

chapters touch on the European Lutheran situation, one on Halle Pietism and the Prussian state, and a final chapter on the inclusion of gender into German Lutheran Pietism research.

As is the case with many volumes of this sort, the reader will find some chapters of more interest than others. But the essays are generally well done and many help to bring a new light on Pietism, especially in its trans-Atlantic contexts.

LUTHER SEMINARY
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Mark Granquist

Shepherds and Demons: A Study of Exorcism as Practised and Understood by Shepherds in the Malagasy Lutheran Church. By Hans Austnaberg. New York: Peter Lang, 2008. 410 pp.

Dr. Warren Quanbeck at Luther Seminary used to remark wryly what a sterilized universe the Enlightenment had bequeathed us, with many moderns and, now, probably even many post-moderns, hardly able to relate to the kind of spiritually dynamic metaphysics that ruled Luther's day. In general, this is not a Malagasy problem. As millions on that island have responded to the gospel over the past two centuries, they brought with them awarenesses of spiritual realities that are many, diverse, and often detrimental to the life of their society. The fact that they have dealt with them as Christians through the liturgy of exorcism has been widely remarked but relatively little studied. Hans Austnaberg attempts to remedy the dearth of scholarly material by this publication of his doctoral research on exorcism as it is practiced by the more educated leaders of the movement in the high plateau region of the Malagasy Lutheran Church.

Taking primarily a descriptive approach, Austnaberg focuses on two basic questions: first, what are the characteristics of exorcism as practiced by the "shepherds" of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (those consecrated for exorcism); and secondly, what are the shepherds' own understanding of the people in need of exorcism, the casting out of demons, and the healing process? This approach seeks to give priority to themes important to the persons actually

involved (3-4). His data consists of the written responses of 44 shepherds and 26 non-shepherds to prepared questions, reports of his own observations at 27 *toby* meetings (houses specially designated for exorcism in the Malagasy church), and interviews with 25 other persons (17-19), all summarized in the appendices. The text is heavily footnoted with references to these encounters, often qualified by his impressions and reflections on their situations. It is an intense and impressive treatment.

But Austnaberg sees his work as more than purely descriptive. As an outsider, he seeks to reflect on his own "pre-understanding" (4). His assumption is "that some sort of synthesis between biblical message and traditional Malagasy culture, as these two elements are handed over to the shepherds, has resulted in the shepherds' practice and understanding of exorcism" (5, 146, 330). Eventually he is able to use his work to formulate three reflective questions to offer back to the movement for further consideration (333-359).

Austnaberg organizes the work in five chapters with a particularly lucid table of contents that functions almost like the missing index. After a first chapter of introduction and discussion of methodology, he sketches the setting for exorcism (chapter two), including a brief history of the movement and a consideration of the four main branches, the fragility of its unity, and the shape of the shepherds' self-understanding and ministry, including calling, instruction, consecration, relation to the pastoral ministry, and demonology. Chapter three describes the liturgical exorcism service itself, including the two main parts, the actual casting out of the demons and the "strengthening," along with the prayer, singing, and preaching that accompany them. Austnaberg considers chapter four the most comprehensive, constituting over half the book, with its deeper probing of the shepherds' understanding within the two wider contexts, the traditional culture and the biblical message, in light of the service just described. A brief fifth chapter summarizes the findings and selects the theological questions that seem most compelling for further research and reflection.

For one with Western stereotypes of exorcism, many startling aspects emerge. The deeper purpose of exorcism as viewed by the shepherds is not driving out spirits as such, but conversion

itself—bringing people to Jesus (197, 300-301, 351-353). This is perhaps not unrelated to Austnaberg's observation that 98% of the people he observed coming forward for exorcism remain sitting quietly afterwards "without any observable reactions during expulsion of demons" (132). Healing is, in fact, more often considered a gradual process with some persons living in the *toby* for months, even years (312-316). Something about the communality, the holisticity, and the Christocentricity of the process struck an appreciative chord in this reader across the barriers of culture and worldview, and this, indeed, to my mild surprise.

One will notice occasional grammatical or usage errors that suggest some other language than English is primary. Though not uncommon and somewhat distracting, they almost never draw into question the author's meaning. More significant, perhaps, is Austnaberg's use of Paul Hiebert's work on spiritual warfare as a basic approach to the biblical message (172ff.). Austnaberg himself shows some uneasiness with his use of such an outwardly unrelated interpretive source when he grants in the footnotes that "[t]he best way to delineate the biblical material might have been to study and present the kind of biblical message which is prevailing in the Malagasy Lutheran Church today" (fn 659). It does seem to cast the whole conversation unnecessarily into "a conservative theological tradition," to use his words (172). Conservative or not, it is a remarkable conversation, and Austnaberg is to be applauded for his contribution.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CAIRO, EGYPT

Mark Nygard

Identity, Survival, Witness: Reconfiguring Theological Agendas. Edited by Karen L. Bloomquist. Theology in the Life of the Church series, volume 3. Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2008. 136 pp.

This small volume contains essays that address some major issues that confront the global Christian church and its mission. The contributors come from a wide variety of church situations, mostly from Asia. The essays are brief but to the point. The relevance of this



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