# Citizenship in the Brazilian Context
## Theoretically, practically and theologically

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**Abstract**

Citizenship has become the key concept for democracy in Brazil after transition. Often referred to, it denotes rather a conceptual field than a clear-cut definition. Following the central insights of Liberation Theology, seeking to adapt to the current democratic situation and the need for a focus on citizenship, this article argues for such focus within the framework of a public theology. First, it offers a theoretical, conceptual reflection, followed by a presentation of the contributions to citizenship by three major and representative Brazilian churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil and the Assemblies of God. Finally, it presents, briefly, five elements of a theology of citizenship based on central assets of Lutheran theology that are able to respond to current challenges of Brazilian democracy and society.

**Keywords:** Public Theology; Citizenship; Religion and Society - Brazil; Churches and Democracy

> *"A Constituição empenha-se em tornar o homem cidadão.*
> *Entretanto, só é cidadão quem recebe salário adequado e justo.*
> *Só é cidadão quem pode ler e escrever, tem casa,*
> *acesso a hospitais, médicos e lazer."* Ulysses Guimarães[2]

## 1.  Introduction

It is a great pleasure to offer the following panoramic view on citizenship in Brazil, its meaning, practical challenges and theological grounding, to a South African public. My own discovery of public theology as a meaningful way of thinking about

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[2]  "The Constitution strives to make Man [sic] a citizen. However, only he who receives an adequate and just salary is a citizen. Only he who knows how to read and write, has a house, access to hospitals, doctors and leisure is a citizen," quoted by Francisco Weffort, "'Brasil: condenado a modernização', in *Brasileiro: cidadão?* edited by Roberto Da Matta et alii (São Paulo: Cultura, 1992), 185-215, 188. Guimarães (1916–1992), an eminent politician, was president of the Constituent Assembly from 1987 to 1988 and had an important hand in the drafting process of what he called the "citizen constitution," as which it has been known ever since.

issues of social justice and liberation in a democratic setup is strongly linked to insights from reflection and practice in South Africa, including the necessary criticism, as if such a public theology were to supplant, substitute or abolish Liberation Theology.[3] My emphasis on citizenship comes from a Liberation theologian, Hugo Assmann, who in a seminal article published in 1994 argued that a "theology of citizenship and solidarity" should be the continuation of Liberation Theology.[4] It was nourished by the need to make a more concrete impact based on the insights and experiences of Liberation Theology[5], and also to allow new contributions into the debate like the one by Pentecostal theologians, who might reject using the term "liberation", but can actually arrive at a quite liberating theology.[6] What follows is to some extent a summary of a wider research completed in 2009, which has gained much from the dialogue with South African colleagues in the years that followed the creation of the Global Network of Public Theology (2007) and the bilateral research project sponsored mainly by the Brazilian National Research Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). After some introductory remarks on the centrality of citizenship in Brazil, I shall expand on it theoretically, practically, and

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[3]  As an introduction to the discussion of Public Theology in South Africa and Brazil, respectively, see Etienne de Villiers, ed., Special Issue: Public Theology in the South African Context, *International Journal of Public Theology* 5/1 (2011); Rudolf von Sinner and Ronaldo Cavalcante, eds., Special Issue: Public Theology in Brazil, *International Journal of Public Theology* 6/1 (2012); Eneida Jacobsen, Rudolf von Sinner and Roberto E. Zwetsch, eds., *Public Theology in Brazil: Social and Cultural Challenges* (Münster: LIT, 2013). Specifically on the issue of the relationship between public theology and Liberation Theology, see the doctoral dissertation by Felipe Gustavo Koch Buttelli, *E a luta continua: propostas para uma teologia pública libertadora para o desenvolvimento construída em diálogo com a reflexão teológica sul-africana* (São Leopoldo: Programa de Pós-Graduação em Teologia/Faculdades EST, 2013).

[4]  Hugo Assmann, "Teologia da Solidariedade e da Cidadania. Ou seja: continuando a Teologia da Libertação", in *Crítica à Lógica da Exclusão* (São Paulo: Paulus, 1994), 13-36.

[5]  Rudolf von Sinner, "Brazil: From Liberation Theology to a Theology of Citizenship as Public Theology", in: International Journal of Public Theology 1/3-4 (2007), 338-363. It was not my intention in that article to suggest the substitution of Liberation Theology by a public theology, but to show how the former, read in the light of Assmann's plea, could be continued meaningfully in a new context and with a somewhat wider, but aggregating concept. It is still open to debate whether this is pertinent or not; in any case I would say that the discussion in Brazil has been fruitful and certainly created a host of reflections, research and publications. As is to be expected, there is no single definition or line of thought in public theology, but various; they do, however, interlink; see Eneida Jacobsen, "Models of Public Theology", *International Journal of Public Theology* 6/1 (2012), 7-22.

[6]  See the important Master's thesis by Rodrigo Gonçalves Majewski, *Assembléia de Deus e teologia pública: o discurso pentecostal no espaço público* (São Leopoldo: Programa de Pós-Graduação em Teologia/Faculdades EST, 2010), also (in a US-context) Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010); Rudolf von Sinner, "Pentecostalism and Citizenship in Brazil: Between Escapism and Dominance", *International Journal of Public Theology* 6/1, 99-117.

theologically, focusing on the concept of citizenship, the contributions of churches towards it and Lutheran theological insights that can ground it.

Citizenship (*cidadania*) has become the new key concept for democracy in Brazil after transition, i.e. since the second half of the 1980s.[7] As such, it supplanted "civil society", "autonomy", and "opposition to the military" as a master frame.[8] Initially, citizenship is a legal status which is due to the citizens of a nation state and, to a lesser degree, to resident foreigners. However, it is also a "socio-political identity."[9] It includes not only rights and duties, but also civic virtues, an attitude of the citizens towards their status and the relationship to others and to the State implied in it. Civil society is, to some degree, the institutionalized expression of citizens' struggle to give shape and effectiveness to citizenship, and its presence is a sign of democratic, active, participatory citizenship far beyond voting, which it seeks in turn to encourage. Christian churches and other religious communities are, in effect, part of civil society and contribute by fostering, to a higher or lesser degree, citizenship.

"Citizenship", as used in Brazil, denotes a conceptual field rather than a clear-cut concept, due to the ever increasing plurality of subjects, issues, goals, and policies. The concept has been historically forged in the West, having as its initial references Athens and Rome and passing through the 18th century revolutions in the United States and France.[10] From there, the liberal notion of citizenship has had its bearing on the Imperial Constitution of independent Brazil (1824), and its further constitutional history. Another matter is how it came to be applied and how it has worked (or not) within Brazil, given its specific multicultural and socially disparate context. European immigrants were called into the country not least to safeguard the white, dominant population against a possible uprising of people brought over from Africa into slavery, who were then already in the majority.[11] But some of them

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[7] On the importance of citizenship in South Africa see Clint Le Bruyns, "The Church, Democracy, and Responsible Citizenship", Religion & Theology 19 (2012), 1-14.

