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“The Ladies Are Warriors”: Latina Pentecostalism and Faith-Based Activism in New York City

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In this essay I examine the narratives of Puerto Rican Pentecostal women in ministry in New York City. They have led ministries that have sought to live and teach a holistic gospel.¹ They have been able to usher in some level of urban social transformation in their communities. These “Progressive Pentecostals” have simultaneously taken a traditional *vertical focus* on being more like Jesus and a *horizontal focus* that is demonstrated through Jesus’ ministry calling (Luke 4: 18–19).

Many black American Pentecostals, including Pastor James Forbes of New York City’s Riverside Church, call their ministry style “progressive Pentecostalism.”² This style blends a passion for transformative social action with an urgency to win souls to the Kingdom. Due to space, I have focused on Puerto Rican Pentecostal women.³

Latina Pentecostal activists have not allowed gender biases, fear, or other obstacles to hinder them from serving others. These activists have made major strides over the past few decades. Latina Pentecostals base their activism on Joel 2:28. They see it as a call to service where only God’s approval is needed. This call is setting them free to do Christian work, globally and locally—in the church and outside of it.

While it may be true that some Pentecostals fall into the stereotype that they are “so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good,” others have been actively engaged in social justice. In New York, evangelical men and women established faith-based nonprofit agencies or holistically-minded churches that have and continue to address some of the social ills in their communities.

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Latina Pentecostals' desires to impact society are rooted in their belief that God is concerned with the person as a whole. To them, it is not an option to sit idly and do nothing as people suffer. It was the call of God over their lives that moved them beyond the four walls of the church to depart altogether from traditional church ministry to do what some may have deemed "ungodly" work—addressing drug addiction, the HIV/AIDS crisis, the mental health issues, children with disabilities, and teen pregnancy.

Manoel de Mello, a Brazilian Pentecostal pastor whose followers number in the millions, reflects the Progressive Pentecostal mindset when he asked his listeners, "What good does it do to convert a million people if at the same time the devil unconverts ten million through hunger, disease and military dictatorship?" He went on to state, "these sort of things one can't overcome by holding wonderful religious services but by organizing one's forces and joining with others who have similar interests. We must join now with other Protestants and even with Roman Catholics to help each other."⁴

Contrary to stereotypes, the Latino Pentecostal movement has a social vision, although they never articulated their work in those terms. As such, they have been active serving their community. However, while the Puerto Rican Pentecostal community was familiar with addressing the end result of a problem, they were not used to challenging the systemic "structural sins." Therefore, if trying to help someone in the church led to critiquing the systems, the minister was considered to be *fuera de orden* (out of order) and plunging into unchartered and restricted territory.

As Gastón Espinosa and Dan Ramírez show elsewhere, the Latino Pentecostal movement has a tradition of social service by providing housing, food, and medical services for migrants and immigrants. Pentecostal ministries served as ad hoc social workers, taxi drivers, counselors, and relief service providers. They have assisted ex-convicts get jobs and helped welfare mothers purchase groceries. They felt that it was not their place as Christians to challenge the system at large because they were suspicious of legislatures. This is why Pentecostal ministries served jobless moms and starving households, instead of advocating for better policies that would have enabled these families to get the skills necessary to find permanent jobs.

The first generation of Latino Pentecostal leaders had a social vision of transforming the community primarily through '*Jesus y la palabra*' (Jesus and the Word) and not through advocacy, policy analysis, or engaging politicians in forums. This is the key difference between second- and third-generation Latino Puerto Rican Pentecostals. The younger emerging Latino Pentecostal population believe that just because a better world is expected, they should not accept all injustice with patience while waiting for the Lord's second coming. Rather, their hope is that they can do something about structural evil. Unlike the first generation who did not see that as an option because of their social, economic, or educational status, this emerging group is dealing with systemic and structural "sins" in addition to personal sin. They are more open to partnerships with secular institutions and non-Christians than the first generation was. For this reason, I call them "Progressive Pentecostals."

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Rev. Aimee García Cortese in the 1970s (Courtesy of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center)

As people who see themselves as servants of God, Progressive Pentecostals advocate for liberation against personal and structural sin.⁵ Some Latina faith-based activists have functioned like Progressive Pentecostals because they are able to translate their faith into social action. Although Progressive Pentecostalism begins in the worship experience, it finds its ultimate expression in community service.⁶ It is these Latinas that I seek to expose. I seek to demonstrate the dynamic effect of Puerto Rican Latina Pentecostals in New York City, as well as to explore their faith as they moved across denominational and socially constructed barriers to create holistic and organic models of leadership since the 1940s. The organizations these women have created, along with their model of ministry and their continued involvement in New York City civic life, has served as a source of encouragement to numerous emerging Latinas today. If the "whole" church is to take the "whole" gospel to the "whole" world, it must have a holistic spirituality. However, the Pentecostal mindset historically has been defined as one that ministers only to the individualistic and personal element, which makes it inner-directed and vertical. The missing element of social transformation (which includes social action, social service, and social witness) is outer-directed and horizontal.

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Nueva York: The Mosaic That Is

The granting of U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans in 1917 and the increased economic influence of America produced what we have come to know as the “great Puerto Rican migration.” By the early 1930s, New York City’s Latino population was predominately Puerto Rican.⁷ Then came the end of World War II, which began a new migration of Puerto Ricans to New York. The increase of Puerto Ricans from the “Enchanted Island” to New York was large. The Latino demographic profile began to change when in the late 1960s U.S. immigration laws and a host of other issues in Latin America began to prepare the way for a new migration of Cubans, Dominicans, Colombians, and other Latinos.

