RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN LATIN AMERICA:
Ambivalence and Advances

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RELIGION IN THIRD WORLD POLITICS. By Jeff Haynes. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1994. Pp. 166. $18.95 paper.)

RELIGION, THE MISSING DIMENSION OF STATECRAFT. Edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, with a foreword by Jimmy Carter. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. 350. $29.95 cloth.)

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HAITI: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE. By Anne Greene. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1993. Pp. 312. $28.95 cloth.)

THE STRUGGLE IS ONE: VOICES AND VISIONS OF LIBERATION. By Mev Puleo, with a foreword by Robert McAfee Brown. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. Pp. 251. $18.95 paper.)

LIBERATION THEOLOGY AT THE CROSSROADS: DEMOCRACY OR REVOLUTION? By Paul Sigmund. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, Pp. 257. $16.95 paper.)

WRITINGS FOR A LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY: IGNACIO MARTIN-BARO. Edited by Adrianne Aron and Shawn Corne. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994. Pp. 242. $29.95 cloth.)

ALGO MAS QUE OPIÓ: UNA LECTURA ANTROPOLOGICA DEL PENTECOSTALISMO LATINOAMERICANO Y CARIBEÑO. Edited by Bárbara Boudewijnse, André Droogers, and Frans Kamsteeg. (San José, C.R.: Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones, 1991. Pp. 176.)

PROTESTANTISMOS Y PROCESOS SOCIALES EN CENTROAMERICA. Edited by Luis E. Samandú. (San José, C.R.: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1991. Pp. 302.)

THE RISE OF PROTESTANT EVANGELISM IN ECUADOR, 1895–1990. By Alvin M. Goffin. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994. Pp. 189. $29.95 cloth.)

COPING WITH POVERTY: PENTECOSTALS AND CHRISTÌAN BASE COMMUNITIES IN BRAZIL. By Cecília Loreto Mariz. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1994. Pp. 195. $29.95 cloth.)

RELIGIOUS REGIMES IN PERU: RELIGION AND STATE DEVELOPMENT IN A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE AND THE EFFECTS IN THE ANDEAN VILLAGE

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OF ZURITE. By Fred Spier. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994. Pp. 328. $55.00 cloth, $37.50 paper.)

Theoretical Approaches to Religion and Society

Scholarship on religion and society (especially on religion and politics) seems to be undergoing a transition, with social scientists eager to make sense of the growing or at least more public role of religion in social change and conflict. Some of these scholars are trying to overcome the perceived shortcomings of past research. Individuals from different disciplines understand these failings in diverse ways and try to correct them accordingly. In work on religion and society in Latin America, however, a couple of weaknesses seem especially common. One has been to take a unidimensional view of religion and its social role, especially the assumption that religion always fulfills a particular type of social function. This approach is sometimes rooted in the thought of Emile Durkheim or Karl Marx, who both assumed that religion could only reinforce the status quo. Another shortcoming in much research has been a tendency to look only at religious institutions and to neglect popular and informal dimensions. This approach tends to present only a partial picture of religion and often reduces it to a function of larger social processes.

Recent studies of religion and society in Latin America have contributed greatly to creating more nuanced and multidimensional theories about religion and society. Many of these studies assume that religion (like society and politics) consists of institutional structures and leaders but also of varying practices, ideas, values, and relationships (for examples, see Ireland 1991 and Levine 1992). To understand religion in this sense requires taking it as a relatively independent variable whose internal complexity and social context lead it to play diverse social and political roles. These roles in society can be grasped only by exploring processes internal to religion as well as the practical, ideological, and affective links between institutions and the grass roots. Investigations of these nuances within and across religious traditions can shatter stereotypes about a particular religious tradition or group and usually provide a fuller understanding of religion's role in human societies.

These advances are manifest in the best writing on religion and society in Latin America and elsewhere. Most works on the subject, however, are less satisfactory and in fact reproduce many of the weaknesses of traditional approaches. This essay will review eleven recent books, two of them of general international interest. The remaining nine focus on Latin America but in myriad ways that reflect the diversity of current scholarship in the field. Some of these books set out explicitly to correct or enrich previous theorizing. Others are intended primarily to offer detailed information about a particular case, in the process suggesting (albeit implic-

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itly) a framework for approaching the topic. As a group, they offer helpful information on a range of subjects and some valuable lessons about ways of understanding religion in Latin America. At the same time, they also underline just how much remains to be done.

