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Hermeneutics and Missions in the Land of the Equinox

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It took less than a century for Spain and Portugal to 'Christianize' the population of Latin America. For the next four hundred years the Roman Catholic Christendom model of society reigned supreme. Now, in the 1990s, the scholarly spotlight focuses mainly upon the 'explosive' growth of Protestantism. The new face of the church in Latin America is largely a Protestant story.... The most significant change, of course, is that it is now the *Latin American* churches, warts and all, that have taken their destiny into their own hands. Traditional holdouts in Roman Catholicism and in North American and European mission structures, one is tempted to say, will go the way of the dinosaurs.¹

¹ Guillermo Cook, *New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994), ix, 268.

I Introduction

The time has passed when observers, critics and opponents considered Latin American Protestantism² 'the invasion of the sects'.³ This marginalization has given way to a popular acceptance, which Stoll likens to a 'New Reformation' or a 'Reinterpreting the Invasion of the Sects as an Evangelical Awak-

² The term *Evangélico* (Evangelical) in Latin American is a catch-all word for all Protestant groups including independent churches, Pentecostals and Neocharismatics. In other words in Latin America 'evangelical' and 'protestant' are synonymous.

³ The following texts on Ecuadorian Protestantism especially express this sentiment: Tomás Bamat, *¿Salvación O Dominación? : Las Sectas Religiosas En El Ecuador*, 1a ed. (Quito, Ecuador: Editorial El Conejo, 1986); David Stoll, 'The Invasion of the Sects in Latin America', in *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); María Albán Estrada and Juan Pablo Muñoz, *Con Dios Todo Se Puede: La Invasión De Las Sectas Al Ecuador*, 1a ed., (Ecuador: Planeta, 1987); Alvin M. Goffin, *The Rise of Protestant Evangelism in Ecuador, 1895-1990* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994).

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ening.⁴ Today the renewal in Latin America has many manifestations or faces: Catholic, Liberationist, Ecumenical, Evangelical and Pentecostal.

Latin America's Protestant hermeneutic is one distinctive that has challenged and enriched the global Christian community. The views and methodologies of a Latin American hermeneutic, ie., its exegesis, contextualization, conscientization, social praxis, pneumatic emphasis and *una mission integral* (a holistic mission that addresses both the spiritual and social facets of life) demonstrate new non-western hermeneutical principles. Although Cook's analysis correctly depicts Latin American believers directing their own future, there are still vestiges of their spiritual parents' influence even in their hermeneutics.

Protestantism in Ecuador exemplifies an evangelical conservatism inherited from North American fundamentalist missions.⁵ This paper considers historically how Ecuadorian Christians are heirs to a literal hermeneutic as a result of their Protestant evangelical heritage. The strengths and the weaknesses will be observed as well as how some Ecuadorian evangelicals are moving away from this inheritance to a contextual interpretation of Scripture. The newer emphasis points to the aspiration for an indigenous hermeneutic where Scripture is sought to address the Ecuadorian reality rather than adopt an outdated exclusively individ-

ualistic approach to the Bible. The Ecuadorian Church is at a historic moment for renewal which if successful will establish their hermeneutical process.

II The Development of a Literal Hermeneutic

The Bible Societies, missionaries, electric (media) church, para-church organizations and the Pentecostal movement are all waves that have deposited conservative beachheads on the Americas of the South. From the mid-nineteenth century and following, many of these North American and European Protestant tides helped shape in Latin America a literal hermeneutic grounded on an absolute inerrancy of Scripture. José Míguez Bonino calls the first wave '*los iniciadores del protestantismo 'criollo'*' / (the initiators of the 'Creole' Protestantism') who began to posit the beginnings of a literal hermeneutic. In spite of their various denominational backgrounds, (Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist), these founders shared the common evangelical perspective of their particular era.⁶ In Ecuador, what type of hermeneutic and perspective of Scripture developed from these initiators? The following defines present Ecuadorian hermeneutics as the fruit of their Protestant founders.

