



# What's New in the History of Christianity?

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## Abstract

Current scholarship shows a growing commitment to study churches outside the West and to allow their histories to shape the way the overall narratives are told. New research, employing a range of methodologies, focuses on minority religious traditions and the complexities of lived religion.

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What's new in the history of Christianity? Two overarching themes guide current research. First, the geographical range of Christianity has expanded. New churches around the globe and old churches in places new to Western scholarly attention are being studied and telling their own histories. Historiography will itself expand and change as these stories are incorporated into the overall history of Christianity. Second, new interests are complexifying standard narratives. Scholars are becoming increasingly aware of the diversities that exist and have existed among those who identify themselves as Christians. Minority traditions and the history of groups not previously included are receiving focused attention. Studies of "lived religion" (described below) proliferate. Within these themes, methodologically, the current wisdom seems to be that more is better. Collections of essays, which might a few decades ago have been critiqued for lacking unity, are now praised for employing "a robust methodological pluralism"<sup>1</sup> as historians of Christianity stress the multiple layers of interaction shaping lives of faith. New questions have prompted the use of new sources, contributing to this complexity.

An excellent series of recent review articles on the state of the field published in *Church History* highlight the thematic and methodological complexity that is increasingly expected. Introducing the series and noting the scholarly energy devoted to the "social history of the Christian past," Hans Hillerbrand writes, "Thematically, recent historiography has demonstrated an awareness that the study of Christian history in the past had the tendency to ignore a part of the story – women, outsiders, heretics – and that a richer picture of Christian history emerges by a more inclusive approach."<sup>2</sup> Writing about late antiquity, David Brakke says that there has been an "explosion of work in the field, which makes any attempted overall narrative vulnerable to charges of oversimplification."<sup>3</sup> Reflecting on changes in the historical investigation of the Middle Ages in

Europe, John Van Engen asserts, "We would now find it nearly impossible to imagine study of the medieval church apart from the issues raised by [recent] works: literacy and discourse; women, bodies, and asceticism; clerics and power; images, devotion and culture . . . [I]t is fair for historians to focus on one or another of the understandings of medieval religion, or to find most telltale or exciting points of tension or competition (which were certainly real), or to emphasize a plurality of religious cultures. What needs attention, however, are approaches that, depending upon time and place, allow for their simultaneous presence, several affecting the same person or community."<sup>4</sup> Discussing twentieth-century Christianity, Hartmut Lehmann sees "the need for an international perspective of the discourse of church historians, the need for more intercultural comparison, and the need for a transdisciplinary approach."<sup>5</sup> From across the field, practitioners agree that the whole is getting larger and more complex.

### *Geographical Expansion: De-centering the West*

Geographical expansion is posing the most fundamental challenge to the history of Christianity. One impetus here is demographic change. Philip Jenkins' *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) details historical demographic shifts, noting that Western numerical dominance of Christianity existed for only about five hundred years. Eastern traditions were stronger in early centuries and, most recently, the church's center of gravity has shifted to the southern hemisphere. This suggests the need to de-center the West from the overall story of Christian history, presenting its history as one significant stream among others. Jenkins further suggests that the new majority of Christians are characterized by theological conservatism and practices rooted in charismatic gifts such as prophecy and healing, and he wonders if this will provoke a kind of "counter-reformation" from Christians grounded in traditions of liberalism and rationalism.<sup>6</sup> His assumptions about the differences between western and non-western Christians have been challenged, as has his take on what makes for authentic Christianity, but he has set out significant terms of debate.

A second impetus to geographical expansion is missionary experience. Although from the beginning a religion with the world in view, most histories of Christianity have not been worldwide in scope. Andrew Walls has been a clarion voice calling for inclusion of non-Western churches, particularly newer churches and their histories, in the full history of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> It is vital, he claims, to allow their histories, particularly the agency they have exercised on the church itself, to shape the way the narrative of Christianity is told. Especially provocative is his suggestion that the early centuries of churches in sub-Saharan Africa (the region with which he is most familiar) constitute an important interpretive tool for understanding the early centuries of the church around the Mediterranean.

