

changes of those years. He explores the question as to how there could be a potential reconciliation between the establishment and voluntarist strands of Scottish Presbyterianism that had been so antagonistic for over a century? Mallon finds the key to this question in the slow shift within the Free Church away from the establishment principle towards a Church embracing unchorded voluntarism and a belief that it freed the Church for evangelism, unconstrained by erastianism. Mallon sees the Free Church of the later decades of the study as a 'softer version of dissent' because it still wanted to claim to be the true national Church of Scotland, with the UPC holding fast to more radical anti-establishmentarianism.

Among the reasons for this common ground opening up between the two dissenting Churches by 1863 that Mallon offers are a younger generation of clerical leaders divorced from the decade of conflict that prompted the Disruption. There was also the growing influence of voluntarism within the Free Church, and the mutual amelioration in both Churches of their adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith. One particularly important aspect of the book is its addressing the contentious topic of the influence of anti-Catholicism in generating a growing Protestant unity in nineteenth-century Scotland. Mallon argues in favour of such an influence, and that it has a wider than ecclesiastical dimension in the political alliance between these two Churches and the Liberal party. This wider dimension of the growing alliance of the two dissenting Churches is further explored in their social activism, most particularly with respect to their support for a national education system. Their mutual position on education was a dimension of their common antipathy towards the hegemony of the Established Church.

Mallon argues that in these various ways a 'common dissenting agenda' was formed that ensured that post-Disruption Scotland continued to experience the effects of sectarianism and denominational conflict, both within and well beyond ecclesiastical communities. This growing agreement and level of commonality might be questioned given the ultimate failure of the union negotiations in 1873, and the long period until eventual reunion with the Church of Scotland in 1929. However, this is an important study that helps account for the emergence of more centripetal forces in previously centrifugal Scottish Presbyterianism. The book helps demarcate reasons why an increasingly pluralistic Scotland did not become even more divisive than it did in the nineteenth century.

WOLLASTON THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
PERTH/
UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY,
MELBOURNE

ROWAN STRONG

Religious conflict in Brazil. Protestants, Catholics, and the rise of religious pluralism in the early twentieth century. By Erika Helgen. Pp. x + 316. New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2020. £50. 978 0 300 24335 2

JEH (73) 2022; doi:10.1017/S0022046922000173

The histories of Catholicism and Protestantism in Latin America have in most cases been written separately. Erika Helgen's book explores the implications of looking beyond denominational and confessional boundaries to account for the Catholic revival and the diffusion of Protestantism in twentieth-century Brazil. This is a

history of religious confrontation, in which Evangelical minorities sought to disrupt the centuries-long Catholic hegemony from below while the hierarchy of the Church put forward a 'Restorationist' agenda, aimed at recovering its social, political and cultural authority. Helgen's monograph concentrates on the Brazilian north-east, the stage of the messianic movements of Canudos and Juazeiro that mobilised large groups of Catholic believers and eventually led them into armed conflicts against national and regional authorities. In consequence of such traumatic events Restorationist clerics and laypeople devised a set of strategies designed to bring Catholics into the Church's sway. Although Protestantism made little headway in the region throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Protestant evangelisation had an outsized impact on the religious culture of the north-east, encompassing an increasing body of indigenous agents and creating local roots. The result is a revealing book that situates this conflictive interplay into multiple social, cultural and political contexts and examines the tensions involved in processes of religious pluralisation.

