

Reviews



THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO PAUL, by James W. Thompson. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2014. Pp. 289. \$26.99 (paper).

Our author calls this book “a comprehensive examination of Paul’s ecclesiology” (ix). He exhibits a flowing style, carrying along the reader at a steady pace. For some readers there will be exceptions, namely, insertions of many Greek terms for the English biblical words, and much of the footnote material includes reference to sources in the German language.

Looking at the current disenchantment with the church as a place where “the word is preached and the sacraments are administered” (9), Thompson goes on to describe various current characterizations: the church as a political action committee, as corporation, as theater, as association, as missional movement, and as an emerging movement. In contrast to these options he wants to expound on “Paul’s articulation of communal identity” (20).

In nine chapters the following themes are elaborated. Chapter 1 is called “A Community Like No Other,” a study of 1 Thessalonians as to how the community is formed. Chapter 2 is “Not Just Any Body,” elaborating the church as “the body of Christ”—clarifying Paul’s Christology. In chapter 3 we see the church made visible, in an examination of baptism and the Lord’s Supper as we read of it in 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. Chapter 4 is entitled “Spiritual Formation Is Corporate Formation,” concentrating on 2 Corinthians and Romans. “Justification Is about Unification” is the theme of the fifth chapter, giving special attention to Romans and Galatians, where he expounds on the death of Jesus and the people of

God. Our author tries to clear up a dilemma in chapter 6 with the theme of “missional,” which may not mean what we think it means, where he deals with evangelism and social action. In chapter 7 the theme is the proposition that the “universal church” is “the local church.” Paul saw the assemblies of believers gathered together as a *koinonia*, literally “a partnership,” fellowshiping together as part of the body of Christ. Chapter 8 takes up a dual theme, namely, the universal church (seen especially in Colossians and Ephesians) and the house church (the focus of the Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). In the former letters, Paul exhorts and encourages the saints to live out their faith in a still unfulfilled state as they press on toward the full cosmic reality. In the latter letters he exhorts them to stand firm in their faith in a period full of threats to their unity, looking forward to that final union with all God’s redeemed. Finally, in chapter 9, Thompson takes up the theme of “Leadership Like No Other for a Community Like No Other,” a composite view of Paul’s vision for his (and other) churches. The main themes in this unit are authority and ministry (as expounded in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon).

In his conclusion, Thompson leaves the reader with some ecclesial models for today. That is to say, how can we characterize the church today? First, as the heir of Israel, the church is a part of the covenant people, called and redeemed by the action of God. We see the emphasis on community and on holiness as portrayed in the scriptures. Second, we are called through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the people of God, described as being “in Christ.” Third, we are God’s

“counterculture,” looking forward to the new age, God’s new world. The church is called to be a “light in the world.”

There is no need for any extended criticism of Thompson’s effort in this text. He has given a full and “Paul-packed” exposition of the theme in Paul’s letters, and one can easily discern his enthusiasm in writing the book. To a large extent he lets Paul speak for himself by his inclusions of unnumbered references to the language of the apostle’s texts. There have been scores of other studies on the theme of the church in our current historical setting, of course. One can think of the rich treatment in H. Ridderbos’s *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, published in 1975, especially pp. 327–428, or B. Childs’s analysis in *The Church’s Guide for Reading Paul*, published in 2008, pp. 112–193.

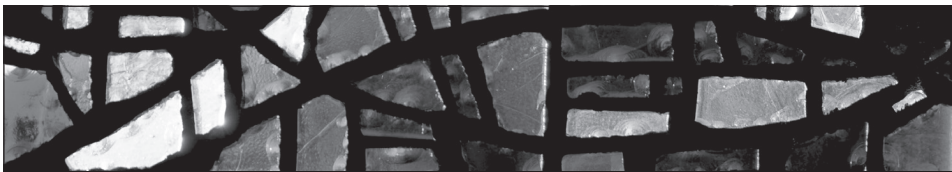
I would encourage you, the reader, to obtain this book, read it with care and, I hope,

with pleasure, and you may reap a rich reward for your studious efforts.

