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Seen: *A Reflection on Emmy Kegler's One Coin Found: How God's Love Stretches to the Margins*

By Intern Miranda Joebgen

This is the book I was looking for.

College was when I discovered two large portions of my identity: my call to pastoral ministry and my queerness. This is the order in which God chose to present them to me. I often joke that it had to be this way, because if I had accepted my queerness before I heard my call to ministry, I might have spent much longer running away from that call and all of the dangers it posed for someone like me. But since I had already begun my vocational journey by the time I started realizing that I was definitely not “straight,” I had no choice but to reconcile these two fundamental pieces of my identity.

This was not the first time I had to wrestle with falling outside of the “norm” for what a pastor “should” be. As a woman, I had learned to seek out role models who could help me understand both the beauty and pain of being a woman in ministry. I had the privilege of having a mentor on my college campus who was willing to walk along this journey with me, and I read books by people like Nadia Bolz-Weber and Karoline Lewis who showed me what a blessing it was to be a woman who is called by God to do hard, yet wonderful things.

So as I tried to reconcile my queerness and my call, I employed the same strategy. In Northwest Indiana at one of the more conservative Lutheran colleges, queer Christian role models were not exactly easily accessible, but I thought surely I would be able to find books that told the story of someone like me - a queer woman called to proclaim the radical, abundant love of God. I spent hours searching the internet, trying every possible combination of, “queer,” “lesbian,” “gay,” and, “lutheran,” “called,” “pastor,” or, “ministry.”

I came up empty. I couldn't find one book by an openly queer, lutheran woman telling the story of how her calling and her sexuality were not contradictory.

I can't describe how alone that made me feel.

This is the book I was looking for. As I read it, I felt indescribably seen. Kegler showed me that it was not only possible to be a queer woman and feel a call to ministry, but demonstrated how beautifully necessary the queer perspective is in ministry and theology. Kegler reminded me that my queerness is not a barrier to my call to ministry - it is an undeniable asset.

I wish this book had existed 4 years ago - it would have been such a comfort to me. I am so grateful that Kegler had the courage and vulnerability to share her story with the world. I hope and pray that this book finds its way into the hands of countless queer Christians, so that they can feel seen. I hope this book shows them that faith might be hard, especially when you're queer, but if you have the strength and stubbornness to wrestle with it, the blessing that awaits is miraculous indeed.

I'm not going to summarize this book, nor am I going to pull out a small portion to reflect upon. Instead, I would like to encourage as many of you as possible to read this book. If you can't buy it, then stop by the FLC library and borrow one of the five copies we have there. Take some time to read it, and then either come to the **RIC First Forum on January 19th** to discuss it with me, or reach out to schedule some time to go over it together one on one. I can't wait to continue the conversation with you all.

In Peace,
Intern Miranda

