LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

Logia after Twenty Years

HOLY TRINITY 2012

VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 3

εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ

LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. *Logia* considers itself a *free conference in print* and is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. At the heart of our journal we want our readers to find a love for the sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God, not merely as rule and norm, but especially as Spirit, truth, and life that reveals Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we confess the church, without apology and without rancor, only with a sincere and fervent love for the precious Bride of Christ, the holy Christian church, "the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God," as Martin Luther says in the Large Catechism (LC II, 42). We are animated by the conviction that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession represents the true expression of the church that we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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Cover art is a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) depicting the Holy Trinity (the Throne of Grace) and is taken from our very first issue of *Logia*. This particular woodcut dates from the Classical Period of the woodcut, 1509–1512. Both drawing and cutting are at the height of technical perfection.

All this and more may be found in *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer,* Willi Kurth, ed., available from Dover Publications, Inc., New York. 285 pages. 8½" by 12¼". Paperbound. Price: under $20. Used by permission.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LSB	*Lutheran Service Book*
LW	*Lutheran Worship*
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	*Service Book and Hymnal*
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
Triglotta	Concordia Triglotta
TLH	*The Lutheran Hymnal*
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	*Luthers Werke,* Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]
Kolb-Wengert	Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

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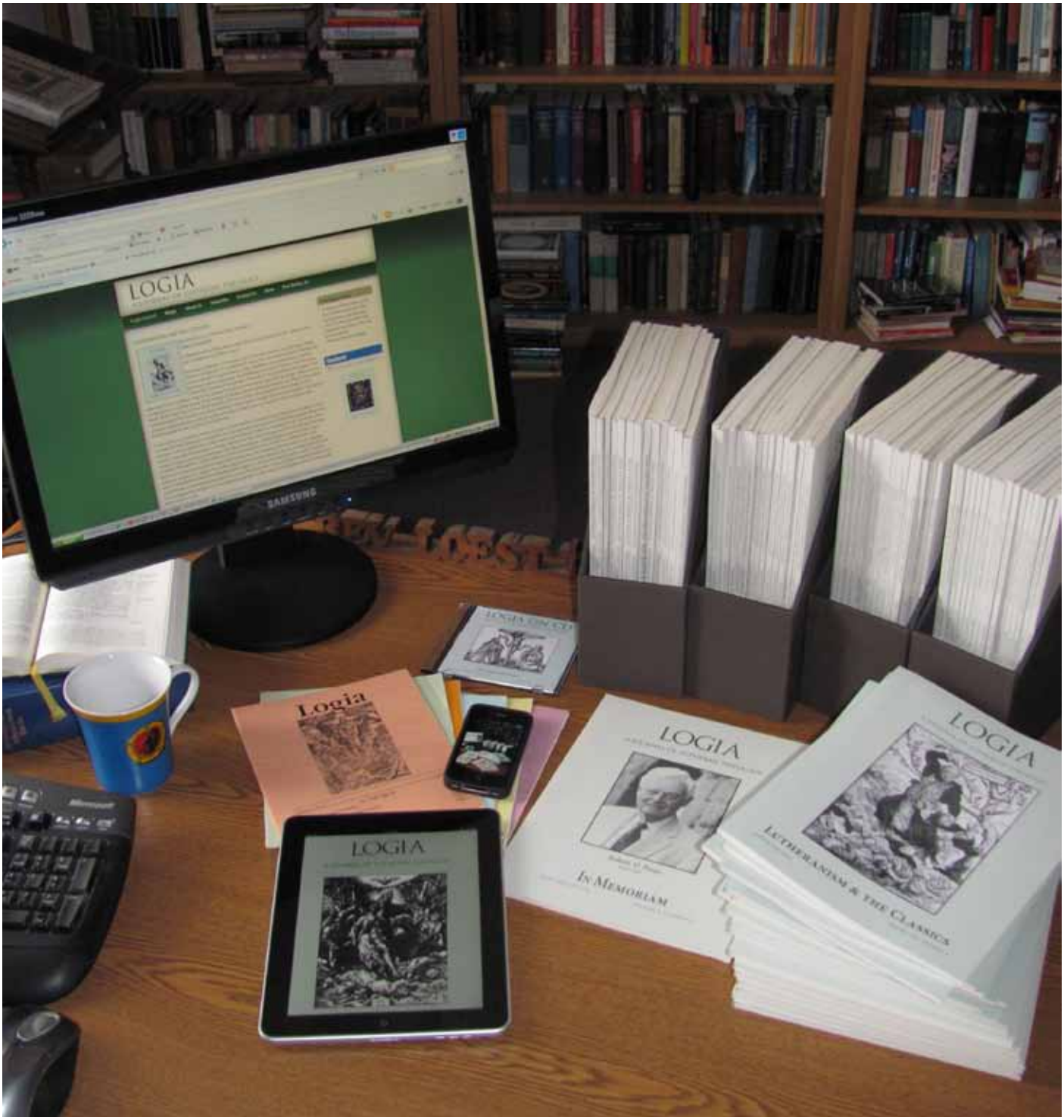

20 Years of Logia

JOURNALS, WEB, MOBILE, IPAD, CD, LOGIA DIGEST

Foreword

Logia After Twenty Years

A Free Conference in Print

"*Logia* won't last five years." The brother who made that prediction now rejoices in the fellowship of the saints around the throne of grace, so he will not need to endure any in-your-face gloating that might arise from here. Having written an essay reflecting on ten years of *Logia* on behalf of the editors for the Epiphany 2003 issue of *Logia*, I am happy to be among those invited to write something again on the occasion of the passing of twenty years.

First a little reflection on how *Logia* came to be. Joel Brondos published a newsletter winsomely entitled *Logia*. Robert Preus had a newsletter entitled *Confessional Lutheran Review,* produced by Paul McCain. I, since 1985, had a little newsletter, awkwardly entitled *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter* (*CLRS Newsletter*), a name not intended to roll off anyone's tongue easily. At the time all of us were trying to publish articles, excerpts, and reviews aimed specifically at encouraging and promoting confessional Lutheran theology. Preus's review, under the editorship of Paul McCain, was the most professionally produced. We all were beginning to dabble in desktop publishing and, at least for me, that consisted of producing copy with a dot-matrix printer and making copies at Kinko's. At the end of the eighties, however, the printing and layout were more professionally produced and printed. We all were aware of what the others were doing, but each had his own little group of loyal readers, with some significant overlap.

