

found Paul and his letters as a viable tool for black resilience and empowerment. They were not unaware of how Paul's letters have questionable statements. As a matter of fact, they critically dealt with them in their own ways. In the midst of all of the imperfections, the black voices throughout the centuries worked with Paul and his letters as one of the many indispensable sources for resistance and transformation.

Dong Hyeon Jeong
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
doi:10.1017/S000964072200049X

A Marginal Majority: Women, Gender, and a Reimagining of Southern Baptists. Edited by Elizabeth H. Flowers and Karen K. Seat. America's Baptists. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2020. xl + 254 pp. \$60.00 hardcover; e-book available.

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) remains America's largest Protestant denomination, and the stories that its own historians have tended to tell about it have often conformed to a master narrative about the organization's rise to prominence and, later, its successful ejection of nonconservative leaders and influences from its boards and agencies. This account, while useful for fundraising and promotion, misses a number of facets of the denomination's history. The most important of these facets is the story of Southern Baptist women.

In this edited collection of uniformly well-written and thought-provoking essays, editors Elizabeth Flowers and Karen Seat present the results of a mission to "reimagine" the Southern Baptist past by focusing on the experiences of the denomination's women. The project hearkens back to the work of Ann Braude and Catherine Brekus, seeking to uncover the stories of women where they have previously been neglected and ignored, but also seeking through the application of this new perspective to revitalize denominational history and demonstrate its usefulness and importance to the historian of American religion at large.

Delane Tew's chapter, the first in the volume, may offer the most directly revisionist claim of any in the book. Tew notes that the Seventy-Five Million Campaign of 1919 to 1925, the Southern Baptist Convention's first major coordinated fundraising drive, was directly dependent upon the work of women in its committee structure and for its fundraising methods. Even though the leaders of the campaign themselves admitted as much in print during the waning months of the campaign, studies of the campaign have neglected women's roles. Other essays in the volume provide other direct forms of scholarly intervention; Carol Crawford Holcomb's essay, for instance, seeks to correct the commonplace that Progressive Era Southern Baptists were uniformly rural traditionalists when it came to social issues, citing publications and activities of the denomination's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). When the denomination's leading women are taken into account, Southern Baptists suddenly emerge as a group many of whose members were fully engaged with the Social Gospel, believing and teaching that their faith required close attention to social problems.

Flowers and Seat acknowledge in their introduction that "not every 'reimagining' will prove uplifting" (xvii). This mixed assessment is particularly appropriate as the authors

engage the question of Southern Baptist women and race. Joanna Lile's essay on race in the novels of Isla Mullins, the spouse of Southern Baptist leader E. Y. Mullins, is a sobering reminder that even urbane, broadminded Southern Baptist women held attitudes about race relations that assumed that racial harmony could best be achieved by looking back to human chattel slavery. At the same time, Melody Maxwell's essay on "Southern Baptist Women and Race Relations, 1945–1965" serves as a counterpoint. Maxwell not only shows that the publications of the WMU were significantly more vocal in their advocacy of racial equality than were the denomination's men, but she also ventures an explanation. Because of their gender, the women of the SBC found themselves restricted to working almost uniformly on the cause of missions; in the process, women were constantly exposed to news about people in other parts of the world and feared that America's racial inequities would discredit the missionaries they funded through their offerings. Additionally, women's mission efforts brought them into direct contact with African American Baptists, with whom they cooperated on a number of projects. In other words, Maxwell's work helps offer a lens through which several chapters can be read by showing why Southern Baptist women seemed (and often still seem) so consistently to lean further to the left than their husbands and pastors.

The final portion of the book delves into the struggles of women in Southern Baptist life resulting from the denomination's hard-right turn that began in the last third of the twentieth century, often focusing on women's willingness or refusal to conform to conservative Southern Baptist gender norms. Elizabeth Flowers traces the nuances of Rosalynn Carter's support of the Equal Rights Amendment, showing how the first lady sought to support the amendment in part by emphasizing her identity with "homemakers and housewives." (165) When Flowers notes that viewing the rise of the Religious Right from this perspective tends to push the date of its founding earlier than 1980, she demonstrates the book's key contribution: that attention to Southern Baptist women's stories will necessarily alter the way the history of the larger SBC and American religious landscape must be told.

The final essay of the volume, about Southern Baptist Bible teacher Beth Moore, demonstrates the ways in which Moore has been able to find a space for her own public teaching by adhering to norms of appearance and demeanor deemed appropriate for a Southern Baptist woman. At the same time, Moore's sudden willingness to critique the culture of her denomination in light of SBC leaders' embrace of the Trump presidency and the #MeToo movement shows that, even now, Southern Baptist women have the power to press their denomination in ways that male leaders find deeply uncomfortable.

Readers who are already familiar with the growing literature on Southern Baptist women (and Southern Baptists more generally) emerging from mainstream scholarly presses will notice that some of the scholarship presented here is not unique to this volume. At the same time, the inclusion of the material is justified, as it renders the volume a well-rounded introduction to work being done in revising the history of Southern Baptists through the recovery of women's stories. *Marginal Majority* is a landmark collection that will influence the direction of future scholarship on Southern Baptist women, Southern religion, and women's roles in American religious institutions.

Andrew Smith
Carson-Newman University
doi:10.1017/S0009640722000506