

Daniel Ramirez. *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico, 1906-1966.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 306 pp. \$32.50, paper, ISBN 978-1-4696-2406-8.

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Historians have studied the borderlands and the people who inhabited that geographical region since the days of Herbert Eugene Bolton. When such histories address religion, they typically focus on either the Catholic South or the Protestant North. Unlike prior histories that posited acquiescence or liberation binaries in regards to Protestantism, Daniel Ramírez's *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century* stretches the traditional borderland paradigm. Utilizing the voices of subaltern agents, he argues that believers intentionally constructed their Pentecostal identities. These identities were inherently influenced by migration, both the sending and receiving of community members, Ramírez argues, and the "Aleluya culture" of Mexican and Mexican-American Pentecostalism was one of protest. By giving voice to apostolic believers who transgressed the Mexico-United States border in the middle of the twentieth century, Ramírez has created a pioneering social and cultural study of religion and a religious movement.

In 1906 Los Angeles, California, the Pentecostal spirit flourished as part of the Azusa Street Revival. The movement proved important, especially within the larger global Protestant religious resurgence. Nevertheless, in published documents related to the event, non-English-speakers' testi-

monies were at the time and continue to be relegated to the background. Contrary to other histories which have treated Mexican and Mexican-American Pentecostals as additive, Ramírez utilizes "fugitive sources" (p. 31), particularly ethnomusical ones, to demonstrate that "the previously marginalized can be brought into sharper relief through attention to borderlands loci, transnational movements from below, subaltern agency and culture" (p. 26). In presenting Pentecostalism as protest, he shows how believers were able to push back against Jim Crow laws of American society while simultaneously reinforcing transnational solidarity with other evangelicals.

Proceeding chronologically, the book first looks at the idea of border-crossing in both the literal and figurative sense. Investigating Protestant churches at the turn of the century, Ramírez finds that the Southwest was a contested space that mainline organizations ultimately ceded to evangelicals. By negotiating and forming alliances with groups on the periphery of religious and social spheres, Pentecostalism was able to take root where mainline Protestant churches could or would not go. Ramírez asserts that "it was precisely the periphery's inconsequence and resultant freedom that allowed heterodoxy to take root, flourish and flow out in new forms and in several directions" (p. 60). The second chapter traces the

flow of migrants between northern Mexico and southern Texas to argue for the intertwined nature of the Chicano and Mexican Pentecostal movements. The ability to gain and maintain transborder alliances suited the growth of Pentecostalism. The third chapter explores the rise of American xenophobia and the expansion of evangelical reach in the wake of an exodus of a third of the Mexican and Mexican American population from the United States. Upon returning to Mexico, many apostolics took advantage of their new environment; they used the government's anticlerical programs to their church's benefit. The next chapter discusses the impact of the US demand for labor (1942-60) and the effects of the Bracero program on the Pentecostal faith. Changing labor patterns and increased migration to the United States formalized rituals of welcome, invited an exchange of clergy, and contributed to the lives of legal, illegal, and in-between repatriated workers. As laborers moved, they brought the spirit and teachings of their religious "families" and mentors with them to evangelize new areas. The fifth and sixth chapters focus on the mobility, reach, and emotive character of music. Using the example of Elvira Herrera's musical composition, which creatively and intentionally changed the lyrics of English-language hymns to fit the needs of her Spanish-speaking audience, Ramírez demonstrates the creative and mobile character of music within migratory Pentecostal communities. He asserts, "the religious proletariat was voting with its ears as well as its feet, as much enchanted by the cultural musical repertoire as the charisma of tongues-speaking evangelists and healers" (p. 178). Through all these, Ramírez demonstrates a nuanced view toward the permeable nature of evangelical Protestantism in a drifting geographical space.

Coupling traditional letters, conference minutes, and the *Exégeta* periodical published by the Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús in Mexico, in a creative manner with hymnals and popular discographies, Ramírez is able to bring to light

the interests and motivations of previously under-represented actors and highlight the contributions of labor, migration, and class to the development of a religious movement. Additionally, demonstrating a facility with sociological, historical and anthropological theories, this work makes interesting connections to movements in South Africa, Chile, and Papua New Guinea.

Focusing on the exchanges of people and ideas across the Mexico and United States borders, Ramírez establishes the transnational nature of the Pentecostal community, which formed as a result of voluntary and involuntary migrations. Though previously presented as on the periphery, Ramírez integrates the voices of subaltern testifiers into a new understanding of an important branch of the Pentecostal tradition that served as a mediator for people in transition, in a similar vein to Virginia Garrard-Burnett's work. He coherently incorporates individual narratives with the stories of internal church dynamics and external national and international histories, weaving macro- and micro-level events together. His layered presentation of complex ideologies, theories, and information adds a multidimensional work to the field. This work would be of interest to graduate students as well as academics interested in the history of religion, the borderlands, migration, music, and culture.

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