NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 3

AUTUMN 2017

2017 Fall Program Recap

by Jill Ogline Titus and Steve Herr

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic gathered at the Memorial Chapel on the campus of the University of Maryland on October 7. At the gathering the society recognized the importance of the chapel as the location of the ordination of Elizabeth Platz, the first woman ordained in the western hemisphere. The Memorial Chapel is the ninth site to receive the recognition by the society. President Stephen Herr welcomed LHSMA members, guests, panel participants and Pastor Platz. Herr thanked all for attending and recognize the efforts of former board member Phil Teigen for his work in making the day possible and for Pastor Ray Ranker's work in providing on-site hospitality and planning. Herr introduced the panel organizer and moderator, the Rev. Dr. Maria Erling. Erling is a LHS-MA board member and moderated the panel's discussion while helping to provide context and fielded questions from the audience.

The afternoon began with a panel discussion on "Women's Ordination and the Ongoing Reformation of Church and Society" featuring four "generations" of female Lutheran pastors. Pr. Elizabeth Platz spoke first, stressing her belief that her historic 1970 ordination must be understood fundamentally as not about her. but rather about the church's action. Platz spoke movingly of her call to minister at the altar, and of the pastors, professors, and synod presidents whose response to God's activity amongst God's people opened the path to ordination to her. Platz was followed by Pr. Anne Dwiggins and Pr. Renata Eustis, whose late 1990s/early 2000s ordinations were the culmination of a long struggle to understand the nature of the call placed before them. Dwiggins reflected on the personal significance of

her ordination, as well as its impact on her congregation, pointing to her call to St. Stephen's Lutheran as an important step in the congregation's unfolding embrace of diversity, which is still expanding to-Eustis also reflected on similar themes, pointing to the impact of their shared ministry on her congregation's sense of self. Both spoke passionately about their congregations' expanding capacity to navigate a pluralistic society and encounter God's voice through new channels. Vicar Tamika Jancewicz, a United Lutheran Seminary student currently completing her internship at Christ Lutheran Church (Washington, DC) reflected on her journey as a clergywoman of color in one of the whitest church bodies in the United States. Positioning herself between the "generations" that came before her and those who will come after, Jancewicz spoke her desire to minister in a way that helps open the way for the full inclusion and embrace of those whose call to ministry is marginalized due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Following the panel discussion, a historic site recognition service was held to formally establish the Memorial Chapel as a Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic Historic Site. Following a site recognition summary composed by Pastor Paul Tomkiel and read by Dr. Jill Titus, both LHSMA board members, Pastor Platz and Chaplain Ranker formally received the site recognition plaque that will be placed at the chapel. The Rev. Will Gohl, Jr., Bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, and the Rev. Richard Graham, Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, participated in the service by offering the invocation and benediction respectively. A light reception followed in the chapel's garden.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Pastor Elizabeth Platz honored during Spring Program
- Spring panel discussion reflects on history of ordained women in the Lutheran church
- University of Maryland Memorial Chapel recognized by LHSMA as historic site
- Tim Townsend, Mark Granquist win 2017 St. Paul, Biglerville Prize in American Lutheran History
- Rev. Anne Dwiggins shares experiences of women's ordination in the ELCA

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President's Corner - Autumn 2017

In the spirit of Thanksgiving I offer a number of thanksgivings to God related to the mission of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic.

Thanks be to God for...

the wonderful heritage and histo-



rv of Lutheranism in the Mid-Atlantic and Eastern United States:

all the Lutheran

saints in the Mid-Atlantic region, some whose names are remembered and others who are lost to history, who shared the Gospel faithfully and boldly;

- this society's founder Samuel Simon Schmucker and all those through the years who have understood the value and importance of history for the life and mission of the church;
- for all the saints who reestablished the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic including Frederick Weiser, Charles Gladfelter. Frederick Wentz, Herman Stuempfle, Annabelle Wenzke, Michael Kurtz, Don Housley and many others;
- the society's dedicated volunteer

board of directors;

for the recently completed service of board members Anna-

belle Wenzke, Judy Simonson, Briant Bohleke;

for the witness of Pastor Elizabeth Platz, Pastor Anne Dwiggins, Pastor Renate Eustis, Seminarian Tamika Jancewicz, and the

