

# BOOK REVIEWS

THE PROTESTANT ETHIC TURNS 100: ESSAYS ON THE CENTURY OF THE WEBER THESIS. Edited by William H. Swatos Jr. and Lutz Kaelber. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005. xxxii + 233 pp. \$73.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper.

The Weber thesis is no doubt the most famous theoretical argument in sociology, but it has not always been so. As we learn from the chapter by William Swatos and Peter Kivisto, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (henceforth *PE*) received lengthy critical reviews only from a couple of minor German scholars, and it was Ernst Troeltsch (who had been jointly reviewed in one of these) who was invited to reply, not Weber. Weber had to use the journal he himself edited, the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, to get his reply in print. Outside Germany, recognition was slow in coming; R. H. Tawney presented an alternative thesis in 1926 but was unaware of Weber around 1912. Parsons's English translation in 1930 was the first big step toward recognition beyond esoteric circles, but it was not reviewed in the *American Journal of Sociology* (the *ASJ* did not yet exist) nor most other major social science journals. Weber remained "the Heidelberg myth" (a nickname reported by Paul Honigsheim) until after the Gerth and Mills reader *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* appeared in 1946. This was widely reviewed, and Weber's canonical reputation took off, indeed in a conflict between leftist neo-Marxian/organizational/political interpretations of Weber and the idealist themes highlighted by Parsons. This pattern of reception, I would add, is characteristic of the establishment of reputations for intellectual creativity generally; well-organized rival networks focusing on a central controversy are what make thinkers canonical.

Other chapters give detail on the early formation of the Weber thesis. Hartmut Lehmann shows how the initial publication was stimulated by Weber's unsuccessful efforts to get the notable economist Lujo Brentano to review Werner Sombart's *Modern Capitalism* (1902) in the *Archiv*; failing this, Weber went on to publish his own counterthesis to Sombart's. Martin Riesebrodt examines differences between the first (1904–1905) and the second (1920) editions of *PE*, and relates its origins to Weber's early reading and current controversies, including the issue of the Jews in contemporary capitalism. And there are elements in *PE* of the conflict between Max's own father, an easy-going Lutheran, and his mother, a pious and puritanical woman with a bent for reformist political activism; within his own family constellation, Max could find traces of the clash that he now theorized as historically momentous.

Among the most novel contributions of this volume is Lawrence Scaff's description of Weber's trip

to the Oklahoma and Indian territories during his 1904 trip to America, while in the midst of publishing *PE*. Tribal self-government was in the process of being phased out under political pressure, and communal land holdings were being converted to individual plots, which were rapidly bought up by white speculators. Weber appreciated a certain romantic tinge to the frontier beyond civilization, recognizing nevertheless how much this existed in the mindset of the observer; at the same time he made good use of what he saw now transpiring for his subsequent analyses of American political and economic life. He also took away some examples, which he published in *The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1906), of how belonging to a religious congregation was essential for a good credit rating in business, and how a land-settling entrepreneur might put a preacher on stipend if he could succeed in "preaching the building sites full."

Lutz Kaelber takes up late 20th-century research on the Weber thesis. As a preliminary, he carefully diagrams the differences between varieties of economic organization and, within these, between political versus economic capitalism, and again within the latter, distinctions between booty/robber capitalism, adventure capitalism, and modern rational capitalism. It is only the very last of these that the Weber thesis is about; hence discussions of how capitalism existed earlier in history or outside the West are beside the point. Nevertheless, Kaelber shows that Weber had within his own family circle (drawing here on Guenther Roth's research on Weber's Anglo-German family of eminent businessmen) examples of the robber-baron type as well as the leisurely traditionalist capitalist. On the whole, Kaelber concludes that recent research by James Henretta, Ann Knowles, and Margaret Jacob shows that the *PE* style was indeed present among capitalists in the Massachusetts Bay colony, in 19th-century Ohio, and in 18th-century England, even though these religious persons were also ambivalent about untrammelled free enterprise. Conversely, Kaelber concludes that Jere Cohen is wrong in asserting that Puritans were traditionalist in their economic orientation.

All this is discussion of the Weber thesis in the narrower sense. Several contributions widen the analysis to what Donald Nielsen calls Weber's "Grand Narrative"—not just whether a particular kind of religious doctrine affected a particular kind of capitalism in Europe, but whether there was a massive divergence or turning point in world history by which the modern world was created through religious influence. None of the contributions fully take on the revisionist economic sociology of the past 30 years, which shows Chinese, Muslim, and even Indian economies ahead of the West—allegedly in near- or full-capitalist mode—until the beginning of the 19th century; nor the argument that it was the Industrial Revolution specifically (rather than the prior development of Protestant-inspired capitalism)—or

alternatively the fortuitous discovery of American gold—that put the West on top.

It should be noted here that Weber's distinctions between booty/robber capitalism, adventure capitalism, and modern rational capitalism do not absolve us from assessing the extent to which these types of capitalism across world history (including even political capitalism) had dynamism of their own; it is too easy for us to posit that only rational capitalism had large effects on long-term economic growth, but the other types may well have been in the mix, too—they certainly were in the modern West, not to mention today! The narrow Weber thesis—whether a type of Protestantism affected the ethic of one type of capitalism—still begs the question of whether this type of ethic was a big contributor to economic growth, and indeed the effects (or rather noneffects) of the other types of capitalism have been more asserted than tested. In recent decades, scholarship on the Weber thesis has become narrowly defensive in defining the problem down to a small segment of the historical universe; Weberians (of whatever degree of traditionalism or orthodoxy) need to broaden their perspectives if they want to remain relevant to the current movement of economic sociology.

The most innovative contribution here is by Philip Gorski. He puts off the larger question of East/West divergence, but does argue for several ways that radical Protestants affected the divergence within Europe between a capitalist takeoff in Holland and England and economic traditionalism in France, Spain, and Italy. Among Gorski's most striking theses are that religious persecution of radical Protestants caused massive migration and thus concentrated the most intensely commercial persons in places that became the economic core; and that the Reformation drastically reduced the number of religious holidays during the year, thereby greatly increasing the amount of work that was done, in contrast to traditionalist and Catholic areas. Gorski also emphasizes the political dimension of Protestantism in diverting monastic property wealth into geopolitical power (thereby helping to make Protestant countries into world-system hegemony), as well as by extending church-style self-government into the state sphere and thereby making government less predatory and more supportive of business.

