

California's Cross: A Cultural History of Pentecostalism, Race, and Agriculture

by

Lloyd D. Barba

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(American Culture)
in the University of Michigan
2016

Doctoral Committee:

Assistant Professor Daniel Ramírez, Chair
Professor Edward J. Blum, San Diego State University
Professor Philip J. Deloria
Professor Silvia Pedraza

© Lloyd D. Barba 2016

For Francisco R. Barba

Acknowledgements

California's Cross is a historical inquiry influenced by wonderful people on the journey of writing this dissertation. While many of my closest family and friends imagined me cloistered away and writing feverishly in a cubicle, the reality is that *California's Cross* allowed me to meet and share ideas with some of the most collegial and intentional people I have ever crossed paths with. Many of the individuals acknowledged below do not know each other, but even as strangers to one another they have collectively impacted my work. In Georg Simmels' sense of the term, as a "stranger" you are not one who came today and left tomorrow, but you are one who came today and stayed for tomorrow, be it in support of my work or in ideas I have carried with me. I am indebted to you all for the fruition of this dissertation. This is intended to be the start for a much larger manuscript and archival project. May you stay for what tomorrow brings.

The journey of *California's Cross* began as a senior capstone paper guided by William Swagerty at the University of the Pacific. Thanks to care of three professors I reached that point in the first place. As a first-generation college student, I was placed under the mentorship of the late Caroline Cox, a professor whose excellence in teaching and mentorship to this day inspires me to become a suspenseful (she ended class with the best cliff hangers!) and thought-provoking (and those cliff hangers made you question everything!) lecturer. Two influential mentors came along the way. Alan Lenzi and Carrie Schroder piqued my interest in the academic study of religion and provided the kind of mentorship that every undergrad could only wish to have. I caught the contagion of archive fever from archivist Michael Wurtz and learned valuable archival sleuthing skills that I would later use extensively in the crafting of *California's Cross*.

I took the next major step into this journey of inquiry when I matriculated into the University of Michigan's Program (now Department) of American Culture along with a wonderful cohort. Garrett Felber, Katie Lennard, Jasmine Kramer, Jenny Kwak, and Eric Shih all came in with vastly different topics, but with a strong sense of solidarity. Jasmine's inquiry into the affect and material culture of Chicana/o religion provided an important sounding board for my work. I am also appreciative of the broader intellectual community of fellow students, many whom are now on wonderful career trajectories: Yamil Avivi, Frank Kelderman, Natalie Lira, Alex Olson (he was pretty much the godfather), Cavar Reid, and Joo Young Lee. A special thanks goes out to fellow Latina/o Studies scholar, Hannah Noel, for your invaluable collegiality. I often wonder how much I could have accomplished without the late night lucubrations that Jared Kane and Amir Maghsoodi endured with me. Sometime we learn best as teachers; I began to think critically about material culture in the American West alongside two indefatigable Graduate Student Instructors and fellow Cream Puff (total misnomer!) conquerors: Carolyn Dekker and Jen Peacock. Deep in heart of the West, whether hoping to spot rare 'animals' or discussing the sublimity of nature, Gregg Crane and Philip Deloria inspired us all us all live life deliberately. Other times, we learn best under great professors. In addition to my dissertation committee members, Kristin Hass, Mary Kelley, Colin Gunkel, and Matthew Countryman saw early drafts of *California's Cross* chapters in graduate seminars. Others, such as Greg Dowd have extended strong support. Behind the scenes every step of the way was the unrivaled Marlene Moore, the secret to each graduate student's success.

The Rackham Graduate School and Department of American Culture sponsored me to attend numerous academic conferences and seminars, and provided the means to establish important, lasting connections. I am especially thankful to those who have provided wonderful

feedback or have asked me to share *California's Cross* at various venues: Sammy Alfaro, Debbie Behro, Jeffery Brickle, Morgan "Ted" Cassady, Priscilla Cortez, Roy Fisher, Felipe Hinojosa, Andrea Johnson, Luis Leon, Nestor Medina, A.G. Miller, Leah Payne, and Donald Whitt III. The Young Scholars Symposium hosted by the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame provided a timely platform to workshop key concepts in *California's Cross*, so I especially wish to thank David Carrasco, Luis Fraga, Mireya Loza, Timothy Matovina, Pedro Morales, and Aida Ramos. Over the past two years I have had the privilege to share my work with colleagues affiliated with *la Red de Investigadores del Fenómeno Religioso en México*. Carlos Garma and Patricia Fortuny Loret de la Mola welcomed the panel of Chicanos. Daniel Ramírez invited Felipe Agredano, Erica Ramirez, and me to present our work alongside his own. The friendship that formed through hours and days of conversations with Erica and Felipe about all things Pentecostal is invaluable.

I could not have foreseen so early into the journey that writing the dissertation would lead to a greater public history project: the founding of the first-ever interdenominational Latino Pentecostal archival collection. Under the direction of Daniel Ramírez, I worked with a creative team to process massive collections donated to the David Allan Hubbard Library at Fuller Theological Seminary. I am especially appreciative for the Manuel Gaxiola, Manuel Vizcarra, and Eglá Montero families, who graciously entrusted us with materials now available for study. Archivist Adam Gossman offered the necessary support to bring the dusty records to life. Felipe Agredano, Claudia Rosales, and Abraham Ruiz played critical roles in processing the collections. Milca Montañez-Vizcarra's unwavering dedication to the project helped bring this vision to fruition. Shortly after the archival work at Fuller, I would continue the quest to track down materials at various collections. A few key individuals facilitated this process: Mary Sholler at

the Madera County Archives, Ismael Martin Del Campo II and Ismael Martin Del Campo III at the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus headquarter, Robin Johnston at the Center for the Study of Oneness Pentecostalism, the supportive staff at the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, and Kathleen Schmelling at the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University. My interviewees provided copies of material and leads essential to many of the chapters. I cannot say thank you enough to Concepción Ares, Manuel Perez, Marta Bracamontes, Howard Davis, Edna Frances, Eugeneina Manzano, Aniceto and Maria Ortiz, Gladine Newton, Demetrio Ramirez, Gilbert Samano, and Donna Siebold. Herminia “Minnie” Martinez’s search for public records on the early histories of Pentecostals leaders and churches has yielded priceless historical documents. I would also like to thank Jerry Powell for sharing his insight into California Pentecostalism caught in a transitional moment in the 1960s. Manuel Ares graciously provided me with historical materials and offered critical interpretations of Pentecostal history. I truly value our friendship that emerged over numerous lunches at Yen Du in Stockton, CA.

An outstanding dissertation committee guided me throughout all this. The actual writing of *California’s Cross* is only part of the story of how my committee members impacted my intellectual projects. From day one on campus Silvia Pedraza was committed to my success in the program. I quickly knew that her expertise on immigration and ethnicity would be a necessary component of my study, as the larger stories of migration and negotiation of identity became ideas I latched on to. She waited patiently as I entertained various specific dissertation topics and ultimately settled on *California’s Cross*. I could not have asked for a better conclusion to my first year of study: when I signed up to serve as a Graduate Student Instructor for Philip Deloria’s three-week course at a field station near Jackson Hole, Wyoming, I did not know that I would be in for the best teaching experience of my life and pick up important

conceptual tools of cultural studies from Phil's toolkit. He challenges me with questions that stretched my mind in ways I did not know it could be stretched (it's quite elastic now). I'll never forget the important discussions about representations, symbols, wilderness/wildness, and Prownian Analysis, as I hope he never forgets the inexhaustible currency of the 'launch meat' joke. As I began to draft early drafts of Mexican and Okie migrations, another fortuitous mentorship took place when I presented my work at a conference on Religion in California at UC Berkeley and Graduate Theological Union. Edward J. Blum served as the moderator for my panel. Ed's questions made clearer to me the potential of my archival sources. The more I wrote about the topic and began to engage with questions about race and religion, the more apparent it became that the overall dissertation would benefit from his expertise. In the acknowledgments of his recent book, *Migrating Faith*, Daniel Ramírez noted that if he could be half of the mentor that Grant Wacker was to him, that he would have accomplished a great thing. To say that Dan accomplished a great thing is a huge understatement. Dan's unwavering support and sustained guidance every step of the way (be it the numerous seminars and dozens of conferences, prelims, and the Latino Pentecostal archive project) have brought out the best in my overall work. Now if I can ever be a quarter of the mentor that he was to me, I will have accomplished a great thing. I humbly submit that I could not have chosen a better mentor.

As a last stop, I wish to acknowledge my families. Family assumes new meanings as one journeys from one site to the next. The family of William and Karen Scott provided the warmest hospitality and strongest support amid Michigan's cold winters for this stranger from sunny California who had only seen snow twice until his move. I am also indebted to the family of Joel and Karina Contreras who have always made me feel at home when I have felt furthest away. I have saved my immediate family for last since they best know what the completion of this

journey symbolizes. Ruth Leon, my love and light, offered much needed support throughout the process. Together we came across fascinating finds for my research at the Dust Bowl Days in Arvin and on our travels throughout California and along Route 66. My sister Fatima showed endless love and motivated me to accomplish this for the family. My brother Arlis was my biggest fan, always enthusiastic to listen to my report of great nuggets I found in the archives. Finally, I have dedicated this to my father Francisco, who gave me a love for history and cultures and taught me the values of love, innovation, and hard work. I have written this in honor and memory of my mother Candelaria.

While the dissertation is over, the larger journey has just begun. I invite those of you acknowledged here to come along and see what more becomes of *California's Cross*.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures	xii

Introduction: Crossing and Dwelling in California’s Fields.....1

Chapter

1. *Avivamientos, Aleluyas y Trabajo Agrícola: The Roots and Routes of Mexican-Pentecostalism in the Valleys of California (1909-1969)*.....27

Mexican Roots at the Azusa Street Revival: Liminality and the Limits of Narrative Recovery

Mexican Ramifications of the Azusa Street Revival

The Binational Branch: Mexico’s Borderlands Churches

Transplanting a Movement: The Imperial and Coachella Valleys

En La Obra De Dios No Hay Fronteras: *Apostólico* Farmworker Expansion

Grafting New Branches: The Central Valley

Roots and Offshoots: New Schisms and New Starts in the Salinas Valley

Conclusion: Pruning the Narrative?

2. The Dust District: The Roots and Routes of Okie Pentecostalism.....69

Urban Northern California
Bible Institutes
California: Domestic Controversies and Global Currents
Polyglot Revivals in California
The Stiff Shirts and Their (supposed) Starchy Pentecostalism

The Okie Problem/Opportunity
Marginalized and Evangelized
Aggressive Evangelism: Reaping the Harvest in the Central Valley
Prophets Accepted in their Own Cities
Everybody's a Preacher: The Okies and Their Oracles

Conclusion: Unsettled Dust

3. Farmworker Frames: *Apostólico* Counter Narratives in California's Valleys.....112

Limits of the Written Record

Roots of Under/Mis/representation

Photographing Farmworkers and Landscape

Landscape: Farms and Frames

Vagrant Male Workers and Families

Music of Migrants

Sanctified Landscapes: Baptisms and the Reinterpretation of Space

Tabernacles of Praise: Tents, *Carpas* and Proto-temples

Temples Made with Hands: A Borderlands Aesthetic of Architecture

Temples Decorations: Borderlands Artisanal Decor

Conclusion: Hidden Frames, Hidden Transcripts

4. Activists and *Aleluyas*: The Religious Politicization of Pentecostal Farmworkers.....156

Black and Brown Religious Protests: Parallel Struggles, Dissociated Memories

La Huelga and its Hierophanies: History and Hermeneutics of *Apostólico* Activism

Apostólico Influences on Chavez

Apostólico Apostasy?

Movement Ecumenism

Tijerina's Influences on *Apostólicos*

Conclusion: Destiny as Reform, Superdream as Rejection

5. Dust, Dreams, and Discipline: The Culture of the Dust District.....205

Recapturing Authority

Manipulating Marginalization: Authority and Archenemies

Holiness: Authority and Ardor

Hard Preaching: Authority and Austerity

Confrontation: Authority and Articulation

Hardliner Hymns: Authority in the Aural

(Conclusion) The Old Paths as Authority and Authenticity

Conclusion: New Homes and Old Boundaries.....242

Conservative Shifts: The Schismatic Stratum Surfaces

Old Boundaries

New Homes

Bibliography.....254

List of Figures

Figures

1. Migrant Mother	121
2. Stoop Laborers.....	121
3. Salinas <i>Apostólicos</i> Harvesting.....	128
4. Tulare Orchestra.....	133
5. Youth Band from Gonzalez.....	135
6. Maruffo Baptizes in the San Joaquin River.....	140
7. Valdez Baptizes in the San Joaquin River.....	140
8. Valdez Baptizes in the Kings River.....	141
9. Picturing the Natural Landscape.....	141
10. <i>Carpa</i> in Riverbank.....	145
11. Breaking U.S. Soil in Sanger.....	148
12. Building on U.S. Soil in Delano.....	148
13. Sanger Temple.....	149
14. Delano Temple.....	149
15. Artisanal Décor in Patterson Temple.....	150
16. Artisanal Décor in Grayson <i>Carpa</i>	150
17. <i>Tejido</i> for the Temple.....	151
18. <i>Tejido</i> for the <i>Santa Cena</i>	151
19. Children from Sanger Carry Banner in Tulare.....	152
20. <i>Hermanas</i> Remembered for Tamales.....	153

Introduction: Crossing and Dwelling in California's Fields

Enter the religious landscape of the San Joaquin Valley. The observations of an anthropologist, an Okie, and an *Apostólico* offer different windows into Pentecostals' (dis)placement in the era of the Mexican and Okie migrations:

“The Assembly of God is a Pentecostal sect, though the minister said, ‘We [the Assembly of God] don’t call ourselves Pentecostal because of their extremist attitude’...This schismatic Pentecostal group is made up entirely of laborers, of whom 82 percent are unskilled. Its ministers have always been lay people – farm laborers in fact. At first they met in a tent; now they have a dingy frame building”

-Walter Goldschmidt (1944)¹

“A man nearly scared me to death one time. We only had twelve in attendance. He knocked on my door, when I answered he said, ‘My name is Voar Shoemake, I’m from Oklahoma, and I came out here to see if this town has enough people for two churches’ My saints were all from Oklahoma, and I was scratching the barrel to get them! When he preached, all my people loved him, because they were Okies. He went up to Modesto and started a church.”

-Reverend Isaac (Ike) Hillard Terry (reflection on mid 1940s)²

“Allí en Tuare la iglesia sufrió los efectos de la división por José L. Martinez y sus seguidores...lo que aquellos hombres deseaban era gobernar la iglesia y pensaron que lo lograrían por medio de la división.”

[“There in Tulare the church suffered the effects of the division by Jose L. Martinez and his followers...what those men desired was to govern the church and they thought that they would achieve this by way of the division.”]

-Jose Ortega (reflecting on the late 1920s)³

“There are ten Christian churches for whites alone in the community, not counting a small Mormon group and the one or two unorganized religious groups which meet in private homes. Besides these, there are three Negro Organizations and there was at one

¹ Walter Goldschmidt “Class Denominationalism in Rural California Churches” *American Journal of Sociology* (Jan, 1944) 49:4, 353.

² Steven Carrier, ed., *A Man and Woman Passed This Way Blessed of God: The Life of Isaac Hillard (I.H.) Terry*, (self-published, 1996), 54.

³ Jose Ortega, *Mis Memorias en la Iglesia y la Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús* (Indio, CA: José Ortega, 1998), 78.

time a Mexican Pentecostal group...The schismatic Pentecostal church represents a still lower level on the scale of formality, a higher one on the scale of emotional appeal.”

-Walter Goldschmidt (1942)⁴

In this religious landscape deracinated migrants filled the pews and pulpits of Pentecostal churches. Agricultural workers, fulfilling a divine mandate, sowed and cultivated seeds of piety in “California cotton fields” (a region and term popularized by country music star Merle Haggard). And interpretations of these divine mandates often conflicted with one another. The above quotes capture the strife, division, and competition characteristic of revivalistic churches in the fields of California. The large influx of migrants intensified the urgency of Pentecostal evangelism in the sun-scorched fields of the Golden State. *California’s Cross* is a historical and cultural examination of how Okie and Mexican Pentecostals made homes and crossed boundaries in the context of the state’s “peculiar institution,” that is, industrial farming.⁵

Theoretical Framework: Sanctified Migrant Narratives

The migratory setting of this story hearkens to Tom Tweed’s pliable metaphor of movement in his definition of religion (*Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*).

*“Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries.”*⁶

Migrant workers built sacred homes and crossed numerous social-economic boundaries. Even the most migratory and the most schismatic found ways to carve out sacred space in the most opprobrious conditions. Anthropologists and sociologists in the 1940s paid particular attention to

⁴ Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1947), 124, 131.

⁵ McWilliams used this term to echo the South’s once “peculiar institution” of slavery. Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception*, (Peregrine Smith Inc.: Santa Barbara, 1976 –1949 original pub.), 150.

⁶ Thomas Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 54.

the enthusiastic and emotional joy of Pentecostal services. For University of Southern California doctoral student James Wilson this served as a marker of disinherited folk.⁷ In 1942 Walter Goldschmidt, a student of labor and migration scholar Paul Taylor (UC Berkeley), pointed to the proliferation of Pentecostal churches as evidence of industrial farming's undesirable social outcomes. In spite of these unfavorable descriptions, a host of transcripts, biographies, and periodicals allows us to see how Mexican and Okie Pentecostals made sacred space in the "dingy buildings" of their schismatic/deprived churches. In these tents and storefronts, they carved out a social space to intensify joy and confront suffering. They regularly appealed to the divine (healing, spirit world, and authority) to cross territorial, doctrinal, and political boundaries. As we will see in chapter 3, Mexican Pentecostals built homes by connecting their vast network of congregations located throughout California's agricultural valleys. Okie Pentecostals built homes in California and subsequently altered the ethos of Pentecostalism by their sheer numbers and indefatigable attempts to re-capture some semblance of authority. Tweed's metaphorically apropos definition allows historians to locate religion among the state's dispossessed migrating Pentecostals.

In this social context of stratified labor and denominational status, how could landless Mexicans wield any sort of power in the fields that entrapped them and symbolized their bondage to a colonial labor system?⁸ Similarly, where in the state's "peculiar institution" could Okies (stripped of land) find the space to carve out a once familiar world of authority? I found that the memoirs and interviews of migrant Mexicans and Okies evidence how they leveraged some power in their diurnal activities of work and church, the two major social spheres of

⁷ Wilson drew from Elmer Clark in *The Small Sects of America* (1937) and predated Robert Mapes Anderson's *Vision of the Disinherited* (1969). This was the first scholarly monograph on Pentecostalism.

⁸ Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 39

everyday life. Work in the fields represented a profane and physically trying experience, while “church” symbolized sacred and spiritual/emotional reprieve. In the fields of California the symbiotic relationship between these two all-consuming social arenas played out as such: physical work in agriculture reinforced their base social status which generally limited their options for places of worship to Pentecostal churches; Mexican and Okie Pentecostal churches were overwhelmingly comprised of agricultural workers, and in these churches they reminded each other about the divine mandate to evangelize; their work in the fields became—in Pentecostal parlance—their “fields” of evangelism. This cycle constituted everyday life. My exploration of quotidian practices and forms of power in this context draws from the work of Michel de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday Life*) and James Scott (*Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*). My reconstruction of Pentecostal everyday life and temperament is informed by articles, periodicals, memoirs, biographies and interviews. Grant Wacker’s study of Pentecostal culture in *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* provided an additional theoretical optic through which to focus on aspects that I found to be distinctly Pentecostal. His argument that the success of Pentecostalism lay in the ability of its believers to hold in productive balance primitivist (*otherworldly*) and pragmatic (*thisworldly*) impulses, proves true with respect to Mexican and Okie Pentecostals; this balance—or tension—gave them staying power in the Central Valley for many years.

Conservative Ethnic Migrations and Schismatic Strata

How is it that Mexican and Okie Pentecostals endured and overcame the opprobrious conditions of agricultural work to become a staying force in the Central Valley? Goldschmidt was not alone in suggesting that Pentecostal churches in the Southern San Joaquin valley

welcomed (and then became) mostly Okie.⁹ Pentecostal churches comprised the lower half of a larger sociological model characterized by what he termed “denominational stratification.” Even the Assemblies of God, which he identified as occupying a separate stratum (positioned above the schismatic groups), had their fissures across socio-economic lines. I proffer the term “schismatic strata” to denote those independent and confrontational revivalistic believers relegated to a lower status owing to a combination (or all) of social factors which primarily included race, class, heterodoxy, and social erasure. I offer the term “strata” in the plural fully recognizing that the marginalization of “schismatic” Mexican Pentecostals was based on *all* the factors; therefore, they would have occupied the lowest stratum. This “schismatic strata” is what later provided the bedrock for a larger phenomenon I term “conservative ethnic migrations.”

In the 1930s, deprivation theory postulated that groups like disinherited Pentecostals would vanish when their members achieved relative prosperity. Instead of resulting in its decline, the modest prosperity that came first to Okies in the 1950s and Mexican farmworkers in the 1970s continued to bolster the growth of Pentecostalism. My research question has broader implications on how the Central Valley became a seemingly conservative religious (and even political) bastion. On the so-called “Left Coast” how is it that conservative religious beliefs enjoyed such prominence and perdurability in the Central Valley? I first began to untangle this by considering the religious ecology of the Valley. The conservatism was not strictly a feature of Pentecostalism. I observed that Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalian, and others maintained a relatively conservative ethos compared to their counterparts in other regions of the state and beyond California’s state line. To further complicate matters, how do we understand this

⁹ Other researchers includes James Bright Wilson, “Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations among Certain Agricultural Workers in the Central Valley of California, US, 1944” (PhD, Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1942); Walter Goldschmidt “Class Denominationalism, 348-355; Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1947), 131-133.

conservative ethos in a region where Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta spearheaded the ostensibly progressive politics of farmworkers' rights and unionism? *Apostólico* interactions with Chavez and Tijerina complicate the simple conservative-progressive binary. Legacies of migration and agricultural work are deeply embedded in this religious and political ecology. Studies on the Dust Bowl "Okies" and Mexican migrants revealed that Pentecostals numbered highly among these migrants. And therein I found my entry point in my attempt to begin to answer the larger question of how the Central Valley was formed into a conservative religious bastion. While Mexican and Okie Pentecostals alone are not accountable for creating and maintaining a conservative ethos, they do epitomize what I term "California's conservative ethnic migrations."

Historiography

The untangling of threads of religion, migration, class, and race in the fields of the Central Valley is a study without precedent. To be sure, the topics of Mexican and Okie farmworkers have received considerable attention, but Mexican and Okie Pentecostal narratives remain somewhat obscured. Daniel Ramirez's recent monograph *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century* (2015) offers a rich historical investigation into the music and migratory flows that shaped the contours of Mexican Pentecostalism in the Borderlands. The cartography within his study necessarily includes the host of everyday Pentecostal migrant farmworkers who built a transnational network of music, rituals, belief, and knowledge production. Unlike Ramirez who focuses on Oneness Pentecostalism (which he terms Apostolicism), Gaston Espinosa examines Latino (mostly Mexican and Puerto Rican) Pentecostalism in the larger Trinitarian networks that either stayed

with or separated from the Assemblies of God. Espinosa fleshed out details regarding the ministerial trajectories of early converts (especially participants in Pentecostalism's most renowned event, the Azusa Street Revival) in *Latino Pentecostals in America: Faith and Politics in Action* (2014). At times these two monographs venture on source materials that concern the valleys of California. Ramirez's monograph integrates oral histories and music, and deftly draws from cultural history in order to recover new life stories and locate agency within these. These historical studies and approaches inform my work.

The scholarship on Okie Pentecostalism emerges from doctoral studies and interviews with the migrants during the decades of greatest hardship. The various essays on the nature and social consequences of farm labor written by Paul Taylor in the 1930s provided eyewitness accounts, interviews transcripts, and a remarkable example of "on-the-ground" scholarship. Taylor's activist scholarship also launched Walter Goldschmidt into the fields of the San Joaquin Valley to conduct his comparative study on the sustainability of large-scale farming (Wasco) and small-family farming (Dinuba) communities. Goldschmidt categorized Pentecostals as a socially chaotic/unstable group in his notion of "denominational stratification" in his 1944 study. In this sociological model Christian denominations fell along very clear lines of socioeconomic status differentiation. The Assemblies of God fell into the bottom half of the strata and below them lay schismatic Pentecostals (this includes independent and Oneness Pentecostals). I examine the longer historical roots and culture of those relegated to the lower half. (Moreover, I later contend that Mexican Pentecostals would have occupied an even lower stratum than the schismatic white Pentecostals did.) James Bright Wilson's dissertation chapter, "Pentecostal Sects and the Agricultural Workers," offers invaluable transcripts and quotes which offer a rare snapshot into the everyday lives and capture the beliefs of Pentecostal Okies. Most importantly, James

Gregory skillfully combined his own interviews and archival research with Wilson's observations to formulate a chapter on Pentecostals and Baptists in *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (1989).

Gregory's work adds to the thick scholarly and literary canon on the Dust Bowl and the Okies.¹⁰ Since 1939 the Dust Bowl and the related phenomenon of "Okie" migration captured the attention of historians, novelists, literary scholars, photographers, and biographers. Gregory's scholarship proved best at combining cultural with environmental and economic historical methods. His chapter "Special unto God" fleshed out the phantasmal references of a seemingly ubiquitous religious force noted by Walter Stein in *California and the Dust Bowl Migration* (1973) and Walter Goldschmidt in *As You Sow* (1947). Stein put it plainly when he wrote "The average Okie migrant belonged to a small highly sectarian church of the "hell-fire and damnation variety."¹¹ Worded differently, Gregory noted the "stern-minded religiosity" of Pentecostals and some Baptists. Most recently Darren Dochuk demonstrated how plain-folk religious migrants carried their southern errand into the spiritual wilderness of southern California. He shows how the overall larger migration of southern whites especially from Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas transformed southern California by creating a politically conservative bastion. The characters in his historical narrative are the urban and suburban counterparts to my study on Okies in the fields of northern California. Dochuk's untangling of southern ethos and attempts to capture authority in California inform my interpretation of Okie Pentecostals' evangelization efforts.

¹⁰ Scholarly and literary titles include: Paul Bonnefield, *The Dust Bowl: Men, Dirt, and Depression* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979); Timothy Egan, *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of those who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl* (New York: Mariner Books, 2006); James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Dan Morgan *Rising in the West: The True Story of an "Okie" Family from the Great Depression through the Reagan Years* (New York: 1992); John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Penguin Book, 2002 – 1939 original publication); Walter Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹¹ Walter Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 168-169.

My work further draws from scholarship on broader topics of Okie and Mexican agricultural work. The former enjoys widespread representation in novels and memoirs while the latter has been the topic of more recent academic study. Studies on Mexican migrant labor generally focus on the Bracero Program (1942-1964) and the effects of xenophobic legal measures such as the Mexican Repatriation (1929-1936) and Operation Wetback (1954).¹² When Mexicans began to comprise the bulk of intensive-crop laborers, economists and anthropologists soon took notice. Paul Taylor undertook an “on-the-ground” study from 1927 to 1929. The resultant three-volume *Mexicans Labor in the United States* did not meet with universal approbation; some of his colleagues at UC Berkeley criticized Taylor for spending valuable UC publications funds to publish extensive interviews with obscure Mexicans.¹³ Manuel Gamio, who trained under Franz Boas, took an academic detour to from his anthropological work in Mesoamerica and conducted similar types of interviews in the industrial fields and elsewhere. His *The Mexican Immigrant: A Life Story* (1931), like Taylor’s work, preserved invaluable transcripts of oral histories and academic interpretations. (He published this as a companion follow-up volume to his more analytical work in 1930 titled *Mexican Immigration to the United States*.) Paul Taylor’s numerous articles would soon establish him as the leading authority on agricultural work in California. His 1939 book, *American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*, (co-authored with Dorothea Lange) rode the wave of popularity generated by John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck’s book quickly became a *cause*

¹² Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Don Mitchell, *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Daniel Cletus, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers 1870-1941*, (Cornell University Press, 1981); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Bracero Story*, (McNally and Lofton, 1964);

¹³ Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 234-235.

célèbre. Most notably the Kern County board of supervisors summarily banned *The Grapes of Wrath* from public libraries and schools. The banning and burning of the book sparked even more interest in the phenomenon of the Okies' and further shrouded Mexican workers into the shadows of scholarship.

Pentecostals seemed to be everywhere in California, but, ironically, generally only made cameo appearances in the literature. I have provided a broader context for some episodes in which they have appeared in scholarly literature and popular representations. For example, the same camp popularized by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* was populated with proselytizing Pentecostals. Steinbeck portrayed Jim Casy as a lapsed preacher. In actuality the Joad family (which Casy joined on the journey to California) was based on the Tatham family from Silisaw, Oklahoma, who amassed wealth after their stint in the fields.¹⁴ The ubiquity of *minor references* to Pentecostals in the literature on Okies challenged me to further excavate the roots, routes, and culture of Okies. The even more obscure (or as evident in the Goldschmidt quote, phantasmal) reference to Mexican Pentecostals posed a greater challenge. These phantasmal and at times untraceable references to Mexican Pentecostals appear in important works. Take, for example, the response of Manuel Gamio's 1926 interviewee:

“One of the sects which has made the greatest headway is that of the so-called Apostolics, which the Mexicans call the Aleluyas. The preachers of that sect say that they are the sons of Christ and they heal by means of prayer. They are the ones that exploit the Mexicans the most, for the Mexicans think that these preachers have special faculties and that they will be healed by means of prayer.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 222; Dan Morgan *Rising in the West: The True Story of an “Okie” Family from the Great Depression through the Reagan Years* (New York: 1992).

¹⁵ Manuel Gamio, *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story* (Chicago, IL: The University of California Press, 1931), 223. Ramirez also uses this datum to point to the growth of Mexican Oneness Pentecostalism.

Gamio's interviewee described the phenomenon in Texas. But at the time of the interview, the seat of power and concentration of churches for the denomination in question ("Apostolic") lay in California's fields, including those in Central California. This dissertation paints a portrait of the broader social milieu of Steinbeck's Pentecostal Okies and the cultural productions of the "*Aleluyas*."

Chapter Outlines and Definitions for California Agriculture, Pentecostalism and Race

Mexican and Pentecostal Okies converged in the same fields, but produced different strains of conservative Pentecostalism and demonstrated varying methods of social contestation. The following five chapters compare the two historical trajectories which overlapped chronologically. The dissertation is divided into two parts. The first two chapters trace the roots and routes of Mexican and Okie Pentecostalism, in the order of their arrival into the San Joaquin Valley. The remaining three chapters examine their cultural production. In chapters 3 and 4 I examine how Mexican Pentecostals produced counter narratives, as rendered in photographs (chapter 3) and their involvement with marquee Chicano leaders (chapter 4). I then return to Okie praxis. Okie social subjugation was short-lived; with the assistance of federal and state governments they largely lifted themselves up from the dust of discrimination. This did not require visionary leadership like that provided by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta for Mexican farmworkers. This difference is understandable. Mexican laborers continued to constitute the majority of agricultural laborers while Okies largely left the fields. Thus, Okie cultural production played out and functioned much differently. Mexican Pentecostal cultural productions, on the other hand, articulated a clear counter-narrative of religious belonging and political resistance vis-à-vis xenophobic laws and racialized discourses. Okie cultural production

dwelt on reasserting cultural authority; given their inability to initially find a respectable place in society, they deployed a rhetoric of authority and reinforced hardliner stances in a social arena (the church) where they could leverage some power. The conclusion offer ways of thinking about how the two overlapped spatially and thereby reinforced their conservative ethnic migration. The dissertation moves across denominational lines with a primary focus on the Oneness Pentecostals since they evidently comprised the very bottom stratum of Goldschmidt's study and the highly sectarian Pentecostals of Wilson's exploration.

Agricultural Nomenclature

The two chapters on the roots and routes both end in the Central Valley. The Central Valley is the name for the one larger valley comprised of the San Joaquin Valley (south) and Sacramento Valley (north). The events and evidence in this dissertation primarily draws from the former but it is necessarily informed by other valleys in the southern (Imperial, Coachella, and San Bernardino) and northern parts of the state (Sacramento, Salinas and Pajaro). Seasonal work from one valley to the next characterized migrant agricultural labor and the nature of work changed little from one valley to the next. The most common and distinct feature about California's farms was the abundance of "*intensive-labor crops*." These required manual labor to harvest and thus attracted large numbers of workers from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. For this reason I trace the cultivation of intensive crops and the subsequent flourishing of Pentecostal congregations.

Pentecostal Nomenclature: Trinitarians, Oneness Pentecostalism and Apostólicos

The largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States hold maintain a belief in the trinitarian nature of God and water baptism performed “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit” as part of their denominational creeds. The Assemblies of God is the largest predominantly white Pentecostal denomination that maintains these historical Christian doctrines. In 1916 about one-third of its ministers defected from the Assemblies of God and organized the early Oneness Pentecostal movement. Biographies and eyewitness testimonies inform us that the hostilities never waned. White Oneness Pentecostals point to 1913 as the definitive year of the restoration of their beliefs. At the worldwide Camp Meeting in Arroyo Seco, California, Canadian evangelist Robert McAlister suggested that the phrase “in name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38) should be invoked at baptisms instead of the traditional formula of “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This precipitated three years of debate over the proper (read: “more biblical”) performative language at baptisms, which, in turn, pointed to larger doctrinal implications on the very nature of God. Jesus-name baptism proponents began to rethink the meaning of the Trinity. They proffered explanations for the Oneness (Modalist) doctrine, that God expressed himself in three modes and was one person. Unlike Trinitarians who maintain that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are coexistent, coeternal, and coequal, they propounded that God manifested himself as the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit who deals with humanity today. Oneness Pentecostals did not deny that the Trinitarian baptismal formula was a historical ritual but they rejected it as the belief and practice of first-generation and first-century Christians. The difference in the proper baptismal formula caused the initial rifts, but the rejection of the Trinity created a gulf too wide to bridge. This dissertation shows, however, that Okie Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostals shared cultural attributes and practices that made them appear more alike than dissimilar.

The schismatic nature and poor record-keeping of white Pentecostal denominations poses problems for ascertaining the denominational affiliation of many a church or minister. In California both Trinitarian and Oneness groups abounded, but the former outnumbered the latter. These denominations include those with deep historical roots in the Central Valley: the Assemblies of God (Trinitarian); the Pentecostal Church Incorporated and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, Oneness denominations which merged in 1945 to form the United Pentecostal Church. The lines of presumed orthodoxy were clearly drawn in incidents of public confrontation and churches leveraged misnomers against their theological foes. Oneness Pentecostals appear with various signifiers in the on-the-ground literature of Wilson and Goldschmidt. The epithet “Jesus-only” found much currency in the Central Valley. In response to this term, Oneness Pentecostals often quipped that they were not Jesus-only; rather they self-identified as “Jesus-everything.” For the sake of consistency and neutrality I have used either Oneness-Pentecostal or Jesus-name. They used the latter in the names of churches, an intentional nomenclature. Jesus Name Tabernacle, for example, was unmistakably Oneness Pentecostal. For Oneness Mexican Pentecostals I have selected a different designation.

Mexican Oneness Pentecostals forged an almost entirely autonomous trajectory. In fact they point to a different origin point of Jesus-name baptism which predates the 1913 Arroyo Seco meeting. The semi-centennial history (1966) of the *Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus* (AAFCJ) points to 1909 as the movement’s first known baptism in Jesus name. By 1912 others, too, were converted. A significant watershed moment occurred in 1916 when migrant laborer Marcial de la Cruz baptized Antonio Nava, the eventual patriarch of the movement. That milestone has long been declared the genesis of the (Mexican) Apostolic movement. I have chosen to use the most widespread untranslated signifier: *Apostólicos*. (The translated term

“Apostolic” becomes too muddled by other groups appropriating the term, as this includes many Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal groups.) Dominant religious groups hurled epithets at them because of their heterodoxy and noisy nature. Some called the noisy bunch, “*Aleluyas*” as exemplified by Manuel Gamio’s interviewee. But they turned the pejorative into a source of pride, as many stigmatized groups have done. Therefore, I have not hesitated to employ the term in its appropriate context as it pertains to the enthusiastic worship that accompanied stentorian music. Ramirez demonstrates the rich cultural lore of *Apostólico* music and how music assumes an important role in conversions. The date as to when *Apostólicos* began to articulate a modalist position is unclear, but their early Jesus-name baptisms certainly places them within the Jesus-name camp well before 1916 when their black and white Oneness counterparts defected from the Assemblies of God ranks and *Apostólicos*’ longtime leader was baptized.

Racial Nomenclature: Landscape and the Making of Disputed Whiteness and Stoop

Laborers

Okies comprised a second-class citizenry. Many of their white non-Okie contemporaries acknowledged that Okies had been treated with a similar disdain that many held towards Mexican, Filipinos, and blacks. One Bakersfield movie theatre pointed “N***** and Okies upstairs.” Acts like these opened greater fissures in the California “racial fault lines” discussed by Tomas Almaguer.¹⁶ Okies, in turn and in the same spirit of racism, sought to assert their whiteness as a way to extricate themselves from the second-class status that had been ascribed to them because of their work in the fields.¹⁷ Okies entered the fields out of desperation; in doing so

¹⁶ Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Gerald Haslam, *The Other California* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 1993), 105-111.

they dug themselves into a class of “stoop laborers,” a social proximity that infuriated them.¹⁸ This complicated eugenic notions of the interwar period that offered biologically determined interpretations about race. Okies seemed out of place in this racialized structure, and government and charitable organizations hurried to remedy this.

In biographies, memoirs, periodicals, and histories, writers often used the terms “Okie” and “Dust Bowlers” synonymously. All “Dust Bowlers” were “Okies” but not all Okies were Dust Bowlers. The popularized “myth” of the Dust Bowls’ disastrous effects clouded the categories. Take, for example, Gerald Haslam’s study which accounts for so-called “Okies” hailing from the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.¹⁹ Generally speaking, the term applied to any white migrant from the Great Plains that entered California’s industrial farms. At a squatters camp in Kern County, Paul Taylor observed that the 150 families drove in on jalopies with license plates from “Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arizona, California, Texas, Nebraska, Mississippi, Utah, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington.”²⁰ Thus, in the application of the term, the place of origin mattered little compared to their occupational destination in the fields. I reserve the term “Okie” for those from the western south, as other have done.²¹ Gregory and Stein use the term Dust Bowlers with the caveat that only few (six percent according to Gregory) actually took refuge in California as a direct result of the Dust Storms. Stein lays out the various economic reasons that spurred the Okie migration into California; their inability to find profitable work lay among the chief

¹⁸ Allison Varzally, *Making a Non-White America: Californians Coloring Outside Ethnic Lines, 1925-1955*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 27-29; Sarah Wald, “The Nature of Citizenship: Race, Citizenship, and Nature in Representations of Californian Agricultural Labor” (PhD Dissertation, Brown University, 2009), 31-37.

¹⁹ Haslam, *The Other Californians*, 106.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Stein, *Dust Bowl*, 6-7.

reasons. Nevertheless, the novel and film *The Grapes of Wrath* etched Okie and Dust Bowler as synonyms in the national lexicon. I use the larger Dust Bowl “myth” when describing Okies social and religious expectations that were based on an orderly society.

Chapter 1

Avivamientos, Aleluyas y Trabajo Agrícola: The Roots and Routes of Apostólicos in the Valleys of California (1909-1969)

Chapters 1 and 2 of the dissertation present of the roots and routes of Mexican and Okie Pentecostalism, respectively. I begin chapter 1 with an exploration of Mexican participation at the historic Azusa Street Revival in order to establish key conversion dates of leaders who shaped the *Apostólico* movement in southern California’s agricultural fields. Chapter 1 also highlights the challenges in recovering a deep textual history of marginalized figures. I examine oral histories, memoirs and denominational accounts in order to locate *Apostólico* roots (Mexico) and routes (California’s Valleys). I trace the cultivation of arable valleys that introduced an influx of workers and facilitated *Apostólicos*’ subsequent evangelization efforts. Following early revivals in the Los Angeles area, the *Apostólico* movement took root, beginning in the late 1910s, in the Imperial Valley, Mexico’s *Valle de Mexicali*, and north of the Salton Sea in the Coachella Valley. The movement’s early leaders were converted and/or underwent ministerial training in this border region. Preachers and migrant laity traveled seasonally from one field to the next. In 1929 the Central Valley assumed prominence in the state’s agricultural sector, and, not coincidentally, we find the concomitant formation of the fledgling denomination's incipient Northern District, which included everything north of the Tehachapi Pass (more popularly referred to as the Grape Vine). Life histories from the Central Valley attest to how agricultural work informed the identity of the movement and directed its routes of evangelization.

In conditions of little to no power, Mexican farmworkers leveraged power along different registers. And herein lays the opportunity to explore how *Apostólicos* re-envisioned the landscape: how they interpreted the more abundant resources and quotidian labor as divinely mandated; how they carved out sacred space in the most profane places and opprobrious conditions; how out of the soil of California’s “peculiar institution” they grew their very own autonomous religious denomination. Somewhere beneath the nationally and locally projected narratives—whether the glamorous landscapes portrayed by agribusiness or the gloomy on-the-ground portrayals by Depression-era photojournalists—lays an even more hidden story of a thriving cultural *movement*. (Here I emphasize the word movement in order to articulate the making of landscape and sacred space as well as the movement of bodies and the mobilization of music, architecture, handmade goods, and heterodox beliefs.)

Chapter 2

The Dust District: The Roots and Routes of Okie Pentecostalism

Okies did not etch out their distinctive culture on a *tabula rasa*. In fact, white Pentecostalism in the valley represents a palimpsest. Okie Pentecostals inscribed their narratives over the narrative of an older pioneering generation of Pentecostals who did not hold Okie hardline stances on soteriology (the doctrine of salvation). This chapter examines the social and cultural context of white Pentecostalism in California before the arrival of the Okies and also accounts for the rift between Okies and their white counterparts in the state. Okies occupied a distinct discriminated class category (they did not fit in California) and brought with them a unique southern ethos of austerity and authority. Thus, they leveraged their whiteness along a different register. The demographic shift of white plain folk from the western south and the subsequent boom of no-compromise Pentecostal churches is the process that created what I have

termed the Dust District. In religious terms this no-compromise *weltanschauung* manifested itself as “stern-minded morality.” Their whiteness allowed them to imbed their stern-minded morality into the larger religious landscape.

Chapter 3 **Farmworker Frames: *Apostólico* Counter Narratives**

The national narratives and representations created around the Okie problem obscured the longer (and deeper) struggle of Mexican farmworkers. In ways similar to how hegemonic discourses placed Native Americans as part of nature, representations of Mexican workers situated them as part of the landscape of industrial farming. The paradoxical relationship between the projected beauty of the landscape (symmetrically lined groves, vineyards, and fields) and the brute realities of the laborers (whose hands beautified the landscape) shaped California’s “peculiar institution.” Carey McWilliams diagnosed these brute realities as the “cancer which lies beneath the beauty, richness, and fertility.”²² Landscape is comprised of more than what met the eyes in the photos of the Farm Security Administration, Resettlement Administration, and the Office of Wartime Information. A photographic archive of the on-the-ground facts (actors and objects of everyday life) from fields where Pentecostals labored broadens the typical idea of “landscape”.

On-the-ground researchers and historians point to Pentecostalism (or Holy Rollerism) as the most common religious affiliation of Okies, but the photographic representation does not reflect this; the shameful legacy of the calamitous fall into the rank of fieldworkers was a chapter of the migration that few wished to remember. Okies fancied themselves to be out of place next to racialized fieldworkers of another race. Ironically, *Apostólico* workers did not share these sentiments of shame. Most researchers rightly assumed/assessed that Mexican farmworkers were

²² McWilliams, *The Great Exception*, 150.

Catholic and took little notice of non-Catholic religious traditions in the fields. *Apostólicos* – stoop laborers subsumed in to the larger landscape – constructed a counter-narrative against assumptions regarding their cultural vacuity (that migrants would leave no mark on the long term culture) and religious homogeneity (that they were all Catholic).

Cultural geographer Don Mitchell examined the junctures between representations and on-the-ground facts of landscape in his social interpretations of agriculture in *Lie of the Land*. After thoroughly dismantling the built-up image of an idyllic California dreamland bearing lush fruits and hearty vegetables in crop-combed fields, Mitchell proffered a view of landscape that peered into the quotidian struggles of proletarian farmworkers against powerful growers. This constant struggle of ethnic workers began in the 1870s when the transcontinental railroad connected the far West to the rest of the nation and refrigeration railcars allowed perishable orchard fruit to be transported for longer distances and times. The subsequent expansion of California irrigation systems and water diversions further facilitated the growth of crops and the beginning of ethnic labor exploitation in the valley. Social critics bemoaned the widening disparities between the representations and the on-the-ground facts. By the 1930s, photojournalists attempted to highlight the economic roots and social fruits of said incommensurabilities. But, as mentioned, they shed more light on the struggle of white workers in the “landscape.”²³ More than a canvas to hold one's gaze and project ideas of idyllic tranquility, Mitchell reminds us how landscape is “integral to an ongoing ‘hidden’ discourse,

²³ In this instance landscape is best thought of as “a natural scene mediated by culture...[it is] both represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity in the package.” W.J.T. Mitchell quoted in, Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 2.

underwriting the legitimacy of those who exercise power in society.” [emphasis in original]²⁴

Power is what lent the state’s landscape “a flavor that is strictly Californian.”²⁵

Disproportionate power marked California’s landscapes. Laborers toiled in farm “factories,” gigantic sites of production that, in Carey McWilliams’ trenchant description, legally “masquerade[ed] as farms...enjoy[ing] complete immunity from virtually every form of state and federal social legislation.”²⁶ Agriculture and industry were one and the same. An interlocking network of farming associations, bureaus, and organizations functioned to regulate the conditions and wages of employment. They colluded to wield power over lives. The most insidious of these measures resorted to the use of undercover agents and provocateurs and strike breakers.²⁷ The possibility for attaining any power seemed bleakest in labyrinthine fields, groves and vineyards, in which subaltern farmworkers were forced to find their way toward social and physical wellbeing. However, this chapter argues that photographs offer us a window to look into how *Apostólicos* made homes and crossed boundaries in their rituals and creation of sacred space. These photographs captured resilient acts, which force a rereading of sites of exploitation (e.g., the fields as providing the dirt to build adobe temples), call for an alternative interpretation of the natural and built environment (e.g., the grower-controlled rivers and canals as sites of sanctified water baptisms), and necessitate a reconceptualization of sacred space (e.g., the church kitchen as a site of spiritual community building for women). This reading of *Apostólico* arts offer a fresh way of reading hidden transcripts and power in the fields of California. Sacred music and charismatic leadership eventually set *Apostólicos* in a place where they could cross paths with Chicano leaders.

²⁴ Kenneth Olwig quoted in Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 2.

²⁵ McWilliams, *The Great Exception*, 170.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

“Activists and *Aleluyas*: The Religious Politicization of Pentecostal Farmworkers”

The ubiquity and agency of Mexican Pentecostals are evidenced by the fact that even in their relative obscurity, they played formative roles in the early careers of activists Cesar Chavez and Reies López Tijerina. Cesar Chavez queried as he drove past a Pentecostal church in Los Angeles, “why do all the people come there so much [?] It must be because they like to praise God—and to sing.” From this fleeting drive-by encounter, Chavez formulated a key to the successful organization of farmworkers. Although he happened upon the charismatic singing and worship in an urban setting, he implemented his new plan in the northern valleys of California where Chavez again happened upon a vibrant network of Mexican-Pentecostal churches comprised mostly of farmworkers. As a testament to the vibrancy of the Mexican religious community on the ground, I look to Chavez and his organization of Mexican agricultural laborers.

Two recent texts acknowledge the connection between Chavez and Pentecostals but do not explore its broader significance. Luis Leon’s *The Political Spirituality of Cesar Chavez: Crossing Religious Borders* offers us a complicated and more complete view of Chavez’s political engagement with members of and beyond the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, a treatment of Pentecostal engagement is found wanting. In *Farm Workers and the Churches: The Movement in California and Texas* Alan Watt painted a portrait of Chavez that involved a multitude and denominations, and briefly described (mostly in footnotes) the role of the Madera Apostolic-Pentecostal Church. Further primary source in the special collections at Wayne State University’s Walter P. Reuther Library indicate that *Apostólico* members contributed in more

ways than joining as Chavez's first members. They contributed a meeting space and drew upon their rich musical tradition to compose the Farmworker Movement's first ballad (*corrido*).

Similarly, the land reforms that Tijerina sought appealed to various Mexican workers. Among these were displaced and landless Mexican agricultural workers. In *King Tiger: The Religious Vision of Reies López Tijerina*, Rudy Busto apotheosized Tijerina into the pantheon of Pentecostal thinkers. He portrayed Tijerina as a zealous charismatic leader of the Chicano Movement who drew from his training in Pentecostal hermeneutics to interpret his "superdreams". The Oral histories and interviews I conducted in the last year have revealed a clear relationship between Oneness-Pentecostals and Tijerina's movement.

The narrative conveyed by material in the personal holdings of former Pentecostal farmworkers has been obscured by three prominent representations of rural life: the faces of impoverished Dust Bowl migrants, the faceless ethnic minorities performing "stoop" labor, and the United Farm Workers Movement, which culminated with the Catholic-inspired pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. While all these certainly do reflect the realities of farm labor, they fail to reflect the larger scope of resilience and active creative genius that farmworkers sustained. The vibrant cultural production in music, architecture, and homemade goods placed Mexican Pentecostals on the radar of Chicano activists.

Chapter 5

Dust Dreams and Discipline: The Culture of the Dust District

Okies quickly extricate themselves from the fields. By 1952 the *Bakersfield Californian* noted the disappearance of the old Model-A jalopies and the squatter camps. Okies only passed

through this extreme short-term poverty thanks to the succor of federal and state aid, wartime industry opportunities, and the larger assumption that intensive-crop labor was simply ill-suited for white Americans. Therefore, white counterparts of Chavez or Tijerina never emerged to launch radical national campaigns to ameliorate the conditions of Okies in the fields; they were believed to not belong there, so Okies were not seeking labor reforms as much as they sought a different sort of labor altogether. Nevertheless, the stigma of agricultural work, their thick accents, and unique idioms still marked Okies as “Other.” The struggles they faced as second-class citizens infused them with a resolve to return to respectability and to recapture something they felt they had lost.

The homogenous social world of Okie Pentecostalism offered the space to nurture Okie religious thought. Researchers of the era noted that Okie agricultural workers comprised the majority of Pentecostal and schismatic churches. Some offered insight into the beliefs and customs of how the social world was reordered in a sacred-social context. In this chapter I compare the observations made by researchers to personal accounts and find that a longing and mission to “recapture authority” undergirded Okie Pentecostals’ preaching. They made sense of their social world by mechanisms which reinforced a notion of something great and lost; they called this “the old paths.” The rejection of Okies from ‘respectable’ white churches (the non-schismatic strata) sent them into Pentecostal pews along with other field workers and unskilled laborers. Here they concocted enemies: those in churches they could not access and their fellow Pentecostals who did not enforce authoritative measures to same or similar degrees. These authoritative measures rested on toughness –that is, on one’s ability to firmly demarcate and guard boundaries. I then explore how this discursive world of authority rested on a concept they called “holiness” and was reinforced by “Hard Preaching” and “a Culture of Confrontation.”

Finally, they sang “Hardliner Hymns” as a way to reinforce group identity. They couched praxis in the language of “old paths.” The older (home, authority, ownership, influence) was assumed to be better. The long term consequences of this is briefly explored in the conclusion.

Conclusion: New Homes and Old Boundaries

The motto wielded by a Pentecostal Church in Fresno, “The Church that Tells it Like It Is Because We Care,” embodied the *zeitgeist* of Holy Ghost preaching on holiness well after the Okie migration in the 1970s. By this time, the Bracero Program had ended and non-Catholic Mexican churches lay scattered across the Valley. Mexican workers disproved the myth that they were “birds of passage,” as they made the Central Valley a home. Small cities along Highway-99 still advertise their churches on signs as you enter. The noticeable presence of Mexican and white Pentecostal churches suggest that the “schismatic strata” eventually shifted the landscape.

Poor agricultural workers did not cross over into California for just a season; rather, they built homes. Darren Dochuk observed that entire neighborhoods in southern California were comprised of Okie migrants.²⁸ This became the case on a smaller scale in the Central Valley, where members from churches lived in neighborhoods around churches. Churches for the most part were located in the poorer parts of town. Pentecostal churches are still found in ‘Okie-villes’ and industrial farm towns. But many of these churches assumed higher levels of social respectability and pushed towards the suburbs. The move across the tracks was applauded, but it did not go without its admonitions that one should not “compromise.” The schismatic nature of the churches (noted in the opening quotes) is notable today and several large denomination disagreements and adjustments occurred in the 1960s. This shows that Mexican and Okie

²⁸ Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*, (New York: W&W Norton Press, 2011), 20.

Pentecostals still draw clear socio-theological boundary lines around their church homes. The cultural apparatuses they used to draw those lines are the topic of *California's Cross*.

Chapter 1

Avivamientos, Aleluyas y Trabajo Agrícola: The Roots and Routes of Mexican-Pentecostalism in the Valleys of California (1909-1969)

“¿No decís vosotros: Aun hay cuatro meses hasta que llegue la siega? He aquí os digo: Alzad vuestros ojos, y mirad las regiones, porque ya están blancas para la siega” (Juan 4:35)

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” (John 4:35)

Throughout the twentieth century Pentecostals drew from this agricultural metaphor to convey a sense of urgency for mass evangelism; after all, they believed that they were “living in the last days.” Such ancient metaphors acquired deeper resonance for the budding labor force of twentieth century ethnic Mexican Pentecostals as they planted, pruned and plucked in valleys symmetrically combed with sundry intensive labor crops.¹ The reference to “fields” in ancient Palestine hearkened back to small-scale subsistence farms; but to ethnic Mexican farm workers, the unprecedented conditions and scale of agribusiness farming expanded the notion of “fields” to assume new meaning in terms of both labor and evangelism. The Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian society had been swallowed up by agribusiness. During the Dust Bowl decade social critic and journalist Carey McWilliams keened, “agriculture is a quiet word, but, in California it has taken on new meaning and novel implications.”² The speed and scale of the growth of agribusiness in the first half of the twentieth century locked into full speed the rapid increase of Mexican borderlands migration; yet the vertiginous process did not overwhelm immigrants.

¹ David Gutierrez’s term “Ethnic Mexicans” is used here as a blanket term to describe those of Mexican descent living in the United States. The term “Mexican-American” is far too constricting and would be spurned by many Mexican migrants who maintained strong ties to their homeland. David Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican American, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (University of California Press, 1995), 218, fn. 3.

² Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, (Santa Barbara, 1975 –1935 original pub.), 4.

These brought with them values and resources from their points of origin, and their social outcome in America was a function of the nature of migration and the social context that greeted them.³ In the case of Mexican-Pentecostal migrants, the combined forces helped to till the ground for the planting of a network of churches in the valleys. Far removed from its ancient metaphor, these new “fields white already unto harvest” reflected a large-scale planting of churches in the wake of ethnic-Mexican farm labor migration throughout California. Mexican-Pentecostals would indeed be “cosechando en el field.”⁴

The various social components that comprise the title of this chapter (*Avivamientos*, *Aleluyas*, and *Trabajo Agrícola*) articulate the praxis and ethos of Mexican Pentecostals in the fields. *Avivamientos* (revivals) are the church meetings (*cultos*) in which believers generally gathered under a large tent (*carpa*) or in the house of a believer. The sonic elements in these sites, such as collective singing, exuberant worship, praise shouting, guitar playing, percussive striking, and hand clapping, traveled beyond the meeting space. As a result the pejorative “Aleluyas” entered into the vernacular of their detractors. A common testimonial template begins with the curiosity of the convert piqued by such sonic transgression; eventually “Aleluya” wistfully became a source of pride as it hearkened back to the experience of conversion.

These *avivamientos* in which the *Aleluyas* gathered happened in the site of their agricultural work (*trabajo agrícola*). With such practice, peoples, and place in mind, this chapter will highlight the “community” component of a religious system.⁵ This chapter maps out the

³ Silvia Pedraza, “Beyond Black and White: Latinos and Social Science Research on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America,” *Social Science History* (2000) 699.

⁴ Ismael Martín del Campo, *Cosechando en el Field: A Brief History of the Apostolic Assembly*. (Long Beach, CA; Editorial Nueva Vision, 2004). The title of this denominational account reflect the movement’s origins among field workers in the borderlands.