Today, the ethnic mosaic in New York City is very different. The 2000 census summary statistics from the New York Department of City Planning reported that among those of a single race, white non-Hispanics remained the largest group, accounting for 35 percent (2.80 million) of the city’s population. Hispanics were the largest single minority group, numbering a 27 percent share (2.16 million) of the population.⁸ Black or African Americans accounted for 24.5 percent, and Asian or Pacific Islanders for 9.8 percent. The numerical and percentage growth of the Hispanic community showed an increase of 377,043, or 21.1 percent; of that figure, the Bronx accounted for the highest percentage (49.5), which is attributed to the Puerto Rican community, followed by Dominicans in Manhattan at 20.6. However, this shows a steady decline from census statistics in 1960, which found that 80 percent of all Latinos in New York City were of Puerto Rican ancestry. This number continued to drop from 68 percent in 1970 to 61 percent in 1980 and to 50.3 percent in 1990. Some attribute the decrease to return migration to Puerto Rico, urban flight to the suburbs, and a change to warmer climates, particularly Florida. The Puerto Rican population decline in the city has been a focus of press attention, as people try to predict the future of the city’s growing and ethnically diverse population.⁹

There are now Latino communities in all New York City boroughs, and 27 percent of New Yorkers are identified in the census as Latinos. As mentioned previously, the Bronx accounts for the largest number of Latinos (644,705), followed by Manhattan (417,816), Queens (556,605), Brooklyn (487,878), and Staten Island (53,550).¹⁰

Las Raices: We’ve Come a Long Way

The Pentecostal movement began in April of 1906 at the Azusa Street Revival. It was led by William J. Seymour (1870–1922), an African American Holiness evangelist from Louisiana. The Latino Pentecostal movement traces its roots back to this revival. The movement split in 1913 into two theological camps—Trinitarian and Oneness. In 1915, H. C. Ball, Rodolfo Orozco, and Alice Luce

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founded the Latin District Council of the Assemblies of God, and in 1916, Francisco Llorente and Antonio Casteñeda founded the Oneness Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus. As Gastón Espinosa notes, almost every indigenous Latino Pentecostal denomination prior to 1940 in the United States traces its genealogy back to one of these two denominations.¹¹ The power to radically turn one’s life around with the help of the Holy Spirit was one of the defining claims of this new movement. Pentecostalism quickly drew those left at the margins of a society. It was no surprise then that Latinos—feeling increasing subjugation from the California Anglo population—became part of the movement. At the onset of this faction, reactions to Pentecostalism were almost unanimously negative. Many of the respected church leaders and theologians dismissed it by not even considering it worthy of criticism. Due to this lack of attention from the religious leaders, those who practiced Pentecostalism were seen as disturbed, mentally challenged, emotionally unstable, psychologically deprived, and pathological. By the 1990s, the movement began to be taken more seriously because of its global scope. David Barrett startled many in 1980 when his statistics suggested that classical Pentecostalism was the largest unit in the Protestant family.¹² By this time, Latino evangelists had already introduced Pentecostalism all over New York, Puerto Rico, and Latin American communities.

One of these early evangelists was Francisco Olazábal (1886–1937). He was considered by many to be one of the most effective Latino preachers in the early days of the Pentecostal movement. Espinosa points out that his invitation to New York City came by way of Rev. Francisco Paz, a Mexican American Assemblies of God minister who had invited Olazábal to Spanish Harlem. After numerous campaigns, he began to cross racial boundaries to influence black Americans, Italian Americans, and Anglo-Americans. Olazábal organized the Latin American Council of Christian Churches (CLADIC)¹³ in 1923 and reportedly helped organize 130 churches that attracted 50,000 followers from across the United States and Mexico. On many occasions, Olazábal traveled with a yet-unknown woman and eventually became a key player in the ministerial development of that emerging unknown Latina in New York City. The unknown woman was Leoncia Rosado Rousseau, or “Mama Leo,” as she has come to be known today. In the 1940s she began her ministerial career that eventually birthed some of New York City’s greatest contemporary Pentecostal leaders.

Rev. Paz, the Assemblies of God minister who had also been greatly persuaded by Olazábal’s ministry, impacted a New York City Puerto Rican Pentecostal giant: Rev. Ricardo Tañón.¹⁴ Another key figure in the Latino Pentecostal movement in New York City was Juan León Lugo. Originally having migrated to Hawaii from Puerto Rico, Lugo converted to Pentecostalism in 1913 and went on to study under evangelists affiliated with the Assemblies of God denomination. Lugo moved to New York in 1931 to personally supervise what is now coined a “church plant” in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. A man of vision and seeing the tremendous increase in Puerto Ricans in Manhattan, Lugo went on to establish a new “church plant” on East 104th Street in Manhattan.¹⁵ In

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general, most Puerto Rican Pentecostals did what they could do in the early years as they were watching from the wings as they, like black Americans, were the victims of the dominant power structure that enshrined Jim Crowism.

Due in part to the work of these men of God, many people were moved not only to spread the gospel but also to become beacons of light in the midst of the many challenges of life that the Puerto Rican community faced in that era. It was then that Latino Pentecostals began to make great contributions to urban ministry in the United States. Though unknown to the wider church, women and men in New York like “Mama Leo” and Rev. Ricardo Tañon, both of whom were significantly influenced by Francisco Olazábal, revolutionized methods to minister to drug addicts, alcoholics, and youth. Rev. Tañon, a former student of Olazábal, was known to be a charismatic preacher. Tañon organized the John 3:16 youth program in Olazábal’s church, which later developed into “Iglesia Cristiana Juan 3:16” in the South Bronx, and he went on to establish many churches in the Northeast, Puerto Rico, and Dominican Republic. For Latino Pentecostals in New York, he was a spiritual and moral voice, not only for them but also for other churches and civic organizations.¹⁶ The new wave of articles from white Evangelical’s speaking of a “new focus on social ministry” by Pentecostals is not news to the Latino community as they have had their own “Convoys of Hope”¹⁷ for decades.

Tañon has gone on to shape the work of Eldin Villafañe, another Puerto Rican Pentecostal from New York City. Eldin Villafañe’s book, *The Liberating Spirit: Towards an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic*, has encouraged many Latino Pentecostals to establish separate nonprofit corporations. He reminds us that Latino Pentecostal leaders have created soup kitchens, after-school programs, and support groups—all of which fulfill important needs in the Hispanic community. He sees these ministries, whether big or small, as prophetic signs to all those who, for various reasons, have chosen flight instead of fight.¹⁸

Latinas in Ministry: The Ladies Are Warriors

Today, while still not nearly enough, there are Latina preachers, pastors, seminarians, college professors, theologians, chaplains, faith-based nonprofit CEOs, and powerfully creative lay leaders in the church. The Latinas who have remained active in ministry in New York City all attribute their longevity to faith, prayer, patience, and, more than anything else, their undying belief that as Pentecostals their work is a mandate of God. These women warriors have shown the world how God manifests His power through earthly vessels *regardless* of gender.