His article "Eusebius Tries Again" lays down the challenge. "New church history writing must deal with the interaction between a Christianity formulated in relation to Western needs and conditions and a whole series of other cultures with histories of their own. If church history writing is to recount the whole story of the faith of Christ, it must explore how that story has, since the sixteenth century, been determined, directly or indirectly, by the world which first burst upon Western Christian consciousness at that time. Not until the twentieth century did it become clear how substantial that impact had been. And the task of catching up with that development academically has hardly yet begun."<sup>8</sup>

But it has begun. While writing the history of missions has been underway for some time, much of this was done from the point of view of the missionaries and somewhat later from that of those who criticized them for cultural imperialism.<sup>9</sup> Current scholarship is becoming more nuanced, building on these earlier trends but expanding beyond reception into the history of the appropriation of Christianity, its transformation into local cultures and idioms, and its spread outward again into other cultures. Lamén Sanneh is a prominent voice here, from his seminal *Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989) to his recent *Whose Religion Is Christianity: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). For indications of the impact global Christianity may have on Christian historiography, see *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History* (Wilbert R. Shenk, ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). The final essay in the volume sets an agenda for future work including cooperative and comparative histories between regions; developing a register of historical sources for Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America; and addressing linguistic hurdles and cultural and epistemological assumptions.<sup>10</sup>

In keeping with this geographical expansion in the history of Christianity, there are burgeoning numbers of studies of the history of Christianity in particular locations. These works include the themes of untold stories and lived religion discussed below, as well as institutional and theological developments, biographies of early leaders, etc. Given the great breadth of what needs to be studied, many good works here are collaborative efforts. Reviews in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* serve as reliable guides.

A growing number of survey books seek to reflect the global nature of Christianity. Adrian Hastings' *A World History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) has chapters on the Early Church, India, Asia, Latin America, China, Australasia and the Pacific, Europe and North America each written by an expert in the field. Although each chapter tends to be dense, the basic framework on which a fuller history could be fleshed out is presented. Its bibliographies are very good. More accessible to beginning students is Dale Irvin and Scott Sunquist's *History of the World Christian Movement* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), which aims to

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treat East and West even-handedly with attention to regions of ongoing expansion. Only the first volume (to 1453) is currently available, but a companion volume of primary sources (quite well-chosen) has just been published.<sup>11</sup>

##### *New Interests: Untold Stories and Lived Religion*

Turning now to new interests within more traditional locales of the history of western Christianity,<sup>12</sup> we find that enrichment and complexification of what we already know is the order of the day, first via the uncovering and inclusion of previously untold stories and second via attention paid to lived religion.

Women constitute a large category of those whose stories were previously untold. Their study and the use of gender as an analytical category has been very active in recent decades. This aspect of the history of Christianity seems to be particularly sensitive to fluctuations in approaches taken in other academic disciplines.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the field, there is a recognition that simply studying “women” is insufficient; there must be further attention to other [categories] such as marital status, generation, class and race. For instance, Kate Cooper’s *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* shows how disruptive Christian asceticism was, not only to particular families, but also to the wider social modes of negotiating status in which aristocratic chaste matrons contributed to men’s suitability for public office.

Driven by the desire to listen to real women, historians have become increasingly skilled at drawing out their stories from the extant sources, written and material. Two good examples of this are Amy Hollywood’s *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995) and Catherine Mooney’s edited volume, *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). By careful attention to gender and genre, these works demonstrate that the voices of holy women are recoverable in the texts set down by the male religious who recorded their lives. The resulting portrait does not supercede, but complexifies the understanding of medieval mystical women as very bodily-focused, an influential model rooted in the work of Caroline Walker Bynum.<sup>14</sup>

The distinction between public and private is often raised, and blurred, in studies of historical women. The essays in Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker’s *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) show that while women’s public preaching was repeatedly denounced, women continued to deliver religious discourses to others in the name of God, negotiating the available ambiguities in cultural definition and opportunity. The twentieth century has seen women move into public leadership in

many Christian denominations, helping to foster a flood of studies on women, especially in North America.

Along with women, the current interest in previously untold stories has taken up those named as heretics and those of minority religious traditions. There is a growing recognition of the alternatives available in any given community and in their mutual interactions, whether analyzed through the categories of inclusion/exclusion or tolerance/intolerance<sup>15</sup>. Any number of recent titles includes the word "Contested."

This multiplicity is a very strong emphasis in studies of late antique Christianity, especially as this portion of the field has moved away from a "history of Christianity" paradigm to a "late antique" paradigm, placing the study of Christians squarely within the religiously plural culture of late antiquity.<sup>16</sup> Following on the work of Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1986), the tenuousness of Christianity in its early centuries is better understood. David Frankfurter's *Religion in Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), for example, argues for the continuing strength of local religion.