Jeff Haynes's *Religion in Third World Politics* and the essays collected by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* both address the general study of religion and politics, including some attention to Latin America.[1] Although both books set out to fill gaps and correct perceived inadequacies in scholarly treatment of the topic, neither achieves significant theoretical innovations. Haynes claims in *Religion in Third World Politics* that religion received little attention in studies of Third World politics before the late 1970s, when the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions and the civil war in Afghanistan forced scholars and policymakers to take notice. In his view, these events represented "only the most overt manifestations of renewed signs of the prominence of religion in the politics of diverse countries and regions. As a result, a renewed focus on the interactions between politics, theology and culture was essential in order to gain information and understanding of a Third World which stubbornly refused to conform to Western stereotypical expectations" (pp. 1–2).

Haynes's purpose in *Religion in Third World Politics* is to explore these interactions in order to develop a more accurate picture of politics in the Third World, which he believes is increasingly shaped by religious movements and ideas. His four main claims offer helpful but not especially novel critiques of traditional (political science) approaches to the topic. First, Haynes asserts that religion has always been political, and he therefore argues against the "artificial separation" of religion and politics in modernization or other political theories. The nature of relations between religion and politics shifts, but the fact of linkage remains a constant. His second point is that "religious ideas have a ready audience even among those deemed 'modern'" (p. 15). Haynes again criticizes traditional academic approaches, this time for portraying religious ideas and groups as options only for "traditional people." A third concern is religion's use as an instrument for attacking governments—and the ways in which opposition to unpopular governments can increase "religious constituencies." According to Haynes, this role has expanded in the wake of "the failure of state-promoted development plans and programmes" (p. 145). Finally, he contends, "the increasing political salience of religion is a direct result of urbanization, swiftly growing populations and the communications revolution of the past 20 years" (p. 16). Haynes explains this perceived increase in religion's political role not as a result of "the

1. Although the two books address various cases, I focus here on their discussions of Latin America and theoretical issues relevant to the region.

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absence of alternative avenues of mobilization or merely a consequence of economic disappointment" but rather as linked to "the growth and internationalization of the world religions, Islam and Christianity" (p. 42).

Of the two, Islam is Haynes's main focus, which creates some problems for his analysis of religion and politics in Latin America. Perhaps because Haynes's theoretical claims rest on his analysis of Islam, he refers to conservative Christian (especially Protestant) activists in Latin America as "fundamentalists." This stereotyping of all Latin American Protestants as conservatives and all Pentecostals as fundamentalists has been shattered by many recent studies (including some under review here). Haynes seems to have done only cursory research on this topic. Similarly, his understanding of Catholicism is laden with misperceptions and inaccuracies, beginning with his confusion of progressive Catholicism with the much narrower field of liberation theology. After presenting caricatures of both Protestantism and Catholicism, Haynes portrays Latin America's religious field as split between the two: "in Latin America in recent times, politics has been chiefly played out within the context of this religio-political divide" between conservative "Christian fundamentalists and pentecostals" and "liberation theologists" on the other (p. 42). Haynes's reliance on these stereotypes along with the frequent errors in Spanish and Portuguese spellings and translations all suggest that the sections on Latin America in *Religion in Third World Politics* received scant attention because they were meant primarily to illustrate his larger interest in religious expansion and polarization. In the end, although Haynes points to weaknesses in traditional political science approaches, he fails to improve on these analyses by exploring religion's place in the lives of ordinary people or the diversity of religion and its political roles, at least in Latin America.

Similar weaknesses mar Johnston and Sampson's *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft,* which also intends to counter stereotypes of religion's role in politics. In this case, the target is religion's perceived link to intolerance, fanaticism, and sectarian violence. The editors and contributors claim that contrary to this perception, religion often plays a positive role in efforts to promote peace, development, and democracy. Ignorance of this fact, they argue, leads to an inaccurate understanding of religion and also to bad policy decisions. While their point is sound, the volume fails to debunk many stereotypes, at least in its discussions of Latin America. In the first section on theory, Barry Rubin's "Religion and International Affairs" presents the religious alternatives in Nicaragua as split between "moderates" and "radicals" (p. 31). His sympathy clearly lies with the former rather than with the "Marxist-Leninist Sandinistas" (p. 30). This perception is reinforced in Bruce Nichols's contribution on Nicaragua, the single Latin American case study. Nichols argues that

