

BOOK REVIEWS

Mark A. Lempke, *My Brother's Keeper: George McGovern and Progressive Christianity*. Amherst: U Massachusetts P, 2017. 246pp. \$28.95.

Mark Lempke's *My Brother's Keeper: George McGovern and Progressive Christianity* is a provocative and compelling study of the religious milieu that shaped his inquiry into faith, ethics, and practice. George McGovern himself provides a perfect vehicle for an enlightened and thoughtful examination of the theological currents, ecclesiastical politics, and personalities that catalyzed the progressive movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Virtually every page would excite any reader who has pondered the fusion of religion and politics during those fraught decades.

The book invited me to recall my own excitement about the McGovern Presidential campaign. That a seminarian and person of conscience could win the nomination of the Democratic Party alerted a rhapsody of hope in my beleaguered Nixon-weary soul. I was serving at the time in revolutionary Chile as a United Methodist Missionary immersed in the same liberation theology that had captured the attention of McGovern. A number of ex-patriots living in Chile were similarly so excited by candidate McGovern that we banded together and actively campaigned on his behalf organizing fundraisers and "get out the vote" absentee balloting.

George McGovern lost in a landslide in 1972. It was neither his loss nor his political clumsiness that inspired Lempke but rather his enduring legacy as a seminal figure in the still-unfolding vortex of progressive religion and politics. With good reason, many liberal church leaders have become skittish about being drawn into partisan politics, Lempke asserts, with convincing arguments that "McGovern's career and the 1972 campaign offer an overlooked example of the possibilities for a prophetic and politically progressive form of Christianity." He argues that McGovern's principled opposition to the war in Vietnam and insatiable militarism reintroduced the social gospel ethos into our current political zeitgeist, influencing the current generation of elite opinion makers, making him the "godfather of modern progressive Christianity" (5). By bridging the gap between mainline religious leaders and evangelicals, he catalyzed an enduring shift in Protestantism's center of gravity, breathing new life into ecumenism.

At the same time, Lempke does not overlook the tensions between these two theological camps. He adroitly analyzes the biases of those who seek systematic change focusing on structures of oppression but who often neglect the centrality of Jesus in their narrative. There are those, on the other hand, whose intensely personal relationship with Christ can cloud their capacity to recognize the scourge of institutional sin. This dichotomy contin-

ues to be manifested in the contemporary debates over same-sex marriage and abortion with both sides claiming a justice-centered approach.

George McGovern was both a Methodist churchman and a politician; sometimes the two identities were compatible and sometimes they diverged. His education at South Dakota Wesleyan and Garrett Theological Seminary and his brief exposure to the academy as a member of the South Dakota Wesleyan faculty deepened his Christian humanitarian convictions—and also persuaded him that he needed a larger platform. Lempke sympathetically describes this transformation as McGovern tried to walk the tight-rope between being a prophetic visionary espousing a litany of liberal causes (opposition to Vietnam and support for civil rights) while representing an essentially conservative constituency. These dynamics were also playing out against a backdrop of the compromises inherent in his political ambitions and his conscientious commitment to a morally-centered agenda at home and abroad.

Drawing on interviews (with McGovern, his friends, and influencers), sound historical research, and his own theological perspicacity, Lempke's most fascinating and original research focuses on both the mainline Protestantism (Religious Leaders for McGovern) and its more conservative echo, Evangelicals for McGovern. Despite brooding about the slippery slope of partisan politics, these pious believers, opting for prophetic ministry, joined the McGovern bandwagon. Both the mainliners and the evangelicals recognized that Nixonian civil religion assaulted fundamental Gospel values and undermining the need for national redemption for domestic and global misdeeds.

The indictment of the status quo by socially conscious evangelicals has had enduring consequence as the mainline churches diminished in numbers and influence. Wanting to avoid the intoxication and cooptation that often accompanies movement politics, these new progressive evangelicals were alarmed and dismayed by the rise of the notoriously partisan Moral Majority. While initially drawn to the hope inspired by the McGovern campaign, they also realized its pitfalls. In an interview with *Sojourners'* founder Jim Wallace, he quotes Wallace asserting their aspiration for a “prophetic role, not becoming a sect of the party” (189).

