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POWER IN RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE:

A discourse analysis of two sermons from the Universal Church of the
Kingdom of God

Por

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ABSTRACT

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A discourse analysis of sermons from the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God

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Discourse analysis has become an alternative approach to the study of language and its relation to society, investigating the influence and power of language on the maintenance and change of social relations. Based on theories about discourse analysis, this research aims at identifying how power is manifested in the genre of sermons by analyzing two written texts, one in English and one in Portuguese, written by bishop Edir Macedo from the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. The Universal Church was chosen among other evangelical churches due to its recent growth in Brazil and other foreign countries. The research is carried out based on the social dimension of discourse (Fairclough, 1989, 1992) and organized according to the components of hortatory texts (Longacre, 1992) which are: establishment of authority/author's credentials; presentation of problem/solution; issuing commands and resort to motivation. Results showed that a great amount of ideological power is present in the sermons as they depict social values and

employ them as common sense notions in an attempt to influence the readers' conduct. The use of the Bible also appeared as a strong means of establishing power since its stories may stand as metaphorical constructions of reality. These findings may provide evidence for the influence that social dimensions have upon texts as well as the texts have upon social dimensions.

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RESUMO

A análise do discurso surgiu com uma proposta ampla de demonstrar a influência do uso da linguagem na manutenção e mudança de parâmetros sociais. Esta pesquisa propõe-se a identificar a forma de manifestação de poder no gênero dos sermões baseando-se nas teorias relacionadas à análise do discurso. Dois textos serão estudados: um em inglês e outro em português, escritos pelo bispo Edir Macedo da Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus. A Igreja Universal foi escolhida entre outras igrejas evangélicas devido ao seu crescimento recente no Brasil e em países estrangeiros. A pesquisa é desenvolvida no âmbito social do discurso (Fairclough, 1992) e organizada de acordo com os componentes dos textos hortatórios (Longacre, 1992): estabelecimento de autoridade/credenciais do autor; apresentação de um problema/solução; comandos e motivação. Os resultados mostraram que a manifestação de poder ideológico é constante nos sermões. Através da retratação de valores sociais aplicados como noções de senso comum, o texto pode influenciar a conduta dos leitores. O uso da Bíblia também se mostrou como um fator importante no estabelecimento de poder, pois suas histórias podem demonstrar construções metafóricas da realidade. Os resultados da pesquisa fornecem evidência de que o âmbito social afeta os textos assim como os textos exercem influência sobre o âmbito social.

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CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

1.1 Purposes of analysis

Assuming that religious discourse is shaped by relations of power in society, the main purpose of this research is to identify such manifestations in two written sermons of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. The reoccurring features of sermons in which an aspect of everyday life is discussed and in which the addressees are told how to proceed may provide evidence to establish the way power is present in the discourse of this specific religious institution.

The notion of power in this work is based on the idea proposed by Fairclough (1989) that “(...) language contributes to the domination of some people by others.” (p. 01), and that “nobody who has an interest in modern society, and certainly nobody who has an interest in relationships of power in modern society, can afford to ignore language.” (p. 03).

The analysis of the data is grounded on the principles of discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1989, 1992), and Kress (1989), and it is framed on the notion of hortatory texts (Longacre, 1992; Meurer, 1998), which sheds light on specific occurrences of specific macroelements within the discussed genre. In addition, discourse analysis may contribute to the study of the sermons considering mainly the level of social practice in the tri-dimensional model in which texts are embedded (Fairclough, 1989; 1992). The identification of powerful elements in the data collected may provide evidence to define features that allure disciples and make these disciples review previous creeds, establishing the Universal Church’s beliefs as truth. The

Universal Church was chosen due to the great number of people it was able to reach in a considerable short period of time becoming an outstanding evangelical church in the last decades.

1.2 Reasons for the option of sermons

Since sermons are common sources of preaching pervaded by strong ideological features, I considered relevant to study this specific genre in order to investigate how the Universal Church struggles to use ideological power to influence the people engaged in such form of communication. By ideological power I mean “the power to project one’s practices as universal and ‘common sense’ (...) exercised in discourse.” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 33). Thus, the data collected may provide evidence to establish the relation between the social and textual as well as they may offer the possibility to identify the persuasive strategies applied in the discourse of the Universal Church to attract and maintain followers.

1.3 Data Collection

The two sermons were collected from the Universal Church’s newspaper available on the Internet (www.urcauniversal.org.com.br). The data to be analyzed in the current study were picked at random among several texts available on the Church’s website. Assuming that most part of the Pentecostal movement in Brazil has financial, political, ideological or institutional ties with American evangelism (Carvalho, 1998, p.79), I selected one sermon written in English and one in Portuguese. The comparison between the two sermons of the same church, one written in Portuguese, the language of the country in which the church was created, and one in English, the language of the

country on which the ideology of the church was based, may provide relevant elements for the study of the way ideological power is manifested through the genre in both languages.

1.4 Data analysis

The dissertation aims at identifying some of the ways ideological power is textualized in the sermons of the Universal Church. Theoretical concepts used in the analysis are discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents some social aspects of religion and introduces the Universal Church, information which contributes to contextualize the sermons since the analysis is carried out mainly on the social level of Fairclough's tri-dimensional concept of discourse (1992), although other theories, such as the features of the context of situation (Halliday, 1978, 1989) have helped in the process of analysis. In order to organize the dissertation, the notion of hortatory text and its macrocomponents worked as regulators for the discussion in Chapters 4 and 5.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Besides Chapter 1, the introduction, this dissertation is subdivided into five more chapters. In Chapter 2 - General Theoretical Perspectives - Some aspects of the theoretical background on discourse analysis are discussed. Relevant premises to the analysis are carried out based on theories of Fairclough, Halliday, Hasan, Kress, among others.

Chapter 3 – Religion and Social Perspectives – aims at providing diverse introductory theories on the study of religion as an attempt to place the sermons in their social context.

Chapter 4 – The Analysis – Part I – introduces the analysis and aims at demonstrating the discursive strategies present in the data collected making use of the presented theories. Sermon 1 and 2 are introduced and discussed in this Chapter regarding two of the 4 main macrocomponents which constitute hortatory texts namely: establishment of authority/author’s credentials and presentation of a problem/solution. The macrocomponents were divided in two chapters for organization purposes only, since the components work together in order to form a cohesive and coherent text.

Chapter 5 – The Analysis – Part II – Even though the features pertinent to one macrocomponent may even be pertinent to another, this chapter deals with motivation and issuing of commands. Both sermons are analyzed on the grounds of the studies presented in Chapter 2 and 3.

As a conclusion to the dissertation, Chapter 6 presents the final remarks providing a summary of ideas assembled through the present work and suggests further research.

CHAPTER 2

General Theoretical Perspectives on Discourse

2.1 Introduction

Language in its social context may be called discourse, which is for discourse analysis a form of ‘social practice’. It is in fact through language that ideas are kept or transformed and it is the element from which social environments are shaped. There is, therefore, a reciprocal relation between discourse and society. They are dependent: discourse influences social practices as well as social practices influence discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

This reciprocal relation between discourse and social practice has influenced the reconstruction or transformation of attitudes of social groupings. As Kress (1989) points out: “institutions and social groupings have specific meanings and values which are articulated in language in systematic ways” (p. 6). Language has always been, by its proper nature, an instrument to establish beliefs, distinguish social classes, institute prejudice, keep or transform ideologies, start revolutions and as a mechanism for innumerable social struggles.

The sermons of the Universal Church stand as an example of how values are conveyed in language. Through the discourse of the Church it is possible to notice that social aspects of religion are reviewed, contributing to the efficiency of the text. In an attempt to insert sermons in the context of discourse analysis I discuss the concepts which I consider relevant to Chapters 4 and 5.

As a first step, the context of situation is discussed so that the sermons may be seen in the social context where they are produced. As a next topic, the notion of genre is introduced, and as soon as sermons are classified as a genre, the concept of hortatory text is presented. The macrocomponents which constitute hortatory texts are the basis for the organization of ideas in the analysis. On account of the social influence in the way the sermons are articulated, it is also of elementary importance to discuss the tri-dimensional level of discourse proposed by Fairclough, since the analysis focuses upon the social level of the model.

The theory discussed in this chapter are concepts on which the analysis lies upon in order to organize the text and identify power manifested through this kind of religious discourse. Discourses carry ideological meanings, and these meanings come from chains of social power relations expressing concepts of particular institutions (Kress, 1989) working as regulators of social activities. Power and ideology are related in the sense that “(...) the nature of the ideological assumptions embedded in particular conventions, and so the nature of those conventions themselves, depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions.” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2)

In the next section the sermons will be placed in the social context in which they are employed.

2.2 Context of situation and its features

Through the notion of the context of situation it is possible to establish relations between the text and the situation in which it occurs. Based on notions about the social aspects influencing the instant text production, Halliday (1978, 1989) has characterized texts in relation to their context of situation proposing a three-heading approach: the

field, the tenor, and the mode. These three dimensions of context help to make predictions about what will be said and how it will be said.

The field of discourse is related to what is happening, or “the institutional setting in which a piece of language occurs, and embraces not only the subject matter in hand but the whole activity of the speaker or participant in a setting” (Halliday, 1978, p. 33). The tenor of discourse concerns the participants in a particular text or “who is taking part” in the text. It refers to “the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles.” (Halliday, 1989, p. 12). The mode of discourse focuses on “what part the language is playing, what is it that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation.” It includes “the channel (is it spoken or written or some combination of the two?) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, and the like.” (Halliday, 1989, p. 12).

Analyzed in terms of Halliday’s framework, the field of the sermons in this work is a religious sermon, Pentecostal to be more specific, made for a site on the internet. The tenor consists of the agents, who are the pastor and the readers, where there is a hierarchic relationship with the pastor as the superordinate and the readers as the subordinate. Finally the mode is classified as a written medium and presented in a persuasive rhetorical mode as the speaker/writer aims at influencing the addresses’ conduct.

Grounded on the definitions of field, tenor and mode it would be possible to affirm that the way a text is organized is related to the conventional structure of that text even though there may be variation in the elements of the plot. This notion was discussed by Hasan (Halliday & Hasan, 1989) who affirms that elements in a text may be either obligatory or optional, however, the first characterize the genre. This means that in a

communicative process, if one of the parts intends to ignore a procedure that would be considered regular, as paying for groceries, for instance, and decides to run away without paying, there would be a change in the elements which constitute that process. The discussion about regular elements in a specific text introduces the notion of genre as follows.

2.3 Discourse and genre

The notion of genre emerged in order to classify different sorts of texts and identify their common characteristics or elements (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). As stated by Kress (1989), “genres have specific forms and meanings, deriving from and encoding the functions, purposes and meanings of the social occasions.” (p.19)

Different kinds of texts may be characterized according to the appropriate elements of their specific type of discourse, thus they offer the possibility of anticipation to the contextualized setting they are part of. The participants or the audience may tell a sermon from a tale and expect different outcomes from those specific text types.

Sermons have already been defined as a genre by Alan Brinton (1995) who, in order to establish concession as a strategy in Bishop Butler’s Sermon 11, identifies co-occurrent elements in christian sermons. He points out that in sermons there is always the presence of a biblical text; the author of the sermon has some intention over the audience and he carries out these intentions in the form of conventions which govern the genre; and finally he shows familiarity with these conventions.

Genre determines how things “will be said in a contextually determined form. Discourse and genre are discrete factors despite the fact that both are constantly present together in linguistic form.” Discourse, as the hortatory type, for instance, “determines

what is to be said” (Kress, 1989, p. 29), in other words, it implies the presence of components which characterize the text. The classification of sermons as a genre seems important since the definition involves the notions concerning the social aspects in which the text emerges and it also involves reoccurring elements in the practice of the discourse.