In my case, I was joined early on by John Pless, having felt the need to build connections with the confessional men in Missouri. Soon, an acquaintance with Michael Albrecht blossomed, I think through his attendance at the Reformation Lectures in Mankato. Michael noticed that the copy wasn't always so well edited and volunteered to help with that, which was welcomed. So then we were three, representing three of the former Synodical Conference churches: the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). That mix reflected the later composition of the *Logia* staff.

One of the most serious challenges was the newsletters' limited size, which prohibited publishing longer articles. On a snowy March afternoon in 1992, I was writing a letter to Paul McCain, then serving an LCMS parish in Iowa. I had a lengthy article by Martin Wittenberg, too long for a newsletter, and Robert Preus had asked permission to reprint an article I had published in *CLRS Newsletter,* "The Universal Priesthood in the Lutheran Confessions." In the course of dealing with that, it occurred to me that we might join together in order to print more substantial articles. While I was writing a letter to Paul McCain proposing some joint effort, Paul called on the phone (literally, *while* I was writing the letter) with the same idea. Sometimes it's hard to stifle the inborn enthusiasm in all of us!

Further discussions soon brought Joel Brondos into the "union" since his mailing list seemed to overlap with the mailing lists of the other newsletters. Brondos's *Logia* became the format for the most popular and widely read department in *Logia,* "Logia Forum." And from that beginning, it was simply never considered that the name of the new journal would be anything other than *Logia*.

The first planning meeting was held on 20 April 1992 in Minneapolis at University Lutheran Chapel with Robert Preus, Paul McCain, Matthew Harrison, John Pless, and Erling Teigen present. The first issue was published before Reformation 1992, though the original target date had been June of that year. I have before me a copy of that first issue with autographs on the cover: Scott Murray, Timothy Rossow, Jon Vieker, Robert Preus, Ken Schurb, Joel Brondos, John Pless, Michael Albrecht, and Erling Teigen. The contents included the two articles that had been the catalyst for establishing the journal: "The Universal Priesthood in the Lutheran Confessions," by Erling T. Teigen; and "Church Fellowship and Altar Fellowship in the Light of Church History," by Martin Wittenberg. Those two were accompanied by Herman Sasse's "The Church's Confession," translated by Matthew Harrison; "The Church: Hospital or Gymnasium," by Ken Schurb; and reprints of two sermons on the Lord's Supper by Luther. These articles pretty much predicted the type of articles *Logia* would publish for the next twenty years. Reviews included a critical review of John Tietjen's *Memoirs in Exile* by Robert Preus; and Joel Brondos's "Logia Forum" began a long tradition of well selected, provocative commentary on various issues.

Before the first issue was published, Paul McCain resigned his position, since Al Barry was elected President of the LCMS and Paul moved to St. Louis as an assistant to Barry. A transition was quickly made so that I became Editorial Coordinator and Jon Vieker became technical editor, and hardly a beat was missed in producing the next issue.

Robert Preus made it possible for the vision to be carried out. He encouraged and advised and provided much of the wherewithal to get the journal into print and distributed widely enough to stand on its own. He let the younger men go at their

own speed and fashion the journal as they thought it should be. As much as anything else, he lent his name to the project, which was no small boost to the success of *Logia*. Robert Preus's death in 1995 was a deep loss and left a hole in the *Logia* staff, especially in the office of encourager. But his absence did not doom the journal to failure.

From the beginning, it was clear that *Logia* would be a collegial effort. There was a coordinator, but the decisions were truly collective, and decisions were not made with any one voice weightier than others. Consequently, there has remained a cohesiveness in the *Logia* staff—while editors come and go, take leave for a time, and turn themselves out to pasture, the mission and the momentum remain. And so it seems that one of the beginning ideals was realized in the principle that commitment to biblical, Lutheran confessional theology would do the leading, not one dominant personality or set of opinions. But that is not to say that everyone agrees all the time, nor that the journal is carried on in a lockstep march. The annual editorial meetings have been lively, but never contentious.

What was *Logia* to be? The introduction laid out the vision. After an instructive word study of λογία, the point was made that "*Logia* is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions." The editorial staff reflected the synods of the former Synodical Conference, but "each editor speaks for himself, not for his church body or any other group." The list of contributing editors was much wider but the journal was at heart dedicated to the solid confessionalism represented in the Synodical Conference. *Logia* was not to be a review of synodical affairs, nor criticism of synodical administrations, nor a platform from which to take potshots in inter- or intrasynodical disputes. That became a fine line to tread, since articles chosen would clearly have reference to issues being discussed within the churches represented. Nonetheless, thanks to long lead time, it was unlikely that a journal like *Logia* could become the battleground for what might go on inside of or between the synods. Of course, the articles were not openly polemical, but they could certainly be viewed as a part of the polemical fabric of Lutheran theology.

It must be said that one of the things intended to distinguish *Logia* from other theological periodicals was that while *Logia* intended to keep to high standards of scholarship, it would publish articles not only by academic, professional theologians, but also by parish pastors, the men on the front lines of preserving confessional Lutheran preaching and teaching.

The introduction to the Reformation 1992 issue remarked: "We want to contend for our confession without being contentious." Whether or not *Logia* succeeded in that will have to be judged by others. Certainly, not everyone would agree that it has; but by the same token the editors also have hoped to avoid falling into the trap of being so agreeable that nothing of value would be said.

The conclusion of the Introduction said:

> In sum, we wish to return to the one source—the Holy Scripture, and our Lutheran understanding of it expressed in the *Book of Concord*. That, and that alone, will inform and mold our thought in this journal. We do that in unity with the fathers of the church, of both ancient and reformation times as well as from more recent times. We appreciate their struggles and we look to them for guidance in our own struggles. We may not be able to return to the past. Who would want to? But if there is an ecumenical unity possible, surely we have it with our confessing fathers. We want to sit at their feet and hear their teaching and sing with them the praises of Him who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Again, we leave it to our readers to judge whether that hope has been met. Yet, we hope that twenty years from now, in reviewing the first forty years of *Logia,* this will still reflect the aim of the editors, in whatever new situation they find themselves.

