

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([00:00:07](#)):

Hello and welcome to the Mapping, the Doctrine of Discovery podcast. The producers of this podcast would like to acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation, Firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee, the indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands Syracuse University now stands, and now introducing your hosts, Phil Arnold and Sandy Bigtree.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:00:31](#)):

Welcome back to Mapping the Doctrine of Discovery podcast. My name is Phil Arnold. I am faculty in religion at Syracuse University and founding director of the Skä•noñh Great Law Peace Center.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:00:45](#)):

And I'm Sandy Bigtree, a citizen of the Mohawk Nation at Awkwesasnee, and I'm on the collaborative of the Skä•noñh Center and I'm the board of the Indigenous Values Initiative.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:00:58](#)):

And we're very pleased today because this podcast has been sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation and we have a very special guest, João Chaves, who was a presenter at our recent Doctrine of Discovery conference here in Syracuse. So we were able to welcome Professor Chaves to Syracuse University. He's assistant professor of the History of Religion in the Americas at Baylor University. And like many of us, he wears many hats. So I'll ask him to introduce himself. João is a historian of religion with expertise in US Protestantism in Latin America, and the development of Latin American religious networks within the United States. So João, why don't you introduce yourself to our listening audience?

João Chaves ([00:02:00](#)):

Of course. Oh, thank you very much. And it's good to see you again, Sandy and Phil. It was a formative time that we spent together there in Syracuse and then before that when we met in the offices of Auburn Seminary in New York City. Yeah, like you mentioned, I teach at Baylor University. That's where I got my PhD from a few years ago. I'm a native of Recife Brazil. After I graduated from Baylor, I worked for Princeton Seminary and then Austin Theological Seminary after that, and then returned here my first year back in the faculty in the Department of Religion. And I teach in addition to the required course called the Christian Heritage that I teach here.

([00:02:55](#)):

I also will teach courses on migration, geopolitics and missions and things of that sort. And one of the things that in this course, the Christian heritage that I have introduced this semester after having been with you all there in the conference of the Doctrine of Discovery, was a more robust look at the ways by which White colonists in the United States, but also in other places have dispossessed native land in different ways. As a matter of fact, Baylor University has its own as many other universities do, the histories of that particular kind of violence. So I appreciate having walked with you in these opportunities and is already changed the way that I think about many things, even the way that I teach, and I'm very appreciative of that.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:04:00](#)):

Well, that's really terrific news, João. I mean, we do focus on probably more on the North American context, so we really appreciate you joining us in the podcast and giving us a sense of the Brazilian context. Also, of course 15 century Roman Catholicism and Papal bulls. But we really need to dig into

how that, well, that mantle of conquest and colonialism was taken up by Protestants, right? Certainly in North America we're looking into that, but we'd like to hear more about how that was formed in Brazil and that kind of legacy. So maybe you could start with that, the one-on-one version of Brazilian religious history from the Portuguese colonization forward into the Protestant era.

João Chaves ([00:05:04](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I can mention a few things about that. As you mentioned, it goes back to those bulls in the 15th century that themselves already have some inspiration in the Crusades that preceded them and so on. So you see that happening later on when first to Portugal, as Portugal develops with Henry the Navigator's sponsorship, you know the story, schools and technologies for naval exploration that begins in some islands away from the shore of Europe and goes through Africa all the way down to Asia, but then also crosses over to the Americas. Brazil is a big part of that. It is the part that ends up being given quote-unquote to the Portuguese by the Pope. And then later in the Treaty of Tordesillas with the Spanish Crown, they divide that and it becomes the site of the dispossession of native land in ways that are analogous to what happened in the United States. And also the place where most, by far, most of the African enslaved people were taken.

([00:06:41](#)):

Brazil received about 5 million of the 10 to 12 million enslaved people who went to the Americas for comparison's sake to the United States. Some scholars estimate around 300,000 to 400,000, 5 million to Brazil. And part of that was because of the way in which slavery worked in sugar plantations in the business models of Brazilian slave owners. That also happened in the Caribbean where the model was to work enslaved people as much as they could. The death rates were higher, so the replacement was needed more often, which was different from the cotton plantation developments in the United States. Although there was enough barbaric acts in all of these places, more than enough, it was really outrageous.

([00:07:50](#)):

In around the 19th century, you see Protestants coming into Protestant missionaries and migrants to different places in Latin America and also with this kind of White supremacist imagination. And although they saw the Catholic Church as their competitors in the religious market, and there was some animosity to go both ways there, those Eurocentric assumptions about property, about land and about relationship with people with other races, well, it was not challenged. It remained mostly unchallenged. As a matter of fact, the Baptist missionaries that became the... The most successful non-Pentecostal group in Brazil are Baptists. And they began with Confederate exiles who went to Brazil after the Confederates had lost the Civil War because Brazil remained a slave-holding country for 23 more years after the end of the American Civil War.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:09:03](#)):

Oh my God.

