



INTERCÂMBIO

Political aspects of the early implantation of Protestantism in Brazil

Aspectos políticos da implantação inicial do protestantismo no Brasil

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Abstract: This text offers an evaluation of the main political aspects that accompanied the implantation of Protestantism in Brazil during the 19th century. It is observed that the Brazilian legislation and political framework of the period were mostly favorable to the implantation of the new religious denomination in the country. It is also observed that this process was also favored by a specific framework of bilateral relations between Brazil and the United States, a country from which many of the missionaries who wanted to insert the new denomination in Brazil were coming from. Finally, it is observed that these missionaries sought to make use of the legal and political prerogatives present, while maintaining a distance from the authorities in order to maintain autonomy in their religious activity.

Keywords: Protestantism. Brazil Empire. Presbyterianism. Congregationalism. Religious freedom.

Resumo: Este texto oferece uma avaliação dos principais aspectos políticos que acompanharam a implantação do protestantismo no Brasil durante o século 19. É observado que a legislação e o quadro político brasileiros do período foram majoritariamente favoráveis à implantação da nova denominação religiosa no país. É observado também que este processo foi igualmente favorecido por um quadro específico de relações bilaterais entre o Brasil e os Estados Unidos, país de onde vinham muitos dos missionários desejos de inserir a nova denominação no cenário brasileiro. Finalmente, é observado que esses missionários procuraram fazer uso das prerrogativas legais e políticas presentes, ao mesmo tempo mantendo uma distância das autoridades visando a manutenção de uma autonomia em sua atuação religiosa.

Palavras chave: Protestantismo. Brasil Império. Presbiterianismo. Congregacionalismo. Liberdade religiosa.

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Introduction

At the beginning of the 19th century, there was no trace of Protestantism¹ in Brazil. By the end of that century, however, various Protestant groups were active in the country, some of them at an advanced level of organization. There were approximately 200 organized churches, and by the 1930s, the number of self-identified evangelicals would be 1 million people in a population of approximately 40 million (Braga & Grubb, 1932). According to the 2010 Census, Brazil has about 44 million evangelicals, or about 22.2% of its population, and it appears that the country is moving towards an evangelical majority population in the coming decades.

The implantation of Protestantism in Brazil should not be understood only as a religious event. From the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, Portugal placed itself firmly alongside Roman Catholicism, especially with the institution of Regalism. In this way, Portugal experienced little Protestant influence during the following several centuries. With the transfer of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil in 1808 and its elevation to United Kingdom with Portugal in 1815, the country seemed destined for the same fate. However, certain factors, which included political ones, coalesced such that it was not so. The purpose of this text is to present some of them.

My field of research focuses on Presbyterianism. This does not mean that I question the importance of other evangelical groups, but the fact is that the Presbyterians had a notorious pioneering in Brazil. The Congregationalists, which preceded the Presbyterians, at the end of the 19th century, were restricted to two urban centers, Rio de Janeiro and Recife. Methodists and Baptists began their effective implantation amongst Brazilians in 1878 and 1882 respectively and were only organized at the national level in Brazil in 1930 and 1907 respectively (Ribeiro, 1981, 11). Lutherans remained voluntarily isolated from the national reality during a similar period, living, predominantly, in colonies in isolated parts of the country².

This text also has the objective of filling what in my view is a historiographical gap: although many high-quality pieces of research have been already done (I refer to many of them here), in my opinion, the history of Protestantism in Brazil has not received the full attention it deserves. Notably, it is my understanding that we need more pieces of research that relate this history to the larger picture of events in progress in the country. In this way, I hope to contribute here to a more global understanding of the political and religious history of the nation.

1 I must clarify from the outset that in this text I use the terms Protestant and Evangelical as synonyms. I recognize that not all Anglicans or Baptists accept to be called Protestants, but this is the terminology that I chose to use. Also, the term evangelical can have multiple uses. The Lutheran Church in Germany is historically called the Evangelical. Also, some American denominations are evangelicals, especially those of fundamentalist and Pietist origins. Be that as it may, my choice in this text is to call Protestants (or Evangelicals) Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Anglicans, and others. An old nomenclature used in Empire times for these groups would be “*acatólicos*,” i.e. non-Catholic.

2 What I mean by this is that Lutherans came to Brazil as immigrants, and not as missionaries. Their goal coming to Brazil was not to convert Brazilians to Protestantism. This is well attested by Simonton, Fletcher, Kalley, and others, who often lamented not being able to have much help from Lutherans in their preaching to Brazilians. More specific details on the German immigration to Brazil can be found in Grützmann et al., 2008.

