

# Reviews



**DELIGHTED: WHAT TEENAGERS ARE TEACHING THE CHURCH ABOUT JOY**, Kendy Creasy Dean, Wesley W. Ellis, Justin Forbes, Abigail Visco Rusert, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2020, 135 pages. \$16.99.

I am not, nor have I ever been, a youth minister or worker. After having other careers outside of vocational ministry, I opened myself up to the possibilities of being a pastor. I was always clear, however, that youth ministry was outside of my calling. I also know that a cadre of youth ministry scholars are thinking, out of necessity, about the church's role in society and how that affects ministry in general. It is with this mindset that I read *Delighted*, a book written by four youth ministry scholars. Not only was the book a joy to read, but I also found that it presented a welcome shift in the paradigm I use to frame ministry—even though I do not primarily work with youth.

The authors are clear in the purpose of youth ministry. They write, "Our primary job as youth leaders is not to delight in young people (though, of course, we do . . . most of the time) but to love them—which means helping them experience God's delight in them, which ignites their delight in God" (4). Joy, then, comes from experiencing the delight that God has for God's children. That experience of delight is not something youth leaders are responsible for creating but, rather,

for helping their students discover. This is the fulcrum of the authors' argument: "Joy is prevenient; it is ours before we ask for it, since God's delight in us overflows into the world from the moment of our creation" (4). Since joy comes before any of our efforts to achieve or create it, ministry results from a foundation of or because of joy. The remainder of the book tackles three practices that are basic to the journey of discovering joy: friendship, celebration, and confession.

Youth leaders are often told not to be friends with their students. The argument goes that appropriate boundaries must be maintained between youth workers and their students. Research also shows that friendships are important to the faith formation of young people. The authors of *Delighted* argue that youth need healthy friendships that are not about rewards and benefits. The church is an alternative to the culture of achievement. Friendship is to be freely and voluntarily given. Youth ministers often fall into the habit of building relationships with specific goals in mind. These goals often include achieving joy, accomplishing friendships, helping students achieve adulthood, and other strategies designed to promote loyalty to the church. In contrast, the kind of friendships promoted here are characterized by trust, wonder, vulnerability, and grace. Joy can be discovered in the midst of these types of friendships.

The second practice explored is celebration. Young people long to be moved—swept into a higher purpose. This movement can be intentionally triggered. However, this is not what youth ministers are called to do—manipulate joy. The goal is to assist young people in responding to joy, not to be producers of joy. “What if youth ministry were less a workshop for creating well-adjusted, thriving adults and more a crucible for celebration, where the God of joy who is working in young people’s lives is noticed and claimed?” (65). In order to notice and claim the activity of God, the authors recommend celebration as a practice. The book provides concrete examples of this practice. It is characterized by hopeful anticipation, friendship, and spontaneity. As youth ministers, it is important to look for the hand of God and be quick to celebrate that work.

The final practice discussed in *Delighted* is confession. The authors describe youth ministry as foster parenting. The leader acts as God’s surrogate as youth stand on the edge of a cliff looking for tangible signs of God’s grace. Often the youth leader botches their role. In those situations, joy can be elusive. The authors suggest that youth ministry is a task that only Jesus can accomplish. “We’re supposed to do this work and love these young people *even if* they don’t come around . . . *even if* not one life is changed . . . *even if* not a single person ever responds to us or to God” (79). Confession is an admission that God, not the youth worker, is the primary actor in this drama of foster parenting. The youth worker is limited by their humanity and is fully reliant on God. Confession illuminates joy that is hidden when a youth worker misunderstands their place in God’s ecology.

I am writing this review in the middle of a global pandemic. Joy is not easily discovered during this time. In fact, it seems fully concealed for people of all ages. It is not found in all of the usual places, and churches are looking for ways to pivot and create any amount of joy—even the most minuscule amount. *Delighted* serves as a reminder that joy is not ours to create. It is to be discovered even in the presence of overwhelming and difficult circumstances. The book’s corrective provides a simple strategy for ministry in this time. Concentrate on freely and voluntarily given friendships—ones without strings attached. Spontaneously celebrate God’s action in fun and clever ways. Confess when our efforts at life are simply not our best or good enough.

