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Ritual and Pastoral Care

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“what the Scripture passage says applied to us”. Lutherans use the Scriptures to preach the Gospel.

Secondly, a Lutheran reader is reminded by this book that the need to teach “what the Scripture says” is an increasingly important preaching task, and is impressed by the authority placed in the simple “there-ness” of the text, i.e., the text with its truths is there before us, and that is reason enough to expound it and to hear the exposition. Nevertheless, I do not find this book a viable model for teaching the Scriptures to contemporary media-age hearers. I would recommend the approach advocated by David Buttrick in *Homiletic; Moves and Structures* (Fortress, 1987), which avoids the rather dreadful “exegesis, exposition, application” sequence and proposes a flow of dynamic “moves” which “exposit” the text and our lives at one and the very same time.

Eduard R. Riegert
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Ritual and Pastoral Care

Elaine Ramshaw

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987

117 pp. \$11.00

Elaine Ramshaw, a Lutheran who teaches Pastoral Care at the Methodist School of Theology in Delaware, Ohio, and guest speaker at the Canadian Liturgical Society's 1989 *Symposium* in Scarborough, Ontario, has written a book in which she tries to bridge the gap between the “ritualists” and the “counsellors” in ministry. She maintains that to separate and isolate these two ministerial functions, as has often been done, is to distort both functions, and to minimize the contributions each can make to ministry. Furthermore, she sees the reality of wholistic pastoral care as lying between the hierarchical role of the pure ritualist and the “just folks” role of the pastoral counsellor, in a realm she calls “mutuality”. She affirms that pastoral leadership is an accepted and required ministerial role, but demands that “leadership is defined by service” (20).

Following a brief introduction, Ramshaw presents her argument and its illustrations in three chapters, each of which deals with a particular category of pastoral care administered through ritual means. “Ritual Care for the Community” deals with ritual as pastoral care in the context of the congregational community. Here she discusses baptism, holy communion, confirmation, marriage, and other life-cycle rituals, including such timely topics as the confirmation of handicapped and retarded persons, rites and rituals for divorce, and the communion of the baptized.

"Ritual and Care for the Individual" deals with the function and use of ritual in situations of individual need and counselling. Topics treated include prayer as ritual, private blessing, private confession and absolution, rites of healing, rituals with the dying and grieving, ritual with the mentally impaired, and ritual with those who have psychological problems.

Her final chapter, "Ritual and Care for the World", discusses the use of ritual as it interfaces with the world outside the church, and ritual as a force in the world for justice and social change. After dealing with the tension between liturgical eschatology and liturgy's inherent conservatism, she presents some "radical" uses of liturgy which have potential for encouraging public change: the Maundy Thursday footwashing liturgy, liturgical preaching for justice, images of justice in holy communion and baptism, secular and public liturgies (such as Thanksgiving Day, Mother's Day, and Memorial Day), liturgical tensions within institutional chaplaincies, materials which enter into liturgy (bread, wine, church architecture and furnishing), the Prayer of the Church, and inclusive language.

Ramshaw has produced a well-written, readable, and useful book. She establishes her theological premises, and then offers numerous practical and timely applications of the usefulness of relating ritual functions to pastoral care. For those who know Willimon's *Worship as Pastoral Care*, but who hunger for more practical applications of his thesis, Ramshaw's book will come as a welcome gift. Although her Lutheran roots are obvious throughout, she also writes from an ecumenical perspective, dealing with problems of ministry which are recognized and arise across the spectrum of the main-line churches.

Any pastor who is concerned about overcoming the separation of worship from pastoral care, and who is looking for tools with which to reconcile these two functions of ministry, will find this book a welcome addition to the shelf, not only for its treatment of liminal situations such as divorce or stillbirth, but also for its discussions of the traditional rites such as holy communion, baptism and confirmation.

Donald Nevile
Peace Lutheran Church

Ministries Examined

John H. P. Reumann

Augsburg Publishing House, 1987

We are indebted to Augsburg for enclosing within one volume five important contributions by this veteran Lutheran pastor, New Testament scholar, and ecumenist to our search for a better understanding and a more faithful practice of ordained ministry in the Lutheran churches of North