

LUTHERAN HISTORICAL CONFERENCE

## NEWSLETTER

### 2010 CONFERENCE

The 25th biennial gathering of the Lutheran Historical Conference was held October 1-3, 2010, at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. Gathered around the theme "Lutherans and Learning," 17 papers were presented. A bus tour also visited three historic congregations, as well as St. Olaf College. At St. Olaf, Jeff Sauve, associate archivist, led a tour of the college archives and the Norwegian American Historical Associate archives.

At the business meeting, three new LHC board members were elected. Richard O. Johnson, L. DeAne Lagerquist, and Joel Thoreson will serve six-year terms on the board, with Susan McArver reelected as president and Marvin Huggins elected as vice president. Kathryn Galchutt, Maria Erling, and Mark Granquist finished their six-year terms at the biennial meeting. At the post-conference board meeting, Joel Pless will continue serving as secretary, while Richard Johnson volunteered to be treasurer.

Marvin Huggins announced that the final Essays & Reports volume containing the papers from the 2006 conference, would go to the printers in November, while Mark Granquist anticipated that the new Journal of the LHC would be issued in early 2011 containing papers from the 2008 conference.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia invited the LHC to hold the next biennial conference on their grounds as part of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. A number of locations in the Philadelphia area are being considered for the bus tour. The theme of the conference will be "Choosing the Lutheran Narrative: Commemorating, Remembering, Forgetting?" with David Settje serving as program



*Vasa Lutheran Church, Welch, Minn., a stop on the 2010 LHC bus tour.*

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## BOOK REVIEW: The Selma of the North

By Kathryn M. Galchutt, Concordia College, New York

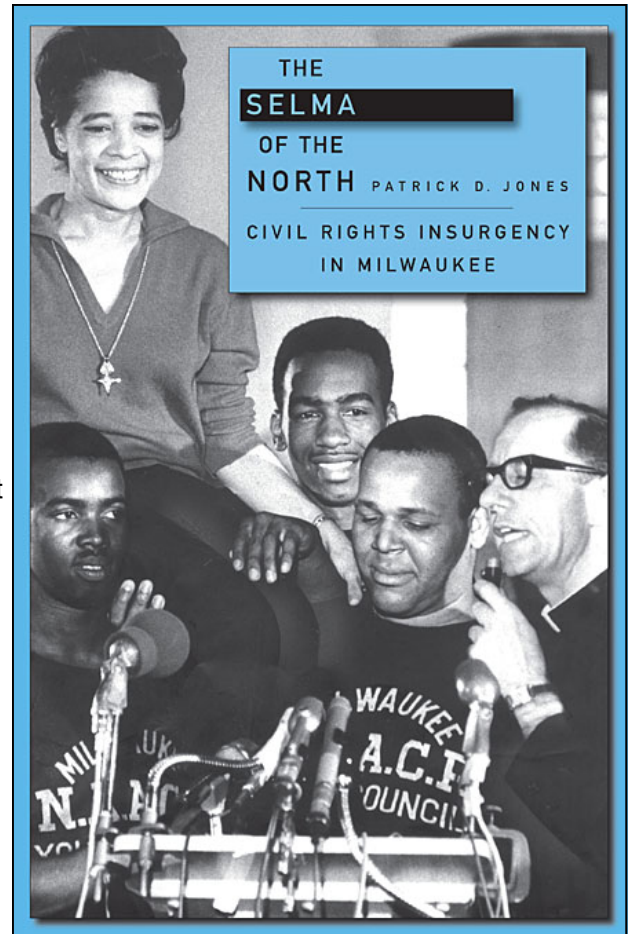
*The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*, By Patrick D. Jones, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009. xi + 318.

Milwaukee is a city known for its German immigrant heritage. Like many urban, industrial centers along the Great Lakes, Milwaukee attracted a large German immigrant population in the mid-to-late nineteenth century up through World War I. But with the industrial demands of World War I and immigration restrictions that followed, northern urban factories began to hire substantial numbers of African Americans migrating from the rural American South. The resulting interactions between German Americans and African Americans in the industrial cities of the North have often been overlooked. The racial dynamics of northern cities is a relatively recent and growing area of historical scholarship. But, at the same time, there has been limited attention to the interconnections between religion and race in the American North compared to the American South.