Fine work has been done on many groups in medieval Europe who did not fit neatly into a traditional Christendom model. See for instance Anne Brenon on the Cathars and Euan Cameron on the Waldenses who present these movements as offering alternative visions and practices.<sup>17</sup> Walter Simons' *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) offers an insightful portrait of Beguine development, social composition, and vernacular spirituality.

In Reformation scholarship, there is growing evidence that established religions were contested by the active presence of other confessions. The English Reformation may be taken as a case in point. Against *The English Reformation* of A. G. Dickens (London: B. T. Batsford, 1964) arguing for popular enthusiasm for Protestantism, revisionist historians in the 80s and 90s, most notably Eamon Duffy in his massive *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), stressed grassroots reluctance to change and enduring commitment to Catholicism.<sup>18</sup> More recently, Christopher Marsh in *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: Holding Their Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) has offered a moderating thesis of gradual accommodation built on the traditional values of obedience and communal charity. Martyrdom intensely focuses the conflict between a dominant religion and alternative communities. Brad Gregory's *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) does a masterful job of showing the shared convictions of martyrs and martyring communities as well as the distinctives of the Protestant, Catholic and Anabaptist martyrs in the early modern period.

Turning to the United States, Diana Eck is the leading expositor of contemporary religious plurality in America. Her *A New Religious America:*

*How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001) highlights the many religious groups established in the United States, reaching well beyond Christianity. African Americans are recovering and telling their histories. For instance, the works of Dwight N. Hopkins show historical ties between Africans and African-Americans and deliberately use historical experience as a resource for constructing contemporary theology.<sup>19</sup> In keeping with historians' diachronic interest in the religious significance of human bodies, Anthony Pinn's *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003) argues that "black history and black religion are ways of reading black bodies as religious texts."<sup>20</sup> Mormons too are garnering scholarly attention. This area has been substantially shaped by Jan Shipps, who has adopted the role of an empathetic outsider who has spent enough time inside the community to explain it to others. Her recent *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000) confirms her early thesis (*Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) that Mormonism was not simply cult or localized denomination, but a religious movement. She further argues that Mormonism has successfully transitioned into a world religion in the years since World War II.<sup>21</sup>

Pentecostals have now entered the mainstream of Christian historiography. Grant Wacker's *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) leads the discussion of American Pentecostalism. He offers "an account of the early Pentecostal temperament, the nuances of experience and behavior that ordinary insiders wrote about, testified to, and exhorted others to taste and feel."<sup>22</sup> His analysis includes the interplay between primitivism and pragmatism that contributes to the transformation of daily reality for believers.<sup>23</sup> Important recent works addressing the international nature of the movement include Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origin and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), and Murry W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Irvine, CA: Regnum Books, 1999), a collection of essays, mostly by Pentecostal scholars, reflecting the theological diversity of the movement.

Alongside the stories of previously understudied groups, "lived religion" is also an animating interest of current historians of Christianity. This overlaps with interests dubbed "popular piety" and "material religious culture." The two-tiered model of elite and popular culture has significantly faded in the recognition that all in a given historical community were subject to multiple influences.<sup>24</sup> Robert Orsi avers, "The key questions concern what people do with religious idioms, how they use them, what they make of themselves and their worlds with them, and how, in turn, men, women, and children are fundamentally shaped by the worlds they

are making as they make these worlds.”<sup>25</sup> In investigating lived religion, historians are often using sources that may not be of great literary or artistic merit, but which offer windows onto the ongoing life of Christians. Sermons, catechisms, devotional literature, religious jewelry and clothing, devotional objects, hymns, drama, images, food, wills, parish records, etc. are being creatively employed. Here again the theme of increasing richness and complexity is borne out. The lived religion approach tends to stress continuities where older historiography has stressed change, as well as stressing diversity in the face of established or dominant religious cultures, as noted above.