These Latina women were “warriors” because God gave them their directives, and they did not let anything stand in their way of fulfilling their divine mandates. They used the tools of faith, prayer, and patience even while not receiving the full support of others in the community of faith. As Progressive

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Pentecostals, these Latinas have demonstrated that the church’s mission includes engaging in power encounters with the sinful structures of society. They have sought as their life’s work to respond to both the vertical and horizontal elements of life, which then becomes holistic in nature and thus breaks the “chains of injustice” and introduces a “chain of change” to transform their urban communities. They are defined as warriors because, as far as they are concerned, they are *doing* what many others are still *discussing*.

Theology of Presence: Holistic Faith-Based Ministry Models in the City

While some are better known than others, all have developed a wholistic methodology to solving specific problems in their communities. They have gone forward to develop an approach that is different from most traditional Christian work. “As Pentecostals, many of us get passionate and involved in one area of need and think to ourselves that if we solve a particular problem in a person all other things will work themselves out,” Rev. Ana Villafañe stated. Founder of Way Out Ministries in the Bronx, the 67-year-old activist went on to claim, “we have found that even though a person may make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, the rest of the problems in his or her life may not be solved instantaneously.”¹⁹ What is evident in Latina Pentecostal faith-based activism is that the old individualistic salvation model proved to be too limited. Pentecostals often found themselves blaming *el Diablo* (the devil) for everything, when, in reality, the problems were social and structural. “Solving the housing problem does not solve the emotional struggles a person has to deal with of being homeless.”²⁰ The models in this essay are organized by decade. These organizations use a methodology that deals with the spiritual, social, economic, political, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, or justice issues, and educational or family life of each individual that walks through its doors. Rooted in their faith, these programs have altered the civic and social issues of their day.

Damascus Christian Churches: Rev. Leoncia Rosado Rousseau, Angel to the Outcasts

Born on April 11, 1912, Rev. Leoncia Rosado Rousseau or “Mama Leo,” as she is affectionately called by many, came to New York City by boat on September 22, 1935. Although when I met her, she was ninety years old and suffering from the beginning stages of a progressive, neurodegenerative disease, Mama Leo could still recall her dramatic beginnings in ministry. From the seedy corridors of some of New York City’s worst barrios, her ministry to “the outcasts” of society—the drug addicts, gang members, prostitutes, and alcoholics—has birthed some of today’s greatest preachers, pastors, and evangelists,

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like Nicky Cruz, who went on to establish a worldwide evangelistic ministry; Jim Jimenez, who pastors the Rock Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia; and Bishop Jerry Kaufman, now deceased, who was a Jewish drug addict and went on to become a well-known figure in New York City after leaving John 3:16 to establish Love Gospel Assembly in the Bronx, to name just a few.

“It was in the mountains,” she says “of Toa Alta, Puerto Rico, when God spoke to me and told me I had to go to New York City.”²¹ After having a huge argument with her mother about this “voice,” she arrived in New York, where she met Rev. Francisco Olazábal, who she credits for opening many doors of ministry for her. “I would go to services with him where he would be the invited speaker and out of nowhere he would say, ‘I feel from the Lord to have Leoncia speak,’ ” she recalls. “You could see the disapproval of all the male ministers on the pulpit” but “I walked through every door God opened,” she said.

A great opportunity for city government sponsorship of her program came when Nelson A. Rockefeller was governor. “She actually said no to \$12 million dollars!” said Sonia Gamboa, Mama Leo’s personal assistant for the last eleven years and a frequent participant of the Center for Emerging Female Leadership. “The *New York Times* actually wrote about her for this situation. Rockefeller offered her \$12 million in state assistance to help fund the program she developed for drug addicts and prostitutes of the street but there was a catch, she had to take out the name of Christ in her programming.” Sonia believes that the exact statement Mama Leo told them was “you can keep your \$12 million, I will keep my Christ.”

When asked about the discouragements and struggles she faced as a Latina in ministry, she said, “I was rejected by many.” Sonia, her assistant, explained: “Cops didn’t like [Mama Leo] because she was working with these really bad people who already had records in the police department. Ministers didn’t like her because she was a women “doing a man’s work.” It would have been easier to deal with” said Sonia, “if Mama Leo had other Latina sisters to talk to, but at that time not many of them were doing what she was doing. She was isolated.” Another struggle she faced was money for operating costs. It was difficult to meet some basic needs for her program participants, although she says, “God always provided.”

Today, while the drug and alcohol rehabilitation program no longer exists, she says it does live on through the legacies of the people she touched. However, Damascus Christian Church still operates successfully and has a Latina woman heading its operations as bishop. Mama Leo still attends the church she started in the 1970s, “Iglesia Cristiana de Jamaica,” which currently has a membership roster of about 150 people. Mama Leo went to the toughest neighborhoods, talked and ministered to some of our society’s less desirables, because she knew without a shadow of a doubt that God had called her. Perhaps that is what is missing in some of our emerging Latinas, a sense of divine purpose. Leo summed up her life with the quip, “if my life inspires other Latinas to get to know God then that is a good thing.”

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Way Out Ministries: Rev. Ana Villafaña, Friend of the Addicted

Born on April 6, 1934, in Brooklyn Heights, New York, and growing up in the early to mid-1960s, a Puerto Rican young woman named Ana Villafaña was about to embark on a life-changing journey in her life. It was during the 1960s while in her thirties that she first got involved in dealing with the heroin epidemic that devastated the New York City Puerto Rican community. As a graduate of Mama Leo's alcoholic rehab program, she felt an earnest desire to make a difference in people's lives. However, before the establishment of Way Out Ministries, she was involved with the Community Progress Corporation (CPC), which was a program funded by the City of New York. CPC ran a rehabilitation station for many in the city, in addition to other programs that they operated for housing and medical treatment. This was a time when "the Bronx looked like an atomic bomb had hit it"²² and "there were no programs really dealing with drug addicts that were faith-based other than Teen Challenge and Mama Leo's Christian Youth Crusade, which was part of the Damascus Christian Church. Although new secular programs like Day Top, Phoenix House, and Inwood House were being established," CPC had locations in the Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, in Queens, and in Hunts Point of the Bronx. After about ten years and a series of events at CPC, she left to become a senior counselor with the Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program. It was at this time that she and her husband, Eddie Villafaña, began Way Out Ministries. Members of the Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, and Reformed Churches were most helpful to Rev. Villafaña at the beginning of Way Out; for three years, she received monetary support from these churches. The City of New York became aware of her program and gave her \$1 million for three years from tax levy monies. Today, however, Way Out exists entirely on private individual donations. For the last twenty-seven years the organization has been operating purely on the faith of its founder. "Very few churches, you won't believe it, support us," says Rev. Ana Villafaña. Although this program mostly services a Latino population, little support actually comes from Latino Pentecostal churches. "I do have a few Pentecostal churches, but not as much as I know I can be supported by. The Hispanic Pentecostal *Concilios* should be doing more to help, but they are not."