[8] See Rudolf von Sinner, The Churches and Democracy in Brazil: Towards a Public Theology Focused on Citizenship (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 66; Kathryn Hochstetler, "Democratizing Pressures from Below? Social Movements in the New Brazilian Democracy", in Democratic Brazil. Actors, Institutions, and Processes, edited by Peter R. Kingstone and Timothy P. Power (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 162-182.

[9] Derek Heater, A Brief History of Citizenship (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 1.

[10] See Jaime Pinsky and Carla Bassanezi Pinsky, eds., História da Cidadania (São Paulo: Contexto, 2003).

[11] No law in Brazil since the abolition of slavery (1888) has used race or ethnicity as a criterion for discrimination. Still, there are blatant social asymmetries, and there is racial discrimination based on the phenotype in people's perception, as recently shown once more by Alberto Carlos Almeida, A cabeça do Brasileiro, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2007), 215-34 – which brings Brazil, mutatis mutandis, near what Rothney Tshaka describes as "pigmentocracy". On the issue of racism and the reacting anti-racism movements in Brazil see Sérgio Costa, Vom Nordatlantik zum "Black Atlantic". Postkoloniale

were brought to replace the slaves, and there were restrictions in their citizenship, especially if they were Protestant. Indigenous peoples had been gaining a proper status along the 20th century, culminating in the 1988 Constitution when they emerged from State tutelage into equal citizenship with a particular right to difference. The persistence of racism against black people has, finally, led to affirmative action in the early 21st century. These three examples show from the outset that it is impossible to restrict citizenship to an issue of passport and Brazilian nationality.

Still, the issue of nationality is a difficult one in Brazil. Who is a "true" Brazilian in a country marked by immigration, whether forced or voluntary? What is it that characterizes the nation? Cultural studies have shown that nations are a construct, promoted both by national discourses reinforcing the common origin and essentials that tie the "compatriots" together, and the constant reinterpretation of national symbols.[12] For a long time in Brazil it had been clear that speaking Portuguese and being Catholic were all that was necessary to be Brazilian. According to Carvalho, until 1930 there were "no people politically organized nor a consolidated national sentiment."[13] Despite some national identity having been forged, for the first time, in the war against Paraguay (1865–1870), patriotic feeling was in the provinces, and a number of revolts during the 19th century were a reaction against central government, against the republic, even against vaccination campaigns in a defence of local and regional life, culture, and religion.

The "myth of racial democracy" presented Brazil as inherently syncretistic, mixing, in a process of *mestiçagem.*[14] It seemed possible to construct one nation from so many diverse influences, namely "the" European, Indigenous, and African, as if these were homogenous groups in themselves. Today, it is clearer that despite a general consciousness to be Brazilian, there are considerable social, racial, ethnic, and cultural differences and asymmetries among Brazilian citizens. An appropriate equilibrium between equality and difference is evidently necessary and becoming a central issue for the debate on citizenship, in Brazil as, today, globally.

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Konfi-gurationen und Paradoxien transnationaler Politik (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007). For Costa, the so-called pardos (literally "grey," "dark," meaning "brownness") and other phenotypes resulting of the mixture of Europeans, Africans and Indigenous, are to be seen as an identity in its own right, to be distinguished also empirically and statistically, and not simply to be seen as a "false" identity (which supposedly should be either "white" or "black," tertium non datur).

[12]  See Homi K. Bhaba, Nation and Narration (London: Routledge, 1990).

[13]  José Murilo de Carvalho, Cidadania no Brasil. O longo caminho (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001), 83.

[14]  This State propaganda was based on the seminal study of Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves, first published in 1933 and has been assimilated, in his search for an alternative to Nazism in his home country, by Stefan Zweig, Brazil: a Land of the Future (Riverside, Ca.: Ariadne Press, 2000).

## 2.  Theoretically: Theories of Citizenship

There is currently no full-fledged theory of citizenship available from a Brazilian's pen, although elements of it are to be found in the abundant literature on the matter, generally focused on rights, their applications and expansion, and to a much lesser degree on its correspondent obligations. Janoski,[15] followed by Vieira,[16] defines citizenship as "passive and active membership of individuals in a nation-state with certain universalistic rights and obligations at a specified level of equality." Most Brazilian authors refer to British sociologist Thomas H. Marshall's (1893–1981)[17] three categories of rights, civil, political, and social, conquered in this order in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, respectively, with Great Britain as his reference. Brazilian political scientist and historian José Murilo de Carvalho argues that the order of conquest was inverted in Brazil. Although civil rights, inspired by the French Constitution of 1791 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, had already been included in the Brazilian Imperial Constitution of 1824, Carvalho makes a reservation: "But if these rights still today are dead letter for a great portion of the population, what to say about Brazil in the 19th century, when there was still slavery and nearly all the population called free lived under the strict control of landlords?"[18]

First, then, came the social rights, which were introduced under Getúlio Vargas' dictatorship in the *Estado Novo* (1937–45). These included the creation of a Ministry of Work, Industry and Commerce, and especially the enormous collection of labour legislation with numerous protections and a pension system, which was finalized in 1943 and is still in effect today. This allowed Vargas to create for himself an image of a benevolent "father of the nation," while civil and political rights were highly restricted, the media were censured and disliked intellectuals and politicians were harassed. Under the military regime (1964–85), further advances such as the creation of a unified pension system were introduced, now extended also to rural workers, domestic employees, and autonomous workers, and the Guarantee Fund for Time of Service (FGTS) was created to function as an unemployment insurance. Political rights were, again, highly restricted, but democratic structures and the vote remained in place, although as little more than a façade. As transition progressed,

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[15]  Thomas, Janoski, Citizenship and Civil Society (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.

[16]  Liszt Vieira, Os argonautas da cidadania: a sociedade civil na globalização (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2001), 34.

[17]  See Thomas H. Marshall, Class, Citizenship, and Social Development (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1965), 71-134. Beyond the three types of rights, Marshall also argued that the equality of citizenship was "not inconsistent with the inequalities which distinguish the various economic levels in the society," as quoted by Heater, Brief History of Citizenship, 113.