Antecedents of Protestant Missions to Brazilians

Although some attempts to establish Protestantism took place in Brazil during the colonial period - particularly with France Antarctique (1557-1558) and the Dutch presence in the north-east of the country (1624-1654) - the fact is that in the early 19th century no vestige of Protestantism was observed in Brazil. This picture began to change in 1808 with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family to the country. Protected by the Treaty of Alliance and Friendship signed by Portugal and England in 1810, in which its article XII granted religious tolerance to Protestant immigrants, some evangelical groups began to arrive in Brazil soon afterward. Anglicans went on to celebrate the Protestant cult aboard their warships that anchored in the port of Rio de Janeiro or in private residences, including that of Lord Strangford (Rodrigues, 1904, 95-96). Places of worship, subject to the restrictions of having no outer temple shape, were built from 1819 in Rio de Janeiro, Recife and Bahia (Reily, 1993, 25). The constitution of 1824, promulgated by D. Pedro I, maintained in its article 5 the same religious freedom granted by D. João VI (Constituição Política do Imperio do Brazil de 25 de Março de 1824).

Protected by this legislation, some Lutheran immigrants settled in Brazil from the 1820s, mainly in the south of the country (Reily, 1993, 39). Although they did not have the primary objective of evangelizing Brazilians, these early Protestant immigrants helped to create the conditions that facilitated the introduction of missionary Protestantism in Brazil. As German immigrants demanded legal guarantees of religious freedom, liberal statesmen created the legislation that, during the long reign of Dom Pedro II, protected the evangelical missions from open persecution and even placed non-Catholic communities under the protection of imperial authorities (Braga & Grubb, 1932, 49).

Protestant missions aimed at the conversion of Brazilians were also preceded by the work of biblical societies. In addition to introducing the Bible in Portuguese in Brazil, these societies relied on the work of prominent individuals such as Daniel Parish Kidder and James Cooley Fletcher. Fletcher, an American Presbyterian missionary, was in Brazil on several occasions between 1851 and 1869. He became friends with many members of the Brazilian high society, including several liberal politicians and the emperor Dom Pedro II himself. One of the highlights of his work in Brazil was the publishing of the book *Brazil and the Brazilians, portrayed in historical and descriptive sketches* (1857), an extended version of the book *Sketches of Residence and Travel in Brazil* (1845), by Daniel Parish Kidder. Throughout his book, Fletcher was a propagandist of Protestant and Anglo-Saxon values as instruments for achieving progress (Fletcher & Kidder, 1857; Kidder, 1845).

First missions to Brazilians

It is generally accepted that the oldest Brazilian evangelical church was established by the medical missionary Robert Reid Kalley³. Ordained minister by the Free Church

³ The closest thing to a primary source on Kalley's work in Brazil (apart from the Archives of the Igreja Evangelica Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, researched by Joyce E. Winifred Every-Clayton is *Lembranças do Passado*, a memoir by João Gomes da Rocha, foster child of Robert Kalley.

of Scotland⁴ in 1839, but acting independently, Kalley arrived in Brazil in 1855⁵. After a brief passage through Rio de Janeiro, he decided to settle in the city of Petrópolis (Rocha, 1941, 31). Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Webb, an American diplomat, gave him space to hold the first Sunday School class in Brazil (Rocha, 1941, 251, 267). The presence of the Scottish missionary at first was well accepted. From his arrival in Petrópolis, he sought to relate to the civil authorities, including the Emperor, of whom he became a friend (Rocha, 1941, 9, 115-116). Nevertheless, Kalley tried to be cautious by seeking to remain judiciously within the limits imposed by the Brazilian law (Reily, 1993, 103). All this caution, however, did not prevent the beginning of persecution.

Although he avoided openly preaching to the Brazilians, Kalley did not shy away from baptizing two high-ranking women, Gabriela Augusta Carneiro Leão and her daughter Henriqueta Soares do Couto. The baptisms took place in Petrópolis on January 7, 1859. Dona Gabriela was a sister of the Marquis of Paraná, one of the most prominent Brazilian politicians at the time (Rocha, 1941, 7, 82-83, 360). The baptism of two Brazilian ladies contributed to the unleashing of persecutions against the Scottish missionary. Under pressure from the nuncio, the imperial government issued a statement to the British Legation with complaints against Kalley, including accusations of propaganda against the state religion and attempted conversion of Catholics to the Protestant faith (Rocha, 1941, 93-94).

