

BOOK REVIEWS

Ted A. Campbell, *Wesleyan Beliefs: Formal and Popular Expressions of the Core Beliefs of Wesleyan Communities*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2010. 318 pp. \$49.00.

Ted Campbell's recent publication is a welcome addition to the study of the Wesleyan tradition and will be most helpful in placing Methodist doctrine in the broader and more ecumenical concept of Wesleyan beliefs. Unlike previous studies, this one focuses not on the Wesleyan *tradition*, but on Wesleyan *communities*; and instead of focusing on a select group of theologians, it focuses on those communities' corporate affirmations. In that context, *Wesleyan Beliefs* is best seen as a continuation of, and compliment to, his earlier work, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (1999).

This work is significantly different from two classic texts, Robert Chiles's *Theological Transition in American Methodism, 1790-1935* (1965) and Thomas Langford's *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (1983), in several respects. Chiles' work identified J. Wesley's "essential" or "fundamental doctrines" but failed to take into consideration C. Wesley's contribution, or the nuanced ways doctrines developed over J. Wesley's lifetime as Campbell does. Langford's groundbreaking work looked beyond Methodism to trace the theological development of the Wesleyan tradition under the rubric of "practical divinity," becoming one of the first serious and sympathetic treatments of the holiness tradition by a prominent Methodist theologian. But, like Chiles's work it focused on theologians and not on Wesleyan communities themselves. Benefitting from two generations of Wesleyan scholarship that has been generated since Chiles's work in 1965, Campbell takes a fresh look at the material, taking seriously Chiles' use of Wesley as a theological "benchmark" and Langford's inclusion of holiness theology as a part of the Wesleyan tradition.

Campbell is critical of recent historical treatments of Methodism, saying they suggest a "chasm between accounts of popular Methodist spirituality and the formal teachings of Wesley and later Methodist theologians" (3). This chasm, Campbell argues, has been created largely by the way historians have approached the material. From there he looks at the teachings of J. and C. Wesley, the sermons, the hymns, and the *Explanatory Notes*, and adds to them the Articles of Religion, the Confession of Faith, and the theologians who were prescribed for study by Methodist churches. Not stopping there, he also includes Methodist hymnals, catechisms, liturgies (one of the more innovative sections discussed architecture and its influence on ecclesiology) and "other official or quasi-official church documents authorized by denominations" (4). All of this becomes an attempt to focus on doctrinal sources

that have been given “corporate affirmation” (4).

The definition of “Wesleyan communities” is expanded to include “the denominations that make up the World Methodist Council and a few other groups that claim a connection to the Wesleyan movement” (8). “‘Wesleyan communities’ are much more easily defined than the more ethereal ‘Wesleyan tradition’” (252). A strength of the work is that Campbell treats Wesleyanism as a global and ecumenical movement consisting of communities, and not just Anglo-American ones. This approach certainly makes for an ambitious project. Realizing this he makes an “earnest appeal.” “My only plea is that I am trying to do something a little different with this material so that this is an initial foray and I hope to return to do it more justice in the future” (250).

Because Campbell is more concerned with these corporate affirmations the work implicitly becomes a study in the part they play in Christian formation and personal theological identity. While personal identity, whether theological or otherwise, is indeed more complex and nuanced than that, and is always subject to matters of conscience and doctrinal deviations from corporate affirmations, to look at “core beliefs of Wesleyan communities” in this way is a welcomed approach.

So how are the core beliefs established? In the first chapter Campbell discusses the Wesley’s understanding of ten doctrines essential to common Christian beliefs and follows it up with a chapter on what are distinctively Methodist beliefs and identifies the doctrine of “perceptible inspiration” as being the “the main doctrine of Methodists” as a way talking about religious experience and knowledge of God through the Scripture way of salvation, making soteriology the heart of Wesley’s theology (72). “Perceptible inspiration” was “a critical epistemological presupposition of teachings on the way of salvation (73). More to the point, Campbell maintains the experience and teaching of “entire sanctification was a unique and distinguishing mark of the Wesleyan sphere of the revival movement” (19). This becomes the lynchpin that holds together corporate affirmations and individual religious experience.

All this leads to what some might see as the most provocative chapter, “Fourteen Core Beliefs of Wesleyan Communities,” beliefs “expressed by the Wesleys and subsequent Wesleyan communities” (203). With painstaking documentation he makes use of the conclusions made in previous chapters and writes,

The doctrine of entire sanctification has at some points proved an embarrassment to Methodists, perhaps especially to those involved in ecumenical dialogue with other Protestant churches for which any talk of “Christian perfection” may be seen as an arrogant claim to an attribute (perfection) that should be predicated only of God... The doctrine of entire sanctification is a great gift at the heart of historic Wesleyan communities, a gift that, I am inclined to say, Wesleyan Christians could neglect only at the peril of losing what has been the heart of their distinctive beliefs (232).