Rev. Dr. Maria Erling whose recent presentations and discusprovided sions inspiration, thoughtful perspectives, and insights into the role of ordained women in the life of the Lutheran Church in America;

- for the generosity of the Wentz family in establishing the A.R. Wentz Prize in American Lutheran History and to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Biglerville. Pennsylvania in establishing the Biglerville Prize in American Lutheran History in honor of The Reverend Frederick Weiser:
- for the nine recognized historic sites by the society and the legacy they share including the most recently named site: Memorial Chapel, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland;

for the work of scholars including recent Biglerville prize winners Tim Townsend, Mark Gran-

quist and A.R. Wentz prize winner Hans Becklin - all whose research and writing illumines our understanding of Lutheranism and its role and impact in America

and the world;

"...a number of

thanksgivings to God

related to the mission of

the Lutheran Historical

Society of the

Mid-Atlantic.

- for all the saints who from their labors rest including all those who were members of the society and for those who served on the LHSMA board:
- for the heritage and legacy of Lutheranism as we commemorate 500 years of God's grace in action.

May you and yours have a blessed Thanksgiving and Christmastide. Stay tuned in the early part of 2018 for details about the annual meeting.

Sincerely,

Pastor Stephen R. Herr, LHSMA President

October 31, 2017 The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas



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Historic Site Recognition Remarks, October 7, 2017

Honoring

Pastor Elizabeth Platz

and

Memorial Chapel,

University of Maryland

By Paul Tomkiel

The Maryland Synod of the Lutheran Church in America ordained Elizabeth A. Platz in the University of Maryland Memorial Chapel on November 22, 1970. The first Lutheran woman ordained in the western hemisphere,

Pastor Platz's consecration represents a landmark in gender equality and in the century-long effort to include women more fully in the life and practice of American Lutheran churches.

The road that led us to Pastor Platz's ordination effectively started in 1849 when William Passavant secured German deaconesses to

work in the United States. This set the idea in the minds of all who were in the Lutheran churches that women could indeed be in official leadership roles as titled clergy. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time when many in the Lutheran churches were inspired with a zeal for God's mission of proclaiming the Gospel. Still forbidden to be ordained, women channeled their zeal into being missionaries, such as Dr. Anna Sarah Kugler, or in establishing mission societies. The Women's Foreign Mission Society was established in the General synod in 1877, and the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society was formed in the Maryland Synod in 1883. In 1884, the Lutheran Deaconess mother house was founded in Philadelphia. By 1889 the number of Lutheran deaconesses in the United States numbered 197, and by 1940 the deaconess community numbered 480. In 1900 the General Synod extended voting membership to women, preceding the ratification of the nineteenth amendment of the United States Constitution by twenty years.

In 1946, we see Bertha Paulssen called to be the first female faculty member of the Gettysburg Seminary. The early 1960s saw the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America establishing the twentieth century's equivalent to the nineteenth's mission societies in their women's organizations. These two organizations were among the three predecessor bodies to today's Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As these two organizations were getting established, Elizabeth Platz answered God's call to ministry and began her studies at Lutheran School of Theology in Gettysburg. In 1965, Elizabeth graduated and began her call as Lutheran Chaplain at the University of Maryland in College Park.

The 1960s saw plenty of debate and discernment among Lutherans in the United States on the question of women's ordination. The Lutheran Council, in February of 1970, delivered the results of their study on the histori-

cal and doctrinal aspects of women's ordination to the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The Lutheran Council declared, "no one argument or set of

> arguments settles the matter clearly one way or another at this point for us," and "if there are no conclusive grounds for forbidding the ordination of women and no definitive ones for demanding it, it follows that a variety of practices at any given time remains possible amid common confession."

