

BOOK REVIEWS

Teaching Reformation: Essays in Honor of Timothy J. Wengert. Edited by Luka Ilić and Martin J. Lohrmann. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021. 268 + xx pp.

Featuring studies of historical figures and texts and contributions that address the life of the church and the proclamation of the gospel today, this is a fitting celebration of the work of Timothy J. Wengert. Wengert's career as professor, pastor, and servant of the church has been so productive that to attempt to summarize his contributions here would leave no room for discussion of the book. Happily, Paul Rorem provides an introduction to Wengert's career (1–2), as well as a bibliography of Wengert's scholarly contributions (253–62) that will benefit scholars, teachers, and students. In between, the reader is treated to a collection that, like Dr. Wengert, speaks to both academy and church.

Teaching Reformation has three parts. Part 1 focuses on “Luther, Melancthon, and Reformation Colleagues.” Here, some studies (for example, Theodor Dieter's study of Luther's *Tractatus de indulgentiis*) will appeal to specialist scholars, while others (especially Scott Hendrix's introduction to Philip Melancthon and Urbanus Rhegius) are written for a broader audience. Irene Dingel situates Luther's *Freedom of a Christian* in its historical context, while suggesting the productivity of bringing Luther into dialogue with discussions of freedom and responsibility today. Contributions by Amy Nelson Burnett, Robert Kolb, and Hans Wiersma remind scholars how much remains to be learned by attending to the colleagues and successors of more famous reformers. Burnett distinguishes Oecolampadius' use of the church fathers in the eucharistic controversy from Melancthon's, showing that neither reformer engaged in a “dispassionate study”; rather, they employed rhetoric to claim that the fathers supported their view. Burnett calls for more study of Oecolampadius' significant influence “on all participants” in the “negotiations for eucharistic concord” of the 1530s (55–56). Kolb's essay reveals

the “critical role” of Joachim Mörlin “in determining the agenda addressed in the *Formula of Concord* and laying the groundwork for the solutions it proposed” (57). Wiersma attends to the role of interpersonal relations in the clash between Albert van Hardenberg and his opponents in Bremen; Hardenberg lost his post after fourteen years, but his Gnesio-Lutheran opponents were soon outmaneuvered by the new mayor. Wiersma draws a lesson for contemporary Lutherans about the need for “love and charity” amid debate, while also highlighting the role of contingent relationships and events in historical developments often treated as inexorable.

Part 2, “Reading and Interpreting Texts in the Reformation” opens with Volker Leppin’s judicious evaluation of the lectures on Judges that Georg Buchwald attributed to Luther in 1884. Leppin deems the text “a compilation and combination of Augustinian reform ideas and Luther’s theological novelties, showing how people involved in the process slowly adopted something that, in retrospect, we call a kind of Reformation theology” (103). Erik H. Hermann analyzes how the exegetical tradition and Luther dealt with three genitive phrases from scripture—*plenitudo temporis*, *lex peccati*, and *opera legis*. According to Hermann, “the ambiguity and versatility of the genitive construct . . . served as catalyst for Luther’s theological reflection” (104–5). Richard A. Muller’s study of Calvin’s interpretation of Acts 2:23 and 4:28 yields significant insight into the development and intricacies of the reformer’s understanding of providence; Muller also cautions against relying too exclusively on the *Institutes* to understand Calvin’s perspectives. Ulrich Bubenheimer’s historical detective work reveals Melanchthon to be the compiler of a single-sheet chronology of world history that was published in 1521 and that survives only because Johannes Lang pasted a copy into his Latin Bible. Taken from Pseudo-Philo, the single sheet reveals how early Melanchthon and the Wittenbergers were preoccupied with “religiously motivated historical research” (167). Contributions by Derek Cooper and Stefan Rhein consider Reformation readings of 1 Samuel 28 and the themes and sources of Melanchthon’s *Historiae*.

Part 3, “Forming the Faith,” begins with several textual studies that point toward large areas needing further exploration: Mickey Mattox explores Luther’s idea of God as *simul requiescens et operans*.

Mark Tranvik examines how Luther's teachings on baptism were reflected in several significant Lutheran catechisms of the sixteenth century. Mary Jane Haemig offers a fascinating reconstruction of Henry Melchior Mühlberg's catechetical efforts in colonial America between 1742 and 1752 through a careful study of his correspondence. Tranvik's chapter especially keeps the church audience in view; he concludes that "many in Luther's circle unwittingly diluted baptism and turned it into a mere 'sign' that provides information about our status before God," thus losing the gospel "framework" of "death and resurrection" and opening the door to "a legal scheme to enter into the way we think about our relationship with God" (211). Martin Lohrmann is also concerned to keep legalism at bay, proposing that a dialectic of "faith and love" can be used to read Luther's *Small Catechism*. Kirsi Stjerna, meanwhile, finds in the "twin concepts of freedom and service" a "Lutheran offering" for the present moment. She encourages "the theologically rooted willingness to promote change when the gospel principles of justice, mercy, and freedom are compromised or at risk" (242). Finally, Gordon Lathrop recalls how Wengert once found the marks of the church at a Roman Catholic Easter vigil and reflects on his own discovery of these marks in the architecture of La Sagrada Família.

This volume has something to offer professional historians and church and lay leaders alike. Perhaps the general reader will take the invitation to wander into the specialist's territory and vice versa—which would be a fitting tribute to Timothy Wengert.

UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Vincent Enever

GETTYSBURG AND PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Martin Luther's Understanding of Faith and Reality (1513–1521). The Influence of Augustinian Platonism and Illumination on Luther's Thought. By Ilmari Karimies. Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation volume 130. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022. xii + 393 pp.

This significant study presents a fresh stage in the development of the Finnish interpretation of Martin Luther's way of thinking launched by Tuomo Mannermaa forty years ago. Placing himself in