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READING BACKWARDS: FIGURAL CHRISTOLOGY AND THE FOUR-FOLD GOSPEL WITNESS, by Richard B. Hays. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014. Pp. 155. \$34.95 (cloth).

Richard B. Hays began his work of examining how the earliest followers of Jesus were interpreters of scriptures in 1989, with his work *The Echoes of Scriptures in the Letters of Paul*. Twenty-five years later, after changing the dynamic of the way many people view Paul’s engagement with the Hebrew Scriptures, Professor Hays now gives us a short introduction into what he hopes will be a much larger project examining each of the evangelists’ engagement with the scriptures. This short and



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provocative work should help continue the conversion of the imagination he challenged his readers to see in Paul, this time in the voice and words of the authors of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. The book is an adaptation of the Hulsean Lectures presented at Cambridge University in the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014, and is a work that will encourage its readers to understand the manner in which these early evangelists use the Hebrew Scriptures to prefigure their experience of Christ.

The relationship of the Hebrew Scriptures to the New Testament is an important question for the church, but one that has often been overlooked. Richard B. Hays invites us into an exercise in learning to place ourselves in the evangelists' places and see these scriptural texts that they used through their own eyes. Dr. Hays is convinced that "*the Gospels teach us how to read the OT, and—at the same time—the OT teaches us how to read the Gospels*" (4, author's emphasis). Rather than seeing the evangelists as proof-texting pieces of the Hebrew Scriptures to make certain points, Hays seeks to evoke a set of rich intertextual relations between the experience of the words of Jesus and the experience of his followers with the vision and world presented by the portions of scripture cited or alluded to by the evangelists. The readings of each of the four Gospels that are presented in *Reading Backwards* provide a rich and concise survey in which each gospel distinctively uses scripture to paint its picture of Jesus.

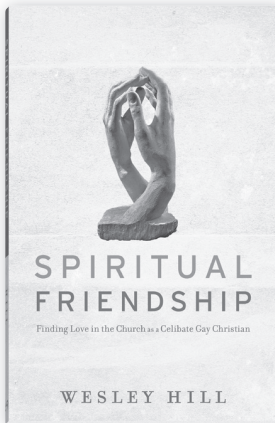
The Gospel of Mark tells a story that is more suggestive and allusive in its narrative style, and likewise many of Mark's uses of the scriptures are allusive as well. Mark rarely quotes scripture but frequently uses language that alludes to how Jesus' work and God's work are mysteriously linked. Mark intimates that Jesus is "in some way that defies comprehension the embodiment of God's presence. Mark never quite dares to articulate this claim explicitly; it is too scandalous for direct speech. For Mark the character of God's presence in Jesus is a

mystery that can only be approached by riddle-like allusions to the OT" (19–20). By looking at the way Mark creatively cites and alludes to scripture from the beginning of the story in Mark 1:2–3 and running through the crucifixion narrative, Hays examines the larger context of the scriptural allusions to open the readers to the mystery of Jesus' relationship with the God of Israel. Mark's characteristic tension holds this identity in suspension as well, never overtly coming out and claiming Jesus' identity but rather in a poetic way hides this answer in order that it might be revealed to those with eyes to see and ears to hear. Mark attempts to lead his readers into an exploration of the mysterious way in which Jesus is recognized as the embodiment of the God of Israel.