Lempke's probing analysis of the McGovern campaign and its impact on religious discourse is a significant contribution to the literature. Writing as a historian with faith-inspired sensibilities, he captures the essence of George McGovern as a man shaped and molded by his archetypal pastor father whose religious experience was grounded in holiness, obedience, and compassion. As McGovern himself wrote, “My father gave me conscience and my education gave me social conscience” (21). Lempke also helps us remember how the *weltanschauung* of his campaign and its aftermath defined him and continues to define us.

THE REVEREND DR. JOSEPH T. ELDRIDGE
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Martin L. Deppe, *Operation Breadbasket: An Untold Story of Civil Rights in Chicago, 1966-1971*. Athens: U Georgia P, 2017. 258pp. \$26.95.

This is a memoir of a Methodist minister involved in the formation and the operation of Operation Breadbasket in Chicago. The book fills a gap in the historical literature about this civil rights organization and its struggle to impact the economic lives of African Americans. Although Deppe is not an academic historian, he has written a dynamic, lively account of the strengths and weaknesses of Operation Breadbasket. The book is not focused on Methodism, but it adds information about the role of Methodists during pivotal years when the movement moved from the Deep South to confront northern urban racism.

Operation Breadbasket began out of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's effort to organize African-American residents of Chicago to improve their housing, employment, and education opportunities. Mayor Richard Daley's political machine was adept at promising change while thwarting meaningful action. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), forced to look for ways to pressure for change in Chicago, formed Operation Breadbasket with the cooperation of local clergy. The idea of boycotting businesses that did not employ and promote African-American workers was not new, but Operation Breadbasket was innovative in using the African-American church as the fulcrum of this boycott movement. Deppe, a white United Methodist pastor serving a local African-American congregation, was among the founding ministers and played an active role in the ministerial Steering Committee throughout the existence of Operation Breadbasket. Many of the records used in writing the book came from materials he has kept in his possession in the decades since.

The ministers who formed Operation Breadbasket were a diverse group. They met on Friday mornings as a Steering Committee and developed a strong sense of comradeship, although in later years participation diminished as the ministers had less influence in the direction of the organization. The ministers believed that they were taking the church outside of the four walls of their buildings and making a difference in their community. They chose as their targets businesses that operated extensively in the African-American community. The ministers asked for information about African-American employment and promotion of African-American business on store shelves. If companies refused to cooperate or had weak employment figures, the ministers would announce a boycott of a business on Sunday mornings to their congregations. They often found the attitude of corporate officers changed once picketing began outside their stores. Negotiations led to agreements that committed businesses such as A&P, Jewel, and Walgreens to increase hiring of qualified African-American workers and to open management positions to them. Agreements also required companies to deposit funds in local African-American-led banks and to use local African-American companies to provide services for retail outlets.

Operation Breadbasket faced a number of challenges that qualified some of its gains, and Deppe is honest about those failings. The Steering Committee had little time and staff for monitoring compliance after agreements were made. Some companies fulfilled their agreements, but others made only modest gains in African-American employment that were far below what had been promised. Operation Breadbasket did not develop a strong alliance with the Chicago Urban League, which had decades of experience of working on African-American employment issues. The Steering Committee was also unable to develop close ties with either the Hispanic community or African Americans on the West Side.

Operation Breadbasket coincided with the rise of the Rev. Jesse Jackson as a civil rights leader in Chicago and on the national stage. This was a double-edged sword, as Deppe illustrates. Jackson brought energy and attention to Operation Breadbasket, but as a result, the Steering Committee lost influence within the organization. Jackson was a dynamo, but he did not collaborate with the ministers and took the organization in multiple directions at once. Jackson also did not work well with the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy and the leadership of SCLC in the years after King's assassination. Deppe admires Jackson's talents, but is also clear about his limitations.

Deppe is a self-effacing author. He is proud of his participation in Operation Breadbasket, but he gives much credit to his fellow ministers: African American, white, Protestant, Catholic, men and women. For them this was a labor of love and one of which they remain proud over the passage of decades and changing social conditions. He might have discussed more his local congregation, its role in the boycotts, and his own role in an early cross-racial appointment. Yet he has produced a book that fills a need in the literature and included both the positive and the negative. It is a valuable study for a wide group of readers.

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Anne M. Heinz and John P. Heinz, eds., *Women, Work, and Worship in Lincoln's Country: The Dumville Family Letters*. Urbana, IL: U Illinois P, 2016. 220pp. \$40.00.

