

the city, the diarist rarely took his surroundings for granted and provided vivid and timeless descriptions of his subjects: 'The women [of Patzcuaro] have a distinctive Costume, a blue woolin [sic] shirt thickly plaited with a red sash & white cotton chemise embroidered around neck and sleeves with red or blue woolen yarn. They weave & embroider rebosas, sashes, serapes & other goods in the town & we saw them at work with their handloom' (p. 877).

While Strother expressed his love and appreciation for Mexico, his diaries teach us how precarious life was in the capital city. As administrator of the American Cemetery, he attended funerals, and recorded deaths by murder, accident and illness. He witnessed assaults, the aftermath of an attempted suicide, and the horrible deaths of matadors and picadors gored at the bullfights. Moreover, he reported on duels, fist-fights, executions and assassinations. In his pages, cholera and typhus snuffed out children young and old; the stable-mate of his son, John, was there one day and dead the next. Strother's routine encounters with death led to a casual attitude toward the violence, alcoholism, poverty and human suffering all around him.

Porte Crayon's diaries stand alone in providing a continuous stream of useful information at a time when just a few foreign journalists, businessmen and tourists recorded fleeting impressions of their month-long trips. Uniquely, Strother was the right person in the right place at the right time to witness Porfirian Mexico in the making. His strong habits of mind, multilingualism, and cosmopolitan outlook equipped him to record memorable first-hand observations, but never earned him the recognition he deserved. Thankfully, Stealey and Strother's own descendants redress this misfortune.

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Kenneth P. Serbin, *Needs of the Heart: A Social and Cultural History of Brazil's Clergy and Seminaries* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. xix + 476, \$60.00, hb.

Kenneth Serbin's book delivers precisely what its subtitle advertises: a thorough history of the Catholic priesthood in Brazil. Based on over twenty years of research, including visits to seminaries and theological institutes in ten Brazilian states, as well as more than 150 interviews with clergy and important lay persons, the book offers new perspective on topics that students of Brazil (and Latin America) have been debating for some time. In particular, by focusing on priests, and connecting their experience to broader socio-political dynamics, Professor Serbin enriches the stories of liberation theology and of the role played by the Catholic Church in promoting democracy and social justice. Equally significant, he takes seriously the non-material influence that priests and the Church have in Brazilian life. As Serbin rightly notes, the clergy have been, and continue to be, important actors in Latin America and around the world. Yet they are not well understood. *Needs of the Heart* goes a long way toward remedying this deficiency.

The book's organisational scheme is essentially chronological and takes as its pivotal point the early 1960s, which witnessed the second Vatican Council and the beginning of Brazil's military dictatorship. The first half of the book, which basically covers the period prior to 1962, offers a thorough socio-economic assessment of Brazil's clergy during the colonial period; a survey of the Brazilian Church's

'Romanisation' and its development of standardised training for priests in line with the Tridentine model (1840–1962); and an analysis of the Tridentine discipline's drawbacks. Serbin exhaustively details seminary life and its leadership. In the process, he sketches various sources of division within the Brazilian clergy, such as country of origin, regional location, and affiliation with dioceses and religious orders. He also identifies a nationalist strain within Brazilian Catholicism, one which historically resisted full alignment with Roman orthodoxy, and which has continued to shape disputes between Church liberals and conservatives since Vatican II. Finally, Serbin discusses the weaknesses of Tridentine seminary training, and explains how it contributed to a general crisis in the Brazilian priesthood in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a crisis that coincided and interacted with the challenges of Vatican II and military repression.

The second half of the book centres on the period during and after the crisis of the 1960s. Here Serbin presents the bulk of his primary research. He first describes the clergy's increased commitment to serving the poor and to using the gospel to raise social consciousness and promote justice. This story parallels that of liberation theology in the 1960s and 1970s and will be familiar to many readers. Nevertheless, Serbin's telling of it from the viewpoint of seminarians and individual priests, gives it fresh life. His account of the seminarian movement, where students struggled against superiors to redefine their training, roles and commitments as priests, is central. By showing the seminarians' links with other student organisations and reform groups, Serbin adds an important dimension to our understanding of Brazil's struggle for democracy and social reform during those years. But another important goal in this part of the book is to understand the specific strategies used by Brazilian priests to address that period's personal and social challenges. Serbin analyses the liberation psychology movement, in which the Brazilian Church tried to use psychotherapy to help priests resolve personal problems, often associated with the vow of celibacy. In addition, Serbin examines some of the clergy's 'outward looking' reform efforts, focusing specifically on the *pequenas comunidades* movement and the Theological Institute of Recife.

