



# Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem

Virginia Garrard-Burnett

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Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem Virginia Garrard-Burnett Guatemala has undergone an unprecedented conversion to Protestantism since the 1970s, so that thirty percent of its people now belong to Protestant churches, more than in any other Latin American nation.

Garrard-Burnett finds that while Protestant missionaries were early valued for their medical clinics, schools, translation projects, and especially for the counterbalance they provided against Roman Catholicism, Protestantism itself attracted few converts in Guatemala until the 1960s. Since then, however, the militarization of the state, increasing public violence, and the "globalization" of Guatemalan national politics have undermined the traditional ties of kinship, custom, and belief that gave Guatemalans a sense of identity, and many are turning to Protestantism to recreate a sense of order, identity, and belonging.



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