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## The Latino Encyclopedia

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Like a new highway still under construction, this six volume set should have a sign: "Proceed with Caution." It too pioneers new efforts, and is certainly a quicker route to travel than previous, more partial paths. However, there is unreliable information leading to dangerous detours from fact.

No other work even attempts such a comprehensive compilation of cross-indexed information about U.S. Hispanics. Subjects are arranged in alphabetical order, but there is also a complete table of contents for each volume. Even more helpful is the series of indices in

volume six: "Entries by Latino Subgroup or Region of Origin" is followed by an entire subject list and complete cross index to all volumes. The time line, serial publications, bibliographies, and other lists of this last tome are also useful. Together these provide as good a search engine as possible without a CD-Rom.

For instance, there are over ninety entries under the subject "Religion and Religious Issues." This review is confined to those entries.

Few reference works on Latinos give this much attention to religion. Important though lesser-known figures such as Concepción Arguello, Ysidora Bandini de Coutts, and Apolinaria Lorenzana are treated. Moreover, some effort is made to do justice to the pervasiveness of religious feeling in these communities. Thus, while the entry on Reies López Tijerina is not included in the index under "Religion," that entry does mention the importance of religion in his life.

Of the longer articles dealing with religion, those on "Religious Art" and "Religious Syncretism" are among the best. Others are of uneven quality. Some leave unanswered questions, others commit incredible errors.

Questions include: (1) Why are there articles on Catholics, Mormons, and Presbyterians, but none on Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Methodists, or other denominations? (2) Why is the *Primer Encuentro Nacional Hispano* mentioned, but not the succeeding two or those of other denominations? (3) Why are certain contemporary religious figures (e.g., Nicky Cruz and Yolanda Tarango) mentioned but not others (e.g., Justo González and Ada María Isasi-Díaz)?

In addition to common factual errors (e.g., Franciscans are mendicants, not monks), there are others far more egregious. The late Fray Angélico Chávez (listed under "Manuel Chávez") is correctly identified as "perhaps New Mexico's greatest literary resource." All the more reason not to claim—inaccurately—that he is a *former* Catholic priest and Franciscan. He lived and died as a Franciscan and a priest as anyone could verify by doing what I did, calling the archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

Volume III, page 715 has a photograph of what appears to be two different images of Our Lady of Sorrows. They are most definitely not images of Our Lady of Guadalupe as the caption connotes. Her image is found in the same volume on page 878.

While open to persons of all faiths, the Mexican American Cultural Center is decidedly Catholic. It is not nondenominational as listed. The brief article about it also incorrectly states that it promotes "the Mexican cultural heritage," and the sentence about its founding is very incomplete. Again, if the author had spoken to the president, María Elena González, as did I, these errors could easily have been rectified.

Incredible amounts of often arcane information is gathered in this handy set. For instance, where else could one find such easy access to this much information about "Honduran Americans"? Scholars from other fields may not share my complaints. However, if one approaches this work looking for information about religious studies, proceed with caution. This encyclopedia is a fair compass, but not a reliable map.

*Kenneth G. Davis*