Stephen Kalberg, in conclusion, applies Weberian analysis still further afield, noting its relevance for American public culture today. Protestant sects sustained a long-standing tension between the ideals of the public community or civic sphere, and the individualist pursuit of one's own soul (and one's own economic career). Kalberg adds a third point to today's "tripolar" tension: the ethos of the consumer-entertainment industries, which opposes and competes with both of the more traditional American religiously influenced lifestyles. As a good Weberian, Kalberg anguishes over the threat to what he values, but he does not give in to easy trend-pointing.

After all, tension among competing forces is what is perhaps most central in Weber's vision and in his enduring contribution to sociology.

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM. By Ralph W. Hood, Jr., Peter C. Hill, and W. Paul Williamson. New York: Guilford Press, 2005. vii + 247 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

In what they put forward as a descriptive study, Hood, Hill, and Williamson offer as frank an apology for fundamentalism as one is likely to find authored by contemporary social scientists. Each of the authors is directly acquainted with fundamentalism in one way or another, and together they vigorously oppose the stereotypes that represent fundamentalists as naïve and close-minded literalists. Fundamentalists, they argue, are as logical and rational as the most liberal of their fellow religionists. Rejecting the notion that fundamentalism is a special case, an eccentric viewpoint to be understood in terms of exceptional personality and cognitive traits, the authors maintain that fundamentalism requires no explanation beyond what is needed to comprehend any other belief system. To argue otherwise, they say, would be both "pernicious" and "pejorative" (p. 203).

Fundamentalism, like every other religious tradition—and, indeed, like many nonreligious commitments and activities as well—can best be understood psychologically as a "system of meaning." Like Gordon Allport (1950, whom they do not cite), the authors argue that a religious meaning system is the most adequate of all, for it alone provides a unifying philosophy of life. Beyond providing a comprehensive understanding of an otherwise mysterious and often chaotic world, such a meaning system offers the individual a sense of purpose, a set of values, a feeling of efficacy, and a sense of intrinsic self-worth. All religious traditions provide these benefits, the authors say, but fundamentalism offers them in spades.

Fundamentalism's central characteristic and its great advantage are said here to be its primary orientation toward a sacred text that contains a set of absolute truths. The authors acknowledge that these truths emerge from an interpretive process and that fundamentalists oriented toward the same sacred text often disagree among themselves about its meaning. The text nevertheless "speaks for itself," determining how it should be read and establishing itself as the ultimate authority under which all peripheral beliefs—that is, less certain truths—are subordinated. Thus if we are to understand fundamentalism, the authors maintain, we must ourselves enter into "open dialogue" with the text and obey its imperatives. In other words, we must ourselves think like fundamentalists.

Governing fundamentalist thinking is “the principle of intratextuality” and hence this principle becomes the keystone to the authors’ “intratextual model of the structure of fundamentalist thought” (p. 26). This “social-psychological model” (p. 12) is their chief instrument for understanding religious fundamentalism in all of its forms.

The *intertextual* model, in contrast, brings more than one text into the process of analysis, applying external hermeneutical principles to the focal text in an effort to discern its meaning. Hood and his colleagues maintain that this model, too, relies on “authority and authoritarian . . . systems of belief.” In this case, however, the authorities are “tentative, contingent, and continually susceptible to change” (p. 26). Seeking further to minimize the distance between the two models, the authors argue that the variability among fundamentalists in their perceptions of absolute truth indicates that they, too, are “open in a very powerful sense . . . to change and interpretation” (p. 27).

With its intra-textual orientation and an inerrant text “that does not contradict itself” (p. 36), fundamentalism offers the assurances of an authoritative and comprehensive blueprint for the conduct of life, including an absolute and undebatable moral code and the promise of a future beyond death. Even when disaster strikes, one can rest assured that all events conform to God’s will and thus have meaning, however dimly one may perceive it. The fundamentalist sense of purpose is a peculiarly compelling one, for, as a dedicated participant in God’s plan, each individual bears the responsibility to share the text’s message with others, offering them, too, the possibility of redemption and the assurance of eternal life.

To bring home to the reader how such a meaning system works, the authors dedicate the bulk of this work to placing particular fundamentalist beliefs in their cultural and historical contexts. They begin with a historical overview of the fundamentalist movement in America, a chapter intended to underscore its complexity and sophistication, thereby forestalling any simple or stereotyped explanations of it. Following, then, is a sequence of chapters on four specific traditions: The Church of God (of Prophecy), with which Williamson was long associated, including 17 years in full-time ministry; a group of Holiness-Pentecostal sects that ritually handle poisonous snakes, a tradition that both Hood and Williamson have observed and studied in depth; the Amish, who are included to make it clear that fundamentalists, if commonly militant, are yet often non-violent; and Shi’ite Islam as it responded to Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, to show that the intratextual model functions beyond the Christian context. Given the intimate acquaintance of the authors with the first two traditions, the chapters dedicated to them are written with particular authority. All four chapters are essentially descriptive and historical, though there are occasional explanatory asides,

couched chiefly in terms of Hjalmar Sunden’s nonreductionist role theory.

Besides its accessible style, the main strength of this book lies in its historical-descriptive material; where it does not aspire to originality, as in the chapters on the general history of fundamentalism and on the Amish, it helpfully sums up much larger and less accessible literatures. This work comes up short, on the other hand, both in its general delineation of fundamentalism and in its aspirations to psychological analysis and insight. The authors’ intention to give fundamentalism a fair hearing is certainly praiseworthy, especially after decades of social-scientific stigmatization. But one does not succeed at this task simply by stepping into the fundamentalist’s shoes.

What is achieved, one wants to ask, by elevating a habit of mind into a quasi-theological “principle,” as if it has been carefully thought out and tested, and beyond that, into a “social-psychological model” that seems to be neither psychological nor a model? And what have we learned when we identify religion as a “meaning system?” Is that not in its own way reductionist?

In any case, by making intra-textuality the defining feature of fundamentalism, the authors invited into their analysis a variety of conservative traditions that are not ordinarily considered fundamentalist—most notably, the Amish. But the Church of God (of Prophecy) and the serpent-handling sects, because they valorize individual ecstatic experiences (e.g., Spirit baptism), likewise required justification for inclusion in this book. On the other hand, the authors effectively closed out movements usually denominated fundamentalist, for the principle of intratextuality as they use it applies only to “religions of the book,” that is, to the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. “Fundamentalists” in other traditions, such as the Buddhist or Hindu, do still find “fundamentals” to adhere to, but these may as easily be revered persons as texts, and they are selectively retrieved from an idealized sacred past, in some cases a largely invented one. Hood and his colleagues do acknowledge that fundamentalists are often typified by their resistance to or hostility toward modernism, a characteristic that the Fundamentalism Project considers crucial for identifying a movement as fundamentalist (Almond, Sivan, and Appleby 1995:405); but given Hood et al.’s conviction that fundamentalism first arose in response to “the sudden breakdown of a conservative Protestant consensus” (p. 51), they cast this feature in a distinctly secondary role.