Kalley reacted to the allegations by drafting a series of questions on his activities and presenting them to some of the most prominent lawyers in Brazil (Rocha, 1941, 94-96). In response to Kalley's questions, the lawyers expressed highly satisfactory opinions in favor of his missionary work, especially regarding preaching to Brazilians (Rocha, 1941, 97). Kalley's persecution in Petrópolis and his reaction to it were key landmarks in the establishing of all Protestant denominations in Brazil. The lawyers' response to his questions became, in that period, the legal basis for the establishment of Protestantism in the country (Ribeiro, 1981, 14; Reily, 1993, 116-119).

The establishing of Protestantism in Brazil was also aided by the presence of heterodox Roman Catholic priests, contrary to the ultramontane relationship between Brazil and Rome. Among these was Diogo Antonio Feijó, a regent of the empire in the 1830s (Feijó, 1999; Ribeiro, 1981, 15). Feijó was also one of the most important liberal politicians in the country, and his political group was generally in favor of Protestantism. Another liberal politician favorable to Protestantism was Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos (1839-1875). Tavares Bastos studied Law in São Paulo, and was elected deputy in 1860, in addition to being reelected in two more legislatures. He became a lawyer and even friend to some of the early Presbyterian missionaries in Brazil, most notably James Cooley Fletcher and Alexander Latimer Blackford (Vieira, 1980, 95-112; Kidder & Fletcher, 1866, vii, 139, 186, 197, 590, 629; Tavares Bastos, 1863, 280, 340, 406, 427, 429, 430).

4 The Church of Scotland is Presbyterian. Kalley himself remained officially a Presbyterian for all his life, although his work in Brazil was Congregationalist.

5 Kalley's life before his arrival in Brazil is exceedingly fascinating for anyone interested in the topics analyzed in this paper. For lack of space, I limit myself to his work in Brazil, but anyone interested in a more in-depth analysis of his life should check the following: BLACKBURN, 1860; FORSYTH, 1988; NORTON, 1850; TESTA, 1963.

Primers of Presbyterianism in Brazil

The planting of Presbyterianism in Brazil resulted from the efforts of American churches. The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA) began its missionary work in Brazil with Ashbel Green Simonton, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro in August 1859 (Matos, 2004, 13-14). At first, Simonton worked with the Americans living in the city, but his goal was to preach to the Brazilians; by April 1860, he was conducting his first service in Portuguese. In January of 1862, he received the first converts, and founded the Presbyterian Church of Rio de Janeiro. Assisted by some of his colleagues, Simonton established the first Brazilian evangelical newspaper (*Imprensa Evangélica*, in 1864). In the next year he also formed the Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro and two years after that a seminary. Simonton died of yellow fever at the age of 34, in 1867. His principal collaborators during that period were Alexander L. Blackford, Francis J.C. Schneider and George W. Chamberlain, as well as José Manoel da Conceição, a former Catholic priest who became the first Brazilian Protestant pastor (Conceição, 1867; Ribeiro, 1979; Ribeiro, 1995; Matos, 2004, 297-306). During the first ten years, protestant missionaries organized churches in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brotas, Lorena, Borda da Mata, and Sorocaba.

A few years after the arrival of Simonton, the Civil War broke out in the United States. One of the consequences of this conflict was the division of the American denominations, including the PCUSA. The Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS, formerly the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America), also known as the Southern Church, emerged from the PCUSA in 1861. This new denomination immediately created a missionary board facing the outside world. With the arrival of southern American immigrants to Brazil after the war, an interest arose to establish a mission in the country. Theologian Robert Lewis Dabney was the first to suggest establishing a mission in Brazil. In 1869, ten years after the arrival of Simonton, the first missionaries of the Nashville Committee, Edward Lane and George N. Morton, arrived. Morton was sent to search the country and choose a place to host the mission. He consorted with the PCUSA missionaries in Rio, who recommended the cities of Recife or Porto Alegre. Instead, Morton went to the city of Campinas, where he went to see the southern immigrants. Both Morton and Lane believed that a place near these immigrants was the best option (Ribeiro, 1981, 200; Ferreira, 1992, 247-248). In a few years, the southern missionaries organized several churches, mainly in the provinces of Minas Gerais and Goiás, and in the North and Northeast of the country, in addition to the initial work in São Paulo (Ferreira, 1992, 105-290; Matos, 2004, 545).

