



PROJECT MUSE®

*More than Luther: The Reformation and the Rise of Pluralism
in Europe* ed. by Karla Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis
(review)

Thomas Farmer

Lutheran Quarterly, Volume 34, Number 1, Spring 2020, pp. 115-116 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/lut.2020.0008>

Lutheran Quarterly
VOLUME 34 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2020

VID
MIA

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/751535>

Section two narrates stories of evangelicals migrating to the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican faiths; of young people drawn to monastic writings, communities, and practices; and of “neo-liturgical churches,” that is, evangelical congregations following aspects of the historic liturgy and celebrating the Lord’s Supper weekly. More stories populate chapter seven, in which he attempts to show that the discovery of liturgy by charismatics and evangelicals may provide a path toward Christian unity (153).

The final section begins by describing the value of such things as the daily office and *lectio divina*. More anecdotal evidence supports his claim that “this generation is reaching the world through mission rooted in liturgy” (176). In the final chapter, the author, with the zeal of a convert, discusses ways in which the liturgy can form families and support their faith development in the home.

For those long-suffering lovers of liturgy, there are only old treasures in this book. Yet, criticisms of “contemporary” worship made for decades by serious liturgical scholars may be what is new, for the author critiques his tradition from the inside. Hence, a possible audience may be leaders in historic liturgical denominations who have sold their birthright of living baptismal waters and Eucharistic feasting for the pot of porridge—so-called contemporary worship—that cannot satisfy. Perhaps the Esaus among us can be convinced by the zeal of this convert.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Rhoda Schuler

More than Luther: The Reformation and the Rise of Pluralism in Europe. Edited by Karla Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis. *Refo500 Academic Studies* 55. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019. 348 pp.

The quincentenary of the Reformation has come and gone, yet scholars continue to publish works stemming from its commemoration in 2017, and rightly so, as the Reformation continues to influence societies across the globe. This book is a collection of papers presented at the Seventh Annual RefoRC Conference, held in Wittenberg, May 10–12, 2017. Of the ninety papers presented at the

conference, twenty have been published in this volume (three of the plenary lectures along with seventeen others).

The parts of this book are greater than the sum of the whole—that is, the individual essays are strong, but the collection is not as coherent as it could be. The title indicated that the book would treat the transition from the Middle Ages, where only one church legally existed, to the early modern era, where several confessions competed with one another. That turned out not to be so, and in fact it was difficult to discern any common theme. Each essay dealt in some way with variety (such as, differing theological perspectives on doctrinal questions), but the differences discussed varied from essay to essay. It was also difficult to divine, from the editors' very brief introduction, the principle of selection used to choose papers for the book, beyond the desire to display the breadth and interdisciplinarity of the conference proceedings. Yet, while the collection as a whole lacks coherence, this does not vitiate the individual papers, several of which are excellent. Accordingly, highlights of some essays give readers a sense of this collection.

Tomoji Odori discusses the secret Christians of Japan, driven underground after Christianity was forbidden in 1614. Odori draws parallels between them and Anabaptists in the Swiss lands. Both groups responded to persecution by forming lay-led communities, emphasizing forgiveness for those who recanted the faith under pressure, and exalting martyrdom. His essay reminds us of the need to study the Reformation as a global phenomenon, whose impact was not limited to Europe. Gregory Soderberg, by contrast, focuses on the debate amongst Reformed Christians concerning the frequency of communion. This issue, which has recently returned, includes authors advocating for more frequent communion on the basis of Calvin's works. Soderberg demonstrates that Calvin's position on this topic was subtler than some of his modern followers claim. While Calvin did desire frequent communion, he also wanted Christians to purify and prepare themselves beforehand and was unwilling to demand frequent communion at the expense of church discipline. This essay also paid particular attention to contemporary theological and pastoral debates. Finally, Edit Szegedi investigates "Calvinisms" in East Central Europe. Far from being

a monolithic faith of the elite, she shows that Eastern European Calvinism was diverse, developed its own unique features, and was shared by elites and commoners alike. As Odori reminds readers to look beyond Europe, Szegedi reminds them to pay attention to those areas within Europe that are usually ignored when studying the Reformation.

This collection's strength lies in the individual essays. Scholars will likely find particular chapters relevant to their research.

BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE

Thomas Farmer

BELMONT, NORTH CAROLINA

Lutheran Theology and the Shaping of Society: The Danish Monarchy as Example. Edited by Bo Kristian Holm and Nina J. Koefoed. Refo 500 Academic Studies 33. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2018. 365 pp.

For decades, scholars have discussed how social change helped precipitate the Lutheran Reformation. This collection of essays considers the opposite question: how did Lutheran teaching inform the development of society in the early modern period? The editors state, "At a concrete level, this book analyses the social dimensions of key Lutheran concepts and their translations into the doctrine of the three estates (church, household, and state). This is deepened by investigating the level of lived experiences of life within these three orders, especially within the household, which is so important in forming the ideal for both church and state" (23). To illuminate these experiences, the authors apply Charles Taylor's concept of social imaginary and Thomas Kaufmann's concept of confessional culture. Kaufmann himself contributes an article on the academic confessional culture in Germany.

This anthology's overall strength lies in how individual articles build upon one another. Theodor Dieter opens the work by considering the *Ninety-Five Theses*. Scrutinizing the economics of indulgences in the medieval church, Dieter outlines Luther's position that all believers held the church's riches. Lutheran rulers held this same position when taking the church's property. The late Vitor Westhelle