Ecuador's literal hermeneutic is a product of evangelical fundamental-

4 The latter is actually Stoll's title for chapter ten.

5 Fundamentalism, which entered at the end of the 19th century, is today well established in the country.

6 My translation. José Míguez Bonino, *Rostros Del Protestantismo Latinoamericano*, (Buenos Aires and Grand Rapids: Nueva Creacion/Eerdmans, 1995), 35.

ism.⁷ Their evangelical hermeneutic is fundamentalist because of their literal reading and interpretation of Scripture. It is also positivistic in that they understand the Bible as offering verifiable information by mere observation and reasoning. Bonilla concurs that Ecuadorian evangelicals believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of Scripture as the inerrant proclamation of God.⁸ Bonino's typology of Latin American Protestantism is clearly perceived among Ecuadorian Protestants: they are 'individualistic, subjectively Christological—Soteriological, with an emphasis on sanctification', maintaining 'a dualism and spiritualism (that leads to) a legalistic and separatist ethic'.⁹

A study in the history of Ecuadorian Protestantism reveals the predecessors that contributed to this inheritance.¹⁰ From 1820 to 1895 the Protes-

tant forerunners, also known as the first 'initiators', introduced the Spanish Bible. Foreign Protestant missions followed, residing in Ecuador from 1895 to 1912 while at the same time slowly laying down roots in certain regions of the country until 1945. During the period from 1945 to 1962 many Protestant missions and organizations entered Ecuador reinforcing Protestantism. The present phase of expansion and growth began in 1962 through the Pentecostal and Charismatic explosion. The following discussion explicates the development of the conservative, literal and spiritual hermeneutic that exists in Ecuador today.

1 Initiators of Ecuadorian Protestantism

The Protestant story in Ecuador, like other Latin American countries, did not occur in a vacuum isolated from internal and external historical events. The region's emancipation from Spain during the 1820s played a major role in the Bible's entry into Ecuador. The emancipation granted a freedom that allowed for the entrance and spread of new ideas in the vernacular.

The Bible's entrance into Ecuador consists of the first phase of this new initiation into Protestantism. Padilla explains that as early as 1820 and 1822 New Testaments were given to Ecuadorians in the coast, but the first person recorded distributing Scriptures was Scotsman Diego Thomson in 1825. Soon others from his organization, the British and Foreign Bible Society, as well as the American Bible Society, dispensed God's word to a spiritually hungry people on the equa-

7 Yattenciy Bonilla is a former Jesuit priest, a Biblicist, a New Testament professor and the Vice President of *United Biblical Society* in Ecuador. During the last 14 years of working in Ecuador, he has found that the greatest challenge in working with Ecuadorian Evangelicals has been their inherited fundamentalism that has not always been open to education and scholarship outside of the Scriptures. (Yattenciy Bonilla, interview by author, digital recording, Quito, Ecuador, 9 January 2004).

8 Bonilla, interview, 9 January 2004.

9 Bonino, *Rostros Del Protestantismo Latinoamericano*, 46, 47.

10 The divisions of the Ecuadorian Protestant movement are from Washington Padilla, *La Iglesia Y Los Dioses Modernos: Historia Del Protestantismo En El Ecuador* (The Church and the Modern Gods: History of Protestantism in Ecuador), 1a ed. (Quito, Ecuador: Corporacion Editora Nacional, 1989), 64.

tor. The Bible's literal and historical meaning convinced authorities of its literary value for their educational system. Although Thomson refused to start schools, others after him carried out the task.

In Ecuador's second phase, Protestant missionary activity from 1895 to 1945, the model of American evangelicism fashioned future Protestantism in the country. The first two missionary groups that entered into Ecuador, the Gospel Missionary Union (1896)¹¹ and the Christian Missionary Alliance (1897) hermeneutically embodied and transmitted a strong fundamentalist impulse for evangelism.¹² This inclination resulted in an individualistic interpretation of the church and the Christian life from the literal approach to Scripture. Padilla stresses,

The labor of these entities are likened to a miner who proportions precious gold mixed with clay. The precious gold (represents) the gospel that until then was unknown by the Ecuadorian people, while the clay (symbolizes) the

(North American) cultural elements which alienate and impede the full application of the values of the Gospel for our country.¹³

A particular value endorsed by these groups was a premillennialist vision of the Kingdom of God. They believed that in their generation the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the battle with the antichrist and the spreading of the gospel to the entire world would bring about the return of Christ and the end of human history. All of this would occur before the millennial reign spoken of in Revelation chapter 20.

