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On the Cover:
Black Bear in Jasper National Park, iStock

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

I write this on April 22, 2023 (EARTH DAY) in anticipation of this very catalog you are holding. As I sit outside and look down towards Sabbath Creek, the birds are—in the words of Friend Owl in Bambi—twitterpated, as are the chipmunks and all of the other creatures. Our Spring here has been beautiful with a good mix of sun and rain, and pleasant temperatures. New life is coming from the plants, the flowers, the trees. The birdhouse someone gave me two years ago now has residents in it and those eggs will hatch soon and new life will fly out to find sustenance. Our red-shouldered hawks, the great blue heron, and the rest of our Sabbath Creek residents are surviving and thriving.

As I sit outside after I get home in the evening, the birds sing until dark. Their songs are mystical, and they remind me every day that we avoided (so far) the silence that Rachel Carson warned us about in Silent Spring (1962). With scientific acumen and the pen of a storyteller, she wrote a book that changed the world. It alerted the public to the dangers of DDT and other chemicals that were harming both nature and humans, but not separately. We were being harmed together, for her point was that humans cannot be separated from nature—we are one.

So, thanks to a book and a movement we still have musical Springs, and the air is filled with nature’s playlist from cardinals to wrens, from hawks to eastern towhees.

Even though your Spring may be a few weeks away when you read this, each book is—like Spring—a new life, a voice that is desiring to be heard. Whether it is a novel that will fulfill your evening, or a poet sharing a moment of sublimity, or a historian sharing a “new” old story, each book is a sign of a perpetual Spring. Each book is a reminder that Spring is a renaissance.

Marc Jolley
April 2023
A work of art as well as a work of literature, *A Year of Birds* will be welcomed by nature lovers, art lovers, and birders. With 150 watercolors and field sketches by renowned bird artist Barry Van Dusen and a foreword by celebrated naturalist Peter Alden, the author of numerous *Audubon Field Guides*, *A Year of Birds* showcases Henry David Thoreau’s writings on birds in a way never seen before.

Unlike previous collections, the observations in *A Year of Birds* are arranged by the day of the year, emphasizing the relationship of birds with their environment and the spiritual significance of the seasons. On any given day, curious readers might step into their yards and compare the birds they observe with those that Thoreau saw and heard.

With a focus on the town of Concord, Massachusetts, where Thoreau spent most of his life, *A Year of Birds* includes the best of Thoreau’s unparalleled descriptions of birds, from the red-tailed hawk to the Blackburnian warbler. Also included are descriptions of bird hunting, birds in museums, and birds as metaphor. Special sections are devoted to the now-vanished passenger pigeon and to Thoreau’s mysterious “night warbler.”

“A partridge bursts away from under the rock below me on quivering wings like some moths I have seen. We have then flowers and the song of birds before the woods leave out—like poetry.” —Henry David Thoreau (May 1, 1852)

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**Geoff Wisner** is a board member of the Thoreau Society and the editor of *Thoreau’s Wildflowers* (Yale) and *Thoreau’s Animals* (Yale). He earned a degree in English and American Literature from Harvard University, and has written for the *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Learn more about him at www.geoffwisner.com.

Massachusetts artist **Barry Van Dusen** is the author and illustrator of *Finding Sanctuary*, based on visits to sixty-one of Mass Audubon’s wildlife sanctuaries, nature centers, and museums. He is a strong proponent of working directly from life, even with difficult subjects such as wild birds. Learn more about him at www.barryvandusen.com.

**Peter Alden** followed Thoreau’s trails and bird notes growing up in Concord, where he still lives. He has authored fifteen bird/nature/travel books and has led wildlife tours to more than 100 countries. His Great Walden Bioblitzes have found 3,600 species within five miles of Walden Pond.
Richard Rankin writes books and articles on cultural history, nature, and hunting. After a long career as a college professor and administrator and an independent school headmaster, Rankin directs the Interlaken Wildlife Center in Cameron, South Carolina. An outdoorsman, conservationist, and Presbyterian layman, he and his family are the sixth generation living on family land in the North Carolina Piedmont.