João Chaves ([00:09:04](#)):

It was the last one to abolish slavery in 1888. And it is in this Confederate enclaves that you see not only Baptists but also southern Presbyterians and southern Methodists and so on, going to and starting churches. And some of those Confederate enclaves became beachheads for the introduction of the sustainable phases of big portion of missionary work from the US to South America to Brazil in this case. So you see there are many connections there in different ways, and there are many analogous situations

to what's happening in the United States too in terms of how the dispossession of native land is justified and continue to be justified in terms of Roman Catholicism.

[\(00:09:58\)](#):

But also you have the Supreme Court here in United States, as you know very well, drawing inspiration from these papal bulls too. And then with Protestantism bringing their own forms of neocolonialism and White supremacy there. Although they did not introduce White supremacy to South America or to Brazil, they did bring their own networks and dispositions and resources to develop different streams of that disposition as Christianities and different forms of Christianity continue to grow in the country.

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:10:37\)](#):

Wow. Wow. That is something. Wow. Thank you for that, João. So I think riffing off what you just explained to us, Adam, our producer tells us that your dissertation, which is almost what? 400 pages long became three books, but I love the title of the dissertation because it's right on topic, I think Disrespecting Borders for Jesus, Power and Cash, Southern Baptist Missions, the New Immigration and the Churches of the Brazilian Diaspora. Are we still talking about what you just explained to us?

João Chaves [\(00:11:22\)](#):

In significant ways, yes, because another version of this story is the fact that some of these folks who were deeply formed by missionary forms of Protestantism that went to Latin America are part of migrant groups that go to different places and form churches that are sometimes connected to very socially conservative geopolitical dispositions. So that this story goes on in different iterations and that we look at migration continuing to grow in the world today. As a matter of fact, this projected to become the number one factor in the growth of the US population in decades to come.

[\(00:12:22\)](#):

And a slice of that, not the whole, but a slice of that is still very much influenced and formed by these forms of missionary Protestantism that were incorporated into the lives of many people in the global south that now bring back with their own religious expressions. But to step back a little bit, in terms of the dissertation, there were mostly, well two books and then a few other things that came out from it. I look first at missionaries to Brazil looking mostly at the Baptist stream, but some of that story is applicable to all the groups. And I looked at race relations between Southern Baptist missionaries to Brazil and locals. And you see in that story that's about first half of the dissertation, and I saw about a hundred years from 1880 to about 1980, looking at how Southern Baptist missionaries, more missionaries in the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, really implemented a successful way to form and maintain connections to their denomination in Brazil.

[\(00:13:43\)](#):

And because they had powerful, eventually built powerful publication houses and had powerful seminaries, their influence really goes beyond the numbers. Although they are in Brazil, the largest non-Pentecostal Protestant denomination, actually the Brazilian Baptist Convention is the largest non-Pentecostal denomination in the whole Latin America. But the influences go is beyond that because of the, again, influence of publication houses of groups that publish and record music because of their theological seminaries, the influence really spreads beyond the numeric, the numeric side of things. So I looked at how effectively they did that.

[\(00:14:34\)](#):

I had a question about why is it, why is it that Brazilian Baptists are ideologically so alike southern Baptists? And I went into that research project with that question in mind, and I laid that out, although it

is a diverse group, that is a majority story that I'm telling. But then in 1980, I shift to the groups that are then migrating to the United States within that same denomination and forming churches in the US in different places. And I do follow those groups and I do some archival work in a few churches and interview leaders. And I look at the history and at the end of that story, and that comes out in... The migrant story, comes out in another book called Migration or Religion. But in terms of a thesis that encapsulates part of those two books, I claim that Brazilian Baptists are closer to southern Baptists when they are actually in Brazil than when migrate to the United States.

[\(00:15:54\)](#):

So I mentioned that the closest to the Southern Baptists, Brazilian Baptists are geographically. The farther from them they get ideologically for different reasons, but proximity reveals certain inconvenient dispositions that distance does not introduce to these groups. Anti-immigrant sentiments and the support for anti-immigrant policies is one of those elements that these immigrants that really appreciate the Southern Baptist Convention when they are in their countries of origin, when they see them up close, then challenges them to reimagine what that relationship means. And there are a few other elements that are involved, but certainly anti-immigrant and political dispositions in the groups that I saw is part of that.

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:17:04\)](#):

Is it more than just the anti-immigrant disposition that you're talking about that indicates their closeness in a way, Brazilian, Baptists and southern Baptists in the US or are there theological elements that one could point to or some other factors? I mean, this is a fascinating discovery, I guess in a way. I'm wondering how that feeds. Well, are there other factors other than a anti-immigrant?

