

and the unfeasibility of such a utopian vision within that local situation. In 1925, the SVD ended their missionary presence among the indigenous and decided to do parish work among Paraguayan Catholics.

Part Two shifts to the discourse of “Development” during the mid-twentieth century (approximately 1930–1970). The post-World War II years or reconstruction gave birth to economic boom in Europe and North America and the notion of the “Third World” of underdeveloped Latin America. Destructive economic dependence would lead to the proliferation of totalitarian and populist regimes in many countries, including Paraguay. The discourse of development likewise impacted the Catholic Church and the three SVD missionaries who had returned to work with the indigenous in the mid-sixties. Piwowarczyk does an interesting study of the activity and attitudes of these missionaries within the field of Indigenism. In sharp contrast to the first group of German SVD missionaries, this smaller group consisted of a Brazilian priest claiming Amerindian ancestry, an AfroBrazilian Brother, and an Italian Brother devoted to development work.

Part Three treats the discourse of “Cooperation/Participation” during the late twentieth century (approximately 1970–2000). The social context included the development of transnational economy, resurgence of nationalism, and ethnic consciousness, emergence of the environmental movement, shift from development to neoliberal cooperation, and the Catholic Church’s commitment to social concerns. The author contends that the Barbados Conference of the World Council of Churches in 1971 “was the turning point in the recent history of the Paraguayan Indigenism” (227) and he points to the key role of NGOs, particularly the indigenist ones in Paraguay, in the further developments. In the late twentieth century, the SVD dramatically increased their personnel (eighteen men from ten countries) and resources for a new engagement with the indigenous people. The author states that the emerging redefinition of Paraguayan Indigenism “was accomplished by socially radical intellectuals in alliance with a group of progressive Catholic missionaries” (259).

The final chapter (10) is much more than a summary as the author draws together concluding insights. First of all, the author has described and analyzed how the ideology, policies, and practices of the SVD missionaries in Paraguay “have been responding to and were shaped by hegemonic relations of power as expressed in three globalizing discourses” (317). Secondly, he explored “the impact of the SVD indigenists on the local context of the Paraguayan field of Indigenism as well as the effect that their work had upon the organizational policies of the Society [SVD] in that country” (317).

On the one hand, the author’s “insider” status may have on a couple occasions effected the total objectivity of his observations, particularly in Part Three. On the other hand, Piwowarczyk, as one of the SVD missionaries in Paraguay in the late twentieth century, generally used his “insider” perspective from many years of living and working in that context to delve professionally and deeply into the complexities of the situation for both the SVD and the indigenous people. Furthermore, he was able to appropri-

ately weave in theology and church developments within his treatment. Recognizing the tension in missionary motivation between salvation and social concerns, and the impact of post-Vatican II trends and liberation theology is extremely important. Very few anthropological studies are able to make this particular interdisciplinary connection. It is also interesting to trace the threads of the commitment to the social sciences by the SVD since its founding in the late nineteenth century (38 f., 71 f., 277 f.), including the foundation of the *Anthropos* journal in 1906.

This fine work will be of particular interest to scholars and students studying cultural interaction, social change, missionaries, church-state relations, and Latin America in general. It also contributes to the new approach of writing the history of Christianity and mission, which takes into serious account the social location of the missionaries, the active agency of the “recipients,” the complexities of the social-cultural context, and the interdisciplinary approach of history, theology, and the social sciences. Finally, many academically-inclined missionaries would be extremely interested in this book.

Roger Schroeder

**Piwowarczyk, Darius J.:** Coming Out of the “Iron Cage.” The Indigenists of the Society of the Divine Word in Paraguay, 1910–2000. Fribourg: Academia Press, 2008. 368 pp. ISBN 978-3-7278-1620-8. (Studia Instituti Anthropos, 52) Price: sfr. 75.00

Piwowarczyk seeks to “identify, analyze and explain” the historical and sociological factors that most influenced the Divine Word (or “SVD”) missionaries in their dealings with the indigenous people of Paraguay. The author focuses on what have been the religious order’s three principal objectives over time – conversion, human promotion, and self-sufficiency of the Native communities. He addresses the Divine Word “text” within the larger “context” of progress (chapters 1–3), development (chapters 4–6), and cooperation-participation (chapters 7–9). Chapter 10 discusses his conclusions.

Founded in 1875, the Divine Word missionaries were “creations of modernity.” They transgressed social limits and internalized the qualities that their founder, Arnold Janssen, embodied: sobriety, self-discipline, and diligence. Emerging within a Romantic period, these emissaries of evangelism were weaned to seek the exotic, the alien, the wild, and irrational. Among their number was the renowned priest-anthropologist, Wilhelm Schmidt, whose distinguished career within anthropology predicated the field’s later antipathy toward people of religion. The order’s presence among the Guarani was partly due to legislators thinking the SVD might bring “progress” to the “savages.” Missionaries sometimes wondered if they were trying to create a bourgeois society or one wherein social justice prevailed.