Furthermore, the authors’ effort to present fundamentalism as a reasonable and even intellectual undertaking obscures another defining characteristic, the movement’s intention “to scandalize outsiders,” as Marty and Appleby (1992:23) put it. The epistemology and discourse of Enlightenment rationalism are viewed by fundamentalists as insufficient for understanding this world and our destiny within it.

It is similarly misleading to suggest that fundamentalists are generally open to change. Changes that accord with the divine plan they welcome with open arms, of course, but not changes in their understanding of that design. Establishing a set of fundamentals is intended, after all, to provide a bulwark against modifications of the latter sort. That fundamentalists disagree among themselves is certainly no sign of openness, but only evidence that the text does not in fact speak for itself. Other problems in logic pop up here and there, including occasional statements that represent certain Christian fundamentalist' claims as facts that the authors surely know are contentious.

The authors' sympathetic approach to fundamentalism would greatly benefit from a more strictly phenomenological turn, one that combines bracketing of their apologetic stance, immersion into a broader range of fundamentalist thinking, and sufficient critical distance to facilitate a penetrating analysis that would take us beyond what the fundamentalists can tell us themselves. There are leads for such an analysis in the Fundamentalism Project's reports—and, indeed, in this book as well—but given especially the absence of psychologists of religion from the Project, and of sustained psychological analysis in the present work, these hints remained undeveloped. There is obviously more work to be done.

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**BORN AGAIN BODIES: FLESH AND SPIRIT IN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY.** By R. Marie Griffith. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004. xiv + 323 pp. \$55.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

In *Born Again Bodies*, historian and religious studies scholar R. Marie Griffith presents a provocative narrative about American Protestants' bodily disciplines. Griffith's focus is on the ways that religious ideas about salvation and godliness are worked out on the body, and the ways that these American obsessions have been translated into secular American diet and fitness culture. This is a fascinating book

that draws on close analyses of an astonishingly wide array of texts and traditions to make clear, in both method and content, how much we have to gain by placing more attention on somatic religions and the body, and how very different the terrain and history of American Protestantism might look by taking embodied religions as a beginning point.

Griffith's cultural history moves chronologically from the early republic to the contemporary period, focusing on religious figures, theologies, and practices including Puritan fasting, the sexual asceticism of Shakers and the Oneida community, 19th-century Protestants' fascination with phrenology and eugenics, and Father Divine's celebrations of corporeal thickness, divinity, and community. These numerous examples catalogue the enduring interests of American Protestants of many stripes with the body as a tool, carrier, and sign of spiritual health and grace.

These examples lay the groundwork for the book's main argument, namely, that our current secular diet cultures are "deeply indebted to [religious] cultures that have perceived the body as essential for pushing the soul along the path to redemption" (p. 240). In this argument, Griffith identifies New Thought (including Christian Science and Unity) and evangelical Protestantism as the two traditions that have most shaped our culture's logics. Griffith argues that these two traditions, while often viewed as theologically opposed, share a surprising "kinship" in the ways that their leading figures focus on the body as a signal site of devotional intimacy, and thus also as a potential barrier (if it is too fat, too unhealthy, too debased) to God's grace. These shared concerns are made apparent through a theoretical focus on religions as they are embodied, and allow Griffith to explicate how Protestant practices of earlier eras (such as fasting) were traded in for more overarching, embedded bodily regimens in which Christian and physical perfection increasingly became viewed as one and the same, namely, slender, firm, and (largely) white.

Griffith builds this provocative argument carefully and convincingly through close reading of countless texts and images, including popular prescriptive Christian dieting literature. In such texts we see, for example, how Christian dieters are told that their fatness is a barrier to connection with God. As these diet books offer prayers for dieters to help "guard them from jealousy" they might feel toward Christians who can eat as much as they wish without gaining weight, their authors frame the sin of gluttony. No longer associated with a lack of self-control, gluttony is now a sin of the body or, rather, not having the correct, slender one. These examples allow Griffith to demonstrate how the connections between personal discipline and correct body are attenuated, and how slowly but inevitably physical thinness becomes the true mark and the primary model of inner spiritual perfection. And, as Griffith further demonstrates, these logics not only

create insurmountable hurdles for Christian men and women, but also become public, social categories that embed all bodies within moral and social hierarchies wherein some (including Jewish, African-American, and other “ethnic” and non-Protestant religious bodies) cannot measure up.

Griffith is even-handed and presents her material with care, wit, and evident intellectual rigor. Nonetheless, the tone of the book is bleak, and her concerns about the scope of our culture’s bodily obsessions extend in the last chapters to an argument that is strongly resonant with Weber’s “iron cage.” Griffith suggests that Protestant prescriptive dieting literature and groups, while at one level directed toward ameliorating fat Christians’ anxieties about salvation, health, and body nonetheless set in motion a number of debilitating ideals and regulatory practices that, now largely unhinged from their religious roots, torment us at every turn. Like Weber, Griffith does not see much space within American culture, or even within American religious cultures, to live freely and fully, or even from which to challenge the powerful logics that wed slimness and salvation.

It is at this juncture that Griffith’s argument raises a set of sociological questions about this culture’s scope that are difficult to answer through the methods of textual close readings. Even as Griffith presents copious evidence for the existence of these logics, prescriptive literature of this kind cries out for further contextualization. How are such books read and used by Christian dieters and nondieters? Do these disciplines of bodily perfection alter (or are they perhaps altered by) other Christian bodily practices such as communal meals, hospitality, and food service to the poor? Griffith works toward answers through interviews with participants in Christian dieting groups, but does not provide a clear methodological statement of how she collected or conducted this fieldwork, making it difficult to assess its relevance. My one disappointment with *Born Again Bodies* is that it does not fully capitalize on this interview and ethnographic material.

That said, the power of *Born Again Bodies* lies in the fact that it brings these questions to our attention in a new way. This is an important book: its theoretical and historical content provokes questions and ideas that will undoubtedly orient future research across disciplines toward greater attention to the embodied aspects of American religions.

