

two Poles, an Irishwoman, and an Armenian), and the effects of federal law.

The second part, "Foreign and Female: Continuities in Immigrant Life," devotes a chapter to paid employment and unpaid work, past and present. The next chapter analyzes family life, including chain migration and power within families. Another discusses voluntary organizations, neighborhoods, church and secular groups, and labor unions. The third part of the volume shows "how class and cultural change in the twentieth century has redefined both immigrant women's adaptation to U.S. life and the identities of their female descendants" (p. xiv). Career paths, mobility, and the "domestication of ethnicity" appear here. The seven-page conclusion is studded with gems of insight comparing male and female ethnic identity and the contemporary situation of migrants.

The topical strategy—surveying an entire 170-year period and crossing a welter of ethnic lines—inevitably leads to a sense of meeting all these people several times and to some sacrifice of narrative drive and temporal context that a chronological organization would ensure. The advantage of topical chapters, however, is to sharpen the definition of problems these migrant women faced in common despite their diverse backgrounds and time contexts.

A very valuable bibliographical essay discusses references relevant to each of the eight chapters and then lists general studies on migrant women and about three dozen works on women of specific nationalities. All of this, and of course the very topic of women migrants, should make the book especially useful for classes in migration history. Serious students of international migration, past and present, should not be without it.

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*The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America.* By Paul K. Conkin. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. Pp. xvii, 326. Notes, index. Clothbound, \$39.95; paperbound, \$16.95.)

The last decade has been a delightful one for historians of American religion. Works like Jon Butler's *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (1990) and Nathan O. Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989) have provided wonderfully readable and provocative reinterpretations of American religious life between the Revolution and the Civil War. Paul K. Conkin's *The Uneasy Center* is a welcome addition to this distinguished company. Conkin has provided the best general overview available of the origins and development of what is now called mainline Protestantism in the United States.

Conkin casts his net widely, defining his subject as virtually all Protestants besides Lutherans and a few small sects, but focusing on Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians. He is also expansive in chronology, beginning his account with the development of basic doctrines in the early church, the split between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, and the reformations in England, Scotland, and Ulster as well as on the continent. He concludes his introductory material with a deft and incisive sketch of John Wesley and early Methodism.

Conkin is an intellectual historian, and this is a work that takes ideas seriously. Conkin delights in Jonathan Edwards but sees his lasting impact as problematic. Samuel Hopkins is for Conkin less profound than Edwards but important in restating Calvinist theology. Nineteenth-century figures such as Nathaniel Taylor, Charles Hodge, and Horace Bushnell also receive considerable attention. A pattern is clear: Conkin sees the most incisive and imaginative theological work being done by Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

At the same time, Conkin does give attention to patterns of worship and the experience and outlook of those who were not in the pulpit. This is a work to turn to for everything from the curriculum of a Sunday school to what happened in a Methodist class meeting to the development of church music, as well as for the difference between Reformed and Associate Presbyterians.

Conkin does not try to make too many generalizations or find too many great unifying themes, and that is all to the good. While focused on the development of the religious outlook that became known as evangelicalism and the ways it changed over time, Conkin is always aware of differences, appropriate in a work that finds fierce denominational competition. Not everyone will like everything here—many will look askance at a book on antebellum Protestantism that gives more attention to Charles Hodge than to Charles G. Finney. But on balance, Conkin's work is a *tour de force* that is elegantly written, masterful in its command of both primary and secondary materials, and careful and persuasive in its conclusions. This book deserves the attention of anyone who enjoys reading good history.

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*The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893.* By Richard Hughes Seager. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. xxxi, 208. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

Richard Hughes Seager's work contributes enormously to the understanding of the World's Parliament of Religions, to which few