Considering the previous assumption, the notion of hortatory discourse and its macrocomponents are discussed in the next section.

2.4 Hortatory Discourse

A sermon can be characterized as a hortatory discourse (Longacre 1983, 1992), a subtype of behavioral discourse. As Longacre posits:

Hortatory discourse aims at influencing conduct, that is, getting the receivers of the text to do something they are not currently doing, to discontinue something they are doing, to continue doing something they are already doing, to expend greater effort in an activity embarked on, to modify the nature of their efforts, and so on.

(Longacre, 1992, p. 109)

Hortatory texts present ‘obligatory’ elements as suggested by Hasan (1989) and may be sustained by the following basics:

A hortatory text, that is, a text whose purpose is to modify the conduct of the receivers of the text has four typical moves: (1) establishment of the authority/credibility of the text producer; (2) presentation of a problem/situation; (3)

issuing one or more commands, which can be mitigated to suggestions of varying urgency; and (4) resort to motivation (essentially threats with prediction of desirable results, and promises along with predictions of desirable results). In this schema, (3) is minimal and basic, i.e., hortatory discourse cannot be such without commands/suggestions and it may consist wholly of commands/suggestions.

Characteristically such a discourse is brusque and brief. But even in such a minimal hortatory text, the presence of (2) is implied (or presenting the context of situation), i.e., there is necessarily some problem/situation which evokes the command elements. Most hortatory discourse also includes (4), motivation – unless the power of the speaker/writer over the addressee is incontestable. All this in turn implies (1) even if not overtly stated. (Longacre, 1992, pp. 110-111).

A Sermon fits the hortatory notion because it is a discursive instance where whoever possesses power and knowledge (credentials) discusses a problem (problem solution) and encourages (motivation) the group to overcome this problem through his orientation (command). The way these moves are carried out characterize the genre of the sermons, presenting the co-occurrent elements as commented in the previous section.

Religious values and common practices of the church influence on the constitution of the sermons, and the sermons depict standards that were kept or transformed through religious history, demonstrating the relevance of the social aspect in this kind of discourse.

According to Fairclough (1989, 1992), discourse is constituted by three different levels, and these levels are able to represent language in its social context.

2.5 Fairclough's tri-dimensional concept of discourse

According to Fairclough (1992), his tri-dimensional conception of discourse – text, discursive practice, and social practice:

(...) is an attempt to bring together three analytical traditions, each of which is indispensable for discourse analysis. These are the tradition of close textual and linguistic analysis within linguistics, the macrosociological tradition of analyzing social practice in relation to social structures, and the interpretivist or microsociological tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared commonsense procedures. (p. 72)

The text itself is the only concrete level (physically seen) and concerns language forms and their meanings. The analysis of this level may be organized into vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure. Fairclough (1992) posits that such structures “can give a lot of insight into the systems of knowledge and belief that are built into the conventions of text types.” (p. 78). The second level - discursive practice - is related to the production, distribution and consumption of the text. It varies according to the situation at hand and according to the members that are taking part in the process.

The analysis in this dissertation focuses mainly on the third level: the social practice. I say mainly because, even though the levels are constituted of three different dimensions of discourse, they are at the same time dependent on each other and there may be situations when one level has to be mentioned in order to demonstrate something in another.

The level of social practice is divided into two headings: ideology and hegemony. They are related to the significations and constructions of reality and institutionalized forms of domination within society, respectively. Regardless of the fact that the analysis will be based mostly on ideological concepts, the idea of hegemony is also relevant since ideology is a means of establishing hegemony, in other words, people holding the same ideology form groups that share similar objectives and aspirations establishing hegemonies. As said by Fairclough (1989) hegemony “is leadership, as much as domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society” (p. 92), it is “about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes, through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent.” (p. 92)

The concept of hegemony helps to construct a connection between power relations in social practices and how they are, to a great extent, kept or transformed by the production of texts, a connection which may establish once more, the idea of discourse as a socially dependent, and at the same time, constitutive practice. Still according to Fairclough (1992), ideology can be defined as “significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discourse practices, and which contribute to the production or transformation of relations of domination.” (p. 87)

Halliday (1989) posits that the essential qualities of society and the nature of social beings are shaped by social conventions. The qualities of a social being relate to the use of language with people who have surrounded the individual since the early stages of social interaction, like the experience with neighbors, family or teachers as well as the exposure one had to different forms of written texts. From Halliday’s point of view, one

learns to think, get to logical conclusions, or establish interpersonal relations through language use, since one is first exposed to it. The church is also an institution that supports Halliday's assumption since it forms groups that share a same religious perspective and establishes a new form of discourse contributing to interpersonal relations since the people involved in the church community may have common purposes. The discourse of the church classifies and positions people, also reinforcing cultural and social differences (Fairclough, 1989, 1992).

Taking into account that social situations are established by relations of power and that one's profile is formed in social circumstances which are, in turn loaded by ideologies, it may be hard to perceive the relations of domination present in discourse, turning institutionalized concepts into common sense notions. As Fairclough (1989) puts it: "It is the conception of ideology as an 'implicit philosophy' in the practical activities of social life, backgrounded and taken for granted, that connects it to 'common sense.'" (p. 84). Still according to Fairclough (1989), the relationship of power in language has created 'common sense' assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware." (p. 02). The notion of common sense is frequently noticed in the analysis of the sermons, once the issues, following the words of the bible, have become institutionalized and are carried out as if they were the only paths to be followed.

The idea of power relation and ideology related to language discussed so far is essential to the analysis in this work since the analysis aims exactly at identifying the power in language through assumptions which may be embedded in the discourse of the

Universal Church and recognize how these assumptions are shared among those who engage in that communicative process.

Although the strong relation between ideology, discourse and power relation might seem clear, it is not noticed by a great number of people, and discourse analysis thus aims “to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). Discourse analysis stands as a prosperous field which allows the identification of ideological dominations, as well as power relations within discourse, searching for evidence in various texts and areas.

In order to help understand the social context surrounding religious discourse, next chapter introduces some ideas about religion and also about the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 3

Religion and Social Perspectives

3.1 Introduction

As far as anthropological studies are concerned, religion has been a part of the social environment in its most primitive forms (Burkert, 1996; Mallinowski, 1984). All communities have had a relation to deities and have attributed to them the power of guiding nature. The idea of personification of an exterior invisible force has helped humankind to bear the doubts and loads of existence. According to Tambiah, 1990:

Deprivations or prosperity have been associated to the wills of the divinity, hence, the honors to superior idealized gods have guaranteed furtherance in life. The concepts of religion, just like social thought, have been redefined, transformed, revised or even reversed by means of new approaches of new religious institutions.

(p. 4)

The church stands as the main institution that establishes religious actions within society. Churches are responsible for the creation of new groups in hold of a same religious ideology, presenting singular manners to worship and believe in God. According to Tambiah (1990), the church was instituted in Early Christianity and it was, since then, established as an integral component of religion.

3.2 Sustaining divine power for social and personal reasons

One of the anthropological theories that sustain the long existence of religion is found in Malinowski (1984) and it is grounded on the assumption that primitive religion has its bases on the belief of spiritual beings, and had its origin in the coherent, but mistaken interpretation of dreams, visions, hallucinations, cataleptic states or any similar phenomenon. Considering that these states were related to spiritual concerns by those who experienced them, philosophers tried to differentiate body from spirit, and the latter would exist after death because it was present in manifestations as the ones specified above, haunting the living in memories and visions and apparently having influence on the destiny of humankind.

Human beings have the need to find an explanation for existence and for the misfortunes they are exposed to. Considering that there has never been a concrete answer for those questions, humanity has attributed to deities the power of guidance of life, and they have searched for answers in spiritual domains. An anthropological approach to these issues is found in Malinowski (1984), when he affirms that:

Tanto a magia como a religião surgem e resultam de situações de tensão emocional: crises da vida, lacunas em objectivos importantes, morte e iniciação nos mistérios tribais, infelicidade no amor e ódio não mitigado. Tanto a magia como a religião permitem escapes para tais situações e impasses, e só proporcionam uma saída empírica, passando pelo ritual e pela crença, para o domínio do sobrenatural. Este domínio abarca na religião, crenças em fantasmas, espíritos, os primitivos presságios da providência, os guardiões dos mistérios tribais (...). Quer a magia quer

a religião assentam estritamente na tradição mitológica, e existem também na atmosfera do milagroso, numa constante revelação do seu prodigioso poder. (p. 90).

A psychological approach may also establish a similar relation between religion and the human necessity for its existence. Bertolucci (1991) says that:

O medo da perda da onipotência (eu posso tudo), perda da vida (eu não morro), perda da identidade (eu sou solidamente isso e aquilo), perda de bens materiais (eu possuo), perda de posições e/ou papéis sociais (eu sou isso ou aquilo perante a sociedade), perda de segurança (eu me defendo) e outros medos geram posições de dependência e favorecem a regressão para elementos mágicos e míticos. (p. 39)

Religion has stood as a regulator of actions in the same strength as has law. The main difference between them is in relation to the sanctions that concern spiritual and physical punishments respectively. Doctrines have helped to construct the parameters of morality and assisted social welfare by establishing values (Malinowski, 1984).

Burkert (1996) assumes that a highly developed awareness of authority within a complex system of rank was well established in all primate societies, and people in all social communities have been induced to adapt to conventionalized norms or laws in order to impose limits to their instinctive behavior and be accepted as group members.

Morality has also been transmitted in forms of fairy tales, legends, myths, and personal stories through the history of humankind. To the Christians, a strong base of morality lies upon the religious narratives documented in the Bible. According to Malinowski (1984) stories that deal with social issues:

(...) muito embora se nos afigurem maravilhosas e inverossímeis, não deixam de estar relacionadas com toda a boa fé, porque se destinam, ou pelo menos assim crê o seu contador, a explicar, por intermédio de algo concreto e inteligível, uma idéia abstrata ou concepções vagas e difíceis como Criação, Morte, distinção de raças ou espécies animais, as diferentes tarefas dos homens e das mulheres; as origens dos ritos e costumes, ou notáveis objectos naturais ou monumentos pré-históricos; o significado de nomes de pessoas ou lugares. Tais histórias são por vezes descritas como etiológicas porque têm como objectivo explicar o porquê da existência ou da ocorrência de algo. (p. 111)

Stories, as defined above, may help understand complex concepts through the use of metaphorical associations, bringing abstract notions closer to their reality. This way, religion might be faced as any other institution in society. Malinowski (1984) assures that:

O reconhecimento de que a magia e a religião não são meramente uma doutrina ou uma filosofia, não apenas o cerne da opinião intelectual, mas um modo especial de comportamento, uma atitude pragmática impregnada de razão, sentimento e vontade em partes iguais. É um modo de acção, assim como um sistema de crença, um fenómeno sociológico, bem como uma experiência pessoal. (p. 26)

To such an extent, “religion, both past and present, appears in special cultural, social, and historical settings, that can be elaborated as symbolic systems and interpreted in fascinating ways” (Burkert, 1996, p. 8). Although the religious symbols

by themselves do not create a sense of reality or actual divine existence, the activities developed within a group holding the same beliefs guarantee the persistence of certain ideologies as the group exchanges experiences and faith, as well as react to them. The need for religion has given the church an incredible power over social variables.

Dedicating their work to encourage the less fortunate part of society, the Evangelical Churches adapted their discourse to the reality that has been experienced by some people in relation to common contemporary problems.

