Bishop Nolan Harmon's 1974 Edition of "Understanding The United Methodist Church" is amazingly complete and accurate. When I picked up this slender 165-page paperback volume I wondered whether he had concentrated on a few of the multitude of factors necessary for an understanding of United Methodism or whether he had skipped lightly over a great many of them. I still cannot understand how he could so concisely yet adequately deal with so many subjects and give such a comprehensive picture of the Church, its history, its theology, its organization, its program, and the part it plays in worldwide Christianity.

Bishop Harmon obviously — and justifiably — is proud of the glorious history of our Church, convinced of its theology, and dedicated to its program. When he compares it to other Christian churches, and particularly the Roman Catholic Church, his evaluation is not entirely impartial, though he does express his appreciation for much of what other denominations believe and do.

There are two important elements of United Methodism regarding which I wish Bishop Harmon had added at least a few paragraphs. First, he has dealt almost exclusively with United Methodism in the United States. In the last few years many of the United Methodist Conferences, particularly in South America and Asia, have chosen to become autonomous, though related, Methodist denominations, but there still are hundreds of thousands of United Methodists in Europe, Asia and Africa. Methodism has been, and still can be, a significant bridge for understanding and communication across the barriers of nationalism, race and language.

Similarly, when Bishop Harmon pointed out that in the United States the United Methodist Church is the most widespread geographically, I wish he had written more fully about its racial and language diversity and the significant role of our black, Spanish-speaking, American Indian, and oriental members.

The divisions between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion in 1796 and the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816, and between the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now Christian Methodist Episcopal Church) in 1866 are an important part of the history of our Church. The present relationships and the future possibilities for greater cooperation or even eventual reunion with these closely related denominations is important to fuller understanding of the United Methodist Church. Within the United Methodist Church itself,
blacks have, for the last 200 years been, at least until the rapid growth of the black membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the last few years, a larger and more significant element than in any other connectional Christian church.

Bishop Harmon has written so well that my only real criticism is a wish that he had written more. I have never seen any one book that approaches this as an overall description of our Church, or would be so helpful to new members of a local church or of an Administrative Board.

— Leonard D. Slutz  
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This *Festschrift* for Ray C. Petry, now retired after many years as Professor of Church History at Duke University, is composed of twelve essays, ten of them by his former graduate students. One is by his former Professor, John T. McNeill; and one is by the former Methodist Bishop in North Carolina, William R. Cannon. These excellent essays are preceded by an Appreciation by Petry's former colleague, Stuart C. Henry. The series concludes with a bibliography of books and articles by Petry. The appendix contains three representative lecture-sermons by Petry on quite diverse topics.

George Schriver, of Georgia Southern College, was not only the editor, but was the person responsible for selecting and introducing the lectures by Petry, and he wrote one of the essays. He characterized Petry's interest in history as "people-centered," rather than institution-, liturgy-, or theology-centered. Petry himself is quoted by Schriver to substantiate the assertion: "One of the greatest fascinations of Christian history is the interest of real people in each other down the ages" (p. 226). This is further exemplified both in the sermon by Petry on "Christ and the Gospels in Worship and the Arts" where he relates human experiences, feelings and aspirations of the past, as exemplified in music, art and architecture, to everyday aspirations of contemporary worshippers; and in the appreciation for Petry by Stuart Henry where the latter states: "In a real sense his study of history is the refinement and practice of his awareness of others — not simply of his own generation, but of whatever age, in whatever world" (p. xiv).

The series of twelve essays is organized around five topics, each of special interest to Petry. The first concerns "Preaching in the great tradition." B. Maurice Ritchie of the Duke University Divinity School has analyzed "Preaching and Pastoral Care in John Tauler" (1300-1361). Studies of the relationship between the great mystic tradition and pastoral
practice have a long history. This author argues that the three steps toward mystical union — sensible, intellectual, and spiritual — provided for medieval man a more meaningful relationship to the divine — *i.e.*, resulted in deeply felt pastoral care — than the intellectual or scholastic approach alone. This thesis is illustrated from many of Tauler's sermons preached to the outer man, but which, the author assumes, had great benefit for the inner man if judged by the popularity of this one mystic preacher. The "Forty Sermons" of Wyclif are analyzed by William Mallard of Candler School of Theology at Emory University, to characterize the English cleric as a pastor outside the lecture halls of Oxford. The "Forty Sermons" were chosen because they reflect the moralistic, popular, incisive, and self-assured pastor before he became involved in his most serious theological debates following his publication on the Eucharist (1379) and his self-imposed exile to Lutterworth (1381).

