

BOOK REVIEWS

Rex D. Matthews, *Ministerial Orders and Sacramental Authority in The United Methodist Church and its Antecedents, 1784-2016*. Nashville: Wesley's Foundry Books, 2018. 137 pp. \$24.99.

With his usual attention to detail, in the introduction to his *Ministerial Orders and Sacramental Authority*, Rex Matthews traces the “changing provisions relating to ministerial orders and sacramental authority in American Methodism from the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) in 1784 to the current position of The United Methodist Church (UMC) as contained in the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* for 2016.” He concludes his description with observations and reflections, including how this history might impact the work of the Study of Ministry Commission for the 2016–2020 quadrennium.

While both the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS) and the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC) had allowed unordained preachers appointed to a church or charge to administer both the sacrament of baptism and the Lord's Supper within the bounds of their charge, the MEC, in contrast, allowed unordained preachers to administer only the sacrament of baptism. Again, Matthews states from the introduction that “The debate about these ministerial orders and sacramental authority at the 1939 [uniting] General Conference set the stage for later discussions about and action on these issues in the Methodist Church [MC] and after 1968 in the United Methodist Church.”

Much of the debate at the 1939 Conference centered on whether there was a difference between the prophetic (preaching) and priestly (sacramental) functions of pastors. Despite strong arguments against changing the practice, the decision was made to extend sacramental authority to lay pastors assigned to a church or charge. Those arguing for the change cited the lack of full-time ordained clergy in many rural areas, which severely limited the availability of the sacraments.

The Evangelical United Brethren Church (EUBC) followed similar practices. However, when the EUBC and MC merged to become The United Methodist Church in 1968, unordained lay pastors were prohibited from administering the sacraments. In 1976, however, the term “lay pastor” was replaced with “local pastor,” and they were once again granted the right to administer the sacraments when assigned to a specific charge, subject to annual renewal (licensing).

Then, in 1996, substantial changes were made to the historical (MEC and MECS) two-step ordination process of deacons and elders, when the orders of deacon and elder became separate but permanent orders. Deacons

were *not* granted sacramental authority and do not itinerate but are members of conference. In addition, a step described as “commissioning” precedes that of ordination—a step which has been misunderstood on many levels. In 2008, however, provision was made for deacons to administer the sacraments where needed to extend the ministry and mission of the church. Then in 2012 provision was made for the ordination of “*local* elders in mission.”

All of this is complicated by the fact that the number of full-time ordained elders in the U.S. has been steadily decreasing while the number of local pastors is increasing. Matthews concludes that “Perhaps the biggest challenge” facing the current Study Commission “is the pressing need to develop a consistent and coherent theology of ordination, ministerial orders, and sacramental authority to undergird the ministry and mission of the UMC—and then to secure approval by the 2020 General Conference of the legislation necessary to implement that theology in the life and practice of the Church” (130).

One area which Matthews does not include in his excellent and very readable analysis is the order of *local* deacon and elder which was granted to women in the MEC in 1924, which continued through 1956 when they were finally granted full clergy rights. A further study of this order might suggest another possibility for addressing the concern regarding sacramental authority and local but unordained pastors.

This book is a must read for anyone grappling with these issues.

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Jane Samson, *Race and Redemption: British Missionaries Encounter Pacific Peoples, 1797–1920*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017. 274 pp. \$50.00.

Jane Samson’s new study seeks to put religion forward as an analytical category to help understand power dynamics of race and gender in British missionary work in the Pacific in the long nineteenth century. In particular, she is interested in mining the theological beliefs of missionaries as a way of understanding how those missionaries understood the peoples and cultures with whom they worked. Samson does so by employing the rhyming concepts of “othering” and “brothering” as a golden thread to tie her book together. This is not just clever wordplay; Samson uses the concepts to considerable nuance. She explores diverse ways missionaries simultaneously saw Pacific peoples as examples of alterity—the “Other”—and universal humanity—the “Brother.” It is important to note that the gendered term is deliberate. Her final chapter traces gender and sexuality as an otherness that missionaries found “too alien to be embraced” (244).

The first part of Samson’s book frames the intellectual context for the missionary encounter. She opens by charting the relationship between missionaries and anthropologists to show that antipathy between the groups was

not a necessary turn of events. Not only did missionaries contribute to the emergence of the modern discipline of anthropology, but both groups shared a common goal and methods. In addition, both sought to understand fundamental human nature. Missionaries, of course, approached the question of human nature through their theological priorities. In the second chapter, Samson shows that missionaries participated in an international intellectual community of ethnographic scholarship.

In the third chapter, "Othering and Brothering," Samson outlines missionary engagement with the concept of race. As noted above, a theological commitment to the oneness of humanity framed missionary encounters with alterity. As such, polygenist theories of human origins were theologically offensive. Even so, cultural practices such as cannibalism and infanticide presented challenges to the missionary desire to see Pacific peoples as their brothers. Samson outlines ways missionaries approached these issues from a premise of human unity, often drawing on theories of Semitic or Aryan diffusion to explain Pacific cultures and ground them in the missionary's own sense of religious and cultural history.

In the second section, Samson discusses issues of language, kinship and family structures, religion, gender, and sexuality in the missionary encounter. She asserts translation "features a complex interplay between alterity and universalism" (98). It assumes a measure of commonality, but also takes difference seriously. Missionaries appreciated the potential of other languages to convey complex concepts and the challenge of translating theological concepts into another language. Chapter five describes ways missionaries drew on theories of social evolution to understand indigenous kinship and family systems. They chose to see in those systems traces of their own cultural history. Missionaries both "othered" and "brothered" indigenous religious practices by strategies such as framing them as idolatrous, finding supposed cultural memories of a biblical flood or kosher laws, and a concept of God. In Samson's final chapter, she shows that although missionaries found many creative ways to identify human universality in their engagement with Pacific peoples, they were unwilling to do the same for women or sexual minorities.

Samson's work benefits from a clear sense of what it is not and what it is. It is not a chronological narrative of Christian missionary activity in the Pacific. Although she offers a basic chronological framework in the first chapter, readers interested in knowing what happened where and when would be better served by other books on mission history in the Pacific. It is a thematic exploration of the ways British missionaries sought to understand different peoples and cultures in that region, above all by drawing on their religious beliefs. It is not an account of missionary participation in the power dynamics of the colonial enterprise or of indigenous agency, although Samson is familiar with that historiography. It is a persuasive case that religion deserves to be an analytical category alongside others when exploring history.

While this work is not focused exclusively on Methodist missions to the

Pacific, Methodist missionaries figure prominently in Samson's account. In that sense, this work offers a helpful exploration of the texture of Methodist missions. The Wesleyan Methodist missionary, Lorimer Fison, surfaces as a recurring and prominent example. Although she notes that her examples provide somewhat uneven coverage of British mission history in the long nineteenth century, they are diverse enough to make her case that the beliefs of missionaries need to be considered in evaluating the history of Christian missions.

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Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones, eds., *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016. 352 pp. \$105.00.

This impressive volume promises a balanced treatment of George Whitefield as a corrective to the many one-sided biographies that developed from the absence of any mention of Whitefield's Calvinism in John Wesley's 1770 eulogy for his former colleague. As a result, one group of studies, based largely on Whitefield's own writings, leans heavily towards uncritical praise. The other, often stemming from comparisons to John Wesley, tends to focus unyieldingly on reproof.