The Gospel of Matthew is much more explicit in its claims and the ways in which it uses the scriptures. Matthew quotes scripture explicitly, more than any of the other evangelists, and from his first citation of Isa 7:14 in the birth narrative where Jesus is titled "God is with us," until the end of the gospel, where all authority has been given to Jesus who will be with them forever, Matthew presents, in a much more direct way, that Jesus is the presence of God among the people and the appropriate response is to worship the living presence of God who is present with them. Matthew uses a combination of scripture quotations as well as allusions to the Old Testament stories to show how Jesus comes to embody not only God's presence but also comes to be the fulfillment of the hopes of the law and the prophets. For example, Herod, in the slaughter of the innocents, certainly would be seen as echoing Pharaoh's decree in the Exodus narrative. Where Mark encourages us to explore the mystery of the way divine presence of the God of Israel is present in Jesus, Matthew wants us to see this presence in order that we may worship God where God has now been found.

Luke reads the scriptures in a way that

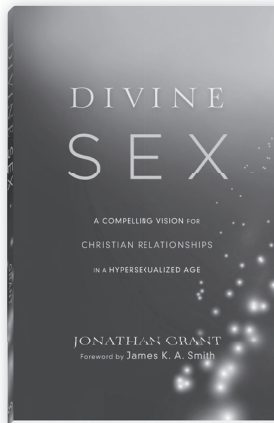
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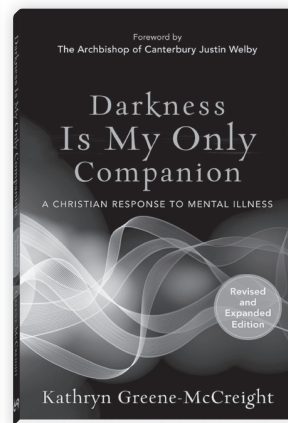
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points to Jesus being the one who is the hope of Israel. From the prophecy of Zechariah, where God is praised for having “looked favorably on his people and redeemed them” (Luke 1:68), to the journey with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus where these disciples, in their sadness, say, “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21), Hays invites us to read again how Jesus might be seen in Moses and the prophets and how Luke might use the scriptures to help us see who Jesus is. Luke uses language and events that reflect the types of things that happened in the stories of the scriptures, while never being simply the same. The effect is to create a powerful but indistinct relation between the saving acts of God in the story of Israel and the liberating acts of fulfillment in the story of Jesus (59).

For John’s gospel the fundamental hermeneutical claim is that the scriptures bear witness to Jesus, but to understand those same scriptures one must first come to Jesus to receive life. This retrospective reading of Israel’s scriptures allows John to use a more visual set of images and figures from the narrative of the people, where Jesus through verbal echoes and direct quotations links Jesus with both the wisdom of God as well as the images of the temple and sacrifice. Through these images John wants to illustrate that Jesus is not only the temple—but also the place where God’s presence comes to meet us and deliver us into union with the divine presence (82). Since John understands Jesus as the Logos of God, the entire narrative—the temple, sacrifice, and the festivals of Judaism—are a rich set of signs and symbols of God’s activity in the life and presence of Jesus.

In this short work with numerous illuminating explorations of the way the evangelists read their scriptures and the scriptures provide a fuller meaning to the telling of the story of Jesus, Richard B. Hays invites the reader to discover a gospel-shaped hermeneutic. This, he argues, involves a complex poetic sensibility that pays attention to the narrative arc of

the scriptures. Hays argues that the more we explore the way the evangelists explore the scriptures, the more clearly it is apparent that each of the evangelists in their own unique portrayal point to Jesus being the embodiment of the God of Israel. This work, which continues Hays’s long work with intertextuality and the art of reading scripture, is a very generative and helpful introduction to the deep question of how the evangelists became interpreters of the scriptures and how the experience of Jesus reframed their reading of scripture, while scripture gave them the language and symbols to express the mystery of who Jesus is to their communities.

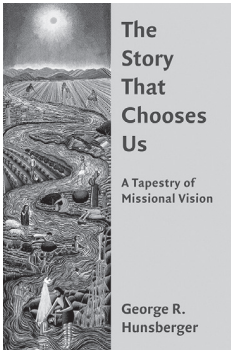
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THE GOOD FUNERAL: DEATH, GRIEF, AND THE COMMUNITY OF CARE, by Thomas G. Long and Thomas Lynch. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013. Pp. 252. \$25.00 (cloth).