3.3 The Arrival of Evangelical Churches

As the years passed, a large number of churches appeared promising to have the way and the knowledge to propose ways for a better life in this world and take their followers to a fair place after death. Different religious ideologies influence specific groups whereas these groups identify their dilemmas with the proposals and discourse of a specific church. As divine argumentation is based on immaterial grounds, mankind is easily deceived by it. Toynbee (1956) says that:

(...) man loves his prejudices, and he can always find leaders who will indulge him in this frailty (...). These leaders make their business pay in the coin of authority as well as monetary profit. (pp. 177-78)

The Universal Church, an evangelical institution, may stand as an illustration of Toynbee's ideas since it has outshined in attracting followers. Evangelical churches are divided in two branches: The Historicals and the Pentecostals. The Historicals are descendent of the protestant reformulation of Martin Luther in 1517, as the Baptist and

the Lutheran Church, for instance. The Pentecostals arrived in the USA in 1901 and in Brazil in 1910. This branch emphasizes divine cures and miracles.

According to Carvalho, 1998:

Em todas as regiões do mundo submetidas à presença do evangelismo norte-americano, a esfera espiritual vem sendo conquistada, em alguma medida, pelo mesmo solo mercantilista que vigora nos Estados Unidos. (p. 103)

The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God was created in 1977 by bishop Edir Macedo and it owns radio and TV stations and acts strongly in the political area (see Revista *Época*, nº 124, 02/2000). Still according to *Época*, the evangelical population in Brazil has already reached 22 million. Among the followers, 75% are part of the Pentecostal branch, which is constituted of hundreds of temples and denominations. Pentecostalism in Brazil has a growing rate of 7% a year, a similar rate of those who have no religion. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the “no-religion” community was 2 million in 1980, 7 million in 1991. Today according to the department of sociology of the University of São Paulo (USP), it is around 18 million.

According to Revista *Época* (nº 124), the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God has 2.5 million followers according to researchers, or 8 million, according to the church’s statistics. Pentecostalism attracts the lower class layers: 11% are illiterate, 68% have finished primary school, 33% earn around 2 minimum salaries or around 3.600 reais a year, 34% are ‘pardos’¹ and 11% are African Brazilians.

¹ The offspring originated by the crossing of black and white races.

The persuasion that the church exerts is said to reach those ‘who have nothing to lose and is described by Boris Fausto in Folha de São Paulo as the ‘therapy for the poor.’ Still according to Folha de São Paulo, the success of the Universal Church is due to reasons such as:

Promessa de salvação instantânea, intimidade com o dinheiro, tolerância em relação aos costumes dos fiéis, organização empresarial sofisticada, exploração dos meios de comunicação de massa e técnicas de persuasão energética fazem dos neoevangélicos o McDonald’s da religião contemporânea.

The next section of this chapter will deal specifically with the philosophy behind the Universal Church.

3.3.1 The philosophy of the Universal Church

Edir Macedo, the self-appointed bishop of the Universal Church, in less than two decades has transformed a little sect in Brazil into a large organization with branches all over the world. According to Epstein (1995):

(...) in addition to the theatrics of their worship with ‘miracle cures’, exorcisms and personal accounts of the church’s effectiveness, the Universal Church offers cure and solution for any kind of problem, be it financial, sentimental or health. ‘Jesus Christ is the solution’ is the pastor’s answer to afflictions as diverse as depression, vices, unemployment, family disharmony, insomnia and headaches. They even promise to cure AIDS and homosexuality. (p. 1)

Edir Macedo, a state lottery administrator, founded a religious institution in 1977. It aims to support people who have not found answers for their suffering in any other spiritual domain. The church tries to reach those who suffer and promises salvation and solution to problems in this world, assuring that Jesus wants people to achieve happiness now rather than after death. All these offers have gradually reached a larger number of people and in 20 years of history bishop Macedo has built an empire. In 1995 there were more than 2.000 temples in 46 different countries (Nascimento, 1995). Still according to Nascimento (1995):

O rito se repete em todo o país: atolado nas agruras do cotidiano, o crente em potencial é fígado pela oratória torrencial dos pastores. Sente-se atraído por uma fala embebida em exemplos bíblicos e articulada por eficientes técnicas de convencimento. O ceticismo dos fracos de fé sucumbe à necessidade de ancorar esperanças. Tem início a conversão, processo que todo evangélico faz questão de preservar na memória (...).

According to data provided by the website of the Universal Church, the church started with the idea of bishop Edir Macedo, to create a sect in which followers could have faith in a God that is alive. Macedo started to preach in the streets, and soon, supported by a small group of people who used to join his preaching, was able to rent the first venue for the church. This happened back in July 9th, 1977, in Rio de Janeiro. The number of people who started to join the church increased, and so did the number of places where the services were held. Before being called Universal Church, the name

it has nowadays, the church had been called Cruzada do Caminho Eterno and Igreja da Bênção. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and its regulations and statutes have been elaborated and established by the bishop Edir Macedo among other bishops.

As the church grew, new and also bigger venues had to be rented and, since then, the church has never stopped growing. Macedo claims that his mission has been to take the words of God to people all around the world and to achieve his mission he has had to use various means of communication. He started spreading his words about God in a 15-minute radio station program called “O Despertar da Fé” in ‘Radio Metropolitana’, a radio station in Rio de Janeiro. Later, the same program was broadcast by the then existing television channel *TV Tupi* in Rio de Janeiro, with repercussion in São Paulo and other Brazilian states. After that, the church continued to rent time on TV stations and even took over some of them, creating a network of radio and television stations to popularize the work carried out by this religious institution. (Nascimento, 1995)

According to the church’s website (<http://www.arcauniversal.com/>), the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God expresses its beliefs as listed below:

- i.** There is only one God, a male deity, who is alive, true, and eternal. He holds great wisdom and power and He created everything visible and invisible. His divinity is of equal importance in each of His three persons, which constitute the Trine, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- ii.** The Father and the Son, were the first and second to appear to humankind. The latter, Jesus Christ, was born from Virgin Mary and is believed to be half human and half God. He came to free humankind and was crucified in the name of our freedom.

After the third day of his death he was reborn and is now sitting at the right side of the Father.

- iii.** The manifestation of the third person, the Holy Spirit is in the human heart, to convince them of sin, justice and judgment. As soon as something wrong is done, the Holy Spirit shows the mistake through consciousness and allows regret. The Holy Spirit functions as the regulator of daily attitudes and appeals to character as a means of living as Jesus did.
- iv.** The Bible was written by enlightened men and is the pattern from which opinions and conducts must be judged.
- v.** Humankind can only be justified through the words of the Bible and the faith in Jesus Christ.
- vi.** Baptism is carried out by submersion in water as a symbol of purification and sanctity in life. After Baptism the individual must change the bad habits in life, such as: addiction, moodiness, egotism, pleasure in misbehaving in relation to God's character, etc.
- vii.** The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are valuable until our present moment. To avoid the misuse of the gift of prophecy all the words and faith of the Universal Church are supported by the words of the Bible. The Holy Spirit gives that gift to those who set an example in private, religious and social life.
- viii.** The taxes paid to the church are as sacred as the words of God. They mean fidelity and love for Jesus Christ on the part of the faithful. They symbolize the blood of those who have been saved in the name of those who need salvation.
- ix.** Jesus Christ gave spiritual authority to His followers to cure the sick, release demons and take His word in the name of the Holy Spirit throughout the world.

- x. All Christians have the right to have an abundant life according to the words of Jesus Christ.
- xi. All Christians must expect the return of Jesus as soon as possible and be ready for his return.
- xii. The final aim of a permanent relationship with Jesus by faith is eternal life, which he promised to those who persist.

All these perspectives may, to a certain extent, be identified in the sermons of the church analyzed in this work, although the ones that are relevant to the present analysis are items iii, iv, v, vii, viii and ix, since they present important premises related to power in discourse in the text. The values held by the church are strongly present in the words of bishop Edir Macedo, as the sermons presented in the next chapter may show.

CHAPTER 4

The analysis – Part I

4.1 Introduction

The following study is based on the theoretical perspectives presented in the two previous chapters. Chapter 2 stands as an overview of theories from which the written analysis is carried out as it situates sermons in the context of discourse studies and discusses power and ideology within the social dimensions of discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough. Chapter 3 provides support mainly for the understanding of the social context in which the sermons are embedded.

The analysis is divided into 4 main headings, namely: Establishment of authority/author's credentials; presentation of a problem/solution; issuing one or more commands; and resort to motivation. These four macrocomponents characterize the hortatory genre, which aims at influencing the addressees' conduct and of which the religious sermons are a significant representation. Each heading deals with the sermons separately.

This first analytical chapter deals with the establishment of authority/author's credentials and the presentation of a problem/solution, while Chapter 5 deals with the other two headings. The separation into four headlines does not mean that they appear independently in the text. Rather, they are strongly linked and sometimes two or more

functions may be conveyed by the same sentence. I chose to deal with them separately for organizational purposes only, due to the close relation they have in practice.

Throughout the analysis of Sermon 2, a comparison to Sermon 1 is drawn and the identification of common or different elements on the same genre in different languages will be possible.

Both sermons are presented below.

4.2 SERMON 1

Palavras do Bispo Edir Macedo

O dízimo

1 Dízimo significa os primeiros dez por cento de tudo o que vem às nossas mãos; é as
 2 primícias da nossa renda ou os primeiros frutos da nossa colheita. Se o cristão não
 3 considerar o dízimo dessa forma, corre o risco de perder os seus inúmeros benefícios
 4 e herdar as maldições de sua desobediência. O dízimo demonstra a fidelidade do
 5 reconhecimento do servo para com o Senhor de todas as coisas. O cristão fiel não
 6 paga o dízimo por imposição ou obrigação, mas por livre e espontânea vontade, e
 7 com todo o prazer; isso porque ele reconhece, no mais profundo de sua alma, o
 8 Senhor Jesus Cristo como sendo seu único Senhor e Salvador. Os ímpios não são
 9 assim; eles não têm nenhum compromisso de fé com quem quer que seja. Qualquer
 10 que seja a sua religião, não se comprometem de verdade com os seus deuses; nem a
 11 eles são fiéis. O dízimo demonstra fidelidade a Deus, mas em amor. Podemos

12 avaliar e compreender isso melhor comparando com o casamento: uma pessoa pode
13 casar e ser fiel ao seu marido ou a sua esposa por uma questão de interesse próprio.
14 É o caso de pessoas de certa projeção social, como políticos, executivos de grandes
15 empresas, e outros, que têm de aparentar um casamento bem sucedido, ou mesmo o
16 caso do presidente de uma nação, que normalmente aparece em público com a sua
17 esposa. Há também aquelas pessoas ambiciosas que se submetem a uma situação de
18 aparente fidelidade apenas por interesse na herança do outro, uma fidelidade
19 dependente das circunstâncias. Aliás, esse é o caso daqueles que são dizimistas fiéis
20 apenas por imposição da própria consciência cristã, não motivada pela alegria ou
21 pelo amor.