The overall effect of this work is that Ted Campbell has put a significant plank in the bridge that spans the chasm between theologians and Wesleyan communities, and has closed the breach between the holiness and Methodist

folks who are a part of the broader Wesleyan community. It is certainly a work that should be read by Wesleyans and Methodists, as spanning both of these gaps is important to the study of the Wesleyan tradition and its communities.

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Jennifer Graber, *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. 234 pp. \$39.95.

In early America, many citizens believed imprisonment should result in personal reformation; most agreed religion was of central import to this process. And yet, as Jennifer Graber shows in her thoroughly researched and thought-provoking book, which considers prison discipline in New York state from the 1790s through the 1850s, Protestant reformers eventually surrendered their attempts to “fashion ‘Christian’ prisons” and instead embraced the “religiosity of citizenship” which was beginning to “take shape” (184).

By exploring the intersection between religion and politics in this context, Graber’s work becomes more than a history of the American penitentiary system, or an account of Protestant reform movements—it also “considers the prison debates as a key site for understanding the ambiguities of American religious disestablishment” (4). Her book shows that even though religion maintained its place within the discussion about prison discipline, its very “character was debated and transformed” as Protestant reformers had to allow “adherence to law and obedience to state authority” trump the “narrative of suffering and redemption” they had once employed (184).

Graber uses each chapter to adeptly portray how practices and philosophies of prison discipline evolved over time, and how that evolution impacted the ideals of Protestant reformers. The first chapter, for example, examines the influence of Quaker activists in the early republic, who saw incarceration as an alternative to the corporal punishment and steep fines faced by those who committed criminal acts during the colonial era. They wanted to create a “garden,” the author explains, that would rehabilitate and transform those who suffered from conditions that had led them to criminal acts. This ideological attempt failed, however, as those imprisoned and those imprisoning failed to conform to Quaker ideals.

The next phase of prison reform, which spans the 1810s and 1820s, Graber contends, hinged on the goals and ideals of Calvinist reformers who drew on the words and imagery of the Prophet Isaiah to suggest that imprisonment should be considered a furnace of affliction. Indeed, the author explains, Christian reformers insisted that time spent in prison should propel sinners to embrace divine grace, which would ultimately transform their

behavior. Unfortunately, this emphasis on rigorous discipline resulted in violent and extreme punishments—a pattern of which many reformers and ministers disapproved.

The fruits of this disapproval are woven throughout the remainder of the book, which delineates the many ways religious reformers protested prison violence in private and public settings. Inmate suffering should not be an end in itself, they argued, but rather a “redirection toward a spiritual good” (131). A key figure behind this movement, Graber notes, was the Methodist chaplain, John Luckey, who attempted to implement a broad reform movement. Indeed, Luckey “preached a story of judgment and mercy” which he hoped would “inspire change in inmates’ lives” (139). By modeling his ministry after class meetings, he encouraged “disciplined living” under the premise that ordinary people—even criminals—could improve themselves (140). Affliction in prison, he assured the incarcerated and the incarcerators, could result in good fruits if inmates were willing to experience God’s mercy and allow it to reform them. Luckey’s success, Graber notes, was short-lived. During his ministry, Eliza Farnham, a new matron for Sing Sing’s female inmates, implemented a new approach to prison discipline, which included phrenology and novel reading. Although Luckey and his wife, Dinah, protested these “liberal” methods, it was to no avail. In the end, Luckey lost his job, and reformers and ministers accepted that “prison had become a living hell” (156). Prison reformation thus “turned to what we might now call social work”; Christians were expected to offer material rather than spiritual aid to broken prisoners (156).

One of the greatest strengths of this book—its careful organization—may also be its weaknesses. By dividing prison reform into three distinct phases: the garden of the Quakers, the furnace of affliction defined by the Calvinists, and the Hell on earth endorsed by a more secularized approach to reform, the author leaves her readers wondering if and how different Protestant groups interacted with one another in this context. Were the divisions as clear as the book implies? Indeed, how is Protestantism being defined and who is included in that definition? Was Luckey the only Methodist to engage in New York’s prison reform? And, taking this a step further, were Protestants the only religious group who invested in it? While the book is clearly supposed to be about Protestant perspectives, one is left to ask: what of Catholics? Jews? Mormons? Were they ambivalent? Indifferent? Or equally engaged?