The writing of letters is an art somewhat in danger of extinction in this digital age. The historian appreciates epistolary material not only because of the personal self-revelation it provides but also because of the "window into an age" that it affords. For the religious historian, letters provide the data—often less accessible in other kinds of formal documentation—necessary to develop a more fully nuanced portrait of a period or events that punctuate critical eras in religious history. This volume, an examination of the correspondence of the Dumville family during the 1850s and early 1860s, provides just this kind of window into one of the most fascinating

periods of religious history in the United States. It is of particular interest to the Methodist historian because of what it reveals about Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century rural Midwest and the place of women in the church.

The primary actors inside this epistolary drama are Ann Dumville, a widowed immigrant from England still sporting her broad Yorkshire accent, and her daughters Jemima, Hephzibah, and Elizabeth. Chapter 1, punctuated with helpful maps and illustrations, establishes the backdrop necessary for a contextual reading of the letters. Demonstrating the centrality of Methodism and education in the life of the family and sculpting out the parameters of politics and ensuing war in this antebellum period the chapter explicates the ideology of domesticity within a profoundly patriarchal society and into which these women fit without too much agitation. As the editors observe, “the Dumville letters tell a story of striving—for social acceptance and economic security, and for salvation” (20).

The meticulously-edited letters are organized chronologically in five chapters which cover roughly two- or three-year periods each. The editors identify the prominent themes of each segment—moving essentially from a focus on family matters and health to the political situation and war—and provide incisive introductions for each cache of letters. Chapter 7 functions more like an epilogue that brings the story of the Dumville family to a close in the absence of letters beyond December, 1863.

Of particular interest to Methodist historians, perhaps, is the entanglement of Ann Dumville with the issue of abolition and what it reveals about Methodist attitudes on the threshold of war. Ardent in her opposition to slavery, Ann was expelled briefly from her Methodist congregation. “Her deep devotion and zeal were not appreciated by members of the church,” report the Minutes of the Illinois Conference. “She was an abolitionist and that was enough in their estimation to neutralize all her other excellencies. For this she was turned out of the church” (18). Unfortunately, none of the letters deal with this issue since it preceded the collection of letters that was preserved. Of particular interest in the letters themselves are the multiple references to camp-meetings, Methodist preachers, and revivals that provide insight into the actual practices of Methodists on the frontier. A well-crafted index assists the reader in engaging these concerns. The frequent references to disease and death and the ways the women navigated these experiences, help the contemporary reader to more fully appreciate how the fragile nature of life shaped the religious experience of nineteenth-century women.

Anne and John Heinz have produced an extremely well-conceived volume that provides a wealth of insight into the lives of ordinary Methodist women in the mid-nineteenth century. While the voice of women from the past has often been lost to subsequent generations, this collection of letters—drawn from an amazing archive—enables the reader to hear their hopes and dreams, and more fully understand how Methodism shaped them.

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Drew Lopenzina, *Through an Indian's Looking-Glass: A Cultural Biography of William Apess, Pequot*. Amherst: U Massachusetts P, 2017. 310pp. \$29.95.

In this thought-provoking new biography of Pequot writer, Methodist circuit preacher, and Native American activist William Apess, Drew Lopenzina offers a portrait of an enigmatic figure fleshed out with literary analysis and theory. Readers of Lopenzina's earlier monograph *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking Up the Pen in the Colonial Period* (2013) will already be familiar with "unwitnessing" as a means of mitigating indigenous experiences within the framework of colonialism; Lopenzina extends this by coining a new term for Apess's literary resistance. He employs this concept of the "negative voice," born from Michel Foucault's idea of "negative work," to flesh out the life of Apess from his 1798 birth in Colrain, Massachusetts, to his 1839 death in New York City near present-day Wall Street. These formative experiences were central to the "radical refiguring of concepts and tropes that have been historically taken for granted" inherent in "negative work," and is key to understanding Apess's efforts to subvert and discredit colonial norms and beliefs through his literary endeavors (6).

Lopenzina's portrayal of the "Indian Preacher" hinges on the "Indian" as the bedrock of Apess's identity, which sidelines the Methodist "Preacher" somewhat. The author stresses Methodism's appeal due to its initial openness towards people of color and rejection of established hierarchies, yet he frames Apess's affiliation through theory regarding trauma and coping mechanisms. After the War of 1812, Apess's travels—of which his autobiography gives few specifics—likely brought him to the Tyendinaga Mohawk where he imbibed of Iroquoian political and spiritual rituals and established an indigenous identity that Christianity never totally contained or eradicated.

