

transcended the socially and religiously constructed boundaries of gender upheld by Syrians and Western missionaries alike” (284). While many such women left behind no written account of their activities, Womack used the few personal accounts, as well as serious archival detective work, to uncover the identities and practices of a number of these women.

As good gender history should do, Womack accomplished more than including women in the narrative. Instead, she uses the role of women to upend the standard history of the Syrian Mission and historians’ understanding of global missionary movements. For instance, it was at a 1910 meeting of the American Mission when a missionary woman suggested that female evangelists could use their access to private spaces not only to minister to women but to men and boys as well. Yet Womack discovered that this practice began some fifty years prior. That is, “by reading scripture and preaching, Syrian Biblewomen served as forerunners for American missionary women to broaden the boundaries of their own evangelistic endeavors” (309–310).

Protestants, Gender and the Arab Renaissance in Late Ottoman Syria contributes to a more well-rounded understanding of history in a variety of ways. Yes, it works as a wonderful contribution to the history of women in Syria’s Protestant communities. By relying heavily on the voices of Syrians, it also offers a broad and honest assessment of Syrian missions as a whole, including notions of Western paternalism and masculinity. Finally, Womack’s acceptance of conversion stories and Syrian Protestants’ religious experiences is a refreshing perspective not often presented in such a manner in historical writing.

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***In Search of Christ in Latin America: From Colonial Image to Liberating Savior.* By Samuel Escobar. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2019. xiii + 371 pp. \$45.00 paper.**

Latin American religious and political life experienced monumental change in the post-war period. Rapidly shifting demographics, especially through rural-urban migration, reshaped the structures across denominations, coalitions, and traditions. Protestants, long a tiny and marginalized religious minority community, began to grow and flourish at the margins of a new urban environment. Protestant evangelicals, and particularly Pentecostals, leveraged their own flexible polities to expand in places Roman Catholicism often struggled to reach. In a political sense, an entire generation of theologians, Catholic and Protestant, was shaped by the Cuban Revolution, Cold War tensions, and proximity to U.S. interventionism. Samuel Escobar, a longtime staff member with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, and later Thornley Wood Professor of Missions at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (now Palmer Seminary), writes from within these crucial intersections—a lifetime of close proximity to missionaries, revolutionaries, and his own religious minority community in Peru.

In Search of Christ in Latin America is a book formed from the margins of Latin American life. It is a work of constructive theology with particular focus on

Christology, but the end product is an intriguing monograph that interweaves theology, literature, and religious history. Escobar, who holds a PhD in Latin American literature from Complutense University (Madrid, Spain), moves seamlessly across fields to fashion a book for which I know very little comparison.

Escobar's interdisciplinary contribution fills various scholarly lacunae. The early years of Latin American Protestantism, particularly the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, stand out as one of these embarrassing gaps in the literature. Escobar, in his early chapter "The Christ in Early Protestant Preaching," highlights pathbreaking Bible society colporteurs as well as influential early missionaries from Britain, the United States, and elsewhere from the Global North. Herein lies one of the particular strengths of Escobar's book: careful attention to the transnational nature of Latin American Protestantism without overlooking local Catholic and Protestant constructions. As such, the book provides a strong introduction to Protestant Christian thought in Latin America without shortchanging Catholic contributions.

Latin American Protestant evangelicals, in particular, have long been criticized for operating ahistorically and producing little of their own thinking. Even the intellectual contributions of Escobar's own "Latin American Evangelical Left," as I call them, have often been labeled a "response" to theologies of liberation rather than a shared response to social and political stimuli from their Cold War context. If credited with intellectual contributions, scholars often date them to later periods well into the postwar period. Escobar returns to this theme throughout the book: Latin American evangelicals enjoy their own intellectual tradition, one with rich resources. In particular, Escobar provides a key intervention in his chapter "The Beginnings of a Latin American Christology," where he discusses the "founders of Latin American evangelical thought." These include the Oaxacan writer Gonzalo Báez-Camargo (1899–1983), Alberto Rembao (1895–1962), and other key Spanish publications. Rembao's 1949 *Discurso a la nación evangélica* and Báez-Camargo's early analysis on Protestant communities during the Spanish Inquisition are key highlights. These thinkers deserve more attention than they currently receive in the English-speaking world, and Escobar contributes toward this end.