Logia was not conceived as an ecumenical endeavor in the sense that it might be a political avenue to restore outward unity to the former synodical conference churches. But it was conceived as an ecumenical endeavor in which the doctrine and fellowship that were at the heart of the Synodical Conference could be openly discussed in, as we said it then, a free conference in print. Outwardly, it might seem that that has not born fruit. After all, the past twenty years have been tumultuous in these church bodies as well. But, that there are discussions, and that the three presidents of the former Synodical Conference churches shared the dais at the 2011 Emmaus Conference, is a welcome indication of a developing consensus, of which *Logia* is but a small part.

The blogosphere has its good and bad effects—too often, things get typed and given a life in etherland that might better have gotten lost in a misplaced mailbag. But just as much has been delivered for the sake of truth, mutual consolation, and edification, and for that, we can only rejoice. It is axiomatic that a free press fosters much trash; but the trash is the price that must be paid for the freedom to speak what is good, true, and noble.

It isn't up to us to predict what the future of these endeavors will be—the printed journal, the blogs, newsgroups, or print material published online. To the extent that voices are raised to speak a biblical, Lutheran confessional faith, that people far and wide have access to it, for that we can only give thanks. *Logia* has fathered or given birth to none of it, but has been a child of a technology that made it possible for a small few to engage in a wider theological discourse, without masses of staff and machinery, large funding and advertising operations, and a huge production network.

To the extent that the effort thus begun continues to bear fruit, is due only to our Lord's blessing—not to our skill, ideals, or vision. And only he will determine how long it endures and is useful. I closed my initial letter to Paul McCain with these words, which are also my continued hope for *Logia:* "If it is His will to use our efforts in this way, let us rejoice in His grace and mercy, and seek not to glorify ourselves, but Him alone."

Erling T. Teigen

Lured from the Water, the Little Fish Perish

Norman Nagel

Which birthday are we celebrating? How many birthdays has *Logia* had? Of water or of the Spirit? There is evidence of the Spirit. Is that then "born again"? How many years to "the age of discretion"? With that might come the recognition that a Christian surely knows his birth from his baptism. There is no mention of water in volume 1 of 1989, sometimes called *Urlogia*. If we were to do it over again, would we not begin with the water and Name of holy baptism? While not undertaking to do others' repentances, something might yet be attempted to relieve this waterlessness. The *Large Catechism* says we can never finish extolling what it calls "a water of God" [*ein Gotteswasser*] (LC IV,14), but we might nevertheless perhaps attempt a belated, aetiological, beginning.

Our banner is supplied by Tertullian. No one has ever had a more rollicking time with the water than Tertullian. "The sacramentum of our water by which the sins of our former blindness are washed away, and we are liberated into life eternal."[1] Thus Tertullian begins the first treatise we have on holy baptism at the end of the second century. There is never a hint that there was ever a time after Christ without holy baptism, for every Christian knew and confessed that he gave it to the apostolic ministry to do: gift, mandate, institution of the Lord. He was himself baptized in John's baptism for sinners only, with the name of Servant-Son put on him with the water. When our Lord had done all that was given him to do with his baptismal name, he gave the Eleven a baptism to do in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Name and water running together. Water and Spirit running together. "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). It is the Spirit's work to deliver the Jesus for us to us. "He will take of mine and give it to you" (John 16:15). The Spirit does this with his words delivered by the apostolic ministry (John 6:63; 17:20). He delivers the Jesus for us to us with the water; his death and resurrection are then ours (Rom 6:3–11). What we have put to block God off is washed away. With the water the forgiveness of sins. "A washing of regeneration and renewal done by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:4).

What all is given and done with the water is given and done with the water. None of what our Lord has running with it may be subtracted, split off, separated, divided up, or spiritualistically lower-leveled. "What God has joined together let not man put asunder" (Matt 19:6). Or Dr. Luther: "*Lasse das Sakrament gantz bleiben*" [Let the sacrament remain whole].[2] Faith rejoices in the gifts given in the way our Lord gives them and does not take in hand to decide what we can do without, or devise better ways than he has given for his giving out such gifts with this water. Faith clings to the water conjoined with the Name (LC IV, 29).

There is already a Gnostic smell in what some Corinthians called spiritual things. What they heard of the apostolic message they fit into what was then the going psychology with its three levels of flesh, mind, and spirit. Water was bottom level. The apostles let them have it in bucketfuls. Most vivid is the way of watering animals. If you have ever attempted to do this with a calf or a foal you know how much water gets splashed about, although some does go down the throat. Getting watered is getting Spirited (1 Cor 12:13).[3]

Where the water, there the Spirit. As in John they go together, and thus they do the rebirth. "Born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). Water is mentioned first so we need have no doubt where the Spirit is doing his life-bestowing work and not just blowing about hither or thither. What is here indissolubly together has had heresy working at it to separate them all along the way (LC IV, 7).