The relationship between the missionaries and the US authorities

As soon as he arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Simonton decided to serve for a time as a volunteer chaplain for the English, Scottish and Irish mechanics in the neighborhood of Saúde, as he did not speak Portuguese. It was only a temporary expedient since his real goal was to preach to the Brazilians. Simonton also volunteered to serve as a pastor

for the Americans residing in Rio. To this end, coffee exporter Robert C. Wright of Maxwell, Wright & Co. introduced him to Robert S. Scott, the American consul. Wright received Simonton for dinner at his house the day he arrived and helped him get his first accommodations in Brazil (Simonton, 1866, 116). Consul Scott, whom Simonton described as a religious man, formally declared to him that he would protect the religious freedom of the American citizens and invited him to lead the worship services at the consulate (Ferreira, 1992, 18; Vieira, 1980, 137). This was the circumstance in which Simonton met the plenipotentiary minister, Richard Kidder Meade, who often attended the missionary's services at the consulate (Vieira, 1980, 136). On at least one occasion he helped the missionary in his visits to his preaching point in Saúde (Simonton, 1866, 119). Simonton later wrote to the Mission Council stating that both Scott and Meade had pledged to protect him, but that they advised him to be moderate and not to offend the Catholic Church. Despite all the guarantees offered, Simonton opted at first not to move away from the big urban centers, fearing that civil authority in the interior would be less respected (Vieira, 1980, 138).

Further details of how Simonton dealt with his country's diplomats may be seen in his contacts with Robert Kalley. Kalley began to disbelieve that the English diplomats could offer protection to him and his preaching in Brazil. However, in conversation with Simonton in August 1859, he deemed the mission of the young American colleague to be timely because he believed that US diplomatic officials would protect their citizens in Brazil, among other reasons (Vieira, 1980, 137). However, the Scotsman recommended to the Presbyterian missionary to distance himself from the Americans residing in Rio de Janeiro. On this last point, Simonton disagreed with his colleague. He did not rule out, however, Kalley's advice about diplomats (Simonton, 1866, 117). Kalley further communicated to his American colleague that he believed there were signs that it was time to evangelize the Brazilians. He knew of Brazilians ready to accept evangelical preaching, but he recommended extreme prudence in public preaching. On this last point, Simonton concluded that the older pastor was exaggerating somewhat, since he soon found great receptivity among the Brazilians and little opposition (Ribeiro, 1981, 20-21). However, American missionaries in Brazil would not always confirm this initial impression of security.

Simonton, therefore, began seeking the protection from Americans resident in Rio de Janeiro and support from American diplomats. In a short time, however, he began to agree with Kalley about the Americans in Rio de Janeiro. At one point he wrote in his diary that he thought it was better for him to move away from the English and Americans (Simonton, 1866, 122-123), who in his view lived "a very frivolous life" (Simonton, 1866, 118-119). In regard to the diplomats, Simonton appears to have followed a different path. He seems to have maintained a good friendship with Scott and Meade and remained concerned about his protection: "I had a conversation with S. which I have regretted. It was an argument upon slavery. He is unreasonably pro-slavery and I by opposing him only lessen my power and influence with him" (Simonton, 1866, 120). The missionary also made the following note in his diary:

I had a long conversation with Mr. S. and Mr. W. on religious liberty in Brazil which was interesting as an exhibition of the views and feelings of business men upon any

attempt to preach the Gospel. The missionary need not count upon much sympathy or support from this class of men. Mr. S. took a far higher stand and declared his purpose to protect every American citizen in the exercise of his religious liberty (Simonton, 1866, 129).

One of the first and most emblematic occasions of persecution against the missionaries happened in June of 1866, in the city of Lorena, São Paulo⁶. At first, in a very curious event, the police chief forbade the preaching of Conceição, apparently following the demands of local authorities, and soon afterward attended the preaching of the Brazilian pastor (Ribeiro, 1981, 115). Initially, the case had no more significant repercussions, but in a short time, preaching in Lorena became more difficult. In November 1868, Chamberlain and Conceição went to preach in this same city. Several people, instigated by the local vicar, tried to prevent the meetings. On one occasion, an individual armed with a pistol threatened the evangelicals, and, at another time, a group armed with clubs beat the believers in the end of the service.