22 Por outro lado, há aquela fidelidade no casamento movida pelo único e exclusivo
23 motivo do amor. O líder cristão, por exemplo, é fiel à sua mulher não porque está
24 imbuído de uma autoridade espiritual que o obriga a ser um exemplo para os
25 demais, mas sim por causa do seu amor para com ela! Assim como, para ela,
26 representa o Senhor Jesus, ela, por sua vez, representa a Igreja para ele. Então, há
27 um vínculo muito forte entre o casal, e uma fidelidade alicerçada no amor. Ora,
28 assim deve ser o espírito do dizimista: ele não pode e nem deve ser fiel a Deus
29 apenas por uma obrigação moral ou eclesiástica, mas pelo profundo sentimento de
30 amor e consideração com Deus, e pela sua vida de comunhão com Ele. Aqueles que
31 são dizimistas apenas porque cumprem a lei ou porque está escrito em algum lugar
32 da Bíblia na maioria das vezes tentam pagar com o que sobra de seu orçamento;
33 fazem contas mesquinhas para chegar à risca aos dez por cento, e questionam
34 constantemente sobre como e quando devem dar o dízimo. Ora, isso não é e nem
35 pode ser considerado como dízimo, mas uma oferta do resto, minguada, chorada e

36 até lamentada; por isso, não tem valor diante de Deus. Creio que aí está a razão do
37 porquê de muitos dizimistas não terem visto nem mesmo as janelas do céu, quanto
38 mais as mesmas abertas sobre a sua vida! A palavra dízimo (no hebreu ma'aser)
39 significa literalmente "a décima parte". Na Lei de Deus, os israelitas tinham a
40 obrigação de entregar a décima parte das crias dos animais domésticos, dos produtos
41 da terra e de outras rendas como reconhecimento e gratidão por tudo o que Deus
42 lhes havia concedido (Levítico 27.30-32; Números 18.21; Deuteronômio 14.22-29).
43 O dízimo era primariamente usado para cobrir as despesas do culto a Deus. Como se
44 sabe, os sacerdotes tinham a obrigação sistemática de oferecer sacrifícios de animais
45 ao Senhor, em favor de si mesmos e do povo. Além disso, o dízimo era usado como
46 sustento dos sacerdotes, uma vez que estes viviam exclusivamente para o serviço de
47 Deus. A idéia central do dízimo acha-se no fato de que Deus é o dono de tudo
48 (Êxodo 19.5; Salmos 24.1; 5.10-12; Ageu 2.8). Os seres humanos foram criados por
49 Ele, e a Ele devem o fôlego de vida (Gênesis 1.26-27; Atos 17.28). Assim sendo,
50 ninguém possui coisa alguma que não tenha vindo originalmente da parte de Deus
51 (Jó 1.21; João 3.27; 1 Coríntios 4.7). Nas leis sobre os dízimos, Deus estava
52 simplesmente ordenando que aqueles que Lhe pertencessem Lhe devolvessem parte
53 daquilo que Ele já lhes tinha dado. Simbolicamente, o dízimo: 1) É um sinal de
54 aliança, sociedade ou compromisso com Deus. 2) Significa o reconhecimento do
55 senhorio do Senhor Jesus Cristo, ou seja, Ele é o dono de tudo o que existe. 3)
56 Significa fidelidade em amor ao Senhor Jesus Cristo. 4) Significa as primícias da
57 nossa renda ou os primeiros frutos oferecidos a Deus. Por isso, deve ser dado pela
58 fé, de coração aberto, com alegria e amor: "Cada um contribua segundo tiver
59 proposto no coração, não com tristeza ou por necessidade; porque Deus ama a quem

60 dá com alegria." (2 Coríntios 9.7). Este é o verdadeiro espírito do dízimo.

<http://www.folhauniversal.com.br/>

4.3 SERMON 2

Edir Macedo's words

1 Living supernatural faith is living in the Holy Spirit, living in the world of God.
2 Living in flesh, on the other hand, is living natural faith. Lots of people have lived in
3 the flesh even visiting church. To have supernatural faith you don't need faith in
4 God, the Holy Spirit puts it in our hearts.
5 This assurance does not always go along with the circumstances and is not related
6 with our feelings. I have the assurance that the Lord Jesus Christ is my savior. He
7 came to this world by work and grace of the Holy Spirit. He lived and was cowardly
8 killed so that I could be saved; I have the assurance that he is resurrected and alive,
9 sitting on the right side of God the father. Where does this assurance come from
10 since I have not seen the Lord Jesus Christ being born, dying or resurrected? I have
11 not seen anything, I only believe with all my heart. There is no one that can take that
12 away from me. Neither this world, nor the devil nor hell, not even angels, because it
13 is something that God, himself, has given to me. This is supernatural faith. In this I
14 live and my life is based on this faith, in this conviction, in this assurance. We have
15 to guard and protect this assurance, not letting the devil put any doubt situations,
16 problems or temptations of this world in our heart.
17 Unfortunately, lots of people have possessed this supernatural faith, but little by

18 little, they have left their communion with God and have ended up ship wrecked.

19 "If someone lives in the spirit, they cannot live according to their will, and not even to satisfy their caprice and desires."

20 Living supernatural faith is living in God's spirit.

21 If someone lives in spirit, they cannot live according to their will, realizing their

22 caprice and desires, since God has given us supernatural faith so that we can serve

23 the Lord Jesus Christ. He has bought us. We are bought. We are not owners of

24 ourselves. We are servants bought with the blood of the Lord, therefore we are

25 servants and a servant has no right to realize their own will; servant is a servant.

26 You are either a servant of God or for yourself. When a person is their own servant

27 and not God's, they turn to be a slave of the devil. Some people, unfortunately, are

28 members of the church but they have not had an encounter with the Lord Jesus

29 Christ; that's why they have not had the experience to receive this supernatural faith.

30 The people of Israel were living in sin and they left to fight against the philistines. In

31 the same day, four thousand men of Israel died. What did they do? They took the ark

32 of the covenant to the to the battle. Thinking that nobody could defeat them, they

33 went against the philistines again. They were defeated and 30 thousand men died,

34 seven times more than the first time. What was the reason why the ark of the

35 covenant didn't work? The reason is simple, they used their natural faith, and for

36 that reason, the ark was only an ark, and nothing more. If they would have used their

37 supernatural faith, God would have been in front of them and they would have

38 defeated any enemy. The people of Israel had no supernatural faith because there

39 was sin and corruption in their way, there was a separation between them and God.

40 When a person is separated from God, they have no hypothesis: she could use her

41 faith, fight, do whatever she pleases, because she is not going to get the blessings or
 42 benefits of supernatural faith. These people that stay in church, they maintain a
 43 religious appearance, but they never had an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 44 Friends of mine say that: "A person raises their head and, she accepts Jesus, she is
 45 saved." Salvation is simple, accept Jesus, saying: " I accept the Lord as my savior, I
 am saved".

46 In that moment salvation is real, but to maintain it, the person will have to
 47 fight, to protect her faith; they will have to live in the spirit, that means living
 48 supernatural faith, if not, its God for nothing. Maybe you are an evangelical or
 49 catholic and say "I am saved, I am from God." But when you look at your life, you
 50 only see failures and downfalls. I ask: "Where is your God, the God that has
 51 promised you abundant life? In this moment you stutter, don't you? There is no
 52 blessings because in reality, you lie to yourself. Faith is for everyone, but it doesn't
 53 belong to just anyone, because not all are humble to seek this faith. Many who have
 54 had this supernatural faith have failed because they have followed this
 55 world. The bible says that we must not walk by what we see, but by what we don't
 56 see. God is invisible; faith is invisible; abundant life and salvation are invisible. But
 57 everything will turn visible the moment we start walking in spirit and truth.

<http://www.folhauniversal.com/>

4.4 HORTATORY TEXT AND ITS MACRO COMPONENTS:

4.4.1 Establishment of authority/author's credentials

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (p. 14), the notion of context of situation subdivided into

field, tenor and mode can be used to deal with the sermon in its social context. In terms of field, the subject matter of Sermon 1 relates to the payment of the tithe and of Sermon 2 to the adoption of supernatural faith as a means of salvation. Both sermons are Pentecostal religious texts made for a site on the internet. The tenor is constituted by the agents, where the pastor is in a higher position than the readers, establishing a hierarchic relationship between them; and finally the mode is written and hortatory.

Once the sermons are contextualized, it is possible to somehow predict how things may be said in the text. Since sermons were classified as a genre in Chapter 2 (section 2.2) they should present a biblical text, the pastor should have intentions over the audience, carrying these intentions in the form of conventions and he should also show familiarity with these conventions.

According to the notion of hortatory discourse, bishop Macedo may use his credentials and the authority he holds to encourage conventions of conduct through the text. In order to exercise power over his audience by means of words the bishop needs to present his thoughts reasonably, and in this case, where religious beliefs are involved, they also have to be supported in a way that the readers will accept the sermons as conveying truth.

This section is based on how the words of the bishop are organized and on what basis they are supported through the text in order to become convincing and reliable to the readers. The content of the sermons may depict aspects of the discussion on religion in Chapter 3 while the analysis is supported by theories on discourse presented in Chapter 2.

4.4.1.1 Analysis of Sermon 1

The subject of Sermon 1 is the payment of the tithe. Edir Macedo wants to demonstrate that the tithe means thankfulness rather than obligation and ought to be paid with pleasure. Throughout the whole text, the bishop discusses the subject as if he is presenting a problem for which he knows the necessary solution.

Regarding the manifestation of credibility or authority in the texts, the data reveal that the presence of power in the genre of sermons may be represented basically in the following ways:

- a) By notions related to religious history as discussed shortly in Chapter 3 .and aspects of the social dimension in which the sermons are inserted;
- b) By the use of respected stories present in the Bible, the sermons confirm the presence of a biblical text supporting the bishop's ideas, as suggested by Alan Brinton when he establishes religious sermons as a genre reinforcing the authority he conveys through the text.

In relation to item 'a' listed above, the position Edir Macedo occupies may be the first reason for his followers to accept his words. The position of a religious leader grants him a certain degree of power as far as leaders, in all social domains, embody a position of guidance to the group they reach. Fairclough (1989, p. 43) has stated that "dimensions of the social orders of social institutions or societies, are themselves shaped and constituted by relations of power." Based on this notion, the figure of a leader may be seen as a constituent part of social structure. Leaders have decided and guided the history of different groups and made followers be guided by their example throughout history. Gardner (1988) defines leadership as "the process of persuasion or

example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader and his or her followers.” (www.leader-values.com).

Therefore, the credentials Edir Macedo amasses as the leader and the founder of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God may stand as a powerful means to secure authority to the written text, although the power put into his ideas through the sermons might not rely on this aspect only, it may be supported by the Bible, for instance, as discussed later in this chapter.

Edir Macedo expresses his authority in the text when he states the following words:

O líder cristão, por exemplo, é fiel à sua mulher não porque está imbuído de uma autoridade espiritual que o obriga a ser um exemplo para os demais, mas sim por causa do seu amor para com ela! (lines 23 to 25)

In these three lines, Edir Macedo presents his assurance of the concealed authority of a spiritual leader. He does not use the first person, but instead, he makes a general assumption that all Christian leaders are faithful because of the love they possess and not by the position occupied in the church, reinforcing by this statement the idea that society is constituted by relations of power, as seen at the beginning of this section. As leaders of a religious group, pastors or bishops, or the holders of any other spiritual title are placed in a position where they have the force to speak in the name of a superior being. Magalhães (1997) has pointed out:

Falar em nome de constitui um lugar de poder. Caracteriza-se assim a ilusão de reversibilidade, porque é a organização prevista no discurso religioso, em que uns

falam e proferem comandos, enquanto outros ouvem e obedecem, que produz o *poder institucional*. (p. 23)

Eventhough Edir Macedo expresses an awareness of institutional power in lines 23 to 25, he introduces the possibility of difference by using the conjunction ‘mas’ (but), where he implies that such concept may not be followed. Therefore, he states his obligations as a spiritual leader involving two abstract concepts: love and faithfulness. By using a contrastive conjunction, which “points out a contrastive relationship between the two propositions within one sentence” (Bloor, 1995, p. 99), in this case, he aims at convincing the readers that the love he feels for his wife is apart from the obligation he has as a bishop of the church. These lines also refer back to Chapter 3, section 3.3.1, item vii, where it is stated as a conviction the church holds that only the ones who are an example in private, religious and social life deserve the gift of prophecy.

Although it might have been seen as a constant factor in the sermons of this work, the notion of common sense could be demonstrated from line 23 to 25 when the bishop makes use of the word “obriga” (“autoridade espiritual que o obriga”) which conveys strong hegemonic concepts. It depicts the leaders as symbols of moral examples to their followers. They have to set the example of an excellent conduct, in this case, a conduct that has also been established by social and religious values. By contrasting obligation with the feeling of pleasure Edir Macedo may be appealing to the common sense there exists about obligations not always going along with pleasure since the subject of the sermon considers paying the tithe for love to Jesus Christ and not because the activity is a requirement for the members of the church

Item ‘b’ listed at the beginning of this section regards the authority the Bible

represents, which might support the ideas of the bishop, granting him power to carry out religious concepts through the text. Lines 23 to 25 discussed so far are a good example of how the authority Edir Macedo possesses may stand as support for the ideas he shares throughout the text. Therefore it is possible to notice in other parts of the text that the authority of the words used in the sermon was attributed to the Bible.

