
REVIEW ESSAYS

IS LATIN AMERICA TURNING PLURALIST?

Recent Writings on Religion

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LOOKING FOR GOD IN BRAZIL: THE PROGRESSIVE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN URBAN BRAZIL'S RELIGIOUS ARENA. By John Burdick. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993. Pp. 280. \$45.00 cloth.)

RETHINKING PROTESTANTISM IN LATIN AMERICA. Edited by Virginia Garrard Burnett and David Stoll. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1993. Pp. 234. \$39.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)

COMING OF AGE: PROTESTANTISM IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICA. Edited by Daniel R. Miller. (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994. Pp. 234. \$53.00 cloth, \$24.50 paper.)

NEW FACE OF THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA: BETWEEN TRADITION AND CHANGE. Edited by Guillermo Cook. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1994. Pp. 289. \$19.95 paper.)

SANTO DOMINGO AND BEYOND: DOCUMENTS AND COMMENTARIES FROM THE FOURTH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF LATIN AMERICAN BISHOPS. Edited by Alfred T. Hennelly, S.J. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 242. \$19.95 paper.)

CAMBIO SOCIAL Y PENSAMIENTO CRISTIANO EN AMERICA LATINA. Edited by José Comblin, José I. González Faus, and Jon Sobrino. Madrid: Trotta, 1993. Pp. 360.)

- THE EMERGENCE OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY: RADICAL RELIGION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY.* By Christian Smith. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991. Pp. 300. \$35.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)
- THE POLITICAL THEORY OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY: TOWARD A RECONVERGENCE OF SOCIAL VALUES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE.* By John R. Pottinger. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. Pp. 264. \$44.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)
- SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM, AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN BRAZIL: AN OPINION SURVEY USING Q-METHODOLOGY.* By N. Patrick Peritore. (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1990. Pp. 245. \$15.00 paper.)
- OUR CRY FOR LIFE: FEMINIST THEOLOGY FROM LATIN AMERICA.* By María Pilar Aquino. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 254. \$16.95 paper.)
- LIBERATION THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTORY READER.* Edited by Curt Cadorette, Marie Giblin, Marilyn Legge, and Mary H. Snyder. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992. Pp. 307. \$16.95 paper.)
- LAS CASAS: IN SEARCH OF THE POOR OF JESUS CHRIST.* By Gustavo Gutiérrez. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 682. \$34.95 cloth.)
- THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN PERU, 1921–1985: A SOCIAL HISTORY.* By Jeffrey Klaiber, S.J. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press. Pp. 417. \$49.95 cloth.)
- PROTESTANTES, LIBERALES Y FRANCMASONES: SOCIEDADES DE IDEAS Y MODERNIDAD EN AMERICA LATINA, SIGLO XIX.* Edited by Jean-Pierre Bastian. (Mexico City: Comisión de Estudios de Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990. Pp. 178.)
- IGLESIA, RELIGION Y SOCIEDAD EN LA HISTORIA LATINOAMERICANA, 1492–1945.* 4 vols. Edited by Adám Anderle. (Szeged, Hungary: Centro de Estudios Históricos de América Latina, Universidad "Jozsef Attila," 1989. Pp. 324, 307, 334, 276.)
- PILGRIMAGE IN LATIN AMERICA.* Edited by N. Ross Crumrine and Alan Morinis. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1991. Pp. 432. \$45.00 cloth.)
- THE POPULAR USE OF POPULAR RELIGION IN LATIN AMERICA.* Edited by Susanna Rostas and André Droogers. Amsterdam: Center for Latin American Research and Documentation, 1993. Pp. 233. \$31.25 paper.)

Starting in the 1960s, a generation of church activists in Latin America nourished the hope that they were not only combating present evils (human rights violations and manifest social inequality) but participating in a broad historical movement toward a qualitatively different kind of world, even if that movement was slow and subject to reversals. They also believed that the churches themselves were being transformed in the process. What was originally a surprise—that the Catholic Church had become an important political actor from bishops conferences to base communities—eventually became a journalistic and scholarly common-

place. The term *liberation theology* became shorthand for the work of that generation.