[18]  José Murilo de Carvalho, Cidadania no Brasil. O longo caminho (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001), 97.

political participation became a possibility for the people. While significant advances were made in social and political rights, it is civil rights that remain "deficient in terms of their being known, their extension and guarantees".[19]

An important tendency is to attribute the conquest of citizenship historically less to the *citoyen* than to the *bourgeois*, and seeing rights primarily as liberal rights serving the bourgeoisie. Marx and Gramsci are, of course, patrons of such discourse. Namely in the beginning of the New Republic, opposition against repression and inequality made thinkers suspicious of liberal discourse, and socialist utopia (pre-1989) and the hope for revolution were still strong, which had its bearing on theology.[20] This utopian tendency is reinforced by the perception that citizenship in Brazil was, originally, not "conquered" from below, but "given" from above, i.e., the State run by the elites, in a "regulated" or "patronising" (*tutelada*) citizenship.[21] What is meant becomes clear through recalling Vargas' promotion of social rights: this was not the conquest of the people, but the populist act of a ruler to incorporate the subaltern classes into a bourgeois order.[22] It is plain that social rights have never attained the same fundamental, universal validity as have civil and political rights, precisely because the principle of equality in this field is a matter of continuous debate, and has fuelled the debate between capitalists and socialists. Corrêa introduces into his definition of citizenship the economic and social aspects:

> "Citizenship is […] the democratic realization of a society, shared by all the individuals to the point that all have their access to the public space and conditions of a dignified survival guaranteed, having as its basic value the fullness of life."[23]

It is plain that such a definition surpasses the issue of rights (and duties) as foreseen by law, but introduces a utopian, even eschatological dimension when speaking of the "fullness of life" (cf. John 10.10, often cited in Christian social movements and NGOs). "Access to public space" seems to include both the political and juridical system and the discursive space, while a "dignified survival" indicates having the basic needs met appropriately. Corrêa clearly wants to go beyond the insufficiencies of Marxism and its reception in Latin America, while maintaining the utopia of

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[19] Carvalho, Cidadania no Brasil, 210.

[20] Cf. the contributions in Klaus Klaus, ed., Falling Walls: The Year 1989/90 as a Turning Point in the History of World Christianity (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

[21] Darcísio Corrêa, A construção da cidadania: reflexões histórico-políticas [1999], 4th ed. (Ijuí: Unijuí, 2006), 215; Pedro Demo, Cidadania menor: algumas indicações quantitativas de nossa pobreza política (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1992).

[22] Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos, Cidadania e justiça: a política social na ordem brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1979), quoted in Corrêa, A construção da cidadania, 216.

[23] Corrêa, A construção da cidadania, 217.

"another possible world," to take up the World Social Forum's slogan. Corrêa seeks to affirm the law and the State as indispensable, even if insufficient for citizenship: "the State as idealized representation of public space takes on the form of law."[24] Three important affirmations are implied here: (1) The State is an "idealized" representation, i.e., its central values as formulated in the constitution are valid even if far from being put into action. Thus, the common opposition of "abstract" and "concrete" human rights is overcome by the "idea" of human rights, which remains as symbolic orientation and, thus, a constant reference for the struggle for their concrete enactment. (2) The State is a "representation," i.e. the public is prior to the State. The latter is, however, indispensable, and becomes a truly representative agent, not reduced to a simple mechanism to defend the bourgeoisie. (3) The "law" is indispensable, not least to serve as a reference to facilitate the struggle of those still excluded from its benefits. This does not mean merely a "passive" status, but rather an "active" contribution of the citizen as a truly political and not merely legal subject. Corrêa shows how it is possible, while somehow remaining within the Marxist flock, to adapt to the new democratic situation and value the law as an instrument to materialize the utopia of human dignity.

One could say that if traditionally the elites distrusted the ability of the masses to govern themselves, it is the masses—as represented by civil society with a Marxist-Gramscian philosophy—who distrust "liberal" or "formal" citizenship as an instrument benefiting only the elites. Corrêa signals a way to continue in that line, opening up to a more constructive and collaborative "active" citizenship, without abandoning a hermeneutics of suspicion. The frequent use of "conquest," "participation," "emancipation," and "active citizenship" in Brazilian literature indicates the hope and, indeed, expectation of those active in civil society to construct a new society with inverted roles—a society from "below," with more emphasis given to the social than to the individual, even some form of socialist republic.[25] The theologians of liberation, strongly articulated with leaders of civil society, blew into the same horn, as I have shown elsewhere.[26] Both for the former and the latter, a certain overstatement of the potential of the people (as well as a rather abstract notion of them, without sufficiently specifying differences) and their movements was underlying. This strong hope was frustrated (but not extinguished) by a number of events in 1989, not only the fall of the Berlin Wall, but the non-election of Lula to the

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[24] Corrêa, A construção da cidadania, 223.

[25] Citizenship is, for Demo (Cidadania menor, 17), "a historical process of popular conquest, by which society acquires, progressively, conditions of becoming a conscious and organized historical subject, with a capacity to conceive and make effective [=emancipation] a project of one's own. The contrary signifies the condition of a mass of manipulation, periphery, marginalization".

[26] See von Sinner, The Churches and Democracy, 100-120.

presidency and the non-continuity of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Thus, new forms of participation within a more modest horizon (the "construction" of citizenship in a "process") had to be elaborated. The so-called participatory budgeting, in which part of the municipal budget is decided upon in popular assemblies, is part of this new vision, relatively modest quantitatively, but still important in indicating a concrete increase in popular, democratic participation.[27] The means of popular vote (referendum, plebiscite, and popular initiative), foreseen in the 1988 Constitution and propagated in a major study by Benevides[28] as elements of an "active citizenship," were only used twice: On the form of government (1993) and on the prohibition of the commercialization of firearms and ammunition (2005). This is deplorable, because it would be another important advance of popular participation in politics. But it also shows the problem of what kind of issue should be submitted to the people's vote. The death penalty has not been put to the vote, because it is taken as being against the logic of fundamental rights. But according to opinion polls, it is not improbable that it would find a majority voting in favour.[29]

Another trend, identified globally by Janoski and taken up by Vieira, includes an emphasis on *civic culture* and specifically *virtue*, in line with Tocqueville and Durkheim and again among communitarians like Bellah, Etzioni, and Walzer.[30] This tendency is less strong in Brazil and Latin America, although there are signs of it in speaking of "responsibility," "duty," "behaviour."[31] This is why the "learning" of democracy[32] and education[33] are so central. It is also no surprise that this aspect is of particular interest to theologians, namely those who think society in terms of a

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[27] See, for instance, Leonardo Avritzer, Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 135-164.

[28] Maria Victoria de Mesquita Benevides, A cidadania ativa: referendo, plebiscito e iniciativa popular [1990], 3rd ed. (São Paulo: Ática, 2003).

[29] According to the 5th Report on Human Rights in Brazil, prepared by São Paulo University (USP), for 44% of the respondents the death penalty is at least acceptable; Núcleo de Estudos da Violência da USP, 5º Relatório Nacional sobre os Direitos Humanos no Brasil, 2001-2010 (São Paulo: USP, 2012), 46.