The 2014 George Whitefield tercentenary conference at Pembroke College, Oxford, highlighted the call for more balanced historiographical studies. Acknowledging twenty-first century scholarly publications on Whitefield that are creating more complex analysis, conference organizers resolved to address the matter further. Several paper presentations were showcased at the conference, now available in this volume, which features essays by distinguished scholars of British history, church history, and Wesleyan studies, as well as specialists on Whitefield, John Wesley, and Jonathan Edwards.

Boyd Stanley Schlenker opens the book with a discussion of Whitefield's life from infancy to adulthood. He suggests that Whitefield's arrogance, inability to maintain a marriage, and failure to institutionalize Calvinistic Methodist societies in England indicate psychological struggles with commitment that may have originated in his early life.

Mark K. Olson divides Whitefield's theological formation into three categories: Oxford Methodist, Evangelical Methodist, and Calvinistic Methodist. As a former Oxford Methodist, Whitefield maintained that the dramatic new birth is foundational to conversion. Later, nurtured by Calvinist works, Evangelical Methodist Whitefield interpreted the spontaneous outbreak of revival as the result of the free sovereign grace of God. Finally, as an active itinerant preacher espousing Calvinistic Methodism, Whitefield viewed faith

as an instantaneous gift, as opposed to something nurtured by holy living and the means of grace.

William Gibson examines reactions of Anglican bishops and clergy to Whitefield's ministry. He argues that Whitefield's inability to yield to church authority sullied his legacy. His unorthodox methods led Anglican church leaders to accuse him of antinomianism and Jacobitism. Whitefield consistently failed to exhibit concern about the critiques, although he faithfully remained in the Church of England.

Frank Lambert situates Whitefield's understanding of reason within the context of the Enlightenment, arguing that Whitefield understood reason as a gift of God's grace, in contrast to the views of John Tillotson and others who regarded human reason as the primary path to acceptance of Christ. Geordan Hammond focuses on the relationship between Whitefield and John Wesley. Through a critical examination of their letters, Hammond finds (unsurprisingly), that Whitefield and Wesley's differing regards for the doctrines of predestination and perfectionism were not their only conflict. The two maintained a universal spirit, however, which sustained their camaraderie but limited Methodist unity and cooperation. Kenneth P. Minkema discusses Whitefield's relationship with Jonathan Edwards. He argues that despite an initial contentiousness, their interactions grew collegial towards the end of their careers. Keith Edward Beebe and David Ceri Jones evaluate Whitefield's evangelical ministry in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. They argue that Whitefield actively encouraged indigenous Calvinist evangelical movements while refraining from establishing organizational models that could exist without him. Brett C. McNelly evaluates Whitefield's critics, noting that Whitefield was the most attacked Methodist leader, even more than John Wesley; that Whitefield defended himself through published apologetics; and that his polemical writings promoted Methodism.

Braxton Boren's unique contribution was analysis of multiple sources of data, including Benjamin Franklin's estimations and Whitefield's own assumptions, to test audio and acoustic simulations of the claims that Whitefield reached crowds of over 50,000 people in the open air, which, he insists, were indeed possible. Emma Salgard Cunha develops a complex understanding of Whitefield's evangelicalism. She disproves theories claiming that use of Christian poetics were understood as integral to the new birth experience. Whitefield believed instead that regeneration is multilayered and the affective reaction is only one aspect of religious response.

Stephen R. Berry argues that Whitefield's ministerial career was distinguished by the frequency of his transatlantic voyages. He considers ship as parish for which Whitefield organized spiritual activities; ship as wilderness where Whitefield experienced depression and struggled with temptation; ship as cloister where Whitefield productively wrote and studied; and ship as haven for rest and physical restoration.

Peter Choi considers Whitefield's Bethesda, arguing that Whitefield's goals for the college developed beyond religious interests to nurturing cultural and imperial visions of Protestant empire. Mark A. Noll assesses the

impact of Whitefield's *Collection of Hymns* (1753) on the promotion of evangelical theology and spirituality. Many of the hymns became Protestant standards.

Isabel Rivers explores the evolution in perceptions of Whitefield by evangelical Dissenters and Church of England evangelicals from his death in 1770 to the centenary celebrations. She demonstrates that both supporters and opponents struggled over time to reconcile Whitefield's ecumenism. Finally, Andrew Atherstone considers the ways in which Whitefield was memorialized in Newburyport; Massachusetts; Victorian England; early twentieth-century Georgia and Pennsylvania; and late twentieth-century England.

One of the most compelling essays in this volume is Carla Gardina Pestana's "Whitefield and Empire." Pestana argues that the rise of evangelical Christianity and empire were not incompatible, using Whitefield's ministerial career as a case study. Despite the ecumenical bent of Whitefield's missionary impulse, his ministry ushered in the juxtaposition between religious and imperial consciousness on both sides of the Atlantic. Pestana lifts up several pertinent examples of Whitefield's support of empire including his willingness to benefit from ecclesiastical associations as an ordained priest, support of the monarchy and class hierarchies, as well as his defense and practice of slavery.

The editors succeed in their mission of presenting a wide range of insightful and enriching perspectives. Although the volume does not attempt to be exhaustive, it inexplicably avoids the issue of slavery. Otherwise, this commendable compilation offers rich scholarly treatments of Whitefield which invite further study and research.

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Edwin Gaustad, Mark Noll, and Heath Carter, eds., *A Documentary History of Religion in America*. 4th Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018. 800 pp. \$60.00.

Stephen Smith, ed., *Freedom of Religion*. Fayetteville: Oxbridge Research Associates, 2017. 689 pp. \$49.95.

Scholars have written extensively on American religious history and religious freedom. Each of these subjects have various points of disagreement, as evidenced in the academic, economic, political, and social life of the United States. Nonetheless, their analyses depend upon many of the same primary source documents and historical arguments. *A Documentary History of Religion in America* and *Freedom of Religion* were compiled to provide students and scholars with access to these documents and arguments. They are integral resources for persons seeking to critically examine and en-

gage with the secondary literature that depend upon these works.

The first edition of *A Documentary History of Religion in America* was published in 1982. Compiled by Edwin Gaustad, the two-volume anthology is comprised of hundreds of letters, sermons, court records, and personal narratives. Subsequent editions were published in 1993 and 2003 to incorporate the religious dimensions of the Civil War and the voices of women and people of color. The length and cost of the third edition, which was edited by Mark Noll, prompted the present work. Seeking to make the work more accessible, Heath Carter prepared a condensed, one-volume edition that retains the most essential documents, arguments, and narratives. His consolidation and incorporation of new, diverse perspectives provides students and scholars with valuable insight into the character of American religion.

Each chapter in *A Documentary History of Religion of America* is comprised of primary source documents with editorial introductions, followed by a list of suggested readings. These documents discuss a wide range of persons, movements, and religious traditions, spanning from the introduction of Christianity in America to the most recent presidential election. Given its extensive scope, Methodism is only discussed a few times; specifically, there are accounts of Jarena Lee and early black Methodists, a Methodist circuit rider, the 1844 separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, how this separation impacted the Civil War, and the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This brief glimpse distinguishes the work from *The Methodist Experience in America: Sourcebook*, which is strictly comprised of American Methodist documents and intended for use in United Methodist history courses. It also enables *A Documentary History of Religion in America* to provide greater insight into the historical context surrounding the tradition. This leads the work to primarily be suited for those interested in and courses on American religious history.

