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# Sources of confirmation: from the Fathers through the reformers

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original". An interesting exercise, to translate the Greek back into Hebrew, and then re-translate it into English!

In contrast, his musical analysis is quite "lite". He provides reflections on the alternating moods of the various strophes, designed, he says, to "...get us into listening to Magnificats". He discusses composers ranging all the way from the early Renaissance to the present: de Quattris, Byrd, Telemann, Vivaldi, Monteverdi, A. Gabrieli, J. S. Bach, C. P. E. Bach, Charpentier, Hovahaness, Tippett, and Penderecki.

His textual analysis is detailed, but his musical analysis is thin. He sketches musical themes on a wide canvas (or should we say score), rather than providing any musicological detail. And missing entirely is any treatment of the liturgical role of the Magnificat in Evening Prayer (Vespers), the other Offices, or the Lectionary.

In sum, this is an introduction to the music of the Magnificat for the biblically literate rather than an introduction to the text for the musically literate. Terrien provides a fine overture for the musical novice. But an in-depth study of the theology of the Magnificat in music still remains to be written.

He provides a bibliography of "available recordings of the Magnificat" which includes 37 titles—hardly a comprehensive, all-inclusive listing of recordings or composers! In addition, there is a selected bibliography of writings on the Magnificat in music. There is one serious printing flaw: three paragraphs of text on page 22 are repeated on page 23.

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## **Sources of Confirmation: From the Fathers Through the Reformers**

Paul Turner

Collegetown, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1994

92 pp. \$14.00

This is a book of "readings" on the topic of confirmation, chosen and edited by Turner, a Roman priest, who made his entry into this field with the publication of his doctoral thesis, "The Meaning and Practise of Confirmation" (Peter Lang, 1987). The purpose of the present book is "to offer readers a collection of texts from which they may follow the course of confirmation from its patristic origins through the Reformation" (9). Most of the texts chosen come from the period of the Middle Ages and the Reformation. Turner's context for writing is the Roman sacrament of confirmation: but the book will be of interest to anyone concerned about the status of confirmation today.

The book is divided into four parts. Within each part the selections are presented chronologically: (1) The ritual of confirmation and candidates for reception; (2) Theological reflections: why the church did it this way; (3) Ritual means: how the rite of confirmation was celebrated; (4) Confirmation in the context of the reconciliation of heretics.

As a sourcebook, the book lacks narrative and does not flow smoothly. One is offered vignettes of confirmation from age to age. The book is fairly short, and as a consequence too sketchy to form a total picture. Still, it is valuable as a window on the theology and practise of confirmation in various periods.

Several startling insights emerge from Turner's anthology. It is surprising how widely-embraced confirmation was by most of the reformers. One wonders if Turner has caught all the nuances in his selections. There is no mention here of Luther's "monkey business"! Still, one sees the shift in thinking and practise from the late medieval Roman emphasis on confirmation as anointing and reception of the Holy Spirit, to the Reformation stress on personal confession and understanding of the faith. The only consistent element throughout remains the imposition of hands.

Surprising to this reader is the vehemence with which Jean Calvin opposed confirmation. His statements are the most furious and fervent: "I number [confirmation] among the most deadly tricks of Satan." Calvin also refers to confirmation as "vomit" and "babble". He labels the episcopal ministers of confirmation as "horned and mitred asses...no more fit for episcopal office than pigs are for singing" (67). Having heard from translators of Luther how often his German has been mollified in English translation, one is curious about the fire of Calvin's original French!

Turner concentrates mainly on pre-Reformation Roman sources, so that a clear picture of Lutheran and Anglican confirmation does not really emerge. This is too bad, since these two traditions provide the only real alternative in the west to Roman confirmation up until the present century, when other protestant churches discovered confirmation as a way of forming adolescent and adult faith.

Still, the literature on the historic rite of confirmation is growing, and this book provides an available source for scholars and interested pastors. Study of this book, and others, such as Aidan Kavanaugh's *Confirmation: Origins and Reform* (Pueblo, 1988), reveal how foreign and distant the present Lutheran practise and rite of confirmation are, in spirit and content, from the historic western rite. Recent studies in our own churches on the sacraments of initiation have completely overlooked the role played by confirmation in the historic initiation rite—to our own detriment and peril.

Lang provides citations from three Lutherans: Luther himself, Melancthon, and Martin Chemnitz. The book is provided with an index of names for easy access.

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