
David W. Bebbington’s edited volume, *The Gospel in Latin America: Historical Studies in Evangelicalism and the Global South*, provides a welcome addition to examinations of evangelical Protestantism in Latin America, Central America and the United Kingdom. “The purpose of this volume,” Ronald J. Morgan writes in the introduction, “is to extend the historical scholarship on this dynamic phenomenon” (p. 1). Most of the chapters first appeared as papers presented at an October 2020 conference at Baylor University, a Baptist University located in Waco, Texas, in the United States.

The essays in *The Gospel in Latin America* address how evangelical Protestantism expanded significantly in a region over the past century that Protestant leaders had left to Roman Catholics a century earlier. The first five chapters are general in nature, providing broad overviews of evangelicalism in 20th-century Latin America. These essays cover topics that include the role of evangelical Protestantism in Latin American politics; its growth in the 1970s; a comparative look at “charismatic renewal” in Latin America; the United States, and the United Kingdom; the limits in the growth of this movement; and a useful historiographical review of Latin American evangelicalism.

The second set of essays are case studies. They address evangelical Protestant ideas of race, history, and social change in Brazil from 1900 to 1940, indigenous Pentecostalism in Chile between 1910 and 1920, the roots of Argentinian evangelicalism, the role of evangelicals in Peruvian politics, and evangelicalism among Brazilian immigrants to South Florida since 1990. Ronald Morgan’s “Afterword” provides a useful conclusion for the essays in *The Gospel in Latin America: Historical Studies in Evangelicalism and the Global South*.

Morgan also provides the introductory chapter. He begins by noting that, despite the purported global perspective of the World Missionary Conference (WMC) at Edinburgh in 1910, attendees gave virtually no consideration of Latin America. The Protestant-led gathering considered the continent a Roman Catholic domain. In the century that followed, the authors in the present volume suggest, Roman Catholicism continued to operate alongside evangelical Protestant in South America with relatively little conflict.

The opening chapter by John Maiden, for example, takes a comparative look at the interplay of Latin American charismatic renewal with similar trends in the United States and the United Kingdom. In this essay, he aims to fill gaps left by earlier scholars, a goal he achieves nicely. Maiden argues that the rise of Latin American evangelicalism was not simply a one-way process, i.e., impor-
tation of the movement and its ideas into the region. Rather, he suggests, this activity proved a dynamic two-way process.

J. Daniel Salinas addresses what he terms “the theological revolution” in Latin American evangelicalism in the 1970s. In doing so, he highlights the need for the church in the region to develop their own theological foundations. The fruits of this process were, among others, the creation of the Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (FTA), the Latin American Theological Brotherhood. Among the FTA’s goals were discernment of a Gospel that spoke to specific socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of Latin American culture. This movement, he stresses, sought inclusivity rather than exclusivity.

Virginia Garrard examines the role of “Dominion theology” (DT) and “Dominionism.” As she suggests, “Dominion theology is not so much a ‘theology’ per se so much as it is an ideology and practice for a specific type of conservative Christian political engagement” (p. 64). Its goal is to use conservative Christianity to ‘transform,’ ‘redeem,’ and ‘restore’ [Latin American] culture in the coming of the Kingdom of God” (p. 64).

Events in Peru proved similar as Véronique Lecaros suggests in her essay on the role of evangelicalism in Peruvian Politics over roughly the past three decades. She traces the expansion of the movement from the days of the Fujimori government in the 1990s to 2019. During his presidency, evangelicals comprised a fraction—about 5%, some 1,105,455 people—of the Peruvian population in 1990, the year he came to power. According to the World Bank, the population of the country was 22,109,099 at that time. By 2020, the proportion of persons who identified themselves as “Evangelical-Unspecified” had more than tripled, rising to 17% of the Peruvian population. These numbers support Lecaros’ claim that evangelicals “have become part of the political landscape” (p. 181).

Lecaros explains the rise of Peruvian evangelicals by analysing three areas: The origin of their political clout, possible shifts in the church-state balance of power, and how evangelicals became splintered into an endless number of different churches. She considers 2010 as a major “turning point in the history of evangelical involvement in [Peruvian] politics” (p. 181) Lecaros also concludes that, despite predictions by some sociologists of religion, “religious beliefs are still shaping the world” (p. 200).

Joseph Florez in “Indigenization and Believers’ Accounts of Pentecostal Faith in Chile, 1910–1920” historically considers the interaction of local cultural traditions in Chile with Pentecostalism between 1910 and 1920. He relies heavily on contemporary accounts in periodicals such as Chile Pentecostal and Chile Evangélico. As such, Florez argues that the importance these early Pentecostals placed on the influence of the Holy Spirit on liturgical expression were not “an
imported religious worldview” (p. 144). Rather, he notes, it reflected “continuous efforts to shape that worldview in terms of local ways of knowing and expression” (p. 144).

The Gospel in Latin America: Historical Studies in Evangelicalism and the Global South contains a variety of perspectives on evangelical Protestantism in South America. The essays of this edited volume provide insights into aspects of this movement that have otherwise been given relatively little attention. As the title suggests, however, there are no examinations of evangelical Protestantism in either Central America or the Caribbean. A companion volume on these regions would add significantly to Bebbington’s excellent collection of essays.

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