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COMING OUT IN CHRISTIANITY: RELIGION, IDENTITY, AND COMMUNITY. By Melissa M. Wilcox. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003. xii + 219 pp. \$55.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

For many Christians, religious commitment and lesbians, gays, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)

identity are mutually exclusive categories. For many LGBT people, adherence to Christianity is equally incomprehensible. This book is an attempt to understand the process by which LGBT individuals reconcile these seemingly contradictory identities.

At the time of the book’s writing, studies of contemporary LGBT people in Christianity were limited. Wilcox approached her research from the dual stance of both insider, in terms of sexual orientation, and outsider, in terms of her relationship to Christianity. Teaching sociology and writing are vehicles for her activism, she tells us, and the explicit purpose of the book is to educate: “If it manages to deepen even one more person’s understanding of LGBT Christians, this book will have been worth writing” (p. x).

Wilcox effectively employs an analogy of “two roads” (LGBT identity and religious commitment, respectively) that, for many LGBT people raised as Christians, are seen as widely divergent and irreconcilable. As Wilcox points out: “the religious life stories of many LGBT people begin with a forced or constrained choice between LGBT identity and religious affiliation” (p. 170).

In non-LGBT churches, the two roads typically do not converge; these churches, regardless of intentions to be open and affirming, operate in the “old world,” which is situated within the confines of heteronormativity. In LGBT churches, however, a “new world” has been constructed in which LGBT identity and Christian belief can peaceably coexist. One such new world has been constructed in the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), a Christian denomination that specifically serves LGBT people (individual congregations are referred to as MCCs).

The UFMCC was founded in 1968 by Troy Perry, who came from a Pentecostal background. Wilcox’s observations indicate that UFMCC is not uniformly Pentecostal, but that the denomination allows extensive theological flexibility at the congregational level. Indeed, the only official directive is that congregations offer, at a minimum, a weekly Sunday communion service.

Because MCC congregations are so diverse, Wilcox studied two very different MCC congregations in California. She conducted fieldwork from 1997–1999, gathering primary data through a mailed survey and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. Valle Rico (MCCVR) is located in a city with a population just under 1 million; its worship style has a metaphysical theological bent. It has a robust membership of about 300, and an impressive monthly budget of \$7,000 that allowed for the hiring of a full-time pastor and two part-time pastors, all male. Oceanfront (OMCC) is a tiny congregation that during the summer of 1998 usually drew a handful of worshipers, most of whom were women. With a budget of almost \$2,000 a month, the church could afford only one pastor—female—who was employed half time. Oceanfront’s worship style could be characterized as charismatic. Both congregations were overwhelmingly white.

Wilcox mailed 384 surveys to members and attenders in both churches, eliciting an overall response rate of 30.5 percent. Forty-four percent of the survey respondents were women, and almost 56 percent were men. Of the 117 survey respondents, five identified themselves as transgender. She also conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 72 survey respondents: 34 women (three of whom were transgender) and 38 men. The survey data have limitations, but Wilcox combines them with interview data to identify suggestive patterns in the identity-reconciliation process. To this end, the appendix contains helpful descriptive information about the survey respondents. Unfortunately, the survey instrument was not included.

She points out that her data are not representative of people still undergoing LGBT identity struggles, transgender people, and ethnic minorities. Despite the low percentages of bisexual and transgender individuals in her study, Wilcox intentionally includes their voices. She notes that although the lived experiences of bisexual and transgender people are qualitatively different from those of gays and lesbians, all respondents shared similar experiences of religiously-based oppression.

One of the study's most important findings concerns the role of individualized religious beliefs in the process of identity reconciliation. From her data emerge five broad patterns in this process. Four of these patterns relied on individual effort rather than on assistance from churches or religious groups, even those (predominantly heterosexual congregations) that considered themselves to be places of welcome. Overall, survey and interview respondents used a combination of personal beliefs, spirituality, and an essentialist understanding of LGBT identity to find their own way, and then they selected a church that validated their already integrated identities.

These findings suggest a new framework from which to understand contemporary religious individualism. For LGBT people, Wilcox points out, such individualism is more than likely to have been "thrust upon them" (p. 16). She asks: "Does this phenomenon look different when it is forced upon people through religious rejection rather than being chosen freely?" (p. 170). Ironically, the rise of religious individualism, sometimes bemoaned as a negative trend in religion in the United States, translated into a propitious development for LGBT people.

I highly recommend this book to scholars and students of religion, sociology, and psychology. Wilcox is also successful in reaching a general audience. Finally, the book is essential reading for those predominantly heterosexual congregations involved in an open and affirming process. In the preface, Wilcox explicitly informs readers that "this is a book about people," not about homosexuality (p. iv). Her respondents remind us that even in the most well-intentioned congregations, dialogue and decision making take place at an abstract level that often excludes LGBT people, suggesting that many

of these congregations continue to operate on the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm.

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CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND SAME-SEX ORIENTATION: THE CASE OF GAY MORMONS. By Rick Phillips. New York: Peter Lang, 2005. vii + 123 pp. \$53.95 cloth.

Rick Phillips's book on gay Mormons presents a concise but comprehensive picture of the lives and conflicts of individuals who find themselves torn between their identities as Mormons and as homosexuals. The book's findings are based on an insider's understanding of Mormonism, interviews with Mormon leaders, and interviews with male homosexual Mormons. Phillips also attended various gay Mormon support groups and meetings in exploring this unique conflict in identities.

Framing his discussion in the labeling perspective of social psychology, Phillips explains that being gay and being Mormon are both master statuses that, once applied, heavily influence behavior. Given the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) Church's position on homosexuality, it is inevitable that these two master statuses will come into conflict. The social-psychological framework will be of interest to both sociologists and psychologists, but the intersection of homosexuality and religion, which is increasingly prominent in both research and the popular media, makes this text of interest to many groups, including institutional researchers who may be helping their institutions respond to similar conflicts and scholars interested in stratification and inequality.

Since the views of the LDS Church concerning homosexuality play a significant role in the conflict between the two master statuses that are the subject of this book, the opening chapters detail the LDS Church's views on homosexuality and how its approach to dealing with gay members has changed over time. Phillips accurately explains that the official position of the LDS Church concerning homosexuality is that it is "a sexual perversion and an abuse of the sacred power to create life" (p. 20). Phillips explains that the frequency with which homosexuality is discussed by the leadership as being sinful has increased since the 1960s and that the policies in place about homosexuals have changed. Initially, the LDS Church took a firm position that homosexuality was a choice and that homosexuals could and should change. Early efforts at change (e.g., aversion/shock therapy) were not successful. Phillips argues that this led to revision in LDS Church policy and approach. Rather than attempting to "cure" homosexuals, the LDS Church is now willing to accept "earnest effort to live within the church's guidelines" and celibacy

by homosexuals. In addition, local leaders appear to be both more open about homosexuality and better educated than they were in the past about how the church would like them to address the issue. Today, most individuals who inform their religious leaders they are homosexual are referred to LDS Social Services for therapy; their religious leaders remain involved, but primarily as arbiters of worthiness and not as therapists.

