On a typical Sunday, in the ‘immigrant gateway’ city of Miami, Florida, a humble storefront Pentecostal church holds a seemingly endless, emotionally charged gathering, drawing a large assembly of Jamaicans, the state’s fastest-growing migrant and ancestry group. Earlier that day, thousands of miles away in the (by Japanese standards) cosmopolitan City of Kobe a palatial, immaculate Roman Catholic church, rebuilt after the memorable Great Quake in 1995, offers a solemn ‘international’ Mass to its diverse ethnic Asian flock, among which Filipinos are the most arresting and engaged celebrants. These two immigrant faiths contrast sharply in terms of sociocultural contexts, religious fabrics, and modi operandi as regards worship, but share a clear gender disparity, marked by an exceeding female presence vis-à-vis the firm male grip on institutionalized power. This observation from my own fieldwork illustrates how gendered perspectives enable valid comparative research into the complex nexus between immigration and religion where opportunities for doing so may seem superficially limited. This fieldwork reflection also ushered me to the anthology under discussion here, Gender, Religion, and Migration. As the order of the words in the title indicates, the book places gender at the
heart of its methodology and theorization, instead of simply adding it as a supplementary variable. It is, as the editors claim, ‘so far, the first collection of works focusing on gender, religion, and integration in migration across different geographic areas’ (p 3), and thus makes an addition to underrated yet longstanding scholarly efforts to genderize international and transnational migration studies. And more importantly, the volume serves as a fresh warning against downplaying the importance of gendered perspectives in the growing scholarship of immigrant faiths.

There is another shared thematic focus, which weaves these ethnographies from different geographic and temporal contingencies into a heuristic comparative study. The contributors carefully avoid the ideological dichotomy between the roles of religion as either facilitating or obstructing the incorporation of immigrant minorities into mainstream society and culture. The book draws attention to the obvious yet often overlooked empirical fact that religion is a sociohistorical and cultural configuration. Displaced by globalization and ending up in host societies (usually in their lower social strata), immigrants and their local-born offspring realign their religious expressions and ritual practices within the sociohistorical conjunctures and power relations of their new environs. As a result, religion has various implications for the integration of immigrant minorities, not *per se* but in its articulation with diverse contextual conditions, including but not exclusive to when and why they settled, where in the socioeconomic hierarchy they are located, how they are publicly perceived, whether and to what extent they retain or re-establish relations with their place of origin, and so on. Examining religion with the concept of agents, or agency, in a broader sense (inclusive of contextual conditions of possibility), each contributor to this volume has unearthed the ‘ironic’ (p 9) or ‘double-edged’ (p 18) roles it plays. In its comparative case studies, the book draws a complex picture of how immigrants take distinct paths of assimilation despite their affiliation to the same religious/denominational traditions.

Evolved from an international workshop panel that took place in Melbourne in 2007, the book contains fifteen ethnographic accounts, which aptly reflect the currents of international migration and the resultant shifts in the global religious landscape, and are geographically sorted: Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America. In what follows, I can only discuss a few examples, unfortunately.

The co-editors have arranged the book in such a way that, following their introductory chapter, it opens the major discussion with the experience of Filipino domestic workers (by G. T. Cruz). It is most likely, as I