The arguments which aim at attributing reliability to the Sermon must be based on words of authority, on ideas that are commonly shared by a large number of people. The Bible, as mentioned in Chapter 3, is one such source that religious discourse may use as it represents the written record of the time Jesus Christ lived and presents stories of victories and defeats in the struggle Jesus engaged in to spread the holy words, in addition, item iv of Chapter 3, section 3.3.1, states that it is from the Bible that conducts and opinions must be judged.

At this point I would like to mention Fairclough's (1989) notion of causality or "who is represented as causing what to happen, who is represented as doing what to whom." (p. 51). Following this notion the person who is doing something or causing something to happen obtains the power.

Edir Macedo, by mentioning the words of the apostles tries to convince people that the payment is part of the tradition of the followers of Christ. When he does that the authority is transferred to sacred writings and Edir Macedo becomes a conduit of information.

Even though the text in the Bible offers more than one interpretation, readers may look at the text previously oriented by the ideas that were present in the sermon associating their interpretations to those that Edir Macedo wants them to derive .

De fato é preciso se entregar a uma formidável devoção ao fundamentalismo para se acreditar piamente no que a Bíblia contém sobre o assunto. As Escrituras são contraditórias e incompletas. Na verdade, mais simbólicas do que documentais. (Júnior, p.60)

This issue might be relevant for the present work to demonstrate that in spite of several discussions about the stories, symbols and interpretations of the Bible, it still stands for a great number of people as a powerful proof of the existence of God and of the messages His son gave about love and faith for those who believe in Jesus as Christ and follow the religion based on his life and teachings. The target readers of the sermons used as data are probably reached by the power of those beliefs and may not question whether the information is true.

An illustration of causality in the use of the Bible as a source of credibility for the words of Edir Macedo is given in lines 39 to 42, below:

Na Lei de Deus, os israelitas tinham a obrigação de entregar a décima parte das crias dos animais domésticos, dos produtos da terra e de outras rendas como reconhecimento e gratidão por tudo o que Deus lhes havia concedido (Levítico 27.30-32; Números 18.21; Deuteronômio 14.22-29).

In these lines Edir Macedo uses the example of what the people from Israel did to demonstrate gratitude for the benefits they received from God transferring the importance of the action of giving to the story of the sacred book. Notice that the word “obrigação” is being used again. It seems that through the sermon the bishop intends to lighten the feeling of obligation present in the history of the tithe by appealing to

pleasure to give, but here, in order to support the idea of the payment, he sticks himself to the meaning that obligation implies and makes no further comments on that. Besides, the words “Na lei de Deus” in lines 39 to 42 indicate causality and also obligation on the part of the followers to obey what was said about the payment. Law is a rule of conduct and if the law of God says that paying is an obligation, the followers may accept the convention without further questions.

Another interesting point in those lines is that the bishop attributes to God the victories accomplished by humankind, and therefore, he says that people must be grateful and thank Him by giving the church the tenth part of their income as a sign of gratitude. The church, which works on behalf of God, receives the money in order to continue spreading His benevolence and to help people in despair.

It is also possible to notice in the lines above that the passages are not written down as part of the sermon, instead they are just mentioned and invite the readers to interact with the text looking for the passages in the Bible. According to what was assumed previously in this chapter, it is evident here that persuasion is effected by means of historical passages.

Another example follows below as the writer of the sermon is still supporting the idea of the payment of the tenth part of his followers' income to the church.

A idéia central do dízimo acha-se no fato de que Deus é o dono de tudo (Êxodo 19.5; Salmos 24.1; 5.10-12; Ageu 2.8). Os seres humanos foram criados por Ele, e a Ele devem o fôlego de vida (Gênesis 1.26-27; Atos 17.28). Assim sendo, ninguém possui coisa alguma que não tenha vindo originalmente da parte de Deus (Jó 1.21; João 3.27; 1 Coríntios 4.7). (47 to 51)

These lines are interesting because Edir Macedo drew from three different concepts in order to support his ideas. As it is possible to notice in the lines above the notion of God being the owner of everything, God being the creator of humanity and the giver of all the things humankind makes use of. The bishop handles the concepts in order to make them suitable for his purpose, i. e., instigate the readers to pay the tithe.

The use of power in this macrocomponent, appeared to be double folded. On the one hand the history of hierarchic systems in society itself has already coped with the establishment of a respectful position on the part of the bishop. On the other hand, the power Edir Macedo holds may be transferred to the events and entities that are present in the Bible and the bishop becomes a messenger of ideas that have been previously established by respectful historical figures. Mr. Macedo selects parts of the Bible that are suitable to support the idea he is presenting.

The identification of the way power is present in this macrocomponent of which the sermon is constituted reinforces the idea that the social dimension of discourse influences the text that is being produced since it affects the way things are said in this specific situation.

4.4.1.2 Analysis of Sermon 2

The analysis of Sermon 2 is supported by items ‘a’ and ‘b’ used in Sermon 1 together with the demonstration of the differences or similarities between the strategies of this second sermon in relation to the first one, written in Portuguese. By doing that I will expand my analysis in order to encompass different sorts of power instantiations and strategies in the two sermons. The subject matter of Sermon 2 is the difference

between natural and supernatural faith, where the latter is mentioned to be the right one to achieve success in life.

Considering item ‘a’, it is possible to affirm that in English, Edir Macedo deals with the power of his position in the first person singular instead of making generalization as in line 23 (“O líder cristão”). He speaks in the name of the authority he possesses and in the name of the divine entity he represents, as it is possible to verify in the following lines:

I have the assurance that the Lord Jesus Christ is my savior. He came to this world by work and grace of the Holy Spirit. He lived and was cowardly killed so that I could be saved; I have the assurance that he is resurrected and alive, sitting on the right side of God the father. Where does this assurance come from since I have not seen the Lord Jesus Christ being born, dying or resurrected? I have not seen anything, I only believe with all my heart. (Lines 6 to 11)

It is possible to notice the difference in the strategies used in lines 23 to 25 of Sermon 1 and lines 6 to 11 of Sermon 2 in the sense that in the first sermon, Macedo asserts his authority by evoking the importance of the position of all spiritual leaders. In fact, the first person is not used in the first text. The second sermon, on the other hand, dismisses the subtlety of generalizations and causes impact by the use of the first person ‘I’. The bishop represents the figure of the entity he is mentioning, and the responsibility for the words he utters is in fact transferred to God Himself.

In order to demonstrate the way the followers may achieve supernatural faith, Macedo goes through the lines of the quotation above stating that ‘he’ knows because

‘he’ was saved, because ‘he’ believes (“I have not seen ... I only believe”). If we consider the fact that the ideas of the bishop may stand as a model of conduct for the people who join the church, it is possible to say that the reliability of Edir Macedo’s considerations, as in Sermon 1, might lie on the figure he represents to the church.

According to item ‘b’, it is possible to notice that Edir Macedo also transfers credibility to the text when he refers to the Christian history. He mentions ideas of common sense in the Christian philosophy such as Jesus coming to ‘this world’, the resurrection and the representation of Jesus ‘sitting on the right side of God the father’. By doing this, he gives support to his ideas based on previous accepted concepts of the figure of Jesus and on the authority of the Bible, as done in the first analyzed sermon.

He also mentions the Bible in lines 55 and 56 when he clearly states: “The Bible says that (...)”, reinforcing the idea that a great load of authority is deposited in the text when the words of the Bible are mentioned.

The notion of causality proposed by Fairclough (1992) is also present in Sermon 2. In lines 22 to 25 below, authority is established in a different way. The conduct that the followers may adopt are based on the actions of God:

(...) since God has given us supernatural faith so that we can serve the Lord Jesus Christ. He has bought us. We are bought. We are not owners of ourselves. We are servants bought with the blood of the Lord, therefore we are servants and a servant has no right to realize their own will; a servant is a servant.

In this case what is called *personification* occurs, God, an invisible entity, has performed material functions as ‘buying’ and ‘giving’, and for that matter Edir Macedo

affirms that the wills of the followers no longer belong to them. The idea of personification was presented in the introduction of Chapter 3. This process together with the authority the assumption has since it has come from ancient sacred writings, the bishop sustains his preaching based on what may be called historically accepted concepts. Edir Macedo places humankind as servants and through his audience-oriented speech, appeals to their cooperation through the use of the tautology: “a servant is a servant”. By doing that he expects the cooperation and concession of the addressees stating something that may logically seem obvious, i. e., he evokes the common sense concepts shared by the readers.

Another characteristic regarding the establishment of authority in Sermon 2 relates to the use of the inclusive pronoun ‘we’. The sentence: “we are servants bought with the blood of the Lord” sustains the idea that the savior has died to save humankind, therefore people must believe in him. It is interesting to note that with the use of the inclusive pronoun the bishop attenuates the process of imposing his conviction by showing his engagement in the process, and motivating people through the idea that he is part of all that, and as anyone else, he has to be a servant of Jesus. According to the discussion in Chapter 2 about power in discourse, it may also be regarded as manifestation of power considering that the bishop, in hold of his authority, levels himself to the readers’ place corroborating to the acceptance of the concepts he is presenting as he shows partnership in the process. It may also be a way of demonstrating power without being demanding. The use of the inclusive pronoun ‘we’ can also be noticed from line 13 to line 15. In this case there is a transition from the first person singular to the first person in the plural form. Edir Macedo states that ‘he’ believes in all that he is saying thus ‘they’ have to defend that assurance together: “This

is supernatural faith. In this I live and my life is based on this faith, in this conviction, in this assurance. We have to guard and protect this assurance (...).”

The presence of social influence in Sermon 2 is also represented by lines 9 and 10 where Mr. Macedo questions his own words. This rhetorical strategy was mentioned by Alan Brinton (1995). It appears to be a common occurrence in religious discourse when the preacher questions his own words as if anticipating any opponent’s objections. In the case of the present sermon, Macedo answers them, stating that he believes in what he said with all his heart. Thus, he still maintains a certain degree of power over the addresses based on his assumptions and on the position his character represents. This strategy was not mentioned in items ‘a’ or ‘b’ because it was not present in Sermon 1.

Power was implied in both sermons in a similar way. The main difference appeared to be in the more constant presence of pronouns in Sermon 2 in lines 6 to 11, where the use of the first person singular was discussed. The use of personification and of the inclusive we were also present in the second sermon. It may have happened because of the stronger impact the use of the pronoun offered in the lines mentioned in the analysis above.

In order to find out the reason for such differences, further research would have to be carried out. The aim of the present analysis was reached when it comes to the identification of ideological power present in the text. The way the authority is concealed in the text helps the writer to manage the problem he is presenting and also gives him credibility to offer an appropriate solution.

The headline related to the way the problem and the solution are exposed through the sermons and also related to the manifestation of power in the evolvment of such concepts in the text are discussed in the next section.

4.4.2 Presentation of problem/solution

According to Jordan (1984), “Problem as signaled in texts (...) means any form of dissatisfaction or other stimulus that makes us want to improve a situation.” (p. 20).

And “when an action is taken in an effort to overcome a problem and it is then seen to achieve that purpose, we recognize it as ‘solution’ to that problem.” (p. 31)

The problems of Sermons 1 and 2 respectively are: the joy the follower should feel in paying the tithe; and the need for supernatural faith in order to receive benefits from God. Both problems present aspects to be improved and the readers must engage in the process so that they can cooperate to the issue at hand. It is valuable to mention Jordan (1984) at this point when he states that: “Texts are not written just for specific purposes, but also for specific readers, and this again is reflected in the information presented and in the way it is presented.” (p.03). In the case of the sermons being discussed here, the presentation of the problems is supposed to be identified as familiar by the ones who are reading them. Since this process is carried out the readers might feel the need to do something to overcome the problem.

