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Pedlar, James E. Review of *The Radical Wesley: The Patterns and Practices of a Movement Maker*, by Howard A. Snyder. *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 91-93.

Howard A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley: The Patterns and Practices of a Movement-Maker*. Revised edition. Franklin, TN: Seedbed, 2014. 212 pp. £12.50/\$18.95 pb. ISBN: 978-1-62-824087-0.

Howard Snyder is well known in Wesleyan and Holiness circles, having served as a missionary, a pastor, and a faculty member at United Theological Seminary, Asbury Theological Seminary, and Tyndale Seminary. He has repeatedly demonstrated a gift for bridging the divide between church and academy. *The Radical Wesley* is a book that evidences this gift in a fruitful manner. Originally published in 1980, it has been revised and updated, though no major or substantive changes have been made to the first edition. For example, wherever

possible, Snyder has changed references from the Jackson edition of Wesley's *Works* to the Bicentennial Edition. He has also included updated references to secondary literature that has been published in the intervening years, and expanded upon some points in light of his own continuing work.

*The Radical Wesley* offers an accessible introduction to Wesley, with a particular focus on Methodism as a renewal movement. Snyder's aim is not primarily historical or theological, though both historical and theological resources are brought to bear upon his examination of Wesley as an example of 'radical Christianity'. The book's primary contribution lies within the field of church revitalization studies, where it remains a standard account of Wesley as a renewal leader. To a certain extent the ideas presented overlap with Snyder's doctoral dissertation, which focused on Pietism, Moravianism, and Methodism, and was published in 1989 as *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church* (Wipf and Stock, reprint, 1997). *The Radical Wesley* makes some of the insights from *Signs of the Spirit* available to a broader audience. Its intended readership includes students, pastors, and other church leaders interested in Wesley and the renewal of the church. Those looking for rigorous engagement with scholarly literature may not find this book helpful, though they would be advised to consult *Signs of the Spirit* for a more extensive treatment of similar questions.

Snyder's basic argument is that Wesley's understanding of the church and its mission parallels the Radical Protestant tradition in a number of significant ways. He is not arguing for a direct historical connection between Wesley and the Radicals, but rather using 'a thematic and typological approach' to establish some fundamental similarities (11). The book contains twelve short chapters, organized into three sections. The first section is primarily historical, and tells Wesley's story, focusing on the key period between 1725 and 1745. Here Snyder not only explains Wesley's change of theological perspective, but also the rise of the Methodist movement. Snyder provides an excellent and accessible account of the structures of Methodism, including a helpful diagram (72). The second section is primarily theological, and examines Wesley's ecclesiology, which Snyder argues was basically Anglican infused with key elements of a believer's church perspective. For example, Wesley's anti-Constantinian interpretation of church history is highlighted in chapter seven, and his functional view of ministry is discussed in chapter eight. The third and final section of the book presents Snyder's analysis of Wesley and Methodism. The ninth chapter forms the lynchpin of his argument, with Snyder outlining seven marks of radical Protestantism, and noting how Wesley incorporates each of these into his Anglican perspective. Snyder also draws out some important implications for church renewal, arguing that the Methodist movement illustrates the need to move beyond a strong institutional versus charismatic dichotomy and embrace

a 'mediating model' that sees 'both the institutional church (even in periods of decline) and also renewal movements and forces as valid and perhaps even normal in some sense' (149). He closes this final section with some critiques of Wesley's views of ministry, his social and political conservatism, and his understanding of the kingdom of God, before commending Wesley as a figure from whom the contemporary church can still learn a great deal.

While Snyder sets out to identify Wesley's affinities with Radical Protestantism, he ends up arguing that Wesley's synthesis of established and believers' church perspectives is in fact more radical than Radical Protestantism. His final thrust is not to make Wesley look like an Anabaptist, but to press the contemporary church toward a greater embodiment of radical discipleship. Significantly, he concludes the book by saying, 'What the world needs now is not Radical Protestantism but radical Christianity' (186).

*The Radical Wesley* continues to deserve a wide readership among its intended audience. It still has great potential to introduce a new generation to Wesley as a renewal leader, and contains many penetrating insights about the perennially rocky relationship between renewal movements and established churches. This revised edition is a welcome addition to contemporary Wesley literature.

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