study of texts and their producers to explore the ways in which cultural meanings were negotiated in a non-capitalist, non-market environment.

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Neil Semple — *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996. Pp. x, 565.

Adding to a list of very good works by, among others, William Westfall, Phyllis D. Airhart, P. Travis Kroeker, and Robert K. Burkinshaw, McGill-Queen's University Press presents this fine book by Neil Semple, released under the auspices of its series entitled ''Studies in the History of Religion''. Semple's primary aim is to show that the Methodist Church, comprised of various groups that differed on non-essential points of theology, is nothing less than Canada's church. This does not mean that Methodism enjoyed any sort of official establishment, of course. Rather, by virtue of the dedication of those thousands of Methodists who gave time, money, energies, and prayers to the propagation of their faith in the Dominion, Methodism's roots permeate Canadian soil.

Semple reiterates his point often. In the introduction to his ninth chapter, ''The Transformation of the Social Means of Grace'', we read that ''Canadian Methodist leaders viewed Methodism as the truly national church encompassing the full range of Canada's cultural identity'' (p. 211). During the settlement of the West in the Laurier years, ''Methodism was committed to Canadianize and Christianize ... settlers while providing familiar church worship for those from Methodist backgrounds'' (p. 285). In the early twentieth century Methodists ''felt a deep responsibility not only to nurture and protect their own members, but also to transform the entire nation into a highly moral social order'' (p. 334). Canada's Methodists carried this temperament with them into the United Church (formed in 1925), which consequently also took itself to be Canada's ''national church'': ''As such, it ... assumed that it had the right and the duty to reshape Canadian society in Christ's image and that its status empowered it to provide a tolerant and unbiased forum for diverse interests from both the religious and secular communities'' (p. 450). In short, Semple wants us to know that the history of Methodism is not incidental to the history of Canada, but rather is inseparable from Canadian history. Thus, Semple joins that ever-expanding and increasingly formidable cloud of witnesses who are committed to reminding us that religion, theology, and faith really do matter.

Though Methodism's abiding influence might be unrecognizable to most today, this book maintains that it is nevertheless present. With other historians who have recently published works on Canadian Protestantism (Michael Gauvreau, for example), Semple sees Methodism's legacy everywhere in Canada's public life. Do you appreciate Canada's health care system and ''social safety net''? Thank the Methodists, for they were at the forefront of the social gospel movement which did so

much to encourage the Canadian government to create and expand the welfare state. The success of Methodism in Canada, Semple writes, ''can perhaps best be measured by the degree to which the state has ... implemented many of the social-welfare programs originally advocated by the Methodist and United churches'' (p. 447).

That Semple himself is in favour of those so-called progressive things Methodism hath wrought in Canada's public life seems clear. While he refers several times in passing to conservatives who rejected theological heterodoxy, a belief in an immanent deity (as opposed to a transcendent one), the social gospel, and welfarism, nary more than a paragraph anywhere in this ponderous tome is devoted to a discussion of them. It is not that Semple is uncharitable towards these dissenters, whom he usually courteously brushes aside as anti-intellectuals pining for a simple golden age. Rather, with few exceptions, he simply ignores them. When Darwin's bandwagon passed by in the late nineteenth century, for instance, most Methodist intellectuals jumped heartily on board. ''[C]onservative and fundamentalist forces'', meanwhile, ''were for the most part obliged to abandon the mainstream denominations and form their own associations'' (p. 264). What associations, I wonder? And what long-term impact did these non-''mainstream'' Methodists have on Canadian public life?

Of course, Semple cannot be held accountable for every question a large work like his raises. His aim was to write a general history, not to account for all shadowed nooks and crannies. Yet, in light of the fact that (generally speaking) theologically conservative churches have maintained their numbers or grown over the years while ''mainline'' denominations have been slowly but surely dying, it is peculiar that ''conservatives'' within the Methodist community should be given short shrift here. There does appear to be a general consensus among Canadian historians as to what constitutes ''mainstream'' religion. One must wonder, however, if religious conservatives, including fundamentalists, have in fact amounted to much more than an historical trickle relative to the well-beloved ''mainstream''.

Some of what is covered in this work — the social gospel movement, for example — is well-trodden ground. Much else found here, though discussed in other works, is less generally known, however, and is well worth reading. Semple's discussion of the Methodist Sunday school movement in the late nineteenth century (chapter 14) struck this reader as particularly interesting. Semple informs us that over a six- or seven-year period enthusiastic Sunday school teachers might teach Canadian children between 4,000 and 5,000 Bible verses — a good number of which the students committed to memory. What he does not say, though he would probably acknowledge is true, is that the Methodist teachers who drilled the Bible into their charges' brains were doing more than planting seeds of salvation or inculcating a fear of strong drink; they were familiarizing the young with the biblical stories, metaphors, and parables that for some nineteen centuries had deeply informed western intellectual, artistic, and spiritual life.

Surely most of the children who were fortunate enough to have been given such training would have had no difficulty in adulthood recognizing the biblical metaphors and allusions that pervade western literature, art, and common discourse.

Unlike some prominent Canadian historians, whose widely consulted and reissued textbook on Canadian history still claims that the Fathers of Confederation chose to call Canada a dominion based on a passage in the book of *Lamentations* (never mind that the word dominion never appears in *Lamentations*), these students probably knew that it was taken from Psalm 72. They would also most likely be able to state why it is important for young Canadians to know such things.

Most praiseworthy in *The Lord's Dominion* is its author's even-handedness. Semple acknowledges that Canada's Methodists often acted in pig-headed ways towards Natives, Blacks, and other minorities and that Methodist men did not always hold Methodist women in the highest regard. Absent, however, are those pernicious oblations some fashion-conscious social scientists so love to pour on the alters of race, class, gender, and other trendy spectres. Semple, it appears, made it a point to understand his subjects on their own terms — a refreshing thing indeed.

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Donald H. Avery — *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896–1994*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995. Pp. 342.

This book is a logical outgrowth of Donald H. Avery's Ph.D. dissertation on Canadian immigration policy (1973) and his subsequent work, *Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada* (1979). As he has worked on this monograph intermittently for over 20 years, it is his *magnum opus*. Its essence is that Canada's immigration policy has always been based on self-interest: people were admitted depending upon the country's manpower needs as articulated by various lobbying groups, especially by business interests.

Between 1896 and 1919, the Canadian government actively recruited certain kinds of immigrants, discouraged others, and deported a third group. Since the federal government as well as the railroad, mining, lumber, and farming interests believed that Canada needed cheap labourers to help develop the West, they all recruited ''stalwart peasants'' in Eastern Europe to meet these needs. Meanwhile, the business interests also recruited Asian immigrants, much to the consternation of the white population of British Columbia, which began to agitate against them. As a result, the federal government proceeded to pass legislation limiting, and ultimately banning, most Asian immigrants from Canada. At the same time, fearing socialist political agitators among the immigrants, the government deported those it deemed to be labour radicals, especially after the ''Red Scare'' of 1919.

In the inter-war period Canada's immigration policy changed gears several times. During the first half of the 1920s the Canadian government responded to various nativist attacks upon the previous policy of admitting hundreds of thousands of Eastern European peasants by banning them and encouraging immigration from Great Britain and Northern Europe instead. However, Northern and Western Europeans did not wish to move to Canada to work as seasonal farm-hands, lumberjacks,