Come the twentieth century, the major institutions (each with an agenda that affected “Indianness”) were the State, the Catholic Church, yerba and timber extracting companies, the Anglican mission, and the SVD. It was the State that led a multi-pronged conversion process. Other institutions helped in the transformation of nineteen eth-

nic groups who composed the Native cosmos. SVDs were players within this landscape whose socialization enabled them to flourish in an otherwise alien world.

Initially seeking to recreate a Jesuit reduction, the SVD contended with a State that sought to bring Native people into the twentieth century, and a Bishop whose romanticized image of an Indian Eden conflicted with the exigencies of reality. Missionaries were supported by the State, and in turn supported the State's efforts to create a nation. Conversion was the stated goal of SVD leadership, but missionaries in the field had little to show for their labor. By 1924, mission work was neither financially viable nor apostolically successful.

Oblate and Salesian missionaries entered the field along with Protestant evangelists and the Indigenist Association of Paraguay (AIP). State involvement came via the Ministry of Defense (miming what had earlier occurred in the U.S. a century earlier when Indian Affairs was directed from within the "Department of War" – later called Department of Defense). As also done earlier in the U.S., the State's "development" programs were administered by the region's only nonnative residents – missionaries! This resulted in Natives of the western region adopting Christianity and the dominant culture while those in the east shunned them.

The Cold War pitted the United States against the Soviet Union, and this played out in the Western Hemisphere with the U.S. tolerating dictatorships (like Paraguay's) that seemed less a threat to American interests in South America. Aid to these regimes was associated with "development" that Vatican II seemed to ratify with its emphasis on "human promotion." The SVDs followed this ideological path.

Vatican II inspired a SVD return to the field. Previously, men labored to establish a Native paradise inhabited by Catholic converts. Modern missionaries envisioned a new order wherein economic improvement helped people's plight. "Liberation theology" declared that the message of Jesus was a message to liberate the oppressed. This did not necessarily mean conversion, but it did mean that Native peoples would at least have the wherewithal to survive and hear the gospel proclaimed. The SVD return was also occasioned by the influx of nonnative peoples into Guarani territory. The State gave its blessing upon those who committed themselves to development projects that would transform poor Indians into wage earners within the national economy.

Paradigms come and go, and so it was with the focus solely on economic "development." Under the leadership of Fr. Carlos Istariz, SVD presence was redefined. Formerly grounded on liberation theology, it now emphasized "teología india" – a Native understanding of what it means to be Christian and Indian. A postmodern world saw bicultural spokesmen within Latin America advocating respect for Native religious practice, and this blended with "globalization – a kind of secular counterpart to ecumenism and syncretism.

Prior to 1970, the bipolar reality of a colonial past was the State, its agents, private and missionary groups on the one hand, and Native communities on the other. Since

the Declaration of Barbados, this model of power relations has been displaced in favor of four alternatives: the national-secular vision of Indianness (INDI), the universal-secular vision of Indianness (NGOs), the universal-religious model of polity (all religious groups), and the ethnic (composed of indigenous organizations).

NGOs depend on government subsidies while at the same time paradoxically espouse initiatives that at times conflict with public policies. Themselves an NGO, the SVDs had access to United Nations briefings, and although not intended, served the interests of corporate powerbrokers. Meanwhile, SVD constituents were primarily interested in survival. Their self-perception was not that of being change agents who overturned unjust social structures.

The foregoing trends put conversions on hold, and the emerging strategy became that of endorsing only "environment and culture-friendly" projects. Assimilation, the State form of "conversion," was also abandoned as a policy. At the beginning of the millennium, Polish-born SVD priests felt uneasy belonging to a Church charged by its founder to baptize all nations but which was now directing cooperatives. Idealizing Indians, baptizing them, or sponsoring economic opportunities conflicted the thinking and practice of SVDs who earnestly sought to discern what positive role they should play within the lives of Native people.

Criticisms of "Iron Cage" are not substantive, but they could help make the work accessible to readers who would appreciate its content in less cerebral terms. For example, Piwowarczyk presents this complex history without photographs (providing only one grainy shot of a chapel in Appendix 5). Photographs could have put flesh and bones on the abstract portrait of missionaries, Indians, and others who people the pages of his analysis. Extremely long sentences are likewise a challenge for most readers – especially if missing words or typographical errors interrupt the flow of thought (more might exist, but errors can be found on pages 18, 65, 180, 222, 307, and 322). An edited version, accompanied by photographs, could attract a larger readership than the present edition probably draws.

The author successfully sets forth the difficult history of SVD presence within Paraguay since 1910, and the issues this history entails are not unique. The SVD story can be of help to other missionaries since the interplay of government, business, and religion is comparable in places elsewhere. Adapting their ministerial strategies to a changing world (as they have done) is not unusual, but twenty-first century SVDs seem determined not to let their identity as representatives of the gospel be sacrificed at the altar of modernity. Evangelizing within this ethos of secularism will remain a challenge, but evangelization among all peoples – in all places and in each era – is a challenge. Piwowarczyk's portrait of SVD presence within the Native world leaves one with the hope that these missionaries not abandon a difficult ministry that has been more often than not a light in the darkness.

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