One of the most contentious debates within American religious history and the United States concerns freedom of religion. For years, Stephen Smith has taught, researched, and written on this debate. As such, his *Freedom of Religion* is a collection of the primary source documents and historical arguments that underlie his scholarship. Similar to *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, each text is preceded by a brief introduction to the author and subject. The primary difference between the two works is their reliance upon American authors. How Americans understand religious freedom has been shaped by persons, events, institutions, and documents spanning thousands of years. This complex history is evidenced throughout the first several hundred pages of the anthology. These pages contain excerpts from Scripture, Greek and Roman philosophers, the Catholic Church, Protestant Reformers, and seventeenth-century theologians, philosophers, and world leaders. Included among these excerpts is a condensed version of John Wesley's sermon "Catholic Spirit," which urges Christians to remain committed to their religious convictions while tolerating differences of opinion.

Most of the documents in *Freedom of Religion* were written between

the American Revolution and 1927. Given the time period and emphasis on the American context, there are various references to Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal Church, but no works written by the church or its members. *Freedom of Religion* is not intended to provide an extended account of the relationship between American Methodism and religious liberty. Consequently, its contribution to United Methodist studies depends upon the background of the reader. For persons who have studied United Methodism, the anthology will deepen various connections between religious liberty and the tradition. Readers without this background will need to supplement the work with books and articles such as: *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, “Opinion, Religion, and ‘Catholic Spirit,’” and *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*.

A Documentary History of Religion in America and *Freedom of Religion* demonstrate the depth and complexity of American religious history and religious freedom. Hopefully, these valuable resources will help scholars and students better understand these important subjects, and inspire Methodists to further examine the unique contributions of the Methodist tradition.

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Linda A. Ryan, *John Wesley and the Education of Children: Gender, Class and Piety*. Routledge Methodist Studies Series. New York: Routledge, 2017. 200 pp. \$145.00.

What Linda A. Ryan has offered the field of Methodist Studies with *John Wesley and the Education of Children* is precisely what she promises, “a body of knowledge which for the first time accurately places John Wesley’s educational programme in its broad social and cultural context” (1). Rather than exploring only a single aspect of class and gender analysis, the scope of Ryan’s work expands to take in the full range of these concerns in the educational milieu of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which both formed Wesley and received his impact.

In this clear and chronologically-organized book, Ryan begins with a sweeping tour of existing educational theorists, such as John Locke and his near-opposite, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These dominant voices are joined by Locke’s contemporary Mary Artell and Rousseau’s contemporary Hester Chapone, both theorists on girls’ education. This first chapter on “Child-rearing and education” also considers changing notions of parenting and childhood, as well as the types of schools available over Wesley’s lifetime. The sheer variety of sources Ryan plumbs in her research is on full display in this chapter and throughout the book, as the reader is treated to excerpts from genres ranging from letters and treatises to novels and advertisements for boarding schools that list curriculum and costs.

That chapter builds a broad and deep foundation for Ryan’s argument that eighteenth-century education did little to challenge and much to reinforce

the status quo of class and gender in the face of social change, though benefits nevertheless did accrue to a limited degree. Her problematizing of the focus on Christian piety as instrument of this reinforcement is compelling. In chapters two through four, she builds on that foundation with attention to Wesley's own formation and educational thinking, the implementation of that thinking, and the difficulty of identifying a single impact of that thinking on the education of "pauper children" at mid-century (1723–1780), as his thinking on this subject itself "was far from straightforward" (83). Here Ryan offers a more nuanced portrait of Susanna Wesley as a compassionate educator-parent, identifies Moravian influence on the shaping of John's commitment to practical matters in education, and clarifies distinctions between the priorities of education for boys and girls. Issues such as the training and credentials of school masters, the complex cultivation of emotional experiences of God to encourage students' conversion, and variation in educational approaches among early Methodists round out these core chapters.

The final three chapters hone in on issues from the previous three, providing deeper analysis of the Kingswood boarding school over time (1746–1780) and of the growing tension between education and evangelism in the increasing drive to train preachers and resulting shifts in social class of the Kingswood School's class make-up. She delves into previously unpublished material for evidence of the above-mentioned variation in approaches to educating pauper children, specifically through the lens of John and Mary Fletcher's work in the Sunday schools in Madeley. Even the work of female educational reformers Sarah Trimmer and Hannah More appears to complicate the narrative of education's dual purpose of saving children from poverty as well as for eternity, focusing instead on the latter.

Ryan concludes that Wesley's "educational legacy was not insignificant" (172, 179) and thwarts previous claims, by J. H. Plumb "that Methodism 'was at its worst in its attitude to education'" and by E. P. Thompson "that 'Methodism was a strongly anti-intellectual influence'" (172). She achieves her purpose of placing Wesley's educational work in its broader social and cultural context and further demonstrates convincingly that his educational priority was not social reform but evangelism, even while acknowledging the positive social side effects that often occurred.

One of the only steps that might improve the work would be for Ryan to have attended to the fact that the Kingswood School still exists today, noting changes over time in both pedagogical concerns about piety (or lack thereof) and the presence or absence today of class and gender issues in the overall design and enrollment of the school.

It may be tempting to designate this work as excellent assigned reading for courses in Christian Education, which would be appropriate; however, to leave it at that would be to overlook its broader relevance. Considering not only the rise of attention to issues of class and gender in the academy, but also the reality that references to Wesley's educational enterprise have a way of cropping up in sermons and advocacy for social reform, this work belongs

at the center of discourse wherever someone is likely to intone “Unite the pair so long disjoin’d, knowledge and vital piety.”

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Frank Baker, Richard Heitzenrater, and Randy Maddox, eds., *The Journal Letters, and Related Biographical Items of the Reverend Charles Wesley*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2018. 466 pp. \$74.99.

The recent publication of *The Journal Letters* of Charles Wesley represents another significant milestone passed in the process of uncovering, documenting, and reporting the legacy of the co-founder of early Methodism. This volume of annotated primary sources written by Charles Wesley brings the reader one step closer to entering, appreciating, and understanding the inner life and dynamics of the first Methodists.

Charles, the lesser-known younger brother of John Wesley, occasionally lived in the shadow of his more famous brother. Where John published and publicized almost incessantly, Charles took a more private route and withheld his journal and correspondence from publication. When his journal, which frequently reads more like an annotated sermon log, was finally published long after Charles’s death, in 1849, it had huge chronological gaps in the material offered and it frequently reported the public side of Charles Wesley’s life, but not often the private. This was due in part to Charles’s sporadic writing habits, and his own penchant for privacy; many of the most personal (and therefore most interesting) details were recorded in an eighteenth-century shorthand style invented by one of the Wesleys’ acquaintances, John Byrom.

The *Journal Letters* are a large collection of serialized literary installments which chronicled the life and work of Charles Wesley, and since many of these were written and mailed home to his family (principally his wife, Sarah “Sally” Gwynne Wesley), they step past the public record and take the reader into more personal details of his life and work. Many installments provide the reader with information about events and people hitherto unknown through Charles’ published journal, while in other instances familiar territory is explored with new depth.

Particularly interesting is the warmth and energy the younger Wesley displayed in these formerly unpublished items. Charles’s undying loyalty to the Church of England shines through strongly here, as does his on-going and somewhat contentious struggles with the Methodist lay preachers (304–359). Equally significant and interesting, however, are the intimate personal details and assessments that appear in this more private account. We learn, for example, of Charles’s spirited dispute with the Rev. Edward Davies over the purchase of a mare, who turned out to be ill and unsuitable for Wesley’s

use; “I *then* thought Mr. Davies an honest man, a Christian brother, a faithful friend, and utterly incapable of taking *such* advantage of my unsuspecting, implicit *trust* in his honour and integrity. Would to God I could *so* think of him still! (395).” Charles’s delightful sense of ironic humor shows through from time to time as, for example, in the midst of the “stillness controversy,” which wracked the fledgling Methodist movement over the role of spiritual disciplines and good works, Charles asked brother John: “Has the numb-fish touched you?” (45). Also included are extraneous unpublished items like Charles’ narrative descriptions of the childhood of his musically gifted sons (Charles, Jr., and Samuel), along with other windows into life in his bustling household (388–395).