João Chaves [\(00:17:44\)](#):

There are other factors, but they're not necessarily theological meaning Brazilian Baptists in general and southern Baptists do not have pronounced theological disagreements. Now, the extent to each one is consistent in their political way of being with their theological understandings of certain things. I mean, that's a lot to look at that. But that is not articulated theological disagreement. What happened is that part of it is that in the US immigrant, migrant churches have as a central aspect of their existence, ethnic solidarity. So the people who attend those churches, they do not go because of anything or because of the denominational identity or the theological disposition. They go because there are people like them there. And then what happened in these churches led by these Brazilian Baptist missionaries in the United States is that most of the people who go to their churches are not Baptists. They are something else.

[\(00:19:01\)](#):

And because of the polity of Baptist churches, Baptist churches claim to be democratic. So people vote on things in the church, and you have these leaders with mostly Pentecostal membership trying to negotiate what the church's identity would be. But what happens in these immigrant communities is that the central aspect that guide their lives are not theological claims, but are again, the idea of living as Brazilians in a foreign land. And that introduces a series of different dynamics, one of which is the fact that most people in the churches I looked at, and that correlates well with what sociologists that looked at Brazilian migrants in the US have found, that most of these memberships is comprised of undocumented immigrants.

[\(00:20:01\)](#):

And that becomes a pastoral challenge that really helps redefine the commitments of these migrants and of these leaders, the religious leaders that are now trying to dissociate their theological beliefs from some of the implications of serving a primarily undocumented community. They begin to dissociate more clearly justice from law where they see the immigration law particularly as being not something that manifests or represents justice, but as a matter of fact, something that denies it. And that realization of this distinction between legality and justice becomes another element in that struggle to pastor undocumented immigrants, many of whom come from different religions or even Christian backgrounds, but are together in these churches because they are hubs of social support and of maintenance of ethnic identity.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:21:19](#)):

So I'm trying to sort out this racist path and this element. So this emphasis, I guess, on missionization and growing the base, I suppose, of the church and then simultaneously having a anti-immigrant framework that associates them with the north. Can you speak a little bit about the missionary activity a little more with respect, for example, I mean one of the things we focus on here is on indigenous peoples. So how is that missionization go in Brazil among these Protestant groups?

João Chaves ([00:22:16](#)):

Yeah. Well, that is a topic that continues to be problematic in different ways. So missionaries to Brazil have been very active in the Amazon.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:22:36](#)):

Right.

João Chaves ([00:22:37](#)):

Brazilian missionaries and missionaries from the US. One of the things that people often overlook is that the expansion of Christianity, Protestantism particularly that I looked at more closely in these places, often count with the strong support of locals who joined the new religion. So if you hear missionaries talk about missionary influence in these places, they often, or sometimes anyway, overstate the impact that missionaries had directly and understate how locals who joined the religion have done a lot of that legwork of introducing the new religion to people.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:23:33](#)):

Oh, that's very [inaudible 00:23:35]. Yeah, that's very true. Yeah.

João Chaves ([00:23:38](#)):

And I say that not to say that, therefore it becomes less problematic. I actually sometimes it's the opposite. But the issue with this kind of western dispositions and even White supremacist sentiments is that some locals incorporate them and disseminate them too. So you see that happening in Brazil in different ways, and you see that happening today where locals are people who are spreading the message in ways that are sometimes problematic and sometimes in ways that reinforce their own subjugation. I was just in Brazil a year ago for a project that I'm doing now with a colleague that looks at Christian nationalism in Brazil and different places. And one place that we went to was the Amazon. We went to Manaus and we went to a particular service of a mega church, a Pentecostal mega church that they have a missions day.

[\(00:25:05\)](#):

And what they had in that church were interviewing the pastors and what they had their missions day were because we were right in the Amazon, they had a native Brazilian presentation where there were native Brazilian groups in the stage or in the pulpit talking about how they are part of these evangelization missions. Because the Brazilian government today makes it illegal for non-natives to introduce Christianity to native groups out of a concern of protecting their culture and eventually their land, which is threatening so many different directions what is left. So what these Christian communities are doing now to circumvent the law is actually recruiting native missionaries so they can do that work because it's illegal to do some of that work otherwise. And they do it in different ways. I mean, there are schools, there are language schools to teach Portuguese to natives that then... I mean, you saw this happening, right? You're shaking your heads here, I can see you. I mean, that's a common story, right?

Sandy Bigtree [\(00:26:25\)](#):

Oh, yeah.

João Chaves [\(00:26:26\)](#):

So you see that happening today also. Now, I should also say though, and this is where it becomes hard to dissociate some of these impulses that the resistance against those moves comes from native Brazilian groups or native Brazilian led groups and some Christian allies too. So then it becomes fuzzy in that regard because you see on one hand, Christian natives or native Brazilians who are Christian and White and otherwise Christians moving in one direction. But the resistance has a similar, in some ways composition where you have non-Christian native Brazilians, but also Christians who recognize the deeply problematic legacies that was introduced with deep fundamental Christian support and means. But they're also part of that resistance trying to dismantle that project. So it becomes a fundamentally complex situation in the Brazilian case. I'm not sure if I addressed some of your questions.