Timothy Vaughn  
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**THE CARE OF SOULS: CULTIVATING A PASTOR’S HEART**, by Harold Senkbeil, Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019, 290 pages. \$14.99.

Equal parts encouragement and primer, Harold Senkbeil’s *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart* is immediately one of the top ten books on pastoring in recent memory. As quotable as Bo Giertz’s *Hammer of God*, this work defines what a pastor is and reminds those who serve of what it means for their vocation to pastor well. Resurrecting the ancient practice of *Seelsorge* from a world of pastor as “fixer/free therapist/Byronic cool guy,” Senkbeil puts the Word and sacraments back as the primary tools for the office of the ministry. He encourages those in the office

to use priestly listening to understand a soul's true burden while at the same time teaching the recipient of pastoral care the complexity of the ministry that the pastor brings. He puts forth a method for soul care: listen carefully, attend to the prognosis, and artfully, if not generously, apply Word and sacraments. Throughout the work he weaves stories that are a delightful reminiscence of farm life and about fifty years of ministry experience. The structure of the work can be summarized by three questions. First, what is a pastor in light of the Word of God? Second, what does a pastor do? Last, how do you survive the pastorate?

Against all other definitions of the pastorate Senkbeil says that "the ministry is rooted in Jesus and his gifts" (16). This incarnational approach to pastoral identity is that from which the rest of a

pastor's work comes. It is the source of the ministry and the strength of supply for those who serve. It may be fair to liken this to an analogy. Nobody praises a paintbrush for the work of art; they praise the artist. Pastors are those well-used brushes in the hands of the Master as God makes a masterpiece.

The true genius of the work, though, is the chapters after the first two and before the final three. In an age when religion is nothing more than "moral therapeutic deism," when pastors feel pressured to be armchair psychologists in the vein of Dr. Phil or, worse, life coaches who have platitudes that would be popular memes for only about a week, Senkbeil reminds us all that the real treatment for the wounded soul is practicing the ministry of Jesus through Word and sacrament. While not denying the real place for therapy and

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coaching in a person's life, Senkbeil gives the pastor permission to not "fake it" with one's flock nor feel guilty about being unable to "do that for them."

While being a breath of fresh air for those who have been wearied by recent trials in the world, Senkbeil does also give a brotherly warning in the end of his work to practice self-care, but with the caveat that the pastor use the very things they apply to others—namely, that the pastor attend to Word and prayer. No doubt his time with *Doxology* has helped shape this final section of the work that encourages pastoral disciplines and seeking a spiritual director for help in the ministry.

To be honest, the book reads a little like the Gospel of Mark in format: a collection of episodic treatments of specific things, as if he is not just drawing on wisdom but on a series or collection of sermons and talks he had well-rehearsed over the years. This was not a drawback at all. In fact, it made it easier to break up the reading for those actively serving in the parish who would have had several reasons to put it down if it required more of the reader than it did.

This book is fine fare for pastors in a world of "Google-happy, how-to fixers." He reacquaints the field with the tried-and-true practices of confession, the Lord's Supper, prayer, and blessing without just practicing repristination. "We are not nostalgia freaks, trying to retreat to a more comfortable past. We move confidently into an uncertain future" (272) with the Lord leading and teaching us the way to go.

So if you feel run down and dogged by the pace or lack of pace in the parish and world today, if you need encouragement because of the pressure to follow the latest trend, if you are always suspicious that what you were taught at the seminary was

really invaluable, then pick up this book and be encouraged. Be reintroduced to your love of the ministry and the care of souls. Or if you just want a real good book to speak to your pastoral heart, read this one, because it will not disappoint. So to all the sheep dogs out there who run around yapping at the Great Shepherd's behest, keep "one ear tuned to the voice of the Great Shepherd while the other is attentive to the sheep" (122).

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**ECOTHEOLOGY: A CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION**, edited by Kiara A. Jorgenson and Alan G. Padgett, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020, 228 pages. \$24.99.