2 HCJB The Voice of the Andes

The twentieth-century witnessed the rise of media religion attempting to reach the modern world. Ben Armstrong, a former director of National Religious Broadcasters and a champion of the 'electric church', a term he himself coined, affirmed that God's intention 'is to use the electric church to revitalize the older forms of the churches, empowering them to keep up with the twentieth-century challenges of a rapidly expanding population and a rapidly diminishing span of time before the return of Jesus Christ'.¹⁴ Although there is much debate over whether the electric church is or is not truly an effective expression of the gospel, high up in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador, visionaries of the

¹¹ A month earlier on June 5, 1896 a victory for the liberal party produced a law that allowed for *libertad de cultos* (freedom of worship) and for the establishment of permanent Protestant congregations in the country. 'La Confraternidad Evangélica Ecuatoriana a la Nación' (The Ecuadorian Evangelical Fellowship to the Nation), (Quito, Ecuador: Confraternidad Evangélica Ecuatoriana, 1990), 2.

¹² This impulse was not detached from a western worldview as Padilla suggests: 'the individualism implicit in their message and their supposedly apolitical stance would lead them to promote many of the values of North American society.' (My translation. Padilla, *La Iglesia Y Los Dioses Modernos*, 184.)

¹³ Padilla, *La Iglesia Y Los Dioses Modernos*, 187.

¹⁴ Bill J. Leonard, 'The Electric Church: An Interpretive Essay', *RevExp* 81, no. Winter (1984): 43.

electric church began the first Christian 'missionary' broadcast in the world.

Early in the 1930s the missionary activity of a new organization in Ecuador, HCJB, would be destined to become the largest Protestant mission work in the country. HCJB (*Hoy Cristo Jesus Bendice*/Today Jesus Christ Blesses) 'The Voice of the Andes', the world's first missionary radio station, went to air with just 200 watts of power on Christmas day 1931 in a crude sheep shed. Clarence Jones and Ruben Larson sat inside the shelter with the vision of reaching the world with the gospel. Today HCJB World Radio ministries has faithfully fulfilled its original vision for over seventy years. HCJB spans the globe, 'proclaiming the good news, using international short-wave, local radio stations and satellite program delivery, as well as training, healthcare, technical services and television program production'.¹⁵

Leonard suggests that since the beginning of the radio and television age, American Evangelicals have controlled the way Christianity is presented on the airwaves.¹⁶ HCJB as the first representative of the electric

church on the mission field followed an American Christian broadcasting format. In Ecuador, the primary efforts of the radio station were to evangelize the country.¹⁷ Over their seventy-two years of broadcasting, they have been a reinforcing presence both positive and negative of a conservative evangelical Protestantism. Padilla expresses this dual presence:

The Voice of the Andes was a new channel of foreign penetration with all the positives and negatives it meant to Ecuador. Positive, in that it was a new channel for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and an advance in the order of technique, material and culture; negative, in that unintentionally (it) came to reinforce international liberal capitalism—and this, not by any foreign government design or of a North American Imperialistic strategy; but (rather), by the sincere desire of some Christians obeying Christ's mandate to 'preach the Gospel to every creature,' utilizing the most effective means that modern civilization placed at their disposal.¹⁸

This new media channel broadcasts North American and Latin American fundamentalist preachers like Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Luis Palau,

¹⁵ HCJB now ministers to more than 100 countries in 120 languages and dialects.

¹⁶ He clarifies the prominence of evangelicals in the media church, 'Whatever their subgroupings, evangelicals have come of age, and one significant factor has been their utilization of the media to communicate their message to American society. Evangelical use of the media is an inevitable result of American revivalistic philosophy and technique.' (Leonard, 'The Electric Church: An Interpretive Essay', 44).

¹⁷ Today all of Ecuador is covered by HCJB's radio and television transmissions. There are 22 provinces (states) in the country and HCJB has 22 transmitters in 22 cities.

¹⁸ My translation of Padilla, *La Iglesia Y Los Dioses Modernos*, 356. Bamat in his small book suggests that such American missions demonstrate an imperialistic infiltration. Bamat, *¿Salvación O Dominación?*, 72.

Omar Cabrera and Alberto Motessi. For Pablo A. Deiros, these evangelists of the masses upheld a 'kerygmatic' hermeneutic of the gospel: 'they belong to a transconfessional family that emphasizes the proclamation of the gospel as the solution to all human and societal problems.'¹⁹ Their evangelistic ethos originated from a literalist interpretation of scripture now present on the radio and television in Ecuador.