All of these reform efforts envisioned a 'new priesthood', one that would be more fulfilling personally, as well as more closely connected to the world and to the lives of 'ordinary' Brazilians. These efforts mostly failed to achieve their goals. In fact, they met with some of the same obstacles that the broader liberation theology agenda encountered. Serbin, however, carefully points out that Rome was not entirely to blame. He offers a complicated, and for the most part ideologically neutral, explanation of what happened to the Brazilian Catholic Church and its clergy after the 1980s. This avoidance of neatly packaged conclusions is one of the book's great strengths. In other words, it is refreshingly devoid of clear heroes and villains. Serbin's critical analysis of the Catholic Church as institution is sensitive to the Church's unique mission, and to the distinct ways that it became embedded in, shaped, and was shaped by Brazilian society. His treatment of priests is similarly careful. He allows us to encounter them not only as privileged actors in a developing country, who either helped or hindered their society's struggle for democracy and material improvements, but also as individual human beings with goals and struggles of their own.

For these reasons, and more, *Needs of the Heart* is a significant contribution to scholarship on Latin America. Nevertheless, the book has a few weaknesses. First, in certain places Serbin lets the details of his story swamp his broader arguments.

A tendency to skip around chronologically and to give long lists within the text (of individual priests involved in minor events, for example) also disrupts the narrative. While the book is commendable for the vast amount of information it conveys, the information is not always well digested or articulated. Second, although the material on liberation psychology is intriguing, Serbin's revelation that seminary discipline and the celibacy vow have caused Brazilian priests to have issues with their sexuality is not. Are Brazil's priests really remarkable for their struggle with celibacy vows? In the epilogue, Serbin tries to relate Brazil's experience to the recent priest sex scandals in the United States, but this discussion seems forced and beside the point. Clearly, a more systematic comparison of the Brazilian clergy's experience with that of priests in other countries would be required in order to put celibacy and other issues in proper perspective.

On balance, however, Serbin's book has more strengths than weaknesses. An impressive piece of research, *Needs of the Heart* raises new questions about important topics, and generates many opportunities for future comparative study.

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Jens R. Hentschke (ed.), *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. xiv + 306, £42.50; \$74.95, hb.

This book treats several dimensions of the Vargas era (1930–54): politics, including regionalism and civilian-military relations; labour history; social policy; civic culture; and cinema. Getúlio Vargas seized power in 1930 with no clear idea of how to combat the Great Depression. 'Only in the long-run did Vargas's takeover ... prove to be a revolution and a new development model', writes Hentschke. The dictator himself would ride the waves of change with extraordinary skill.

Both the editor and the first essayist, Gunter Axt, assert the importance of Rio Grande do Sul's peculiar political culture in forming Vargas's approach to politics. Vargas was nurtured in the traditions of Julio de Castilhos, Rio Grande's positivist dictator from 1892 to 1904. Castilhos viewed social problems as resolvable through technological solutions. However, one can acknowledge this tendency in Vargas's later political vision while still attributing Vargas's genius to an opportunistic grasp of changing political and economic situations that required a nod to twentieth-century ideologies. Axt shows that Vargas had financial acumen and experience, for which he is seldom given credit. Axt also considers economic and political alliances within Rio Grande, analysing the structural shifts occurring in the state by the time Vargas became governor (1928–30). Vargas encouraged new economic associations that shifted power away from the commercial interests of the Litoral area to ranchers and industrialists.

James Woodard considers the regional issue that dogged Vargas in the early years of his dictatorship and helped 'justify' the unitary Estado Nôvo regime. In Woodard's view, Vargas was more concerned about discontent in São Paulo than challenges from Integralistas and Communists. Most importantly, the loss of hegemony by São Paulo's political and economic elites was the source of Brazil's only twentieth-century civil war (July–September, 1932). Woodard hypothesises that the defence of Paulista identity (as opposed to economic interests) was the main source of the 1932 revolt, but the contention cannot be fully established in the short