Local Signs and Wonders
Essays about Belonging to a Place
Richard Rankin

Also available in e-book format

April 2024
Essays

Local Signs and Wonders is an essay collection describing how attachment to a family homestead creates a sense of wellbeing, fulfillment, and belonging. Richard Rankin lives on family property settled in the mid 1760s and farmed until the 1970s. The Rankin home place sits in a shrinking countryside about twenty miles west of fast-growing Charlotte, North Carolina.

The desire to belong to a place grows out of a deep yearning to feel at home in the world and to find a particular location where that feeling is best satisfied.

Individual essays treat diverse local topics including the disappearance of family farms, complicated racial history, soil conservation, physical labor as recreation, the influence of a great tree, chicken fighting, folk history, folk healing, the disappearance of bobwhite quail, black bear restoration, and exemplary outdoorsmen. As a whole, the pieces reveal how a settled inhabitant’s personal identity grows from a local landscape and its history and culture. How the Creator invites the settler to join an ongoing partnership to re-create and steward a beloved place and its creatures. And how this creative process leads to a greater appreciation of local things and people.

With local farming gone, suburban development exploding, and the planet warming, several essays focus on land stewardship and conservation as a remedy. Despite rural decline and environmental peril, these essays show how staying on family land benefits personal wholeness, rich relationships with family, neighbors and wildlife, and service to creation.
Learning to live inside one’s own unfathomable longing—and how yearning for God can shape a willing life

Vincent Van Gogh, even with his mental illness, poverty, isolation, and persistent failure, reflected compassion remarkable for his own life of rejection. He loved God. He loved beauty. He acknowledged his own shortcomings and was never as good as he wanted to be. He might be an unlikely role model for some, since he was neither saintly nor successful; but his serious attention to human suffering, as well as to beauty in the world around him, gave this author a different vision.

In a nation that lives inside the politics of the day—reveling in the constant wish to be right, or for others to be wrong—these essays might prove to be an antidote. Cox writes about her own experiences—sometimes imprudent, sometimes profound: weeks spent living in a homeless shelter in New York City, a trip to the Mid-East where she visited Yasser Arafat in his compound, an unexpectedly impacting Alaskan adventure, working with abused/neglected children, and the explorations of the mind through reading. Each experience reflected and gave insight into what this author lacked, while deepening a sympathy learned from those around her—always trying to cross that bridge of understanding. One section titled “Prayer Walks” includes a more daily pursuit into a life of “paying attention.”

Reading Van Gogh plunges into the ideas of psychologists, artists, poets, physicists, and fiction writers who combine reason, imagination, and experience in a way that might enlarge, or even change, the definitions we live by.

“Elizabeth Cox writes beautiful, energetic prose, and she writes particularly well of the great human mystery of ‘going in,’ and of the greatest mystery, of finding there as a certainty, the great lovingness she recognizes as God. This book is elegantly lived theology.” —Coleman Barks, author of The Essential Rumi

Elizabeth Cox has published five novels, a collection of short stories, and a book of poetry. She has won the North Carolina Fiction Award, the Lillian Smith Award for a novel, and in 2013 she was awarded the Robert Penn Warren Award for Fiction. Cox taught creative writing at Duke University for seventeen years, and has also taught at Bennington College, Boston College, and MIT. She resides in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Learn more about her at www.elizabethcox.net.
Sudden Death: A Novel  Carolyn Curry  P659 | $20.00 | 9780881468700  e-book | $20.00 | 9780881468519

Tell It True: A Novel  John Pratt  P656 | $20.00 | 9780881468670  e-book | $20.00 | 9780881468663

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Christmas Gift!: Ferrol Sams†; includes CD of author reading story  H810 | $25.00 | 9780881462111
There is much about her hometown that Carrie Buck loves: Venable Elementary where she first learned to read; Starr Hill because that’s where Miss Mora lives; Chancellor’s Drugstore where she sometimes gets a free cola; and Anderson’s Bookstore where a girl can look through all the books she likes.