The operating costs and funding issues that she has encountered have been very discouraging, but she still maintains a positive attitude. She said, "you have no idea what I have gone through, but I am here because God has me here and because I am unrelenting." She went on to say, "I know what God has started he will finish." Interestingly, the majority of her employees are women, and only two of them (her part-time bookkeeper and her secretary) actually receive a stipend for their work. All others are volunteers who she personally had to educate in the area of volunteerism.

However, while Rev. Villafaña holds on to her unrelenting faith, the future of Way Out is literally in the hands of its community, and she is hoping they

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come through for her. Currently, she is undertaking a \$2 million fundraising campaign to build a new residence in the East 148th Street area where her program now resides. This is the first time in their history that she has embarked on such a challenge to raise support. “It not because of pride, but because I was happy with the way things were.” Unfortunately, she has had a tough time, as people have not fulfilled their pledges of support from her radio campaigns and fundraising dinners.

Way Out has as its goal to minister to substance and alcohol abusers, individuals with AIDS, the homeless, the needy and afflicted individuals in order to help them break out of their destructive lifestyles and prepare them to accept responsibilities. Throughout the past thirty-three years, many people have been drug free and law-abiding citizens. Some have even chosen to help others by becoming directors of residences, shelters, soup kitchens, and pantry programs.

Crossroad Tabernacle: Aimee García Cortese and Joseph Henry Cortese, Latina Pioneer and Hip Hop Evangelist

Aimee García Cortese, now seventy-three years old, is pastor emeritus and founder of the Crossroads Tabernacle in the Bronx, New York. Her thirty-four-year-old son, Pastor Joseph Henry Cortese, took over at Crossroads in January 2002 from his mother, who founded the church in 1983. Pastor García Cortese has been written about in Pentecostal literature and has even appeared in various articles on women in ministry.²³ While the church is still part of the Assemblies of God (AG) denomination, its mission and ministry are unique and quite unlike any other AG church in New York City. When asked how she feels she is affecting her community through her church, she stated, “Our impact is the obedience to proclaim the gospel to all people.”²⁴ The doctrine of Crossroads is based on “Bible truth as found in the scriptures and I make no apology for its truth because in it I find the mind of God.”

The legacy of Pastor García Cortese and the church she founded continues as the Reverend Joseph Henry Cortese, or “Pastor Joe,” as he is called, has transitioned into the role of senior pastor. Pastor Joe is known in the city as the “Hip-Hop Evangelist” because of his use of drama and music to reach the teen culture. He was born in the East Bronx in 1967 and is the youngest of four children. Currently, he is supervising the church’s \$3 million renovation, slated for completion in 2002. The project is transforming a 1939 movie house into one of the largest and most sophisticated theaters and recording studios in the Bronx borough.

The building, at 1320 Castle Hill Avenue, has been transformed into the Boden Center for the Performing Arts, which features concerts and plays, as well as teach dance, music, and drama to neighborhood kids. The church has already completed the Studio on the Hill, a state-of-the-art audio and video recording studio. “Although our paradigms and our models are drawn from scriptures—the bare necessities of ministry as Jesus called it—Crossroads has

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taken those bare functions and translated them in such a way that they work here in Castle Hill in 2001," Pastor Joe goes on to say, "ministry for us is becoming more and more radical, even though it's still very historic."²⁵

"We're really pulling away from fundamental tradition and moving into real living, breathing spirituality," said Rev. Joe García, "and that translates at the bottom into some very non-religious things in terms of outreach, such as providing services for the community that are not based on church membership or doctrinal lines."²⁶ He plans to make the church a beacon for the Gospel and hip-hop artists and teens throughout the Bronx. He also hopes to provide education and job training. He even hints at the possibility of opening a laundromat and restaurant to serve the community.

In thinking about the philosophy of ministry found at Crossroads, Rev. García says, "Jesus' ministry met all human needs. First and foremost, knowing. He knew who he was, and where he came from." From Pastor Aimee's perspective, a community needs to understand its identity. "He cared about hunger in his community," she goes on to say; "therefore it is fitting for churches to feed the hungry—spiritually and physically."²⁷

Coming from what she calls a legalistic "raja-tabla" Pentecostal background,²⁸ Pastor Aimee has gone through many metamorphic stages due to her treatment within the Pentecostal community. She mentions how she was asked to leave "Spanish Assemblies of God" many times, only to return. Reflecting on her struggles, she says that she came to the following conclusion: "I know who I am—actually God knows who I am." In her times of ministerial *mêlées*, she says, "I cried out to God—I'm yours, Lord. Do what you please with me; place me at your service, and I will follow and not turn back." Although her church is meeting the needs of their community as Jesus modeled in His day, Pastor Aimee would not necessarily use the term "wholistic" because as she says, she is "still dealing or, better yet, struggling, with the concept." Yet, with over fifty years in ministry, Pastor Aimee García states, "if being wholistic and impacting our community means reaching out, meeting needs, touching the sick, helping them receive medical assistance, seeking betterment for our children by advocating for better schools and health plans, then we are very much wholistic!"²⁹

Bruised Reed Ministry and Rev. Rosa Caraballo, Healing Caregiver

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on January 21, 1954, Rosa grew up Baptist and was introduced to the Pentecostal movement when she met and began to date Pentecostal preacher Hermes Caraballo. During her formative years in ministerial training, she worked at New Life for Girls, with Cookie Rodríguez, a former prostitute and drug addict in New York City who became a Christian and turned her life around.