This volume is indispensable for anyone who wants to know about the inner workings of Charles Wesley, and to see—through his own eyes—the emergence and development of early Methodism. It is developed almost exclusively from primary source manuscripts, well documented, and adequately indexed. It is highly and joyfully recommended.

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Diane Glancy, *Mary Queen of Bees*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2017. 54 pp. \$11.00.

As its title suggests, Diane Glancy’s novella *Mary Queen of Bees* imagines the life of John and Charles Wesley’s sister Mary (1696–1734) through a first-person narrative rich in metaphor and allusion. Glancy’s fictional treatment of Mary’s life was inspired by Frederick E. Maser’s *The Story of John Wesley’s Sisters, or Seven Sisters in Search of Love* (Academy Books, 1988). Using well-known incidents from Wesley family records and fragmentary evidence about Mary’s life, Glancy weaves a complex human voice for this Wesley sister. Glancy invites us to imagine Mary’s experience in ways that challenge Methodist hagiography while ultimately affirming the value of wrestling with scripture, practicing spiritual disciplines, developing compassion for others, and persisting in the quest for genuine Christian faith.

Like much of Glancy’s work, *Mary Queen of Bees* uses fiction to recover a voice lost to history, examining the experience of disenfranchisement from the inside. Mary’s imagined voice is vivid and conflicted, reflecting a complex inner life. Admonished to keep silent, Mary dramatizes her longing to be heard: “I put salt grains on my tongue to sting it. For words not spoken that I wanted to speak” (1). Later she asks, “Where is a book written the way my thoughts fly?” (43). *Mary Queen of Bees* becomes that book by stitching together vignettes of life at Epworth rectory, lists (such as names of siblings, things she likes, questions for God), her “Letters to Paradise” (part

prayer, part theological musing), excerpts from Wesley family documents, and interior monologue. Ultimately, her patchwork story is a dialogue with God, dramatizing the quarrel with the self in the tradition of Augustine's *Confessions*, although as a woman's life, its scale is much smaller. Spirited, but suppressed, Mary wrestles with the scarcity of outlets for her intellectual curiosity and emotional hunger: she is a woman in an eighteenth-century patriarchal milieu, a person struggling with ways pain and disability confine her, a pastor's daughter restricted by religious conventions, and a Wesley wrestling with the strictures of her powerful mother, Susanna.

Glancy's narrative draws on documentary evidence of Mary's disability, her sense of being mocked by her family, their coming to appreciate her intelligence and compassion, and her brief, happy marriage to John Whitelamb. Glancy supplements the historical record by imagining the sorrows and possibilities of such a life. Mary's childhood experiences of cold and hunger, the deaths of infant siblings, the tensions between her parents, and her mother's rigid discipline question idealized versions of life at Epworth. She shows us what it might feel like to be a child in a house where "The rod was frequent . . . with so many children full of unmet needs" (4). Her response to this "harsh discipline" is complex: "I welcomed it. I sanctioned it. I longed for it. I hated it" (10).

As she matures, Mary searches for outlets for her extraordinary education, struggles to come to terms with the God who has not healed her, and learns to love. "Why" Mary asks, "all this learning if all we were to do was to have children?" (1). Later she realizes that daughters "were to be copies of Christian women with the starch washed out of them." Yet, Mary wryly observes, her mother "is not washed of starch" (37). Mary herself can imagine going to university, joining the Oxford Holy Club, and even lecturing to students, but she is shut out from all this by her gender, her disability, and her family culture. Marriage, an avenue of escape open to daughters, seems impossible as her disability outweighs her attractive face and lively mind.

Forced to study the Bible, Mary begins in anger: "I wanted to unravel the text. I wanted to rearrange what it said. To make it more agreeable. Less unraveling to my life" (21). Pondering Psalms, Job, the story of Mephibosheth, and even biblical references to bees, Mary emerges as a passionate wrestler with the text, struggling toward faith. Her voice provides glimpses of the possible richness of all the lost commentaries of women, whose fathers and brothers claimed a monopoly on truth. Despite a life of privations whose joys are brief, the Mary Wesley Whitelamb of the novella comes to see life whole and to inscribe it in the context of a hard-earned faith: "The bee stings, but also gives honey. In the message of the Bible there is hell in the afterlife. There also is heaven" (47).

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Emma Salgard Cunha, *John Wesley, Practical Divinity and the Defence of Literature*. London: Routledge, 2018. 200 pp. \$122.00.

This is an academic book for those who are interested in John Wesley's publication projects as they related to and were part of the literary print culture of the eighteenth century, a time when a significant number of religious texts were produced. Wesley himself may have been responsible for as many as 3,500 items. This study, then, will be most useful for scholars interesting in the history of publishing, in various religious movements such as Methodism, in the purposes and uses of literature and the readers of literature, and the reputation of John Wesley as a literary figure who instigated, as the frontis note says, "a sophisticated programme of reading, writing, and publishing within his Methodist Societies" (iii). Cunha's aim is "to create some bridges between various academic groups drawn to the complexity of religious texts as sites for theological and for literary thinking" (2), especially in terms of the wider cultural literacy of that century. She may very well be successful in this endeavor because this study, which covers a great deal of material, is solid and sophisticated.

Of primary importance in tackling this study is a sense of what is meant by "practical divinity," for this is the frame Cunha uses to see Wesley as a legitimate literary figure and to understand how Wesley believed that literature (defined broadly yet of accessible forms) could be a means to education, conversion, devotion, godliness, and even the experience of grace among readers with different abilities and status—readers caught up in reason as well as emotion. Cunha brings to bear on this project the skills of a literary critic, analyzing Methodist history and theology through a plethora of texts, beliefs, and practices.

This analysis takes then "practical divinity" as a type of religious writing that can be considered a literary genre, an effort that keeps the needs of readers in mind and is very much against speculative and polemical writing. Although "practical divinity" can mean many things, Cunha sees it as "the fundamental building block of Methodist literary culture" (24), a culture which is explained in the book's first chapter. "Practical divinity" thus is both a literary form and a religious practice that incorporated faith, reason, revelation, emotion, testimony, and experience to help explain to the reader what is meant by a scriptural faith and how that reader should understand God's saving relationship with humanity—and with the reader. The better a contemporary reader understands the notion of "practical divinity," the more valuable will be the book's various chapters.

The chapters which follow treat different types of writings that Wesley either wrote or edited for publication: sermons, hymns, liturgies, prefaces, letters, biographies, autobiographies, poetry, anthologies, and tracts. Because Wesley was responsible for so much, Cunha singles out only a few representative publications in different genres in each chapter, but nevertheless gives the reader a good sense of what Wesley was up to as he wrote, edited, abridged, published, distributed, and used texts which Cunha wants us to see

may have significantly influenced the reading culture of the eighteenth century. In many ways, Cunha is showing not only how Wesleyan works were directed to members of the Methodist Societies but how entities outside the societies were of interest to Wesley—that is, as the title of one of the hymn collections has it, hymns for “real Christians of all Denominations.”