In this vein, an outstanding book for late antiquity is Averil Cameron's *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Sather Classical Lectures 55, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). She demonstrates the importance of language and imagery in creating a Christian “intellectual and imaginative universe,” elastic and inviting enough to draw in pagans from a wide social spectrum via homilies, saints' lives, and especially personal contact.<sup>26</sup>

The lived religion approach has been particularly fruitful for the Middle Ages, following the lead of such scholars as Carolyn Walker Bynum and Richard Kieckhefer who have made intelligible those whose practices (such as extremes of fasting and weeping) seem at first quite foreign to contemporary Western sensibilities.<sup>27</sup> Excellent examples of this approach for the Middle Ages are Rachel Fulton's *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), setting changes in devotion in contexts of cultural change; Miri Rubin's *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), using the lens of the new feast of Corpus Christi to show how religious idioms traveled through late medieval culture, and Katherine Jansen's *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), tracing the growth of the cult of Mary Magdalene as a penitential saint, rather than as a preacher, using sermons and imagery. In an illuminating study of “ordinary” people, Katherine French in *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) shows how parish life was not simply directed by the clergy, but developed its own liturgical, administrative and social traditions in the midst of local limitations and opportunities.

An important subset of the attention to lived religion is an interest in spirituality and mysticism. The ever-growing series, *Classics of Western Spirituality*, begun just over 25 years ago, continues to set a high standard for texts and interpretive introductions covering the breadth of Christian history and traditions. The *World Spirituality* series also offers a useful set of short articles.<sup>28</sup> Bernard McGinn is the leading overall interpreter here. He is writing a projected five-volume series, *The Presence of God: A*

History of Western Christian Mysticism, the most recent volume of which is *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200–1350)* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), highlighting vernacular religiosity and the interactions between women and men in the high Middle Ages.

For the Reformation era<sup>29</sup>, an important question grounded in lived religion is, How significant were the changes this age saw? While sixteenth-century people are on record as seeing tremendous change in their day and many wrote to distinguish their confession from those of others, some contemporary scholars tend to stress continuities with the later Middle Ages (including an ongoing interest in reform) and the parallels between various Protestant and Catholic groups. Grounded in the work of the late Heiko Oberman, this trend has recently been promoted by Thomas Brady and James Tracy.<sup>30</sup> A second influential approach, also rooted in lived religion, is that of confessionalization. Historians following this model, such as Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, focus on the role of the early modern state in shaping confessional religious cultures, especially as they exercised social discipline to bring about local unity.<sup>31</sup> Studies of lived religion, coupled with the growing knowledge of minority religious traditions, have helped to indicate the limits of such endeavors. A delightful example is *A Bishop's Tale: Mathias Hovius Among his Flock in Seventeenth-century Flanders* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Authors Craig Harline and Edy Put paint a portrait of the multi-faceted pressures this bishop was under and tell of his successes and failures as he sought to implement Tridentine reform.

In modern European religious history, the experience of the Nazi era has garnered a great deal of interest as well as the relationship between religion and politics more generally. Hartmut Lehmann sees the “the rise and triumph of ‘political religions,’ that is, of ideologies of a pseudo-religious nature that served to legitimate totalitarian systems” as one of the most marked characteristics of the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup>

For lived religion in America, the works of Robert Orsi are noteworthy for empathetically opening up the world of Catholic devotion, showing what Catholics have done with ethnic traditions and official teachings to help them thrive in the new world. *Thank you, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Lost Causes* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996) traces the development of a new devotion helping the daughters and granddaughters of European immigrants express their own needs and shape their world in the midst of expectations placed on them by family, church and culture. Increased complexity is one of the stated goals of Colleen McDannell's 1995 *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press). Wanting to “scramble” the categories of sacred and profane, she illuminates how American Christians use objects in their religious practices, from treasuring family Bibles to visiting religious theme parks. Hers is the leading example of a material culture approach for the period.

### Looking Ahead

While relatively little attention has been directed in the last several decades to intellectual history and historical theology, there are signs of its return in the midst of other interests. Henri de Lubac's classic *Medieval Exegesis*, tracing the history of the traditional four senses of scripture, was reprinted in 1998 (2 Vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans). This tradition of a multiplicity of meanings fits the current attention to richness and complexity. E. Brooks Holifield's *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) is a study in intellectual history, but one with a keen ear for the role theology played in public discussion and the impact it had on social issues. This carefully wrought book ends with a discussion of differing interpretations of the Bible with respect to slavery on the eve of the Civil War; a second volume is expected. There has also been a huge upsurge of recent interest in the early American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards. George Marsden's *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) is the pre-eminent synthesis of fresh scholarship. Here a cultural historian turns his attention to the theological matrix of Edwards, presenting him as thoroughly grounded within an international Reformed movement, as well as within familial, social and political structures.