[30] Cf. Janoski, Citizenship and Civil Society, 7.

[31] See, for instance, Elizabeth Jelin, "Construir a Cidadania: uma visão desde baixo", Lua Nova vol. 33 (1994), 39-57, who speaks (from Argentina, but in a similar situation to that of Brazil) of the need to reconstruct and transform the institutions of the State and civil society, but also emphasizes that "people have to adopt adequate and coherent behaviors and beliefs in relation to the notion of democracy, learning how to act in a renewed institutional system" (ibid., 55).

[32] Cf. Paulo J. Krischke, The Learning of Democracy in Latin America: Social Actors and Cultural Change (New York: Nova Science, 2001).

[33] Cf. Ester Buffa, Miguel Arroyo and Paolo Nosella, Educação e cidadania: quem educa o cidadão? [1987] 13th ed. (São Paulo: Cortez, 2007); Evaldo Luis Pauly, Ética, educação e cidadania: questões de fundamentação teológica e filosófica da ética da educação (São Leopoldo: Sinodal, 2002); Danilo R. Streck, Educação para um novo contrato social. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2003.

large community, like Boff, who emphasizes "virtues for another possible world,"[34] these being hospitality, conviviality (*convivência*) and the sharing of the table (*comensalidade*). The churches are, or at least can be schools of democracy, where ways of linking up motivation, analysis, and action in a participatory discussion are tested.

Civil society is an important correlate of citizenship and has in Brazil and elsewhere without doubt played a considerable role in the expansion and enhanced efficiency of rights, although not rarely downplaying (or leaving out on) duties. In this context, it is important to stress that the State is not something barely instrumental and transitory, but an indispensable institution to keep law and order with a monopoly of coercion; indeed, civil society with its mediating, claiming, educating, and project executing role would be meaningless without the State. History seems to have shown that the important experiences of small scale "popular" organizations like Church Base and other communities and movements cannot make up for the whole of society and guide its path with its long-term processes of reflection and decision-making—which is, however, not to say that its experiences could not be valued, as happens in the experiences of public budgeting.[35] In fact, such movements can only exist inasmuch as the State provides and guarantees space for them, which even the military regime did to some extent, if only because it could not directly supervise all these localized experiences. As rightly stated by Vieira: "civil society cannot constitute the *locus* of the rights of citizenship, as it does not cover the State sphere which assures official protection through legal sanctions".[36] The dimensions of State and the law it establishes and guarantees, with equal and universal validity, are, thus, indispensable (even if insufficient) dimensions of citizenship.

At the same time, civic culture, i.e., the significance attributed to being a citizen and the attitudes of pride, rejection, or disbelief held by citizens toward their citizenship, has a direct influence on the degree to which citizenship can be effective and participative, not least because those in power and working in the administration are also citizens, and their shortcomings reflect all citizens' potential or real shortcomings. The churches, to some degree part of civil society and certainly mediating institutions, can have influence on laws, inasmuch as their members and representatives directly negotiate with the State on these, and on civic culture, inasmuch as they train, inform, and legitimate it among their members.

In sum, I agree with the Brazilian authors that citizenship cannot be reduced to rights and duties in a national State. *For one*, the law as written needs grounding in something that is prior to it, to which the people at least broadly agree and feel

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[34]  Leonardo Boff, Virtudes para um outro mundo possível, 3 vols. (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2006).

[35]  Cf. Avritzer, Democracy and the Public Space.

[36]  Vieira, Os argonautas da cidadania, 37.

committed to. Morality and normativity come in here, as do human rights, which by definition go beyond national boundaries. *Secondly*, the law is useless unless it is effectively available for the people, which includes both how it is handled by the instituted authorities and perceived by the citizens. *Third*, citizenship is moulded by discourse and practice in the public sphere, where civil society as the organized part based on, as I define it, private initiative engaged in fostering citizenship in the public sphere to promote the common good for the whole of society has a specific task. Here, the question is to be asked if this civil society is to be seen in a national or global perspective.

Initially, the answer will be "both, of course," recalling the crucial role Brazil has played in bringing about and sustaining one of the most visible forums of a globally interacting and networking civil society, the World Social Forum. There certainly are conceptions of a global citizenship, and it is true that national boundaries have become flexible to some extent.[37] A globalized economy as well as ever faster means of communication seem to make nonsense of national boundaries. But fragmentation, ethnic issues, migration with subsequent reactions of xenophobia, and closing of borders have also created new boundaries and reinforced old ones. In any case, it is the national setup that puts into practice concrete rights and claims duties. The national State and its laws are a concrete correlate to civil society, which is not the case globally, although there are regional and certain global conglomerates that assume a certain degree of supra-national power (the European Union, or the United Nations with its political, judiciary, and military institutions and regulations). There is no World State, and it is questionable whether it would be desirable to exist, as some would be more powerful than others in running it, and it might undermine rather than foster a world democracy. A kind of federation, based on international law, as advocated already by Kant in his *On Perpetual Peace* might be, *mutatis mutandis*, more appropriate.

Be this as it may, it is legitimate to focus on a national constitution to analyse what it says about citizenship, because it is in reference to this citizenship that people can struggle for the improvement of their lives and effective participation. And if I agree, as indicated, that citizenship is much more than rights and duties, to become effective for people's lives it is prominently about rights and duties.[38] I now turn to the concrete contribution of churches to citizenship in Brazil.

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[37] Cf. Vieira, Os argonautas da cidadania; John Keane, Global Civil Society? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[38] This line has been radically – and perhaps too unilaterally – taken by Charles Villa-Vicencio in his project of a "Theology of Reconstruction", biblically speaking of a return from exile, harvesting on earlier ecumenical reflections on "middle axioms" as mediators between the great ethical principles and concrete rules and regulations, as well as on Indian thought on nation-building by M.M. Thomas and

## 3. Practically: The Churches and Citizenship in Brazil

Since colonial times, Brazil has been made a predominantly Christian country.[39] According to the 2010 census, the Roman Catholic Church continues to hold the majority of believers (64.6%), even if with great losses in the last 30 years, followed by the booming Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches (18.1%).[40] Historic Protestant churches, of immigration or missionary origin, make up for 4% of the population, while Spiritists (2%), African Brazilian (0.3%) and other religions together have a share of 2.7%.[41] The most obvious shift is from the Catholics to the Pentecostals, who more than tripled from 1991 (5.6%) to 2010. In what follows, I shall look at the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (*Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil,* IECLB), and the Assemblies of God (*Assembléias de Deus,* AD), which are representative of a great part of Brazilian Christians and can serve as cases in point. The first one came with the Portuguese colonial power to Brazil in 1500, and today holds some 123 million believers. The second, which arrived with immigrants from Germany in 1824, counts among its members roughly 700,000. The third, which began through the work of Swedish missionaries who had passed through the U.S., in 1911, can count on 12.3 million members (2010).

