

Words of life!

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Words of life!

Celebrating the new *Contemporary Bible Commentary*

This spring, we are delighted to celebrate the launch of a landmark publication: *the Comentario Bíblico Contemporáneo (Contemporary Bible Commentary)*. This long-awaited volume is the first of its kind. A commentary on every book of the Bible, written in Spanish, from Latin America and for Latin America. Culturally relevant, highly readable and deliberately accessible in price, this book is set to change the landscape of theological study across the continent for years to come.

It is fitting that General Editor, René Padilla, should describe it as 'a dream come true'. Created to address the need for greater depth of training among evangelical churches and leaders in Latin America, this project has taken 12 years and the hard work of over 100 women and men. Experts in the Bible, in theology, or the social sciences, representing nearly every Latin American country, and from a wide range of ministries and cultural backgrounds. What an achievement!

Here's the story so far...

A dream come true

Dr C. René Padilla was born in Ecuador, raised in Colombia, and has lived for many years in Argentina. He's an eminent evangelical theologian and missiologist, best known for coining the term Integral Mission. A founding member of the Latin American Theological Fellowship and the Kairos Foundation in Buenos Aires, he was International President of Tearfund for 12 years and is now President Emeritus of both the Micah Network and the Kairos Foundation. As well as being General Editor for the CBC, he wrote commentaries on Colossians and Ephesians, and articles on 'Discipleship', 'How to read the Bible', 'Imperialism', 'The Jubilee' and 'Church'.

The *Comentario Bíblico Contemporáneo* is a dream come true. A dream of many who—though representing different Christian ministries and cultural backgrounds—shared basic theological convictions.

An initial meeting considering this project took place in the Kairós Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March 2007. All present agreed on the need for a one-volume Bible commentary, one that was written by Latin American authors in a simple, direct, and accessible style.

It should be an exegetical and contextual commentary for all interested in understanding the relevance of the biblical message for the contemporary world; [including] articles about current topics, written from



a biblical perspective, for the purpose of helping readers connect biblical principles with the ethical issues of today's Latin America.

This commentary would encourage pastors and teachers to expound the biblical message with depth and faithfulness, their sights set on the renewal of the hearts and minds of Latin America's people in general and the people of God in particular.

At the publication of the CBC, we give joyful thanks to God for allowing this project which began as a dream to become reality.

Overcoming obstacles

Latin Link's Ian Darke has worked for more than 30 years in Latin America, first in Peru and now in Costa Rica. He's been the coordinator for the CBC project since its inception in 2007. We asked what some of the main challenges had been in the creation of this wonderful publication:

At that first meeting in 2007 there was a lovely sense of the Lord's presence, as the various groups agreed to join forces, drawing on resources from across the continent. I had the honour of being invited to join the core team, as project coordinator.

We initially talked of completing the commentary by 2010, but soon realised this was hopelessly optimistic! Any image we had of contributors working calmly in book-lined studies was soon dashed by the realisation that many also had a heavy teaching load, pastoral work and other responsibilities. There were family crises and health problems to overcome too.

We are incredibly excited because this is an extraordinary resource

Experts in the Old Testament were hard to find, while some scholars found it a challenge to communicate deep content in

Linguistically, we also had to make sure that the Spanish was sufficiently international to avoid regional confusions, and to



Ian Darke

simple language. However, we saw this as an opportunity to help them become better communicators, producing even more resources in the future.

It has been exciting to be in touch with Bible teachers and scholars from every part of the continent. Almost all evangelical groups are represented, as are almost all Latin American countries. Given such diversity, our editors had to be careful that commentaries explain different perspectives on issues that can cause division.

translate contributions written in Portuguese into good, flowing Spanish, which is harder than it may seem!

None of this work would have been possible without a host of contributors

Another challenge was the sheer number of contributors! In addition to the commentaries, over 100 contextual articles were included, on matters of great relevance in Latin America, such as: prison ministry; domestic violence; care of orphans; concern for people with disabilities; magic; secret societies and political violence. Each was written by someone with extensive experience.

'The CBC is a great blessing, because every time I consult it, I learn something new. The most enriching thing is precisely that fresh and familiar Latin American perspective that it contains. I thank God for this resource.'

Sofía Quintanilla (Old Testament lecturer at a Bible seminary)

The editorial team (L to R): Ian Darke (Project Coordinator), Rosalee Velloso (Editor, New Testament), C. René Padilla (General Editor), Milton Acosta (Editor, Old Testament), Gilbert Montero (Editorial Assistant)

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the individuals and institutions which have made the publishing of this commentary possible...the authors, translators and editors, and all the friends (individuals and organisations) who have supported the project in prayer and financially.

None of this work would have been possible without a host of contributors: the writers, the core group of editors, and many other editorial helpers. Some reviewed theological content or language style, others prepared study questions which are included throughout.

Finally, the cost of producing a work of this size and complexity has been huge! So many thanks go to donors, especially SIM and Langham Partnership.

Now, after 12 years of so much effort from so many people, the commentary is complete! It is certainly not perfect... no human book ever will be. But we are incredibly excited, because this is an extraordinary resource, available in a beautifully printed edition, at a remarkably good price, and being distributed across the continent by the thousands. It will soon be available on electronic platforms, such as Logos and Accordance, and accompanied by a freely-

accessible web site, containing extra resources and information.