Phillips's goal for the book is to illustrate how these two master statuses are incongruent. I believe Phillips has admirably accomplished his aim. In relating the experiences of individuals who have been caught in this conflict, Phillips clearly demonstrates that the conflict is significant and results in the suppression of one or the other identity. At present, according to Phillips, the primary way this conflict is resolved is for one of these master statuses to be relegated to a minor status or repressed altogether. This is clearly the primary message of the book, and an important one for both religions and scholars of religion. In building this argument, Phillips illustrates that two substantial segments of society are at odds: homosexuals and strict religions that condemn homosexuality.

Despite its clear message, there are a few minor problems. While the book is initially presented within a labeling theory framework, this framework is seldom employed explicitly to help the reader understand the situations of the informants in the book. Employed to its fullest, this book would likely have included discussions of how the master status of "homosexual" overwhelms the "Mormon" status, leading to apostasy or excommunication, or how the master status of "homosexual" is toppled by the competing master status of "Mormon," leading to abstaining gay Mormons. These notions are implied in relating the stories of informants, but are never stated explicitly.

Also, given the price of the book, I was expecting a much lengthier work. The book could easily have been extended by 30 to 50 pages to include a chapter detailing the experiences of informants. That information would be engaging, and would provide a closer look at the life and struggles of homosexual Mormons as they negotiate their identities. Finally, while this book is an excellent study of gay Mormons, and necessarily limited by available resources, there is obviously a need for a companion volume on lesbian Mormons.

Criticisms aside, Phillips provides compelling insights. For instance, Phillips notes it is usually homosexuals who leave the church and not the church forcing them out. While the LDS Church does excommunicate nonrepentant and sexually-active homosexuals, it is willing to work with homosexuals who are trying to curb their sexual activity. Phillips also notes that abstaining gay Mormons "are admonished to divulge their sexual orientation to others on a need to know basis" (p. 79) to prevent their mistreatment by members of their local congregation. While

the intent may be worthy, the outcome is often that abstaining gay Mormons feel lonely and isolated.

Phillips's book is a valuable contribution to the literature on Mormonism. While Phillips is modest in claiming his findings should not be generalized beyond the small communities he studies, his insightful analysis is one more block in a growing foundation of Mormon studies and a valuable summary and extension of the information previously available about gay Mormons.

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RELIGION AND FAMILY IN A CHANGING SOCIETY. By Penny Edgell. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. xii + 210 pp. \$50.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Centered on questions of how congregations respond to increasing diversity in American families, Penny Edgell's new monograph provides a much-needed analysis of the intersections of religion and family life. Conceptually, Edgell shifts the focus away from individual believers and religious movements to the level of the institution—asking how religious institutions (e.g., congregations) have incrementally adjusted to changing families by revising both programs and discourses through which they communicate and offer religious goods to families. Her intent is to assess change over time from the era of high attendance and breadwinner/homemaker ideals to an era of diverse families and religious formats.

Her findings are based on analyses of both congregational- and individual-level data drawn from multiple methods, including surveys of 125 pastors, participant observation (aided by a small team of graduate research assistants) in 23 congregations, and focus group interviews with almost 50 pastors. Adding breadth to the analysis are data from a closed-ended telephone survey of 1,006 community residents (with a response rate of 60 percent) and follow-up in-depth telephone interviews with 80 respondents. The sites for the research were four communities in central New York state (approximately 250 surveyed in each). Demographic diversity is limited to urban/rural and middle/working class (two communities being somewhat more educated and upper income than the nation as a whole and two being somewhat less educated or professional). The sample is largely limited to mainline, Catholic, and conservative Protestant traditions that were at the heart of church growth in the 1950s and 1960s. It is also primarily white (94 percent) and somewhat more Catholic and mainline Protestant than the rest of the country. What the analysis lacks in breadth across race, ethnicity, or non-Christian religious groups it makes up for with depth—exploring congregations

within local “ecologies” or networks of churches, voluntary associations, and other social and economic resources within four communities.

Edgell argues that congregations, more than religious elites and activists, are the context through which families assess changing ideals for family life. As might be expected, elements of culture wars rhetoric appear across conservative and liberal/mainline churches. However, themes around the need for churches to support “the family” are typically muted in light of pragmatic concerns for meeting increasingly diverse needs within the wider community. A “standard package” of family ministries developed in the 1950s (Sunday school, women’s groups, and teen programs) continues to undergird many congregational programs today—with emphases on programs for youth, the elderly, women, and men. Not surprisingly, larger churches have both more traditional and more innovative programs; more conservative churches also tend to provide a mix of traditional and innovative programs that are more flexible in schedule, location, or organization in order to meet the needs of two-earner and single-parent families.

In addition to placing the work of congregations within communities at the center of her analysis, Edgell’s study also emphasizes how individuals draw on interpretive frameworks, or schemas, to assess the meaning and salience of religion and family in their own lives. She poses two alternative sets of schemas that frame how individuals in these communities think about religion and family. On the one hand, individuals may think about religious participation as an element or expression of their own spiritual pilgrimage or journey. This “self-oriented” framework conceptualizes religion as a separate domain from work or family. Others interpret religious participation as an expression of family and community life, via a “family-oriented” rhetoric. These frameworks operate independently of individuals’ structural position *vis-a-vis* either work or family. Chapters on styles of religious involvement highlight gender differences in motivations and meanings of participating in congregational life. Men, Edgell finds, are more likely than women to describe church involvement as a venue for supporting connections to children, and to struggle with the appropriateness of ministries to diverse families. Women describe how participation in congregational life supports their own spiritual growth and experience, and are generally more supportive of nontraditional and more flexible programming.

A third theme within the book concerns the relative importance of religious markets and religious institutions in the process of social change. From a rational choice theoretical perspective, churches that revise programs and services to meet diverse needs of contemporary families should thrive because they are better able to compete for new members. Yet questions of when and how congregations change, Edgell argues, are better addressed from an insti-

tutional approach to religion. Thus, although some programs are ostensibly appealing because of their marketability, Edgell makes the case that the stability of core programs and limited incremental change within congregations provide greater support for an institutional perspective on religion and religious change.