Preacher-professor Thomas Long and poet-undertaker Thomas Lynch bring an earthy depth of wisdom to bear in *The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care*. Their wisdom, as they note in the opening autobiographical chapters, is inextricably connected to their personal and professional encounters with death. By sharing brief synopses of their life’s journeys with death, grief, and funerals, they invite the reader to contemplate her own journey.

Lynch, the son of a father of the funeral service, felt called to enter into the family business along with his siblings. At the age of eight or ten, Lynch’s father took him into the embalming room to witness the care of the dead, and “there was, ever after, the sense that my father’s world had importance and purpose however imponderable it might have been at the time” (10). For over four decades, then,

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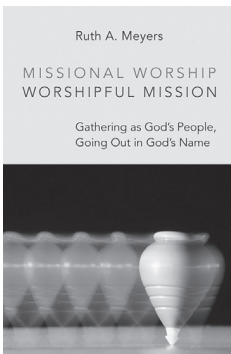
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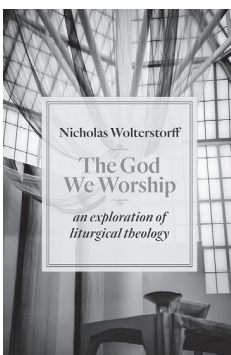
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Lynch has served as a funeral director of Lynch & Sons in Michigan. As a prolific writer and presenter of notoriety in the funeral business, Lynch's path inevitably crossed with Long's.

Long, a Presbyterian minister and professor of homiletics, has researched funeral practices for decades and wrote *Accompany Them with Singing – The Christian Funeral*. This extensive work led him to Lynch, where they began conversation, friendship, and the shared work of reclaiming the North American funeral. "We discovered that both of us are persuaded that the rituals and practices around death are a window into the soul of a culture" (xxiii). And, as they write in this text, when this window is cracked open, what is revealed is that "a society that is unsure about how to care for the dead and is confused about what to do with grief and loss is a society that is also uncertain about life" (xxiv). Thus, their shared concern birthed this project.

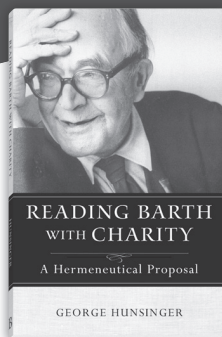
In chapter 3, "Humanity 101," written by Lynch, and chapter 4, "Habeas Corpus...*Not*," written by Long, both authors critique the new North American practice of a body-less funeral. As Long wrote, "Curiously, we are rapidly becoming the first society in the history of the world for whom the dead are longer required—or desired—at their own funeral" (93). Lynch states it this way: "For many bereaved Americans, the 'celebration of life' involves a guest list open to everyone except the actual corpse, which is often dismissed, disappeared without rubric or witness, buried or burned, out of sight, out of mind, by paid functionaries such as me" (53). The primary task of a funeral since the dawn of humankind was to bury, burn, cast into sea, entomb, or otherwise rightly dispose of the dead body of the deceased so that, "by getting the dead where they needed to go, the living got where they needed to be" (54). This is the central theme of the book, repeated often by both authors lest we forget—again—what it means to be *humus*, of the earth, and to bear our own mortality by journeying with dead.

Why the cultural amnesia and the avoidance of dead bodies at the time of death? Both Long and Lynch cite some key factors, including the incredibly influential publication of Jessica Mitford's 1963 classic, *The American Way of Death*. Her book criticized the practices of funeral directors as untrustworthy sales associates preying on grief and guilt in order to immerse families in the expensive funeral economy: showy caskets, pricy embalming practices and funeral plots, flowers, trinkets, etc. Mitford argued for "simpler" methods apart from the trappings and rituals, including cremation. Her sentiment and overall distrust of funeral directors have been cemented in the American psyche, leading to, as Lynch argues, the "banishment" of our dead (72).

