

Guidelines and Tips for Book Reviews.

Guidelines

1. Keep your reviews between 500–800 words.
2. Your book review **MUST** include the following publication data (three examples in red-font will follow):
 - a. Title (including subtitle) of book. The Title is in ALL CAPS and the subtitle capitalizes each word, except prepositions. The Title and Subtitle are separated by a comma. For example: Hans Boersma’s book *SACRAMENTAL PREACHING: Sermons on the Hidden Presence of Christ*.
 - b. Author’s name (first, then last) preceded by the word “By” For example: By Hans Boersma
 - c. Place and date of publication. For example: Grand Rapids, MI. 2016.
 - d. Publisher’s name: For example: Baker Academic.
 - e. Number of pages (including front matter). 240 pages.
 - f. Price. For example: \$26.00
 - g. (optional) If the book is part of a series, the series title may be given.

SACRAMENTAL PREACHING: Sermons on the Hidden Presence of Christ. By Hans Boersma. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. 240 pages. \$26.00.

OF GOOD COMFORT: Martin Luther’s Letters to the Depressed and Their Significance for Pastoral Care Today. By Stephen Pietsch. Hindmarsh, SA: ATF Theology, 2016. 307 pages. \$23.77.

JOHANNES BUGENHAGEN: Selected Writings. 2 Vols. Edited by Kurt K. Hendel. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. 1458 pages. \$70.00.

3. When citing page numbers put parentheses around the page number or numbers like this: (74). Do not include a “p.” like this: (~~p.~~74). The final punctuation of your sentence is outside the close parenthesis. An example follows:

Love Big. Be Well is a novel about Rev. Jonas McAnn who receives a no-nonsense hand-written letter from a pastoral search committee asking him to be the pastor of Granby Presbyterian Church located in the fictional small-town of Granby, Virginia. Jonas replies to the hand-written letter with one of his own, which he concludes with these words, “Oh—and one more thing. Aside from the normal financial and vacation considerations . . . I’ve just now decided that I would insist on one further contractual obligation. If I were your pastor, I’d want to continue this letter-writing thing. We’re onto something” (14).

4. The review should conclude with the following format.
 - a. Your name, Position
 - b. Parish or Vocation
 - c. Location

For example: (see next page)

Timothy Koch, Pastor
Zion Lutheran Church
Linn, KS

or

Jerry Broom, Church Elder
Salem Lutheran Church
Salem, IL

or

David Coe, Assistant Professor of Theology
Concordia University
Seward, NE

5. *Seelsorger* is a journal concerning the cure of souls. Your book review should reflect how the reviewed book intersects with this discipline.
6. Email your review to seelsorger@doxology.us

Tips

1. Write your review as soon as possible after you have finished the book.
2. Read to understand, not to react. If you are reading a book in order to find something you object to, you will find something, but you will also misread the book.
3. A book review is not the place for you to showcase how orthodox you are. Rather, accurately summarize the book's content and its value in the cure of souls.
4. The 8th Commandment restrains us from ruining reputations. It's certainly fine to disagree with a book, but you must accurately understand (see Tip #1) the author's argumentation before you disagree with it.
5. Avoid exaggerations such as "best/worst book ever."
6. You are not in the cheerleading business. Just because a book is published by a publisher/author you like/respect, that doesn't mean you need to say good things about it.
7. It's likely the people reading your review are looking for a recommendation as to whether they should buy this book. If you think they should, be clear as to why. If you think they shouldn't. Be clear as to why.
8. Avoid spoilers or warn about them ahead of time. This is particularly important in works of fiction.
9. Ebooks do not always have the same pagination as hard copies. If you need to cite page numbers, make sure the page number cited is from a hard-copy, not from the eBook.