In June of 1970, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church both accepted the Council's report at their assemblies. At both assemblies, members voted to open the door for women to be ordained in their church bodies.

On November 22 of the same year, Elizabeth Platz was ordained a pastor in the Lutheran Church in America. Just weeks later, Barbara Andrews was ordained in the American Lutheran Church.

Since Pastor Platz was ordained, there are now thousands of faithful women pastors in the ELCA. Untold numbers of women and men have been comforted and inspired by their witness and ministry. The year 1992 saw April Larson elected as bishop of the LaCrosse Area Synod, and of course, 2013 saw Bishop Elizabeth Eaton elected as the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

It is the privilege of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic to give thanks and honor to the Reverend Elizabeth Platz for her persistence, her patience, and her ministry as well as to recognize the site of her ordination here in this chapel. Pastor Platz, a servant of God, answered the Holy Spirit's call to a venture of which she did not know the ending, by paths as then untrodden, through perils unknown. Through her faithful service, the Church and the world caught a glimpse of the new life in Christ that St Paul describes in the third chapter of his letter to the Galatians: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

And so today, on the commemoration of Henry Muhlenberg, we give thanks to Pastor Elizabeth Platz and to God for renewing the mission and ministry of the Lutheran church in America through the lives of ordained women such as Pastor Platz.

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LHSMA Announces 2017 Biglerville Prize Winners

By Steve Herr and Jill Ogline Titus

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic has announced that Tim Townsend and Mark Granquist have won the 2017 St. Paul, Biglerville Prize in American Lutheran History. Townsend's Mission at Nuremberg: An American Army Chaplain and the Trial of the Nazis (HarperCollins Publishers, 2014) explores the ministry of Lutheran pastor Henry Gerecke with twentyone Nazi leaders awaiting trial. "In placing Lutheran chaplaincy and ideas of pastoral care at the heart of his account of one of the most famous trials in world history, Townsend's account is a powerful story of American Lutheranism on the world stage. Mark Granquis's Lutherans in America: A New History (Fortress Press, 2015) offers a thoughtful reinterpretation of American Lutheran history, raising timely questions about unity, diversity, and the definition of

MISSION at NUREMBERG

An American Army Chaplain and the Trial of the Nazis

TIM TOWNSEND

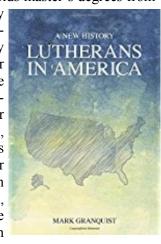
a missional church history. We are delighted to recognize these two excellent works, both of which – in their own distinctive ways – profoundly enhance our understanding of American Lutheran history," commented Dr. Jill Ogline Titus, chair of the Society's St. Biglerville Prize committee.

These monographs are the tenth and eleventh books

to receive the award in the 23-year history of the Biglerville prize. The prize is awarded every two to three years by the Society to a newly published book of mature scholarship in American Lutheran history. It was established by St. Paul Lutheran Church in Biglerville, Pennsylvania to honor their pastor, the Rev. Frederick Weiser, at the time of his retirement. It includes a \$3000 award and was last awarded in 2014.

Townsend, formerly the religion reporter at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, holds master's degrees from

the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and Yale Divinity School. He has written for the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and Rolling Stone, among other publications. In 2005. 2011 and 2013, he was named Religion Reporter of the Year by the Religion Newswriters Association, the highest honor on the "God beat" at American newspapers.



Granquist is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity at Luther Seminary, having previously taught at St Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota and at Gustavus Adolphus College in St Peter, Minnesota. An ordained Lutheran minister, he served as a parish pastor in Rochester, Minnesota. He serves as associate editor of the Luther Seminary Journal "Word & World," as well as editor of the "Journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference." He was recently elected as president of the Lutheran Historical Conference, an organization that fosters effective cooperation among persons and institutions concerned with research, documentation and preservation of the resources revealing experiences of Lutheranism in North America.

