



# Homies and Hermanos: God and Gangs in Central America

*Robert Brenneman*

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Why would a gun-wielding, tattoo-bearing "homie" trade in la vida loca for a Bible and the buttoned-down lifestyle of an evangelical hermano (brother in Christ)? To answer this question, Robert Brenneman interviewed sixty-three former gang members from the "Northern Triangle" of Central America-Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras-most of whom left their gang for evangelicalism. Unlike in the United States, membership in a Central American gang is hasta la morgue. But the most common exception to the "morgue rule" is that of conversion or regular participation in an evangelical church. Do gang members who weary of their dangerous lifestyle simply make a rational choice to opt for evangelical religion? Brenneman finds this is only partly the case, for many others report emotional conversions that came unexpectedly, when they found themselves overwhelmed by a sermon, a conversation, or a prayer service. An extensively researched and gritty account, *Homies and Hermanos* sheds light on the nature of youth violence, of religious conversion, and of evangelical churches in Central America.

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