But a warning to those stuck in a Wesley hagiography. Cunha does not hesitate to identify and explore problems in John Wesley’s thinking and practice: conflicts with definitions of “practical divinity”; with understanding the intellectual dimensions of Methodism; with understanding the tensions between the spiritual and the literary; and with portrayals of experience, emotion, and reason. Moments of ambiguity and confusion, clashes between literary style and evangelical purpose, the effort to remain within the Church of England yet developed, inevitably, fundamental and long-lasting differences. This exploration is done, however, with a wonderful sense of objectivity.

Individuals who pick up this book will have a fine introduction to the incredible amount of scholarly work academics have been pursuing in terms of John Wesley, early Methodism, and eighteenth-century book and religious culture. In this regard, the footnotes at chapters’ end reveal how much solid academic work has been done and is ongoing in terms of Wesleyan scholarship.

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Andrew Gant, *O Sing Unto the Lord: A History of English Church Music*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2017. 454 pp. \$35.00.

English church music permeates the worship of most American United Methodist congregations and not only the hymns of Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts. Favorites in the current hymnal include: “In the Bleak Midwinter” by Christina Rossetti, “Good Christian Friends Rejoice” and “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” by John Mason Neale. Beyond these are a wide selection of English Hymn tunes stretching way back to TALLIS’ CANON; Henry Purcell’s WESTMINSTER ABBEY; Orlando Gibbons’s CANTERBURY (paired with four different texts); William Croft’s ST. ANNE (“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”) and HANOVER (“Ye Servants of God”); Samuel Sabastian Wesley’s setting of “Lead Me Lord” and AURELIA (“The Church’s One Foundation”); George Frideric Handel’s tune ANTIOCH (“Joy to the World”) and GOPSAL (“Rejoice, the Lord is King”).

Generations of American Methodists have belted out “Guide Me, O thou Great Jehovah” to John Hughes’s CWM RHONDDA and “Onward Christian Soldiers” to Arthur Sullivan’s ST. GERTRUDE. Ralph Vaughan William’s contributions are many, including FOREST GREEN and KINGSFOLD (multiple

times each), and the more challenging SINE NOMINE (“For All the Saints), and SALVE FESTA DIES (“Hail Thee, Festival Day”). Even musically demanding pieces by Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (JERUSALEM) and Charles Villiers Stanford (ENGELBERG) make their appearance. Though “Lord of the Dance” is set to an American Shaker tune, the lyrics were composed by Englishman Sydney Carter.

Influenced by the aesthetic pattern of worship, larger urban churches adopted architectural styles from England, adding choirs, galleries, pipe organs, bell choirs and multi-voice choirs. Much of the music they perform was composed in England. Such congregations often produce special performances of Handel’s “Messiah” on a yearly basis, during which Americans follow the British tradition of standing for the Hallelujah Chorus.

Andrew Gant puts all this music in context in this American edition of *O Sing Unto the Lord*, charting its progression through a turbulent political and ecclesial history, and noting the lyrical and musical innovations along the way. His wide-ranging bibliography shows that Gant, one in a long line of organists, choirmasters, and composers for the Chapel Royal, clearly has been steeped in both the history and performance of the music itself.

O Sing Unto the Lord is a comprehensive history spanning more than 1,400 years. Fluency in specialized terminology used in general Western church history; general British history; music theory (“an oddly square kind of polyphony,” p. 140); and liturgical terms (Matins, gradual, etc.) would facilitate the reader’s engagement of the text. Even so, it is quite likely that the American reader will get a little lost as the chapters move through the kings and queens, Georgian and Victorian composers, and the “atavistic echoes of the medieval and modal” cadences and inflections (349). With graduate-level knowledge of these subjects, the book is still dense yet informative and sometimes amusing: “The spirit of Laud moved upon the face of the darkened cloister and the surpliced choirboys” (231).

The preface to the American Edition includes examples of how English church music has travelled across the Atlantic and “‘musical accents’ such as Shaker music and spirituals travelled the other way too” (viii). Gant makes clear that this history is “not just of the music itself but of the people who made it. It is an attempt to track public events, official doctrines and the soundtrack that goes with them. It is the story of the part that church music has played in ordinary lives and the way it reflects those lives back to us” (x). For scholars of American Methodism, the book provides the context from which the Wesley brothers developed their societies and acknowledges Methodism’s contribution, particularly to British congregational hymn singing.

The history weaves together several themes: Catholic and Protestant struggles, disputes over what music is appropriate for worship, and whether it is best for the whole congregation to sing, or just a few well trained voices. Working through the chapters, the reader gains an appreciation for the far-reaching branches of the musical family tree, noting which composers and directors were trained by whom at which cathedrals or chapels. Gant’s

scope moves back and forth from the nobility and court musicians, to the composers, the choirs, and the people who sang devotional music, working songs, and drinking songs as invocations “calling down the aid of their favourite saint to make their drudgery divine” (53).

Organized chronologically and endowed with a forty-page index, *O Sing Unto the Lord* is a useful reference book in any theological library. Another wonderful asset of the volume is the long list of URLs which enable the reader to hear the music while reading Gant’s descriptions. For those American readers with an average knowledge of British church history it is similarly advisable to keep Wikipedia close at hand.

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Glen O’Brien and Hilary M. Carey, eds., *Methodism in Australia: A History*. Ashgate Methodist Studies. London: Routledge, 2015. 308 pp. \$71.95.

Concise and crisp, the chapters of this book make a strong case for the significance of the Methodist tradition in Australia. The significance is primarily explained in terms of social impact, and an excellent case is made for the deep impact of Methodism on nineteenth and early twentieth-century Australian life, and the differences among the nation’s different states. One might not ordinarily think of Australians as influenced by religion, but this stereotype is effectively challenged in this book.

Methodism in Australia extends beyond social history into intellectual history. Glen O’Brien writes brilliantly on the religious experience of Methodists—a slippery subject, but he concisely shows how revivalism, organization, proto-Pentecostalism and liberalism are all wrapped up in this tradition. The book has frustrating gaps, however. There is virtually nothing on the organization of a highly organized movement. The denomination was one of the founding members of the Uniting Church, and this is briefly covered in the final chapter, but other twentieth-century history is virtually absent except in the chapter on Western Australian; this is a serious deficiency. There are some excellent thematic chapters on twentieth-century trends—including Samantha Frappell on the crises of nationhood and Jennifer Clark on the challenge of the sixties—but these chapters do not focus on the growing Methodist structures; as such a reader might conclude that the Wayside Chapel and Alan Walker are typical of Methodism. Conversely, there is a very fine chapter on the historiography of Methodism by Hilary Carey, which is a model of how historiography can enhance understanding.

Particular highlights for me included Malcolm Prentis’s meticulous chapter on New South Wales, and David Hilliard’s beautiful evocation of the tone of Methodism in South Australia. Knowing the history of Methodism’s splits and reunions in other parts of the world, I appreciated Ian Breward’s chapter which showed that the speed of moves to unite Australian Methodists was negotiated at a distinctive Australian pace. The chapter on Methodist music

by D'Arcy Wood was also very suggestive.

The editors are surely right to suggest some convergence between Australian national identity and Methodist tone. In a very tight framework, and without illustrations, they have skillfully deployed an impressive depth of knowledge. The gaps in this book are troubling, but the authors deserve our deep thanks for their rich insights.

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Joseph F. DiPaolo, *Wide Views and a Loving Heart: The Life and Ministry of Bishop Levi Scott*. Philadelphia: Historical Society of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church, 2018. 172 pp. N/A.