Finally, Edgell’s analysis provides additional evidence that “culture wars” are more a product of religious producers than they are the experience of religious believers within local congregations. Rather than finding that congregations thrive when they are in tension with the broader culture, Edgell argues that religious organizations thrive when they offer a coherent religious tradition that provides a moral framework, personal identity, and a sense of what is good, true, and right. In these ways, Edgell’s work reaches beyond sociology of religion and sociology of family in an effort to speak to broader questions about culture, meaning, social engagement, and social change.

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WHEN PROPHECY NEVER FAILS: MYTH AND REALITY IN A FLYING-SAUCCER GROUP. By Diane G. Tumminia. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 216 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of Festinger et al.’s *When Prophecy Fails* (1956), Diane Tumminia’s study of the Unarius group meticulously demonstrates just how far the social sciences have progressed in attempting to present fair and accurate research on the subject of failed prophecies. Festinger and his research team have since been criticized for their misinterpretation of a historical event, misunderstanding of millennial group organization, rigid outsider objectivity, methodological negligence, and failure to recognize alternative reactions to prophetic disconfirmations. Tumminia acknowledges the importance of *When Prophecy Fails* and the subsequent critiques that have followed, and contributes in a major way to the study of failed prophecy by: (1) reflexive techniques of making her presence a part of the narrative; (2) presenting thick descriptions of Unarius members and dialogue that they shared with her; and (3) applying the “mundane reasoning” thesis to the analysis of this subject.

Tumminia’s *When Prophecy Never Fails* is a compilation of over a decade and a half of ethnographic research, in which she presents an overview of activities and events of the Unarius extraterrestrial contact religion. Founded in 1954 by Ernest and Ruth Norman, Unarius is an eclectic new religious movement that incorporates a host of New Age beliefs and practices and postulates relationships with extraterrestrial beings. Unarians are perhaps best known for

their millenarian prophecy that envisions the coming of 33 spaceships that will usher in a period of enlightenment through elite knowledge possessed by the thousands of scientists believed to be piloting these spacecrafts. Rather than focusing on the oddities of these claims, or critically underscoring the ironies of a group that sustains or even amplifies its belief after a disconfirmation, Tumminia instead presents a sincere and believable depiction of individuals practicing their “science” of Unarius.

Based on apprentice participation, Tumminia illuminates a rather personal side of this group by attempting to tell their story in their own terms. Throughout the book, Tumminia also tactfully inserts reflections on her own involvement within the group. She makes a careful effort to reconstruct previous events that occurred prior to beginning her research by gathering and interpreting various testimonies from Unarians, as well as by analyzing Unarius literature and videos. The overall account describes a tightly-woven relationship between herself and members of the group, never dismissive of Tumminia’s effect on the group and/or *vice versa*. This feature is an indication of how crucial, visible, and self-conscious a researcher’s presence has become—since the work of Festinger et al.—and the consequential construction of reflexive narratives.

The book contains an introduction, 10 chapters, three appendices, and a photo gallery. In addition to reviewing literature on failed prophecies and mythology, the chapters also explore Unarian myth-making processes, profiles of key figures within Unarius, the mode by which Unarians deal with disconfirmation of prophecies, the loss of their leader, and the reorganization of their group thereafter.

The appendices and photo gallery are especially helpful. The first appendix is a chronological history of Unarius; the second is a series of brief narratives that describe the relationship between Ruth Norman and her planetary contacts; the third is an annotated list of Norman’s perceived incarnations. The photo gallery is a collection of 20 pictures ranging from Unarius artistic depictions of Ruth and Ernest Norman and spaceships to photographs of various Unarian activities taken by members themselves. Because the photographs at times deal with such unusual content, their presentation in color would have magnified their impact. Overall, these photographs and appendices are necessary elaborations and fully complement the written text.

In the Festinger et al. study, the team of social psychologists argued that experiencing disconfirmed prophecy might actually serve to reinforce beliefs, or to establish what is known as cognitive dissonance. They suggested that under certain specified conditions a disconfirmation of prophecy would actually increase proselytizing among group members. In contrast, Tumminia borrows Melvin Pollner’s (1974) “mundane reasoning” thesis, which states that a member’s sense of social structure is reinforced

through a perceived corpus of factual accounts provided by, and sustained in conjunction with, other members of the group. In the case of Unarians, Tumminia argues that the failure of prophecy is not necessarily an indication of a falsified event, as the Unarians have already presupposed a factual reality that spaceships either have often visited earth secretly or have been deterred from doing so by the negative energies from human beings. Tumminia calls these rationales “interpretive tools” for sustaining beliefs (p. 47). For Unarians, incorrigible realities—those established realities that will always be perceived as truth—are simply not falsifiable. According to Tumminia, the Unarians reconcile their beliefs with supposed disconfirming events by affirming that their belief system, being incorrigible, never fails. This contrast between the simple rational model of Festinger et al.—where disconfirmed prophecies were adjudicated by outsider social scientists—and Tumminia’s use of mundane reasoning—which shows the group’s support for members’ common sense reality—is a conceptual improvement in the long list of studies about failed prophecy.

Scholars and students of new religious movements may find this book particularly helpful for understanding extraterrestrial contact religions. Indeed, anyone interested in exploring the contactee community through the thoughts and actions of believers themselves will find this to be a valuable reference. Rich in detailed description and thoroughly developed dialogue, this book will also be a useful teaching tool for courses on ethnography or religion.

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND STATE POLITICS: NEGOTIATING PROPHETIC DEMANDS AND POLITICAL REALITIES. By David Yamane. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. 187 pp. \$65.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Despite the importance of state politics to so many important social issues—not the least of which are most laws dealing with hot-button issues of education, welfare, and abortion—scholars who study church-state issues often focus exclusively on the federal government. In this masterfully written book, David Yamane takes a close look at the functioning of 34 state-level Catholic Bishops Conferences in the United States. In the introduction, Yamane presents a theoretical framework around the double movement of secularization. According to this theoretical construct, religious authority in the modern world has indeed rapidly given way to secular authority. However, Yamane demonstrates that religious groups have accommodated to the reality of secular politics and, in some ways, participate in the system without being beholden to it.