The world of the 1990s, however, has frustrated those hopes. Latin Americans who once believed that they could devise their own (socialist) model of development are now struggling to understand on what terms they can compete in the global marketplace. The most important religious development, one with societal implications, has been the growth of mass (primarily Pentecostal) evangelical churches. The simplistic and somewhat cruel remark of Caio Fábio d'Araujo, a prominent Brazilian evangelical leader, contains more than a grain of truth: "The Catholic Church opted for the poor, but the poor opted for the evangelicals."¹

For this review, it seems appropriate first to discuss works dealing with current developments, then to turn to several books related to liberation theology, and consider last other studies that are more historical or anthropological in character.

Evangelical Coming-of-Age

The publication in 1990 of works by David Stoll and David Martin drew attention to the little-noticed growth of evangelical churches. That same year, a vulgarized form of Martin's Weberian thesis appeared in *Forbes*, a publication not normally known for concern about Latin America or religion. The article described the Pentecostal boom, gloating that the trend indicated that Latin America's future would be not Marxist but bourgeois (Marcom 1990).

The Protestant expansion continues to astonish: researchers at the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER) documented the opening of 710 new Protestant churches (91 percent of them Pentecostal) in metropolitan Rio between 1990 and 1992. During the same short period, the Catholic Church established one new parish (Fernandes 1992). Although enthusiasts about the growth in evangelical churches are fond of projecting the years in which Protestants will become a majority in various Latin American countries, serious researchers generally conclude that membership numbers and growth rates are approximations at best. Most scholars concur, however, that the number of Protestants attending worship approximates that of Catholics in Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, and probably other countries as well.

That quantitative fact has qualitative implications: becoming an evangelical is a genuine option for most Latin Americans at all social levels. And exercising that option no longer takes one beyond the pale of family and social relationships, as it once did. We are witnessing something like a coming-of-age in Latin American Protestantism.

1. James Brooke, "Pragmatic Protestants Win Catholic Converts in Brazil," *The New York Times*, 4 July 1993.

As indicated by John Burdick's title, *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil's Religious Arena*, when he set out to conduct anthropological fieldwork in a community on the outskirts of greater Rio de Janeiro, he was sympathetic to what he and others call "the progressive church," although he realized that its numerical strength was modest. Contrary to his own expectations, he found himself moving toward this question: why are "Pentecostalism and *umbanda* expanding while the [progressive Catholic] *comunidade* is not?" (p. 110).

Among the range of religious possibilities in the community (including at least four discernible varieties of Catholicism), Burdick chose to focus on three: the progressive Catholicism of a parish organized along the base community model, an Assembly of God congregation, and *umbanda*. He compares the relative appeal of these religious possibilities in terms of social class, gender, age group, and race.

Burdick confirms the now-common observation that despite much talk about an "option for the poor," the Catholics who gravitate toward and become members of base communities tend to be not the poorest but those who are somewhat better-off. One factor is literacy, which is important in the biblically based Catholic Church. It is ironic, given the traditional Protestant emphasis on individual Bible reading, that illiterates often feel more at home in Pentecostal churches, where the accent is on oral testimony, emotional prayer, and singing—and the ability to read is therefore less important.

To illustrate differing approaches to the common experience of abuse by male spouses or partners, Burdick describes the experience of a woman named Ivanda. Neither the base community nor the priest could deal effectively with such problems, nor did they want to. Marital problems are assumed to be rooted in larger social ills. "Relating faith to life," as progressive Catholics claim to be doing, does not extend to this everyday problem. Ivanda initially found an *umbanda* medium helpful, but she lost confidence when he started charging money and her marital problem remained unresolved. Eventually, she went to a Pentecostal faith healer and found support. Both *umbanda* and Pentecostal religion are nonjudgmental and supportive, whereas the base community turned out to be irrelevant to this area of her life.

Although adolescents as a rule are disinclined to be active in any church, those who choose to become members of evangelical churches actually find it a relief to withdraw from the arena of sexual competitiveness. For that significant minority, church contacts offer a promising pool for selecting a responsible and serious life partner. Despite efforts by some Catholic leaders to draw attention to racism, darker people are less likely to be recognized and valued in a base community. Burdick finds that participants in *umbanda* and Pentecostal churches are notably "blacker" than members of *comunidades eclesiais de base* (CEBs).

