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Kyle Jantzen, *Faith and Fatherland: Parish Politics in Hitler's Germany* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

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Kyle Jantzen's Faith and Fatherland: Parish Politics in Hitler's Germany is a superb contribution to the historiography of the Church Struggle. Through a detailed examination of three Lutheran church districts Jantzen provides readers with fascinating glimpses of the Church Struggle from the perspective of parish clergy, local church patrons, and district superintendents. This "bottom up" approach allows Jantzen to examine how familiar events in the Church Struggle at the national level, such as the formation of the Pastors Emergency League and the establishment of Hans Kerrl's church committees, were experienced by regional and local church authorities. Faith and Fatherland is a most welcome addition to a field dominated by national studies that focus on leading figures in the Confessing Church or the German Christian Movement. "Entering into the daily world of German Protestants," Jantzen rightly contends, "illuminates many gradations within the church-political spectrum, as well as the inconsistencies with which pastors and parishioners thought and acted, shifting their positions and living in ways that defy our subsequent attempts to pigeonhole them into neat theological or church-political categories" (13).

While many of the same issues that dominated the Church Struggle on the national level filtered down to the parish level, such as whether to recognize German Christian authorities in the "destroyed" churches, the responses to these issues were incredibly varied from district to district and parish to parish. Moreover, the Church Struggle at the parish level often took on characteristics quite unique from the struggles on the national level - the struggle over pastoral

appointments being a case in point. For both these reasons, our historical understanding of the Church Struggle is broadened and diversified by a history "from below."

Located in three different regional churches, the church districts Jantzen investigates are Nauen on the outskirts of Berlin in the Brandenburg Church Province of the Church of the Old Prussian Union, Pirna southeast of Dresden in the Saxon Lutheran Church, and Ravensburg just north of Lake Constance in the southeastern corner of the Wuerttemberg Protestant Church. Whereas the districts of Nauen and Pirna were located in regional churches that were taken over by German Christians, Ravensburg remained under the control of the powerful Lutheran bishop, Theophil Wurm. Despite the proximity of Nauen and Pirna to large cities, all three districts were rural or semi-rural and church life played a prominent role in many of the small towns and villages in these regions. Nauen consisted of twenty-five parishes, Pirna thirty-nine, and Ravensburg just eleven.

Jantzen's first two chapters address what motivated Protestant ministers in Nauen, Pirna, and Ravensburg to support Hitler's ascent to power and how Hitler's goal of "national renewal" translated into a "Protestant renewal" in many local parishes. He attributes clerical support for National Socialism to the belief that Hitler would partner with the churches in generating a national and moral renewal that would revitalize church life and stem the tide of workers leaving the churches for the Communist Party. In addition to their nationalism and anti-communism, Lutheran clergymen, Jantzen believes, were predisposed to the authoritarian character of the Nazis by their understanding of Lutheran theology, especially the law/gospel dualism, the doctrine of two kingdoms, and the theology of the orders of creation.

The belief that Hitler and a National Socialist government would be beneficial to the churches was at first confirmed by a surge in new church members in Nauen and Pirna after Hitler assumed power. Jantzen argues that this wave of religious enthusiasm illustrates the way in which the political-nationalist momentum of National Socialism propelled a parallel religious-nationalist momentum in many of the Protestant regional churches. The German Christians, who swept to power in Nauen and Pirna, led the charge, spurring the churches on to support Hitler's national renewal. However, as the influence of the German Christians waned in the mid-1930s so did the new found interest in the churches. Frustrated new members abandoned them in droves. In the eleven parishes in Ravensburg in southern Germany, however, there were no membership surges in or out of the churches and markedly less excitement about the National Socialist seizure of power. This can be explained in part because Protestants were a small minority in the region of Upper Swabia,

where the district of Ravensburg lay. Catholics were the overwhelmingly majority in Upper Swabia and they tended to support the Catholic Center Party. In all likelihood the politicization and disruption of church life in Nauen and Pirna was the rule for most parishes across Germany.

Jantzen's analysis of pastoral appointments in chapter three is a novel approach to understanding exactly how parish politics was conducted in Nazi Germany. In small towns and villages pastors were often more important than mayors. They baptized, confirmed, married, and buried their parishioners, educated children, led Bible studies, preached sermons at weekly services, counseled those in need, chaired parish meetings, and wrote for and edited parish newsletters. Although the appointment of a pastor to a particular parish was often a routine affair, in the Third Reich the process could just as often erupt into a battle between supporters of the Confessing Church and the German Christians or between rival factions of the Confessing Church. When a pastoral position opened--and they opened frequently during the chaotic years of the Nazi era--parishioners, church patrons, clergy, and district and regional church authorities all had interests at stake. One of the many intriguing conclusions that Jantzen reaches is that the Confessing Church in Nauen was far more adept at getting their clergy appointed than the German Christians because parishioners and local church officials, who were quite influential in the appointment process, were angry about the overt politicization of church life by German Christians. They believed that Confessing Church pastors were more likely to be responsible servants of the church and to recognize the authority of the Bible and the Reformation Confessions. Whereas the appointment process in Nauen was usually a local affair, in Pirna and Ravensburg Land Bishops Coch, a German Christian, and Wurm, a conservative Lutheran in the Confessing Church, centralized control of the appointment process and appointed pastors whose views were compatible with those of the bishops.

Although local pastors aligned with the German Christians and Confessing Church could be fierce opponents in the realm of parish politics, they diverged very little in their views on Nazi racial policy. Jantzen writes that, "there is no evidence from the correspondence, publications, or actions of Protestant clergy in Nauen, Pirna, and Ravensburg to suggest that they were significantly affected by or preoccupied with the euthanasia crisis or the "Jewish question" (93). Most clergymen in the Confessing Church were too preoccupied with defending the autonomy of the churches from encroachments by the German Christians and the Nazis to pay much attention to racial policies that did not directly affect the churches. The anti-Judaic traditions in the church, the antisemitism of many of the pastors, and the desire to forge a strong bond between the church and the state all contributed to

pastoral complacency toward, and at times complicity in, the mass extermination of Jews. There were, of course, churchmen and women who struggled in vain to convince the church to defend the victims of the Nazi killing machine, but they were indeed exceptions.

The last three chapters of Jantzen's monograph examine the course of the Church Struggle in Nauen, Pirna, and Ravensburg. These chapters are filled with fascinating sketches of individual pastors, church patrons, and district superintendents as they try to negotiate their way through the many trials and tribulations of the Church Struggle. Occasionally the knowledgeable reader may come across a familiar name but for the most part the stories recounted by Jantzen depict pastors and parishioners whose lowly status within the churches did not warrant their appearance in the more nationally oriented literature of the field. By reconstructing the subjective experiences of individuals toiling away in the parishes Jantzen challenges the neat stereotypes of anti-Nazi Confessing clergy and pro-Nazi German Christians. A much more nuanced picture emerges, especially of the Confessing Church, that reminds us of the rich diversity of opinions and experiences in the Church Struggle and confirms the value of a parish-level approach to church history.

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