

A Different Type of Anthropology

When most people think about anthropology, they think about apes and Neanderthals. This does not have to be the case all the time though. Below is a chapter summary of an ethnographic work titled "Jesus and the Gang: Youth Violence and Christianity in Urban Honduras". It focuses on the youth in Honduras having to choose between joining the local gang life or the church, and their struggle to either convert or die.

Summary for the chapters

Chapter one is an introduction to the youth violence in Honduras. It also discusses the widespread of gun violence in the culture. In the beginning of the chapter, it shows the example of El Titere, a young man who was part of the Eighteenth Street Gang and how he was shot down right in front of his own house on the way to a carnival in his town by other gang members. This happened to the author during the beginning of his research study and was a shocking introduction to the lifestyle that goes on in that town.

Chapter two is mainly to show the three main social organizations that youth become part of. Those are the Catholic Church, one of the few of the Pentecostal churches, or the one that the book is centered about: the gang. These choices are the different ways a child or young adult in Honduras can end up going and living by.

The third chapter in the book has a primary focus on the relationship between gang members. This is shown through the graffiti they put on the streets and other places, the tattoos they get on their body to show their allegiance to their gang, the bonds between two members of the gang called *carnal*, or blood brothers, and the nickname given in a gang and how it is

a central role. Once all this is done the gang is, as the title of the chapter suggests, "thick as blood" meaning that they are as close as family, especially the between carnals, because they are always together.

With the fourth chapter, this is more centralized on how the churches are trying to get youth to turn to them instead of violence. The Catholic Church, for instance, tries to take care of and help the youth through church groups. Through these groups, the church tries to connect to the youth to show them that they can turn to God for their needs, and hopefully get out of the gang life and better the community.

The first part of the title for chapter five says it all- "Finding sanctuary." This is about how the gang members try to find a way out of gang life through God through Pentecostalism. Sergio is a great example for this because he left his gang due to the fact that his carnal (El Titere) was shot down and realized that he could not continue that life. Through Pentecostalism and with the help of El Titere's mother, Sergio struggles to not fall back into his old lifestyle, and live a Christian like way.

Chapter three provides the most successful view on the ways of the youth in Honduras. It shows the ties between the gang members and how they operate. It shows how the peer groups in the gangs provide a sort of kinship for the members that might not always be there back home. It provides support, food, shelter, and a freedom to dress and act freely, but according to the new social norms of the gang.

This book, like I said, is excellent. The book is very effective in showing just what goes on and how easy it is to get involved with gangs, especially at a young age. I did like this book because of all the research that is put into it, along with the interviews and stories, but it was a little too dry for me. It was well written, do not get me wrong, but it just is not my type of genre that I prefer to read. I would

recommend this book to other college students who would like to know more about Honduras or are traveling to the county. I would also recommend this book to older church group members to read and discuss amongst each other and their religious leader because they would be happy to know that the word of God is spreading to the gangs and are leading members away from crime and murder to a better life to be saved.