In his final chapter, Burdick argues that facile assumptions about the assumed political consequences of Catholic and Protestant forms of religion need qualifying. Only a small minority of Catholics become fully involved in community activities in the ways that liberationist discourse would suggest. Other Catholics are alienated by progressive discourse, or use liberationist language but interpret it vaguely, or continue to attend the parish but retain a more traditional idea of religion. At the same time, some members of the Assembly of God will take part in community activities with no specific theological justification. Burdick concludes that about one-tenth of the members of the leftist Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) in Duque de Caxias were evangelicals. *Looking for God in Brazil* exemplifies a growing tendency to study churches and forms of religion in Latin America not in isolation but side by side (see Brandão 1986; Levine 1993; Ireland 1992; Froehle 1993).

In their introductory and concluding essays to *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America*, editors David Stoll and Virginia Garrard Burnett make no dramatic claims but outline various areas of discussion. Is Pentecostalism another form of popular religion and thus alien to traditional Protestantism, as Jean-Pierre Bastian argues, or is it analogous to early Methodism, as David Martin asserts? Can Pentecostalism supply the cultural basis for adopting capitalist behavior and values and thus for economic development, or is it more likely that some adherents will find upward mobility while most remain poor as long as existing development models fail to incorporate large numbers? Most of the contributions are based on book-length studies already completed (some are dissertations that have recently become publishable as a result of new scholarly interest in Latin American evangelical religion).

Given the fact that half of all Latin American Protestants live in Brazil, it is appropriate that three of the essays in *Rethinking Protestantism* deal with that country, including contributions by Burdick and by Rowan Ireland. Paul Freston, an important new scholar, examines evangelical political behavior at particular junctures, especially the large group of evangelicals who entered the Brazilian national congress in 1986, catching the political class by surprise. Freston finds some constants in Protestant politics: a "concern to distinguish their product from that of the Catholic hierarchy and base communities; anticommunism; a pragmatic conservatism aimed at maximizing concrete advantages; politicization of moral questions; and the ambition to insert religious symbols and ceremonies into the public sphere" (p. 102). Freston also highlights significant differences among Protestants, between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals, and among Pentecostals as well.

Coming of Age: Protestantism in Contemporary Latin America, edited by Daniel Miller, presents essays prepared for a conference held at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Most of the contributors reflect a

personal investment as well as scholarly interest in Latin American Protestantism. The introduction and several of the essays seek to get beyond facile explanations of evangelical growth. Quentin Schultze argues that the “orality” of Latin American Pentecostalism may have a particular appeal to Latin American popular culture today because it is both preliterate and postliterate, that is, it is connected by television to the post-modern world yet without a consciousness heavily shaped by print culture.

The fact that *New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change* refers not to base communities but mainly to Protestants indicates strikingly how matters are changing—all the more so because the publishing house is Catholic. Editor Guillermo Cook, who has spent most of his adult life as a Methodist missionary in Brazil and Costa Rica, aimed this collection primarily at an audience within the churches. The essayists speak with many voices. Well-known Latin American Protestant writers, including Justo González, Samuel Escobar, René Padilla, and José Míguez Bonino, represent a range of positions. Only one of the authors of the twenty-one essays, Chilean Juan Sepúlveda, is a Pentecostal, a proportion that reflects the fact that Pentecostalism is an oral movement and even its major leaders write little. Moreover, Pentecostals are devoted to spreading their own particular church, not a generic Protestant movement. Hence Protestant scholars and spokespersons do not represent the most dynamic part of the movement.