The narrowly-focused studies which are the dominant genre in the field of the history of Christianity today are beginning to become the building blocks of new syntheses, presenting larger trends and connections. The bar for such endeavors has been raised by the ongoing commitment to complexity, but we need to see what this all amounts to. Two recent works may be mentioned. Dairmaid MacCulloch, a noted scholar of the English Reformation, has recently published *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Viking, 2004). An early review by Brad Gregory, on the one hand, praises it for "its geographical reach, comparative acumen, integration of religion and politics, and analysis of social and cultural change." On the other hand, Gregory castigates MacCulloch for treating Catholics less satisfactorily and sympathetically than Protestants. In a telling commentary on the present state of the field, Gregory concludes, "An enormously ambitious book, precisely because it seeks to do so much, is bound to draw criticisms of various kinds. In its own way, that is a tribute of a very high order. Whatever its shortcomings, MacCulloch's achievement is remarkable, and demonstrates that notwithstanding the vitality and volume of Reformation scholarship in recent decades, an individual scholar can indeed render the whole in impressive fashion."<sup>33</sup>

The second portrays the history of Christianity in America. The narrative articulated by Perry Miller and Sydney Ahlstrom from the 1950s forward claimed that Puritanism and the Reformed tradition shaped mainstream American Christianity. This is now challenged by those who claim that evangelicalism, especially Methodism, deserves center stage. Mark Noll's

*America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) posits that a “potent compound of evangelical Protestant religion, liberal republican political ideology, and commonsense moral reasoning came to infuse public life within the new nation, and its plausibility, flexibility, and popularity were the key to the remarkable Christianization that took place in both North and South between 1790 and 1865.”<sup>34</sup>

In conclusion, the history of Christianity is a thriving and lively field. As our geographical and internal horizons expand, our overall sense of task is growing. Much as Christians affirm both four gospels and one Gospel, it still makes sense to talk about Christianity, not simply “christianities,” even as scholars delve deeply into a multiplicity of particularities.<sup>35</sup> Christianity includes Augustine and Jarena Lee, it drums in worship and sings Gregorian chant, it elevates elaborate chalices and wears Jesus T-shirts, it creates martyrs and heals bodies and souls. Having grown from small groups of Jesus’ followers in and around Jerusalem to establish churches to the ends of the earth, vast numbers of Christians have their histories to tell, showing how they have lived out their religion in the midst of their daily lives. It is an exciting time to be listening.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Garces-Foley. Rev. of *Christianity, Social Change, and Globalization in the Americas*. Eds. Anna L. Peterson, Manuel A. Vasquez, and Philip J. Williams. *Sociology of Religion* 64:3 (2003), 417.

<sup>2</sup> Hans J. Hillerbrand, “Introduction,” *Church History* 71:3 (2002), 471.

<sup>3</sup> David Brakke, “The Early Church in North America: Late Antiquity, Theory, and the History of Christianity,” *Church History* 71:3 (2002), 474.

<sup>4</sup> John Van Engen, “The Future of Medieval Church History,” *Church History* 71:3 (2002), 507.

<sup>5</sup> Hartmut Lehmann. “The History of the Twentieth-Century Christianity as a Challenge for Historians” *Church History* 71:3 (2002), 586.

<sup>6</sup> This point is made clearly in Jenkins’ “The Next Christianity,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (October, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> See Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> In *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*. Ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 2.

<sup>9</sup> The historiography of the U.S. missionary endeavor can be found in Dana L. Robert’s “From Missions to Mission to Beyond Missions: The Historiography of American Protestant Foreign Missions since World War II,” in Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart, eds. *New Directions in American Religious History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 362–93.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Hutchinson, Pablo Deiros, Klaus Korschorke, Donald Lewis and Melba Maggay, “The Ongoing Task: Agenda for a Work in Progress,” 115–123, especially 122–123.

<sup>11</sup> John W. Coakley and Andrea Sterk, eds. *Readings in World Christian History*. Vol. 1: Earliest Christianity to 1453 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Orthodoxy has not greatly impacted western historical interest. The standard treatment is Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church*. New ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1993). Also helpful is Donald Fairbairn, *Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Clark identifies tensions between “textualists” who value the insights of literary theory, “social historians” who use an analytic model, and those doing “gender studies” who

stress a hermeneutical approach in "Women, Gender, and the Study of Christian History," *Church History* 70:3 (2001), 395. See also Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Women, Gender, and Church History," *Church History* 71:3 (2001), 600–620.