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religion played a central role in negotiations between the Sandinistas and indigenous peoples on the Atlantic Coast primarily because of the effectiveness and legitimacy of the religious leaders involved in the talks (pp. 66–67). The role of religion in shaping ordinary Nicaraguans' perceptions and actions receives little attention. For example, although a section of the case study addresses "the importance of the spiritual dimension," Nichols attempts to summarize this dimension with an unhelpful quotation from the secretary of the Conciliation Commission: "Religion was important because there were religious leaders on the commission" (p. 73). Nichols unfortunately does not follow up on a subsequent reference to religion supplying "a common language of conciliation" (p. 74), which might have illuminated the role of religion beyond the credentials of the negotiators.

Nichols's contribution thus gives short shrift to religion's role in anything other than the formal affiliation of elites. It also displays a troubling tendency to downplay U.S. and counterrevolutionary manipulation of indigenous and religious groups, a subject that has been well documented elsewhere. For example, Nichols obscures or at least understates the administration's central role in widening and exploiting the rift in this disingenuous statement: "From the point of view of the Reagan administration, the Sandinista/Miskito rift was a welcome opportunity" (p. 69). This political blind spot is as troubling as the weaknesses in Nichols's theoretical approach to religion. These analytical flaws stem from a failure to go beyond the traditional social scientific views of religion as significant only in terms of formal institutions and the affiliations of elites. Although this edited volume and Haynes's monograph recognize the need to nuance theory, in the end both point only to changing political roles for religion without offering changed ways of understanding these roles.

Works on Catholicism

The development of new theoretical paradigms rests in part on the emergence of new topics in the study of religion and society in Latin America and elsewhere. Prior to the late 1980s, most research on religion in Latin America seemed to focus on Catholicism, especially the changes following Vatican II and the Catholic Church's role in defending human rights and educating and empowering poor laypeople. The best of these studies contributed greatly to broadening theoretical understandings of religion and society. Interest in progressive Catholicism has not vanished, but it has dissipated considerably in the face of growing conservatism in global Catholicism, political changes in Latin America, and increasing religious diversity in the region (fueled largely by evangelical Protestant growth). Several recent books on Catholicism add to scholarly knowledge

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of Catholicism's complexity, but largely without achieving the analytical innovations of earlier works on the topic.

Anne Greene's *The Catholic Church in Haiti: Political and Social Change* resembles the studies of the 1980s in focusing on a national church's support of human rights and democratization in an oppressive political situation. Like earlier works on Brazil, Chile, and Nicaragua, Greene's study examines the way a formerly conservative institution became a mainstay of opposition to political injustices (see Bruneau 1982; Smith 1982; and Dodson and O'Shaughnessy 1990). Like many of these analyses, Greene's work consists largely of discussions of the institutional church and its leaders and documents, devoting relatively little attention to the role of religion in ordinary people's understanding and behavior.

Greene understands the recent history of the Haitian Catholic Church in the context of Haitian history but also as part of the evolution of Latin American Catholicism. While her discussion of Haitian political history and the development of the Haitian church is thorough and meticulously documented, her treatment of Catholicism in Latin America since independence is cursory. Greene's portrayal of Catholicism since Vatican II (1962–1965) relies on limited research and broad generalizations. For example, she offers an uncritical evaluation of Christian base communities (*comunidades eclesiales de base* or CEBs) and a rather outdated overview of liberation theology (pp. 8–9, 230). Greene also falls into the common error of viewing liberation theology as a "movement" almost synonymous with progressive Catholicism since Vatican II (p. 11).

Greene's discussion of Haitian political history is more satisfying, and her examination of Haitian Catholicism since the colonial period is very detailed, although focused on the church as a formal institution. She pays particular attention to the Duvalier dynasty, especially the overthrow of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. Greene argues that the Haitian Catholic Church, after decades of passivity toward dictatorships, "played an important leadership role in the ouster" of Duvalier due to embarrassment about its past complicity and the post–Vatican II vision of a church dedicated to justice for the poor (p. 191).

