

Article Review

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What is one concept that stood out to you in this article?

Rady Roldan- Figueroa wrote an article expressing his thoughts on the report from the congress on Christian work in Latin America or the Panama Congress, which was held on February 10-20, 1916, in Panama City. The congress reflected on missionary work in Latin America, and the debate was around whether or not missionary work was needed. Roldan- Figueroa wrote on the aspects of the report that focused on the congress' perspective of Latin women and missionary work.

The article had a few concepts that stood out to me. The congress was debating whether or not missionary work is a necessity in Latin America. According to Congress, Latin America was already Christianized because of Catholicism (Roldan-Figueroa, 112). The influence of Christianity and catholicism came from the Spanish Inquisition. In certain social classes, people in Latin America have a disdain for Christianity because of the way Christianity/catholicism was introduced.

The second concept that stood out to me was the influence of catholic culture on how Congress viewed women. The Spanish Inquisition did not only present the catholic faith, and it also influenced social culture. The Victorian impact mentioned in this article is the congress' perspective of Latin women. According to the article, Congress viewed the importance of missionary work to women based on their social class. The article separated the Latin woman into two categories, "educated motherhood vs. virtuous motherhood". Educated motherhood is women that have jobs outside the home. Virtuous motherhood is categorized by women that love large families and are devoted to their families.

What implications does this concept have for Missions?

Christianity has been used in many ways to influence countries negatively. As presented in this article, Christianity was introduced during oppression. People of power used the Christian faith to demoralize and antagonize a group. This influence affects the way that Christianity is received through missionary work. The influence of power may also affect the mindset of those doing missionary work. The missionaries can either uphold the oppression that they endured or bring restoration.

In certain aspects of the Congress' report, Congress upheld those oppressive ideations in their categorizations of women. The categorization of women helped Congress create a missionary plan. The Congress portrayed all Latin men as corrupt. According to Congress, Latin men did not meet Victorian standards. Those influences impact the missional plan for Latin America. Because congress viewed all Latin men as corrupt, they decided to focus their efforts on women instead of men. This limited mind-set does not allow the gospel to have equal opportunity to be received.

What needs to change in your life as a result?

In my life, I must be aware of the outside influences that affect the demographic of people that I am trying to reach. In many cases, many factors impact the way that the gospel is received. It is important to be knowledgeable of external influences, but not allow those external influences to determine my perspective of those that I would like to reach. Missionaries could easily form a superiority complex because of their knowledge. I would like to know to help me understand the points of oppression. I would also like to not allow my knowledge to determine my missionary goals.

References:

Roldán-Figueroa, R. (1998). Latin American Women Through Missionary Eyes: The Women's Work Commission of the Panama Congress. *Apuntes*, 18(4), 112–125.