While 1920s Charlottesville, Virginia, is a charming place to grow up, there’s one thing Carrie doesn’t like about her hometown—her home. Abandoned by her father and taken from her mother, Carrie is put up for fostering as a toddler. A silent child, her foster parents regard her as slow. She feels no obligation to correct them. At age ten, Carrie is forced to leave school to work as a domestic.

Carrie’s lone ally, Miss Mora, a Scottish immigrant, is hindered by racial barriers from being the helper Carrie so desperately needs. But when Carrie turns up pregnant at seventeen, it is Miss Mora—Charlottesville’s most competent midwife—who she turns to.

Fearing their nephew’s assault of Carrie will be discovered, Carrie’s foster parents fraudulently commit her to the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded. They claim custody of her infant daughter. Dr. Priddy, the colony’s superintendent, deceptively labels Carrie an imbecile, unfit to bear children. In pursuit of a legal argument granting states the right to forcibly sterilize individuals, he exploits her.

No Perfect Mothers explores characters, historical and imagined, who over the late 1800s to the 1920s were parties to the infamous Buck v. Bell U.S. Supreme Court case of 1927. Here, Carrie is given back what was denied her by the Court and by society some 100 years ago—her own voice and personhood.

Karen Spears Zacharias is an American writer whose work focuses on women and justice. She holds an MA in Appalachian Studies from Shepherd University and an MA in Creative Media Practice from the University of West Scotland. She lives at the foot of the Cascade Mountains in Deschutes County, Oregon. Zacharias taught First-Amendment Rights at Central Washington University and continues to teach at writing workshops around the country. Learn more about her at www.karenzach.com.
Jack B. Bedell is professor of English and coordinator of Creative Writing at Southeastern Louisiana University where he also edits Louisiana Literature and directs the Louisiana Literature Press. His latest collections are Against the Woods’ Dark Trunks, Color All Maps New, and No Brother, This Storm. Bedell served as Louisiana Poet Laureate, 2017–2019. Learn more about him at www.jackbbedell.com.

Evoking memory and respecting ghosts of the past and present

All manner of ghosts haunt the poems in Jack Bedell’s new collection, Ghost Forest. From memories of lost loved ones, to the ghosts of heroes, to the remnants of an eroding coastline, these spectres fill Bedell’s lines with beauty and wisdom to help us all move into the future.

Sometimes through memory, sometimes through visitation, sometimes through pure fantasy, Bedell’s poems invoke spirits to help us see the world as it needs to be seen—or put back whole our broken pasts to make moving forward possible.

No matter if it’s Sonny Liston in need of a moment’s peace, a ghost forest glowing as harbinger of what’s headed our way, or old habits left to us by family we’ve lost come back around on the breeze to make their souls present in this world, Ghost Forest takes time, page by page, to pay its due respects.

“Ghost Forest is a vibrant collection devoted to the seen and unseen. These poems sing, building lush rhythms rejoicing in how memory, nature, music, death, and life are always shaping us.” —Michael Garrigan, author of River, Amen and Robbing the Pillars

“Ghost Forest welcomes you in gently, like a warm kitchen filled with rain smell and the sizzle of onions in the frying pan, an extra chair set at the table to invite a nearby ghost to stay a spell.” —Dayna Patterson, founding editor emerita of Psaltery & Lyre

“Whether invoking the personal ghosts of family and friends, or describing the ghosts a swamp healer calls in her practice, or hearing ancient voices in a cave painting, Bedell shows how rich a life is when the spirits of our past are welcomed to the present.” —Grant Clauser, author of Muddy Dragon on the Road to Heaven
Catherine Staples grew up in Massachusetts and it’s there—in New England woods, meadows, and Cape Cod coasts—that the loss of her brother plays out as a quest across space and time: from a weathervane in Madison Square Park to a rusty pump in the mountains, from words etched on nineteenth-century glass to the track of skates on the Charles River. Place is at the heart of the transformation of loss. So, too, are myth and the lives of New England’s early naturalists and Transcendentalists. Henry David Thoreau’s narrative echoes and enlarges hers. He, too, lost a brother and found his way by tuning ear, eye, and stride to “the living earth,” a new way of seeing things.