The first two chapters situate the contemporary situation within the history of state Catholic conferences and analyze in depth one of the oldest: the Maryland Catholic Conference. In the third chapter, Yamane analyzes the authority structure of the Bishops Conferences as dual structures in which bishops represent the religious authority structure and the lay staff constitute the agency structure. In this chapter, Yamane shows how numerous church documents such as *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium* identify the world of politics as the proper domain of the laity. However, lay Catholics do not have the authority to make or change Catholic teachings, a responsibility that lies with the bishops in communion with the Pope.

Chapter 4, entitled "Issues: The Seamless Garment in Action," brings to life both the content of Catholic social teaching and how religious authorities and agents attempt to put it into action. Through a careful analysis of issues that Bishops Conferences have lobbied on—education, welfare, health care, criminal justice, and abortion—Yamane shows how the Bishops Conferences' positions cut across traditional liberal and conservative political divides. In fact, he convincingly argues that Catholic Bishops Conferences distinguish themselves from most other religious or secular lobbying groups precisely because they cannot be pegged into a single political camp.

Although Yamane does not dedicate a chapter to Catholic social teaching *per se*, in Chapter 4 in particular he presents an engaging and concise summary of many important elements of Catholic social teaching. Yamane employs an effective strategy of quoting primary documents that comprise the church's social teachings, such as papal encyclicals and Vatican II documents. Although Yamane aims to show how all of the church's social teachings should be considered as a whole, he also states clearly that official church teachings, and thus the lobbying of the Bishops Conferences, do not waver on more hot-button or so-called conservative issues, namely, abortion. Rather than apologizing for this unyielding stance on one of the most divisive issues in America today, Yamane's explanation helps readers understand how the laity who staff the Bishops Conferences and the bishops themselves construct a hierarchy of social issues all the while emphasizing their interrelatedness. Employing the concept of "prudential judgment," Yamane explains that since numerous church teachings over millennia have defined abortion as an absolute moral wrong, the staff of Bishops Conferences need little prudential judgment to establish a policy stance on this issue; on the other hand, new questions on how much the state should spend on education and welfare require much greater prudential judgment when analyzing policies. Although the concept of prudential judgment and its application may be difficult to grasp, scholars concerned with how religious groups "negotiate prophetic demands and political realities" should

pay particularly close attention to this section of Yamane's book.

In Chapter 5, "Discourse: Liberally Clothing the Naked Public Square," Yamane further buttresses his argument that religious organizations have accommodated to the secular discourse of politics. His analysis of the testimonies of Bishops Conferences demonstrates that, contrary to what some may believe, members of the conferences rarely rely exclusively on religious arguments to support their positions. Rather, they combine religious arguments with secular reasoning and scientific evidence and religiously-based ethical arguments.

I will close with two criticisms. First, although it may be quite difficult to weigh all the factors that enter into policy decisions, readers are only given a bit of anecdotal evidence that the lobbying of Bishops Conferences has been successful. One might reasonably think that, on the whole, American public policy is inching further away from the ideals of Catholic social teachings. Second, we might wonder if the Bishops Conferences could better promote the "seamless garment of life" by better educating the Catholic population itself to uphold Catholic social teachings in both their private decisions as well as their voting behaviors. Both of these caveats may lead us to wonder if secularization has not indeed advanced much further than the double movement theory of secularization suggests. Despite this, Yamane's book undoubtedly represents an important theoretical and empirical contribution to the ever-important topic of religion in the public square.

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JAZZ AGE CATHOLICISM: MYSTIC MODERNISM IN POSTWAR PARIS 1919–1933. By Stephen Schloesser. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. xi + 449 pp. \$85.00 cloth.

Stephen Schloesser's excellent *Jazz Age Catholicism* examines how devotional Catholicism and modern realism, usually conceived as being in opposition to one another, were creatively fused, forging a "mystic modernism" in France following World War I and revitalizing 20th-century Roman Catholicism. Schloesser uses a method akin to intellectual history, but he is deeply interested in the aesthetic settings of ideas, so he attends especially to those intellectuals who cultivate the capacities for imagination: novelists, musicians, artists, and also philosophers (especially those with connections to the art world) working from roughly 1919 to 1933. He draws upon a staggering range of sources—novels, plays, pamphlets, paintings, biographies, letters, theology, papal statements, musical compositions, and secondary literature about late modern

psychiatry, crime, science, and art in France. The result is a marvelous ground clearing of one of the most important sites of Catholic intellectual achievement and creativity in the modern period.

In a hefty prologue and his first three chapters, Schloesser explains that in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, intellectual life in France steered in essentially two antagonistic directions. On the one hand, the rise of positivism and naturalism insisted that one's gaze not be directed toward the heavens but to the observable world, in all of its ugly reality and wretchedness: think (as Schloesser invites you to) of Gustave Flaubert's 1857 descriptions of oozing pus and screams in *Madame Bovary*. On the other hand, a besieged, ultramontanist Catholicism dug in its heels and offered just the opposite: eternal truths corresponding to unchanging principles of human nature and the divine, doctrines that floated above the messiness of history. It was the trauma of the Great War, Schloesser argues, that presented a need for a third way, one that could absorb the grief of the wartime generation in ways that empiricism and liberalism could not. This generation needed to draw on the nation's religious heritage, but demanded a Christianity that did not wince in the face of the war's brutal reality. Consequently, a new Catholic *avant-garde* (consisting of many newly converted) drew upon certain "ancient" resources, such as devotion to saints and mysticism, which they suggested were uniquely able to express modernity's most tragic and profound realities. This hybrid shift, Schloesser shows, represents a fascinating and important detour in the path that had been laid between modernity and Catholicism since the Enlightenment.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Schloesser gives his attention to Jacques and Raïssa Maritain. Jacques Maritain has been treated at length many times before, but Schloesser's approach is unique because he emphasizes the hugely influential contributions his wife Raïssa made to this movement. She even introduced the writings of Thomas Aquinas to Jacques, who would later become the 20th century's most famous neo-Thomist. This sent me in search of Raïssa's own writings, incredulous that I had not heard more about her before. Chapter 6 treats artist Georges Rouault, whose moving, graphic depiction of the crucifixion graces *Jazz Age's* cover. The novelist Georges Bernanos is the subject of Chapter 7, and in the final chapter Schloesser takes up the organist Charles Tournemire, convincingly showing his association with the revival of Gregorian chant to be more complex than once thought.