Sandy Bigtree [\(00:27:56\)](#):

Oh, no. It's-

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:27:56\)](#):

Oh, yeah. It's what you're describing is right on.

Sandy Bigtree [\(00:27:59\)](#):

...intentionally made confusing. That's the whole purpose of dividing and conquering indigenous people and lands. You have to immediately convert Christians. And even if they aren't, they're threatened. I mean, the early, when the Jesuits first arrived, the horrible abuse forcing the Christianization of women, they would target the women as being the most-

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:28:00\)](#):

Firebrand.

Sandy Bigtree [\(00:28:35\)](#):

...firebrands of hell. We were just hearing stories why the Onondaga nation remains outside the Bureau of Indian Affairs. And the story we were just told is that through the churches in this community, this was like in 1935, they were already of course anchored in there with Christianizing, trying to Christianize

the Haudenosaunee. They were trying to instill the Bureau of Indian affairs government of an elective system of chiefs, whereby we had a process of raising chiefs that were through the clan mothers, and the Confederacy would always come into a consensus and agreement. They did not vote. But we have these foreign governments and the churches facilitating this. And even I'm sure there were Christian native people, Haudenosaunee people that were now Christianized and allying with the priests or the ministers, would've been ministers because there were no Catholic churches at Onondaga, but there was this one vote where the community had to vote in this BIA government.

(00:29:56):

And all across Indian country, traditional people would not vote in those elections. And the only people that would vote in them were those that were more compliant with the church's wishes on their territories. So they would vote, and those would be the elections United States would recognize. So then they would install these BIA governments because the people voted for them. Well, traditional people didn't vote in those elections because it's a foreign regime coming into their territories. So when this happened at Onondaga, rather than not voting at the prospect of letting a BIA government in there, they went to one another and said, for the first time, "Get out and vote it out."

Philip P. Arnold (00:30:48):

Vote no.

Sandy Bigtree (00:30:50):

Vote no. And they're the only ones that kept the BIA out of Onondaga. And other nations across the United States were astounded that they didn't have to accept that BIA puppet regime of the United States. So many of them were trying to undo that process in their own territories. But the US said, "No, you voted us in. We're in."

Philip P. Arnold (00:31:17):

I mean, that continues today, actually it's 90 years ago, but it's still happening. People are still wondering, or different nations are wondering how they can get out of the federal system.

Sandy Bigtree (00:31:31):

But you triggered that whole story when you were talking about instilling more of a democratic process of voting in these areas. That's not necessarily a good thing.

Philip P. Arnold (00:31:44):

Yeah, it's a ruse.

Sandy Bigtree (00:31:46):

Now that most people are of course bound to this system of voting. I mean, I'm not saying you get out and vote because you're already in that process, but being indigenous, no, you do not want to bring that into your community because it's divisive really in the larger picture, if you have not a better way of bringing minds together.

Philip P. Arnold (00:32:06):

And of course, I mean, course what you're describing too, João is, and it's also true here at Onondaga, what you're describing has a backdrop of these economic forces, right?

João Chaves ([00:32:21](#)):

That's right.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:32:21](#)):

The organization is not just a conversation about the nature of the spiritual dimension of existence. It's not a theological debate. There are these very big economic forces that are yearning to get cheap beef out of the-

João Chaves ([00:32:42](#)):

That's right. That's exactly right.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:32:44](#)):

And so that I'm drawn to that cash element in your dissertation. So I mean, these two things are always conjoined at the-

João Chaves ([00:32:56](#)):

I agree with that completely.

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([00:33:00](#)):

Do you need help catching up on today's topic or do you want to learn more about the resources mentioned? If so, please check our website at podcast.doctrineofdiscovery.org for more information. And if you like this episode, review it on Apple, Spotify or wherever you listen to podcasts. And now back to the conversation.

João Chaves ([00:33:21](#)):

Now connecting to what Sandy mentioned, it makes it very difficult to do it outside of a system because... So to mention the fact of cattle and beef, deforestation is a big deal in Brazil. And depending on who's on the government, depending on who is in the majority in the Congress and Senate regulations and policing of deforestation can change drastically. You saw a previous administration in which there was less investment in regulations for deforestation, and you have all this big cattle money that is deeply investing in just burning forests and native land even more so that they can raise cattle, so that they can make money. So how do you do it? Are you going to mobilize people to be able to vote and to protest?