The more significant opposition was apparently due to the presence of ex-priest Conceição. Chamberlain immediately went to court, where he communicated to the Consul and the US Minister about the incident. Blackford looked for Tavares Bastos. Immediately, the highest authorities of the Empire intervened and guaranteed the safety of the missionaries and the Brazilian converts (Ribeiro, 1981, 116-117). The Lorena case reverberated in the US; on February 21, 1869, James Cooley Fletcher wrote from New York to the Emperor Pedro II in the following terms: “We were delighted to read in the newspapers that Mr. Alencar, Minister of Justice, so promptly attended Loreno’s (sic) case. I knew Your Majesty would see that justice was done” (James, 1952, 202; Ribeiro, 1981, 117). Shortly after arriving in Brazil, in their first evaluations of the country, the missionaries were even euphoric with the general guarantee of freedom of worship that they found in Brazil (Ribeiro, 1981, 118), a feeling that occasions like the one of Lorena do not seem to have erased entirely.

Despite the overall lack of persecution by authorities, the missionaries faced other problems. Almost half of the letters sent by them to the Mission Board between 1859 and 1869 made mention of the financial difficulties they faced. In 1861 and 1862, the financial crisis experienced by the ministers was sharpened. Simonton even considered leaving Brazil so that the Board could employ the funds only for Blackford (Ribeiro, 1981, 121). This shortage of funds produced what may be one of the most exciting cases of connection between the missionaries and US diplomacy in Brazil: for some months in 1861, Blackford was employed as Secretary of the American Legation in Rio de Janeiro (Ribeiro, 1981, 121; Matos, 2004, 32; Vieira, 1980, 139). The position was offered to Blackford by Richard K. Meade, who was already Simonton’s friend (Vieira, 1980, 139). Later that year, Blackford even acted as a substitute Meade, who had to return to the United States (Vieira, 1980, 139). At the direction of the Board of Missions, Blackford did not continue his service in diplomacy (Ribeiro, 1981, 121),

⁶ Similar cases occurred afterward in Soroca and Embahú, but the occasion on Lorena remained a reference about persecution in the minds of the missionaries. See *The Foreign Missionary*, Volume 28. New York: Mission House, 1879, 152-153. *The Foreign Missionary*, Volume 29. New York: Mission House, 1870, 70-71.

but it is unlikely that Blackford himself would want the other way. A firm adherent of the Old School of American Presbyterianism (Ribeiro, 1987, 199), he tended to avoid this kind of mixing. Apparently, his employment in diplomacy was due to financial needs and nothing more, since it was promptly abandoned under the orders of the Board and never commented on again.

In addition to these more dramatic episodes, others of a more mundane nature indicate that missionaries and diplomats had regular contact with one another. First, there was coexistence within the “colony” of Americans in the court: upon arriving in Brazil Simonton became the professor of the children of Mr. Ewbank (Simonton, 1866, 129) - possibly Thomas Ewbank, author of *Life in Brazil or, A journal of a visit to the land of the cocoa and the palm* (*The Foreign Missionary*, Volume 22, referred to in Ribeiro, 1981, 173). Mary Dascomb, an educator who would cooperate with the missionaries, came to Brazil for the first time in 1866 and became the preceptor of the children of James Monroe, an American consul in Rio de Janeiro who was a Presbyterian (James Monroe Papers, 1819-1898. Oberlin College Archives. Available in oberlinarchives.libraryhost.com. Oberlin College. Accessed in May 30, 2017). She would return to the country in 1869 as a missionary (Ribeiro, 1981, 261; Matos, 2004, 67). Numerous entries of Simonton’s journal indicate that he and his colleagues often visited the headquarters of US diplomacy in Rio de Janeiro for a variety of reasons.

Finally, it should be noted that the missionaries of PCUSA and the PCUS were not the first to be defended by diplomats from their country. James Cooley Fletcher also established relations with US diplomats (in fact, these were much more intimate than those of the later missionaries) and the Methodist missionary Daniel Parish Kidder also could count on the aid of the American diplomacy (Kidder & Fletcher, 1857, 561).