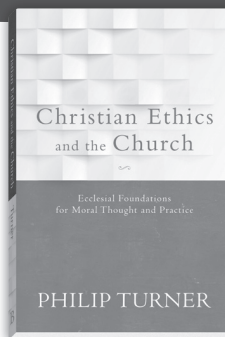
Lynch and Long are quick to state that cremation itself is not the cause of this trend and, in fact, devote a chapter to "The Theory and Practice of Cremation." For cremation "is an ancient and honorable practice and effective method of body disposition, but in most cultures where it is practiced it is done publicly in ceremonial and commemorative venues" (62). And therein lies the problem: cremations in our culture are done offsite, detached from the ritual practices of mourning and grieving the dead, and kept out of sight of the general public. The authors argue that this is the fallout of Mitford's discomfort with dead bodies, to be sure, although Lynch does offer some perspective and critique on the missteps by funeral service providers (e.g., the preselling of funerals by "death care" conglomerates) in his chapter "Our Own Worst Enemies." Long also offers his own self-critical assessment of clergy, stating, "today ministers and funeral directors conspire as interior decorators to help consumers fashion improvised, throw-away ceremonies of self-expression" (168).

This, then, brings the authors back to the task at hand: the reclamation of the funeral as an embodied journey, where "caring for the body is part of how we tell the great story, and the great story of the meaning of life and death

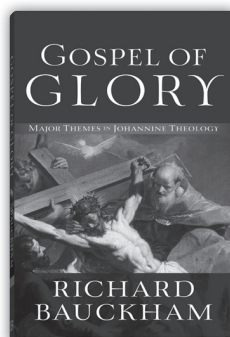
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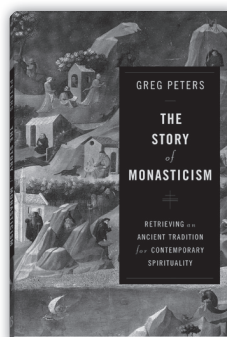
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shape how we care for the body” (200), and “by getting the dead where they need to go, get the living where they need to be” (237). A good funeral, then, is a piece of “community theater” where we “enact and interrogate yet again what we believe about life and death” (210). By moving with the dead—including preparing and carrying the body—we enact the story about life, death, and hope that leads to the promise of transformation (211–218).

Lynch and Long challenge clergy, funeral directors, and communities of faith to walk again with the dead, “allowing the sacredness that is already present in this great drama to be seen and magnified” (174). In the foreword by Barbara Brown Taylor, she says of her father’s memorial service (cremation offsite prior to the worship service), “Now that I have read this book I wish we could do it all over again. I would insist on the body” (xviii). May we all insist on an embodied journey, carrying the dead all the way to the grave (or crematorium or columbarium or pyre or beach or memory garden or . . .) and thus getting where we need to go.

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SENT FORTH: AFRICAN MISSIONARY WORK IN THE WEST, by Harvey C. Kwiyani. New York: Orbis, 2014. Pp. 244. \$40.00 (paper).

The church’s center of gravity is shifting into the Southern hemisphere. As early as 1976, Andrew Walls pointed out that within the previous three centuries Christianity has undergone a remarkable shift from being a sort of “tribal religion of the Caucasian people” to truly global religion (“Toward Understanding Africa’s Place in Christian History,” in *Religion in a Pluralistic Society*, vol. 2, *Studies on Religion in Africa* [Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1976] 180). Along with such development,

Christians from the Global South are also migrating to the Western world in large numbers and starting congregations. This new development has attracted scholars of various disciplines, particularly in the United States, to study the missional impact of immigrant congregations on the social, economic, political, and religious life of the West.