Many other North American parachurch organizations also entered, emphasizing evangelism through specialized interests and ministries such as Bible translation and community development. Two specific groups came to Ecuador: the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIM) in 1952 and the renowned World Vision International in 1975. In Ecuador they followed the same fundamentalist worldview and hermeneutic already demonstrated.

3 Pentecostalism the New Conservative Force

Pentecostal missionaries from the International Foursquare Church, Arthur Gadberry and his family, first arrived in Ecuador in 1957. Five years later, the Pentecostal explosion of 1962 marked the first significant Protestant growth in Ecuador since the initial evangelical penetration in 1825 by Thomson. In 1962 the Aguirre family working in Panama was sent to help the Gadberrys in Ecuador. Roberto Aguirre, a US citizen of Mexican

descent (bi-cultural), organized a city-wide crusade without the help of other churches except the Assemblies of God. The crusade appeared doomed for disaster according to Wayne C. Weld:

Failure seemed inevitable since the small Foursquare congregation could not even provide many counselors for the campaign. There was no choir, no musicians, no seats in the rented football (soccer) stadium, and relatively little publicity before the campaign. But finally just before the campaign was to begin an event occurred that was to turn defeat into victory. The manager of a local radio station offered to broadcast all the services for operational costs of some fifteen dollars per night.²⁰

Aguirre invited Roberto Espinoza, an AOG healing evangelist from California, to be the speaker for the event. On the first night only 1,000 people came out, but, when the news spread of the healings, the fire of God's Spirit ignited and left a blazed trail over the next six weeks.²¹ On the second night

²⁰ Wayne C. Weld, *An Ecuadorian Impasse* (Chicago: Evangelical Covenant Church of America, 1968), 62. The media coverage would be a major factor in the success of the crusade.

²¹ William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson, *Latin American Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969), 122. It was an 'extraordinary visitation of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, and miracles that (throughout) 42 days shook the conscience of many lives and multiplied at least five times the evangelical population of Ecuador' (my translation). '25 Años De Labor Misionera En El Ecuador De Las Asambleas De Dios', ed. *Familias Misioneras* (Ecuador: Asambleas de Dios, 1987), 3).

¹⁹ My translation of Pablo Alberto Deiros, *Historia Del Cristianismo En America Latina* (History of Christianity in Latin America), 1. ed. (Buenos Aires: Fraternidad Teologica Latinoamericana, 1992), 803.

5,000 appeared, on the third night 10,000; by the end of the week, over 20,000 people filled the stadium. At the end of the six-week revival, 30,000 people witnessed 1,500 baptized in water. The thirty plus member Foursquare congregation in the city of Guayaquil received into their fold 600 new converts. This propelled them to open seven more churches in the city.

Once the fires of revivalism settled, Pentecostalism in Ecuador through North American denominations (Foursquare, AOG and the Church of God Cleveland, Tennessee) surged as the new conservative force of Protestantism. These groups have also posited a literalist view of scripture but with an individualistic (escapist) eschatology. Pentecostals as Protestants theologically and in praxis fall on the left wing of the Reformation in the tradition of the Radical Reformation (Anabaptists) rather than the Magisterial (Lutherans and Calvinists). Predominantly in the last four decades, as Deiros suggests, the main characteristic of the Ecuadorian Pentecostal worldview that explicitly influenced their hermeneutic was 'a dualistic view of the world cosmologically, heaven vs. earth, and sociologically, church vs. world'.²² North Ameri-

can Pentecostals in Ecuador have continued in the Evangelical fundamentalist model of those before them.

III Fundamentalism

Established on the Equator

What Bonino identifies as 'the Evangelical face of Latin American Protestantism' correctly defines the fundamentalist Protestant identity past and present. He boldly states,

It is unthinkable of a Latin American Protestant identity that excludes these (fundamentalist) characteristics. Even more, I dare say that the future of Latin American Protestantism will be Evangelical or it will not be.²³

Today Ecuador likewise shares an Evangelical identity with many fundamentalist aspects (sectarian, premillennialist, pietistic, holding to the centrality of Scripture, etc.) which will remain part of its future legacy.

