Mabat, Yael. *Sacrifice and Regeneration. Seventh-day Adventism and Religious Transformation in the Andes*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022, 289 pp.

The Peruvian altiplano would seem an unlikely place for the prospering of a protestant denomination that arose in upstate New York during the mid-nineteenth century and was centred on the imminent Second Coming of Jesus Christ, adherence to strict rules on diet and health, and the observance of the Sabbath. Yet in 1918, Puno's Adventist community numbered over 1,300 members, and some 548 of these were recently baptised, which was more than any other Adventist mission in the world at the time (p. 121).

In practical terms, rural Puno was a suitable site for Adventism because the centrality of task-based labour and relatively flexible working hours (compared with urban centres such as Lima) made it feasible for converts to adhere to the Adventist prohibition on working on Saturdays. There was also little competition from other Protestant denominations, owing to a prior agreement among US Church leaders to focus their missionary efforts in different parts of South America. More fundamentally, Seventh-day Adventism was uniquely appealing to a particular category of «Indian» —the term used at the time and maintained throughout the text— seeking to evade the political and economic demands of the local political structure.

While acknowledging the difficulties of identifying precisely who the «Indians» who converted to Adventism in the early twentieth century were —archival records are highly dispersed and incomplete— Yael Mabat's finding that the vast majority were indigenous army veterans is highly significant. With the introduction of a modern military code in 1898, all Peruvian men between twenty-one and twenty-four were to be drafted for three or four years of military service, in a move designed to professionalise the military and strengthen the nation-state. In practice, conscription fell most heavily on the shoulders of Aymara and Quechua Indians, who could not buy their way out of service. Decried by some as

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a new form of exploitation and hailed by others as a route to education and integration, military service left an indelible imprint on the lives of Indian conscripts.

After completing military service, the majority returned to their home communities, either by choice or because they had no other option. Yet many were rejected as *mistis* who had spent too long outside the norms of the community. They also lacked the material wealth that might buy them social status and insulate them from criticism; a situation exacerbated by increasing land scarcity in the context of population growth and encroachment on indigenous lands. Seventh-day Adventism provided access to a relatively autonomous space in which Indian self-improvement and aspirations towards racial «regeneration» were facilitated. This is illustrated through the case of Manuel Camacho, who returned from military service in 1900 to his home district of Chucuito, Puno, and proceeded to establish an improvised school, where he taught reading and writing and Adventist doctrine to fellow veterans. The experience of breaking away from traditional religious and political practices, in turn propelled converts into new forms of activism, as indicated by the prevalence of Adventists among the Asociación Pro-Indígena and, later, the Comité Central Pro-Derecho Indígena Tahuantinsuyu.

Interwoven with this history is the story of Adventist missionaries, who began arriving in Peru from the United States in 1905. They framed their work in the remote altiplano as a life of «sacrifice» that required them to dispense with middle-class comforts and travel long distances to spread Adventist teachings among the Indians. Beneath this carefully constructed narrative, missionaries —most of whom came from farming families— were also responding to economic and social pressures in their place of origin. Amid accelerating industrialisation, population growth, competitive market forces, and the rising price of land and machinery, these men found it increasingly difficult to establish a family farm as their fathers had done; a situation exacerbated by the fact that observing the Sabbath barred them from many white-collar jobs in the cities. Becoming a missionary, Mabat argues, paradoxically offered a more secure route to middle-class status and long-term security.

Crucially, Mabat highlights that «[l]ike peasants in the Andean highlands, farmers growing wheat or grazing cattle on the grasslands of the United States were now subjected to fluctuating prices influenced by the fortunes and misfortunes of peasants in Ukraine, ranchers on the Argentinean pampas, and the changing tastes and fashions of anonymous men and women» (p. 101). While she emphasises that the position of missionaries was always more privileged than the Indians they came to convert, analysing the two groups together is revealing. It moves beyond the idea of globalisation as a Western-led phenomenon to which the global South was always reacting, and highlights instead the simultaneous dislocations in both the global North and the global South.

Contrary to the common perception of religious missionaries arriving unannounced to conquer new lands, the story that emerges in *Sacrifice and Regeneration* is one of connected histories, with substantial pressure from below for the construction of missions, and little in the way of a coordinated plan administered from above. Manuel Camacho wrote to Adventist representatives in Chile and Lima for almost a decade before his requests for a missionary and an official mission in Puno were answered. And when Adventist missionary Ferdinand Stahl finally arrived to set up a mission in Chucuito in 1910, he did so only after spending a year visiting Camacho from La Paz, where he had been stationed originally.

The book also reveals that race and ideas about race were central to the history of religious conversion in the Andes. For Manuel Camacho, converting to Seventh-day Adventism enabled him to articulate an Indian identity that did not conform to the expectations of criollo and mestizo society. The book also shows how, although the Indian character of the mission proved a big draw for indigenous recruits and the idea of «living with Indians» contributed to the missionaries' narrative of social sacrifice and isolation, this framing was later dropped in favour of cultivating relations with mestizo elites and even poor mestizos, who nevertheless helped the mission present itself as a less threatening organisation in the eyes of the Peruvian state. Notably, although this shift guaranteed more harmonious relations with government authorities, it brought stagnation and ultimately a decline in the number of new converts.

This fascinating study of religious conversion and Adventist missionaries in Puno brings to light a history that has often been passed over in studies of Christianity in Peru. It makes careful and creative use of a wide variety of sources —police reports, legal archives, church records, and missionary memoirs— to bring us closer to the lived reality of converts and missionaries, and to understand the relations between them. The Catholic presence in the region comes across as rather inert and one-dimensional, and the book would benefit from being placed in dialogue with other histories of Christianity in Peru during this period, particularly Ricardo D. Cubas Ramacciotti's work on the rise of Social Catholicism. Nevertheless, *Sacrifice and Regeneration* makes significant contributions to the history of religion through the questions it asks and the evidence it deploys. Moreover, it speaks well beyond the history of religion, with valuable insights for those interested in veterans, race, and the cultural reverberations of globalisation in rural communities.

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