
Murray’s extensive study of race relations among Methodists in this critical era merits a wider audience than the title might suggest. More than a denominational study, *Methodists and the Crucible of Race* delineates the painful struggle of African American Methodists and white Methodists to build an inclusive fellowship in mid-20th-century America. Thus Murray, (Methodist College) provides a richly-detailed account of a mainline Protestant denomination that confronted social justice not only within its cultural context, but also within itself. Drawing heavily from archival research, Murray allows the primary sources to speak for themselves on a controversial, emotional issue. Some points call for outrage, but Murray suspends his judgment and allows voices from the past to judge their own history. Tracing Methodist division over race to antebellum disputes over slavery, he provides a vivid portrait of the racism that infected all American denominations as they participated in the injustices of the larger society. Murray’s inclusion of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Episcopalians in his account highlights Methodism as typifying the broad-scale exclusion of African Americans from mainstream institutional participation. As he points out in Chapter 2, “Jim Crow Church,” the 1939 union that created The Methodist Church brought together white Methodists only by forming the Central Jurisdiction, a governing structure based on race. Race relations after the 1939 union focused largely on dismantling jurisdictional segregation. However, African American Methodists wanted more than simply the elimination of the Central Jurisdiction. Rather, they aimed for inclusion and equality at all levels of the denomination.

Methodists traversed a difficult path toward an inclusive fellowship. Murray’s research closely examines the drama both behind the scenes in committee work and on the floor of General Conferences. Prominent personalities—such as Charles C. Parlin and James P. Brawley—come to life with their contributions and all-too-human flaws. Rather than whitewashing the story, Murray reveals how the journey to inclusion has been a series of hard-won (and often hard-lost) battles that have brought heartache and disappointment. Even bishops, who figured prominently in these battles, some-
times harbored anxiety for the denomination as Methodists struggled to find common ground. As Murray highlights in Chapter 3, the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* pressured Methodists to end segregation in their ranks. Yet the principle of voluntarism, emphasized in Chapter 4, meant that Methodists rejected compulsion as a means for social change and worked on building consensus. Thus, change toward inclusion was painfully slow and the denomination risked prophetic irrelevance through merely following its social context. But voluntarism succeeded as Methodists maintained unity even as American culture splintered over race relations. Murray keeps readers posted on contemporary events in the larger social context in which Methodism operated. Rather than dealing with race relations as a static element, Methodism worked toward inclusion in a tumultuous environment in which demographics ("white flight"), economics ("urban decay"), social upheaval (such as the riots in major cities) and fragmentation among ethnic groups (such as the tensions between black nationalists and more conservative civil rights leaders) conspired to unravel racial ideals. When one considers these circumstances, the fact that Methodists managed to work toward inclusion while remaining together in the same denomination is a story that merits admiration. Murray even discusses the positive contributions of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, whose policies toward race relations figured into the 1968 Plan of Union that created The United Methodist Church. By the 1970s, United Methodists established a new platform for social justice and secured funds for racial reconciliation and healing.

Certainly, Murray's splendid account deserves wide reading among United Methodists. Courses in Methodist history and polity should emphasize its importance by placing it on their reading lists. UMC ministers and other leaders should add it to their professional libraries. Academic libraries with collections related to the American Civil Rights Movement, or strong theological/Methodist Studies collections should regard Murray's book as essential. UMC church libraries should also purchase this book and recommend it to their constituents.

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This is the first critical study of the founder of Methodism in Germany. It examines the life and thought of Christoph Gottlob Müller (1785-1858) within his larger historical and theological milieu. It admirably succeeds in its purpose of demonstrating how he succeeded in domesticating British Methodist piety within German culture, thereby helping Methodism to become an international movement in the early 19th century, and preparing it to embrace the mission of North American Methodism to Germany, which came in the second half of that century. Tracing the career of Müller provides a context for portraying the history, structure, and piety of his Wesleyan societies which constituted the hitherto unexplored first phase of Methodism in Germany.

