

BOOK REVIEWS

Laura Bartels Felleman, *The Form and Power of Religion: John Wesley on Methodist Vitality*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012. 105 pp. \$15.00.

Laura Bartels Felleman offers a quick and easy read on a synopsis of John Wesley's "Thoughts Upon Methodism" (1786) that focuses on his understanding of the "form and power of religion." Bartels Felleman zeros in on the passage that reminds readers what Wesley feared most for the people in the Wesleyan Movement. He wrote: "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out." The book makes this concern come alive in an accessible way for any United Methodist interested in understanding Wesley's principle doctrine on salvation.

In a time and place where United Methodism is struggling to recover a foothold on the social impact the church once had in American culture, Bartels Felleman brings back to our attention the core values that make us distinctively Methodist following a tradition that stemmed from a movement begun over 200 years ago. As the denomination raises the questions about vitality in the church today, Bartels Felleman raises the question about whether or not we know what type of vitality we are looking for in the Methodist movement. She reminds the reader that Wesley was concerned with more than just the actions of faith, but rather he was most concerned with the transformation of faith. She writes, "For Wesley, genuine discipleship occurred when external righteousness sprang from a power that produced internal righteousness." (4) His vision was for a restoration of the *imago Dei* which could only be renewed by grace, thereby illustrating his understanding of grace through faith as a principle doctrine of Methodism.

Once she has established this value from the Methodist heritage, Bartels Felleman continues to describe the "Ordering of Methodist Doctrine" and how the Methodist movement transformed into an organization and eventually an institution. She describes John Wesley's own spiritual journey and growth as a leader of the movement. She offers reflections on how his reading of current religious advice books influenced how he informed and encouraged the Methodist preachers, teachers and leaders. With each time and place, there were different emphases as he engaged in conversations with people of other theological understandings. The influence of the Church of England remained primary as he described the pursuit of "holiness of

heart and life” as well as “present and future happiness” according to Bartels Felleman.

The richness and simplicity of the book is demonstrated in the excerpts she offers from the journals of members of the Methodist movement. She illustrates each state in “Wesley’s model of salvation” by drawing from these entries. “Grace justifies Sarah Clay,” offers a segment of a story that could be out of a twenty-first century experience. She captured this sentence, “As much as she tried to have faith she could not, until one day while at home a feeling of peace came over her, and she was then able to believe in Christ, sense God’s love for her, and resist things that previously enticed her.” (53) It is not a glamorous conversion, but a switch in mindset that had been brewing in her soul. Bartels Felleman presents the Wesleyan model of Salvation in a way that easily resonates with the reader.

Where the book falls short is in a practical application for twenty-first century Methodists. The final chapter attempts to offer considerations for Methodist vitality among disciples of Christ today. Although she recognizes the challenge of contextuality across The United Methodist Church, she makes an assumption that many (if not all) Methodists agree and interpret the Wesleyan language into the “vernaculars of today” similarly or the same. The book continues to speak to a western-dominated culture that does not take into consideration the social-psychological and cultural influences Methodists in other countries outside the U.S. and Europe. I value the fact that she ventures into the world of neuroscience to strengthen her conviction, but she does little justice to the true complexity of venturing into the “neuro-theology” conversation.

This book is a good starting point to help leaders in the church define and articulate what has made the Methodist movement distinctive in the past. Bartels Felleman will continue to join the pastors, theologians, and laity who contribute to the vision and the progress that will define the distinctions of Methodism into the future.

AMY VALDEZ BARKER
Executive Secretary
The Connectional Table
The United Methodist Church

Kenneth J. Collins, *Power, Politics and the Fragmentation of Evangelicalism: From the Scopes Trial to the Obama Administration*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2012. 299pp. \$22.00.

In his recent biography of Roger Williams (*Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul*, New York, 2012), historian John Barry writes that the seventeenth-century Puritan and founder of Rhode Island believed that “when one mixes religion and politics one gets politics.” I think it is safe to say that Kenneth Collins, a professor of historical theology at Asbury Theological Seminary and author of *Power, Politics and the Fragmentation*

of *Evangelicalism*, would agree. Collins's book is part evangelical history, part cultural criticism from a Christian (Wesleyan) perspective, and part sermon.