The author of this book, Harvey Kwiyani, is an African scholar interested in the study of immigrant congregations in America. The book is the product of his experience as a missionary serving in Europe for seven years, and his exposure to immigrant congregations when he was doing his postgraduate study in Saint Paul, Minnesota. This is his first published book, which started life as a doctoral dissertation and was then broadened and amended for publication. Harvey deserves praise for taking the initiative to study the complexity and diversity within the immigrant congregations in America, a group that is too often overlooked in scholarly circles. The study is a timely, thorough, and thoughtful exploration of the experience of immigrant congregations in Minnesota and makes a valuable contribution to the growing literature on the African diaspora, thus filling a void and providing a fuller understanding of African immigrants.

The book focuses on immigrant congregations in the USA, their struggle for identity, their adaptive strategies, and the challenges and opportunities they present to American Christianity and society. The principal argument of the book is clearly defined and well argued as follows: In the postmodern world, where Western Christianity is faced with a significant amount of diversity (cultural, racial, and theological), there has to exist negotiation of cultural diversity within Christianity itself for the churches to effectively engage in mission. Taking the issue of migration as the center of his argument, he attempts to show the link between migration, mission, and the

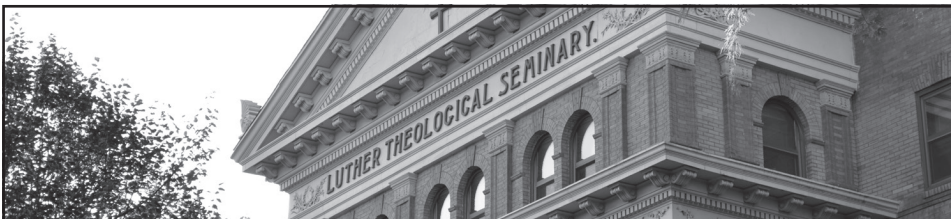
missional engagement of congregations in a pluralistic world.

The book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of Christianity in Africa and the involvement of African Christians in global mission. He makes the link between the two by describing how migration becomes the cause for the emergence of African congregations in the West. Chapter 2 traces the history of missions in Africa and Africa's place in global mission history. Focusing on African indigenous missionaries as main contributors to the development of Christianity in the continent, he critically evaluates the role of Western mission organizations in Christian history and Africa's involvement in world mission movements.

Chapter 3 describes the historical development that resulted in the academic awareness about African missionary movement. Here, he critically engages the European and American conversation on the implications of African

Christianity for global mission. Chapter 4 is about the presence and active participation of African denominations in the postcolonial West. Focusing on Pentecostals, mainline denominations, Roman Catholics, and African Initiated Churches in the West, he demonstrates how significant it is for the Western Christian churches to embrace such denominations and to try to look for ways in which they can partner with these denominations in God's mission. What these congregations do is to rehabilitate Africa's rich cultural heritage and religious consciousness, but in a self-consciously Christian and theologically active manner. As such, they seek to demonstrate the character of African Christian identity.

Chapter 5 deals with the central question of his thesis: "How is the rising African missionary movement to the West changing the religious landscape of Europe and North America?" (135). Mission history is dominated by stories and adventures about West-



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ern missions crossing borders to spread Christianity. Therefore, mission was understood as the responsibility of the Westerners (the “civilized”) towards others (the “uncivilized”). However, with the increase of migrants from the non-Western world every year, and with the growth of migrant congregations, a new phenomenon has emerged—the dynamics of mission has shifted in such a way that Europe and America are also considered as “mission fields.” Chapter 6 underlines the need for “multi-cultural missionary movement as God’s preferred future for mission” (171). He describes the following as the social, cultural, and theological challenges the non-Western Christians face in their missionary endeavors: discrimination, difference in theology, politics of migration, and identity crisis. He contends that “the entire Christian church needs to develop new theological language that looks at faith, race, and mission in healthy ways that encourage cross-racial missional partnerships” (192).