The Gnostic attack scorned the water. Of Mani we know that he had little joy of the water. What baptism there was for him was metaphorical and figurative and so a fractioned process of progressive purification through *gnosis*.[4] The Gnostics would rise transcendent to what they supposed was a more God-level spirituality, above and away from the lowly earthly, physical, carnal, specific water. The Gnostic priestess, against

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1. Ernest Evans, ed., *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism* (London: SPCK, 1964), 4 (hereafter Bapt.). WA 12: 48.19; BSLK, 536, n. 7; WA 49: 127.17: *eitel wolgefallen, lust* 964). A.-G. Hamann, *Baptism: Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1967), 30.
2. WA 30, I: 55.19; WA 23: 266.26; AE 37: 140.
3. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul* (New York: Herder, 1964), 84–85.
4. L. Koenen, "From Baptism to the Gnosis of Manichaeism," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980–1981), 2:736–52; Schnackenburg, Baptism, 144.

whom Tertullian writes, is of the Cainite sect. She was not given to teach, even if done correctly. She knew how to kill the little fish by luring them out of the water. Separated from the water the little fish perish, separated from the Christed water. "We are born in water as little fish in the way of our fish Jesus Christ" [*Nos pisciculi secundum ichthus nostrum Jesum Christum in aqua nascimur]*.[5] Such as that Gnostic priestess carries on where there is no water. There dwell vipers, basilisks, and cockatrices. Watch out for vipers, asps, basilisks, and cockatrices. If you come upon one of them, you are in peril. No water where they are, and where there is no water, the little fish perish. Apart from the water where Christ is, waterless death. "*Nunquam sine aqua Christus*" [Christ is never without water].[6]

A more subtle attempt to diminish this water comes of embarrassment at its utterly unspectacular lowliness: someone is dipped in water with a few words.

A more subtle attempt to diminish this water comes of embarrassment at its utterly unspectacular lowliness: someone is dipped in water with a few words. That should get him to eternity! For Tertullian there is no telling God how he may or may not do what he does. Lowly simplicity is characteristic of God's way of doing things. "A carnal act with spiritual effect." For Tertullian this is no spiritualizing from lower to higher, or outer to inner. "In the waters our spirit is corporally washed, and in those waters our flesh is spiritually cleansed." Thus "baptism itself."[7] Try a bit of Neo-Platonism on that, if you can.

At ground level Tertullian goes darting about collecting all the water that the Lord may ever have made use of, inquiring, he says, after the *auctoritas* of the liquid element. (Exousia, what the water is granted, permitted, enabled to do—its worth. The translation's authority, *potestas*, power, run less well in the way of a gift.) What he gathers together is not to praise the water, but to confess baptism (*rationes baptismi*), and this not by analogy, but simply by what God has set up and does (*in sacramentis propriis parere fecit*).[8] The water is always his servant as his words tell us. Starting off at the creation waters Tertullian then has a whale of a time finding any water in Scripture that can then be used to extol what the water of holy baptism does and gives. Thus: Israel through the waters of the Red Sea. The waters of Marah made to sweet usefulness by the tree Moses threw in: and that tree was Christ. The water from the rock and that rock was Christ.

> See how great is the grace that water has in the presence of God and his Christ for the corroboration of baptism. Wherever Christ is, there is water: he himself is baptized in water; when called to a marriage he inaugurates with water the first rudiments of his power; when engaged in conversation he invites those who are athirst to come to his everlasting water; when teaching of charity he approves of a cup of water offered to a little one as one of the works of affection; at a well-side he recruits his strength; he walks upon the water; by his own choice he crosses over the water; with water he makes himself a servant to his disciples. He continues his witness to baptism right on to his passion: when he is given up to the cross, water is in evidence, as Pilate's hands are aware: when he receives a wound, water bursts forth from his side, as the soldier's spear can tell.[9]

In his edition of Tertullian's *De Baptismo*, Evans points out Tertullian's distinction between "baptism itself " and those things based on "church tradition and custom, and not on scriptural warrant." These Evans observes in Tertullian as "(in their origin) illustrative tokens," and not themselves doing or bestowing what they point to and extol.[10]

We may later observe some extolling getting so carried away that it ends up by itself extolling itself. But first we may observe the pull of an inherent affinity, magnetism, or perhaps valency. (St. Augustine might call it *virtus*; Goethe, *die Wahlverwandtschaften*.) It works as one pulling others into the dance. First our Lord weds his words and the water, and the dance is on. No matter how crowded the dance, this first pair is always there, and without them it dies away—dries away. We attend the liturgy.

Most weighty in Tertullian is what he evidences of the liturgy. Nothing is ever called a baptism that is not done with water. The water by itself does not engage attention. In the Didache (*ca*. 100) after confession of what has been taught, baptism is done in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Running water is preferable, but if not available, then other water, cold water, and if not cold, then warm, and if neither, then pour water three times upon the head in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Name certainly and with water, but the how of the water is no great

5. Tertullian, Bapt. 1, 3 (Evans, Homily, 4; Hamann, Baptism, 30).
6. Tertullian, Bapt. 9, 4 (Evans, Homily, 20, 15).
7. Tertullian, Bapt. 2, 1; 7, 2 (Evans, Homily, 4, 16; Hamann, Baptism, 31, 36. Ipse baptismus; cf. *Little Book of Baptism,* 5. BSLK, 536.25 and 538, n. 7; WA 12: 48.17; Kolb-Wengert, 372.
8. Tertullian, Bapt. 3, 1 and 6 (Evans, Homily, 6 and 8).
9. Tertullian, Bapt. 9, 3–4 (Evans, Homily, 20).
10. Evans, Homily, xxix; "Holy Baptism" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, ed. Fred L. Precht (St. Louis: CPH, 1993), 267 (hereafter LWHP).

matter.[11] Justin Martyr speaks of washing "in the water in the Name of the Father and Lord God of all things, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."[12] We observe how the Name bursts with all that is in it, and when Justin tells us that this washing is called enlightenment, we see how one word, item, gift, pulls another in along with it, and we are on our way swinging into the roundelay of the exulting Eastern baptismal liturgies. They all join hands as they circle round the font and each gets gloriously wet. Any one of them that dries out drops out of the dance, dead or dying: no water, no life.

How can you be saved as wet, and then be saved as dry?

Some are wet already in the New Testament. Thus undoubtedly *bath* (loutron) (Titus 3:5), a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit that joins hands with newness of life (Rom 6:4) and the washing of water with the word (Eph 5:25) thus Christ's bride; by way of a washing a woman came to be a bride (Ezek 16:9), as also a man a priest (Exod 29; Lev 8).