As shown in Chapter 3, people who join evangelical churches are usually going through a difficult period in their lives, thus, the way the problem is exposed may be identified by these readers as part of their reality. Since they are seeking for help, they will expect the bishop to guide them towards a solution. Because the situation may be recognizable to them, they are expected to make inferences through the text understanding its structure and expecting an appropriate outcome.

This section aims at identifying the occurrence of ideological power in the manner the problem and the solution to that problem are exposed in the text and on how the

bishop instigates the readers to come to a solution. In applying the hortatory schema to the sermon at hand and having its genre in mind, it is possible to state that the procedures to overcome the problem proposed in the text may be carried out in forms of conventions of which the bishop may show familiarity with. The use of power in this specific section relates to Edir Macedo's intentions to make his followers believe him, respect him and act as he is suggesting, i. e., the way Macedo supports the dilemma he discusses.

The way Edir Macedo supports his discourse relates to section 2.5 of Chapter 2, which concerns, once more, the social dimension of discourse as far as the problem discussed in the sermons may have appeared through social evolvement. It also relates to the notion of hortatory texts when the bishop intends to reestablish the conduct of the addressees according to the church's philosophy presented in Chapter 3.

A relevant point in both sermons proved to be the recurring number of contradictory argumentation. Although Mr. Macedo uses the authority of the Bible in both sermons, in order to defend the issue he is discussing, he seems to get a little lost trying to support his thoughts, turning his sermon quite weak in matter of consistency.

This section is related to the first one discussed in this chapter because since the text is weak regarding argumentation, it may be through the demonstration of credibility that the followers engage in the process of identifying themselves with the problem at hand and expect to overcome that problem according to the directions given by the bishop of the church. The importance of credibility in this particular instance reinforces the notion of hortatory text which suggests that even if it is not specified, credibility is implied in all the other three macrocomponents.

4.4.2.1 Analysis of Sermon 1

The subject of the sermon is introduced in the first two lines where Edir Macedo explains the meaning of the tithe. The problem and the solution are also summarized in the lines that follow the exposition of the subject: “Se o cristão não considerar o dízimo dessa forma, corre o risco de perder os seus inúmeros benefícios e herdar as maldições de sua desobediência.” (Lines 2 to 4). The problem is being explained when the bishop brings about what will happen if his followers do not consider the tithe the way it was explained at the beginning of the sermon. Consequently, the solution would be to follow and believe in the definition given to the tithe by the pastor of the Universal Church.

In order for the followers to understand and accept the tithe, the pastor explains the beginning of the tradition, as well as its purposes (lines 39 to 42) as an institutionalized religious procedure based on reports on the Bible, involving the power that exists in the social aspects surrounding his discourse.

Na lei de Deus, os israelitas tinham a obrigação de entregar a décima parte das crias dos animais domésticos, dos produtos da terra e de outras rendas como reconhecimento e gratidão por tudo o que Deus lhe havia concedido (Levítico 27.30-32; Números 18.21; Deuteronômio 14.22-19).

Fairclough (1989) posits that “Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations”. (p. 33). These existing power relations are the real support for what Edir Macedo intends to achieve.

The institutional power according to the reference to the subject of the tithe was

presented in lines 39 to 42 as an obligation the Hebrews had, even though the use of this kind of authority at this point of the text might have stood as a contradictory argument to what Edir Macedo really wants to achieve through his sermon. The bishop wants his followers to pay the tithe for love and not for obligation, which becomes the real issue as the text evolves. An example of the direction the text has taken is in lines 5 to 8 or even further in the text in lines 28 to 30 as transcribed below:

(...) ele {o dizimista}² não pode e nem deve ser fiel a Deus apenas por uma obrigação moral ou eclesiástica, mas pelo profundo sentimento de amor e consideração com Deus, e pela sua vida de comunhão com Ele.

In these lines Edir Macedo clearly states that the ones who pay 10% of their income to the church can not and must not do that as an obligation and he explains the reason in the following lines:

Aqueles que são dizimistas apenas porque cumprem a lei ou porque está escrito em algum lugar da Bíblia na maioria das vezes tentam pagar com o que sobra do seu orçamento; fazem contas mesquinhas para chegar à risca aos dez por cento, e questionam constantemente sobre como e quando devem dar o dízimo. Ora, isso não é e nem pode ser considerado como dízimo, mas uma oferta do resto, minguada, chorada e até lamentada; por isso, não tem valor diante de Deus. (Lines 30 to 36).

It is possible to identify in the lines above the reasons why the contribution to the

² The explanation in brackets is not in the original text.

church should not be given as an obligation. He declares that the ones who worry about the amount given are practically giving leftovers and leftovers do not please God. By doing this, the bishop intends to instigate his followers to see happiness in giving and to forget about monetary values. It is possible to conclude from the premises that those 10% may be more, if the followers are really fond of pleasing God and do not mind about getting to the exact sum of their income to contribute to the church.

The argument is therefore constructed upon the idea of giving money to the church in the name of love and consideration for God. The ideology held by the Universal Church is being transmitted in the form of laws from God in order to convince its followers to adopt a new conduct, as the hortatory discourse suggests, and assume a new position related to the question of monetary duties, which are part of their obligations as members of that specific institution.

Another interesting aspect present in lines 30 to 36 is the way Edir Macedo seems to lessen the importance of the authority of the Bible. The same strategy he used to support his words in lines 39 to 42 is now mentioned as if it were of no importance to the problem at hand. The pastor probably wants to banish the sense of obligation on the part of his followers by saying “*escrito em algum lugar da Bíblia*”, as if at that moment, the words of the Bible were not authority enough to incite the payment. As it is possible to perceive, in lines 30 to 36, he did not intend to highlight the reason for giving but how the process should be carried out.

As a result of his attempt to convince his followers to joyfully engage in the process of giving, Edir Macedo might have contradicted himself when he talks about the reason and tradition of this custom using examples that involve notions of obligation and obedience (examples will be given in the next paragraph), and when he explains the

process the givers should undertake eliminating the importance of the contribution as a religious commitment which, according to him, has no value to God.

Evidence is found in lines 2 to 4 where Edir Macedo says that if the followers do not consider the way the tithe was described by him, they will take the risk of “herdar as maldições de sua desobediência.” One can only disobey when there is a rule to be followed, a commitment to be met. It is possible to observe how he contradicts himself in lines 5 and 6 when he says: “O cristão fiel não paga o dízimo por imposição ou obrigação, mas por livre e espontânea vontade.” If the payment is supposed to be made by one’s free will, it should not involve any concept of obligation in its essence.

There are other parts of the sermon where obligation is implicit when the subject of the tithe is mentioned. On line 39: “significa *literalmente* a décima parte”, line 49: “(...) a Ele (Deus) *devem* o fôlego da vida.” Line 51 “Nas *leis* sobre o dízimo, Deus estava simplesmente *ordenando* (...)” The words in italics represent concepts of obedience and discipline, ideas that do not corroborate the way Edir Macedo expects and tries to convince his followers to behave.

Another quite weak part of the text in terms of support appears in lines 43 to 47 in the next citation, where the bishop explains the projects for the money collected by the church in the past. When he starts describing the use of the money in the past tense, he causes an expectation in the reader or a prediction that he will then comment on the use of the money nowadays. According to Tadros (1995) prediction is as “a commitment at one point of the text to the occurrence of another subsequent linguistic event.” (p. 6). The prediction that there will be a comparison or contrast in the text with the contemporary use for the money is not fulfilled:

O dízimo era primariamente usado para cobrir as despesas do culto a Deus. Como se sabe, os sacerdotes tinham a obrigação sistemática de oferecer sacrifícios de animais ao Senhor, em favor de si mesmos e do povo. Além disso, o dízimo era usado como sustento dos sacerdotes, uma vez que estes viviam exclusivamente para o serviço de Deus. (Lines 43 to 47).

According to Magalhães (1997),

A conquista de novos adeptos depende dos investimentos financeiros da Igreja na multiplicação de templos e em programas no rádio e na televisão. Um intenso trabalho lingüístico e argumentativo é desenvolvido, portanto, para justificar as contribuições dos fiéis. (p. 33).

The explanation above may stand as a demonstration of the use for the money the church collects in present times. The words of Magalhães may be also helpful to understand the reason Edir Macedo puts so much effort in trying to convince his followers to have pleasure in giving not counting the money when it is time to pay the tithe since the solution to the problem in Sermon 1 would be to give with pleasure to satisfy God otherwise the contribution would not be worth.

It seems that Edir Macedo was not able to sustain his ideas appropriately in Sermon 1, creating contradictions all through the text. He concludes his sermon saying that “Deus ama quem dá com alegria.” (lines 59 and 60). The discrepancy between obedience and joy was not well developed in his speech since obedience involves discipline as well as discipline involves parameters established socially and most of the time, it goes against freedom and joy from the part of the social members. There was a

lack of transition between the ideas: instead of being a support for previous statements certain textualizations ended up as a contradiction. The text may be persuasive due to the authority Edir Macedo holds rather than the arguments he presented to discuss the problem in the text.

4.4.2.2 Analysis of Sermon 2

The problem in Sermon 2 is introduced in the first two lines by the contrastive concepts between natural and supernatural faith: “Living supernatural faith is living in the Holy Spirit, living in the world of God. Living in flesh, on the other hand, is living natural faith.” This sermon, as the first one, presents contradictions as the text evolves,

The position Edir Macedo takes in relation to this contrast is that the latter should be the appropriate way to believe in the power of God and again, the appropriate way to receive the expected benefits from God. This is possible to conclude because the concepts used in the first two lines associate supernatural faith with the Holy Spirit and with God, while natural faith is associated with flesh. Not only the contrastive element “on the other hand” presents the contrast above but also the religious connotation of the word “flesh”, which was related to natural faith, may lead the readers to infer what is the felicitous pattern of behavior by evoking their common sense.

As the beginning of the sermon was introduced, the readers might have concluded that supernatural faith is what they should achieve and should then expect further explanations on both faiths and also that the bishop would teach how to overcome such matter, helping his followers to find the solution. The expectation is fulfilled in the lines following 1 and 2 when the bishop states: “To have supernatural faith you don’t need faith in God, the Holy Spirit puts it in our hearts.” (Lines 3 and 4). Edir Macedo

introduces the solution as a passive process in which the followers must engage. As he suggests that, he personifies an entity and presumes that this entity is able to perform material actions such as 'giving' in the case above.

The assumption offered by Edir Macedo seems to present a certain level of inconsistency with the rest of his argumentation. His reasoning about who is supposed to act in the process of acquiring supernatural faith seems to be quite weak in the sense that he is asking his followers not to do anything but at the same time he is demanding action from their part, even at a mental level. The followers have to do something, to engage in the bishop's teachings based on the ideologies held by the Universal Church, or at least come to the church, facts that indicate actions. It is quite a contradiction to ask someone to have faith without acting, since the process of having faith requires mental processes.

One of the parts that may stand as a demonstration of Mr. Macedo's inconsistency is in lines 5 and 6: "This assurance does not always go along with the circumstances and is not related with our feelings." When he states that the Holy Spirit would carry the action while the one who would receive that supernatural faith would only have "the experience to receive this supernatural faith" as he assures in line 29, he is appealing to his followers' feelings. Edir Macedo himself, in an attempt to demonstrate to the readers how he acquired this supernatural faith ends up with the sentence: "I only believe with all my heart" (line 11). Beliefs are related to mental acts, nevertheless, when the belief is related to the heart as in the case above, feelings are involved.

