

5-1-2005

The church in a postliberal age

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Recommended Citation

Cranston, W. S. (2005) "The church in a postliberal age," *Consensus*: Vol. 30: Iss. 1, Article 18.

DOI: 10.51644/AZBU9962

Available at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol30/iss1/18>

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The Church in a Postliberal Age

George A. Lindbeck, James J. Buckley, Editor

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002

300 pages, \$27.00 Softcover

The Church in a Postliberal Age is an anthology of key writing samples from the renowned Lutheran theologian George A. Lindbeck. Compiled, edited and introduced by James J. Buckley, this collection is one volume of a series entitled *Radical Traditions: Theology in a Postcritical Key* whose purpose is to look non-apologetically at the place of theology, Jewish, Christian and Islamic, in modernity.

Buckley's volume seeks to utilize selected writings from the comprehensive works of this Yale University professor in an effort to display the radical nature of Lindbeck's theology. The essays chosen date between 1968 and 1997, representing thirty years of Lindbeck's contributions to the greater body of theological literature. Central to both the writings of Lindbeck and to the annotations of editor James Buckley is the issue of ecumenism and the specific role of the Lutheran church in fostering Christian unity. It is Buckley's intention, through selecting the readings and providing introductions to each chapter, to present George Lindbeck as an evangelical, catholic and postliberal theologian.

The volume is effectively organized into three parts, each one containing writings which represent the evangelical, catholic and postliberal characteristics of Lindbeck's theology. *Part I: Evangelical* deals with the relationships between Christianity and Judaism, the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, and finally between Christians and non-believers. Central to this discussion is Lindbeck's understanding of evangelical as theology and practice centred in the three "alones": *solus Christus*, *sola fide*, and *sola scriptura*. Also central is Lindbeck's rejection of supersessionism, of both Judaism by Christianity, and Roman Catholicism by Protestantism. *Part II: Catholic* offers writings selected for their consideration of Lutheranism as a reform movement of the Church catholic, and the centrality of an ecumenism based on a futuristic eschatology and a respectful consideration of doctrinal differences. Finally, *Part III: Postliberal* includes writings representational of Lindbeck's hopes for Christian unity. Buckley effectively states in his general

introduction that Lindbeck's writings in their entirety, and certainly those selected for this anthology, are interdependent and universally centred in a hope for Christian unity.

This anthology, as it has been edited and introduced, raises questions that are central to relationships within the wider Christian church. The majority of divisions within the wider Christian church are dependent upon doctrinal, political and theological disagreements from times that are not ours. Lindbeck suggests that a reconsideration of cultural and chronological boundaries could help to reconcile centuries of division. This suggestion is intended to encourage the reader to move beyond the theological and doctrinal categorization of his/her own denomination to reconsider each community's role in the movement towards unity.

Buckley has collected and effectively introduced key samples of the theological writings of George Lindbeck so that they might be available to theologians and, more generally, educated readers and students of religious studies. I would recommend this book for any person making an attempt to understand Christian relations, as well as any ordered or lay member of the wider Christian church who holds ecumenical relations central to his/her Christian identity.

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Treasures Old and New: Images in the Lectionary

Gail Ramshaw

Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002

435 pages. \$47.25 Hardcover

In this book Gail Ramshaw weaves a wonderful tapestry of images from the three-year Revised Common Lectionary. She does so in a way that deepens our appreciation for the fabric of our lives as bounded by the proclamation of lectionary texts in Christian worship. In truth, what she develops is a marvelously deep and wondrous liturgical hermeneutic which takes the weft of the Bible seriously, but also sets it in the woof of the liturgical year and ongoing sacramental