

Christ's Gift, Our Response: Martin Luther and Louis-Marie Chauvet on the Connection between Sacraments and Ethics. By Benjamin Durham. Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier, 2015. xviii + 184 pp. \$24.95 (paper).

The phenomenological approach to the sacrament of the eucharist from the French Catholic theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet (b. 1942) has become somewhat *de rigueur* among contemporary sacramental and liturgical theologians. In the last decade, a spate of English monographs on Chauvet have appeared and at least two studies set Chauvet in direct conversation with other thinkers (Heidegger and Benedict XVI, and Rahner, respectively). Benjamin Durham's slim volume contributes ably to this conversation and with a new methodology: placing Chauvet and Martin Luther, through the Finnish School of Luther Interpretation, "side-by-side as sources for each other" (p. 145).

He offers this as a new sort of ecumenical endeavor to see how the other's theology might *strengthen* the theology of one's own tradition. Durham attempts "to read each theologian in light of the other and to allow the insights of each theologian to speak to the tensions of the other," thus producing not "unity in thought" but a new kind of "unity of purpose" (p. 145). A similar approach birthed the Finnish School through its engagement with Eastern Orthodoxy. The reason for choosing Chauvet is directly tied to Durham's ecumenical goal: sacraments and ethics are the two places that embody both the church's internal division and its relationship to the world, and they are also central to Chauvet's project. The most significant interconnection between these two theologians is precisely what Durham hopes each theologian and his followers can be to the other: gift.

Chapter 1 sets up the background for a conversation on sacraments and ethics in the twentieth century. The scope here is quite broad: the American liturgical movement's unique vision; the original sacraments-ethics union in Don Saliers, Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, and Bruce Morrill; the philosophical basis of Chauvet's work (especially Heidegger, and Marcel Mauss); and a summary of the Finnish School of Luther Interpretation with its reading of justification as union with Christ. Durham's summaries are succinct and extremely clear, particularly his summary of Heidegger.

Chapter 2 presents Luther's sacramental theology, which Durham frames through the interlaced triad of Christ's *gift*, *presence*, and *promise*. Because Christ is truly given to the Christian in the sacraments through the mechanism of faith, Christ dwells in the Christian by faith such that ethics becomes Christian (or, he suggests, "Christ-in") ethics. Chapter 3 provides an overview of Chauvet's take on the relationship between sacraments and ethics, most especially in his magnum opus, *Symbol and Sacrament* (French, 1987; English, 1995). Sacraments and ethics are two vestiges of the same

process that Chauvet names "symbolic exchange." For Chauvet, symbols bear the presence of what they symbolize. Thus, the symbolic exchange of particular things (for example, flowers, bread, a wink) necessarily entails the exchange of *persons*. The consent to the essential physical "mediation" of the sacraments and the church is similarly mediated ethically in our bodies as part of the Body of the church. The final chapter brings them together through a focus on three particular areas: the centrality of gift in their respective sacramental theologies; the anthropologies of their sacramentologies; and the role of community in this connection.

The choice of these two theologians raises certain questions. Since *Symbol and Sacraments* begins with a rejection of Aquinas's treatment of the instrumentality of sacraments, is Chauvet properly representative of Roman Catholicism in the way that Luther is for Lutheranism? The same could be asked about the Finnish School vis-à-vis Lutheranism more generally. Given how complex Luther and Chauvet are and how this complexity would have only increased dramatically with an attempt to survey all the secondary literature, Durheim's focus on primary sources is the right approach. Nonetheless, the book could have been strengthened with more footnotes to assure the reader of Durheim's interpretations of both figures, especially Luther. Likewise, reference to nuanced critiques of Chauvet's interpretation of Aquinas (such as Bernard Blankenhorn) would have been helpful, as would footnotes to the *Summa* itself, rather than just Chauvet's citations.

Durheim has crafted a monograph marked by exceptionally clear unencumbered prose that will appeal to a wide range of readers: ecumenists, Luther scholars, sacramental theologians of all traditions, and ethicists. In order to apprehend his goal, two-thirds of the book is a presentation of Luther and Chauvet respectively. This means that scholars, pastors, and practitioners looking for an introduction or refresher to these figures will be suitably rewarded, and the chapters on each thinker can stand easily on their own. Upper-level undergraduate and master's level courses in ethics and ecumenical theology will find this text an original and stimulating addition. It remains to be seen whether theologians will add Durheim's method to their ecumenical arsenal. Regardless, this sort of careful, focused blend of primary text study and creative engagement is not only spiritually edifying but contributes to the imperative of real and substantive unity between divided Christians.

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