That is not to say that Methodism was not important to Apess's life. Women like the Pequot Sally George, frequently the vanguard of Methodist converts, served as spiritual mentors. Methodism also provided him with credibility as a preacher, though his encounters with church leadership and efforts to block his ordination betray the contradictions embedded within the racialized society of his day. Throughout his life, Apess was dogged by people seeking to discredit him through accusations of drunkenness, misuse of church funds, and rabble-rousing. Ironically, his accusers frequently came from within the ranks of the Methodist clergy. As a lifelong activist on behalf of his native kin, Apess sought to harness the egalitarian message of Christianity to confront his audience with the hypocrisy of the times—employing the nineteenth-century trope of the "looking-glass", reflecting the unseen or the ignored. Methodism also provided a livelihood, albeit an itinerant one, as he trucked books and pamphlets (including his own writings) across New England. Similarly, overlapping networks with moral reformers gave Apess a platform for his message.

Faced with the lacunae of sources that frequently accompany indigenous figures within the archive, Lopenzina has admirably mitigated this challenge

through contextualization and well-reasoned speculation. He also teases out moments where sources may reflect their contemporary biases, such as the curious reference to drunkenness in his coroner's report, suggesting that his autopsy reflected appendicitis and newspaper reports alluding to a "downward spiral" align too neatly with the nineteenth-century narrative of the tragic Indian. Conspicuously absent from Lopenzina's text is reference to another recent biography on Apess by Philip F. Gura, entitled *The Life of William Apess, Pequot*, which invites a brief comparison. Gura's text is much shorter, restoring Apess to the ranks of the moral reformers of the early Republic, and is accessible to both the specialist and undergraduate student. Lopenzina's text is denser, albeit beautifully and imaginatively written, and will circulate amongst specialists and graduate students. Nevertheless, it is essential reading for period scholars.

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G. M. Best, *A Tragedy of Errors—The Story of Grace Murray: The Woman Whom John Wesley Loved and Lost*. Bristol, England: New Room Publications, 2016. 246pp. £8.99 (\$11.69).

A Tragedy of Errors is the well-researched and documented story of Grace Murray, the woman whom John Wesley nearly married but eventually lost to John Bennet primarily due to the actions of his brother, Charles Wesley. Best has utilized a number of primary resources, the main one being a manuscript that gives John Wesley's version of events, written in November, 1749, and transcribed in 1910 by Augustin Leger. Best states that the manuscript was likely written for his sister-in-law, Sally Wesley, very much in the heat of the moment (235). In addition, Best references John and Charles Wesley's *Journals* and pertinent letters; fragments of John Bennet's diary; and a version of Grace Murray's own memoirs with excerpts from her diaries, edited by her son, William, and published after her death. A few other sources are included where pertinent and appropriate. Thus we have, to the extent available, reports of the events in the words of those involved.

The early chapters of the book chronicle Grace's life as she grew up, became involved in the church at an early age, and was eventually appointed by John Wesley as a band leader and a visitor to the sick. She then became an effective class leader and exhorter as well as a preacher, for all intent and purposes, giving up her life fully to work in the church. As she matured into these roles, she drew the attention not only of John Bennet, a lay preacher in Newcastle, but more importantly of Wesley himself. This, however, unfortunately also produced a good deal of jealousy among many of the female members of the society.

Best has presented as objectively as possible the events that led to Grace

promising first to marry John Bennet, then John Wesley, only to have Charles Wesley intervene and convince her to marry John Bennet. What emerges is a picture of three men who were some of the most effective preachers of the Word of God in their generation but who had very little ability to articulate their own personal feelings on a face-to-face basis in their human relationships. In addition, it often seems that these three men were attempting to discern the will of God for themselves, the Methodist revival, and for Grace—while rarely including her in the conversation.

While John Wesley preached sanctification and “going on to perfection in love” as one of its major themes, Charles struggled with his own feeling that Grace was not worthy to marry his brother. Charles justified his lies and deceit in effecting Grace’s marriage to John Bennet citing his fear of the gossip generated among the revival’s female members because Grace Murray was from humble origins and had been a servant to John Wesley in his travels. Charles’ worries about petty gossip and its possible negative impact on the Methodist revival led to behavior in which he felt the ends justified the means—behavior hardly consistent with living a life of “perfection in love.”