Joseph DiPaolo provides a biographic account of the life and ministry of Bishop Levi Scott in *Wide Views and a Loving Heart*. Bishop Scott served during the mid-nineteenth century when the Methodist Episcopal Church experienced its first major schism and within the realities of a divided country. DiPaolo set out to remind us of this important and overlooked bishop and his work accomplishes this task.

DiPaolo follows Bishop Scott's life chronologically, beginning with his childhood (ch. 1); through his conversion and early years as a circuit rider (ch. 2); as a Presiding Elder and as Assistant Book Agent for the Methodist Book Concern (ch. 3); and as Bishop (ch. 4). His later chapters delve more into the historical context of Bishop Scott's ministry seeking to situate him as a gradual emancipationist and as a person who sought to empower free and enslaved African Americans within black Annual Conferences (ch. 5–7). Most of the evidence presented throughout the book comes from Bishop Scott's personal diary, correspondence, and annual conference journals. The book is filled with color images and photographs which help to highlight the archival materials employed by DiPaolo. The book ends with appendixes as supplementary primary source material. Included are statements from his funeral and an annual conference tribute (Appendix A, B); two sermon outlines (Appendix C); two of his more important addresses (to Liberia, Appendix D and his 50th anniversary of preaching, Appendix E); and a statement on his support of eugenics (Appendix F). These primary source materials help the reader get a better, more detailed, more personal account of the ministry of Bishop Scott.

The overall picture presented of Bishop Scott is of a balanced figure who understood the racial and social tensions of America and Methodism in the middle of the nineteenth century who sought to work within the racial tensions of the time in order to empower African Americans in a way

that was not revolutionary. DiPaolo does a good job of presenting Bishop Scott's support of the American Colonization Society in a nuanced manner, being critical of the society itself while still letting the reader understand why Bishop Scott chose to support it. While DiPaolo praises Bishop Scott for his accomplishments, he is not shy to admit that many of the actions of Bishop Scott prolonged racial oppression and segregation within American Methodism—thus presenting Bishop Scott as a complicated historic figure.

This book might serve as a warning for today's contemporary United Methodism. Again, we find ourselves divided as a denomination. There is much to learn from Bishop Scott's life and ministry amidst disunity. Bishop Scott was not radical or bold in his ministry. He was what we might today call a "centrist," one who sought to empower free and enslaved African Americans, but only within their own, segregated conferences. He provided them with a platform for ministry but that platform was still overseen by white men and was in reality never fully a place of African-American empowerment. DiPaolo does a wonderful job of making this known. He also successfully points out places where United Methodism needs to pay attention to our history. The 1844 schism did not sever the communication ties between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The two denominations, despite being separate, maintained communication and continued to discuss race long after their schism. DiPaolo's account points out that those in the Methodist Episcopal Church after the 1844 schism still did not agree on how to include African Americans within the life and ministry of the denomination. This discussion is most prominently in chapters 4–6 where DiPaolo lays out Bishop Scott's involvement with the Liberian Missionary Conference, creating separate African-American conferences within the United States, and allowing full conference membership for African American preachers.

This book is a great contribution to Methodist history as it provides a snapshot of how Methodism operated across a few decades of the nineteenth century, particularly amidst a time of deep division and it provides necessary nuance to the conversations surrounding race between the 1844 schism and the Civil War. Methodist history tends to highlight bishops who were staunch abolitionists in order to see its own history through a brighter lens (Bishop Haven, Bishop Simpson). But Methodist history is more complicated than that and is full of persons like Bishop Scott who were "anti-slavery whites" but not abolitionists. While these figures are not radical or revolutionary, their nuanced stories can help us better understand our history and how those within our denominational traditions have struggled with living in their own times.

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F. Douglas Powe, Jr. and Jack Jackson, eds., *E. Stanley Jones: Sharing the Good News in a Pluralistic Society*. Nashville: Wesley's Foundry Books, 2018. 148 pp. \$16.99.

As a boy of 12, I could feel the excitement in our Methodist parsonage. My father, a Methodist pastor in the Holston Conference, had invited E. Stanley Jones to his church for a preaching mission. After all, Jones was a world-renowned evangelist whose Christ-centered witness had stirred the hearts of people across the globe, but especially in India and the U.S. Dad's excitement rubbed off on his kids, and while I do not remember what Jones said—I do remember how he said it. His humility was clear and he spoke with the conviction of someone defined by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We were spellbound, not because we were expected to be, but rather by the luminescent aura of a man centered in Christ. He left us with the gift of deliverance from our circumscribed lives in East Tennessee and with a gift of a tiny red pod that held within it an almost microscopic elephant carved from ivory.

Over the passing years I occasionally thumbed through *The Christ of the Indian Road*, but honestly, it was not until reading *E. Stanley Jones: Sharing the Good News in a Pluralistic Society* that I fully grasped the centrality and transforming radiance of his Christology. It helped me not only rediscover the lasting truth of his ministry but also his enduring relevance as we confront the cacophony of voices fracturing social and religious norms in our increasingly post-Christian and secular America.

Jones's words shattered the western appropriation of Christ that preaches a constrained and domesticated interpretation of the Gospel whose fullness can only be understood in a global context. I am a former United Methodist missionary to Latin America, a region that is vexed by conflicts, often violent, emerging from class, race, stratification and inequality. How does one teach and preach Jesus, while being fully conscious of and sensitive to the burden of history, imperialism and empire? Cultural relativism notwithstanding, how does one lay claim to the truth of Christ while seeking above all to do no harm? Several authors are more than up to the task to address these questions and they are brought together seamlessly by two insightful editors, F. Douglas Powe, Jr., and Jack Jackson.

Jones departed for India in 1907, and what set him apart immediately was his capacity to listen and learn, becoming embedded in the soul of pluralistic India, while never wavering from the truth of the exclusivity of Christ. Distinct from his contemporaries, he availed himself of the gifts of this multiplicity of faiths to not only learn about them, but also to learn from them. His intrinsic humility enabled holy conversation with Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Jains, and he gracefully introduced new platforms for interaction—public lectures, Round Tables and Christian Ashrams. Each approach represented an evangelistic innovation as Jones discerned alignments in the search for religious truth while never wavering from the claim of Christ's universality. As he himself observed, he maintained social broad-minded-

ness, but that posture was zealously narrow about conversion to Christ and Christian practice.

As his notoriety expanded, his network and influence grew. Deciding that a peace and justice agenda could best be amplified by interacting with the educated elite, he found audiences not only among the intelligentsia but also with presidents and prime ministers. For Jones, there could be no strangers to the “unshakable Kingdom” for what Christ reveals is the “hope for the world, embedded in the very order of creation” (33). Undaunted by speaking to centers of power, he lived through two world wars, the partition of Indian and Pakistan, Japan’s imperialism, the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the Civil Rights Movement, and in all cases he fearlessly denounced the instigators and perpetrators of the violence. Recent declassification of FBI documents indicates that his prophetic deliveries had earned him a bulging file.

Poignant were his interactions with Mahatma Gandhi, whom Jones implored to accept Christ. These conversations highlighted the inherent contradiction implicit in trying to convert without the imposition of culture. When asked by Jones what Christians could do to naturalize Christ in India, Gandhi responded with a list of four things: 1) that Christians live more like Christ; 2) to practice the faith without toning it down; 3) to emphasize love and make it your working force; and 4) to look to find the good in other religions (89). Throughout his life Jones remained disappointed that Gandhi “had grasped the principles of (Jesus) but missed the Person (of Jesus)” (55).

