
The history of Christianity in Canada has been written for the most part by males and its actors are largely men. In 1990 the Centre for the Study of Religion in Canada in Toronto, affiliated with the University of Toronto, held a conference on women and Canadian religion at Emmanuel College of Victoria University. This resulting volume of eclectic essays by sixteen women and one man, seeks to broaden that perspective with feminist methodologies (e.g. "collegiality") and offers valuable insight into the Canadian religious picture. With present scholarship, *Changing Roles* nicely supplements the trilogy of John S. Moir (1966), John Webster Grant (1972), and George A. Rawlyk (1990).

In a useful introduction by the editors, the constraints, opportunities, commonalities and differences are described, making frequent reference to the essays. From a woman's point of view, benefits from various kinds of Christian service included a unique opportunity to express her spirituality, and greater self-fulfillment, administrative experience, and the gaining of self-confidence. Church and society benefitted too, the former in enjoying an inexpensive or volunteer labor force and the latter from social improvement and change.

The seventeen essays delve into specific women's roles and organizational life, Protestant and Catholic. The scholarship provides new primary source material for Catholic women religious as well as Mennonites. Baptists, Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians occupy most of the attention, but not to the exclusion of voluntary organizations like the Y.M.C.A and the W.C.T.U. A good deal of the material reinforces patterns very similar to women's experience in the United States and of course the secondary material reveals heavy dependence upon American historians.

The articles are divided into four sections, "Women in Religious Communities," "The Missionary Enterprise At Home and Abroad," "Pastoral Ministry and Professional Status," and "Christian Benevolence and Social Transformation." The first section offers evidence of the caring ministries of Canadian women, as well as mutual aid services. Section two sheds more light on overseas mission and women's missions with native peoples. Surveying the United Church of Canada, Methodists, Anglicans, and the Gospel Worker's Church, section three analyses the emerging roles of women in ministry. The final section, weaker to some degree than the others, blends essays on evangelical women, the social gospel, and social transformation.

Anthologies are often hard for publishers to market unless the articles are written by leaders in the field or the content is well-integrated and
ground-breaking. Many of these essays are written by leading scholars across Canada, although there is some unevenness in the style and coverage. I looked in vain for any material on women in early Canadian experience (17th and 18th centuries). Also, for a culture which stresses muticulturalism, and is proud of its Francophilic heritage, particularly in Quebec, there is only one article on religious life in Quebec and it focusses upon the English-speaking Ladies Benevolent Society in Montreal. For the contemporary Canadian scene, this is unfortunate.

One of the strongest assets of this book is its excellent eighteen page bibliography. Here the reader will find in both French and English the best available listing of books, articles, dissertations and other items on women in Canadian religion. Also, the format of the book is especially attractive and user-friendly. Each article is prefaced by a paragraph precis which quite adequately describes the argument.

This worthy book will become a reference tool for years to come.

William H. Brackney
Hamilton, Ontario


During the last two decades, the hidden (and often silenced) narrative of the role of women in the church's history has finally been uncovered. This recovery of women's religious history is well represented by *Spirituality and Social Responsibility*. The book takes its place alongside other semi-popular historical accounts of women's significance in social reform, such as Nancy Hardesty's *Women Called to Witness* and Carma Van Liere's *Hallowed Fire*, though, unlike the others, this volume is a collection of essays and is specific to Methodism. As with most anthologies, there is a mixture of quality; nonetheless, the overall product is impressive.

The essays in this volume are case studies in the history of American Methodist women's social activism from the late eighteenth century to the present. Familiar figures in the book include Amanda Berry Smith, Frances Willard, Anna Oliver, Ida Wells-Barnett, Georgia Harkness, and several contemporary women bishops. Surprisingly, the lives of some well-known Methodist women are missing from the collection—Barbara Heck, Phoebe Palmer, and Anna Howard Shaw, to name the most obvious—but these omissions do not detract significantly from the overall contribution of the monograph. Particularly interesting to Methodist historians will be the stories of various unfamiliar figures who, because of this book, will now be more familiar: Catherine Livingston Garrettson, Eliza Garrett, Jennie
Fowler Willing, Katharine Bushnell, and Thelma Stevens, for example. Taken as a whole, this volume begins to fill a serious historical lacuna—the story of women's leadership in Methodism.