⁵ Historian Catherine Albanese contends that three other components (creed, code, and cultus) comprise a religious system. These three are taken up in the next chapter. Catherine Albanese, *America: Religion and Religions* (Beverly, MA: Wadsworth, 1995) 8.

roots and routes of Oneness-Mexican-Pentecostal churches, and locates the various *Apostólico* community sites in the valleys of California. The growth of intensive labor agribusiness, the search for a reserve labor force, and the geopolitics of the border (as expressed in the various national immigration laws enacted after World War I) dictated the routes of evangelism.⁶ The discussion of such macro-factors not only provides historical context but also demonstrates how these forced *Apostólicos* to carve out a social place of their own. The Great Depression, the Great Repatriation, low wages, and a foreign language barrier notwithstanding, they expressed a mode of agency by holding revivals in the very same fields of their exploitative work and by organizing a cohesive network of churches. This chapter seeks to recover the silenced voices of field workers viewed as bodies for labor. Few believers made headlines and even fewer wrote down their recollections of their days as laborers. Demographic studies, denominational accounts, and oral histories shed light on this rather obscure movement whose believers openly worked the sun-scorched fields of California's valleys. It also challenges narratives that portray Mexican workers as vagrants who lacked any social cohesion, by providing an alternative in the case of specific denominations that came into being and matured during the most unlikely time and conditions. The founding of congregations provided "homes" for various families. These so-called vagrants found homes within the collective body of believers. In this incipient phase, members banded together for services, prayer, and singing based on a collective hymnody. With its base in the Imperial Valley during the 1920-1930s, the *Apostólico* movement, comprised of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus (AAFJC) in the United States and its counterpart in Mexico, *La Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesus* (IAFCJ), managed to

⁶ Mexican Oneness Pentecostals have preferred to use the term *Apostolic/Apostólico* instead of Pentecostal. Most understand the term Pentecostal to describe their non-Mexican Pentecostal counterparts. I use *Apostólico(s)* in keeping with their own historical signifier.

organize a grass-roots, binational movement comprised mostly of low-wage farm laborers led by clergy who labored alongside them in the fields. This community was one in which all members worked alongside each other by day and worshiped alongside each other by night.

Converts in these field churches were baptized in rivers and canals, the same channels that delivered water to the fields where the congregations sprang up. The study of the borderlands *Apostólico* movement in the valleys invites a framework that views the recovery of subjugated farmworker voices against this backdrop. The notable features of this borderlands religious movement (constant migration, rerouting of water sources, and rampant agricultural development), prompt a consideration of Tom Tweed's theory of religion, which proffers a rich aquatic metaphor appropriate to California's valleys:

*"Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries."*⁷

Tweed's theory as a whole and in its various parts helps to illumine the beginnings of the *Apostólico* movement as: 1) a grass-roots movement that grew from humble origins under the direction of leaders with diverse Christian backgrounds;⁸ 2) a religious network which rooted believers in joyful social spaces in a tightly-knit community; 3) a hermeneutical community in which to interpret the ordinary and the extraordinary;⁹ 4) an refreshing respite in the midst of frequent uprooting, which then reinforced a belief that God was directing their every step from labor site to labor site; 5) a movement marked by its constituents' transgressions across social,

⁷ Thomas Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 54.

⁸ Daniel Ramirez emphasized the importance of what he termed "proto-evangelicos" in the formation of the AAFCJ. A significant number of leaders who converted from Methodist and Baptist denominations brought their skills into the organization stage of the AAFCJ. Daniel Ramirez, "Migrating Faiths: A Social and Cultural History of Pentecostalism in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands" (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2005), 104, 124.

⁹ Albanese characterizes "ordinary religion" as "more or less synonymous with culture which shows people how to live well within boundaries; her elaboration of extraordinary religion includes "that which helps people to transcend, or move beyond, their everyday culture and concerns." See, Albanese, *Religions and Religion*, 6-8.

national, denominational, and (albeit less frequently) economic boundaries and; 6) a transformation of space into place.

Mexican Roots at the Azusa Street Revival: Liminality and the Limits of Narrative Recovery

On the northern side of the U.S.-Mexico border, the roots stretch back to the Azusa Street Revival of 1906-1909. This revival in Los Angeles began in 1906 under the ministry of William J. Seymour, the son of former slaves, born in Louisiana, blind in one eye but with a vision of ushering in “the latter rain”.¹⁰ Summoned from Houston to preach at a Holiness mission, he found himself locked out of his second (Sunday evening) service at the host church. His insistence that morning that a believer’s reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be evidenced with speaking in tongues proved unpalatable.¹¹ Histories of the Azusa Street have picked up on both the interracial overtones as well as on the racist undertones, but they almost all focus on the black-white divide.¹² However, beyond this binary history, the seeds of Mexican Pentecostalism were planted in a contiguous transnational terrain by early converts

¹⁰ William J. Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, (October 1906), 1.

¹¹ Various interpretations regarding the relationship between glossolalia and the infilling of the Holy Spirit had begun to spread throughout Kansas, Arkansas, and Texas beginning in January 1901 under the direction of Charles F. Parham and his protégés.

¹² Some of the many titles include: Estrela Y. Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011); Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); James R. Goff Jr., *Fields White unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1988); Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003); Lian MacRoberts, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1988); Robert R. Owens, *The Azusa Street Revival; Its Roots and Its Message*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001); Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997); James L. Tyson, *The Early Pentecostal Revival: History of Twentieth-Century Pentecostals and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, 1901-1930* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1990).

More recent works have fleshed out the role of Mexicans at the revival.¹³ Mexicans' perennial debuts occupied a limited space in memory, hardly surviving in the historical narrative. The earliest evidence of Mexican participation at the Azusa Street Revival is found in the Apostolic Faith Mission's own contemporaneous accounts. However, the limited references to Mexicans in the *Apostolic Faith*, the Mission's official organ, employ paternalistic language to describe their presence. To be sure, the reports stressed ethnic, racial and linguistic difference in order to highlight the ability of the person operating in the Spirit to cross cognitive (language), social (de facto segregation and black-led revival), and gender (women praying for men) boundaries. Thus, in several instances, a Mexican is described as "Mexican" for the purpose of emphasizing differences and the ability of those operating "in the Spirit" to cross those lines. The rhetorical choices, however, ultimately result in the exoticization, marginalization, and occlusion of the non-English-speaking Mexican Others. As a result, historians are challenged to uncover more fully the roots of Mexican Pentecostalism.

The paternalistic rhetoric aside, we can certainly see how some events of the revival might have been viewed as a "transgressive space" for ethnic minorities and women.¹⁴ These transgressive acts engendered a spontaneous *communitas* –that is, a momentary leveling-out of the social playing field and the inversion of expected roles. However, as anthropologist Victor Turner reminds us, "it is the fate of spontaneous *communitas* in history to undergo what most people see as a 'decline and fall' into structure and law."¹⁵ Such was the case of the Azusa Street

¹³ Gaston Espinosa, *Latino Pentecostals in America: Faith and Politics in Action*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Arlene Sanchez-Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal Identity: Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Gaston Espinosa, *Borderland Religion: Los Angeles and the Origin of Latino Pentecostalism in the United States, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, 1900-1945*, (PhD Dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara, 1999), 96.

¹⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 132.

Revival in early 1909, when its revival fires began to cool.¹⁶ We find very few references to Mexicans at the Revival, and even fewer once the hallmark spontaneity of Pentecostal preaching and testifying had largely been stifled.¹⁷ That feature was noted in the first year of the revival:

“It is noticeable how free all nationalities feel. If a Mexican or German cannot speak English, he gets up and speaks in his own tongue and feels quite at home for the Spirit interprets through the face and people say amen. No instrument that God can use is rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education. This is why God has built up the work.”¹⁸

The “work” that “God has built up,” (referenced by the anonymous editor of the *Apostolic Faith*) hinges largely on liminality, as liminalities are “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony.”¹⁹ The transgression of social boundaries became a hallmark of Mexican Pentecostalism in the years under study. Take for example the following items from the *Azusa Faith*:

On August 11th, a man from the central part of Mexico, an Indian, was present in the meeting and heard a German sister speaking in his tongue which the Lord had given her. He understood, and through the message that God gave him through her, he was most happily converted so that he could hardly contain his joy. All the English he knew was Jesus Christ and Hallelujah. He testified in his native language that was interpreted by a man who had been among that tribe of Indians. This rough Indian, under the power of the Spirit was led to go and lay his hands on a woman in the congregation who was suffering from consumption, and she was instantly healed and arose and testified.²⁰

“Los Angeles, Aug 12, 1906. This will certify that my daughter, Mrs. S. P. Knapp of Avenue 56 and Alameda Street, was healed of consumption by God on the above date, God’s Spirit working in answer to prayer and through a poor Mexican Indian. For particulars, inquire of Frank Gail, with Troy Laundry, corner 14th and Main, Los Angles.”²¹

¹⁶ Cecil Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 311.

¹⁷ For a thorough treatment of early Pentecostal homiletics see Grant Wacker, *Early Pentecostal and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001), 114-120.

¹⁸ Seymour, *Apostolic Faith*, (November, 1906), 1

¹⁹ Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95-97.

²⁰ *Azusa Faith*, September 1906, 3.

²¹ *Azusa Faith*, Sept. 1906, 2.

Note the stark contrast between the “poor”, “rough” Indian and the “German sister.”²² Whereas the names of people, particulars of places, and the incorporation into the local body of believers, (denoted by the term “sister”), were cited with respect to the German sister, we only know that this unnamed man was from Mexico, and that he was reported to wield pneumatological gifts of the interpretation of tongues and healing. The background information related to his place of origin, incompetency in English, and low-social status is cited in order to stress the ability of believers under the influence of the Holy Spirit to temporarily cross these otherwise humanly impervious boundaries. The following submission to the *Azusa Faith* highlights the claims to bridging language incommensurabilities. Language is both cognitive and social, and this bears out in the following submission where both underscore the immensity of the miracle.²³

As soon as we would come in after supper, after working on the chain gang during the day shoveling dirt, I would get my Bible and call the men into the big room and the Lord gave me their tongue, the Mexican language. I did not have that tongue, until I went into the jail. As I would talk with them, the tears would run down their faces. There was not one of them but was weeping bitterly. Then when I went into my little cell, after I got done preaching, two or three of them would come in and talk with me a long while. Most of the men were Mexicans. Two or three could talk my language and they could interpret English for the others. I did not know what I was saying in tongues, except as they interpreted for me. When I was preaching to them in tongues, I read the 55th chapter of Isaiah to them in the Mexican language, with my Bible in my hand. I did not know the chapter or that I had read it until they told me. I never had the Lord use me so much before as in jail. It seemed wave after wave of power would run over me. There was hardly a night I would sleep more than an hour or two. The Lord was giving me messages to give them. Bless His holy name.²⁴

According to the contributor, this Bible study relied on the divine and few English-speaking Mexicans to compensate for the language gaps. The designation “Mexican language” was a common faux pas of the time, and thus suggests how systems of nomenclature pertaining to the

²² Daniel Ramirez highlighted marked differences in the rhetoric in Ramirez, *Migrating Faith*, 4-6.

²³ Ferdinand de Saussure, Wade Baskins trans., *Course in General Linguistics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

²⁴ Henry McLain, *Azusa Faith*, November 1906, 4.

Other often elude precision by the dominant group. The phrase “two or three of them could talk *my language*” [emphasis mine] implies a social marginalization, but it also frames his possession of English language as mundane (*thisworldly*) and his utterance of the Spanish as divine phenomena of tongues (*otherworldly*).

This manner of the representation of Mexicans persisted from the beginning of the revival in 1906 until its denouement in 1909. Even in these attempts to document their active and passive participation, Mexicans were used as metaphorical baselines of class, color, and low literacy. A Turnerian approach (which contrasts binaries of oppositions and discriminations) to these reports offers us a useful framework to interpret the revival in the binaries of liminality and systems of structure. Before turning to Turner’s binaries, let us consider the 1909 reference to Mexicans at the revivals, as this will underscore such binaries. In his attempt to side with the silenced Mexicans, Frank Bartleman, the chronicler of the Azusa Revival, slipped into paternalistic representation of Mexicans when he recollected:

Old Azusa Mission became more and more in bondage. The meetings now had to run just in appointed order. The Spirit tried to work through some poor, illiterate Mexicans, who had been saved and “baptized” in the Spirit. But the leader deliberately refused to let them testify, and crushed them ruthlessly. It was like murdering the Spirit of God. Only God knows what this meant to those poor Mexicans. Personally I would rather die than to have assumed such a spirit of dictatorship. Every meeting was now programmed from start to finish. Disaster was bound to follow, and it did so.²⁵

The contrast between Bartleman’s lament and the 1906 accounts of free worship reminds us of the inevitable outcome of *communitas* in a Turnerian scheme. In this case, Turner’s binary of “structure and law” was tantamount to “bondage” and the silencing of Mexican voices. The Azusa Mission’s drift towards structure and law augured the eventual exclusions of Mexicans from the revival. To further demonstrate how limited representation of Mexicans at the revivals

²⁵ Frank Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA, 1925), 140. Accessed on: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bartleman/los.i.html>

presents us with the problem of recording and narration of Mexicans at Azusa, consider how the once existent *communitas* in which Mexicans participated, eventually morphed into a system of structure at the cost of their own exclusion from the site of the revival in Los Angeles by 1912.

Table 1 contrasts the liminal elements that enable *communitas*, and its antithesis the “systems of structure.”

<u>Liminality</u>	<u>Systems of Structure</u>
Anonymity	System of nomenclature
No distinctions of wealth	Distinctions of wealth
Absence of rank	Distinctions of rank
Sacred instruction	Technical knowledge
Continuous reference to mystical powers	Intermittent reference to mystical powers

Previously, the testimonies of anonymous participants abounded with references that underscored the *communitas* of the revival, but to establish this point and foreshadowing later divisions, the anonymous writers use Mexicans and “colored people” as referents to symbolize the bottom rank of race and class. This suggests that divine power served as an intermediary and necessary agent so that middle-class whites could bond in spiritual communion with *Others*. “If it had started in a fine church,” testified one prominent Methodist laymen, “poor colored people and Spanish people would not have got it, but praise God it started here.”²⁶ The various denominational and celebratory accounts of the revival attempt to portray a revival in which equality reigned supreme. In the end, however, Seymour’s Azusa Street Revival lost its interracial character, and by 1915 only allowed African-Americans to serve in leadership. According to Seymour this was done in order to “keep down the race wars” (referring to conflict

²⁶ Azusa Faith, November 1906, 1.

with whites).²⁷ While systems of structure should provide a community with the tools to record a narrative, the inclusion or elision of certain people therein rests on the redactive power of the leaders (editors). When the Azusa Street Mission assumed characteristics of structure, Mexicans were not invited to be part of that structure but were instead sent away to minister to folks of their own shared tongue. Leaders at the Azusa mission “silenced” Mexicans in 1909 and hardly documented in any sources before that. After 1912 the larger borderlands (beyond Los Angeles) comprise a site of study where the recovery of an ethnic-Mexican social history is possible.

While the prospects of growth may have seemed bleak for Mexicans, by 1912 the Mexicans had begun to branch out beyond the local mission and to establish their own autonomous missions. This expands our site of analysis beyond the Azusa Street Mission. Based on the vast differences noted in these earliest accounts we might ask then if ethnic-Mexican Pentecostals would have ever consented to being absorbed and carried by the current of the American Anglophone Pentecostalism. In the remainder of this chapter we will see how the *Apostólico* movement in the borderlands maintained a strong Mexican identity, erstwhile sponsors notwithstanding. If the Azusa Street Revival represents an era of muted voices and scant ordinations of the post-1912 period, represents an era of a host of revivals in far-flung and scattered borderland spaces.

Basing our assumption off the scanty record, the Mexican roots at the Azusa Street Revival appear to have been shallow and mostly dormant. Ironically, their extraction in 1912 allowed for transplant to a more fertile ground. There, Mexican Pentecostalism blossomed. This study of the post-Azusa period seeks to retell and revise the story of elided Azusa Street (and

²⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 319.

post Azusa Street) characters who founded and shaped a vibrant movement in rural California and war-torn northern Mexico.

Mexican Ramifications of the Azusa Street Revival

To see how this movement ramified, we need to expand our scope beyond Azusa and Los Angeles, in order to focus on the larger borderlands circuits of southern California and northern Mexico. While not dismissing or discrediting the miraculous experience of xenoglossy claimed by believers, the evidence in the *Azusa Faith Papers* suggests that the sustainable Spanish-language congregations had been started by and for ethnic-Mexicans. The roots of both Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostal denominations are imbedded in the revival, but the Azusa Faith Mission did not become the locus of Mexican Pentecostalism.²⁸

Our limited sources on early *Apostólico* leaders indicate that they began their ministerial careers in migrant farm labor camps along the border. In 1909 Luis Lopez in Otay (San Diego) was baptized in the name of Jesus and Seymour ordained Juan Navarro into the ministry in Los Angeles. It is believed that Lopez and Navarro left the Azusa Street Mission in order to carve out their ministries in the San Diego area.²⁹ Although the baptism of Lopez is celebrated in the denomination's history book as the first Jesus-name baptism of an ethnic Mexican, it is not clear (probably unlikely) that they had begun to articulate the Oneness doctrine of God by this point.³⁰ It is uncertain, but not unlikely, whether Navarro baptized Francisco Llorente in a migrant labor

²⁸ Mexicans participated in leadership positions at Trinitarian Pentecostal missions in the Los Angeles area e.g., Pisgah Mission and Elmer Fisher's Upper Room. See, Espinosa, *Borderland Religion*, 120-131.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 129-134

³⁰ The doctrine of the Oneness was not articulated among Pentecostals until 1913. This controversy would come to be known as the "new issue" and would rend asunder the early American Pentecostal movement over the next few years. David Reed, *In Jesus Name: the History and Beliefs of Oneness Pentecostals* (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2007).

camp in San Diego. Llorente, from Acapulco, Mexico, would be voted in as the Pastor General of the *Iglesia de la Fe Apostólica Pentecostes* in a series of meetings held in the Imperial Valley.³¹

Two watershed moments in 1912 marked a later confluence of streams along the border: the baptisms of Francisco Llorente in San Diego and of Romana Carbajal de Valenzuela in Los Angeles. By the end of the decade, their discrete evangelistic trajectories coalesced in the borderlands. Llorente evangelized in agricultural towns of southern California; Valenzuela founded the first churches in northern Mexico. Here begins the recovery of *Apostólico* roots and routes beyond Azusa.

The solidification of a Mexican leadership propelled the movement beyond its incipient phase (1912-1916). The official denominational history book of the AAFCJ strongly emphasized that the leaders and converts of the early church were Mexican by nationality and that many of these conversions took place in homes or in farm labor camps. The all Mexican-born triumvirate of Juan Navarro (likely ordained by Seymour), Francisco Llorente (baptized by Navarro), and Marcial de la Cruz (baptized by Llorente) gleaned their first fruits of converts in the migrant populations of Southern California in San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Los Angeles. In 1915 the movement's organizational genius, Antonio Castañeda Nava, arrived to the Imperial Valley for work in the cotton fields. In the following year Marcial de la Cruz proselytized Nava, an event heralded as the founding of the future Apostolic Assembly in the U.S.³²

³¹ *Historia de la Asamblea Apostolica de la fe en Cristo Jesús, 1916-1966*, (Sal's Printing Service: Mentone, CA, 1966), 6. By this time Navarro had begun an active migrant labor camp ministry and in the Los Angeles area.

³² The leaders of the denomination did not make efforts to hold annual meetings for another decade but Nava's iconic baptism marked the beginning of the U.S. movement. See, *Historia de la Asamblea Apostólica*, 7; Daniel Ramirez, "Antonio Castañeda Nava: Charisma, Culture, and Caudillismo" in eds., James R. Goff Jr. & Grant Wacker, *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Studies* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002) 291.

The second phase (1916-1919) revealed incommensurate growth north and south of the border. The U.S. proved to be fertile ground because of the northward migration from war-torn Mexico, the rapid growth of agribusiness, and population mobility. With no temple to occupy as their own, *Apostólicos* gathered in homes in the U.S. and thereby formed a network of churches. With the exception of Marcial de la Cruz's congregation in San Francisco, the U.S. branch of the movement was entirely based in southern California. Many had begun to arrive there pushed out by the Mexican Revolution and pulled in by job opportunities in agriculture. (De la Cruz transferred to the Imperial Valley for ministry and field work during the heyday of revivals in the Imperial Valley area.)³³ While there is record of the Imperial Valley as a preaching point, no congregation was established until 1918. The revivals in the Imperial Valley are treated later in this chapter). The introduction of Mexican churches into this labor circuit reinforced the movement's ethnic identity and Hispanophone preference. By 1916, evangelization was in full swing on both sides of the border but with more rapid growth in the United States, owing to the propitious conditions of agribusiness recruitment.³⁴

The Binational Branch: Mexico's Borderlands Churches

Romana Carbajal de Valenzuela carried embers from the waning Azusa Street Revival fires and sparked a new religious movement in Mexico. The circumstances that impelled her to flee the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution and to come to Los Angeles were not unusual; however, that she had left Mexico as a Congregational lay member and returned as a Pentecostal missionary is unusual. In 1912 she joined a small band of Mexican Pentecostals for home prayer

³³ *Historia de la Asamblea Apostolica*; 6-8. Ramirez, *Migrating Faiths*, 84.

³⁴ Manuel Gaxiola-Gaxiola, *La Serpiente Y la Paloma: Historia, teología y análisis de la Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús, la denominación Pentecostal más antigua de México 1914-2014* (Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús, 2007, second edition) 135-155.

meetings where she received the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of glossolalia.³⁵ After this experience, in 1914 Valenzuela traveled back alone to convert her Catholic and Congregationalist family in her hometown of Villa Aldama, Chihuahua. The prospects of founding a church and much less a movement seemed bleak given the various unresolved conflicts of the Mexican Revolution under Victoriano Huerta's sanguineous regime. Initially, her family rejected her newfound faith on the basis of its heterodoxy in belief and practice. The doctrines of tongues quickly proved distasteful to her family from the Congregational Church.³⁶ She cultivated the seeds of piety in her nephew Miguel García, a devout Catholic and assistant to the local priest. She insisted on baptizing García and the rest of the family, but feeling unqualified to do so, she sought out a Protestant pastor to perform their baptisms in the name of Jesus. In this endeavor she converted Methodist minister Rúben Ortega, taking him to El Paso to be baptized by an African American Pentecostal minister. Ortega and García's baptisms transpired in the context of geographical, linguistic, gender and racial border-crossings.

Valenzuela had also trained enough converts to continue evangelization efforts in nearby states. While Ortega assumed the pastorate in Villa Aldama, Miguel García and Valenzuela had initiated congregations in Gomez Palacio, Durango and nearby Torreón, Coahuila; the latter would become the de facto headquarters of the IAFCJ within the next decade.³⁷ In Torreón the García converted the Rivas family including Felipe Rivas, who became a longtime presiding bishop of the IAFCJ. Thus, Valenzuela not only founded the first churches, but she converted the

³⁵ Kenneth Gill, *Toward a Contextualized Theology for the Third World: The Emergence and Development of Jesus' Name Pentecostalism in Mexico* (Bern, Switzerland, Peter Lang International Publishers, 1994) 43.

³⁶ Missionaries from the Congregational Church had already made inroads into Chihuahua. Their presence and missions in Chihuahua would be approved by the interdenominational Cincinnati Plan of 1914 to allot Chihuahua to the Congregational Church. Ortega, as a Methodist at the time, likely resented the foreign imposition. Gill, *Contextualized Theology*, 45.

³⁷ Ramirez, *Migrating Faiths*, 132-136.

earliest converts who would shape the churches from isolated outposts into a regional and later national movement.

Within a decade of Valenzuela's mission, the fate of the budding borderlands movement was sealed by the concomitant growth of congregations founded on either side of the border by her protégés. Located at the southeast corner of California, the Imperial Valley is geologically part of a larger contiguous valley divided only geopolitically by a border with Mexico's *Valle de Mexicali* (Mexicali Valley). Miguel García's (Valenzuela's nephew and first convert) 1922 arrival and assumption of the pastorate of the church in Westmoreland symbolized a prescient moment of reverse missions.³⁸

The *Apostólico* movement in Mexico crystallized into its own proper denomination in 1932, with some forming binational links with coreligionists in the U.S.. The *Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesus* was comprised of three geographical clusters. Heterodox practices, internecine fighting, and schisms vitiated the congregation in Torreón in its earliest years, but the constant rows with heterodox factions ultimately reinforced it as the movement's center of orthodoxy and eventually as its operative headquarters. A second group, formed by repatriated converts with close ties to Apostolic Assembly ministers, established a foothold in Sinaloa; but these churches held no formal affiliation with any denomination until Felipe Rivas, the leader of the Valenzuela Torreon group, shepherded them into the new denominational fold. The third group, based in Baja California, was started by ministers in the U.S. and therefore considered itself part of the larger U.S. movement, deliberately disregarding the international boundary

³⁸ Gill, *Contextualized Theology*, 49. Some say he left earlier see *Ibid.*, 66 fn. 45. For the past several centuries the majority of missionaries constituted a flow from the Euro-American West and to the global south; "reverse missions" is a term used to describe the reverse flow of missionaries from the global south to countries that have historically been the provider of missions, the U.S. and England serving as prime examples.

line.³⁹ The U.S. dimensions of the Baja California churches are explored in the next section on the Imperial Valley.

Transplanting a Movement: The Imperial and Coachella Valleys

Apostólico comprised a movement by the mid-1920s but a denomination would not crystallize until the late 1920s when congregations sprang up throughout the Imperial and adjacent Coachella, Gila, and Mexicali valleys. North in Los Angeles and in the Inland Empire, speaking in tongues and healing formed the cornerstone practice of Mexican Pentecostalism; to the West in the San Diego area, the Jesus-name baptismal formula became a distinct ritual of the movement. Valenzuela took the message of these doctrines south to northern Mexican states. Soon thereafter Antonio Nava and Ramon Ocampo carried this message eastward to Yuma in the Gila Valley. Flows of agricultural laborers kept this message in circulation. The growth of a critical mass of believers in the Imperial-Mexicali valleys sustained a larger transnational network growing in all directions. The churches of the Imperial Valley benefitted from being flanked by *Apostólico* congregations and from a mobile laity. A fortuitous placement in the transnational Imperial-Mexicali valleys accounted for the movement's first major revival.⁴⁰

Whatever growth the movement experienced in the U.S. up to this point, it paled in comparison to what lay ahead once labor contractors in the Imperial Valley began to draw from a deep pool of Mexican labor. Diversions to the Colorado River along the Imperial Canal made the

³⁹ Ibid., 57-58

⁴⁰ At this time the *Apostólico* movement had operated under the auspices of an interracial (black-white) Oneness-Pentecostal denomination: the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW). The PAW faced its bouts of racism and was rent asunder in 1924 over white ministers in the South refusing credentials signed by black leaders. In the following year, Francisco Llorente was elected as the Pastor General of the *Iglesia de la Fe Apostolica del Pentecostes* (soon to become the AAFCJ), which would continue to operate under the PAW in its first general convention in 1925. David Reed, *In Jesus' Name*, 212.

area now called the Imperial Valley arable for large-scale agribusiness. After several engineering and environmental disasters, water sources were properly rerouted and the valley's fecund soil lay ready for new roots, both agricultural and social. Nativists lamented the flourishing of the latter. One *Imperial Valley Press* editor bemoaned "[t]he importation of hordes of undesirable people and the creation of troublesome social problems"⁴¹ The prognostication of demographic diversity did not go unfulfilled. By the mid-1910s white, black, American Indians, "Hindoos" (the misnomer applied to many Sikh immigrants from the Punjabi region of India), Filipinos, Japanese, and Mexicans converged to work. Few ethnic-Mexican workers arrived in the earliest years of agricultural development, most likely because the earliest type of crops in the Imperial Valley from the years 1901-1910 required worker for the cultivation of non-intensive labor crops (e.g., wheat, barley, and hay) workers. The influx of workers from various ethnicities created the conditions in the "Cradle of Vigilantism" to virtually stifle any labor organization and to break all strikes by pitting one ethnic group against another.⁴² With all others mostly dismissed, Mexicans came to comprise the labor majority. Centered on Calexico and Mexicali, the movement experienced its most significant phase of growth in a contiguous valley on both sides of the border.

The expansion of intensive labor crops (e.g., melon, cantaloupe, cotton, and lettuce) in the Imperial Valley directly correlated the growth of the ethnic-Mexican population and to the earliest successes of *Apostólico* congregations. The demand for intensive crop workers increased with the outbreak of WWI. In 1917, for the first time, California growers relied on ethnic Mexicans to be the main supply of harvesters. The total acres of intensive crops in the valley rose

⁴¹ Imperial Valley Press, May 28, 1910 as found in Paul Taylor, *Mexican labor in U.S.* Vol. 1, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 10.

⁴² McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 230-1.

from 13,500 in 1913 to 93,000 in 1918.⁴³ By WWI, Mexican laborers accounted for the majority of farm workers in the valley. In 1920 the total amount of cultivated acreage reached a new high of 153,000 acres. From 1910 — the period of few Mexican farm workers — to 1920, the percentage of Mexican-born Imperial Valley workers increased by 339 % and the acreage of labor intensive crops reached a record high of 152,828 acres. It was during this period of rapid development that the *Apostólico* evangelists enjoyed their earliest success in the migrant labor communities. They planted a growing network of congregation throughout the Imperial Valley as well as in the contiguous Mexicali Valley and in the neighboring Gila Valley in Arizona. The passage of federal laws and the continued interest of growers in a Mexican workforce coalesced with the founding of churches in the Imperial Valley area.

The groundswell of landless Mexicans seeking permanent residency in the U.S. became more apparent as Mexicans exited the country in the wake of land loss. During the prolonged regime of Mexican president Porfirio Díaz – a regime labeled the “*Porfiriato*” – the Mexican government launched an aggressive initiative to turn over communal lands (*ejidos*) into the hands of private companies in hopes of advancing modernity through industrialization and foreign investment. Visions for the restoration of small farms seemed bleaker when in 1883 Díaz sold over 135 million acres of public land to private companies. Now landless, the former *ejidatarios* looked to escape poverty by becoming wage workers on industrialized plots where they had once owned land, in other parts of Mexico, or, financially more enticing, in the U.S.⁴⁴. In all, it is estimated that the Porfiriato land reforms uprooted nearly 5 million small land

⁴³ Ibid., 9-16.

⁴⁴ Catherine Guerin-Gonzalez, *Mexican Workers and the American Dream: Immigration, Repatriation and California Farm Labor 1909-1939* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 27-28.

owners.⁴⁵ During the years of the Porfiriato, Mexico's population had grown from 9.4 million to 15.2 million. The population boom and the land grab of private companies diminished one's chances of ever attaining land. With few prospects for regaining land or for acquiring work to sustain the larger families typical of small-scale farmers and with the enticement of higher wages in the U.S., the "push" and "pull" factors motivated migrants. The Mexican Revolution beginning after Diaz's exile in 1911 further exacerbated the large-scale emigration.

Since Mexican workers in the U.S. had prior experience in farm labor, growers idealized them as perfect prospects for their agricultural empires; they were believed to demand little and work on an as-needed basis.⁴⁶ The advent of intensive labor crops resulted in greater demand of manual laborers and growers began to prefer Mexican workers over other ethnic workers. Growers complained that non-Mexican workers too often demanded higher (though still low) wages and better working conditions. Like every ethnic labor force before them, Mexicans were believed to be docile and unlikely to organize. But unlike these laborer groups, Mexicans were never expected to permanently settle, especially if they were never to be offered permanent work. They were believed to be "birds of passage."⁴⁷

The geographical proximity to Mexico gave flight to the avian myth. Growers argued that Mexicans would not stay in the U.S. but that they would simply return across the border after the completion of their work.⁴⁸ The 1917 Immigration Act became a legal and business battleground between xenophobes in the east, (whose anxieties were first fueled by the large waves of

⁴⁵ George McBride's estimate cited in Lawrence Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States 1897-1931* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1980), 7.

⁴⁶ Labor contractors found legal loopholes to circumvent the 1885 Contract Labor Law. The law, originally enacted to forestall immigration from southeastern Europe, was hardly enforceable in the Southwest, and the immigrants who accepted work were punished instead of the contractors who enticed them. Guerin-Gonzalez, *Mexican Workers and the American Dream*, 29-31.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 24-27

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-47.

southeastern European immigrants) and agribusinessmen in the Southwest who needed to recruit laborers to perform tasks unbecoming for “Americans”. The latter group’s renunciation of the agrarian society of small-scale farms, coupled with their dismissal of the American workers ability to perform “stoop labor” and their reliability on foreigners to perform such work, earned them the reputation for forming “factories in the fields.”⁴⁹

Amid the national tensions arising from immigration into ports of entry on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and on the international boundary line with Mexico, the need for laborers overwhelmed the critics. Therefore exemptions were made but with precautions pertaining to health and culture. With respect to health, impoverished landless Mexicans fleeing the sanguinity of the Revolution were depicted as dirty and diseased and in need of delousing. The 1915 typhus epidemic in the interior of Mexico reinforced these notions of uncleanness from the south. As a result of public opinion, public health service officials implemented strategies to forbid admittance of Mexicans with unwanted diseases. The number of those found to have been infected at the border was relatively immaterial with respect to the number of those inspected, deloused, sterilized, and quarantined.⁵⁰ The memory of such humiliating tactics seemed to imprint itself strongly in the memory of those who crossed the border at the main entry point in El Paso, a point of entry for migrant *Apostólicos*.⁵¹

By the 1920s the U.S. Mexico border transformed from a vague international boundary with little security to an increasingly militarized line of defense. The wave of immigrant Mexican workers came at an opportune time as the Immigration Act of 1917 excluded all non-

⁴⁹ McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 90; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 107, 132.

⁵⁰ Alexandra Minna Stern, “Buildings, Boundaries and Blood: Medicalization and Nation Building on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930” *Hispanic American Historical Review* (1999).

⁵¹ Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 58.

white immigrants. With racial categories still in flux, especially in California, Mexicans had been classified as white, but such ad hoc classification came with its own set of restrictions imposed by nativists and infringed by growers.⁵² Moreover, in California the newly mandated literacy tests, head taxes, and contract labor clauses were hardly applied to Mexicans whose work in the fields did not require many of those skills. For the most part, the swelling number of Mexican laborers had not yet triggered mass hysteria, as they were not exposed in the media for piling up in the industrial slums of the American North like European immigrants had largely been.⁵³ Such exemptions for a population that did not see itself as white, nor would be referred to as white outside of the U.S. census, arose conveniently from the desire of industrialists and growers to sustain a reserve labor force, to maximize their profits with a cheap and replaceable pool of labors.⁵⁴

Amid the debates of border security and enforcement post 1917, *Apostólicos* continued to fill in the roles of pastors and penitents, and planters and pickers.⁵⁵ For an example of the strength of the network of borderlands churches straddling the border in migrant labor communities during this period, consider the following brief statements on churches founded during the second stage of revival. The details in these brief distillations attest to the scale and speed to which the network unfolded in this revival within less than a decade.

Calexico (Imperial Valley), Colonia Zaragoza and Mexicali (Mexicali Valley)

In 1920 after a short stint in Yuma, AZ, pioneer evangelists Antonio Nava and Ramon Ocampo

⁵² Guerin-Gonzalez, *Mexican Workers and the American Dream*, 24. Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994)

⁵³ Stern, 302, *black Gold*, 17.

⁵⁴ Guerin-Gonzalez, *Mexican Workers and the American Dream*, 24.

⁵⁵ Patricia Limerick points to the sustained flow of Mexican agricultural laborers as a legacy of conquest in the American West Patricia, see chapter 7 "American the Borderland" of Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987) 222, 244-258.

moved to the Imperial Valley. After establishing a sizable congregation in Calexico, the Nava-Ocampo duo founded churches in Mexicali and Colonia Zaragoza in 1922. Their first converts in Calexico came from a Methodist background and offered their house as the central place to hold worship services. While the Border Patrol had been established in 1924 the binational network of believers rallied together to purchase the first temple of the *Apostólico* movement in the U.S.⁵⁶ As a demonstration of the transnational reach of the church, in 1927 the IFAP held its third general convention in the newly constructed temple in Colonia Zaragoza.⁵⁷

Brawley, El Centro, Westmoreland, Holtville, Calipatria, and Yuma (AZ)

Located in the north central region of the Imperial Valley, Brawley acted as both a central point in the valley for a greater outreach into the smaller surrounding towns, and also connected the works across the Salton Sea in the Coachella Valley.⁵⁸ The precise date of the founding of Brawley is not known, but by 1924 a sizeable congregation of farm workers had been established there. Brawley was part of the revival circuit linked to a thriving church in Calexico by way of El Centro and Holtville. Miguel García (Valenzuela Carbajal's first convert in Mexico) made his way into this circuit as a pastor in Westmoreland. He had arrived to the Imperial Valley as early as 1922. The extent of his evangelistic circuit is unknown, but we do know that his network reached as far northward as Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley and as far south as the first *Apostólico* churches in Mexico he oversaw in Gomez Palacios and Torreon (the up-and-coming hub of Apostolicism in Mexico and future site of the first convention of the *Iglesia Apostólica*).

In the cotton town of Calipatria, Jose Ortega led a group of twelve men to hold services at a farm when the picking season in Brawley slowed down in 1927. Ortega and these men

⁵⁶ *Historia de la Asamblea Apostólica*, 9.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Jose Ortega, *Mis Memorias en la Iglesia y la Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús* (Indio, CA: José Ortega, 1998), 78-80.

transformed the small quarters into a spiritual retreat (somewhat structured like a monastery). There Ortega prepared meals reminiscent of his mother's Mexican cuisine. Following the meals he provided biblical instruction for those who would return from long days of picking cotton. This quasi-monastic retreat home housed nearly 40 believers, attracting saints from Brawley. The amount of work there precluded them from attending the annual convention. Their absence from the meeting compelled evangelists Epifanio Cota to check up on them. There is no indication if the Calipatria work was intended to become permanent, but evidence suggests that the evangelization work there was dictated by the cotton harvest and that afterwards several from that congregation returned to Brawley.⁵⁹

Yuma Arizona can be included in the mapping of this California-Mexico borderlands religion. In 1919, Lucio Hernandez, a recent convert from the Oxnard Plain, had been commissioned to baptize twelve individuals who had believed the Pentecostal message after hearing the testimonies of Nava and Ocampo in Yuma. Half of the distance from Calexico to Coachella, Yuma, located in the adjacent Gila Valley, was more conveniently reached by passage through Mexico's northern valleys instead of braving the arid desert stretch that bordered Mexico.

Thermal, Coachella, and Indio

Jesus Torres, the pioneer of the Coachella Valley, emerged onto the scene in 1919 during the revival in Yuma. Like many of his contemporary *Apostólico* preachers, Torres was quickly entrusted with the ministry of evangelism and pastoralism. By 1921, he founded two churches in the Coachella Valley, one in Thermal and the other in Coachella. He later assumed the pastorate

⁵⁹ Ibid., 80-84.

of the church in Indio, where a newly built temple was to host the second general convention (1926) of the *Apostólico* movement.⁶⁰

En La Obra De Dios No Hay Fronteras: *Apostólico* Farmworker Expansion

Migrants' propensity to remain once in the U.S. and to continue seeking work in other valleys led to *Apostólico* growth. The 1925 ministerial roster from the IFAP first general convention revealed that at least 15 of the 20 representatives hailed from towns or cities that subsisted on agriculture. By 1924 the IPAF boasted five churches in the Imperial Valley in the cities of Calexico, Brawley, El Centro, Westmoreland, and Holtville. Farms in these towns exclusively cultivated intensive labor crops. The concomitant growth of intensive labor crops and *Apostólico* congregations was also evident in the Coachella Valley. Pastors and evangelists from churches in the Imperial and Coachella valleys accounted for half of the delegates at the first convention. Such evangelism and rapid movement into other developing valleys came from a strategic move to empower the laity to "move about liberally to preach to their compatriots."⁶¹

The 1924 purchase in Calexico of the movement's first temple in the U.S. was a transaction rich with inter-ethnic exchange and telling of subaltern migrant trajectories. Before turning to Mexican labor, Imperial Valley growers had recruited black southerners to pick cotton but they were soon conscripted for service in World War I. Paul Taylor states that by 1917 non-U.S. citizen Mexicans appeared to be the only major source of available labor for intensive crops. The temple had been built by the Disciples of Christ for the growing number of African Americans pouring into the Imperial Valley to assume jobs in agriculture; however, the outbreak

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

of WWI precipitated this labor force's departure from the region.⁶² The Disciples of Christ's official history alludes to the circumstances surrounding the sale to *Apostólicos*:

“Churches were once alive and seemingly prospering in Niland, Seeley, Imperial, and Calexico. Appeals were made by each of these churches for assistance at various times, but all of them faded out of the picture and in some instances property was sold to other religious bodies...after a long struggle the church disbanded, the property was sold by the State Society in 1924 to a Spanish-speaking church.”⁶³

We might consider that Mexicans in Calexico represented a more stable (non-migratory) population.⁶⁴ This transaction highlights efforts by subaltern groups to create and maintain a cohesive social structure amid poverty.

The building of the Colonia Zaragoza temple was part of a larger trans-border revival that extended into the *Valle de Mexicali*. The denomination's official history records that “in 1922 there was a great revival of such proportions that the message passed into the Mexican side, to Mexicali and Colonia Zaragoza”⁶⁵ Indeed they believed that “en la obra de Dios no hay fronteras” [in the work of God, there are no borders.] The growing revivals in the Mexicali-Imperial Valley area behooved leaders to hold their third general convention (1927) in the revival fires Colonia Zaragoza's new temple. The constituency of the Colonia Zaragoza temple

⁶² Taylor, *Mexican Workers*, 10-16. Growers believed that because many of these southerners had prior experience in picking cotton that they would be eager to leave behind the boll weevil districts of the South. The number of Southerners continued to rise until 1916. Opportunities afforded by the military and the wartime industries of the North enticed workers wearied by agricultural work. Further contributing to the decrease in African Americans worker, in 1916 the Texas State Employment Bureau halted the migration of black cotton workers to California for fear of losing its supply of cotton pickers.

⁶³ Clifford Cole quoted in Ramirez, “Migrating Faiths,” 97.

⁶⁴ Taylor, *Mexican Workers*, 27.

⁶⁵ The denomination's historical account reads: “en 1922 hubo un gran avivamineto de tal manera que el mensaje pasó al lado mexicano, a la ciudad de Mexicali y la Colonia Zaragoza.” [translation mine] *Historia de la Asamblea Apostólica*, 9.

reflected the growth of the body of believers in that, as an *agrarista* community it was comprised mostly of agricultural workers.⁶⁶

With a foothold in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys and another in the greater Los Angeles area, the leaders of the movement left the supervision of the PAW and formed an autonomous denomination. The need for autonomy arose with the realization that they would wish to issue their own credentials. With a denomination of their own the leaders could strengthen their network and assist the clergy to navigate them through the vicissitudes of migrant life. The borderlands consciousness of ethnic-Mexicans further widened the gap between them and their non-Mexican counterparts. That a people who experienced economic hardships, exploitative labor, and constant migration, and underwent little professional training came to organize into a full-fledged denomination highlights a skipped chapter in the annals of Chicana/o history. Unlike their Pentecostal counterparts who enjoyed the benefits of experience in established denominations, a vast Anglophone network, and a more permanent constituency, the ethnic Mexican *Apostólicos* of the valleys confronted xenophobia and racialization in their journey to organize as the AAFCJ in 1930.

The timing of the 1925 annual convention meeting coincided with stricter immigration laws and more pressure in passage from one country to the next with the passage of the 1924 National Origins Act. By the late 1920s Mexicans began to witness the ramifications of xenophobic attitudes. With the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, the federal government had begun to increase security along the border, but the early stages of this hardly affected California. The passage of the 1924 National Origins Act and the creation of the Border Patrol in

⁶⁶ Ibid., 20. Ramirez notes that government officials shut down the temple in Colonia Zaragosa because the gathering of tuberculosis patients at the services seeking divine healing posed a public health hazard. See, Ramirez, *Migrating Faith*, 54-56.

that same year resulted in the etching of an indelible line between the two nations. When the aggressive Mexican Repatriation was launched in 1929, Mexicans were marked as unwanted. Xenophobia resulted in the repatriation of Mexicans (many of whom were not foreigners) from 1929 to 1944. *Apostólicos* were embroiled in the perilous economic times following of 1929 crash of the stock market. From 1931 to 1933 they had to cancel their annual conference meeting because of the lack of financial resources. The growth of intensive labor crop agribusiness beginning in 1929 opened up new channels of evangelism. (By that year California accounted for 40 percent of the nation's total fruit and vegetable output.⁶⁷) National immigration laws created an oppositional socio-political climate that in all likelihood should have stunted the growth of the church, but growers remained interested in recruiting Mexican families to work in their fields.

Women labored in the fields and churches alongside their male workers in the valleys. The entire Mexican movement is rooted in the efforts of Valenzuela and photographic evidence indicates that women contributed to an extent obscured in the narrative of the Apostolic Assembly's own history. The strength of the Imperial Valley churches lay within a laity who could always secure work in the nearby farms. Early photographic evidence of the 1920s suggests that churches in the Imperial Valley were not comprised mostly of male "birds of passage," but rather of an equal number of women and children.⁶⁸ Growers preferred Mexicans largely because they traveled in families and could thus employ their entire family and pay the women and children less.⁶⁹ The recruitment of families units for labor and their belonging in a network of believers offered "foreigners" a sense of belonging in the transnational context of the Imperial and Mexicali valleys.

⁶⁷ Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of Their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900 -1940* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 5.

⁶⁸ See photo inserts between pages 8-9 in *Historia de la Asamblea*; Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 83-85.

⁶⁹ Paul Taylor, *On the Ground in the Thirties*, (Peregrine Smith Books, 1983), 2.

A large number of ministers trained in the Imperial Valley were commissioned to plant churches elsewhere. Jesus Valdez and Epifanio Cota, two of the early *Apostólico* pioneers to the Central Valley had been converted and received their training in the Imperial Valley. But rather than mapping out the borderlands simply as a south-to-north migration – whether Mexico or Imperial Valley to the Central Valley – the migratory patterns of the laity should remind us of how a symbiotic relationship existed between these far-flung *Apostólico* outposts within an expanding borderlands (especially the Central Valley), and how the border has historically been an ever-shifting zone with lines redrawn by the migrants themselves.

Before an examination of the south-to-north flow in the following section, for an example of the reverse ministerial migration pattern consider the story of Jose Ortega. After crossing into the United States at the El Paso entry point in 1924, Ortega looked for work in Arizona, Calexico and San Diego and finally arrived to the citrus groves of Los Angeles. In October of that year, when he arrived in San Juan Bautista, he was – apropos to its name – baptized.⁷⁰ With the help of Antonio Nava who had come up from the Imperial Valley, there he facilitated the incorporation of the local congregation and of nearby Watsonville into the fledgling Apostolic Assembly organization. Two years later, after a return to Mexico, he would once again cross the El Paso border en route to Watsonville with the intention of beginning his career as a minister. Taking advantage of a growing network of churches, in the wake of a schism in Watsonville, Ortega headed south to Tulare. He learned how to operate and start a church under the mentorship of Epifanio Cota. Finally in 1927, Ortega left for Brawley, knowing that there he could join a larger fellowship of believers and secure work in the fields.

⁷⁰ Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 16-25.

Illustrating his own borderlands circuits and conversions from Catholicism, to Quakerism, to Pentecostalism, a weary Ortega penned the words to the hymn “Los Caminos de Dios” [The Paths of God] after a long day’s work. Appropriate to the life trajectory of the various borderlands migrants who moved from one valley to the next, saving money from one day to the next, the title to Ortega’s hymn cannot be separated from the borderlands paths that had taken him through his conversion in the Salinas Valley, pastoral mentorship in the Central Valley, and finally leadership training in the Imperial Valley. Ortega’s autobiography (titled *Mis Memorias*) offers us a glimpse into the earliest churches in California’s northern valleys.⁷¹

Grafting New Branches: The Central Valley

In his journey Ortega had met believers in the northern valleys in churches that were scattered and lacked a network. The use of the word “*evangelista*” [evangelist] entered the institutional vocabulary of the leadership as a designation for itinerant preachers; it should be of no surprise then that preachers of the Central Valley assumed this title when they preached in the new intensive labor crop farms opening up in the northern valleys.⁷² This suggests that, despite the very uncertainty of where one would go next for work, one thing was certain: that they would manipulate and interpret the migratory labor patterns as the will of God. Beyond cold, hard, economic greed or agribusinessmen, their fate came to be interpreted through the lens of “human and suprahuman forces” that allowed them to make homes and cross boundaries.⁷³ As was the case of the valleys in southern California, *Apostólico* congregations in northern California blossomed where intensive labor crops grew.

⁷¹ Ibid., 78-79

⁷² Ibid., 155

⁷³ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 54.

Northern California in the first half of the 1920s saw very little evangelistic activity, as the northern valleys were still undergoing the transition from non-intensive to intensive labor crops. But churches sprang up in a pattern that followed the cultivation of crops and recruitment of Mexican workers. As early as 1922 evangelist Abel Estrada baptized Pedro Banderas, and together they began to evangelize the region. In the southernmost region of the Central Valley, Juan Rodriguez, a convert of Miguel García in Torreon, founded a church in Bakersfield after meeting with Methodists in their own temple in the later 1920s.⁷⁴ Like many other converts from the early period, a conversion or upbringing in a Protestant variety of Christianity led to membership in a Pentecostal church.⁷⁵ Ministers as well as laymen in the Central Valley continued in agricultural work in order to support themselves and their families. 1924 proved to be a breakout year in Salinas Valley. The arrival of Martin Tagle (an obscure figure in the history) in San Juan Bautista in 1924 led to the baptisms of six fellow farm workers and to the establishment of a budding congregation there. In that same year, Abel Estrada, who had been baptized by Pedro Banderas in the Central Valley town of Selma, assisted in expanding the network of churches in the greater Salinas Valley region, including, Martinez, Watsonville and Salinas.⁷⁶

Evangelist Epifanio Cota followed the south-to-north trajectory that began in the Imperial Valley. He then planted churches throughout the San Fernando Valley, the Oxnard Plain, and the lastly in the San Joaquin Valley. Cota joined the ranks of licensed ministers in the Imperial Valley in 1924. Francisco Llorente, the movement's first Pastor General ordained him into the

⁷⁴ Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 155.

⁷⁵ This conversion from Mainline Protestant denominations to *Apostólico* ranks is described as the antechamber of "proto-evangelicos Ramirez, "Migrating Faiths", 16-152 (chapters 2-3).

⁷⁶ Ortega, *Mis Memorias* 155-156.

ministry in Brawley.⁷⁷ Cota learned the ropes of preaching, tying together his early-church *Apostólico* fervor and open-air delivery.

In 1927, Cota began his missionary forays into California's heartland, the Central Valley. He was a man of the field, both in agricultural and evangelistic terms. After leaving the Imperial Valley, he took the circuitous route to his ultimate pastorate in Tulare, stopping at various farm labor camps to preach, teach and pray. After his short stint in the Imperial Valley, he initiated *obras* (works)⁷⁸ in towns throughout the Oxnard Plain: Saticoy, El Rio, and Oxnard. Boasting itself as the "strawberry capital of the world," the Oxnard Plain has long been cultivated to grow berries and various labor intensive crops. In the neighboring San Fernando Valley, Cota spearheaded churches neary Saticoy, North Hollywood, Pacoima, and Van Nuys. Cota planted more churches near the San Bernardino Valley in Corona and Chino and further south in Santa Ana. In total the itinerant Cota planted *obras* in ten southern California agriculture-based cities.⁷⁹

Finally in the San Joaquin Valley, Cota arrived at his permanent pastorate in Tulare, but not without first establishing works in Fowler, Caruthers, Wasco, Fresno, and the once-famous Tagus Ranch where he continued his open-air sermons and faced ridiculed that boiled over into physical persecution.⁸⁰ His contemporaries had also initiated works in the Central Valley: Pedro Banderas had launched his *obra* in Selma, Ramon Carillo had evangelized in Cutler, and Juan Rodriguez started a church at the southern tip of the Valley in Bakersfield. By 1927 the Bakersfield congregation laid claim to the Central Valley's first temple, a relatively large edifice.⁸¹ As a result of his proven record and with a permanent pastorate, Cota became the first

⁷⁷ Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 283.

⁷⁸ The term *obra* is used to describe the start of a congregation. It is an ambiguous referent in that it could either mean the members met in a public place, one's home, or, less likely, in a church.

⁷⁹ Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 283.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Issac Cota, interview with author, Modesto, CA, June, 2013.

⁸¹ Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 78; photo insert between pages 22-23 in *Historia de la Asamblea*.

Bishop of the AAFCJ's newly established Northern California District, which included the Salinas Valley in its jurisdiction. The creation and appointment of this bishopric in 1929 proved to be prescient on the part of the *Apostólico* leaders.

That *Apostólico* churches flowered in patches across the Central Valley starting in the late 1920s comes as no surprise, given the transition in agribusiness in the Central Valley from non-intensive labor crops to labor intensive crops. Within a year of the publication of Paul S. Taylor's *Mexican Labor in the United States*, a significant statewide demographic shift began to occur. In 1928 the California Department of Agriculture discovered that "Mexican workers were unrivaled both in numbers and in the degree to which they fulfilled the fundamental desire of farm employers." This had been the case in the Imperial Valley for about a decade, but now the demographic changes of the Central Valley began to mirror those that had occurred a decade earlier in the Imperial Valley. Indeed, the rapid growth of agribusiness in late 1920s gave the perception that agriculture in California would see no end until every last acre of its fertile soil had been tilled.⁸² The rosters of the early conventions point to a growing representation in the north. The 1925 roster only listed Bakersfield, Madera, and Watsonville but the early 1930s rosters indicated that the north became the focus of denominational evangelistic efforts based on the momentum created by the establishment of the "Northern District" in 1929.

These Central Valley churches reflected various dimension of farmworker life. Jesus Valdez pioneered a dozen churches in the Central Valley. His congregation in Sanger (just east

⁸² Like most industries, agribusiness seemed as if would wilt in the looming shadow of the Great Depression. Heading into the 1930s, agribusinessmen supposed that they had little to fear since in the two previous decades they had fought off unions and had negotiated to possess almost absolute control over the laborers' hours, wages, and work conditions. National labor reforms in the 1930s and agricultural strikes halted the efforts of growers to continue driving their workers into further deprivation. The arrival of Dust Bowl migrants raised awareness of condition of farmworkers in California. Daniel Cletus, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers 1870-1941*, (Cornell University Press, 1981), 68-69.

of Fresno) reveals how historians might reflect on the modes of agency expressed by rural Mexican churches. Valdez worked alongside grape pickers and eventually started a small Bible study in his home with them. The “Pit Church,” as it was called, could house 30-50 sitting. Until workers from the church were able to build an adobe brick church, scoffers called them *Aleluyas* and “*topos*” (gophers), because they literally emerged from the ground after church meetings. Like a gopher’s mound, the tarps that covered the pit would billow during ecstatic services. Limited resources and funds forced them to think and act innovatively.

Even the building of the adobe church reflects dimensions of farmworker life. The adobe brick church constructed in Sanger was both affordable and easy to build, so the churches in nearby Madera and Selma soon followed suit. The soil and climate of the Central Valley were conducive to making durable bricks. The designer of these churches, Florencio Zuniga, learned how to make adobe brick buildings aboard a train back into the U.S. in 1931 as an unwanted and undocumented ethnic Mexican. The design of the earliest *Apostólico* temples in the Central Valley therefore came from the genius of a newly-converted lay member criminalized by the U.S. as “illegal.”

The funding to build these temples adds another layer of social complexity to this narrative of dogged resilience. Since most workers were poor and could contribute little beyond their required tithes, women set out to finance the building of new temples through the sale of tamales.⁸³ In fact, most churches in the Central Valley stayed afloat and financed larger projects with funds generated by the sale of tamales made by women in their own or church kitchens. As a place where women ministered to one another, devised new project plans, and even critically examined decisions and sermons, the kitchen was arguably the most important space second only

⁸³ Eugenia Manzano, interview with author, Modesto, CA, November 16, 2013.

to the sanctuary of worship. Such transformation and construction of a domestic space into a sacred space is further examined in chapter 3 (*Farmworker Frames*).

