

no illusion as to Martyr's success in convincing his Lutheran opponents, notably among them Johannes Brenz. The latter's opinion of Vermigli's *Dialogue* was simply that it served "better at showing the weakness of his mind than in attacking the truth" and that the arguments advanced in the *Dialogue* were "contrary to the teaching of Scripture" (xviii).

The translation is from the Zurich edition of Vermigli's *Dialogue*, supplemented by the topical headings and subdivisions provided by the editors of the 1581 Basel edition. The translator shows great skill in rendering sixteenth-century Latin texts into good, modern English and demonstrates his grasp of the intricacies of the often wearisome eucharistic debates of that period. Perusal of this well-crafted modern translation should advance greater appreciation for the theological acumen of Vermigli and his immense debating skills; while at the same time deepening appreciation for the fact that eucharistic differences served not only as a wall of division between Catholics and Protestants, but also between Lutherans and Reformed theologians and their supporters.

E.J. Furcha

McGill University

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***Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich.*** By Doris Bergen. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. ISBN 0-8078-4560-4. Pp. xiii+341.

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With this aptly titled book Doris Bergen has made a significant contribution to a much-neglected facet of German Church Struggle (*Kirchenkampf*) historiography. The German Christian movement emerged in the late Weimar era as a mixture of *völkisch* nationalism, ecclesiastical renewal, and religious anti-Semitism. Representing the most aggressive attempt to introduce National Socialist ideological and organizational principles into the Protestant churches, the movement downplayed Christian teaching on sin, redemption, and love. After 1933 German Christians controlled the largest Protestant Land church, the Old Prussian Union, and under Reich Bishop Ludwig Mueller, spearheaded the attempt to unite the twenty-eight Protestant Land churches into a single Reich church.

Since Kurt Meier's pioneering work on the German Christians (1964), only two regional studies—Helmut Baier's on Bavaria (1968) and Reijo Heinonen's on Bremen (1978)—have added significantly to the historical understanding of this movement. Recently Rainer Lächele's examination of the Württemberg synthesize German Christians (1994) and Doris Bergen's work have given new life to the field. Bergen, "struck by what seemed the contorted efforts to fuse Christianity with Germanness and purge it of Jewish influence," has written a clear analysis of the failure of the German Christians to address the "fundamentally irreconcilable" belief systems of National Socialism and Christianity (xi).

Bergen does not focus on the rise and fall of the German Christians in Protestant church politics, but rather on the main ideas of the movement. Following a background chapter on the centrality of Christianity in the Third Reich and the

various stages in the development of the German Christian movement, subsequent chapters deal with the three themes of race, doctrine, and gender. A concluding chapter demonstrates the ease with which German Christians and their ideas persisted in postwar Germany, even after the movement itself collapsed.

On the issue of race Bergen demonstrates that "by elevating *Volkstum*—race—to the level of God's revelation, German Christians opened the floodgates to a torrent of non-Christian and anti-Christian beliefs, attitudes, and activities" (21). Chief among them was the concept that the cultivation of the life of the *Volk* was a divine mission; the result was a strident anti-Semitism. Bergen draws a clear parallel between the increasing legal and physical mistreatment of Jews by the Nazi state and the corresponding increase in the intensity of the anti-Jewish polemic of the German Christians.

In subsequent chapters Bergen elaborates on the German Christian racial policy. Regarding the baptism, membership, and ministry of non-Aryans in Protestant churches, she argues that in principle the movement acted to exclude non-Aryans from the *Volkskirche*, though in practice exceptions were tolerated. Further, Bergen exposes the ultimate nihilism of the German Christian plan to preserve Christianity by removing all of its Jewish elements, including the Old Testament, portions of the New Testament, and many pieces of traditional church music. Her conclusion is that "by trying to tear their religious tradition from its Jewish roots, German Christians took on a boundless task that they could not accomplish without exploding Christianity itself" (142).

On doctrine Bergen's analysis of the German Christians demonstrates both their utter disregard for the most basic elements of Protestant theology and their failure to unite Protestants through ecclesiastical ritual, the ethnic ideal of the Protestant *Volksdeutsch*, the notion of the state church, and the "sacrament" of war (57). The most ambitious aspect of their abandonment of doctrine (belief) for the sake of unity (blood) was the attempt to form a unitary, supra-confessional German church. According to Bergen, German Christians' ignorance of the doctrinal gulf between Protestants and Catholics only repulsed Catholics, divided their own camp, and exposed the "essential negativity and the spiritual void at the heart of German Christian ecclesiology" (118).

The aspect of *Twisted Cross* that is the most original—and the most valuable to German Protestant historiography as a whole—is Bergen's discussion of German Christians and gender. She shows that in the style of their meetings and the language of their speeches, German Christians portrayed themselves as a manly movement, fully in accord with the militaristic tone of the National Socialist state. In fact, the active involvement of women in German Christian meetings and as would-be leaders made a farce of this manly image. Consequently the charge of weakness or womanliness that the German Christians employed against their Confessing Church opponents was used with equal effectiveness against the German Christians themselves by their anti-Christian enemies in the Nazi Party. Bergen argues that "the two images that dominated the gendered vision of the church—the weeping woman-mother and the fighting warrior-man—could be reconciled in the notion of sacrifice," the sacrifice demanded by war (202).

*Twisted Cross* is a meticulously researched book, full of anecdotal and polem-

ical material culled from church and state archives across Germany. If there is a criticism, it is that the relative importance of the various aspects of Bergen's argument is not always clear. Certain points are substantiated by a single anecdote, with no explanation as to whether the evidence is representative of a commonly held idea or is merely the expression of an isolated viewpoint. Nor is there a sense of the regional diversity among German Christians. On the whole, however, Doris Bergen's straightforward style and the richness of quotations—ranging from the shocking to the absurdly humorous—combine to make *Twisted Cross* a rewarding read. Bergen has convincingly demonstrated the impossibility of the German Christian attempt to marshal the forces of Christianity on behalf of National Socialism.

Kyle Jantzen

University of Saskatchewan

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***Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519–1530.*** By Miriam Usher Chrisman. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996. ISBN 0-391-03944-X. Pp. xiii+288.

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Propaganda pamphlets of the Reformation have generally not been accessible to North American students—partly because archives and libraries on this continent did not purchase enough of these treasures when they were readily available on the antiquarian book market. More importantly, of course, there are fewer individuals apart from specialists who could easily handle either script or language. Hence students of early modern history and anyone interested in the religious expressions of laypersons will greatly welcome this monograph by Miriam Usher Chrisman.

This seasoned scholar of the early modern period has produced a fascinating analysis of German lay pamphleteers from the years 1519–1530. Although the activities of laypersons have received considerable attention from German scholars, little has been done, apart from the work of Paul Russell in the late 1980s and Miriam Chrisman herself, by scholars writing in English.

The author works with the hypothesis that different lay writers—not unlike their clerical counterparts perhaps—had views of reform that sprang from different motivation, social context, and/or objectives. She discovered that lay writers did not simply echo the ideas of theologians like Luther or Zwingli and of other prominent thinkers. On the basis of the evidence Chrisman demonstrates convincingly that they developed their own views of social and religious change and expressed these in short tracts that were easily disseminated.

Chrisman divides her examination of some three hundred pamphlets written by ninety-odd lay persons into nine chapters. In the introduction she sets the parameters of her investigation by defining the different modes of discourse employed by sixteenth-century lay writers. Her analysis is summarized succinctly in a brief conclusion. In the first chapter Chrisman delineates the social order that prevailed at the outset of the modern era and provided the context that inspired