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Maasai Diviners and Christianity: An Investigation of Three Different Clans of IlÓibonok in Tanzania and the Attitude of the Lutheran Church towards Them by Christel Kiel
(review)

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Lutheran Quarterly, Volume 33, Number 1, Spring 2019, pp. 110-111 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/lut.2019.0004>

Lutheran Quarterly
VOLUME 33 / NUMBER 1 / SPRING 2019

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the whole way” and finally not say “No” to Luther’s “Yes,” but rather say “But,” and then go on to correct, enlarge, and explain it (271). Barth did indeed correct, enlarge, and explain—often at length—other aspects of Luther’s thought. The relation of law and gospel, and especially the interpretation of justification, prompted Barth to an extensive dialogue with the Reformer.

This collection of twenty-six articles, half of them in English, describes Luther’s wide influence beyond the “Luther lands.” Churches in the Netherlands, for instance, differed from Luther in their rejection of images, but Dutch artists incorporated his theology in their paintings (29–77). Even the architecture of Reformed churches there reflected Luther’s emphasis on the preached Word. An essay on Luther’s influence on the Italian *Spirituali* (523–534) demonstrates how pervasive his insights were right up to the eve of the Council of Trent.

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Maasai Diviners and Christianity: An Investigation of Three Different Clans of IlÓibonok in Tanzania and the Attitude of the Lutheran Church towards Them. By Christel Kiel. Cologne: Rüdiger Kóppe Verlag, 2015. 146 pp.

Working as a missionary in Tanzania from 1986 to 1992, the author got to know seven traditional Maasai diviners, called IlÓibonok (plural) or OlÓibóni (singular). She also collected second-hand accounts about several others. Years later she has organized her notes and reflections. As a collection of evidence her book has some value. Her sketches provide one outsider’s perspective on certain people whose role(s) needs to be taken into account by the church in that place. As the Tanzanian church defines and refines the vocation of a pastor, it must take perceptions into account. The idea of “pastor” will certainly be shaped in that context by its analogy to the traditional role of diviner.

The book disappoints in many ways, however, for which the up-front apologies are inadequate. As the editors comment: “As the author writes in her preface, the work and finalizing of the book faced some challenges and took some time, we appreciate that it is

now accessible to the public” (v). In her preface the author offers excuses for how long it took to get around to this.

The tales of her few personal encounters are short, simplistic, and fail to separate out her highly subjective reactions: “He had the most cunning Buddha-like face I ever saw” (41). A chapter about alcoholism is two paragraphs long, with remarks like: “All of them were friendly and highly polite people.” and “How can a person use alcohol as a tool for his profession and not get addicted to it?”

The book has no proper thesis or argument, despite a title which begs for one. Offhand and diffident conclusions abound, for example, “In the most negative cases, Oloibóni was a mere fraud and a cynic and he deceived people for the sake of deceiving and their willingness to be deceived” (90, *sic*).

Where were the editors? Part Two begins on page 28 according to the table of contents; it actually starts on page 35. The structural gimmick of alternating case study with commentary does not work because there is no “study” in these case studies but only the story of the encounter, sometimes including what happened on the trip to the diviner’s place. The commentaries are light, and leap rapidly to fairly obvious conclusions without considering alternative explanations. The last eleven lines of page 74 are repeated at the top of page 75. The practice of italicizing people’s proper names, especially in a font which murders italics, made reading much more difficult. I could go on.

If you are curious about Maasai diviners, you may love this. If you want a well-considered discussion of the complex issues raised by the introduction of Christianity among the Maasai, keep looking.

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Marcus Felde

Luther’s Christological Legacy: Christocentrism and the Chalcedonian Tradition. By Johannes Zachhuber. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2017. 148 pp.

This short reflection on Luther’s Christology is the 2017 Pere Marquette Lecture in Theology, sponsored by Marquette University. Oxford theologian Zachhuber offers a markedly lucid interpretation of Luther’s view of Christ. He unfolds Luther’s