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic is a non-profit organization with a mission to preserve, document, and nurture interest in the rich Lutheran Christianity traditions and heritage of the Mid-Atlantic region. For more information visit their webpage at www.LutheranHistoricalSociety.com or contact LHSMA Pres ident Stephen Herr at 717-334-5212.



Reflections on the Ordination of the Rev. Elizabeth Platz

By The Rev. Anne Dwiggins, Panelist

It is an honor and a pleasure to be asked to share my experiences of women's ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America here at this site recognition at the University of Maryland Memorial Chapel. Interpreting the meaning and importance of anything is best done in community, where a variety of voices can be heard — so I welcome the chance to share my thoughts and hear the thoughts of others as we reflect on an historic event — the ordination of Pastor Elizabeth Platz, the first woman ordained by a Lutheran body in the western hemisphere — here in November 1970. My husband is a graduate of this institution, and we were married here in this chapel roughly one year after that historic day. When we were married in 1971, I never expected that I would become a pastor.

First, I'd like to share a little about myself, and then address three questions: What did ordination mean to me? What did it mean to my congregation to call a woman pastor? And finally, what did it mean to the ELCA to ordain women?

My parents were of mixed religious backgrounds. When I was in 5th grade, they joined an LCA mission congregation. My father was on the first Congregation Council, all men. I show you this little book, "It Will Be Your Duty...", given to him at that time, written to, and I quote, "help laymen, vestrymen, church councilmen" learn the ropes. I love the cover with its male pastor and male councilmen! My mom, on the other hand, was in charge of the celebratory dinner on organization Sunday. The pastor's wife was organist and the go-to for everything. Boys were acolytes; girls served in the nursery. I was not aware that in the late '50's, questions of women's ordination were being asked in American Lutheran circles.

I graduated from college in 1970. It was a tumultuous time of change: Viet Nam, Kent State one month before my graduation, demonstrations on college campuses all over the country, including this campus. It was the year the LCA Convention approved the ordination of women. Even so, and even as I graduated from a women's college with an emphasis on women's capabilities and leadership, I had no vision of a career. I expected to work for a while and get married. I did not see myself standing at the cusp of something entirely new in terms of roles for women.

So I worked. I got married. We had three boys. I sought baptism for my first son, though I had been through a "church drop-out" period. I became increasingly involved in the congregation, took on various leadership positions, and served as part-time church

secretary. Imagine my surprise when one day, talking to my pastor, these words came out of my mouth: "Wouldn't it be fun to be a pastor?" I might have expected the Holy Spirit to speak in a slightly more profound way, but there it was! My pastor was very supportive, although he first tried to steer me in a nonordination direction. Having started seminary as a single guy, I think he had trouble seeing how I could do this with a family. So did I!

I put up plenty of roadblocks. How would I do this? How would I pay for it? What were my motivations for going? I yearned to grow in faith, but was this the purpose of ordination? What if the church sent me to Timbuktu – what about my family? (Questions along this line were not always answered with empathy.) It wasn't that I didn't think a woman could become pastor – I had the example of Beth Platz, who was generous with her expertise and time in my nearby congregation. It was more, can I become a pastor?

I prayed for a burning bush – a clear sign. God answered in a slow, unfolding process. I began to see that God had a plan for my life – and that everything to this point was preparation for that plan. I saw that I was my best in the church. I articulated to myself that I wanted to make a difference in just one person's life, as I began to understand the church as the one institution that could bring people together in peace and wholeness.

God patiently overcame every objection. I finally surrendered, not knowing where it would lead. At age 44, 22 years out of college, with a husband and three kids at home, I headed off to Gettysburg.

