

Book Review

Like a Mighty Army; R. Kenneth Strachan and the Global March of Evangelism-in-Depth, by Paul E. Pretiz and W. Dayton Roberts, Latin America Mission, Box 527900, Miami Springs, FL 33152, 1998, 204 pages. \$9.95

History is valuable not only to remind us of how things happened, but also to inspire us of how things might be. *Like a Mighty Army* by two veteran Latin America Mission (LAM) missionaries serves both of those purposes.

An exciting sequel to *The Gospel People*, a 1992 history of the fast-growing evangelical church in Latin America written by Paul E. Pretiz and Mike Berg, this new book reviews the massive *Evangelism-in-Depth (E/D)* movement that swept the region in the 1960s and early 70s and eventually was copied world-wide. Not only does it rehearse the events and philosophies of E/D, analyze the strengths and failures and describe the model, it also offers a corrective challenge to evangelists and church leaders today who still, too often, see evangelism in a “come hear” mode rather than a “go tell” form.

The E/D movement grew out of earlier emphases in LAM work that utilized mass crusades to take the word to a relatively unevangelized portion of the western world. Pretiz and Roberts argue that there have been three periods of significant growth among Latin American churches, the latest of which was that associated with the E/D efforts that began in Nicaragua in 1959 and wound down with an effort in Brazil in 1977.

More than just fiery preachers and tent crusades on a vacant lot, the E/D movement mobilized church members to invite neighbors to Bible studies, take Goodwill (medical) Caravans to needy towns and neighborhoods and share the gospel door-to-door while bringing together normally competitive, mistrusting churches to unite in a community or nation-wide campaign.

Pretiz and Roberts clearly point out that many of the concepts in E/D were not new, but never before had they been brought together in one exhaustive effort spanning a year or more. The secret, they relate, was to change the emphasis of evangelistic programs from professional speakers and their teams to individual church members who were enabled and inspired to become evangelists themselves on a one-to-one basis.

Reading *Like a Mighty Army* provides just enough history and theology along with a sense of excitement and motivation to encourage today’s church to examine its evangelistic practices and emphasis on “leave it to the pastor.” Would that churches not only in Latin America but also throughout the world recommit themselves to mobilize each member to go and tell the world that Jesus Christ has come!

Kenneth D. MacHarg

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