A second subdivision of two essays concerns "Christianity and the Arts." James F. White, of Perkins School of Theology, analyzes the *Rationale divinorum officiorum* of William Durandus (1230-1296), a bishop in southern France. He concludes that this work, an elaborate discussion of the allegorical and symbolic aspects of the high Middle Ages, formed the epitome of many centuries' development in worship in the same way that Thomas Aquinas epitomized scholastic theology. Gerald H. Shinn, of the University of North Carolina, studies the interrelation between the various laws — Roman, Canon, Biblical — in Germanic areas. These were presented both in the written word and in the elaborate illuminations of the *Sachsenpiegel* (Dresden, ca. 1275) a secular law book of the post-Charlemagne period.

The third section consists of three essays on "Reform, dissent, heresy." The editor, George H. Schriver, surveys the changing image of Catharism in recent historical analysis. He suggests that reaction against this "counter-culture," "counter-church," and "loser in history" may have forced its "orthodox" opponents to "uphold the created order as a good act of the one good God" (p. 79), more than they would have otherwise. In one of the most suggestive and insightful articles in the series, H. Lawrence Bond of Appalachian State University in North Carolina, analyzes the mystic, Nicholas Cusanus (1400-1464), as a "reformer before the Reformation." Because all men, by nature, seek knowledge, while knowledge of the unknowable God (according to neo-Platonic thought, and Nicholas of Cusa) is not possible, there must be another approach. Cusa takes the "coincidence of opposites" to be a reflection of the opposing natures of Christ in one person. Hence, as Bond analyzes Cusa, the only valid way to discuss the relation between infinite God and finite man is through Christology. The main contribution of Cusa's three-volume *Learned Ignorance* is thus epistemological, rather than substantive or metaphysical. Obviously, then, the presupposition of Late Medieval
Theology, as exemplified in Cusa, forced him to reject syllogistic and analogical arguments in reference to God. "Learned ignorance, as the knowledge of faith in Christ, is the epistemological datum for theologizing" (p. 86). Thus Bond argues that the Christological epistemology of Cusa foreshadowed aspects of the thought of both Luther and Calvin. Finally, to conclude this third section, James Jordan of Georgia Southern College analyzes many aspects of Lefevre d'Etaples' reform at Meaux, his French translations of the Bible, and the reactions resulting therefrom.

The fourth section, consisting of three essays, is entitled "History, eschatology and the contemplative life." Roger D. Ray of the University of Toledo reassessed the Historia Ecclesiastica of Oderic Vitalis (1075-1142), and especially this Benedictine's ascription of semi-divinity to the English Henry I after his coronation. Ray argues that this political theology of Vitalis is not merely rhetorical, but authentically reflects the concept of the twelfth century historian. If this is an accurate assessment it may shed new light on the conflict between Henry I and Anselm, and may also indicate why Vitalis refrained from discussing this conflict in his story of Henry I. Grover A. Zinn, of Oberlin, analyzes the role of history for Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141). Hugh, so the author asserts, elevated the understanding of ongoing history in contemplation as he insisted that all events, not only biblical events, are the vehicle through which God is working out what is now called Heilsgeschichte. Finally John T. McNeill, formerly of Union Theological Seminary of New York, gives some 12th century "Perspectives on Celtic Church History," related to his book on Celtic Church History published this year (1974). This essay is a summary of recent research in Irish-Welsh Church History and calls into question, among other things, the generally accepted dates for St. Patrick himself.

The fifth section, entitled "Teaching in the Great Tradition," consists of two essays. The first, by David Burr of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, deals with the limits of intellectual freedom with respect to Petrus Iohannis Olivi, a Franciscan in France in the last half of the 13th century. The writings of Olivi show that he was an advocate of more intellectual freedom in order to discuss the faith in a Pseudo-Dionysian framework. The purpose of this, however, was to counteract what he thought were more serious errors of the growing Aristotelian "heresy" of the period. The final essay of the book, by Bishop William R. Cannon, is entitled "The Genesis of the University." This is totally different type of essay. It is not based on primary research, as the others are, but is a summary of material long available. Most of the article is summarized from Hastings Rashdall's The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages (1895). Cannon limits his summary to the first volume of the revised edition (1936), the study of Salerno, Bologna and Paris. Even the impressive Latin footnotes, which were checked by this reviewer, are also lifted from this old and well-known work. Part of the essay is also dependent on C. H. Haskins' The
Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (1927).

The various contributions to this Festschrift, while reflecting great diversity, are a fitting reflection of and tribute to the many-faceted career of Church Historian Ray Petry.

—J. Alton Templin

The Iliff School of Theology