I began seminary in 1992, the year April Larson was elected a bishop in the ELCA. My class was fifty percent women and predominantly second career. The seminary struggled to recognize and adjust to the needs of older, commuting students. At my first meeting with my advisor, a respected male biblical scholar, he mused along the lines, "Should you be at home?" A woman parishioner in my otherwise tremendously supportive parish asked at the end of my first semester, "So you are still at it?" There was the difficulty of clergy shirts. The first one I ordered was shiny black, like patent leather. I sent it back! There were the doubts of fellow women students. In my systematic theology class, we were divided into three-person study groups. I was put in a group with two other women. One of the women, I later learned, went to the professor and asked to be PAGE 6 VOLUME 27, NUMBER 3

Reflections

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placed in a group with men. "Women can't do theology," she worried. The professor refused, and actually, the three of us did a pretty good job!

But the worst obstacle was my <u>own</u> self-doubt. I can't do this! I don't know how to do this! I developed a mantra: God brought me here; God will see me through.

In 1997 I graduated from the seminary and received my first call. I was ordained 20 years ago this coming week. I remained with Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, MD, until I retired. I later learned from members of the Call Committee that four male pastors were interviewed before me. None expressed interest; some questioned the congregation's viability.

At the beginning, I struggled with the fish bowl of pastoral leadership. There were also unique struggles as a woman. For example, did I join other women in helping out in the kitchen, or did I do as I had seen my own pastor do, go in, greet and thank everyone? In my early years, I was the only woman who attended my periscope group – there was lots of sports, and a very occasional sexist joke.

So let me get to those questions. First, what has ordination meant to me? Becoming an ordained minister meant overcoming enormous self-doubt. Ordination allowed me to recognize, appreciate, and own, my gifts. I <u>had</u> gifts for ministry – I could do <u>good</u> ministry. I was empowered. I found my voice. I had underestimated myself. I did things I thought I could never do. Most of all I learned the importance of being myself, being real and authentic – however different that might be from other pastoral models. I learned the truth of my baptism: I am God's own unique and gifted child.

I learned other things too. I learned to appreciate the role of a sense of humor (especially about oneself), humility, the willingness to forgive oneself and others. The truth that Paul spoke about the body became clear! I was not good at some things – but there were others who were. I began to appreciate the mutuality of ministry and the process of building trust. We learn from one another. A woman from Zimbabwe said at a new member meeting, "We'll learn from you, and you'll learn from us."

A male pastor once remarked that women clergy try to do it all. I learned to fight "over-responsibility" – that it was best <u>not</u> to act on some things. I made mistakes aplenty – but that was okay. I learned to sin boldly – but trust more boldly in the gospel promise. My

faith grew. After all, ministry is not about me. It's about the Holy Spirit, working among us. I wasn't responsible to provide the story - I was the voice that <u>told</u> the story.

Did I encounter prejudice? Sure – sometimes from visitors, even occasionally from a congregation member. And how many times was I asked in an elevator or on the street, "Are you a nun?" I took it as an opportunity to share and educate.

What did it mean to my congregation to call a woman pastor? I would love to put this question to my congregation's members – they could answer more adequately than I. Shortly after I arrived, a parishioner succeeded in getting the local paper to print an article – it trumpeted the call of a woman pastor, accompanied by a big photo. I think the congregation saw the step as a bit daring – a new path, a new direction for the parish. I like to think that having called a woman, and having had a faithful ministry with a woman, the congregation became more open to new peoples, experiences, and different types of pastors. It began to see diversity as a strength and a witness.

I saw myself as a consensus builder – I believe this allowed others to grow in their ministerial voices – all part of the baptized body of priests. I believe they heard some different perspectives from the pulpit and in teaching. When I left, was the congregation better able to move into a pluralistic, global future? I believe so.

What did women's ordination mean to the ELCA? Women's ordination gave voice to a previously underrepresented body of people. Yes, women had been leaders, but not from the pulpit, not from the altar. Ordination allowed women, to "explor(e) their full capacities" – and to move from "distorted personal identity and self-image." ii As someone has said, "The test of a good pastor, whether woman or man, has been and should continue to be whether one can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly and with power." iii

One of my favorite commentators David Lose reminds us that the Bible is "a family scrapbook that tells the story of the people of God." ^{iv} The Bible is written from different perspectives, during different times, from different contexts. We share – discuss – puzzle over – and learn from these differing perspectives. This multifold experience of the Bible compels us to ask: how can we know God fully if some voices – some experiences of God – are silenced in our own day? Without those views, the whole body of Christ suffers. ^v

The ordination of women has led us to hear other voices. As work on racism led to the ordination of women, so women's ordination led to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, with its vote on gay and lesbian ordina-

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Application for Membership/Membership Renewal

(Please submit this Annual Membership Renewal form.)