The chapters that focus on the relevance of Jones’s message for twenty-first century America merit special attention. A starting point might well be a Christian Ashram, the mission of which is to be the Kingdom of God in miniature. At the core of these experiences are three questions: Why are we here? What do you want? What do you need from God before the event ends? Modeling a Jones-inspired Christian pedagogy, they remain the path that invites a deeper investment in both the individual and communal Christian salvation.

Jones was a man who was able to bridge divides and transcend boundaries—but remain unapologetically bound by the gospel and God’s truth incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ.

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Elaine Allen Lehtreck, *Southern White Ministers and the Civil Rights Movement*. Jackson, MS: UP of Mississippi, 2018. 384 pp. \$30.00.

Elaine Allen Lehtreck has written an important new work for scholars of religion and race relations in the American South. The book explores

the lives of progressive white southern ministers during the years of the Civil Rights movement, detailing the ways these men and women risked their careers, families, and at times, their lives for the sake of social justice. Lecktreck explains that she developed her research topic while an intern in the Birmingham Public Library Archives. She discovered a number of progressive ministers who had moved on to other professions, including her internship director. Marvin Whiting explained that he was once a Methodist minister until he was fired for having condemned parishioners who had tied a black man “to the end of a pickup truck and [dragged] him across the countryside until he was a bloody mess and died” (vii). This revelation encouraged Lecktreck to scavenge the South for similar figures, and over the next twenty years, she personally interviewed sixty-eight ministers for her book.

The first six chapters are organized chronologically, beginning in 1954 with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision and ending with the aftermath of the MLK assassination. Lecktreck fashions a history that skillfully interweaves topical narratives with biographical sketches. In a chapter focusing on school desegregation, the book explains that many white southern ministers embraced federal mandates to integrate public schools and challenged their church members to uphold their Christian duties. Practically all experienced rebukes from their congregations, which included boycotts, destruction of personal property, and job loss. In the early 1960s, eighteen ministers left the Mississippi Conference over conflicts related to school integration (33). Subsequent chapters convey similar storylines of how progressive ministers struggled to convince their conservative congregations to embrace change.

The final two chapters serve together as a lengthy conclusion. Chapter seven offers an explanation for how evangelical and mainline Protestant denominations navigated changes in race relations, and it concisely addresses some of the challenges distinctive to each institutional body. In last chapter, Lecktreck tries to draw conclusions about a group of ministers who defy categorization. Some were liberal through and through, from their religious doctrine to their political leanings. Others were conservative on every issues except for race relations. She settles on “progressive” as her preferred nomenclature, but she admits this also is an imprecise term. Borrowing language used to describe African-American preachers in the movement, she argues that these were “prophetic” southern white ministers willing to stand in their pulpits and deliver uncomfortable truths to white southerners.

In recent years, more historians have written about these preachers, but primarily as peripheral partners who offered measured support for Civil Rights, or as curious anomalies in an otherwise solid South. Lecktreck calls these ministers “a courageous minority” who deserve being the primary subjects of investigation (248). Most came from affluent southern families and pastored urban churches. They tended to be well-educated, and some went on to become university professors. Not all were cut from the same cloth—a notable exception was Baptist preacher Will Campbell, who relished in his self-described “redneck” upbringing and anti-establishment leanings (166).

“Brother Will” helped many people, including my own father in the 1970s. Although he never spoke about many details of his job loss at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, after reading this book, I realized that I too knew one of these courageous men. Likewise, many readers will recognize similar figures in their own communities.

In the 1960s, Jewish-American writer and Charlotte resident Harry Golden warned white North Carolinians that “no state can long progress that exiles its prophets and exalts its fools.” Perhaps *Southern White Ministers and the Civil Rights Movement’s* most important contribution is to welcome home the prodigal sons and daughters from their exile. More of us should tell them that they made a difference and their lives mattered. It is a reminder that as we navigate uncertain times not to be afraid of standing up for truth and decency, for we stand on the shoulders of prophets.

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Joseph W. Cunningham, *John Wesley’s Pneumatology: Perceptible Inspiration*. New York: Routledge, 2014. 172 pp. \$59.95.

John Wesley’s pneumatology should be explored more deeply; after all, Wesley was a theologian of the “economic Trinity” who has helped shape Western spirituality significantly over the years. The neglect on this topic is not surprising given that pneumatology is often relegated to playing second fiddle to Christology, but in another sense it is strange given the shape of Wesley’s own theology and the theological currents it both draws from and has contributed to over the centuries. Cunningham helps fill the gap with this book, a deep dive into the topic that is well-documented and extensively elaborated.

Cunningham begins by defining pneumatology as “an orderly understanding of God’s spiritual nature in relation to human existence” (vii), a curious starting point but a defensible one given Wesley’s preferences for thinking of “spirit” as both metaphysical substance (“God is spirit” John 4:24 [the *NRSV* does not have an article, whereas Wesley’s *Authorized Version* did—“God is a Spirit]) and divine personhood (God the Holy Spirit). The goal with this definitional starting point is to register pneumatology as dynamically at work within the economy of God’s salvific work and that this activity can be perceived by humans. This helps explain Cunningham’s subtitle: he offers the Wesleyan notion of “perceptible inspiration” (largely drawn from the exchanges Wesley had with an anonymous “John Smith” from 1745–1748) as indicative of a model that can incorporate many of Wesley’s pneumatological reflections (which at times appear contradictory or at least paradoxical). Wesley elaborates the theme in his correspondence with Smith: “We mean that inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit whereby he fills us

with righteousness, peace, and joy, with love to him and to all mankind. And we believe it cannot be, in the nature of things, that a man [*sic*] should be filled with this peace and joy and love by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost without perceiving it, as clearly as he does the light of the sun,” after which Wesley remarks that this as well as his other closely related reflections consist of “the main doctrine of the Methodists” (see *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 26, edited by Frank Baker [Oxford: Clarendon, 1982], 181-182).

After Cunningham focuses on the particular correspondence between Wesley and Smith so as to establish this model (ch. 1), he continues by elaborating various “pneumatological operations” within the model: “grace” (ch. 2), “faith” (ch. 3), “witness of the spirit” (ch. 4), and “the fruits of the spirit” (ch. 5). With each “operation,” then, the logic of “perceptible inspiration” can be detected and delineated. Proceeding in such a fashion can be a bit strained; that is, proposing a “model” for understanding a historical figure’s thinking can mean that in the execution of the argument the model itself becomes the end or point of elaboration. This is a concern I at times had with Cunningham’s project. Having said that, I find the arguments at work in Cunningham’s volume to be exceedingly important to highlight, not just for their historical value in understanding Wesley’s theology but also for their significance to theological reflection today.

The broader point to emphasize surrounding “perceptible inspiration” as a motif is not only that God’s Spirit is at work in the world but that people can actually know, identify, and sense this work. This is a remarkable claim, given reservations in Wesley’s day and our own to make this move—to actually say what, where, when, and how the Spirit is active. People then and now worry about a certain species of “enthusiasm,” and to a degree (but only a degree), the concern is legitimate. The other and equally worrisome extreme is a pneumatological silence or resignation that is itself a danger since it can stifle the maturation of believers. That last point is critical, for maturation is essential to this kind of knowing since it functions on a different order which operates out of the spiritual senses. Talk of knowledge based on the spiritual senses does not make it “unnatural” (given that God is the creator of all things, a *pneumatological* point Cunningham stresses as it relates to Wesley’s views on grace), but it does require a specific course of both activation and cultivation (at which point Cunningham joins the emerging chorus of connecting Wesley to the Christian virtue tradition). The point needs to be lifted up continually, for it helps bolster the Wesleyan theological vision in which theology and spirituality are intertwined. In all of this, Cunningham’s instincts are sound and nuanced, making this volume a useful read for making sense of Wesley’s pneumatology.