Catholic Self-Assessments

Cook includes in *New Face of the Church in Latin America* an abridged translation of an essay by José Comblin, a Belgian Catholic theologian who has worked in Brazil and Chile since 1958. Other writers have sometimes alluded delicately to problems within the progressive church, but Comblin spells them out at great length, and his article triggered a debate in Brazil. He points out a basic tension: sometimes (especially in rural areas) base communities devote themselves to primarily religious activities, functioning like subdivisions of parishes; but on other occasions (especially in cities), they operate more like leftist social movements. Comblin devotes several pages to explaining what Catholic leaders can learn from Pentecostals. Catholic clergy, he asserts, exercise religious control over CEBs through “benevolent authoritarianism.”²

2. Comblin’s proposal is that the base communities be allowed to form an independent lay movement with its own leadership. For those who nourished the hope that the base communities were “the new model” of the Catholic Church, such a move would be tantamount to admitting defeat because they would be reduced to being just one initiative within the Catholic Church among numerous others, such as the charismatic renewal. As painful as such an admission might be for those who have invested a good part of their lives in this

The October 1992 meeting in Santo Domingo of the fourth general Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM) was to some extent an occasion for self-examination by Catholics, at least for those active in the church. The date, which coincided with the quincentennial of the discovery or conquest of the Americas—was chosen by Pope John Paul II to accentuate Latin America's Catholic identity. This meeting represented the culmination of the founding meeting of CELAM in Rio (1955), the second meeting in Medellín (1968) that helped launch the progressive church, and the more contested third meeting in Puebla (1979), whose published documents partially reflected a conservative backlash among the hierarchy and the experience of the Latin American military dictatorships of the 1970s.

The Puebla document reflected tensions among conservatives, liberationists, and a broad middle ground among the bishops, whereas the Santo Domingo document reflects tensions between many bishops and Rome itself. This document is the centerpiece of *Santo Domingo and Beyond: Documents and Commentaries from the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, edited by Alfred Hennelly.³ The many paragraphs of boilerplate theology reveal few signs of critical examination of Latin American society or the Roman Catholic Church. Observations on society are located in the middle section, under the rubric of "human development" (*promoción humana*). Ecology is given new emphasis, and land struggles, particularly those of indigenous peoples, are acknowledged. The bishops indicate some uneasiness with "neoliberalism" and an awareness of new challenges, such as the informal economy, but readers will be hard pressed to find even an implicit overall critique of the post-1990 shape of the world. The preparatory documents had stated that the challenge was no longer *dependencia* but something worse, *prescindencia*: the rich countries were largely ignoring the Third World, including Latin America. But this perspective—with its accompanying sense of pain and urgency—is largely missing from the final document. Protestants are neatly subdivided into "brothers and sisters" with whom ecumenism is to be practiced and "fundamentalist sects." One finds no indication that Protestants are in any way serious rivals.

After the Santo Domingo conference, those committed to a liberationist view consoled themselves by insisting that Santo Domingo did not

kind of pastoral work, Comblin's conclusion is that the choice is this or nothing: if base communities are not allowed to have their own lay identity, they will simply disappear.

3. The Vatican maneuvered repeatedly to control the process and thereby the final document: during the preparatory period it vetoed one document prepared by CELAM with input from the bishops and numerous other groups. At the Santo Domingo conference, even the watered-down compromise document was set aside, and the bishops were in effect told to start over. Their interaction was further hindered by days spent listening to addresses. These maneuvers are detailed in Hennelly's report on the Santo Domingo conference itself (pp. 24–36).

reverse Medellín and Puebla, perhaps thereby indicating that they will not even be looking to these documents for inspiration. In the Hennelly volume, Jon Sobrino, the well-known theologian in El Salvador, chooses to reflect not on the text the bishops produced but on the Santo Domingo conference as an "event." He draws attention to the failure of the document to note the many martyrs (he himself would have been among the Jesuits murdered by the Salvadoran army in 1989 had he not been out of the country). Sobrino also finds significant the carefully qualified gestures of the pope and the bishops acknowledging the church's involvement in the crimes against native peoples and African slaves. Some believe that Santo Domingo's accent on "*inculturación*," the process by which the Christian faith takes part in a dialogue with cultures and enters into them, will prove important. Although the most obvious sense of the concept is recognition of the need for the church to adapt its language and symbols to indigenous cultures, the idea could be applied more broadly. In principle, one could say that the "new urban culture" that has now become a reality for most Latin Americans is also alien to Catholicism and that church agents must approach it as well in a spirit of "inculturation."

Whatever Happened to Liberation Theology?

