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U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba: From Independence to
Castro (review)

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in this volume demonstrate that much can be learned by not dividing Caribbean historiography into rigid “pre-plantation,” “plantation,” and “post-plantation periods.” Now it remains for others scholars to build on the insights of this volume to demonstrate how these overlapping worlds of sugar and non-sugar (that some authors in this volume often separate far too neatly) existed side-by-side and have reinforced each other throughout Caribbean history.

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U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba: From Independence to Castro. By Jason M. Yaremko. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. Pp. 200. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00 cloth.

Jason Yarmeko has chronicled the development of Protestantism in Cuba in a manner that complements other books published on the subject in the past few years. This study contributes to our ability to analyze this cross-cultural phenomenon with new information and insight. The book is divided into seven chapters that organize the discussion in a loosely chronological fashion. The first chapter focuses on the movement of organized Protestantism into Cuba in 1898 with the flow of soldiers following the Spanish-Cuban-American war, but the reader is reminded that Protestants frequented the island long before this event. In 1741 the first documented Protestant service took place under British occupation. Both events remind the reader that the development of Protestantism was inextricably connected to foreign intervention.

Protestantism was introduced into eastern Cuba by Cuban ministers and teachers prior to 1898 with little support from the mission boards; however after 1898 the eastern part of the island was transformed and the U.S. influence expanded. Eastern Cuba was a likely location for early Protestant attention because the strength of the Catholic Church was minimal in the region and the less industrialized nature of economic activity there also meant neglect by the government. This early introduction evolved into a wider movement to create a “new Cuba” after 1898. Rebuilding was particularly evident in the eastern part of the island where some U.S. interests sought “virgin soil.” Twenty-four U.S. Protestant missions arrived during the first few years after the independence war. U. S. missionaries found their interests in Cuba complementary with U.S. business and governmental interests and, although some missionaries disliked the association, Protestant mission work and U.S. business interests reinforced each other. As the Protestant churches evolved, this alliance with U.S. corporate interests proved problematic. This was particularly the case in the east where a heritage of nationalism persisted. By the 1920s Protestant churches and schools had grown in number and the relationship between the Cuban ministers and the U.S. boards and administrators had become strained. Yaremko focuses considerable attention on these developments in chapters five and six. By the era of the Good Neighbor and Cuba’s “revolution of 1933” both cooperative and confrontational responses to the U.S. role came from Cubans and Americans.

Yaremko analyzes the rather complicated development of Protestantism throughout the book. Missionaries shared a worldview with U.S. business leaders and government officials, but sometimes found themselves at odds with particular approaches or policies. Protestant Cubans were both supportive of mission schools and churches and opposed to missionary control. Missionaries were reluctant to relinquish this control. With few exceptions, missionaries did not think that the Cubans were capable of administering the churches and schools. "The struggle over Cubanization versus Americanization persisted both within the political and ecclesiastical realms" (p. xi). This was particularly the case in the Protestant schools, which augmented the U.S. oriented public institutions.

U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba is an admirable contribution to a relatively new field of study for Latin America. This book informs the reader that Protestant activities in these countries were not uniform. The experiences in Cuba, given the direct U.S. role in governmental affairs, created a different context than in Mexico, for example. The evangelization goal may have been the same, but important details differed. The complexity of the mission experience in Cuba is well documented so this study will provide substantial comparative information for further work.

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The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics. Edited by Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. xii, 724. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$26.95 paper.

This lengthy book is part of the Latin American Readers series published by Duke University Press; it is a welcome addition that complements Duke's previously published Peru, Brazil, and Mexico readers. The book contains a wide array of source material that spans more than 500 years of Cuban history. It is divided into eight sections that correspond to the island's historical turning points and which are entitled: Indigenous Society and Conquest; Sugar, Slavery, and Colonialism; The Struggle for Independence; Neocolonialism; Building a New Society; Culture and Revolution; The Cuban Revolution and the World; The 'Período Especial' and the Future of the Revolution. Guided by the belief that "there is no history without culture and politics" (p. 3), the editors divided the readings evenly between historical, cultural, and political topics. The book is not limited to the works of Cubans but includes the voices of non-Cubans as well. Despite its length, the volume is a quick and very enjoyable read.

Of the 125 selections contained herein, the editors smartly include both "high" and "low" source material. The reader contains well-known tracts from important political leaders, such as José Martí, Julio Antonio Mella, Fidel Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and John F. Kennedy, as well as material from Cuban slaves, unskilled rural and urban workers, white collar professionals, activists, writers, musi-