Helgen reconstructs the anti-Protestant arguments and actions of Restorationist Catholics between the 1920s and 1940s. Influential bishops and intellectuals depicted Protestantism as a religion that was both mistaken in its theology and ecclesiastical organisation and a threat to the social fabric of the nation, bemoaning the 'infiltration' of such extraneous religious forces in Brazil. The Restoration, however, was not solely a project of high-profile clerics. It involved parish priests and believers, who distilled this anti-Protestant rhetoric at the local level, merging together a vast array of symbols and rituals. Local clergy revitalised the very practices that Protestants most conspicuously rejected, including the devotions to the Virgin and the Sacred Heart and the doctrine of the real presence of the eucharist. Priests resorted to biblical imagery to claim that their communities needed purification from dreaded pollution, depicting Protestants as goats among the sheep and tares among the wheat. Inspired by such sets of metaphors, ordinary Catholics took action, which included banning all interreligious commerce, boycotting the businesses of Protestant converts and in the most extreme, albeit rare, cases physical violence. Instances of Restorationist anti-Protestantism reached a climax in the *santas missões* (holy missions) which the author reconstructs with meticulous care, offering a rare glimpse into the lived realities of Catholics. Organised by Capuchin friars, the missions sought to inspire and discipline the faithful by exposing local communities to a week-long campaign of intense preaching, large-scale catechetical instruction, the administration of sacraments and physical labour to restore rundown church property. Although these events were devised to bring Catholics into the orthodox, disciplined sensibilities of European Catholicism, the climate of the *missões* was emotional and theatrical, eliciting religious fervour. Such occasions also sparked fiery anti-Protestant sentiments, as friars exhorted local communities to repent for their negligence in allowing Protestantism to gain a foothold in the north-east. A whole chapter is dedicated to one of the most prominent Capuchin friars of this era, the Italian Frei Damião. His remarkable ability to translate complex theological arguments into simple formulas, his extreme dedication to the *missões*, his passionate sermons warning Catholics against Protestants and the rigour of his asceticism transformed him into a saint-like figure in the Brazilian north-east, much feared by Evangelical believers.

Protestants, in their turn, blurred denominational boundaries in order to stand up to the Restorationist offensive. Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists put their differences aside and organised series of conferences to attract disillusioned Catholics and dissect the 'errors' of Catholic doctrine. Important transformations altered the image of Protestantism as churches and missions made headway into the Brazilian north-east. Although foreign missionaries controlled many of the missionary resources, from the 1920s onwards a growing number of Brazilians began to take up leadership roles. Paternalist missionaries reacted by tightening their grip over schools, seminaries and congregations, which unnerved the local leadership. But in the context of the Great Depression and its impact on missionary budgets, Brazilian pastors rose to prominence, undertaking pastoral, evangelistic and administrative roles. These mixed-race, working-class ministers were able to communicate with their publics more effectively. Faith missionaries and Pentecostal evangelists expanded the north-eastern Evangelical frontier from coastal cities to the interior, deemed as the stronghold of traditional Catholicism. Restorationists racialised and pathologised Pentecostalism, portraying it as a wild, fanatical cult with roots in Afro-Brazilian and indigenous religions.

At the heart of the book is a case study of how Protestants in the state of Paraíba were able to put Catholic perpetrators of religious persecution on trial despite the conspicuous indulgence of religious violence, in my opinion the most insightful chapter. Protestants succeeded due to a series of reasons. First, they did not appeal to the local courts of justice but to a special judicial body created by the Getúlio Vargas government to prosecute crimes that threatened the security of the nation (the Tribunal de Segurança Nacional). Second, Protestants did not simply claim they were victims of religious violence, but that it was motivated by the supposed 'fanaticism' of north-eastern Catholics. In doing so, they linked the actions of Restorationist Catholics to the messianic movements of the previous decades, which challenged the state's monopoly on violence. Bringing the thickness of the historical context into the narrative, Helgen shows how Protestants manipulated the zealous orthodoxy of Restorationist Catholics and the modernising goals of the Vargas's authoritarian regime to pit the state against local priests and punish the 'fanatics'.

This is a telling book that does not fall into the intellectual temptation of opposing the north-eastern religious culture of the urban coast to the rural interior, or the leading bishops to the local clergy. Instead, the author convincingly challenges such traditional boundaries by reconstructing the religious world of Restorationist Catholicism, a project that mobilised a wide range of clerical and lay agents who shared a common set of beliefs, practices and rituals across the Brazilian north-east. Their desire for authority and respectability clashed with the Protestant aspiration for Evangelical diffusion in unexpected ways, reframing the contours of the religious landscape of the country.

BRAZILIAN CENTRE OF ANALYSIS AND PLANNING /
SÃO PAULO RESEARCH FOUNDATION,
BRAZIL

PEDRO FEITOZA