The overall task of the book, as Keller states in her brief but helpful introduction, is to explore the ways in which Methodist women have understood and responded to the call of God on their lives. Her summary observation is that the overarching vocational vision of these women has been the union of “spirituality” and “social responsibility.” Keller (and the other authors) are particularly astute at assessing the differences in Methodist women's understandings of “social responsibility” over the years. Keller tells us that late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Methodist pioneers were consumed with the basic task of “test[ing] the perimeters of women's role;” later, their twentieth century sisters developed a more “mature 'sisterhood of shared fire' addressing the festering thorns of racism, sexism, classism, and militarism in church and society.”

Less clear are the changes that occurred over the years in Methodist women's “spirituality.” What was the specific content of that spirituality? Other than an institutional identification with Methodism, what distinguished the faith of these women from that of Episcopalian women or Baptist women, who also had deeply felt spiritual bases for their social justice advocacy? More specifically, what unites the vision of the female clergy leaders of today to that of the female leaders of the nineteenth century, other than a mutual struggle within a particular historic tradition? The “common thread,” according to Keller, is their striving for “equal consideration for men.” But did not Presbyterian women and Congregational women, for example, strive for such equal consideration, as well?

Actually, there has been a very significant, denominationally-specific theological content to the spiritual basis of the vocational vision of Methodist women, as can be gleaned from the various essays. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an evangelical concept of Christocentric conversion and sanctification—expressed in distinctly Wesleyan terms as prevenient, justifying, and perfecting grace—motivated these women to action. After 1900, however, this emphasis is less noticeable. In terms that are derived more from the social gospel than from the Wesleyan revival, most of the twentieth century women represented in this book had a conversion to “the church,” the community of faith, or the reign of God rather than a pietistic conversion to a personal savior. This theological/historical distinction is important for understanding the differing ways in which various Methodist women expressed their vocational vision.

Such a theological distinction says more about the transition in Methodist history in general than it does about Methodist women in particular. While late eighteenth and nineteenth century women often held together a highly evangelistic faith commitment with their social activism, their twentieth century sisters were forced by the exigencies of recent religious history to choose one or the other. Most of the twentieth century
women represented in this volume chose social action; there are other
United Methodist women who would have chosen personal evangelism.
For those (soon-to-be) twenty-first century Methodist women (and men)
who hope for the reuniting of vital Christocentric faith with an emphasis
on social justice, many of the vignettes in this book (particularly the earlier
ones) provide exciting models for present-day vocational vision. And for
that we can be thankful to the authors and the editor of this volume.

DOUGLAS STRONG
Washington, DC

Paul K. Conkin, The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum
America. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina

Conkin defines the Reformed tradition—the "center" upon which he
focuses—as including Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists,
Calvinistic Baptists, Methodists, German and Dutch Reformed and as ex­
cluding Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the right and various smaller
groups on the left. Acknowledging that his inclusion of Methodists widens
the usual understanding, he defines Reformed Christianity not by con­
formity to Calvinist orthodoxy, but as comprised of groups growing out
of that tradition, as well as that of Zwingli and others of the reformers.