Since the pioneering ecotheological work of Joseph Sittler in the 1950s, nearly every theological tradition and community has been seeking to understand the Bible, theology, the Christian tradition, and ethics in light of our age of ecocide. This book situates itself in that tradition of responds by seeking to give further language and thinking to "greening" Christianity. Edited by Kiara A. Jorgenson (St. Olaf College) and Alan G. Padgett (Luther Seminary), *Ecotheology: A Christian Conversation* brings together four outstanding chapters from four leading ecotheological scholars with the stated intent to "stimulate and guide further crucial work in ecotheology" (2).

The text is introduced by Katherine Hayhoe—the prominent Christian climate scientist—with fresh ecological statistics alongside a renewed call to stop treating our finite planet as though it were infinite. Certainly, as Hayhoe contends,

talking about the environmental crisis is a critical step forward in actually doing something about it. A brief introduction by the editors sets the stage for the chapters to come alongside a succinct overview of the ecotheological trajectories to date—from Sittler, through Lynn White, to the present. Their outlay of the book is simple and pragmatic: four chapters from four scholars with responses from each.

The initial chapter by biblical scholar Richard Bauckham, titled “Being Human in the Community of Creation,” is nothing short of breathtaking. Indeed, Bauckham’s previous efforts around apocalyptic literature and ecotheological conversations have been widely noted by scholars abroad. But it is here that Bauckham’s dual passions of biblical exegesis and creation care are married. It is the opinion of this reviewer that this piece—which draws on Bauckham’s material in *Living with Other Creatures*—is Bauckham at his best. The article is worth reading on its own. Humans, he contends, are *one* part of the created community alongside the insects, plants, and beasts. In this web of relationships humans find themselves, and have always found themselves. With all his exegetical might, Bauckham locates within the creation message of Genesis 1–2 the very help Christian theology needs to deconstruct the Baconian deathtrap it has been tortured by for centuries. And Bauckham succeeds. Humans, he shows, are not created by God to be lords *over* creatures or creation. Rather, humans are creatures themselves. Yes, creatures with distinct responsibilities and assignments. But creatures nonetheless.

Lutheran ecotheologian Cynthia Moe-Lobeda’s piece “Love Incarnate” mines a variety of biblical and theological themes orbiting around love for the

purposes of eco-care. Of all the pieces, this one has the most “spiritual” quality to it—in the formative sense. How does the love of God form us into ecologically mindful people who are formed rightly? To that end, Moe-Lobeda identifies and expounds on eleven key themes of biblical love. Of particular note, Moe-Lobeda’s reflections on creation as God’s revelation are penetrating (she calls Revelation “the first book of revelation”). Equally important is her incisive call to reshape individuals not only toward a spirituality of love, but toward systems that embody and enact love toward the “least of these.” If climate change and ecological degradation disproportionately harm the poor, Moe-Lobeda contends, then loving action must undoubtedly include addressing climate change. While Moe-Lobeda might have done well to expand her focus beyond simply climate change, her point remains nonetheless. We need a renewed approach to love to do justice in our world.

Steven Bouma-Prediger’s chapter largely captures the impetus of his most recent book-length treatment *Earthkeeping and Character*, published in 2019. Bouma-Prediger’s approach here pivots on two main themes. First, he enters the fray of the well-traveled debate around the usefulness and viability of the metaphor of “stewardship” as a means of caring for the planet. While not landing upon a novel response, he most certainly captures the key elements of the debate and lands on “earthkeeping” as more appropriate language. Secondly, Bouma-Prediger tethers ecological concerns with what is called “ecological virtue ethics.” More important than anything, Christian discipleship is about becoming the *kinds* of people who care for the planet. One of these keys is the formation of humility—a critical feature of the

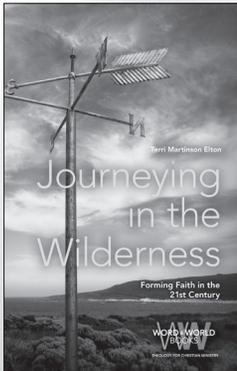
character necessary to live humbly on a sensitive planet.