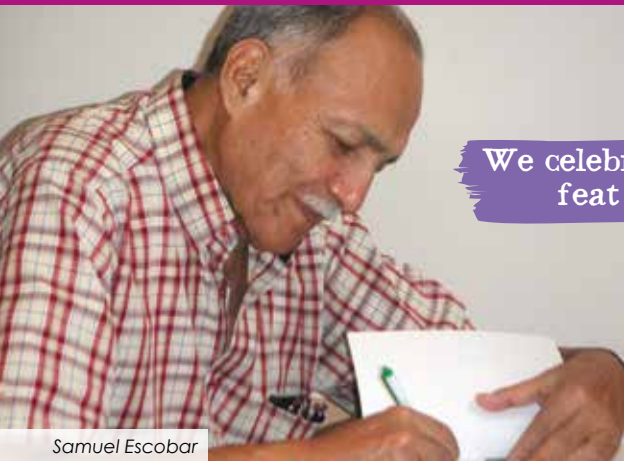
Please join us in thanking God for his goodness. PRAY for the book's distribution to every part of the continent. PRAY for the Portuguese edition, still in the pipe-line. PRAY for the launch events in many cities, along with workshops on expository preaching and leading Bible studies.

FACT FILE

12 years
100+ contributors
66 chapters
100+ articles
1,696 pages

Collective effort!

Dr Samuel Escobar, a native of Peru and a leading Latin American theologian, was one of the key participants in the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, Switzerland. He is Honorary President of the Latin American Theological Fellowship, Emeritus Professor of Missiology at Palmer Theological Seminary and a past president of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES). For the CBC he wrote commentaries on 1 Peter and 2 Peter, plus articles on 'Spirituality', 'Patriotism and Nationalism', 'Hospitality', and 'Migration'.



Samuel Escobar

The CBC is the collective effort of several generations of Protestant scholars. They offer us a reading of the Bible without losing sight of the missional and evangelistic dimension. At the same time, the commentary seeks to respond with intellectual honesty to the pressing pastoral needs of a society undergoing rapid changes.

Getting scholars from throughout the Americas—both men and women, from vastly differing denominations, and from the gamut of generations—to work together on this project has been an unfathomably complex endeavour, both editorially and in terms of pastoral, training, and administrative issues.

Back in 1970, at the founding of the Latin American Theological Fellowship, [I] was calling for the development of a theology that could distinguish the biblical message from the Anglo-Saxon dressing in which it so frequently came clothed.

We celebrate the culmination of this editorial feat with profound gratitude to God

We could not be more delighted at the publication of this commentary which, with its committed faithfulness to the text of the revealed word, has also sought out precise contextual relevance. We celebrate the culmination of this editorial feat with profound gratitude to God and to those who have worked tirelessly on this project.'

Right here, right now



Rebeca Santiago and her husband Fabián are part of Ekklesia - an independent church plant in Puebla, Mexico, reaching out to students with the gospel, by preaching and teaching, and mentoring future leaders. Rebeca writes:

In Mexico, as in many parts of Latin America, the huge problems of violence, corruption and poverty are impossible to avoid. Not a day goes by when we don't hear another tale of death, shameless greed, or exploitation.

It is perhaps no surprise that just as many ordinary Mexicans choose to retreat into their walled secure neighbourhoods, so the Church here has mostly retreated into a gospel detached from reality, emphasising prosperity, happy families, and the world to come. The truth is that the big problems

of our context can only be faced with the big truths of Scripture, and the big truths of Scripture need to be studied and taught, learned and preached.

There is a young generation of Mexican believers who are keen to learn, and who understand the relevance of the great themes of Scripture for our society. They know that engaging with these themes will allow us to bring the gospel to our neighbours in a way that makes sense.

They need and want to be trained for ministry, but the lack of resources and adequate theological institutions often leads to training being informal: through part-time distance learning, mentoring, and reading. Lots of reading.

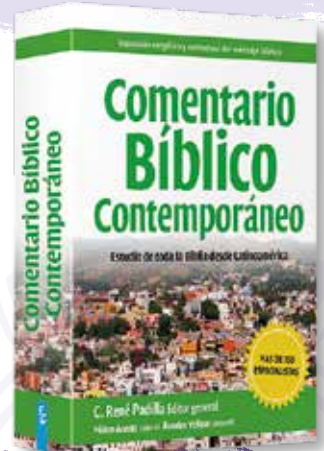
Engaging with these themes will allow us to bring the gospel to our neighbours

Finding good, up-to-date theological material in Spanish is in itself a challenge! And finding material that actually speaks into the issues we face as Christians in Mexico is even more rare.

We will be doing everything we can to ensure that the young people we mentor, already working hard for the expansion of God's kingdom, will be able to get a copy of the CBC, and we pray that the Lord will use this new tool to equip and encourage a whole new generation of leaders.



Senior proof reader Adriana Powell (right), at work with friend and colleague, Psychology professor Silvia Chaves, who wrote the article on 'Singleness'.



You're invited!

All are welcome to a thanksgiving and launch event for the CBC on 20 June 2019 at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, where you can hear more and meet members of the editorial team. For details contact info@latinlink.org.uk