These mystic moderns described clearly are an inspiring resource in Catholicism for Schloesser. But refreshingly, he does not look away from the movement's darker sides, such as the right wing nationalism that occasionally lurked at its edges. If his explanation of *Jazz Age Catholicism's* early nationalist tendencies is satisfactory, its gendered urges toward a strange kind of eroticism receive somewhat less attention. One wonders, for example, what Schloesser

makes of the young men he describes weeping at the feet of the apocalyptic Virgin at La Salette, or Léon Bloy and Georges Rouault's associations between prostitution and the divine.

Overall, however, Schloesser's study is a path-breaking *tour de force*. His work motions toward an appeasement between historicist, social scientific approaches to studying Catholicism on the one hand and aesthetic, theological, philosophical approaches on the other. He shows how theological and mystical reflections—in all of their aesthetic strangeness and wonder—emerge from complex cultural worlds, not only as mere reverberations but often as powerful shapers of culture and history as well. Also, his analysis is a welcome contribution to thinking about war and religion: rather than using institutional or rhetorical analysis, Schloesser considers how religious imaginations can help make sense of what otherwise is unthinkable on the plane of reason. Schloesser engages theories of modernity, mourning, and trauma to unpack this, adding the Great War to a discourse that has largely been dominated by Holocaust studies.

The price of the book is unfortunate, but despite it (and with hopes that the paperback edition will be out soon) *Jazz Age Catholicism* is an extraordinary resource for courses in Christian history, Catholic thought, modern European history, religion and war, religion and art, and religion and modernity. Scholars in any of these fields should be on the lookout for more works of equal passion and erudition from this new historian.

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STRIVING FOR "THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN": JAMES LEGGE AND THE SCOTTISH PROTESTANT ENCOUNTER WITH CHINA. By Lauren F. Pfister. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004. Two volumes. xxix + 315 pp., xii + 443 pp. \$128.50, cloth.

A Scottish missionary of the London Missionary Society who lived in China for about 30 years beginning in 1843, James Legge (1815–1897) was a monumental figure in 19th-century European Sinology. His works remained standards in Chinese studies thereafter. His own life, however, was essentially unknown.

Based on a wealth of materials, including 56 works in English and Chinese by Legge himself, Lauren F. Pfister in *Striving for "The Whole Duty of Man"* delineates Legge's life from his earliest years until the end of his missionary career in Hong Kong in 1873. Pfister highlights three dimensions of new understandings of Legge's work: Legge's Scottish Nonconformist upbringing and training;

the complexity of Legge's Sinological corpus; and Legge's missionary career interpreted through previously unemphasized relationships with Chinese people. Readily accessible and well written, the book should be of interest to religious researchers, historians, Sinologists, and those who study translation.

The book is composed of two volumes. The first volume provides details about Legge's family, his religious ideas, and his educational experience in a Scottish setting. Readers can come to a better understanding of how Legge's intellectual interests developed and how he became determined to become a missionary in China. The second volume examines from a cross-disciplinary perspective, in depth, how Legge's missionary scholarship is related to principles of Scottish Nonconformism and Scottish realist philosophy. The conclusion summarizes four forgotten visions within Legge's legacy: Sabbath culture; millennial momentum; Sinological Orientalism; and accommodationist missionology.

The book describes clearly how Legge and Ho Tsun-sheen (1817–1871), Legge's Chinese pastoral colleague, successfully transplanted Scottish Sabbath culture into the Chinese cultural soil of late Qing and early Hong Kong colonial settings. This was achieved in part by choosing directly from the oldest Ruist (Pfister's preferred term for "Confucianist") canonical traditions a word "Shangdi" for the biblical idea of "God," and by using Ruist terms for all the major Christian ethical virtues. Legge encouraged all Christians, of whatever status or background, to fulfill the Christian Sabbath in worship and service to others, and so established a new cultural option for Chinese Christians in Hong Kong as well as a new form of life for Qing Chinese. In other words, Legge and Ho Tsun-sheen offered a Protestant refinement of the Jesuit model of incorporating Ruism ("Confucianism") into Chinese Christian lifestyles. Having coined "Sabbath culture" to describe this phenomenon, Pfister goes on to argue that "the 19th century Sabbath culture model of Chinese Protestant life in Hong Kong was a timely and creative response to both Scottish Protestant and traditional Chinese values" (p. 228).

Either unable to access the relevant archival materials or due to misunderstandings of Christian theology, Chinese mainland historians of the Taiping Rebellion (1845–1864) failed to account for why one of the rebel leaders, Hong Rengan, could produce such progressive political documents. The reason is convincingly explained in the book as Hong's contact with London Missionary Society members in Hong Kong, with whom he studied as an apprentice evangelist and from whom he learned much about Legge's postmillennial theology. It was also this millennial momentum that enabled the minuscule but active Chinese Protestant communities in mid-19th-

century southeastern China to work with such extraordinary dynamism.

Edward Said has claimed that nonindigenous translators and interpreters of Eastern traditions tended to create distorted literature, an issue Said describes with the term "Orientalism." According to this book, Said's conclusion may not apply to Legge's renderings. In fact, Legge was very involved with living Chinese traditions and sought to engage them directly, first by understanding them with a fairly high degree of guarded openness, and then by dialoguing with them critically from a perspective that included his Christian worldview. Legge's approach, critically framed by Scottish realist hermeneutic principles of discernment and adjustment, nurtured further practice in the art of refining past interpretations. The author describes this dynamic vision with the phrase "Sinological Orientalism" (pp. 237–38).

Pfister carefully analyzes the fact that Legge had initiated an accommodationist missionary strategy as a missionary scholar. Rather than consider Ruism as a major cultural and political hindrance to Christian evangelism, Legge took up a more positive approach to Chinese religious cultures of Ruism, Daoism, and Buddhism. He helped develop serious studies of Chinese religions and carefully explored Chinese religious traditions through detailed scriptural comparisons. Even though Legge's open-minded research and China-friendly attitude led to many controversies in his day, his tactics have been significant and influential. Similar methods have since been adopted by religious or philosophical researchers after his time, including the comparative religious studies scholars on China's mainland today.

Finally, other aspects of the book should be mentioned. First, one of the sustainable values of the book is that a film, or a TV film series, could be produced based on the vivid, abundant, archives-based findings of the book. Second, an analytic triangulation method of interpretation—moving from (Scottish and Chinese life) experiences to Legge's mindset and then on to his translations—can be strongly recommended as an insightful approach for Sinologists and translators. Third, Legge's life and works demonstrated that respect for a culture leads to a more nearly objective research of the culture. Finally, just as James Legge's knowledge of Chinese culture surpassed that of ordinary Chinese, Pfister's access to Chinese philosophical and religious themes offers insights for readers interested in the details of his research.

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