Müller’s early upbringing within the milieu of Würtemberg (South German) Pietism is carefully told, followed by his relocation in England, where he converted to Methodism and, after extensive ministry in North London, was commissioned by that free church as its first missionary/evangelist to the Continent. His desire to live in peace with the clergy of the Protestant state churches (Landeskirchen) has been criticized by denominational historians as an indication of Müller’s “defective church consciousness,” but in this study it is presented as approximating the model of primitive British Methodism, functioning within the Anglican Church. Müller’s work is also located within the world of the “Erweckungsbewegung” (awakening movement) then underway in Würtemberg, although the author contends that Müller’s piety and the structure of his societies bore the unmistakable imprint of British Methodism.

Burkhardt constructs his impressive study of this key figure upon substantial use of archival material on Müller that has not previously been examined, including sources on the awakening in Winnenden, where his mission had its base. He locates the story of primitive German Methodism within the matrix of church-based and sectarian manifestations of Württemberg Pietism. There is an extensive list of devotional works in the possession of the Müller family, including titles from such luminaries of German Pietism as Tersteegen and Jung-Stilling, whose influences on Müller and early German Methodism have yet to be probed. Of particular interest is the insight offered into how early Methodists here were observed by their Pietist neighbors, including the provocation of inter-generational tensions that were occasioned by the presence of Müller and his mission. The excurses provided at the end of each chapter offer the reader further insight into Methodist beliefs and structures, as well as discussions of the theological motifs found in Müller’s extensive correspondence with his sponsors at the London Mission House. His growing effectiveness as awakening preacher/evangelist is chronicled amid a host of impediments, includ-
ing opposition from Pietists, legal and financial difficulties, and health problems.

Of particular interest to Americans is Müller’s contacts with Wilhelm Nast, founder of the Methodist Episcopal work in Germany in the mid-19th century. Results of that relationship include the adoption of the German hymnal of North American Methodists in Winnenden and the building of an international fellowship of German Methodists. In fact, Müller is interpreted as increasingly gravitating toward the American connection in view of strains endured with the London Mission House. In brief, Müller’s work is viewed as a development within the threefold axis of Württemberg/London/North America.

This innovative and seminal study is recommended for all research libraries and scholars with interest in how Methodism developed as an international, inter-cultural body. It is attractively published, with extensive bibliography, tables, and indices. It is also distinguished as the recipient of the Jesse Lee Prize of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History (1993). Hopefully, Burkhardt’s work can be translated into English for wider dissemination in North America.

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*Holiness Abroad* is a book whose genesis was to document Asian mission work by the Church of the Nazarene for students attending the denomination’s seminary in the Philippines. To that end it succeeds. Scholars whose interest lies in Holiness missionary work in Asia will find Cunningham’s book a good starting place. The first chapter is a gem since it encapsulates the philosophy of mission work as set forth by the nascent Church of the Nazarene which becomes the bar by which missionaries and their work are measured in subsequent chapters. One of the most refreshing aspects of Cunningham’s work is giving a balanced view of this history while assessing the strengths and weaknesses of Nazarene Asian missions. He paints a lively picture of American missionaries and their relationship with indigenous workers against the backdrop of what was happening both sociologically and culturally in their respective countries. The picture is always framed with the larger presence of the policies propagated by Nazarene general mission board in the United States. If there is a downside to the book it has to do with Cunningham’s occasional use of phrases that non-Nazarenes may not fully comprehend. An appendix with time line and listing of missionaries and their appointments would have made the volume more helpful. However, the absence of such information does not detract from the approachable nature of the work.

The book touches briefly on other Methodist mission work. It deals with documenting the sale of Methodist mission property to the Church of the Nazarene when Methodists abandoned certain areas of their Asian mission fields. It is, at times, nearly impossible to track such information in standard Methodist sources. The other exception has to do with Church of the Nazarene’s respect for comity agreements of which United Methodism was a major part.

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