

matter of legitimizing the imagined shared familial visions of the three faith communities.

Even as Young's story hurtles to the inevitable apotheosis of Ronald Reagan, a number of compelling set pieces illustrate the tensions and halting, give-and-take between the factions of the coalescing Religious Right. Whether in the form of a close study of *The God Makers*, a rabidly anti-Mormon propaganda animated cartoon distributed by evangelicals in the 1980s, or in his description of conflicts between evangelicals and Catholics over Reagan-era nuclear weapon policy, Young's narrative reminds readers that the political homogeneity aspired to by the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition remained stubbornly elusive. As Young's epilogue on the Obama administration makes clear, the three traditions will never reach an ecumenical consensus, but they can always temporarily unite in their righteous anger over federal policies related to healthcare and the idealized shape of the American family.

While the book might invite a number of easy criticisms—it begs for more attention to the role racial strife played in the anti-ecumenical movement, for example, and the political significance of international theological developments, such as liberation theology, are conspicuously absent—Young's book should instead be seen as an exemplary model for comparative studies that should take up such issues for future research. *We Gather Together* joins the growing body of work offering a drastic expansion of the scholarly frame of reference for evangelicalism and fundamentalism in the twentieth century. Along with important recent contributions by Molly Worthen, David A. Hollinger, and David R. Swartz, Young's text continues the trend of widening the historical record to include overlooked or under-appreciated elements of the Religious Right. Yet Young's book is truly unprecedented and groundbreaking for its ambitious attempt to not only synthesize all manner of Protestant sects into his narrative, but for his expansive and nimble discussion of Roman Catholicism and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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Varieties of Southern Religious History. Edited by **Regina D. Sullivan and Monte Harrell Hampton**. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015. 296 pp. \$54.95 cloth.

Donald G. Mathews wrote one of the great books in American religious history, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977),

co-wrote (with Jane Sherron DeHart) an important volume on gender and politics, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of the ERA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and continues to write challenging essays on southern religious history and violence, and religious history and its relationship to scholarship on southern history. When he retired after decades of teaching in the History Department at the University of North Carolina, a number of his former Ph.D. students put together this impressive collection of essays to honor his work as a teacher, scholar, and example.

Varieties of Southern Religious History is not the sort of essay collection that anyone is likely to read from beginning to end. As a group, the fifteen essays are not attempting to support, or prove, or overturn any scholarly argument or approach to history. A few themes emerge that relate immediately to themes in the work of Donald Mathews. How did people, mostly in the South, use Christianity to oppose slavery, and to support it? Which parts of the Bible did people use to understand community, power, ethics, gender, and in one case, the end of the world? How did people understand death, and how did they understand how to live and to treat other people? How did definitions of gender relate to religious life and respectability? How can scholars study institutions like colleges and newspapers—institutions that often generate their own sub-fields of scholarship—in ways that connect to questions of power, freedom, and inclusiveness? How did women change what had been all-male features of religious life and leadership?

What unifies these essays is their attention to using evidence to tell meaningful stories, and their potential for surprise. On the latter point, it seems important that the first words of the first essay are “few would guess” (9). Some of the surprises come from the approaches of the authors: taking seriously, for example, the theology of Nat Turner; or studying the earliest versions of Japanese Christianity not through missionaries, but from the perspective of an educated Japanese convert; or in detailing the story of a Kentucky-born lesbian adventuring among London’s Bloomsbury writers. Some of the surprises come from the arguments: such as studying religion founder William Miller as someone who, despite what scholarly models might suggest, had neither charisma nor organizing skill; or in telling stories about a briefly bi-racial church before whites turned toward a pro-slavery Christianity, opposition to Quaker efforts to free their slaves in the 1700s, and a Nashville preacher who faced controversy because of his spiritualist beliefs about contacting the dead. Essays consider how different groups of southerners denied death, how popular works on the Underground Railroad have done a poor job using historical evidence, and religion editors faced recurring controversies over issues of gender and activism.

Life, death, power, organizing, writing, educating, freedom, slavery—the scholars in this collection consistently address big questions in short essays.

Above all, these essays are unified by the quality, professionalism, and ambition of their scholarship, and that seems the best tribute to Donald Mathews and his influence.

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***Emptiness: Feeling Christian in America.* By John Corrigan.**

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. x + 225 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

Emptiness is likely not high on most people's list of familiar emotions, but in this evocative study, John Corrigan manages to foreground an emptiness that lends depth and complexity, if not quite coherence, to the fractious history of American Christianity. His book consists of an introductory synopsis of the relevant history, followed by five chapters of thematic elaboration: "Feeling," "Body," "Space," "Time," and "Believers." The synoptic history, ranging from Puritans and colonial Catholics to twenty-first century American Christians, still searching for something essential, comes at a blistering pace. For readers less versed in the history of American religion, the good news is that the thematic chapters review and elaborate aspects of what has already been synopsized. In that regard, the book's introduction—"Emptiness and American Christianities"—functions more like an overture to an opera than a blueprint to a building, and returning to it once the themes have played discloses an artistry that is hard to appreciate fully on a first hearing.

In the "Feeling" chapter, Corrigan rehearses the Janus-faced logic of emotional emptiness. American Christians of strikingly different temperaments, times, and cultural locations have, on his account of them, commonly sought cathartic liberation from the pseudo-satisfactions of a profane life. Here self-emptying proves to be inseparable from redeemed desire and the prospect of divinely infused fulfillment. But it is also true for these same Christians that pseudo-satisfactions—all the subtle and not-so-subtle exultations of ego—are, in their very presentation of fullness, empty. So how is it possible to lay claim to a fulfilling emptiness, a godly feeling, and not be simultaneously cast into the shadow of satisfactions whose falsity continues to remain hidden?

In the chapters "Body," "Time," and "Space," Corrigan introduces us to some of the ways that American Christians have tried to relieve the material world—the manifest world of separated bodies, situated in time and space—of its stubbornly profane determinacy. But as the transformative power of agency here has to be fully divine and not merely human, and so infinitely