### 3.1 The Roman Catholic Church

Within the Roman Catholic Church, the 1950s had been a period of fostering social awareness and activity, forming a new generation of progressive leadership. The *Catholic Action* adopted the French-Belgian model of creating specific organizations for different sectors of society, especially youth organizations for high school students, workers, and university students, among others. However, "by 1968, the most innovative Catholic experiment since the French worker-priests had forcibly come to a halt" as the Catholic Action was dismantled.[42] Even so, their heritage remained influential, as many liberation theologians and other church activists

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P.D. Devanandan; Charles Villa-Vicencio, A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and Human Rights (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[39] On this part, see extensively von Sinner, The Churches and Democracy in Brazil, 121-278.

[40] Officially, the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE), counts 13.3% of the population as part of "evangelical [churches] of Pentecostal origin", but it is most probably fair to add those classified as "undetermined evangelical [church]" (4.8%). IBGE, Censo demográfico 2010: Características da população, religião e pessoas com deficiência, Tabela 1.4.1; <http://www.ibge.gov.br>, acessed on 3/7/2012.

[41] I have not counted under other religions, nor under evangelicals, "other Christian religiosities", Mormons, and Jehova's witnesses, which together account for 1.6% of the population.

[42] Ralph Della Cava, "The People's Church, the Vatican, and Abertura", in Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation, edited by Alfred Stepan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 143-67, 144.

emerged from the named organizations, and adopted their method of "see – judge – act", beginning by social analysis of the context before proceeding to a reading of it in the light of faith and turning to subsequent action. The Church Base Communities (*Comunidades Eclesiais de Base,* CEBs), small groups of church members gathering regularly under lay leadership, were created in the fifties, originally to meet the blatant lack of priests and to reach members better in religious and social aspects. Gradually, they evolved into politically "conscientized" – following Paulo Freire's concept of a pedagogy of the oppressed –groups, reading the Bible with eyes open to the context, and taking action in mobilizing pressure on local authorities towards clean water, sewerage, education, health services and the like, mainly at the periphery of great urban centres, as well as in rural areas.

The Roman Catholic Church, albeit since the first Republic (1889) no longer an established church, continued to understand itself as *the* religion of the Brazilians and sought to pursue its project of maintaining hegemony against atheist and Pentecostal threats alike. Initially, the church welcomed the military's "revolution" (in fact, a coup, in 1964), as it re-established order and combated communism. The church remained relatively passive, observing what it expected to be a short-lived military government which would soon give back power to democratically elected representatives. However, when the church itself began to feel the repression, from 1968 onwards, even moderate bishops turned to opposition. They began to take a critical stance towards the government, being led by a number of prophets like bishops Hélder Câmara and Paulo Evaristo Arns who became particularly renowned – and feared – for their courageous and fierce criticism of repression. Both the growing number of CEBs, from below, and the support of the church leadership, from above, guaranteed a certain independent space for alternative visions and political networking. Stepan concludes that "by the mid-1970s the Brazilian Church had become the most theologically progressive and institutionally innovative Catholic Church in the world. With the initial support of the Vatican, it also became in Brazil the most legitimate, most nation-wide, and most useful organizational resource for the opposition forces of civil society."[43] The so-called "popular church", referring to the CEBs, liberation theologians and a good number of bishops supporting them, remained numerically modest, but undoubtedly has left its mark on history. Many important leaders in civil society have come from this "popular church" and could count on its continued support. A strong basis of commitment to democracy and social justice, as well as of leadership training was being provided by the CEBs and those related to them. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church

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[43] Alfred Stepan, Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation, edited by Alfred Stepan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), xii; also Scott Mainwaring, The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

has certainly made an important contribution to democratic transition. Some call this "conjunctural" or an "artificial" visibility of the Church[44], as the Church's monopoly of opposition was broken as soon as other types of organization (parties, trade unions, social movements, NGOs) were allowed to exist. Certainly, the immediate influence of the Church diminished, and many communities (including CEBs) and a considerable part of the hierarchy tended to go back to "internal business" as repression faded. This tendency was reinforced by the Vatican's policy under Pope John Paul II, as retiring bishops were invariably substituted by conservative or even reactionary bishops, who not rarely destroyed in a couple of months what their predecessors had constructed over years. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, imported from the U.S. and today the strongest tendency in Brazilian Catholicism, steers an individualist line centered on spiritual experience, emotion, and healing, tending to be politically conservative.

However, the National [Catholic] Bishop's Conference (*Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* – CNBB) continued to make important contributions to the debate on democracy, and priests like Frei Betto, Leonardo Boff and many others actively participated in building up a political alternative, mainly through the Worker's Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* – PT). Especially land reform and the rights of indigenous peoples were constantly dealt with in the CNBB and many dioceses. The church played an active role during the constituent process (1986-88) and made a considerable number of proposals, which are well documented. Before the actual constituent process, the CNBB had laid out its principles in the pastoral declaration "Toward a New Constitutional Order", a statement approved by the CNBB's 24th General Assembly in April 1986. There, the bishops affirmed that

> "the new constitution should not restrict itself to the reorganization of the State and its relationship with society. It shall translate the search for a new model of society […] A model that shall be based on the ethical demands of human society and on the extension of effective citizenship to all Brazilians without exception. Within this new model, it inheres to all citizens to participate co-responsibly in the effort toward social improvement and to the State to promote the common good, featuring an organic and participatory democracy."[45]

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[44]  See Della Cava, "The ‚People's Church', the Vatican, and Abertura"; J. Daudelin and William E. Hewitt, "Churches and Politics in Latin America: Catholicism Confronts Contemporary Challenges," in Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World, edited by Jeff Haynes, 141-163 (New York: Macmillan, 1999).

[45]  CNBB, Por uma nova ordem constitucional. Documentos da CNBB 36, 1986, paragraph 10.

Here and in other documents, the CNBB insists on the need for measures of popular participation (referendum, collective legal action etc.), fundamental rights for all, the equality of women and, in general, the (re-)establishment of a constitutional state, among others. While all power emanates, ultimately, from God, in a democracy power emanates from the people. The State, in this system, is to use this power to serve the people, eradicate misery and serve the common good.[46] The church further recognizes that it has to give a good example and to undergo itself the conversion it is proposing. However, it states clearly that "although in the Church of the Lord Jesus power does not come from the people, nor is it exercised in the name of the people, we want to work generously that in our dioceses and in our communities the spirit of communion, the climate of co-responsibility, mutual respect, the attitude of service and the flourishing of adequate mechanisms of participation (cf. Mt 20,25-28) may consolidate, being excluded all forms of arbitrary authoritarianism."[47]

On the political level, the fighters on the Catholic left invested much hope in the Lula and Dilma administrations (2003-10, 2011-), but not few of them have distanced themselves following disillusionment with the PT's transition from opposition to government, with many goals left unachieved. CNBB pronouncements, analyses and reflections on issues of poverty, social justice and democracy, continue as ever, adopting the role of a critical vigilant over politics and society. There are also numerous *pastorais,* sectors of pastoral work, which develop specific work with children, women, prisoners, persons affected by illness (including HIV/AIDS) and the like, which are perceived as very positive by the population. On the other hand, the inflexible position imposed by Rome in terms of abortion and contraceptives is not being appreciated. With regard to bioethics, for instance on embryonic stem cell research, its position is perceived by the media and the educated as very conservative.

