



Negotiating Respect: Pentecostalism, Masculinity, and the Politics of Spiritual Authority in the Dominican Republic (Latin American and Caribbean Arts and Culture)

Brendan Jamal Thornton

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“Breaks new ground by virtue of its thorough exploration of the ongoing negotiations of Pentecostal masculine identities.”—Martin Lindhardt, author of *Power in Powerlessness: A Study of Pentecostal Life Worlds in Urban Chile*

“Provides important insights about why men convert to Pentecostalism, how they derive authority and status in Pentecostal churches, and how at the same time they reaffirm their claims to local ideals of masculinity.”—Elizabeth Brusco, author of *The Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Colombia*

“A nuanced portrait of born-again life . . . illuminates the Roman Catholic shaping of Dominican nationalism including its anti-Haitianism, evangelical masculinity, and the possibilities for gaining respect that Pentecostalism offers to entrenched gang members.”—Elizabeth McAlister, coeditor of *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*

Negotiating Respect is an ethnographically rich investigation of Pentecostal Christianity—the Caribbean’s fastest growing religious movement—in the Dominican Republic. Based on fieldwork in a barrio of Villa Altagracia, Brendan Jamal Thornton examines the everyday practices of Pentecostal community members and the complex ways in which they negotiate legitimacy, recognition, and spiritual authority within the context of religious pluralism and Catholic cultural supremacy. Probing gender, faith, and identity from an anthropological perspective, he considers in detail the lives of young male churchgoers and their struggles with conversion and life in the streets. Thornton shows that conversion offers both spiritual and practical social value because it provides a strategic avenue for prestige and an acceptable way to transcend personal history. Through an exploration of the church and its relationship to barrio institutions like youth gangs and Dominican *vodú*, he further draws out the meaningful nuances of lived religion providing new insights into the social organization of belief and the significance of Pentecostal growth and popularity globally. The result is a fresh perspective on religious pluralism and contemporary religious and cultural change.

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