

Enrique Dussel in declaring Kierkegaard “the founder of the ‘prehistory of Latin American Philosophy and the immediate antecedent of our new Latin American thinking’” (30).

Kierkegaard, however, was no Gandhi. Raised in privilege, he spent his forty-two years mostly as an idle and rebellious student and then as an independently wealthy author. He squandered his substantial inheritance on renting luxury apartments, maintaining a large staff (to increase leisure time), supplying himself with fine cigars, and having his new books bound in leather. Educated among Copenhagen’s elite from childhood, he frequented the city’s salons and theaters and was an active, if vexing, participant in high society. He never, in any meaningful way, embraced poverty by any obvious concrete choices in his life and yet, we are told, Kierkegaard “powerfully ... chose solidarity with the economically most unfortunate” (40).

Kierkegaard did care about the plight of the poor, and there is no doubt he spoke against the establishment’s perverted structures of favoritism and partiality—especially those he believed undermined the integrity of the Christian ministry. As Pérez-Álvarez shows, he was unrelenting in exposing these sins even as he refused to romanticize poverty or advocate asceticism. But the suggestion that he was the father of liberation theology with an organized economic agenda, or “powerfully ... chose solidarity” with the impoverished, or was some kind of Danish Gandhi, is too much.

—Bruce P. Baugus

*Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi*

## Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate: A Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation

**Charles D. Gunnoe Jr.**

Leiden: Brill, 2011 (542 pages)

The dynamic struggles between church and state over the two millennia of Christian history are critically important to understanding the development of Western civilization, and the Reformation-era physician and political theorist Thomas Erastus has been associated with one of the defining features of these conflicts. *Erastianism* is a historical term often used imprecisely as a virtual synonym with Max Weber’s *caesaropapism*, that is, a more or less absolute dominance of the civil authority exercised over spiritual matters and ministry. In his recent book *Divine Transcendence and the Culture of Change* (Eerdmans, 2011), David H. Hopper describes theories of the relationship between church and state associated with thirteenth-century figures such as Marsilius of Padua, who predates the life of Thomas Erastus (1524–1583), as offering “a persuasive statement of the Erastian position” (174). Hunter Baker, in his book *The End of Secularism* (Crossway, 2009), describes a situation in which Christians “surrender the priorities of the church to state approval” in the following way: “That is Erastianism and that is a heresy” (140). Although generally eschewing the term itself, except in association with the thought of Thomas Hobbes (132), Brad S. Gregory argues that the modern separation of church and state amounts

to a fundamental relationship of state control of churches, a logical consequence of the magisterial Reformation's dependence on the civil magistrate for support:

Western states' control of religion in the early twenty-first century is a latter-day extension of the sixteenth-century control of churches by states. Secular authorities have exercised this control in many different ways in the interim, with divergent historical trajectories in individual countries and regions. But every one of these trajectories in individual countries and regions derives from sixteenth-century states' control of the churches. (*The Unintended Reformation* [Belknap Press, 2012], 154)

If historical terms such as Erastianism are to have any meaningful significance, however, then they ought to bear some conceivable resemblance to the views of their namesake. In this regard, Charles D. Gunnoe Jr.'s work on the complex life and thought of Erastus is an invaluable aid. The many superficial, fragmentary, and partial interactions with Erastus in historical literature stand in need of correction, which Gunnoe's study is designed to initiate. As Gunnoe writes, "My goal has been to replace the multiple and often competing versions of Erastus in the historiography with a more unified, intelligible portrayal of Erastus; in short, to move from many Erastuses to one" (3). To this end Gunnoe focuses his exploration of the multitalented Renaissance physician to his years at the University of Heidelberg, between 1558 and 1580, and proceeds in three major parts. In the first part, Gunnoe outlines the origins of the introduction of the evangelical faith to Heidelberg and the context of the composition of the momentously important Heidelberg Catechism. In part 2, Gunnoe focuses on Erastus' ongoing engagement in church political matters, particularly as related to his dispute over church polity and church discipline with a party led by Caspar Olevianus, who espoused a model inspired by the Genevan consistory. In part 3, Erastus' declining influence in church politics gives way to an increasing emphasis on his natural philosophical endeavors. These three periods combine to provide a comprehensive, if not exhaustive, introduction into the mature intellectual interests of Erastus.

Gunnoe's work is characterized by meticulous interaction with the relevant primary sources, made possible by his work in the archives in Heidelberg and other relevant collections on the Continent. Particularly noteworthy is Gunnoe's reliance on Erastus' largely unpublished correspondence, which testifies to Erastus' significance for the early modern intellectual news network of Reformers and Renaissance humanists. One of Gunnoe's more intriguing claims, for scholars of the Reformation, has to do with Erastus' involvement in the composition of the Heidelberg Catechism. The authorship of the Catechism has often been ascribed to Zacharius Ursinus primarily and Olevianus secondarily. Although not denying the influence of Olevianus, Gunnoe contends that a more committee-like approach is warranted from the extant sources and that "Erastus stands out as the one member of the committee besides Ursinus whose participation is most explicitly confirmed by the sources" (129).

The picture that we have of Erastus on the question of the relationship between church and state is also refreshingly revisionist. On Gunnoe's account, Erastus' intention in the disputes with Olevianus was less to enforce an absolutist control of the church by the

civil authorities (the position with which his name is more often associated today) than to protect the diversity of approaches that characterized Reformed views of church discipline in the early generations of the Reformation. Indeed, Gunnoe has done us a great service by rendering this progenitor of a historiographical “-ism” into a more developed and nuanced context.

Gunnoe’s epilogue, which traces Erastus’ discernible influence through later generations and in areas such as the Netherlands and England, also foreshadows important areas of future research. Gunnoe has admirably accomplished the goal of presenting the historical Erastus, “a leading figure within the second Reformation in Germany, the most important opponent of the Paracelsian revival, and a significant natural philosopher in his own right” (412). This book must be a primary point of reference for any serious explorations into the various areas of intellectual history that Erastus influenced in the course of his significant career.

—Jordan J. Ballor  
*Acton Institute*

*Book Review Editor’s Note: The significant book that is covered in the following reviews has elicited sharply divergent opinions among those who have assessed its merits. Given this divergence and considering the ecumenical nature of this journal, it was deemed appropriate to solicit two reviews of the book.*

## The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society

**Brad S. Gregory**

Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap/Harvard University Press,  
2012 (574 pages)

This book is a tour-de-force by a scholar of truly exceptional ability. The work’s significance deserves a ranking in historiography such as Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) or Keith Thomas’s *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), but unfortunately such recognition will not come because Gregory critiques and does not reinforce the predominant thought and prejudices of the early twenty-first century. This is no ordinary historical monograph. Gregory, a historian of sixteenth-century Europe, poses the question, “How did we get from there to here?” He answers with a grand theory about how a few, relatively simple ideas, which have little to do with race, class, gender, sex, or semiotics, transformed the cultural landscape of the West over the past five centuries. The premise of the book is based on an almost undeniable historical counter-factual: If Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and all the religious Reformers of the sixteenth century were here to observe what has become of the churches they founded and of Western Christian