Vert is an old word in danger of being lost. “In English forest law,” it’s “everything that grows and forms a green leaf, serving as cover for deer.” It’s suggestive of habitat, our imperiled earth, the small spinney of a brother’s memory.

“Sorrow sung well becomes beauty”—in music-soaked language, Vert creates the green sanctuary its name evokes, cover and sustenance when “the arrow… has gone too deep… the deep wound of losing a brother.” These eloquent lyric poems echo Orpheus’s journey, ‘I turned to answer your look / but you were the lake,’ while brilliantly reversing the Orphic tradition. For it isn’t human grief whose song moves nature but—oppositely—the rich music that rises from ‘earth’s sweet continuance’ that moves and revivifies the poet—‘the orchard as witness.’”

—Eleanor Wilner, author of Before Our Eyes and recipient of the Frost Medal


Poems about the natural world, living through loss, and the healing powers of nature, imagination, and writing
Timothy H. Scherman is distinguished professor of English at Northeastern Illinois University. A graduate of Dartmouth College and Duke University, his career-long recovery of the life and work of Elizabeth Oakes Smith began in 1991 and continues to the present day. Scherman is founder and president of the Elizabeth Oakes Smith Society and editor of the most comprehensive and current collection of her work. Learn more at www.oakes-smith.org.

Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Writings, Volume II documents a literary celebrity’s decision to commit herself to the cause of woman’s rights.

The first volume of this series revealed a feminist sensibility in the subtexts of Oakes Smith’s early poetry, fiction, and memoir. Volume II traces the sharp turn in her career at mid-century—a multidimensional effort involving newspaper editorial, a lecture career extending as far as Louisville and Chicago, and throughout these efforts, an attempt to garner the support to inaugurate the first journal owned and edited by women dedicated to the cause of woman’s empowerment.

Featured are fully annotated editions of two of Oakes Smith’s treatises published in the early 1850s (Woman and Her Needs and Hints on Dress and Beauty), along with her most popular lecture, “The Dignity of Labor.” Correspondence collected and edited here for the first time between Oakes Smith and Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, Horace Greeley, and other reform leaders of the period regarding her projected journal, the *The Egeria*, reveal the economic challenges faced by radical leaders in the Antebellum period.

“Scherman’s long research recovers a woman writer and advocate who was at once the bearer of Margaret Fuller’s legacy and the most accessible American voice of first wave feminism. Oakes Smith promoted a soul-based ‘Woman Thought’ that also demanded outward action against injustice; as she counseled her readers, it was time to ‘up and do.’”

—Phyllis Cole, coeditor of *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism*

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March 2024
Women’s Studies/Literature

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Current and recent backlist titles can also be found on pages 25 & 26.
How does psychoanalysis animate racial passing and how does racial passing inspire psychoanalysis? Despite long-held beliefs that the two have nothing in common, Donavan L. Ramon poses that psychoanalysis is relevant for understanding the reasons behind jumping the color line.

Beginning with the premise that Sigmund Freud created psychoanalysis to contend with his own anxieties about race, Ramon explores canonical and non-canonical passing narratives using psychoanalytic perspectives. He closely reads narratives by Charles Chesnutt, James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Jessie Fauset, Anita Reynolds, Danzy Senna, Vera Caspary, Anatole Broyard, and Philip Roth to advance several provocative claims about the intersections of passing and psychoanalysis. Chief among them are the youthful trauma and psychological consequences of racial passing. For instance, while the death drive motivates fictional racial passers to hasten their own deaths, those who pass in real life often seek their own immortality through print despite hiding their Blackness. Throughout this analysis, Ramon underscores the nuances of racial passing in school as the place of trauma for Black subjects.