> And as Christ the giver of it is called by many various names, so too is this gift, whether it is from the exceeding gladness of its nature (as those who are very fond of a thing take pleasure in using its name), or that the great variety of its benefits has reacted for us upon its names. We call it the gift, the grace, baptism, unction, illumination, the clothing of immortality, the laver of regeneration, the seal, and everything that is honorable [timios]. We call it the gift, because it is given to us in return for nothing on our part; grace, because it is conferred even on debtors; baptism, because sin is buried with it in water; unction as priestly and royal; for such were they who were anointed; illumination, because of its splendor; clothing, because it hides our shame; the laver, because it washes us; the seal because it preserves us, and is moreover the indication of dominion [who is now my Lord]. In it the heavens rejoice; it is glorified by angels, because of its kindred splendor. It is the image of the heavenly bliss. We long indeed to sing out its praises, but as befits it we are not able.[13]

Is there any stopping this "exceeding gladness?" Luther's *Freude* and *Herrlichkeit*.[14] Who is to be told you are not welcome into this dance? Mayn't we bring our friends? Have you run out of water? Who can hold a lid down on what is bursting to be extolled? Such vitality of extolling may however swing so free as to end up by itself with what is extolled in itself rather than confessing "baptism itself," the water and the Name.

Worst of all is flying off the ground up and away, away from the water. There is some defense against wafting off transcendent in Tertullian's Stoic style of thought and language in a monolevel world, and also in Rome's spare, lean, straight, solid, no-nonsense liturgical language. For liturgical larking about we go East or beyond the Alps.

In Spain the *Liber Ordinum* gives us:

> Behold, O Lord, we also, humbly observing the commandment of thy majesty, have prepared a way through which we lead thy people who like as the hart [Ps. 42:1] thirst for the fountains of waters. Do thou, O Lord, forgive their iniquity, cover their sins, and lead them as thou hast sworn into the land of promise, that flows with milk and honey. Thou art the Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world [John 1:29]: thou, who hast granted that they who know thee should become the sons of God [John 1:12]: thou who art anointed by the Father with the oil of gladness above thy fellows [Ps. 45:7]. O Lord, pour upon these people the blessing of thy grace. Lest they die in their old sins, let them be cleansed in the blessing of the fount of waters: let them be reborn in the Holy Spirit, and let them see the everlasting altar of Jerusalem: and may the power of the highest overshadow them [Luke 1:35]. Blessed be their generation and blessed be the fruit of the womb [Luke 1:42] of their mother the Church: for the Lord shall magnify his servants in good things, and of his kingdom there shall be no end [Luke 1:73].[15]

That may also be said of these prayers. And from Wittenberg the *Sintflutgebet*:

> Almighty, eternal God, in your strict judgment you damned the unbelieving world with the flood. By your great mercy you preserved faithful Noah and seven with him. You drowned hardened Pharaoh and all his men in the Red Sea. Through it you led your people Israel with dry feet. In this way you signaled ahead with this bath your holy baptism. By the baptism of your dear child, our Lord Jesus Christ, you hallowed and set forth the Jordan and water everywhere to be a blessed flood and boundless washing away of our sins. For the sake of that unfathomable mercy of yours, we implore that you would graciously

11. Didache 7, 1–3; E. C. Whitaker, ed., *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1987), 1; Cyril C. Richardson, ed., Early Christian Fathers, Library of Christian Classics 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 174.
12. Ap I, 61; Whitaker, Documents, 2; Richardson, Fathers, 282.
13. Gregory of Nazianzus, Orations 40.4 (PG 36:361; NPNF² 7:360). Hamann, Baptism, 89–90.
14. WA 12: 48, 19; BSLK, 536, n. 7; WA 49: 127, 17: *eitel wolgefallen, lust und Freude.* AE 51: 319.
15. Whitaker, Documents, 118.

look upon this N. and grant salvation with true faith by the Holy Spirit. Thus through this saving flood drown and put an end to all this as born in him from Adam, and all that he himself has added to that. Separate him from the number of the unbelievers, and preserve him dry and safe in the ark of your holy church. Keep him always fervent in spirit, joyful in hope, serving your Name, so that with all the believers he may come to eternal life according to your promise, made worthy through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.[16]

This prayer, filled to bursting, finds no place in *Lutheran Worship*, which is of mostly Saxon descent, with the Flood Prayer until 1982. In the *Lutheran Book of Worship* only some parts of it survive, and they not the weightiest. One can hardly imagine a baptismal prayer heavier with water than the Flood Prayer. It has not been found prior to the *Little Book of Baptism* of 1523, and yet no part of it is original with Luther. Parts of it are found in Aquinas, Damascenus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Origen, and Justin Martyr. First water scim à la Tertullian gives us 1 Peter 3:18–22; 2 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 10:1–2; the Jewish lectionary for the New Year (Great Sabbath), Exodus 14; Genesis 7. When is too much too much? A question contrary to the way of the gospel ("He forgives us more sins than we got"), contrary to his way with the water.

When the watery liturgy of the baptized is over, it is not over, for there flow the waters of life.

The history of the Flood Prayer's use may give a reading on holy baptism in the Lutheran tradition, and so perhaps also in the Anglican tradition, where a version of it appears in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, and was in the American Prayer Book until 1928. In 1549 "saving flood" becomes "misticall washing"; the strict judgment according to which the unbelieving world was damned becomes "of thy iustice dydest destroy by fluddes of water the whole world for synne." In 1552 this is all gone and we have first "of thy great merce diddest save Noe and his family." Pharaoh and his army have also disappeared. Already in 1549 Adam didn't make the cut with all that is from him. 1549 has "the holesome laver of regeneration," but thereafter it disappears.[17] No Adam or Pharaoh either in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*; unbelief and faith have also disappeared.

There is so much in the Flood Prayer. Some of it is devastatingly hard to take; no wonder it has been clipped about. There is so much water that a congregation fed mostly on what Chemnitz calls "pleasantries" would almost certainly blow bubbles. How can you be saved as wet, and then be saved as dry? A little fish dried out perishes. Water scorned damns. Inhaled water kills. Water with the Name gives life.

Augustine may help in telling of a shipwreck (*naufragium*) and two waters. The ship is breaking up. In a few minutes the sea water will drown them all. In this emergency a Christian does what he would otherwise not do. He baptizes a catechumen. The baptized catechumen absolves the Christian who has baptized him. Then they drown together to life eternal. Awesome water.[18]

The South Germans did not want to have the Flood Prayer, they would do without exorcism, and when the Enlightenment came it was embarrassed by such heavy talk of sin. What has that to do with water?

