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Mattes's "Martin Luther's theology of beauty: A reappraisal" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Mattes, M. C. (2017). *Martin Luther's theology of beauty: A reappraisal*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 226 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 9780801098376

Mark Mattes, professor of philosophy and religion at Grand View University, is explicit as he explains in considerable detail Martin Luther's theology of beauty. In remembrance of the 500th anniversary of the reformation, this book is a tremendous resource in the study of Martin Luther. Mattes provides a source for a researcher to examine Martin Luther's perspective on beauty, but this book allows a researcher to explore beauty more broadly. This book draws the reader in the subject of beauty and the reader desires to further research the subject of beauty.

The book denotes a scholarly resource, however, it provides a reader an introduction into Martin Luther's theology of beauty. This book provides a groundwork of scripture passages which cover beauty. Mattes alludes that Martin Luther derived a theology of beauty from scripture. Mattes examines Luther's treatment of philosophy in the beginning of the book and his thought on goodness. These two topics help the reader have a better understanding when Mattes goes into more detail on beauty. The author divides the topic of beauty from the perspective of an early Luther and a mature Luther. This division allows the reader to understand Luther's progression in the area of beauty. The author discusses music and visual imagery by showing the beauty that comes from music along with the role of icons in the church. The approach Mattes uses to weave the chapters together is incredible and it helps the reader fully understand Luther's theology of beauty, rather than starting with ascetics, where it may have been unclear to the reader.

This book contributes to the field of study because it allows the researcher to understand beauty better and allows those studying Martin Luther to understand his perspective on beauty. Therefore, this book would benefit seminary courses on the theology of beauty and seminary courses on Martin Luther. The book is well documented with footnotes, works cited, and indexes of names, scripture, and subjects. These documented pages allows the reader to conduct further research in a specific area. It saves the researcher time when documented pages are presented well.

Reviewer

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