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Tending the flock: congregations and family ministry

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book for the times – times of rapid and often uncontrollable change. The author notes: “Two fears face our congregations: the fear of too much change, and the fear of too little change” (9) – and times of confusion and uncertainty for leaders. It is well worth reading and using by clergy and laity in congregational, educational or judicatory leadership contexts. Rendle’s book is not only “a goldmine of ideas” but a key resource of practical and creative helps!

Arnold Weigel

Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

Tending the Flock: Congregations and Family Ministry

K. Brynolf Lyon and Archie Smith, Jr., eds.

Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998

219 pages, \$26.00 Softcover

This volume is one in a series of ten books which address “The Family, Religion, and Culture”. The editors of this book, Lyon (associate professor of practical theology and pastoral care at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis) and Smith (James and Clarice Foster Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling at the Pacific School of Religion and Graduate Theological Union Berkeley), have both done extensive research on the family, religion, and culture. They have engaged the various contributors to *Tending the Flock* to answer the question: What is happening to Western families in general and American families in particular? They use case studies from various religious settings. For example, a wide variety of church communities are explored, such as the CME Church, a Catholic parish, a Jewish synagogue, a Pentecostal church, a community church committed to reconciliation, an urban Presbyterian church, a Baptist church’s family ministry to gay men, and a multiethnic church’s ministry to families of many languages. Some settings are simple, though effective for the families present. Some settings reflect a more radical response to extraordinary families in our culture. All the settings presented illustrate for the reader the importance of different forms of family for engaged communities of faith. One can pick and choose, depending upon the reader’s situation, models of family ministry. The only drawback is whether or not one model can truly be transferred from the particular setting mentioned in the book to another setting – even if the two settings seem on the surface to be quite similar. The editors could possibly be forgetting that individuals who make up the above-mentioned interesting communities, actually enable these ministries to flourish. People make ministry happen, not only the particular model of ministry. Other than this

problem, *Tending the Flock* is a most helpful collection that may spark a fire in the reader's own setting.

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