

*Four steeples over the city streets. Religion and society in New York's early republic congregations.* By Kyle T. Bulthuis. Pp. xi + 273 incl. 22 figs. New York–London: New York University Press, 2014. \$39.978 1 4798 1427 5  
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This is a richly documented study of Anglican and Methodist Christianities in New York City during the early republic and antebellum periods. The book fits in one sense within the venerable genre of institutional church history. Bulthuis follows the life of four well-known, still-active congregations: Trinity Episcopal Church, John Street Methodist Chapel, Mother Zion African Methodist Church and St Philip's (African) Episcopal Church. Yet if his approach is in important ways conspicuously traditional, it is none the less deeply informed by the social and cultural turns. While Bulthuis attends to the many ways in which the clergy shaped congregational life in early nineteenth-century New York City, he also offers illuminating analyses of class, gender and race. He draws on a vast range of congregational and municipal records to trace the shifting occupational profiles of the four congregations, and moreover finds compelling new evidence for the now well-established fact that American women have long comprised a majority of the people in the pews: indeed, Bulthuis's digging reveals that while women comprised only 10 per cent of pew renters at Trinity Episcopal, they represented fully 64 per cent of communicants (p. 78). Many readers will doubtless find his extended treatment of African American church life especially rewarding. His intimate familiarity with both black religious worlds and the wider contexts in which they were situated yields, among other things, a convincing explanation of why it was St Philip's – and not the more racially progressive Mother Zion – that bore the brunt of white rage during the anti-abolition riots of 1834. One plot line that runs through the book pertains to how each of the four churches, having once aspired to a vision of 'organic unity', made their peace with the growing segmentation of the industrialising city. Bulthuis writes that, by the cusp of the Civil War, 'none had within their congregations the class and racial breadth of the colonial-era churches. Each congregation represented a slice of the city, not the full sweep of the city streets' (p. 200). This represents one of the more ambitious and satisfying story arcs in a book that does, at points, lose the proverbial forest for the trees. If, as a result, it fails to hold the attention of some generalists, it will nevertheless be of great help to those interested in how churches and cities grew up alongside one another in the early republic.

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*Religion around Emily Dickinson.* By W. Clark Gilpin. (Religion Around, 2.) Pp. x + 201 incl. frontispiece. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014. \$34.95. 978 0 271 06476 5  
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W. Clark Gilpin explores the poetry of one of nineteenth-century America's greatest writers. He examines how Evangelical Protestantism shaped Emily Dickinson's worldview and also how Dickinson's poetry illuminates the religious dimension of the surrounding culture. In particular, the volume reviews the religious practices, literature, architecture and ideas that were an inescapable feature of the Dickinson

family's everyday life in Amherst. The study also analyses how religion shaped the habits of thought, styles of expression and even daily routines of Dickinson's life. Here, Gilpin recovers how religious presuppositions affected the patterns of nineteenth-century New England social life, including, for example, the prevailing normative assumptions about gender roles. Yet religion did more than shape Dickinson and the culture around her. Through her poetry, as Dickinson famously put it, she proposed to 'tell all the truth, but tell it slant' (p. 8). At this level, Gilpin uncovers how Dickinson gave poetic expression to her religious thought and in this way she shaped religion. Two chapters explore how Dickinson reconfigured the classic Christian practice of solitude through reading, meditation and writing, all prominent ingredients of Christian devotion in New England since it was first colonised. The final two chapters examine how classic ideas of heaven, immortality and eternity empowered Dickinson to interpret experiential problems of mourning, desire and the transient nature of human life. Although not a biography in the traditional sense, the study does provide a useful introduction to Dickinson's life. More importantly, it uses Dickinson's poetry as a window into the religious thought, practice and imagination of nineteenth-century American Protestantism. This eloquently written volume provides a valuable resource for students of nineteenth-century American literature, religion and culture.

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*Reinventing the Reformation in the nineteenth century. A cultural history.* Edited by Peter Nockles and Vivienne Westbrooke. (*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 90/1.) Pp. 382. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014. £50 (paper). 2054 9318

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This latest edition of the *Bulletin* is a welcome addition to the growing corpus on the reception of Reformation thought. The theme of this collection of seventeen articles and two afterwords, together with a brief introduction, is the cultural history of the reinvention of the Reformation in the nineteenth century. The articles are categorised into three areas: invocation, reinvention and negotiation, and cover a wide range of literary, musical, economic, sociological and theological themes, to name but a few. Though such a range of subjects may beg the question of consistency and continuity, the articles are of a high standard, and their broad focus adds to the attraction of this volume. Richard Rex, in his introductory essay 'The morning star or the sunset of the Reformation?', sets the tone for the volume in that the perception of the Reformation in nineteenth-century England was under threat from the Enlightenment, Irish immigration and Catholic emancipation, as well as forces of reaction, and the increasing influence of the science of history. These forces could no longer be ignored insofar as they influenced the the Reformation legacy in Britain and Ireland. Eamon Duffy writes in his afterword that 'the writers of the Reformation in Nineteenth Century Britain were seldom if ever disinterested', and it is this lively engagement with the subject that shines through the vast majority of these essays. Of