

***Mainstreaming Fundamentalism: John R. Rice and Fundamentalism's Public Reemergence.* By Keith Bates. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2021. x + 226 pp. \$55.00 hardcover.**

John R. Rice (1895–1980) was one of the most influential Baptist fundamentalists of the twentieth century. Like his early mentor, J. Frank Norris, the strident pastor of the First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, Rice learned to condemn anyone he thought was an enemy of true doctrine or right living. His constant target was the Southern Baptist Convention, and he followed Norris out of the Convention to become an independent Baptist. Rice was a militant, but he also had a winsome style as an evangelist and Bible teacher. In 1934, he founded the *Sword of the Lord*, a weekly newspaper, which eventually reached sixty thousand subscribers. Evidently, Norris became jealous, and he accused Rice of embracing Pentecostalism (which was abhorrent to Baptists). Rice struck back, and the men parted ways.

That was the first in a series of harsh personal conflicts over Rice's career, marking what the author wryly calls "the education of a fundamentalist leader" (chapter 1's title). Rice never backed away from a dispute and this book gives several blow-by-blow accounts. It would be easy to caricature the inhabitants of this realm, but the author writes the story calmly and he patiently explains the content and situation of these interminable debates. He also exposes Rice's troubling views of race relations and of women but is careful to establish the context for each.

Rice's story has not received much scholarly coverage, probably because it appears to wander off into isolationism and irrelevancy. The author insists, however, that Rice was a catalyst in the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention and in the rise of the New Religious Right. Rice admired Jerry Falwell, a fellow independent Baptist who moved from denouncing America's apostasy from the pulpit to taking the fight into secular politics. Was that not a violation of separatist principles? No, said Rice. Separatism is for church affairs, not for politics. In times like these, Rice insisted, we need to reengage. So, Rice played a supportive role in Falwell's mobilizing fundamentalists to get back into right-wing politics.

John R. Rice has needed a good critical biography, and Keith Bates's argument that Rice left a large legacy also helps us better understand Southern fundamentalism.

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***Send Them Here: Religion, Politics and Refugee Resettlement in North America.* By Geoffrey Cameron. McGill-Queen's Refugee and Forced Migration Studies 4. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. xiv + 241 pp. Can\$37.95 paper.**

"A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence" and "has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social

group.” The 1951 Geneva Convention “clearly spells out who a refugee is and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from the countries who have signed the document” (“What is a Refugee? Definition and Meaning,” USA for UNHCR, 2021, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>).

Despite the apparent clarity of this definition, only a very small fraction of all persons who conform to it are able to receive resettlement in a country that signed. Instead, nations extend or deny refugee status according to their own standards. Acceptance hinges on factors such as race, religion, politics, nationality, social and economic conditions, and labor force issues. As a case in point, following the cessation of the war between the United States and Vietnam in April 1975, the U.S. Government gave eighty thousand Vietnamese refugee status in only three months. In contrast, two years after twelve thousand persons fled from the CIA-orchestrated coup against Chilean socialist president Salvador Allende, only twenty-six had been cleared to live in the United States (David M. Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* [Columbia University Press, 1985], p. 185).

Defining refugees is so complex and contradictory that much literature on the topic reflects the concerns of specific academic disciplines, political groups, religious traditions, and service delivery organizations. Consequently, there is a paucity of writing that presents wholistic, interdisciplinary, and integrated understandings of the ways by which refugees are defined and treated in diverse locations and circumstances.

In *Send Them Here: Religion, Politics and Refugee Resettlement in North America*, Geoffrey Cameron tackles these issues as he advances our understanding of refugee policy in the two countries—the United States and Canada—that were responsible for resettling 77 percent of all refugees globally between the years 2003 and 2017 (4).

Drawing on an exhaustive review of literature and a nuanced and inclusive historical analysis of U.S. and Canadian refugee policy, Cameron increases and broadens our understanding of the process by which these nations have dealt with often-conflicting interests, agendas, value systems, and welfare policies to develop flexible, widely accepted, and admired systems that have provided refuge to millions. Cameron asserts that religious traditions in existence prior to states’ involvement in refugee resettlement inspired Americans and Canadians to honor the assistance of refugees and immigrants as sacred obligations. The author does an impressive and thorough job of tracing the actions of religious groups as well as political parties, government agencies, and other social actors in building pro-refugee movements.

Cameron notes that at the conclusion of the conflict in Southeast Asia, both the United States and Canada passed comprehensive and wide-ranging refugee policies. These systematized each country’s refugee policies, which had been previously applied on an ad hoc basis. The 1976 Immigration Act of Canada and the United States’ Refugee Act of 1980 regulated entry, funding, and sponsorship arrangements for all entrants defined as refugees. These programs also outlined roles for religious and voluntary groups and for the distribution of government resources.

*Send Them Here* concludes with the author’s analysis of current patterns that have transformed refugee policies. He observes that Canada’s private refugee sponsorship program has become a tool for family unification, with between 95 and 99 percent of applications for sponsorship being utilized by extended family or close friends as of 2003 (166). Despite the possibility of some modifications, the author sees private sponsor arrangements as continuing to benefit Canadian family members rather than being devoted to the needs of broader, if less locally connected, constituencies.

With respect to the United States, Cameron notes that 2018 marked the smallest admission of refugees since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980. He attributes this constraint to a rise in nativism and the Trump Administration's embrace of anti-immigrant attitudes (167). Citing statements from directors of resettlement organizations, the author argues that limitations on refugee admissions not only constrain entry but further erode the constituencies, resources, and skills that the country's resettlement infrastructure has spent decades to build. In closing, Cameron suggests some basis for optimism regarding the possibility of improving conditions for refugee resettlement in the United States and Canada. At the same time, his analysis highlights the transformed role of religious organizations from that of resettlement advocates to exclusionists.

*Send Them Here: Religion, Politics and Refugee Resettlement in North America* is an impressive, ambitious, and multifocal study that scholars will find valuable as a comprehensive analysis of refugee resettlement policy.

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***A History of Christian Conversion.* By David W. Kling. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xvi + 852 pp. \$150.00 hardcover.**

David Kling's prodigious volume, *The History of Christian Conversion*, attempts to tackle two basic questions: What does Christian conversion mean? And why do people convert to Christianity? Kling notes that some approach these questions from an evangelical perspective, thinking of conversion as a sudden, individualistic change of the heart. Others, however, perceive the notion of conversion negatively, either as an act of coercion or as an example of triumphalist colonialization. Instead, Kling offers a more nuanced, if more modest, thesis: "the way in which conversion occurs and is expressed illumines the distinctive characteristics of Christianity in any given period" (xi). Using Lewis Rambo's sevenfold "typology of conversion" but also other models of conversion theory (including William James, A. D. Nock, Ramsay MacMullen, and Lane Fox), Kling attempts to explore a variety of conversion motifs: intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist, and coercive. Instead of privileging one form of conversion over another, Kling's work promises to explore a wide array of conversion "themes" throughout Christian history and across the globe.

Part 1, "The Roman World," covers the first through the late fourth century. Kling examines both New Testament accounts and early Christian thinkers (e.g., Justin Martyr, Cyprian, and Constantine) to identify a variety of reasons for Christian conversion: a sense of the divine, communal belonging, the promise of moral transformation, intellectual attraction, the example of martyrs, and strong leadership. Kling rightly concludes that "no single model of conversion predominated or defined Christianity in the first three centuries" (77). The post-Constantine period, however, marks a shift in conversion. Once Christianity became the privileged religion of the empire, motivations for conversion changed, and religious syncretism became more prominent, raising new questions about the meaning of conversion.