The book can be summarized by its major sections. The introduction
presents a concise and helpful history of Christianity in the West prior
to the Reformation. This background material is compromised, however,
by Conkin's unqualified assertions of points about first century Judaism
and primitive Christianity which are, in reality, still much disputed by
scholars in these fields. Chapter one relates the story of Reformation in
the national churches of England and Scotland from which the largest
number of American colonists came. An anomalous interpretation of the
governance of Puritan Massachusetts begs for further explication. Chapter
two is a well written presentation of Methodism, blemished by a rather
snide comment about Wesley's ordinations for America and a few errors
of fact—the interpretation of Wesley's views on original sin and infant
baptism is inaccurate as is the statement that bishops were official delegates
to the early general conferences. The subject of the next chapter is New
Divinity—"the only reasonably coherent theological movement yet born
in America." The thought of Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Hopkins is
admirably explained. Chapter four describes "The Age of Evangelical
Hegemony," covering from the late eighteenth century to about 1830. It
benefits from careful definition of terms such as "evangelical" and "reviv­
alism." Conkin's recognition of the "strong sacramental component" of
American revivalism is a valuable corrective. The chapter is marred by a startlingly caustic portrayal of the antebellum South as violent, "secular and macho," with a "pre-Christian and anti-Christian ethic." "Outside the Evangelical Consensus" (chapter five) deals with the Protestant Episcopal, German and Dutch Reformed churches. A discussion of the influence of the Oxford Tractarians includes, more than once, the regrettable misspelling "tracks." Chapter six is an enlightening treatment of public worship and music. Calvin is identified as having had "more impact on worship in America than any other single individual." Particularly interesting is Conkin's insight into how traditional forms were replaced by distinctly American practices which fulfilled the same functions and needs. In chapter seven, the author offers a lucid presentation of "Reformed Theology at Maturity," focusing on the thought of Nathaniel Taylor, Charles Hodge, and Horace Bushnell. The final chapter, "Storm Clouds on the Evangelical Horizon," traces dissension and schisms in the denominations prior to the Civil War.

Conkin's conclusion is that denominations representing the Reformed tradition were challenged during the latter decades of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, on issues of Christian doctrine and experience, by modern evangelicals (who differ vastly from those of an earlier era), fundamentalists, advocates of Holiness, and Pentecostals. Such challenges were more destructive when they came from within than when they were posed by external groups. It was "increasingly disruptive internal factionalism" which eventually fragmentized and enervated these Reformed churches, causing them to lose their center position in American Christianity. Yet it is significant and provocative to realize that "members of the Reformed mainstream still own and govern America."

**Gayle Carlton Felton**

**Durham, NC**


The essays in this collection originated in a conference called "The Scholarly Writing of Denominational History: An Oxymoron?" Ironically, the editors say, that very conference proved that the title does not apply! Richey (Duke Divinity School) and Mullin (North Carolina State University) suggest a rich potential for denominational history studied in relation to American society. Their book seeks both to foster a new appreciation of denominational studies in the scholarly community and to offer a variety of models for historians who may want to do denominational
history. With that goal, and that audience, it is not surprising to find an emphasis on scholarly interests and methodologies. This is a book for the professional historian, not the casual reader.

The methodologies struggle with the questions: 1) Have denominations played a significant role in American history? If so, what was it, and how did they exercise it? 2) Do denominations still have an important role in American life? Are they critical to understanding religion today?

The three major sections in the book approach those questions in three different ways. “Overviews” asks about the nature and value of denominational studies. How does one do denominational history? What gives that history meaning and focus? The essays run the gamut from defining denominational history as meaningful only when it fits into broader historiographical trends, to typologies to help explain the nature of denominationalism to the broader meaning of denominational studies.

Section II, “Models,” deals with methodologies for doing denominational history. These models range from sociological through existential and theological, to the importance of history for the religious community itself. The historian, professional or amateur, will find exciting possibilities for her or his work in these essays.

Section III, “Case Studies,” explores how new approaches to denominational history benefit both the denomination and the wider scholarly community. This section includes essays on the role of gender, on a typology to help understand denominations within Judaism, on denominational consciousness in African Methodism, on the interaction between denominational structures and Progressivism, on denominations and the founding of colleges, and on the possibilities of denominational studies for religious communities.

These case studies help point new directions for the study of denominations and their role in American life.

JOHN O. GOOCH
Nashville, TN


The Making of Methodism is another retelling of the Methodist story but packaged in a modest length work of 100 pages intended for the general reader from the perspective of British Methodism. It is the first volume of what is to be a series of books for laity and the non-specialist entitled “Exploring Methodism.”

Sixty percent of the book is devoted to the 18th century beginnings of Methodism in England and about 40% to British Methodism from the
death of Wesley to the present. Four chapters deal with the life and times of the Wesleys and three with Wesley's theology. Especially the chapters on theology are helpful introductions to "His Sources of Authority," namely scripture, tradition, reason, and experience; "His Order of Salvation" and "The Means of Grace." They admirably fulfill their intent to be brief non-technical summaries.

