



Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today (Lutheran Reformation 500)

Timothy J. Wengert

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Today's Protestant churches are often rent by disagreement and dissent over the office of bishop, the roles of the ordained, and myriad forms of lay ministry.

Timothy Wengert's new work overturns many of the "pious myths" about these matters to probe the core conviction of Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and the early Reform about public ministry. Theirs was an original vision of Christian ministry, revolutionary for its time. It jettisoned the lay/clerical distinction and brought "new authority and purpose to the public office in Christ's church," says Wengert.

After resurrecting that initial context, Wengert traces the diminution and distortion of this foundational vision through the centuries. He shows that many of the modern fights over public ministry are simply wrong-headed, and he then draws striking and helpful conclusions about the rich assets and forms of service in the single public office of ministry today.

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