Chapter 7 concludes with a reflection on the nature of non-Western congregations in Europe and America in light of faithfulness to *Missio Dei*—God’s mission. He describes how immigrant congregations, particularly African-based congregations, find it difficult to engage in mission in the Western world. With a remark that Christianity is all about welcoming strangers, he contends that “the entire Christian body in the West will need to work together to overcome these challenges in order to make it possible for Christians from different parts of the world to work together for God’s mission in the world” (204). The text concludes with an extensive bibliography and index.

For scholars interested in immigration, African Christianity, African immigrant congregations, and African diaspora studies, this is an indispensable resource and a must read.

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LUTHERANS IN AMERICA: A NEW HISTORY, by Mark Granquist. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. Pp. 388. \$60.00 (paper).

Many pastors do not like history. The work of a pastor seems never ending, and myriad responsibilities leave little time for reading beyond that required for weekly preaching, especially on a topic that seems dull and detached from the daily practice of ministry. But Mark Granquist’s updated history of Lutheranism in the United States is worthy of a read by even the most reluctant students of history. Written in an engaging style that situates American Lutheranism in the broader context of American religion and life in general, Granquist succeeds in touching on a variety of issues that will be helpful for pastors as they reflect on their ministries today.

For example, many pastors, especially younger ones, experience a disconnect between their own piety and that of parishioners they serve, especially related to the practice of the Lord’s Supper. Granquist points out throughout his narrative the changing nature of sacramental practice in Lutheran congregations from the late seventeenth century to the present, providing readers with a foundation for further exploration of this topic. Granquist also touches on the reality of revivalism among Lutherans in the last two centuries and its enduring effects on congregational piety, an awareness of which would have been helpful in the early years of my own pastoral ministry. Perhaps even more relevant to the current practice of ministry, Granquist discusses the role that hymnals have played in American Lutheran history, especially highlighting the process and controversies leading up to the publication of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* of 1978, which continue to impact congregational life to this day. Clearly, history is not irrelevant.

These are simply provided as a few examples among many that pastors can use to reflect on and enhance their ministries. Throughout his work, Granquist carefully

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blends discussion of American Lutheran history with reflection on changes in American life more generally, highlighting how changes in society, political and economic, have impacted American Lutheranism. He is also careful to discuss the Lutheran experience in America “from below,” focusing not only on institutional history and theology, but also on how Lutheranism was lived out in America among the laity. In addition, he also devotes a fair amount of space to discussion of women and ethnic minorities among Lutherans, which is lacking in previous histories.

Notably, there is a different tone in Granquist’s history than is found in earlier histories by E. Clifford Nelson and Abdel Ross Wentz. Wentz and Nelson, living in a time when American Lutheran influence had reached its zenith, considered merger among American Lutherans desirable if not inevitable. In light of the controversies and schisms that have occurred since then, Granquist’s history is a more sober appraisal, while avoiding outright pessimism. Younger pastors who cannot remember a time before the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988 will find the last two chapters of Granquist’s book especially informative.

Because of the vast amount of information that Granquist covers in 388 pages, his work understandably avoids extraneous detail and at times leaves the reader longing for more specific discussion. But this is an invitation for students to undertake their own research of these topics. Granquist’s new history is an excellent introduction to a field that receives little attention among historians. One must also note that because of space limitations, while not ignoring the presence of smaller Lutheran bodies, Granquist’s work is focused mostly on the ELCA, its predecessor bodies, and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

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GERHARD O. FORDE: A LIFE, by Marianna Forde. Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2014. Pp. 247. \$18.00 (paper).

For decades, the teaching, preaching, and ministry of Gerhard Forde have influenced, formed, and encouraged many pastors and teachers of the Lutheran churches in North America and around the world. He utilized his gifts for the enrichment of the theological scholarship of the academy, and his works have made a global impact as they have been translated and used by seminary students around the world, from Slovakia to South Korea. Yet, Forde’s impact should not be measured merely in terms of his scholarship and writings, though these are second to none. Gerhard Forde was a preacher of the crucified and risen Christ, and in this biography, Marianna Forde, wife of this late preacher, demonstrates how the proclamation of the gospel motivated and filled everything he said and did. Mrs. Forde tells us the story of her late husband both as a theologian and as a person. Her account is filled with details of his life and relationships as well as with a comprehensive view of his theology and ministry.

