

funding mainly from annual conference minutes and other denominational records. He demonstrates how these pursuits produced tensions and divergences among Methodists. Hence, disconnection, especially on issues of race, Richey says, became a “Methodist signature.”

The glue that holds this hybrid volume together, however, is Richey’s autobiographical reflections about experiencing Methodism’s racial dilemma in his own life. He laments the Methodist legacy of slavery revealed in the 1844 split that produced two majority white Wesleyan bodies, the subsequent segregation compromise in 1939 that brought about a flawed reunion of these separate denominations to contemporary racial reckonings in church and society. For Richey, Methodism remains a broken and unfinished ecclesial venture.

Dennis C. Dickerson  
Vanderbilt University  
doi:10.1017/S0009640723000604

***Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture and Globalization in the Age of Empire.* By Jeremy Best. German and European Studies 38. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021. xiv + 322 pp. \$CDN 75 cloth; \$CDN 79 E-pub.**

Jeremy Best adds crucial nuance to ongoing debates about the impact and legacy of German colonialism by carefully tracing the views and actions of four major German Protestant mission agencies. Their missionaries understood race and the role of commerce in the German colonies differently than secular colonialists. They strove to make their contrasting views known in Germany where their publications were more likely to be read in rural areas than those of secular origin. One key difference is that they were more likely to view race as a cultural, not a biological, phenomenon. Best also found German Protestant missionaries to favor international cooperation over nationalism. In his analysis more continuities in their history stretched across German, French and British colonial cultures of the prewar era than across the different eras of Imperial, Weimar, and Nazi Germany. Thus, he argues against a German colonial *Sonderweg* into the Holocaust.

These findings are based primarily on the archives and published literature of four major mission agencies, the older Moravian Brethren, Berlin, and Leipzig Missions, and the newer (1887) Bethel Mission (28). The book focuses on German East Africa, highlighting the impact of the Maji-Maji War (1905–09) there while mostly ignoring other German colonial territories. It began as a dissertation completed at the University of Maryland under Jeffrey Herf.

The second chapter on language and education provides some of the best evidence for missionaries’ departures from secular colonial practices. They hoped to replicate *Volkkirchen* locally. To do so they geared education to local realities. Instruction was therefore offered in Swahili or English to meet African expectations and encourage African participation. Above all, missionaries insisted that Africans were capable of learning. This emphasis on local languages and abilities aligned German Protestant

missionaries with international trends and against the secular German colonial preferences either for no education or education in German. At the same time, all German colonialists agreed on the need to keep Africans and their culture separate from German culture, and missionaries thus supported anti-miscegenation laws.

Interesting differences among the missions appear in the chapter on labor. The newer Bethel Mission, closely aligned with the Inner Mission movement in Germany, prioritized just enough education for Africans to produce qualified labor, while the older missions maintained a higher profile for education as necessary for Africans to become proper Protestant Christians. A chapter on anti-Catholicism in contrast highlights this as a commonality between all four missions and thus marked clear Protestant limits to a sense of internationalism that excluded cooperation at any level with Catholic missionaries.

A chapter on links between the mission societies and their local supporters back home highlighted the effective nature of Protestant colonial missionary engagement with ordinary Germans. Local mission clubs, especially for the Berlin Mission, were led by village notables and clergy and brought the stories of Africans to rural areas via the mission press and through annual mission festivals. Women's sewing clubs created space for female participation. Their work was typically linked to a specific mission station, connecting the handwork of German women to missionaries and geographies in Africa that they came to know by name.

