


Chapter 13 shows how Old Catholic ecumenical efforts trickled into our present day. Anglicans declared intercommunion with Old Catholics in 1931. Following Vatican II, Roman Catholicism is more open to ecumenism. Old Catholics, Anglicans, and Orthodox churches are now internally divided on questions related to women's ordination and sexuality. Nevertheless, Geffert concludes that "the fundamental impediment to any union" is the discovery of "just how diverse was Christian belief from the very outset" (375). Therefore, a Church, not history, must interpret revelation. "Until Orthodox, Anglicans, and Old Catholics share a common ecclesiology, reunion will remain impossible" (376).

Geffert might have expanded on Boerneke by assessing the role of Scandinavian Lutherans in the ecumenical movement. Many associated with Bonn wrote off Lutherans because they did not claim apostolic succession. But others, especially Anglicans, argued that since Lutherans possessed *de facto* succession they too constituted a legitimate branch of the Catholic Church. This possible oversight is interesting given that Boerneke was a Lutheran pastor and professor. In any case, Geffert admirably sheds light on an understudied period of Christian history and successfully demonstrates its ecumenical significance.

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***Richard McNemar: Frontier Heretic and Shaker Apostle.* By Christian Goodwillie. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2023. xv + 518 pp. \$85.00 cloth; \$40.00 paper.**

The latest book by Christian Goodwillie, a leading scholar of Shaker history, shines welcome light on the life of Richard McNemar, a prominent New Light clergyman in the Kentucky Revivals who converted to Shakerism in 1805. A gifted, charismatic, and classically trained theologian, Richard McNemar was already a trailblazer in the region's ongoing religious change. When the first Shaker missionaries arrived there in early 1805, they found a young minister with a proven track record of taking himself and others into uncharted spiritual territory.

Richard McNemar spent slightly under half of his sixty-eight years as a Shaker. His conversion at age thirty-five utterly shocked his contemporaries and left a gaping void in the trans-Appalachian New Light circles. Ironically, McNemar's pivot into Shakerism—formally the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing—probably shielded him from the mainstream scholarly scrutiny that he has so long deserved, by placing his prodigious output of writings within collections too often side-stepped by scholars less interested in Shakerism *per se*. This gripping biography carefully examines McNemar's full life experience, from childhood in central Pennsylvania to his early spiritual experiences, education, and Presbyterian ordination in Kentucky, his rapid rise and growing influence as a theologian and denominational leader, before his Shaker conversion. Thereafter, McNemar's life purpose revolved around the build-up of the Shaker project—theologically, organizationally, legally, musically, and more.

Goodwillie's masterful research on McNemar is undergirded by his impressive fluency with events and figures across the full spectrum of the Shaker world, but particularly the Shaker west, during the period. Western Shaker communities have drawn somewhat less attention from modern scholars, and it is perhaps ironic that the earliest non-Shaker historian of the movement was early twentieth-century Ohio scholar, John Patterson MacLean, whose work—still widely read—focused almost entirely on the western communities. MacLean even wrote the first biography of McNemar himself (*A Sketch of the Life and Labors of Richard McNemar*, Franklin, Ohio, 1907). But for the next century, there was little additional critical scholarship examining the Shaker west. Consequently, misinterpretation and even fabrication have been common. Goodwillie's important volume, so thoroughly grounded in primary sources that have never been fully examined, offers lucid and detailed interpretations of murky interludes in Shaker history. The result, in many places, is nothing short of explosive. Goodwillie blows the proverbial lid off episodes previously little known, other than through highly mythologized descriptive narratives.