Another part that may demonstrate the weakness in his argumentation is when he says that: "Faith is for everyone, but it doesn't belong to just anyone, because not all are

humble to seek this faith” (Line 52 and 53). According to his words in the lines above, supernatural faith belongs to those who seek it, and the verb ‘seek’ indicates an action.

The lines above also demonstrate that the solutions are suggested along with the discussion of the problems and require the perception of the readers in the sense of making inferences through the text. Once criticizing a certain pattern of conduct for example, it is inferred that the solution may be the opposite of what has been said. Lines 52 and 53 in the paragraph above may stand as an illustration when the adjective ‘humble’ is used. By stating that not being humble is a reason not to have supernatural faith, he suggests humbleness as a solution to the problem.

The way the solutions are suggested is the same in both sermons considering that they are understated through the texts. Furthermore, both sermons present contradiction in relation to how the bishop supports the problem and appeals to the reliability of his authority. As Edir Macedo was inconsistent through his argumentation, the power present in this specific macrocomponent of the hortatory texts, seems to be more related to the authority he holds than to the manner the ideas are developed.

The presence of power used to motivate and give commands will be dealt with in the next chapter. These two other macrocomponents conclude the hortatory schema and are closely related to the exposition of a problem/solution. This is due to the fact that commands and motivation will be necessary so that the readers will be aware of what to do to approach a solution to the presented problem.

CHAPTER 5

The analysis - Part II

5.1 Introduction

Both sermons were contextualized in the introduction of Chapter 4 according to the theory on discourse analysis presented in Chapter 2. As the sermons are seen in their context rather than isolated discourse instances it is then possible to discuss the social aspects that influence such texts. The manifestation of power in the two macrocomponents of hortatory discourse presented in this chapter is once more related to the social dimension of discourse as proposed by Fairclough, since it is possible to recognize the social influence upon the words of bishop Macedo. Chapter 3 stands as a support to the understanding of the Universal Church's philosophy and helps with- the construction of the social context in which sermons are embedded.

This chapter deals with "issuing of commands" and "resort to motivation". Since the "problem and the solution" are clear in the text and the authority is embedded throughout the bishop's reasoning as seen in the previous chapter, "commands and motivation" become necessary in order for a sermon to be effective and meet the rhetorical requirements of hortatory discourse.

5.2 Issuing Commands

As a characteristic feature of hortatory discourse, the issuing of commands plays a fundamental role in the sermons, as presented in Chapter 2. In fact, this component is minimal and basic: “hortatory discourse cannot be such without commands/suggestions” (Longacre, 1992, p. 110). The presence of power in this macro component may be seen in the following features:

- a) Subtleness to issue commands by the use of generalizations, the inclusive we in Sermon 2, and by examples of the Bible;
- b) The appeal to the readers’ reasoning related to feelings as love in contrast with religious duties. This feature overlaps with motivation as presented in section 5.3.2.

The analysis focuses on how the commands are given and on the way Macedo exercises his power to give orders.

5.2.1 Analysis of Sermon 1

The issuing of commands in this particular sermon seems to be very subtle. Although there are commands distributed all through the text, the way they are presented makes them stand as a suggestion or an ideal of potential religious groups. By making generalizations, Edir Macedo does not address the readers directly, instead, he generalizes the subject of the sentence appealing to the readers’ identification with the subject, including themselves in that group and encouraging them to act as he suggests. This strategy is shown in lines 5 and 6: “O cristão fiel não paga dízimo por imposição ou obrigação, mas por livre e espontânea vontade, e com todo o prazer (...)”

The generalization used by Edir Macedo was mentioned as a strategy because it may be in the bishop’s interest not to address the reader directly so that the addressees should

not feel personally insulted. To hide power is also a means of exercising it. This way, the readers should feel as part of a group that shares the same ideals and for this reason they may evaluate their own behavior in order to adjust to that specific group.

Another characteristic of the exertion of power in this component of the sermon is the use of the Bible to demonstrate the ideal conduct:

Na lei de Deus, os israelitas tinham a obrigação de entregar a décima parte (...) como reconhecimento e gratidão por tudo o que Deus lhes havia concedido (Levítico 27.30-32; Números 18.21; Deuteronômio 14.22-29). (lines 39 to 42)

By using the Bible, Macedo does not stand as an authoritarian figure as he gives orders to his followers. The words of the Bible together with the conduct of the people in the stories documented stand by themselves as an example of behavior and incite actions on the part of the readers. Besides, it becomes easier for them to picture the situation and the kind of relation they should have with God. Moving a little beyond in relation to the use of the Bible in this specific instance, it is also valuable to note that by issuing commands based on examples described in the Bible, Edir Macedo lessens the chance of being contradicted by his opponents.

It is also possible to note that there is a strong appeal to feelings when the issue of commands arise. This appeal may function as a psychological component of self-monitoring and may be the source of guilt for those who do not follow what has been preached by the bishop. Due to the scope of this particular work, no research was carried out to investigate such impression.

The appeal to feelings is based on two main ideas: the idea of obligation and the idea of love. These two concepts may function as the basis for the bishop to stimulate the readers to follow his commands. The idea of obligation upon which the commands are based may be noticed on lines 28 and 29: “(...) ele não pode e não deve ser fiel a Deus apenas por uma obrigação moral ou eclesiástica (...)”; on lines 30 and 31: “Aqueles que são dizimistas apenas porque cumprem a lei (...)”; on lines 39 and 40: “Na lei de Deus, os israelitas tinham a obrigação de entregar a décima parte (...)”; and in lines 51 and 52: “Deus estava simplesmente ordenando (...)”

The idea that Macedo intends to instigate the payment for love and recognition, may be noticed from lines 6 to 8: “(...) mas por livre e espontânea vontade, e com todo o prazer; isso porque ele reconhece, no mais profundo de sua alma, o Senhor Jesus Cristo (...)”; lines 29 and 30: “(...) mas pelo profundo sentimento de amor e consideração com Deus (...)”; and on lines 57 and 58: “Por isso, deve ser dado pela fé, de coração aberto, com alegria e amor (...)”.

As the appeal to love is presented in the text, the ideas of faithfulness and recognition are introduced and the readers are then required to do things for love of God. This way, the problem/solution of the text is approached, since Edir Macedo wants his followers to contribute to the church with joy and not for obligation.

It is hard to present the commands in Sermon 1 without referring to motivation. Exactly the same way the problem and the solution were worked together in the text, the commands and motivation are woven throughout the paragraphs. For this reason, further comments on aspects of the text that are related to commands but seem much like motivation will be dealt in the last section of the analysis.

5.2.2 Analysis of Sermon 2

The commands issued in Sermon 2 are tactfully constructed. Exactly like in Sermon 1, commands are indirectly given along the text by the use of a third person (generalization) or by the appeal to the readers' understanding of how to behave according to examples shown along with the text. An example of the use of the third person to give commands is found on lines 21 and 22: "If someone lives in spirit, they cannot live according to their will, realizing their caprice and desires."

The only command that is given directly by the use of the second person is on line 45: "(...) accept Jesus, saying: "I accept the Lord as my savior (...)" Although, at this moment, Edir Macedo is not really giving a command to the readers, he is using a story that his friends had told him as an example (line 44). Again, he is not assuming the position of a dictator since the command is part of a story he used to explain the problem in the text. Furthermore, he gives sequence to his thoughts using the third person again on lines 46 and 47: "In that moment salvation is real, but to maintain it, the person will have to fight, to protect her faith, they will have to live in the spirit..."

The use of the Bible is also present in Sermon 2 in so far as the issuing of commands. Lines 21 and 22 mentioned previously in this section are used twice in the text. Once they are used as a quotation from the Bible (line 19) as support for Macedo's thoughts and then, he repeats on lines 21 and 22 the same words from line 19, as if they were of his own and appoint them as a model of behavior by suggesting the way the readers should conduct themselves transferring the responsibility of his command to what was stated in the Bible. Once again, as in Sermon 1, illustrations of how to behave are based on stories from the Bible. As mentioned in Chapter 3, stories may function as

a metaphoric support so the readers are able to identify themselves to the situation which their lives may resemble.

A point that was not present in the first sermon was the use of the inclusive ‘we’ when some action is required. When Edir Macedo explains supernatural faith from lines 6 to 14, he makes use of the power he represents within the Universal Church and makes use of the 1st person singular through his explanation. The use of the first person was made in bold in the transcription below to exemplify this observation:

I have the assurance that the Lord Jesus Christ is my savior. He came to this world by work and grace of the Holy Spirit. He lived and was cowardly killed so that **I could be saved; I have the assurance** that he is resurrected and alive, sitting on the right side of God the father. Where does this assurance come from since **I have not seen** the Lord Jesus Christ being born, dying or resurrected? **I have not seen anything, I only believe** with all my heart. There is no one that can **take that away from me**. Neither this world, nor the devil nor hell, not even angels, because it is something that God, himself, **has given to me**. This is supernatural faith. In this **I live and my life is based on this** faith, in this conviction, in this assurance.

While the bishop is explaining his assurance in relation to supernatural faith he uses the first person singular. However, the moment an action has to be carried out, he uses the first person plural to suggest a command. This is evident in the sequence of the lines showed above, from line 14 to line 16: “We have to guard and protect this assurance, not letting the devil put any doubt situations, problems or temptations in our heart.” The same strategy occurs again at the end of the sermon where Edir Macedo implies the idea

that he will also engage in the action that is being proposed. From line 55 to 57 he says: “The bible says that we must not walk by what we see, but by what we don’t see (...) everything will turn visible the moment we start walking in spirit and truth.” As he places himself at the same position of the people he is directing his text to, the bishop implies that he is also involved in that process. This is a way to exercise power in the sense that, once more, the readers may not feel the command as an order, but as a process in which the bishop is also engaged.

The sermons in both languages make use of similar strategies in order to issue commands. The commands are not given directly and stories are used as examples for a good conduct. The way the bishop exercises power is subtle and more related to the position he occupies in the church and the support he derives from biblical references.

5.3 Resort to Motivation

The element of motivation in the data analyzed in this work aims at stimulating the addressees to behave as suggested so that they will engage in the activities proposed and become a stronger part of that specific religious group.

According to Lammermeyer (1990):

The stimulation of our social needs in such way that we feel recognized, accepted in a circle of common friends or colleagues, and financially and emotionally secure is motivation. (p. 101)

The readers of the sermons might feel motivated to act as the text suggests since they are part of the group that constitute the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and should behave as signaled by their superior in order to achieve their religious purposes. When the church motivates its followers, it exercises its hidden power in order to control the group in the sense of attracting or maintaining the people engaged in the activities of the church.

Religion, as other social regulators, as law for instance, has motivated people through fear with the purpose of instituting discipline and order. In the definition of hortatory discourse presented in Chapter 2 the idea of motivation carried out essentially by threats was also mentioned. The dichotomy between good and evil has established limits and set punishments for those who belong to a definite social group but do not follow the prescribed directions of conduct. As expressed by Reedcliffe-Brown:

(...) law, morality and religion are three ways of controlling human conduct which in different types of society supplement one another, and are combined in different ways. For the law there is legal sanctions, for morality there are sanctions of public opinion and of conscience, for religion there is religious sanctions. (1965, p.172)

The various religious beliefs have different rules to assure salvation and prosperity, but all of them have something in common: the idea of punishment if the established set of rules is not followed. As far as historical social values as moral, law and religion are concerned, the fear of punishment has worked as a regulation of acts regarding social welfare.

The purpose of this section is to point out parts of the text in which Edir Macedo intends to stimulate the readers so that they will believe and follow the suggestions given as well as identify how ideological power is present in such words of instigation in a social context.