After having married Hermes Caraballo, an Assemblies of God minister at that time pastoring Glad Tiding Church in the Bronx, she was thrust into

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the reality of HIV/AIDs when someone in her congregation in 1985 was diagnosed with the opportunistic disease. That sparked the beginning of Bruised Reed Ministry. In 1986, due to the death, she began to develop formal relationships with Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx Lebanon, and North Central Bronx through her hospital visitation ministry at Glad Tidings. "I never planned on this, I was just walking through the doors that God opened for me."³⁰

As a bilingual faith-based, nonprofit organization, its mission is to deliver and help others render holistic compassionate services to persons afflicted, affected, or abandoned because of HIV/AIDs. In 1993, they incorporated and moved into donated office space. In 1996, an opportunity to expand arose when Rev. Raymond Rivera provided office space in his building at virtually no cost. Some of the challenges Rev. Caraballo has faced are similar to what Rev. Ana Villafaña mentioned previously; she lamented that "there is very little financial support for our organization. It's discouraging to see that very few Latino churches see people with HIV/AIDs as a mission field to be won for the Lord." She goes on to say that "men of God and vision like Rev. Ray Rivera, Rev. Marcos Rivera of Primitive Christian Church, Rev. Lou Carlo, Pastor of Wounded Healer and Professor at Alliance, Rev. David Anglada [a former AG youth leader who is now assistant to the bishop for Hispanic/Latino Ministries in the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Lutheran Church], Rev. Franklin Simpson, the pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in the Bronx, have all been supportive to me personally or to my ministry through financial donations." However, she stated that most of her support has come from the non-Christian AIDS community.

Rev. Rosa Caraballo indicated that while it is wonderful that more Pentecostals want to get involved in faith-based efforts to deal with societal conditions, she fears that some may be doing it now due to the new Charitable Choice law which "makes it easier to take the risk from some one else's funding than your own church's budget." Currently, Rev. Caraballo has a dual role of serving as executive director of Bruised Reed and chaplain for the HIV Palliative Care Services Division of Montefiore Medical Center, a partnership that fits nicely with her vision to one day open up Villas de Esperanza, a home that will provide respite for caregivers of HIV/AIDs-afflicted families.

Latino Pastoral Action Center (LPAC)

At the core of the Latino Pastoral Action Center's establishment (in 1992) was a 1970s organization known as Acción Civica Evangelica de las Iglesias Hispanas de Nueva York. This organization was cofounded by the now deceased, Rev. Dr. José Caraballo, an Assemblies of God minister and the dean of Hispanic studies at New York Theological Seminary. This was the first major and widely recognized attempt to organize Latino Pentecostals in hopes of religion changing social and political issues. The organization was able to have representatives from every major Pentecostal council in New York City. "Some of

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New York’s best and brightest youth ended up working for us and going on to become scholars and voices in the city for a different generation,” said Rev. Rivera reflecting on Acción Civicas history.³¹ “The organization ultimately ended in closure due to lack of funding sparked by an investigation from the mayor’s office due to an innocent minister’s demand of all youth employees to tithe from their summer paychecks.”

However, the theology of a wholistic gospel that would facilitate social transformation always stayed in the mind of Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera, and thus when an opportunity became available, he established the Latino Pastoral Action Center (LPAC) in 1992. LPAC was instituted as a faith-based, nonprofit organization to wholistically educate, equip, and empower people to serve effectively in church and society. Rev. Luís Lugo and Rev. Danny Cortes of the Pew Charitable Trusts were instrumental in the genesis of this organization. “Danny promised me start-up funding if I could find a fiscal conduit.” At that time, the New York City Mission Society (NYCMS), the oldest church-based organization and social service agency in the city, had a Puerto Rican layperson, Emilio Bermis, for the first time in its history serving as executive director.³² “Emilio Bermis did not hesitate to give us an opportunity and that was a miracle as I never met him before that moment.”³³ After approval, LPAC officially became a division of NYCMS, but it was autonomous from the start as “we came to them, they did not invite us.” LPAC started out providing technical assistance to other grassroot Latino organizations. It now operates an urban ministry complex that serves the entire generational cycle, while being a model for wholistic ministry to urban leaders throughout the United States.

It is LPAC’s aim to assist the many grass-roots level organizations that exist and continue to come into existence in their development, organizing, advocacy, and networking activities. “The lack of sustainability is the major downfall of many organizations; it is even harder for Latino/a-led agencies,” Rev. Rivera stated. It is because of his experience that he tirelessly works to help other Latino organizations in New York City get funded and provides the necessary technical assistance to educate them on the advantages and disadvantages of starting faith-based ministries in the city. He does all this while still struggling to stabilize his own organization.

LPAC has been able to advocate, organize, and create a network that follows a wholistic ministry paradigm as a complementary alternative to existing traditional models of service. Experienced and emerging leaders of the city and leaders across the country have felt LPAC’s impact. Its visibility has increased due to Rev. Rivera’s four-principle philosophy of “transformation, liberation, community, and healing,”³⁴ which has been a requested seminar topic around the country. Rev. Rivera has been a great advocate for women in ministry and has helped Bruised Reed, Angels Unaware, Mission of Mercy, and the Center for Emerging Female Leadership and many others with monetary donations, space, funding sources, or general encouragement and support.

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Latinas in Ministry and the Center for Emerging Female Leadership (CEFL)

The Center for Emerging Female Leadership was founded after a reorganization of the Latinas in Ministry program that was started by Dr. María Pérez y González. In the beginning, Latinas in Ministry served only a predominately Spanish-speaking, first-generation community. It began when the New York Mission Society won a grant from the Lily Endowment to do a study on Latinas in Ministry following a Black Women in Ministry model already present at the organization. It was a groundbreaking study.³⁵ No doubt, that study was initiated by Emilio Bermiss, the first Puerto Rican lay minister serving as executive director. The first study, which began in 1992 and was completed in 1993, raised some issues about leadership development within the Latino community for women. Representatives on their advisory board were respected Latinas in Ministry such as Rev. Frances Rivera (Baptist pastor), Rev. Olga Torres Simpson (Pentecostal minister's wife and now founder of a faith-based organization), Isabel Ramos Wing (a Christian social worker), Marilyn Calo Rivera (a Christian Board of Education principal), Rev. Rosa Caraballo (Pentecostal pastor's wife and founder of a faith-based ministry).

Soon after, a retreat was held in 1994, which attracted eighty-six women to address some of the issues raised in the study and to pay tribute to Latina pioneers, such as Pastor Aimee Cortese and Mama Leo. Funding from the Lily Endowment was exhausted. Dr. Pérez y González and others were not able to commit to the time necessary to build the program and also maintain their already active lives as ministers, professors, chaplains, and wives.