Patrick D. Jones's *The Selma of the North* is an important and valuable contribution to understanding the Civil Rights Movement in the North. Jones pays particular attention to Milwaukee's Catholics, noting the leadership role of Father James Groppi in the civil rights protests of the late 1960s. Jones states that in many northern cities, Catholics made up between one-third to one-half of the population and were central to both promoting and resisting racial change in the North. "The result was 'two distinctly Catholic visions of church, community, and authority . . . clash [ing] in the streets, parishes and

Catholic schools of the northern cities'" (p. 100). As Jones explains, "Catholics filtered the issue of race and reform through the lens of religion" (p. 107).

Early on, Jones notes that "The Catholic Church dominated the religious life of most new immigrants, but the Lutheran Church was also strong in the city among Germans and others" (p. 16). Yet, very little is said about Lutherans or other religious groups throughout the rest of the book. More could be done to explore the role of Lutheran churches, pastors, and laity in Milwaukee's encounter with race in the twentieth century. Lutherans were also a very prominent religious group in Milwaukee. According to records from the Association of Religion Data Archives, in 1971, there were 377,604 Catholics and 153,323 Lutherans in Milwaukee County. The next largest religious groups in the county were considerably smaller; there were 17,428 Methodists and 13,268 Presbyterians. The records from 1971 also show that in Milwaukee County, more conservative Lutherans (LCMS, WELS) significantly outnumbered more liberal Lutherans (ALC, LCA). Like Catholics, Lutherans reflected conflicted responses to race relations. While many Lutherans moved to the suburbs and avoided some of the direct racial conflicts in the city, there were Lutherans who remained.



Both Mayor Frank Zeidler (1948-1960), Milwaukee's last socialist major, and Mayor Henry Maier (1960-1988), who was both criticized and praised for his handling of the racial tensions of the late 1960s, belonged to Lutheran (LCA) churches. While Maier was not an active Lutheran, Zeidler was an active Lutheran whose faith influenced his politics. Jones describes the very different positions of Zeidler and Maier in the racial politics of the city, but does not explore their religious backgrounds.

Jones provides much context, comparison, and connection with the traditional story of the Civil Rights Movement in the American South. As Jones explains, "the level of segregation in Milwaukee equaled Birmingham, Atlanta, and other

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## 2009 INDEX OF WRITINGS IN THE FIELD OF AMERICAN LUTHERANISM

## Compiled by

**Dr. James W. Albers,  
Mr. John N. Dickmeyer, and  
Rev. Robert E. Smith**

This is the latest installment of the bibliography of items related to the history of Lutheranism in America. It covers items published in the calendar year 2009 and items from prior years which were missed in previous indexes. The 2009 and previous bibliographies are also available on the LHC Web Page: <http://luthhist.org>.

As in previous years, we once again appeal to LHC members for help in compiling next year's index. Although the tools of modern library research are excellent, such as searching WorldCat, such searches are not, nor are they likely to become, exhaustive. Please send us citations of your own work as well as those of your colleagues. We are especially interested in local, private and unindexed theses of note. Send relevant citations to:

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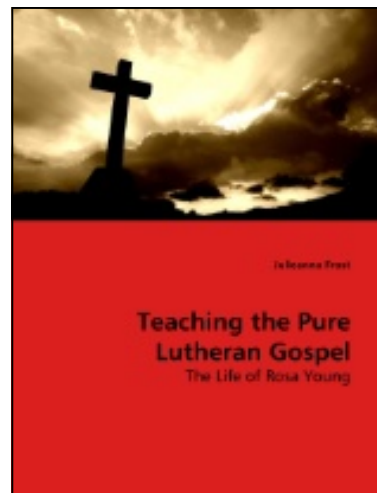
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## NEW RESOURCE

LHC Board Member Julianna Frost has published *Teaching the Pure Lutheran Gospel: The Life of Rosa Young* by VDM Verlag Dr. Muller e.k.

The biographical study examines the life and work of Dr. Rosa Jinsey Young (1890-1971). As An African American, Young was raised in the African Methodist Episcopal tradition and educated in their schools yet converted to become a Lutheran teacher and missionary in her home state of Alabama. In this role she was the founder of numerous Lutheran parochial schools as well as

Concordia College – Selma. This study has implications for our understanding of race, religion and gender by showing how Young manipulated her multiple minority identities to allow for effective action in her community and church, while showing how historical events and challenges interacted with Young's various identities. It also provides a detailed picture of private religious schools for black children in the Jim Crow south, as well as providing an understanding of the complex reactions to the Civil Rights movement, while showing how a conservative Lutheran denomination engaged in missionary work in the Black community.