<sup>14</sup> Bynum's works, especially *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) and *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) continue to exert influence on the field. Similarly important for the early church is Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> E.g., Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims, and "Pagans" in Medieval Hungary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 900–1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

<sup>16</sup> Brakke, "Early Church in North America," 475. This includes a greater stress on synchronic questions than on diachronic ones.

<sup>17</sup> Anne Brenon, *Les Cathars: une église chrétienne au bûcher* (Toulouse: Milan, 1998); Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> See also Christopher Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

<sup>19</sup> Dwight N. Hopkins, *Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue: Black Theology in the Slave Narratives* (Nashville: Westminster John Knox, 2003); *Shoes that Fit Our Feet: Sources for a Constructive Black Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> As described by Noel Leo Erskine, Review in *Theology Today* 61:2 (2004). ProQuest. 30 Sept. 3004. <<http://www.proquest.umi.com>>.

<sup>21</sup> See Philip Barlow, "Jan Shipps and the Mainstreaming of Mormon Studies," *Church History* 73:2 (2004), 412–26.

<sup>22</sup> E. Brooks Holifield, Rev. of *Heaven Below* by Grant Wacker. *Church History* 71:1 (2002), 215. This review includes a substantial list of books on various aspects of Pentecostalism.

<sup>23</sup> Also noteworthy in light of the rising interest in historical theology noted below is Douglas Jacobsen's *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> This may be credited to seminal works such as Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); John Van Engen, "The Christian Middle Ages as a Historiographical Problem," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 519–552; and William A. Christian, Jr. *Local Religion in Sixteenth Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>25</sup> Robert Orsi, "Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live in?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42 (2003), 169–74. 28 Sept. 2004. FirstSearch: WilsonSelectPlus. <<http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org>>.

<sup>26</sup> As described in Carl A. Volz's review, *Church History* 61:4 (1992): 437–8. I am grateful to Georgia Frank for drawing this book to my attention.

<sup>27</sup> In addition to the works of Bynum mentioned above, see *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) and *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001). See also Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), and "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion." In *Christian Spirituality, High Middle Ages and Reformation*. Edited by Jill Raitt. World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest, vol. 17. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989.

<sup>28</sup> For Christianity, see *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, eds. Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff, World Spirituality Vol. 16 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt, World Spirituality Vol. 17 (New York: Crossroad, 1987); *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, eds. Louis Dupré and Don E. Saliers, World Spirituality Vol. 18 (New York: Crossroads, 1989).

<sup>29</sup> The proper naming of this era is debated. John O'Malley's *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) offers a clear historiographical survey of the Catholic side, recognizing the value of various labels (Counter Reformation, Catholic Reform, Early Modern Catholicism) and encouraging a breadth of usage.

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<sup>30</sup> An influential reference work incorporating this approach is the *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600*. Eds. Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy. 2 Vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994–5).

<sup>31</sup> Heinz Schilling, ed., *Kirchenzucht und Socialdisziplinierung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa (Mit einer Auswahlbibliographie)*, Zeitschrift für historische Forschung, Beiheft 16 (Berlin, 1994); Wolfgang Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State," *Catholic Historical Review* 75 (1989), 383–404. See also R. Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550–1750* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> "The History of the Twentieth-Century Christianity as a Challenge for Historians" *Church History* 71:3 (2002), 586. Politics and religion are of interest outside the modern period as well. For example, Harold A. Drake's *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), is quite provocative, claiming that Christian intolerance emerged as a political rather than theological issue.

<sup>33</sup> Brad Gregory, "Half the Story," Review of *The Reformation: A History* by Dairmaid MacCulloch, *Commonweal* 131:10 (2004), 22–23.

<sup>34</sup> Grant Wacker, "How *America's* God Became, Well, *America's* God," Review of *America's God* by Mark A. Noll, *Church History* 72:3 (2003), 620. For a synthetic treatment of Roman Catholicism in the US, see Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> Both the History of Christianity Section of the American Academy of Religion and the American Society of Church History are committed to presenting both the diachronic and the synchronic study of Christian history.