Collins begins with an historical overview of American evangelicalism, pausing on occasion to explore how Wesleyan and Holiness groups did not embrace the political and ecclesiastical concerns of the evangelicals associated with Protestant Fundamentalism and the Neo-Evangelical Movement. Collins's story reflects much of the Reformed narrative espoused by the likes of George Marsden and Mark Noll. In the process, he misses an opportunity to rewrite the history of twentieth-century evangelicalism from a more Wesleyan or Arminian point of view, an approach that the church historian and theologian Donald Dayton championed a couple of decades ago. Wesleyans and Holiness groups do not drive Collins's narrative. Instead, they make cameo appearances under separate subtitles. But Collins does not seem interested in grand narratives—at least not in this book. By focusing his narrative mainly on the culture-transforming Reformed groups, Collins is able to point to the political views of Wesley, Wesleyans, and the Holiness Movement as alternative approaches to thinking about Christian political engagement. These approaches, he believes, are more likely to avoid the pitfalls of cultural accommodation.

After these first two chapters, the American religious historian gives way to the theologian, cultural critic, and preacher. This transition is rather abrupt and takes place with little warning. In a long chapter on the Intelligent Design Movement (ID) Collins challenges the views of evangelicals who embrace theistic evolution, suggesting that they have drunk too deeply from the well of science. And though he is critical of some dimensions of ID, he does see the movement as a way forward for evangelicals on tough issues related to religion and science. This chapter is bracketed by chapters on the Religious Right and the Evangelical Left. Drawing heavily from the argument of James Davison Hunter in his 2010 book *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, Collins argues convincingly that both the Christian Right and the Evangelical Left (he is particularly hard on Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, and Brian McLaren) have relied too heavily on politics to advance the ideals of the Kingdom of God.

Collins, like most cultural critics, is better at diagnosing problems than offering solutions. He challenges his fellow evangelicals to pursue the life of the mind, create an approach to politics that respects human dignity, and rely more fully on the Holy Spirit for guidance. In the end, he has provided Christians with a road map to move forward in their collective witness in the world.

JOHN FEA
Chair and Associate Professor of History
Messiah College
Grantham, Pennsylvania

Christopher J. Anderson, *The Centenary Celebration of American Methodist Missions: The 1919 World's Fair of Evangelical Americanism*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012. 263 pp. \$149.95.

Christopher J. Anderson, *Voices from the Fair: Race, Gender and the American Nation at a Methodist Missionary Exposition*. Asbury Theological Seminary Series: The Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements in Pietist/Wesleyan Studies, No. 8. Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2012. 336 pp. \$45.00.

The two titles under review go together, since *Voices from the Fair* is a collection of some of the speeches and addresses from the 1919 Methodist missionary fair held in Columbus, Ohio, which is the subject of Anderson's monograph, *The Centenary Celebration of American Methodist Missions*. The author currently works as Head of Special Collections, University Archives, and Methodist Librarian at The United Methodist Archives in Madison, New Jersey, and the books resulted from his doctoral work at Drew University. The majority of this review will be devoted to Anderson's monograph.

The first chapter of *The Centenary Celebration* provides an overview of the missionary fair: its place in the history of such fairs, its purpose as showcase and promotional event for Methodist missions, and its role in identity formation of Methodists of various denominations, races, genders and ages who visited the fair. Chapter two is an investigation into the use of cinema at the fair, a matter of delicate negotiation since Methodists were (at least officially) highly suspicious of the movie industry, as evidenced by the prohibition in the Methodist Episcopal Church's rule book of attendance at movie theaters (83). Chapter three examines how the fair portrayed the roles of women in church and society both nationally and internationally, while chapter four shifts the focus to men and notions of masculinity. A brief conclusion outlines how the hopes generated by the fair and its organizers—especially hopes for over \$150,000,000 for mission work—were disappointed in the 1920s.

The speeches and addresses collected in *Voices from the Fair* cover the topics in the monograph, but other topics are included as well. The chapters, respectively, contain talks pertaining to race, gender, prohibition and universal suffrage, and nationalism in the wake of World War I. The volume opens with a general introduction, and each chapter contains some introductory remarks.

