

## BOOK REVIEWS

Melvin Easterday Dieter. *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980. 356 pp.

Dieter's book, first of a series titled "Studies in Evangelicalism," offers readers an indepth look at the Methodist doctrine of holiness and how it generated a movement of its own in the last century.

Dieter begins by analyzing how historic pietism and American revivalism were blended with Wesleyan perfectionism into a distinctly new teaching. The movement centered around Phoebe Palmer and her "Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness" in New York City. The movement spread to the British Isles and Canada through the meetings held by the Palmers, Charles Finney, William Boardman, and Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith.

After the Civil War it was institutionalized first in the camp meetings, then the holiness associations, and finally, despite all attempts by Methodist leaders to keep it from breaking away, in such denominations as the Church of God, the Church of the Nazarene, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and the whole Pentecostal movement.

Dieter is especially helpful in his theological analysis of the historical roots of holiness, though his book is primarily history. He gives fair place to the role of women in the movement and notes their prominence at a time when other segments of the church were much less encouraging. His work also gives a sense of the movement's place in the broader context of Anglo-American church life.

The book was initially Dieter's dissertation at Temple University and still includes both the strengths and weaknesses of that format. On the one hand it is extensively documented; scholars will find it a mine of clues to further delving into the subject. On the other hand, it has that feel of being written to please a committee rather than to express the focused interest of one mind.

It will, however, take its place alongside Timothy Smith's *Revivalism and Social Reform*, Charles Jones' *Perfectionist Persuasion*, and Vinson Synan's *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, in helping American church historians to interpret this most important spirit of revival in the nineteenth century church.

Nancy A. Hardesty  
Atlanta, Georgia

Norman W. and Betty B. Spellman, *A Century of Faith, 1881-1981*. Wichita Falls, Texas: First United Methodist Church Heritage Committee, 1981. 211 pp. \$17.50.

This volume sets a high standard for local church historians. Written by a husband and wife team, the book contains an amazing scope of detail about the history of First United Methodist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas. Yet the story moves along gracefully and relates local church events to the life of the city around it as well as to denominational trends.

The breadth of research in which the authors engaged is an outstanding feature of the account. Among these are church records, local newspapers, interviews, the *Texas Christian Advocate*, annual conference journals, the *Handbook of Texas*, secular histories of the state, histories of the denomination in the conference and in the state — and others. This book is, in short, an excellent model for any church planning to produce its own history.

Walter N. Vernon  
Nashville, Tennessee

*A Documentary History of Religion in America: to the Civil War*. Edited by Edwin S. Gaustad. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982. 535 pp. \$15.95 paperback.

Edwin S. Gaustad, Professor of History at the University of California, Riverside, is one of the premier historians of religion in America. This is the first of two volumes in which he presents some of the fascinating and important documents for reconstructing American religious history. He calls them "building blocks." In this collection Gaustad aims to capture the variety of American religious experience and its "passionate voices." The Methodist tradition is represented in short selections from the writings of Whitefield, Asbury, Richard Allen, James Gilruth (circuit rider), Daniel Payne (not specifically identified as an African Methodist Episcopal leader and bishop), and the slavery schism of 1844.

Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.