A final chapter pulls together a thread of analysis on the lasting impact of German Protestant African mission work in Germany and Europe. Iterations over the years of publishing about mission work and comparing German efforts to other colonialists led to the founding of a new academic subfield in theology, *Missionswissenschaft* (missionology), first in Germany and then more widely. Gustav Warneck, a local pastor in Saxony, became a leader in this new field that by 1874 had its own academic journal, *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*. In the early twentieth century, this German internationalist approach to missions and its dream of a Protestant world was an important vector, according to Best, leading to the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference. Julius Richter, a second-generation German mission leader, was appointed vice-chairman of that conference's Continuation Committee. From this vantage point he promoted the founding of its journal in 1912, *The International Review of Missions*. Plans for a 1920 world missionary conference in Berlin were cut short by World War I. Given that the Edinburgh conference was one of the streams that fed into the founding of the World Council of Churches after World War II, this legacy of German Protestant missions has indeed had long-lasting impact.

Best's volume supports a trend in recent scholarship to connect German colonial history to broader themes in German history beyond the break that occurred due to World War I and to challenge what some historians see as a simplistic linkage of that colonial heritage to Nazi brutality. Sean Andrew Wempe, in *Revenants of the German Empire: Colonial Germans, Imperialism, & the League of Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), for example, has recently demonstrated the myriad ways in which secular German colonists reacted to the loss of colonies, with many in German Southwest Africa going as far as rejecting German citizenship rather than agreeing with the metropole's formulation of how to be German. Other German colonialists, of course, joined in with Nazi racism and brutality.

Jeremy Best has made an important contribution to our understanding of the options available to Germans in Imperial Germany as they thought about racial difference as it related to Africans. The focus mainly on German East Africa is one limitation

to note. In addition to the good analysis provided on the influence and contrast between German secular and Protestant missions' approaches to the colonial enterprise, a question not as well incorporated into the book was how broader developments in Protestant churches in Germany, as opposed to those of German society, impacted this story. A book that answers so many intriguing questions and prompts others is, of course, a commendable addition to scholarship.

Mark Jantzen  
Bethel College

doi:10.1017/S0009640723000112

***Edward W. Blyden's Intellectual Transformations: Afropolitanism, Pan-Africanism, Islam, and the Indigenous West African Church.*** By Harry N. K. Odamtten. Ruth Simms Hamilton African Diaspora Series. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2019. xxv + 272 pp. \$49.95 paper.

Believing Edward Wilmot Blyden to be “the most influential black intellectual of the nineteenth to early twentieth century” (vii), Harry N. K. Odamtten produced the intellectual biography *Edward W. Blyden's Intellectual Transformations: Afropolitanism, Pan-Africanism, Islam, and the Indigenous West African Church*. In it, Odamtten traces how Blyden's thinking evolved in response to his various experiences and the contexts in which he lived and how these shifts in thinking manifested in his writings. Born in St. Thomas in 1832, Blyden moved to Liberia—by way of the United States—to pursue his education. He became a Liberian citizen and lived in West Africa for the remainder of his life, ultimately moving to Sierra Leone where he died in 1912.

Odamtten articulates the ways in which his book differs from previous works on Blyden—from his more chronological approach (others have used a theoretical framework) to his assertion of Blyden's incomparable influence (others have presented him as a “failed leader” [x]). To counter arguments that Blyden “uncritically receive[d] racialist ideas from European interlocutors” (viii), Odamtten frames Blyden as an “Afropolitan”—a term of Odamtten's own design that he uses “to describe African public intellectuals who utilize an Afro-positivist discourse and whose scholarly engagement with provincial, cosmopolitan, and global public spheres is undertaken from an African perspective” (xii).

The problem here is the reliance on “Afro-positivism,” a term which Odamtten neglects to adequately define. He first quotes Gregory Mann to explain that Mann used it to mean “a real, empirical and ethical commitment to perceiving African societies . . . as lived, by Africans, now” (xii), thus relying on positivism as a theory rooted in empiricism. Odamtten goes on to predominantly use “Afro-positivism” as a “tradition of valorizing Africa” (59)—which is to say representing Africa in ways that are counter to the negative European representations. In order to take Afro-positivism as having this dual meaning, Odamtten seems to believe—though he does not directly state—that any work on Africa that uses “critical observation methods” (xiii), which,