

deserves commendation for recognizing the value of Wesley's legacy. "Wesley's genius was not the discovery of a new religious idea. It was the mobilization of the men and women who shared the beliefs of the Connexion which he led" (300). It feels strange to recommend a book for the very reason it must be criticized. It focusses excessive attention upon Wesley's personal character, yet still provides us with a valuable spiritual/political report. Finally, with the author, we celebrate how "Methodism encouraged the working poor to be ambitious, industrious and respectable – the qualities which made them the indispensable backbone of industrial and imperial Britain" (410).

– Paul Campbell

RELIGION AND ETHNICITY IN CANADA

**Edited by Paul Bramadat
and David Seljak.**

**Toronto: Pearson Education
Canada Ltd., 2005.**

**Pp. xii + 252. Paperback ,
\$47.95.**

Religious and ethnic diversity have increased in Canada over the past 50 years. But little attention has

been given to the interaction between the two and their growing implications for public life. Also, many Canadians know little about the presence of religions other than Christianity in Canadian society. This book seeks to redress this. Part I studies six minority religious traditions that have a significant presence in Canada: Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Chinese religion, Judaism and Islam. Part II looks at the implications of this diversity for public policy in terms of immigration, education, and health care. It concludes with a helpful chart giving an overview of the demographics of religious identification in Canada. The book is part of a projected series of three volumes. The other two will study ethnicity within Christian communities and First Nations communities.

Each of the six chapters in Part I offers an introduction to the religion in question, a history of its presence in Canada, and an analysis of how it relates to particular ethnic groups. These chapters offer an interesting account of how these religions have adapted to Canadian life. They show how they are helping shape Canadian contexts, and how the contexts are shaping the local forms of these religions. The result is a very helpful introduction and overview to the history and current state of these

religions in Canada.

The book is not only written to inform, but also to influence. The official policy of multiculturalism in Canada has followed a liberal practice of trying to accommodate religious differences by relegating religion to private spheres, or by treating all religions as different expressions of the same thing. The editors of this book insist that this will not do, and call for increased public education in major religious traditions, and an increased openness to them in Canadian public life. This call for an enriched multiculturalism raises some interesting questions.

Paul Bramadat describes multiculturalism as “part of a critical discourse” that seeks to illuminate and change structures of inequality in Canadian society (11). If multiculturalism is part of a critical discourse, what utopia guides its critique, and what norms emerge from this? David Seljak’s insightful and well-argued chapter shows how the liberalism of Canadian multiculturalism now needs a kind of communitarian corrective. The removal of Christianity from public education has created a vacuum therein and helped fuel a rise in independent religious schools. Religious education needs to be re-introduced into the public education system, as a matter of justice to those who

belong to religious communities and to equip future citizens to live in a multicultural society. Quebec is leading the way in this.

The book also offers differing assessments of the place of Christianity in Canada. Bramadat gives a thumbnail sketch of how it has lost much of its social standing and power in Canada since the 1960s (3-6). Yet John Biles and Humera Ibrahim argue that Christianity continues to function here as a “shadow establishment” (169). This term is often used to point to the powerful presence of Protestantism in English-speaking Canada from 1840 to the 1960s. I suggest that these two descriptions are mutually inconsistent. Christianity cannot have lost much of its former power and status and still be functioning as a shadow establishment as it did prior to the 1960s. More accurately, Paul Bramadat and David Seljak state that “Christianity still wields tremendous power in the Canadian imagination” (224). This is an important corrective to claims that Canada has become a post-Christian society.

The functioning of Christianity as a shadow establishment prior to the 1960s is frequently linked with xenophobia, Eurocentrism, and prejudice against the religious traditions and ethnic communities studied in this book. This reality

needs to be acknowledged and come to terms with. But there is also mention of how some leaders in the Roman Catholic education system advocated the dis-establishment of Catholicism in Quebec in the 1970s, in recognition of growing ethnic and religious diversity (184). Other authors have noted how some Protestant church leaders were doing the same in relation to Protestantism in English-speaking Canada.

This is a very informative, well produced, and accessible book. It could be profitably read by lay people, clergy or academics who seek to be better informed about religious diversity in Canada.

– Don Schweitzer

**FEMINIST AND
WOMANIST ESSAYS
IN REFORMED
DOGMATICS**
**Columbia Series in
Reformed Theology**
**Editors: Amy Platinga
Pauw and Serene Jones**
**Louisville: Westminster/
John Knox, 2006, \$32.99**

This book is part of a series aimed at bringing classical Reformed dogmatics into conversation with the contemporary church. This particular volume

draws upon Reformed doctrines and reads these in light of feminist and Womanist convictions. While many think that mixing Reformed dogmatics and feminist theology is akin to joining oil and water, the editors of this volume would beg to differ. Serene Jones and Amy Platinga Pauw have assembled a wealth of authors, all of whom are theologians within Reformed churches within the United States, except one author, Margit Ernst-Habib, who writes from within the Protestant Reformed Church in Germany. These essays represent, in my view, a certain maturing of feminist theology, displaying not merely the posture of “suspicion” toward previous theologies, but also a considered appreciation of the gift of tradition, viewing it with the kind of nuance and rigour that was often missing in previous revisionist strategies.

The editors set the tone for the anthology with a definition of feminist and Womanist theologies as those which, “take special interest in the lives of women, their stories, their social roles and relations, and their flourishing and failures, and their multilayered experiences of oppression.” So far there is little to distinguish this proposal’s vision from that of earlier descriptions of the task of feminist theology. But the editors continue to add a rather surprising