Presently there are over 150 members (churches, denominations and para-church organizations) of *la Confraternidad Evangélica Ecuatoriana* (the Ecuadorian Protestant Fellowship). In a document addressed to the nation they identify themselves as an evangelical entity and they state their basic beliefs, as:

1. The inspiration of the Holy Bible;
2. The Holy Trinity, manifested in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit;
3. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ;
4. The deity, incarnation, expiatory

²² My translation of Pablo A. Deiros and Carlos Mraida, *Latinoamerica En Llamas* (Latin America in Flames), (Miami: Editorial Caribe, 1994), 179. He offers several observations on how Pentecostals interpret Scripture: 1) a Fundamentalist reading of the Bible; 2) the Pentecostal hermeneutic is dogmatic; 3) a literal reading of the Biblical text; 4) the refusal to use elementary techniques to study Scripture; and 5) an allegorical and experiential reading (experience is normative in a Pentecostal hermeneutic), 181-185.

²³ My translation of Bonino, *Rostros Del Protestantismo Latinoamericano*, 51.

- death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ;
5. The salvation of human beings (and escape from the kingdom of darkness and eternal condemnation) only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and the acceptance of his lordship;
 6. The church of our Lord Jesus Christ made up of all the redeemed through his precious blood, who constitute his visible body on this earth, entrusted to proclaim his holy and blessed gospel;
 7. The second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth in order to establish once and for all his reign of love, peace, justice and joy in the Holy Spirit.²⁴

They ultimately seek to maintain an evangelical attitude that exhibits 'a belief in Christ and a revealing of Christ'.²⁵ A conservative Protestantism is well established in the equatorial country where its sierra, coast and jungle regions manifest its belief system.

1 Strengths and Weaknesses of a Literal Hermeneutic

The Ecuadorian evangelical hermeneutic acquired from various missionary efforts (Bible societies, missionaries of various denominational backgrounds

and para-church organizations) has left positive and negative results.²⁶ First the positive elements will be observed.

As demonstrated beforehand, the literal interpretation of Scripture provided a strong support for an evangelistic impulse. The motivation behind Bible distribution, the GMU and CMA missionaries, the HCJB radio and television ministry and the Pentecostal groups was wholehearted obedience to the biblical mandate of evangelism. Through the examples and the Scriptures that they have observed, the Ecuadorians have been guided to propagate the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and even to the outer most parts of the world. Jerold F. Reed's analysis found that a believer's testimony and the distribution of the Scriptures were the two most important factors for conversion.

The literal interpretation of Scripture has also contributed to the Ecuadorians' esteeming orthodoxy. Such a fundamentalist defence against enemies attacking from without (the destructive atheist critics) and from within (the liberal theologians attempting to negate the evangelical faith) has given meaning to the people during these crisis moments. Another strength stems from the Pentecostal hermeneutic that emphasizes the spiritual power of the scriptures to overcome personal and social evil. Sherron

²⁴ The fellowship further declares that 'the previous beliefs or postulations of faith emerge from a wide biblical base which permit us to maintain our doors open for all those who confess and commit to such postulates'. (My translation, 'La Confraternidad Evangelica Ecuatoriana a La Nacion', 5.)

²⁵ 'La Confraternidad Evangelica Ecuatoriana a La Nacion', 5.

²⁶ For the following I am dependent on Reed's survey of *Los Evangelicos del Ecuador* (The Evangelicals in Ecuador), 19. It is a partial survey of his doctoral thesis: Jerold F. Reed, 'A Componential Analysis of the Ecuadorian Protestant Church' (1974).

Kay George explains this emphasis:

A constant companion and identifying sign of Pentecostals, the Bible, provides models, examples, and solutions for the contemporary Christian. It is used extensively in church services, healing, exorcism, testimony, daily witness, street-preaching, problems-solving, and vehement apologetics.²⁷

There are other strengths to the Ecuadorian hermeneutic but the above three exemplify the Bible's evangelistic ethos, orthodoxy and spiritual power.

In Ecuador, the negative effects of the literal interpretation come from its extreme fundamentalist form. Bonino observes three aspects of Latin America's fundamentalism: an ideological influence acquired, a staunch ethical stance and an exclusive ecclesiastical position; these are found also in Ecuador.