Beyond these localized forms of resistance, larger outcomes for the *Apostólico* movement constituted a counter-narrative to the dominant narrative of deracinated vagrant workers. The congregation of poor grape pickers rejoiced over realizing the construction of their own temple despite the face of mounting financial pressure of the Great Depression and mass repatriation of 2 million Mexicans. The number of *repatriados* reached an all-time high of 138,519 in 1931.⁸⁴ Because of a lack of financial resources, the budding AAFCJ was forced to nix its annual general meeting from its yearly calendar from 1931-1933. This larger national crisis did not halt evangelization efforts. Churches in Mexico reaped the benefits of the repatriation, as “*hermanos repatriados*” rode the U.S. government’s repatriation efforts and evangelized disparate parts of Mexico.⁸⁵ Viewed on a larger, binational scale, the repatriation from 1931-1933 proved to be a transplantation of the movement’s constituencies rather than a deracination.

For believers, macro-economic factors came to be understood divinely. This is a case in which their social reality was viewed through the prism of *la voluntad de Dios* (God’s will). Initially they did not interpret their migrant proletarian reality through a Marxist lens, they viewed their vagrant harvest wandering (read: evangelism) through a Markan lens of the Great Commission:

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. **16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned . **17** And these signs shall follow them that believe ; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; **18** They shall

⁸⁴ Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (University of Arizona Press, 1974).

⁸⁵ Ramirez, *Migrating Faiths*, 154.

take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.⁸⁶

Growers said to come; but more importantly to spirit-baptized farmworkers, they believed that Jesus had told them to “go.” They baptized converts in the rivers and canals adjacent to their field revivals; before the water ever reached the fields, they had sanctified it through baptisms.⁸⁷ They found ways to turn circumstances of peril into moments of praise. Such is the case in the story of Florencio Zuniga, who in the 1929 left Clovis, relinquished his U.S. residency papers, and headed with his wife and year-old daughter to Jalisco, Mexico aboard a free-fare train ride offered to those who voluntarily repatriated. But before leaving he met *hermano* Mariano Marín from Tulare (likely from Epifanio Cota’s congregation), who gave him a pocket-sized New Testament. After arrival he began to read the Bible for the first time. A dreadful year in rural Mexico – the stillborn delivery of one child en route to Mexico, the starvation of another, and the inability to provide food or shelter for the family – propelled Zuniga and the family back to the United States, this time without documentation. After crossing through El Paso his family converted him to the AAFCJ. When he arrived in Sanger he immediately joined Valdez’s congregation. Though only introduced to the gospel but not fully converted to the *Apostólico* church at the time of his repatriation, the family interprets the events that led up to his conversion as *la voluntad de Dios*.⁸⁸

Congregations offered community and stability to evangelists and laity riding the unsteady wave of migration stirred up by macro-economic forces. Co-religionists from the

⁸⁶ English-speaking evangelists such as Epifanio Cota would have used the King James Version of the Bible for his sermons in English. (Mark 16:15-18). *Apostólicos* later involvement with Chavez’s Community Service Organization (labeled as communist) indicates that they at least indirectly assumed some sort Marxist interpretation of social change (chapter 4).

⁸⁷ For thorough discussion of the symbolic meaning of sanctified waters of baptism, see chapter 3 (Farmworker Frames). Photographic evidence of such phenomena is also provided.

⁸⁸ Here I borrow Ramirez’s term as it applies to the purposeful trajectories of migrants. Ramirez, *Migrating Faiths*, 158.

Imperial Valley during the summer harvest would fill Sanger's adobe brick church beyond capacity. Local churches located in cities with summer harvest crops fully expected growth during those months. This migratory labor phenomenon, noted by Paul Taylor, as a "surge northward" and a "pour[ing] over into the great Valley of California" was also noted by *Apostólico* leaders.⁸⁹ These developed a parallel economy of sociability and accountability, namely a protocol system of letter of recommendation for transient saints to deliver to pastors of new sites of work. These guaranteed offered a sense of community upon arrival.⁹⁰

The "surge northward" of saints led at times to the creation of new sites of worship as well as to the conversion of non- *Apostólicos*. An empowered laity took the initiative to erect their own makeshift temples to begin converting others. One eyewitness recalled that even if no temple stood "they wouldn't waste time; they would get together and have church wherever they could."⁹¹ This became true of the makeshift tents (*carpas*) set up in the fields. Another eyewitness recounts how the *hermanos* from Calexico would arrive in Patterson (near Modesto), and, lacking a temple, would set up a large tarp on poles and gather for services. These outdoor services were not exclusive to members of the church; they often attracted outsiders. After working the fields in Heber, CA (northwest of Calexico) for five years, Aniceto Ortiz found himself among *Apostólicos* in the fields of Patterson in 1950. In his first day in Patterson, a fellow field worker invited him to join fellow migrants from Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico under a *carpa*. When recalling the day of his conversion Ortiz weeps remembering the feeling of community that he had never found in Heber. The bonds between the saints reminded him of his family in the small town in the state of Sinaloa that he had left in 1940 and made him

⁸⁹ Manzano interview.

⁹⁰ Taylor, *On the Ground in the Thirties*, 5-6.

⁹¹ Manzano, interview.

feel at home. The church's practice of collective singing from hymnals and its emphasis on reading the Bible as daily devotion compelled Ortiz toward literacy. Although Ortiz had never attended school, an *hermano* from the church taught him how to read, enabling him to later teach and preach.⁹² These skills enabled him, as a lay member, to minister to Bracero workers in Patterson and Grayson.

Growers like Escalon's George Driscoll noted the sense of community. In Escalon, George Driscoll contracted Mexican laborers. Knowing that the *hermanos* from the Apostolic Assembly practiced sobriety and proved to be dutiful workers, he contracted a large number of them to sow and pick his crops. As they were wont to do, the laborers and their families set up tents to hold their services in a *carpa*. In nearby Riverbank the midway point between Escalon, and the larger city of Modesto, they pieced together a *carpa* tent. From this small work arose the thriving First Apostolic Church of Modesto, where strawberry picker, Remigio Montes, would assume the pastorate.⁹³ *Apostólicos* took the opportunity to establish new congregations where growers called for workers. The outdoor religious rendezvous turned into full-fledged churches in the case of Lathrop, Tracy, Patterson, and Riverbank. Thus, evangelistic imperatives dovetailed with economic ones.

Roots and Offshoots: New Schisms and New Starts in the Salinas Valley

This evangelistic fervor was reminiscent of the patterns already apparent elsewhere in northern California in the mid-1920s. The cluster of churches near Watsonville is an example both of farmworkers creating a network of churches and the emergence of schismatic charismatic leaders. Ministers from different parts of the state (Imperial Valley, San Diego, Los Angeles, and

⁹² Aniceto and Maria Ortiz, interview with author, Ceres, CA, November 9, 2013.

⁹³ Manzano interview.

San Francisco) gathered in Watsonville months before the 1926 annual general convention. They devised a plan of dissent contingent on two issues: the promotion of Jose Martinez from Secretary General to Pastor General of the new organization, and a change in the the official salutation from “paz de Cristo” to “paz de Dios” (they cited the Pauline salutations as precedence for the former). To their chagrin, both agendas foundered and shortly thereafter they defected from *La Iglesia de la Fe Apostólica Pentecostés* (precursor of the *Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus*). According to Jose Ortega, the dissenters eventually disbanded.⁹⁴ The fact that a charismatic leader like Martinez arose in such a far-flung outpost (from the northern valleys) and was able to garner support from ministers throughout the state provokes us to consider the strength of this incipient network and its enabling of both cohesion and dissent.

Apostolic Assembly churches reemerged in the Salinas Valley in the 1930s spearheaded by Juan Amaya in Salinas and Valentin Medina in Gonzalez. Though generally small, they commissioned some of the denominations earliest foreign missionaries to South America.⁹⁵ In nearby San Jose, Pedro Banderas founded a church that would eventually rise to regional prominence in the East Bay and Salinas Valley.⁹⁶ The experiences of the clergy and laity in the churches in the Salinas Valley and in San Jose largely mirrored the experiences of those in the Central Valley. Indeed, in many cases, the congregants cross-pollinated from the Central Valley to the east and vice versa, as harvest patterns dictated.

The congregation in Salinas reminds us of the role of laity in shaping churches. A small congregation had formed in Salinas at some point in the 1930s but the congregation’s growth and stability had to await the valley’s agribusiness in the early 1940s when the Spreckles sugar beet

⁹⁴ Ortega, *Mis Memorias*, 77-78.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 284-285.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

company opened a large factory and lured in a large number of migrant laborers. The conversion of the linchpin family came when Mercedes Rodriguez-Perez had first heard the Pentecostal message as taught to her by another woman (only identified as Maria). After a series of Bible, Perez later attended church services with Maria. Mercedes' mother, Ramona Gutierrez, also converted and relocated the family from Castroville to Salinas in order to be closer to the church. The move coincided with Juan Amaya's attempts to launch a church in Salinas. The preacher requested Ramona to hold church services in her house.

The congregation in Salinas began as an *obra* comprised of farm workers. To reach the new *Bracero* workers (the program was started in 1942), they held outdoor services. The women's auxiliary seized this opportunity to raise money for the building of a temple by selling tamales and soft drinks to the workers.⁹⁷ It is believed that the large majority of the churches in the northern valleys received the majority of their funds for special projects from the sale of tamales.⁹⁸

Conclusion: Pruning the Narrative?

This chapter, along with chapters 3 (*Farmworker Frames*) and 4 (*Activists and Aleluyas*) show the agentic role of stoop laborers. By highlighting these stories we can acquire a deeper appreciation for the everyday and the extraordinary work of such subaltern luminaries as: Romana Carbajal de Valenzuela, responsible for founding one of Mexico's largest Pentecostal movements;⁹⁹ Florencio Zuniga, the undocumented Great Repatriation-era architect of churches

⁹⁷ Manuel Perez email correspondence with author, August-September 2014.

⁹⁸ Marta Bracamontes, interview with author, San Bernardino, CA, March 2014; Eugenia Monzano interview; Ortiz Interview; Perez correspondence.

⁹⁹ By commemorating her work, perhaps she may earn a rightful place in the pantheon of Pentecostal leaders – despite that her very own denomination in 1932 admonished women to keep their silence in the church, effectively stripping them of any clerical roles.

on U.S. soil; Jose Ortega, the young migrant worker whose tenure spanned valleys, nations, and decades of fellowship; Aniceto Ortiz the homesick laborer who followed the “surge northward” only to find a “home” in Patterson.

Apostólicos point back to the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street as their origin story. A narrative connection to the Azusa Street Revival functions as a method of legitimation. The *Apostólico* story is tenuously traceable to the revival. To be sure, we find the cultivation of *Apostólico* doctrines in fields of California. The small base in the Los Angeles area served as a launching pad into the Imperial, Coachella and *Mexicali* valleys. The commitment of farmworker laity and clergy to plant congregations wherever agribusiness took them resulted in a vast network of churches throughout the valleys. *Apostólico* thought matured and leaders of the soon-to-be denomination were trained in the agricultural fields of these border area. Many ministers who trained in this region rode the wave of agricultural labor flows and made careers in the Central and Salinas valleys. *Apostólicos* were thus well imbedded into the landscape throughout the state. But they would not be alone.

In 1929 the Central Valley became the most profitable valley in the agricultural sector of the state, *Apostólicos* founded the Northern District, and the Mexican Repatriation started and drove out scores of Mexican workers; the faces in agriculture would change with the crash of the stock market and withered crops throughout the western south. Fleeing hard times, Okie began to arrive into the Central Valley and forged a Pentecostal trajectory of their own. Dominant religious narratives (comprised of U.S. urban church bias, Anglophone leaders, machismo, and notable clergy) have largely overpowered the more subtle and rural voices that resound clearly if we look outside of the mainstream of society. Okie migrants entered California’s fields and garnered national attention because they seemed out of place among Mexican and Asian stoop

laborers. Okie Pentecostals arrived in the same fields, preached very similar (often the same) doctrines as Mexican Pentecostals did, but seemed to hardly interact with them until both Okies and Mexicans began to share Pentecostal discourses in English and advanced from agricultural work (to varying degrees). Okie and Mexican Pentecostals began to earnestly plant new churches in the Central Valley by the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Chapter 2

The Dust District: The Roots and Routes of Okie Pentecostalism

The notion of the “Dust District” emerges from a joke I heard during my research: “The Oklahoma District is the largest district in the entire [Pentecostal] organization, but most of its people are in California.” The joke is intended to deride the state’s notoriously conservative culture, most evident in the Central Valley. Even among today’s mostly white Pentecostal denominations, the Central Valley churches still retain similarities to their counterparts from Oklahoma and the greater Southern Plains. As a product of two decades of migration beginning in the late 1930s, the Dust District seemingly remains frozen in time. The zealous Okie oracles projected mythologized notions of the “old paths” and handed down specific teachings on how to “be separate from the world.” Although this rhetoric is not unique to Pentecostalism in California, the degree of influence and rapidity of cultural transition in California indeed spells out a unique chapter of this tradition. Indeed, Central Valley Pentecostalism underwent a transition among Oneness and Trinitarian groups. The early Pentecostal pioneers (1906-1936) in northern California represented polyglot and cosmopolitan cohorts of preachers. These pioneering preachers often emerged from a Wesleyan ministerial background and concertedly supported missions globally and/or trained women and men to launch new missions to California’s many language groups. These earlier preachers preceded the Okies and largely hailed from the Upper Midwest and abroad. Notably, they did not bear the outsider stigma that Okies bore and were praised for their global visionary missions.

In *California's Cross* I have thus far offered examples of how Mexican Pentecostals crossed fluid national and denominational lines. The overland journey of Okie migrants along the historic Route 66 adds another cross-cutting layer to the category of whiteness and another layer of convergence and complexity to religion in the American West. In order to understand how migrants imported and imparted their religious values, we should conceive of northern agricultural California as a site of convergence –that is, a convergence of religiously conservative Western South migrants.¹ In the Central Valley, Okies came as strangers, an unwelcomed class of newcomers. Yet they would transform the Pentecostal culture of the Central Valley. After all, “the stranger is one who comes today and stays for tomorrow.”² In the words of an anonymous hitchhiker from the Okie migrant camps town of Arvin, “[i]f it weren’t for Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, there wouldn’t be much of California, would there?”³

In a movement where the number of “souls won” acted as the barometer of any congregation’s success, the proof lay in the pudding of proselytism, and Okies made better pudding. The sheer numbers of migrants, their class marginalization and inclination toward Pentecostalism, and their aggressive evangelism afforded Dust District Pentecostals a numerical advantage over their pioneering, polyglot predecessors. This aggressive evangelization surpassed that of the early California pioneers. In general, I refer to religious solicitation and conversion efforts as “evangelism”. In the Pentecostal lexicon found in biographies and reports in periodicals, the language of “soul winning,” “harvest,” and “evangelism” emerged most frequently. In California, from the 1930s to the 1950s, the migration of religiously conservative

¹ Patricia Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckoning in the New West*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.) 18-28.

² Georg Simmel, *The Stranger*.

³ “Remark of a Hitchhiker” (n.d.), Dust Bowl Migration Archive North Bay Regional and Special Collections, University Library, Sonoma State University, Ronher Park, California.

plain-folk augured well for evangelism. What critics and observers deemed the “Okie Problem,” the scattered churches of the Central Valley saw as an opportunity. To the chagrin of Okies of Baptist and Methodist background, churches of these denominations in California seemed inaccessible to them. Their newly ascribed lower class status left few church doors open to them. But they found an alternative. Pentecostals not only welcomed them, they compelled them to enter. First, though, we will look at the seed of piety sown by their Pentecostal predecessors.

The Pioneers and Polyglot Proselytism

The Pentecostal culture of the valley transitioned out of “refined” and polyglot strains of early Pentecostalism that emerged out of the Azusa Street Revival. The influx of Dust District (Okie) migrants overwhelmed this kinder/gentler practice of Pentecostalism and ushered in a hardliner Pentecostalism from the Western South (Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas). Sociologists of the time noted the secondary and even tertiary social standing of Pentecostal denominations, which they called “sects” and “schismatic churches”.⁴ Pentecostalism in the late 1930s rapidly grew out in the open fields of California and even today is well embedded into the fabric of social memory in the valley, so much so that one *Bakersfield Californian* reporter recently described Country singer Merle Haggard’s Bakersfield as “a hot, dusty hell hole of oil rigs, cotton fields and Pentecostal Sundays.”⁵ These migrants, remembered more famously as Okies or Arkies from the Western South, brought almost none of their possessions with them.⁶

⁴ Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1947); James Bright Wilson, “Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations among Certain Agricultural Workers in the Central Valley of California, US, 1944” (PhD, Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1942); Elmer Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937). In the 1940s the University of Southern California became an important site for the sociological study of churches.

⁵ Robert Price, “A Lion in Winter but He Still Has One Hell of a Roar” *Bakersfield Californian* (March 15, 2014).

⁶ The term “Okie” is used throughout the chapter as a signifier to describe the over one-million migrants who left the Southern Plains that were ecologically and economically affected by the Dust Bowl storms. “Dust Bowl Migrants” is a longer and generationally imprecise term, especially with respect to their children who never lived in

Nevertheless, they did bring their resolve to recapture some form of authority or sense of stability. This hardliner authority articulated as ethos and praxis stood in stark contrast to the earlier wave of evangelism carried out by Pentecostal pioneers from 1906 to the late 1930s. While earlier Holiness-Pentecostal ministers sowed the seeds of piety, Okie Pentecostals agricultural workers proved best at reaping them. In this section I show the characteristics of the earlier strains of Pentecostalism.

Urban Northern California

When Okie Pentecostals entered California they confronted older, polyglot, and more cosmopolitan strains of white Pentecostalism. On the heels of the Azusa Street Revival, Pentecostalism quickly expanded into the state's northern urban cities (San Francisco and Oakland). The many missions and churches formed in Los Angeles as a result of defections and divisions in the Azusa Street Revival left Los Angeles a "burned-over district".⁷ Testimonies of the efficacy of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) and xenolalia (speaking in known foreign tongues) quickly filled the pages of the revival's organ, *The Apostolic Faith*. More generally, tongues and missions became the dominant tropes. This in part reflected the diversity of language and foreign nationalities in Los Angeles and among revival participants. More specifically it reflected the larger phenomena of California's growing multi-lingual metropolises (Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland) and emerging cities in the agricultural valleys

the Dust Bowl states yet they carried the various cultural nuances that Okies brought with them. In some cases I use that term as well as "Southern Plains" folk. Okie embodies the general ethos of migrants and articulates elements of their self-cultural awareness as second-class citizens. James Gregory uses the term Western South in some cases to describe the region from which Okie migrants hailed. See, James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (Oxford University Press, 1989) Moreover, today the term "Okieville" is still used to describe the impoverished white parts of towns throughout the Central Valley, see conclusion.

⁷ I borrow the term from Revivalist preacher Charles Finney who first used the term "burnt district" to describe the late nineteenth-century revivals in western New York.

(Sacramento, Fresno, and Stockton). By the end of the Azusa Street Revival, Pentecostal pioneers had already forayed into the Bay Area and made inroads into the Central Valley. These northern California sites functioned as proving grounds for some missionaries and housed early Bible institutes of the incipient Pentecostal movement. The far-flung yet connected congregations pastored by men and women with global experiences defined the era of polyglots and pioneers from the early 1910 to the mid-1930s.

Correspondence in the *Azusa Faith* periodical captured the earliest sites of Pentecostals' mission efforts in northern California. Within a few months of the Azusa Street Revival's inception in April 1906, a small band of ministers from Los Angeles initiated revival meetings in Oakland and San Francisco. In the early months of 1907, Seymour visited the incipient work in San Francisco.⁸ Around 1906, Azusa Street convert, Harry Morse initiated missions in Stockton and Oakland.⁹ From 1906 to 1914 these various Pentecostal missions eluded integration into any one organization. Only after 1914, in the aftermath of the "Second" and "Finished Work" dissention and in the thick of the Jesus-Name controversies did traces of organization materialize.¹⁰ Frank Ewart's Los Angeles-based publication *Meat in Due Season* marked these

⁸ See multiple reports: "Fire Falling at Oakland," "The Same Old Way," "Pentecostal Faith Line" in *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906); "Fire Still Falling" in *The Apostolic Faith* (October 1906), and "San Francisco and Oakland" (December 1906); Seymour preached in San Francisco in early January of 1907, see (February-March 1907), "Pentecost in San Francisco" (April 1907); it's plausible that Harry Morse sent in this brief testimony from Stockton, see "Reports in Stockton" (January 1908).

⁹ Talmadge French, *Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism: G. T. Haywood and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World 1901-1931* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 62,206; Olive Haney, *The Man of the Hills – Served in the Valley: The Biography of Clyde J. Haney* (Unknown Publication, 1985) 42-43; Jewel Yadon Dilon, "Harry Morse" in *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers*, ed. Mary Wallace (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1984), 289-290

¹⁰ In short, the former proposed after the moment of conversion a believer could experience a "second blessing/work" that cleansed her/him from inbred sin and prepared the heart for the Holy Spirit baptism; the latter offered a new interpretation namely that a believer was sanctified at the moment of conversion and did not need to undergo a second work of grace. The first had been strongly embedded in those who entered the Pentecostal ranks from ministerial background in Wesleyan and Holiness Traditions. See Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1997) 149-152.

divisive doctrinal lines between Oneness and Trinitarians “Finished Work” believers. Seymour’s *Apostolic Faith*, Ewart’s *Meat in Due Season*, and the Assembly of God’s *Weekly Evangel* evidence that the ministers in California maintained an acute concern for international and polyglot missionary work.¹¹

In the 1910s marquee churches sprang up in Oakland, San Francisco, and Stockton. Ministers with a primary goal of training global and domestic Pentecostal missionaries founded these congregations. A proto Assemblies of God mission took root in San Francisco in 1911.¹² Glad Tidings Tabernacle’s reputation grew as it attracted U.S. Pentecostalism’s most renowned preachers and faith healers. Names such as Aimee Semple McPherson (Canadian) and Smith Wigglesworth (British) headlined heavily-advertised revival services.¹³ In 1915 the three delegates from San Francisco attended the General Council Assemblies of God second annual meeting represented the state’s northern metropolis. A number of non-attendees held pastorates in the city.¹⁴ By the end of the 1910s, Robert J. Craig, pastor of Glad Tiding Temple in San Francisco served as one of two Assembly of God presbyters in California and eighteen nationwide.¹⁵ The Assembly of God’s Oneness counterparts also led churches in the urban centers: Frank Ewart in Los Angeles and Harry Morse in Oakland. Morse and Craig gained considerable influence within their respective organizations by opening Bible Institutes.

Bible Institutes

¹¹ The General Council of the Assemblies of God published various organs including, *The Weekly Evangel*, and *Christian Evangel*, which were ultimately renamed *The Pentecostal Evangel*.

¹² Robert Craig’s 1911 mission named “Glad Tidings Hall” preceded the formation of the Assemblies of God. A 1925 report claimed that the nightly tabernacle services were embarking on their fourteenth year. “Glad Tidings Bible Institute San Francisco, California” *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 12, 1925), 13.

¹³ “A History of Glad Tidings Church San Francisco.” Accessed (March 1, 2016): <http://www.gtsf.org/contentpages/41729/88181eb5-d4e8-499a-a04f-d65ed25e1d8a/GladTidingsChurch.aspx>

¹⁴ Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God (St. Louis, MO: 1915);

¹⁵ The other Presbyter in California served in Los Angeles, *The Christian Evangel* (March 2, 1919), 7;

During the heyday of the Azusa Street Revival, Morse visited the revival and spread the Pentecostal fires first to Stockton and then Oakland where he set up his Bible Training Home. Morse led his school with a vision for spreading the Pentecostal fires “to the uttermost part of the earth.” Missionaries to China, the Philippines, India, Japan, African countries and various foreign destinations trained at the school.¹⁶ Morse and his students adhered to a strict schedule which included Sabbath observance –atypical of early Pentecostals. The outbreak of WWII caused his Bible Training Home to disband in 1942, as the U.S. government conscripted many of the school’s young men.¹⁷ Located in the downtown of a major port city, the church and school on the corner of Ninth and Mission attracted missionaries returning from the East. Its advantageous position on the West Coast led Louis Olson to pioneer a “Forget-Me-Not” campaign which aimed to raise funds so that Morse’s Bible Training Home could lodge returned missionaries.¹⁸ Various memoirs and biographies attest to the fact that the school exposed students to foreign and domestic missionary work.¹⁹

In its early years the school attracted German twin sisters Ethel and Lilian Zimmer from Victoria County, Texas. Victoria County lay in the southeastern region of the state, which became a hub of German immigrants entering through Port Indianola.²⁰ The Zimmer twins converted to Pentecostalism under the Assemblies of God in the Houston area and shortly thereafter joined the Morse family in the Bible Training Home. In Oakland they fully embraced Oneness Pentecostal teachings. After ordination under Morse, they travelled as itinerant

¹⁶ Yadon, “Harry Morse,” 291; *Pentecostal Herald* (February 1947), 7.

¹⁷ Harry Morse, “Oakland, California” *The Apostolic Herald* (April 1942), 9. Periodical Collection, Center for the Study of Oneness Pentecostalism, Hazelwood, MO.

¹⁸ Yadon, “Harry Morse,” 296.

¹⁹ Jewell Yadon Dillon “Ruth Angela Scott Yadon” in *Pioneer Pentecostal Women Vol. 1* ed. Mary Wallace (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press), 250.

²⁰ The Indianola Port was the main port for German immigration.

evangelists but ultimately coconcentrated most of their foreign language evangelism efforts in Lodi, California, a German-speaking town.²¹ In addition to the Zimmer twins, Morse later trained more students who went on to found churches under the doctrinally laxer Pentecostal Church Incorporated (PCI). Foreign language evangelism and missions shaped the views of PCI ministers in California. Their more cosmopolitan views would later conflict with those of Dust District Pentecostals.²²

Across the San Francisco Bay, Robert Craig garnered considerably more influence when he opened the doors of Glad Tidings Bible Institute in 1918.²³ There Craig and his team trained leaders for the domestic and foreign missions. By 1923 they sent out pioneers to rural Central Valley towns: Fresno, Raisin City (near Fresno), Merced, Winton (near Merced), Ceres, and Live Oak. Along the northern coast they bolstered missions in Oakland, San Jose, Santa Rosa, and Pacific Grove.²⁴ Craig claimed that “rapid development of the work of the Assemblies of God in Northern and Central California is in large part attributable to the stream of influence going out from Glad Tiding Tabernacle and Bible Institute.”²⁵ Within its first decade of operation, the school graduated hundreds of students, mostly students from California but also some from

²¹ Alyce Price, “The Zimmer Twins” in *Pioneer Pentecostal Women Vol. 1*, 258-270.

²² The PCI held considerably strong influence in California and the Pacific Northwest’s Oneness Pentecostal circuits. Members of its sister organization (Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ) with which it later merged in 1945 viewed their more soteriologically lax PCI counterparts askance. On the one hand, PAJC ministers staunchly maintained the necessity of water baptism in the name of Jesus and the infilling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of glossolalia; on the other hand, PCI ministers did not believe that those rituals were necessary for salvation. This PCI and PAJC difference largely defined the line between the PCI predecessors in California and the later PAJC Dust District. For a detailed history on the rift between PCI and PAJC preachers leading to the formation of the United Pentecostal Church International, see Thomas Fudge, *Christianity without a Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism* (Parkland, FL: Universal Publishers, 2003). Fudge also notes how the Yadon family maintained strong PCI views in the Northwest.

²³ A September 1925 report claims that the school was going into its seventh year of operation that October. “Glad Tidings Bible Institute San Francisco, California” *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 12, 1925), 13.

²⁴ Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God (St. Louis, MO: 1915); For ministerial destinations of students see “Northern California district Council and Glad Tidings Bible Commencement” *Pentecostal Evangel* (May 26, 1923), 14.

²⁵ “Glad Tidings Bible Institute San Francisco, California” *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 12, 1925), 13.

Canada as well as some from “the Orient.” The school commissioned missionaries to China, India, and countries in South and Central America. Craig recruited faculty from the Assembly of God’s executive ranks as well as its missionary roster, including Adolfo C. Valdez.²⁶ Prior to his arrival at Glad Tidings Bible Institute, Valdez pioneered churches in Australia and New Zealand; he later continued his missionary work in Latin America, India, China, Japan, South Sea Islands, and Hawaii.²⁷ Valdez’s record of ministry among Spanish speakers in the U.S. is unclear.²⁸ Nevertheless his Mexican subjectivity brought a larger world and cultural perspective to students at Glad Tidings Bible Institute. In the world of Pentecostal bible institutes, experience superseded formal education or training at an institute.

In 1911 as the work in San Francisco lay in its infancy stage, Robert Craig made timely overtures that altered the course of Borderlands Pentecostalism and converted Mexicans.²⁹ Craig later ordained Francisco Olazábal into the Assemblies of God on February 14, 1918. Olazábal pastored a Methodist Episcopal Church congregation in Pasadena before he arrived to a new pastorate in the Bay Area when he met Craig and Holiness faith healer Carrie Judd Montgomery.³⁰ The extent of his training under Craig is not clear; however, throughout 1918, Olazábal is referred to as “from” or “working with Bro. Craig’s work” in San Francisco. Within a year of his ordination Olazábal preached revivals and established churches in Los Angeles and

²⁶ “Good News of Glad Tidings Bible Institute” *Pentecostal Evangel* (August 11, 1928), 8.

²⁷ A.C. Valdez, *Fire on Azusa Street* (Costa Mesa, CA: Gift Publications, 1980), 116.

²⁸ Arlene Sanchez-Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal Identity: Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 16; Gaston Espinosa, *Latino Pentecostals in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 138-139.

²⁹ Espinosa, *Latino Pentecostals*, 143.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 102; For more on Olazábal see “Francisco Olazábal and Latino Pentecostal Revivalism in the Borderlands,” in *Embodying the Spirit: New Perspectives on North American Revivalism*, ed. Michael McClymond (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Gaston Espinosa, “Francisco Olazábal: Charisma, Power, and Faith Healing in the Borderlands” in James Goff and Grant Wacker, eds., *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 177-197.

El Paso.³¹ These establishments represented the infancy of his highly influential ministry among Latinos.

Glad Tidings Bible Institute afforded Pentecostals experiences that came from living in a thriving metropolis. Musical performances by the 140 member orchestra (led by a former Salvation Army band leader) resonated in the 2,500 seating capacity sanctuary and could likely be heard in the nearby streets.³² Glad Tiding’s boosters touted the temple and school’s modern look as “two massive modern buildings of steel and concrete in the heart of San Francisco...substantial and imposing.” They further boasted of Glad Tiding’s status as the only AG-affiliated institute on the American continent to operate its own broadcasting station.³³ Craig and the students published reports that highlighted the international background of converts (e.g. Russians and Austrians) and surrounding areas from which visitors came. The reports noted that students advanced evangelistic efforts.³⁴ Students operated the locally renowned Calvary Rescue Mission in the heart of the men’s district. They also oversaw chaplaincies in jails, hospitals and alms homes.³⁵ Glad Tiding Tabernacle’ continued to sponsor the Assemblies of God missionary work in the midst of the Great Depression. From 1931 to 1933 members gave \$27,646—more than double the amount of the second highest donor. For the remainder of the 1930s, they remained at the top the denomination’s charts in missionary offerings, giving at least \$146,171

³¹ “Mexican Work in California” in *The Pentecostal Evangel* (April 20, 1918), 11; “Los Angeles, Cal” in *The Pentecostal Herald* (June 15, 1918), 13; “A Report of the Spanish Pentecostal Convention San Antonio, Texas, Nov 10-18” in *The Pentecostal Evangel* (December 28, 1918), 7.

³² “Glad Tidings Bible Institute San Francisco, California” *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 12, 1925), 13

³³ “Glad Tidings Temple and Bible Institute” *Pentecostal Evangel* (July 31, 1926), 6; after renovations to 1441 Ellis Street property, Craig changed the name from “Tabernacle” to “Temple”, a better suited name given the “imposing” size of the structures.

³⁴ “San Francisco, CAL” *Pentecostal Evangel* (December 8, 1923), 13.

³⁵ “Glad Tidings Bible Institute San Francisco, California” *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 12, 1925), 13; “Good News of Glad Tidings Bible Institute” *Pentecostal Evangel* (August 11, 1928), 8.

from 1929 to 1939.³⁶ Until its relocation sixty miles south to Scotts Valley in 1950, the Glad Tidings Bible Institute (later renamed Bethany Bible College in 1955, then Bethany University in 2005) claimed the most cosmopolitan setting of any Pentecostal Bible college or institute.³⁷

California: Domestic Controversies and Global Currents

The founding of the rural Central Valley churches transpired under the ministry of women and men with global and polyglot impulses but who were caught up with doctrinal issues and schisms at home. Glad Tidings Bible Institute's rise to prominence within the Pentecostal movement shows how global thinking garnered domestic prominence. Yet while they successfully deployed missionaries abroad they faced internal turmoil at home. The Jesus-name controversy, which would split the Assemblies of God, originated and gained much momentum in California. Until the Oneness ministers organized under the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World in 1918, California played the leading role in keeping loosely affiliated Oneness ministers together. Following the racial turmoil in the Oneness movement from 1924 to 1931, many California pioneers identified with the PCI. The (relative) theological fluidity of these ministers is evidenced by the fact that PCI thought held the day in global California until the overwhelming number of Okie clergy and laity clamped down on them. Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan and polyglot pioneers sustained long influence in the Northwest and regions of

³⁶ Heather Curtis "God is not Affected by the Depression: Pentecostal Missions during the 1930s" in *Church History*, (80:3, 2011), 588.

³⁷ The early prominence of Glad Tidings Bible Institute is often overlooked. This is likely due to its location away from the Assemblies of God headquarters in Springfield, MO. Central Bible Institute opened after in 1922 (after Glad Tidings Bible Institute) in Springfield, MO and became the de facto seat of power within the Assemblies of God's consortium of Bible Institutes. Edith Blumhoffer uses the term "plain dress" gospel, see Edith Blumhoffer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana-Champaign: The University of Illinois Press, 1993), 149-153.

California hardly touched by the Okie migration.³⁸ Many leaders from this region came into the ministry under the mentorship of Harry Morse.

Harry Morse: The Educator of Missionaries

Harry Morse distinguished himself from the early Oneness ministers with his residential Home Bible Institute, Sabbatarian teachings, and career in northern California that looped in a larger international circuit of ministers. Born in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1879, Morse arrived in Stockton in 1898 from Michigan. He spent his earliest ministerial days in the Holiness-based Peniel Missions of California. Through his work in the Peniel Missions in San Pedro (incorporated into L.A. in 1909) he met the Azusa Street Revival's most prolific chronicler Frank Bartleman. It is plausible that he learned about the revival through Bartleman whose preaching circuit included Peniel Missions in San Pedro, Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Diego, and Stockton. Curiosity and word of mouth beckoned Morse into the renovated barn and former African Methodist Episcopal church on 312 Azusa Street. It is uncertain as to when he received his Pentecostal experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All accounts record that it happened much later after he witnessed it at Azusa (recall: he was already a Holiness preacher). This relatively late infilling of the Spirit possibly influenced his markedly pliable views on the essentiality of the Holy Spirit baptism for salvation.³⁹ His new experience prompted board members of the San Pedro Mission to relieve Morse of his pastoral duties. In 1908, Morse launched a Pentecostal Mission in Stockton; his earliest converts included the Haney family from the town's Peniel Mission.⁴⁰ On March 14, 1908, Morse and Sophie Haney received the Holy

³⁸ Fudge, *Christianity Without a Cross*.

³⁹ The two most extensive accounts on his early years record that it took him months to receive his Pentecostal Holy Spirit baptism. Dillon records "about six months after his wife Maude" received it. Haney records 1908. Either date still shows the prolonged period until he received it; this could offer insight as to why he sided with PCI ministers and later with the Latter Rain Movement.

⁴⁰ Haney, *Man from the Hills*, 38-43.

Spirit, and by the end of the month he hosted Bartleman to preach in Stockton.⁴¹ Morse opened a mission on the corner of Grant and Main Street and thus planted the roots of what would become a welcome station for a host of Western South migrants and later California's most prominent Oneness Pentecostal church.

Morse left Stockton in order to begin a Bible school in Oakland. Over the course of the next three decades the mission in Stockton changed hands between various male and female pastors. By the late 1930s it would thereafter lay securely in the hands of the Haney family.⁴² Morse not only pastored the earlier generations of the Haney family and their relatives, he also trained Oneness Pentecostalism's most well-known missionaries. Even Frank Ewart specially noted his unparalleled support of missionaries.⁴³ Shortly after Oneness ministers defected from the Assemblies of God, one of Morse's cosmopolitan contemporaries assumed leadership of the works in the Central Valley.

William Booth-Clibborn: The Polyglot Missionary

William Booth-Clibborn preached month-long revivals in Stockton in 1916, and in the same year he oversaw the work in Sacramento and hosted early tent revivals in Lodi.⁴⁴ Booth-Clibborn knew well the Holiness movement: he was born in Switzerland in 1893 to the founders of the Salvation Army in France and Switzerland. In 1908 he received his Pentecostal spirit baptism near London. After missionary service in England and Germany, he arrived in the U.S. After preaching in Oklahoma and Arkansas (ca. 1915) he received a copy of Ewart's Los

⁴¹ Ibid., 43; Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*, (Los Angeles: 1925) 113. Accessed February 29, 2016 at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bartleman/los/formats/los.pdf>

⁴² Haney, *Man of the Hills*.

⁴³ Frank Ewart, *Phenomenon of Pentecost: A History of the Latter Rain*, (Houston, TX: Herald Publishing House, 1947), 109.

⁴⁴ William Booth-Clibborn, "Should a Christian Physically Defend Himself?" *Meat in Due Deason* (June 1916); "Special Revival Tent Meeting in Stockton, CAL." *Meat in Due Season* (June 1916)

Angeles-based *Meat in Due Season* and soon thereafter was re-baptized in Jesus name.⁴⁵ At the height of the Jesus name controversy, Booth-Clibborn continued his evangelistic circuit in cooperation with Ewart in Los Angeles, Robert McAlister in Ottawa, Frank Small in Winnipeg, and Harry Morse in northern California. Booth-Clibborn joined the editorial staff of *Meat in Due Season* in 1917. In that year he reported from Lodi that he preached in English and German. Preaching in his mother tongue reportedly engendered heavy criticism from the local press and vandalism. One man to cut the ropes and canvass of the tent. (The man reportedly died shortly thereafter). Other members of the community filed a petition to force them to move.⁴⁶

Booth-Clibborn's ministry not only added another layer of foreign language and missions, but it also added a pedagogical and musical layer which magnified his newfound Oneness beliefs. Writing after the 1915 General Council of the Assemblies of God, he stated, "[t]he council of St. Louis is responsible for shutting the door to this glorious message God will be victorious though, and I know will forgive them."⁴⁷ His exegetical articles on the Oneness accompanied those of Frank Ewart and African-American Oneness leader Garfield T. Haywood.⁴⁸ Haywood defended the Oneness position within the Assemblies of God at the 1915 council, led various Oneness denominations, and is noted for being "the most intellectually wide ranging of all early Pentecostal theologians"⁴⁹ Beside writing profusely about the Jesus-name doctrines, Haywood shared another distinction with Booth-Clibborn as composer of Oneness hymns.

⁴⁵ Clibborn "A Preachers Testimony" in *Meat in Due Season* (December 1915); "Germany" *Latter Rain Evangel* (April 1911), 14.

⁴⁶ William Booth-Clibborn, "Great Victory at Lodi, CAL" *Meat in Due Season* (August 1917)

⁴⁷ William Booth-Clibborn, "A Preacher's Testimony" *Meat in Due Season* (December 1915)

⁴⁸ William Booth-Clibborn, "Bible Study No. 5" Jesus is All in All" *Meat in Due Season* (June 1916)

⁴⁹ Douglas Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 173.

Booth-Clibborn's childhood and young adult year in Switzerland, England, and Germany would have exposed him to a wide range of European musical genres. He penned his best known song "Down from His Glory" to the tune of the Italian aria "O Sole Mio." Its lyrics later proved palatable for Trinitarian groups (especially for Christmas performances); but it is apparent that his appropriation of biblical passages such as Jesus is "all in all" and "all God's fullness dwelleth in him" that frame the masterpiece drew from his extensive Oneness theological expositions, such as "Jesus is all in all."⁵⁰ Other songs such as "The Music of Pentecost" captured the doctrinal differences that triggered their expulsion/exodus from the Assemblies of God.⁵¹

Clibborn-Booth and fellow architects of the Oneness doctrine (Garfield Haywood, Booth-Clibborn, Frank Ewart, and Howard Goss) maintained beliefs that the Dust District preachers later deemed "weak." The generation that defected from the Assemblies of God sought ways to reconcile the salvation of their Assemblies of God counterparts by proposing the "light doctrine."⁵² Unlike this early generation of Oneness doctrinal architects, Dust District preachers built protective walls of soteriological orthodoxy between themselves and their Trinitarian counterparts. Frank Ewart's writings and ministerial trajectory offer more evidence concerning the more cosmopolitan and doctrinally later nature of early Pentecostalism in California.

Frank Ewart: The Cosmopolitan Missionary

Ewart, born in 1876 in Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, began his young adulthood as a Baptist missionary. At the recommendation of his doctor, he moved to better climate in

⁵⁰ "Bible Study No. 5" Jesus is All in All" *Meat in Due Season* (June 1916).

⁵¹ "The Music of Pentecost" *Meat in Due Season* (August 1917).

⁵² Jesus-name Pentecostals taught that their Trinitarian counterparts' salvation would be judged on the basis of how they responded to the light/revelation revealed to them by God. In theory then those who were not baptized "in the name of Jesus" could still receive eternal salvation. This was a popular teaching among the first generation of Jesus-name believers who had suddenly witnessed a separation from their fellow spirit-filled believers. Ewart, *Phenomenon of Pentecost*, 105-106. Fudge, *Christianity Without a Cross*; Robin Johnston, *Howard Goss: A Pentecostal Life* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press Academic, 2010).

Saskatchewan, Canada, in order to recover from a blood disorder. There, and later in Victoria, British Columbia, he continued his ministry as a Baptist minister. Once again in poor health, he took a furlough and attended a camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, where he received his Pentecostal baptism experience. In 1911 he came under the tutelage of William Durham who had already commissioned Pentecostal missionaries to Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Persia, Canada and polyglot ministers in the U.S. (Italians and Scandinavians). Ewart was no stranger to initiating controversy and publishing dissenting ideas. In 1911 his mentor's new teaching "The Finished Work of Calvary" divided the incipient Pentecostal movement into two camps: the second work and the finished work. On the heels of the 1913 controversy regarding proper baptismal formula, Ewart invited that message's herald, Canadian Robert McAlister, to teach the new doctrine to his Los Angeles congregation.⁵³ During the next year, Ewart began to systematize these ideas and published them in his monthly periodical *Meat in Due Season*. From his editorial desk in Los Angeles he attracted an international readership and kept close documentation of new works, including those he helped launch among foreigners and Americans with Morse in northern California.⁵⁴ Through the *Meat in Due Season Publication* from 1915 to 1921 Morse and Ewart trained, supported, or followed at least 22 of the 96 reported Oneness missionaries.⁵⁵ (On a related note and for scale, consider that 158 Oneness ministers defected from the Assemblies of God in 1916. The sheer number of Oneness missionaries further attests to the more global and pliable views of Oneness Pentecostals.) The majority of these missionaries ventured to the East, setting them within the orbits and sailing ports of Morse in Oakland and Ewart in Los Angeles.

⁵³ McAlister (using narrative theology reading of the *Acts of the Apostles*) propounded that New Testament converts were baptized in Jesus-name and not in the titles (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) at the 1913 camp meeting in Arroyo Seco Camp (near Los Angeles). Ewart, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost*, 50-54.

⁵⁴ "Our Trip Up North" *Meat in Due Season* (December, 1915)

⁵⁵ French, *Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism*, Appendix B.2 , 215-218.

Relatively speaking, Ewart held a more capacious view of salvation as evidenced in his hagiographies of Trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostals contained in his book's epilogue.⁵⁶ After the dust settled and Oneness ministers defected from the Assemblies of God, it became apparent through Ewart's publications that the new cohort of ministers looked to California for reports on world revivals, the dissemination of articles about Jesus-Name doctrines, and organizational leadership. Ewart functioned as a linchpin for the loosely organized Oneness Pentecostal ministers.

Polyglot Revivals in California

This older stream of Pentecostalism lacked a systematic plan of evangelism and was spread across various linguistic groups. Unlike Baptists, Lutherans, and Methodists who by the 1920s already systematically evangelized immigrants of various language groups (Punjab, Japanese, Chinese, Swedish, Russian, Dano-Norwegian, Spanish, Assyrian, and German), Pentecostals came up relatively late with a plan to evangelize polyglot Californians.⁵⁷ In Oakland and San Francisco the Pentecostal revival based out of Azusa assumed polyglot dimensions when Adolph Rosa, a Methodist minister from Cape Verde "received his Pentecost." He then ministered to the Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities in San Francisco.⁵⁸ Like the Methodists and Baptist before them, Pentecostals –albeit less systematically – launched missions in German, Japanese, an unspecified Filipino dialect, and Russian. In San Francisco, as early as

⁵⁶ Like Morse, Goss, and many other early PCI and PAW preachers, Ewart taught the "light doctrine." Regarding missionary Alfred Garr, he wrote, "[w]hen the message of the oneness of the Godhead came out, he rejected it, and this caused a very painful parting between us. But despite all these things, our love for each other survived, and this divine love will be renewed in the glory where we will all see eye to eye, and doctrinal difference will never again intrude." Ewart, *Phenomenon of Pentecost*, 105-106.

Ewart, *Phenomenon of Pentecost*, 105-106.

⁵⁷ *Northern California Baptist 74th Annual Convention* (1926), Special Collections, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California;

⁵⁸ *The Apostolic Faith* (October 1906).

1921, the Glad Tidings Bible School opened its doors to Spanish-speaking students. Renowned Assemblies of God missionary Alice Luce and Australian Jewish surgeon Florence Murcutt commended this work into the hands of a recently converted pastor Juan Guerrero.⁵⁹ Students from France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada, England, Denmark, and Mexico attended the school. This list of countries that students hailed from shows that students from the West attended and does not reflect how students from the school ventured into Eastern countries. As a composite, this attests to the global mindedness of a Pentecostal school in the Northern California metropolis.

Since statehood, California has been a site of polyglot convergence;⁶⁰ even the patterns of Pentecostal evangelism attest to this. Just north of Stockton, the *zeitgeist* of Pentecostalism suffused the German-speaking town of Lodi. Pentecostal fires fell among Dakotan and upper Midwest migrants. One witness from the 1918 revival recalls her family's conversion from German Baptist pews into the German Pentecostal tent.⁶¹ Beginning in 1917 German-language evangelistic efforts began in earnest. A series of tent meetings materialized into regular church services.⁶² These German-language revivals in California were not unprecedented. During the height of the Azusa Street Revival, revivals broke out in the German town of Anaheim.⁶³ In Fresno, immigrant Albert Graner, invited Aimee Semple McPherson to his German Baptist congregation. Members of the German community joined the already existent Full Gospel

⁵⁹ *Combined Minutes of the Assemblies of God* (1921) lists Juan Bantista Guerrero as a minister in San Francisco, Luce would later launch Berean Bible Institute in San Diego with the help of Glad Tidings Bible Institute in 1926. The name of the school was changed to Latin American Bible Institute and relocated to La Puente (near Los Angeles) in 1935.

⁶⁰ Limerick contends that the American west stood as a site of "convergence," which she described as "one of the great meeting zones of the planet." See, Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 19-20

⁶¹ Edna Francis interview with author.

⁶² *Our heritage: Western District of the United Pentecostal Church* (n.p., n.d. ca. 1973), 201.

⁶³ "Pentecost among Young People" *Apostolic Faith* (December 1906)

Tabernacle as a result of her teaching.⁶⁴ During the Okie migration into Shafter, the Assembly of God congregation formed as a result of a “rebellion against the Germanism of the local Baptist Church.”⁶⁵ Several converts from the 1918 revival in Lodi also jumped out of German Baptist pews (with their hymnbooks) and landed into Pentecostal aisles.⁶⁶ The German-language revivals also had their limitations in World War I-era America when many German speakers were discouraged from using their native language. Several German-speaking families from the revival in Lodi enjoyed ministerial careers among English-speakers in northern California. As noted in the case of the Assemblies of God church in Shafter, by midcentury Okies broke into the ranks of polyglot congregations under German American pastors.⁶⁷

In very few places was it possible for German Americans to assert their dominant social class over other white Americans, but the stratification of labor in California’s valleys allowed this cultural stratification to take root. The case of Julius Rode’s church in Modesto offers us an example of how the sheer growth among Okies eventually defined the ethos of German-led churches in the Central Valley. Rhode converted to Pentecostalism in Lodi in the 1920s. As a store owner, he enjoyed favorable social standing before and after his conversion. He married Lilian Zimmer in 1928 and soon thereafter joined the ministry among Germans in Lodi.⁶⁸ In 1931 their fellow PCI California pioneers Earle and Ethel Toole (Zimmer) founded a church in Modesto. In 1942 Julius and Lilian Rode succeeded them. The congregation, near the town’s

⁶⁴ “When Revival Came to Fresno” *Declare His Glory: Southern California Assemblies of God Celebrating 75 Years of Ministry 1914-1994* (n.p. 1994), 16-17.

⁶⁵ Walter Goldschmidt “Class Denominationalism in Rural California Churches” *American Journal of Sociology* (Jan, 1944), 49:4, 353.

⁶⁶ Edna Francis recalled that her family left a German Baptist congregation and converted to Pentecostalism during the 1918 tent revival.

⁶⁷ Earle and Ethel left Modesto for Kerman to assume to found a church for the large influx of migrant workers from Mississippi and Louisiana, see Price, “Zimmer Twins.” The family of Lodi Christian Life’s current pastor, Richard Francis, hailed from the 1918 revival.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

airport district (the Okie section) quickly outgrew a set of buildings. By the 1950s, Okie Pentecostals comprised the majority of believers in Rode's congregation. His 'Germaness,' nevertheless, evidently distinguished him throughout his ministerial career in an area (the Central Valley) surrounded by Okie migrants. Rode witnesses the transition from the pioneering polyglots to Okie oracles. His stern-minded Okie-pastor counterparts thought that he did not enforce doctrinal beliefs assertively enough. Rode has been remembered as a man of class and refinement. His German whiteness and polyglot sophistication loomed over his Okie detractors. Rode, remembered as a humble man, would have not asserted these sorts of categories himself; however, his status as a German speaker re-inscribed among Pentecostals the saga of contested and classed whiteness in the Central Valley.

The early revival in northern end took on international significance as early as mid 1907 when Adolph Rosa left his fledgling flocks in San Francisco and headed to Portugal "to preach the gospel to his own people there." His Spanish and Portuguese language congregations in California prepared him for missionary work abroad. As a reverse example, David and May Heath, returned from their missionary work in Japan and evangelized Japanese neighbors.⁶⁹ Their son David Gray later evangelized first in California's Central Valley then set sail for Japan after training at Harry Morse's Bible Training Home. Upon his return he established Oneness Pentecostal churches in California.⁷⁰ Their daughter Olive Gray married Clyde Haney of the founding Pentecostal families in Stockton. She and her husband both trained at Morse's school before assuming a pastorate in Pasadena and later founding Western Apostolic Bible College in the late 1940s in Stockton. The present-day mega church and small college epitomizes the PAJC Okie and PCI old-Western struggle. The world/global vision of pastors and preachers in the early

⁶⁹ Haney, *Man of the Hills*, 82.

⁷⁰ *Man of the Hills*, 63-77.

Pentecostal revival of northern California stood in stark contrast to the diurnal local struggles of agricultural Dust District preachers and saints.⁷¹ Certainly not all, but indeed a sizeable amount of California's Pentecostal pioneers maintained a more cosmopolitan and global vision of evangelism. The stark contrast between their experiences and their later Okie counterparts is especially borne out in the stern mindedness of the Okies.

The Stiff Shirts and their (supposed) Starchy Pentecostalism

The early Pentecostal preachers in California proved themselves through formal training in urban settings. Morse trained a host of early Pentecostal preachers in California in the cosmopolitan and polyglot city of Oakland. But Morse, by the estimation of some, was “weak on doctrine. More to his discredit (in their view) he kept the Sabbath. The former put him in the minority group of ministers when the PAJC and PCI merged in 1945 to form the United Pentecostal Church International. Until the merger, the majority of white Pentecostal ministers in California (and much of the West Coast) hailed from the PCI.⁷² In the Central Valley tensions between the two groups loomed.

The unabashedly hardliner PAJC preachers would condemn PCI ministers (such as Morse) for being too weak and “compromising” while PCI ministers would sometimes keep PAJC ministers from speaking at their meetings.⁷³ The PAJC had a strong influence in the

⁷¹ Goldschmidt noted that Schismatic Pentecostal Churches were comprised almost entirely of unskilled agricultural laborers and their families, *As You Sow*, 136-137.

⁷² Steven Carrier, ed., *A Man and Woman Passed This Way Blessed of God: The Life of Isaac Hillard (I.H.) Terry*, (self published, 1996), 60-61. Ministers from the PAJC believed that baptism in the name of Jesus and the infilling of the Holy Spirit was necessary for salvation and emphasized this point equally, if not more, than the Oneness of God. Both these points separated them from the Assemblies of God who only agreed with them on the infilling of the Holy Spirit but strongly reject Jesus' name baptism and the even denounced the “Oneness Heresy.” Members of the PCI accepted the beliefs of the PAJC but did not believe that baptism and the Holy Ghost infilling was *essential* for salvation. It was welcome and they practiced it, but the absence of those two phenomena would not consign one to hell. See Fudge

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Western South and especially in Oklahoma. Dust Bowl migrants arrived with rigid doctrinal ideas and simultaneously attempted to recapture authority in some form; that rigidity and authority rested on certitude, absolute rightness, and an uncompromising spirit. Beginning in the 1940s several preachers in California attended C.P. Williams's Apostolic College in Tulsa. Williams and his students followed a remarkably strict code of discipline. Stern-mindedness and no-compromise graduates from Apostolic College entered California hardly *tolerant* of their PCI counterparts. On a broader Protestant scale, Paul Harvey noted the peculiarity of "Texas Theology" among Southern Baptists. Darren Dochuk demonstrates how this brand of Texas Theology migrated from the Bible Belt to the Sunbelt. In a similar cultural vein, James Gregory noted how Okie's "stern minded-religiosity" transformed the rank and file of Baptist and Pentecostal churches.⁷⁴ In the Central Valley, stern-minded Pentecostal ministers sought to transform their "compromiser" counterparts. (The culture of the stern-minded preachers is the topic of chapter 5 on "Dust District Disciplines").

Morse, his school, his polyglot contemporaries, and the era under which it thrived emblemize the once more cosmopolitan, polyglot, and theologically malleable period of Oneness Pentecostalism in California. Morse headed the missions of the Pentecostal Church Incorporated until its merger with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ in 1945; thereafter he continued to apprise his fellow believers of international revivals through submissions to the United Pentecostal Church's organ. Their more flexible teachings – that Jesus name baptism and the infilling of the Holy Spirit are not *essential* for salvation – put them at odds with their PAJC Okie counterparts in California. Under the hardliner influence of C.P. Williams and preachers

⁷⁴ Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Identities and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), 151; Darren Dochuk, *Bible Belt to Sun Belt*, 8. Gregory, 189; Grant Wacker offers fuller descriptions of how early Pentecostals understood "compromise," "certitude" and "absolute rightness." See Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 22-24.

from the Texas-Oklahoma circuits, Okie ministers introduced more stern ideas to the Pentecostal landscape of California, and the laity largely supported this.

The arrival of the Okies changed the religious landscape by creating a demand for plain folks an intense religious experiences, high personal and social moral values akin to those upheld the Western South, and an influx of dispossessed English speakers in need of community absorption. The earlier strains of Pentecostalism in the Central Valley seemed to have gained limited acceptance leaving these open to the influence of Okie Pentecostals intent on recreating the south and reclaiming authority. The case of Okie saints rejecting graduates of (possibly from the San Francisco Glad Tidings Bible Institute) offers an example of how they sought to overtake Pentecostalism in California. One former lay minister from Shafter reported,

“There is no difference between our church and the other Pentecostal church except that we believe that the spirit has the right of way. The [General]Council [of the Assemblies of God] has tightened down and become formalized. Back East they are free, but here (especially in Southern California) many of the churches have tightened down. Educated ministers and college graduates who are stiff shirts came in and some of the people fell for it.”⁷⁵

The lay minister expressed disappointment with the misguided succor the General Council offered the Bakersfield region. Goldschmidt clarified that “college graduates” denoted those who completed their education at “religious colleges, not of general schools of higher learning.”⁷⁶ With respect to the pioneer Assemblies of God and Oneness Pentecostals, Goldschmidt proved right when he observed that “these churches, as they grow older, slough their emotional appeal and ascetic character and develop more ordinary middle-class standards.”⁷⁷ We will see in the

⁷⁵ Goldschmidt, *As You Sow*, 140.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁷⁷ Goldschmidt, “Class Denominationalism,” 351.

next section how even in small towns, rival groups from the same denominations held on to fixed notions regarding education and class.