([00:34:23](#)):

I mean, it's really a bloody story. As a matter of fact, one of the pictures that I have outside my office door is a picture of a native Brazilian woman with the flag full of blood that brings, is this image of this nation making that happened in different places that does involve these three columns. And I do tell my students that the modern world was founded on three columns or three pillars, racism, Christianity, and capitalism. It's hard to distinguish one from the other. So when I think about missionaries, I am thinking about these dynamics going together like you mentioned, Phil. And I do not think about them separately.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:35:24](#)):

I think they work in consort. Absolutely. I mean, we had the Christian front through the 30s. It was very strong in Boston, and the person spreading this, Father Coughlin had a huge radio show reaching millions and millions of people. And the speech was basically anti-Semitic. And so the person they had leading this front in Boston was actually working with a counterintelligence operative of Hitler's, and they were feeding this Moran how to use propaganda to sway your audience. And they aligned over this anti-Semitism of the fascists and Nazis with the Catholics who found also aligned to anti-Semitism because they were killers of Christ. They said that Jews were killers of Christ, and that was fabricated during the Roman period.

[\(00:36:44\)](#):

Interestingly enough, after the thirties, it morphed into the McCarthy era where they were attacking and imprisoning communists because again, it's a continuation of the anti-Semitism because they viewed Marx as being a Jew. So not much has changed. It's just morphed, and it's continued to just move around the globe. But these are old systems of manipulation and domination used from these doctrines of discovery that one human being has the right to dominate and control another. It's-

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:37:29\)](#):

Right, right. I mean, it's an old story, but-

Sandy Bigtree [\(00:37:29\)](#):

They all together.

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:37:32\)](#):

...it's also has these new manifestations. I guess here you have... In your context, you have Bolsonaro who's Catholic, right, being embraced by the Protestants in Brazil, the evangelicals. I mean, it's analogous to our story of Donald Trump in many ways.

João Chaves [\(00:37:54\)](#):

That's correct.

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:37:55\)](#):

Yeah. And I-

João Chaves [\(00:37:56\)](#):

No, that's right. And Bolsonaro is an interesting case. It was a sociologist, Paul Freston, I think, who coined very appropriately that he's the first pan-Christian president of Brazil, meaning that he can... I mean, he is Catholic, like you mentioned, but he was baptized by a Pentecostal pastor in the Jordan River, and he is married to a Baptist woman. So it's really interesting Michele, when they go to Protestant churches together, you can really see her taking the lead in some of that. And yeah, I think that he really, because what's happening in Brazil also Brazil is in this odd position of being the country with the largest number of Catholics in the world, but also the largest number of Pentecostals in the world, and the number of Protestants continue to grow and the number of Catholics to diminish. So if it was possible for Catholics to imagine running the country without having to enter coalitions with Protestants, that is no longer the case. And Bolsonaro is one of those figures around which these coalitions, ultra conservative coalitions have been built.

[\(00:39:30\)](#):

And so you see that Christian nationalism growing in Brazil with both Catholic and Protestant and Protestant participation. I think that for me, who self-identify as Christian, although I was raised with a father who was a Black Brazilian who wasn't. And he would often remind me of the histories and the complex entanglements of the tradition that I ended up entering. I feel compelled to mention that the most, I wouldn't say the most, but a very important resistance. It also comes from those who are able to tell more honest stories about their Christian background or the history of their tradition and try to reimagine it to be what they think, something that is closer to what would be a Christ who was killed by a state for being a subversive. That is not the Christ of many who want to sit on the throne and oppress people and take what is theirs and violate them in so many different ways. So I think it was Gandhi who said that he didn't have a problem with Christ. He had a problem with Christians. And often I feel close to that disposition.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:41:18](#)):

Yeah. Christ was not a Christian. I mean, you can put it that way. When does Christianity start? It's fourth century. And that's probably when Doctrine of Discovery began. But I appreciate that comment because Brazil is such an interesting place, religiously speaking. You mentioned your father, I'm thinking of Afro-Brazilian traditions that are all through the country, and you could say minority traditions in a way, but then also infused into the culture in so many ways.

João Chaves ([00:42:06](#)):

That is right.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:42:10](#)):

Candomblé and I mean... But yeah. So it's such a rich area, culturally rich place largely through trauma of course. But I mean, this is the way the new world is founded.

João Chaves ([00:42:24](#)):

That's right. And also, it is interesting because often scholars, especially scholars from the global North that look at Brazil, but other places in the global south often think that those allegiances are mutually exclusive. Whereas there really not. On the ground it is often the case where people do translate aspects of Christianity to align with cosmologies and worldviews that were already there and are very creative in terms of what they incorporate and what they don't incorporate. So it's not always candomblé practitioner or Catholic. Sometimes it's candomblé practitioner and... So you have those different affiliations, translations, and multiplicities happening as people grapple with these new ideas, but they do not, again, adopt them uniformly or even fully. There is often lot of local creativity and agency and how that is appropriated in practice.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:43:47](#)):

