

While this approach can yield valuable insights (as both of these books certainly do), one wonders what happened to scholarship pure and simple, scholarship that merely attempted to explain what is, why it is and how it became so.

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Migrational religion. Context and creativity in the Latinx diaspora. By João B. Chaves.

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Migrational religion offers a conceptually sound and historically rich approach to the study of Brazilian Baptists in the US. Chaves argues that Brazilian Baptists' 'experiences of migration and adaptation affect the role of identity of particular immigrant faith communities' (p. 3). The book centres on the *Associação de Igrejas Batistas Brasileiras na América do Norte* (Association of Brazilian Baptist Churches in North America – abbreviated in the book as AIBBAN), holding in tension this association of Baptists to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) with which AIBBAN has close institutional ties. The book shows how 'the contextual effects of migration push immigrant religious networks to both reconfigure aspects of the theological arrangements imagined in their constituents' home countries and uncover the theological limitations of the specific traditions to which they become affiliated in their host country' (p. 4). The SBC of the United States played an outsized role in influencing Baptists in Brazil. By 1881, the SBC had established a solid missionary endeavour in Brazil and over the next one hundred years constituted a one-way stream of missionary work. Then in 1981 the first Brazilian Baptist missionary arrived in the US and the flow of missions work would come full circle, sustained by an increasing number of Brazilians arriving the US. The Brazilian Baptists in this study comprise a network of churches 'formed primarily of undocumented immigrants' who maintain transnational lives and bring with them values and ideas from the homeland (p. 3). *Migrational religion* helps one understand the relationship between larger waves of migration and religious institutions.

Chapter i constitutes the introduction to the book, framing the topic and situating it in various fields of study, most notably American religious history, global Christianity and migration studies. In chapters ii and iii Chaves outlines this history, pivoting on the year 1981. That year, the first Baptist Brazilian Baptist missionary to the US, Humberto Viegas Fernandes, arrived in New Jersey as a missionary to the Portuguese in the area. Fernandes's arrival coincided with a realisation of a growing Brazilian diaspora in the US. Chapter iii examines the recent histories of four Brazilian (or Brazuca) churches in the east coast cities of Boston, Danbury, New York and Elizabethtown.

Just north of Boston, I visited a friend at a Pentecostal church which met in the same building as a Brazilian Methodist congregation. Having arrived early for the service we decided to catch part of the Brazilian Methodist service. As far as the music was concerned, there seemed to be little difference between that group, which met in the main sanctuary, and the quintessentially loud and spirited Latino Pentecostals who gathered in the recreational hall in the following hour. I

had wondered about the extent to which Brazilian Protestants had been 'Pentecostalisated'. If that service was any indication, the answer seemed to be that they had undergone a substantial degree of Pentecostalisation. Traces of evidence in chapters iv through vi of *Migrational religion* would seem to confirm my suspicion of many similarities between the two congregations in that church north of Boston. Chapter iv reads as a transitional chapter in that it is still focused on rendering a historical account but it does so as it develops the idea of 'ethnic denominationalism', one of the most important concepts in the book. Chaves describes ethnic denominationalism as 'the organization of ethnically-based associations that act as the de facto places of denomination activity for immigrant communities' (p. 23). The concepts to describe the networks and transnationalisms within the Brazilian Baptist tradition are further teased out in chapters v and vi. Chapter v covers how the large presence of undocumented immigrants in these churches stirs up questions of identity and presents challenges for pastors and between the Brazilian churches and their politically conservative Baptist counterparts the SBC. Numerous academic articles and chapters in recent years have focused on the undocumented immigrant populations but few have contextualised their experiences in religious spaces as well as Chaves has in this chapter. As Brazilians, the Baptists in *Migrational religion* hail from a national context that has been heavily Pentecostalisated, so chapter vi examines the effects of this Pentecostalisation especially as it pertains to the elevation of women leaders, a move that constitutes a sharp departure from the Southern Baptist Convention which prohibits the ordination of women. Chapter vii, the conclusion, spells out how a transnational and historical study pushes the reader to see the formation of incipient immigrant theologies. The Brazilian Baptists in *Migrational religion* wrestle within and against religious institutions all the while forming their own across the borders of nations, language, gender, institutions and citizenship.

Chaves draws together a wide range of sources to balance the historical narration of individual churches and leaders in an effort to tell the story of the Brazilian Baptist movement. Sources include interviews with leaders and a close reading of archival material, such as the *Jornal Batista*, minutes and various reports. *Migrational religion*, then, offers an excellent example for the historian wishing to offer a story of a denomination or movement that balances the use of internal sources with outside ones.

Migrational religion, because of its interdisciplinary anchoring, offers much to readers across various fields. To the scholar of church history and global Christianity, the book provides a fresh take on the ongoing conversation about 'reverse mission' and 'multidirectional missions' by centring the voices of immigrants in the pulpit and pews. The Brazilian immigrants in the US, no doubt, challenge assumptions of what it means to be Baptist and American. The Southern Baptist Convention remains the largest Protestant denomination in the US even as its numbers appear to be in decline. Scholars of church history would do well to continue tracking the limits of this decline. Meaningful scholarship on migration studies (beyond a nominal mention of places, deities or institutions) is severely lacking. *Migrational religion* shows one way in which the study of religion can greatly inform studies of migration.

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