Ultimately in the Central Valley the work of mainline denominations proved to have staying power and had little to fear from the Holy Ghost wildfires sparked by early Pentecostal pioneers. Backed by deep institutional pockets, supported by a historically deeper mission strategy and standing as a symbol of respectable Christianity (in stark contrast to Okies) among California's newcomers, Mainline Churches maintained a strong presence in the small towns and big cities. In 1927 one reporter to the Northern California Baptist Annual Convention noted the "marked waning of the Pentecostal and McPherson movement"⁷⁸ With the Dust Bowl migration about to kick up, however, his prognostication proved anything but prescient.

The Okie Problem and Opportunity

The migration of Okies caused a statewide uproar and attracted years of media coverage that stigmatized them as a social problem.⁷⁹ Pentecostals, however, saw the so-called "Okie problem" as an "opportunity." After all, a large number of the migrants were Pentecostal prior to their migration. Many Okies came to understand their deracination from the Southern Plains as God's mission to California. Those who ventured West with that divine mandate hailed from the Pentecostal rank and file. Out of pragmatic considerations, pastors, too, headed to the "California Cotton Fields" immortalized by Merle Haggard. In the name of evangelism, the line between clergy and laity was blurred: anybody could "preach." The scale and efforts of Pentecostal Okie

⁷⁸ *Northern California Baptist Annual Convention*, (1927), 58.

⁷⁹ James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Walter Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Farmworkers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

evangelism reveals the reasons they grew so rapidly in the Central Valley; the stability and familiarity that Pentecostals offered deracinated people further delineates the roots and routes of the Dust District.

Marginalized and Evangelized

The two-way stream of Okies arriving with Pentecostal backgrounds and the Pentecostals before them seeking to welcome them (and to convert non-Pentecostals) created ripe conditions for growth. Pentecostals evangelized at an opportune moment. Migrants, according to Timothy Smith, undergo a “theologizing experience”:

“In such ways the acts of uprooting, migration, resettlement, and community-building became for the participants a theologizing experience, not the secularizing process that some historians have pictured...The folk theology and religious piety that flourished in immigrant churches from the beginnings of American settlement were not merely traditional but progressive. Belief and devotion were powerful impulses to accommodation and innovation; and both helped legitimate the behavior, the perceptions, and the structures of association that sustained the processes of change.”⁸⁰

Pentecostal churches welcomed the unwelcomed Okie migrants. In California, Baptists and Methodists had established an early foothold, but California largely lay within the province of Northern (American) Baptists and Methodists. Okies hardly felt welcomed in these churches. The reluctance of Okies to step foot in these churches and the aggressive evangelization of Pentecostals resulted in the flourishing of white Pentecostalism in California, and particularly in the Central Valley. Historian James Gregory states that these churches “enjoyed almost a monopoly position in the migrant communities.”⁸¹ Reverend Donald Weston of Modesto’s Assembly of God offered his take on the patterns of conversion to Pentecostal churches:

⁸⁰ Timothy L. Smith, “Religion and Ethnicity in America,” *American Historical Review* 83 (Dec. 1978, 1174-5). James Gregory uses Smith’s concept to explain Okie religiosity (*American Exodus*, 200).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

“Most of the ones who were loyal Baptists and Methodist in the southwest, upon coming to California, usually drop these ties. If they do go to a house of worship it is to a center of people of their own walk and life and not to the older denominational churches. They feel they are not wanted in the denominations that nurtured them back home. They say they are above them so they practically become outcasts.”⁸²

On a similar note, Elmer Clark offered reasons as to why Pentecostal and schismatic churches thrived. In *The Small Sects of America*, he concluded:

“The sects are strongest at those points of doctrine and practice where the denominations are weakest. They flourish by taking up the things which the great churches drop. An analysis of their outstanding tenets reveals that all were once characteristic of the great bodies, but have now been neglected or discarded. This is a fact of the utmost importance, signifying that the churches are gradually widening the breach between themselves and the plain people.”⁸³

Okie marginalization coupled with sectarian incorporation of “plain people” resulted in an opportunity for Pentecostal evangelism. When Mainline Protestant counterparts spurned Okies at the doors, Pentecostals actively invited them to enter. Their belief in Jesus as the Soon-Coming King –in the midst of the Depression and another World War – compelled them to intensify their evangelistic efforts.⁸⁴ In terms of numbers, the efforts evidently paid off.

Aggressive Evangelism: Reaping the Harvest in the Central Valley

The statistics offer us a clearer image of the growth of Pentecostalism among California’s impoverished migrant communities. Many Okies entered California as part of the lowest white social group: landless agricultural laborers. While white migrant laborers enjoyed benefits that Filipino, black and Mexican farmworker did not – better housing and some white-only camps –

⁸² Weston McDonald quoted in Bright, “Religious Leaders, Institutions,” 251.

⁸³ Elmer Clark, quoted in *Ibid.*, 243-244.

⁸⁴ Pentecostals maintained a four-fold gospel: Jesus as Redeemer, Baptizer, Healer, and Soon-Coming King. See Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Hendrickson Publishers Inc. second edition, 1996), 19-23.

their occupational status rendered them second-class citizens.⁸⁵ The “stigma” of field work followed many who left the fields. In addition, their telltale Okie vernacular spoke louder than their actions. But it was exactly these sorts of plain-folk characteristics that granted them immediate acceptance into Pentecostal circles. The majority of Pentecostal growth in U.S., after all, had been in the South and Western South. (Recall the astute observation of the hitchhiker in Arvin but now place “Pentecostal” before “California”).

Despite their regional make-ups and breaks-up, Pentecostal denominations enjoyed increasing growth in the first half of the twentieth century. Because schisms occurred with such frequency, tracking the growth of denomination is a difficult task. Nevertheless some denominational trajectories offer us fruitful points of comparison. Among all Christian denominations in the U.S., from 1916 to 1926, the Assemblies of God reported the largest increase of church membership (468 %). The denomination in 1916 was still in its infant stages and had just undergone a defection of one-third of its believers to the Oneness “Jesus-name” camp. Other Pentecostal denominations “Church of the Living God the Pillar and Ground of the Truth” (African-American) and the Church of God, trailed behind the Assemblies of God at yet still remarkable growth rates of 198.7 % and 190.9 %, respectively.⁸⁶ These denominations represented the three fastest growing, and they were all Pentecostal. The following seventeen years from 1926 to 1943 reveal more about growth of U.S. churches. In 1943 demographers took count of church growth for denominations with over 50,000 members. At a time when denominations on average grew by 24.3 %, the Assemblies of God and The Church of God grew

⁸⁵ According the Arvin Librarian (ca. 1940), white women married to Filipino men were not allowed to bring their husbands to the camp. On a similar note of marriage and race, she noted the presence of about 200-300 Filipino men in Arvin, who, if they married, did so equally with black and white women. “According to the Arvin Librarian” (n.d.), Dust Bowl Migration Archive. Sonoma State University.

⁸⁶ Tables provided by Wilson in Wilson, “Religious Leaders, Institutions,” 245

by 364.5 % (from 47,950 to 222,730) and 245.7 % (23,247 to 82,462) respectively.⁸⁷ These numbers bore out in California.

Among the various Pentecostal groups in California, the Assemblies of God was the most persistent in evangelization and has left the most robust record about this in the Central Valley. By the 1940s the Assemblies of God had already been organized for over 30 years and thus systematically evangelized all areas of the country. The organization divided its missionaries into two categories: foreign and domestic. The former group generally received more funding since supporters of foreign missions often believed that the missionary could not support themselves in other countries. While this is partly true, it is also rooted in paternalism. Images of poor and lost (read: unsaved) peoples of Asia and Africa, stirred more emotions and generated more support than images of indigent and emaciated Californians. The foreigner was always already exotic, entirely other, and thus in most desperate need of the gospel. The “foreign field” –as they would call it– cultivated a sense of eschatological urgency in that the sooner the whole world heard the gospel, the sooner Jesus would return. Pragmatic considerations for maximizing evangelism led some Pentecostal congregations to organize.

Assemblies of God leaders proved masterful at incorporating independent Pentecostal churches into its fold. The once independent Full Gospel Tabernacle of Bakersfield was incorporated into the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1932. In 1927 members of Full Gospel Tabernacle donated much of their labor to build a structure valued that year at \$60,000. As one of the most-rapid growing denominations, the Assemblies of God made use of

⁸⁷ Ibid. 246.

that building and by 1942 opened another church in the southern part of town.⁸⁸ Kern County not only became home to most Okies, it also emerged as the hub of Okie Pentecostalism.

The Hub of Pentecostalism: Kern County

The reports of preachers aboard a “gospel car” [a modern mechanized circuit rider!] attest to the absence of any Pentecostal church in Bakersfield in 1919.⁸⁹ By 1923 the Assemblies of God planted their first church in town and they quickly turned to the pool of talent to the north: the Glad Tiding Bible Institute in San Francisco.⁹⁰ In the mid-1920s Pentecostals established a mere toehold in Bakersfield, but by the mid-1930s they welcomed the company of early Okie migrants. By the 1940s there were more Pentecostal congregations in town than churches any other religious denominational family. The category of “Pentecostalism,” however, eluded (or was ignored) compilers of the city directories in the 1920s.

From 1926 to 1930 the Bakersfield city directories listed churches according to family denominational categories: Adventists, Baptists, Catholics, “Christian”, Minnionite [sic], Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Miscellaneous. Though boasting three (possibly four) churches and even outnumbering churches of different family denominations, Pentecostals did not have their own category. Following 1931 churches were listed in alphabetical order. By the end of the 1930s, Pentecostal churches doubled (twelve) that of Baptists churches (sic). Also during this time at least thirty Pentecostal congregations had been launched, relocated, stayed

⁸⁸ Floyd Hawkins, *Bakersfield Californian*, (February 21, 1942); the 1925 *Bakersfield City Directory* lists the Full Gospel Church as “Pentecostal Mission 1307 1th Street” a location that matches Hawkin’s historical report. City Directories stored at Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, CA.

⁸⁹ *The Bridal Call*, April 1919, 10.

⁹⁰ “Reports from the Field” *Pentecostal Evangel*, March 31, 1923; for placement of graduates, see *Pentecostal Evangel* (November 17, 1923).

put, consolidated, or floundered.⁹¹ While the number of congregants is unknown, it signals the aggressive evangelization efforts on the part of Pentecostals. By 1943 nineteen Pentecostal churches served Bakersfield's population of approximately 30,000.⁹² In 1953, after the dust had settled, the *Bakersfield City Directory* once again categorized its city's religious bodies. Southern and Free Baptists offered a boost to bring the overall number of Baptist congregations to 19. Holiness-Pentecostal groups reaped the harvest of their dutiful evangelism and at 41 congregations accounted for approximately 35 % of the city's overall Christian churches. As in the years before 1931, the compilers of the directory once again failed to categorize Pentecostal churches into a distinct group, despite the fact that they comprised the majority of churches.⁹³

Where the Grapes of Wrath Are Stored: Migrant Labor Camps

Bakersfield became the de facto hub of Okie migration, and the surrounding smaller towns reflected the growth of Pentecostalism. In his 1942 doctoral dissertation "Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations in the Central Valley" James Wilson noticed how in Kern County "sect type" churches abounded in the small cities once the Okie migration was in full swing. In Porterville, for example, over the course of fourteen years, nine of these "sect type" churches sprang up and they claimed a large bulk of Okies.⁹⁴ Pentecostals searched out prospective Okie converts wherever they may have been found. The federal government shaped

⁹¹ Bakersfield City Directories (1925-1939).

⁹² Bakersfield, California Department of Finance Records, Historical Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities in California, 1850–2010. (Accessed on February 13, 2016)

http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/historical_census_1850-2010/view.php

⁹³ Bakersfield City Directories (1925-1953).

⁹⁴ Wilson, "Religious Leaders, Institutions," 248.

the landscape of American agricultural by setting up federal migrant camps in the Bakersfield area. Pentecostals continued their evangelization efforts there.

The sites of Assemblies of God evangelism overlapped with the Joad family's stops in *The Grapes of Wrath*. By 1940 the Weedpatch Assembly of Assemblies of God began in earnest to evangelize migrants at various labor camps, including the Weedpatch Camp popularized by John Steinbeck. A church reporter in 1940 (one year after Steinbeck's publication) recorded her local assembly's Sunday schools in the migrant camps. These attracted anywhere from seven to ninety-nine students. Amid all the other forms of profane/secular entertainment (especially dances) at the migrant camp, Friday night youth services seemed to attract speakers and youth from beyond the camp.⁹⁵

The phenomenon of migrant saints can be gleaned from the reports that Central Valley church reporters sent into the Assembly of God's Southern California District organ accounts that generally omitted the class of converts. One 1940 issue of the *The King's Trumpet* (published by the Southern California District of the Assemblies of God) noted how a record-breaking five churches had been dedicated in one month and that many other churches expanded in order to facilitate the "harvest." Some reports, however, noted the struggle of saints and problem of seasonal shifts. One report from Hemet (in southern California) described how "summer always brings a varied congregation. Part of the regular attendance goes to other town for work in the fruit harvest, and the influx of migrant families for the apricot harvest brings a fair average of attendance...The field is ripe unto harvest, but the willing workers are few. Remember this new church in your prayers, for they are in need of special prayer in the trying days of summer."⁹⁶ Seasonal agricultural migration from one valley to the next characterized the

⁹⁵ Mrs. C.J. Cheek, "Weedpatch Assembly Helps Migratory Camps" in *The Kings Trumpet* (June 1940)

⁹⁶ "Beautiful Stucco Church in Hemet" *Kings's Trumpet* (August 1940).

growth of Pentecostalism in the valleys. (This was also the case for Mexican Pentecostals, as shown earlier).

Migrant labor camp periodicals also chronicled the aggressive evangelization of Pentecostal groups. Camp periodicals in the Central Valley and other valleys show an acute concern for the wellbeing of Christian affairs in the social life and reveal how Pentecostals relied on camp insiders to announce services.⁹⁷ In the op-ed section of the January 7, 1939, edition of *The Covered Wagon* (published by the camp in the Coachella Valley town of Indio) several members of the Assemblies of God from Indio wrote about the positive aspects of their church at the Social Center in Indio. This testimony operated as a type of implicit evangelism that becomes more explicit when one continues to read on. Later in that same issue the camp management reported that they would no longer facilitate services in the camp for any one specific denomination. Perhaps to offset the zealous attacks of some the management asserted:

“we hold non-sectarian services each Sunday afternoon...those that wish to attend a specific church can do so in Indio or Coachella...[w]e all worship the same God. Please don’t any one group ask for special favors in this matter”⁹⁸

State workers perceived that Pentecostal preaching and singing in labor camp ushered in cacophony and general nuisance. Tom Collins, former manager of the Weedpatch Camp and the man to whom Steinbeck dedicated the *Grapes of Wrath*, hoped to put out the Holy Ghost fires in the Thornton camp. He described how “one of [the] problems was “getting Holy Ghost out...the less education, the less recreation, more salvation.”⁹⁹ Collins’ report reveals the direct relationship between time invested in educational/recreational [read: good, wholesome] and the

⁹⁷ Visalia Migratory Labor Camp, *The Hub*. The Friday July 12, 1940; Dust Bowl Migration Archive. Sonoma State University.

⁹⁸ *The Covered Wagon* (January 7, 1939), 3, 6; Dust Bowl Migration Archive. Sonoma State University.

⁹⁹ Tom Collins “Thornton 8/18/40” Dust Bowl Migration Archive. Sonoma State University.

Holy Ghost people offering salvation [read: nuisance]. In Pentecostal belief and parlance, however, they were merely adhering to their evangelistic mandate and “redeeming the time.” The showdown between Collins and the Holy Ghost people must have escalated at some point in August of 1940. In his field reports Collins noted how he told three stories, one of which was the “story of the Holy Rollers when the lights went out (“What the hell do you need lights for?”).

Fred Ross, the acting chief of family and community services of the Farm Security Administration 1942 and erstwhile manager of the Arvin Government Camp, chimed in as well. He observed that as a general rule Pentecostal ministers were forbidden to conduct services in government camps because their length and cacophony.¹⁰⁰ In Modesto some preachers made their rounds announcing services through a bull horn mounted atop their vehicles. At a private camp in Livingston, the manager supervisor shut down Pentecostals’ effort after one preacher disrupted the peace at night and relentlessly denounced Catholicism, the faith of the camp owner. Other camp managers feared to interfere with “the individual’s or group privilege of freedom of thought and worship” so they sought others means to discourage Pentecostal preachers. A camp manager in Marysville forbade preachers from collecting monetary offerings; others publicly disapproved of Pentecostal faith healers, arguing that Pentecostals' ban against taking medicine for communicable diseases might result in camp-wide epidemics.¹⁰¹ Collins and other prominent California intellectuals, expressed frustrations with religious southerners.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ This is the same Fred Ross that corresponded with Chavez when he was in the Community Service Organization (see, chapter 4). Camp managers in Firebaugh and Thornton also confirmed this ban against Pentecostal ministers. Fred Ross quoted in Wilson “Religious Leaders, Institutions,” 288-9.

¹⁰¹ Walter Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*, 168-170.

¹⁰² Dochuck notes that Carey McWilliams had little patience for Southern Evangelicals. On a more national scale H.L. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis leveraged acerbic attacks against the “backwater” southerners, see Dochuk, *Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, 106.

From the southernmost city of the Central Valley, Arvin, to the northernmost city, Yuba City, Pentecostals reached out to Okies in the government and private camps. The DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation's employment recruitment resulted in a "population explosion" in Arvin, Weedpatch, and Lamont in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰³ In the case of Lighthouse Tabernacle of Lamont which had its origins as Weedpatch Tabernacle the "church became a reality by cotton picking."¹⁰⁴ Not coincidentally this hub of Okie Migration was the stopping point of the Joad family and Reverend Casy. The major Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostal groups abounded in these towns.¹⁰⁵ The fact that one can find sectarian groups ubiquitously in the records speaks to the efforts of Pentecostal evangelization. Surely, if the erstwhile Reverend Mr. Casy had been a real life character, he would have encountered Pentecostals attempting to "pray through" the backslidden Pentecostal-preacher-turned migrant-advocate.

The Highways and Byways: Sanitariums

Pentecostals' confidence in divine healing further empowered them to continue evangelistic efforts. Even in instances in which the state imposed public health safeguards, Pentecostals persisted in evangelizing the most marginalized (quite literally the quarantined). For example, the Assemblies of God even reached out to patients deemed a public health hazard. The Assembly of God division officer of the southern end of the valley believed in "taking advantage of the many opportunities this section affords[in] [t]he Keene Tubercular Sanatorium [sic],

¹⁰³ Don Burkett, "Digiorgio Brings Population Explosion" *Lamont Ledger*, ca. 1972. Microfilms rolls Beale Memorial Library.

¹⁰⁴ Don Burkett, *Lamont Ledger* (September 12, 1972), Microfilms rolls Beale Memorial Library.

¹⁰⁵ Don Burkett, *Lamont Ledger* (September 12, 1972), Microfilms rolls Beale Memorial Library.

Emigration camps, shutins, etc.”¹⁰⁶ Where Cessationist Protestants¹⁰⁷ lacked faith for even the most ill to be miraculously healed, Pentecostals not only sought to heal them, but to bring them into the fold. A congregation in Oildale boasted growth in 1940s and attributed this to their street evangelism as well as the work in the Keene Sanitarium.¹⁰⁸ Again, where many in society saw a problems (e.g., Okie influx and rise of sanitariums and poor schools), Pentecostals saw an opportunities.

Okie Children: Sunday Schools

Steinbeck’s Okies traveled in family units. This phenomenon, when paired with aggressive Pentecostal evangelization, augured well for Sunday schools’ numerical success. A new pastorate for the Assemblies of God church in Arvin in 1939 proved to be timely. Within a year, Sunday school attendance nearly doubled from 157 to 300 and its continued growth called for new additions to the building. Within another year, these proved insufficient, so members of the church once again expanded the facilities.¹⁰⁹ Just further north, in Exeter, from 1938 to 1940 Sunday school attendance tripled from 44. Among the various miracles ushered in by the evangelist in Exeter, the pastor noted attitudes which likely reflected how Okies were regarded and treated by fellow saints. He punctuated his account of Holy Spirit services by celebrating that “[p]rejudice is being broken down and an interest in the work is growing among the high school students”¹¹⁰ Lay and clerical members from the Assemblies of God made special appeals

¹⁰⁶ “San Joaquin Valley Division” in *King’s Trumpet* (April 1940). As a parallel in the Mexican Pentecostal story, Daniel Ramirez notes how the presence of tuberculosis patients posed a public health hazard to the Mexican agrarian community of Colonia Zaragoza. See, Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the U.S. and Mexico in the Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 54-56.

¹⁰⁷ This category of “cessationist” includes fundamentalists who rejected the modern day continuance of miracles

¹⁰⁸ “Oildale Growing” in *King’s Trumpet* (August 1940).

¹⁰⁹ “Arvin Builds Addition” in *King’s Trumpet* (April 1940)

¹¹⁰ “Exeter Reports Victory” in *Kings Trumpet* (April 1940)

in the government camp newspapers to invite their children to Sunday school. In field reports from churches, Sunday school growth operated as one of the indices of palpable church growth. The expansion of churches in the 1940s was often due to the need to enlarge Sunday school classrooms.¹¹¹ The monumental growth of Sunday schools even prompted new churches to launch summer vacation Bible schools.¹¹² Pentecostal parents hoped these church schools would create a space free of class discrimination like that faced in public schools.

Prophets Accepted in Their Own Cities

Pentecostals had distinct regional home-roots advantage over their Mainline Protestant counterparts. Instead of claiming headquarters in the major metropolises or even abroad, several Pentecostal denominations in the 1930s and 1940s were headquartered and convened annually in the Western South. Membership in those regions abounded, thus farming and working class people came to comprise the majority of believers. Evangelizing Pentecostals also held a class solidarity advantage over their Mainline Protestant counterparts. In the Central Valley, most of the clergy and laity were recent migrants and agricultural laborers.¹¹³ This influx resulted in a greater and more efficient method of plain-folk evangelism. In many cases, pastors worked alongside the laity in the fields or had come from a similar agricultural background. Dust District laity preferred the preacher who had worked in the fields and did not hold formal degrees.

One 1942 researcher concluded that “a large percentage” of the migrant agricultural workers were Pentecostal in their home states.¹¹⁴ Another historian observed a pattern of conversion from Southern Baptists churches to Pentecostal churches for reasons including push

¹¹¹ “Hemet church” *King’s Trumpet* (August 1940)

¹¹² “Oildale Growing” *King’s Trumpet* (August 1940)

¹¹³ Goldschmidt, *As You Sow*, 156-157.

¹¹⁴ Wilson, “Religious Leaders, Institutions,” 250.

factors such as the stodgy nature of Northern Baptist in California services and pull factors such as the enthusiastic worship of Pentecostal services –a level of enthusiasm that also repelled non-Pentecostals.¹¹⁵ While most converts were more predisposed to spiritualize their conversion with testimonies such as “I was a Baptist and lived the best I could till I heard the real Word of God,” social class certainly played a large role in determining what church migrants would eventually attend. The degradation of their class status also sent migrants workers to Pentecostal pews. Migrants witnessed this degradation before their very eyes as they went from land-owning Americans in their home states to landless harvesters for large corporate farms in California. As owners of the land in their home states they cultivated a bond to the land and thereby embodied the estimable ideals of Jeffersonian Agrarianism; while in California, as workers they had no relation to the owner(s) of the land, who probably lived somewhere in the East. In California their occupational class became evident in the pews. One Assemblies of God member from Modesto, CA observed:

“Most of the ones who were loyal Baptists and Methodists in the southwest, upon coming to California, usually drop these ties. If they do go to a house of worship it is to a center of people of their own walk and life and not to the older denominational churches. They feel they are not wanted in the denominations that nurtured them back home. They say the churches are above them so they practically become outcasts.”¹¹⁶

To the chagrin of Mainline church migrants, California was not the dream land they imagined; many could not even join their own churches without being marginalized.

Intra-Pentecostal feuds manifested themselves along class lines. For example, the more conservative believers from Marysville would pass right by the thriving church of Yuba City en route to the small town of Live Oak where “the people of Live Oak have a lower income than the

¹¹⁵ Gregory, *American Exodus*, 191-221.

¹¹⁶ Donald Weston quoted in “Religious Leaders, Institutions,” 251.

Assemblies of God people in Yuba City...they feel more at home up there...our folks are more common.”¹¹⁷ Similarly, the Assemblies of God in Modesto split along class lines. The pastor of the First Baptist Church in Modesto described the people’s worship at the lower-income Airport Community church as “noisy” “shouting like wild Indians” and sweaty as if one had “been through a washing machine.” When asked to describe the people of Pastor Weston’s church of higher (albeit not “upper” in the proper sense) status, he described them as more reserved and the pastor as “splendid fellow...popular throughout the community...goes golfing with professional men.” His overall tone hinted that he found little to admire about the Airport Community Church and much to respect in Pastor Weston and his people.¹¹⁸ Notably, Donald Weston hailed from the early Pentecostal pioneering generation. Weston graduated from Glad Tidings Bible Institute in 1926, thus it comes as no surprise that his church commanded this degree of respectability. The Okies Pentecostals might have labeled Weston a “stiff shirt.” His experience as a pastor in the state’s coastal cities and training in San Francisco exposed him to the larger politics of contested church respectability.¹¹⁹ In Modesto social class, respectability and appeal to Okie migrants caused a defection among Assembly of God congregations. Weston’s church lay in the better part of town near First Presbyterian Church. H.T. Langley, who split from Weston’s church over socio-economic status and marginalization, founded a church a few blocks away but “on the other side of the tracks.”¹²⁰ Finally, Ernest Adam’s who confessed that “some preachers is goin’ to have a hard time in Hell explainin’ why they told people it was not necessary to have the

¹¹⁷ Delmer Wright quoted in *Ibid.*, 311.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹¹⁹ *Messenger of the Cross 1931-1932 Annual of the Glad Tidings Bible Institute* lists Weston as a 1926 graduate, page 89; *Minutes the General Council of the Assemblies of God 1931* (page 128) lists Weston in Pacific Grove, CA; in the 1933 minutes (page 155) he is listed in Eureka, CA; by 1935 he arrived in Modesto allowing him 7-8 years to establish his church before Wilson’s study.

Messenger of the Cross 1931-1932 Annual of the Glad Tidings Bible Institute (Accessed on March 1, 2016): <http://www.mocavo.com/Glad-Tidings-Bible-Institute-1931-San-Francisco-Ca/831134/87>

¹²⁰ Wilson 309.

baptism of the Holy Ghost” pastored in the airport community, the city’s poorest district.¹²¹

Clearly, class differences carried theological (and soteriological) implications.

Schismatic churches of the Dust District could generally be found in the poorer sections of the communities and with names that clearly articulated their Pentecostal affiliation.¹²² (Traces of this pattern are still somewhat detectable today). Since its formation in 1914 the Assemblies of God identified as a Pentecostal denomination. Despite this, some pastors during the height of the Okie migration disavowed that title, citing that “[w]e don’t call ourselves Pentecostal because of their extremist attitudes.”¹²³ This is reflected clearly in the name of churches such as Full Gospel Tabernacle, Bethany Assembly, and Faith Tabernacle. Many of the “first” churches later relinquished names such as “First Pentecostal of Bakersfield” in favor of the more neutral names. The abundance of former “First Pentecostal” churches in the records indicate that the move towards the better side of town in larger building often meant rechristening the church with a neutral name. In the religious landscape of the Central Valley today “Tabernacle,” “Mission,” “Revival” and “Pentecostal” largely signify the churches which emerged from the late 1930 to 1950s.

Everybody’s a Preacher: Okies and Their Oracles

The last element to be examined in the evangelistic mandate of Okie Pentecostals is the fluid category of “preacher.” Pentecostal evangelism mandated that all believers “preach the gospel to every creature.”¹²⁴ While “preaching” is generally conceived of as the delivery of a

¹²¹ Ibid., 282.

¹²² Goldschmidt, *As You Sow*, 126.

¹²³ Goldschmidt, “Class Denominationalism” 353

¹²⁴ This passage is part of the great commission mandated by Jesus in Mark 16:15. Pentecostals especially appropriated this passage because of the reference to speaking in new tongues as recorded in the following verse.

sermon from a pulpit, in this context it is better imagined as “proclaiming the gospel.” This practice empowered the laity to take part in evangelism.¹²⁵ In the context of past and looming World Wars, the second coming of Jesus could not have seemed more imminent. In California’s fields, where the impoverished held little to no power, one could find eschatological power in a spiritualized discourse.

Pentecostalism operated and multiplied because of the burden of evangelism placed on the laity. More often than not, in the initial stages of founding a Central Valley church, believers met in homes and women led churches in many cases.¹²⁶ Layperson Nettie Lawrence of Olivehurst described the fluid and expeditious process of transitioning from laity to clergy: “the Lord didn’t call me to bury people or marry them. He called me to preach the Gospel.”¹²⁷ Similarly PAJC Texan and Bakersfield pastor Ike Terry recalled how one of his converts began preaching from one day to the next.

“My face was all lathered up, and in a little bit I heard a woman say, “Hello!” her name was Lillian White. A little later we had church. She went home and told her husband, Sammy. At that time they were attending a Nazarene church. That Saturday we had church and they came. Before service he told me, “we told the Assembly of God we’d be there tomorrow morning.” I told my wife we’d better do something or they’ll be with that group and we’ll lose them. After church we asked if they wanted to spend the night. That night around an old oak table I preached oneness and when he went to work Monday morning he was preaching it on the job!”¹²⁸

Urgency and immediacy characterized early Pentecostalism and this conversion of the Nazarene couple. Many Pentecostals did not see the need for formal training for preachers since the core gospel message could be understood and taught quickly (seemingly as quickly as one night).

¹²⁵ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 208-214.

¹²⁶ Wilson 249

¹²⁷ Rev. Nettie Lawrence quote in Wilson, 249.

¹²⁸ Carrier, *A Man and a Woman*, 53.

Good preaching conveyed certitude and toughness, even in intra-Pentecostal relations. Terry trained over forty such ministers, and many remained in the area.¹²⁹ (The various nuances of the term “preaching” are explored in chapter 5 on Okie Pentecostal culture.)

Because Pentecostals often spurned organization or any “human machinery,”¹³⁰ tracking Pentecostal churches through denominational history still only gives a glimpse of Pentecostal life in the 1930s and 1940s. Small schismatic churches sprang up all across the nation in the first half of the twentieth century, leaving little to no record of their customs and beliefs. Interview transcripts, church polemics, dissertations and theses of the time shed some light on both organized and independent Pentecostal churches, and capture the ubiquity of Pentecostalism as a layperson’s movement.¹³¹

Much of the laity in the Central Valley was of Okie origin. But, so, too, were the clergy. Darren Dochuk captured a peculiar legacy in the migration of Okie “preachers” affiliated with the Assemblies of God. He noted how Assembly of God executives lamented the condition in and audacity with which Okies arrived in California. Swedish Pentecostal pioneer Arthur Osterberg bemoaned Okies’ arrival. In his capacity as the superintendent of the Southern California District (this included everything south of Fresno) he wrote to an executive at the Assemblies of God headquarter in Springfield, Missouri, grumbling over the conditions in which Okies arrived:

¹²⁹ Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 7.

¹³⁰ Elizabeth V. Baker quote, as found in Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 141-143. Grant Wacker uses the term “leaderlessness.” Early Pentecostals believed that the more humans were involved in the work of God, the less God was involved.

¹³¹ Allan Anderson notes that on a global scale the empowerment and little training required of the laity differentiates Pentecostalism from Mainline Protestantism missions, see Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 208. The poverty levels of migrants into the Central Valley created ‘mission’ like conditions where the laity would have sought such empowerment.

“with their broken down automobiles, their wives and large families together with their washboards and washtubs, billy goats and bedding, their chicken coops and their lice with the information that God in Heaven sent them to take up a pastorate here”¹³².

This influx of zealous preachers persisted in the following decade. In 1946 Osterberg’s successor F.C. Woodworth offered startling statistics: 650 preachers and 175 churches.¹³³ The Western District of the predominantly white United Pentecostal Church published a heritage book in the early 1970s which contained a collection of obituaries. At that time a majority of deceased leaders hailed from PCI backgrounds. The two fallen foreign missionaries also came from PCI origin. Three of the twelve men pastored in Oklahoma prior to their arrival in California.

These 1970s obituaries and offer a window through which to examine migration patterns and even sheds light on observations made by Assembly of God executives. In the 1940s the Assemblies of God and the newly formed United Pentecostal Church embarked on another decade of Okie laity and clergy crossing into California. By the 1950s, Okies had largely come “Up from the Dust” but their characteristic style and authority remained intact. After all, this sort of stern-minded preaching reaped numerical results. The ways in which they sought to recapture authority is the topic of the chapter titled “Dust, Dreams, and Discipline.”

Conclusion: Unsettled Dust

Mexican and Okie migrant Pentecostal flows seemingly shared some common traits in their migration to the agricultural fields of California. Not until the 1960s, after the dust settled, did Okie Pentecostals find some coalescence with their Mexican counterparts. Francisco Olazábal led Mexicans out of the Assemblies of God towards autonomy in 1923. Shortly thereafter Mexican Oneness Pentecostals charted their own path (1925). By the 1940s both

¹³² Osterberg quoted in Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, 34.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Mexican and white Pentecostals established staunchly conservative church cultures in the Central Valley, a culture that always defined itself against their weak Pentecostal counterparts, stodgy Mainline churches, and a worldly society.

By their sheer numbers and aggressive evangelism Okie Pentecostals exercised a major influence in the religious ecology of the Central Valley. By the middle of the century, the earlier Pentecostal polyglot ministries largely waned as second and third generations of English speakers arose. Later white Oneness leaders in California downplayed the significance and memory of Morse, Ewart, and Booth-Clibborn. When all three joined the Latter-Rain movement, a proto-charismatic movement in the 1940s, PAJC and UPC preachers strongly denounced and renounced them. By this time, Pentecostals virtually held a monopoly over Okie migrants. Their aggressive evangelism in the Central Valley is manifest in that they deliberately sought out the most vulnerable: those in labor camps, sanitariums, and children. The final testament to their extensive evangelism is evidenced in the degree to which Pentecostal preachers empowered the laity (or laity empowered themselves) to also “preach” and thereby “win souls.”

The dynamic cultures of these Holy Ghost people underwent changes that reflected the economic and social challenges directly associated with stigmatized agricultural labor. In the remaining chapters I turn to the cultural production of these Mexican and Dust District Pentecostals.

Chapter 3

Farmworker Frames: *Apostólico* Counter Narratives in California's Valleys

En el sudor de tu rostro comerás el pan hasta que vuelvas á la tierra; porque de ella fuiste tomado: pues polvo eres, y al polvo serás tornado. (Génesis 3:19)

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19)

California's agricultural heartland became the scene on which its various social agents cast their competing visions. After the Gold Rush, the earliest land speculators turned their gaze from the foothills and looked west towards the fecund valleys. They saw that money no longer came from deep within the mines, but that it now lay in the soil and grew from the ground up; first reaped as wheat and subsequently as crops that required intense manual labor (e.g., lettuce, grapes, asparagus, and apricots).¹ As early as the mid-1860s –after the completion of the transcontinental railroad– agriculture and ranching took over as the main commodities in California. The labor demands of agribusiness (especially the cultivation of intensive labor crops) set into motion a movement of low-wage workers. The movement of bodies toward a budding site of labor resulted in a host of social consequences which came to define California's agriculture as the state's "peculiar institution".² Prospective farmers with any aspirations of redeeming the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian society were summarily blindsided by the large

¹ Beginning in 1909 the number of intensive labor crops in California began to spike. By 1929 the value of such crops reached 400 million dollars while extensive labor crop values plummeted. See, Paul S. Taylor and Tom Vasey, "Historical Background of California Farm Labor" *Rural Sociology* (Sept, 1936, 1:3).

² Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception*, (Peregrine Smith Inc.: Santa Barbara, 1976 –1949 original pub.), 150

land grabs that in acreage mirrored the holding of early nineteenth-century Mexican hacienda owners.³ Mexicans would return to the large tracts of lands in the early twentieth century, although not as *hacenderos*, but as hired laborers, giving them a new vision of a land they and their predecessors once knew as *Alta California*.

Because of its enormity and seemingly endless growth at the turn of the twentieth century, agriculture offers a panoptic economic *and* social lens through which to view the state. Inseparable from the landscape were the massive pool of workers required by this industry. Land speculators contracted workers from various ethnic minority groups for this “peculiar institution.” Prior to World War I, labor forces comprised of Native Americans, Chinese, Japanese, African Americans and Indian-Punjabis converged into the valleys. The labor vacuum caused by the War prompted growers to plead for looser restrictions towards their war-torn neighbors south of the border. After their successful pleading, they began to view Mexican workers as bodies of labor, a force to expand their agricultural empires. All the while, deracinated Mexican migrant workers viewed the landscape around them as a system of labor opportunity, financially fruitful yet fraught with exploitation. Okies and Arkies pictured California to be a type of second Promised Land after dust storms, withered crops, recessive markets, and exacting bankers uprooted them from their family farms. Viewed collectively, these competing visions offer us an unsettling picture of California in which farming was no longer a way of life according to the anachronistic Jeffersonian vision of social development. Rather, agriculture was leveraged as a tool of profit and it entirely rearranged the social world of farming.⁴ In this, the meaning of farmer faded somewhere in between the categories of farm

³ Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, (Peregrine Smith Inc.: Santa Barbara, 1975 –1935 original pub.),10-27.

⁴ Daniel Cletus, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers 1870-1941*, (Cornell University Press, 1981), 32.

operator/grower/industrialist and farmworker.⁵ This chapter is concerned with the religious practices of the latter. If agriculture became a panoptic lens through which to view California, its landscapes, and its workforce, what then do we glean by reflecting on religion in those landscapes?

This chapter interrogates the nearsightedness of the historiography and photojournalism of the era, brings to the foreground the religious imaginary of Mexican Pentecostal farmworkers, and offers ways of capturing a clearer picture of that vision through their photographic record. My archive – comprised of personal holdings, unpublished biographies, and self-published denominational accounts – departs from two contradistinguished traditions of California representations. Chapter 1’s epigraph (John 4:35), in tandem with the Great Commission (“*Id por todo el mundo; predicad el evangelio á toda criatura.*”/ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”), formed the theological cornerstone of Mexican Pentecostal evangelism. The imagery of fields served as a ready metaphor for photojournalists, laborers, and religious migrants alike.⁶ Each added new layers to an already-thick canon on California.

Mexican farmworkers found themselves in a once-homeland that was now storied with American (read: foreign) literary representations. The appeals to sight and allusion to landscape of John 4:35 were reminiscent of a larger literary tradition of the irenic, idyllic imaginary of California (*a la* Zenas Leonard, John Muir, Richard Henry Dana). Because of its invocation of the sudatory, physical, and arduous nature of agriculture, this chapter’s epigraph echoes a later literary tradition that covered the harsh on-the-ground realities of California, its landscape, its agriculture, and its “machine in the garden” (*a la* Frank Norris, John Steinbeck, Carey McWilliams). If the early California authors envisioned the land as an edenic garden, then surely

⁵ McWilliams, *The Great Exception*, 157.

⁶ This further discussed in chapter 1 (*Avivamientos, Aleluyas, Y Trabajo Agrícola*).

the later writers showed how its social agents suffered *a fall out of Eden*.⁷ The difference lay in California as space and place.⁸ With the exception of Steinbeck (in his depiction of Mr. Casy, a Pentecostal-preacher-turned-protesting-pugilist), the pantheon of California authors largely failed to capture the religious dimensions of California's people;⁹ this large omission is not unique to the state's literary canon. While labor historians and economists have long examined the migratory work patterns of the state, none have yet added religion to the equation. Wither then a denomination in rural California? (Or more trenchantly: wither then unwanted ethnic Others comprised of socially unpalatable tongue talkers in the margins of the state and religious institutions?)¹⁰ In the fallen garden, among the crops, and alongside the machines we find members of the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus, whose religious imaginary held in productive tension the evangelistic impulse of "fields white already to harvest" and the physical pragmatic impulse of eating (and making) bread by "the sweat of thy face". They proved the most successful at proselytizing fellow farm laborers in the valleys, much of this transpired before the involvement of Catholics and Mainline Christian Protestant churches that thrust the unknown perils of farm labor into the national spotlight by the late 1960s.¹¹

⁷ An earlier California canon of Anglo land speculators, whose panegyrics of the landscape invited others, stood in stark contrast to the muckraking of 20th century writers who witnessed the outcomes of land speculations. For more on the varying literary traditions of California, see David Wyatt, *The Fall into Eden: Landscape and Imagination in California* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁸ Writers such as John Muir deified space in the Yosemite, and invoked the divine in his construction of landscape; land was pristine because it was without human intervention (Native Americans notwithstanding).

⁹ Steinbeck's representation was more of a caricature of Okie religious culture rather than an exploration of the religious dimensions or cultural significance of Pentecostalism on California.

¹⁰ The distaste towards glossolalia reached the front pages of the Los Angeles Daily throughout the revival's first month in April. During the rise of the Pentecostal movement prominent American theologians and entire theological institutions denounced speaking in tongues.

¹¹ While a study of the arrangement, placement and captions of photos in family albums could easily in and of itself constitute an entire study, in this chapter I will only explore aspects that pertain to memory in the oral histories and reconstructions of the past.

The possibility of photographs as a method of historical inquiry arose when I began to compare the photographs I collected to those of the same region and time taken by various government workers. A cursory comparison of the photographs would suggest to any spectator that the representation of farm life beginning in the 1930s vastly differed between the private family photographs I collected and the public representations –both published and unpublished—. This comparison led me to my central questions: would a different story of migrant farm labor have been articulated if a camera had been put into the hands of the laborers? If so, how would they have chosen to represent themselves? These private representations preserved in my interviewees’ photograph albums tell a history of a Pentecostal denomination germinating and maturing in rural California.

The narratives in these photographs contest the official and popular portrayals of ethnic-Mexican farmworkers during this period.¹² Such portrayals in written and photographic records suggest that Mexican agricultural workers were male, vagrant, without social networks, passive, and culturally vacuous, lacking artistic genius. By contrast, the photographs and the accompanying oral histories under study detail a narrative of family groups whose interpretation of migrant labor vicissitudes as *la voluntad de Dios* (the will of God) enabled them to create a network of churches and a dynamic culture of artistic production. This is strongly exemplified in their photographs, which show an early (pre-Bracero) vibrant tradition in music, architecture, and handmade goods.¹³

¹² By “contest” I do not mean in any way to discount or discredit the copious fieldwork conducted by historians and anthropologist on migrant laborers who indeed faced all obstacles associated with farm labor. By “contest” I intend to demonstrate that such portrayals of the indigent and impoverished farmworkers should not be totalizing, especially to the extent that it discredits the narratives of others who found community in such social spaces.

¹³ Immediately, we must recognize the limits of representation in such photographs I’ve collected. First, ownership of a camera suggests mobility or group effort to hire a photographer and to reproduce the images. Therefore, most photographs staged by Mexican Farmworkers themselves tended to be taken in groups. Impoverished migrants workers likely would not purchase one nor take such a luxurious item with them where their property was susceptible to theft and damage.

Limits of the Written Record

The social setting in California's valleys calls for an interdisciplinary examination of the above topics; this study thereby necessitates a careful consideration of migratory artifacts. The labor, migration, and religion of subaltern groups generally have not left a formal or rich written record. In the absence of an extensive written record from the period, for the history of Mexican Pentecostals (*Apostólicos*) we must rely on oral and visual sources. After all, they emphasized the oral and aural aspects of religion during the course of their services (extensive preaching, teaching and singing of memorized hymns). *Apostólicos* lacked the organizational structure of their religious contemporaries in the valleys (Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodists), and consequently their minutes from the meetings and district reports are not housed in any central archive and were only sparingly recorded. The few extant documents were preserved by a few historically-conscious believers.¹⁴ The primitivist impulse of early Pentecostals likely influenced their indisposition to keep records; in a world of poverty and despair, certitude in the soon return of Christ diminished the importance of keeping written records, and, at worst, rendered such practices altogether otiose.¹⁵ In the Pentecostal borderlands then—a site of migration and poverty, and lack of land and building ownership i.e., seeming social instability—the privileging of written texts over, say, cultural ones, runs the risk of

¹⁴ The fact that hymnals are among the most ubiquitous items in interviewees' holding speaks to how deeply they entrenched themselves in hymnody and memory.

¹⁵ Grant Wacker elaborates on this primitivist tendency to eschew organization and other material (*thisworldly*) matters, see Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 10.

reproducing hegemonic epistemologies and memory making that I intend to undue or at least challenge.¹⁶

In the borderlands, privileging an alphabetized written record engenders the unintended consequence of promoting one narrative over another. Jose Rabasa's concept of "writing violence" during the era of Euro-Native contact offers an epistemological standpoint of ways to view the cultural productions of farmworkers – who did not have the means or foresight to write, broadly publish, and propagate their own ideas. Indeed, "writing codifies legal categories such as criminals, insurgents, deviants, and insubordinates, and legitimizes violence towards these groups."¹⁷ In the context of rural California, the redactive power of editors and publishers similarly enabled the pervasive and powerful construction of social-legal categories including "vagrant," "bindlestiff," "bird of a passage," "wetback," "fruit tramp," "stoop laborer" (almost all male-adult categories). This nomenclature, whether written or spoken, reinforced the thrust of discursive violence. These terms regularly appeared in government documents and in negotiations between major agricultural powerbrokers: the state, the counties, and the growers. In the cases where the state intervened, language transcended vernacular enunciations of these categories. In anti-vagrancy laws, Operation Wetback, and media representations, these pejoratives became legally codified and socially palatable. With the cards stacked against them, how could those under what Mario Barrera termed a "colonial labor system" wield any sort of power?¹⁸

¹⁶ The abundance of unscored hymns also attests to how they relied on and even privileged the orality and auality based on singing from collective memory. Such collectivity is not uncommon to sect-like denominations, and it is viewed as a mechanism to reinforce dour religious identity markers.

¹⁷ Jose Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 22.

¹⁸ Barrera, writing in the early years of Chicano Studies, asserted that the colonial labor system accounted for the large scale and persistent power imbalance between Chicanos and Euro-Americans in the Southwest. He defined the colonial labor system as a "colonial labor system exists where the labor force is segmented along ethnic and/or racial lines, and one or more of the segments is systematically maintained in a subordinate positions." Mario

What then is to be made of the quotidian acts of farmworkers? We get a glimpse into subaltern arts by locating the sorts of practices that comprised *Apostólico* culture. Based on the photographs of church life captured by *Apostólico* farmworkers in the northern valleys, I suggest that the recovered narratives captured and projected in the photographs introduce a new meaning and novel implications (*a la* McWilliams) to the history of agriculture in California. They offer a rich archive through which to explore and subsequently compare the crossroads of race, religion, and migration. To begin with a notable and iconic case, I query whether the photographs of Dorothea Lange were any more truth-telling than lower-grade photographs of Pentecostals breaking ground for a new temple? The latter point to inequitable access to resources. While Okies relied on state and federal assistance, Mexican Pentecostals expanded their network of churches, planted new *obras*,¹⁹ constructed new temples, decorated those temples and radically reinterpreted the landscape. What then may be made of the everyday lives of farmworkers is by and large a matter of where spectators and researchers focused (and focus) their lens, literally and figuratively.

Roots of Under/Mis/representation

The narratives conveyed by the personal photographs of former *Apostólico* farmworkers were obscured by three prominent representations of rural life: faces of impoverished Dust Bowl migrants, faceless ethnic minorities performing “stoop” labor, and the rise of the United Farm Workers Movement. While all these certainly do reflect the realities of farm labor, they fail to

Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 39.

¹⁹ As it is used in chapter 1, the term *obra* is used to describe the start of a congregation. It is an ambiguous referent in that it could either signify that members met in a public place, a *carpa*/tent, one’s home, or, in a temple.

reflect the high degree of resilience and creative genius wielded by farmworkers. It is crucial to keep in mind that the photographs which informed these representations were mostly taken by government employees, newspaper editors, and photojournalists. Yet when a camera was placed in the hands of Mexican farmworkers, they captured a different vision of themselves. This documentation can now illuminate an obscured period and is ripe with possibilities for an interdisciplinary study of race, migration, farm labor, photography, and material culture. The photographic documentation of church members toiling in the fields, posing next to migrant labor camps, baptizing in rivers and canals, and breaking ground for new churches provide us a glimpse through their lens of self-representation and shed light on what occurred in the shadows of the other representations.

The popularized story of religion, labor, and migration in the Central Valley begins with the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Activists and government workers under the Resettlement Administration, Farm Security Administration and Office of Wartime Information captured thousands of photographs of rural life, leaving us the impression that the lion's share of Depression era struggles were suffered by white farmers and farmworkers. Photograph captions often recorded their names and offered brief descriptions of circumstances that led them to their predicament. By the 1930s, attention to Mexicans' plight in the fields (brought to the foreground by Paul Taylor's 1928 *Mexican Labor in the U.S.*) was diminished in deference to the newly arrived "Okies" and "Arkies".²⁰ This influx of migrants prompted the activist duo of Paul Taylor and Dorothea Lange to refocus their lens (literally in the case of photographer Dorothea Lange),

²⁰ Paul Taylor, *Mexican labor in U.S.* Vol. 1, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1928); Paul Taylor, *Mexican labor in U.S.* Vol. 2, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1928). Even at UC Berkeley, Taylor had his share of detractors, as some objected to the use of UC funds to underwrite the publication of extensive interviews with obscure Mexican workers. See, Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 235.

resulting in the further shrouding of Mexicans in the shadows (the same marginalized group they sought to document). In 1934 the economic downward spiral triggered by the Great Depression exacerbated market prices for the few crops that managed to grow. Failed market crops and over-cultivated grasslands spurred the westward journey of Dust Bowl migrants, most of whom sought refuge in the Central Valley. There they integrated themselves into California’s peculiar institution – until wartime industries and government assistance paved a path for them to exit the fields. Even after whites mostly exited the fields, Mexican laborers, religionists, and migrants by and large continued to be faceless and/or nameless to spectators.



Figure 1. Migrant Mother: Dorothea Lange recorded meticulous details and provided personal humanizing descriptions about her photo subjects. The side caption reads: “Destitute peapickers [sic] in California; a 32 year old mother of seven children February 1936. The image and commentary provided a script to evoke sympathy and grip national attention. It still a hallmark symbol of the Depression.²¹



Figure 2. Stoop Laborers: Faceless stoop laborers in the fields of California filled the landscape. Such photographs came to characterize depression era minority workers. Photographers scarcely recorded their names or asked for consent, as they visually became part of the landscape. These types of images even characterize minority field workers today.²²

²¹ Dorothea Lange, Photograph of Florence Thompson, Accessed: <http://cdn.loc.gov/service/ppnp/ppmsca/23800/23845r.jpg>

²² Dorothea Lange Collection; accessed <http://www.museumca.org/picturethis/pictures/stoop-labor>

In 1936 after a long rainy drive through southern California and on a mission to capture the plight of farm workers in labor camps, Dorothea Lange staged an image that would resonate with a national audience. Lange's photograph of Florence Thompson stood as the symbol of migration and poverty in Depression Era U.S. The image of this "Migrant Mother" indeed resonated as a type of *punctum*, described by Roland Barthes as "a sting, speck, cut, little hole" that a photograph is able to have upon a spectator.²³ On a national scale it gripped the hearts of Americans. The forlorn Migrant Mother embodied the pathos described in John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, that of deracinated and landless erstwhile Oklahoma farmers. Okies tried their hand in the promising fields of California, landing mostly in the Central Valley as well as in the smaller valleys throughout the state; but ultimately they found conditions similar to those pictured in the image of the Migrant Mother.

The larger immediate stage beyond the frame of the Migrant Mother photograph reveals social complexities. A tool we can use to deconstruct the social context is space off theory; which Hirsch defined as "the space not visible in the frame but inferable from what is visible in the frame."²⁴ Lange's photo captured the photo at a pea picking camp in Nipomo, California. The remaining unpublished photographs and the story, as told by Lange, reveals that at that camp the majority of migrant laborers were Mexican. In 1939 Lange published *American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*, a landmark publication of photojournalism that sought to ride the wave of the *Grapes of Wrath*'s popularity, also released in 1939. In this "record of human erosion" we find two references to Mexicans. The first is in a photo of men performing "stoop labor" (a term, which carries with it a long history of eugenics racialization and the belief that

²³ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 26-27.

²⁴ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 198.

Asians and Mexicans, due to their shorter height, were naturally fit for such working conditions).²⁵ In the following reference Taylor laments the unfolding scene of white Americans joining ethnic minorities in the fields,

“When they arrive in the fertile valleys of the West, the migrants are the most ragged, half-starved, forgotten element in our population, needy, the butt of the jabs of those who look down on “fruit tramps,” but with a surprising morale in the midst of misery, and a will to work. These people are not hand-picked failures. They are the human material cruelly dislocated by the process of human erosion. They have been scattered like the shaving from a clean-cutting plane, or like the dust of their farms, literally blown out. And they trek west, these American whites, at the end of a long immigrant line of Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Negroes, Hindustanis, Mexicans, Filipinos, to serve the crops and farmers.”²⁶

Historian James Gregory noted how Taylor “...discovered the empathetic value of white skin. The news that old-stock white American families were joining Mexican and Asians in the fields had human interest potential.”²⁷ The Central Valley, most notably Kern County, became home to migrants from Oklahoma and Arkansas, but the valley was already home to a large number of Mexican laborers.²⁸ Such ethnic minority workers can be located in the “space off” hidden deep in the fields, and, in many cases, far from major highways. What we can infer with respect to space off is partly knowable in the photographic frames of *Apostólico* farmworkers.

Photographing Farmworkers and Landscape

²⁵ Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor, *American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939), 133.

²⁶ Lange and Taylor, *American Exodus*, 148.

²⁷ James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 81.

²⁸ For fear of losing the migratory workforce due to immigration legislation growers called for Filipinos laborers beginning with the late 1920s Repatriation of Mexicans. By the 1930s, 30,000 joined the migratory labor force of California. See, McWilliams, *The Great Exception*, 154. While most Filipinos came as and remained Catholic, a small number worked along Mexican Pentecostals farmworkers and joined their ranks. Such conversions occurred in the fields of San Jose as well as in Blythe of the Palo Verde Valley, Gilbert Samano interview with author, April 2013.

When we look at the photo journalism of the time there is little wonder as to why representations would have differed if the camera had been put in the hands of the photo subjects, rather than in the hands of government employees. In *On Photography* Susan Sontag illuminated the polarities of photography taking. She stated that "the history of photography could be recapitulated as the struggle between two different imperatives: beautification, which comes from the fine arts, and truth-telling, which is measured not only by a notion of value-free truth, a legacy from the sciences, but by a moralized ideal of truth-telling..."²⁹ The latter imperative aligns with the legacy of Depression-era task forces and the work of Dorothea Lange. In their self-representation *Apostólico* farm laborers fulfilled both imperatives.

Apostólicos took and made the photographs at the margins of labor, empire, and religious denominations.³⁰ Socially, these farm laborers occupied a type of "third space"; they received American theological paradigms from the Azusa Street Revival from 1906-1909 (considered the cradle of global Pentecostalism) and reinterpreted an American black/white theology. Along with former black and white members of the Assemblies of God they formed a heterodox Pentecostal group known as Oneness Pentecostalism (*Pentecostalismo-Unicitario*)³¹. These reinvented theological paradigms came to shape the lives of the community, as they called for a strict code, enforced a heterodox creed, and maintained a demanding cultus.³² While only tenuously connected to their black-white counterparts in the Mid-West, they came to form their own denomination under unexpected circumstances. Rather than a shamed legacy of field work that

²⁹ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York: Picador, 2001 –original pub. 1973), 86.

³⁰ Sontag argues that photographs are made rather than taken.

³¹ On third-space theory, see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). While Oneness-Pentecostalism is a minority movement in U.S. Pentecostalism (in the shadows of the Assemblies of God, The Church of God in Christ, and the Church of God), in Mexico it is the majority.

³² On creed, code, and cultus, see. Catherine Albanese, *America: Religion and Religions* (Beverly, MA: Wadsworth, 1995) 8. More on the formation of Oneness Pentecostalism and its nomenclature is offered later in this chapter on the section *Sanctified Landscapes*.