Presbyterians and Confederate immigration to Brazil

Shortly after his arrival in Brazil, Simonton informed the New York Board that he agreed with Robert Kalley: times were propitious for evangelical preaching in Brazil. Among other reasons noted by the missionary was the fact that Brazilian politicians were hoping that confederates would migrate to Brazil. The reason for that was that with the ban on slave traffic in 1850, there was a fear of economic stagnation for lack of labor force. For the sake of immigration, Simonton continued, the government would be ready to offer religious freedom to Protestants (Vieira, 1980, 137). However, like Kalley, Simonton did not overemphasize the Brazilian politicians. Like the older pastor, Simonton believed that the defense of Protestantism made by liberal politicians was done for particular reasons (immigration and differences with the Catholic Church), not for the sake of Protestantism or religious freedom itself. Therefore, caution was called for (Vieira, 1980, 137). Writing to the Mission Council, Simonton reported that the press had been reacting against attacks on evangelicals in Brazil. The reason for this reaction, he explained, was that Brazilians felt they had to encourage immigration at any cost. The immigration of Germans seemed to be the solution to this problem at the time. For this reason, the missionary continued, Brazilians were “nervously sensitive under

any accusation of intolerance shown to a settler.” Still, Simonton reported that this was “a powerful argument for tolerance and [was] the thread of the skein to understand much of what [was] happening here” (Vieira, 1980, 234)⁷.

The association between Presbyterians and liberals in the 1860s and 1870s around the immigration of Confederates had a precedent in Brazilian history. In the 1830s a similar association had already been established between Regent Diogo Antônio Feijó and Methodist missionary Daniel Parish Kidder. Feijó wished to remove Rome from what he considered “Brazilian issues,” even requesting the help of the Moravian Brothers in the process. Decades later, the International Immigration Society proposed a similar program in the 1860s (Vieira, 1980, 239).

The Presbyterians discreetly supported the strictly pro-Confederate wing of the International Immigration Society of 1866 (Vieira, 1980, 224). Tavares Bastos, the Presbyterian’s “close friend,” was the main Brazilian articulator of the Confederate migration (Vieira, 1980, 223-224, 242-243). The Alagoan politician was critical of other immigration promoters, who, in his view, served only as “tour guides” for the Confederates, without offering real conditions of colonization. The society Bastos led, supported by the Presbyterians, proposed, above all, changes in the laws of the Brazilian Empire concerning religious freedom, civil marriage, and civil registration. These changes were, in the opinion of the members of the International Immigration Society, essential to attract the Confederates. For the missionaries, these changes were particularly beneficial for their purpose of evangelization of Brazilians: the same religious freedom that would benefit the Confederates would also help Brazilians who became evangelicals (Vieira, 1980, 224-227, 230-231).

Given the circumstances mentioned above, the missionaries followed with great interest the activities of the International Immigration Society and the general movement around the exile of the Confederates. During 1866, Simonton was present at all meetings of the Society. In a report to the New York Board, he noted that Dr. Antônio Francisco de Paula e Souza, the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture, had committed “to give urgency to the liberalization of laws” that restricted the religious, civil, and political activities of the non-Catholics. The missionary also reported that the minister was a subscriber of the *Imprensa Evangélica* and that Paula e Souza had shown interest in the evangelical preaching (Vieira, 1980, 225-226, 235).

For some members of the International Immigration Society and other liberals, the racial aspect played an essential part in the arguments favorable to immigration. Among the Brazilians, there were many who attacked the Latinos and exalted the Anglo-Saxons. Newton Bennaton (who, despite his name, was Brazilian) was one of these racist Brazilians. Reporting in 1866 about the meetings of the International Immigration Society he had attended that year, Simonton wrote to the Mission Council that “it was amusing to hear [Newton Bennaton] condemn the Latin race, its religious prejudices,

⁷ Vieira identifies his source as BFMPUSA, Vol 1 n° 133. I was unable to have access to this source, but Simonton makes similar remarks in *The Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. New York: Mission House, 1860, 46-47.

and its social surroundings.” Above all, Simonton noted that “the Anglo-Saxons, and especially the Americans, were greatly praised” (Vieira, 1980, 234-235).

Nevertheless, Simonton observed that a tremendous social and political movement was occurring in Brazil, provoked by the arrival of the Confederate immigrants. According to him “Brazil [was] very similar to the United States in natural resources and elements of greatness.” However, because it was so “different from the North Republic in its progress and prosperity,” the Brazilians had always “looked enviously upon the American people.” Thus, the “thinking men” had opened Brazil to immigration, fearing that with the end of slavery the country would become a desert (Vieira, 1980, 238).

In addition to the International Immigration Society, several private agents sought to foster Confederate immigration. Among these was Wright & Company (Vieira, 1980, 240), which, as already noted, welcomed Simonton in Rio de Janeiro. Therefore, we can observe that the missionaries were benefited by agents of Confederate colonization, by the International Society of Immigration, and by groups of liberals and speculators. These latter groups assumed that helping missionaries to organize their churches would also be encouraging immigration (Vieira, 1980, 240).

