

Liberation Theology to Evangelicalism: The Rise of Bolsonaro and the Conservative Evangelical Advance in Post-Colonial Brazil

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Abstract:

The rapid rise of the Evangelical churches in Brazil will, by current projections see its adherents not only outnumber Catholics, but also reduce them to a religious minority within the coming decades. If accurate, it will mean that the Catholic church, which has dominated Latin American religious life since European colonisation in the 16th century, will have ended. The expansion of Evangelicalism has created a massive political and cultural shift in post-colonial Brazil, where many of the Catholic poor are increasingly turning to the conservatism of Evangelical preachers. The paper examines the historical relationship between the Evangelical churches and the United States to counter leftist currents in post-colonial Latin America; the impact Evangelicalism has had on Brazilian society and politics; the exploitation of Brazil's poor by some Evangelical churches; and the Evangelical drive behind the rise of Brazilian President, Jair Bolsonaro.

Keywords: Brazil, Evangelicalism, Catholicism, Bolsonaro, Prosperity Theory