Okies shied away from, field worker *Apostólicos* kept photograph that showed, and even boasted, their cultural genius. *Apostólicos* constituted their center of evangelization for at least half a century at the very margins of labor, empire, and religion,

Their evangelization efforts can be viewed in the context of a borderlands labor diaspora and a long legacy of Mexican cultural production that arose in these far-flung migrant labor camps. Gloria Anzaldua's notion of the borderlands consciousness applies to this group of Mexicans farm laborers who chose to reproduce a Mexican aesthetic in murals, buildings, and decor.³³ Photographs became the family (and, in my cases, the church family's) primary medium for self-knowledge and representation. George Eastman's invention of the Kodak camera in 1888 allowed amateur photographers to try their hand at an emerging form of art. The simplicity of "you snap and we do the rest" enticed amateurs to photograph what they knew best: everyday life. Consequently, photographs of the domestic sphere abounded.³⁴ Perhaps unintentionally, this also created widely circulated and shared ideas of what everyday life should look like. In other words, the "everyday" came to comprise the ordinary, the expected, the status quo, which were all regulated by the arbiters of cultural taste—that is, the white middle class. Such cultural expectations and mass (re)production of the social, the domestic, and the family were laden with power. These ideas stand in stark contrast to the aesthetics and taste of borderlands religionists captured in the photos and accompanying oral histories.

The internalization of what was normal conversely constituted a category of lack. Social problems and lack of success became the criticisms of familial representations that did not meet the standard of model white families from the late-Victorian-age and Progressive Era. Laura Wexler described this phenomenon as the regime of sentiment and defined it as "a private

³³ Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007).

³⁴ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 6.

practice of representing family and domesticity that in turn became an aggressive popular social practice”. She asserted that the culture of sentiment “aimed not only to establish itself as the gatekeeper of social existence, but also aimed at the same time to denigrate all other people whose style or conditions of domesticity did not conform to the sentimental model.” Since the sentimental home was the model home, it followed that anyone else’s home was in need of reform.³⁵ *Apostólicos*’ representation of their social world did not avoid the “truth telling” realities of photography; moreover they added a new layer to the beautification of space, namely its sanctification.

In conditions of little to no power, Mexican farmworkers leveraged power along different registers. And herein lays the opportunity to explore how *Apostólicos* re-envisioned the landscape: how they interpreted the abundant (profane) resources and quotidian labor as divine; how they made sacred space out of the most profane places and opprobrious conditions; how out of the soil of California’s “peculiar institution” they grew their very own autonomous religious denomination. Somewhere beneath the nationally and locally projected narratives—whether the glamorous landscapes portrayed by agribusiness or the gloomy on-the-ground facts portrayed by Depression-era photojournalists—lays an even more hidden story of a thriving cultural *movement*. (Here I emphasize the word movement in order to articulate the making of landscape and sacred space as well as the movement of bodies and the mobilization of music, architecture, handmade goods, and heterodox beliefs.) *Apostólicos* involved themselves in the creation of sacred space in their worldmaking – by their rituals of preaching and singing; worldcentering – by piecing together *carpas* (tents) and constructing temples; and, finally, worldrenewing – by

³⁵ Laura Wexler “Seeing Sentiment: Photography, Race, and the Innocent Eye” in *The Familial Gaze* (Hanover, NH: the University Press of New England, 1999), 256

invoking hope for reprieve from the struggle of farm labor, a new age to be ushered in by the *parousia* of Jesus.³⁶ A view, then, of California's religious landscape must take into account the creation of sacred space, a powerful otherworldly construction with *thisworldly* elements.

Vagrant Male Workers and Families

Men comprised the majority of the migrant labor force; however, the overwhelming number of male workers (both Bracero and non-Bracero) skews our memory of Mexican workers of this era, resulting in an eclipsing of women and children in the historical record. The preponderance of representations capturing male farmworkers in written and visual records seems to warrant little need for a revision. In the case of Mexican workers, we might approach this by asking if there is a corollary to the Migrant Mother – a woman set in the national spotlight? Photojournalists of the Dust Bowl deliberately attempted to show that *families* were uprooted, not just men. The Joad family of the *Grapes of Wrath* exemplified a type of extended family that ventured west. Such family arrangement beyond the nuclear family became emblematic of the era; their collective struggle was first familial, and secondarily (Okie) cultural. Okies were not national foreigners; therefore they could travel with their families and did not need to navigate through immigration quotas and prohibitions. Both of these struggles, the Mexican and the Okie, centered around a familial cultural unit

Growers did not expect Mexicans to permanently settle. Especially if they were never to be offered permanent work and if they did not put down roots with their families, the prospects of long-term settlement seemed bleak. They were thought of as “birds of passage.” The geographical proximity to Mexico and preponderance of short-term contracts gave flight to the

³⁶ The Eliadian concepts of worldmaking, worldcentering, and worldrenewing are borrowed from David Carrasco. See, David Carrasco, *Religions in Mesoamerica* (Long Grove, IL, Waveland Press, 2014 –original pub. 1990), 37-40.

avian trope. Growers argued that Mexicans would not stay in the U.S. but that they would simply return across the border after the completion of their work.³⁷ The majority of Bracero workers were single males, but those demographics did not necessarily reflect the composition of church membership. *Figure 3* is one of many photographs which shows *Apostolicos* engaged in intensive manual labor as family units in the 1940s. Their struggle, like that of their Okies counterparts, was at once both religious and familial, as demonstrated in frames captured and produced by farmworkers themselves. Lines of the nuclear family were often blurred by the more expansive church-family model.



Figure 3. Salinas *Apostólicos* Harvesting: Members of the Salinas Apostolic Assembly church gather for a quasi-staged photo in the mid-1940s. Unlike the stoop laborers in *figure 2* the names of these laborers were kept by the extensive “church family.”³⁸

Figure 3 shows a typical farmworker frame of the church family, and from this we view the rich and complex farmworker frame. Set in the built environment of agriculture, this

³⁷ Catherine Guerin-Gonzalez, *Mexican Workers and the American Dream: Immigration, Repatriation and California Farm Labor 1909-1939* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994) 24-27.

³⁸ Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

photograph captures constitutive (and alternative) interpretations of the same scene.³⁹ Here we encounter more obvious cues of the landscape such as habitat (houses in the background) and landscape as artifact (the material objects worn and held by the farm workers). Evangelism in this context bred permanency and bases for the growth of church-family units. But we might also view landscape as systems of labor (bodies of labor), social organization (familial and grouping by age and gender), and legality (clear-cut plots of land – ownership). When landscape is viewed through the lens of *Apostólico* ideology, we arrive at a more profound understanding of why women in the fields wore long dresses and sleeves that covered much of their arms. Their collective understanding of “outward holiness” rested on modesty demonstrated by their clothes, which covered most of the body, and by gender distinctions in dress (men wore pants and women wore dresses). Such codifications of belief demanded high level of participation from believers which resulted in tightly knit communities. These tightly knit communities engendered stabilization and permanency. What we do not see in the *Figure 3* are the houses which surrounded the first temple built in the fields.⁴⁰

Still, vagrant male labor also furthered the reach of the *Apostólico* network. Much like the earliest activities and subversions of the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies), evangelists and itinerant labor evangelist took command of space by connecting far-flung outposts.⁴¹ Ironically, vagrancy (a stigma and codified legal category) proved to be a mechanism which enabled the propagation of information. Because of the precedent set by the Wobblies in the Wheatland Riot of 1913, California lawmakers in collusion with growers passed a series of laws

³⁹ Donald W. Meinig, “The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene” in D. W. Meinig and John Brinckerhoff Jackson eds. *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 33-47.

⁴⁰ Milca Vizcarra-Montañez, email correspondence, December 2013

⁴¹ Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 64-68.

to enforce punishment for vagrancy and systematic measures to discourage farmworkers from rallying. (Again consider the figure of the rabble-rousing reverend Tom Joad whose own death occurred as he tried to escape vigilante union busters.) The onset of the Great Repatriation and the arrival of the Okie again gave anti-vagrancy laws new appeal; but, at the same time, they fueled union fires as they recruited disaffected workers with little to lose. They also stoked the fires of Pentecostals whose doctrinal imperatives enjoined them to welcome the stranger, the outcast, and the poor.⁴²

Though lawmakers and growers conspired to pass anti-vagrancy and anti-rallying laws in effort to stymie further wars with strikers, the cacophony of masses neither began nor ended with strikers in California. Similarly, the sonic battle engendered by the convocation of Pentecostals had long stirred the ire of neighbors (and *growers*) and stimulated the curiosity of nearby prospective and future-converts.⁴³ Pentecostals and labor proponents shared space in the fields of California. In some cases, agricultural union leaders and political radicals borrowed organizing strategies from religious leaders.⁴⁴ Religious and pro-labor institutions proved the best at leveraging the mobility of their members. The music of borderlands migrants folks manifested in

⁴² James Gregory's work shows how many Okie Pentecostals felt unwelcomed in Mainline Churches, see Gregory, *American Exodus*, 193-206. Some Okie Baptists, for example, converted to Pentecostalism because Pentecostals readily welcomed the newly arrived outcasts. The historic anti-education stance of Pentecostals often led to the denouncement of the higher social classes. This animus toward the wealthy, coupled with New Testament passages regarding the haughtiness of the rich and the mandate to evangelize social pariahs, reinforced the notion that their missiology aligned with scripture (a primitivist impulse).

⁴³ Concepcion Ares recalled how the noise from a church building in Los Angeles piqued her curiosity of activities in the building; this led to her eventual conversion. This is not an uncommon conversion experience; Concepcion Ares interview with author, April 2013.

⁴⁴ As will be shown in the following chapter, Cesar Chavez and Reies López Tijerina borrowed extensively from religious groups to rally and revivify their own efforts.

songs written in praise of the labor movement and the Lord.⁴⁵ Borderlands migrants mobilized a culture of folk music and disseminated it from one field to the next.

Music of Migrants

The belief that farmworkers had little to no active artistic expression while working in the fields is summarily falsified with respect to *Apostólico* farmerworkers' robust musical tradition. Government photographers captured occasional Mexican strumming their guitars, but beyond snapshots of seemingly isolated performances, *Apostólicos* in the space-off of these frames created a rich musical tradition of hymns and ballads. Individual and bands of farmworkers converted landscapes into *Apostólico* soundscapes.

The most prolific *Apostólico* composers, Marcial de la Cruz, converted in the earliest circuits of farmworker revivals (San Diego county, Los Angeles County) and carved out his ministry in the Imperial Valley.⁴⁶ De la Cruz composed over twenty-five of the hymns that appeared in *Cantos de Consolación* in the mid-1930s. Around the same time as the Mexican “surge northward” his counterpart in the north, Pedro Banderas, expanded the soundscapes of *Apostólico* music. Erstwhile elder of the Northern District of the Apostolic Assembly, pastor in the farming town of Cutler, and founder of the churches in San Jose and Selma, he wrote his share of songs, one of which was published in *Cantos de Consolación*. Although the date of its composition is uncertain, he mostly likely wrote “Mi Petición” (My Petition) while serving as pastor in the Central Valley. *Mi Petición* represents a cry for divine succor reminiscent of exilic

⁴⁵ The Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University houses a small sample of the many ballads written in honor of Cesar and the movement. See, UFW Office of the President Collection, Box 48 Folder 7.

⁴⁶ *Historia de la Asamblea Apostólica de la fe en Cristo Jesús, 1916-1966*, (Sal's Printing Service: Mentone, CA, 1966), page 16 of “biography” section. (The pagination is inconsistent throughout the book).

period literature.⁴⁷ These compositions enjoyed widespread acceptance and larger groups incorporated them into their repertoire.

The rise of grass-roots bands such as the one pictured in *Figure 4* were not entirely uncommon. This 1934 orchestra from Tulare hailed from a church that had been established seven years earlier by an itinerant farmworker evangelist. From one farm town to the next, bands of these sorts migrated, strumming and drumming. In *Figure 4* the orchestra from the Central Valley town of Tulare performed in the revival service held in the border town of Otay. In the larger borderlands context of labor migration and musical production, musicians, lay leaders, and even clergy were known to make stops in fields in order to finance the next portions of their interstate and trans-border travel to church conferences and conventions.⁴⁸ Father-daughter duo Florencio and Eugenia Zuniga took their talents with them as labor demands dictated their trajectories. Eugenia recalls how church services served as venues to demonstrate her skills and also expand her network of friends. Eugenia's father brought her along to provide the piano accompaniment to his saxophone performances and exhortations. Together they traveled the migrants harvest route from Sanger, Huron, Dos Palos (Central Valley towns) to Watsonville (Pajaro Valley) for work and worship (the two occurred in tandem).⁴⁹ Daniel Ramírez notes how Pentecostal composers deployed contextual metaphors. Songs such as “*Trigo Soy*” (I am Wheat), “*Vamos a la Siembra*” (Let's All Go to the Sowing), “*El Sembrador*” (The Sower), “*Rosa de*

⁴⁷ Pedro Banderas “*Mi Petición*” in *Cantos de Consolación* (Los Angeles, CA). For a fuller discussion of Pentecostal Subaltern music, its origins, international trajectories, and influence from and on Protestant music, see chapter six of Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico, 1906-1966* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

⁴⁸ Jose Ortega, *Mis Memorias en la Iglesia y la Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús* (Indio, CA: José Ortega, 1998).

⁴⁹ Eugenia Manzano, interview with author, Modesto, CA, November 2013.

Saron” (Rose of Sharon), and “*Como La Primavera*” (As the Springtime) all sprang up from a borderlands context of agricultural work.⁵⁰



Figure 4. Tulare Orchestra: An Orchestra from Tulare at their 1934 performance in Otay (border town), CA. The Tulare church rose to regional prominence under the pastorate of Epifanio Cota, an itinerant farm laborer and evangelist (migration made both occupations possible). Local church bands performed at region services throughout the. Several movement leaders occupy the second row.⁵¹

The migratory experience and oral culture allowed *Apostólico* soundscapes to spread, opening up new paths for doctrinal expression. Their Pentecostal heterodoxy called for the redaction of songs with references to the Trinity and thus enforced a need to compose their own songs. But unlike their Anglo counterparts, *Apostólico* musicians generally did not enjoy the benefit of honing their skills under paid-professional trainers and schools. This new musical orthodoxy then represented an organic product easily distributed along migrant routes via an oral culture. In this oral culture one did not need formal training (this was also the case with preachers). Lacking formal instruction, most learned how to play by ear. The earliest *Apostólico*

⁵⁰ Ramirez, *Migrating Faith*, 222

⁵¹ *Historia de la Asamblea Apostólica*, 28c.

musicians did not score their music. New members quickly learned parts in the abundant opportunities offered by lengthy services held multiple times per week.

Music fine-tuned *Apostólico* borderlands culture and identity. The mid 1930s compilation of the movement's first hymnal, *Cantos de Consolación*, attests to this. As the first item published with the intention of consumption by clergy and laity alike (on either side of the border) the hymnal played an important role. Carried alongside a Bible, it accompanied the preaching of *Apostólico* (heterodox) doctrine. It orchestrated a collective oral-musical culture. It also resonated (however, little) within the broader hymnody of borderlands soundscapes for easy incorporation. Since the composers did not score any of the hymns, it thereby provided a staff (figuratively) onto which *Apostólico* audiences could easily write and rewrite, modify and modulate, transpose and later translate. The unscored hymnal traveled easily and its theoretical music simplicity allowed youth and adults to partake in and help create an emerging organic tradition. In most cases, musicians did not own the instruments they played; rather members of local congregations bequeathed them to the church body with the expectation that the beneficiary would perform in the services (sometimes at least three times a week).⁵²

The photo evidence offered by *hermano* photographers for the early organ of the AAFCJ, “*La Nube Y El Fuego*” (The Cloud and Fire) offers a glimpse into this farmworker frame. The July-August 1946 issue records a florid exhortation from the national youth director accompanied by a photo (*figure 5*) of the youth from the “*pequeno pueblo de Gonzalez*” (the small town of Gonzalez). The editors likely included mentioned the size of the town in the caption, since it stood in stark contrast to size of the relatively large youth group (about 30). If one examines more closely, about one-third (between eight to ten) of the group hold instruments.

⁵² Eugenia Manzano, interview with author, Modesto, CA, November 2013.

And like the orchestra from Tulare, this group boasted a wide range of instruments: trombones, saxophones, violins, guitars, banjos, and percussive instruments. The Gonzalez orchestra included women and younger children. (Musicians did not perform on the podium). The collective church participation in the hours of musical praise and the shared-ownership exchange allowed more participants to learn and showcase their talents.



Figure 5. Youth Band from Gonzalez: The periodical which highlighted this 1946 youth band from Gonzalez (Salinas Valley) stressed how the small congregation in a small city strung together an orchestra. These sorts of disadvantaged circumstances became sources of pride.⁵³

A hint of the vibrancy of the Mexican religious community on the ground can be seen in the cooperation between Cesar Chavez and Madera, California Apostolic Assembly pastor Mariano Marin. (This encounter is further explored in the next chapter). One of Chavez's earliest influences for organizing came from a non-Catholic church. In his days with the Community Service Organization (CSO),⁵⁴ setbacks in organizing caused him to reconsider his organizing strategies. As he passed by a full Pentecostal church in Los Angeles one night, he wondered, "why do all the people come there so much [?] It must be because they like to praise God—and

⁵³ *Reportero Juvenil*, "La Nube y El Feugo" (Julio y Agosto, 1946: p. 9).

⁵⁴ In this 1963 interview Chavez referred to passing by the church "a few years ago." See footnote below.

to sing.”⁵⁵ Because the church was effective in drawing scores of people into one building, he was led to believe that he needed to adjust his organizing strategies. One way was through singing. Chavez explored the dynamics and practices that bound Pentecostals together. In Madera in 1954, while still working for the CSO, he had a similar circumstantial experience in the home of Pentecostal preacher and *Apostólico* pioneer Mariano Marín. Because of their exuberance in worship and fervency in singing – something Chavez had never experienced firsthand until then – he decided then to implement similar charismatic practices into his union meetings.⁵⁶ Singing later proved effective in building morale for the Movement, especially in the storied pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento. Songs with religious undertones, such as *El Corrido de Cananea* and *El Corrido de Cesar Chavez*, helped solidify Chavez’s image as a “brother” and the movement as “religious.” Such “religious” movement is rooted in the vibrant culture of musical arts in the Central Valley and other farmworker settings.

Sanctified Landscapes: Baptisms and the Reinterpretation of Space

The richness of the collective musical tradition is apparent in the songs that accompanied water baptism, a ceremony of worldmaking. The performative language of the baptismal invocation formula and the requisite singing of hymns (*El Nombre del Mesías* and *Yo Soy Bautizado*) resulted in the sanctification of landscape. If we could ascribe any sort of hierarchy of sacraments to Oneness Pentecostalism, the baptismal ritual of immersion has historically been most preeminent. In this act of performing this sacrament in rivers and canals,

⁵⁵ Cesar Chavez, interviewed by Wendy Goepel, 1963,

<http://farmworkermovement.com/essays/essays/MillerArchive/004%20Viva%20La%20Causa.pdf>

⁵⁶ Levy, Jacques E. *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 115-116. See also, Alan Watt, *The Religious Dimensions of the Farm Workers Movement*, (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1999) 193, footnote 26. See also, Alan Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches: The Movement in California and Texas* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2010).

we see a re-envisioning of the landscape. Beyond the natural, believers perceived landscape as a holy place at the moment of baptism.

Hierophanies that involve water rituals span time and place across various religions.⁵⁷ By seeking to understand the theological headwaters that flowed in the Kings, San Joaquin and Stanislaus rivers, we may begin to understand how believers saw that hierophanies temporarily transformed the rivers from profane to sacred.⁵⁸ In keeping with longstanding Christian soteriology, in the obedience and performance of full-immersion baptisms believers identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, thus fulfilling the Great Commission.⁵⁹ In the absence of formal temples to house a baptistry, *Apostólicos* baptized for the cleansing of sins in the muddied (and pesticide polluted) rivers of the Central Valley. The invocation of the sacred offered an alternative view of landscape, a type of hidden transcript. In his exposition of the “dialectics of hierophanies” Mircea Eliade proffered that “a thing becomes sacred insofar as it embodies (that is, reveals) something other than itself.”⁶⁰ For believers, the waters of the Central Valley rivers carried more than the life-supply of the vineyards; it also carried powers of sanctification that in turn washed and carried away their sins. In this hierophany (manifestation of the sacred) there is a “clear-cut separation of this thing which manifests the sacred from everything else around it.” When the minister and believer stepped foot into the river, the waters stopped were suspended as “a mere profane something, and, at the moment, acquired a new “dimension” of sacredness.⁶¹ During the descent down the riverbank, the dunking, and the

⁵⁷ Mircea Eliade describes hierophanies “express in some way some modality of the sacred in some moment in its history”, Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996 – 1958 original pub.), 2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 196-197.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

returning ascent, they sang sacred hymns from collective memory in celebration of a new member being “baptized into the body.”⁶²

A close reading of the significance of baptism allows us to dive into the waters of Oneness-Pentecostal soteriology and to access a deeply hidden transcript at play. The symbolic manipulation of the natural environment—water for crops was transformed into sanctified waters of baptism—offered believers power to read the supernatural (baptisms) in the natural (rivers). Even if only for brief moments, the worldmaking engendered by the ceremony and mythic transformation of the tributaries, canals, and rivers gave believers a view of landscape known only in a hidden transcript. In Pentecostal typology of baptism as death to sin, their entire salvation was at stake. It was not unknown for them to ask converts to undergo re-baptisms if they had not been baptized in the name of Jesus. Their treatises and social memory of baptism offer us a more legible reading of this hidden transcript.

Apostólicos and their Anglophone counterparts took issue with those who performed baptism with the “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” formula. Their dogged insistence that converts be baptized only “in the name of Jesus” (because the early church performed baptisms thusly in *The Acts of the Apostles*) led to the volatile episode in early Pentecostal history dubbed the *New Issue* in which approximately one-third of the Assemblies of God defected and regrouped within the contemporaneous Pentecostal Assemblies of the World in 1916.⁶³ The Oneness and Jesus-name message was well received among Black and Mexican

⁶² The foremost African-American Oneness Pentecostal, Garfield T. Haywood wrote the hymn “Baptized into the body” from which Antonio Nava loosely translated “El Nombre del Mesias.” See, Ramirez, *Migrating Faith*, 56-59.

⁶³ The term “new issue” became the definitive term to describe the emergence of a branch of Pentecostals who practiced baptism in the name of Jesus and held a modalistic belief of the godhead (a clear renunciation of the Trinitarian understanding of God). But the term “new issue” has not persisted without critics who argue that it unfairly sets “the discussion in the “negative terms of the AG [Assembly of God] perspective.” See, Talmadge French, *Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism: G.T. Haywood and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World 1901-1931* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 4-6.

Pentecostals.⁶⁴ Their steadfast commitment to “Jesus name” (the nomenclature preferred by Oneness proponents) or “Jesus only” (the epithet used by opponents) doctrine kept them within familiar doctrinal circuits and familial amenability. *Apostólicos*, like their black and white Oneness counterparts, placed primal importance on baptism (but each ascribed varying degrees of soteriological significance⁶⁵). Baptismal orthodoxy shook early Pentecostalism at an organizational level, but it also proved significant in the lives of individual believers who persisted in that faith.

The biographical data gleaned from the hundreds of funeral programs and obituaries provide a glimpse into the premium placed on the act, date and site of baptism. The following represents a basic template (not necessarily in this order): Born, Born of the Spirit, Born of the Water (place of baptism), Married, Ordained into the Ministry, Home with Jesus. This method of memory placed their *otherworldly* and *thisworldly* memory on the same plane.⁶⁶ At the moment of baptism the landscape was sanctified by a verbal utterance; in the memory of believers the landscape was forever sanctified as a site where they sealed their eternal salvation. The memory of this act was immortalized by the public record locating and dating the site of baptisms.

⁶⁴ Ramirez, *Migrating Faith*, 43.

⁶⁵ See Thomas Fudge, *Christianity without a Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism* (Parkland, FL: Universal Publishers, 2003).

⁶⁶ The advancement of farmworkers out of the fields the 1970s and 1980s placed them in a position to keep better written record. Funeral programs of deceased believers provide material witness to the ways in which they and their families chose to remember their life milestones. Funeral programs are located in the *Manuel Vizcarra Collection* at Fuller Theological Seminary, and in the personal collection of Ruth Cantu Gonzalez. I borrow the term *otherworldly* (emphasis in original) from Grant Wacker as it pertains to the primitivist impulse common to early Pentecostals. See Wacker, *Heaven Below*.



Figure 6. Maruffo Baptizes in the San Joaquin River : In this baptism near Patterson, Miguel Maruffo enabled forms of subaltern arts by repurposing the San Joaquin River (ca. 1950s).⁶⁷



Figure 7. Valdez Baptizes in the San Joaquin River: Jesus Valdez baptizing in the San Joaquin River in Patterson, 1961. This river, as well as the Kings and Stanislaus rivers, shaped *Apostólico* memory in the Central Valley.⁶⁸

When members from the Sanger church built their first temple, they later tried to adopt the natural landscape into the site of baptism. Unlike other contemporaneous Apostolic Assembly borderlands temples that contained baptistry murals of the biblical Jordan River, the temple in Sanger church displayed a local landscape familiar to migrants. The glacial-cut u-shaped valleys of Yosemite provided a familiar pristine landscape. The headwaters for the Kings River cascaded down from Yosemite National Park. Complete with rocks and a pump to replicate the live flow of water, the Sanger temple baptistry contained all the elements to recreate the natural landscape within a built environment. Such invocation of the natural in a

⁶⁷ Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

⁶⁸ Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

sacred space borrowed from and influenced a larger trend of borderlands churches (e.g., temples in Phoenix, Salinas, San Jose, and Riverside) *Figures 8 and 9* show the sites of baptisms: the former before the temple was built, and the latter of the baptistery housed in the temple. Because baptism no longer took place outdoors in the Kings River, they sought to render the source of the Kings River in a mural of the Sierra Nevadas in the picturesque Yosemite Valley.⁶⁹ Outdoor baptisms became hallmarks of the early Pentecostal revivals and echoed the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River; but for Mexican Pentecostals, a trough or canal did not compromise the salvific validity of the baptism. The belief that water washed away one’s sins was a ritual act of worldmaking that radically altered their view of the landscape, from waters that fed the fields of their exploitation into sanctified waters that fed their souls. In the end, the river denoted something entirely new for the farmworker, an *axis mundus*.



Figure 8. Valdez Baptizes in the Kings River: Before they could afford their own temple and baptistery, Jesus Valdez baptized members in the Kings River in Sanger ca. 1930s.⁷⁰



Figure 9. Picturing the Natural Landscape: Scriptures and natural landscapes decorated baptisteries that were the backdrop to the platform. The phrase “santidad a Jehová” (Holiness to the LORD) invoked a discursive sanctification over space in the temple in Sanger. The Yosemite Valley pictured in the middle represented a pristine landscape and the source of their baptismal waters. In a move uncommon to strict biblical literalist, the banner omitted and rearranged words from the Mark 1:15 passage. This might hint to the creative license given to artists and decorators of temples.

⁶⁹ Demetrio Ramirez, interview with author, Pinedale, CA, February 2015.

⁷⁰ *50 Year Anniversary Sanger* (n.p., 1981). Courtesy of Marta Bracamontes.

To the degree that baptisms, the creation of sacred space, the manipulation of the natural environment, and the reinterpretations of the natural all reflect modes of worldmaking, the construction of temples and erection of *carpas* signaled modes of worldcentering. In most Apostolic Assembly-built temples, the baptisteries occupied a central space behind the podium. In a similar fashion to how priests place the Eucharist in the center of the podium in Catholic masses, the pulpit and baptistery generally took center stage in Apostolic temples. When no temples stood, *Apostólicos* baptized in the nearby waterways and hosted services in makeshift temples-tents they knew as *carpas*.

Tabernacles of Praise: Tents, *Carpas* and Proto-temples

Tent revivals, saw dust floors, and late-night shouting characterized Pentecostalism in its infancy. Pentecostalism inherited this traditions from its parent Wesleyan and Holiness movements. The phenomena of itinerant circuit riding preachers and the tent revival ministries came into vogue as practical methods of evangelism for areas where few churches existed. Always believing that as with wine the “older is better” Pentecostals long maintained a purified (redacted) view of their past, that is, the past as pure, pristine and very/organically Pentecostal. The idea of tent revivals in the South and Midwest evoked this sanctified nostalgia. The Pentecostal mythos maintained that the tent revivals typified “old time religion,” a tabernacle experience creating sacred space outdoors, beyond the sturdy walls of a temple. Following the heyday of the Azusa Street Revival, tent revivals came into extensive use. They served as convocations for “revival” services for believers from the surrounding areas to gather, and they

also betokened efforts towards start-up churches. *Apostólicos* knew the latter as *obras en carpas* (tent works); these tent services, too, evoke a nostalgia of a bygone era and late-night shouting.⁷¹

But differences existed. Some of these were materially minor: instead of saw dust floors, they set up *carpas* on the dirt of the fields. Other differences were historically more significant: in California agricultural fields, Mexicans Pentecostals used less elaborate tents to convene migrant farm laborers. Some of these tents were set up within miles of their Okie Pentecostals counterparts. One of the most notable differences was the cultural meaning the *carpa* carried for Mexican Pentecostals. For white Pentecostals the “tent” summoned sentiments of Bible Belt Pentecostalism, while for Mexican Pentecostals the tent (*carpa*) hearkened back to sites of respite from hard labor in the agricultural fields. The comparative differences between these groups illumine the obscure history of race, labor migration, and competitive religions in California.

The *carpa* tradition arose in the 1920s during the early years of Mexico’s cinematic and circus production. The *carpa* ranged from satire, humor, romance and music and created visual and physical experiences for spectators/participants. And, with low admission costs and with few mobility constraints the *carpa* appealed to an economically and geographically diverse audience. The productions in these tents involved the most profane objects and carnivalesque societal manifestations; the *carpa* as place and phenomena indubitably embodied the paragon of *cosas mundanas* (worldly things). Could such profane artifacts be consecrated?

We have seen in the case of water and landscape how *Apostólicos*’ cosmovision provided them a lens through which to view even the most physical (arduous work, bodily sweat, stoop

⁷¹ Pentecostals hymns mythologize the past revivals. Herbert Buffam composed “The Old-Fashioned Meeting” in the revivals of California. Pentecostals extensive performance of “Old Time Religion” demonstrates how Pentecostals also incorporated non-Pentecostal hymns that reinforced this view of the past.

labor, i.e exploitative labor) aspects of California agriculture as seedbeds ripe with spiritual possibility. In the case of *carpas* (and in the next sections temples, artisanal décor) *Apostólicos* pruned the most the profane/vice-ridden vines of society and shaped them to make them culturally palatable ready for picking and use on the revivals along the “plate route.”⁷² If items assisted them in fulfilling the Great Commission, then out of a pragmatic impulse they incorporated them.

The *carpa* at once embodied both the pragmatic and primitive impulses of Pentecostalism. As a financially feasible method of mobile evangelism and venue for increased public exposure, it held taut the primitivist-pragmatist tension. It embodied a symbol of “old time religion” in an ever- modernizing age. Eugenia Manzano’s recollection of *carpa* revivals illustrates how these impulses worked in productive tension. In cases where *hermanos* would arrive at new labor sites that did not have an *obra*, “they wouldn’t waste time; they would get together and have church wherever they could.”⁷³ In this regard the *carpa* facilitated the Great Commission (*Mark 16:15*). On the one hand the setting up of *carpas* “wherever they could” demonstrated the means/*praxis* of “Go, ye into all the world.” On the other hand, *carpa* evangelism articulated the primitive urgency and *doxia* of the Great Commission “go...preach the gospel to every creature.” The success of Pentecostalism, according to historian Grant Wacker, lay within Pentecostals’ ability to hold these two impulses in productive tension; as shown in chapter 1 (*Avivamientos, Aleluyas, y Trabajo Agrícola*), Mexican Pentecostals successfully deployed *carpa* evangelism to found churches in agricultural areas. These seemingly isolated churches connected to a larger, vast network of borderlands *obras*. The *carpa* in *figure 10* is an example of one in a rural area; and though it may not appear to be so, it was

⁷² The “plate route” refers to migratory labor routes dictated by seasons of harvest and reaping.

⁷³ Manzano Interview.

indeed more elaborate than other *carpas*, as it was equipped with sturdy siding to uphold the canvass tent. This *carpa* served the pragmatic purposes for its time, and the congregation that occupied it later migrated into their own temple in Modesto.



Figure 10. *Carpa* in Riverbank: The *Carpa* in Riverbank (ca. 1948) offers a glimpse of a sturdier tent. The *carpas* in Patterson and Sanger match the description of tents suspended by guy ropes and anchored by stakes.⁷⁴

Apostólicos always intended the *carpa* to be temporary and used as a means to garner the necessary constituent support to build a proper temple. Growing congregations needed larger structures to comfortably accommodate the increased number of families and farmworkers, with space and facilities for crowds to gather for hours at a time and with rooms for an expanding Sunday membership.⁷⁵ They also needed kitchens to host the “breaking of bread” after church services. (Later in this chapter we will see how women implemented the Mexican culinary arts to sustain the infrastructure of an entire movement.) Not all *obras* that started off as *carpas* successfully made the structural transition. Therefore the ultimate mark/legacy a *carpas*

⁷⁴ Photo courtesy of Eugenia Manzano.

⁷⁵ In the 1950s the Apostolic Assembly general board in concert with its counterpart in Mexico (*Iglesia Apostólica*) launched a denomination-wide Sunday School curriculum. Many churches in the U.S. relied on the *Iglesia Apostólica* curriculum, often printed in the *Iglesia's* organ *La Exegeta*. This reflected the need to reinforce orthodoxy from an early age as well as a more pragmatic side of institutional organization that in effect circumvented the spontaneous/extemporaneous teaching typical of early Pentecostalism.

impressed upon a landscape came when membership reached a critical mass for the collectivity to construct permanent temples. Whether received as a fellow saint by the faithful or *persona non grata* by others, evangelists made their physical mark on the landscape by driving their stakes into the ground, unravelling their canvases across the landscape, angling guy rope in every direction and finally and raising the roof heavenward. The *carpa* was intended to represent a start and by no means an end. Some evangelists pitched tabernacles, while other built proper temples; some wandered in the liminal wilderness while others drove stakes into their promised land.

Temples Made with Hands: A Borderlands Aesthetic of Architecture

Where there were believers, there were places to assemble, and these assemblies did not go without an aesthetic borderlands touch. Pulling creative impulses from south of the border and invoking the divine in a single place of consecration constituted a type of worldcentering. In this act believers “celebrate[d] creativity and the construction of buildings that focused on ritual and daily life”⁷⁶ Adobe brick buildings gained popularity as an indigenous, Mexican, and southwestern aesthetic. The importation of this aesthetic into the valleys of California suggests an expanded borderlands consciousness stretching into rural northern California towns as early as the 1930s. James Scott in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* noted that subordinated groups under large scale structures of domination also have a “fairly extensive offstage social existence, which, in principle, affords it the opportunity to develop a shared critique of power.”⁷⁷ Photographs taken (or made) in California’s rural agricultural towns offer ample opportunities to observe this offstage existence.

⁷⁶ Carrasco, *Mesoamerican Religions*, 40.

⁷⁷ James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 21.

We can observe how this offstage social existence operated at multiple levels within and outside of the church in Sanger. A rereading of the this congregation's first meeting sites challenges how we reflect on subaltern modes of agency and the political forms of resistance that one dared to not speak (especially during the Mass Repatriation of Mexicans). Pastor Jesus Valdez worked alongside grape harvesters and eventually started a small Bible study with them in his home in the early 1930s. As noted in chapter 1, they built a temple in Sanger on the heels of the Mexican Repatriation. Against contrary geopolitical forces, Florencio Zuniga boarded a train back into the U.S. during the repatriation. While aboard he acquired the masonry skills to make adobe bricks, a skill he would use for employment and for service to the church he would eventually join in Sanger. Thus while some Mexican migrants then were being uprooted *en masse*, others put down roots in U.S. soil. Some left lasting legacies. In the case of the Sanger congregation, this imprint came in the form of a permanent structure built with (adobe bricks) and on U.S. soil.⁷⁸ *Figure 11* captures the solemnity and social organization of the groundbreaking ceremony.

In the southern end of the Central Valley, trained architect Pilar Moreno oversaw the construction of the adobe brick temple in Delano. Prior to his conversion he had already built ten churches and several luxurious Spanish-style homes in Kern County.⁷⁹ In a rare photograph of temple construction in the Central Valley, *figure 12* offers a glimpse of laborers taking a recess from laying adobe bricks. The workforce was comprised mostly of agricultural workers (they labored mostly in cotton and grapes). Built in the mid-1940s, the Delano temple was one of two northern California churches designed by Moreno. The style of the temple pictured in *figure 14*

⁷⁸ Manzano interview.

⁷⁹ Various photographs and newspaper clips in author's possession, courtesy of independent researcher, Herminia Martinez.

is reminiscent of a Spanish mission, complete with a bell tower and a more sophisticated brick façade. At a time when leaders of small Pentecostal churches scoffed at the construction of elaborate temples and the ostensible misuse of funds, Moreno charged his members to build a temple that would be distinguished from others nearby and from others in the denomination. His adobe brick design spread to Phoenix, San Jose, and prominent *Apostólico* sites. The construction of the Delano temple enunciated an indubitable borderlands aesthetic, and so, too, did the adornment of the temple inside.



Figure 11. Breaking U.S. Soil in Sanger: Epifanio Cota, fellow Central Valley pioneer and Bishop of Northern California, led Valdez's congregation in the ground breaking ceremony ca. late 1930s. At a time of intense xenophobia towards Mexicans *Apostólicos* built permanent structures using and on U.S. soil.⁸⁰



Figure 12. Building on U.S. Soil in Delano: Pilar Moreno (2nd from left on bottom row) oversees the construction crew comprised of farmworkers ca. 1947.⁸¹

⁸⁰ *50 Year Anniversary Sanger* (Self published, 1981). Courtesy of Marta Bracamontes.

⁸¹ Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

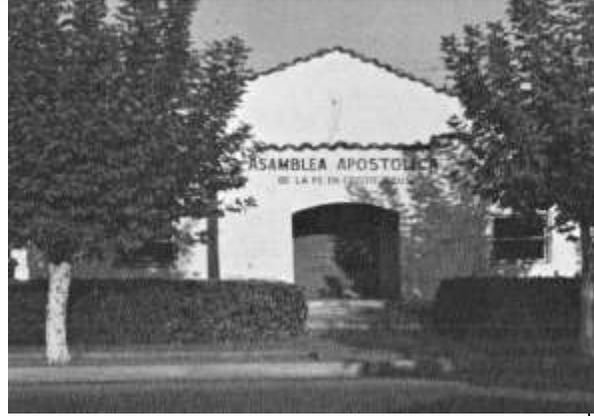


Figure 13. Sanger Temple: The final product of the temple in Sanger pictured in *figure 11* (pictured ca. 1966). It lacked the architectural sophistication of Moreno's temples, but the timing of its earliest construction symbolizes Mexican resilience.⁸²



Figure 14. Delano Temple: The temple in Delano (pictured ca. 1966) boasted a design distinct from their Christian counterparts in the cities and farming region of rural California. Without deep denominational coffers to draw from, the congregation financed and built it.⁸³

Temples Decorations: Borderlands Artisanal Decor

Photographs of church services inside of an Apostolic Assembly temple offer a *prima facie* impression of male dominated space. After all, male leaders of the movement codified the prohibitions against women preaching (and quoting passages of scripture) by 1933 despite that women had set historical precedents. (Romana Carbajal de Valenzuela founded the Oneness-Pentecostal Movement in Mexico and the Mexican Oneness-Pentecostal movement ordained women as deaconesses in its early years). *Apostólicos* codified a trend informally triggered by their many North American Pentecostal counterparts: the closer the movement moved towards organization into a denomination, the more they systematically or informally removed women

⁸² 1966 Yearbook, Northern District Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus (Self-published, 1966) Courtesy of the Antonio Castañeda Nava Collection, Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus Headquarters.

⁸³ Ibid.

from clerical roles.⁸⁴ Within two decades of their binational beginnings, Apostolic Assembly leaders barred women from any pulpit or platform ministry when in the presence of men.

But men did not occupy all the space in the fields or in the churches. Women made up a large portion of the believers in farmworker churches. Many of them played leading roles in evangelizing and increasing the membership and constituted the earliest leaders of the women's department called *Sociedad Femenil Dorcas*. In some cases women donated the properties on which members built temples.⁸⁵ In those temples, female representation took on different forms. Because the podium served as the site from which the preaching of the word was pronounced, it operated as a holy/sacred place and was even blocked off from all laypersons and to all women (see *figure 15*). Amid the sacred place there was a silver lining for the creative genius of women; it was a white lining that came in the form of embroidery.



Figure 15. Artisanal Décor in Patterson Temple: In this photograph longtime presiding bishop, Antonio Nava, led a service in Grayson near Patterson (ca. mid 1960s), Jesus Valdez sat behind him. From fresh flowers to embroidery, the evidence of artisanal décor filled (and made) the space sacred.⁸⁶



Figure 16. Artisanal Décor in Grayson *Carpa*: Women even decorated the pulpits with *tejidos* as shown in this late 1940s picture of a children's choir in Patterson. The congregation started here in a *carpa* and by the early 1960s moved into a temple in Grayson (figure 15). *Apostólico* photographs provide images of artistic spaces.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

⁸⁵ Email correspondence, Manuel Perez, September 2014. (Perez was the pastor of the Salinas church in the late 1950s).

⁸⁶ Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

⁸⁷ Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Women visualized and produced a borderlands aesthetics in the making of *tejidos* (embroidered fabrics), which occupied the most sacred spaces in the temples and *carpas*. Preachers placed their Bibles and sermon notes (with the exception of extemporaneous “no-notes” preachers –a hallmark of early Pentecostalism) on pulpits covered/beautified by handmade products. The aesthetics of place did not come by their own accord. Even if only men occupied the pulpits, women covered them and aestheticized the sacred space of the platform by draping *tejidos* over pianos and altars of repentance (worldrenewal) set immediately in front of the pulpit. Women also imported other Mexican practices by decorating the platform and altar area with fresh flowers usually grown at home and sometimes purchased. Most notable, *tejidos* such as those in *figures 17 & 18* covered the most holy objects of all in the temple: the bread and cup offered in *Santa Cena* (Holy Communion). Knowing that they would be used to cover sacred objects, women designed these with fastidious details and consecration.⁸⁸

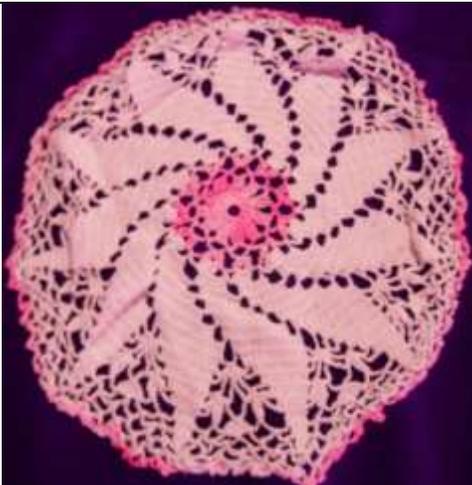


Figure 17. *Tejido* for the Temple: The embroidery work covered the most sacred objects in the temple. Pictured here is a *tejido* used for covering the cup in the *Santa Cena*.⁸⁹



Figure 18. *Tejido* for the *Santa Cena*: The bread of the *Santa Cena* also had its own covering. The privilege to weave together the *tejido* came with the utmost honor.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Marta Vizcarra, interview with Author, Corona, CA, February 2015.

⁸⁹ Photo by author, courtesy of Martha Vizcarra.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Apostólicos mobilized handmade temple aesthetics in their temples as well as in the public sphere. Handmade banners heralded the arrival of youth groups (*Mensejaros de Paz*), the ladies auxiliary (*Las Dorcas*) and the men's group (*Los Varones*) as these paraded their way into their own churches or at visiting churches as shown in *figure 19*. Members recall how upon arriving at youth services, each local church carried their own banners. The leader of each church would place the banner on the platform to declare that they had arrived and came set; all in holy-jealousy, they each tried to outdo the other groups. The competition extended beyond the production of banners. Members from youth groups in the rural Central Valley towns recall how their counterparts from the more cosmopolitan Los Angeles district dressed more ostentatiously (*very* relatively speaking here) and overall wore better clothes and accessories than the modest white gowns they wore.⁹¹ Like banners were, their clothes were often handmade.



Figure 19. Children from Sanger Carry Banner in Tulare: Children from the Sanger Church at the Tulare Temple adorned in their best garments and wieldig their banner to announce their presence at a service in 1937. The intra-politics of holy dress and acceptable attire became apparent when members from churches wore more ostentatious dresses or allowed for smaller head coverings or more (relatively speaking) revealing clothes.⁹²

⁹¹ Manzano Interview. Ramirez interview.

⁹² *La Nube y el Fuego en el Desierto* (Febrero, 1937: p. 9)

The role of handmade goods and foods in funding the construction and maintenance of these temples adds another layer of complexity to this offstage narrative of resilience. *Tejidos* bolstered the finances of the church. Those not sanctified for the use in the temple, but instead intended for aestheticizing domestic spheres, generated profits to supplement what farmworkers could contribute from their wages. The financial contributions of workers in a “colonial labor system” could hardly sustain a movement, so women also made and sold tamales in order to generate sufficient funds. (Those who worked to build temples donated their labor). After they built temples, the funds from tamale sales sustained churches for special projects (see *figure 20*). The kitchen provided a space for women to interact with each other in ways prohibited while in the sanctuary. While in the kitchen they could minister to each other and critique the decisions made by their male counterparts about church matters. When members of the church attained better jobs (cannery work for women and construction or factory work for men), they relied less on the sales of handmade goods and foods as fundraisers. For them, money indeed grew from the ground and came from ground corn.



Figure 20. *Hermanas* Remembered for Tamales: That congregation in Sanger chose to memorialize women making tamales in their jubilee yearbook speaks to the importance of the practice and its centrality in shared memory. Pictured below are women making tamales in the 1950s.⁹³

Conclusion: Hidden Frames, Hidden Transcripts

The photographic record offers access to view what James Scott terms the “infrapolitics of subordinate groups,” which he defined as “a wide variety of low-profile forms of resistance that dare not speak in their own name.”⁹⁴ In this chapter we have explored just some of facets of *Apostólico* culture in the borderlands and how ethnic-cultural aesthetics came to influence an emerging religious *movement*. While the emergence may have eluded photographers and been shrouded under the shadow of looming national concerns, in the obscured margins a movement flourished. As early growers demanded laborers in the center of their fields, *Apostólico* Mexican migrant workers lived on the periphery of society. The religious center was even further from them. Their religious *poesis* played out locally but also globally – their music, for example, had far reaching hemispheric influences. More locally, Spanish-language hymns about migratory routes sung during the Mass Repatriation constituted a form of resistance; when sung in the seclusion of their own homes or temples, the performance acted a hidden transcript. Other acts, such as undocumented Mexicans building an edifice on U.S. soil and baptizing converts in the river controlled by growers was a public performance of the hidden transcript. Photographs of these performances that oriented the *otherworldly* in a very physically (read: *thisworldly*) trying environment enables us to compare “landscapes” as well as the public vs. private transcripts at play in the valleys of California. The legal and social categories denoted in pejorative terms played out as a public transcript and coerced a particular type of behavior between the growers and laborers. A nameless “vagrant”, however, was often an *Hermana/o* with a letter of

⁹³ *50 Year Anniversary Sanger*.

⁹⁴ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 19.

recommendation signed by his/her by a pastor in one valley, state, or country commending the saint to a pastor in another valley, state, or country; a faceless “stoop laborer” may have very well also been a musician by night reaching over to fix a *tejido* laid on the altar by a fellow “field hand.” The rich hidden transcript of *Apostólico* arts, however, was inaccessible to the growers and to the larger public. The photographic archives offer us clues into the rich material history, arts, and modes of low-profile resistance lived out in the fields of California. In the rural fields, the very space-off of published photographs of the time, they sowed the sacred, created axis mundi, and nurtured a vibrant artistic culture. Farmworker frames capture this religious and cultural florescence which even came to the attention of Chicano leaders.

Chapter 4

Activists and *Aleluyas*: The Religious Politicization of Pentecostal Farmworkers

“And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.”

(Mark 4:8)

“So in that little Madera church, I observed everything going on about me that could be useful in organizing. Although there were no more than twelve men and women, there was more spirit there than when I went to mass where there were two hundred.”

-Cesar Chavez

“I read in the Bible that mercy and truth met, and justice and peace hugged...it was the religious life for the satisfaction of the yearning of my heart for justice. This is what I got from religious life.”

-Reies López Tijerina

Cesar Chavez learned important lessons as he went to launch a Community Service Organization (CSO) chapter in the Central Valley town of Madera in 1954. After a series of meetings and events for the CSO, he landed in a small, spirit-filled Mexican Pentecostal church. He had met with the *Apostólico* pastor to assist him with immigration troubles exacerbated in the era of Operation Wetback. A church service was not on Chavez's agenda. The gathering of about twelve in a living room seemingly projected a larger than life phenomenon. The odd combination of clapping hands, prostrated bodies, elevated arms, bowed heads, joyful leaps, isolated dances, and a smattering of tongue talking fascinated Chavez. These demonstrative forms of praise matched the wide range of weepy hymns and ebullient *corridos*, all genres familiar to Chavez. The Pentecostal proletarians infusing the sacred into the soundscapes in that small living room were in need of Chavez's legal succor, not vice versa. But in this case, they helped Chavez. Pentecostals in that little Madera church unwittingly taught Chavez an integral component of

movement solidarity. Three years later Pentecostals from that same denomination attended a two-week revival where they encountered another Chicano activist. Reies López Tijerina responded to the summons of a young pastor inviting him to edify his congregation. The settings of Chavez and Tijerina's experiences were all too similar: an *Apostólico* spirit-filled church also located deep in the crop-combed fields of industrial farming. Tijerina also found something useful. The dynamic and visionary nature of Pentecostal belief and worship aligned with his own "heart for justice." In the end Chavez and Tijerina left the respective churches with a clearer vision of protest and with a larger base of supporters: the entire *Apostólico* church joined Chavez's CSO and several families followed Tijerina to his utopian community.

The legacy of *Apostólicos* in California's valleys is not merely veiled in a hidden transcript recorded in photographs, music, and material culture. That legacy played formative and foundational roles in the careers of Chicano activists by producing history that is visible and important. The previous two chapters traced the roots and routes of rural *Apostólicos* and located agency in their cultural production. We found that *Apostólico* roots stretched back to Azusa Street Revival, and that the earliest revivals and establishment of *obras* (ministerial outposts) followed the trajectory of farm laborers in the Imperial-Mexicali, Coachella, Central, Pajaro, and Salinas valleys. The establishment of congregations provided permanency for the families that settled, and offered sites of respite for diasporic laborers. Emanating first south then north from Los Angeles, each new outpost in the various valleys served as a launching point for the next congregation. In rural California, *Apostólicos* produced a vibrant culture of subaltern arts in music, architecture, artisanal décor and a reinterpretation of the natural and built environment. The ubiquity of the movement in the agricultural valleys by the 1950s placed *Apostólicos* within the same circuits as Cesar Chavez and Reies López Tijerina. *Apostólicos* at the local level left

religiously rooted imprints on these leaders. Chavez fully incorporated music into his movement and Tijerina continued his radical fight for justice at regional levels. Within the next decade, their movements reached national headlines. These activists learned from and were motivated by *Aleluyas* at the local level.

This chapter focuses on the encounter between Chicano leaders and *Apostólico* (known as “*Aleluyas*”) in the northern California valleys.¹ We will see how by the time Cesar Chavez and Reies Lopez Tijerina garnered national attention in the mid 1960s, *Apostólico* farmworkers had already left indelible imprints on their respective movements. The dynamic nature of Pentecostal worship, hermeneutics, and leadership allowed for an unconventional relationship with charismatic Chicano leaders in the early stages of their careers.² The narrative is built around two singular events and their aftermath. The first concerns Chavez’s start of a Community Service Organization (CSO) chapter in Madera in 1954. The second involves Tijerina’s recruitment of families from Salinas, California, into his desert utopian community in 1956. These episodes in their early careers proved to be more than mere encounters; they shaped the movement by further infusing it with Pentecostal praxis and belief. I argue that the enthusiastic, dynamic, and grass-roots nature of Pentecostal farmworkers’ praxis informed the charismatic careers of Chavez and Tijerina and subsequently helped fuel the religious dimensions of their protests. To frame with the metaphor of this chapter’s epigraph the seed of their effort landed on” good ground.” The fruit of it is evident in the religious seeds/origins of their labor.

¹ I do use the word “Chicano” with some caution as it pertains to Tijerina who preferred the term Indo-Hispano. The term “*Aleluya*” originated as a pejorative which described cacophonous church services. The term “*aleluya*” is particularly fitting for this chapter as it pertains to Cesar Chavez’s experiences with Pentecostal song services. To many *Apostólicos* “*Aleluya*” evoked conversion experiences and became a source of pride.

² Note the lowercase charismatic, which ought not to be confused with the rise of the Pentecostal-influenced Charismatic movement of the 1960s.

These episodes predate the heyday of the Chicano Movement; they germinated—one might say—in a social context of protest established by African-American leaders. An underlying issue addressed in this chapter is the nature of the religious impulses ascribed to Black and Brown activism of the 1950s and 1960s.³ Before reckoning with the religious milieu of Tijerina and Chavez, we would do well to situate this understudied Chicano religious activism in the conversation of well-received religious activism of African Americans.

Black and Brown Religious Protests: Parallel Struggles, Dissociated Memories

The social memory of the radical 1960s presents a mountain of deeply embedded ideas concerning the leaders, their supporters, and their causes. Whereas the scholarship (and memory) regarding the role of religion in resistance movements of the 1960s has been well preserved with respect to African American groups, the same cannot be said regarding Chicanos. The African-American Civil Rights movement in popular memory is inseparable from the religious zeitgeist that suffused it.⁴ From Christianity to Islam and Gandhian principles of Hinduism, religious philosophies and their agents of change shaped the movement from the start. In short, that religion played an active role in the movement is not seriously contested. Until recently, the terrain of religion in the Chicano Movement lay fallow, with the roots of potential scholarship preemptively deracinated by claims that religious agency was hardly existent in the movement. It has taken many revisions of Chicano history in order to set the record straighter.

³ The scope of this chapter and the known exploits of its actors do allow for a more historical comparison to the Long Civil Rights movement as discussed by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall “The Long Civil Rights Movement and Political Uses of the Past” in *The Journal of American History* (91:4) 2005. Proponents of the long Civil Rights movement insist on a more robust story of Civil Rights movement predating the “classical period” from 1955-1968. The start of the New Deal and Depression era unrest marks a viable origin for the Long Civil Rights Movement.

⁴ Aldon Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

Scholars at the turn of the twenty-first century produced an interdisciplinary religious historiography of the Chicano activism. For example, Gaston Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda, editors of the 2005 anthology, *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, attribute the lack of attention to Cesar Chavez's religious dimensions to the prominence of Marxist teachings among Mexican-American scholars, which consequently led many to believe that religion (the "opiate of society") had no role on the real life issues of labor, land, and citizenship. Furthermore, they posited that the Marxist and socialist agendas of radicals in the 1960s and 1970s treated religion as an anti-intellectual avenue of study. And, while the movement produced a critical mass of Chicano academics, the focus on the first cohort and the genealogies that they produced, suggest the ways that this intellectual frame had more staying power than it otherwise might have. Texts on the Chicano movement until 2005 mostly treated religion as a non-essential element. In his 1972 work, *Occupied America* Rodolfo Acuña wrote:

The Catholic Church refused to promote social action and limited itself to meeting the minimal spiritual needs of the people...[It] was a missionary group that, by its silence, tacitly supported the oppressive conditions under which Chicanos had to live and work...Protestant churches...were not interested in...championing rights or promoting brotherhood.⁵

Published just a few years after the marquee Chicano protests and during the rise of student activism, *Occupied America* stifled productive conversations about religion. Because foundational texts in Chicano studies so forthrightly and preemptively elided religious accounts of the movement, Chicano scholars seemingly avoided taking up the topics. As a corrective, Espinosa and Elizondo point out that spirituality and popular religious traditions profoundly

⁵ Rodolfo Acuña quoted in Gaston Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, Jesse Miranda, "Introduction: U.S. Latino Religions and Faith-Based Political, Civic, and Social Action," in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism* (New York: Oxford University, 2005), 3.

shaped the visions of Chicano activist leaders. *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States* claims to be “the first in a series of anthologies, monographs, and reports that seek to create a critical discourse on Latino religions and politics in the United States.”⁶ Almost four decades after the zenith of the Chicano Movement, Chicano Studies begs to take an introspective look at the heart of religious matters.

