Evangelicals at a Crossroads: Revivalism and Social Reform in Boston, 1860–1910. By Benjamin L. Hartley. (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2011. xiv, 288 pp. Cloth, $85.00, ISBN 978-1-58465-928-0. Paper, $39.95, ISBN 978-1-58465-929-7.)

While many historians have studied Boston's intellectual, social, and literary life, few have examined its religious dimensions in the years after 1800. Along with Margaret Lamberts Bendroth's *Fundamentalists in the City: Conflicts and Division in Boston's Churches, 1885–1950* (2005), *Evangelicals at a Crossroads* helps fill this void. While Bendroth focuses on reformed Christians, the city's leading congregations, and the development of fundamentalism, Benjamin L. Hartley's well-researched and well-documented study concentrates on Wesleyan evangelicals and the interdenominational agencies that Boston evangelicals established to assist orphans, immigrants, and the poor.

Boston's varied evangelicals (primarily Methodists, Baptists, and Salvation Army members) took paths that at times converged and at others diverged as they strove to practice scriptural holiness and base urban life on biblical standards. Despite their differences over theology and praxis, before 1890 their shared values and goals enabled them to work together effectively to win converts and improve social conditions. By the early twentieth century, however, the impact of the Social Gospel movement, theological differences, and changing social circumstances fractured their united front, and they split into liberal Protestant, fundamentalist, evangelical, and Pentecostal camps.

Hartley's themes elucidate this development. The course and consequences of the revivals conducted by Dwight L. Moody in 1877, Rodney "Gipsy" Smith in 1906, and J. Wilbur Chapman in 1909 differed substantially. Boston evangelicals founded many important organizations including the Home for Little Wanderers, Boston University, and the New England Conservatory of Music. While Brahmin Protestants and Irish Catholics played the leading roles in Boston's politics, evangelicals engaged in many political battles, especially those over immigration, labor issues, intemperance, and religion in the public schools. Evangelical women worked vigorously to aid Boston's downtrodden, while managing to avoid the theological controversy that prompted many other organizations and congregations to concentrate on either revivalism or social reform. This trend is illustrated by the Baptist A. J. Gordon who emphasized evangelism (through the Evangelistic Association of New England) and the focus on remedying social ills by the Methodist Edgar J. Helms and his Morgan Memorial Church.

Hartley lauds Boston evangelicals for the "astounding" breadth of both their revivalist and social reform endeavors and for their "exceptional ability to bridge religious, class, cultural," and ethnic boundaries in creating an impressive array of benevolent organizations to achieve their goals (p. 170). By 1910, however, most Boston evangelicals, like their contemporaries across the nation, found it difficult to simultaneously promote revivals and social reform. While some continued to stress evangelism, more of them opted for ministering to the needy, influenced by their growing affluence, their new leaders, the decline of the holiness movement, the growing respectability of Boston Catholics, and the city's many social ills.

Hartley's book is very valuable, and its careful examination of religious groups, ministries, and social circumstances in particular locales helps either support or challenge broad generalizations about American religious history. His study also sheds light on two areas scholars have neglected: the importance of religion in American cities and the significant contribution evangelicals made to the nation's social welfare.

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