(Please print or write clearly. Thank you!)

Name:	
Address:_	
Phone:	Email:
Congregat	on (<i>if applicable</i>): Please list name, town, and denomination.
I desire me	embership in LHSMA as a New Member or as a Renewal.
Date of ap	olication:
\$ 2	O Life Membership for an individual or institution O Annual Membership for an individual or institution (Annual membership is for a <u>calendar year</u> .) sh to give a donation to the society (see below for details). Amount \$
	ested in the following:
Res	earch
Rea	ding
	lishing
Oth	er:

Financial gifts to further the work of the Society are always welcome and greatly appreciated. Such gifts may be mailed to LHSMA, in care of the treasurer, Lee Knepp, at the address below. LHSMA is a 501C-3 organization and your gift is tax deductible as permitted by law.

Please complete this form and your check made payable to *LHSMA*. Mail to:

Lee Knepp, LHSMA P.O. Box 76 McClure, PA 17841 Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic

61 Seminary Ridge Gettysburg, PA 17325

Email: info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com Web: www.lutheranhistoricalsociety.com

"Preserving, documenting, and sharing the history of Lutherans and Lutheranism in the Mid-Atlantic and surrounding areas."

We're on the Web!

Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic Newsletter

ISSN 1049-6424

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic, in the interest of the preservation and cultivation of Lutheran history in Central and Western Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area issues this newsletter two to three times a year.

Notes of announcements, projects, historical celebrations, genealogical concerns, notes of church or Synodical activities, and notes from other historical societies are solicited.

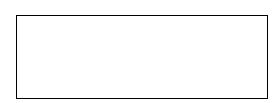
Address corrections are helpful.

Send replies via email to:

Stephen Herr

info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com

Subject: LHS Newsletter



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Reflections

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tion. The ELCA continues to give voice to other voiceless groups, not always perfectly, but always with the desire to bring about God's wholeness. This goal of breaking barriers – be they barriers of gender, race, or sexuality – must continue to be a priority.

Let me conclude. The gospel transforms. The gospel transformed my life. In church, in the ordination of women, I discovered my gifts and became the best I can be. I thank God for calling me, giving me this opportunity. I thank the church for confirming my call. I am grateful to the early pioneers – Pastor Platz and others – who absorbed the blows so I could come to preach. I give thanks to the Holy Spirit, along with the efforts of women and men, who saw in the ordination of women and inclusion for all peoples, a path toward God's wholeness.

Our God is truly present with us.

The Lord is broken <u>for us</u> – given for you, shed for you – always bringing new life.

Wilfred Bockelman, "It Will Be Your Duty . . ." (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 7.

ii Dorothy J. Marple, "God at Work Among Us," in Lutheran Women in Ordained Ministry 1970-1995, Reflections and Perspectives, ed. Gloria E. Bengtson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 24. With these words, Marple is speaking specifically of racism and its effects, but she also links the debilitating effects of racism and sexism.

iii Gracia Grindal, "How Lutheran Women Came to be Ordained," in *Lutheran Women in Or*dained Ministry 1970-1995, Reflections and Perspectives, ed. Gloria E. Bengtson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 43.

iv David J. Lose, Making Sense of Scripture, Big Questions About the Book of Faith (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009), 19.

^v Phyllis Anderson, "Lutheran Women in Theological Studies: Headway, Hard Work, Hurt, and Hope," in *Lutheran Women in Ordained Ministry 1970-1995, Reflections and Perspectives*, ed. Gloria E. Bengtson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 130.