Why has no theological parallel emerged to Jorge Castañeda's (1993) unflinching assessment of the history and prospects of the Latin American Left? One might expect that intellectuals who pride themselves on working "*a partir de la realidad*" would be at the forefront of efforts to comprehend recent changes in the world conjuncture and its consequences for the Latin American Catholic Church and for liberation theology. Yet one finds surprisingly little such reflection in even the most recent works by well-known theologians. A few observations on this question are in order before discussing some works that attempt such an assessment.

First, liberation theologians are truly theologians: they were trained as theologians and their writings largely deal with questions of God, Christ, and the church. This point is often overlooked by those who have perceived the apparent political promise (or threat) of liberation theology. A good case in point is *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Ellacuría and Sobrino 1993), a collection of thirty-five essays that remains the best one-volume summary statement of liberation theology on God, Jesus Christ, the church, and other central concepts.⁴ Jon

4. In the early 1980s, several dozen Latin American theologians under the leadership of Chilean Sergio Torres conceived an ambitious publishing project that they named "Teología y Liberación." Realizing that theological texts in Latin American seminaries were still pri-

Sobrino's brief introduction deals with the question of whether liberation theology is still relevant. His answer is that no other theology seems to be

seriously concerned with poverty and injustice, liberation and justice, hope and utopia. . . . [H]istoric socialism had no part in the origin of the theology of liberation . . . even though it proved helpful . . . in the critique of capitalism and in nourishing certain utopian horizons. The origin, impulse, and direction of the theology of liberation did not come from socialism, but from the experience of God in the poor of this world, an experience at once of grace and challenge. Thus, as long as this experience exists, there can and will be a place for the theology of liberation. By the same token, as long as conditions of oppression continue there will be and must be a theology of liberation. (Pp. xiii–xiv)

Indeed, the term *liberation theology* is often used as shorthand for “the progressive church” itself. Although these theologians have shared the dream of a qualitatively new kind of society, they have not sketched out what they envisioned at any length. The very word *liberation* is an implied metaphor: Latin America (along with humankind as a whole) is embarked on an exodus-like journey toward a promised land of freedom. The task of theologians is not to spell out what that land will look like or even how to get there but to explain the deeper theological underpinnings and draw attention to the pastoral implications for the Catholic Church and its agents.⁵ Individual theologians are typically involved in local community struggles and mass national movements, but as theologians they tend to write for a broader audience that includes Latin America but extends to a worldwide theological community. Hence one searches in vain for references to specific situations. Furthermore, the general backlash in the Catholic Church encouraged by Pope John Paul II has put the theologians on the defensive, making it even more difficult for them to explore openly issues that might create problems for themselves and also for priests and sisters working with the poor.

Chilean theologian Pablo Richard, who has lived in Costa Rica since the late 1970s, presents one of the final essays in the Cook volume, entitled “Challenges to Liberation Theology in the Decade of the Nineties.” Acknowledging that the events of 1989–1990 have brought profound change, he rejects the triumphalism of the champions of neoliberalism. Capitalism, which until recently claimed to be striving for development, now has no competitors and hence “no longer needs to keep a human-

marily translations of European works, they planned to produce a comprehensive collection covering major theological themes from a liberationist perspective. Some of the projected fifty-three volumes appeared in Spanish and Portuguese (and a few in English translation), but by the late 1980s the project was foundering because of poor sales. *Mysterium Liberationis* in its two-volume Spanish form and one-volume English version (which omits some essays) manages to salvage something of the original project.

5. An interesting exception is Clodovis Boff, who—with unfortunate timing—published a collection of “theological letters” on socialism based on visits to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba on the eve of the cataclysm of historical socialism (Boff 1989).

itarian façade. . . . The Third World is no longer even dependent, but simply nonexistent. Where we were once dependent we are now expendable" (*New Face of the Church in Latin America*, pp. 247–48). Richard describes a situation of life versus death that he does not shrink from calling "apocalyptic." Indeed, he has also published a handbook on the apocalyptic Book of Revelation, a project that grew out of his work with Bible discussion groups among the poor (Richard 1994).

At a time when secular and leftist Latin American social scientists have trimmed their sails in adapting to the world of the 1990s, liberation theologians like Richard are becoming more radical. Certainly, church representatives undertaking pastoral work in barrios and country towns perceive that even seemingly successful adaptations to the global economy, like that of Chile, leave large numbers of individuals worse off than ever. Richard finds hope in the proliferation of new social movements and in the fact that new sectors such as indigenous peoples, women, and the young are becoming new political and social actors.