Despite Shakerism's emphasis on collective "union," there has never been full uniformity within the Shaker ranks; and Shaker history, like the history of any movement, is filled with stories of how singular individuals, driven by unique talents and impulses, have contributed to the progression of individual Shaker communities, as well as the United Society more broadly. An awareness of the potential for individuals to make a difference has contributed to a trend among Shaker scholars to generate biographical studies. Since the early 2000s, other key early Shakers have been subjects of scholarly biographies, and Goodwillie's brilliant treatment of McNemar represents the latest contribution to what will hopefully be a continuing trend. This biography offers a window illuminating the times and places of the subject's experience. My own biography of Shaker missionary Issachar Bates (*Issachar Bates: A Shaker's Journey*, University Press of New England, 2013), the colorful preacher-turned-elder who enlivened the Shaker west for more than thirty years, devotes considerable attention to McNemar's Shaker transition and explores the ramifications of the devoted friendship shared by the two men. Together, the two biographies chronicle the early history of the entire Shaker west and address the reasons for its dramatic transformation by the late 1830s.

In historical writing, to call a person or an event "pivotal" can easily become cliché, and Goodwillie uses "pivotal" to characterize several junctures in the life experiences of Richard McNemar. With respect to the western expansion of Shakerism, McNemar preached a sermon that was "pivotal" in April 1805 (80), McNemar's involvement in the emergence of Shaker hymnody was "pivotal" (90), and McNemar's friendship with Shaker missionary Issachar Bates was "perhaps the most pivotal relationship in the establishment of Shakerism west of the Appalachian mountains" (301). But Goodwillie's powerful account demonstrates that truly no term is more apt in characterizing McNemar's role. The entire western Shaker enterprise literally pivoted upon Richard McNemar, even more than the first missionaries themselves initially realized, when they reached revival centers in the Kentucky bluegrass region in early 1805 and were directed to search out McNemar. With his conversion, the United Society gained not only many of his congregants, colleagues, and their extended families, they also gained an asset whose usefulness to Shakerism would prove more profound than Shaker leaders could possibly have envisioned.

Among the many families who were flocking to the Shakers in the early 1800s, McNemar's preaching talents and theological acumen stood out to the Shaker leaders, who soon relied on him not only to evangelize throughout the region, but also to assist

in formalizing a Shaker theological system whose exact tenets were still in flux. Through his skills as orator, writer, and evangelist, McNemar drew hundreds of others into Shakerism. Because he was also gifted in understanding and navigating civil law, as well as the legal relationship between church organizations and civil authority, the Shaker hierarchy steered him into unusual roles for the United Society—for example, writing and revising the covenants that governed Shaker spiritual and economic life, preparing arguments and justifications for the Shakers to use in legal defenses when lawsuits were brought against them, and representing the interests of Shaker communities in public courts of law.

Ironically, McNemar endured denunciation in his beloved Shaker community of Union Village, Ohio, near the end of his life. But his positive legacy within Shakerism has remained unquestioned, though the details of his life experience were never explored with such stunning clarity until now. Goodwillie's extraordinary work ensures that McNemar's legacy within the history of broader denominational circles will finally be better understood, as well as his incomparable contributions to Shaker history. Richard McNemar always sought a life in the forefront where he could use his singular skills to make a difference. He set out to transform the spiritual life of a region both before and after his Shaker conversion. Today, when America has again devolved into deep division over religious and political conviction, McNemar's story serves as a vital reminder of other times when the moral and spiritual stakes were similarly high.

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***The Religion-Supported State: Piety and Politics in Early National New England.* By Nathan S. Rives. Religion in American History. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022. 292 pp. \$110 hardcover.**

As they defined the expected return for denominational freedom, early national clergyman contributed to what historians have increasingly described as an implicit bargain between public political institutions and Protestant churches. In exchange for the free exercise of their religious institutions, thanks to the ostensible separation between church and state, a consensus emerged that they ought to excite moral order among those who might later assume positions of political and civic authority. Religious teachers and ministers advocated an Augustinian division between civil and spiritual bodies while also outlining the intended public effect of that division. As Nathan S. Rives has shown in his important new book on the religion-supported state, the ambiguity of that implicit bargain was exposed in New England by the continuation of tax-supported religion into the early 1830s.

Though New Englanders found themselves in a free marketplace of religion, competing interpretations of religious truth were buoyed by contiguous fears about religious error as theologians and laymen tried to make sense of the public interest of matters such as Sunday laws and antislavery activism. As a result, a range of groups from