

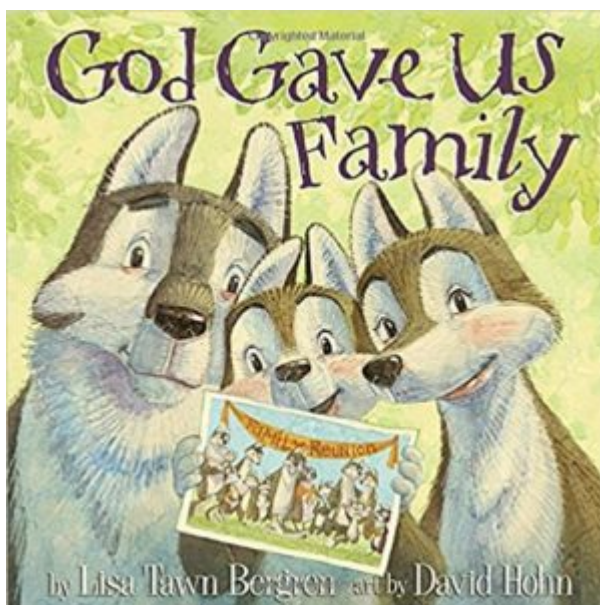
Reviews: “God Gave Us Family” and “Martin Luther”

December 4, 2017

God Gave Us Family

**Written by Lisa Tawn Bergren,
illustrations by David Hohn
(WaterBrook)**

Lisa Bergren’s writing and David Hohn’s art produce the fun-filled *God Gave Us Family* for children ages 3-7. In the story, Little Pup attends an outrageously huge family reunion. Set outdoors from dawn to dusk, charming illustrations take Little Pup from swings, swimming, hiking and hide-and-seek to s’mores and fireflies.



As kinfolk arrive with scads of little ones in tow, Little Pup asks why his family only has one child. Throughout the day, he meets other families shown as different creatures. Papa and Mama explain them from adopted Little Bear who looks like a bunny to Wally Wolf’s seven siblings, the geese cousins whose dad lives on a different pond, and the raccoon relatives who sleep in a tree.

As annoying little wolf cousins splash Little Pup, Papa wisely observes: “Even family can get on our nerves. ... But because we’re family, we figure out how to get along.” Ultimately, the cousins build a fort together, howl at the moon, and nod off to grandparents’ stories. Closing his eyes, Little Pup decides, “He’d never want a different family. ... He loved the one God gave him.”

While teaching lessons about God’s gift of different families, the book also illustrates having fun doesn’t always mean video games, smart phones or movies. *God Gave Us Family* would be a great read around the Christmas tree—just save enough time for the girls and boys to talk about their own grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Chandler Joy Hillman, age 4, with her grandmother

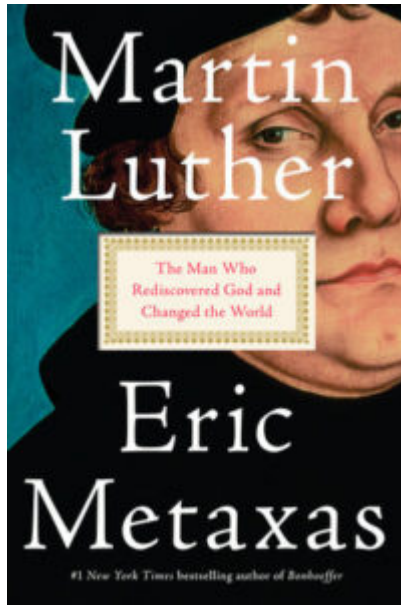
Kathy Robinson Hillman, former president

Baptist General Convention of Texas

Waco

Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World

By Eric Metaxas (Viking/Penguin-Random House)



Eric Metaxas, author of the best-selling *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, presents a definitive look at Martin Luther. At 480 pages, this book is both authoritative and exhaustive.

The biography provides a full treatment of Luther's life and ministry in Wittenberg, Germany, his translation of the New Testament and his ultimate excommunication from the Catholic Church. Metaxas does a wonderful job not only presenting the life of Luther, but also acquainting readers with the times in which he lived, the issues he faced and results of his ministry. Metaxas shows how Luther helped change the church and, in the process, transformed Germany and world history. After all, the Reformation he sparked eventually inspired the spiritual and social reforms of George Whitefield, William Wilberforce, John and Charles Wesley and others.

The book includes a helpful timeline of Luther's life and key activities, and it includes a detailed index and bibliography.

Be advised: This is not an easy read. It is more for the academically minded. It is well worth the effort, but allow time to absorb its depth.

Skip Holman, minister of discipleship

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