Greene's optimism about the church's role in achieving this justice fades, however, when she turns to the contemporary situation. Greene completed *The Catholic Church in Haiti* after Jean-Bertrand Aristide's 1990 election and overthrow the following year but before his return to power in 1993. She does not praise the institutional church's role under the military regime: "While it was all right for the Church to lead Haitians and Filipinos out of dictatorships, the Vatican has been unwilling to have it participate in the establishment of democracy" (p. 234). Greene at times criticizes Aristide (pp. 247, 252), but ultimately she judges the Vatican and Haitian church leaders more harshly for having reverted since the 1991 coup to their traditional passivity in the face of political injustice. This

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conclusion may not be especially original, but it is well supported. In the end, Greene's study offers valuable information on the Haitian Catholic Church, although her theoretical approach follows rather than pushes beyond traditional institutionalist focuses.

Mev Puleo's *The Struggle Is One: Voices and Visions of Liberation* also looks at progressive Catholicism. Rather than examining the positions and processes of the institutional church, however, Puleo presents individual Catholics (and a few Protestants) working for social change in Brazil. After a brief introduction and a foreword by Robert McAfee Brown, the book is filled with Puleo's interviews and photographs of sixteen individuals, ranging from laypersons in poor urban and rural areas to well-known theologians and bishops. The interviews and photos are meant to introduce North Americans to the concerns, goals, practices, and faces of progressive Christians in Latin America. In this respect, the book offers much of value.

Brown's foreword states that *The Struggle Is One* is the book he would choose to introduce North Americans "to the real meaning of liberation theology" (p. ix). This meaning emerges from the interviews in predictable attacks on structural injustice and affirmations of service to the poor but also in repeated criticisms of the Catholic hierarchy made by laypersons and clergy alike. For example, Catholic laywoman Salomé Costa argues that due to appointments of conservative bishops, "things have receded . . . , our space within the church is being eliminated" (p. 27). Dominican brother Frei Betto decries the Vatican's effort to "uniformize" the church according to a neocolonialist model (p. 95).

While these critiques and other issues raised throughout the book shed light on the ambiguities present in "liberationist Christianity" in Latin America, the primary contribution of *The Struggle Is One* comes from the words of those whose lives have been changed by this religious movement. "My life wouldn't have meaning if I wasn't in the struggle," avers lay activist Toinha Lima Barros, a teacher who earns forty-two dollars a month (p. 63). Statements like these may seem trite or superficial, especially to cynical and comfortable North Americans accustomed to rhetoric about "the end of history" and "the death of socialism." At times, Puleo's interviewees seem to be repeating slogans, but that may not lessen the slogans' meaning in their own lives. Just as often, however, they go beyond sloganeering to reveal "the struggle's" deep roots in the lives of ordinary people. Here Brown's warning against reducing liberation theology to "another theological fad" ought to be taken to heart (p. ix). Progressive Catholicism has suffered many failures, but it has also given birth to social movements and theologies that at the least have given meaning to the difficult lives of many.

An empathetic understanding of this meaning is precisely what is missing from Paul Sigmund's *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads: Democ-*

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racy or Revolution? Sigmund highlights central theological issues and offers helpful historical information (and appendices) as a context for the theology. Overall, however, he fails to do justice to the central concerns of the theology itself. The book's most troubling dimension is Sigmund's insistence—in the subtitle and throughout the text—on opposing democracy and revolution. He sets up this polarity by his definitions: "revolution" means socialism, and "democracy" means liberal institutions and elections (and perhaps market economies, although he tries to hedge this connection). In celebrating "democracy," Sigmund fails to explore its ambiguity, in part because he neglects its grassroots dimensions. His political claims also foster the impression that his criticisms of liberation theology rest in the end on a broader antipathy to socialism. For example, Sigmund criticizes what he views as a reliance on Marxist thought and "lack of scriptural discussion" (p. 38) in Gustavo Gutiérrez's seminal *A Theology of Liberation* (1973). In discussing the turn by Gutiérrez and others to more "spiritual" and biblical concerns beginning in the mid-1980s, Sigmund seems to tie this shift to an acceptance of political liberalism that is far from self-evident in Gutiérrez's and other theologians' recent theological and political writings. Sigmund's implicit agenda thus weakens the contribution made by *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads* to scholarship on religion in Latin America.

Although Sigmund scans progressive Catholicism's theological and political implications, he pays little attention to its day-to-day effects on the lives of believers. This dimension is well conveyed in a collection of essays on psychology by Spanish-Salvadoran Jesuit Ignacio Martín-Baró, edited by Adrianne Aron and Shawn Corne. Only one essay in *Writings for a Liberation Psychology: Ignacio Martín-Baro* focuses on religion. Using survey evidence, "Religion as an Instrument of Psychological Warfare" explores the ways that religious affiliation and especially conversion shape individuals' political attitudes. Martín-Baró argues, "The massive religious conversion to Pentecostal groups (evangelical or Catholic charismatic) during El Salvador's civil war represents not only a way for certain individuals and groups to try to satisfy their psychological ('spiritual') needs, but also a political instrument for those who hold power, and more specifically, an element of psychological warfare" (p. 138).

