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David C. Kirkpatrick. ***A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Latin American Evangelical Left.*** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780812250947 (cloth, $55.00).

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The evangelical organization World Vision is a juggernaut of international charities, ranked ninth in the list of biggest charitable organizations with yearly expenses of more than a billion dollars. World Vision's current mission statement proclaims its evangelical devotion to "promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God" but promises to do so through "integrated, holistic commitment" to development, emergency relief, and "promotion of justice that seeks to change unjust structures affecting the poor among whom we work."[1] This mission statement explicitly commits a massive organization that is largely marketed to and funded by American evangelicals to an integrated social mission. Since the story of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism is one predicated on a break with the Social Gospel and mainline churches, how did evangelicals come to embrace a social mission? David Kirkpatrick's *A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Latin American Evangelical Left* argues that the answer must be found outside of the United States in a dynamic relationship between a community of Latin American and global evangelical leaders institutions. Kirkpatrick's narrative centers on the development and spread of a "brand of social Christianity, flavored by the political and social ferment of the global Cold War," from Latin America to the United States and the world through a growing network of evangelical institutions, leaders, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Kirkpatrick's argument, while framed primarily as a work of religious and intellectual history, contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the connections between American and global Christianity. Where scholars such as Matthew Sutton have studied evangelicals' attention to the world, Brantley Gasaway and David Swartz have studied the Evangelical Left from the 1970s to the present and a plethora of scholars have deepened perspectives on the rise and development of the Evangelical Right.[2] Darren Dochuk's study of evangelical connections to the oil industry is indicative of the business-centric and internationally relevant focus of recent work on evangelical politics.[3] On a parallel track, David Hollinger's call to re-examine the legacy of mainline missions in creating a cadre of internationalist agents, bureaucrats, and cultural shapers opens new space for seeing American Christian institutions as transnational and ideologically flexible, not only as agents of empire

[1] "Who We Are," World Vision, https://www.worldvision.org/about-us/mission-statement#1468276217335-4d5c9ff3-3760

[2] Matthew Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2014); Brantley W. Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals and the Pursuit of Social Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); David Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[3] Darren Dochuk, *Anointed with Oil: How Christianity and Crude Made Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

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but as vectors of internationalism and pushback against imperialism.[4] Kirkpatrick uses English and Spanish-language archives in Latin America, England, and the United States as well as a series of interviews to deepen Hollinger's approach for an evangelical subject and to argue that Latin American *evangélicos* worked together with American and English evangelicals to drive an important shift in global evangelical thought. His investigation of social mission seeks to correct scholarship that focuses primarily on evangelical conservative politics and to show the diversity of thought within the global evangelical movement.

Kirkpatrick also attempts to complicate post-colonial scholarship of Latin American Christianity that, in his view, over-corrects by focusing on Catholic liberation theology or by painting Latin American evangelical strength as solely self-generated and independent from the global church. Kirkpatrick notably focuses on Latin American evangelical organizations that correspond more closely to American 'neo-evangelical' denominations and theologies, which had a clearer relationship to global evangelical leaders and institutions in the 1960s and 1970s. He then avoids the complications of analyzing the Latin American Pentecostal movement that gained more power in the following decades. This choice makes sense for his time period and in parsing the specific theological differences in the broader spectrum of 'evangelicals.' However, there is fertile ground for further study to see how this story would change with the increasing demographic, economic, and political power of Latin American Pentecostal leaders and the growing influence of Latin American immigrants in American Christianity since the 1980s.

Integral mission, or *misión integral*, represented a theologically conservative but socially progressive way to respond to poverty, urbanization, and political corruption. Kirkpatrick traces the roots of social theology to Latin American evangelicalism's unique place in the Cold War context of the 1950s and 1960s. Latin American evangelicals responded to the same problems of urban poverty, political corruption, demographic change, and American imperialism identified by liberation theology. Their churches and theological arguments similarly originated on university campuses. Evangelicals, however, built an identity as a minority oppressed by both Catholics and Marxists, and they fought hard to retain their theological bona fides in the eyes of the American churches that provided funding and organizational assistance. Kirkpatrick centers his narrative on two theologians, Ecuadorian C. René Padilla, the more radical voice pushing for faster change, and Peruvian Samuel Escobar, a less-confrontational but strong advocate for integrating a social mission. These two figures worked hard to maintain relationships with evangelicals in the United States and England. They even worked directly for American-run ministries such as the International Federation of International Students (IFES). At the same time, however, they and their colleagues in organizations such as the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL) also wrote and organized furiously to "strip [evangelical theology] of its white, middle-class American packaging" and create a theology that saw social action as integrally bound up with Biblical faith, rather than a secondary goal (5). Kirkpatrick traces the early mobilization of a network of Latin American evangelical leaders in universities, seminaries, and NGOs through the 1960s and early 1970s. Escobar and Padilla used gatherings of the FTL and the 1969 *Asociación Teológica Evangélica* meeting to fill a perceived "vacuum" in Latin American evangelical leaders and "void in the Gospel itself" (59). At these meetings, Latin American evangelicals also built ties to Catholic theology theorists such as Miguz Bonino and global evangelical leaders such as Andrew Kirk. Their agency and embrace of social theology in these meetings stood in stark contrast to lingering paternalism in the *Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización* (organized by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) held later in 1969.