Yeah. And I think you're right. The Christian groups that we are affiliated with in our network that have repudiated the doctrine of discovery, this puts them on a path to really rethink their traditions in many ways. Along the lines you were just reflecting on, I mean, what kind of Christianity is it that we really truly embrace? These are conversations that are happening internally to these different denominations, different religious communities. They no longer feel that... They might feel that their tradition has been hijacked in some ways, maybe from the beginning, maybe from its inception, given Protestants history, rather short history. So I think what you're stating is a kind of realignment of theology in some ways with

respect to what's a more viable future, what's a more just and sane world that we want to embrace. And I think that's also part of the mapping of the doctrine of discovery that we have to take account.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:45:09](#)):

Christianity, it's become more of a battle of conquest, of good over evil. And I think that morphed in some way with a new age movement, thanks to Vincent Peale.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:45:21](#)):

Norman Vincent Peale.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:45:23](#)):

Norman Vincent Peale's positive thinking theology.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:45:29](#)):

The power of positive-

Sandy Bigtree ([00:45:31](#)):

The power of positive thinking. It's still the same thing of good over evil because it's the power of positive thinking. I mean, it's still dominating. It's still going to dominate any honest interaction that you have with the world around you. You're still competing and conquering someone who's not going to be quite as positive as you might be. It's so many levels of all of this, right? And Norman Vincent Peale had his first church here in Syracuse, and then he moved it to New York City and he was a major capitalist, and that's where Trump's parents joined that church in New York City. And Norman Vincent Peale had given a talk in Central Park one Easter during the 30s, and it was announced that it was actually like a Nazi rally. So there's these alliances that may appear to be all well and good, but they're problematic too.

João Chaves ([00:46:32](#)):

Yeah, that's right. But what is interesting though, and again, I do not have a big enough sample to draw any strong conclusions. Perhaps you have had even more experiences in this area, is that when I speak about Christianity in ways that are not despairing but are honest and are critical to my students, they are... Here at Baylor, which is a university that calls itself a Christian university, they are very tolerant and welcoming and critical about that conversation. But it is when that is criticism against the United States that I see more reaction. I mean of course those two are not necessarily, unfortunately, not necessarily very distinct for some people.

([00:47:30](#)):

For some people they see such a close connection between Christianity and the United States. And this is where the doctrine of discovery seems to, or conversations about that seem to meet that the intersection of criticizing deeply both religion and nation. But I do wonder if the kind of reactions against that truth that needs to continue to be revealed and challenged not only in its story but also in its continuing implications, if the resistance is because of the implication of a form of Christianity or it's because of the implication of property and nation. There is where it seems to me some people will react more strongly.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:48:22](#)):

That's where the rubber meets the road. So Adam is telling me we should go back because you've been incredibly productive with all these books. And I want to ask you to go in a little more detail about your book, the Global Mission of the Jim Crow South. Talk to us about the Confederados. Not sure how you pronounce that in Portuguese, but-

João Chaves ([00:48:51](#)):

That's right.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:48:53](#)):

And how does that factor into where we are today? Again, going back to this racist missionary past.

João Chaves ([00:49:03](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Well, let me start, perhaps not at the end, but at the middle.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:49:11](#)):

Okay.

João Chaves ([00:49:12](#)):

I think it was a historian of the US South, Charles Reagan Wilson who said, or maybe it was somebody else that skips my mind now, who said that the South lost the battle but won the war. Meaning that the cultural dispositions that were deeply formative, that certain mentality in terms of racial superiority and anti-Black, anti-native racism, anti-Semitism and all of that, that remain a guiding light in significant ways of southern culture even after the war was ended. And I say this because the connections between Brazilian Protestants and certain institutions are very strong, and in some ways they remain, I mean, with agreements to send leaders to train in theological seminaries in the US and on and on. But what happened in Brazil again was we have these confederates who lose the war. Thousands of families go to Brazil and to Mexico too, actually. And I say this as someone who is in former, not only native land, but also Mexican land beyond that, and that is some overlap even in that terminology.

([00:50:45](#)):

But when they get to Brazil though, although Brazil remained a slave holding country, they think that there's too much racial fluidity in Brazil. So then they go into enclaves of Confederate exiles that attempt to draw a harder racial line and boundaries. And again, is there where we see churches beginning in terms of Baptists, but also Presbyterians and Methodists. You see southern Baptist missionaries going to Brazil and first stay in those colonies and then moving away. Now, there is another element to this, which is Brazil already has, it's... Had when these missionaries go there, because of the Portuguese influence that dates back hundreds of years before that happened in the 19th century. Brazil has a racial taxonomy and imagination, that is not based in or it doesn't become based on heritage like in the United States, but it's based on phenotype. So that is that distinction.

([00:51:59](#)):

But that said, the hierarchy of Whites at the top and everybody else at the bottom was already established. So you see that agreement there. And then what happens is that those missionaries, they send the local leaders of their denominations to be trained in the segregated south. So the people who are trained here, they go back, they found churches and seminaries and they translate books. The books that train these ministers are all books written by Southern Americans or by and large, the great majority that is then translated into Portuguese. That's where they learned their theologies. And then

you see that disposition growing in churches. And this goes on to the extent that up until the 1980s, after... I was born in 1980, so even a few years after I was born, the presidents of Brazilian Baptist seminaries, or at least one of the major ones was still a Southern Baptist missionary. So it goes on very recently.

