

BOOK REVIEWS

Inventing Authority: The Use of Church Fathers in Reformation Debates over the Eucharist by Esther Chung-Kim. Baylor University Press, 2011. 230pp., hb., \$49.95. ISBN-13: 9781602582132.

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This book originated as a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of David Steinmetz of Duke University. The book deals essentially with four debates over the meaning of the Lord's Supper and the use of the church fathers in these debates. The debates studied are those of Martin Luther and Huldreich Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529 (ch. 1), the continuing debates between John Calvin and Joachim Westphal from 1555 to 1558 (chs. 3 & 4), the debates between Calvin and Tilemann Hesshusen between 1560–1561 (ch. 5), and the debates between Theodore Beza and Jacob Andreae at the Colloquy of Montbeliard in 1586 (ch. 6). There is also an introduction, a chapter on John Calvin's use of the church fathers in his *Institutes* and New Testament commentaries (ch. 2), as well as a concluding chapter, two short appendices, bibliography and index.

The book is well written, balanced and impartial, and focuses on the use of the early church fathers by the reformers in their attempts to prove the validity of their own positions.

Most of the reformers had initially been influenced by Luther's *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* and together with him had rejected the scholastics' doctrine of transubstantiation and Christ's repeated sacrifice in the mass. Rejecting tradition, they accepted the concept of *sola scriptura*. But it soon became a question of how far one went in interpreting Scripture. The extreme interpretations of Karlstadt, Müntzer and the Zwickau prophets Luther saw as leading to chaos and social disorder. Chung-Kim implies that

this led Luther to become fixed in his view on the Eucharist well before the Marburg Colloquy in 1529 and to be suspicious of Zwingli's views on the Lord's Supper. However, the same probably has to be said of Zwingli with his experience with the Swiss Brethren. The only resort was for both sides to appeal to the early church fathers, mostly Augustine. Yet that proved useless since both sides would sometimes claim the same statement of Augustine to argue their particular point. So it became a matter of interpreting the church fathers as much as it was of interpreting Scripture.

By the time Calvin came on the scene, as Chung-Kim shows in the debates with Joachim Westphal and Tilemann Hesshusen, the Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist had become fixed in confessional statements, and the real corporeal presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper was emphasized, sometimes to a degree that became perilously close to the concept of transubstantiation. Calvin's emphasis on the spiritual presence of Christ was seen by his opponents as coloured by Zwingli's symbolic understanding. As the opposing positions became more polarized, it became a matter of who could call up the most church fathers to confirm their positions. Chung-Kim also demonstrates how Calvin's references to the church fathers continually increased in his various revisions of his *Institutes* as he was involved with the debates over the Lord's Supper.

The clearest statements of both Lutheran and Reformed views came in the debate between Jacob Andreae and Theodore Beza where there was an honest attempt to understand each other in the hope of some agreement. But by this time confessional statements had become fixed and there was very little margin for change. *Sola scriptura* was not so *sola* anymore.

Chung-Kim's book is a worthwhile study which illustrates the growing tendency in the debates of both parties to appeal more and more to the church fathers and eventually to confessional statements, so that the concept of *sola scriptura* lost much of its impact as new traditions were formulated and became primary authorities. The study also shows how the church fathers were used by the opposing sides only to argue their particular position and were not really open to consideration or compromise. Using the same quotation from Augustine and others only demonstrated how the different sides were entrenched in their own positions. Understandably, the arguments were often repetitious. Giving some of the quotations of the fathers that the opposing sides were using and the ways they interpreted them differently more often would have increased the overall value of the study.