Enlightenment recalls the blindness of my days in Papua New Guinea. There the pastor at Arawa on Bougainville told me of the training he had received from Bishop Mufuanu. This bishop, old and wise (in Papua New Guinea that was an hendiadys), took the fresh, green, young missionary from Australia with him as he went on visitations. So they trekked up and down the steep mountainsides crossing the voluble rivers in between. One day they noticed that one of the party was not with them. They looked back, and saw him bent over the water at the bottom of the valley chattering away. The young Australian was much puzzled; Bishop Mufuanu explained: "He is listening to the water and talking to it." Then with their form of the first person plural, which includes and embraces you, he said to the young Australian, "He has not been to school, as we have."

When I told this to the pioneer missionary Willard Burce, Apostle to the Enga, he summed it up with: "You see, they have not been through the Enlightenment." Is there any hope for us who have been? Perhaps the recognition of no hope may be the beginning of hope even for us—us post-Enlightenment, post-Existentialism, post-neo-Hegeleanism, postpersonalism, poststructuralism, postdeconstructionism, postsemiotics, postnarratology, post what comes next? Each methodology has its own particular usefulness, and also its limitations as evidenced in its presuppositions. With some help from each

16. BSLK, 539; WA 12: 43–44; Cl 3; 313; AE 53: 97; Kolb-Wengert, 373–74. Leiturgia 5:380–3; Alfred Adam, "Das Sintflutgebet in der Taufliturgie," *Wort und Dienst* 3 (1952): 11–22; W. Dürig, "Das Sintflutgetet in Luthers Taufbüchlein," in *Wahrheit und Verkündigung, ed. Leo Scheffczyk, Werner Dettloff, and Richard Heinzmann* (München: Schöningh, 1967), 2:1035–47; *Lutheran Book of Worship,* 122; LWHP, 274–275.

17. E. C. S. Gibson, ed., *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI* (London: Dent, 1964), 236, 394; Edward Lambe Parsons and Bayard Hale Jones, *The American Prayer Book* (New York: Scribner, 1955), 235.

18. Augustine in a letter to Fortunatus quoted in Gratian's Decretum III, distinction 4, chapter 36; quoted in Tr 67 (BSLK, 491, n. 2; Triglotta, 522; Tappert, 331). Tappert's index (651) makes a general rule out of this emergency, as does also Kolb-Wengert's index (695), contrary to Tr 67, in casu necessitatis, which is the point of the story. Thus Triglotta, 1246, Jacob's Book of Concord, and Müller, 881.

we are in bondage to none, not even the very latest. Of each we may ask whether wet or dry? We should have learned something; we should have unlearned something. One thing may perhaps help us along, and that is the recognition of all the different sorts of language that attempt to control by theory and categorization, on from St. Augustine's *signum* to yesterday's semiotics. The Lord's words and Name alone hold sure. We hear him say it by his use of the mouth he has put there for his use in saying it. We witness what happens. We see a man's hand doing the water. Done in God's name it is "truly God's own act" (LC IV, 10). The Lord's water with the Lord's Name. Whom he waters his Name on is his, no more wreckable than his Name, than he. *Alles was Gottes ist* (LC IV, 17).

If Tertullian has drawn us into rejoicing in the creaturely carnality of the water, we may then not rebel against our creaturely locatedness in time and place but rather rejoice in it, for that is where the water is, bestowing what flows from his crucified side. Angels and saints gone ahead are already into the unending liturgies. The water does not run uphill, but carries us on and out into our calling where baptism wets and enlivens everything. "More in baptism to live and exercise than we can get through our whole life doing," says LC IV, 41. The water that goes on thus flowing unfailingly starts from where our Lord put it: means of grace, *coram Deo*, liturgy, font, that is, water and Name poured on. On the one hand the bare minimum of holy baptism in cases of emergency, that is, when death is imminent, and on the other the liturgy that can't stop growing with always more and more to extol, and so it gets to be as if we are in heaven already, and no longer such creatures as made brothers here by Jesus. From time to time some pruning then, but then only some things that have dried out, or are pretending to work apart from the water.

Sit or kneel beside the fonted water and listen to what it is saying: first the words that our Lord has given it to say, and then all the words that these first words will pull along with them, and then the words that these words will pull from the cloud, the rained-on crowd of witnesses, and from what echoes out of the emptiness of our lives and the brimming fullness, and so to a quietness in which the water goes on blessing us as may flow then into the liturgy where our Lord has always more gifts to give out than we could ever have imagined. He never runs dry; our little pint-size receptacles can never hold it all. Unfaith says a pint's enough, thank you. A pint is all I can manage, but that much I can manage. Our laying on limits and our lust to have the management, to get our hands on the tap, are in pitiful contradiction of our Lord's watery way of dealing with us; floods of it and always more.

Deum vidit, et erubuit. The water beheld her Lord, and blushed.[19]

And when the watery liturgy of the baptized is over, it is not over, for there flow the waters of life, the Lord's river and fountain of the water of life flowing, enlivening us through all our days to his consummation. Now it is day by day. "In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say, In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." "The Old Adam in us be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and a new man daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." And so on to the New Jerusalem with its river of the water of life. "On either side of the river the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month [always something more to look forward to]; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. . . . They shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads" (Rev 22:2, 4).

Prepare yourself Zebulon,
and adorn yourself Naphthali.
Jordan, pause in your flowing
to dance in receiving
the Lord. He comes and would be baptized.
Rejoice O Adam,
with the mother of us all.
Do not hide yourselves
as once you did in paradise.
He who saw you then naked has appeared to clothe you
with the garment of the beginning.
Christ appeared
to make new the whole of creation.[20]

Rejoice, O *Logia*. Your sins too are washed away. Clothed in Christ you go on wetly garmented all the way. *Vivat, crescat floreat Logia abluta.* LOGIA

19. L. C. Martin, ed., The Poems, English, Latin and Greek, of Richard Crashaw, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 38.
20. Troparion, Orthros January 2. From 5–6 century. Anthologion tou holou eniautou I, 1340; Menaion, 21. Rome, 1967. Lothar Heiser, *Die Taufe in der orthodoxen Kirche* (Trier: Paulinus, 1987), 216–17.

