

Tito Madrazo. *Predicadores: Hispanic Preaching and Immigrant Identity*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021. 189 pages. \$39.99.

Tito Madrazo's new book *Predicadores* (Preachers) lays an important marker for the field of homiletics with his thick description of preachers and preaching in first-generation Hispanic immigrant communities in North Carolina. Madrazo's work is an impressive execution of the kinds of anthropological methods that homiletics has been talking about for years but has never fully made its own. Madrazo uses "collaborative ethnography" as a way of walking alongside the 24 male and female preachers whom he studies. In doing so, he pushes back against what Hispanic homiletics "should be" in terms of what first-generation Hispanic immigrant preaching actually *is*. Madrazo's crucial distinction between the "is" and the "ought" has implications for Hispanic preaching, the field of homiletics, and the theologies that it deigns to notice.

We begin with the very term Madrazo uses to characterize his study's collaborators and subject matter: *Hispanic*. The descriptor "Hispanic" has problems because of its ties to the US government, of course, but Madrazo is concerned that the designation Latino/a or Latinx is not yet close enough to the people and traditions he is researching (163, n. 3). Madrazo's research methodology, collaborative ethnography, specifically requires him to make his work accessible to his research subjects. The Assemblies of God, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal M.I., Independent, and United Methodist traditions are represented in the study and the immigrant preachers themselves are both men and women. Madrazo uses the designation Hispanic because he wishes to place no barriers to his collaborators' understanding.

An important key to understanding the project is the immigrant experience that his 24 collaborators share. As first-generation immigrants preaching mostly to other rural, suburban, and urban first-generation immigrants they share in a powerful experience of dealing with the dangers of transnational crossings and threats from authorities. Madrazo thus emphasizes Mary McClintock Fulkerson's insight that theology begins with a wound. The transnational crossing itself is a moment fraught with difficulty, threat, and change. In the sermons he studies, these immigrant wounds are often connected to conversion (not a few of Madrazo's preachers are new to Protestantism) and a sense of call. Naming the wound of immigration becomes a deep theological locus for the sermons, too.

Chapter 1 begins by introducing Madrazo's study and methods. Chapter 2 then deals with the various traumatic journeys of immigration that preachers and hearers share. Such experiences become the very focus of Hispanic preaching which aims to heal those deep wounds. This shared experience then leads to a study of immigrant identity in chapter 3. Here Madrazo underlines the multiple identities that his subjects assume as preachers who are bi-vocational, transnational, and bicultural. Chapter 4 looks at preaching itself by identifying theological themes represented in the preachers' sermons: Christ as Savior and Friend, God as Miracle Worker for the Marginalized, God as Gatherer of a New People, God and God's Law as Provider of Structure in Chaos, and God as Healer of the Family. The themes together bear witness to the particularity of his first-generation immigrant communities and sketch out a bicultural, transnational, immigrant homiletical theology. Chapter 5 focuses on the experience of Hispanic women preachers. The complexities of the roles of men and women in immigrant families are extended to the church and its gendered understandings of leadership, occasionally worked out in ad hoc, local ways that themselves can be surprising. In chapter 6 Madrazo offers his conclusions about collaborative ethnography in practical-theological research and the tendency of homileticians to prescribe

rather than describe preaching in relation to specific cultures. Here Madrazo pushes back on the work of Justo González and Pablo Jiménez in *Púlpito* (2005) for thinking of Hispanic preaching in the liberative prescriptive terms of the academic guild, and not the descriptive, communal terms that Madrazo himself offers where preaching is informed by liberation *and* tradition.

I do have one concern. Madrazo's critique of González and Jiménez runs the risk of closing off a necessary and living dialogue between homiletical theologies in faith communities and the kinds of liberative, prophetic theological claims that homileticians critiquing their own traditions can articulate. I am not convinced that the "is" of thick description for thriving communities with their preachers and the "ought" of a critical homiletic theory are forever stuck in a zero sum game. Even so, the significance of Madrazo's work is not to be gainsaid. He invites us to see not just the forest, but the trees (146f.). With Madrazo, we learn about the theologies of preachers and communities who struggle with real wounds and proclaim healing in their life together. And that may just change the way the guild envisions homiletics going forward.

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