BOOK REVIEWS


Ian Maddock has produced a comparative study of two of the more prominent leaders of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival, namely, John Wesley and George Whitefield. Pointing out the “conspicuous paucity of intentionally comparative studies” in this area, Maddock moves beyond the “polarized nature of much of the literature,” in terms of both Wesleyans and Calvinists alike, to offer an account that is both historically accurate and even handed.

Sound theological judgment is carefully weaved into this fine historical study as Maddock explores the evangelical conversions of both Wesley and Whitefield, an endeavor that undermines the flat-footed attempts of a weary body of aging literature that was willing to grasp at most any cause other than the obvious and appropriate explanation that such conversions are best understood in terms of the unction, the charism, of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Maddock takes Carrick1 to task precisely for suggesting a “naturalistic explanation of the phenomenon of George Whitefield,” one that focuses on his employment of “the techniques of the stage,” among other things. This same naturalistic assumption or presupposition has found its counterpart in recent interpretations of John Wesley’s revivalistic success as if it were all due to his employment of the method of field preaching beginning in April, 1739. What’s more, Maddock is astute enough as a theological interpreter to realize that the language of regeneration, and not simply that of assurance, is very much a part of Wesley’s own Aldersgate narrative.

In terms of the heart of the engaging argument developed throughout the book, Maddock compares Wesley and Whitefield with respect to all of the following: their motivations for printing their sermons, the ways in which they employed Scripture within their published writings, their hermeneutical approach to Scripture, their respective anthropologies, as well as the theological matters of justification, regeneration, and the flow of redemption. Recognizing that the theological contrasts between Wesley and Whitefield have often been overplayed, Maddock affirms that Wesley embraced not merely a synergistic understanding of grace (which is how Wesley is often misread even today) but also a free grace understanding, typical of the Protestant Reformers, which celebrated nothing less than “the work of God

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alone.” Such balance in a study is refreshing and serves as a much needed corrective as it gathers up the nuances of Wesley’s carefully articulated theology.

One of the more significant differences between these two larger-than-life eighteenth century leaders that Maddock does indeed underscore has to do with how the forgiveness of sins was understood in terms of justification by faith. For Whitefield such forgiveness entailed “past, present and future sins,” whereas for Wesley justification was defined as the forgiveness of “those sins that are past,” precisely in order to avoid any hint of antinomianism or lawlessness.

Maddock concludes the work with the helpful observation that perhaps these two evangelical leaders at times looked past each other because, “Whitefield appears to have confused Arminianism with semi-Pelagianism; Wesley appears to have at times equated Calvinism with a form of hyper-Calvinism from which Whitefield expressly sought to distance himself.” Despite their differences, as well as their distinct theological traditions, Wesley and Whitefield had much in common as Maddock has so ably argued: they were both instruments employed by God to spread the gospel both far and wide to a people who, in the end, heard them gladly.

Kenneth J. Collins
Asbury Theological Seminary
Wilmore, Kentucky

In recent years, many of Charles Wesley’s primary works have been published in a critical form. This volume begins the work of providing a critical edition of the letters of Charles Wesley and contains Charles Wesley’s out-letters from 1728–1756. A second volume is planned which would include the out-letters for the rest of his life.

This work is another window into the early years of Methodism. It gives us Charles’s perspective of events, primarily in the moments he is experiencing them (although on a few occasions they are reflections). They record the personal interactions of one of the leaders of Methodism with other leaders in the movement, especially his brother John. Throughout his life Charles and John exchanged over 200 letters. The letters become more personal in 1747 when Charles begins to write to Sarah (Sally) Gwynne, his future wife. After that date most of his letters are written to his immediate family giving us a glimpse into the family life of Charles Wesley. This volume includes the beginnings of that relationship. It details the struggle
Charles had in securing the permission to marry Sarah and the doubts he had about marriage in general. Just before the wedding he once again shared his struggle with getting married in a letter to Sarah “My fear of loving you too well is moderated, but not quite removed. & perhaps it is good that it should continue as a guard & protection. But of this I seemed assured that rather than let me make an idol of you, the jealous God will take you to his bosom, or deliver me from the evil to come” (215).

These letters are both interesting and important, because unlike his brother John, Charles was not writing for publication, he was not trying to promote Methodism to a larger public, he was working out the difficulties faced through letters he never expected to see published. This makes for some interesting comments. Unfortunately, although they do shed light on the Methodist movement from Charles’s perspective, like his journal, there are many gaps, which limit their usefulness.