A final chapter, by theologian John F. Haught, titled “The Unfinished Sacrament of Creation” explores the theme of ecotheology from a distinctively Catholic perspective. Haught’s contention, among other things, is that theologians are to blame for our ecological ignorance and for having neglected to shape theological inquiry in an earth-friendly way. Theological work is important, ecologically. To that end, Haught situates his approach within a sacramental (or, as he calls it, “analogical”) framework drawing heavily on the work of Thomas Berry and Teilhard de Chardin. With an almost liturgically inspired reflection, the natural world is envisioned as a kind of unfinished work that anticipates with groans the breaking in of the eschaton.

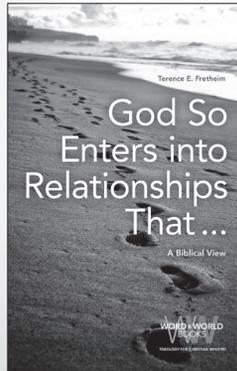
Within, we are privileged to take in four voices—Reformed-evangelical, Anglican, Lutheran, and Catholic—who find common ground on one thing: the call to worship God by caring for God’s garden. Such a beautiful tapestry of reflections from a diversity of traditions in Christ’s body is needed and even prophetic. With responses to each chapter from each coauthor, we are given a front row seat into the nuances of how different Christians think about these matters. In due course, the kind of hospitality embodied here will make its way into the broader conversation. A welcome compendium, indeed. While not recommended for an undergraduate audience, it might better be suited for researchers, graduate students, theologians, and pastors.

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**THE LEGACY OF THE BARMEN DECLARATION: POLITICS AND THE KINGDOM**, edited by Fred Dallmayr, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019, 130 pages. \$85.00.

In this book, Fred Dallmayr analyzes the eclectic theological works done by pastors and theologians, including Eberhard Busch, Wolf Krötke, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, focusing on the document adopted in the town of Barmen from the standpoint of political theology. The “Barmen Declaration of May 31, 1934” (3) was a response of German Protestant pastors and theologians to the attempt of Hitler’s Nazi regime to consolidate its tyrannical rule expressed through the secular rulers extending their powers to the community of faith. Dallmayr intends to show how faith and politics can engage in a “tensional” interaction with each other in which “each side challenges and corrects the other’s self-sufficiency or self-enclosure” (2) while maintaining their difference.

In chapter 1, Dallmayr describes that the Barmen Declaration calls all evangelical churches in Germany to seek the unity that is established on the Word of God. As a result, the churches rejected the false doctrine, particularly the one promoting the church/state relation, that falls short of scriptural attestation. The second chapter concerns the Confessional Churches and their assertion that the Bible is the authoritative source of truth and faith, in which Jesus Christ, the one Word of God, whom Christians must hear, trust, and obey, is “attested to us” in the context of Hitler’s Nazi regime. The Confessional Churches called both the German church and the state to discharge their respective responsibilities as commissioned to them by God

without one exercising dominion over or on behalf of the other (21).

Eberhard Busch describes the situation of German Evangelical churches in 1933–1934 in chapter 3. A too-close identification of the confession of faith in God with a confessional commitment to the German nation, including its history, its authoritarian regime, “its Führer, and its German race” (26) characterized the 1933 religious and political context. At the center of this confession was a jubilant endorsement of the Nazi regime. Thus, “a political Yes to Hitler” was connected with “an ecclesial Yes to Christ” (27). The Barmen Declaration of May 31, 1934, was a correction to this confusion of foundation for the Evangelical church, declaring that the church “stood *only* on the one rock, the Word of God” (27). This led to a renewed attention to the meaning of confession as involving not only the binding of the church to the God it confesses, but as involving also some sort of rejections implied in its “Yes” to the divine truth revealed in the Scripture. Confession must first bind churches to God before it binds them to each other. They are so bound to each other that they cannot be Christians in isolation but only together with others. They are bound to God in such a way that even old divisions among Christians can be overcome (35).