For the half century following John Wesley's death, British Methodism was marked by "Controversies and Divisions" (Chapter 8) with the formation of the Methodist New Connexion, the Independent Methodists, the Primitive Methodists, the Bible Christians and others. Then, efforts at union culminated in 1932 with the formation of The Methodist Church. A cursory glance at issues such as theology, worship, ministry, structure, mission, and ecumenism brings the account to the present.

Features of the book that greatly enhance its usefulness for the reader who has no previous knowledge of the subject are time lines of events and questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. A glossary of terms, suggestions for further reading, and an index make this a useful study book for church groups, especially on the life and thought of Wesley. The text is interspersed with selections from primary sources such as Wesley's writings, Minutes of Conference, or other contemporaneous works.

Inevitably, in a book of this nature, some topics receive too limited a treatment. For example, one sentence on the origins of episcopacy in American Methodism (p. 50) speaks of Wesley's disapproval but fails to distinguish between the form of superintendency, which was established by Wesley, and merely the change of terminology from superintendent to bishop. In a time line, the death of John Wesley is placed in February of 1791 instead of March 2. Only two sentences are devoted to the World Methodist Council with the date of organization given as 1951, with no reference to its origins in the Ecumenical Methodist Conferences beginning in 1881.

*The Making of Methodism* will probably have limited accessibility in the United States and limited appeal except for those who are interested in Methodism in Great Britain. Yet, that is a part of the Methodist story that should be more widely known by those outside the United Kingdom.

ROBERT J. WILLIAMS
*Cherry Hill, New Jersey*


Lippy depicts American popular religiosity as a do-it-in-private religion, which the Methodist historian recognizes as standing judged by
John Wesley's tart observation that "'Holy solitaries' is phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers." Even though "being religious, American style" contradicts the Wesleyan understanding of Christianity as essentially social, it owes much to American Methodist evangelism.

Wesley insisted on placing the religious seeker in the social context of church, preaching house, small group, and doctrine, where mind and heart combined in shaping one's Christian life. American Methodism focused on the individual's emotional conversion experience, which leads Lippy to comment: "If conversion is a matter of individual encounter with the Holy, then authentic religion becomes a matter that ordinary people themselves determine, regardless of external authority or official religion" (p. 50). All of which has prepared Americans to shop for do-it-yourself religious nostrums at the strip mall of supernatural powers.

Lippy argues "that among Americans there has always flourished a lively sense of the supernatural and a conviction that the empirical world is the arena where supernatural powers of good and evil struggle to hold sway" (p. 10). Americans seek access to these supernatural forces by shopping for "receivers."

Lippy provides massive documentation of the "receivers" Americans have "bought"—all the way from European astrology to African-American conjure, from the peyote ceremonies of Native Americans to the goddess ceremonies of wicca covens, from the rattlesnake-handling of Appalachia to the crystals-handling of suburbia, from the mind-cure of Mary Baker Eddy to the mind-cure Robert Schuller. Each "receiver" exists outside the boundaries set by systematic theology as a tap for supernatural power.

The result was expressed by Dwight Eisenhower when he said that the U.S. "government makes no sense unless it is founded on deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is" (p. 196). That the President understood his nation's popular religiosity is the point articulated with scholarly acumen and literary skill by the author of Being Religious, American Style.

JOHN G. McELHENNEY
Westchester, Pennsylvania


In a well-written and provocative study Brian Masaru Hayashi has brought new and important insights to our understanding of immigrant assimilation and the role of Protestant churches.
Commonly held historical assumptions—that Protestant influence was at the vanguard of Japanese immigrant assimilation into American economic, social and cultural structures—are countered by Professor Hayashi’s strongly researched portrait of the Los Angeles Japanese-American community from just prior to the 20th century until after Pearl Harbor. The Japanese Protestants were “clearly not at the forefront of Japanese American cultural assimilation in the prewar period.”