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William E. Nicholas, *Go and Be Reconciled: Alabama Methodists Confront Racial Injustice, 1954–1974*. Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2018. xiv +136 pp. \$21.95.

Carrying backcover endorsements from a bishop who served in Alabama, William Willimon, and from four scholars who have probed the state and region's racial traumas, the Nicholas book takes the reader back into the struggles by white Methodists both to further and to resist the integration of the church and the merger of Alabama conferences—the two white and one African American. A few Black Methodists, notably Joseph Lowery and several Black bishops, make cameo appearances in the drama, but their conferences and doings otherwise remain mainly off or briefly on stage. Instead, Nicholas takes the reader into the leadership patterns and stances of and conference racial theater under successive white bishops—Bachman Hodge, Nolan Harmon, Kenneth Goodson and Carl Sanders. Key clergy and lay leaders in the two white conferences also make their appearances, sometimes repeatedly and centrally. The play's actions spill outside in the final act, into the street, and Alabama Baptists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians join Methodists, also reenacting their own confrontations with racial injustice.

Although filled page-by-page and line-by-line with names of the hundreds of actors and with some identification of their racial or racist commitments, this short book carries the reader readily into confrontations with injustice. The lead actor and main character of the middle chapters, indeed of the book as a whole, is Goodson. His episcopal predecessors, Hodge and Harmon, are shown to be resistant to the integrationist cause, as also his successor, Sanders. Nicholas renders his “guilty” judgment on these three carefully and with sufficient “testimony” to warrant his evaluative conclusions.

Nicholas takes great pains in the middle chapters, the ones devoted to Goodson, to attend to the changes in the bishop's racial stance; to track the strategic and effective activities by which Goodson entered into the everyday lives of the folk and leadership across the conferences; to indicate how attentive the bishop remained to structure, protocol, communication and policy; and to show how effectively he entered the lives of the people through correspondence, weekly broadcast on the radio and eventually appearances on TV. He notes Goodson's elevation to national leadership in Methodism's Commission on Religion and Race; indicates how carefully he brought younger and more progressive clergy into cabinet and other leadership posts; and follows his careful strategizing to carry through United Methodism's mandate to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction and merge white and African-American conferences. Nicholas tracks the incredible and elaborate strategies by which lay leaders sought to resist the mandated integration; covers the disastrous racist events in Alabama, including those especially in Selma; judges the way in which such racist events transformed Goodson; and maps Goodson's creation of dialogue committees, conference-wide listening sessions, advocacy structures and new organizations—all to encourage conferences to embrace the UMC's merger imperative.

The defeat of the integration plan in 1970 by both the North Alabama and Alabama-West Florida conferences, Nicholas shows, did not bring Goodson to abandon the cause. Rather, he kept at it, and the next year both conferences passed the enabling legislation—although just barely. Nicholas goes on to show how little the merger of the conferences meant on the ground, particularly after Goodson’s duties were moved “home” to North Carolina in 1972.

Surprisingly, Nicholas gives little attention to “Methodist” George Wallace and his interaction with the bishop. Another disappointment is the first chapter, which tries to cover two centuries in a few pages. Hurriedly read, it might create some misunderstandings as it makes contestable claims. Methodism “took hold” in America not in 1784, but earlier. Asbury did not invent the “itinerant ministry.” Methodists did not establish General Conference until 1792, a point not clear in the text (4). The creation of “jurisdictions” (5) needs to be identified as 1939. Racially separate conferences began not in 1876 (7) but in 1864, and in 1876 the MEC permitted then bi-racial conferences to segregate. The conversations between the MEC and MECS began earlier than “the 1930s” (8), with the most serious, sustained, and well documented occurring before 1920. The first chapter then ought to be read hurriedly with the reader plunging quickly into the quite moving, well-crafted, insightful, and important chapters that follow.

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Mark K. Olson, *Wesley and Aldersgate: Interpreting Conversion Narratives*. New York: Routledge, 2019. 200 pp. \$140.00.

One of the persistent questions in Methodist Studies is how best to interpret Wesley’s Aldersgate experience and its significance for those in the Wesleyan tradition. Olson’s *Wesley and Aldersgate* (revised from his doctoral dissertation [University of Manchester]) provides a welcome addition to the body of literature addressing these questions.

Olson reexamines the “riddle” of Aldersgate (i.e., textual ambiguities resulting in wide ranging interpretations) by proposing “to examine the full textual record for what it can reveal about Wesley’s interpretation at different periods in his life” (5). This “textual record” includes the “official” version from Wesley’s *Journal*, as well as “unofficial” versions including letters and diaries from 1738, miscellaneous remarks, the 1774–1775 footnotes, and select sermons. Olson further locates Aldersgate within the genre of evangelical conversion narratives of the eighteenth century. From this examination, he concludes that 1) Aldersgate was Wesley’s “evangelical conversion” viewed through the lens of an eighteenth-century “evangelical

understanding of the three spiritual states—natural, legal, and evangelical” (138); 2) Wesley’s interpretation shifted as his soteriology matured; and 3) Aldersgate’s “true legacy” is as an instantaneous and affective “appropriation event” completing the “instructional events” of March 4 and April 23, 1738 (153).

Olson’s lengthy and well-documented study is a welcome addition to the literature and ongoing conversation around the meaning of Aldersgate. His methodology—the examination of the larger corpus and corroborating texts—is careful and extensive, providing scholars with a catalogue of resources for the study of Aldersgate. Most scholars will find new avenues of inquiry opened by Olson’s argument, whether persuaded by his conclusions or not.

Even so, this reader sensed that, perhaps, this ambitious project attempted to resolve too many questions simultaneously. At various points Olson argues for the consistency over time of Wesley’s interpretation of Aldersgate as his evangelical conversion (despite textual ambiguities); seeks to locate Aldersgate in the literary milieu of eighteenth-century conversion narratives; posits the relationship of Aldersgate to the Methodist movement’s development; and intends to demonstrate that Aldersgate “was the ‘leitmotif’ of [Wesley’s personal] spiritual and theological journey” (131). Any one of these avenues of inquiry would have been valuable; interwoven the argument’s progression appears unsteady.

Some methodological inconsistencies are also present. At times, the author seems to “beg the question” in assuming the meaning of Aldersgate before the evidence has been presented to the reader. There are points, as well, when the textual evidence seems incomplete or partial. For example, in drawing upon the sermons for indirect evidence, Olson examines “The Almost Christian,” fairly suggesting it may help “to discern Wesley’s interpretation of Aldersgate in the early 1740s” (105), but chooses not to address how the nuanced understanding in “The More Excellent Way” might also reinterpret Aldersgate in later years. Indeed, his attention to Wesley’s mature writings is less carefully presented than the early ones. But, again, given the scope of this project, some omissions are to be expected.

These criticisms aside, *Wesley and Aldersgate* rekindles the interpretive debate while providing a method and catalogue of texts for investigation that most Wesleyan and Methodist scholars will find valuable in their own reconstruction of May 24, 1738, and its meaning for Wesley and his followers.

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