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»Lutheranism and social responsibility« is a collection of essays, gathered by editors Nina J. Koefoed and Andrew G. Newby. The essays are the result of two symposiums held at Aarhus University in 2018 and 2019, prompted by the quincentenary of the Reformation. The broad themes of these symposiums regard the often-complicated relationships between Lutheran confessional identity and the Nordic welfare state. As the editors note in their preface, these essays span a long historical period and reflect a diversity of methodological and disciplinary commitments. The breadth of time and diversity of discipline are the most interesting and difficult features of the text as a whole, a point to which I will return in this review's conclusion.

In their introduction, Koefoed and Newby note that, while care of the poor is common among Christians, this care takes different forms depending on social circumstances and the theological claims to which it is bound. Readers familiar with the Reformation will know that the Protestant Reformers tasked civil authorities with care of the poor. The common chest replaces begging. This basic Reformation commitment occasions the book's essays, which are divided into three sections. Essays in the first section take up questions about the meaning and practices of care for the poor under Lutheran theology's claims. Essays in the second section consider how the poor were cared for in Nordic countries where Lutheranism became the state religion. Essays in the third section track this Lutheran social commitment's evolution as Nordic countries democratize and modernize.

There is much to learn from each of the book's sections. Owing to space limitations, I will highlight a few standout essays from each section. In the first section, Esther Chung-Kim's essay »Johannes Bugenhagen and Christian III«, highlights the relationship between the Reformer and the famed Danish king. Chung-Kim details the history of their relationship, including Bugenhagen's coronation of Christian III and the king's role in preparing the final version of the Danish church's orders. The essay is a thoughtful analysis of the religious-political cooperation, not without its difficulties, required in order for the Reformation's social program to take root. In perhaps the volume's best essay, »Justification and Care«, Christian Neddens examines the relationship between justification by grace and care of the poor in Lutheran confessional cultures. It is customary to examine this relationship through a close reading of texts. With an assumption about the importance of other cultural products – songs, paintings, gestures – in place, Neddens



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turns instead to artwork, principally alms panels. Neddens offers close readings of these alms panels as a way to follow the change in attitude and practice with respect to care of the poor. That these panels are reprinted in full color adds to Neddens's already insightful argument.

The second section is similarly instructive. Mary Nørby Pedersen's »Christian relief for the poor in Early Modern Denmark«, argues for Lutheranism's impact on social policy through a close reading of several key pieces of legislation in Denmark's early modern history. For Nørby Pedersen, this legislation is an important place where Lutheran theological claims are translated into Denmark's social life. Lutheran theology, as translated into law, helped state authorities identify the poor, determine their needs and how to best distribute care. Johann Annola and Riikka Mietinnen's »Piety and Prayers« considers the religious practices of the poor in Sweden and Finland, specifically those who received indoor poor relief. The authors also explore the relationship between Lutheranism and poor relief at a legal level, but the attention paid to the religious practices required of the poor adds new material for the reader.

The third section brings the reader forward in history, covering new ground in the process. Take co-editor Andrew G. Newby's contribution, »Brothers of the Nordic Tribe«, for example. In this piece, Newby argues that many Danish people responded charitably to 19th-century famines in Sweden and Finland, in part, to further the cause of a unified Scandinavian state. The Danes recognized the Swedish and Finnish as a part of their own in-group, and therefore worthy of their charity. Lutheranism, as a shared religion, helped make this recognition possible. In »Lutheran doxa and Reformed action«, Anders Sevelsted shows the ways 19th-century Danish Christians took up voluntary social work as an expression of a Reformed-revivalist influenced Lutheranism. Sevelsted argues that a strict separation of Christian confessions cannot make sense of the voluntary social work societies in Copenhagen on which his work focuses. As a result, Sevelsted argues for more flexibility when applying confessional terms (Reformed, Lutheran, etc.) to social movements.

This book is a thoughtful, detailed exploration of the Lutheran theology's impact on social responsibility in the Nordic context. Readers will gain much in terms of understanding both the broad history and selected historical events associated with the Nordic context. Nevertheless, the book presents the reader with a few challenges. The first is the issue of methodological and disciplinary diversity. Given the nature of the text, it will be likely that readers find certain portions of the text more interesting than others, unless one's interests lie precisely in the topic. There is a related readership concern. At times, this reader was hoping for more constructive or normative theological gestures. Such moves could function as a bridge to those whose immediate scholarly interest falls outside a history of the Nordic welfare state. For example, return to Chung-Kim's essay. In it, the relationship between



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Bugenhagen and Christian III puts some pressure on a classical understanding of Luther's two kingdoms theology. What are we to make of that pressure? Given the success of the Danish King's social reforms, what are we to make of the two kingdoms doctrine? Perhaps this is the standard quibble of a moral theologian reading a primarily historical work. However, this quibble comes about precisely because the authors examine such interesting historical phenomena. In that, even this complaint is a compliment.



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