[\(00:53:12\)](#):

And then even after that changes and goes more strongly into the hands of natives or locals I should say, the networks continue and the impact is very much continue to this day where many leaders of the denomination are trained in the United States and have US connections. Again, I don't want to paint everybody with the same brush. I don't know if that's correct. The saying is correct. I want to acknowledge that there is diversity. But by and large, that is a major tendency towards this welcoming disposition in connection with Southern Baptist Convention and that disposition. And that bleeds into the kind of political dynamics happening in Brazil that includes Baptist, but also Pentecostals and Presbyterians and others. And I can mention so many examples, but I mentioned that I was in Brazil not too long ago for that research. We not only went to the Amazon, me and my collaborators, we also went to Brasilia and we interviewed elected politicians.

[\(00:54:32\)](#):

One of them was the leader of the Evangelical Caucus. We had a conversation with him, and he mentioned that the following morning he had a breakfast with the leaders of Capital Ministries, that they are also continue to work in and around Congress and Senate in Washington, DC having prayer meetings and breakfasts and things of that sort. You see different kinds of connections between the Bolsonaro and the Trump administration. Steve Bannon said one time that he had greater hopes for Bolsonaro than he did for Trump. He was an unofficial counselor of Bolsonaro and his sons, one of Bolsonaro's sons was seen on January the 6th in Washington DC with a MAGA hat. I mean, you can see this transnational flows coming, and that is beyond this missionary stream that I'm mentioning. But that is certainly part of the story, is more complex, is more diversified and you follow different pathways. But one element of this story that we can draw in broad strokes to today has that influence there certainly so.

[\(00:55:58\)](#):

And the social issues that are connected to theological convictions are also analogous to the one in the US, abortion, gay marriage and our issues that are brought up. And then the protection of the traditional family. So all of those things are talking points of these theological political convictions that in some ways are very closely connected to each other by the religious right, both in Brazil and in the United States. As a matter of fact, and I'll mention this as a last comment, that are historians who argue that the religious right is in some significant ways co-created by the United States in Brazil, given there are different partnerships throughout the 19th and 20th century. So there is a lot of analogous situations and dynamics there.

[NEW_PARAGRAPH]There are many partnerships to be talked about. And those two countries is important to say, are projected to continue to be the countries with the largest numbers of Christians in the world. Brazil and the United States are that today, and they're projected to continue to be the largest, the country with the largest number of Christians in the world. So it is hard to think that it is coincidental that those are also very important hubs of this kind of authoritarian right that is brewing, although similar issues are happening in other places via other religions too. We can talk about Hindu nationalism and on and on. So there are other manifestations of these also.

Philip P. Arnold [\(00:58:05\)](#):

Yeah, Modi and others. Yeah. No, I mean it's on the rise and you can feel it. Really appreciate this, the engagement that your work has in the world. And along that vein, we can finish up with a brief conversation about this book, this other book that you co-wrote with Mike Parsons. And forgive me, I'm going to slaughter this title, but Remembering Antônia Teixeira.

João Chaves ([00:58:06](#)):

Teixeira.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:58:37](#)):

Teixeira. A story of missions, violence and institutional hypocrisy. What really strikes me about this, of course, is your detailing a story of a rape while Antônia was a guest at Baylor University by the president in 1894 at your own institution. That is brave, my friend. As an assistant professor, that's an important story. It's an important story, let me put it that way first, that we need to all tell about our own institutions. And according to Adam, this has had a great impact. It's continuing to have a impact in our world. Please tell us about that and why you decided to do that. Tell that important story.

João Chaves ([00:59:43](#)):

Yeah, well, thank you. Thank you for asking. As a matter of fact, Baylor gave a grant of \$25,000 to help with the research of the book. So this was-

Philip P. Arnold ([00:59:43](#)):

Good for them, good for them, good for them.

João Chaves ([01:00:02](#)):

Well, this started with Michael, I should say is the longest-serving faculty member in the Department of Religion. He's been here for 38 years, and he's the only distinguished university professor at Baylor. So he's been in this institution for a while, and he was part of a commission put together in supported by the president and the board of trustees called Commission for Historical Campus Representations that were going to look at the statues and see what kind of figures the university wanted to celebrate. Now, one of those statues was Rufus Burleson, the president who was the host of Antônia Teixeira, and then later tried to blame her for her own rape in some ways.

