

*The Politics of Faith during the Civil War*, by Timothy L. Wesley. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013. xi, 273 pp. Notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Mark S. Schantz is professor of history at Birmingham-Southern College. He is the author of *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (2008).

The subject of Timothy L. Wesley's new volume is not Iowa history (indeed, the state is scarcely noted in the book), but it will be of interest to readers who want a broadly framed study of how the American clergy—both North and South—weathered the storm of the Civil War. Wesley's central argument is that things did not go well for American ministers, with the exception of those Northern pastors who strapped on the full armor of the Union and wore it until the end. Even for them, though, the story does not end happily, for Wesley sees in the crucible of war a situation in which ministerial authority was compromised under the weight of political pressure. "In straightforward terms," he writes in his introduction, "Civil War ministers were removed from their pulpits, excommunicated from their churches, and treated roughly by local members and nonmembers alike for what they said" (3). Wesley makes an important case that the political allegiances required by the state (either the Union or the Confederacy) began to trump the faith commitments of American ministers and church members. His book thus contributes to a body of literature that reveals the underpinnings of a more secular, postwar American culture.

Wesley is sure-footed in guiding readers through the challenges ministers faced during the Civil War. Those ministers in the North suspected of "disloyalty" could be hauled up before annual conferences and ecclesiastical bodies and held accountable for their opinions. For example, Wesley finds in one sounding that Methodists in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio brought up 121 ministers on charges of not being fully loyal to the Union cause (77). Other churches demanded that their members subscribe to "loyalty resolutions" that inevitably undercut the authority of ministers, even where they might have supported the cause (81). In the South, the perils came in a different form. Because most Southern ministers lined up behind the Confederacy (indeed, Wesley reminds us that Pope Pius IX "came nearer a formal recognition of the Confederacy than did any secular European leader"), there would be hell to pay when they found themselves on the losing side (101). Union commanders remembered the full-throated endorsement Southern ministers offered the Confederate government and swept down on their churches with a vengeance. Wesley reminds us, too, that Union war policy "placed the property of disloyal churches in the occupied

South under the control of select northern denominational leaders" (148). Religious independence melted away before the exigencies of war. Perhaps Wesley's most chilling accounts are those showing what happened to Unionist clerics in the Upper South. Although the evidence is not fully explicated, Wesley proposes that "there were more than a few wartime murders of denominational ministers throughout the South, murders of and by both Confederates and Unionists. The bulk of such atrocities were carried out in the Upper South, and a majority of them featured victims who were in the Unionist clergy" (164). The suppression of religious speech and the outright murder of ministers—regardless of side or cause—form a vital part of Wesley's case regarding the decay of wartime clerical authority.

His concluding chapter, "Black Church Leaders and Politics in the Civil War," is a disappointment and puts in jeopardy the scope of his argument. Wesley rightly problematizes the idea that "black leaders" thought in any single way about important political issues—such as colonization or the recruitment of troops—but misses the ways the war empowered rather than diminished them. It offered many such opportunities, perhaps nowhere more powerfully than when a group of 20 black ministers met with General William T. Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in Savannah, Georgia, on January 12, 1865. Sherman and Stanton took the meeting in order to help solve the refugee problem plaguing Sherman's invading armies. The black ministers proposed land ownership as one solution, and Sherman delivered for them. Four days after that historic meeting, Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15 opened the door for freed people to lay claim to thousands of acres of abandoned plantation lands. Black ministers, too, exerted new power in officiating at the weddings of thousands of freed people (a ministerial office denied them under slavery) and by running for elective office during Reconstruction. Had Wesley counted more fully the experiences of black ministers and church leaders, his overall assessment of the damage the war did to clerical authority might have been more carefully circumscribed.

*The Steamboat Bertrand and Missouri River Commerce*, by Ronald R. Switzer. Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 376 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.