

BOOK REVIEWS

Rebekah Miles, *Georgia Harkness: The Remaking of a Liberal Theologian*. Library of Theological Ethics. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. 186 pp. \$29.95.

This addition to the Library of Theological Ethics series provides an introduction to Georgia Harkness for those who would not have ready access to her work otherwise. In this volume, Miles brings attention to a Methodist figure with whom it is worth thinking. The collection of readings draws from her writings between 1929 and 1942, the period of time in which Harkness was most deeply involved in the academic conversations of her time. Reflected in these readings is her intellectual engagement with major figures, such as Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, engagement in which she admirably held her own. Reading these selections leaves one with the question of what might have been had Harkness not been passed over for a position in systematic theology in which she might have exercised her agile mind more thoroughly on academic theological issues of her time than she could in a position in applied theology.

Still, there is much to learn from what she did accomplish. It is timely to have these selections available now for several reasons. Arguing often against the dominance of neo-orthodoxy, Harkness' defense of liberalism provides insight into its values and ongoing influence at a time when the study of liberal theology is gaining attention (for instance through Gary Dorrien's three-volume work on the liberal tradition). The changes her views underwent—explicitly reflected in these readings—are also instructive.

Her work not only serves as an example of a previously influential style of theology, though. It also anticipates some current concerns in theology. She wrote having often in mind a generation of young people disillusioned with religion, to whom she wanted to show the vitality and credibility of Christian faith. Harkness wrote contextually—and in the later years represented in this volume, during a time of war—and her theology intentionally addresses the world. She was aware of how her life experiences shaped her thinking. As a result of her involvement in international ecumenical conferences, she became keenly interested in what Christians from “younger churches” (what we would now call the global south) had to say. Hers was not an ivory-tower theology, removed from the issues of her time, and her questions have more than a little resonance with ours.

SARAH HEANER LANCASTER, PH.D.
Methodist School in Ohio
Delaware, Ohio

Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2010. xxi + 342 pp. \$29.99.

In this recent collection of essays on John Wesley, Randy Maddox (Duke Divinity School) and Jason Vickers (United Theological Seminary) join fifteen additional authors from England and the United States to provide readers with a critical analysis of the life and work of John Wesley.

The edited volume is divided into four sections or themes. The first, Wesley's context, paints an historical sketch of eighteenth-century England. This survey sets the stage for a second section that narrows contextual parameters by addressing Wesley's life and ministry within this larger British context. The third section reviews Wesley's work in England as revivalist, biblical interpreter, correspondent, publisher, and health adviser. Section four analyzes Wesley's legacy by demonstrating the global reach of Methodism, the links between Methodists and the holiness/Pentecostal/charismatic traditions, the African American Methodist traditions, and the debates surrounding traditions historically connected to Methodism that claim Wesley as historical and theological heir.

Maddox and Vickers set out "to counter such selective and uncritical presentations of his life and work, by introducing readers to the range of Wesley's presentations of his life and activities, placed in historical context" (4). Specifically, the central thesis of the book is "devoted to surveying major dimensions of Wesley's activity and writings" in order to "place Wesley's practice in context and to note the impact of his engagement upon the broader context" (5). The authors have admirably examined a variety of perspectives of Wesley's life and ministry. The book revisits familiar historical narratives yet also documents more recent work on Wesley—including his interest in the natural sciences.

The book is an examination of the current status of Wesleyan and Methodist studies yet it seems to be missing the scholarship of authors from Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Overall, the volume is an excellent addition to the libraries of those interested in Wesleyan and Methodist studies. The volume is much more affordable than other current surveys of Wesley (upwards of \$150 a volume). This lower cost factor permits both the theological library *and* the layperson to afford the volume. Graduate and undergraduate students will find the text useful for a critical evaluation of various Wesleyan perspectives from history. For courses on Methodist history or theology the text will be a valuable supplement to other resources.

CHRISTOPHER J. ANDERSON, PH.D.
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

Michael G. Cartwright. *Exploring Christian Mission Beyond Christendom: United Methodist Perspectives*. Indianapolis: U Indianapolis P, 2010. 166 pp. \$24.95

The volume is a product of a 2008 symposium held on the campus of the University of Indianapolis. The book is a collection of essays that examine missionary involvement for both The United Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church traditions. The text raises a series of questions related to the following themes: missions and evangelism; missions and service; missions and interfaith dialogue; and missions and justice.

Calvin Hollett. *Shouting, Embracing, and Dancing with Ecstasy: The Growth of Methodism in Newfoundland, 1774-1874*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2010. 368 pp. \$85.00

Hollett's volume explores the history of Methodism in Newfoundland through the lens of social history. The author contends that the growth of British Methodism in Canada was the result of nineteenth-century lay revivals rather than the focused work of denominationally-sponsored missionaries. The book demonstrates that revival meetings attended by fishermen, farmers, and factory workers emphasized freedom of individual faith which blossomed into the growth of Methodism throughout Newfoundland. British Wesleyan missionaries were historically present yet their roles in the growth of Methodism in the Province have been overemphasized.

Scott J. Jones and Bruce R. Ough, eds. *The Future of the United Methodist Church: 7 Vision Pathways*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010. 121 pp. \$16.00

The edited volume includes a collection of essays written by ten bishops of The United Methodist Church. The authors highlight four areas of focus (people, leaders, poverty, and health) intended to spark denominational renewal and social action. To accomplish these foci church leaders suggest the following "Pathways": planting new congregations; transforming existing congregations; strengthening clergy and lay leadership; children and poverty; expanding racial/ethnic ministries; improving health globally; and eliminating poverty by stamping out disease.

Robert F. Lay. *Lessons of Infinite Advantage: William Taylor's California Experiences*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2010. 326 pp. \$50.00

This edited volume contains selections of the writings of Bishop William and Anne Taylor. During the nineteenth century the Taylors served as missionaries for the Methodist Episcopal Church. The book highlights the personal journals of William (1851-1856) and Anne (1866-1867) and offers readers insights into the work of the Taylors in San Francisco. William Taylor helped originate self-sustaining missionary work which required missionaries to raise their own funding until the denominational agency was able to support them in their place of service. Lay provides the reader with numerous contextual notes and a helpful introduction.

William K. McElvaney. *Becoming a Justice Seeking Congregation: Responding to God's Justice Initiative*. New York: iUniverse, 2009. 150 pp. \$15.95

McElvaney has been engaged in social justice initiatives for many years as a pastor, seminary president and professor. As a result, the author created a "rubber hits the road" manual to encourage readers and congregations to embrace societal renewal by means of social justice. The volume highlights biblical, theological, and liturgical approaches and functions as a primer for clergy, laity, and seminary students.

CHRISTOPHER J. ANDERSON
Book Review Editor