Speaking at a meeting of liberation theologians held in Spain's El Escorial in 1992 on the eve of the Santo Domingo bishops' conference, José Comblin characterized the present bleakly as a time of "ambiguity, uneasiness, and uncertainty." The new democracies have not turned out as hoped and now give the impression that "all ways out are closed off": "Liberation is increasingly becoming a language, a rhetoric, an ever repeated discourse, of which people become weary because it does not lead to concrete actions and social victories" (*Cambio Social*, p. 29). The depoliticized new urban masses are electing leaders like Fernando Collor, Carlos Menem, and Alberto Fujimori. Even traditional Catholic popular religiosity is rapidly being displaced by television programming that invades homes and lives. The logic of Comblin's position is that the very assumptions of the progressive Catholic Church have been severely shaken. Judging from the contributions to *Cambio social y pensamiento cristiano en América Latina*, the other participants in the meeting at El Escorial did not share Comblin's view or preferred to take another tack. Those who gathered at El Escorial reflected on the dizzying twenty years since a conference was held in 1972, when liberation theology was in its infancy and a worldwide network of "Christians for Socialism" was inspired by the Unidad Popular government in Chile headed by President Salvador Allende. The main value of this collection coedited by Comblin, José González Faus, and Jon Sobrino is that it provides examples of the thinking of theologians who are seeking to take changing world conditions into account.

The shifting world situation casts a different light on several of the books under review that were conceived or written in the late 1980s. In *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory*, Christian Smith asserts that liberation theology is not simply a set

of ideas but an “attempt to mobilize a previously unmobilized constituency for collective action against an antagonist to promote social change” (p. 25). He seeks to move beyond the numerous previous accounts that are largely a haphazard listing of events, writings, and meetings and to explain the rise of liberation theology in terms of organization theory (specifically the political-process model of Doug McAdam). Smith first traces how a group of young radicalized theologians became influential in the Catholic Church and then recounts more briefly how the Catholic hierarchy reacted. In the process, he has produced perhaps the most thorough account of the rise of liberation theology and the early years (the story up to 1968 occupies two-thirds of the book). One great strength of Smith’s account is its extensive use of interviews with those who were active during that period. Only in the last few pages—indeed, in the last few lines—does Smith hint that liberation theology may be challenged by recent changes.

Intellectuals from other continents have been fascinated by—and possibly have even envied—Latin American theologians who seemed to embody the ideal of the “organic intellectual”: they involved themselves in real political struggle, even at personal risk, while remaining in contact with major intellectual currents elsewhere. Such feelings may well have motivated John Pottenger’s search for the underlying political theory of these theologians. His sources for *The Political Theory of Liberation Theology: Toward a Reconvergence of Social Values and Social Science* seem to be largely the translated writings of such theologians rather than extensive research into the experiences that gave rise to their writings. Pottenger ranges over the kinds of issues discussed during the 1970s and on into the 1980s: dependency, reform versus revolution, and the use of Marxist analysis. Pottenger believes that liberation theology could benefit from applying the categories of the Frankfurt school more explicitly. While *The Political Theory of Liberation Theology* is a good example of a North American academic engaging in serious dialogue with Latin American intellectuals, it has limited value for those already familiar with these theologians and their ideas.

Despite a rather sweeping title, Patrick Peritore’s *Socialism, Communism, and Liberation Theology in Brazil: An Opinion Survey Using Q-Methodology* actually examines several sectors of the Brazilian Left during the mid-1980s. After applying Q-methodology (in which relatively small samples of respondents are asked to agree or disagree with a series of prepared statements), he constructed a series of typologies of Brazilian Communists, members of the workers’ PT party, and liberationist Catholics. Given the fact that the research was carried out a decade ago, the findings may not reflect current conditions.