This conclusion is not surprising, given Martín-Baró's commitment to progressive Catholicism. But he also supports his claims with substantial evidence, avoiding for the most part the polemics that other liberal Catholics have wielded against *"la invasión de las sectas."* This essay serves as a small but well-crafted contribution to the ongoing debate over the political role of Protestantism in Latin America.

Writings for a Liberation Psychology makes a larger contribution to understanding the role of religion in Latin America by shedding light on the possibilities opened up by Catholicism's *aggiornamento* (renewal) fol-

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lowing Vatican II.[2] Although the essays selected for this collection represent only a fraction of Martín-Baró's scholarly output, they give a sense of his evolution from writing traditional scholarship (like his 1975 article "The Psychological Value of Violent Political Repression") to issuing sharp challenges to traditional views held by psychologists and Salvadorans. In essays such as "War and Mental Health" (1984) and "Public Opinion Research as a De-Ideologizing Instrument" (1985), Martín-Baró reveals his intellectual range as well as his consistent commitment to identifying injustice and healing the wounds it has created. This commitment did not evolve simply from changes in the Catholic Church. These changes nevertheless helped turn the interest of Martín-Baró, other Catholic intellectuals, and laypersons to questions of justice. This connection is evidenced in the book title's evocation of liberation theology as a model for psychology. As Martín-Baró's work and Puleo's interviews reveal, these religious reforms transformed lives and societies.

Works on Protestantism

While scholarly interest in the changes wrought by post–Vatican II Catholicism has waned in the past several years, interest in Protestantism in Latin America has skyrocketed. Many of the most helpful recent reflections on religion and society have appeared in studies of Protestantism. Much of the best work on this topic has come from Latin American and European scholars whose writings have received little attention in the United States. Two edited volumes published recently in Costa Rica reflect current research and its direction, which is suggested by one of the titles: *Algo más que opio: Una lectura antropológica del pentecostalismo latinoamericano y caribeño.* Edited by Bárbara Boudewijnse, André Droogers, and Frans Kamsteeg, this volume presents essays by Dutch scholars on Pentecostalism in South America and the Caribbean as well as an invaluable forty-page bibliography on Pentecostal and charismatic movements throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Algo más que opio begins with the now-familiar assertion that "the growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America and the Caribbean is spectacular" (p. 13). Pentecostalism accounts for most of the recent growth in Protestantism in the region—and for most of the research as well. Although some studies, notably David Martin's *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (1990), have made sweeping generalizations on the subject, *Algo más que opio* captures the diversity and ambiguity of Pentecostalism in different countries. A brief introductory chapter outlines the distinctive characteristics of Pentecostalism as well as the reac-

2. More generally (and beyond the scope of this essay), Martín-Baró's work on violence, ideology, and power in these essays and other works can also contribute much to general understanding of religion, culture, and politics in Latin America and elsewhere.

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tions of established Protestant churches to its growth, but otherwise the book gives no overview of Pentecostalism or its significance. Rather, the volume presents detailed studies of Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Curaçao. The most general contribution is Droogers's essay on Pentecostal growth in Chile and Brazil, which offers a helpful overview and critique of recent theories that tie Pentecostal growth to class conditions, "anomie," and failed modernization. Droogers finds none of these approaches wholly satisfactory but suggests that the contradictions among them can enrich theory. This sense of contradiction and ambivalence defines Droogers's understanding of Pentecostalism and leads to his conclusion that its rise is tied to the movement's "paradoxical character," especially its ambivalence toward the outside world and the individual's place in that world (p. 39).

