This ethnographic study of Trinidadian gospel music engages the multiple musical styles circulating in the nation's Full Gospel community and illustrates the carefully negotiated and contested spaces that they occupy in relationship to questions of identity. By exploring gospelpyso, jamoo (“Jehovah's music”), gospel dancehall, and North American gospel music, along with the discourses that surround performances in these styles, the book illustrates the extent to which value, meaning, and appropriateness are continually circumscribed and reinterpreted in the process of coming to terms with what it looks and sounds like to be a Full Gospel believer in Trinidad. The local, regional, and transnational implications of these musical styles, moreover, are read in relationship to their impact on belief (and vice versa), revealing the particularly nuanced poetics of conviction that drive both apologists and detractors of these styles. The book sets the investigation against a historical narrative and introduces a theoretical approach that the book calls the “ethics of style”—a model that privileges the convictions embedded in this context and which emphasizes their role in shaping the terms upon which identity is continually being constructed in Trinidad. The result is an extended meditation on the convictions that lie behind the creation and reception of style in Full Gospel Trinidad.

Regionalisms
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
This chapter investigates the music of gospel dancehall and hardcore soca artists in Trinidad. It discusses the issues that surround their performances, including the ethical and stylistic implications attendant to their active creation of new social spaces for worship. It examines the ethical discourse surrounding the performance and reception of regional music in general and dancehall music in particular within the Full Gospel community in Trinidad. It traces the cultural and political trajectory of dancehall from the marginalized spaces of lower-class, black Jamaica to Full Gospel Trinidad.

Nationalism and the Soul
Timothy Rommen
in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2012
Publisher: University of California Press
DOI: 10.1525/california/9780520250673.003.0004

This chapter examines the emergence of gospelpypso and its reception history in Trinidad. It aims to illustrate the themes of post-independence identity that lie close to the heart of this musical style. It explains that gospelpypso is too closely related to the perceived evils of carnival and bacchanal and the Full Gospel community refused to identify with gospelpypso or accept it as a valid, representative expression of Full Gospel identity.

Transnational Dreams, Global Desires
Timothy Rommen
in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
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DOI: 10.1525/california/9780520250673.003.0005

This chapter analyzes the rise of North American gospel music in Trinidad, investigating some of its connections to transnational and neo-colonial processes and cosmopolitan dreams along the way. It suggests that the historical trajectory of North American gospel music was essentially contemporaneous with the emergence of gospelpypso. It discusses the ways that transnational and neo-colonial issues are often discussed with and through the ethics of style in order to demonstrate the powerful counterprocesses that Trinidadian Full Gospel believers put into play, both in discourse and through musical practice.
Music, Memory, and Identity in Full Gospel Trinidad
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
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Item type: chapter

This chapter traces the religious histories that have shaped the current context within which Full Gospel Trinidadians are negotiating their identity. It parallels the function of an opening invocation, which serves not only to define the present but also the past(s) with which contemporary Trinidadian believers are sharing their present. It also introduces the four principal musical styles circulating in and around the Full Gospel community including gospelypso, North American gospel music, dancehall, and jamoo.

Reenvisioning Ethics, Revisiting Style
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
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Item type: chapter

This chapter brings the discussion of the ethics of style full circle. It proposes several ways that musical change and musical practices themselves might be reenvisioned and rethought in light of the ethics of style by offering a close reading of a Baptist church in Point Fortin, Trinidad. It attempts to reconnect the ethics of style to individual congregations to illustrate the important role that these local instantiations of the Full Gospel community fulfill in the Trinidadian gospel music scene.

The Ethics of Style
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
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Item type: chapter
This chapter proposes an analytical model to provide both theoretical grounding and methodological justification for its use within Full Gospel Trinidad. It outlines the theoretical basis for and the practical applicability of an analytical paradigm referred to as the ethics of style. It suggests that the ethics of style, when coupled with and balanced by a careful application of several archetypes of Caribbeanness, provides a powerful approach to thinking about music in this Trinidadian context that clears space for analysis which takes seriously the importance of the divine in the lives of those searching for communion with one another.

