

Editorial

Epilogue: Luther's Theology and Feminism

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'Critically' and 'compassionately'—these are key words for engaging Luther and feminist scholarship in the same space. The contributors for this special issue on "Luther's theology and feminism" exemplify the fruits of such an approach. The articles, with different methods and source material, expand the room for Luther scholarship, which benefits significantly from the experiences of women, in his time and ours.

The sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther continues to evoke great interest among scholars today, including women and feminist thinkers. The reasons are many. For one, Luther's persona, story and massive written legacy continue to fascinate and provide stimulus for yet another study from yet another angle. Another reason can be found in the multifaceted and peculiar efforts to defend a certain image of Luther, or a particular interpretation of Luther or his significance. Historians continue to find different aspects of Luther and his production worth chewing for the sake of expanding the pool of information, and theologians tend to concern themselves with the questions regarding the (presumed) "correct" interpretation, and about the relevance of approaches and questions applied with Luther. One important reason for the never-ending research on Luther is the fact that he continues to stand as a central and "live" figure in the Lutheran faith tradition/s, and in the spiritualities, faith languages and theological orientations of those who identify themselves within or in relation to that herd. In a related note, there are individuals, whether they associate with Lutherans as a tradition or not, who connect with some aspect of Luther's biblical interpretation, existential wrestling, spiritual searching or soul care issues in ways that are deeply personal, while also being on some level utterly universally relatable.

The contributions in this issue aimed to overcome disciplinary contentions and hegemonies of the past, and read Luther anew from an authentic, contemporary, feminist perspective, or with approaches and questions shaped by feminist thought. As such, the voices heard in this issue promised to stir the pot. Common to all the authors was their appreciation of Luther, their personal wrestling with Luther, and their own experience as a woman and as a Lutheran scholar. The contributions ranged from historically oriented to theologically focused articles: a comprehensive and first-of-a-kind review of recent scholarship around the question "Luther and women" by Laura Jurgens; a new reading of the evidence about the wedding of Luther and Katharina von Bora, and its timing during the Peasants' Wars, by Diane Bowers; a critical look into both feminist critique of Luther and the liberal or liberating aspects of Luther in relation to women by Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen; a feminist engagement with Luther with an intersectional methodology by Caryn Riswold; a reflection on questions regarding (unnecessary) male language and androcentrism in the interpretation and translation of Luther by Mary Streufert; illuminating Luther's theological ruminations about women and motherhood with the real-life experiences of motherhood by Amy Marga; arguing for the right to marry for all from a Lutheran position, and particularly in the context of the Finnish Lutheran Church, by Sini Mikkola; and an articulation of a Lutheran position for the right to die with dignity, a piece written especially in the context of the Canadian Lutheran Church by Kayko Driedger Hesslein.

The special issue came to its completion during the most extraordinary experience of the global pandemic of Covid-19. In their own ways, the authors offered a word of hope and a stimulus to go

on. In the post Covid-19 experience, many things will be different. How might the new normal look? How will new Luther scholarship look? Hopefully, it will be freed from unnecessary conventions and pursued more in a way more in tune with the wide gamut of lived human experiences, without which no theology is worthwhile to engage with. Luther, that is for sure, wrote his theology in the midst of life and for life. He also modelled the importance of stirring the pot. In that regard, feminist scholars daring to read and write in light of their experiences deserve a hearing. In gratitude to the authors.

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