This fundamentalism first negatively transmitted the ideology and politics of the United States—in particular the new religious right and their support of the established order.²⁸ Dif-

ficulty arose for Ecuadorian Evangelicals in judging scripturally their spiritual parents' homeland because their literal interpretation directed them to honour their parents above all. Another difficulty appeared as a result of the dualistic morality inherited from the evangelical and pietistic tradition of the missionaries. Their literalism manifested through a staunch legalism, an opposition to the material and a separation from the world, an individualistic and subjective ethic was passed on. Lastly, because of the individualistic and subjective ethic incarnated, Ecuadorians experienced much isolation and division.

2 Espousing a Contextual Hermeneutic

After 1970 there arose a '*neo-evangelico*' (Neo-Evangelical) movement in Latin America, which Bonino prefers to call '*la renovacion evangelica*' (the Evangelical Restoration). This restoration movement is firmly represented in the '*Fraternidad Teologica Latinoamericana*' (Latin American Theological Fraternity). It upholds and rescues an evangelical tradition, it affirms the centrality of scripture, it critiques the acculturation of the Latin American Evangelical Protestantism and it proposes a contextual hermeneutic.

Contextualization for Latin Americans is basically a Protestant theology of evangelism and social awareness. George says, that 'the creative contextual contributions of theologians such as Elsa Tamez, Orlando Costas, Rene Padilla, Mortimer Arias, and Samuel Escobar have enabled the church in Latin America to move beyond a false dichotomy between evangelism and

27 Sherron Kay George, 'From Liberation to Evangelization: New Latin American Hermeneutical Keys', *Int* 55 (2001): 373, 74.

28 Bonino gives sufficient examples of Chile, Guatemala and the physical and ideological support of the 'contras' in Nicaragua, Bonino, *Rostros Del Protestantismo Latinoamericano*, 52. It was in Ecuador where Padilla's eyes were finally opened in 1970 and he became 'conscious of the relationship that there exists between religious conservatism and political conservatism...the church had married the power', (my translation of Padilla, *La Iglesia Y Los Dioses Modernos*, 12).

social justice.²⁹ In Ecuador Washington Padilla (1927-90) woke up to such a contextual hermeneutic. His awakening 'began to gain conscience that history and the life of the church are intimately related with the history and the life of the world in general, and in our particular case Ecuador'.³⁰ His leadership as an Ecuadorian Evangelical left a lasting impression for future generations who now follow his example and the FTL's hermeneutic.

IV Conclusion

Ecuadorian Evangelicals like Freddy Guerrero, Estuardo Lopez and Nelson Castro, to name a few, are leaders today directing the new face of Protestantism in the country. This generation is leaving a legacy for other Ecuadorian believers and future generations of Protestants. The Ecuadorian Evangelical Fellowship rightly depicts their vision and mission for Christians in the country:

We see through the pages of the Word of God that faith (preaching) and life (social action) go hand in hand in the holistic purpose of redeeming humanity from sin and their consequences. We seek to identify ourselves with the ethnic, cultural and social realities of Ecuadorian men and women in search for their self-realization.... We are a young Church with our limitations but we also have our

aspirations. We desire to glorify God and do his will.³¹

It is obvious a new generation of Protestants (Pentecostals, non-Pentecostals and Independents) in Ecuador is taking their destiny into their own hands. But at the same time they respect and acknowledge the Latin American Protestant inheritance handed down to them. They realize that most Ecuadorian believers are today still using the literal interpretation of Scripture. The hermeneutical task remains before all Evangelical Ecuadorians, regardless of theological background, worldview and the inherited missionary tradition.

The Ecuadorian evangelical hermeneutic as demonstrated in this study is a Protestant missionary inheritance. Conservative forms of North American fundamentalism were transposed, or, as critics claim, they were imposed by missionaries. This paper has presented historically the development of a literal hermeneutic arising from an inherited evangelical Protestantism. Fundamentalism, which entered at the beginning of the late nineteenth century, is today well established in the country. The strengths (evangelism, orthodoxy and spiritual empowerment) and the weaknesses (ideology of the right-wing, a dualistic morality and an ecclesiastical individualism) were observed. And finally the restoration of Protestantism in Latin American has also beckoned Ecuadorian Evangelicals to gladly move away from their inheritance and espouse their own contextual hermeneutic.

²⁹ George, 'From Liberation to Evangelization: New Latin American Hermeneutical Keys', 371.

³⁰ My translation of Padilla, *La Iglesia Y Los Dioses Modernos*, 12.

³¹ My translation of 'La Confraternidad Evangelica Ecuatoriana a La Nacion', 7, 9.