The 1974 Lausanne conference is the lynchpin of Kirkpatrick's story, the moment when Latin American evangelicals and other "Global Christians" from outside the United States and Europe succeeded in including a discussion of "Christian Social Responsibility" in the conference proceedings and the Covenant produced by the gathering. Lausanne represented a turning point where many global evangelicals argued that social theology and evangelism should go hand in hand. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and evangelical periodicals such as *Christianity Today* certainly did not become overnight converts to social theology or Latin American influence, and Padilla and Escobar continued to be frustrated in encountering

[4] David A. Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

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paternalism from North American or British evangelicals. Still, Kirkpatrick tracks the growing influence of "integral mission" ideas and Latin American theologies in formative contacts with the American Evangelical Left from the 1970s into relationships with Brian McLaren and the "emergent church" movement of the 1990s. He also notes the social framing used by the growing array of evangelical NGOs during the 1980s and 1990s as a sign of Latin Americans' successes in influencing major organizations and institutions such as InterVarsity and Palmer Theological Seminary.

Kirkpatrick skillfully traces networks of personal relationships and argues for complexity in understanding the relationships of American, British, and Latin American evangelicals. He deftly shows how some American and British evangelical figures such as John Howard Yoder, John Stott, or Andrew Kirk learned from Latin American evangelicals during shared conferences or time spent living in Latin America. One of his best sections foregrounds the work of Catharine Feser Padilla, René Padilla's American-born wife, and shows just how much she contributed to René's writing by serving as translator and silent co-author of many of his books and speeches. Despite the complex sequences of conferences, covenants, and institutions, Kirkpatrick successfully teases out connections between Latin American and global evangelicals and bring them to life through snippets of letters and stories. He also shows concrete examples of lasting influence as Latin American evangelicals moved into positions of leadership, such as the prominent role of Padilla and Escobar as speakers at the 2010 Cape Town meeting of the Lausanne Movement (162).

For foreign relations historians, this short volume opens important questions about the role of American foreign policy in shaping the creation and development of this new theology, though it does not dive deeply into politics and power and leaves those questions for future work. At only 175 pages of text, the book is not intended to be exhaustive and it keeps the primary focus on theologians and religious organizations. Still, Padilla, Escobar, and their colleagues such as Orlando Costas and Pedro Arana often are analyzed in a way that decouples them from current events and national contexts, and this would be a useful way to either deepen this study or expand with future scholarship. During the 1970s, groups such as the FTL brought together theologians from countries experiencing coups, dictatorships, or Marxist revolutions, and it would be fascinating to see how those events influenced their relationships with American evangelicals or the expression of their theology. One example mentioned in the text is the divide between the largely Puerto Rican, Costa Rican, and US-based speakers and the Peruvian-born and Argentina-based Escobar at CLADE in 1969 (62). Another is a heated 1977 argument where Costas criticized Escobar for ignoring class analysis in his FTL Presidential address. Escobar responded by pointing out how Costas, who was born in Puerto Rico and operated primarily in the United States, had greater political safety that made it easier for him to speak out on class than Escobar dared (157). This contextualization with events and geopolitics is a promising way to accomplish more of what Hollinger succeeds in doing with his *Protestants Abroad*, marrying religious history with politics or economics.

Several other chances to do this, however, are missed or need further development, such as the connection drawn between dependency theory and Latin American evangelicals' fears of dependence in Chapter 3. The only footnotes on American development work in the region cite Walter Rostow and David Ekbladh without going deeper into the rich recent historiography or theoretical work on dependency or development (55).[5] In particular, foreign relations scholars can build on Kirkpatrick's identification of networks of influence between Latin America and the United States to better understand evangelical reactions to foreign-policy issues in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. The foundation that Kirkpatrick provides here, in combination with recent work by Lauren Turek, for instance, would allow better analysis on how the same network of Latin American evangelicals influenced American evangelicals' reaction to the 1982-1983 rule of the Pentecostal General José Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala.[6]

[5] Walter W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[6] Lauren Frances Turek, "To Support a "Brother in Christ": Evangelical Groups and U.S.-Guatemalan Relations during the Ríos Montt Regime," *Diplomatic History* 39 4 (September 2015): 689-719. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhu039

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Kirkpatrick's *Gospel for the Poor* is groundbreaking in its identification of transnational flows of evangelical thought and argument for the influence of Latin America on evangelical understandings of social mission. Its deep studies of the complex relationships between U.S. and Latin American leaders is a useful model for historians of missions and postcolonial churches. While primarily a religious history, this book will help foreign relations historians understand the cultural connections between Latin America and the United States, particularly during the rise of evangelical political power in the 1970s and 1980s. It also helps deepen the historiography on the Evangelical Left and provides a useful springboard for future scholarship on US foreign policy in Latin America.

Michael Limberg received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in 2018. His dissertation focused on American development work in the Middle East during the 1920s and 1930s, and his research interests include the history of missions and humanitarianism. He is an independent scholar and teacher in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

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