Ramon’s work is deeply interdisciplinary, threading psychoanalysis and other theoretical perspectives throughout persuasive close readings of twentieth and twenty-first century racial passing narratives. The monograph concludes with a meditation on today’s ineffective language of race, which hinders racial progress.

Scholars of race, African American Literature, American Literature, and psychoanalysis will find Ramon’s book compelling.
Selected Backlist—Memoir, Biography, Music, & Food

Samuel Elbert and the Age of Revolution in Georgia, 1740–1788  
Clay Outz  H1027 | $45.00 | 9780881468588
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THE CASSVILLE AFFAIRS
Johnston, Hood, and the Failed Confederate Strategy in the Atlanta Campaign, 19 May 1864
Robert D. Jenkins, Sr.

February 2024
Civil War History

Reexamining controversial events at Cassville—including the Confederate leadership—during this decisive campaign

Civil War historians have remained baffled over the Cassville controversies for the past 150 plus years. There are two versions of events: Confederate commanding General Joseph E. Johnston’s story, and Lieutenant General John Bell Hood’s story. But Federal General William T. Sherman had other plans, and it was Confederates who would be “surprised” instead.

The Cassville Affairs—there were two of them—because there were two critical decisions that the Confederate leadership faced at Cassville: first, whether to attack a portion of the Federal army in the morning; and second, once the morning attack was no longer feasible, whether to stay and fight the next day. Both decisions were the responsibility of Johnston, and both decisions involved the advice and assistance by Hood. Johnston issued a General Order to all soldiers that morning proclaiming that the army had fallen back enough and would now turn and face the enemy. After a series of unforeseen circumstances, however, the Southern commander withdrew without a fight.

Before the war even concluded, Johnston and Hood began finger-pointing as they wrote their own versions of what happened that day. Since then, historians have been scratching their heads as to who was telling the truth, or if either one was honest. The Cassville Affairs promises to change our understanding of the events surrounding the Cassville controversies and close the gap in its history. Replete with both period and modern-day color maps, The Cassville Affairs will be a vital book in the annals of the Atlanta Campaign.

A native of Chamblee, Robert D. (Bob) Jenkins, Sr. has been a trial attorney in Dalton, Georgia, since 1990. He holds a BBA in Business Management from Georgia Southern University and a JD from Mercer University School of Law. He is the author The Battle of Peach Tree Creek and To the Gates of Atlanta. Jenkins is president of Save the Dalton Battlefields, LLC and is vice chair of Whitfield County’s Historic Preservation Commission. Through their efforts, the County has acquired and opened Mill Creek Gap Park, Potato Hill Park, and Rocky Face Ridge Park.
The Wild and the Sacred
Evaluating and Protecting the Ocmulgee River Corridor, Volume 1
Chris Watson; edited by S. Heather Duncan

Chris Watson began developing a tool for mapping wildness across the Georgia landscape, but as work progressed, the study’s conception of the region’s significance expanded beyond ecology: the floodplain’s value is immeasurable to the Muscogee Indians. As the earliest people to settle the Southeast, their ancestors left a physical imprint on the land, from the remains of villages to giant earthen mounds. In turn, the land left a spiritual imprint upon the Muscogee that is still felt today.

Chris Watson is campaign director with the National Parks Conservation Association’s southeast regional office in Knoxville, Tennessee. With the organization since 2010, he directs projects primarily in Georgia and Kentucky. Watson holds a PhD in Conservation Geography from the University of Georgia.

A River of Time
Archaeological Treasures of the Ocmulgee Corridor, Volume 2
Dominic Day; edited by S. Heather Duncan

Every year, thousands of visitors climb the tallest of the ancient Ocmulgee Mounds in Macon, Georgia. Gazing fifty-five feet down from the top of this Great Temple Mound gives a sense of the might and mystery of the earliest Southeastern American civilization. According to Dominic Day, the archaeological finds cover more than fifteen thousand years, the complete human record in the Southeast. While most are not included in the national historical park, this Mercer study makes a strong argument that many should be.