Jehovah's Music

Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad

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Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the musical style called jamoo coined by Ras Shorty I. It suggests that this idiosyncratic approach to gospel music offers insights into the possibility of other ways of thinking about music in Trinidadian Full Gospel contexts. It explores the life and music of Ras Shorty I in order to have a better understanding of how the ethics of style might be brought to bear on analyses of the racial imagination and the poetics of conviction in Trinidad.

Megachurches in Asia and the Dissenting Movement

Wonsuk Ma

in The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume IV: The Twentieth Century: Traditions in a Global Context

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This study examines whether Asian megachurches hold any theological and conceptual dissenting elements, historically shaped in Europe. The Yoido Full Gospel Church is used as a case study due to its mega size and the deep impact of its experience of church growth on wider global Christianity. Placing the life of the church and its founder David Yonggi Cho in their social context of Korea, the study identifies key motivations for the theological and practical processes and the outcome of church growth. Based on this assessment, it then probes whether the
megachurch movement in Asia expresses any social and theological aspect of the dissenting movement. Even if there is no direct historical connection, there are important theological and social motivations that are found both in the megachurch movement and the dissenting traditions.

Reenchanted: Divine Healing in Korean Protestantism
Sean C. Kim

in Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing

The growth of pentecostalism in South Korea since the 1950s, fueled largely by divine healing practices, is symbolized by the Yoido Full Gospel Church, the world’s largest Christian congregation, founded by David Yonggi Cho. Korea is second only to the United States in number of overseas missionaries. Ironically, divine healing first emerged in Presbyterian churches founded by “cessationist” Western missionaries who believed miracles had ended. Despite the “disenchantment” of the Western worldview, because missionaries emphasized native initiative in church planting, Korean evangelists were able to use divine healing and exorcism in conversion. In 1923, the Korean Presbyterian Church abandoned the doctrine of cessationism. Pentecostalism was appealing because it drew on traditional Korean cosmology of spirits and the supernatural and also presented Christianity as more effective than other religions in meeting this-worldly needs. It is misleading to reduce Korean pentecostal healing to “shamanism”; healing is better understood as indigenization of Christianity.

Sounds Transcendent
Timothy Rommen

in Resounding Transcendence: Transitions in Music, Religion, and Ritual

This chapter explores the mediating position(s) of translocal music in Trinidadian Full Gospel worship. Pentecostalist missionizing, the North American gospel music industry’s presence in Trinidad and Trinidadian cultural politics have set in motion several transitions. Repertorial
transition finds congregations moving away from long-meter and revival hymns toward singing North American praise and worship choruses and gospel music. Doctrinal transition—a turn toward the idea of the invisible church—has fostered repertorial transition as a means of generating sonic identification with fellow Christians globally. A demographic transition is also taking place, incorporating East Indian converts into church life as Full Gospel congregations work to ameliorate communal tensions. The repertorial transition addresses the demographics of Full Gospel Trinidad by sidestepping or silencing the predominantly Afro-Creole cultural politics at the national level. Ultimately, the chapter shows how North American gospel music provides a translocal means of facing local transitions in Full Gospel Trinidad.

Rattlesnakes, Holiness, and the Nearness of the Holy Spirit
James Hudnut-Beumler

in Strangers and Friends at the Welcome Table: Contemporary Christianities in the American South

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Although the outside image of southern Pentecostal Holiness is often sensationalized by associations with serpent handling believers, that actual practice is confined to roughly a thousand individuals in an Appalachian crescent in the South. The story of Wesleyan Holiness belief in the nineteen century transforming in the twentieth to a wide variety of Pentecostal bodies is an important one that gains importance in the contemporary era wherein the South’s growing number of “bapticostal” black churches and other churches effecting the prosperity gospel far outnumber the formal number of Pentecostal churches. Furthermore, the convictions that the Holy Spirit is nearby and waiting on believers’ calling have come to characterize even many mainline and evangelical churches’ practice to the point where one can speak of the Pentecostalization of southern Christianity.