Notwithstanding the noted weaknesses, Graber does successfully reveal the dramatic shifts that took place as Protestant reformers encouraged others to embrace the religion of citizenship; aware of the limitations they faced, they exhorted other Christians to follow the Savior’s command to show kindness to the incarcerated. While they did not like the concessions they were asked to make, they realized they had to work within the secular system if they wanted to maintain a presence. “Their relevance,” Graber notes, “lay only in their willingness to preach a religiosity of citizenship that invoked God’s blessing on moral living, hard work, and obedience to secular author-

ity” (177).

Religion continued to influence the prison-discipline debate, Graber argues, even as its very nature and objectives was transformed (184). By altering their original understanding of suffering and redemption, Protestant reformers no longer connected the afflictions prisoners suffered to the possibility of experiencing grace, but rather interpreted them as a necessary punishment for those who chose to break secular laws. The changes that came were not the changes that the reformers had anticipated.

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Henry H. Knight III (ed), *From Aldersgate to Azusa Street: Wesleyan, Holiness, and Pentecostal Visions of the New Creation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010. 371pp. \$42.

It is commonplace—and has been for a long time—for United Methodists to lament the lack of Wesleyan teaching on holiness in our local churches, seminaries, and other denominational structures. Wesley’s teaching on entire sanctification has been called a “conversation stopper” by some and a teaching greatly in need of re-examination by others—and sometimes it is described as such by the same person!

The twenty-six contributors to *From Aldersgate to Azusa Street* clearly desire to invigorate a re-examination of Wesleyan-Pentecostal distinctives. They have done so by stressing the “common vision” as well as the diversity found in the Wesleyan-Pentecostal tradition. They trace the development of the Wesleyan-Pentecostal movement biographically from John Wesley in the eighteenth century to Mildred Bangs Wynkoop in the late twentieth century.

This work will be useful for scholars and pastors who desire an introduction to the Wesleyan-Pentecostal tradition in one full sweep. Those very familiar with Methodism will mostly find the chapters on Pentecostal leaders to be a helpful excursion into somewhat different territory while the reverse is the case for Pentecostals for whom the contributions of Seymour, Parham, Durham, and Mason (all discussed in this book) are well-known. The chapters this reviewer found most valuable were those by John Wigger (on Asbury), Douglas Strong (comparing Borden Parker Bowne and Henry Clay Morrison), Arlene Sanchez Walsh (on Assemblies of God work in the Southwest among Mexicans), William C. Kostlevy (on E. Stanley Jones), and Stephen W. Rankin (providing a philosophical assessment of the Wesleyan-Pentecostal contribution).

Decisions about what to include in a book are difficult for any author and infinitely more so for a multi-authored work. That said, this reviewer would have liked to have seen more attention to less well-known figures within both the Wesleyan and Pentecostal movements in North America as well as

from around the world. Persons such as Timothy Merritt, Charles Cullis, Henry McNeal Turner, Pandita Ramabai, D. T. Niles, William Wade Harris, and others were not chosen for extensive consideration in this book. In the case of West African revivalist Harris, the appropriateness of his inclusion may indeed be debated, but this debate in itself would have been helpful to demonstrate the porous nature of the Wesleyan-Pentecostal tradition in its global dimensions. Merritt would have been helpful to include in order to demonstrate the extent Phoebe Palmer (who is discussed) built on or simply adopted his ideas.

In a subsequent work, the authors who are a part of the annual Wesleyan/Pentecostal Consultation hope to publish another book that more deeply explores the implications for the church today. Some excellent essays in the final section of this book already sought to do so. There were also brief “pastoral responses” interspersed throughout the book. Conceptually, this was a valiant effort on the part of the contributors to bridge the gap between church and academy. These responses were frequently too brief and/or superficial, however, to accomplish the purposes for which they were intended.

In the future I hope to teach a seminary seminar course on Wesleyan-Pentecostal missiological contributions. I have already decided that I will structure such a course in a biographical fashion. I will consider this book as a course text. Others should as well.

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Jennifer L. Woodruff Tait, *The Poisoned Chalice: Eucharistic Grape Juice and Common-Sense Realism in Victorian Methodism*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2011. 176 pp.

I was teaching confirmation in the 1970's, speaking of American Methodists' passionate participation in temperance/prohibition. A stunned seventh grader asked, “You mean there are Methodists who don't drink?” Later, I asked a much older member of the same church how Methodists he knew reacted to the Repeal of Prohibition. “We felt like our world was ending.”

Between these reactions is a story. It is difficult to underestimate American Methodist involvement in temperance/prohibition. Yet we have succeeded in doing exactly that.