Utilizing records from three churches—Los Angeles Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles Japanese Union Church (Presbyterian), and the Los Angeles Holiness Church—Hayashi examines the Issei (Japanese-born) generations’ economic, class, and social background within the churches’ population vis-a-vis the larger Issei community. The LA Japanese Methodist Episcopcal Church’s records were the central resource and provided extensive statistical, illustrative, and biographical material to articulate Hayashi’s thesis. Methodism figures predominantly in its missionary endeavors, its support for the development of immigrant faith, and assimilation of American culture.

The book’s thesis is that several important factors worked to inhibit authentic assimilation of American cultural and social values. These include social backgrounds and cultural legacies of those who had joined the Protestant churches and the strong support of Japan’s military endeavors against neighboring Asian nations. Church women’s societies were strongly attached to the struggles in their homeland and illustrated that through effective charity work. The Alien Land Act of 1920 (passed by California’s Legislature which prohibited the purchase or inheritance of land) and the National Immigration Act of 1924 (Congress’ prohibiting nearly all Asian immigration) increased the Japanese-American reluctance to assimilate and pushed them towards nationalism and support of Japan. Finally, growth and stability caused the churches to rely less on Anglo assistance and turn increasingly to the resources of the Japanese-American community at large.

The different perspectives of the Issei and Nisei (American-born second generation) are the focus of the latter part of the book. It is shown that the increasing tensions of the church community which arose within the 1930’s—with Japan’s invasion of Manchuria (1931) and China (1936)—reveal a cooling off, by the Nisei, of the nationalism which their Issei parents maintained. Professor Hayashi demonstrates that the Protestant churches, instead of being a beacon of assimilation, reflected the broader ambivalence of their community toward their adopted country’s politics and culture, as well as support for Japan’s foreign policy. These insightful conclusions are important for both historians of culture and Methodism.

CHARLES JOHNSTONE
Castro Valley, California

In his latest offering, R. Laurence Moore traces the commodification of Christianity in America. In doing so, Moore deftly navigates the commercial currents which impelled many of America's religious leaders. Admittedly, many Christians chose to buck the tide, but more often they simply tried to divert the current into different, yet parallel channels. Consequently, Christians moved from a widespread disdain of fictional writing, to the creation of a genre of literature which Moore labels "moral sensationalism" whose racy content packaged in the form of a "true tale" often made other novels seem tame by comparison, from opposing the stage, to setting new standards in theatrical representation, and from a measured cautiousness about leisure activity to the creation (or usurpation) of a wide variety of amusements. In doing so, "they were sometimes impressively creative." However, religious leaders clearly underestimated the strength of the cultural currents they had entered. Consequently, they often found themselves driven in directions they never intended to go. Ultimately,

American religious leaders did not set out to create a market system of competing denominations. They did not intend in trying to redeem Americans' commercial culture to become deeply implicated in commercial means of tapping popular enthusiasms. They did not want religion to become a commodity for consumption, advertised as something essential to a happy life, and to transform churches into institutions that supplied peace of mind to the rich and powerful. Yet in their roles as important cultural innovators, which they certainly were, they did all of these things.

In chronicling these errant journeys, Moore includes an impressive cast of characters from Lorenzo "Crazy" Dow to Jim Bakker and his narration is spiced with a generous wit. There is, however, an unfortunate tendency to downplay or ignore the role of genuine religious conviction. Indeed, in bringing "to the fore aspects of religious life that taint the credibility of religion's moral influence," Moore acknowledges that he has given only "tardy reminders about the charitable activities and spiritual life of American churches." This weakness aside, the work marks an excellent contribution to our understanding of American cultural history.

Dale H. Simmons
*Mishawaka, Indiana*
Grace and Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology for Today, by John B. Cobb, Jr. This book represents the first significant effort at constructive Wesleyan theology since the formation of the denomination in 1968. Cobb draws on and moves beyond the historical, critical, and literary work that has characterized Wesley studies in recent years to propose one way of reconstructing and reappropriating essential elements of Wesley's thought in service of the life and mission of United Methodists today.

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