One must wonder how negatively the Methodist revival in England would really have been affected had John Wesley married Grace Murray rather than Molly Vazeille. It is quite possible that it would have, in fact, had positive results, though we shall never know.

Best’s book provides an important contribution to our Methodist heritage and a fresh approach to what truly was a “tragedy of errors” and a monumental lack of communication.

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Christopher H. Evans, *The Social Gospel in American Religion: A History*. New York: New York UP, 2017. 271pp. \$28.00 (paperback).

Christopher H. Evans’ *The Social Gospel in American Religion: A History* offers a nuanced portrayal of the social gospel movement. The book centers on three themes: (1) it is characterized by “an idea of social salvation”; (2) its influence can be found in both religious and secular institutions; and (3) over time its emphasis shifted away from reshaping the world in Protestant Christian terms into affirming our nation’s pluralistic character (222). United Methodists will be especially interested in how influential Methodists were as shapers of the movement and its legacy. Laudably, Evans intentionally includes African-American, international, and women’s voices as part of the narrative, and highlights overlapping traditions within Catholic and Jewish circles. His approach ensures that the social gospel movement is not seen as a monolithic, ideal movement, but as a set of deeply flawed human efforts—often with a less-than-satisfactory record with regard to issues of racial justice, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholic sentiments.

In the first four chapters Evans offers a deep, multilayered view of the

time leading up to and including the “classical social gospel movement.” After its peak expression in the early 1900s, many individual proponents of the social gospel lost their passion for the perfection of the world in light of the evils of war and totalitarianism.

However, Evans demonstrates that social gospel tenets were adopted by institutions and international networks such as the YMCA and the Federal Council of Churches. In Chapters 5 and 6, Evans traces these streams of tradition and influences, which he argues peaked in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Finally, in Chapter 7 Evans circles around to the opening issue of the book—the rise of the Christian Right and its appropriation of the social gospel tradition, including the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Evangelicals such as Ralph Reed represented Rauschenbusch and King both as premillennialist figures that emphasized divine sovereignty instead of divine immanence. Evans states that despite Reed’s “lack of historical nuance” the Christian Right achieved “a religious movement that empowered grassroots constituencies to engage in concerted political action” (200-201). Yet Evans fails to underscore the Kingdom of God (as preached by Jesus and manifest on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2) as a necessary logic at the heart of any social gospel discourse. Although this logic has been expressed in different ways, a movement with premillennial beliefs (in which Jesus Christ must return first before God’s Kingdom will be manifest) is not derived from the social gospel tradition.

Moreover, although Evans raised the possibility that “progressive evangelicals” such as Jim Wallis and Rob Bell may be carrying on the social gospel legacy, he did not mention evangelicals like John Perkins, Lisa Sharon Harper, Soong-Chan Rah, or the work of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA founded in the 1980s). With their emphasis on racial reconciliation and developing leadership from indigenous populations, these evangelicals both reimagine and mimic the logic of the social gospel tradition. Evans’s efforts would have been strengthened by recognizing these evangelicals as carrying on the social justice legacy into contemporary Christian and secular life.

Apart from these issues, Evans offers carefully nuanced, multi-dimensional expositions on a number of diverse, flawed figures who were both influenced and shaped by the social gospel movement. His work is a valuable contribution and joins an ever-growing body of scholarship that is doing the important work of exposing and exploring the influence of religious thought on social movements and politics, such as Charles Marsh’s *Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From The Civil Rights Movement to Today* (Basic Books, 2008) and Sarah Azaransky’s *This Worldwide Struggle: Religion and the International Roots of the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford UP, 2017).

KELLY WEST FIGUEROA-RAY
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Kevin M. Watson, *The Class Meeting*. Franklin, TN: Asbury Seedbed Publishing, 2014. 153pp. \$16.95.

Kevin Watson combines his commitment to the Wesleyan/Methodist family and his research on the early Methodist models of the band and class meeting into a contemporary guide and resource for current and aspiring lay or clerical leaders in the local church or even college or seminary campuses. It is preceded with accolades from renowned scholars in the academy and retired and active bishops of the United Methodist Church.

