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Faught, C. Brad. Review of *Redefining Christian Britain: Post 1945 Perspectives*, edited by Jane Garnett, Matthew Grimley, Alana Harris, William Whyte and Sarah Williams. London: SCM Press, 2007. *Anglican and Episcopal History* 77, no. 2 (2008): 214-215.

and degradation racist whites inflicted upon black men and women. According to Blum, Du Bois, theologically speaking, was a precursor of present-day liberation theologians and hence was quite at home in “discussing God and Christ in terms of their blackness” (17).

Although he perhaps goes too far in his deprecation of other studies’ failure to research and treat Du Bois’s religiosity, Blum’s study does offer a new and important window on this noted African American figure as belonging to America’s liberationist religious tradition. He is to be applauded for his careful and thorough research and analysis.

If there is a flaw in this invaluable work, it goes to its title. Not every prophet is necessarily “religious.” Given his thesis, his title would have served him better if he had simply added the word “Religious” before the word “Prophet.”

Paul R. Griffin

Wright State University

*Redefining Christian Britain: Post 1945 Perspectives.* Edited by Jane Garnett et al. (London: SCM Press, 2007, Pp. xii, 308. \$35.95.)

This book is a pointed and timely rebuttal of the rhetoric of decline that pervades the scholarship of the state of the contemporary Christian church in Britain. *The Death of Christian Britain* (2001) by Callum Brown, for example, is one such title that does more to obscure than to illumine, maintain the editors and authors of *Redefining Christian Britain*. And in a tightly argued and variegated volume of eighteen essays—“case studies” they are called in a nod to the pronounced analytical nature of the book—they make a compelling case for “transformation” rather than decline as the essential feature of the modern British church.

At base, Jane Garnett and her colleagues find the secularization thesis, which emerged in the 1960s as a means to explain the rapid decline of religion as a significant force in public life, as shopworn and an unsatisfactory way in which to explain contemporary British religiosity and the church. Such a “master narrative” is rejected for a number of reasons, the most convincing of which is the authors’ mistrust of the simple numbers game, or “the persuasive power of the metaphor of the downward slope” (33). They contend that even though church attendance has fallen significantly across the denominational spectrum in Britain, such institutional falling away is not restricted to the church alone and therefore cannot be seen necessarily as proof of secularization. Instead, what is required, and what the authors propose in order to understand more accurately the phenomenon of the contemporary

church, is a new research agenda comprised of three key concepts: authenticity, generation, and virtue. Employing the instructive work on modern identity formation of Charles Taylor, among others, they argue that there are various ways to get at the state of contemporary Christianity that go far beyond numbers alone. They also make the point that modernization is not necessarily generative of secularization. In other words, the secularization thesis may be useful in a European context, but given prevailing social trends in Africa, Asia, South America, and elsewhere, its universal explanatory power diminishes markedly.

The essays are grouped according to how they relate to one of authenticity, generation, and virtue. They are written by many of the brightest scholars currently working on the contemporary British church and cover a range of topics including homosexuality, the Internet, and the controversial children's literature of Philip Pullman, best known for his book *The Golden Compass*, made recently into a film. The only serious omission in what is otherwise a constellation of the most noteworthy issues in contemporary British Christianity is a sustained examination of the impact of post-Second World War immigration.

The summative effect of these essays pushes hard at the intellectual hegemony of the secularization thesis and is epitomized by the book's compelling conclusion that "the cultural strength of religion must be separated from its institutional strength" (290). Far from the death of Christianity being at hand, the only thing that looks to be dead is an outmoded thesis that for over forty years has been predicting the imminent demise of what appears to be a most uncooperative patient.

C. Brad Faught

Tyndale University College

*Pauli Murray and Caroline Ware: Forty Years of Letters in Black and White.*

Edited by Anne Firor Scott. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006, Pp. xiii, 190. \$24.95.)

If you are looking for a book that follows the familiar academic expectation of presenting a thesis and then arguing for it throughout the text, this is not the book for you. If you are seeking a study that seeks to shed new light on some historic figure or problem, this book will greatly disappoint you. But if you are in search of a study that searches out letters of communications that were exchanged between two significant but largely forgotten females of the mid-twentieth century, then this book is a must read for you.

Anne Firor Scott has collected and put together in book form an