It is worth remembering that the immigration of Southerners to Brazil was one of the factors that led the PCUS to establish a mission in Brazilian lands, and the final location of the mission headquarters, the city of Campinas, São Paulo, was chosen due to its proximity to the more populated Confederate colonies. Shortly before the PCUS established its mission in Brazil, two Presbyterian pastors of that denomination had already begun working among the Confederate immigrants without formal support of any church: Rev. William Curdy Emerson and Rev. James Robison Baird. About 1870, Emerson and Baird organized a Presbyterian church, the Hopewell Church, along with the immigrants in Santa Barbara. William McFadden was another founder of this church. Soon after, Hopewell Church organized a congregation in the city of Água Branca, between the Tietê and Tatuí rivers, which also became a church⁸.

Several times in the 1860s Emerson and Baird wrote to their denomination, asking for a mission to be initiated in Brazil and for them to be appointed missionaries of the same. The requests of these two pastors had some influence on the final decision of the PCUS to establish the said mission. With the arrival of George Nash Morton and Edward Lane to Brazil, pastors Emerson and Baird and the churches they had organized joined the missionary efforts of the PCUS. The families of both men, as well as the members of their churches in São Paulo, had a significant participation in missionary work in Brazil. Dr. James McFadden Gaston, a presbyter working with Emerson and Baird, cooperated decisively with the evangelization of Brazilians and with the immigration of Confederates. In 1867, Gaston published the book *Hunting a Home In Brazil* and led the coming of more than sixty Southern families to the interior of São Paulo (Matos, 2004, 165-170).

Robert Lewis Dabney, one of the leading supporters of the PCUS Mission in Brazil, was also an incentive for US migration. Dabney would like to transplant entire Virginia to Brazil (Vieira, 1980, 212-215). Despite all his propaganda, Dabney never

⁸ Although it is hard to identify a consistent rule for that, the missionaries often took some time before calling a local congregation a church.

came to Brazil. His nephew John L. Dabney, however, arrived in the country in 1879 as a PCUS missionary. It is important to note here that the Civil War, although mainly understood as a political conflict, also had a religious element associated to it: both belligerent sides believed to be defending the correct Christian principle in relation to slavery (Genovese, 1998; Miller, Stout & Wilson (eds.), 1998; Noll, 2006). The different prevailing theological positions between northerners and southerners can also be observed in the Old School–New School Controversy in PCUSA (Fortson, 2016; Hart & Muether, 2005).

We see that in general the activities of the first missionaries of the PCUS and the immigration of confederates were very close. The Brazilians were divided about the pertinence of the arrival of a large number of Americans to the empire. A large number of liberals, led by Tavares Bastos, enthusiastically received the Confederates, believing that this group would be the solution to Brazil's problems of backwardness and the key to the progress they so longed. The excellent reception can also be explained by some other factors: the need for military aid in the Paraguayan War, the sympathy of Brazilian slaveholders for the Southerners, and even, as Simonton observed, the dissatisfaction of the Brazilian Catholic clergy with the relations between the Crown and the Church. The missionary noted that essential representatives of the Catholic Church in Brazil were anxious for the arrival of the Confederates, since "the Americans would bring the republic" and thereby end "the oppression of the empire" over the convents (Vieira, 1980, 209-211).

In 1867 Rev. William Curdy Emerson founded a newspaper, the *Emigration Reporter*, where many of the Confederate demands were reported to Brazilians. Early in its publication, Simonton joined Rev. Emerson in producing this newspaper. In April 1867 Simonton sent a letter to the Mission Council which included an article he published in the *Emigration Reporter* and explained that he was helping Emerson to "have the American immigrant organ [show] a correct view of moral and religious issues." He added that the newspaper gave him "the opportunity to put these issues [of religious freedom] before the Brazilian Government." (Vieira, 1980, 228).

In 1876 George Nash Morton observed that, from liberal Brazilians, the Catholic Church, with its conservatism, was "a barrier to the progress of Brazil," especially by curbing the immigration of Protestants (Vieira, 1980, 239). This Catholic opposition to the immigration of confederates can be observed in January 1868, when the Archbishop of Bahia, Manuel Joaquim da Silveira, wrote a long letter to Counselor José Joaquim Fernandes Torres, Minister of the Empire, complaining about the government's disregard for the "Protestant threat" that materialized in Brazil with the arrival of the missionaries. In the letter, the Archbishop also referred to his theory that the United States intended to seize the lands of Brazil⁹. In a letter to the Mission Council, Blackford noted that the minister replied "with stern but delicate irony," dismissing the Archbishop's arguments against the missionaries (Vieira, 1980, 246-247).

