

**Padilla, Carlos René and Lindy Scott.** *Terrorism and the War in Iraq: A Christian Word from Latin America.* Buenos Aires: Kairós, 2004, 186 pp. ISBN 987-9403-68-1, \$15

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This timely book includes the work of two Christian scholars: Latin American Protestant theologian Carlos René Padilla and Wheaton professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies Lindy Scott. Authoring alternate chapters, these two scholars examine the response of the United States to the events of September 11, 2001, and they question the justice of the war in Iraq from the perspective of Latin American evangelical Christians.

Padilla and Scott are careful to point out that theirs is *a* word, not the *definitive* word from Latin America. But they are also disturbed that there has been so little analysis of the Iraq war by evangelical Christians in the United States. We must listen to our brothers and sisters in Christ who speak from a different vantage point, since all of us form part of the same Body of Christ.

The first chapter, by Scott, deals with the response to the war in Iraq by Latin American evangelical churches. While in the U.S. some main-line Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church officially came out against the war, support from the person in the “pew” in the evangelical wing of U.S. Protestantism was probably higher than 80%. On the other hand, nearly all evangelical bodies in Latin America, in spite of their typically apolitical positions, came out *against* the war, and Scott provides numerous examples, such as the *Unión Evangélica Pentecostal Venezolana*, the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana*, the Baptist World Alliance, and Mexico’s Anglicans, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians. In Mexico the Presbyterians are known as one of the most conservative denominations, especially in socio-political issues; yet they split sharply with conservative Presbyterians in the United States on the issue of the Iraq war.

In the second chapter Scott examines the war in Iraq in the light of the “just war theory,” according to its seven generally accepted criteria

(just cause, just intention, last resort, formal declaration, limited objectives, proportionate means, and noncombatant immunity). Scott argues that none of the criteria were met, but the first four were most grievously violated. Since a connection between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein has not been shown, since no weapons of mass destruction have been found, and since other tyrants are left in power by the United States (which many Latin Americans view as hypocrisy), the cause of the war was not just (first criterion). As for the intent of the war (second criterion), the goal of making Iraq into a democracy lacks sufficient understanding of Iraq's religion and culture, and Latin Americans also suspect an economic intent to gain oil revenues. A diplomatic resolution to the conflict was not pursued to the end, thus violating the third criterion: war as a last resort. As for the fourth criterion, the United Nations did not approve the declaration for war, in spite of strong-arm tactics to change Chile's and Mexico's votes on the Security Council.

The third chapter, by Padilla, examines the past interventions of the United States in Latin America and the arrogance of power that has marked U.S. relationships with other countries. The information is not new, but is a comprehensive review of U.S. policy in Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine and the Good Neighbor Policy to interventions in the Cold War era. Padilla also explores economic dependence in Latin America and the effect of large foreign debt. His conclusion that the war in Iraq is one more instance of state terrorism on the part of the U.S. and that the U.S. is reaping what it has sown will probably be the most controversial section of the book for many U.S. readers. However, the chapter does explain the perspective of many Latin Americans and why they have not supported the war in Iraq.

The fourth chapter, by Scott, looks closely at two "isms" prominent in U. S. society: ethnocentric patriotism and materialism. Scott blames them for dangerous effects on the lives of Christians and on the testimony of the Christian church. He asks if U.S. evangelical support for the war in Iraq may be grounded more in these non-Christian "isms", which may rival our allegiance to Christ, rather than on the Bible. Scott gives numerous biblical examples of the dangers of materialism, with its "health and wealth gospel" and the pitfalls of believing that one's own country or ethnic group is ethically superior.

Finally, in the fifth chapter, Padilla pleads for responsible Christian reflection and action. Taking a cue from the International Congress on

World Evangelization held thirty years ago in Lausanne, Switzerland, he calls for a revolution of values that will lead to justice and peace, a new spirituality that brings together worship and public life and in which people are reconciled to Christ and to each other, and a restructuring of the Church that leads to lives of sacrificial service to Christ. Although some of the rhetoric (such as breaking free from “the military-industrial-political complex that enslaves them”) may alienate some readers, the call to examine ourselves and to lead fully responsible lives of Christian discipleship is powerful.

This review is being written just after the January 2005 constitutional elections in Iraq. The situation in that country shifts from one moment to the next, and the end results are still unclear. It is difficult to make pronouncements or predictions about how the Iraqi situation will turn out. Of course we pray for peace for Iraq with a government responsive to the needs of its citizens. But regardless of how the situation may end, we cannot abnegate our responsibility to think through the justifications given for the war and our own attitudes that may conflict with our call to Christian discipleship. We can ask for forgiveness for wrong that has been done, and we can resolve to influence future decisions about war and peace. In this process, it is wise to consider the perspective of our Latin American brothers and sisters in Christ. This book should be on the reading list of every reflective Christian in North America.

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**Johnston, Bill.** *Values in English Language Teaching.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003, 171pp. ISBN 0-8058-4294-2 \$24.50

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Perhaps the most telling commentary on the last 50 years of professional discussion of language education to emerge from this slim volume by Bill Johnston is the fact that the idea that language teaching is an irreducibly moral process should have to be presented as a new idea. Johnston