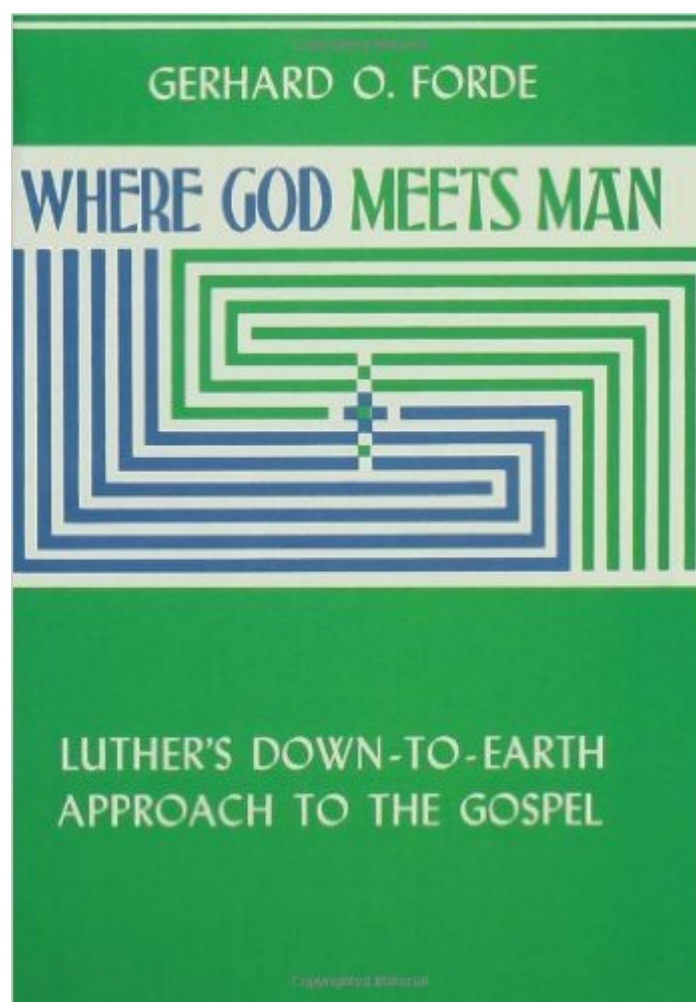


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Where God Meets Man



Synopsis

This book about Luther's theology is written out of a two-fold conviction. First, that many of our problems have arisen because we have not really understood our own traditions, especially in the case of Luther; and second, that there is still a lot of help for us in someone like Luther if we take the trouble to probe beneath the surface. It is an attempt to interpret Luther's theology for our own day. The fundamental theme of the book is the "down-to-earth" character of Luther's theology. In using this theme, Forde points out that we have failed to understand the basic thrust or direction of Luther's theology and that this failure has caused and is still causing us grief. Modern scholarship has demonstrated that Luther simply did not share the views on the nature of faith and salvation that subsequent generations have foisted upon him and used to interpret his thinking. This book attempts to bring the results of some of that scholarship to light and make it more accessible to those who are searching for answers today. The central questions of Christianity are examined in this fresh restatement of Luther's thought: the God-man relationship, the cross, the sacraments, this world and the next, and the role of the church. The author presents the "down-to-earth" character of Luther's theology in the hope that it will help individual Christians today to be both faithful to God and true to their human and social responsibilities.

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Customer Reviews

Gerhard Forde's book is the clearest articulation of Martin Luther's theology that I have read. Shortly after Luther's death - and perhaps even during Luther's later life - the Reformation movement began to drift into Orthodoxy and lose some of the scandalous edge that is inherent to

the very nature of a Gospel that turned - and still turns - the world "upside down". With great clarity and accessibility, Forde recaptures Luther's Reformation theology. He systematically leads the reader through Luther's understanding of: the human condition, the nature of God, salvation by grace through faith, the Sacraments, this world and the world to come, and the calling (vocation) of Christians in this world. Forde also illustrates the many ways that the Church - even the Lutheran tradition - has misunderstood, watered down, or tried to "tame" Luther's views. The book is useful for personal reading, discussion groups, and Christian education classes. As a Lutheran pastor, I have used it a number of times with adult groups. Class members found the book to be very readable and helpful in shaping their own theology and faith. The only criticism is that the book was written prior to a concern for inclusive language, and so the pronouns - even in the title - need to be glossed over.

One can glean from this study some basic elements of Martin Luther's theology that lead the reader toward biblical Christianity; however, the author's using of Luther's polemic against what he calls "ladder theology" to condemn the orthodox, biblical doctrine of the Vicarious Satisfaction of Christ is an act of scholarly dishonesty: Luther steadfastly held to this orthodox, biblical doctrine. One must "read Luther through" and not simply present some of his theology. While this study is written for the theological layperson, it could offer more footnoted/endnoted references to support its assertions. It is more helpful for understanding Forde's theology than Luther's theology.

The best summary of Luther's basic tenants I have read. Those new to protestant religion would do well to start with this book to learn the key differences between pre post reformation Christian theology. Luther is held by many to be the first man to found a lasting protestant faith and understanding why and how he formed a new church is central to his success.

A classic explanation of the Lutheran understanding of justification by grace through faith. Easy to understand and is memorable. I first read this in college, and bought it again recently for review. I am a Lutheran pastor and highly recommend it.

This book, although dated, to me is a good representation of a living, Lutheran approach to the Christian faith. Very dated in the author's illustration "up the down staircase," but since I'm old I get it :) Anyway, I find myself drawn to this "up-ending" of most evangelical theologies' weakness: sanctification. As a Wesleyan, of course, I think that Lutheranism could stand a more critical self-review over the place of works as expression of faith, but still, it is refreshing and challenging to

think about a viable theology of the cross rather than a theology of glory.

Though Dr. Forde has been gone now for several years, this continues to be a classic little book identifying what it means to be a Lutheran in the 21st century, speaking directly to the problems of societal accommodation that the church seems to constantly struggle with in today's age. It is appropriate for even those who aren't "theological" as Dr. Forde writes in such a way as to make it accessible to all readers.

Though not as good as his *Theology is for Proclamation*, it's a great, short book that does a grand job of showing the center of Lutheran theology and indeed, theology in general. I'd recommend this as a reminder for theological students about what is important about theology, and I'd give it the average Christian to introduce them to the theological language of the gospel.

I was disappointed that the quality of the printing from was so poor. The font was quite fuzzy. The content of the book on the other hand was excellent. Forde's book provides a good overview of Martin Luther's theology.

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