

Mary McLeod Bethune: Village of God. By Yahya Jongintaba. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. 2021. xxii + 285pp. \$60.00 hardcover.

The author considers this work, based on his years of research, a religious biography of the very devout Bethune. His close engagement with the spiritual life and work of his subject—Mary McLeod Bethune—includes three years teaching at the namesake school that she founded in 1904, which grew to collegiate- and now university-standing as Bethune-Cookman University. It remains the only extant college founded by an American woman. She presided over it as president until the 1940s. Immersing himself in the letters, speeches, and documents housed on campus in the Bethune-Cookman Collection, the author's mission is to define Bethune as a woman of God and to capture the spiritual legacy that flowed from her life of faith and purpose. This book is not concerned with the growing cache of Bethune scholarship that has produced significant insights into and about her multi-faceted public career as an educator, political insider, administrator, diplomat, and women's rights and civil rights leader. Rather, the single-minded exaltation of Bethune defines this work but also narrows its outlook to his stated purpose: the "beatification in the world church" of Mary McLeod Bethune (x).

This is a personal quest that included a name change for the author—from college professor Jon Michael Spencer to Yahya Jongintaba, village founder and spiritual leader. Jongintaba means one who looks at the mountain" in Swahili. His Village of God mission in Tanzania, in East Africa, is based upon Bethune's spiritual philosophy. The country that borders the Indian Ocean, with a backdrop of Mount Kilimanjaro, inspires a connection to Eden—paradise in the Book of Genesis. Using Bethune's life of Christian devotion, the Village of God is dedicated to the common good of all, with Bethune as its guiding light. Jongintaba identifies five virtues in Bethune's life as a Christian that sustain the outlook and philosophy of the Village: (1) Freedom; (2) Creativity; (3) Integrity; (4) Discipline; and (5) Love; and centers a chapter on each. Within this framework, he gives particular mention to Bethune's relationship with the eminent theologian Howard Thurman and his wife Sue Bailey Thurman. She worked closely with Bethune and became editor of *Women's World*, a journal that Bethune helped to launch in her capacity as founder and president of the National Council of Negro Women. Throughout, the author's reference to Bethune as "Mary" and luminaires like Howard Thurman by their first names implies a kinship of purpose that suggests a second objective: to anoint Jongintaba as heir to and inheritor of their spiritual/religious mantle. He enlists two early popular biographies of Bethune to buttress his case: *Mary McLeod Bethune: A Biography* by Rackham Holt (Doubleday, 1964) and *Mary McLeod Bethune* by Catherine Owens Peare (Vanguard Press, 1951), a biography for young readers. Both are valuable in having been initiated during Bethune's lifetime and for including interviews with her. However, Bethune sued Peare for misrepresentation and not fulfilling the terms of their contract. His mention of these early biographies helps elevate his own as more complete and definitive. Jongintaba does not neglect Bethune's role in women's leadership, and some of the primary sources that he quotes are gems. They include correspondence and speeches to multiple women's groups. In a notable speech to Japanese women, Bethune shows her global appeal and outreach. She draws comparisons between Black women in America and her Japanese hosts (109).

Contextualizing Bethune in religious, rather than broader, terms further endears her to a core constituency of the faithful, but that presentation is repetitive. Still Bethune's wisdom will shine through to a wider circle of admirers. Her unwavering faith extends to her optimistic view of American democracy, despite its troubled race relations. She acknowledged that the dreams of Black Americans for justice and equality were a long way from being realized.

Jongintaba quotes prolifically from her speeches at home and abroad to endorse his central metaphor of a spiritual village and finds several examples to confirm that notion. It is the backdrop for all her numerous accomplishments and informs her world view, he argues. This hopeful rendering extends not only to Black Americans but outward to the world. The bibliography is impressively ample, but the absence of an index dilutes that strength. Some casual readers who are among the many who revere Bethune may welcome this book as a tribute and reference point. It is something that the author clearly intends. Despite its limitations, Jongintaba can be counted among recent researchers who are bringing Bethune the scholarly attention she deserves. If this book ignites further study or helps to expand the legacy of this singular and most consequential American woman, it is to be commended.

Audrey Thomas McCluskey
Indiana University-Bloomington
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***Sectarianism and Renewal in 1920s Romania: The Limits of Orthodoxy and Nation-Building.* By Roland Clark. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. 232 pp. \$115.00 hardcover.**

The book authored by Dr. Roland Clark (University of Liverpool) describes the adventures of Romanian Orthodoxy and its relationship with various dissenting groups, within or outside, in the first decade after the unification of the Romanian state. The book aims to map the development of the Romanian Orthodox Church shortly after 1918 and the reaction of the Orthodox clergy to factionalism within through theological and missionary renewal but also the main characteristics of the emergent new evangelical groups inside the Orthodox fold (the Lord's Army and the Stork's Nest).

Accordingly, the author shapes his book into three parts. The first, entitled "A Modern, National Church" and subdivided into three chapters, discusses the new challenges addressed to Romanian Orthodoxy by the emerging problems and the rise of the new evangelical groups. The first chapter, "Romanian Orthodoxy," provides an overview of the prominent trends that characterized the development of missionary and catechetical practices after 1918. New approaches in missionary studies implemented by Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban (1878–1949) provided the much-needed theological justification for defending Orthodox faith from the sectarian challenge. "Renewal" discusses the integration of Western ideas by Bishop Vartolomeu Stănescu (1875–1954) in "social Christianity." It also addresses the turbulent relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) with the local Federația Asociației Studenților Creștini din Romania. While "social Christianity" remained a marginal intellectual project within the framework of the Orthodox Church, the YMCA received much more attention