sortir les gens de la dépendance d'une assistance, mais elle préfère ne pas voir les mendiant participer à ses cultes. Freston suggère finement que l'IURD demeure « un phénomène lié à la pauvreté chrétienne » : elle a peu de succès là où les chrétiens ne sont pas pauvres ou les pauvres pas chrétiens (pp. 188-189). En outre, les « solutions de nature magico-religieuses » proposées par l'IURD s'accompagnent d'exigences financières pour être méritées (Mariano, p. 212), ce qui n'est pas étranger aux problèmes d'image rencontrés par le mouvement.

L'IURD apparaît comme un groupe de type « secte », exclusif, qui ne se mêle pas aux autres communautés religieuses. Cependant, le chapitre consacré par Jean-Pierre Dozon à la Côte d'Ivoire estime que son succès – réel – reste relatif et que « l'apparente réussite de l'IURD en Côte d'Ivoire ne participe jamais que d'une vague pentecôtiste d'envergure qui déborde largement » (p. 102). On ne peut que saluer l'initiative d'un volume qui, fondé sur des études de cas, offre un aussi riche matériel sur un mouvement tel que l'IURD et contribue en même temps à notre connaissance des variations du pentecôtisme.

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In her book, which is based on a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Marburg, Uta Theilen sets out to describe the situation of the Methodist Church and its (female) membership in the context of the political changes that have taken place in South Africa since 1994. She asks how changes in the political and social landscape have affected South African Methodism and whether the new founding ideas of South African democracy are reflected in the life and structures of this particular church community and individuals belonging to it. The author's analysis is focused on notions such as non-racialism, reconciliation and gender equality as well as on the resurgence and promotion of “African traditions” in post-apartheid political discourse. Theilen chooses two specific areas of inquiry: the position of women (and women’s organisations) and the significance of African Traditional Religions and African traditions within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA). In her analysis Theilen not only aims at a “better understanding of urban Methodism” but offers an outlook on the forming of individual and social identities in South Africa’s political transition.

The author puts much emphasis on providing space for Methodist women to speak for themselves. To
this end she combines detailed interviews with participant observation. In addition she relies on information gathered by means of questionnaires distributed among members of various women’s organisations and, on a smaller scale, among university students.

After an introductory chapter outlining her research and dealing with the history of the Methodist church in general and more specifically in Southern Africa, various Methodist Women’s Organisations, their formation, their membership and function are described. According to Theilen most women’s organisations are still more or less organised along racial lines: The Manyano assembles black women; the Women’s Association caters for “coloured” and the Women’s Auxiliary for white members of the church. The Women’s Fellowship (another, smaller organisation for black women) and the Women’s Network uniting women from all ethnic backgrounds are more recent additions to Methodist women’s structures. Continuing segregation between the Women’s organisations is considered a major obstacle to racial reconciliation by the church leadership which puts some pressure on them to unite and form a single body. Whereas the Women’s Network spearheads the establishment of a non-racial community, Theilen does not consider the reunion of the remaining four organisations as likely to happen in the near future (236). Bonding across ethnic boundaries still seems to be difficult because of prevailing mutual negative attitudes and scepticism, language barriers, but also on grounds of separate life-worlds and differing living conditions. However, individual members are establishing contacts between the three major organisations, a process that eventually might have the potential to lead to an improvement of mutual communication and possibly to a process of reconciliation. All women’s organisations face problems of attracting young professional women in order to secure sustainability. Nevertheless the church will—according to Theilen—remain important in offering women a social and spiritual ‘place of belonging’ “in an environment that is characterised by social and economic instability and the lack of public security.” (246)

Theilen concludes that women’s organisations offer a space to address gender issues within the church. By raising women’s self-respect and teaching the necessary skills they empower women to take up leadership positions within or even beyond the organisation’s confines. In chapter 3 (117-153) six women are portrayed who occupy or used to occupy leadership positions within the church as circuit stewards, lay ministers or presidents of women’s organisations. Theilen outlines their professional and religious biographies as well as their struggles for “more personal independence and for influence in their congregations” (118). Whereas local congregations might still be reluctant to accept women in leadership positions the general church leadership of the MCSA is described as showing a great degree of gender awareness and thus being very supportive. Theilen is cautiously optimistic that efficient changes have