rituals, but again, she was denied. In the last petition, James signed her letter to Smith as "Your Sister in the Gospel"—which became the title of Newell's book.

Newell expertly explains that Manning understood all too well that her skin color disenfranchised her in her new faith, yet she and her family were drawn to the Mormon message of salvation. Many of Mormonism's unique religious practices spoke to her directly: Mormonism's emphasis in speaking in tongues, prophetic revelation, healing gifts, and Mormon salvific rituals and rites. Jane also developed a kinship with fellow (white) sisters in the all-woman Mormon Relief Society, a philanthropic organization started in Nauvoo in 1842. In this tightly-knit community, the Relief Society supported James her during moments of financial distress and grief but also provided spiritual sustenance when the larger church seemed to fail her.

Familiarly known as "Aunt Jane" to her fellow Latter-day Saints, Manning demonstrated her commitment to the church when she followed Latter-day Saints to the Great Basin in Utah, where she lived until her death in 1908. As Newell chronicles this story, she acknowledges the limitations of her scant sources, yet with her critical eye for detail, rigorous interrogation of extant sources, and creative imagination, she has provided a probing account of a seminal yet overlooked figure in the annals of Mormonism. Newell also includes several arresting accounts of Manning in Mormon historical memory, demonstrating that by the twenty-first century James had evolved among the Latter-day Saint faithful—so much so that she became the subject of plays, musicals, and Mormon prayer candles.

Newell's work is a wonderful reminder of what can be accomplished with limited sources. But, more importantly, she provides a model of how to write about the lived religion of marginalized voices and how to include them into our narratives, whether it be that of a black Mormon woman like Jane Manning James or marginalized voices in other faith traditions. For this effort, and more, we are in her debt. Newell has done historians of Mormonism and Religious Studies a great service.

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Hard-Fighting Soldiers: A History of African American Churches of Christ. By **Edward J. Robinson**. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2019. xxvii + 224 pp. $54.00 cloth.

Denominational history is a genre too often neglected in serious scholarship in United States religious history. Fear of charges of hagiography and institutional triumphalism probably chase some scholars and students away from these projects. This neglect has had negative consequences for African American religious history because important aspects of black belief and practice are left unexamined. The publication of Edward J. Robinson's study of African American Churches of Christ, a network of congregations associated with a loosely structured, predominantly white ecclesia, is a partial redress to these concerns. Shaped by the Stone-Campbell restorationist movement, this black religious body, like its white counterparts, functioned as a virtual denomination through an aggregation of churches, lectureships, periodicals, and schools. Though largely aloof from white governance, except for fiscal interactions pertaining to

missionary and evangelistic support, the independent African American Churches of Christ represented a hybrid ecclesia with characteristics that typified three types of black ecclesiastical organizations. This alliance resembled the autonomy embedded in the historic black denominational bodies, the semiautonomous black judicatories and associations within the predominantly white religious bodies, and the voluntary associations of independent congregations, like the black Baptists, that morphed into formal ecclesiastical organizations. In a blend of these characteristics, African American Churches of Christ emerged as an identifiable religious community that differed from blacks in the largely white and formally structured Disciples of Christ, another Stone-Campbell body. These comparisons locate the polity of African American Churches of Christ on this diverse spectrum of black ecclesial bodies. Moreover, the antebellum origins of some black Churches of Christ, despite their relationship to slaveholders in Stone-Campbell churches, paralleled the contemporaneous rise of Northern and Southern black congregations in other denominations.

The Robinson study revolves mainly around three themes. First, he stresses that molding black Churches of Christ into a distinct religious community drew mostly from the aggressive evangelistic and organizational efforts of an intergenerational cadre of zealous African American clergymen. Second, Robinson casts the development of black Churches of Christ within the larger milieu of major events in African American history and shows that some ministers and members supported movements against black subjugation. Third, the largely uncritical espousal of the Stone-Campbell restorationist doctrine led black Churches of Christ to define themselves in opposition to the creedal positions of black Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal bodies.