Dominic Day is a Middle Georgia native and a geospatial and cultural resource professional. Day completed studies in anthropology at Georgia State University and geographic information science at Georgia Tech. He currently works with the Environmental Planning group at HNTB in Atlanta, Georgia.

From Settlement to Society
A History of the Early Mississippian Settlement at Ocmulgee, Volume 3
Daniel Philip Bigman; edited by S. Heather Duncan

Daniel Bigman’s research places Ocmulgee’s development in the context of other large Early Mississippian mound centers and communities in the geographic region. Bigman argues that Ocmulgee is not a “mystery”—something odd and different—but rather a case study in understanding the interactions among Mississippian communities and how Ocmulgee’s struggle for power shaped an individual settlement while leadership roles evolved and social inequality fluctuated.

Daniel Bigman received a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Georgia with a focus on archaeological geophysics applied to Native American sites in the southeastern United States. He is the founder of Bigman Geophysical, LLC, a private firm focusing on training, consulting, and technology supply.
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Charlotte C. S. Thomas is professor of Philosophy, director of the Great Books Program, and codirector of the McDonald Center for America’s Founding Principles at Mercer University. Her work focuses on ancient political philosophy, philosophy of culture, and ethics. She is the author of The Female Drama: The Philosophical Feminine in the Soul of Plato’s Republic.

Xenophon (430–354 BCE) was a man of many modes: follower of Socrates, Athenian General, friend to Sparta, philosopher, political theorist, military historian, and writer. This collection of essays explores his writings across three genres, all of which he blends into one another: philosophical dialogue, political theory, and history.

In whatever form he chose, Xenophon seems to have several foundational questions always in mind: What makes a human life good? How best should human beings be governed? What aspects of character and accidents of history contribute to good and bad rule and to good and bad lives? Like his teacher Socrates, there seem to be no questions off limits to Xenophon, who defied convention in his writing and in his life. And like his contemporary, Plato, he embraced the practice of altering the facts to illuminate the truth of the human condition.

Xenophon was once considered among the most important figures in Classical Literature, then in the nineteenth century he was marginalized. But his reputation is again on the rise among scholars, and these essays offer ample evidence for why that is a very good thing. The volume focuses on his Cyropaedia, Hellenica, Memorabilia, and Symposium.

This collection is based on the 2022 A.V. Elliott Conference on Great Books and Ideas, sponsored by The Thomas C. and Ramon E. McDonald Center for America’s Founding Principles at Mercer University.

Contributors include Peter Ahrensdorf, Wayne Ambler, Thomas Martin, Gregory McBryer, Carol McNamara, Paul A. Rahe, Richard Ruderman, and Charlotte C. S. Thomas.

March 2024

Philosophy/Essays

TITLES OF INTEREST

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Soul and Life: Psyche in Seminal Ancient Greek Thinkers brings together essays on Greek ontology, psychology, politics, and theories of soul in Socratic thought, Plato, Aristotle, and Herodotus. Among the included perspectives, there is the recognition in common that the soul or ψυχή (psyche) is not a mere hypostatization or reification of the object of cognitive studies. Instead, the essays contained in Soul and Life attempt to understand the soul as distinguished by life itself and as setting out ways of being in the world. The essays in Part I focus on political psychology, pursue feminist themes, and engage with issues in ethics and education. Contributions in Part II argue that the soul situates the fundamental structures in ontology and the study of Being as such. The authors in Part II further approach ancient psychology in terms of new ways of understanding the capacities of living beings for nutrition and generation and articulate the soul as a central concept in the constitution of the world as knowable.


Marina Marren is assistant professor of Philosophy at the United Arab Emirates University. Her research focuses on Ancient Greek, political, as well as nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy. In addition to numerous scholarly articles, Marren is author of Plato and Aristophanes: Comedy, Politics, and the Pursuit of a Just Life and editor of In Dialogue with Plato’s Politics and Education.
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Christopher L. Schelin is dean of students at Starr King School for the Ministry in California and a senior research fellow at the International Baptist Theological Study Centre in the Netherlands. He holds an MDiv from Duke University and a PhD from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His research interests include Baptist history and theology as well as the interactions between religious traditions, political liberalism, and democracy.

