

Review: Baptists Worldwide: Origins, Expansions, Emerging Realities

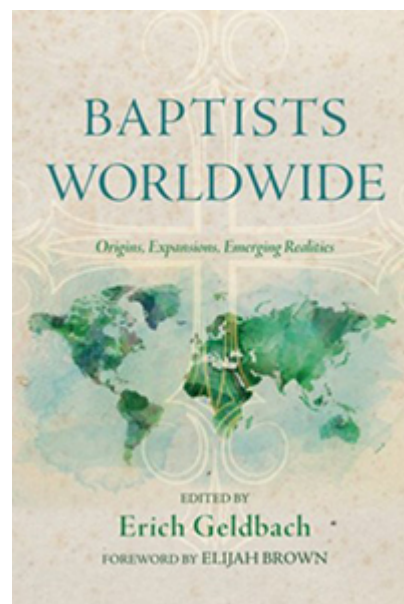
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Baptists Worldwide: Origins, Expansions, Emerging Realities

Edited by Erich Geldbach (Cascade Books)

How do you cover more than 400 years of Baptist history all over the world? One bite at a time. That's the scale of the task contributors to *Baptists Worldwide* undertook in a survey spanning more than 400 pages and the global reach of the Baptist World Alliance.

Four parts comprise the first third of the book: "Origins and Development of the Baptist Movement," "Baptist Missionary Endeavors," "Baptist Teachings" and "Baptist Women." The chapters in each provide treetop surveys of their respective content, complete with bibliographies for further reading.



As a further resource, readers can communicate directly with contributors

via email using the addresses provided in the list of contributors immediately following the table of contents.

“Freedom of Religion and Conscience” by Massimo Rubboli is a good representative chapter. Rubboli deftly and succinctly relates the development and defense of one of Baptists’ most important core values.

“Baptists on All Continents” is the largest part of the book—covering the latter two thirds. Among the many Baptist histories and books about Baptist principles, this fifth part sets *Baptists Worldwide* apart.

The chapter on the Baptist World Alliance focuses on the core principles and activities of the global collective, giving the sparsest update to the earlier history of BWA—*Baptists Together in Christ: 1905-2005* by Faith Bowers.

The remainder of “Baptists on All Continents” is given to one section each for the six regional bodies of BWA (in order by section): North American Baptist Fellowship, All Africa Baptist Fellowship, European Baptist Federation, Union of Baptists in Latin America, Caribbean Baptist Fellowship and Asia Pacific Baptist Federation.

These chapters open a much-needed window on the history of Baptists in places that tend to receive little attention from Western Christians. For example, an account of Baptists in Nigeria calls autonomy of the local church a “syndrome in the United States ... imposed on the people without necessary contextualization” (p. 260). As the Baptist center moves evermore south and east from North America, insights like these are invaluable. They ought to be read and considered.

*Eric Black, executive director/publisher/editor
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