The introduction to this volume details the challenges of undertaking this project. Two of the greatest challenges are dating the letters and transcribing the shorthand. It also clearly highlights the methodology used to establish the dates of the letters and how the spelling and punctuation are silently modernized.

Each letter includes a heading with the following information: addressee, source, document, date, address, place from, and additional information. The notes at the end of each letter include scripture references, sources referenced by Charles, people, and other notes which aid the reader in understanding the context. Where there is another published copy of the letter the text often, but not always, includes the differences between the two publications. The appendixes are also helpful giving a biographical summary of the people mentioned in these letters, and an index of people, places, subjects, and scriptures.

This volume is a great addition to the growing collection of critical works on the younger brother of John Wesley. It will be an important part of any critical study of Charles Wesley and will be of interest to the historically minded pastor or lay person.

**Patrick Alan Eby**

*Adjunct Professor of Historical Theology*

*Indiana Wesleyan University*

*Marion, Indiana*


*The Staircase of A Patron: Sierra Leone and the United Brethren in Christ* by Jeremy H. Smith provides a much-needed update on the historiography of the United Brethren in Christ (UBC) mission in Sierra Leone. The
main motif of the book according to Smith, who holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature and is a professor of English at Otterbein University, is “how Christianity was introduced and adopted in Sierra Leone” (1). Smith does this by looking at the UBC’s work particularly with the Mende and Temne people, the two largest ethnic groups in Sierra Leone.

At the center of this research is Rev. Lloyd Mignerey (1896-1988), who served as missionary in Sierra Leone from 1922-1924. Mignerey’s writings provide interesting insights to this cultural interaction since they contain records of his thoughts and struggles. In his reading of Mignerey, it is clear that Smith successfully avoids a misstep, which is not too uncommon in mission studies—he does not give a one-dimensional appraisal of the missionary. Smith instead moves beyond the usual caricature of missionaries as mere moral agents of imperialism by seeing Mignerey and others as persons with particular historical and theological locations. As with Mignerey, Smith compellingly captures the nuances, complexities, and development of his thoughts especially in his encounter with indigenous Sierra Leonean culture, colonialism and racism. He also demonstrates in great detail how Mignerey’s three-year experience on the field helped changed his attitudes on these issues. For example, in the book’s epilogue, Smith demonstrates how Mignerey, who also served as an Army chaplain during World War II, criticized the Vietnam War, and supported racial equality and the Civil Rights Movement.

Smith, however, does not totally rely on Mignerey’s writings, but also adds ample context to the study. In addition to the historical and socio-political milieu of Sierra Leone during the period, Smith provides a rare look into the theological and missionary ideology in the UBC from 1800-1922 in the first chapter of the book. Much of what is written in mission studies often ignores the theological location of missionaries, and, hence, resulting in an obscure or incomplete understanding on why they did what they did. Theological views or beliefs do matter, and Smith’s attempt to highlight them results in a much richer narrative.

While Smith’s attention to theological locations is to be commended, the categories he uses to describe these locations need attention. For example, he calls Mignerey a “theological liberal,” distinguishing him from missionaries who were theologically “conservative,” and credits this impulse for forming his progressive views on race and other social issues. Smith primarily locates this impulse from liberal currents in American Protestantism emerging from the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy of the 1920s and the Social Gospel movement. He even places Mignerey in line with Walter Rauschenbusch, and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the epilogue (292). After cautiously avoiding the much common, and yet problematic, definitions for “liberal” and “conservative,” Smith defines “liberals”—the ones who are mostly portrayed as heroes in the narrative—as those who placed greater emphasis on Christ’s life and teachings as opposed to “conservatives” who emphasized Christ’s death and atonement (16-17). These definitions, while marked improvements, still do not totally free us from the same problems.
Smith is trying to avoid (see 261, for example). This makes me wonder then whether the liberal-conservative lens gives sufficient justice to the theological locations of Mignerey, and that of the other UBC missionaries and figures Smith features in the book. For example, what about the legacy of Pietism in the doctrine and praxis of the UBC during the period? That theological stream, in addition to “liberal” sources, likely helped inform aspects of Mignerey’s missionary practice and social views. I wish there were a more nuanced and multi-layered reading of these theological locations, one not solely bound by the liberal-conservative paradigm.