For the last fifteen years, feminist theologians sympathetic with the general method and approach of liberation theology have criticized

the male vocabulary and assumptions of its mostly unwitting male practitioners. A growing number of women theologians are speaking and writing about their views. María Pilar Aquino summarizes some of their criticisms and sketches out alternatives perceived by Latin American women in *Our Cry for Life: Feminist Theology from Latin America*. The emphasis is not so much on what women think but on how they think, how gender affects their view of life and faith. Women's voice arises mainly from doing, although the practice that Aquino has in mind is often day-to-day work, whether in the home or in the steady volunteer work that undergirds base communities and other pastoral initiatives. Compared with their feminist colleagues in North America and Europe, Latin American women theologians are still rather timid, especially on reproductive issues. They are nevertheless becoming an increasingly independent voice and will certainly be exploring new ground.

It is no accident that three of the four editors of *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Reader* are women. Edited by Curt Cadorette, Marie Giblin, Marilyn Legge, and Mary Snyder, this volume provides further evidence that liberation theology is now a worldwide movement. Although almost half the contributors are Latin Americans, the majority write from Africa, Asia, and North America (one-third of the contributors are women). The editors note that they envisioned potential readers picking up this sampler of liberation theology for "academic, pastoral, or personal reasons," but it is also plainly intended for classroom use. Again, unfortunately, little attention is given to the possible impact of the changing world context on the assumptions underlying liberation theology.

Those who view liberation theology primarily in terms of its mobilizing potential will be puzzled by the large new work by Gustavo Gutiérrez, who is regarded as the most influential theologian in Latin America and one of the most influential Catholic theologians worldwide. In addition to pastoring a parish in the Lima barrio of Rimac, he also oversees a theological and pastoral reflection center with annual summer workshops that draw two thousand church personnel from all over Peru. Yet his new work, the fruit of many years of research, is neither an ambitious systematic theology nor a set of essays related directly to Peru's problems or to contemporary issues but an extensive study of Bartolomé de las Casas, the sixteenth-century Spanish defender of the Indians.

Gutiérrez's interest in writing *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* is to distill the theologies underlying the stances taken by the missionary and his adversaries at each juncture in his lifelong struggle. Although Gutiérrez rarely makes the point explicitly, his concern is not purely historical but rather to show that contemporary struggles by church activists (priests, sisters, and lay persons) belong to a long and honorable tradition.

What will be the enduring legacy of liberation theology and the

kind of pastoral work associated with it? The priests, sisters, and lay persons who inspired the post-Medellín generation of the Catholic Church are now in their fifties or older. Anecdotal information indicates that although some younger sisters and priests espouse the same ideals (such as living in small communities in poor barrios), the trend is far from universal. Progressive church workers often complain about the *involución* (turning inward) of Catholic religious orders and the Catholic Church in general. Certainly, some features of liberation theology have been adopted by the Catholic Church and by historic Protestant churches. Whether the tenets of liberation theology will become a permanent legacy or merely the work of one generation at a unique period in time is a question at least worth raising.

Perspectives from History and Anthropology

Jeffrey Klaiber has provided the first systematic history of the Peruvian Catholic Church in the period following independence. *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821–1985: A Social History* is a translation of his *La iglesia en el Perú: Su historia social desde la independencia*, published in 1988. Klaiber's organizing theme is the institutional weakness of the Catholic Church in Peru, as exemplified in its chronic shortage of priests and consequent inability to reach the masses of baptized Catholics. His approach is simultaneously thematic and chronological. For example, the period from 1855 to 1930 is treated in four chapters discussing the pastoral situation of the church from various angles. The period from 1955 to 1975 is presented as the most decisive era because of the social ferment of the 1960s and the "progressive period" of military rule in Peru. The years since 1975 (concluding with Pope John Paul's visit in 1985) are portrayed as a time when tensions between conservatives and progressives reached a balance.

Although Klaiber's few paragraphs on Protestants are defensible in a book on the Catholic Church, they might reflect a Catholic tendency to view Latin American Protestants as having little history. One sign of the Protestant coming-of-age is the search for its historical roots in Latin America, as exemplified in the collection of essays edited by Jean-Pierre Bastian. The actual content of *Protestantes, liberales y francmasones: Sociedades de ideas y modernidad en América Latina, Siglo XIX* ranges somewhat more widely than the title would indicate. For example, the contribution on Ecuador focuses on Bible sellers who traversed Latin America decades before Protestant churches were founded in the region. Some of these essays suggest further avenues for historical exploration of the nineteenth century.

