

than a thinker with any sustaining vision. Yet, fade though he must within the shadows of his being a writer 'at the margins', as Hart calls him, he is likely to amuse a readership, including a religious clientele who, after the years since his death in 1956, no longer fears his darts. They will indeed be entertained and, we picture, may enjoy some chuckles during moments in which one can recognise the follies of the neighbour and, one hopes, of oneself.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MARTIN E. MARTY

'Our principle of sex equality'. The ordination of women in the Congregational Church in Australia, 1927–1977. By Julia Pitman. Pp. xviii + 328 incl. 68 figs. Melbourne, VIC: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016. A\$39.95 (paper).
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Julia Pitman's history of women's ordination within Australia's Congregational Church is a significant addition to a well-established body of scholarship on Western women and religion in the modern era. Through a careful and detailed excavation she shows how Congregational women 'enjoyed greater opportunities than women of other denominations to explore the possibilities of Christian citizenship'; how they 'assumed the prophetic role to negotiate access to priestly roles' within their Church; and ultimately how they took 'responsibility for the Church as well as for everyday life' up to the formation in 1977 of the Uniting Church in Australia (p. 24). In 1927 Australia was the third Congregational Church to ordain its women members after America (1853) and Britain (1917). Central to this book are the fifteen women ordained as Congregational ministers between 1927 and 1977. In this narration the first woman ordained – the Revd Winifred Kiek – is a pivotally-important figure. Short biographies of each woman are provided as an appendix, and other women's biographical details are an important feature of this history. As such Pitman's book is a good example of both reclamation and analytical history. It moves logically from contextual details (traversing Congregational, women's and Australian historiographical issues), to substantive chapters on women's prophetic role within Congregationalism, the evolution of women's ordination and the key roles played by Congregational women with respect to ecumenism in both its global and Australian settings. She uses this structure to argue that women's 'prophetic and priestly roles in their own church' (p. 118) positioned Congregational women particularly well to contribute to the wider Australian ecumenical movement and to the eventual formation of the Uniting Church in Australia. Here their influence was disproportionately greater, both in national and denominational terms, than their numbers. While it focuses on Australia, this is a history that makes many valuable links to wider dynamics, especially the development of Congregationalism beyond England (especially in white settler contexts); women and overseas missions (chapter ii is an excellent example of how to integrate the missionary elements of church life into a broader work of religious history which, in the process, brings both women and missions to the centre of writing religious history); women's interaction with and influence on the international peace movement and child welfare; women's public religion and the evolution of women's ordination; and the significance of ecumenism at both local and global levels. At the same time it is not uncritical. In particular settler

Congregational women contributed to the still contentious set of policies that separated Aboriginal parents and children. The book is well written and structured. The only quibble is the placing of captions in the prelims of the book rather than with each photograph. Overall this is a thoughtful and accessible synthesis of narrative and analysis that makes a valuable contribution to the wider history of women and religion.

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

HUGH MORRISON

Preacher girl. Uldine Utley and the industry of revival. By Thomas A. Robinson. Pp. xii + 320 incl. 19 ills. Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2016. \$49.95. 978 14

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Fundamentalists' war on theological modernism and cultural decadence in the 1920s often forged strange alliances in the United States. Contending for the old time religion and opposing Darwinism, alcohol, divorce and worldly entertainment united forces otherwise rent asunder by theology, ecclesiology and such contentious issues as the proper role of women in ministry. With America's identity as a Christian nation at stake, distinctions blurred in ways that challenge assumptions a century later on where the battle lines were drawn in postwar America. Revival in the Church and in American culture mobilised all sorts of crusaders in a common cause. Even child evangelists answered the call to do battle with the world, the flesh and the devil. Illuminating a forgotten field of that war, Thomas Robinson, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Lethbridge in Canada, reconstructs the story of Uldine Utley (1912–95), largely forgotten now but once as famous as Billy Sunday and any Hollywood starlet of the Jazz Age. Utley succeeded beyond anything she or her parents imagined in the revival 'industry' of the Twenties, drawing large crowds, attracting headline notice in the press, winning celebrity endorsements from leading Fundamentalists, and publishing her own magazine and sermon collections. John Roach Straton, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Manhattan, overrode the objections of his deacons to promote the child prodigy at the height of her career, sharing his pulpit with a child, a female, and a Pentecostal baptised in the Holy Spirit and blessed with the gift of tongues and faith healing. Utley began preaching at the age of eleven, soon after her conversion in Southern California under the ministry of Pentecostal revivalist Aimee Semple McPherson. She ended her public career at twenty-four, by then licensed and ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church. In this sympathetic account, Robinson confronts the dark side of fame, the costs imposed on a child evangelist by a rootless family life, and the suffering endured through mental illness. This is a recognisably human story. It puts a face on what are too often abstract categories. Robinson was both blessed and cursed by his discovery of a trove of new material late in the writing of his book. His unwieldy account ends up being two books – one an intimate family portrait, one a story of the big business of modern revivalism – that never really hold together. It is marred by disorganisation, repetition, extraneous details and a distracting amount of speculation that raises nagging questions about how much concrete evidence there is for many of his generalisations about