



Luther on Women: A Sourcebook

From Cambridge University Press

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Martin Luther contributed extensively to the sixteenth century 'debate about women' with his writings on women and related subjects such as marriage, the family and sexuality. In this 2003 volume, Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Susan Karant-Nunn bring together a vast selection of these works, translating many into English for the first time. They include sermons, lectures, pamphlets, polemic writings, letters and some informal 'table talk' recorded by his followers. The book is arranged into chapters on Biblical women, marriage, sexuality, childbirth and witchcraft, as well as on Luther's relations with his wife and other contemporary women. The editors, both internationally-known scholars on Reformation and women, provide a general introduction to each chapter, and Luther's own colourful words fuel both sides of the debate about whether the Protestant Reformation was beneficial or detrimental to women. This collection will make a wide range of Luther's works accessible to English-speaking scholars, students and general readers.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This brief look at Luther's varied comments on women provides a resource that has been noticeably missing in the tremendous number of volumes written about the reformer.... This work is useful as a sourcebook for Luther's thoughts on this topic. Recommended." Choice

"...this volume constitutes a valuable contribution to the teaching of Reformation studies, offering an accessible, very readable set of primary sources to faculty trying to include women in traditional courses on the Reformation or presenting the Reformation in courses on women's history." H-German (H-Net)

"In letting Luther speak for himself, the book aids both historical and theological engagement with Luther's views on women. Most excerpts are of sufficient length that the reader gets a good sense of Luther's logic and depth of thought. Thankfully the conversational "zingers" from Luther's Table Talk do not become the center of attention of analysis but rather are placed at the end of each subtopic or chapter. With its wide range of texts, the book goes a long way toward encouraging a nuanced critical appreciation of Luther on women...this work should spur discussion on the topic and invite a wide range of readers into that conversation." Sixteenth Century Journal, Mary Jane Haemig, Luther Seminary St. Paul, Minnesota

"...Drs. Karant-Nunn (University of Arizona) and Weisner-Hanks (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) collaborated for over eight years to produce not only a commendable resource but also a highly useful study....present Luther's views clearly and methodically, exploring and exemplifying, through carefully selected excerpts of Luther's writing, his numerous statements on the role and activity of women.... Younger scholars (female and Male) will particularly benefit from this valuable sourcebook. Not only does this work provide easy access to many Luther quotations, often well-executed original translations, but it also provides immediate direction for further research....a wealth of accessible information....I highly commend seminarians, deaconesses, and pastors to pick up this book and enjoy a conversation about women with "the good doctor, Martin Luther."

--Timothy Maschke, Mequon, WI, Concordia Journal

About the Author

Merry Wiesner is Professor of History and Director, Comparative Study of Religion Program and the Center for Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

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