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Hispanic Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists In Texas (Book Review)

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element among the newly absorbed Latinos destined to influence their incorporation into U.S. society—their Spanish-Indian-African racial and religious hybridity. The next two chapters describe the experiences of Mexican Americans in San Antonio and of Puerto Ricans in New York from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, pointing out ways in which Catholicism promoted community-building and ties to their homelands. An examination of four powerful figures between 1940 and 1965—Archbishop Robert Lucey of San Antonio, Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York, and Cardinals Samuel Stritch and Albert Meyer of Chicago, who “assumed unprecedented powers in addressing issues brought on by Latin American migration and settlement beyond merely parochial concerns” (p. 91)—follows. In a chapter spanning 1959 to the present, Badillo explains the development of “exile Catholicism” (p. 92) among Cuban Americans in Miami, a blend of religiosity and fervent anti-Castro nationalism whose dominance has begun to weaken in the face of generational change coupled with Miami’s more diverse immigration patterns of recent years.

The last three chapters focus largely on globalization, religion, and ethnicity and how these have become increasingly intertwined in the post-1965 era. One chapter is a case study that examines these issues among Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago; here Badillo uses short ethnographies to good effect, putting a human face on the complexities and interrelatedness of Latino social mobility, transnational experiences, and faith traditions. Similar concerns are the focus of the next chapter, however, with an eye toward comparing and explaining the successes and failures of Catholic civic activism in San Antonio and New York. In the final chapter, Badillo extends his discussion to other cities and regions. The effects of Vatican II reforms, an increased and diverse Latin American immigration, the rise of Latino Protestantism, and the forces of urbanization and globalization, the author concludes, have created a new model of immigrant church within U.S. Catholicism, one which generally tends to regenerate homeland-specific ethnicities and resists “church policies designed to promote Latino ‘panethnicity’ for the sake of administrative and economic efficiency” (p. 201).

Some readers will fault the author for giving so much play to what he himself calls “top-down episcopal leadership” (p. xx) at the expense of developing other perspectives, especially a more gendered one. Nonetheless, the author has synthesized important scholarship and mined primary sources to produce a resource that will be useful to novice and specialist alike.

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Hispanic Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists in Texas. By Paul Barton. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006. Pp. 256. Illustrations, figures, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 029271291X. \$50.00, cloth. ISBN 0292713355. \$19.95, paper.)

Much of the religious historiography of the Mexican-American borderlands naturally concerns Roman Catholicism. But of course this scholarly focus should

not divert attention away from Hispanic Protestants, who have suffered as a “double minority” (p. 2)—being religiously divergent from other Hispanics and ethnically and racially divergent from other American Protestants. Paul Barton’s account highlights the attempts of Hispanic Protestants in Texas to construct an identity in the face of these dominant communities. This work complements the works of Daisy Machado, Mark T. Banker, Randi Walker Jones, and Susan M. Yohn in bringing light to this important, but neglected, subject.

His story begins with Protestant missions to Texas in the 1830s and ends in the 1990s when declining animosity between Protestant and Catholic communities in the Southwest began to undermine Hispanic Protestant distinctiveness. Barton asks “how . . . the identity of a group of people from one culture changed when they adopt a religion of another culture” (p. 4). Specifically, he is interested in the role of Protestantism in Mexican and Mexican American assimilation to Anglo American culture. While he finds that Hispanic Protestants “incorporated aspects of Mexican culture into their faith, and . . . appropriated certain aspects of Anglo-American culture and values,” he shows that they never fully embraced Anglo American norms in terms of conforming to the language, culture, and institutions of the dominant society (p. 3). Barton shows that Hispanic Protestants appropriated the ethos of evangelical revivalism and “educationally oriented religion” from Anglo American culture (p. 76). Yet Mexican American congregations continued to hire ministers from Mexico, and they wove together the sometimes antagonistic aims of evangelism and education in ways that reflected the unique cultural aspirations of Mexican Americans. Moreover, despite their ability to move into middle-class neighborhoods and professions, Mexican American and Anglo American Protestants remained congregationally segregated owing to divergences in their cultural experiences as well as a pervasive racism in Anglo American culture. Nevertheless, Hispanic Protestant churches have over the years served an assimilating function in easing the cross-cultural transition for their members—instilling the values of “democracy, punctuality, self-improvement, education, and individualism”—and, on the other hand, they have also introduced fully-assimilated Mexican Americans to Mexican culture (p. 138).

Barton’s largely compelling argument about the “double minority” of *los Protestantes* obviously suggests ways for religious historians to engage broader historiographical trends capturing the attention of borderlands scholars. But this reader wonders whether such a framework does not, in fact, oversimplify the story. Despite the implicit promise of the title, Barton’s narrative tends to conflate the experiences of Texas Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists. (A two-page section titled “The Special Case of the Baptists” [pp. 141–142] is the exception that proves the rule. Here he credits a Baptist preoccupation with evangelism and doctrine for their comparative success.) The more important analytical category by far in this book is Protestant. Barton awkwardly speaks of “the Protestant church” and a “conversion to Protestantism” (p. 46, p. 69). Nevertheless, despite leaving some topics unexplored, Barton’s book breaks new ground in the field and has opened up space for future scholarship on the important tradition of Hispanic Protestantism.