Chicano scholars have recently revised how religion factored into the leadership of Chavez and Tijerina. At the forefront of forging a new and more accurate account of Chavez’s religious impulses are Stephen Lloyd-Moffett and Luis D. Leon. (Also, importantly, Alan Watt’s *Farmworker and the Churches* provides the historical context for the institutional role of Protestant and pro-labor Catholic groups embroiled in the struggle.)⁷ In contrast to the common historical record which attributes Chavez’s leading role in activism to secularized ideology, Lloyd-Moffett argues that Chavez’s personal spirituality informed his activism. He also asserts that the common historical record has been formed by the popular production of the liberal intelligentsia and Chicano activists who sought to “secularize Chavez and substitute their own values for his stated motivations...creating a Christ-less Chavez.” This happened “by eviscerating the spiritual core of the most famous Latino civil activist, and perpetuat[ing] the widespread notion of a breach between religion and social engagement in the Latino culture.”⁸ Richard Castillo Griswold and Richard Garcia concurred, “[i]n a world in revolt, the liberal intelligentsia –in search of a hero, of a myth, of a soul- performed the necessary textual transfiguration...Chavez had central private belief, but the old-style liberals created his public

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Stephen R. Lloyd-Moffett, “The Mysticism and Social Action of Cesar Chavez” in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism*, 35-52; Luis Leon, *The Political Spirituality of Cesar Chavez: Crossing Religious Borders* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Alan J. Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches: The Movement in California and Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University, 2010).

⁸ Lloyd-Moffett, “The Mysticism and Social Action of Cesar Chavez,” 35.

person.”⁹ In *The Political Spirituality of Cesar Chavez*, Luis Leon offers a multivalent picture of how Chavez’s “political spirituality” was articulated by myth and prophecy that in effect made *La Causa* a religious movement.¹⁰ Leon’s interest is the interpretation, enmeshment, and appropriation of Chavez. We will see how *Apostólico* music informed tactics of solidarity in the National Farm Workers Association and how Chavez’s farmworker movement occupies a contested place in *Apostólico* memory. Tijerina’s place in *Apostólico* memory is muddied by his short-lived direct encounter with *Apostólicos* and stained by his raid of the Tierra Amarilla courthouse in 1968.

The scholarship on Tijerina’s religiosity is thin. Rudy Busto’s work stands in a lonely category of its own. He accounts for how Tijerina’s religious impulses influenced his various attempts to reclaim lands swindled by the American government. While Tijerina’s biographers did acknowledge his religious tendencies, a serious treatment of his religious impulses is only followed through by Busto. This oversight is largely due to the same concerns discussed by Espinosa (et. al.) regarding the secularist ideological commitment of Chicano scholarship.¹¹ Busto contended in *King Tiger* that “Chicano studies as an emergent academic discipline was burdened in subtle and not so subtle ways by an ideological cultural nationalism” and that this discourse “contained, suppressed, and even erased dissident and religious voices from its collective ethnic memory.”¹² One might conceive of such an erasure in terms of Chavez; not so

⁹ Richard Griswold del Castillo and Richard A. Garcia quoted in *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ Leon, *Political Spirituality*, 13.

¹¹ The biographies on Tijerina were published soon after his raid on the courthouse and mostly failed to account his deep religious impulses. Michael Jenkinson, *Tijerina: Land Grant Conflict in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: Paisano Press, 1968,); Peter Nabokov, *Tijerina and the Courthouse Raid* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969); Richar Gardner, *Grito!: Reies Tijerina and the New Mexico Land Grant War of 1967* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Compnay, 1970); Patricia Bell Blawis, *Tijerina and the Land Grants: Mexican American in the Struggle for Their Heritage* (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

¹² Rudy Busto, *King Tiger: The Religious Vision of Reies López Tijerina* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 4.

easily imaginable is how Tijerina's past as a Pentecostal preacher could be so obscured. It is in the same spirit of Busto's project that I attempt to develop a conversation between American Religious History and Chicano Studies.

The historiography on the religious dimensions of the Chicano Movement lacks when compared to the tomes dedicated to religious black activism. Whereas the Black Civil Rights movement is not easily pigeonholed into any specific religious tradition, if any religion is at all associated with the Chicano Movement, it is Catholicism. By elevating Chavez and debasing Tijerina, we lose an important non-Catholic legacy of the Chicano Movement. The foundational role of Pentecostal farmworkers offers us a bridge to think about Chavez and Tijerina on the same turf (valleys of northern California), among a broad family of peoples (*Apostólicos*), all embroiled in a common struggle (improving or altogether escaping the conditions of agricultural work). Bridges to connect Black and Brown legacies lay in early Black Pentecostal activism.

It seems hard to imagine a legacy of Pentecostals as agents of social change. Their skepticism – enveloped in their suspicion of government affairs and their conscientious objection to bearing arms – surfaced in their codified prohibitions against participation in unions and civil unrest. But a cursory glance at marquee events of the Civil Rights Movement points to multifaceted levels of engagement between Pentecostals and civil causes. Consider Mamie Till's catalytic moment. From the pews of the Church of God in Christ in Chicago, she made a cause célèbre of the gruesome details surrounding her son Emmitt Till's death. Also take into account the last (and long lasting) images of the careers of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Dr. King delivered his final speech at the historic Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in Memphis, Tennessee in (1968) in support of Memphis' sanitation workers. At a time when many declined to host Malcolm X's funeral, Harlem's Church of God in Christ opened its doors. In 1964 the

Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God in Christ, adopted a resolution related to the Civil Rights and passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Nevertheless, what we do know about Pentecostals' involvement in Civil Rights is limited, but absence of evidence may not in fact be evidence of absence.

The political uses of the past in the legacies of two movement leaders offer productive starting points of dialogue between Black and Brown struggles. The Chicano Movement struggle in the southwest was fueled by shared and distinct goals from the nationwide African American Civil Rights movement. They both fought similar battles in the areas of educational reform, state violence, workers' rights, voting access and, to some extent, segregation. In the arena of worker rights, Chicanos differed in that that their struggle largely centered in the rural towns of California, whereas black unrest was primarily urban.

Chavez and Tijerina's approaches reflect those of King and Malcom X. Chicanos thrust their prophet Chavez to center stage for a highly publicized takedown against growers. As the preeminent hero of the Chicano Movement, Chavez had a large base of supporters in his corner ranging from Indian-American, Yemeni, and Filipinos. He also entered the arena with the mentoring of influential whites, such as Saul Alinsky and Robert Kennedy. In keeping with King's model of Civil Rights, he crossed religious lines (from Chicano Catholicism to multi-racial Protestantism). The more violent elements of the Chicano Power Movement manifested themselves in the person, followings, and beliefs of Reies López Tijerina. His call to action stemmed from the belief that tracts of land throughout the southwest legally belonged to Mexican families cheated by officials who did not honor the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* (1848). The revelation emboldened him and his followers to reclaim the land by settling on it, sometimes resorting to armed force. Tijerina's opponents – local, state, and federal officials –

proved to be much more formidable than the growers Chavez brought to their knees. Even though the fulfillments of his promises were short lived and in some cases did not come to fruition, Tijerina has been extolled in Chicano literature as the fiercest and most violent of the four horsemen of the “Chicano Apocalypse.”¹³ Chavez, the better known of the four horsemen, on the other hand epitomized the principals of non-violence. Tijerina’s own militant strategy and rhetoric is comparable to Malcolm X, while Chavez’s (we do know) pacific approach was heavily influenced by Dr. Martin Luther King.¹⁴

The legacies and political uses of Chavez and Tijerina also mirror those of King and Malcolm X, respectively. These leaders spoke prophetically. In doing so, they employed religious texts of liberation. They all underwent religious mentorship or formal theological education. And shortly after their religious education, they launched their careers as activists, connecting the two. Tijerina and Chavez came to their roles in dissimilar ways, but they shared a context of rural California. It is specifically the religious dimensions of this context that offers us a productive starting point to investigate how these leaders rallied the support of *Apostólicos*.

***La Huelga* and its Hierophanies: History and Hermeneutics of *Apostólico* Activism**

The seeds of unrest germinated under the pressure and heat of labor exploitation. Chavez and Tijerina proved to be masterful husbandmen. *Apostólicos* merely comprised a small minority of believers in the borderlands, escaping classifications in studies performed in 1942.¹⁵ Walter Goldschmidt’s 1942 study classified California’s Christian denominations along socio-economic

¹³ This term is borrowed from the characterization of Cesar Chavez, Reies Lopez Tijerina, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzalez, and Jose Angel Gutierrez in Matt Meier and Feliciano Rivera, *The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994).

¹⁴ Espinosa and Elizondo, *Latino Religious Activism*, 9.

¹⁵ Walter Goldschmidt, *As you Sow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1947) 133-138

levels, and white Pentecostals fell at the very bottom of the scale. He noted the presence of Mexican Pentecostals, but they did not register in his scale of denominational stratification. While Mexican Pentecostals had fallen out of the purview of photographers (as noted in the previous chapter) and scholars, they momentarily became a focus of at least two Chicano leaders. The ubiquity (and agency) of Mexican Pentecostals is evidenced by the fact that even in their relative obscurity, they played formative roles in the early careers of Chavez and Tijerina.

Apostólico Influences on Chavez

Through the same lens used to examine a people's history and an epistemological perspective "from below," I invite readers to see and think in the context set forth in the previous chapters: migrant laborers laboring in industrial farms by day and rejoicing in tabernacles and temples by night. All this transpired in the context of xenophobic immigration laws at the federal level and discriminatory voting laws at the state level. The abuse of state policies placed Chavez in the Fresno-Madera area in the summer of 1954.

The political and legal battles waged in the rural fields were hardly fought in isolation. By the 1950s large networks of strikers developed, but the seemingly endless supply of Bracero laborers blunted their immediate impact. The 1952 Walter McCarran Act, which made it a felony to import or harbor undocumented workers opened another front in the incipient (long) Chicano Movement; the Act also made it illegal to require persons over the age of 50 who had been in the U.S. for over 20 years, to take readings, writing, or speaking examinations in English in order to obtain citizenship. CSO neophyte Cesar Chavez entered the fray over voting discrimination in San Jose in this zeitgeist of combating xenophobia and red-baiting. He took up the case of voter discrimination with Attorney General Edmund Brown. Lamenting the outcome of the "Get Out To Vote" drive in San Jose, Chavez described in a November 1952 letter addressed to the

Attorney General how American citizens of Mexican descent were the only ethnic group to be subjected to literacy tests.¹⁶ In his diplomatic response, Mr. Brown cited California State Constitution Elections Code section 5620 and 5626. The former accorded any voter the power to orally challenge any person offering to vote; one of those grounds was suspicion that the person offering to vote could not read; the latter directed the person offering to vote to read any consecutive one-hundred words of the state constitution in English as selected by the precinct election board.¹⁷ Chavez's early role in the CSO mostly revolved around voting reform. Two years passed and in 1954 a violation of this latter provision of the Walter-McCarran Act in the Fresno-Madera area caught the attention of CSO leader Fred Ross who sent Chavez to investigate.¹⁸ In Fresno, Chavez found other violations of the Walter-McCarran Act and his work then expanded to new legal fronts. More specifically, when he took the "Get Out To Vote" drive to Fresno, Chavez faced a larger set of problems concerning citizenship. This brought him in conversation with migrant *Apostólicos*.

In June of 1954 Fred Ross of the Industrial Areas Foundation assigned Chavez to Fresno in order to investigate discrimination against elderly Mexicans seeking naturalization. A naturalization examiner reportedly refused to examine qualifying applicants in Spanish, in violation of code 312 of the Walter-McCarran Act. A subsequent report concerning the mismanagement of Spanish-speakers' voter registrations compounded Ross troubles.¹⁹ These discriminatory practices caught the attention of the CSO board in Fresno, Fred Ross in San

¹⁶ Cesar Chavez to Edmund Brown, correspondence, 12 November 1952, The United Farmworkers Office of the President Collection (UFOPC), part 1 box 2 folder 2, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

¹⁷ Edmund Brown to Chavez, correspondence, 25 November 1952, Ibid.

¹⁸ Correspondence to Congressman Harlan Hagan, 9 July 1956, UFOPC, part 1, box 2, folder 9; Fred Ross to Cesar Chavez, correspondence, 12 August 1954, UFOPC, part 1, box 2, folder 5.

¹⁹ Correspondence to Congressman Harlan Hagan, 9 July 1956, UFOPC, part 1, box 2, folder 9; Fred Ross to Cesar Chavez, correspondence, 12 August 1954, UFOPC, part 1, box 2, folder 5.

Bernardino, and Cesar Chavez in San Jose. Immediately north of Fresno, in Madera, farmworkers struggled with filling out federal immigrant documents. Voting and immigration issues in Fresno and Madera drew Chavez out of his hometown of San Jose. These scale of these issues compelled Chavez to take up residency in Madera on July 6.²⁰

A mixed group of Protestants and Catholics readily welcomed Chavez into their homes and churches. The solution to complications over citizenship extended beyond the ken of local clergy. Similar intimidation tactics faced by Spanish-speaking constituents in San Jose beleaguered their counterparts in Fresno and Madera; in all these places Chavez relied upon religious leaders to amass Mexican voters, who already occupied the pews in their temples. The tactic seemed simple: go where unified Mexicans already routinely congregate. In San Jose he worked with Father McDonnell and in Madera with Father Dominic Albertelli. But unlike in San Jose and Fresno, Chavez's organizing in Madera found great resonance among Protestant groups. Although they comprised a minority in Madera, they made up the majority of the CSO chapter members and executive board leaders. When they decided to elect only farmworkers to the board, the result was an all Protestant board.²¹ This is likely due to the warm welcome he received in his first week there, when he had held three house meetings with different Protestant groups. His success among non-Catholics drew the ire of Father Albertelli who "complained that there were too many Protestants."

He recalled something peculiar about the house meetings hosted by one of the Protestant groups. In the living room of an *Apostólico* he remembered:

"I didn't know it then, but I was in for a special education in Madera. One of the first cases I had was a Pentacostal [sic] Preacher who was having trouble getting his paper in

²⁰ Chavez "Reports of Cesar Chavez," 16 July 1954, Fred Ross Sr. Collection, box 1 folder 2, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

²¹ Jacques Levy, *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa*, (Minneapolis: First University Press of Minnesota, 2007 – 1975 original publication), 116.

order. He'd paid a lot of money to many people who handle paperwork for a fee, coyotes we call them, to get his green card from the Immigration Service. He still didn't have it. Both he and his wife needed the green card, which gives them permanent residence status, before they could become citizens. They also had a daughter who was born here but was stuck in Mexico. Immigration wouldn't let her return because she couldn't prove her birth here."²²

At the time, at least two ministers of the Apostolic Assembly resided in Madera. The earliest date that "founders" set up Madera as a preaching post is unknown, but the first commissioned evangelist arrived in 1935 and was followed by two others until 1942 when Mariano Marin took the helm as the first pastor. His pastorate spanned over a decade that experienced the onset of the Bracero laborers, and, more importantly, the passing of the Walter-McCarran Act of 1952. Marin partially handed over the reins in that same year to Sabino Robles. Robles and Marin led their immigrant congregation during the throes of heavy immigration raids which culminated in the passing of Operation Wetback in 1954.²³ Marin remained in Madera until his death in 1959. So when Chavez arrived in Madera, he would have encountered a tag-team of Marin and Robles, with the latter as a mentee of the former. It is uncertain as to whether

²² Ibid., 115.

²³ In March 1966 Juan Muro filled out a "Resumen de la historia de la iglesia de Madera, California" (Summary of the history of the church in Madera, California). Martha Vizcarra, a compiler of the documents, reported that very few of the pastors complied with the denomination's request for such summaries. Nevertheless, in 1966, the denomination self-published a hagiographical history. The publication emphasized the roles of founding ministers and mostly highlighted the careers of the Assembly's who's who, who all mostly hailed from metropolitan cities and the greater Los Angeles area. The summary lists the names of ministers who played an important role in creating the networks of churches discussed in chapter 3. The founders of the modern congregation were: Bernardo Lerma, Ramon Garcia, Jesus Valdez, Miguel Esqueda and Cristobal Villegas. Beginning in 1935, the evangelists were: Miguel Esqueda 1935; Bernardo Lerma 1937-39; Teofilo Guerro 1940. The constant change of hands likely reflects the migratory patterns and borderlands flux of both laity and clergy. At least two of the founders later returned as evangelists. Chavez recalled that the church services were held in a house. Within a decade the congregation came under four different pastors: Mariano Marin 1942-52; Sabino Robles 53-57; Francisco Ramirez 1958-1962; and Juan Del Muro from 1962 until at least the filling out of the summary. The change in pastorates likely contributed to the inability to secure a proper temple. Until 1962 (the earliest record in available city directories) the church operated as such until it assumed ownership of a former Apostolic Church of Christ on 900 Sonora Avenue, across the street from the Marin residence/parsonage on 60 Lincoln Avenue. Chavez reported that he organized three meetings with different Protestant groups, but the identities of those are unclear. For "Resumen de la historia de la iglesia de Madera, California" see Antonio Nava Collection, Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus Headquarters, Rancho Cucamonga, CA;

Chavez entered the home of Marin or Robles, but, as elder and bishop, Marin certainly would have exercised authority over decisions.²⁴ Regardless of whose home it was, either minister would have conducted church services in his living room since the Apostolic Assembly did not have its own proper temple in Madera until sometime between 1959-1962.²⁵

Chavez found particular success among the Pentecostals. This happened at the expense of losing Albertelli's support, and he turned against Chavez and red-baited the budding CSO. In an unusual (and perhaps unprecedented) move the entire Apostolic congregation of Madera joined the CSO and the family of Mariano Marin assumed leadership roles.²⁶ His daughter Sallie Torres (Marin) became the first corresponding secretary of the Madera CSO chapter and her husband Jerry Torres also served on the executive board.²⁷ In a letter to Ross, Chavez noted Jerry's enthusiasm. "Jerry Torres here in Madera has helped me a lot. He has attended every house meeting with me. He has lined up about six meetings at his house...and he is all out for the C.S.O."²⁸ Later, Chavez fondly reflected on his work with the Madera CSO chapter: "I radicalized that chapter more than any other chapter, I guess, in that short period of time. They weren't afraid to take on the police or the immigration service. They weren't afraid to fight for their rights."²⁹ The immediacy with which they successfully organized the CSO chapter may also speak to the "anteroom" preparation that Pentecostals underwent in the form of their religious

²⁴ The timing of his daughter's birth and 1930s U.S. Census reveals that Marin had immigrated into the U.S. sometime prior to 1930 and would have qualified for citizenship under the Walter McCarran Act, U.S. Census 1930; It appears as if he resided in Madera until his death in the late 1950s, the California Death Index shows November 27, 1958 while his headstone at Arbor Vita cemetery in Madera reads 1959.

²⁵ The 1958 city directory does not list the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus congregation as the occupants of their first temple on 900 Sonora St. in 1958, but it does in 1962; the 1959-61 directories are missing from the collection. See, *Madera City Directory*, (Madera County Library).

²⁶ Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa*, 116.

²⁷ Sallie Marin to Cesar Chavez, correspondence, undated (ca. 1954 or early 1955), UFOPC, part 1, box 2, folder 6; Madera Executive Board to Cesar Chavez, "Thank You" card, 12 October 1954, UFOPC, part 1, box 2, folder 5.

²⁸ Cesar Chavez to Fred Ross, correspondence, 16, July 1954, Fred Ross Sr. Collection, box 1 folder 2.

²⁹ Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa*, 120.

practice, which readied them for engagement in the public square.³⁰ Opportunities to speak before congregations, perform ceremonies, lead prayer groups, evangelize others, teach Bible studies, direct ministries within the church—all served as preparation for public engagement. Formal or seminary training was not mandated in order to perform any of these rituals, as leaders were nurtured within their respective congregations. Leadership from below is given ample opportunities to rise in less rigid hierarchical structures.

In Chavez’s description, we receive a rare perspective from an outsider. He captured elements of the borderlands migrant church:

“When I went to their home, which was very, very humble, we talked and ate. Then he excused himself to conduct services. “I’ll be back in about an hour,” he said.” “Can you wait for me?” He went into a little room – it hadn’t occurred to me that it was a church – I thought it was just a living room.”³¹

The “very very humble” state of the home-church stood out in his mind. Its condition would have stood in stark contrast to the sacred space offered by Father Dominic Albertelli at St. Joachim’s Church. Chavez had initially failed to observe the existence of a home-church that had been in Madera for almost twenty years. While the *obra* in Madera had been kept on record for nearly twenty years in a denominational ledger in southern California, it failed to register with demographers of a town with a population just over 10,000.³² Such an elision was the also case with many other Spanish-speaking churches, *Apostólico* and otherwise.³³ What transpired in that meeting proved revolutionary to his organization strategies. He remembered:

³⁰ Daniel Ramirez, “Public Lives in American Hispanic Churches: Expanding the Paradigm,” in Espinosa and Elizondo, eds., *Latino Religions and Civic Activism*, 178.

³¹ Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa*, 115.

³² Madera, California Department of Finance Records, Historical Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities in California, 1850–2010.

³³ For the congregations in Delano, Sanger, and Bakersfield I noted their late inclusion of into the city directories. This late inclusion was even the case when congregations occupied their proper temple.

“After they started service I asked if I could join them...*So in that little Madera church, I observed everything going on about me that could useful in organizing.* Although there were no more than twelve men and women, there was more spirits there than when I went to mass where there were two hundred. Everybody was happy. They all were singing. These people were really committed in their beliefs and this made them sing and clap and participate. I liked that. I think that’s where I got the idea of singing at the meetings. That was one of the first things we did when I started the Union. And was hard for me because I couldn’t carry a tune.” [emphasis mine]

A pneumatic expression of Christianity added to his remarkable charismatic toolkit. It is important to remember that in such a service Chavez would have encountered singing from the vast collection of *Apostólico* hymns, many of which, according to Ramirez, “redeemed the *fiesta* of Mexican and Latino culture.”³⁴ This participatory sonic environment would have contrasted vastly to music services in both Catholic and Mainline Protestant services in San Jose and Madera. In contrast to Catholic visual religious stimuli, Pentecostals wielded the power of the sonic, so that a group of twelve could exhibit “more spirit” than two hundred in Mass. A larger set of demonstrative sensory experiences in the services would have come to surface, the same ones that Mainline Protestant clergy often denounced. What would have accompanied the singing also would have distinguished it from its contemporaneous sacred soundscapes: heavy repetition of choruses, “Spirit-led” individual dancing, collective and/or individual shouting, and, more distinctly, glossolalia.³⁵ The presence or types of instruments remains unknown, but the most likely would have been guitar, percussion set, and perhaps a smaller piano in the living room home. All this movement and instrumentation would have accompanied the lusty singing of hymns. These *Apostólico* soundwaves resonated with the working-class Chavez and left deep imprints in his mind.

³⁴ Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 218.

³⁵ Ibid.

Himnos de Cosolacion (mid-1930s) and *Himnos de Suprema Alabanze* (1941) contained unscored hymns composed by working class migrant people. Tropes of pilgrimage, rain, agriculture, and the natural and built environment resonated with borderlands migrants. In lieu of a strong formulaic liturgical tradition, they sang songs at baptisms, communion services, and funerals as well as rituals less religious in nature, such as birthdays. The music could be sung with minimal or no instrument accompaniment. The hymns drew from genres more closely associated with secular music of the time: polka, ranchera, vals (waltz), huapango, marcial, canción romántica, bolero, and corrido.³⁶ The last of these genres found resonance in the Farmworker Union's early repertoire.

By his own admission, Chavez couldn't carry a tune, nevertheless members of the union could carry and even produce their own. Beyond the chants of *huelga* (strike), farmworkers tapped into a musical tradition, whose incorporation into the movement was inspired by the exuberant singing of *Apostólicos* in the valley. In a house meeting on September 25, 1962, yet again in Madera, the first corrido of the farmworker movement was written. Chavez recalled two of its verses of *El Campesino* in English:

In the year 62
With effort and uncertainty
There begun a campaign
For the *campesino*.

Cesar Chavez started it
He became a volunteer
And went forth as a pilgrim
To fulfill his destiny.³⁷

The full rendition of the original song offer us clues of the religious and cultural environment in which the song was composed and the ways in which it would have resonated

³⁶ Ibid., 220-221.

³⁷ Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa*, 170.

more strongly with farmworkers. During a house meeting Rosa Gloria penned the lyrics to follow the melody of a popular Mexican folk ballad titled “*El Corrido de Cananea*” (the ballad of Cananea) also popularly known as “La Carcel de Cananea” (the Cananea Jail). This *ranchera* written in three-fourths time was music of the common folk (a cultural equivalent to Country music).³⁸ The ballad hearkens back to the twilight of Porfirio Diaz’s regime when Mexican workers in the copper mines of Cananea, Sonora, Mexico, launched a strike over the higher wages paid to American workers. The ensuing strike resulted in casualties on both sides, but the massacre stood as a protest of the working class and as a harbinger of the impending Mexican Revolution. The myth of the strike was immortalized in the 1917 song “La Carcel de Cananea.” Gloria’s song, nearly half a decade later in Madera, demonstrates the sorts of music farmworkers carried with them on their migrant journeys. Gloria penned the lyrics of “*El Campesino*,” in the tune of a *corrido* that invoked a legacy of American injustice and the oppression of the working class Mexicans. Gloria’s rendition, embedded in the religious and cultural milieu of the Central Valley, struck a powerful, yet religiously modulated chord. The full transcription of the lyrics merits attention here:³⁹

1. En el nombre sea de Dios
Que con acierto y atino
Pueda probar yo unos versos
Al pobre del campesino

1. Be it in the name of God
With success and precision
May I attempt some verses
About the poor farmworker

2. En el año sesenta dos
Con esfuerzo y desatino
Se principió una campaña

³⁸ Ibid.; Cesar Chavez interview with Wendy Goepel, 1963, accessed at: <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essays/essays/MillerArchive/004%20Viva%20La%20Causa.pdf>

³⁹ Rosa Gloria, “El Campesino,” 25 September 1962, UFOPC, part II, box 48, folder 7.

En favor del campesino

2. In the year sixty-two
With effort and uncertainty
There begun a campaign
For the farmworker

3. Cesar Chavez la emprendió
Y voluntario se dio
//Y anda como peregrino//
Para cumplir su destino//

3. Cesar Chavez started it
He became a volunteer
//And went forth as a pilgrim
To fulfill his destiny//

4. Enviaremos peticiones
Al jefe del mandatario
Que suplique por favor
Al congreso y senado
Que aumente a los campesinos
La petición del salario

4. We will send petitions
To the head of state
That ask
The congress and the senate
To increase the farmworkers'
Salary request

5. Mis queridos compatriotas
Aunque se de raza hermanos
//Tengan fe en esta nación
Y únanse a la asociación//

5. My beloved compatriots
Although we are of the race, brethren
Have faith in this nation
And unite yourselves with the association

6. California es muy bonito
Y también muy habitado
Porque viene el contratado
El mojado y el alambrista
Hacer poco más rico

Al mañoso del contratista

6. California is very beautiful
And also very inhabited
Because there comes the hired worker
The wetback and the border crosser
To make slightly richer
The crafty contractor

7. El pobre del campesino
Sufre mucho en el invierno
A unos les cierran el agua
El gas y la electricidad
Dejando los pobrecitos
En una fea obscuridad

7. The poor farmworker
Suffers much in the winter
For some they shut off the water
The gas and electricity
Leaving the unfortunate
In an ugly darkness

8. Ya esta aquí el mal temporal
Ya se mira muy refeo
//Y al pobre del campesino
No le pagan desempleo//

8. The bad season is already here
It already looks hideous
//And the poor farmworker
They won't pay him unemployment//

9. Y con esta me despido
De esta buena asociación
Y no pierdo la esperanza
De un gran realización
Que le pagen mejor sueldo
Al pobre del trabajador

9. And with this I will leave you
With this good association
And I don't lose hope
Of a great realization
That they pay better wages
To the poor worker

10. Pido perdón yo señores
Si ofendo yo en mi expresión
//Perdonen me atrevimiento
Por falta de educación//

10. I apologize, sirs
If I offend you in my expression
//Pardon my daring
For my lack of education//

From the outset the song places the organization/association/union under divine orchestration. While the opening line may appear to be a perfunctory invocation of the name of God, it is noteworthy to point out the contrasts between this rendition and the original more secularized “Corrido de Cananea.” *El Campesino* is replete with religious typologies. In the ten-verse ballad we find strong resonance with biblical tropes: Chavez embodies the voluntary savior, the messiah in whose group (association) his followers place hope; the supplication of the oppressed go unheard; the insurmountable hegemony exacts cruel measures of control; the exile followed by enslavement to a system seems inescapable except by some divine succor; and, hope of improvement is made possible by Chavez and his association –what eventually became United Farm Workers. What Chavez relayed to his biographer may have very well been the popularized ditty of the longer ten-verse song.

These shorter two-verse rendition recalled by Chavez encapsulates the drama of farmworker struggle, hope, and Chavez’s messianic role. (Bear in mind that 1962 marks the genesis of the union and thus predates the national attention and major strike victories). Even in these two verses we find a parallel to biblical narratives that would have resonated with the farmworkers of California, a majority of whom came from religious backgrounds. Consider the two verses in the following climatic progression: a genesis (“the year 1962”), the fall articulated

as need/lack (“with uncertainty there begun a campaign” rendered in the passive voice) met by raw volition (“with effort there begun a campaign” also in the passive voice); an identification of the redeemable vulnerable people (“for the *campesinos*”). The next verse switches from the passive voice into the active voice backed by action verbs and exploits. It begins with a new genesis and messiah (“Chavez started it”) which sets up his self-sacrifice (“he became a volunteer”) and enfleshment as a *campesino* which echoes the Pauline passage of “humbling himself and taking on the form of a servant.” In this act of deigning himself to walk and talk with his fellow brothers and sisters in the fields, Chavez became a pilgrim (“went forth as a pilgrim”). As a pilgrim he supplicated and journeyed in a manner similar to Jesus (this especially became evident in the 1966 pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento). The imagery of a pilgrim akin to Jesus’ portrays Chavez as a messiah. Latino theology and hymns emphasize the role of Jesus as a divine companion (*el divino compañero*) in friendship and fellow pilgrim.⁴⁰ In September of 1962 the goals of the United Farm Workers still had not materialized nor had they been articulated unequivocally.⁴¹ Nevertheless, “to fulfill his destiny” counted as the final act of the redemption of the *campesinos* and functioned as rhetorical device to echo the destiny of Christ. The longer song specifically identifies increased wages as the destiny, but the isolated repetition of the two verses allowed for polysemous interpretations among *campesinos*, which could have include pressing matters like citizenship, voting, permanent housing, and better working conditions.

Gloria penned the song at transitional moment in Chavez’s career. In 1962 he left the CSO to form a union dedicated exclusively to advocating for the rights of farmworkers. A central element in the new union would be the binding and charismatic power of music that he

⁴⁰ Sammy Alfaro, *Divino Compañero: Toward a Hispanic-Pentecostal Christology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

⁴¹ Chavez opposed illegal immigration, citing reserve labor pools as the nemesis of labor organization.

had now practiced and nurtured. Chavez had taken what he learned about music in Madera as a community organizer in 1954 and transposed those into the soundscapes that identified the movement. In an interview with Wendy Goepel in 1963, Chavez honed in on several of the appeals “to pageantry and displays of the signs and symbols” of the association. Before mentioning the movement’s symbol of a thunderbird or the unifying slogan “viva la causa”, he discussed the “song written by Mrs. Rosa Gloria, a member from Madera, which is sung at meetings.”⁴² Music and community organizing proved to be important component of Chavez’s later United Farmworkers union.

In his recollection of the movement we can clearly see that music informed its identity. In the same 1963 interview with Goepel, Chavez associated Pentecostalism with singing, jubilation, and effective gatherings. (Bear in mind that he made similar associations in his later autobiography written with Jacques Levy.) After rhetorically asking Goepel, “The spirit of our revolution; what has happened to it?” “Why do people belong to anything, or get excited about anything; what do they want?; what keeps them going?” he recounted how at age nineteen, he and his brother immediately abandoned their duties of picking cotton in Corcoran (a Central Valley town) in response to a rally call to meet downtown. The ensuing ruckus and mob violence rendered the meeting futile. Chavez moved from this mid-1940s memory to a late-1950s (or early-1960s) account of passing by a Pentecostal church at night.

“A couple of years ago, I was driving home from Los Angeles. I passed a Pentecostal church at night and it was full of people and I thought to myself, why do all the people come there so much. It must be because they like to praise God—and to sing.”⁴³

Chavez felt comfortable appropriating ideas and symbols from religious groups. Since his time with the CSO 1952, he straddled a delicate line between Protestant and Catholic churches,

⁴² Interview with Goepel, 4.

⁴³ Ibid., 2.

claiming that he was one of the few Catholics in San Jose who would set foot into Protestant churches.⁴⁴ He offered a ready-sell project by couching the union and its strike in religious rhetoric and displaying symbols that resonated strongly with Mexican farmworkers. The later manifestations of musical genius in the movement stemmed from Chavez's experience in the small Madera home church and another church in an undisclosed location on a California night. Since 1954 music served as a necessary accompaniment to the movement. Unbeknownst to *Apostólicos*, their music and enthusiastic style of worship inspired the identity and solidarity of the Farmworkers movement.

If Pentecostal forms of liturgical expressions would have been denounced by Christian clergy, how much more would such association and borrowings from Pentecostals have perhaps discomfited Saul Alinsky who expressed how embarrassing it was to the larger liberal-intelligentsia when Chavez undertook extended fasts? Many liberals and radicals shared Alinsky's sentiments concerning Chavez's fasts.⁴⁵ The details of Chavez's encounter in Madera services did not appear in any known communique between Chavez and Fred Ross. In fact, he did not use the term "Pentecostal" in any of his 1954 correspondence. But in his biography dictated in 1975 he recognized Pentecostalism as a subcategory of Protestantism. Aside from Jacques Levy's constant misspelling of "Pentecostal" (written as Pentacostal), the autobiography captures an accurate account of enthusiastic and seemingly larger-than-life services hosted in the humble, farmworker church/home in the Central Valley. In this humble abode, Chavez unwittingly was drawing from a deep well of *Apostólico* arts. In a church *obra* that had been planted nearly twenty years before but had not yet come to own its own temple or register with city officials, a vision of organization would begin to materialize from religious music. Chavez's

⁴⁴ Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa*, 115.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 277.

blurring of lines between religion and activism embarrassed Chavez's stodgy secular contemporaries.

Apostólico Apostasy?

What is to be said of the lack of documented participation of *Apostólicos* in the later farmworkers' protests? Chavez's movement became increasingly more Catholic while taking on an ecumenical identity. The strong Catholic and ecumenical affinities likely account for the difficult place of Pentecostalism in the movement. Given their staunch renunciation of Marianism and their historical refusal to be involved with most ecumenical endeavors, most Pentecostals likely opted out. The fact that white Pentecostals generally steered clear of any political involvement only compounds this problem. And the difficulty of locating *Apostólico* congregations not registered in city directories exacerbates the problem of finding evidence to support the oral histories which record that *Apostólicos* participated in strikes.

The paradox is this: it seems to be an accepted fact that *Apostólicos* participated with Chavez and farmworker strikes, yet the evidence in written texts is sparse. In *California's Crossroads*, I examine the migration of conservative (more pessimistically, legalistic) religious groups such as the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus whose dire economic circumstances, I posit, placed them in a position to side with the strikers and dispossessed. The United Farm Workers' appropriation of Catholic (read: Marian) and interfaith symbols proved to be too much for these groups, who refused to compromise their religious convictions, even in the face of what seemed to be economic necessities. Pentecostals often viewed the ecumenical movement as the harbinger of a world church with major eschatological implications. Mexican Pentecostals, especially, had knee-jerk reactions against any Marian iconography because of its

ubiquity in Mexican Catholicism as *La Virgen Guadalupe*. In the 1950s, the involvement of Mexican Pentecostal churches may have very well been the norm, but the movement's appropriation of Catholic symbols and its strides toward ecumenical cooperation likely resulted in an abandonment and cautious participation of Pentecostals. Also, his transition from community organizer, assisting individuals with legal and labor troubles, to union organizer likely offered Chavez less face-to-face contact and individual church visitation. By 1962, he had left the CSO, though seemingly maintained an amicable relationship. By the time he formed his union, he could rely on a vast network of 35 CSO chapters, a majority of which were in agricultural valleys and chiefly in the Central Valley that made up his base.⁴⁶ To garner the support of a wider array of religious groups, Chavez harmoniously incorporated a version of Catholicism which aligned with ecumenical tenets of the Second Vatican Council.

Chavez embodied an image of the broken body of the crucified Christ of Catholicism. In late February of 1968, on the twelfth day of this twenty-five day fast, he appeared at the Bakersfield courthouse followed by scores of peaceful protestors praying, singing, and making their way to Chavez on their hands and knees as if he were a patron saint.⁴⁷ Perhaps to many farmworkers in California's agricultural heartland, he was a saint, or a messiah-like figure who ushered in historical changes in the exploitive labor system of agriculture. Two months after the courthouse incident, the *New York Times* had reported that "one of the reasons for his success is that he is a charismatic leader who has...invested his cause with religious and civil rights."⁴⁸ By

⁴⁶ CSO Mailing List December 1962, UFOPC, Part 1, box 26, folder 9.

⁴⁷ Jacques E. Levy, *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007) 277-280.

⁴⁸ "A Farm-Bred Unionist," *New York Times*, March 11, 1968.

1968 Chavez had acquired some quasi-mystic status imputed to him during a protest two years earlier.

In the days leading up to Easter in 1966, Chavez coordinated a twenty-five day, 340-mile march from Delano to Sacramento. Rather than calling this a march, in the registration form for the *peregrinacion*, Chavez referred to this as a *peregrinacion* (peregrination/pilgrimage).⁴⁹ Chavez likened the *peregrinacion* to a religious pilgrimage. The terms on the top of the second page of the registration form read “Peregrinacion, Penitencia, Revolucion.” The multivalent meanings of the march resonated with a larger audience beyond Catholics. The absence of Marian language in the call appealed to Protestants; the very notion of public marching and revolutionary rhetoric appealed to college students.⁵⁰ Even though Chavez specifically stated on the registration form that “[t]his is a religious march,”⁵¹ and that registration was mandated for participation in the march, nonbelievers join the ranks.

The “Catholic aura” of the march disturbed some of these non-religious participants, but it nevertheless retained some trace elements of Pentecostal fiesta. To the chagrin of Protestants, Marian icons held prominent positions in the *peregrinacion* and they disagreed with the need for strikers to pay penance. As disputes arose over the Catholic iconography, Dolores Huerta recalled “[t]he question was brought up at a special meeting. We put the Virgin to a motion, and virginity won.”⁵² The salience and binding power of Guadalupe was manifested clearly in *El Plan de Delano* which identified her as “the patroness of the Mexican people.” The *peregrinos* held a rally every night, most of which were religious (even Pentecostal) in nature.⁵³ As the

⁴⁹ Cesar Chavez, *Registration for Peregrinacion*, UFOPC, Series I, Box 48, Folder 4.

⁵⁰ Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches*, 74-78

⁵¹ Chavez, *Registration for Peregrinacion*.

⁵² Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches*, 79.

⁵³ Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa*, 206-214.

peregrinacion swept through towns, newspapers featured extensive coverage on the movement. The photographs featured in the newspapers would convey that the march was religiously infused and comprised of working-class migrants. Articles on the *peregrinacion* ascribed significant religious meaning to marchers. One caption in the *Stockton Record* labeled the *peregrinacion* “Religious in Nature.”⁵⁴ *The New York Times* reported that “Religion Inspired Grape Marches” and that the movement “has heavy religious overtones.”⁵⁵ The front page of the April 9, 1966 issue of the *Sacramento Bee* pictured silhouettes of marchers carrying the Christian cross followed by a banner of *la Virgen de Guadalupe* standing over the letters NFWA (National Farm Workers Association), followed by an American flag, and last in line, a Mexican flag. The caption underneath the picture informed readers of the march’s culmination that night (Saturday) at West Sacramento’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and encouraged them to gather for a rally at the steps of the Capitol on Sunday.⁵⁶ In the end, the march’s Catholic aura proved unpalatable for significant portion of tongue-talking Pentecostal participants, who, Alan Watt notes “bolted from the union altogether.”⁵⁷ The movement had gained so much support by this point that few seemed to notice their departure.

As the leader of the *peregrinacion* Chavez acquired a stronger religious image. One Delano resident touted Chavez’s self-sacrificial approach to the strike as he described Chavez in messianic-like language, “I’ve known Cesar Chavez all my life. He will give up his life for the poor people. I believe in Chavez.”⁵⁸ It is precisely this Catholic aura that likely accounts for the

⁵⁴ *Stockton Record*, (n.d.) UFOPC, series I, box 48, folder 4.

⁵⁵ Lawrence Davies, “Religion Inspired Grape Marchers,” *New York Times*, 25 March 1966, *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ *Sacramento Bee*, March 9, 1966, NFWMC, Box 14, Folder 16; other flags in the march included the union flag and the Filipino flag, see Watt, *The Religious Dimensions*, 192.

⁵⁷ Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches*, 79.

⁵⁸ Davies, “Religion Inspired Grape Marchers.”

lack of documented participation from Pentecostals (and especially Mexican Pentecostals) in the United Farm Workers.

Movement Ecumenism

Despite the Movement's strong identification with Catholicism, Chavez managed to incorporate ideas from religious members of the non-Catholic and non-Christian community. Some of his strongest non-Christian support came from Jewish Rabbis. Portraying the movement as somewhat ecumenical in its outreach for support, a *New York Times* article quoted from the religious portion of *El Plan de Delano* – reminiscent of Emiliano Zapata's Plan de Ayala.⁵⁹ Luis Valdez (an atheist) who wrote the plan in cooperation with Chavez, read it daily during the *peregrinacion*'s evening rallies. The *New York Times* honed in on the religious dimension of the march and the six-point program. *El Plan de Delano* projected an ecumenical image and articulated longstanding Catholic social doctrine from the 1893 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* on the "Right and Duties of Capital and Labor." Point three of the program merits quotation here:

We seek, and have, the support of the Church in what we do. At the head of the pilgrimage we carry LA VIRGEN DE LA GUADALUPE because she is ours, all ours, Patroness of the Mexican people. We also carry the Sacred Cross and the Star of David because we are not sectarians, and because we ask the help and prayers of all religions. All men are brothers, sons of the same God; that is why we say to all of good will, in the words of Pope Leo XIII, "Everyone's first duty is protect the workers from the greed of speculators who use human beings as instruments to provide themselves with money. It is neither just nor human to oppress men with excessive work to the point where their minds become enfeebled and their bodies worn out." GOD SHALL NOT ABANDON US.⁶⁰ [emphasis in original]

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Catholicism and nationalism formed a discursive alliance, one with more power than that found in Pentecostal discourse. The music and performances that accompanied the Sacred Cross and the Star of David symbolized the culmination of Chavez's genius incorporation of music into the movement. The use of music in this march and in the various strikes inspired a repertoire of songs about Chavez, many of which were titled "*El Corrido de Cesar Chavez.*" In response to rumors of Chavez's assassination, Raul Berraza Beltran wrote the lyrics to one such song. As in *El Campesino*, the ballad portrays Chavez as the hope of Mexican workers, for justice, and it hearkens back to the humble nature of Mexican heroes:

El nació en un barrio noble
Y se crío con frijoles y tortillas
Ahora lucha por los pobres
Como hicieron los Generales
Zapata y Villa

He was born in a noble neighborhood
And was bred on beans and tortillas
Today he fights for the poor
As did the generals
Zapata and Villa

The song identifies Chavez as voluntarily entering the struggle with everyday people. The estimableness of the cause is articulated by his placement in a pantheon of Mexican revolutionary war heroes. In the final verse, a blessing of God's immortality is invoked upon for his sacrificial embodiment of the poor's plight:

Dios quiera y le toque suerte
Por ser hombre tan humano
Y no encuentre la muerte
Como Kennedy y su Hermano

God willing and may he be blessed
For being such a humane man
May he not encounter death
Like Kennedy and his brother

Other songs about Chavez similarly ascribe messianic qualities to him and invoke divine blessings upon him (these are customary in Mexican-American religious cultures.) Some ballads are not specifically about Chavez, like “*Las Huelgistas*.” Nevertheless, they still convey a sense of (revolutionary) hope in the man called the General. The role of music assumed inter-ethnic dimensions when they began to sing the song of African American activists: “We Shall Not Be Moved” and “We Shall Overcome.”⁶¹ They also adopted music of fellow unionists such as “Which Side Are You on?” written by Florence Reece to the tune of Baptist hymn “Lay the Lily Low.” Watt notes, “[e]very night an upbeat program, a fiesta, rejuvenated the spirits of the weary marchers. It often resembled a religious revival, the techniques of which Chavez had witness years before at a Pentecostal rally.”⁶² Music continued to build solidarity within the movement and between movements from 1954 onward.

But in the end, even the solidarity engendered through music did not bode well for musically inspired *Apostólicos*. The farmworkers’ movement had become too embracing of elements of interfaith efforts, which in their eyes, signaled the end of days. Chavez’s request for “help and prayers of all religions” likely set well only with Second Vatican Catholics and Mainline Protestant such as those involved in Chris Hartmire and the National Council of Churches’ Migrant Ministry. Chavez’s definition of the “church” was also perhaps a bit expansive for most *Apostólicos*:

“Of course, when we refer to the Church we should define the word a little. We mean the whole Church, the Church as an ecumenical body spread around the world, and not just its particular form in a parish in a local community.”⁶³

⁶¹ UFOPC, Part II Box 48 Folder 7.

⁶² Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches*, 79. It is unclear as to which incident he is referring but it is likely that he is referring to the interview with Goepel in 1963.

⁶³ Cesar Chavez, *The Mexican American and the Church*, Speech, Second Annual Mexican-American Conference, Sacramento CA, March 8-10, 1968, <http://farmworkermovement.com/essays/essays/Cesar%20Chavez%20-%20The%20Mexican-American%20and%20the%20Church.pdf>

By middle of the century *Apostólicos* held fraught relationships with religious groups. Their reaction to Jewish iconography was anything but free of any eschatological significance, especially after the 1948 establishment of the state of Israel and the victory in the Six Days War.⁶⁴ The most iconoclastic *Apostólico* hailed from a Catholic background steeped in devotion to *la Virgen de Guadalupe* (Our Lady of Guadalupe). Moreover, the cooperation between global religious forces (in this case Catholic and Jewish) troubled the eschatological water of Pentecostal hermeneutics. Still, many wrestled with the dilemma of viewing the interfaith elements of the farmworkers' struggle either as a Trojan Horse attempting to enter the *Apostólico* ranks or as a bona fide initiative free of eschatological baggage.

The longer record signals a mixed legacy. After the heyday of the Movement, Manuel Vizcarra, the presiding bishop of the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus, visited and prayed with Chavez. The farmworker's struggle resonated strongly with Vizcarra, who, after all, labored as pastor and *campesino* in the rural town of Westley. He knew all too well the plight of farmworkers from his time there and from his years of ministerial training in the fields of Salinas in the late 1940s and early 1950. By the late 1950s, the farmworkers of Salinas would experience the full force of Chicano radicalism under the ministry of Reverend Reies López Tijerina. Among the today's old-timers, Tijerina, too, acquired status as a phantasm that once appeared in an *Apostólico* temple.

Tijerina's Influences on *Apostólicos*

⁶⁴ Joseph Williams "The Pentecostalization of Christian Zionism" in *Church History* (84:1, 2015) 159-94.

By the middle of the century, the Salinas valley became home to major growers and a few *Apostólico* congregations. The Spreckles Sugar company attracted thousands of farmworkers to work the sugar beet fields of Salinas. My research has shown that where crops arose, *Apostólicos* soon followed suit in the name of labor and evangelism. In chapter three I showed how ministers trained in the Imperial Valley and then launched their careers in various agricultural valleys. By the mid-1920s a cabal of ministers near Salinas defected from the fledgling Apostolic Assembly denomination. For nearly a decade, the cities in the Pajaro and Salinas valley lay out of the province of the Assembly's evangelistic efforts. Juan Amaya in Salinas and Pedro Banderas in San Jose (further north) reclaimed the region and in concert reinitiated *obras* in the prosperous agricultural region. By the 1950s, Amaya rose to prominence in the denomination. In 1956 he assumed the pastorate of the burgeoning San Jose congregation. This change of leadership left Salinas in the hands of neophyte Manuel Perez.⁶⁵

Perez inherited a thriving congregation on the precipice of a schism. By his own admission, Perez had not been properly trained to assume these responsibilities.⁶⁶ While he may have been prepared for the basic duties of pastoring a church (preaching, teaching, prayer, etc.), no one foresaw (or could have been prepared) for the larger-than-life personality of Reies Tijerina. Upon the conclusion of a multi-week revival Tijerina enticed believers to leave the Salinas Valley for the Valley of Peace (*El Valle de Paz*), his utopian community in the Arizona desert. In the Salinas church, Tijerina's powerful charisma burrowed deep into the dynamic interpretation of dreams, the bible, and eschatology. There he sowed doubt by impugning the already-strict dress codes. He knew farmworkers and Pentecostals well. Before we fully discuss the establishment of the *El Valle de Paz*, its aftermath, and how *Apostólico* beliefs proved to be

⁶⁵ Manuel Perez interview with author, March 2015, Coral Gables, FL.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

fertile soil for the cultivation of members into the radical community, we will first briefly review Tijerina's social milieu and religious background to understand how these would have resonated with fellow *campesinos*.

The colonial labor system dominated agricultural labor in Near Falls City, Texas, where Tijerina was born in 1926 into the racial and class system.⁶⁷ Mexicans were relegated to labor in a variety of intensive labor crops, including cotton. This occupational work placed them at the bottom of Texas' racial caste along with African-Americans. Tijerina's family knew all too well the disparities of the agricultural system and he became disillusioned at a young age. Mainline Protestants and Pentecostals heavily proselytized the south Texas. Tijerina's father claimed to have converted in order to escape the even worse treatment of Catholics. At a young age Tijerina began to tell of his "Super Dreams." He recounted uncanny dreams of heaven, divine protection, and unnatural phenomena. His childhood and teenage years spent in poverty and on the migrant trail likely influenced the nature of his dreams. The constant swindling of wages and intimidation at the hands of growers and klansmen impelled Tijerina to leave Texas to look for jobs in the Midwest's booming automobile industries. While picking sugar beets in Michigan, he had his own conversion experience. A Baptist missionary came into the fields to speak with Tijerina about the gospel. The fifteen-year old Tijerina listened intently, was baptized in a nearby river and encountered a text that provided the language to articulate his dreams: the *Bible*.⁶⁸

In the Bible he also found the words that articulated his later political and religious protests. He became enamored with the text. He recalled how, "I read in the Bible that mercy and truth met, and justice and peace hugged." This passage from Psalm 85 summed up the interplay

⁶⁷ Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 39.

⁶⁸ Busto, *King Tiger*, 35-46.

between religion and justice. He described how “then it was the religious life for the satisfaction of the yearning of my heart for justice [a]nd [of] my idols [beginning] with Moses on [to the others]. This is what I got from religious life. I gathered up the strengths and liberties of justice out of the lives of those Biblical men of old.”⁶⁹ From this point forward, Tijerina pursued justice through the mechanism of religion. In his pursuit of justice he took issue with the United States’ illegitimate land grabs. He became a man of the book, figuratively speaking, in his literal interpretation of scripture, an interpretation shaped by mid-century Pentecostals hermeneutics.

The Bible became the focus of Tijerina’s religious formation. In 1944 he found great company for this hermeneutical adventure when he matriculated into the *Instituto Biblico Latino Americano* (Assembly of God Latin American District) in Saspamco, Texas. He sought out a biblical education alongside prospective Mexican evangelists being groomed to minister to the booming immigrant population. After three years of study, he was expelled for violating strict regulations against passing time unchaperoned with students of the opposite sex. Busto believes that this was a legal pretext for the bigger offense that actually led to his dismissal. The institute’s superintendent Kenzy Savage likely expelled Tijerina for his unorthodox theology. Busto notes how the institute offered a Bible-centered and pragmatic theology that would not have been offered by, say, Baptist or Presbyterian seminaries. Here, Tijerina learned a Pentecostal style of charismatic preaching that fueled his speeches throughout his political career and short-lived ministry as a licensed preacher with the Assemblies of God (1946-1950).⁷⁰ As a non-denominational preacher, in the 1950s he established his own itinerant ministry. This allowed him to navigate through various denominations and eventually find himself among *Apostólicos* in Salinas. Tijerina recalls how he spent his time “teaching, talking to people...

⁶⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 39-41.

farmworkers in the town going from one church to another where I was invited.”⁷¹ But by the end of 1955, he gave up on institutional Christianity and began to recruit members, called Heralds of Peace, for his utopian desert community.

The establishment of *El Valle de Paz* (The Valley of Peace) in 1956 marked the only Chicano utopian community and symbolized the zenith of Chicano religious zealotry. The Heralds of Peace purchased 160 acres in the Sonoran Desert between Eloy, Coolidge, and Casa Grande for \$1,400. Tijerina sought out a location isolated enough so that they would not disturb anyone nor have anyone disturb them. Tijerina understood this as a biblical commandment:

“We had abandoned a form and a style of life that we considered evil and opposed to the road to justice that had been indicated to us by the Man from the Holy Land”⁷²

As noted earlier by 1955 Tijerina renounced organized religion and so, too, did his followers. Like other religious utopian communities, the purpose of *El Valle de Paz* was to withdraw from the system of the church and corrupt society. In keeping with his Pentecostal hermeneutic he took the events recorded in the *Book of the Acts of the Apostles* as scriptural mandates. Shortly after the pouring out of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost in the second chapter of the *Book of Acts*, the believers “held all things common, and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had any need.” Tijerina understood this as a scriptural mandate in the same literalist hermeneutical style that led Pentecostals to believe that the spirit could be poured out upon believers who would then in turn speak in tongues as described throughout *the Book of Acts*. But Tijerina, was no ordinary literalist. He also took the latter half of chapter 2 as scriptural precedent for the establishment of a shared living community. Writing twenty years after the fact, Tijerina praised his followers, calling them *los valientes* (the brave ones). The

⁷¹ Jenkinson, *Tijerina*, 21.

⁷² Reies López Tijerina, *They Called Me King Tiger” My Struggle for the Land and Our Rights*, Jose Angel Gutierrez, trans. (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 2000), 1. Tijerina open his memoir with this story and exposition.

number of *valientes* differs in the several biographies, but in his autobiography he listed seven heads of households: Rodolfo Marez, Juan Reyna, Francisco Flores, Simon Serna, Luis Moreno, Vicente Martinez, and Manuel Mata.⁷³ The final four listed here at some point joined the ranks of *Apostólicos* in California's valleys; the last three hailed from Manuel Perez's flock in Salinas.⁷⁴

California farmworker *Apostólicos* comprised over half of the male leadership in the valley and perhaps even the majority of the residents of *El Valle de Paz*. It appears that immediately prior to his arrival in *El Valle de Paz*, he made at least one more round to recruit followers from the fields. The chronology drawn from various sources indicates that in 1955, he and the Heralds of Peace labored on a farm in Fruta Colorado to earn the last of the necessary funds.⁷⁵ (By this point, Tijerina had already determined to establish *El Valle de Paz* as directed to him in a dream). In 1956 he arrived in Salinas and recruited three more families. After establishing *El Valle de Paz* he recruited at least one more follower from Visalia. Some commonalities between Tijerina's Pentecostal past and the *Apostólico* belief system led him to believe that it was worthwhile to venture out into California at least one last time for recruitment.

Doctrinal nuances aside, mid-century *Apostólicos* had many common characteristics with other Pentecostals. Perez recalls that Tijerina arrived in Salinas in 1956 to preach a multi-week revival. Generally, ministers and visiting congregants arrived at churches with letters of recommendation from a pastor. In lieu of a letter of recommendation, the neophyte pastor welcomed Tijerina at the insistence of a mutual friend Vicente Martinez, a member of Perez's flock. After all, Tijerina had grown accustomed to preaching wherever he was allowed. Much of what Tijerina imparted to Perez's flock aligned with the worldview of *Apostólicos* and he

⁷³ Tijerina, *They Called Me King Tiger*, 1.

⁷⁴ Perez interview.