Summing up, we can say that the CNBB has been and continues to be strong in its debate with the government, as well as in its participation in civil society, albeit

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[46] CNBB. Exigências éticas da ordem democrática. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1989, paragraph 71. In general, the CNBB follows Catholic Social Teaching's main principles, based on human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity, and oriented by the values of truth, freedom, justice, and love; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (Strathfield: St. Pauls Publications, 2005), paragraphs 197ff. This Teaching has, in turn, adopted the "preferential option for the poor" as developed by the Latin American Episcopate, paragraphs 182ff.

[47] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, paragraph 107. Subtly, but still clearly, Clodovis Boff indicates that this should mean, in order to be credible, that the church should not only be "living the democratic spirit, but strive to endow itself with structures which would be effectively democratic"; "Fé cristã e democracia", in Cristianismo, humanismo e democracia, edited by Fábio Régio Bento (São Paulo: Paulus, 2005), 77-105, 101.

mostly indirectly through its specialized pastoral sectors. Internally, however, there has been and continues to be implemented a re-traditionalization, which restricts the activities of lay people, especially in worship. The church sees itself clearly as part of society and is conscious of its not being a political party, thus not being entitled to give direct instructions on how the State, society, and politics should be. In all documents, the church leadership clearly recognizes that it has a limited role to play in politics, but it does recognize a continued role in, for instance, encouraging electoral participation under ethical criteria. It understands its role properly as an educator, giving orientations and being a critical partner of the state and society in alerting for peoples' needs and, not least, watching over the due place of religion. However, while the church does contribute to knowledge and conscience on citizenship and its rights in many of its pastoral work branches, it insists that it in itself is not a democracy, as the power it holds does not emanate from the people. It is a continuous matter of debate whether, at least, it could not be more "with" the people than it currently is.

### 3.2 The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil

During the military regime, the historic Protestant churches remained, by and large, silent and complied more or less actively with the new situation, some even denouncing "communist" brothers and sisters from their own church. Such quietism had, among others, a specific reason in the *Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil:* as it largely consists of immigrants and their descendants from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, it was and is being called by many "the German church". Initially, the problem was more of a religious kind, and, as other Protestants, they had to conquer their citizenship all along the 19th century. Religious liberty was restricted and they could not bury their dead on public cemeteries, nor was their blessing of marriage accepted – their children were, thus, considered bastards. Neither did their baptisms receive public recognition, which was highly problematic in a time when there were no civil birth registers. From 1871 onwards, when Pan-Germanism was actively promoted by the now united motherland, the church itself tended to confuse faith and germanism.[48] Identified as foreign and, more specifically, considered stained by the shame of two horrible and eventually lost World Wars, they wanted to make sure they would not again fall prey to the accusation of not being truly Brazilian. With State measures against the

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[48]  See Martin Dreher, Kirche und Deutschtum in der Entwicklung der Evangelischen Kirche Lutherischen Bekenntnisses in Brasilien. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978; Hans-Jürgen Prien, "Identity and Problems of Development: The Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil", in Lutheran Churches – Salt or Mirror of Society? Case Studies on the Theory and Practice of the Two Kingdoms Doctrine, edited by Ulrich Duchrow (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1977), 192-242.

German language, German nationals working in Brazil and the evangelical schools where German was spoken during the World Wars were confronted with repression and discrimination. While this created much suffering, severed ties to Germany and broke transatlantic personal and financial support, it facilitated a new phase of consciousness in the church of their truly Brazilian citizenship, which became evident through the increasing use of the Portuguese language. The IECLB continued to struggle hard to find its identity between its German immigrant roots and its strive for being truly Brazilian. This made it rather reluctant to oppose a government which harped strongly on Brazilian patriotism, as any criticism would be understood as renewed evidence for the IECLB's foreign identity. A group of critical intellectuals, however, gained momentum and influence over the Church's leadership after the shock suffered by the Church when the Lutheran World Federation decided to transfer its 5th Assembly from Porto Alegre in Brazil to Evian in France (1970) in order to avoid giving a signal of acceptance to the Brazilian government. Although a very painful process and full of misunderstandings, it seems that this event served as a catalyst for the church to take its social responsibility more seriously. It began to denounce human rights abuses and the state's patriotic hubris. At the same time, social issues became more and more pressing inside this church. Many of its members, originally small farmers in southern Brazil, migrated to other states, especially in the Amazon region, and became involved in land conflicts and related issues. And migration to the cities gave the church an urban constituency as well, raising other issues onto the agenda.

Thus, the IECLB began its more explicit and more critical political positioning in 1970. After that it continuously made public its opinion on the regime and the process of transition, exhorting not only the government, but also the church's members to take seriously their public responsibility. The tone was generally cautious, avoiding direct opposition to the State, but became more outspoken as the transition process progressed. In a quite daring message issued on Christmas 1978, the church leadership called, among other things, for amnesty in favour of political prisoners and exiles, the full revocation of exceptional laws and the reestablishment of the constitutional State. This aroused discomfort both in the relation with the State and within the church, resulting in a self-imposed ''moratorium'' on public statements in the early eighties to calm the heated spirits. Nevertheless, internal and external statements on public issues remained a continuous feature of the IECLB, with a strong centre of reflection at its seminary (Escola Superior de Teologia), an active and critical Council of Mission among Indigenous Peoples (COMIN), working ecumenically with its Roman Catholic counterpart, and a good number of pastors engaged in the struggle for land reform, not least in conjunction with the predominantly Roman Catholic Pastoral Land Commission (CPT). The fact that

President Geisel, who commenced the process of transition, came from a Lutheran family, was debated in the church's newspaper, the *Jornal Evangélico,* and aroused certain hopes that this would influence his politics, but apparently did not make any visible difference, nor did it give the IECLB better access to the government.