Beginning in the postbellum period, succeeding cohorts of zealous black clergy evangelized African Americans, founded churches, and established educational and journalist entities that forged fellow black adherents into a parallel Churches of Christ ecclesia. For example, Samuel R. Cassius, a former Virginia slave, converted to the Stone-Campbell movement in the 1880s and planted black congregations in Oklahoma and California. Marshall Keeble, born in Tennessee in 1878 and among the most prolific preachers in building a black Churches of Christ infrastructure, attracted innumerable converts who in turn populated the several congregations he established in Tennessee, Texas, and elsewhere. Later, in the 1940s Keeble led the recently founded Nashville Christian Institute. G. P. Bowser, another fervent minister, founded the *Christian Echo* in 1902, which highlighted the distinctive religious voice of blacks in the Churches of Christ. Bowser also established schools in Nashville and Fort Smith, Arkansas, as well as an annual lectureship. These and other ministers constructed an organizational framework for the black Churches of Christ that provided cohesion to this otherwise loose association of congregations.

Despite the anti-slavery and racial egalitarian sentiments of some Stone-Campbell founders, numerous white progenitors and members owned slaves and supported the South's subsequent segregationist regime in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Only a few black Churches of Christ adherents were outspoken in their advocacy of African American rights, but were mostly deferential to the racial paternalism exhibited by white Churches of Christ benefactors. Such preachers as Samuel R. Cassius, however, were uncompromising in backing the black freedom struggle. He used the pages of the *Christian Echo*, for example, to support the NAACP and to denounce the racist movie *Birth of a Nation* which celebrated the Ku Klux Klan. In the modern civil rights movement, black Churches of Christ youth joined militant groups such as the Congress of Racial Equality, and they and their parents joined efforts to desegregate public schools.

Fred D. Gray, a black Churches of Christ minister and lawyer, became legal counsel for Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference through the 1950s and 1960s. These activities from Cassius to Gray, Robinson argues, belied "the myth of the silent church" in describing the black Churches of Christ.

The Stone-Campbell movement, starting with the Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky in 1801, stressed adherence to the doctrine and practices of the early church. Blacks, in embracing this restorationist creed, espoused "pure worship," which eschewed instrumental music, and "hard theology," which emphasized Biblical literalism. These tenets constituted the Churches of Christ as the "one true church." Despite the segregated spaces that African American churches occupied, black Churches of Christ preachers and parishioners routinely declared that neighboring Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches erred in their beliefs and practices. They asserted, for example, that the three modes of baptism in Methodist doctrine and the exuberant emotionalism of the Pentecostals lacked Biblical support. Robinson, in noting these contested perspectives, needed to clarify how the asymmetry of Stone-Campbell restorationism interacted with the emancipationist themes embedded in the same black religious heritage that black Churches of Christ adherents shared with other African American Christians. Did the example of Fred D. Gray, the consequential civil rights attorney, demonstrate how this paradox was reconciled?

Robinson's study reminds scholars and students in United States religious history that black denominational diversity extends beyond the historic African American churches. Moreover, he suggests that doctrinal tensions often roiled interchurch relationships and that a limited focus on the mainline black religious bodies may mask these significant creedal disagreements. Despite scant attention paid to African and African American religious idioms and how they infiltrated black Churches of Christ belief and practice, Robinson has widened the landscape of religious influences that have affected black Christianity.

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Birth Control Battles: How Race and Class Divided American Religion. By **Melissa J. Wilde**. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. xii + 285 pp. $29.95 paper.

Since the 1930s, organized religious groups in the United States have disagreed about the propriety of birth control. In *Birth Control Battles: How Race and Class Divided American Religion*, sociologist Melissa J. Wilde explores the fault lines that motivated some religious denominations to support birth control—some openly, some unofficially—and others to become fierce critics of it. Her study of 10,000 articles published in religious periodicals, sermons, census data, and the records of the American Eugenics Society reveals that anxieties about race and immigration—rather than gender and sex—and denominational support or opposition to the social gospel movement animated debates about birth control among thirty of the most prominent American religious groups between the 1930s and the 1960s.