⁷⁵ Tijerina, *The Called Me King Tiger* 1.

conformed to the culture of the local assembly (he even wore a neck tie which he very reluctantly donned). But it was precisely on matters about dress and appearance in which Tijerina's doctrines troubled Perez. As he recalls it, Tijerina was "suave," "smooth," and "tactical" in his pulpit homiletics. In this suave homiletic he introduced radical egalitarian ideas of apparel. He espoused that that men and women ought to don plain tunics because Jesus had done so. He also contended that men should let their beards grow out, well, because Jesus had done so as evidenced by the fact that they plucked his beard when he was crucified. These radical notions alarmed Perez but convinced some of the congregants. Behind the podium Tijerina would often glibly aver to biblical ideas he tenaciously defended in private. A restorationist impulse – the notion that modern believers should restore the practices and beliefs of biblical peoples – of the early Pentecostal church fueled these ideas. While alarming to most in attendance, such conclusions in fact harmonized with a strict literalist readings of scriptures; nor were such conclusions unknown to Mexican Pentecostalism.⁷⁶ Of all of Tijerina's preaching, the "tactical" here-and-there references to dress codes is what Perez remembered most clearly. (Mexican Pentecostals already adhered to strict dress codes that they were to dress modestly in terms of cost, coverings, and ornamentation; women were only allowed to wear dresses or skirts well below the knee.) The declaration of Tijerina's heterodox ideas drove Perez to dismiss him from his congregation.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Influential self-proclaimed prophets arose in the Mexican *Apostólico* ranks rose during the movement's formative years. In Monterey, Torreón, and Guadalajara, these "prophets" and founders of churches and denominations assumed biblical names, believed they received visions, and taught new doctrines such as the growing out of beards and the removal of shoes before entering a temple. For more information on the sectarian branches within the Apostolic movement see, Kenneth D. Gill, *Toward a Contextualized Theology for the Third World: The Emergence and Development of Jesus' Name Pentecostalism in Mexico* (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang Publishers, 1994), 47-57.

⁷⁷ Perez Interview.

During this time, Perez also learned that Tijerina had met with the Martinez clan privately. Included in the larger clan were the Moreno and Mata families. Again, Martinez was Perez's personal friend and the one who had invited Tijerina to preach. This coincided with the time when Tijerina would have already finalized (or at least have been close to) the purchase of 160 acres. Perez recalled this purchase and commented how when the families left Salinas, they went directly "to the Arizona desert to live in caves." The Martinez clan from Salinas comprised almost half of the leadership. Why the Martinez family did not simply venture out on its own without Tijerina's visit is not clear; but the fact that he invited Tijerina to preach a multi-week revival in Salinas may suggest that Martinez saw the folks of the Salinas church as prospects for the utopian community. He likely also viewed Tijerina as a charismatic and "suave" preacher (note: position of authority) with power to sway farmworkers of a hyper bible-centric worldview. Owning land, living communally (as suggested in Acts, in a prominent passage for Pentecostals), dressing modestly (another major Pentecostal tenet), and imitating the appearance of Jesus (Oneness Pentecostals especially employed a Christocentric hermeneutic) all would have appealed to impoverished bible-centric farmworkers.⁷⁸ The mere digressions about clothes, modesty, and biblical restoration likely had a larger appeal with staying power. Perez estimates that of the one hundred member church, about fifteen left. This rupture left the church devastated and the young Perez found little help within the denomination's leadership to deal with the defection.

Once in *El Valle de Paz*, Tijerina, now with the help of likeminded people from the *Apostólic* tradition, set out to establish communal living in the end of days. They lived under trees until they were able to gather enough scrap materials from nearby Eloy to build

⁷⁸ On the Christo-centric elements of Oneness Pentecostalism, see David Reed, *In Jesus Name: The History and Beliefs of Oneness Pentecostals* (Blanford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008), 32-43.

subterranean homes. On April 18, 1956, Tijerina's daughter was born in *El Valle de Paz* as the community's first native-born resident. He named her Ira de Alá (Spanish for "Wrath of God") because

"ten years earlier, the Unites States had begun to make atomic bombs day and night without pause...I was convinced that the church harmed humanity more than any other organization on earth. I knew that if here was a just God, he had to be angry and unhappy with those that managed our government and religion here on earth"⁷⁹

Much of the events surrounding Cold War politics heightened Pentecostal's sense of the end of days. Tijerina and the Heralds of Peace tenaciously defended the significance of the *Book of Revelation* concerning world events. Tijerina began to downplay his religious background in favor of pursuing the restoration of land to swindled *Hispano* owners soon after the dissolution of *El Valle de Paz* in February of 1957 (rainstorms destroyed Tijerina's home, teenage vandals on horseback tromped on the subterranean homes, charges of theft compromised the leadership and, the final death knell sounded when the U.S. Department of Education cracked down on the poor conditions of the school).⁸⁰ Tijerina's new pursuits did not deter Simón Serna from pursuing theological epistolary correspondence with Tijerina over the next several years.

Serna joined *El Valle de Paz* after Tijerina spoke in Visalia at the summons of Luis Moreno's daughter, Cecilia Moreno. Tijerina, joined by Martinez and Marez, headed to California shortly after the birth of Ira de Alla, and convinced Serna and his family to return with them to *El Valle de Paz*. Serna's involvement with the larger *Apostólico* movement in the years after the decline of *El Valle de Paz* provides an example of how utopian and primitivist beliefs persisted among the *Valientes* after the community's decline. (It is unclear as to whether Serna was part of Pastor Epifanio Cota's flock in Tulare, but given his relation to Celia, who grew up

⁷⁹ Tijerina, *They Called Me King Tiger*, 3

⁸⁰ Busto, *King Tiger*, 130-132.

Apostólico, it is plausible that he was already exposed to *Apostólico* culture). The fact that Serna joined an organized religion and remained hopeful that a utopian community would someday be realized offers an example of radical political thought among strict biblical literalists.

The record of correspondence between Tijerina and Serna in the aftermath of *El Valle de Paz* reveals the theological dimension of the Heralds of Peace. This epistolary correspondence began in 1961 in which Serna, known within the group as *El Ciclón* (the Cyclone), continued to regard Tijerina as an esteemed and beloved prophet of God. Serna seemingly continued to send offerings to Tijerina, but also insisted that they sell the 160 acres they had purchased and buy land to establish a new community. Citing many of the same reasons that Tijerina had in his previous writings, Serna believed that society was far too corrupt and did not side with the “poor, the oppressed, the nearly-dead, and the broken.”⁸¹ No copies of the letters from Tijerina to Serna were preserved, so Tijerina’s sentiments are unknown, though we do know that by the 1960s he began to downplay his religious background and focused on his political career. Nevertheless, Serna repeatedly requested that they sell the land and begin the community anew. He assumed that Tijerina still held enough influence over several of the *valientes* to convince them to establish another utopian community. To that end, Serna would sell vehicles and a house in Juarez, Texas in order to pay two-years taxes due on the land. In anticipation of some confrontation, he requested that Tijerina pick up a .38 caliber pistol from Juarez since it was “property of the children of the kingdom.” From 1961 to 1963 Serna’s tone changes from affection and pleading to cautious rebuke and frustration.

The couched rebuke signaled a critical turn against Tijerina and his God-ordained leadership. Serna reported to Tijerina how he had spoken briefly with Manuel Mata (a former

⁸¹ Simon Serna to Reies Tijerina, correspondence, 1961 (no month/date), Reies Tijerina Papers, box 48 folder 2, Center for Southwest Research (CSR), University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

member of the Apostolic church of Salinas) while Mata was finishing out his four-year parole for possession of stolen federal property. Mata had become disaffected with the entire movement, and confessed to Serna that when he arrived at *El Valle de Paz* he believed that he would sit on the seat of authority among the *valientes*. And Tijerina had given him an opportunity to show his fealty to the community. When the community was falling into disarray, Tijerina asked Mata to hide tools that Tijerina had stolen and Mata complied and hid them in his own home. (It is unclear as to whether Mata knew that the tools were property of the federal government). Pinal County deputy sheriffs discovered the tools and arrested Mata. Meanwhile Tijerina fled and initiated what he called his “fugitive years.”⁸² Serna recalls that this episode scarred Mata and catalyzed his disaffection with Tijerina or any utopian effort. Mata’s wife Martha, reached out to their former pastor Manuel Perez to request a letter of good character on her husband’s behalf. Perez agreed and never learned of the outcome. He heard stories in *Apostólico chisme* that Mata appeared at a relative’s funeral in a grown-out beard and plain tunic. Mata’s conversation with Serna seems to have sown some seed of resentment, as Serna would later charge Tijerina of stealing from the government and sacrificing Mata.

In Hollister, California, in the summer of 1962, Serna received a vision which he later interpreted as the restoration of the community. He did not share this with Tijerina until twenty years later. In nearby San Jose he shared his aspirations with a religious group. As evidence of growing interest in reestablishing a utopian community, he relayed his success with the San Jose group to Tijerina. Serna claimed that “after three weeks, they no longer wanted to listen but wanted to begin doing the work.”⁸³ A sense of urgency to sell the land began to overcome Serna, as he proposed that since the land had not garnered the attention of any buyers that they return to

⁸² Tijerina, *They Called Me King Tiger*, 17.

⁸³ Simon Serna to Reies Tijerina, 7 November 1962, Reies Tijerina papers, box 48 folder 2.

redevelop it by digging wells and building adobe homes. It appears that between November of 1962 and January of 1963, a series of financial hardships befell Serna and he relocated to work in the fields of Bellingham, Washington. In Bellingham, he received another vision in early January. In this next warning to Tijerina, an already-financially troubled Serna seemed to have continued couching his frustration in the form of dreams so as to not offend Tijerina, who seemingly made no efforts to sell the land. In this vision God dethroned Tijerina and appointed Serna to lead. Due to grammatical imprecision it is unclear as to whether Serna was still speaking about the vision or of his own critique, but he began to forcefully rebuke Tijerina for his theft of property in *El Valle de Paz*.

By the time of his next letter in 1967, he no longer couched his critiques behind dreams and visions; he excoriated Tijerina for aligning with churches, calling him a “hypocrite, son of the devil, enemy of justice of God” who “shouldn’t pervert the righteous paths of God.” Having gone from esteemed and beloved prophet to hypocrite, the harshest charge of all was in closing when he called Tijerina “nothing.”⁸⁴ A later correspondence in the early 1980s reveals reasons as to why Serna’s opinions changed so drastically.

The date of Serna’s conversion to *Apostolicism* is unclear. However, by the summer of 1962, he claimed that the heralding angel of the fourteenth chapter of the *Book of Revelation* revealed to him the writing on scroll: April 6, 1926. This date became etched in Serna’s mind. This date corresponds to the founding of a Mexico-based *Apostólico* movement known as *La Luz de Mundo*. Over the course of four epistles, he attempted to reconnect with Tijerina and offered various interpretations, tables, and graphics on eschatology. This linking of biblical passage and dreams was likely a skill he learned from Tijerina. He included handwritten charts about

⁸⁴ Simon Serna to Reies Tijerina, 1967 (no month/date), Reies Tijerina papers, box 48 folder 2

authority and succession. Towards the end of a letter to Tijerina, he proclaimed that Eusebio Joaquin the founder of *La Luz del Mundo*, received the mantle of first-century apostolic authority that he later passed on to his son, Samuel.⁸⁵ *La Luz de Mundo* has been based out of Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, since its founding in 1926. It shares historical roots and doctrines with other *Apostólico* denominations, namely the *Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus* and *Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús*.⁸⁶ Much of the biblical literalism and eschatology is shared with major American Pentecostal denominations. Cultural expression such as the donning of veils by women in prayer and the emphasis on dreams is common to other Latin American denominations. These are all important and overarching factors that Serna was likely unaware of. Despite his renunciation of “churches” which were corrupt, he joined the thriving *La Luz de Mundo Congregation* in Santa Maria. Serna, who had chastised Tijerina for siding with organized religious groups, soon thereafter affiliated with an even more sectarian *Apostólico* denomination.

Serna shared various qualities and experiences with Eusebio Joaquin. Like the founders of other prominent Mexican Oneness-Pentecostal denominations, Eusebio received visions that summoned him to begin his own church. After the disbanding of *El Valle de Paz*, Serna began to receive visions of establishing a religious utopian community. Of foundational importance to their doctrinal beliefs, Serna and Joaquin both originally followed prophets who advocated for donning tunics, wearing long beards, called for humble living, and believed in receiving divine direction through dreams. The most striking correlation was one that Serna saved till the end in hopes of convincing Tijerina to join the ranks. Serna envisioned founding another religious

⁸⁵ Simon Serna to Reies Tijerina, correspondence, “19 May 1982,” “6 June 1982,” “19 September 1982,” “15 November 1982” Reies Tijerina papers, box 48 folder 2.

⁸⁶ Gill, *Toward a Contextualized Theology*, 49-53.

utopian community, something that never came to fruition; on the other hand, Eusebio had successfully founded *La Hermosa Provincia* in Guadalajara, a neighborhood comprised of *Luz de Mundo* believers. What Serna sought in his own efforts and in Tijerina's he found in Eusebio's. In his *Apostólico* faith, he declared to Tijerina, "[L]ook, I read Psalm chapter 48 verses 1 and 2; what we wanted to do in *El Valle de Paz*, to live apart in a colony of believers, this has been done by Aaron Joaquin." He then proceeded to attempt to convince Tijerina that his plan from over 25 years earlier was still possible on earth.⁸⁷ The fluidity allowed by the interpretation of dreams, visionary leadership, biblical literalism of prophetic events allowed Serna, as an *Apostólico*, to still hope for the establishment of a more perfect *Valle de Paz*. Tijerina's responses to these requests are unknown though it is clear that he replied. While he awaited Tijerina's reply, Serna made plan to participate in the church-mandated pilgrimage to Guadalajara for the annual Holy Supper/Communion. For the time being, at least, *El Ciclón* was on his way to a realized *Valle de Paz*.

Conclusion: Destiny as Reform, Superdream as Rejection

In Chicano history, Tijerina is most remembered for leading demonstrations in New Mexico. In 1966 he first led a demonstration at Echo Amphitheatre, property of the U.S. National Parks, which he believed belonged to Mexican descendants. His more recognized protest came in the following year when he led an armed takeover of the Tierra Amarilla Courthouse. These daring demonstrations indelibly inscribed Tijerina into the annals of Chicano History. The lesser-known demonstration at *El Valle de Paz* is often overlooked. It is perhaps because it is passed off as religious zealotry. But to Tijerina it clearly mattered, so much as to begin his autobiography, not with his birth in Texas or conversion in Michigan, but with his

⁸⁷ Simon Serna to Reies Tijerina, correspondence, 19 May 1982.

experiences and visions with the Heralds of Peace in *El Valle de Paz*. The positioning of this story in his autobiography shows how his reading of the bible, reading of politics, and his organizational skills fused into racial consciousness. When Tijerina and others staked a territorial claim in *El Valle de Paz* they set into motion his longer fight against the government for land rights of *Hispanos*.

In his autobiography, Chavez made his religious motivation quite clear. Chavez expressed his conception of social protests as Christ-centered, “[with] the teachings of Christ....I think you need very little else to make things work.”⁸⁸ Reinforcing this point Chavez said, “I was convinced that [my ideology was] very Christian...I don’t think it was so much political or economic.”⁸⁹ In these ways, Chavez himself corrected those who assumed he based his actions solely on secular ideology alone. In hindsight he stated:

“today I don’t think I could base my will to struggle on cold economics or some political doctrine I don’t think there would be enough to sustain me. For me the base must be faith.”⁹⁰

That faith is easily read as Vatican II Catholicism –with ecumenical gestures. But the earliest gesture across faith lines was with Pentecostals where Chavez learned lessons about using music to organize, a hallmark feature of Chavez’s activist legacy. In Chavez’s case, *Apostólicos* became involved over uncertainties concerning leadership but in their quotidian practices of “having church” they unwittingly impressed upon Chavez a key to successful organizing for the community and the farmworkers movement. In Tijerina’s case, the majority of his leaders and

⁸⁸ Cesar Chavez as quoted in Stephen R. Lloyd-Moffett, “The Mysticism and Social Action of Cesar Chavez,” 43.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* Also cf. Frederick John Dalton, *The Moral Vision of César Chávez* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003).

followers associated with *El Valle de Paz* hailed from the *Apostólico* tradition, and some of these leaders wished to see the continuance of the utopian community.⁹¹

Mexican farmworkers hoped for the materialization of Chavez's "destiny" (farmworker labor and legal rights) or Tijerina's "superdreams" (separatist communal living). Their racialization and placement as part of the mechanized landscape seemed to keep them trapped in the colonial labor system. And when they looked around to compare their plight, conditions did not seem any better. By the late 1950s their Okie counterparts had almost entirely left the fields. Wartime industries and postwar prosperity offered them the opportunities to pull themselves up from the dust. Poverty, however, remained the case for Mexican farmworkers, and the continuance of the Bracero Program would reinforce their "place" in the fields (*chapter 3*). *Apostólicos* from Madera show that some sought to reform the system, while those in *El Valle de Paz* sought to create an alternative sacred order.

Those who remained in the ranks of the *Apostólico* movement would see that reform came slowly but steadily. But it was mostly the English-speaking generation of *Apostólicos* that lived without the struggle of fieldwork. This English-speaking generation came of age in the late 1960s and 1970s and their battle to keep the mostly Spanish-speaking *Apostólic* movement alive would take place in the broader social context of the Central Valley where their Okie Pentecostals shared a language with them. This placed them both in a common sacred-social world of Pentecostalism. But, importantly, each group arrived to this common world via different

⁹¹ The research on Pentecostals, race and agriculture in California necessarily positioned me to examine the role of elided people in understudied events of Chicano leaders. The challenge to social history is compounded when the people involved derived from oral communities that left little to no paper trail. Sixty years after the events, few witnesses remain, but the phantasms of *Apostólico* involvement in the Chicano Movement are traceable through a mixed approach of oral history, genealogical research, local community collections and university archives which, thankfully, have preserved bit and pieces about the Tijerina and Chavez episodes in the valleys.

cultural mandates. I have noted the struggles and formation of *Apostólico* culture. The Okie's parallel (but not yet intersecting) Pentecostal culture is examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Dust, Dreams, and Discipline: The Culture of the Dust District

“We’ll never pay rent for our mansion
The taxes will never come due
Our garments will never grow threadbare
But always be fadeless and new”
We’ll never be hungry or thirsty
Nor languish in poverty there
For all the rich bounties of heaven
His sanctified children will share”

This 1914 composition “There’s No Disappointment in Heaven” resonated strongly with believers in the Dust District. Their class status preceded their arrival to California, as they were portrayed as the state’s “problem.” Their dreams of reliving among plain-folk Americans and having some semblance of authority seemed symbolically attainable through social groups that welcomed them. The growing Pentecostal movement proved to be a fecund soil for dispossessed migrants to cultivate their dreams. Dust District Pentecostals developed a subculture (within the larger Okie culture) that rejected modern secular entertainment, the expectation of surfacing to the middle class, and conformity to the larger world of Protestantism. Until churches attained a higher social standing, Okie Pentecostals leveraged their underclass status as a form of social protest.¹ To demonstrate this protest they developed staunch oppositional stances built on behavioral disciplines. This code of conduct came with rewards of promised “No Disappointment in Heaven.” Various sectarian Okie Pentecostals groups zealously asserted

¹ Cheryl Bridges Johns draws from Paulo Friere’s concepts and formulates “Pentecostalism as a movement of conscientization.” See, Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publications, 2010 – 1998 original publication).

themselves to be *the* authorities on salvation. This culture of exclusivity and authority is explored in this chapter.

The zealous attempts by preachers and laity to recapture authority are clearly evident in their hardline stances regarding behavioral and social expectations they called “Holiness.” “Hard Peaching” was the term Pentecostals used to describe specific instructions formulated in order to influence individual behavior and social norms through sermons and studies. “Hard preaching” manifested itself in homiletic fervency, that is, the “toughness” of a stance against a perceived evil and the persistent reinforcement of doctrines already familiar to a group. A balanced mix of fervency, charisma, and clever articulation designated a preacher “anointed.” A hardline stance could be articulated sternly in a quieter register but such articulation lacked an expected element of toughness. “Anointed preaching” became a trademark of toughness. Class, doctrinal, and homiletical differences also played out in hard preaching. Dust District preachers defined hard preaching over against weak, soft, or false teaching. And no hard preacher would avoid confrontation. Pentecostals sometimes engaged in debates that resulted in a public rejection of their messages, echoing the experience of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica. At other times they rejoiced in a steadfast and studious response like that of the Bereans. Taking their example from these passages in *Acts 17*, resistance or reception reinforced the veracity of one’s claim. In erstwhile Pentecostal fashion, music preceded and followed a sermon. “Hardliner hymns” complemented the hard preaching and thereby augmented the resolve of Pentecostal groups. Sociologists of the 1940s noted how “Pentecostal sects” most persistently reinforced doctrines and practices in preaching and hymns. Dust District preachers deployed a repertoire of southern preaching, particularly in the areas of authority, tough homiletics, enthusiastic (read: not soft) worship and its accompanying hardliner music. In these ways, the dispossessed migrants sought

to restructure the social world of California's factories in the fields. The evolving and competitive nature of Pentecostal holiness standards allowed for instantiations of recapturing authority.

Recapturing Authority

The Dust Bowl migration represented one of the largest deracination of white Americans, and a large concentration settled in the Central Valley. The confluence of Okie subculture and Pentecostalism in the Central Valley resulted in the formation of a new religious apparatus that sought to recapture authority. Ideas of holiness, cases of hard preaching confrontations, and lyrics of hardliner hymns offer a window into the ways in which the apparatus of authority was reinforced and deployed.

The prevalence of songs such as "There's No Disappointment in Heaven" in part reveals how Okies coped with dim social dislocation by looking for a brighter future. Those who had owned homes, land, or leased farms in the southern plains had been stripped of ownership and authority. In this shameful tragedy of capitalistic agrarianism dispossession and subservience supplanted ownership and authority. In the southern plains Okies believed themselves to be respectable townspeople and proud, upright Christian citizens. In California, they symbolized a social problem to many, and a symptom of capitalistic greed to most. Chapter 2 (The Dust District) notes that agricultural workers comprised an overwhelming majority of Pentecostal congregations (especially sectarian and "Jesus-only" churches). The labor class homogeneity and piety of Pentecostal churches proved to be the ideal soil to reestablish an orderly social home. Home –as a mythologized past and especially as a familiar social order in the southern plains – was always better. In restorationist/primitivist religion, the old is better.

Pastoral undertakings to normalize “standards of holiness” revealed a noticeably high degree of homogeneity across Pentecostal congregations. Dust District women especially showed and maintained a distinct standard of modest dressing that marked their public presence (not quite as uniform as German Baptist Dunkards (Dunkers) yet stricter than independent Fundamentalist Baptist). But Pentecostal Okies viewed these markers and their marginalization as indices of their humility and chosenness as a “peculiar people.” They interpreted class difference and used scriptural citation as a mechanism to instill belief. In his chapter titled “Believing and Making People Believe” de Certeau offers a broader social interpretation of citation and how citation is “the ultimate weapon for making people believe.”² This social interpretation of “citation” coupled with the belief in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible offers a clearer view as to how citing scripture for the purposes of regulating behavior operated so powerfully in Pentecostal systems of belief. Preachers frequently (upwards of multiple times a week) reminded their flock that they were to separate. Put biblically, they were to “come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing, then I will receive you.”³ Class marginalization alone did not satisfy this criteria of separation from the world. A theological apparatus of authority lent the added and necessary rationale. In the development of the latter Pentecostals masterfully manipulated (reinterpreted) their marginalization.

Manipulating Marginalization: Authority and Archenemies

Indeed Pentecostals marginalized – or as they would have said “separated” – themselves at the behest of scripture in 2 Corinthians 2:13 and similar passages. Many prided themselves in

² Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 188-189.

³ Copious articles used this passage as a contradistinction against worldliness. See, “Israel Demands a King” *Pentecostal Evangel* (August 13, 1938), 8.

this separation. Their self-designated status as “chosen” and “peculiar” shielded them from and acted as a protest against their opprobrious underclass status. In the same way that churches provided “homes” they also allowed for the re-cultivation of former expectations; namely, that one could try to reproduce rural southern plain-folk life and authority in the industrial farms of California. In the fresh new social soil (fertilized by heavy concentrations of Okie subculture), new strains of Pentecostal discipline abounded.

This Dust District exemplified the stern-minded religiosity in the Central Valley. Pastors in the Central Valley took bellicose stances against modernity and the existing church culture, often at the expense of slandering their pioneering Pentecostal counterparts in the process. Hardline stances engendered a legion of cultural enemies and bugaboos. As part of the theologizing experience, religious Dust Bowl migrants turned inward and assumed a reactionary stance against what they thought was a godless (or less extreme, but more insulting, spiritually “weak”) California. But in reality Okie pastors could afford to impose hardline stances with little risk of losing their flock since Pentecostal churches quickly began to outnumber denominational ones in cities throughout the San Joaquin Valley. This concentration of churches which were fueled by ideas of a godless and unsaved society likely prompted high levels of (in)direct competition over who could hold the distinction of being more “authentic,” apostolic, and hence biblical. Therewith a proliferation of congregations seeking to restore “primitive” Christianity unfolded.⁴ Striving for “the faith once delivered the saints”, they created, or at least imagined, a world in which the experience of the New Testament Church was relived. In this world, marginalization evidenced “choseness.”

⁴ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 12.

As hard as nature fought back against overzealous agribusiness farmers in the southern plains, zealous Okie preachers combatted against any contrary force. According to the mythology of Dust Bowlers, natural forces tore down their homes, ravaged their crops, and tried their faith, but hopes in California allowed them to redouble their efforts of bringing their dreams to fruition. Unlike in southern California, where plain-folk migrants influenced the political and social culture, the Central Valley's Okies wielded little political and social influence;⁵ their influence became most apparent in the social spaces of their fellow kind in churches. This re-creation of religion would require new measures of discipline from within the church. Agricultural migrants turned their realized lower social position on its head and in turn nurtured a sense of pride anchored in toughness, down-to-earth roughness, and discipline cultivated from struggle. Likely due to the fact that the upper crust of the social strata remained so far out of reach, Okie migrants despised that which they could not attain. In any instances in which they could nurture a modicum of pride they usually did so always in opposition to three perilous forces: a secular world, denominational Christianity, and their "weak" Pentecostal counterparts. They sparred most frequently with the latter two in the arenas of sermons and writings. Since Pentecostals especially sought to recapture authority in the realm of religion, the last two were most frequent and consequently found their place in sermon as archenemies.

The 'Denominal' World

⁵ Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*, (New York: W&W Norton Press, 2011); James Gregory offers some exceptions such as Bernie F. Sisk, a Texan and eventual congressman from Fresno, see James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 243; a similar and longer product of conservative cultural transformation is evidenced in Robert Wuthnow, *Rough Country: How Texas Became American's Most Powerful Bible—Belt State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014) and in chapter 6 (*The Eagle Soar*) in Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Monikers often served Okies well for their offhand description of rival Christian groups. They leveraged the term ‘denominal’ to describe more respectable Mainline and non-Pentecostal “denominations.” Pentecostal Okie opposition to the ‘denominal world’ centered around at least four points of contention: 1) “cold, dead” expression of worship; 2) abandonment of biblical literalism and basic Fundamentalist principles;⁶ 3) ostensible lack of concern for welcoming lower classes (despite that Mainline churches funded and administered clerical aid to the most vulnerable populations, including Mexican Farmworkers and advanced civil rights –of little import to impoverished Okies);⁷ 4) their devolution into looking like the “world” (read: secular society). White Pentecostals especially forged a social identity base on what they were *not* rather than what they were. In similar manner to the Torah (much of which they took literally), Okie preachers issued informal litanies of commandments, the majority of which were negative in nature. These negative commandments of “don’ts” and denuncements were deployed in order to regulate moral and social behavior. (Living as a chosen/separate people, they never decoupled the moral from the social. It was in this decoupling of categories that Dust District Pentecostals believed the ‘denominal’ to err.) Since Okies wielded very little influence over civic affairs and public social life, the conflation of the moral and social offered a convenient and tangible way of recapturing authority over their rivals.

Dust District Pentecostals found victories over their rivals in the everyday arena of discourse, be it evangelism, extemporaneous preaching, or debates. One preacher from

⁶ Christian Fundamentalists outright rejected speaking in tongues, but they shared five core principles with Pentecostals and Evangelicals. These core principles include: the historical accuracy of the Bible, the virgin-birth of Jesus, the resurrection and atonement of Jesus, and the imminent and physical second coming of Jesus,

⁷ James Bright Wilson’s chapter “Established Churches and the Agricultural Workers” in Wilson “Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations among Certain Agricultural Workers in the Central Valley of California, US, 1944” (PhD, Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1942), 163-232. Jonathan Ebel refers to this Social Gospel type of relief as the “Gospel of Christian Collectivism;” See Jonathan Ebel, “In Ever Cup of Bitterness, Sweetness: California Christianity in the Great Depression” *Church History* (80:3, 2011), 595-596.

Oklahoma offered an account which bolstered Okies' confidence in their place at the table of theological debate/orthodoxy. Two brothers in Oklahoma came to a theological disagreement. One was enrolled in a Baptist seminary and the other attended a Pentecostal meeting where he felt called to preach. The two met to settle biblical matter and, against societal expectations, the newly converted Pentecostal imparted profounder truths and "the educated Baptist couldn't say nuthin' [sic]. He tried but he jist [sic] didn't have it under his belt"⁸ Okie raconteurs could cause a righteous ruckus in a similar homiletic in which preachers could fire up a crowd to a frenzy. Storytelling and testimonies, especially epic showdowns between Low-Church preacher and High-Church seminarians, was the bread and butter of southern preaching. Expositions on the Westminster Confession would likely fall onto deaf ears, but the every-day folk preaching and singing of corn-fed preachers would almost certainly stir one into a Holy Ghost jig. A large number of men and women carved out their own careers in this profession since prerequisites for entering the ministry were so minimal. Commitment trumped education. The enthusiastic evangelist was preferred over the erudite exegete. Whenever possible they gloated in their victories over the educated. Pentecostals testified to trouncing their educated opponents, and to them this signaled divine inspiration and approbation.

Pentecostals found ways to create a sense of belonging, empowerment and uplift, making the best of their condition when fighting in these social-theological wars. Pentecostal preachers prided themselves in their ability to preach despite never having attending seminary. Okies held seminarians responsible for cold, dead churches.⁹ Take the words of one migrant from the Okie hub of Olivehurst, CA: "I've never been ordained. Have never conducted a funeral or a wedding.

⁸ James Bright Wilson, "Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations," 255-256.

⁹ I use the term "preacher" and preach in agreement with the phenomenon of laity enablement. For use of the word "cold" to describe churches and clergy see Wilson, "Religious Leaders," 251, 256, 262.

The Lord didn't call me to bury people or marry them. He called me to preach the Gospel."¹⁰

Most Okie preachers possessed only an elementary school education.¹¹ They flipped the idea that seminary training produced great clergy by appealing to their down-to-earth qualities; these made them more popular among the agricultural workers than did a degree behind a name. An evangelist in Modesto appealed to his rugged, uncouth mannerisms as evidence that the Holy Spirit operated through him. The following datum demonstrates how he wielded his Okie argot as means of relevance:

“I want you good people to pray fer me as I attempt to preach. I'm not an educated man. I'm jist an old Oklahoma plough boy. I've eat about as many beans and black-eyes peas and watermelons and rose ears as anybody... the only [preaching] course I ever had was to bury my head in this old Book, and study. I never went a day beyond the eighth grade so if there is to be any preachin' here tonight the Holy Ghost will have to do it.”¹²

This raw, unedited transcription reveals how preachers esteemed themselves in opposition to trained seminarians. They posited that their lack of education offered some rawer articulation of that which God wanted to speak through the preacher. Pentecostal audiences viewed their social shortcomings as laudable, not laughable. The less reliance on education (read: human philosophy) resulted in greater dependency on the Holy Spirit. The observations of another preacher from Modesto further demonstrated how this anti-intellectual logic appealed to pious plain folk:

“We don't go through all the stuff the regular preachers follow. We'll have a man preachin' ten years before they even git started...He'll [a man ordained that Sunday] be full-fleged [sic] preacher in less than two weeks, jist as soon as he gits his credentials. He went to the eighth grade.”¹³

¹⁰ Rev. Nettie Lawrence quote in *Ibid.*, 249.

¹¹ Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow*, (Montclair, N.J: Allanheld, Osmun and Co. Publishers, Inc)

¹² Unnamed interviewee quote in *Ibid.*, 254-5.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2 (Dust District) demonstrated how a quick turnaround from conversion to “full-fledged” preaching augmented the force of the Dust District’s evangelism. Preachers deployed conversion and ‘calling’ narratives in order to highlight the stark contrast to the years of seminary training that their ‘denominal’ counterparts undertook. And in a place where numbers of converts functioned as the barometer of success, the overnight preachers had some room to boast over their ‘denominal’ counterparts. Given the competitive nature of evangelism and “holiness” disciplines, it should come as no surprise that Dust District Pentecostals soon sized up one another.

Compromisers

Factions within the movement resulted in ministers relentlessly gauging their holiness with and against those with whom they once shared a platform. On the one hand, Pentecostals interpreted evangelistic victories as success; yet on the other hand, the so-called ‘sectarian’ groups interpreted their apparent low numerical ceilings without a modicum of insecurity; for peculiarity never promised numerical prosperity. In a metaphor apt to the Central Valley, when some withdrew from these more stern-minded churches, God was simply weeding out the church.

The first half of Pentecostalism’s existence was marked by make ups and break ups and in every case they negotiated . But “negotiation” is perhaps too neutral is a term; it was not part of Pentecostals’ debating lexicon. More accurately, those who relinquished any doctrinal territory were labeled “compromisers.” Grant Wacker recalled how the well-educated E.N. Bell paid the highest possible tribute to William Durham (the author of the “Finished Work”) by

proclaiming his brother to be “no compromiser.”¹⁴ Because Pentecostals proclaimed themselves to be a Spirit-led people and their preachers claimed to always operate under the divine –and often arbitrary– will of God, new revelations created strife. One indication of Pentecostalism’s large foothold in California by the 1940s was the presence of a vast number of schismatic groups. The Assemblies of God, various Jesus-name (oneness) churches, Pentecostal Holiness Churches, the Church of God, *La Asamblea Apostólica*, and various unaffiliated churches made up the various branches of Pentecostalism in the Central Valley. Unlike the case of the Methodists and Baptists, who split over differing views on major moral/political issues of the day, Pentecostals’ schisms existed in the mundane, everyday moral/social behavior. From small scale arguments such as what sleeve length constituted modest attire or what color nylons were appropriate for church, to larger salvific questions such as how to perform baptism, tensions boiled over to the point where families would not just leave...they would take saints with them.¹⁵ Referring to defecting groups as “poison,” Pentecostal polemics caused more division than they did understanding. The dogmas of these churches were often a larger expression of one personality, either that of the pastor or a defecting leader.

Oftentimes defection from an organized body represented protest to the church’s upward trajectory, an action that mirrored the larger social protest. Take for example the Assemblies of God congregation in Modesto. In Modesto, the oldest Assembly of God congregation began approaching the “denominational pattern” of formalized services. Pastor Donald Weston was remembered by a Baptist layman as “a splendid fellow and is popular throughout the city. He goes golfing with professional men, and various lodges and other organizations hold their

¹⁴ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 22.

¹⁵ Wilson, “Religious Leaders,” 253.

conventions in his church.” The same Baptist applauded the sloughing off of sectarian Pentecostal traits:¹⁶

They say Amen once in awhile [sic] but no foolishness goes on. After awhile [sic] they will taper down and be like the rest of our churches, quiet and orderly.”¹⁷

In stark contrast to Weston, the Baptist observer spared no words about the Assembly of God congregation in the Airport District of town, likening them to patients of a crazy house and deploying racialized descriptors of “shouting wild Indians.” Here, a Baptist, an outsider, made clear his preferences, but perhaps unintentionally his negative impressions only added more fuel of marginalization/choseness to Pentecostal fires. Further north in Live Oak, Okies triggered another intra-Pentecostal competition. Congregants from Live Oak took pride in the spontaneity of their church services. One layman expressed his aversion toward order and his reliance on the *otherworldly* when he stated “[w]e don't go much on formality here. In the majority of our services we don't know what is goin' to happen next. We jist [sic] let the Lord work it out.” He continued on and criticized Calvary Tabernacle of nearby Yuba City for following a denominational trajectory.

“Seems to me at times the Assemblies of God is goin' that way. Lettin' too much of the world creep in. Some of our young people go to shows and do other worldly things. Our preachers used to preach against the likes of that. Even our denomination is gradually makin' its compromise with the world. Too bad.”¹⁸

“Makin' compromise” stood as no petty charge in the Dust District. Euphemisms such as “that way” constructed a binary world of right and wrong and anything that “creeps in” was vigilantly observed. Clear behavioral boundary lines marked Pentecostal moral parameters. These lamentable compromises in Yuba City proved unpalatable for Live Oak folk. As a result

¹⁶ Ibid., 310.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Delmer Wright quoted in Ibid., 311.

of these tensions, the faithful of the Live Oak often passed right by Calvary Tabernacle en route to their own services nearby. Migrants like those in Live Oak and from the Airport District in Modesto acted as agents of cultural resistance, leading to the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the valley.

Holiness: Authority and Ardor

Pastors set a wide range of “holiness standards.” Sociologically, these could be understood as behavioral expectations set by a pastor (specifically) and/or entire denominations (generally). “Holiness standards” evidenced sanctification, a notion appropriated from Pentecostal theological ancestors in the Methodist/Holiness tradition. According to this doctrine a person could reach a state of perfection (a persistent or residual will to sin, notwithstanding) through persistent consecration, that is, sustained acts of piety and a change of lifestyle.¹⁹ Several schools of thought arose from this idea of perfection, but all schools agreed that the holiness within a believer’s heart would manifest itself outwardly in comportment, speech, dress, and social engagement. The Dust District’s fertile site for new ideas and beliefs allowed Pentecostals to impose their various interpretations of “holiness standards.”

The rapid growth and saturation of sanctified folks in the San Joaquin Valley afforded Pentecostal preachers the opportunity to take bold stances without risking the loss of supporters. Bold public stances seemingly imitated the apostle’s brazenness described in the *Book of Acts*. Such readings found a place within Pentecostal narrative theology.²⁰ The steady flow of conservative migrants ensured that the pews would stay filled despite defections. The

¹⁹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 5-9.

²⁰ Donald Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Hendrickson Publishers Inc. second edition, 1996) 23-26.

convergence of migrants from various states into one valley exposed migrants to new ideas about “holiness.” Timothy Smith’s idea of the “theologizing experience” sheds more light on how a convergence of migrants fostered the development of intensely conservative social values.

Pentecostals equated these values to holiness.

“In such ways the acts of uprooting, migration, resettlement, and community-building became for the participants a theologizing experience, not the secularizing process that some historians have pictured...The folk theology and religious piety that flourished in immigrant churches from the beginnings of American settlement were not merely traditional but progressive. Belief and devotion were powerful impulses to accommodation and innovation; and both helped legitimate the behavior, the perceptions, and the structures of association that sustained the processes of change.”²¹

By “progressive” Smith refers to the fluidity of church beliefs and practices. Paradoxically, Pentecostal churches that sought to restore “the old paths” actually carved out new ones, demanding levels of consecration unheard of anywhere else. Exiled by nature from home and church, it seemed that migrants built up extra safeguards to keep them from sinning while nature and better social conditions discouraged a return to the western south. The migration introduced change, new surroundings, and social unfamiliarity, which led religious Okies to restructure their world around religion, with the Bible as their guidebook, and their raw home-grown hermeneutics as their exegetical lenses. Migrant workers rubbed shoulders in the fields, shared ideas in churches, sang the songs from back home and encountered new theologies.

Convergence, however, did not always lead preachers to agreement; indeed with religion as life’s cornerstone, social conflict and theological quodlibets were sure to follow. The conservative, intensifying effects of the theologizing experience surfaced everywhere, causing schisms in Dust District churches where preachers would anathematize their own saints to hell for wearing a scintilla of makeup. To this, Gregory, adds that “relocation often drastically alters religious

²¹ Timothy L. Smith, “Religion and Ethnicity in America,” *American Historical Review* 83 (Dec. 1978, 1174-5).

behavior, either disrupting or intensifying it. In this case [Okie migration] it did both.”²² As ardor intensified, so, too, did authority.

Ardor and Attendance

Pentecostals in the agricultural towns of California did not operate out of ornate cathedrals or brick-façade edifices, but gathered in store fronts, rented-out basements, dilapidated offices converted into churches, or any affordable building suitable for services multiple times a week. A migrant from Texas attested to the more frequent church services and the manner in which believers practiced their religion at home *in addition* to attending church several times a week.²³ Federal Migrant Camp managers offered their opinions about Pentecostals services. The problem was not that the services were loud for a portion of the night; the problem was that preachers, musicians, and worshippers sustained the sanctified stentorian soundscapes all night – and not uncommonly– night after night. The cacophony (for insiders, euphony) that they generated for hours upon hours in these tent revivals eventually led to a prohibition against hosting Pentecostal services in several private and federal labor camps.²⁴ Some also banned or simply refused to hire preachers.²⁵

Involvement in church allowed Pentecostals little time for other organized activities, especially those which required a high level of commitment such as unions. Steinbeck portrayed an exception to this anti-union stance in the fictional character of Jim Casy, a Pentecostal preacher turned-rabble-rouser. Casy’s preacher charisma drew large crowds, thereby plowing

²²James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 200.

²³ Will Casey quoted in Wilson, “*Religious Leaders*,” 269.

²⁴ Fred Ross quoted in *ibid.*, 288-289.

²⁵ Camp Managers in Arvin, Thornton, and Firebaugh banned Pentecostals from holding services on camp premises. See, Wilson “*Religious Leaders, Institutions*,” 288-9.

fertile ground for strike discussions. Indeed it seemed plausible that a Pentecostal preacher would use his charisma to organize a protest. (Reies López Tijerina proved this in the Salinas Valley). However, except for a few documented cases, American Pentecostal leaders discouraged believers from joining unions or participating in strikes.²⁶ This injunction against joining strikes appeared to be the case in the Dust District.²⁷ Reverend George Childs of Madera declared with Pentecostal forthrightness, “The Bible says that we shouldn’t be a striker.”²⁸ An organizer for the American Federation of Labor in Modesto shared his frustrations with Pentecostals:

“We’ve had trouble with these holy rollers. They have screwy ideas. Some of them don’t to belong to any organization and will quit their jobs rather than join the union. Their preachers won’t let them belong to any organization, but their own. That can be a glorified racket.”²⁹

The labor organizer understood well how authority worked, and Pentecostals devotion to their owned hampered his own abilities to involve them in union causes which were economically in their better interest. He also charged preachers with being guilty of micromanaging the institutional social lives of their saints. In that charge, he identified a larger characteristic of Pentecostalism that assumed prominence in the Dust District.

Pastoral Authority

²⁶ Jared Roll offers examples of vigilante activity led by Pentecostal preachers in the Bootheel of Southeast Missouri, see Jared Roll, “From Revolution to Reaction: Early Pentecostalism, Radicalism, and Race in Southeast Missouri 1910-1930,” *Radical History Review*, (2004: 90) 5-29. White Pentecostals generally refrained from union activity and striker agitations, see Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 195.

²⁷ Wilson, “Religious Leaders, Institutions,” 315-317.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁹ R. M. Thomson quoted in *Ibid.*

With the exception of necessary quotidian activities, pastors strongly denounced any behavior or activity that did not promote a Pentecostal view of spirituality. Camp managers regretted that Pentecostals even refused to participate in recreational and educational activities.³⁰ This resultant behavior demonstrated well the primitivist impulse of early Pentecostalism. Pentecostals developed a lexicon to define their social and theological foes. The logic behind banning non-church activities was that a believer's time should be spent in consecration to the Holy Ghost, not in concentration of leisure, amusements, and any activity remotely related to what the "world" practiced.³¹ In Pentecostal parlance the "world" equated to secular and sinful society. "Worldly" lay in the repertoire of epithets as the haymaker in confrontational preaching. Scripture served as the source of authority for these matters. Inflected in an Old English-Okie argot, Dust District preachers toted around the King James Version of the Bible to decry the menace of "worldliness":

1 John 2:15-17

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."³²

Titus 2:11-12

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"³³

³⁰ Conrad Reibold, manager of the Firebaugh Government Camp attested to Pentecostals' reluctance to participate in social activities, see *Ibid.*, 316.

³¹ See Grant Wacker's chapter titled "Temperament" in *Heaven Below*.

³² In 1940 the assembly of the Church of God accepted recommendation by the Bishops Council regarding amendments to the rules on "Modest Apparel." The changes began with the 1 John 2:15-16 passage. See, *Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Church of God* (Chattanooga, TN: 1940), 30-31. Numerous articles in official denominational organs cited this same passage in discussions regarding anti-worldliness. The frequent citation of this passage allowed a short hand "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." See, Ernest S. Williams, "The Pentecostal We Need," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (August 1, 1942), 1.

³³ For examples of these citations, see George A. Byus "Deliverance from Indwelling Sin" *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* (April 21, 1938) 4; "The Great Problem Must Be Mastered" *The White Wing Messenger* (May 25, 1940), 1, 4.

These oft-referenced passages illustrate another example of how Pentecostals sought to restore primitive/apostolic Christianity. A Pentecostal reading of this first passage concluded that the world (some abstract idea/influence) manifested itself to believers and enticed them with the intent of drawing them from the “will of God,” an existential compass fine-tuned by pastors. In the second oft-quoted passage, worldliness equaled ungodliness and was the very antithesis of the grace of God, unmerited favor. Though unmerited, Pentecostals sought to respond to this grace with a puritanical morality. This oppositional theology of always combating against the “world,” its vices and enticements, characterized interviews with Okie Pentecostals in the 1940s. Worldliness created a binary world of either a highway of holiness or a highway to hell. One Assemblies of God preacher from Live Oak defined “worldliness” as:

“anything that doesn’t pertain to the Christian life, fer instance, playin’ cards, goin’ to shows, or dancin’. We don’t believe in it. Our young people have parties, but no foolishness goes on.”³⁴

“[A]nything that doesn’t pertain to the Christian life” did not include the mundane activities such as work, but it included any type of unwholesome leisure or pleasure. The staunchest of these

³⁴ H.C. Lafferty quote in Wilson, “*Religious Leaders*,” 262. Interestingly here Wilson, a researcher from an elite institution invariably chose to render the phonetic spelling of Okie speech in similar way that researchers preserved the broken English of some Mexican field workers. His rendition of the word “fer” in lieu of “for” shows ways that researchers highlighted their broken English. It should be noted that authors across various genres did not uncommonly employ similar practices especially for racialized groups. Whereas Cowboy talk might have been imagined or the status quo in the imagined American West in a similar manner that Okie speech was in the western South, when ethnic minorities spoke broken English or mispronounced words it served as a marker of their otherness. Columns written by Okie in the migrant labor camps passed the eye of the editors despite that they were written in broken Okie English with various misspellings. The reasons for preserving the broken English is unknown to me but the fact that papers were distributed in Okie speech indicates that it became acceptable at some point. James Baldwin contested these undue linguistic impositions placed on African Americans. He stated, “language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power. It is the most vivid and crucial key to identity.” See James Baldwin, “If Black English Isn’t a Language Then Tell Me, What Is?” in Dohra Ahmad, *Rotten English: A Literary Anthology* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007).

preachers forbade picnics, vacations, and even the consummation of the marriage.³⁵ Time spent (or wasted) in any activity that did not “pertain to the Christian life” was believed to stymie the growth of the church. Instead of attending shows or carnivals, pastors of churches expected that saints would evangelize, spread the gospel, teach formulaic Bible studies, read their Bible, and pray (i.e., redeem the time because the days are evil).³⁶

In California those saints who violated any of these standards were subject to harsh pastoral correction. From public shaming to excommunication, the consequences varied in method but they were bestowed with the same measure of gravity. One Okie pastor postulated that if one of his members attended a show that he would “throw him out” of the church. That same pastor worried that if “sinners” saw him at a show that they would not hear him preach. This taboo extended to movies and ‘Hollywood.’ Paper bags lay in store for women who attended church wearing makeup in Weedpatch. After all, some believed that “The Lord didn’t teach in His Word fer us to use lipstick and rouge and finger nail polish. That’s all of the devil.”³⁷

Like other sectarian groups, Pentecostals refused medical services. This remained the rule and the not exception well past midcentury in the Dust District. Such medical services seemed incompatible with divine healing, a pillar of Pentecostal theology. But Pentecostals from the church in Weedpatch continued to spurn human medical services to a greater extent and relatively longer than many of their fellow Pentecostals did. Rita Dawson, born in Di Gorgio in 1936 to Arkansas migrants, recounted how en route to a youth service in Carlsbad, New Mexico,

³⁵ Olive Haney, *The Man of the Hills – Served in the Valley: The Biography of Clyde J. Haney*. (unknown publisher, 1985.), 103.

³⁶ Grant Wacker’s chapter titled “Temperament” offers various examples as to how Pentecostals sought to “redeem the time” of the last days. See Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 18-34.

³⁷ Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 263.

she and several other youngsters sustained serious injuries resulting from a vehicle collision. She recalled how the pain in her back worsened when the ambulance that picked her up collided head on with an oncoming vehicle. With a busted lower lip that had been cut through with her teeth, bruises, and swollen eyes, she, along with the injured others, refused to sign papers for admission into the hospital. They even refused to take aspirins. She remember how on the following night “our battered choir was assembled. David Turk, our drummer, played with a broken collar bone and his head bandaged from an eye injury. Mike hobbled upon on crutches and others wore bandages. We had not yet sung two minutes until the power of God fell.”³⁸ Another believer from a second Jesus-name congregation in Weedpatch refused medical attention for a gangrenous leg. She recounted that her pastor continued to trust in divine healing. After weeks of prayer with no results, the believer claimed that the now rather-frustrated pastor prayed once again over the phone, and finally reversed the course of the infection. However, the unrealized divine healing hit that pastor’s family with full force when his own son died of valley fever.³⁹ Arvin Camp Manager, Tom Collins noted that “Full Gospel” refused to “enter the Kern Migrants Camp for fear physicians will be called in case of sickness.”⁴⁰

Medicine ostensibly undermined faith in God’s healing power. Operating on a “blame-the-victim” theory, if infirm saints did not experience healing, it was because they lacked sufficient faith in God.⁴¹ Reverend Sanderson of Olivehurst, who claimed healing from tonsillitis while preaching, put it this way: “We don’t need to go to the doctor. To go to one of them shows people ain’t got faith in God. It’s evidence of lack of trust. God is our great physician.”⁴² In the

³⁸ Rita Dawson, *25 Years in a Place Called Weedpatch* (n.p. n.d.), 17-20.

³⁹ Gladine Newton, Interview with author, February 2014.

⁴⁰ Collins quoted in Ebel, “In Every Cup of Bitterness,” 596. See, Thomas Collins, Weekly Report, 18 January 1936, “Coded Administrative Files, 1933-1945: Arvin” (NARA, San Bruno).

⁴¹ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 27.

⁴² Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 264.

second half of the twentieth century, as diagnoses and medical practices became more efficient and as psychologists provided new explanation for mental condition –instead of just passing off a person as possessed– and as Pentecostals moved up the socioeconomic scale, they abandoned this practice. Unlike the sustained preaching against makeup, jewelry, theatres, and attending ballgames, their pragmatic impulse kicked into gear, making clear that they should not resist the advancements in medical research for much longer.

Hard Preaching: Authority and Austerity

Hard preaching came part and parcel with aggressive “soul-winning” evangelism efforts and rested on toughness. The shame of being an “Okie” plagued the impoverished migrants; the term signified second-class white citizenship. But they found ways to compensate for that which they did not materially possess in value; more crassly stated, they found ways to fight back, quite literally. On characteristics of the Okie subculture, Gregory notes how migrants valorized toughness.⁴³ The “cult of toughness” manifested itself in curious ways in the Dust District. Toughness became an almost necessary feature of hard preaching and an essential one of “being anointed.”

Hard preaching and certitude marked schisms and inter-church competition. Tough Okie preachers pulled no punches when it came to topics of splintered groups. Take, for example, Reverend Leonard Pollard who opined that schisms result because “somebody wants to be boss. There’s gonna be lots of preachers in hell. Positive fact.”⁴⁴ The last statement added a layer of certitude to an already bold definitive claim. In a similar vein of austerity, Rev. Terry’s own protégés described him as “not concerned with preaching pretty sermons with cute stories and

⁴³ Gregory, *American Exodus*, 143-149.

⁴⁴ Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 253

funny jokes” and some remember him for his austerity, brashness and, in some cases, offensiveness. This was the tough Pentecostal culture inculcated into him in West Texas. Terry had been converted under hard preaching in a PAJC church where evangelist C.B. Webb did not “preach anything but doctrine” and was “strong on Jesus’ name, one God preaching.”⁴⁵ How one with such personality traits could have nurtured a church of seven hundred largely lay in the fact that his tough preaching enjoyed acceptance in the social and cultural climate created by Okie subculture.⁴⁶ Verbose plain language sermons, however, contrasted to the supposed terseness of Okie argot. Maggie Terry noted in her diary how her husband Ike had preached in Weedpatch for two and a half hours.⁴⁷ Tough preachers assumed that tough saints could endure tough sermons.

Just as this cult of toughness extended to women boxers and wrestlers, it also extended to women believers who underwent “hard conversions.”⁴⁸ Hard preaching wrought hard conversions. It is no easy task to precisely gauge the level of conservatism based on a groups’ non-participation, but with respect to Pentecostals we see how non-participation couched in terms of hard, outright rejection became part of their shared discourse and a feature of hard preaching. Take modest attire as an example of how Okies intensified their practices in the Dust District. The account of one faithful saint from the small town of Hughson (south of Modesto) sheds light on the affect and effects of hard preaching:

“Do you believe you could be condemned fer wearin’ short sleeves? Well, you can. When I come to California I didn’t own a dress with long sleeves. I was settin’ right down here in church one Sunday and was condemned in my heart fer havin’ on a dress with short sleeves, and I had on a coat too. My arms began to hurt...I was condemned fer my short sleeves. I didn’t have no long sleeved dresses or money to buy any so I made me a little coat to wear over my arms and they quit hurtin’.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Steven Carrier, ed., *A Man and Woman Passed This Way Blessed of God: The Life of Isaac Hillard (I.H.) Terry*, (self published, 1996), 28-35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-80.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁸ Gregory, *American Exodus*, 143-154.

⁴⁹ Will Casey quoted in Wilson, “Religious Leaders,” 263.

Pentecostals did not merely abstain from wearing certain clothes; in fact they frequently made public confessions regarding their deeply held beliefs. In taking this offensive stance, they actively fought against the “worldly spirits” that enticed them. This usually happened during preaching, Bible studies, and in songs.

In Okie culture, denunciation plus toughness made for a formula of intimidation. Rather than being stigmatized for not participating in recreational activities, Okies sought to compensate for their absence by forcefully preaching and employing forceful language when speaking against worldly things. Take the testimony of an elderly believer from Modesto’s airport community (still known today as the tough and rough part of town.)

“I’ve burned at least fifteen decks of cards since I got the Holy Ghost. My husband settin’ right over there. He loves his filthy old pipe. I’m afreared its [sic] goints take an awful struggle to bring him to seek the Lord”⁵⁰

The act of burning cards (symbol of profane entertainment) does not just demonstrate the force and toughness of her no-turning-back tactic of relinquishment. The rather large amount of cards they amassed marked her as an even greater sinner prior to her conversion and a more radical saint ever “since she got the Holy Ghost.” Hard testimonies captured elements of force, hyperbole, and profane things. (Rev. Terry is remembered for his defiance against the gospel in his pre-convert days. He would arrive at church in Monahans Texas with a big cigar that he would leave on a post outside of the church and retrieve after service).⁵¹ Tough sinners made for tough saints. To own so many decks of cards meant that she not some ordinary gambler, she was a hard gambler. Furthermore, her audacity to call out her husband in front of the congregation,

⁵⁰ Wilson, “Religious Institutions, 284.

⁵¹ Carrier, *Blessed of God* 32.

demonstrates how women through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost acted in toughness when speaking of any sin including that of their own husbands. This toughness allowed women to discursively transgress social and gender lines. They could posit “Holy Ghost anointing” for their assertive stances which belied notions of passive femininity. The larger congregation generally esteemed these instantiations of anointing as heroic. Pastors placed the majority of regulations against women; but when women had the opportunity to speak to sins of men, they did so with equal force. Such preaching however drew its share of criticism. The charge of a “woman acting like a man” or “usurping authority over a man” became common. But when the homiletics of preaching and testifying rested on toughness, what recourse did a woman have but to preach hell just as hot?

