

AMY LEONARD: *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005; pp. xiii + 218.

This title is drawn from Martin Luther's view that a woman is "like a nail driven into the wall" which Catherine Stimson, editor of the "Women in Culture and Society" series in which this book appears, interprets as "her obligation to hold up a heterosexual household in which she is her husband's cherished but obedient, submissive partner" ("Foreword," viii). The members of the three Dominican convents in Strasbourg, on which this study chiefly focuses, appear the antithesis of this interpretation, and with her extensive use of German and other sources, Leonard demonstrates that her three chosen communities were not unique. Like those in Spear's study, each convent was autonomous, its nuns the daughters of the city's elite classes and ready to use social and political networks to defend their interests. All three communities, the only female Dominican houses to survive in Strasbourg, had responded to the fifteenth-century monastic reform movement, a strength, Leonard notes, when extinction threatened. She examines the anti-cloister theories of Protestant reformers, basing her analysis on numerous pamphlets and the many preserved letters of Protestant family members enticing daughters and sisters home. The nuns, however, answered with equal spirit, defending their choice and the right to make it. As Leonard distinguishes, the German situation differed basically from the English, where a centralised government and a ruthless public policy were able to effect complete destruction. Each German city made its own decisions, with the compromises demanded by the checks and balances in any local socio-political situation. In Strasbourg, given the obduracy of the three communities — where leading citizens still sent their daughters for schooling and acquiesced in their becoming nuns — they were suffered to survive in pragmatic acceptance of their educational service. Leonard raises the question of how far the Protestant programme penetrated city life and exactly what adherence it entailed, especially when challenged by these women. The council's willingness to compromise, she claims, modifies theories of rigid confessionalisation.

The Peace of Augsburg led to increasing Catholic influence in Alsace. In one convent, the prioress became more publicly outspoken while community disaffection undermined what Leonard pinpoints as another of the nuns' strengths — their communal solidarity. Allegations, inconclusively proven, of administrative and sexual misconduct amongst the nuns, led in 1592 to municipal disbandment, with provision to join another convent for those willing, and in 1681, Strasbourg's Dominican nuns were there to welcome Louis XIV and the public restoration of Catholic practice.

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HUGH V. MCLACHLAN, ed.: *The Kirk, Satan and Salem: A History of the Witches of Renfrewshire*. Glasgow: The Grimsay Press, 2006; pp. 506.

This edited collection, produced by Hugh V. McLachlan, incorporates a selection of texts ranging from facsimile reproductions of nineteenth-century historical accounts to previously unpublished seventeenth-century manuscript material. The book focuses primarily on texts generated by the series of witchcraft allegations revolving around Christian Shaw during the 1690s in Renfrewshire, Scotland. However, it also incorporates material from arguably the most famous of all witchcraft prosecutions: those in Salem, New England, in 1692. McLachlan's purpose in combining these sources is to allow a

better understanding of witchcraft allegations and the legal processes that they precipitated. The book usefully provides access to a variety of previously inaccessible or obscure sources, in a single volume. This facilitates further research into a broader range of cases in Renfrewshire, in addition to those involving Shaw, as well as enabling detailed cross-comparison with the incidents in Salem.

The reproduction of material from the nineteenth-century retains the original small, closely spaced font, which is rather difficult to read and detracts from the overall quality of the collection. The introduction provides a helpful overview of the contexts from which the material in the collection emerged; this is complemented by the brief paragraphs that accompany each of the individual items in the edition. There is a factual error in the reference to "Increase Mather, a New England minister and the son of Cotton Mather" (23); although the relationship is stated correctly in a later comment on "*the curiously named father and son: the Rev. Increase and the Rev. Cotton Mather*" (436). This, along with lengthy and repeated quotations from a single secondary source (Richard Godbeer: *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692*. Oxford: OUP, 2005), undercuts its scholarly integrity to some extent. Issues of critical import, such as the legitimacy of torture as an element of the judicial process, are raised in a provocative manner without being pursued further. As, for example, McLachlan's comment on Guy Fawkes: "Was the torturing of him morally justified? I do not know but I think that, at least, a case could be made in support of it" (54). Such observations require significant justification if they are to contribute effectively to the overall argument within the limited space allotted to an introduction. The comparison McLachlan draws between witchcraft and terrorism is designed to persuade readers of important affinities between early modern cultures and the contemporary world. This is more extensively developed than the issue of torture, but again, it needs to be carefully explicated in order to be of any significant methodological use in seeking to understand witchcraft as an historical phenomenon.

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KALU U. OGBU, ed.: *African Christianity: An African Story*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria Press, 2005; pp. xx + 631.

This book of twenty chapters, written by nineteen scholars and divided into three parts, represents the first conscious attempt to build up a guild of church historians and scholars of religion from Africa to tell the story of African Christianity as an encounter between the gospel and African peoples.

Part one, "The Insertion of Christianity", consisting of seven chapters, discusses the major encounters between Christianity and African peoples. Here, Kalu considers the key concerns of modern African church historiography and eschews criticisms of Christianity in Africa that are rooted in "old racist biases." As opposed to the institutional understanding of church history and missionary historiography, Kalu suggests the ecumenical approach, which avoids an easy dismissal of non-Christian spiritual traditions; and provides an overview of African Christianity in four sequences. Sawyer and Youssef focus on the story of Christianity in North Africa, remarking that it was a golden epoch in world Christianity as Africans, mainly through the Alexandrian and Carthaginian Christian leadership, played a central role in the formation of Christian thought. Further, Anderson and Kalu provide the accounts of the rise and decline of the Churches of Nubia and Alwa, and the long ties of the Ethiopian Church with Christianity, while Akinade examines through several case studies, historical landmarks

This book is about the famous outbreak of witchcraft allegations and prosecutions associated with Christian Shaw, the so-called 'Bargarran Impostor' in Renfrewshire, Scotland in the 1690s. Much of the material it comprises was written then, in particular, the pivotal publication: *A True Narrative of the Sufferings and Relief of a Young Girl; Strangely molested by Evil spirits and their instruments in the West: With a preface and postscript containing* Read Full Overview. McLachlan, Hugh V. (2006) *The Kirk, Satan and Salem: The History of the Witches of Renfrewshire*, (editor), The Grimsay Press, Glasgow. McLachlan, Hugh V. and Swales, J. Kim (2007) *From the Womb to the Tomb: Issues in Medical Ethics*, Humming Earth, Glasgow. Experience. "present. Professor of Applied Philosophy, Glasgow Caledonian University. Education. 1976. The City University, London, PhD Social Sciences. *The Origin of Witches*. Early witches were people who practiced witchcraft, using magic spells and calling upon spirits for help or to bring about change. Most witches were thought to be pagans doing the Devil's work. Paranoia was sweeping Salem, and Elizabeth was being examined by a local judge on suspicion of witchcraft. Watching his wife withstand the heated examination was bad enough, but suddenly the ...read more. Loading