The work is divided into two parts. Part one (chapters 1-4) is the theoretical portion of the book. These chapters define types of small groups: affinity, informational and transformational; the class meeting is squarely placed in the latter. These chapters provide historical and theological information that describes the effectiveness of the class meeting in the eighteenth century—arguably the most profound period of Methodism’s expansion, and its demise in the nineteenth century, as Methodists in America prioritized wealth and intellectual ability above living the Christian life with accountability to others.

Part two (chapters 5-8) is the actual guide and resource for the aspiring class leader. Here Watson lays out the criteria and ethos that undergird an effective class meeting and its leader. In the local church, the support of the senior pastor is critically important to prioritize its importance and to identify spiritually gifted class leaders. The training of class leaders and an understanding of the life cycle of small groups is vitally important for persons interested in recovering this helpful Wesleyan practice and develop classes in their churches or on their campuses.

Undergirding the entire project is a curriculum that guides the reader from merely studying the class meeting to participating in a class meeting. Critics who are looking for an emphasis on Wesley’s commitment to social holiness or current calls to social justice may be disappointed in this book. All eight chapters conclude with a section organized with leading questions for discussion that help participants hold one another accountable every week as they strive to be faithful to the baptismal covenant. It appears that its purpose is to influence transformation at the individual and collective levels as a small group, prior to working to transform society at large.

Watson takes great care to ensure that this book can be read, comprehended, and utilized by the average lay leader who may be called upon by the pastor to lead a class in the local church. The information is practical and the teleological goal is spiritual growth. The simplicity and practical approach of the text will assist the twenty-first century church reset its capacity to make disciples who face a plethora of challenge and complexity in the postmodern world.

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Making and Remaking Saints in Nineteenth-Century Britain, edited by Gareth Atkins. Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2016. 283pp. £84.

Gareth Atkins, Director of Studies in History at Magdalene College, Cambridge University, has assembled an excellent team of historians drawn largely from the United Kingdom to analyze the various ways that specific saints were viewed during the Victorian period in Britain. The sixteen essays demonstrate that Protestants with no process for canonization and even religious skeptics were as interested in saints as were Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Evangelicals were designating people as saints while Anglican Tractarians, Presbyterians, and others were remaking and reinterpreting saints in light of the needs of their traditions and times. Critical historians challenged the historicity of some of the legends of the saints while affirming the need for them as role models.

The chapters provide Victorian Age interpretations of the Apostle Paul, the Virgin Mary, Claudia Rufina, Patrick, Thomas á Becket, Thomas More, Ignatius Loyola, the English Catholic martyrs, Richard Baxter, the Scottish Covenanters, John and Mary Fletcher, William Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry, Sarah Martin, John Henry Newman, and Therese of Lisieux. Rather than providing a biographical sketch of each saint, the authors have instead approached the saints from the interpretative vantage point of different nineteenth-century movements. For example, Irish Presbyterians saw Patrick through a different lens than Catholics: Patrick was Biblically-based, grace-centered, evangelistic, and independent of papal control. On the other hand, Catholics regarded Patrick as a diocesan bishop and an advocate of apostolic succession through the popes.

Many Protestants considered Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, as “a byword for everything that Protestants loved to hate: asceticism, eccentricity, improbable miracles, slavish allegiance to the pope” (128). However, in 1820 Robert Southey discovered a close resemblance between Ignatius and John Wesley, who despite their differences on the Reformation, mirrored each other in “absolutism, organizational genius, sincerity and ‘enthusiasm.’” (133). The epithet “Protestant Loyola” stuck with Wesley not only because of his autocratic style but also his resemblance to Ignatius, “the soldier saint” who inspired absolute obedience from his followers (133).

While the Protestant Reformation had opposed relics, images, and veneration of saints, Methodists depicted Wesley in an engraving as being carried to heaven by a band of angels just as Counter-Reformation saints in Baroque art. Holy relics of Wesley such as beds on which he had slept, tea cups from which he had drunk, locks of his hair, and articles of clothing were cherished and preserved by his followers. The American holiness preacher Phoebe Palmer went on pilgrimage to Madeley, England, to receive relics of John and Mary Fletcher, early Methodist models of Christian perfection, who exemplified her holiness preaching.