After explaining the UBC mission through the lens of Mignerey’s experiences on the field, Smith begins to take a different approach in chapter four as he investigates African culture. Here, Smith’s particular interest on the nature of religious experiences provides a very rich and much needed framework for understanding the “African point of view” in the narrative. This then sets the reader up for chapter five, which deals with the confrontation and interaction between Sierra Leonean culture and the UBC missionary culture. It is here where Smith offers a postcolonial reading of his sources by illustrating the primary roles played by Sierra Leonean UBC pastors in the spread and development of the UBC mission in their country while the missionaries assumed secondary roles. Smith successfully illustrates that indigenous workers were not mere passive recipients of the Christianity, but instead, to varying degrees, deviated from the negative view of African traditions as espoused by some missionaries. They accommodated Sierra Leonean indigenous practices in a manner that was consistent with the reflections of prominent twentieth-century West-African theologians.

LUTHER J. OCONER
United Theological Seminary
Dayton, Ohio
The Historical Society was convened Saturday, September 14, at 6 pm for dinner and presentation of the Ministry of Memory and Saddlebag awards. Lila Hill was the recipient of the Ministry of Memory award.

*The Works of John Wesley*, volume 12, “Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises,” volume I, edited by Randy L. Maddox, received the Saddlebag Award. Kathy Armisted accepted the award for the publisher, the United Methodist publishing house. Randy Maddox accepted the award and gave a short presentation outlining the Wesley Works Project.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

Dan Swinson announced the upcoming meetings as follows:

2014: meeting at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina with the Southeastern Jurisdiction and South Carolina Conference Historical Society hosting.

2015: North Central Jurisdiction and Convocation in Chicago in July. The meeting is to take place in Evanston, Illinois, at Garrett Evangelical Theological School.

The committee recommended the following meeting locations:

2016: Meeting in the NE Jurisdiction in May at or around Dover, Delaware.

2017: Meeting in the Alaska Conference in June.

2018: Meeting in The South Central Jurisdiction possibly at St. Louis, Missouri in July.

It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously that 2016-2018 meeting venues be as recommended. The meeting was recessed at 8:20 pm to resume Monday, September 16.

The Historical Society was reconvened at 11:15 am on Monday, September 16. Dan Swinson opened the meeting by singing “Wrestling Jacob,” or “Come, O Ye Traveler Unknown.”
Secretary’s Report:
The report was approved as printed in the 2012 edition of Methodist History.

Treasurer’s Report:
The report was passed out with the proposed budget. There was some discussion about the budget, including membership issues. A motion was brought from the board to accept the proposed budget for the 2013-2014 year. The budget was passed. Pat Thompson gave a strong comment about membership and how it is declining.

Proposed Budget:
Pat Thompson talked about Historian’s Digest. She was reconfirmed as the editor of the Historian’s Digest. Conference commission chairs will be included to receive notice about deadlines for Historian’s Digest. We are looking for ways of communicating what is being done around the history and heritage of the church.

Membership Secretary’s Report:
The membership secretary’s report was received with 17 life members. Membership is open all the time, but expires on a quarterly basis. All were encouraged to join if they are not members.

New Officers elected:
President: Russell Richey
Vice-President: Daniel Swinson
Secretary: Barbara Essen
Treasure: Kerri Shoemaker
Membership Secretary: Marge Benham

Program Committee:
Members-at-Large serve as the Program Committee: The board recommended Priscilla Pope-Levison, Phil Lawton, and Dan Flores to serve on the program committee for a 2-year term. They will work with Chris Shoemaker and Rob Sledge, who continue on the committee. The Saddlebag and membership chairs will also serve on the program committee.

Ministry of Memory Award:
Patti Russell from Virginia will be the 2014 recipient of the Memory of Ministry award.

Closing:
The meeting was closed with prayer by Russ Richey, the incoming president, at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Essen, Secretary
## 2012 - 2013 Treasurer’s Report

### Income:

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### Balance:

- **April 30, 2012** $13,565.85*
- **September 3, 2013** $11,123.23

* Includes gifts to the Albea Godbold Fund from Bea Shepperd, Rob Sledge, and Dan Swinson totaling $3,000.

**Members of Board of Directors neither requested nor received reimbursement for travel.

## 2013-2014 Budget

### Income:

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Dr. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.
Treasurer
Methodist History Subscription Rates

Paper Copy:
Within the United States
   One year subscription  $25.00
   Two year subscription  $40.00
   Student rate (one year)  $15.00

In Canada
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   Student rate (one year)  $20.00 (U.S.)

All other countries
   One year subscription  $40.00 (U.S.)
   Two year subscription  $60.00 (U.S.)
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