The fourth chapter is devoted to the analysis of Wolf Krötke’s historical synopsis of the Barmen Declaration of 1934. The context for the Barmen Declaration was marked by national socialist ideology, which promoted the superiority of the German race and the national socialists in and beyond Germany. The “German Christians” movement expressed their loyalty to the Nazi regime by acknowledging Adolf Hitler as “God’s revelation in German history” (40), recognizing

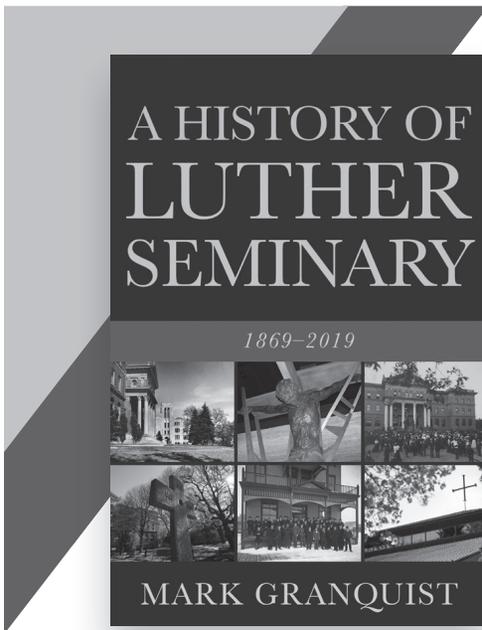
the Nazis' rise to power as an "hour of God" (that is, "hour of the Germans"), and setting themselves aside as members of the state church that confessed their commitment to "fellow Germans" as the only true ministry. The Barmen Theological Declaration was the outcome of the Confessing Churches' resistance to the nationalist-religious ideology and "Führer-principle." It was the German Lutheran and Reformed churches who came together as a "Confessing Synod" in Barmen from May 29–30, 1934. The Confessing Churches offered resistance under the motto of "Church under the Word" in 1933 (40–41). The six theses of Barmen in which the national socialist ideology was condemned, signify that the church can be the church *in the world* by going *with* and *beyond* Barmen (43).

In the fifth chapter, Derek Alan Woodard-Lehman's analysis of Karl Barth's works is presented. Woodard-Lehman gives particular attention to Barth's theology of Reformed Confession, rectifying the misunderstandings of Barmen, and reconstructing Barth's political theology, which was implicit in the Barmen Theological Declaration. Barth defines "Reformed Confession as a praxis of communal interpretation and application of scripture" (50). In line with Barth's account of Reformed Confession, Woodard-Lehman argues that the Barmen Declaration confirms that "Christianity is an inherently political and intrinsically democratic faith in which the form of confessional theology determines the content of political theology" (50). The larger portion of this chapter is devoted to narrating the process that led to the composition of the confession at Barmen (55–62). That the Confessing Church was portrayed as "the Church of sinners" (58) in the third thesis of the declaration and that

the declaration is viewed as "a work of people" (62) are other important points.

In chapter 6, Wolfgang Huber analyzes the relationship between the church and the Enlightenment in terms of confession and resistance in light of the political-theological legacy of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer respectively (76). Barth strongly condemned a "theology" that was seeking refuge in National Socialism, but "not the National Socialist state and social order," which not only endangers the church's role in the public sphere but also makes Barth guilty of neglecting the "Jewish question" in his public theological statements (78). Although the Theological Declaration of Barmen as ecclesial document exceeds Barth's theological statement that Jesus Christ was God's *only* Word for the church and contributes to the church's struggle for liberation and social justice, its denunciation of "the false doctrine" (79) failed to address the marginalization of Jewish citizens. Later, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who used the concept of "law and order" and warned the government against either the absence or the excessive realization of law and order, criticized the Confessing Church for neglecting the "Jewish question" in order to accommodate the state's rule. Bonhoeffer also encouraged the church to cooperate with the state as long as it continued to discharge its "law-and-order-oriented function" and to intervene on behalf of victims against the state's illegitimate actions (80–83).