In this account, we get a deep look into the background, life, and work of Dr. Forde not only as a theologian, preacher, teacher, but also as a father, husband, son, and brother. We get glimpses of how “Ga” (Gerhard) grew up and the events and people who were influential in his formative years. We learn many things about who Forde was as a person and not just as a theologian. We see how the theologian who taught us that theology is for preaching loved to sing and play music, whether the high sounds of Handel’s “Messiah,” hymns of the church, or the tones of country music (10–11, 13, 25, 27). We read that the preacher who proclaimed that God’s justifying word in Jesus Christ brings the dead to life was concerned that politicians should speak up for poor and working people (23–24). We discover that the



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scholar of Luther's works who taught us how to be theologians of the cross was an avid fisherman who loved to catch northern pike and to read stories to his children at night (87). We learn about Forde's international work and how scholarly time was blended with time for family and friends in Norway, Germany, Slovakia, France, and Great Britain, and how such travels sparked interests and formed his work. We also read the accounts of students and colleagues who knew Gerhard as a teacher, mentor, and friend. We hear firsthand accounts of how the theologian who made bold theological statements about the bondage of the will and the distinction between law and gospel was a gentle professor who preferred to teach in an indirect manner and tease responses out of his students (169–170).

Mrs. Forde's work here is not, however, just a retelling of stories by family and friends. She demonstrates, rather, how personal life and ministerial life were interwoven in the witness of Gerhard Forde. We read here how Gerhard's works were occasioned by particular situations or concerns. We get a backstage view into how *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life* grew out of a series of lectures marking the 450th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession (91). We find out how Gerhard's work on the two kingdoms doctrine of Luther was occasioned by a symposium commemorating the 450th anniversary of the Reformation and the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution (43).

Even still, discussion of Dr. Forde's theology is not here limited to an exploration of the background to his works. Indeed, Mrs. Forde has given us the most comprehensive secondary source on her husband's theology to date. In the pages of this volume, we find extensive discussion on the significant themes of justification by faith alone, sanctification as the everyday living out of justification by the sinner-saint, the bound will, election, and the proclamation of the gospel as the word of God that accomplishes what it says. While such dis-

cussion in no way detracts from the personal nature of the biographical work Mrs. Forde has undertaken, it does give an excellent overview of all of Dr. Forde's works and provides us with a detailed outline of his theology.

In an age when many Christians, including many Lutherans, talk about analogy as the foundation of theology and evidence a desire to move beyond the proclamation of the law and the gospel, Forde's theology has fresh appeal. Simply put, the church needs the continued witness of Gerhard Forde, and Mrs. Forde's biography of her husband's life and witness describes for us a theology of the crucified and risen Christ wherein God meets human beings in time and space without the added baggage of layers upon layers of metaphysical ontology. Forde's is a theology wherein God has become human, died, and was raised to life in Jesus not in order to satisfy some abstract philosophical principle or to pay off some eternal law that binds even God's grace, but in order to forgive and give real eternal life to real sinners in real time and space. That good news is a cause for celebration, and Mrs. Forde's book shows us just how much her husband's life was a celebration of that gospel. For those who knew him, the stories contained in this work will doubtless bring back blessed memories. For those like me, who know Dr. Forde only through the preaching and teaching of his works, students, and colleagues, this book is a gift that brings insight and encouragement from the life of a true servant of the Word. It is my hope that all who read this work will be inspired by Gerhard Forde's life and encouraged by his theology. Even more, I hope that all who read it will also hear, confess, and preach the same crucified and risen Christ proclaimed by Dr. Forde.

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