Finally, many are aware of influential Catholic social traditions, with monumental documents such as *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and CELAM documents from Medellín. Escobar argues that evangelical Protestants have a similar tradition, doing the work of Vatican II in the *first* half of the twentieth century. In making this argument, he focuses on the Scottish Presbyterian John Mackay (who would later become president of Princeton Theological Seminary), the Latin American Theological Fellowship, and ecumenical thinkers such as José Míguez Bonino. Mackay's influence on later generations might surprise many observers given a resistance to exporting credit from Latin American intellectual work. Mackay's encounter with Latin American culture and literature, however, convinced him that Christianity in the region was anything but indigenous. The Christian message had a foreign accent, and this disfigured the image of Christ. Mackay wrote his most influential book, *The Other Spanish Christ*, in 1932 as an attempt to diagnose these problems within Latin American Christianity and provide a way forward to an authentically "Latin Christ." Escobar finds in Mackay a careful balance of Latin American and global Christology alongside evidence of the tilled ground of Latin American Protestantism. This attention to and praise for Mackay also displays one of Escobar's strengths: his willingness to give credit where credit is due, even if it cuts across political narratives or appears to export agency to northern thinkers. The Latin American Protestant

intellectual tradition, particularly within the theme of Christology, is a transnational space filled with diverse materials.

Overall, this book displays impressive breadth as an introductory sweep of Latin American Christology. While Escobar pays careful attention to a broad spectrum of literature, his work should dispel at least one surprisingly persistent myth: Latin American Protestants lack their own intellectual tradition. Escobar paints a detailed picture of a global *and* Latin American Christology with materials from a long twentieth century. Escobar's inclusion of Spanish-language religious literature, in particular, contributes to scholarly and public lacunae across multiple fields as well. Toward this end, *In Search of Christ in Latin America* is a fascinating book with rich resources for the historian and theologian.

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***The Mysterious Sofía: One Woman's Mission to Save Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Mexico.* By Stephen J. C. Andes. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. xxvi + 424 pp. \$65.00 cloth.**

Sofía del Valle (1891–1982) was a leading lay activist who played a crucial role in rebuilding and shaping the Catholic Church in Mexico after the Cristiada. Del Valle's institutional legacy was formidable: she founded both Mexican Catholic Action's branch for young women—the *Juventud Católica Femenina Mexicana*—and the first Catholic liberal arts college for women. As this fine biography shows, del Valle remained an important lay leader long enough to see the emerging laywomen so evident at Vatican II drift away from the JCFM and the idea of celibate service. Del Valle proved to be adaptable and surprisingly ecumenical, working with secular organizations like UNESCO toward the end of her career.

Interspersed throughout the biography's chronological narrative are several examples of reflexive history, in which Andes recounts the experience of researching and writing the book. This permits him to explore the limits and responsibilities of biography, the tension between history and memory, the challenges of understanding his subject as a North American man raised Protestant, and the paper chase in archives in Mexico, the United States, and Rome.

Because the self-effacing del Valle served the church as a key activist, educator, de facto diplomat, and spokesperson, archival finds reveal her important connections to Archbishops Pascual Diaz and Leopoldo Ruiz, heads of the Mexican episcopate during the height of the church-state crisis, as well as to Father (later Archbishop) Rubén Darío Miranda, the founder of Catholic Action in Mexico. Miranda's relationship with del Valle was more than professional: the two enjoyed an emotionally intimate but platonic bond that lasted decades in spite of long separations. Andes also pays close attention to del Valle's social milieu in Mexico City as well as her networking in the United States and Europe during extended stretches abroad, publicizing the plight of Mexican Catholics and seeking funding. At times they served to protect her from not only the Mexican state but also enemies within the church, principally some Jesuits and leading