In chapter 7 Dallmayr examines Martin Buber's argument regarding the notion of two types of faith. He then turns to reflecting on how the Barmen Declaration, in the context of a concern for political justice and the right to freedom of life, leads "a Confessing Church" to the kingdom God promised



## A History of Luther Seminary

1869-2019

By Mark Granquist

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to all humanity. Dallmayr engages in an extensive analysis of Buber's definition of genuine faith in terms of the Jewish word *emunah*, which means "trust" or "the condition of finding one's life entirely entrusted into God's hands" (92). Accompanying this by a thorough exegetical dialogue with the biblical texts, Dallmayr explains the urgent and inclusive nature of the kingdom of God. Just as *emunah* as an evolving faith "arises from Israel but [is] not limited to that location" (95), the kingdom of God is not confined to a "restrictive or exclusive nationalism" but extends itself beyond national, ethnic, and political boundaries to all humankind (91-96). Thus, the Barmen Theological Declaration marks the refutation of false doctrines expressed through the renewal of commitment to genuine faith (*emunah*) established on the proclaimed

Word of God rather than a nationalist movement.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thoughtful exposition of "Thy kingdom come" as a prayer by which Christians seek God's kingdom to be realized on earth is the central theme discussed in the last chapter. Church and state are ordained by God to anticipate the coming of his kingdom to the already cursed and sinful earth. In the light of this, an attempt to dichotomize the kingdom into otherworldliness and secularism signifies human beings' failure to believe in God's kingdom. Christian prayers for God's kingdom to come are an appropriate response to their calling toward "the most profound solidarity with the world" (104), rather than an attempt to flee from it and take refuge in the kingdom as a place removed from their trouble. The coming of the kingdom is not an indication of human beings



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gaining strength as a result of prayer and getting beyond “death, loneliness, and desire” (the three powers troubling life) and transforming the cursed ground into a blessed one. It rather signifies that the kingdom comes to us “in our death, in our loneliness, in our desire” (105) while we are persevering in solidarity with “the fallen, lost and cursed earth” (107) as the community of believers expecting the kingdom only from God.

In summary, political theology neither eliminates secular politics as immaterial nor neglects religious concern. It rather articulates the tensional interaction between politics and faith in a way that promotes justice and the concern of society. In the Barmen Declaration, the church is summoned to balance between its commitment to nation and its commitment to the Word of God. This theological declaration is relevant to all political contexts regardless of a democratic or autocratic stance of the system. Thus, the book is worth reading.

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**A HISTORY OF LUTHER SEMINARY: 1869–2019**, Mark Granquist. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019, 291 pages. \$20.00.

Of the many educational institutions that have shaped the Lutheran tradition in North America, Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, stands among the most prominent. As one of the largest Lutheran seminaries in the United States and indeed the world, it has touched the lives of countless individuals at home and abroad. The significant role Luther Seminary has played in American and

international Lutheranism itself justifies the publication of this history. However, the more immediate occasion for the publication was the anniversary year of 2019—150 years since Luther Seminary marked its beginning.

When institutional histories are published for anniversary celebrations, such works are often triumphal in their tone, which limits their value for anyone seeking honest analysis of the institution’s life. The goal of such works is to celebrate and promote the institution. While such celebratory works have their place, Granquist’s book avoids this pitfall. This book attempts an objective evaluation of Luther Seminary’s history and, as such, is a valuable addition to the study of American Lutheran history. Though not negative in tone, his treatment of the seminary’s life in all eras is honest and does not avoid critical analysis. He does not hide the presence of tension and conflict within the school or how outside social and ecclesial factors created or exacerbated conflict. Historians are rightly cautious about discussing recent events, especially those events in which they themselves have been involved, and Granquist provides such a disclaimer. Even so, he is bold in his discussion of the events of the previous decade, notably Luther Seminary’s financial crisis of 2012 and related contraction. However, given the headlines this crisis produced, it would seem odd for a history of the institution to include no mention of it, and Granquist succeeds in a fair, matter-of-fact description of the issues involved.