Dr. Anderson has done those who are interested in Methodist studies as well as American culture and society a great service in bringing the 1919 Methodist missions fair to light. The descriptions regarding the construction and running of the fair make for fascinating reading. Many of the speeches in *Voices from the Fair* are likewise intriguing, offering us "textual sound bites" (2) of how Methodist leaders attempted to persuade their partisan audiences to take certain positions and undertake certain actions. I am not so

sure that this particular form of discourse was meant to challenge listeners “to think carefully about Christian missions” (2); rather it was meant to energize and motivate a base of support. What comes through especially in the author’s monograph is how Methodism saw itself, probably with a fair degree of accuracy, as the representative tradition of middle class North American society, both black and white, female and male.

The author has the intellectual sensitivities of an archivist; he prefers to present material and let us draw our own conclusions about it, or to point to conclusions that others have drawn about it. At times this reviewer wishes that Dr. Anderson would have given freer vent to his own voice, opinions and analyses about the people, events and artifacts he is describing. The issues of race, gender and nationalism beg for comment, and while the author points to key scholars who have theorized about these issues, one wishes he would provide his own read on these important subjects. Nevertheless, we are indebted to Dr. Anderson for bringing the 1919 Methodist missions fair to our notice, and we look forward to more work on this and other such social and ecclesiastical spectacles in American history.

ARUN W. JONES
Hankey Associate Professor of World Evangelism
Candler School of Theology
Emory University
Atlanta, GA



**UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE®**

**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

1. Publication Title Methodist History	2. Publication Number							3. Filing Date
			3	4	2	6	0	0
4. Issue Frequency Quarterly	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 4							6. Annual Subscription Price \$25.00 Domestic
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) P.O. Box 127, (36 Madison Avenue), Madison, NJ 07940							Contact Person Robert J. Williams Telephone (Include area code) 973-408-3189	

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)

P.O. Box 127, (36 Madison Avenue), Madison, NJ 07940

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)

Publisher (Name and complete mailing address)
Robert J. Williams
P.O. Box 127, (36 Madison Avenue), Madison, NJ 07940

Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
Robert J. Williams
P.O. Box 127, (36 Madison Avenue), Madison, NJ 07940

Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
Robert J. Williams
P.O. Box 127, (36 Madison Avenue), Madison, NJ 07940


10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church	P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
 The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

13. Publication Title Methodist History		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below July 2013	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (<i>Net press run</i>)		475	475
b. Paid Circulation (<i>By Mail and Outside the Mail</i>)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	377	365
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (<i>Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies</i>)		
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®		
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	32	32
c. Total Paid Distribution (<i>Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)</i>)		409	397
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (<i>By Mail and Outside the Mail</i>)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541		
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541		
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	9	9
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (<i>Carriers or other means</i>)		
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (<i>Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)</i>)		9	9
f. Total Distribution (<i>Sum of 15c and 15e</i>)		418	406
g. Copies not Distributed (<i>See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3)</i>)		57	69
h. Total (<i>Sum of 15f and g</i>)		475	475
i. Percent Paid (<i>15c divided by 15f times 100</i>)		98%	98%
16. <input type="checkbox"/> Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet.			
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the <u>October 2013</u> issue of this publication.		<input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.	
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner			Date
 , Editor			9/17/2013

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

***Methodist History* Subscription Rates**

Paper Copy:

Within the United States

One year subscription	\$25.00
Two year subscription	\$40.00
Student rate (one year)	\$15.00

In Canada

One year subscription	\$30.00 (U.S.)
Two year subscription	\$50.00 (U.S.)
Student rate (one year)	\$20.00 (U.S.)

All other countries

One year subscription	\$40.00 (U.S.)
Two year subscription	\$60.00 (U.S.)
Student rate (one year)	\$25.00 (U.S.)

*Please make payment in a check or money order made out to
"General Commission on Archives and History."*

*Students, please enclose a photocopy of your student I.D. or
other appropriate identification.*

General Commission on Archives and History

P.O. Box 127

Madison, NJ 07940

www.gcah.org

973-408-3189

Methodist History are now available for free when accessing them through our website: www.gcah.org. From the home page you can click on "Research" or "UMC History" and then click on "*Methodist History* Journal."