Latinas in Ministry is now a program under the Center for Emerging Female Leadership umbrella. While the leadership, focus, and target group were Latinas, it was open to everyone. Eventually it began to attract many black American women as well. Most of the Latinas involved with the program, however, are second- and third-generation Latinas. Initial attempts to work with Latinas who were first generation did not work due to the issue of language. As was discovered from the Latinas in Ministry study, one of the concerns of many Latinas was culture/language.³⁶ The changes that have occurred caused some of the earlier advisors and members of Latinas in Ministry to feel estranged as they felt they lost ownership of the program. It is the Latinas in Ministry's desire to develop a way to bridge the generations, but they have yet to find a clearcut solution. The greatest challenge has always been getting enough support from volunteers to operate programs since this is done out of passion not payment.

CEFL has held eight conferences that have attracted people from Florida, California, Texas, and Massachusetts. Its last conference, which was held in March of 2002, attracted 630 women (and some men). The conference is said to be one of the only gatherings in the city that brings together many women from different denominations. It is unique in that it blends Latina Spanish Pentecostal traditions with black American Pentecostalism in its worship serv-

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ices and preaching delivery. Topics chosen for the conferences deal with many of the realities of women, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and economic stabilization, in addition to topics that help attendees grow in their faith and spirituality. Other CEFL programs include women’s retreats, Women in God’s Service retreats (WINGS—only open to women in ministry or theologians), and intermittent seminars. Having gone through a tremendous transition, as it was a program of the Latino Pastoral Action Center, CEFL is now in the process of getting its own 501(c)3. It has its own board of directors and a national board of advisors. It hopes to become a national organization. It plans to hold a bi-annual Latinas in Ministry convocation. It also hopes to resurrect one of the key features of the Latinas in Ministry program of the past—fellowship groups in each borough. At present, the Center for Emerging Female Leadership is also exploring the interest of the Lily Endowment to do a second Latinas in Ministry study. Dr. María Pérez y González has indicated interest in serving as principal investigator. Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier and Dr. Milagros Peña have also accepted seats on the national advisory board of the organization.

Regardless of the differences of opinion on how the program should be run, we have been very successful. In December 1997, *Latina Magazine* did a brief article on the program, which yielded many inquiries from all over the United States about when we will get programs going in their state. The future of CEFL looks bright, as interest for the continued development of female leaders, especially the Latina women who have less resources available than their black American counterparts, is needed. Funding will be needed to operate a full-fledged organization with its own executive director and staff. This way, CEFL can move forward to meet the needs of all women, including the needs of Latinas.

Mission of Mercy (MoM): Iris Sánchez, Emerging Leader

Iris Sánchez, who is more than fifty years old, began her work with the hungry and homeless of Sunset Park, Brooklyn. With the support of her pastor, Apostle Luciano Padilla Jr., and his church, Bayridge Christian Center, she sought to make a difference in the lives of other women. Herself a victim of domestic violence, she organized women around that issue and substance abuse and general health care of women. Starting out as a ministry of the church and having received tax exemption status from the federal government with the help of the Latino Pastoral Action Center, Mission of Mercy (MoM) has been able to contract with the Human Resources Administration of New York City to operate a Welfare to Work demonstration project, which is a multimillion-dollar project. In addition, she was given the responsibility to oversee other Brooklyn agencies that also participate in the program as service providers. As a newcomer to the faith-based nonprofit world that is truly a unique position to be in and quite challenging. MoM’s programs include but are not limited to providing food and clothing to clients; establishing new connections within

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the community by providing resources, training, and education in order to facilitate individuals to earn their GED; and advocating and educating the church and community about key issues that affect their section of Brooklyn. Due to her domestic violence background, she hopes to open a safe haven for battered and abused women over 18. But ultimately, as she says, “we are diffusing the idea that it is impossible to make a difference.”³⁷

Revisiting the Latina in Ministry Study

On June 24, 2002, two Latina in Ministry Focus Groups were held at Alliance Theological Seminary. The topic of discussion was the first study of Latinas in Ministry. The groups totaled twenty and were a mixture of first- and second-generation Latinas, with varied backgrounds of ministry experiences. All, however, had more than ten years of experience in ministry. The issues that were raised in the first report—such as empowering women and culture and language—were felt to still be issues today. Maribel Acosta, a well-spoken, educated, second-generation Latina who attends a first-generation church, talked about the struggle of language: “Sometimes I feel that first-generation Latinas don’t understand our educational and social needs.” She went on to say, “I don’t want to give up my cultura.” Many in the group agreed with that statement. Evidently, the perception seems to be that if you give up your Spanish language, you give up your “cultura.” Furthermore, many felt that although empowering women is seen much more from the pulpits, it still needs to get more individualized attention.³⁸

Another concern they had which was also brought out in the initial study is educational support. Unlike many of the Anglo denominations that provide mentoring, financial support, and resources for education, they felt the Latino Pentecostal church was still behind in that area. According to Rachel Miranda (a Latina in ministry who wears many hats in her church and their outreach ministry to the community), “saying you empower me is one thing, show me the money that proves to me you are willing to invest in my education.”³⁹ All these women felt that investing in their education is an investment in your church or faith-based ministry, as they would fittingly give back from what they have learned.

The last predominant issue that came up with all the leaders who were interviewed for this essay, as well as the participants of the focus group, was the lack of support networks. This was also listed in the initial study. According to Rev. Villafañe, “I went through a very public separation with my husband which was very devastating to me personally. Not one pastor came to me to console me or encourage me, to say ‘sister Ana we are with you.’ It would have been great to at least get one my sisters in the faith to say that.” She also mentioned, “I do get lonely. I have no mentorship. The only time I get a woman to call me is when they want me to go to an event they are hosting. I would like a support group with peers.”⁴⁰ Carmen Acosta, an Assemblies of God licensed minister shared, “although I didn’t have a real mentor, I watched my

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pastor’s daughter because she had an education. It was mentorship by osmosis, so to speak.” Rev. Caraballo went on to say, “women supporting women is also about showing emerging leaders how to do ministry and avoid the mistakes we made. I learned street ministry from Cookie Rodríguez. I saw compassion in action from a Mennonite woman who befriended me. These women helped me grow into my call. That is what is lacking now. Latinas rarely mentor other Latinas.”⁴¹