⁹ It seems that for still a long time some Brazilian intellectuals continued to identify Protestant missionaries as agents of American imperialism. For an example of that see BANDEIRA, Moniz. *Presença dos Estados Unidos no Brasil (Dois séculos de história)*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1978, 124.

It should be noted that much of the anti-American propaganda portrayed in the Empire was in fact rather anti-Protestant than against the USA itself. This propaganda against the immigration of Confederates was carried out mainly by ultramontane elements, who had more problems with Protestantism and Protestants than with the US itself. In any case, the result of this propaganda was the spread of negative sentiment that non-distinctively attacked Protestantism, Protestants, the United States, and the immigration of the Confederates. It must be considered, however, that the Regalism of Dom Pedro II and the action of the liberals prevented the partisans of Pius IX and his encyclical *Quanta Cura* from having a greater influence on the directions of Brazilian immigration policy. Ultramontane Catholics sought to combat the migration of American Protestants by offering the alternative of Polish or Irish Catholic migration. Both projects failed, each in its peculiar way. Polish migration seems to have had worse consequences for the Ultramontane Catholics, with the coming of Polish prostitutes to Brazil rather than immigrants who could strengthen their position against Protestantism and the United States (Vieira, 1980, 245).

We can conclude that the Confederates arrived in Brazil at a delicate moment of disputes between Ultramontane Catholics and liberals and that soon they were inserted by the disputants in the discussion - against their will, apparently (Vieira, 1980, 221, 223, 244-246). However, it should be noted that religious elements related to immigration could be seen from the Confederate side as well. Part of the immigrants wished precisely to maintain the “purity” of their religion, far from the negative influences of the Northerners. Others were opposed to immigration, considering that “only bitterness could come from throwing their lot in a Papist country” (Weaver, 1952, 452; Vieira, 1980, 253).

Despite all the promises made by the government, all the efforts made by liberals and immigration agents, and all the support and expectation of the missionaries, the liberalization of Brazilian religious legislation has slow and unsatisfactory steps for immigrant evangelicals. In 1872 the Rev. William Curdy Emerson formulated what appeared to be the general claim of both the Confederates in São Paulo and Protestants of all nationalities throughout Brazil. The sentiment expressed by him (and shared by the Brazilian liberals) was that the foreign Protestants had been responsible for a series of new ideas that had favored Brazilian progress. According to the pastor, “All these new ideas have been admired and adopted by Brazilians so that few countries can say that they have more freedom and that they are progressing more at that moment.” Emerson continued, this freedom was not as great as it should be. Every time foreign evangelicals asked why they were forced to bury their dead “like dogs in the woods,” they replied that it was because they “had the religion of the devil.” In other words, American Protestants believed themselves to be responsible for Brazilian progress, without thereby benefiting from the religious freedom and the civil rights they believed to be due (Vieira, 1980, 254-255). In any case, after the first years after the War, the Southerners generally seem to have concluded that their situation in the United States was not so bad as to justify exile. And only a small number of them arrived in Brazil (Vieira, 1980, 253).

Conclusion

During the first decades of missionary work among Brazilians, the most active Protestant denomination in Brazil was the Presbyterian. Although they were soon followed by Baptists and Methodists, for some decades, Presbyterians acted predominantly alone in Brazilian territory. This Presbyterian work, accompanied by some important Lutheran and Congregational initiatives, paved the way for the country's protestantization between the 19th and 20th centuries.

The implantation of Protestantism in Brazil in the 19th century was favored by some factors. First, US officials offered legal protection to missionaries from North America. Although the missionaries sought to distinguish their work from bilateral relations between Brazil and the United States, the fact is that US diplomats cooperated at some level with the deployment of Protestantism in Brazil. Secondly, various political authorities in Brazil, especially liberal politicians, but also the emperor Dom Pedro II himself, were in favor of missionary work. Finally, diverse factors such as the immigration of Confederates to Brazil after the Civil War and the interest of the Brazilian population for an American education also favored this implantation.

The implantation of Protestantism in Brazil and its interaction with other factors within the history of the country is still a topic little studied, but I believe that this work already demonstrates that Protestantism was not a foreign body in the Brazilian reality, but rather a phenomenon interacting in several and varied ways with the broader environment, influencing many changes and also being influenced by them.

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