast Leader* (October 2, 1913), which reports one woman being among those detained. Chambi y Ch. (pp. 32, 33) names seven males who were incarcerated: Patricio Camacho, Jacinto Tarqui, Esteban Miranda, Simeon Nara, Mario Chambi Poma, Melchor Ignacio, and Manuel Camacho.

64. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 132; *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 163.

65. "El encarcelamiento de los Protestantes"; see Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 137; the English edition is in Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, pp. 168, 169.

66. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 137; *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 170.

67. Herbert Money, *La libertad religiosa en el Perú* (Lima: Antartida, 1965), p. 37.

68. "Al Margen de los Crímenes Cometidos en la Provincia de Chucuito," *El Siglo* (June 21, 1916), quoted in Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, p. 201; see the English version in Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 245.

69. Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, 228; see the English version in Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, p. 273.

70. Pedro Kalbermatter, *20 años como misionero entre los indios del Perú (apuntes autobiográficos)* (Paraña: Nueva Impresora, 1950), p. 88ff.

71. Wilcox, p. 167ff.

72. Assaults on missionaries are noted in Wilcox, pp.

112, 116, 122, 166ff; Stahl, *En el país de los Incas*, pp. 127-150; Kalbermatter, p. 88ff; Westphal, *Fords*, pp. 26, 27.

73. *El Herald* 3:144 (June 2, 1927), p. 7 prints a memorial drafter by the women of Azangaro in September 1923.

74. Dora Mayer, ed., *El indígena Peruano a los cien años de república libre e independiente* (Lima: Casanova, 1921), p. 57, and Roca S., p. 189ff, discuss both the commission and its findings.

75. Roca S., p. 192.

76. *El Siglo* 7:1707 (August 9, 1920); Roca S., pp. 253, 254.

77. The Stahls worked out of Iquitos and the Upper Amazon until their retirement and return to the United States in 1938. Narratives detailing the Amazon chapter of their career are Stahl, *Amazon*; Westphal, *Bride*; and Westphal, *Ana Stahl*.

78. Lewellen, p. 4ff.

79. W. E. Carter, "Innovation and Marginality: Two South American Case Studies," *American Indígena* 80: pp. 389, 391. Carter's conclusions, Lewellen notes, appear to square with the classical anthropological viewpoint articulated by Roger Keesing. Keesing decries the "austerity and emptiness of the new life" offered to Protestant converts and contends that, accordingly, a "pall of Protestant gloom hangs over many a community in the Pacific and tropical South America that once throbbed with life, laughter, and song." [See Roger M. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology: A Contemporary Perspective* (New York: Holt, 1976), p. 461.] Keesing's observation that Weber and Tawney compellingly argued for the close association of Protestantism and capitalism thus informs the Weberian hypothesis.

80. Lewellen, p. 122.

81. *Ibid.* pp. 114-116.

82. *Ibid.* p. 125.

83. *Ibid.* pp. 132, 133.

84. *Ibid.* p. 132.

85. *Ibid.* p. 133.

86. *Ibid.* p. 136.

87. Hazen. Note especially the abstract immediately following the title page and Chapter 9, "The Process of Social Change in Puno" (pp. 415-434; see also p. 35ff).

88. *Ibid.* p. 121.

89. Kessler, p. 121.

90. *Ibid.* p. 122.

91. *Ibid.* pp. 111-114.

92. Alomia Bartra, p. 135.

93. Kessler, p. 241.

94. *Ibid.* p. 241.

95. *Ibid.* p. 230.

96. *Ibid.* p. 230.

97. *Ibid.* p. 230.

98. *Ibid.* p. 230ff.

99. See note 60.

100. Kessler, pp. 231-233.

101. *Ibid.* p. 242.

102. Escobar, p. 18.

103. *Ibid.* pp. 118-120.