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ROMERO, Catalina, editora, 2017, *Diversidad religiosa en el Perú. Miradas múltiples*, Lima, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas y Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones. 272 pp.

Studies about religious phenomena in contemporary societies such as ours are few, and even more rarely do they employ a multidisciplinary approach to understand broad and complex processes, as is the case of this book edited by sociologist Catalina Romero. The purpose of the book is to provide an overarching review of the ideas, institutions, and practices that people use to relate to the religious sphere, which it does through twelve studies by sociologists, anthropologists, historians, political scientists, theologians, and communications specialists. The articles seek to answer two questions: why does religion continue to be vital to Peruvians, and what is the dynamic character of this phenomenon?

In order to better review the book, I have chosen to divide the studies into two groups – in a different order than in the book itself – which, as I see it, enables an understanding of the overall objectives of the proposal.

First, I have chosen nine studies about the various facets of religion in today's society. Catalina Romero provides two guidelines for reflection which appear in some of the other articles: inter-religious migration and the growing evangelical presence in the public sphere.

Migration in the religious sphere is a reality that can be observed not only in the movement of Catholics to the evangelical world, but also within this trend: from protestant churches to evangelical, Pentecostal, and neo-Pentecostal churches. José Sánchez investigates the case of a dynamic charismatic Pentecostal congregation which left behind the classic model of the Pentecostal church. Uta Ihrke-Buchroth's study also stands out. It demonstrates how neo-Pentecostal churches attract many young people who used to be evangelicals or Pentecostals. However, the author finds that inside these faiths there is also mobility, whether because of social aspirations or because one congregation offers more than another – languages or social networks, for example. Nevertheless, Ihrke-Buchroth recognizes that within these processes of migration and integration there can be tendencies of social exclusivity that prove painful (p. 246).

The evangelical world is not only very dynamic in terms of mobility but its presence in the public sphere is notable. This aspect is discussed in detail by Rolando Pérez, who finds three motives for entry of the faithful into this sphere: a religious agenda leading to support for politicians who recognize

their importance; a social concern that is part of the religious agenda; or the desire to work on social problems and seek to generate change through existing citizen initiatives. Pérez argues that this evangelical presence, which seeks legitimation and empowerment, is the result of having been the historical Other from the perspective of the nation. In any case, as Jorge Aragón maintains – based on a survey – the evangelicals have their own political vision about what liberal democracy and society can be, with strong and centralized political power and a more individualistic vision of the benefits to be obtained. Thus, they have a specific political orientation, although the author recognizes that this is the product of specific and short-lived circumstances.

This first part is rounded out by four studies that also deal with the resignification of the religious among the faithful of today. Veronique Lecaros investigates Catholic sacramental practice in Lima and Chosica and finds a low level of participation in masses, baptisms, confirmations, and marriages due to cumbersome administrative requirements that do not coincide with people's time availability or their needs. This leads to a condition of religious informality in their lives. The work by Pablo Espinoza investigates devotion to the Cruz del Señor de Torrechayoq in Cuzco. He describes a devotee who discretely, while she is praying, takes a photo with her cell phone to send to a family member in a faraway place, perhaps abroad. This image revolutionizes the conception of the sacred in the context of globalization and of new experiences of time and space. These are conditions of continuous change, as Alejandro Diez reminds us when he analyzes patronal feasts, indicating that their transformations are a result of new significations, changes in their places in local and regional calendars, processes of migration, and the repositioning of the religious feast itself in local contexts of authority and power, considering the increasing importance of the market and the phenomenon of tourism. Diez even notes that festivals, a commercial activity which accompany many patronal feasts, are a new and disconcerting reality in the religiosity of many towns today.

But the resignification of the religious can also mean finding refuge in doctrinal and organizational orthodoxy, as Romina Yalonetzky argues in her research on four Jewish congregations in Lima. These congregations ignore those who are not Jewish by birth, particularly congregations in the provinces, even though in the past and the present at least three of them have demonstrated considerable flexibility in their criteria for the integration of members.

Thus, this first group of studies allows us to understand the complex panorama of churches and their faithful, in which informal religious practices, new technology, and changing socioeconomic realities intersect.

Then, in my view, there are three studies that can be considered a second section, since their goal is to contribute to understanding how this reality came about. That is, they demonstrate – without knowingly doing so – why the breach developed between daily practices and some current discourses of institutionally. Thus, Rolando Iberico refers to the debate that existed between regalists and the ultramontanes in the 19th century, a theological and social debate that helps one understand how the Peruvian Catholic church reached the 20th century with a negative attitude toward modern thought and its practices. It tried to shake off this attitude in the second half of the same century, in a context of world and regional change and new commitments within Catholicism, such as the current of Theology of Liberation. Nevertheless, there were difficulties between what was desired and what could be implemented, as demonstrated in the study by Juan Miguel Espinoza, who recounts the importance of the Days of Reflection (Jornadas de Reflexión) of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) between 1971 and 2000. These events were aimed at different people who wished to “translate the characteristics of the popular [sector] world into pastoral practices”¹ (p. 133), particularly in the 1980s. The proposal is interesting. One would have to see whether this experience led to an effective renewal of the Church in some of its sectors.

This relationship between what could be expected and the reality of the pastoral and spiritual lives of parishioners is also dealt with by Oscar Espinoza, who studies the relationships between the Catholic Church and the indigenous people of the Amazonian lowlands, and attempts to establish a chronology. He argues that it was in the 1970s that the Church was best able to face up to pastoral issues as well as colonization, justice, culture, and other matters that affected this population. Espinoza notes that Theology of Liberation, with its particular focus, helped in these efforts – although the absence of information about pastoral work in these years makes it difficult to evaluate this hypothesis – and recognizes that ecclesiastical changes and a mission focus in the next decade resulted in the neglect of the mission to indigenous people, something that seems to have been changing in recent years.

The text as a whole shows us that the religious sphere is, on the one hand, flexible, transformative, agile and informal, and adapts itself to concrete and daily needs. But, on the other hand, it demonstrates the difficulty

1 Translation of quotes in Spanish are by *Apuntes*.

that institutions have in encompassing the process. In general, the book demonstrates that religion continues to be vital for Peruvians.

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