How the present institution of Luther Seminary considers its founding year to be 1869 is a complicated story interwoven with the larger narrative of American Lutheranism, and Mark Granquist does a commendable job at laying out this history in a very readable work. He

carefully balances his discussion of the various streams that have converged to create the present institution, which is the result of the confluence of different traditions both within and outside of Norwegian-American Lutheranism. For example, one arrives at the founding date of 1869 because one of the antecedents of the present institution, namely Augsburg Seminary of the Lutheran Free Church, began in that year, before any other predecessor school.

Granquist begins by situating his discussion of Luther Seminary in the broader context of Protestant theological education, beginning in Europe and taking root in North America. The process of creating an American model of theological education among Protestants was not without difficulty. Tension between liberal theologians and those influenced by various revival traditions eventually erupted into open conflict with the fundamentalist/modernist controversy, as one example. Related to this, he notes that the American Lutheran seminary tradition attempted to combine the model of European theological university education with the practical focus of European Protestant mission schools. He continues by providing a helpful overview of the founding and the consolidation of various Lutheran seminaries in North America.

Acknowledgment of Luther Seminary's place within the broader Lutheran and Protestant educational tradition is a helpful way to begin analysis of Luther Seminary itself and distinguishes this work from mere celebratory works mentioned above. It helps the reader understand that Luther Seminary as a present institution, far from representing a single point of view as is sometimes supposed, is one of balancing different and at times competing traditions. To that end, Granquist

devotes subsequent chapters to discussion of these different streams that have converged over time. Luther Seminary is often known for its Norwegian heritage, and though that piece of its history cannot be ignored, readers might be surprised at the diversity that existed within that Norwegian Lutheran tradition as well as the non-Norwegian Lutheran influence on the present institution.

The history of Norwegian-American Lutheranism is a complex one, and the first few chapters of this book provide a helpful and concise overview of the difficult and at times painful process of schism and merger. This process involved the conflict, rapprochement, and compromise between the Norwegian Haugean revival tradition and their more formal counterparts rooted in the tradition of the state church of Norway, the effects of which can be observed in different ways in our own time. Also, differences in educational philosophy resulted in the departure of one group of Norwegians from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1897 to form the Lutheran Free Church. The seminary of that church body, Augsburg Seminary, would eventually become a part of Luther Seminary after the Lutheran Free Church merged into the American Lutheran Church in 1963.

In his thorough treatment of the history of Luther Seminary, Granquist also provides a helpful chapter on the history of Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary, which began in the 1920s and became one of the streams that flowed into the present institution of Luther Seminary. This institution, which came to be located adjacent to the campus of Luther Theological Seminary, began as a part of the Synod of the Northwest, one of the synods of the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA). In time, the

ULCA merged with three other groups to form the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1962. Therefore, Luther Seminary of today is not only rooted in Norwegian-American Lutheranism, but also in the heritage of the eastern, colonial “Muhlenberg tradition.”

Overall, *A History of Luther Seminary: 1869–2019* succeeds in introducing the reader to the complex history of an institution that has exerted tremendous influence on American and international Lutheranism. A gallery of photographs from different eras provides an interesting look at some of the many men and women who have played a role in the life of the present institution and its predecessors. Yet photographs themselves provide an incomplete picture of the daily life of the school. In his prose, Granquist touches on all aspects of the life of the seminary, and the many alumni of Luther Seminary and its predecessor schools will want to read this book if for no other reason than to evaluate Granquist’s “take” on the era

of their study. Refreshingly, this history deals not only with issues of theology and church politics, which one would expect to be evaluated. He also includes discussion of the experience and the mindset of students as they responded to issues within the church bodies and the outside world, which makes this publication far from a dry read.

One suggestion that could make this book even better would be the inclusion of a whole chapter, perhaps a comparative chart, devoted to Luther Seminary’s curriculum throughout the ages. To be sure, Granquist does not ignore the issue of seminary curriculum, but it would be interesting to compare what students were taught in the previous century with today’s experience. Such information might help enlighten us about the state of our churches today.

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