Another young woman employed an equal dose of toughness in speaking about her struggles. She said, “the devil gave me a hard blow, but I want to give him a black eye. Ifn’ [sic] I set still tonight it’ll be twiet [sic] as hard to git up and testify tomorrow night” Similarly another woman in the same service blurted: “if you keep your hands and feet pretty, the devil will have a hard time gittin’ the rest of you.”⁵² The marked austerity of authoritative Pentecostal Okie preaching especially manifested itself in the lexicon of words during services, debates, and demonstrations.

Confrontation: Authority and Articulation

Austere certitude led to boldness. Pentecostals drew from the confrontational example of the apostles Peter and John (*Acts of the Apostles*). This confrontation manifested itself strongly between Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostal groups. They held many doctrines in common, but

⁵² Ibid., 284.

the few differences that existed between them proved too divisive for any reconciliation. These disagreements, undergirded by Okie toughness, made for public shouting matches. A brief transcript of one pastor's description is worth noting in its entirety. Reflecting on his time as a pastor in Shafter (near Bakersfield), he recalled:

“The Jesus Name Only people are poison to the rest of the Pentecostal groups. They come to our service and testify and we can spot them the minute they open their mouth. They would like to dominate the entire service and so take it completely out of our hands. They shout right out some times that we are all going to hell if we are not baptized in the name of Jesus Only. I can usually shut them up pretty easy by starting a chorus and sit them down. Once in a while I will say, 'My brother, you are out of order.' I have also said this when one has finished his testimony: 'We are glad to have Brother-so-and-so of the Jesus Name Only faith with us tonight. That burns them up. I said they are poison, and I mean poison. I've known cases where people were converted in our meetings and one of them preachers would take some of the new converts right out that very night after our service was over and baptize them in the name or Jesus Only. What is that but poison? Of course a new convert wouldn't know any difference.”

Ironically, this description and case are not too dissimilar with how Oneness Pentecostals remember such confrontations. In 1944 Ike Terry had recently arrived in Bakersfield and sought out converts in this manner. In his own words:

“One evening, I went to a Church of God service to testify. They were so glad to see me. When asked to testify, I began exhorting on the oneness of the godhead. It got real cold! The pastor called everybody to pray, and while they were praying they'd look back to see if I was still there. I sat and listened to them pray for a while. They were praying like there was a devil in the house; I guess they meant me! I finally left.”⁵³

Recall that the “oneness and the godhead” represented a cornerstone theological tenet of Oneness Pentecostalism. As a minority position in Pentecostal communities, Oneness preachers often took the first jab to provoke Trinitarian clergy and laity. The combative or confrontational sparks between these groups often resulted in full-blown formalized debates. None would dare back down to a debate challenge; certitude welcomed challenges.

⁵³ Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 248.

In Bakersfield, there were other examples of how Oneness churches relied on these public debates (confrontations) in order to garner more attention and win over converts. Take, for example, Terry's recollection of the founding of the first Oneness Pentecostal church in Bakersfield:

“When we arrived in Bakersfield, I was ready for a fight for the gospel. I welcomed the opportunity to defend what I knew was right in doctrine. I placed a lunch board on the sidewalk in front of our storefront church. It read, “Trinity Is The Way To Hell!” This seemed to draw attention. It wasn't long until Trinitarians came to my house, and challenged me to a debate with the Church of Christ [non Pentecostal] preacher.”⁵⁴

Debates quickly morphed into a battle of wits centered on biblical literalism. In response to a point that the Trinity manifested itself at the baptism of Jesus in three distinct form (Jesus, the Holy Spirit as a dove, and the voice of the Father), Terry quipped “how would you like to go bird hunting with a guy that doesn't know the difference between a dove and a person?”⁵⁵ In the battle of wits, Oneness Pentecostals articulated points seemingly so clear that they required little to no theological mulling.

“I'll defy anybody to show me where it's possible to baptize in any other name. Preachers go on baptizin' in the three names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They are jist deceivin' the people. In Oklahoma one of them Trinity men debated with me about Jesus Name Only. He interrupted my sermon on the street. He said, 'What are you goin' to do with Matthew 28:19?' I didn't know what to say but the Holy Ghost fell on me and give me a message. The crowd got so big the police had to clear the street. That preacher was an educated man and there I was jist a plain corn fed preacher. But he couldn't take it. I couldn't even find him after the meetin' was over and never saw him agin though I preached on the street there every Saturday night fer two years. Preachers like that can't stand up agin the Word of God.”⁵⁶

Here the unknown preacher leveraged an appeal to simplicity (just a corn fed preacher) against the educated seminarians who in the preacher's view, spent a wealth of time learning but

⁵⁴ Ibid., 59. Terry attested to the efficacy of debates for winning over Trinitarian converts, see Ibid., 70.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁶ Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 283.

seemingly never understanding true riches. Okie Pentecostals were straightforward and they believed the Bible was, too. This plain-folk religion, augmented by toughness, certitude, and confrontation, appealed to many in the Dust District. A successful confrontation also denoted that one had “stuck to their guns” and had not compromised. The most combative Pentecostals jumped on any opportunity to take a jab at the educated, especially when it was over a theological point. These small jabs in the proceedings of the debates counted as haymakers in Pentecostal preaching/storytelling.

A scene in the aftermath of the aforementioned vehicle accident involving the Weedpatch youth group merits further consideration, as it pertains to their culture of confrontation. The worst of the injured, Rita Dawson’s husband, Dearl (born in Oklahoma), was in no condition to drive back to California. Their insurance agent demanded that he undergo a medical examination. After much protest Dearl consented. With a broken neck and lacerations over his head, Dearl’s condition called for conversation with the doctor. Dawson’s recollection of the story is influenced by the tendency of Pentecostal storytelling to portray doctors, lawyers, professors, seminarians (i.e., the educated who would not join their ranks in any significant numbers) as losers in debates with Pentecostals.

[Doctor] “Just how long has there been anybody [who] believed like this?”

[Rita] “Oh, ever since the day of Pentecost,” I answered.”

“And when was that!?” he demanded.”

“You mean, you’re a doctor and you don’t know that?” I said incredulously”

“I have never met anybody so...’, he exploded, too angry to supply an apt description.”

“Well Doc, I’m glad you got to meet us. But I can tell you could not afford to meet very many of us. Because, from the way you’re breathing right now, I can tell you’d probably die of a heart attack!”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Dawson, *25 Years*, 17-20.

If debates ended favorably for Pentecostals, they shared these exploits with their congregations. These small victories acted as larger social reinforcements of their status as chosen and favored of God. Dust District Pentecostals especially rejoiced in cases where higher education –the very product of the enlightenment– fell flat in front of those without a high school diploma. Confrontation often involved leveraging euphemisms against theological enemies. Okie Pentecostals ascribed a particular value to being “tough on doctrine.” If one “preached doctrine” it signified that they did not back down against their perceived theological enemies. Maggie Terry penned her observations regarding the first service held in the newly constructed church after the 1953 tremor in Bakersfield in the same spirit of doctrinal toughness, “On May 29, 1954, the First United Pentecostal Church pastored by Rev. Ike Terry moved to their new building on 36th St. Brother Terry kept preaching doctrine, holding revivals, loving souls, and the church kept growing.”⁵⁸ The order of the actions that Terry “kept” doing is likely not haphazard. Describing a preacher as “preaching doctrine” or “keeping doctrine” boiled down to several characteristics. It signaled that they highly emphasized the Oneness of God and an unequivocal rejection of the Trinity; they proclaimed Baptism in Jesus Name and a nullification of baptisms performed in the titles Father, Son, Holy Ghost; and that they took a strong (and very specific) stand for holiness dress standards. Rev. Ray Brown, a protégé of Terry recalled “Brother Terry was a doctrine preacher with variations of five sermons: oneness, holiness, obedience, faithfulness, and government. If I had a dollar for every time I heard oneness preached, I could make a down-payment on a nice house!”⁵⁹ Other contemporaries recalled, “All Brother Terry ever wanted to talk about was the doctrine and church government;”⁶⁰ “he was a man who

⁵⁸ Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 79.

⁵⁹ Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 80.

⁶⁰ Carl Ballestero quote in Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 35.

always had the doctrine of the New Birth, Oneness, and church government on his mind;”⁶¹ “Brother Terry wasn’t interested in anything but teaching the doctrines of the Bible.”⁶² Terry trained over 40 preachers; many of them stayed in the Central Valley and continued to be “tough on doctrine.”⁶³

As noted in chapter 2 (*The Dust District*), Okie Pentecostals encountered a cosmopolitan and doctrinally lax strain of Pentecostal pioneers. Not surprisingly, Dust District preachers labeled these as “weak on doctrine” and “compromisers.” In a specific case, many preachers from the hardliner Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (PAJC) decried the laxer position of their Oneness counterparts in the Pentecostal Church Incorporated (PCI). Some viewed the 1945 merger of the two negatively as a “compromise” (a grave Pentecostal epithet) and believed that PCI ministers who did not steadfastly hold to the salvific requirement of baptism in Jesus name and infilling of the Holy Spirit should leave the organization. In northern California, those who rejected such fundamentals eventually found themselves in the minority tagged as “weak” (eventually many ministers with PCI roots and influence withdrew from the merged denomination, the United Pentecostal Church). Western Apostolic Bible College (WABC) in Stockton became a national battleground site of older Pentecostal PCI pioneers and newer PAJC arrivals. Elected leaders of the UPCI and WABC taught there and publicly endorsed the so-called “light doctrine.”⁶⁴ The “light doctrine” was a reconciliatory teaching which upheld the salvation of those who had not been baptized in the name of Jesus and filled with the Holy

⁶¹ Carl Ballestero, *How High My Mountain*, (Bloomington, CA: Self published, 1991), 182.

⁶² Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 35.

⁶³ Carrier, *Blessed of God*, 7.

⁶⁴ Thomas Fudge, *Christianity without a Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism* (Universal Publishers, 2003), 90. Fudge included an entire bibliographic index on ministers and movements “weak on the message.” Howard Goss, the first General Superintendent of the UPCI held these views, see Robin Johnston, *Howard Goss: A Pentecostal Life* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press Academic, 2010).

Spirit; it was based on the belief that God would judge individuals on how they received “the light (revelation) that was revealed to them.” For, many PAJC folks this especially marked a compromise with Trinitarian Pentecostals. The earliest Oneness Pentecostal leaders of denominations maintained this. Critics from the PAJC camp fired criticisms against Howard Goss (best known for his role in founding various Oneness denominations), Harry Morse and Frank Van Buskirk (early pastors of the Stockton Oneness congregation), Clyde Haney (first president of Western Apostolic Bible College) and C.H. Yadon (the last president of the WABC with PCI roots).⁶⁵ At the end of the day, PAJC thought, which had become dominant in California due to migration, held sway.

Hardliner Hymns: Authority in the Aural

Music provided another means to reinforce identity. It also added a sensory experience that internalized creeds. Early Pentecostal leaders often rejected the formal codification of their beliefs. Nevertheless, repeated ideas embedded in sermons and music functioned as a declaration. And for displaced migrants, what better way was there to convey teachings than to deliver them in a musical genre closely associated with music “from home”.

Music provides a unique window into the world of migrant theology, nostalgia, and social positioning (“This World Is Not My Home”). Music carried a transvaluing meaning, so that migrants would sing praise of better things to come in spite of their social deprecation. Okies sang hymns and choruses suffused with hopes of attaining something better in heaven. In fact, their poverty only reinforced their sense of eternal security, an idea Jonathan Ebel termed

⁶⁵ Ibid., 102, 152, 169-174.

the “gospel of righteous poverty”;⁶⁶ for after all, according to Jesus, “it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Their low economic status and their future “blessed hope” in Jesus’ second coming inspired song writers to reflect on their humble past and to aspire for a glorious future. Most Okie hymns and choruses referenced heaven: in exchange for their temporary housing, they hoped to walk into a celestial mansion; threadbare clothes would be transformed into unblemished silk.

Okies gave hymns a Country and Blues feel. Guitars, banjos, and sometimes accordions (i.e., portable instruments) accompanied singers in these choruses. The more established churches might have an organ or piano. Those that could not afford instruments sung a cappella. They sang rhythmic and joyous choruses at least eight to ten times. The great fervor of these services appeared to one observer as more chaotic than cathartic. Believers bellowed out lusty “amens,” “praise the Lords,” and unknown tongues. While some wept, others jerked, some ran around the church, with a few running around pews and through the aisles.⁶⁷ One 1940s researcher noted that “[i]t is proper to refer to them as being musical performances. Even the sermon is a musical performance.” Less flatteringly he noted that the “dramatic, the bizarre, and the fantastic abounds in these services.”⁶⁸ The demonstrative forms of dancing and bodily movements in the Dust District’s Country and Blues “musical performances” indeed starkly contrasted to those of other denominations.

Songs spoke directly to the struggles of migration and degradation in class status. The following titles capture the hope that Okies believed lay up in heaven for them: “In a Land that is

⁶⁶ Ebel, “In Every Cup of Bitterness,” 596-7; Heather Curtis also shows how Depression Era Pentecostals interpreted their poverty as a sign of God’s grace. See, Heather Curtis “God is not Affected by the Depression: Pentecostal Missions during the 1930s” in *Church History*, (80:3, 2011), 583.

⁶⁷ Wilson, “Religious Leaders,” 273-274.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 313.

Fairer than Day,” “Tell Mother I’ll Be There,” “Beulah Land,” “Higher Ground,” and “The Haven of Rest.”⁶⁹ Beulah land appeared to be everything – plus more – that they had in their home states. Songs that described home resonated strongly with many of these migrants who had lived in temporary shacks on federal and private farming camps. The chorus, “Higher Ground” resonated on both an economic and spiritual registers with the congregation.

[Verse 1]

“I’m pressing on the upward way,
New heights I’m gaining every day;
Still praying as I’m onward bound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”

By the 1950s many migrants had received enough assistance to extricate themselves from poverty. The language of moving up from the dust proliferated throughout Okie writings. As with black hymns sung en route to the North, Okie songs took on new meanings in the process of migration. For African American moving out of the South songs about deliverance from the bondage of Egypt assumed prominence in their musical repertoire. The Exodus narrative became all-the-more powerful and resonant as black migrants crossed over the major rivers separating the North (Promised Land) from the South (Egypt).⁷⁰ The theologizing experience of migration also evidenced itself in the songs of Dust District devotees.

Hardliner hymns upheld distinctive Pentecostal social teachings. Dust District Pentecostals overwhelmingly believed that women presented themselves more femininely when they dressed in attire that was unmistakably for women. While it was a standard imposed by men, women at times prided themselves in their modesty. When called upon to sing the

⁶⁹ Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 260-261.

⁷⁰ James Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 45-54.

“Arkansas Special” one young girl from the Pentecostal church in the Airport district of Modesto sang in a cappella in a “high nasal tone”:

[verse 2]

“Father and mother I’ll tell you what’s best
Have prayer with your children
Teach your girls how to dress
Don’t’ turn them lose [sic] to do what they please
With a mosquito-bar waist and their dress to their knees

[verse 3]

These sisters in the church who claim to be saints
And you can hardly see their eyes for the powder and the paint
With their hair cut off and their sleeves all gone
With their skirts to their knees and their anklets on.”⁷¹

Music like the Arkansas Special was composed and sung with the mandate to reinforce social identity, in this case a minority view. (This music reflected a major departure from the lyrics of traditional Christian hymns which sought to directed believers to reflect on God’s characteristics). To make a public display of their holiness, congregants in Modesto called upon this young sister to sing this “Arkansas Special”. Ann Burlein’s analysis of the Christian Right’s angst towards modernity and the need to preserve their politics and gospel “for the sake of the younger generations” serves as a reminder as to why Pentecostals found it necessary for children to repeat their core tenets.⁷² Hearing a child ask for their parents to advise them as to what is best and how to dress certainly warmed the hearts and tickled the ears of the devout in the pews. Among the Pentecostals sects in the Valley, it was expected that a women first of all would wear dresses –never “britches” – because of their interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5 “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment:

⁷¹ Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 285.

⁷² Ann Burlein, *Lift High the Cross: Where White Supremacy and the Christian Right Converge* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.” Pants threatened the gender line, and dresses to-the-knee tempted men. The mosquito-bar, a mesh see-through fabric, proved too provocative, as did powder and paint –all likely accoutrements they could not afford. As exemplified in the “Arkansas Special,” those seeking to recapture authority in the Dust District brought with them and adopted new positions regarding modesty, anti-modernism and found fertile soil for these ideas in California among low-class Pentecostals. Their social descent upon arriving in California dragged them to common ground and consequently they formed group solidarity. Modest dress, while upheld for doctrinal reasons, should still be understood in terms of socio-economic class.

Doctrinally charged music that reinforced a minority social identity continued to find strong resonance in the Dust District long after the dust had settled. In 2007 the song “I’m a Pentecostal” emerged from Stockton, a site where the stern-mindedness of PAJC thought flourished after PCI thinkers had been quashed or expelled.⁷³ Lyrics in the verses such as “/We've been known to get wild, and let our hair hang down/” and “/There's millions who have come, and millions on the way/ They're leaving there dead churches for this Pentecostal faith/” reinforce the social and dimension of the strong doctrinal proclamation that comprises the chorus “/I'm a Pentecostal, I am not ashamed /Just read the book of Acts, we are still the same/ We worship only one God, Jesus is his name/We are Apostolic in every way.” The chorus evokes a sense of imagined apostolic authenticity (“just read the book of Acts, we are still the same”). The restorationist impulse of Pentecostals drove them to zealously attempt to restore the practices of the early church especially those described in the book of Acts.⁷⁴ These sorts of claims in the

⁷³ Fudge, *Christianity without a Cross*, 175-179.

⁷⁴ Generally speaking, Pentecostals employed a narrative theology to interpret the events in the *Acts of the Apostles* as having as much theological significance as the various epistles. Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 23-26.

music of Pentecostal worship in the Central Valley offered an anchoring stance and apology against critics. The term “the old paths” simultaneously captured anti-modern stances and the appeal to be as “authentic” as the earliest Christians. Pentecostals from various denominations employed this term to decry changes and seek the restoration of something that had been lost.⁷⁵

Conclusion

The Old Paths: Authority and Authenticity

Pentecostals’ appeal to authority largely rested on the notion of the “old paths,” a ubiquitous term that evoked an imagined past instead of any definite tangible historical referent. The utterance of this trope invoked a sanctified view of the past. And since it cited a Jeremiad (“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16) it carried special meaning. Sermons such as those preached at Full Gospel Tabernacle of Bakersfield constituted part of a larger cultural preaching dynamic. Reverend Floyd Hawkin’s Sunday-morning sermon “The Old Paths,” announced in the city newspaper struck a conservative chord.⁷⁶ This chord set the tune (and tone) for the larger conservative work of hard preaching in which preachers would summon imagery through anecdotes and affirm an anti-modernist stance. The invocation of the “old paths” typified early Pentecostalism’s “primitivist impulse.” In good Pentecostal fashion, they dubbed Sunday night church meetings “evangelistic services.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Laity and clergy from almost every Pentecostal denomination penned letters, teachings, and exhortations which summoned the “old paths.” For a prime example in the Church of God (Cleveland) see “Ask for the Old Paths” *Church of God Evangel*, (Sept. 5, 1936), 3;

⁷⁶ *Bakersfield Californian* (February 18, 1942).

⁷⁷ Pentecostal Tabernacle of Bakersfield California is one of many example of churches that advertised evening “Evangelistic Services” see *Bakersfield Californian* (Feb. 21, 1942).

Following up on his sermon on the “Old Paths” for the evening service, Rev. Hawkins would tackle another topic that smacked of anti-modernity: “They Will Not Be Persuaded.”

Through the practices of preaching and writing, the “old path” acquired the status of a modern mythical practice. De Certeau defines myth as “a fragmented discourse which is articulated on the heterogeneous practices of a society which also articulates them symbolically.”⁷⁸ The passage of “the old paths,” drawn from Jeremiah’s rebuke of the enemies of Israel, served as a ready-made chastisement for any wayward group. Literalist Pentecostal preachers employed a fiery homiletic and “citation” from scripture “as the ultimate weapon for making people believe.”⁷⁹ The old, it was assumed, was better. In anti-modern discourses, the old (or past) remained sanctified. Certeau reminds us of practices which make people believe: “the party carefully collects the relics of former convictions and, given this fiction of legitimacy, succeeds quite well in managing its affairs. It only has to multiply the citation of these phantom witnesses.”⁸⁰ Pentecostals throughout the Dust District constructed a narrative of lost authority based on relics of former convictions. The ubiquity of Okie-influenced churches in the Central Valley stands as a testament to the region’s battles where Okies ultimately held sway over their “compromising” Pentecostal predecessors. On this Pentecostal palimpsest Okie Pentecostals would inscribe a fiction of legitimacy they called the “old paths.” This apparatus to “make people believe” allowed preachers and laity to cite a mythical code of moral and behavioral conduct that one could hardly deconstruct.

An appeal to the “old paths” buttressed the steadfast practices of manipulating marginalization, holiness teachings, hard preaching, confrontational engagement, and hardliner

⁷⁸ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 133-134.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

hymns performances. The so-called ‘denominal world’ proved too cold and dead for enthusiastic Pentecostals up and down the valley.⁸¹ “Compromisers” of the pioneering polyglot generation acquiesced to worldliness and weakness, and symptoms of this were golfing with business men in Modesto and teaching the “Light Doctrine” of salvation at WABC.⁸² Notions of holiness assumed more pronounced sectarian dimensions as new arrivals sought to recapture authority by ordering the social in alignment with the “old paths.” Both in oral and discursive mediums, hard preaching complemented the cogency of these stances. The culture of hard preaching extended into the larger public space where volatile Pentecostal confrontations were not infrequent. If the oratorical and discursive arena of preaching and scriptural debate was not enough, hardliner hymns provided a sensory backbone to reinforce the messages. Sung in genres closely associated with music “from home,” the hardliner hymns delivered “strong” content in rhythms and melodies familiar to migrants. The long term consequences of this stern-minded morality are still heavily evident today in the Central Valley. From Stockton to Bakersfield California, this mini-Bible belt remains tightly fastened.

⁸¹ For deployment of the word “Cold” see Wilson, “Religious Institutions,” 251, 256, 262,

⁸² Fudge, *Christianity without a Cross*, 152, 175-176.

Conclusion: New Homes and Old Boundaries

Again enter the religious landscape of the San Joaquin Valley. The observations of two historians offer windows into Pentecostals' (dis)placement in the post-1960s era.

“The cacophonous sounds of machinery are everywhere in the rural air: irrigation pumps, tractors, tomato harvesters, helicopter spraying herbicides, the roar of a cotton gin, the scream of a black supercharged Chevy painted with red swirling flames, carrying migrant workers on to the next job. On every hand one finds a loose miscellany of buildings, crops, and other artifacts scattered across the landscape. The Vineyard Chapel of the Pentecostal Church of God. Our lady of Guadalupe [sic]. Rose of Sharon and True Light Gospel. Trinity Episcopal. Iglesia Bautista Mexicana. Cortesian Farms. Tenneco Farms. Zaragosa Market. Safeway Incorporated. The blue-green stucco Moctezuma Café. The drab pink Pioneer. Club Los 3 Aces Club. Progress Road. Seventh Standard Road. Brown and Bryant Agricultural Chemical plants. DiGiorgio Park in the town of Arvin, where old Mexican men sit and talk softly in the late afternoon.”¹

-Donald Worster (1985)

“This Okie subculture survives today. It is most apparent in the San Joaquin Valley, where so many of the Dust Bowl migrants made their homes. Visit Bakersfield one of the surrounding town in the southern portion of the valley near where Steinbeck's Joad family was supposed to have settled. These days a large Hispanic population shares these communities. But talk to the Anglos, especially in the working-class neighborhoods. The accents are Oklahoman and Texan, and they come not just from aging expatriates of the Dust Bowl states but also from their California-born children and grandchildren, indeed from Anglos of all sorts of backgrounds. Notice the churches. Bakersfield, a city of about 280,000 people, claims more than four hundred of them, mostly Pentecostals, Southern Baptist, or other evangelical Protestant denominations. The commercial establishments give forth other cultural clues, especially the coffee shops with their Dr. Pepper signs out front, their jukeboxes filled with country-western hits, and their menus featuring chicken-fried steak, chili, biscuits and gravy. The political climate is also revealing. Experts consider this one of the state's critical swing district. Strongly democratic in registration, the area votes for conservatives of either party who talk tough on defense, crime, and moral issues and who stay away from minority causes like school busing or Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers.”²

-James Gregory (1989)

¹ Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992 – 1985 orig.), 6.

² James Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), xvi-xvii.

As hinted in the above observations, Pentecostals could be found in almost every city of the Central Valley. Mexican and Okie Pentecostals continued to reap the results of their prior evangelism efforts. The two opening quotes attest to the ubiquity of Pentecostalism in the San Joaquin Valley and show how its religious institutions maintained staying power in the larger Central Valley. Bakersfield boasts more churches per capita than any other city in California. These same signage markers (read: social signifiers) that clued Worster and Gregory into the pervasiveness of the cultures of migration and religion in the social soil also left deep impressions on me and informed this study on Pentecostalism, race, and agriculture.

Conservative Shifts: The Schismatic Stratum Surfaces

California's Cross explains why Okie and Mexican Pentecostalism (subaltern religious traditions) flourished in the Central Valley (a site of industrialized agriculture). I argue that the simultaneous processes of the racialization of Okies and Mexicans and the marginalization of Pentecostals in the context of Depression, New Deal, and Bracero Era industrial farming (an opprobrious site of marginal poverty) provided oppositional forces that ultimately strengthened schismatic Pentecostals' resolve to assert their cultural and religious mandates. *California's Cross* shows how these subaltern groups endured different processes of social discrimination, religious marginalization, and historical erasure, but nevertheless prevailed to become a conservative religious force in the Central Valley. Their zealous efforts to maintain distinct social identity markers (which they called "holiness standards") offered a sense of group

belonging (making homes), and their successful conversions allowed them to play active social roles (crossing boundaries).³

I have bored down into the “schismatic strata” (the lower half of Goldschmidt’s denominational stratification)⁴ in order to excavate the agency of subaltern migrant workers. I used biographies, periodicals, oral histories, photographs, and denominational accounts to identify this overlooked schismatic strata while using the tools of cultural historians to examine the historical and cultural samples. I found that discriminated ethnic groups (Okies and Mexicans) used pronounced socio-religious identity markers (backed by charismatic preaching and enthusiastic worship) of a distasteful religious movement in order to resist cracking or crumbling under the pressure of denominational respectability and the era’s dire economic circumstances. At an ostensibly unlikely time (Great Depression, New Deal, and Bracero Program Era) an overlooked group of schismatic Pentecostals solidified their presence in the Central Valley, a site which in reality offered a social soil arable for the cultivation of religious fervor. Mexican Pentecostalism took root in the Central Valley despite the nation’s implementation of xenophobic laws (the Great Repatriation and Operation Wetback) and at a time when a majority of Mexican Pentecostals entered the state as invisible workers subsumed into the landscape. Okie Pentecostalism flourished despite the characterization of Okies as the state’s problem and the caricature of Pentecostalism as a “Holy Rollerism” of disinherited folks. Mexican and Okie Pentecostals demonstrated the agentic roles of subaltern religious folks in the states most opprobrious labor sector: industrial farming.

³ Here I draw from Thomas Tweed’s concepts of homes and boundaries in Thomas Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 54.

⁴ Walter Goldschmidt “Class Denominationalism in Rural California Churches” *American Journal of Sociology* (Jan, 1944) 49:4, 348-355.

California's Cross accounts for why Worster and Gregory noted the presence of Pentecostals throughout the Valley; it offers the historical backdrop of Merle Haggard's Bakersfield, recently described as "a hot, dusty hell hole of oilrigs, cotton fields and Pentecostal Sundays."⁵ Throughout *California's Cross* I have shown how the "schismatic stratum" emerged as a crosscutting (socially transgressive) religious force and later comprised the bedrock of Pentecostalism, forming a cornerstone of the larger "conservative ethnic migration." This conservatism characterized the religious and political life of the Central Valley. This study is the first to offer a religious history of the Central Valley and to offer a comparative study of race, religion, and migratory cultures. I have limited my unit of analysis to a region of California through which ethnic labor migrations flowed and inevitably mixed, especially as they drank from the same Pentecostal waters. In the post-1960s era we can clearly observe how Okie and Mexican Pentecostals streams converged in the Central Valley. My study points us to the historical and cultural headwaters.

The dearth of historiography on Pentecostalism in the Central Valley compelled me to begin *California's Cross* with the roots and routes that the "schismatic strata" Pentecostals inhabited and then to follow up with the cultural shaping forces of the strata. Chapter 1 (*Avivamientos, Aleluyas y Trabajo Agrícola*) examined how *Apostólicos* built a network of churches in southern California and then from the Imperial Valley commissioned ministers to plant new churches in the Central Valley. In 1929 *Apostólico* leaders established the North District in order to better oversee the affairs of the denomination in the Central Valley, where both the state's agricultural sector and the denomination's evangelistic work was expanding most rapidly. The year 1929 signaled the beginning of hard times for future Okies, as the Great

⁵ Robert Price, "A Lion in Winter but He Still Has One Hell of a Roar" *Bakersfield Californian* (March 15, 2014)

Depression's market failures exacerbated the condition of low-yielding farms overrun by dust storms. Okies (from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas) became associated with Depression Era representations even though only a small minority of Okies took refuge from the actual dust storms. Chapter 2 (*Dust District*) showed how Okies' low socio-economic class status and preference for strict revivalist sort of preaching offered them few options in the Central Valley other than to fill Pentecostals pews and pulpits. The work of researchers in the 1940s showed how these "schismatic strata" Pentecostals heavily evangelized in industrial farming towns. Dust District Pentecostals confronted and eventually numerically won out against a pioneering generation of polyglot and cosmopolitan Pentecostals. Chapter 3 (*Farmworker Frames*) posed challenges to national photographic narratives. The U.S. government's documentation of Depression-Era and Wartime America had drawn national attention to the fields of California and the plight of white Americans in the fields. Few photographs, however, captured the "schismatic stratum" and none showed the cultural vibrancy of *Apostólicos* (the very bottom stratum), which I show was quite rich and traceable through their own photographs. Mexicans had long been portrayed as part of the built environment of landscape, as faceless and nameless stoop laborers. Chapter 4 (*Activists and Aleluyas*) examined the religious dimensions of Chicano activism in the years before Cesar Chavez and Reies López Tijerina garnered national headlines. Mexican farmworkers did not enjoy an expeditious exodus out of the fields like the Okies did, and well after the postwar economic boom Mexicans continued to occupy the jobs in the fields. Unlike Okies who never expected to stay in the fields in the first place, Mexicans rallied around labor organizers to reform the conditions of farm labor. *Apostólicos* inspired Cesar Chavez's to use music in his unions and *Apostólicos* played a large role in Reies López Tijerina's utopian experiment. Ironically, *Apostólicos* sparked the fires of radical Chicano leaders, but did not stick

around to fuel the nationwide conflagrations. Second-generation Mexican and Okies Pentecostals came of age in the post-1960s. Chapter 5 (*Dust, Dreams, and Discipline*) shows how by that time Okie Pentecostals had established a major cultural foothold and, through various cultural apparatuses became the authoritative voice of English-speaking Pentecostalism in the Central Valley. The “Old Boundaries” and “New Homes” section of this conclusion considers how they soon turned their evangelistic gaze toward English-speaking Mexicans who had taken jobs outside of agriculture. (Much of this cultural mixing occurred after Okies and English-speaking Mexicans emerged from the agricultural work and is thus beyond the scope of the preceding chapters.) The same sort of hardline cultural authority that Okie sought to capture became an idol/totem for English-speaking Mexican Pentecostal mimesis. Defending boundaries meant that the “old paths” (chapter 5) would be challenged by both modernity and economic prosperity.

Old Boundaries

I concluded the previous chapter (*Dust, Dreams, and Disciplines*) by suggesting that the mini Bible belt is fastened most tightly from Stockton to Bakersfield; this is true – to varying degrees – with respect to Okie Pentecostals and *Apostólicos*. Walter Goldschmidt noted that the Assembly of God churches comprised a middle level of the lower half of his denominational model. Today the Assemblies of God boasts some of the largest churches in cities throughout the Central Valley. Pastors and members have long sloughed off the label of schismatic, as they have entered the civic life of cities. Most recently, however, their conservative religious-political agenda has come into conflict with progressive values.⁶

⁶ “Police Chaplain Fired” *Stockton Record* (Feb. 24, 2016)
<http://www.recordnet.com/article/20160224/NEWS/160229800>

Most Assembly of God congregations have followed the path toward social respectability and have sloughed off the Okie stigma. Leaders of the Assembly of God began to question the “plain dress” gospel and social markers that seemingly gave the appearance of a forgone time in the Postwar Era.⁷ Their detractors would have described this social uplift, “going ‘denominal’,” “that way;” or following the “denominational world;” academics labeled it “approaching the denominational pattern.”⁸ Recall Pastor Donald Weston of the Bethel First Assemblies of God in Modesto. The same pastor, described in the 1940s as “a splendid fellow...popular throughout the community...goes golfing with professional men,” planted the seeds for The House Church, Modesto’s prominent megachurch. The other schismatic churches in Modesto and Bakersfield followed similar trajectories, but it is still not uncommon to find the once-schismatic churches in the ‘Okieville’ and poorest districts of town.⁹ Members of larger congregations even settled into neighborhood enclaves near their home churches.¹⁰ Thus, a socio-economic index does not entirely reveal the deeper historical patterns created by the Okie migration. At the same time that many Assembly of God churches moved towards denominational respectability, Oneness Pentecostals sought to further distinguish themselves.

⁷ Edith Blumhoffer uses the term “plain dress” gospel, see Edith Blumhoffer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana-Champaign: The University of Illinois Press, 1993), 153.

⁸ James Bright Wilson, “Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations among Certain Agricultural Workers in the Central Valley of California, US, 1944” (PhD, Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1942), 253.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 457. ‘Okieville’ in the Central Valley differ from Depression Era “Hooverville.” Okieville are entire neighborhoods where poverty persisted well beyond the Depression Era. Shacktowns sprouted throughout the valley, but in today’s ‘Okieville’ there are permanent houses, schools, stores. Garden Acres is a census designated site in Stockton, California, but it is much better known as Okieville. In Tulare the Highland Acres neighborhood is popularly known as “Okieville.” The city of Oildale (birthplace of Merle Haggard) maintains the same legacy of impoverished whites who have Okie roots. The Airport District of Modesto (*chapters 2 & 5*) is known as “Little Okie.” For an example of an Okieville in contemporary media discourse see, see “As Wells Dry Up Calif. County Aims to Streamline Solutions for Water” *National Public Radio* (May 26, 2015) accessed on April 7, 2016: <http://www.npr.org/2015/05/26/409672031/as-wells-dry-up-calif-county-aims-to-streamline-solutions-for-water>; Nichole Crowder, “How a small drought town in California’s Central Valley is weathering the state’s massive water shortage” *Washington Post* (September 15, 2015) accessed on April 7, 2015: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-sight/wp/2015/09/15/california-drought-town/>

¹⁰ This is the case in Stockton and Bakersfield, see author interview with Donna Siebold interview; author correspondence with Hermina Martínez.

Oneness Pentecostal pastors generally still resist this denominational trajectory and have long criticized Assemblies of God for their abandonment of “holiness.” Both white and Mexican Oneness Pentecostals in the Central Valley largely practice abstention from “worldliness” to a degree observed in few other regions. (Perhaps only scattered regions in Texas and Oklahoma maintain similar standards.) The body is understood as a “temple of the Holy Ghost “therefore it should not be adorned with worldly accoutrements. It is still not uncommon to find a Pentecostal church in almost every sizeable city of the Central Valley where the clergy and laity strive to maintain a distinct social identity by their manner of modest attire, a type of “plain dress” gospel.¹¹ Many of these practitioners will not wear any clothes that immodestly reveals the body (including shorts, cap sleeved –and in some cases, short sleeved – shirts), garments of the opposite gender (women wear dresses and skirts only and men wear pants). Jewelry is strongly prohibited to the extent that many condemn the wearing of wedding rings and bands. White Oneness Pentecostal women generally do not cut their hair and refrain from wearing any form of makeup; dresses are generally below the knee and fitted clothes are discouraged. Such proscriptions against men using hair spray or too many products arises from an anxiety over maintaining boundaries for masculinity. Males are asked to keep a clean look (parted or short hair). The majority of prohibitions, to be sure, fall on women, but the claim is made that women are the public testimony of the church. The defense for holiness includes bans on sporting events, secular music, theatres, and television. A “compromise” regarding the last of these precipitated a large defection from the United Pentecostal Church International, a denomination that 15 years prior passed a resolution which mandated that ministers sign a yearly affirmation statement as a way to screen ministers who did not align with a hardline stance on soteriology. The boundary

¹¹ Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 153.

lines established in the Dust District illumine fissures within the national and even international (some Western Apostolic Bible College alumni became missionaries) denomination.

The fallout from the 1992 UPCI Ministerial Affirmation Statement controversy revealed old lines of division within the denomination. Thomas Fudge’s meticulously documented that the bulk of ministers and key leaders who defected from the denomination hailed from churches once affiliated with the Pentecostal Church Incorporated which maintained a stronghold in the U.S. West. A staunch proponent of the resolution and co-author of its preamble hailed from Kerman, California, a then thriving church of the Dust District.¹² Chapter 2 (*Dust District*) revealed how PAJC ministers outnumbered and overwhelmed their PCI counterparts and transformed the Central Valley into a bastion of ministers who maintained a hardline stance on the Jesus-Name doctrine of salvation. Another denominational-wide controversy in 2007 revealed the degree of anti-worldly stances maintained by clergy in the Central Valley. Ministers voted to allow churches to advertise on television at the 2007 General Conference of the United Pentecostal Church International. The passing of the resolution resulted in the withdrawal of ministers, especially throughout the valley, a conservative bastion of Oneness Pentecostalism. Some ministers joined the newly-formed Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship and others became independent. “The Church that Tells it Like It Is Because We Care” in Fresno is an example of a church that took the independent route.¹³ The “no-compromise” worldview found acceptance among like-minded ministers throughout California –especially in the Central Valley.

New Homes

¹² See chapter 5 on the resolution in Thomas Fudge, *Christianity without a Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism* (Universal Publishers, 2003), 200-275.

¹³ This no-compromise, tell-it-like-it-is stance is captured in the church motto from the 1970s. *Our heritage: Western District of the United Pentecostal Church* (n.p., n.d. ca. 1973), 150.

Second and third generation English-speaking *Apostólicos* gradually came under the influence of the Dust District Pentecostals. Leaders from the newly formed United Pentecostal Church (1945) recruited emerging Mexican and Chicano leaders into their bible colleges beginning in 1946. The notably stern-minded leaders from Apostolic College in Tulsa, OK (*chapter 2*) hosted key *Apostólico* leaders until the Bible College dissolved in the 1950s. Western Apostolic Bible College's (WABC) location in Stockton (unlike Tulsa and the other schools) was in the orbit of *Apostólicos* in California. The first Mexican American students enrolled in 1960. The only Spanish-language Oneness Pentecostal bible institute was the *Instituto Teológico Apostólico Internacional* but it was across the border in Mexico City and run by the Apostolic Assembly's sister denomination *la Iglesia Apostólica*. (The cultural rift caused by the upward social trajectory of Mexico-based movement leaders was symptomatic of growing tensions with proletarian Chicanos in the U.S.). Mexico City was an option for so few and Mexican students were being heavily courted by white Pentecostals Bible schools (especially WABC), thus in 1965 the Apostolic Assembly launched *Colegio Bíblico Apostólico Nacional* (CBAN) in Hayward, only 60 miles from Stockton.¹⁴ CBAN offered bilingual training and was fortuitously located in the East Bay, an entry point for post-1965 Latin American immigration.

A noteworthy feature about the Central Valley is the Texan twang heard from many white Pentecostal churches; the forceful style of Anglo preaching became worthy of imitation and largely characterized the Central Valley.¹⁵ One does not need to look too far to find a Mexican inflecting words like a southerner when under the “anointing” of the Holy Ghost.

¹⁴ Ramirez “Migrating Faiths: A Social and Cultural History of Pentecostalism in the U.S. Mexico Borderlands” (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2005) 169-170; Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the U.S. and Mexico in the Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 160-161.

¹⁵Ramirez “Migrating Faith,” 260; in the second opening quote Gregory notes how Okies and their children carried the Texas and Oklahoman accent.

Researchers in the 1940s noted that Okies and Mexicans rarely mixed in religious settings.¹⁶ Bible Colleges, however, placed Okie and Mexican Pentecostals in overlapping social circles; this overlapping became more common as second and third generation Pentecostals learned English and expanded their evangelism beyond monolingual (Spanish) ministry. Bilingual services are not uncommon and the Spanish-language ministry of traditionally white denominations (Assemblies of God, Church of God, and United Pentecostal Church) represents their greatest growth. Latin American Pentecostal immigrants today continue to reap the seeds of piety planted by an early generation of Mexican Pentecostals.

Worster's cultural clues reflected some of the demographic shifts, but the names of churches may be deceiving. It is not uncommon to find predominately Latino congregations pastored by white men and Latinos assuming pastoral roles in mostly white denominations. Worster's cruise down the Central Valley was prescient in other ways. For example, Latinos account for over 90 % of the population of Arvin, a town that once boomed as a result of the Okie migration. The Okie Pentecostal churches founded in the 1940s either relocated or now serve Spanish-speaking believers. Mexicans still sit and talk quietly in the evenings in DiGogrio Park in Arvin; but a noisy mass of *Aleluyas* sing praise across the street. (Here one may purchase handmade foods prepared by an *hermana* donning a long *velo* and modest attire.) Up the road in Bakersfield, *Apostólicos* affiliated with the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus congregate in over half a dozen bilingual churches, and their Mexico-based counterparts in *La Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesus* conduct services only in Spanish. One can spot another Spanish speaking Pentecostal (Apostolic) church at the southern tip of the city; a sizeable and recently constructed *La Luz del Mundo* church sits in the middle of an arid agricultural field.

¹⁶ Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1947), 135.

Small cities along Highway-99 advertise their churches on signs as you enter and many (in some cases most) of the signs are in Spanish and many are for Pentecostals churches. These are the telltale signs that a “Latino Reformation” is underway. The growth of the “schismatic strata” allowed for a distinctly conservative culture to flourish, one that now welcomes new waves of migration from countries of Latin America with large Pentecostal populations. As the Central Valley becomes home to more religious migrants from Latin America, a story awaits to be told regarding how Latinos are becoming the predominant ethnic and religious force. We await to see how their influence is shaping the valley differently from the ways that Okies did. To reprise and rephrase the words of the hitchhiker from Arvin, “[i]f it weren’t for Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, [and Latin America] there wouldn’t be much of California, would there?”

Bibliography

Books, Book Articles, and Journal Articles

Albanese, Catherine. *America: Religion and Religions*. Beverly, MA: Wadsworth, 1995.

Alexander Estrelda. *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.

Alfaro, Sammy. *Divino Compañero: Toward a Hispanic-Pentecostal Christology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011

Almaguer, Tomás. *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Anderson, Allan. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Anderson, Robert Mapes. *Vision of the Disinherited*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007.

Baldwin, James. "If Black English Isn't a Language Then Tell Me, What Is?" in Dohra Ahmad, *Rotten English: A Literary Anthology*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Ballester, Carl. *How High My Mountain*. Bloomington, CA: by the author, 1991.

Barrera, Mario. *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

Bartleman, Frank. *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: by the author, 1925.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994)

Blawie, Patricia Bell. *Tijerina and the Land Grants: Mexican American in the Struggle for Their Heritage*. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Blumhoffer, Edith. *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture*. Urbana-Champaign: The University of Illinois Press, 1993.

- Bonnefield, Paul. *The Dust Bowl: Men, Dirt, and Depression*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979.
- Brown, Frank Burch, *Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life*: (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Burlein, Ann. *Lift High the Cross: Where White Supremacy and the Christian Right Converge*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Busto, Rudy. *King Tiger: The Religious Vision of Reies López Tijerina*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.
- Cardoso, Lawrence *Mexican Emigration to the United States 1897-1931*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1980.
- Carrasco, David. *Religions in Mesoamerica*. Long Grove, IL, Waveland Press, 2014.
- Carrier, Steven, ed. *A Man and Woman Passed This Way Blessed of God: The Life of Isaac Hillard (I.H.) Terry*. by the author, 1996.
- Cletus, Daniel. *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers 1870-1941*. Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Cohen, Deborah. *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Curtis, Heather. "God is not Affected by the Depression: Pentecostal Missions during the 1930s." in *Church History*, 80 no. 3, (2011): 579-589.
- Dalton, Frederick John, *The Moral Vision of César Chávez*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003.
- Dawson, Rita. *25 Years in a Place Called Weedpatch*. n.p. n.d.
- Dayton, Donald. *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Hendrickson Publishers Inc. 1996)
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.
- De Sassure, Ferdinand. Translated by Wade Baskins. *Course in General Linguistics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Del Campo, Ismael Martin. *Cosechando en el Field: A Brief History of the Apostolic Assembly*. Long Beach, CA; Editorial Nueva Vision, 2004.

Dochuk, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. New York: W&W Norton Press, 2011.

Ebel, Jonathan. "In Ever Cup of Bitterness, Sweetness: California Christianity in the Great Depression." *Church History*. 80 no. 3 (2011): 590-599.

Egan, Timothy. *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of those who Survived the Great American Dust Bow*. (New York: Mariner Books, 2006).

Espinosa, Gaston. *Latino Pentecostals in America: Faith and Politics in Action*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014);

_____. "Francisco Olazábal and Latino Pentecostal Revivalism in the Borderlands," in *Embodying the Spirit: New Perspectives on North American Revivalism*, ed. Michael McClymond (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

_____. "Francisco Olazábal: Charisma, Power, and Faith Healing in the Borderlands" in James Goff and Grant Wacker, eds., *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002).

Espinosa, Gaston, Vergilio Elizondo, Jesse Miranda, "Introduction: U.S. Latino Religions and Faith-Based Political, Civic, and Social Action," in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism*. New York: Oxford University, 2005.

Ewart, Frank. *Phenomenon of Pentecost: A History of the Latter Rain*. Houston, TX: Herald Publishing House, 1947.

French, Talmadge. *Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism: G. T. Haywood and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World 1901-1931*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014.

Fudge, Thmoas. *Christianity without a Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism*. Parkland, FL: Universal Publishers, 2003.

Galarza, Ernesto. *Merchants of Labor: The Bracero Story*, (McNally and Lofton, 1964)

Gamio, Manuel. *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story*. Chicago: The University of California Press, 1931.

Gaxiola-Gaxiola, Manuel. *La Serpiente Y la Paloma: Historia, teología y análisis de la Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús, la denominación Pentecostal más antigua de México 1914-2014*. Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús, 2007.

Gill, Kenneth. *Toward a Contextualized Theology for the Third World: The Emergence and Development of Jesus' Name Pentecostalism in Mexico*. Bern, Switzerland, Peter Lang International Publishers, 1994.

Goff, James R. *Fields white unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1988.

Goldschmidt, Walter. *As You Sow*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1947.

_____. "Class Denominationalism in Rural California Churches" *American Journal of Sociology*. 49 no. 4, (January 1944): 348-355.

Gregory, James. *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

_____. *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Gutierrez, David. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican American, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. University of California Press, 1995.

Guerin-Gonzalez, Catherine. *Mexican Workers and the American Dream: Immigration, Repatriation and California Farm Labor 1909-1939*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

Haney, Olive. *The Man of the Hills – Served in the Valley: The Biography of Clyde J. Haney*. By the author, 1985.

Haslam, Gerald. *The Other California*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 1993.

Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Hoffman, Abraham. *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939*. University of Arizona Press, 1974.

Jacobsen, Douglas. *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006.

_____. *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Jenkinson, Michael. *Tijerina: Land Grant Conflict in New Mexico*. Albuquerque: Paisano Press, 1968.

Johns, Cheryl Bridges. *Pentecostal Formation: Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publications, 2010).

Johnston, Robin. *Howard Goss: A Pentecostal Life*. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press Academic, 2010.

Lange, Dorteia and Paul Taylor. *American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939.

Leon, Luis. *The Political Spirituality of Cesar Chavez: Crossing Religious Borders*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.

Levy, Jacques E. *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckoning in the New West*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2000)

_____. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.

Lloyd-Moffett, Steven R. "The Mysticism and Social Action of Cesar Chavez." In Espinosa, Gaston, Vergilio Elizondo, Jesse Miranda, eds. 35-51. *Latino Religions and Civic Activism*. New York: Oxford University, 2005.

MacRoberts, Lian. *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1988.

Maffly-Kipp, Laurie F. "Eastward Ho!: American Religion from the Perspective of the Pacific Rim." In Thomas A. Tweed, *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 127-148.

Meier, Matt and Feliciano Rivera, *The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1994.

Meinig, Donald W. "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene" in D. W. Meinig and John Brinckerhoff Jackson eds. 33-49. *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Mitchell, Don. *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

_____. *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2012.

McWilliams, Carey. *California: The Great Exception*. Peregrine Smith Inc.: Santa Barbara, 1976.

_____. *Factories in the Field*. Santa Barbara, 1975.

Morgan, Dan. *Rising in the West: The True Story of an "Okie" Family from the Great Depression through the Reagan Years*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

Morris, Aldon. *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press, 1986.

Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Ortega, Jose. *Mis Memorias en la Iglesia y la Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús*. Indio, CA: by the author, 1998.

Owens, Robert R. *Speak to the Rock: The Azusa Street Revival; Its Roots and Its Message*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001.

Pedraza, Silvia. "Beyond Black and White: Latinos and Social Science Research on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America." *Social Science History*. 24 no. 4. (2000): 697-726.

Poloma, Margaret. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*, Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

Ramírez, Daniel. *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

_____. "Public Lives in American Hispanic Churches: Expanding the Paradigm." In Espinosa, Gaston, Vergilio Elizondo, Jesse Miranda, eds. 177-195. *Latino Religions and Civic Activism*. New York: Oxford University, 2005.

_____. "Antonio Castañeda Nava: Charisma, Culture, and Caudillismo" in eds., James R. Goff Jr. & Grant Wacker, *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Studies*. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002.

Rabasa, Jose. *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

Reed, David. *In Jesus Name: the History and Beliefs of Oneness Pentecostals*. Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2007.

Reisler, Mark. *By the Sweat of Their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900-1940*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976.

Robeck, Cecil. *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006.

- Roll, Jared. "From Revolution to Reaction: Early Pentecostalism, Radicalism, and Race in Southeast Missouri 1910-1930," *Radical History Review*, 90 (2004): 5-29.
- Sanchez, George. *Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles 1900-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Scott, James. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Walsh Arlene Sanchez. *Latino Pentecostal Identity: Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Shoemake, Blanche Faye. *Blanche Faye: Pioneer Pentecostal Experiences as Witnessed Through the Eyes of a Child*. Chula Vista, published by author, 2007.
- Smith, Timothy. "Religion and Ethnicity in America." *American Historical Review*. 83 (December 1978): 1155-1185.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Picador, 2001.
- Starr, Kevin. *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Stein, Walter. *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973.
- Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Third edition. New York: Penguin Book, 2002.
- Stephens Randall J. *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Stern, Alexandra Minna. "Buildings, Boundaries and Blood: Medicalization and Nation Building on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930." *Hispanic American Historical Review*. 80 no. 3 (1999): 463-501.
- Synan, Vinson. *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997.
- Taylor, Paul. *Mexican labor in U.S.* Vol. 1, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1928.
- _____ *Mexican labor in U.S.* Vol. 2, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1928)
- _____ *On the Ground in the Thirties*. Peregrine Smith Books, 1983.
- Paul S. Taylor and Tom Vasey, "Historical Background of California Farm Labor" *Rural Sociology*. 1 no. 3 (September 1936): 281-295.

Tijerina, Reies López. Translated by Jose Angel Gutierrez. *They Called Me King Tiger” My Struggle for the Land and Our Rights*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2000.

Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Tweed, Thomas. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Tyson, James L. *The Early Pentecostal Revival: History of Twentieth-Century Pentecostals and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, 1901-1930*. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1990.

Valdez, A.C. *Fire on Azusa Street*. Costa Mesa, CA: Gift Publications, 1980.

Varzally, Allison, *Making a Non-White America: Californians Coloring Outside Ethnic Lines, 1925-1955*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.

Wallace, Mary ed. *Pioneer Pentecostal Women Vol. 1* ed. Mary Wallace. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1981.

_____ *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1984.

Wacker, Grant. *Early Pentecostal and American Culture*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001.

Watt, Alan. *Farm Workers and the Churches: The Movement in California and Texas*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2010.

Wexler, Laura. “Seeing Sentiment: Photography, Race, and the Innocent Eye” in *The Familial Gaze*. Hanover, NH: the University Press of New England, 1999.

Williams, Joseph. "The Pentecostalization of Christian Zionism" in *Church History*. 84 no. 1(2015): 159-94.

Worster, Worster. *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

_____ *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and Growth of the American West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Theses and Dissertations

Gaston Espinosa, *Borderland Religion: Los Angeles and the Origin of Latino Pentecostalism in the United States, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, 1900-1945*. PhD diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 1999.

Hanson, Rita. *Educating Elementary School Children of Seasonal-Migrant Agricultural Workers in San Joaquin Valley*. Ed.D diss., Leland Stanford Junior University, 1949.

Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faiths: A Social and Cultural History of Pentecostalism in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. PhD diss., Duke University, 2005.

Sarah Wald, *The Nature of Citizenship: Race, Citizenship, and Nature in Representations of Californian Agricultural Labor*. PhD diss., Brown University, 2009

Watt, Alan. *The Religious Dimensions of the Farm Workers Movement*. PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1999.

Wilson, James Bright, "Religious Leaders, Institutions and Organizations among Certain Agricultural Workers in the Central Valley of California, US, 1944." PhD, diss., University of Southern California, 1942.

Periodicals

Apostolic Faith (Los Angeles)

Bridal Call

*The Church of God Evangel**

The Covered Wagon

*The Christian Evangel/Weekly Evangel/Pentecostal Evangel**

The Hub

Kings Trumpet

La Nube y el Fuego en el Desierto

*Meat in Due Season**

The Pentecostal Herald

*The Pentecostal Holiness Advocate**

*White Wing Messenger**

**accessed through the Consortium of Pentecostal Archives*

Newspapers and Media Outlets

Bakersfield Californian

Lamont Ledger

New York Times,

Sacramento Bee

Stockton record

Washington Post

National Public Radio

Minutes

Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God

Minutes of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World

Northern California Baptist 74th Annual Convention Minutes

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Church of God (Tennessee)

Denominational Accounts

A History of Glad Tidings Church San Francisco

Declare His Glory: Southern California Assemblies of God Celebrating 75 Years of Ministry 1914-1994

Historia de la Asamblea Apostolica de la fe en Cristo Jesús, 1916-1966. Sal's Printing Service: Mentone, CA, 1966.

Messenger of the Cross 1931-1932 Annual of the Glad Tidings Bible Institute

Our heritage: Western District of the United Pentecostal Church (n.p., n.d. ca. 1973)

50 Year Anniversary Sanger (n.p., 1981).

1966 Yearbook, Northern District Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus (Self-published, 1966)

Oral Histories

Ramirez, Demetrio. Interview with author, Pinedale, CA, February 2015.

Manzano, Eugenia. Interview with author, Modesto, CA, November 16, 2013.

Ortiz, Aniceto and Maria. Interview with author, Ceres, CA, November 9, 2013.

Bracamontes, Marta. Interview with author, San Bernardino, CA, March 2014

Samano, Gilbert. Interview with author, Escondido, CA, April 2013.

Newton, Gladine. Interview with author, February 2014.

Perez, Manuel. Interview with author, March 2015, Coral Gables, FL

Collections

Dust Bowl Migration Archive North Bay Regional and Special Collections, University Library, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

Special Collections, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California.

Center for the Study of Oneness Pentecostalism, Hazelwood, MO.

Manuel Vizcarra Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Manuel Gaxiola Collection, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

The Antonio Castañeda Nava Collection, Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus Headquarters.

Walter Goldschmidt Collection, Special Collections, University of California Los Angeles.

Reies López Tijerina, Center for the Study of the Southwest, University of New Mexico.

California Odyssey Dust Bowl Migration Archives, Walter Stein Library, California State University Bakersfield.

Microfilm, Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California

UFW Office of the President Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

Fred Ross Sr. Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

City Directories and State Data

Bakersfield City Directory

Delano City Directory

Madera City Directory

Department of Finance Records, Historical Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities in California, 1850–2010

Speeches and Interviews

Cesar Chavez, interviewed by Wendy Goepel, 1963.

Cesar Chavez, *The Mexican American and the Church*, Speech, Second Annual Mexican-American Conference, Sacramento CA, March 8-10, 1968.