
Reviewed by David Bundy

This history of the Assemblies of God in Peru is more than a chronicle of the development of the denomination. It offers an analysis of the development of the Peruvian Pentecostal tradition, especially the Assemblies of God, reflecting on the mission of the church, and the diverse missionary models which developed during its history as well as the different causes and factors which contributed to the expansion and diversification of the Pentecostal churches in Peru. The analysis has implications beyond Peru. The volume is perhaps the most severe critique of the missiology of the Assemblies of God, U.S.A., yet published by a leader of a national Pentecostal church that is, finally, achieving a degree of autonomy and the possibility of developing indigenous structures and value systems.

The author was graduated from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in 1978 with a degree in economics. After several years of working for Peruvian government agencies, during which time he was a founder and an editor of the periodical *Kerygma*, Zavala Hidalgo enrolled in the Seminario Evangelico de Lima. He was graduated with a Licentiate in Missiology in 1987 having defended a thesis entitled *Un enfoque histórico-misiológico de las Asambleas de Dios del Perú* which served as the basis for this book. Since 1987, he has been involved in theological education, both in institutional and extension contexts. At present he is professor of missiology and ecclesiastical history at the Seminario Bíblico Andino de las Asambleas de Dios (IBISAD).

After an introduction describing the goals and methods of the investigation (pp. 10–15), Chapter 1 (pp. 18–60) describes the pre-history of Pentecostalism. It traces the history through the Apostolic Church, Montanists, Waldensians and Pietism to Wesley and the Wesleyan revivals in England and North America. Out of these revivals came the Holiness tradition and, eventually, Pentecostalism. In this section the author adapts much from the “history of heresies” historiography of Johan Arndt and early North American Holiness and Pentecostal historians. He argues against the efforts of Menzies and other Assemblies of God historians to downplay the contribution of the Holiness tradition to Pentecostalism.

The reason for this becomes clear as the Peruvian experience is discussed (pp. 64–139). The first Pentecostal missionary to Peru was Kenneth W. Cragin who arrived in Peru in 1910. Cragin had studied at Texas Holiness University (Greenville, Texas) and at Central Holiness University (University Park, Iowa) and became a Pentecostal in Los Angeles. When they arrived in Peru they attempted to work with the Methodists, but without success. Instead they established churches in
Bolivia and Ecuador as well as Peru. The mission theory which gave direction to their efforts was that of the Holiness movement as articulated by the Holiness Methodist missionary Bishop and mission theorist, William Taylor. They sought immediately to engage converts in the direction and sustenance of the church. As soon as converts were organized, the result was considered a church, not a mission, and national leaders were encouraged to develop ministry structures which would not make them financially dependent on the missionaries. They were also committed to the linking of spirituality with a concern for social ministries and social justice issues.

By the late 1920s, the numerous Assemblies of God, U.S.A., missionaries had established periodicals, a publishing house and a Bible School. They published hymnals and devotional literature, most if not all of which was translated from North American works or written by the missionaries. The "Peruvian" organizational structures of the Assemblies of God were developed in 1936 after most of the national pastors left the mission after being forbidden to fraternize with other Evangelical and Pentecostal believers and to work in cooperative social ministries.

After this controversy, only ten Peruvian pastors remained with the North American missionaries. However, despite the losses, not until 1962 would a Peruvian be a Superintendent of the Asambleas de Dios, and then only every other year! The North Americans obviously retained control until the 1970s, and still control the educational structures. This North American control, and their denigration of social ministry and justice issues, were the central issues which led to the formation of 17 denominations in splits from the Asambleas de Dios between 1949 and 1987. This brings the total number of Pentecostal denominations in Peru to about 55, with 80 percent of the adherents belonging to the Asambleas de Dios. These denominations are described and the particulars of their divisions are discussed (pp. 117–136) although the earlier work of Santiago Aquilino Huaman Pumayalli, La primera historia del movimiento pentecostal en el Peru (Lima: for the author, 1982) remains useful.

Zavala Hidalgo also argues that the North American missionaries formed a national leadership dependent on their funds and detached from the values and needs of their own cultural structures. As a result, many of the older potential leaders immigrated to the United States. Only after this passive group emigrated were younger leaders able to achieve a degree of autonomy from the mission structures. The degree of indigenous leadership, and the consequent re-implementation of a missional theory like that of Cragin, are shown to be directly related to the growth of the church, which now can claim about 311,000 adherents and 1610 national ministers as opposed to 21,410 baptized members and 321 national ministers in 1969. Most of this growth has come since 1978 when a plan for decentralization of the leadership of the church was