5.3.1 Analysis of Sermon 1

As discussed in Chapter 2, the social dimension in which the sermon is embedded shapes the way the discourse is constructed. In order to institute motivation through the text and exercise power, Macedo organizes the text in following ways:

- a) As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the idea of punishment is developed in order to motivate readers to adopt a new conduct related to the topic discussed;
- b) The text appeals to the readers' feelings when recognition and love for God are mentioned.
- c) The personification of invisible entities as God and the Holy Spirit is also present in this macrocomponent.

A good example of punishment as a source of motivation present in Sermon 1 is shown in the following sentence: “Se o cristão não considerar o dízimo dessa forma, corre o risco de perder os seus inúmeros benefícios e herdar as maldições de sua desobediência.” (lines 2 to 4). The resort to motivation here is the threat of ‘inheriting the curse of misbehavior’. It is possible to notice that Edir Macedo is not addressing the *curse* directly to the readers, but to those Christians who do not consider paying the tithe. This strategy has already been mentioned in the analysis of the previous

macrocomponent in this chapter, where it was seen as strategy or indirect threat to the readers, motivating them as a group and at the same time disguising the authority the bishop holds. This feature may represent the definition of motivation given by Lammermeyer at the beginning of this section concerning the concept of group, of establishing ties to a certain circle of friends by engaging in the activities of a certain group.

Curse and misbehavior seem to be the most powerful words in the passage. The choice of words or the ‘wording’ as suggested by Fairclough (1992) may be strong in order to make the addressees aware of how vulnerably they may be exposed to punishment in religious matters. The “curse” is neither mentioned or specified because its idea is already institutionalized, it is already part of the established religious system and also part of the context of situation and of the addressees’ schemata reinforcing the idea that social concepts shape the text and stand as a means of exercising power. This social aspect is a good example of ideology intrinsic in religion, i. e., the idea of penalty has been part of the religious discourse and dismisses greater definitions.

Another part of the sermon that may demonstrate the motivation through fear is present from line 36 to line 38: “Creio que aí está a razão do porquê de muitos dizimistas não terem visto nem mesmo as janelas do céu, quanto mais as mesmas abertas sobre a sua vida.” This threat originated from the premise that the readers should face the tithe as it was described by the bishop and adopt the conduct he is suggesting.

In relation to item ‘b’, from lines 19 to 21, Edir Macedo is appealing to the readers’ feelings in order to motivate them to follow the text: “ Aliás, esse é o caso daqueles que são dizimistas fiéis apenas por imposição da própria consciência cristã, não motivada pela alegria ou pelo amor.” This feature is also noticed by the use of concepts which are

related to feelings of love and joy as demonstrated in the lines above. Ideas such as ‘recognition’ (line 7); ‘consideration’ (line 30); and ‘commitment’ (line 54) may stand as an incitation to induce the addressees’ behavior.

The concept of behavior embodies submission. The followers are supposed to act according to the expectations of the institution, which here has an invisible and strong power as mediator: God or Jesus Christ. Nietzsche (1888) had already mentioned the imaginary basis the church lies upon:

Nem a moral nem a religião, no cristianismo, tem algum ponto de contato com a efetividade. Somente causas imaginárias (“Deus”, “alma”, “eu”, “espírito”...); somente efeitos imaginários (“pecado”, “clemência”, “castigo”...). Uma transação entre seres imaginários..., uma ciência imaginária da natureza..., uma psicologia imaginária..., uma teologia imaginária (“o reino de Deus”, “o juízo final”, “a vida eterna”). (p. 349)

Grounded on the imaginary basis on which religion lies upon, it is possible to draw a manifestation of power in the element of motivation. As a demonstration, lines 51 to 57 picture the situation where God, as an entity, is establishing the way His followers should behave. The presence of power exists specially in the element of personification of this superior entity: “Deus estava simplesmente ordenando (...)” (line 52) who is not supposed to be ignored if the objectives of those who are in the church are to be accomplished.

The social dimension of religious discourse affects the sermons in the sense that concepts, such as the idea of punishment, are presented and regarded as common

features of the genre. The presence of power comes from the social concepts themselves and also from the position Edir Macedo holds in the Universal Church.

5.3.2 Analysis of Sermon 2

The analysis of Sermon 1 deals with motivation through the presence of basically 3 elements: the idea of the duality between good and evil, loaded with sanctions or punishments for misbehavior; the appeal to the readers' feelings as well as personification of entities according to the imaginary basis of religion. These three elements are also present in Sermon 2, although they may be observed under other macrocomponents of the hortatory schema instead of the one about motivation. As an example, the personification of an entity in Sermon 2 (line 22) appears in the exposition of the problem/solution. Sermon 2, as a cohesive unit, may as a whole, communicate the same message as Sermon 1 regarding this specific strategy, but it may not always be present under the same headline of the schema at hand.

The strategy that is present in Sermon 2 and seems to work as powerfully as in the first sermon is the one of the duality between good and evil and the sanctions related to misbehavior. On lines 17 and 18 "(...) lots of people have possessed this supernatural faith, but little by little, they have left their communion with God and have ended up ship wrecked." there is the contrast of good, which is the supernatural faith compared to communion with God, with evil, which is the loss of this communion that leads to a sanction, that is, those who have lost that feeling have ended up ship wrecked.

Another example is present on lines 26 and 27 where there is an explicit duality between the concepts related to God and the devil: "When a person is their own servant and not God's, they turn to be a slave of the devil." These lines present the idea that

those who live for themselves live in the flesh, which is the opposite of what the church intends to demonstrate as a correct way to behave. The presence of threat as a resort to motivation is also expressed from lines 40 to 42:

When a person is separated from God, they have no hypothesis: she could use her faith, fight, do whatever she pleases, because she is not going to get the blessings or benefits of supernatural faith.

In this sentence, the bishop clearly states that if the person does not live according to what he is suggesting, he or she will not be rewarded. The establishment of a religious sanction is well stated in these lines.

According to item 'b' presented in the analysis of the first sermon, Sermon 2 also appeals to the readers' feelings as the ideas are developed in the text. There is no explicit word under this macrocomponent of Sermon 2 that shows it as an aspect of motivation, however, Edir Macedo uses other strategies, such as the authority he possesses, to assure his followers that he has enough knowledge about the subject at hand, as it is possible to see from line 11 to 13: "There is no one that can take that away from me. Neither this world, nor the devil nor hell, not even angels, because it is something that God, himself has given to me."

By showing that he is so certain about what he is saying, he uses the position he occupies as a model of behavior to those who are in the church, since he represents the figure of a spiritual leader and then, his words may be a motivation to engage in the same experience he has.

Edir Macedo also approaches the readers with the intention of stimulating them when in lines 48 to 50 he mentions their lives as being full of failures: “Maybe you are an evangelical or catholic and say “I am saved, I am from God.” But when you look at your life, you only see failures and downfalls.” He is cleverly making use of the reasons that usually draw followers to his church, as mentioned in Chapter 3, to turn it into a stimulus to those who intend to receive the blessings from God.

He finishes Sermon 2 with words of motivation that can be related to the quotation from Nietzsche (1983) mentioned in the previous section about the invisible forces on which religion is based. Macedo says: “God is invisible, faith is invisible, abundant life and salvation are invisible. But everything will turn visible the moment we start walking in spirit and truth.” In order to instigate the readers, he makes use of abstract ideas present in the religious context and places them as aims to be achieved through the conduct he suggests through the text.

Basically, Edir Macedo motivates the readers in Sermon 2 by showing them the consequences of not following the ideas he shares through his words. He does not appeal to their feelings as strongly as he does in Sermon 1, but by sharing his personal experience and by using their lives to exemplify what he says. The analysis met the social dimension in which the sermons are inserted and was able to identify power in such dimension as it was demonstrated through the chapter.

CHAPTER 6

FINAL REMARKS

6.1 Introduction

This dissertation aimed at investigating two written sermons of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in their social context, looking at discourse as a form of social practice. As seen in Chapter 2 there is dependence between discourse and social context with one having influence upon the other. The religious perspectives and the philosophy of the Universal Church supported the analysis as they presented features that could be identified in the sermons reinforcing the idea that social dimensions shape the way a text is presented at the same time that a text may shape the social environment.

Considering the theory presented on discourse analysis and the perspectives on religion, it was possible to identify power instantiations within the genre of sermons. The analysis allowed not just the investigation of elements depicting power but also the comparison between the manifestation of such power in two different languages, since one sermon was written in Portuguese and the other one in English.

The main findings are discussed in the following section.

6.2 Main findings

As the analysis was organized according the macrocomponents of hortatory discourse, the discussion of main findings will also follow the same order.

Regarding the component of the establishment of authority or author's credentials it was possible to notice that power was represented by the position Edir Macedo holds in the church, even if it was not overtly stated in the text, and by the presence of biblical references that, according to the church's convictions, are the model from which opinions and conducts must be followed. As the responsibility of the words in the texts was transferred to the Bible, the notion of causality was applied in the analysis. Sermon 1 and 2 present the same characteristics related to establishment of authority, although in Sermon 2 the bishop refers to himself in the first person singular instead of using generalizations as in Sermon 1. Sermon 2 also presents the personification of entities. As Macedo depicts God performing material actions he obtains authority over the words presented.

The component of the presentation of a problem/solution in both sermons proved to be quite weak in terms of argumentation, presenting contradictions all through the texts. As the analysis of the data revealed, bishop Macedo does not provide enough evidence for the idea of paying the tithe with pleasure in Sermon 1 when he uses the Bible as a model of conduct presenting the idea of obligation as the essence of the tradition of the tithe. The problem in Sermon 2 is the achievement of supernatural faith and like the first sermon, it is not well supported since the bishop states that the acquirement of supernatural faith is a passive act but at the same time demands action on the part of his followers. Power instantiations in this macrocomponent proved to be more related to the

authority Edir Macedo holds than to the argumentation he represented in order to propose a solution to the readers.

The investigation of the data also showed that the manifestation of power in the issuing of commands in both sermons is very subtle. Commands or suggestions are given all through the text although the imperative tends to be avoided. Instead, the bishop appeals to threats as well as to the readers' feelings such as love for God, and suggests actions by using stories which set example or, on the contrary, stories that may represent how the follower should not behave.

Finally, the macrocomponent of motivation is present in the text exactly like its definition given in Chapter 2, through threats, and also by means of appeals to the readers' feelings. Features concerning religious concepts themselves are present sources of motivation through fear of spiritual punishments and both sermons depict such instances. Supported again by the authority of the Bible and by his own position, Edir Macedo intends to demonstrate how vulnerable to sanctions readers may be if they do not follow the ideas presented in the texts.

In so far as the instantiation of power in two different languages, the analysis has underlined similar strategies in both of them, even though a same strategy could have been used under a different component within the hortatory framework. This kind of identification may be an indication that what is important in the Church's text is the use of the elements that are part of the genre instead of the order in which they are used.

The sermons meet the definition of hortatory discourse given on Chapter 2 (section 2.4) because they present the four components suggested by Longacre and the components function as he stated they should, i. e., they intend to influence the conduct of the readers. The analysis also met its purposes in relation to the identification of

power in the genre of sermons of the Universal Church since its manifestation is present in the social dimension and can be recognized in the way the texts are constructed. Such manifestations support the idea that institutions have values which can be demonstrated through language use (Kress, 1989), and that power is related to ideology in the sense that the nature of the conventions themselves “depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions.” (Fairclough, 1989:2)

6.3 Further research

Further research could be carried out to investigate the effect of the ideas presented in the sermons on the community that engages in such activities. Interviews with the followers of the Universal Church could contribute to draw such relation, offering the possibility to verify if the text is really reaching its intended purpose.

From the perspective of discourse analysis research like the one carried in this dissertation, or like the one which is being suggested, the present dissertation may contribute to demonstrate the relationship between language and its social environment, promoting social awareness and appealing to individuals' critical views regarding the activities that are common in modernity.

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