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The Word as Means of Grace

Leiv Aalen

Translated and Edited by Charles J. Evanson

I. GRATIA—FAVOR AND DONUM

When we speak of the word as a means of grace, everything depends on what we mean by *grace,* that grace which frees from sin. From the perspective of the history of dogma and theology, we can differentiate between two distinct basic methods of looking at the problem of sin and grace. These two understandings part company in such a way that, in principle, Roman Catholic and Neo-Protestant interpretations stand together on the one side, while on the other side of the dividing line stand the Old-Protestant and more particularly, the Lutheran interpretation. For the former group, grace is thought of first and foremost as a divine act of inner transformation, but for the latter it is understood as the forgiveness of sins. Of course, in neither case is the opposing party's point of view totally disregarded. Luther's strong Reformation position is that in the question of personal salvation—justification—he sets a law-minded grace that transforms against an evangelical grace that gives forgiveness. It is by this means that he maintains the biblical message of sin and grace in a new way. After the Reformation, the heritage of the evangelical interpretations of grace pass on to Orthodoxy and Pietism, but both of these again put grace into a theological framework that led to the predominance even on Protestant soil of an understanding of grace that is not evangelical.

It was in the interpretation of sin and grace that Lutheranism and Rome went their separate theological ways. In his apologetic diatribe against the Roman Catholic theologian Latomus *(Rationis Latomeaniae Confutatio,* 1521*)* Luther inquires specifically into the fundamental point of difference and distinguishes between the two senses of grace: favor *(favor)* and gift *(donum)* (in connection with Romans 5:14 and 17).[1] For Luther, too, saving grace itself leads to a "transformation" in man, for the new life of faith follows justification as God's gift *(donum).* But grace, *gratia,* in the primary meaning of the word is God's forgiving mercy and unmerited favor toward sinners *(misericordia et favor),* revealed in what Christ has done and gotten us for our redemption by faith apart from any transformation.[2] Of course, the *favor* of the forgiveness of sins and *donum* of faith belong insolubly together. Yet *favor* is the stronger of the two, says Luther, for it is God's favor that frees us from sin's eternal curse, God's wrath, and thereby bestows eternal life.[3] This redemption is complete, for in and with the forgiveness of sins the whole man ceases at once to be under wrath; he is instead under grace.[4] On the other hand, in this world the new life of faith is and persists only in incipient form and from its side it has the sinful nature of the old man to contend with.[5] Therefore, he who believes is "at the same time sinner and righteous," as Luther already earlier expressed it in the Exposition of the Letter to the Romans (1515–1516).[6] And this *simul peccator et justus* (or *simul justus et peccator)* has a twofold significance: By faith man is wholly and fully justified before God in the power of Christ's imputed righteousness (*favor* active in the *sola fide* which justifies). Thus, the faithful have in and with the same faith the Spirit's gift of grace, which in the power of Christ's righteousness, creates the incipient righteousness of life that constantly contends against the sinful nature (*donum* active in the struggle of sanctification).[7]

That the word is a means of grace means that there is a clear distinction between the law and the gospel. Because of this, the evangelists' message of grace comes to expression without being intermingled with any law-minded doctrine of works. According to Roman Catholic doctrine God's word in Christ is first and foremost the law of the New Covenant *(nova lex),* which man must fulfill before he can be saved, and grace is a series of inner workings that put man in a position to do this.[8] Here personal redemption is a process of transformation that

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1. *WA* 8: 106 ff.
2. *WA* 8: 106.10–11: "*Gratiam accipio hic proprie pro favore dei sicut debet, non pro qualitate enim.*"
3. *WA* 8: 106.15. See *WA* 8:107.11.
4. *WA* 8: 107.2.
5. *WA* 8: 107.21: "*Remissa sunt omnia per gratiam, sed nondum omnia sanata per donum.*"
6. See Ficker, 168 ff. The same exegesis against Latomus, *WA* 8: 116 ff.
7. *WA* 8: 114.29–30: "*Prius illud principale et robustissimum est, licet et alterum sit aliquid, sed in virtute prioris.*" See also Galatians (1535) (*WA* 40, I: 376.27) and Psalm 51 (1532) (*WA* 40, II: 357.35) about *duae partes iustificationis.*
8. Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, 4th ed.* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1930), 3:456 ff.

is tied particularly to the sacraments, first and foremost the "sacrament of penance." The result depends on man himself cooperating with grace. He is himself active in the transformation.[9] Christ's merit is the point of departure. For this reason, discourse concerning the forgiveness of sins stands necessarily under the category of the law, so that the grace of forgiveness comes to be only an episode in the dialectic between the grace of transformation and human merit.[10] To be a Christian, according to this perspective, does not convey anything of *simul justus et peccator,* for it depends essentially on the inner transformation by which he becomes so much the more holy and righteous that he is only partially frail and incomplete, a so-called forgivable sinner, as Roman Catholic dogma asserts.[11] Against this Luther keeps the law full strength and with it the continuing force of original sin in the life of the Christian. He therefore asserts that the sin of the faithful is in and of itself "mortal sin" and must lead to condemnation if he is not at the same time under grace for the sake of Christ alone.[12]

That the word is a means of grace means that there is a clear distinction between the law and the gospel.