The Church's leadership and working sectors tended to continue along the line shown above. Namely, the Center of Support for the Small Farmer (CAPA), founded in 1979, and a great number of local projects which are today coordinated by the Lutheran Fund for Diaconia, have given concrete shape to the church's position. Still, such politically active position and action probably never became a majority position among the laity and was indeed contested by influential Church members (entrepreneurs, for instance). Even so, there is a remarkable continuity in statements of the Church leadership on public issues like the land reform, elections, racism, and the rights of indigenous peoples. These pronouncements continued in the period after transition and were only to diminish from 1994 onwards, when the boat of democracy was floating in stiller waters and the Church concentrated on inward matters. Walter Altmann, member of the critical new generation that arose in the sixties and seventies, and Pastor President from 2003 to 2010, has been insisting on public issues and established consultant groups, for instance on gender, ethnic and issues of public responsibility, which assisted in the production of public statements.[49] However, to gain the synods and parishes' support in 2003-2004 disarmament campaign proved much more difficult than expected, and one of the issues that took considerable time and energy from the presidency was internal, i.e. the conflict around the church's charismatic movement.

I can affirm that the church has been in fairly direct, critical and constructive contact with the government since 1970, both through documents and participation in politics and in mixed councils, where civil society is represented. From a good number of conversations in courses for adults and contacts with (secular) media I can at least extrapolate that representatives from the IECLB are especially welcome in this area where state and civil society overlap, as they do not generally engage in proselytism or seek benefit for their church, tend to be well trained professionally and are not prone to take prefigured positions (for instance in bioethical questions).

### 3.3 The Assemblies of God

Pentecostal churches have been present in Brazil since 1910; the *Assemblies of God* (*Assembléias de Deus,* AD), the largest among them, began to be formed from

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[49]  See also Walter Altmann, Luther and Liberation: a Latin American Perspective (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2000).

1911 onwards in the state of Pará. They were founded by foreign missionaries, but their congregations and conventions soon came under Brazilian leadership. Their emphasis is on the gifts of the Spirit, namely the speaking in foreign languages without having learnt them, and more lately also healing and exorcising evil spirits. They are democratic as even the poorest among the poor are considered bearers of the Holy Spirit, and can express this in worship and daily life. At the same time, they are organized in a strict hierarchy, and women are excluded from ordained ministries, although they do exercise strong leadership at the base level. After a remarkable growth in the first years, the AD stagnated to some extent, but regained force in the sixties. As they preached strict obedience to the law and to the government (with reference to Romans 13), they became supporters of the military regime, while they were left to do their evangelizing work as they would be no threat to those in power. Despite some believers who did support movements of resistance, the churches as such and their leadership were important allies of the government, as they had access to the poorest strata of society. When believers came under scrutiny by the law for their support of suspicious movements, they were often punished not only by the state, but also by their church.

While there would be very little grounds for opposition against the regime as such among Pentecostals, some of them did become involved in civil society given the pressing social problems.[50] Their traditional dualism between "us" in the church and "them" in the world outside gave way, in some cases, to a vision which would include "believers and heathen" as those for whose benefit they were to fight. Others were readily willing to serve as clients under state patronage, in the same way the Roman Catholic Church had done earlier.[51] In any case, while Pentecostalism might have contributed little to a transforming political discourse, it has been remarkably effective in coping with poverty.[52]

For long, it had been normal for AD believers to think of themselves as alien to politics, and so they were considered. *Crente não se mete em política* – "the believer does not mix with politics", was the slogan. However, since transition and especially the constituent process in 1987-88, this has changed radically and the church has now a considerable number of federal and state deputies, mayors and city councillors. Sociologist Paul Freston affirms that, since the late 1980s, "evan-

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[50]  See Rowan Ireland, Kingdoms Come: Religion and Politics in Brazil (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1991); John Burdick, Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil's Religious Arena (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[51]  R. Andrew Chesnut, Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

[52]  See Cecília Loreto Mariz, Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994);  André Corten, Pentecostalism in Brazil: Emotion of the Poor and Theological Romanticism (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

gelical religion is arriving at a series of social instances where it had only a timid existence previously, or none at all. [...] The new political presence is part of this ample process of evangelical expansion."[53] Freston aptly highlights the ambiguity of this process, as he was writing just after a big budget scandal in which many Pentecostal politicians were involved. However, it is important not to reduce the Pentecostal potential for social change to formal politics and, namely, the election of "brothers" to the legislative. Such concentration is prone to presuppose that Pentecostalism was *eo ipso* "alienating". Indeed discourse on public issues is scarce, although there are a higher number of statements on such issues than usually perceived. Perhaps ironically, they match the Roman Catholic positions in moral (not social) issues, being against abortion, homosexual marriages, and euthanasia, as well as restricting divorce. The church has created, in 2001, a project "Citizenship AD Brazil", even if it is geared mainly towards securing electoral support among the faithful. In any case, the main contribution toward citizenship, in my view, is the AD's effectiveness in giving people a sense of worth and dignity, as well as transforming their lives as to leave "vices" (drinking, for instance) and become responsible with their job and families which does, indeed, improve their situation and give them a sense of citizenship. Although there is a continuous separation between the "celestial" and the "earthly" citizenship and obedience to the authorities according to Romans 13 maintains its leading place, there is a small window towards critique of the State, and even resistance according to Acts 4,19 and 5,29.[54] Furthermore, the AD has been consistently fighting for religious liberty to be enforced against the Roman Catholic majority *de iure* and *de facto*.

In sum, we can affirm that these churches are, in many respects, in direct contact with the government, although they tend to do so in a way supportive of those in power. Pentecostal politicians have generally not proven to be more competent or more ethically sound as anybody else, despite their discourse in this direction. There is a timid participation in civil society, but on an individualized basis. The church does promote social projects, but is only slowly agreeing to partnerships, as it uses such projects for promoting faith (and their church). They do serve as schools for citizenship in the sense that they (re-)establish a sense of dignity among the poorest of the poor, not least among drug consumers and traffickers, as well as

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[53] Paul Freston, Evangélicos na política brasileira: história ambígua e desafio ético (Curitiba: Encontro, 1994, 15). Non-Catholic Christians are generally called "evangélicos" (evangelicals) or "crentes" (believers), but the term is used mainly for Pentecostals. See also Freston's Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); ed., Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[54] <http://www.ad.org.br/ad/ad.asp>, "posicionamento" (11.12.2003); see also <http://www.cgadb.org. br>  for further statements of the General Convention of the Assemblies of God in Brazil [these links are, unfortunately, no longer available].

other criminals, with a degree of effectiveness nobody else is achieving. But there is as yet very little explicit discourse on citizenship, except for the named moral issues and the constant fight for full and effective religious liberty.

## 4. Theologically: Towards a Theology of Citizenship

Having dealt with the concept and theories of citizenship (theoretically) and the contribution of three representative churches towards it (practically), it is now time to develop, proactively, elements of a theology of citizenship (theologically). The Lutheran tradition as lived and thought in Brazil will be particularly visible, being the one in which I have been moving, congregating and ministering over the last ten years. It tries to offer reflections for the churches and seminaries to rethink and strengthen their efforts towards citizenship for all, and thus to make a theological contribution to one of the central debates in Brazil's public sphere today.