A New Paradigm for Ministry

The Latinas highlighted here as Progressive Pentecostals are getting involved in the daily socioeconomic issues confronting their cities, and there are many others like them that have not been mentioned. Progressive Pentecostalism will no doubt create urban social transformation, as demonstrated by the stories of these Latina activists. In post-9/11 New York, the church, its ministers, and lay people, are poised to be key instruments to do what it has wanted to do all along—evangelize the masses. But this time the paradigm seeks to challenge systemic conditions and structures, in addition to providing direct services. It is a paradigm that is willing to look at the “sinful” social structures in society. The context we presently find ourselves in has challenged ministers, lay people, church planters, and senior pastors to work toward a prophetic imagination where God and His gospel touch every area of life. Politics and civic participation are no longer seen as taboo as they once were. Anthony Stevens-Arroyo states that although advocating on behalf of issues that impact the Latino community may still not be popular in organized religion, churches are doing it anyway. He believes it could be attributed to the fact that religion actually helps believers survive the harsh realities of urban dwelling.⁴² The Latino community in New York and across the globe needs a prophetic voice, as Walter Wink argues in *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*. It is a voice that will “name, unmask, and engage the powers” of destruction that are currently determining the existence of the Latino communities here in New York and elsewhere. African Americans have captured the prophetic imagination and have developed the confrontational voice and presence needed that has been able to rally their people to unity and shake the corridors of power that are responsible for the inequality, pain, abuse, and death of their communities. Latinas can learn from the many New York City African American pastors who have led their churches or developed nonprofit organizations that are wholistic in nature and prophetic in deed.⁴³

Concluding Reflections

Urban social transformation in New York City has taken place at various levels because Progressive Pentecostal Latina women (and men) have taken their place in ministry and are redefining for themselves and for those who watch

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them, what it means to be a Pentecostal. They have worked to add the missing social element in our contemporary definition of Pentecostalism. All social structures and institutions “have moral values entrenched in them. They can be good or evil.”⁴⁴ These Latinas have been able to improve the city through the work of nontraditional church ministry and faith-based nonprofit organizations that challenge the structures. They have used the resources available to them, regardless of the obstacles before them, whether it was gender bias, racial discrimination, lack of support, or denominational baggage.

While Latinas have come a long way, we still need to address issues that will not go away until we call them out of darkness and into the light. Latinas need to begin support networks, provide intentional mentoring opportunities for emerging Latina young women, learn to fellowship instead of hiding the scars of ministry for no one to see, involve themselves with ministries for women like CEFL and other organizations that are working to support women who have decided to follow God to the barrios of our cities across the United States. In addition, the Latino Pentecostal church must learn to become more involved financially with the ministries that are being effective and efficient in “engaging the powers” and are working to continue to transform our urban neighborhoods. It is no longer enough to support Latinas by mouth either via the pulpit or the occasional “el señor te esta usando” (The Lord is using you). It is time, especially in light of what has happened to our world post 9/11, to help ministries like the ones highlighted here with the money, support, and resources they need to continue to impact society and challenge the structural sins of our institutions of power. There is no reason for them to continue to struggle alone. The call to Progressive Pentecostalism that impacts society and transforms neighborhoods is for everyone who claims to have the power of God. Latina faith-based activists, *You are proclaimers of the word, rebuilders of our cities, and restorers of our hope. You are God’s oaks of righteousness; He will display His splendor through you!* [Read Isaiah 61:1–4.] ¡Siempre P’alante Latinas de fe!

NOTES

I thank Rev. Dr. Lou Carlo, director of the Urban Studies Program and assistant professor at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York City; Rev. Edna Quiros, ordained minister of the Spanish Eastern District of the Assemblies of God; and Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera, president and founder of the Latino Pastoral Action Center for their support with the critical feedback, focus group coordination, research, and writing of this essay.

1. The word “wholistic” is commonly used in the context of alternative medicine or the New Age movement. I intentionally use this spelling to differentiate my understanding from the alternative medicine understanding.

2. James Forbes, *The Holy Spirit and Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 15.

3. This includes organizations such as Christian Community Benevolent Association, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Angels Unaware, and Vision Urbana,

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along with newer emerging groups such as the Northeast Clergy Group and its program, the Ground Zero Clergy Taskforce, and Young Progressive Ministers.

4. Cited in Walter J. Hollenweger, "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992): 7–17. See also "Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements: A Challenge to the Churches," in *The Holy Spirit*, ed. Dow Kirkpartrick (Nashville, TN: Tidings, 1974), 209–233.

5. This is based on the Four Principles of the Latino Pastoral Action Center as developed by Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera. <http://Livedtheology.org/pdfs/Rivera.pdf>.

6. Carl S. Dudley, Jackson W. Carroll, and James P. Wind, *Carriers of Faith* (Louisville, KY: Westminster–John Knox Press, 1983), 65–94.

7. Gabriel Haslip-Viera, "The Evolution of the Latino Community in New York City: Early Nineteenth Century to the Present," in *Latinos in New York: Communities in Transition*, ed. Gabriel Haslip-Viera and Sherrie L. Baver (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 7, 3–30.

8. Population Division, New York City Department of City Planning. U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary. Available: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/pub/soc001>. [July 3, 2002].

9. For example, Janny Scott, "Master of the Mosaic That Is New York City; Expert Keeps Tabs on Changing Population," *New York Times* (September 1, 2001); Susan Sachs, "Hispanic New York Shifted in 1990's, Puerto Ricans Lost Their Plurality," *New York Times* (May 22, 2001); Mireya Navarro, "Puerto Rican Presence Wanes in New York," *New York Times*, (February 28, 2000).

10. Race categories are from the 2000 census and are not strictly comparable with categories of previous years, which would make count seem slightly off. Population Division, New York City Department of Planning, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 *Census 94–171*. Available: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/pub/soc001.pdf> [July 3, 2002].

11. Gastón Espinosa, "El Azteca: Francisco Olazábal and Latino Pentecostal Charisma, Power, and Faith Healing in the Borderlands," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67 (September 1999): 597–616.

12. David Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

13. Espinosa, "El Azteca," 604.

14. Eldin Villafañe, "A Spiritual Father and Spiritual Leader: Rev. Ricardo Tañon—An Apostle in the Bronx," *The Catalyst: Magazine of the Latino Pastoral Action Center* 1 (July–September 1998): 16.