The Contestable Church
Dissent, Democracy, and Baptist Ecclesiology
Christopher L. Schelin

May 2024
Baptist History/Ecclesiology

For the contestable church, conflict spurs Christians to be ever receptive to difference and always reforming

Baptists have a well-earned reputation as a contentious people. Lacking a centralized authority to settle disputes, and defending the conscience of each believer, they have excelled at conflict and division. But perhaps the resolution of this scandal is not for Baptists to stop fighting, but to learn to fight better.

In The Contestable Church, Christopher L. Schelin reconsiders Baptist ecclesiology from the perspective that conflict is not merely inevitable but is essentially constructive for the church’s discernment of the mind of Christ. Enlisting the support of radical democratic political theory, as exemplified in the work of Romand Coles, the author argues that it is precisely through hospitable encounters with difference and disagreement that new possibilities emerge. Schelin invites Baptists not to shy away from conflict, employing convergences with radical democracy to reimagine key doctrinal themes such as soul competency, the priesthood of believers, and pastoral authority. By adopting insights from radical democracy, Baptists may avoid the competing dangers of excessive individualism and conformist authoritarianism.

The Contestable Church offers a positive witness to the peace of God that is the horizon for conflict and invites Baptists to the practice of vigorous dissent for the sake of living faithfully. Instead of revealing a dissolution into chaos, dissent is an expression of hope that Christians are a pilgrim people for whom a vulnerable and challenging intimacy leads the way home.

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The Contestable Church
Dissent, Democracy, and Baptist Ecclesiology
Christopher L. Schelin

May 2024
Baptist History/Ecclesiology

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If festschrifts celebrate a person for their life’s work, few are more worthy of the honor than William J. Leonard. He is equal parts teacher, minister, and administrator, all with a style that is “uniquely Leonard.” Why Study Baptists?: A Festschrift to William J. Leonard features eleven essays by friends, colleagues, and former students that bear witness to that style.

These essays explore topics ranging from race and spirituality to Appalachian religion and religious freedom. If one detects a familiar ring, it is because those are broad themes that reflect Bill Leonard’s career. He will tell you that he is a radical when it comes to race—because he is. He will tell you that he keeps close tabs on the political scene, especially on religious liberty issues—because he does. He will tell you that he cares deeply about others, especially in matters bearing on spirituality and equality—because it’s true.

So, why should anyone study Baptists? The reasons vary from person to person, but one thing is certain: Bill Leonard has set a high standard. Future chroniclers of all things Baptist will do well to consult his works at some point in their journey. The essays in this volume are a testimony to Leonard’s call for integrity of thought and deed. They are also a testimony to the effect one person can have on how you see the world around you.

Readers of the BENA Series will immediately recognize that this series does not follow the traditional “Baptists in the United States” or “Baptists in America” organizing pattern. Especially in the colonial period, the division between the Thirteen Colonies and the Canadas and Maritimes was secondary in light of a unified political culture under British colonial administration. As Morgan Edwards saw it, the Baptist religious community stretched from Nova Scotia to Georgia before the Revolution.

Volume XI specifically illustrates the presence of Nova Scotia Baptists in the transatlantic community.

In the late colonial period, the Maritime Provinces in British North America were a frontier to the emerging American colonies in the process of becoming a new nation. In addition to the administration of His Majesty’s government there were significant influences from the New England colonies. From 1760 scores of families from the six New England colonies emigrated especially to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, known as “planters.” They were later joined by the United Empire Loyalists who fled the American Revolution to remain loyal to their King. Their settlements, villages, ports, and farms resettled the old Acadian lands and, happily for the British, they anglicized French Maritime Canada.

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<td>(Publisher not responsible for lost shipments sent by USPS Media Mail)</td>
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<td>UPS Ground or UPS Ground Residential</td>
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