My intention is to show five elements which are central, theoretically, practically and theologically speaking, to the being of the citizen. The theological and practical elements correlated here are both central elements of Christian, namely Lutheran theology, and major challenges to citizenship in Brazil, as shown above. I have developed this extensively elsewhere, and due to limits of space I limit myself here to a short characterization of these five elements, which I understand are crucial for *being* a citizen, *living* as a citizen, *enduring* as a citizen, *serving* as a citizen, and namely for being a *Christian* citizen, serving One God under Two Regiments.[55]

(1) *To be a Citizen: Dignity and Rights.* There is a deplorable lack of awareness of one's citizenship and its implications, both rights and duties and an attitude towards society and the State. This goes namely for those who have been too much humiliated to see themselves as citizens, and for them or others who think of themselves as not being (fully) part of society. The gratuity of justification and the attribution of dignity without conditions by the creator are the emphasis here. Lutheran theology insists on justification by grace through faith *extra nos,* received as a gift, which together with a theology of creation focused on the human being created in the image of God provides the foundation for citizenship. The person is a citizen not for specific features or merits, but simply for being human, with her or his dignity attributed by being God's creature. Nobody can take it away; it can, however, be made invisible. In such case, it is necessary to make it visible again, and a concrete experience for the person.

*(2) To Live as a Citizen: Trust in the Context of Distrust.* While interpersonal and institutional trust are indispensable for any democracy, they are alarmingly absent or restricted in Brazil. The churches, at the same time, are among the most

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[55] von Sinner, The Churches and Democracy in Brazil, 281-317.

trusted institutions, which gives them a high potential and responsibility. The fact that their faith means trust in God goes far beyond such trust necessary for the functioning of democracy, but can strengthen and renew it. From here it is possible to take the risk to trust again – and to show oneself worthy of other's trust. In this way, it is possible to *live as a citizen.*

*(3) To Endure as a Citizen: the Ambiguity of Existence.* To live in this world is to live in an ambiguous situation. This becomes especially palpable in Brazil, where social relations, politics, and sexuality, but also religion are being lived in highly ambiguous ways by the population. At the same time, some churches try to wipe out such ambiguity, either by pointing to Christ which is the only one who can bring change— and then the world is wholly evil, a tendency present in the Assemblies of God —, or by offering a total, immanent solution for one's problem in a real-ized eschatology as preached by the Universal Church of God's Kingdom (IURD). Furthermore, moralist legalism also can be seen as an attempt to overcome ambi-guity rather than, with love and realism, to see oneself and others as *simul iusti et peccatores*, just *in spe,* in hope, and sinners *in re,* in reality, as Luther would say.[56] Rather than pessimism, as some have thought, this is realism. This also means that trust as exposed above cannot be a naïve trust, but must be cautious and informed. For Christians, there is always a distrust of human beings, both themselves and oth-ers, due to their conscience of the power of sin. In any case, being able to support ambiguity as being part of life, one can *endure as a citizen.*

*(4) To Serve as a Citizen: Liberty and Service.* The issue of motivation towards a citizenship is also central, a motivation which does not only take into account one's rights, nor only one's duties. Such motivation, for which Christians have spe-cific theological foundations, falls neither into autonomy misunderstood as mere individual interest, nor heteronomy as blind subservience, but seeks the free ser-vice in liberty. Through justification by faith, Christians become new creatures, free from bondage to evil, while in a position to serve, in the midst of sin and evil. In his famous treaty on Christian liberty, Luther clearly shows that such freedom is not, simply, a liberty of choice, but of service: to be, at the same time, free lord of and subject to all, on his own account, not through coercion.[57] Thus, citizenship can be discovered *as service.* In face of the occasional emphasis only on rights rather than on duties, such attitude is particularly important.

*(5) Being a Christian Citizen: Serving One God under Two Regiments.* Some Christians and churches have the tendency to separate religion and politics, Church and State in a way that dispenses them unduly of their responsibilities in relation to

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[56]  Lecture on Romans 4:7, LW 25:260.
[57]  On Christian Liberty, LW 31:343-77.

the whole of society. Others tend to confuse them and seek to impose their belief and church on others. Both tendencies and temptations are to be overcome by the Christian citizen seeing him- or herself as serving one God under two regiments. For Luther, in a time of Christendom, it was clear that God would reign through both regiments. This cannot be the point of departure today, in a situation of religious pluralism and in a secular, i.e. religiously neutral State. But the distinction of roles seems important still today to avoid an undue incursion from any side. In Brasil, today, the State generally stays out of religious matters which, however, ironically turns it more vulnerable to religious lobbies. Indeed, the incursion (or attempt thereof) of churches into the State's matters is considerable. Just to name two conflicts in evidence today: The one is on whether or not to have crucifixes in courtrooms. The Superior Court of the State of Rio Grande do Sul ruled, in 2012, that they had to be removed, which was hailed by some, but fiercely opposed by others. Some judges had the crucifix put back in its place. Another case of conflict is the appointment of Assemblies of God Pastor Marco Feliciano as president of the Chamber of Deputies' Commission on Human Rights. After years in the hands of the Worker's Party, in a political deal the presidency was handed over to the allied Christian Social Party (PSC), who in turn nominated Pastor Marco. The problem is that he has become notorious for his strong positions against gay relationships, as well as for racist statements, where proclaimed that Africans were offspring of Noah's cursed son, Ham, the father of Canaan (Genesis 9). Such statements, of course, disqualify him completely for the mandate he has assumed in the Commission on Human Rights; however, despite all protests, not least from many Christians and Christian organizations, he continues in office. A common political deal has opened the door for another move toward a "Jesuscracy", as a – most probably forged, but not unrealistic – poster in celebration of Feliciano's "victory" is said to have claimed.[58] It is, thus, a challenge for every *Christian citizen to serve God under two regiments.*

The principles laid out in this sequence are, I believe, not restricted to Christian citizens, certainly the first to fourth. The theological grounding is certainly Christian and seeks to demonstrate how references found in Scripture and Tradition— the latter understood as the great treasure of the interpretation of Scripture through time and space— can, and indeed should, orient the Christian citizen in his ecclesial and secular citizenship. Still, I hope that the insights presented here might be a helpful challenge also to those who do not share the Christian faith, but seek to transform the current situation in order to foster citizenship for all based on the responsibility of all.

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[58] See http://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/temas/politica/2013/03/partidos-negam-responsabili-dade-por-cartaz-que-pede-jesuscracia-no-brasil, accessed on 15 March, 2013.