The other contributors share Droogers's desire to go beyond current theories. For example, Angela Hoekstra's essay on rural Pentecostalism in Pernambuco, Brazil (subtitled "Algo más que una protesta simbólica)" contends that "the Pentecostal movement constitutes too much of a continuation of traditional social-cultural structure for it to be called 'revolutionary' without qualification." But neither should it be called simply "conservative" (p. 55). Hoekstra insists on remarking the specificity of Pentecostalism's manifestations in different areas, especially the ways that individuals in particular settings use it to improve their own lives and their societies. Kamsteeg's chapter on Arequipa, Peru, explores a crucial but little-studied issue: the relations between leaders and laypeople in Pentecostal churches. He highlights the dominant role of the pastor, thus qualifying claims that Pentecostal groups provide free and democratic social spaces (compare Martin 1990). Future research should explore the implications of Kamsteeg's suggestion that the rigidity of the pastor's authority, in contrast with the theological promise of "the priesthood of all believers," leads believers to establish their own churches (pp. 111–12).

Other contributions reinforce some current approaches with detailed and nuanced case studies. Bárbara Boudewijnse's essay on the charismatic movement among Catholics in Curaçao highlights the movement's value for women, who find in it "space to express themselves emotionally . . . , company and security, and . . . material and nonmaterial support" (p. 75). Hanneke Slootweg's contribution also focuses on women, asking what attracts poor women in Iquique, Chile, to Pentecostal groups. She concludes that Pentecostalism helps poor women address male-female relations, economic difficulties, and health problems, echoing Cecília Mariz's claim in her book under review here that Pentecostalism helps poor Brazilians "cope" with the hardships of poverty. The theoretical contributions and rich ethnographic detail of *Algo más que opio* make it one of the most valuable recent volumes on Protestantism in Latin America.

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Focusing on a narrower geographic range, *Protestantismos y procesos sociales en Centroamérica* also offers detailed case studies and theoretical sophistication. Both introductory and concluding chapters insist on the complexity of Protestantism in Central America. As editor Luis Samandú asserts, the topic "resists any simplification" (p. 8) and cannot be understood without taking into account cultural, political, ethnic, and national conditions as well as religious factors. To describe this diversity, the first contribution by Andrés Opazo Bernales suggests a threefold typology of "Protestantisms" (p. 15) and highlights differences among countries. For example, the well-publicized strength of evangelical Protestantism in Guatemala stands in contrast with the relative weakness of its Salvadoran counterparts. Opazo Bernales also provides helpful tables summarizing Protestant growth and numbers in each country.

A second essay by Abelino Martínez and Samandú and a concluding one by Arturo Piedra also emphasize the complexity and diversity of Protestantism in the region as well as the difficulty of generalizing about it. Martínez and Samandú contend that their primary goal is to "problematize" the issue by offering a counterweight to the usual discussions of Protestantism in Central America (p. 61). This contribution suggests that the growth of Protestantism in recent years stems partly from political violence and economic chaos. Still, evidence showing that Protestantism is growing fastest in Costa Rica, the region's most stable country, underlines the impossibility of pinpointing any single cause. Martínez and Samandú explore the reasons why Pentecostalism, rather than other forms of Protestantism, has experienced most of the growth and suggest that Pentecostalism has responded particularly well to the "popular religious demands" of the present day (p. 58). Piedra contends similarly that the kind of Protestantism that has expanded in Central America offers a type of "therapy" in response to social and economic crisis, although he does not view it as entirely productive (p. 291).

The remainder of *Protestantismos y procesos sociales en Centroamérica* consists of detailed case studies of the five countries in the region. These essays generally share the analytical framework set forth in the introductory and concluding chapters, especially the emphasis on Protestantism as a response to social crisis. Even the chapter on Costa Rica by Jaime Valverde Rojas emphasizes the relationship between Protestant growth and "the deterioration in living conditions" (p. 231). He also discusses the role of conservative missionaries from the United States, a theme receiving some attention in other chapters without being presented as the primary reason for the spread of Protestantism. On this issue and others, *Protestantismos y procesos sociales* repeats some common arguments about Protestant growth in Latin America. Overall, however, the collection reflects carefully researched and nuanced analysis that avoids reinforcing stereotypes.

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Alvin Goffin's *The Rise of Protestant Evangelism in Ecuador, 1895–1990* approaches the topic from a more polemical perspective than the two Costa Rican studies just discussed or than some recent work by U.S. scholars (compare Stoll and Burnett 1993). Goffin begins by providing a thorough historical background, a welcome contrast to studies that present the current growth of Protestantism in Latin America as a sui generis phenomenon. He then turns to three "specialized groups," projects sponsored by U.S. Protestant missionaries. The first group, HCJB Radio ("La Voz de los Andes") was founded in 1931 and became "the longest-lasting and most powerful specialized Protestant group in Ecuador" (p. 41). While this radio station survived bouts of opposition from governments and other groups, a second "specialized group" did not fare as well. The Summer Institute of Linguistics began work in Ecuador in 1952 but came under increasing attack in the 1970s for its missionary work with indigenous groups. The Ecuadorian government expelled the group in 1981. Goffin's discussion of World Vision, the third group, focuses on criticisms of its inattention to structural injustices (p. 79), links to right-wing politics (p. 83), and misuse of funds (p. 88).