## BOOK REVIEW Cont'd

southern cities" (p. 24). He also notes the enthusiastic reception of George Wallace in the city, recalling that "Wallace stated that if he ever had to leave Alabama, 'I'd want to live on the South Side of Milwaukee'" (p. 66-67). The tensions that surrounded Milwaukee's open housing protests in 1967 across the Sixteenth Street Viaduct was "eerily reminiscent of the racial violence at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge," leading some to name Milwaukee, "the Selma of the North" (p. 3, 191). Civil rights activists in Milwaukee, such as Groppi, had been greatly influenced by events in the South and their experiences in places like Selma which provided a "powerful resonance . . . from the fusion of politics and faith" (p. 83).

Despite all of Jones's interesting connections, more remain to be

made. A leading figure among activist white clergy in the South was the Lutheran pastor Joseph Ellwanger, who was involved with the civil rights campaigns in Birmingham and Selma. In 1967, Ellwanger accepted a call to Cross Lutheran Church (LCMS/AELC/ELCA) in inner-city Milwaukee. While Ellwanger arrived too late to take on a leadership role in Milwaukee's open housing campaign of 1967-68, he began a long commitment of inter-racial ministry in the city. Ellwanger was one of a small number of Lutheran pastors and laity who were active in trying to improve race relations in Milwaukee. But the lack of attention to Milwaukee Lutherans may also be a result of a traditional reticence among Lutherans to become overtly involved in politics and public affairs.

Throughout *The Selma of the North*, Jones sets local racial developments in a larger national context. Sometimes contemporaries distanced themselves from events elsewhere; but sometimes they were able to draw parallels. When some of the nation's worst race riots broke out in 1967, the city of Milwaukee took notice. As Jones explained, "Newark and Detroit worried everyone . . . Rumors circulated that Milwaukee was next" (p. 160-61). Newark, Detroit, and Milwaukee, like other cities in the East and in the Midwest, were at one time known for their German immigrant populations, much of which were Catholic and Lutheran. While works like Jones's do much to explain how Catholics responded and reacted to racial change, more could be done to examine the role of Lutherans who were also a substantial part of some urban areas in the North.

## LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRIZES ANNOUNCED

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic announces the Wentz Prize for the best essay completed in the 2010-11 academic year detailing the history of Lutherans in America by



a first degree student in a Lutheran Seminary and by a Graduate Student in an American or Canadian University. Each prize carries a

\$2,000 award. Submissions are due by May 31, 2011. Articles should be at least 25 double-spaced pages, follow the format stipulated in the most recent guide by Kate Turabian and be accompanied by a short letter

of reference from a faculty advisor.

Submissions and nominations should be sent to:

Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic  
c/o Lutheran Theological Seminary,  
Gettysburg  
61 Seminary Ridge  
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Or to Don Housley, secretary, Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic at [dhousley@verizon.net](mailto:dhousley@verizon.net).

## NAHA-NORGE CALL FOR PAPERS

The eleventh seminar of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Norway Chapter, titled "Migrant Journeys: The Norwegian-American Experience in a Multicultural Context" will be held on June 15-17, 2011 at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. The seminary welcomes a wide variety of papers, with particular interest in papers on subjects related to emigration/immigration and the experi-

ence of the migrant in relation to the ethnic group, the host culture, and other ethnic cultures.

A call for papers can be found at [www.naha.stolaf.edu/.no/NAHA Norge Call for Papers.pdf](http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/.no/NAHA%20Norge%20Call%20for%20Papers.pdf).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Those interested in contributing book reviews or wishing to suggest a book, please contact David Settje at [David.Settje@CUChicago.edu](mailto:David.Settje@CUChicago.edu).

Each review should be between 500 and 750 words long, be sent as a MS Word document or in a compatible format, and specifically evaluate the book and its Lutheran content/context.

## NEEDED: YOUR NEWS!

This newsletter is intended as a clearing-house of information for archivists, historians and librarians. It needs **you** to provide material for it.

Please send material for publication to the editor. Items of interest include notice of research in progress, new appointments, publications, meetings and celebrations planned or held, bibliographical materials, and anything of general interest to LHC members.

The LHC Newsletter is issued four times a year: February, May, August and November.

Please send items to  
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