15. Luis A. Carlo, "Let Us Overturn the Tables: Toward a New York Puerto Rican Pedagogy of Liberation" (Ph.D. diss., Teachers College/Columbia University, New York, 2002), 148–151. This chapter is a general overview of Hispanic Evangelicalism and its influences. See chapter six of Espinosa's dissertation on the origins of the Latino Pentecostal movement in New York City: Gastón Espinosa, "Borderland Religion: Los Angeles and the Origins of the Latino Pentecostal Movement in the U.S., Mexico, and Puerto Rico, 1900–1945" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1999), 217–245.

16. Eldin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit: Towards an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 97–98.

17. Rose Marie Berger and Hunter, Susannah, "Between the Lines: Raising the Roof," *Sojourners Magazine* (September–October 2001). Available: <http://www.sojo>

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.net/magazine/index.cfm/action/sojourners/issue/soj0109/article/010942i.html[July 7, 2002]. This article speaks about the new acceptance Pentecostals are receiving since it has become public knowledge that they are focusing on social ministry through "Convoys of Hope," which bring health clinics, food, clothing, and other such items to over 25,000 people every weekend.

18. Villafaña, *Liberating Spirit*. 9.

19. Telephone interview with Rev. Ana Villafaña, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City (July 8, 2002).

20. Personal interview with the Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City (July 5, 2002).

21. The following quotations are from a telephone interview with Leonicia Rosado, as told to Sonia Gamboa, personal assistant, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City, (July 8, 2002). Due to "Mama Leo's" frail condition, she spoke through her personal assistant who translated into English her answers to my questions.

22. The following quotations are from a telephone Interview with Rev. Ana Villafaña, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City, (July 8, 2002).

23. For a discussion on women and ministry and early social action, see Gastón Espinosa, "Your Daughters Shall Prophesy": A History of Women in Ministry in the Latino Pentecostal Movement in the United States, in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, ed. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 25-48.

24. The following quotations are from an e-mail interview with Pastor Aimee Cortese, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City, (July 9, 2002).

25. Emily Fancher, *Bronx Times*, January 10, 2002.

26. Ibid.

27. E-mail interview with Cortese.

28. "Raja tabla" is a figure of speech in Latino Pentecostal circles which means "to preach so hard that it splits wood." It has legalistic underpinnings.

29. E-mail interview with Cortese.

30. The following quotations are from a telephone interview with Rev. Rosa Carballo, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City (July 8, 2002).

31. The following quotations are from a personal interview with the Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City, (July 5, 2002).

32. The New York City Mission Society was a nondenominational Mainline Protestant organization that was instrumental in the early history of New York Latino Protestantism. See Espinosa, "Borderland Religion," 221-222.

33. This and following quotation from Personal interview with Rivera.

34. The four-principle philosophy is available by contacting LPAC. Rev. Rivera is currently working on a book entitled "Ministry in a Situation of Captivity."

35. See "Latinas Altar Place in Church," *New York Daily News*, (October 1994).

36. Ibid, p. 7.

37. Telephone interview with Ms. Iris Sánchez, conducted by Elizabeth Rios in the Bronx, New York City, (July 7, 2002).

38. Latina in Ministry Focus Group, conducted by Elizabeth Rios at Alliance Theological Seminary, Manhattan, New York City, (June 24, 2002).

39. Ibid.

40. Telephone Interview with Villafaña.

41. Latina in Ministry Focus Group.

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42. Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Latino Barrio Religion*, Available: <http://home.adelphi.edu/catissue/articles/arroyo96.htm> [July 3, 2002].

43. See Testimony of the Honorable Floyd H. Flake to the Senate Committee, March 14, 2001. Retrieved online at <http://www.senate.gov/finance/031401fftest.pdf> [July 4, 2002]. See also *New York Post* article "Drowning Kids in Failure," March 20, 1999. Retrieved online at http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/_nypost-drowning.htm [July 4, 2002]. See also biographical data on the Rev. Calvin O. Butts, retrieved online at <http://www.upenn.edu/chaplain/pucfsn/buttsbio.html> [July 4, 2002].

44. Francis X. Meehan, *A Contemporary Social Spirituality* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 9.

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Word of Faith Mission. 796 likes. A Network of Episcopal Pentecostal Churches, committed to Raising Christlike Men and Women, Empowered for Global...
Joining us will be: Apostle Prof Opoku Onyinah (former Chairman: Church of Pentecost, former President of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council and former Rector of Pentecost University College); Prof Paul Frimpong-Manso (General Superintendent: Assemblies of God and President, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council Ghana); Bishop Ngwiza Mnklanda (Bishop of Faith Ministries: Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa & UK). Design, setting, and participants: Case series of patients with COVID-19 admitted to 12 hospitals in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester County, New York, within the Northwell Health system. The study included all sequentially hospitalized patients between March 1, 2020, and April 4, 2020, inclusive of these dates. Demographics, baseline comorbidities, presenting vital signs, and test results were also collected. Results: A total of 5700 patients were included (median age, 63 years [interquartile range {IQR}, 52-75; range, 0-107 years]; 39.7% female). The most common comorbidities were hypertension (3026; 56.6%), obesity (1737; 41.7%), and diabetes (1808; 33.8%). Pentecostalism is based on a key event in the life of the early Christians: the baptism of the twelve disciples by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Inspire Church, Sydney ©. Most Pentecostals think that their movement is returning Christianity to a pure and simple form of Christianity that has much in common with the very earliest stage in the life of the Christian church. Pentecostalism is not a church in itself, but a movement that includes many different churches. It is also a movement of renewal or revival within other denominations. In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well. Mark 16:17-18. This state-of-the-field overview of Pentecostalism around the world focuses on cultural developments among second- and third-generation adherents in regions with large Pentecostal communities, considering the impact of these developments on political participation, citizenship, gender relations, and economic morality. Leading scholars from anthropology, sociology, religious studies, and history present useful introductions to global issues and country-specific studies drawn from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the former USSR. eISBN: 978-0-253-01094-0. Subjects: Religion, Sociology, Anthropology Pentecostalism or Classical Pentecostalism is a Protestant Christian movement that emphasises direct personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit. The term Pentecostal is derived from Pentecost, an event that commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, and the speaking in "foreign" tongues as described in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. In Greek, it is the name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks.