



## The Lutherans (Denominations in America)

*L. DeAne Lagerquist*

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Lutheran churches in the United States have included multiple ethnic cultures since the colonial era and continue to wrestle with increasing internal variety as one component of their identity. By combining the concerns of social history with an awareness for theological themes, this volume explores the history of this family of Lutheran churches and traces the development from the colonial era through the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988. An introduction details the origins of Lutheranism in the European Reformation and the practices significant to the group's life in the United States. Organized chronologically, subsequent chapters follow the churches' maturation as they form institutions, provide themselves with leaders, and expand their membership and geographic range. Attention is given throughout to the contributions of the laity and women within the context of the Lutherans' continued individual and corporate effort to be both authentically Lutheran and genuinely American.

Offering a rich portrayal of the Lutherans' lives and their churches, the social historical approach of this study brings the Lutheran people to the foreground. The dynamic relationship between pietist, orthodox, and critical expressions of the tradition has remained among Lutherans even though they have divided themselves by several factors including ethnicity and confessional stance. Of interest to scholars and researchers of Lutheran history and religion in America, this engaging, multifaceted work balances narrative history with brief biographical essays. A chronological listing of important dates in the development of the Lutheran church is especially helpful.

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