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Park and Armisteads' "Nevertheless She Leads: Postcolonial Women's Leadership for the Church" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Park, H. Y., Armistead M. K. (Eds.). (2020). *Nevertheless she leads: Postcolonial women's leadership for the church*. Nashville: General Board of Higher Education & Ministry, the United Methodist Church. 154 pp. \$28.99. ISBN: 9781945935664

This engaging collection of eleven articles is best characterized not as lectures, discourses, or sermons, but rather as conversations. For each reader to look within and around as the reading unfolds is the unstated, but desired end, of these conversations.

Presented to the reading public by the Higher Education and Ministry conclave of the United Methodist Church, the force of these narratives is to prove Albert Outler's conclusion that Methodist founder John Wesley is a "folk" theologian. Contributors represent three continents and sympathetic voices united, not so much in the denunciation of Patriarchy, as the more forward-focused theme of the female empowerment that enrichingly elevates everyone's vision for the kin'dom of God (this being the new and preferred rendering of the now obsolete Kingdom of God).

In the familiar terms of feminism, there is nothing of great surprise here. The ethics of inclusion is stressed over the theology of evermore granular doctrinal distinctions.

Historians who read these conversations in a half-century are likely to start with the dozen-page musings of Bishop Karen Oliveto, United Methodism's first openly gay bishop. Like virtually all the other ten on this united team, Oliveto is most intent on telling her personal story of conversion and her call to Christian ministry. In the terms of Methodism's classically regarded theological methodology – Scripture, Reason, Tradition, Experience – the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, Experience is at the forefront here. Scripture is quoted here and there, and there are significant overtures toward historical retrieval also, as in what Anita Phillips learned from her Cherokee grandmother, who spoke only Cherokee.

For a panoramic view of current "postcolonial women's leadership" in the United Methodist vernacular, which will be more or less identical to that of all progressive Protestant groups, this is a valuable, and highly accessible, resource.

Reviewer

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