The overwhelmingly negative tone on evangelical Protestantism that reverberates in the chapters on the specialized groups continues in Goffin's discussion of more general trends and issues. His tone is least disapproving when he examines at the growth of Pentecostalism, "the most important development in Protestantism in Ecuador and in Latin America generally from 1950 to 1990" (p. 91). Goffin acknowledges that Pentecostalism in Latin America has largely broken away from its origins in U.S. missionary projects, although he continues to link Pentecostal Protestantism to rightist politics in Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America. Goffin's chapter on indigenous responses to the "Protestant threat" reinforces this connection: "most of [the indigenous people] viewed the proselytizing activities of Protestant groups as part of the most recent phase in a five-hundred-year conquest and the destruction of their way of life" (p. 125). Actually, however, the chapter devotes little attention to evangelical work, concentrating instead on indigenous mobilization.

Goffin's criticisms of evangelical Protestantism are not unfounded, and he offers substantial evidence for his claims in *The Rise of Protestant Evangelism in Ecuador.* At times, however, his critique fails to capture the ambiguity of the political implications of evangelical Protestantism. His concluding speculation that future forms of evangelization might "help create a more equitable and just society for all" does little to soften the strong attack on Protestant evangelicalism that is Goffin's main message (p. 144).

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Comparative Approaches to Religion and Society

A more theoretically fruitful approach to evangelical Protestantism and other religions is suggested by recent studies that place Protestantism within a larger religious field. This strategy works especially well in Brazil, the most diverse country in Latin America in religious terms. In the past few years, several books have presented comparative analyses of the country's three main religious traditions: Protestantism, Catholicism, and African-based religions. The best of these is Rowan Ireland's extraordinary *Kingdoms Come: Religions and Politics in Brazil* (1991; see also Burdick 1993). In *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil,* Cecília Loreto Mariz examines the ways in which these three religious traditions, particularly Pentecostalism and progressive Catholicism, help Brazilians survive poverty—given, as she acknowledges, that virtually nothing helps them actually escape it. Her analysis is heavily Weberian, insisting that in order to understand religious beliefs, scholars must understand their economic context. In her view, because the material conditions that define the lives of most Brazilians are those of poverty, the struggle to survive poverty must be central to any analysis of religion and economics. This approach, however, carries with it a danger of falling into functionalism, of perceiving religion as merely a function of economic determinants. Mariz cautions against this error, suggesting instead that religion's main economic role may lie in its ability to provide meaning and motivation.

Mariz concludes that all three traditions offer something to their poor adherents but that Pentecostalism appeals most to the poorest sectors, especially those facing personal and financial crises, because it encourages behavior and creates networks that help stabilize individuals in extreme situations. Catholic base communities mainly help not the poorest of the poor but the "working poor" with some degree of stability, who are interested in medium-term changes that will improve their neighborhoods or their governments. Mariz devotes less attention to Umbanda, although she ranks it between Pentecostalism and progressive Catholicism in its usefulness in dealing with poverty.

Coping with Poverty provides a valuable but perhaps not definitive contribution to the literature on religion in Brazil and that on religion and society in Latin America. Mariz's use of a comparative format is particularly helpful, as is her limited discussion of the relationship between "religious meaning" and economic behavior. A fuller examination of this relationship and the question of "meaning" in religion more generally could have expanded her conception of religion as a coping strategy in the face of everyday hardship and special crises. For example, Mariz might have spent more time exploring different religious theodicies (explanations of evil) or theories of redemption. As it stands, her approach

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shortchanges the internal (and more "spiritual") dimensions of religion and thus is limited in how much it broadens or advances theoretical frameworks for understanding religion and society.