The four-volume *Iglesia, religión y sociedad en la historia latinoamericana, 1492–1945*, edited by Adám Anderle, amasses ninety-two papers

originally presented at the eighth congress of the Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas de Europa, which was held in Szeged, Hungary, in 1987. A sampling of some of the better-known contributors—Enrique Dussel, Hans-Jürgen Prien, Jean-Pierre Bastian, and Magnus Mörner—suggests that most of them presented papers based on work they had already published elsewhere.

At the same time that much scholarship has been devoted to “the progressive church” and more recently to evangelicals, work on popular religion has continued. *Pilgrimage in Latin America*, edited by Ross Crumrine and Alan Morinis, offers the advantage of focusing on a single type of religious act. Two introductory chapters propose a Levi-Strauss type of interpretation and offer background information on European shrines. Numerous shorter essays describe pilgrimages throughout Latin America, emphasizing Middle America and omitting certain well-known shrines like those of La Virgen de Guadalupe in Mexico and Nossa Senhora de Aparecida in Brazil. The generous use of photographs enhances this volume.

Anthropologists generally favor viewing religions from the standpoint of ordinary practitioners rather than from that of official representatives. Editors Susanna Rostas and André Droogers examine the gap between what Protestant leaders say and what ordinary believers think and do in *Popular Use of Popular Religion in Latin America*, a collection of papers originally prepared for conferences in 1990 and 1991. The editors suggest, “Latin America will perhaps be no more Protestant in the future than it has been Catholic in the past. People have their own strategies and priorities in adhering to whatever religion they choose and they tend to produce their own version of it” (p. 2). According to Rostas and Droogers, more interesting than the question of “whether one official religion is taking over from another” is a whole series of questions related to the “frenzy of religious activity that is occurring in Latin America” (p. 3). The first essay by Droogers resembles the more developed studies by John Burdick (reviewed here) and Rowan Ireland (1992) in its schematic comparison of umbanda, Pentecostalism, and Catholic base communities. The individual contributions dealing primarily with Brazil and the Andean countries provide rich observations.

Concluding Observations

Neither the group of books discussed here nor the current scene leads to neat or dramatic conclusions. An array of religious expressions is not new in Latin America. Popular Catholicism in various forms has always existed alongside official Catholicism. What is new is the emergence of evangelical (and especially Pentecostal) Protestantism as a serious competitor at village, barrio, and national levels. Most Latin Americans—urban and rural, from all social classes—now have the opportunity to

become something other than Catholic. In that sense, Latin America is today becoming religiously pluralist for the first time.

Latin American cultures nonetheless remain Catholic in some larger sense. In each country, the Catholic bishops' conference can address the nation's public as its flock in a way that Protestant leaders cannot. Evangelical leaders believe that they rightfully deserve to be heard publicly, but efforts to form organizations to provide such a voice continue to founder on the deep divisions over doctrine and practice. For example, Brazilian Methodists are theologically closer to Catholics than to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, Protestant denominations are competing with one another. Nevertheless, the current coming-of-age should find expression in public life. As Paul Freston observed about Brazilian Protestants, a group of twenty million cannot disregard public life as easily as it did when it numbered only two million members. Nor should one assume that such involvement will inevitably be conservative.

For many in the Roman Catholic Church, the present moment is one of perplexity. Catholic bishops and theologians thus far have paid relatively little attention to evangelical growth, which they were initially tempted to dismiss as foreign-sponsored or encouraged by military dictatorships in order to weaken Catholicism. The Catholic Church's public role has been muted, partly as a result of a consistent Vatican policy of choosing bishops on the basis of loyalty to Rome but more because the times have changed: the heroic moments when unarmed bishops and base communities resisted troops wielding automatic weapons are (with only a few exceptions) a receding memory. The living standards of many Latin Americans may have deteriorated, but the identity of "the oppressor" has become more diffused, if indeed the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy still makes sense. A priest in the progressive church working in the *cortiços* of São Paulo encapsulated the perplexity that is now widespread: "A few years ago we had many answers and few questions; now we have many questions and few answers."

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