Jennifer L. Woodruff Tait sets out to reverse this trend in *The Poisoned Chalice: Eucharistic Grape Juice and Common-Sense Realism in Victorian Methodism*. As her subtitle describes, Tait seeks to answer the question—“What were they thinking?”—when American Methodists adopted the “pure” juice of the grape, then its successor, pasteurized grape juice, as the prescribed beverage for Holy Communion?

For Tait, the key lies in Baconian empiricism mediated through Thomas Reid's Common-Sense Realism, "holding that any human being of good common sense whose mind was operating normally would believe certain basic truths; the existence of the external world, the continuity of the self, the existence and continuity of others, and the reliability of sense perception, memory, and testimony *when obtained under the correct conditions*" (5, author's italics).

Tait recounts in detail from a variety of sources how this reasoning undergirded temperance arguments that even a drop of an intoxicating beverage like wine deranged those conditions, and therefore could not be part anything so sacred as the Lord's Table. She extends her examination to related concerns regarding the effects of stimulants (including coffee, tea, tobacco, spicy foods, poor hygiene, irregular habits, improper amusements, etc.) upon lives that should exhibit "poise, propriety, and self control." Such qualities characterized both a proper life and a holy life.

Allowing her subjects to speak for themselves, she recounts how science, Biblical interpretation, theological reflection, and advice manuals on subjects from public health to personal hygiene to child-rearing were rallied to the cause of an abstemious lifestyle that was both pure and natural. In this context, the fresh-squeezed fruit of the vine was the purest God intended. Mr. Welch's grape juice was second best because it stabilized the beverage close to its natural state. Wine was the product of the human manipulation of processes of decay resulting in poison. Grape juice was holy; wine could never be.

Tait also examines the introduction of separate cups in Communion, noting that it was related but not identical to the promotion of grape juice. Separate cups harkened more to public health and personal hygiene (which remain with us today, often in secular settings). Thus, it was possible for Methodists like James Buckley to favor grape juice in a common cup, while some non-Methodists favored wine in individual cups.

Tait also aims at those she holds in part accountable for the neglect of this history—historians who have conflated religious temperance/prohibition with Fundamentalism, and liturgical scholars and reformers who have dismissed grape juice (and individual cups) as one of the departures of American Methodism from Wesley and the liturgical riches of the historic church.

Against the former, she argues a complex reality that could as easily find proponents of grape juice using the tools of progressive Biblical criticism as of literal Biblical interpretation. Conflating temperance/prohibition with Fundamentalism overly narrows the focus by reading history backwards. Against the latter, Tait examines Methodist theology and finds something more complex than the memorialism with which abstinent Methodists are usually charged. She argues that, while the "epistemological paradigms" behind wine and grape juice differ sharply, they are also unacknowledged and thus not properly accounted.

Within a relatively brief compass, Tait makes a compelling argument, and does so in an easy style. The argument is fresh, and will come as news to

many historians. The style will appeal to the non-specialist.

Good scholarship raises questions and suggests other avenues of inquiry. *The Poisoned Chalice* is no exception. While Tait convinces of the importance of Common-Sense Realism to temperance rationale, she leaves untouched the reverse. She quotes many non-Methodist authors (Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, both British and American) as they appeared in the Methodist press, advocating abstinence and grape juice from Common-Sense premises. However, all represented traditions which, no matter the grass roots support for grape juice, considered the issue at best a matter of debate rather than a prop for policy. And the debate could turn hostile. Tait quotes Charles Hodge, preeminent Princeton theologian and Common-Sense Realist, but without noting that he and his school in general adhered to wine in Communion. Indeed his son, A. A. Hodge, famously grumped that “Whoever puts away true and real wine, or fermented grape juice, on moral grounds, from the Lord’s Supper sets himself up as more moral than the Son of God who reigns over his conscience, and than the Saviour of souls who redeemed him.”

It is a short-coming of Tait’s work that this tension between Common Sense Realists and temperance advocates was not recounted.

Other parts of Tait’s subtitle deserve exploration. Some of the concerns she notes for “poise, propriety, and self-control” in all parts of life owe more to Victorian sensibilities than any philosophical framework. What part did these sensibilities play in Methodist views of temperance/prohibition. For that matter, what of Methodist sensibilities? The persistent appeals of Methodist writers for the disciplines and simplicities of holiness inevitably echo Wesley’s preachments, even though Tait does not often reference these. Tait does raise something unnamed in her title—American. She notes some peculiarities of the American setting that prompted temperance movements. But more could be done, especially in differentiating American Methodism from British Methodism.

Jennifer L. Woodruff Tait has gracefully opened a door to a room full of possibilities. Hopefully, she will not be the last to enter.

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