([01:01:02](#)):

And that story came up in connection to that committee. And then Michael, who was part of that initiative, emailed me and asked me if I knew about Antônia Teixeira. I thought he had misgendered Antônia because Antônia Teixeira was the first Brazilian Baptist pastor in Brazil. He was actually ordained in a Mazonic Lodge in a Confederate enclave. And the name of the Mazonic Lodge was George Washington in the state of São Paulo. So by the way, parenthesis here, I do show my student a picture of Confederate parties, and I asked them, "Where do you think this is happening?" And they guessed Mississippi, they guessed Louisiana, they guessed. And then I tell them, "No, this is São Paulo. Is in the state of São Paulo." They still have the Confederate party there. But anyway, in that area. And the reason why I asked that is because Antônia Teixeira's story is well known, but nobody knew of Antônia.

([01:02:08](#)):

As a matter of fact, his biographer just calls her the firstborn, doesn't even know her name apparently. Well, she came to... After her father died, she was brought by Southern Baptist missionaries here to Baylor, which was a different time. And then she was housed at the president's home. He was raped by

a relative. And then there was a controversy around the trial because there was a... Partially because there was a journalist here, a very controversial journalist here in Waco called Less named Bran, who was nicknamed the Apostle of the Devil. And he wore that nickname very proud. And Bran did not like Baptists or Baylor. So he had a periodical that had a strong circulation. And he revealed that in the late 1800s, he exposed all of that, and the trial happened here, and we tell that story.

[\(01:03:22\)](#):

But more than telling the story of Antônia, we also found out that Antônia, when he was a Catholic priest, was accused of kidnapping when he was 32 years old, kidnapping a 17-year-old woman who was presumably Antônia's mother. We tell that story too, and then we tell the story of Antônia. But more than that, we want to show these stories as illustration of how institutions in order to preserve the story of institutional goodness are willing to erase the oppressed and the marginalized to the extent that the maintenance of institutional goodness, or the myth that institutions want to tell about themselves is very often in opposition to the best interest of those who are in the margins. And we show how that happened in relationship to the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, who had the reputation of the missionaries connected to that of their Brazilian jewel Antônia Teixeira who converted from being a Catholic priest and it was really big for Baptist.

[\(01:04:44\)](#):

So they erased the story of his own issues, sexual issues. But then here in terms of Baylor Antônia Teixeira's story was the story that was forgotten. And when we tell that story, but then showing that institutions in many ways do that and making clear that although Baylor was part of that, all the institutions do that too. And not to necessarily diminish Baylor's implication and responsibility in that story story, but just to show that to a large extent, institutions have something to gain by hiding certain truths. And then also, it is only now where coming, taking these skeletons out of the closet became its own way to articulate institutional goodness.

[\(01:05:44\)](#):

We have institutions funding these kinds of project, like Baylor funded the project of this. So I mean, it is a complex setting in which now there is something to gain in telling how bad you have been. So is within that cycle too. It's just the patterns of identifying institutional goodness now include being honest about one's story, but there's something to gain from that. So again, is a story full of entanglement and complexities as these stories often are. But you are right that Baylor has been extremely supportive financially and otherwise. And I did ask, because I knew the book was coming out when I was interviewing here, and I did ask, is this going to be a problem?

Philip P. Arnold [\(01:06:35\)](#):

Of course, yes. Yeah.

João Chaves [\(01:06:43\)](#):

And I was told that, I mean, some people might dislike it, but I was assured that they do value academic freedom to the extent that I'll be protected in that regard. So, so far that seems to be true.

Philip P. Arnold [\(01:07:00\)](#):

Well, that ends us on a really a happy note I would say. I mean that there is hope, and again, really appreciate you João and all that you do. You're out there, you're out there man, really telling the truth, which is not always a comfortable position to be in, but really appreciate what you're willing to do. So really appreciate all of that. Okay.

João Chaves ([01:07:36](#)):

Well, likewise. I appreciate you all, and you've been part of the many witnesses that have shaped my trajectory in different ways. And I really appreciate that and hope we'll continue to collaborate in different ways in our journey.

Philip P. Arnold ([01:07:57](#)):

Absolutely. Absolutely. We're at the beginning of this. You'll be back in Syracuse in Onondaga nation territory I predict in the near future.

João Chaves ([01:08:07](#)):

I'll look forward to that.

Philip P. Arnold ([01:08:07](#)):

All right.

Sandy Bigtree ([01:08:07](#)):

Yes, indeed. Take care.

João Chaves ([01:08:11](#)):

All the best.

Philip P. Arnold ([01:08:11](#)):

Bye-bye.

Sandy Bigtree ([01:08:12](#)):

All right. Bye-Bye.

João Chaves ([01:08:12](#)):

Bye.

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([01:08:15](#)):

The producers of this podcast were Adam DJ Brett and Jordan Loewen-Colón. Our intro and outro is Social Dancing music by Orris Edwards and Regis Cook. This podcast is funded in collaboration with the Henry Luce Foundation, Syracuse University, and Hendrix Chapel, and the Indigenous Values Initiative. If you like this episode, please check out our website and make sure to subscribe.