Dissenting churches that lacked canonization and saints’ days looked for saints among Protestant missionaries, soldiers, feminist campaigners, aboli-

tionists, and prison reformers. Even agnostics and unbelievers seized upon models of sanctity to demonstrate their secularized notions of morality. This book demonstrates how the need for saints and their devotional practices survived even during the Victorian Age's strife over faith, skepticism, and secularism. The concept of saints spoke to two obsessions of this era: "the cult of history" and "the cultivation of character" (5). The concept of saints and holiness provided avenues for nineteenth-century discussions of many political and intellectual questions of the day.

The book might draw a wider audience than that of the specialists had it provided two or three pages of introductory biographical material for those readers not already familiar with the saint being analyzed. The small print of the text makes for unpleasant reading, and the publisher's reproductions of artwork were of only fair quality. Despite these problems, this well-documented and superbly written book will be a great help to those who teach church history and spirituality and who wish to show how changing cultural and historical contexts seek out examples of heroic virtue to face challenges of their age.

United Methodists will find the chapters on John Fletcher, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and William Wilberforce especially helpful, since John Wesley wrote a biography on John Fletcher of Madeley as a model of Christian perfection and encouraged Wilberforce in his career of abolitionism in Parliament. Methodists supported "practical saints" Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect who advocated individual and institutional reform by challenging imperial sins such as the slave trade.

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David Dickinson, *Yet Alive? Methodists in British Fiction since 1890*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016. 148pp. \$19.50.

As the title indicates, David Dickinson is interested in discussing how Methodists are portrayed in British Fiction of the last 100 years. Save for his own work, he admits that there has been little interest in this among historians and literary scholars. Judging from what Dickinson covers, there may not be an abundance of fiction which gives much notice to contemporary Methodists or Methodism, but there is some, and with its focus on British fiction, this specialized study will appeal to readers in the United Kingdom. The authors covered are not well-known outside of Britain, and may not be "best-selling" authors. These include Michael Arditti, H. H. Bashford, Nina Bawden, Rhidian Brook, Sid Chapin, Stevie Davies, Harold Frederic, Howard Spring, and Quiller-Couch. Perhaps the best known novel is *Carrie's War* by Bawden. It may be the case that Dickinson's study will prompt read-

ers to take a look at these writers and their “neglected and forgotten” novels, and if those readers are Methodist consider how accurate and complete the pictures are of Methodists and their denomination (2).

Dickinson’s talents as teacher, literary scholar, and Methodist cleric shine in six short, readable chapters. Chapter one reviews Methodism’s depiction in earlier fiction; chapter two discusses novels published in the first decade of the twentieth century. Chapter three recalls the political and social witness of Methodism, especially the denomination’s commitment to social conscience. Chapter four considers faith and doubt in some historical novels featuring Methodists, and chapter five follows with attention to preaching and preachers mentioned in the previous chapter. Because the novels Dickinson analyzes are not well known, he provides plenty of summary so the reader knows about character, theme, and plot in each story.

Chapter six draws Dickinson’s themes together. Methodism is not present much in contemporary fiction; and when it is, it is portrayed as old-fashioned despite what Dickinson sees as its sense of mission and its engagement with the world. Dickinson’s hope is that his denomination will learn something from these portrayals of Methodism and so be inspired to better engage the world with a Wesleyan sensitivity.

As chapter five indicates, Dickinson is especially interested in preaching and preachers, and so he provides an appendix, “An Analytical Kit for the literary criticism of sermons in fiction,” for those who might be interested in sermons, whether Methodist or not.

It seems to this reviewer that Dickinson’s book is not for the literary scholar, but rather for readers interested in religion and spirituality. Those readers need not be Methodist; the introduction gives a historical sketch of Methodism and the denomination’s characteristics. Some readers might very well embrace Dickinson’s orientation: “I have learned that where literature and theology . . . converge God . . . is found” (xii). Since Dickinson also observes the convergence of the sacred and the secular in contemporary fiction, he encourages others to experience how reading a novel could lift one toward the transcendent.

However, for both Methodist historians and others interested in literature and theology, what may be most interesting are Dickinson’s comments on the presence of religious and spiritual themes in a secular age which often challenges faith and belief and how literature may encourage theological and spiritual thinking.

Yes, British Methodism is “yet alive,” but on the basis of Dickinson’s study one might add “barely.” Nevertheless, as a “valued religious orientation” Methodism is certainly worth knowing something about as our world struggles through a perilous and religion-filled twenty-first century (2).

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