Similar problems bedevil Dutch scholar Fred Spier in a different kind of book, *Religious Regimes in Peru: Religion and State Development in a Long-Term Perspective and the Effects in the Andean Village of Zurite.* Spier examines religion in a single site over an extremely long-term perspective: from about 8000 B.C.E. to the present. He is interested in religion's relation to nature and to the state and also in the increasing religious diversity of his field site. Although his long-term perspective is innovative, Spier adopts a fairly traditional social science interpretation. He believes that "religious organisations [are] often dependent to some extent on worldly elites" and that "the relations between churches and states are of central importance in understanding religion inside as well as outside churches. Consequently, much of the attention [in this book] is focused on these dependency relations" (p. 16). This approach leads Spier to ignore most of the time the relative autonomy and inner complexity of religion and often to adopt a functionalist approach. His employment of three central concepts reinforces this tendency. He begins by citing the concept of "religious needs," which arise in every era due to insecurity, anxiety, and suffering (p. 19). These needs lead to formation of "religious regimes" to meet them. Spier defines a religious regime as "a constellation of human interdependency relations, characterised by a complex of religious representations and practices which people try to impose on each other and on themselves" (p. 18). Such imposition often develops into "constraint," the power to enforce certain religious beliefs and practices on others (p. 20).

Spier's use of these categories leads his discussion of the region's earliest religions to focus on development of a priesthood and religious organizations. The "constraint" wielded by religious specialists, who often were also political leaders, was not particularly oppressive in early Inca society because it largely coincided with followers' religious needs (p. 59). Inca rule became more authoritarian later due to increasing (but far from complete) differentiation between religious and political spheres and growing gaps between religious needs and the constraints exercised by religious leaders and institutions (p. 65). In Spier's view, Inca domination paled in comparison to that exercised by the Spanish after 1533. His discussion of the colonial period is lengthy and detailed, highlighting the close relations between conquistadors and Catholic friars as well as the often superficial and incomplete nature of indigenous conversions to Christianity.

Spier also deploys his concepts of religious needs, constraints, and regimes in a detailed analysis of the decline of the Spanish Empire and the religious monopoly of Catholicism. For the twentieth century, he

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introduces a new term: *religious privatization,* meaning a growing separation between church and state that coincided with modernization projects, liberalism, democratization, secularization, and Catholic decline (p. 230). This term highlights Spier's interest in relations between religion and the state, especially the dependence of religion on the state.

A point of interest in Spier's discussion of contemporary developments is his analysis of the guerrilla movement Sendero Luminoso, which he characterizes as a type of religious regime. In his view, Sendero achieves through "its rather violent conversion strategy . . . the functional equivalent of the exercise of religious constraint, while some of its adherents might be motivated by the functional equivalent of religious needs, ideological needs" (p. 233). Spier's identifying Sendero as a type of religious regime, while perhaps provocative for attempting to understand the guerrilla movement, highlights the weakness in his approach to religion. His dependence on the concepts of religious needs and constraints obscures the specificity of religion as a relatively autonomous dimension of human culture and societies. Thus despite the contribution made by his use of a long-term framework and his detailed historical information, Spier does not move far in *Religious Regimes in Peru* beyond traditional social scientific approaches.

Conclusions

Hay, hermanos, muchísimo que hacer.
César Vallejo, "Los nueve monstruos"

Books on religion and society ought to contribute to theoretical approaches to the topic, or to knowledge of a particular case, or ideally to both. All the books reviewed here make contributions in one of these areas, but most do so in limited and problematic ways. Many of these books (especially those by Goffin, Spier, and Greene) provide valuable information about previously unrecorded or underdocumented experiences. Except for the two Costa Rican volumes, however, none of these books succeed fully in bringing such information together with substantial theoretical advances. As a group, they contribute to theory mainly insofar as they remind scholars of religion of how much remains to be done on two points in particular. First, social scientists still need to pay more attention to the popular or noninstitutional dimensions of religion. Books like Puleo's *The Struggle Is One* that present only the "grassroots" perspective are valuable, but we also need analyses of this dimension by itself and in relation to institutional processes. Second, despite scholarly awareness of the flaws of functionalism, these books reveal how difficult a trap it is to escape. Even recognition of the complexity of religion does not prevent analysts from viewing it as largely determined by or reacting to social conditions. This failure to view religion as a relatively indepen-

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dent variable continues to hinder efforts to understand not only the social roles but also the character and complexity of religious institutions, communities, practices, and ideas. Nevertheless, critiques of functionalism should not lead us to divorce religion from its social context. We need not adopt a decontextualized idealism but rather should strive to take religion—in all its diversity, constant changing, and internal complexity—seriously as both product and shaper of its economic, political, and cultural conditions.

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