The new life of faith is given us only *in gratia Christi,* and for that reason redemption is given solely in the forgiveness of sins which faith rests upon *favor.*[13] However, just because sin forgiven is and remains real sin, Luther understands faith to be always a faith engaged in conflict, and to that extent for believers it is no longer sin which rules (as is the case with mankind as a whole), but sin which is ruled over.[14] What the grace of transformation cannot accomplish because it does not take seriously the law or the gospel, the grace of forgiveness accomplishes because it is an *unconditional* promise of grace for sinners *(promissio).*[15] The gospel's promise, received by faith, imparts, according to evangelical confession, the fullness of redemption. It consists not only in the word, but includes also the sacraments as instruments of the grace of forgiveness *(favor* as opposed to *gratia infusa).*

This view is clearly formulated in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church,[16] but it came quickly to be obscured in the course of the ensuing theological developments. A slippage is evident already in Melanchthon's later years. As in the case also of Calvin—although each operated from different presuppositions—there is a shift in emphasis between *favor* and *donum*. In both cases *donum* and *favor* are mutually independent, so that faith comes to be thought of as an independent part of transformation rather than a direct effect of the grace of forgiveness. In consequence, faith again becomes a condition for the appropriation of the *favor* of the forgiveness of sins. In Calvinist doctrine this condition is tied, from God's side, to an absolute election of the individual;[17] in Melanchthon, on the other hand, it is tied to man's own choice.[18] For the word as means of grace this means that the promise of the gospel can no longer have ascribed to it the unconditional, faith-creating power.[19] According to Calvin, word and sacrament cannot really be "instruments" of giving faith in the sense of Augustana v, because the Spirit's call is really actively conveyed only to the elect. And, according to Melanchthon, it is not, strictly speaking, effected by the gift of faith, *"when and where God wills* in those who hear the gospel," for the decision lies finally with man himself.[20]

Both of these doctrinal models are rejected in the Formula of Concord.[21] Orthodox Lutheranism sought to avoid the pull of synergism that gradually separated Melanchthon from so-called Gnesio-Lutheranism. Synergism came to expression in-

9. Ibid., 3:458 ff. and 3:467 ff. Here the Thomistic thesis has value: "T*ota iustificatio impii originaliter consistit in gratia infusione"* (476). Thomas does not teach *cooperatio* (461) but Trent followed the Franciscan theology on this point. See Denziger, *Enchiridion*, art. 814.
10. On the distinction between Lutheranism and Catholicism on this point, see Sigrid von Engeström, *Förlåtelsetanken hos Luther och i nyare evangelisk teologi* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1938), 136–37.
11. On how this plays into the contention between Luther and Latomus on this point, see *WA* 8: 101.38.
12. See *WA* 6: 163.4–5: "*Hoc est mortalium mortalissimum, non credere se esse damnabili et mortali peccato obnoxium coram deo.*"
13. *WA* 8: 106.11. Compare WA 8: 114.20–21. "*Nullius enim fides subsisteret, nisi in Christi propria iustititia niteretur et illius protectione servareture.*" See also WA 8: 111.27.
14. *Favor* overcomes sin's guilt, *donum* contends against the power of sin. See *WA* 8: 107.35–36: "*Deus non fictos, sed veros peccatores salvos facit, non fictum, sed verum peccatum mortificare docet*"; see also 91 ff.
15. See *WA* 40, I: 659.10 concerning the law's conditional promise and the unconditional promise of the gospel. See also WA 40, II: 91.26–30: "*Ego sum peccator et peccatum sentio. . . . Sed Spiritui non Carni obsequar, Hoc est, apprehendam fide et spe Christum ac ipsius verbo me erigam atque hoc modo erectus concupiscentiam carnis non perficiam.*"
16. First and foremost in Augustana IV; "Concerning the Sacraments," IX-XIII; and also "Concerning Original Sin and Baptism," II.
17. This is explicit in Calvinist orthodoxy; see Heinrich Heppe and Ernst Bizer, *Die Dogmatik der evangelish-reformierten Kirche* (Neukirchen: Moers,1935), 413, where external and internal call are separated.
18. In the third edition of his *Loci*, Melanchthon posits three causes of personal salvation: God's word, God's Spirit, and the will of man (*Corpus Reformatorum* 20:600).
19. See note 17. Herbert Olsson, *Calvin och reformationens teologi*, Lund's universitets årsskrift avd. I, bd. 40, nr. 1 (Lund: Gleerup, 1943), 559 ff.
20. See *Loci,* CR 21:916: "*aliquam esse in accipiente causam, non dignitatem, sed quia promissionem apprehendit, cum qua spiritus sanctus est efficax.*"
21. See *Ep* XI, 17–20 (Election).

directly, however, particularly in the doctrine of election. Here Orthodoxy did not follow the Formula of Concord.[22] In addition it must be asked whether synergism did not quite practically express itself in the "overemphasis on the objective" of which the Orthodox were accused. For once the "subjective" becomes in some measure independent in relation to the grace of forgiveness, a concurrent relationship invariably arises between *favor* as God's doing for us and *donum* as conditioned by a human factor, and the danger which naturally arises for an Orthodox view of faith can then only possibly be neutralized when all possible weight is put on *favor* (Christ for us), displacing *donum* (Christ in us).[23]

In any case this shapes the background for the opposing emphasis which broke through in Pietism. It could theoretically appear to be simply a shift in accent within the doctrinal system of Lutheran Orthodoxy, but in practice it came to be something far more significant.[24] In opposition to Orthodoxy, Francke, for example, makes it no secret that an inner transformation is a human condition for justification. This pattern of thinking is similar to that found in the Roman Catholic doctrine of grace, with transformation effected concurrently by a working of an inner grace of transformation and man's own spiritual activity.[25] Theoretically this indicates also an absolute break with the Old Lutheran doctrinal tradition and it follows that Francke breaks also with the Lutheran *simul justus et peccator* in the exegesis of Romans 7.[26]

The final step to a Neo-Protestant view of Christianity is found in the Herrnhut movement, the revival that issued from Zinzendorf (the Brethren Congregation), and which in its wider development with his "New Evangelical" offshoot came largely to displace the earlier Pietism. While Spener and Francke sought to maintain the strictly "forensic" *schema* of Melanchthon and Orthodoxy in the doctrine of justification, Zinzendorf represented a type of doctrine that is suggestive of Osiander: "Christ in us" is now made the foundation of justification.[27] In addition, Zinzendorf is the author of the doctrine of "total transformation," which we later meet again in Methodism and other modern revivalist groups.[28] "Christ for us" still plays a strong role in the proclamation, but at the same time, the connection between *favor* and *donum* is completely shifted so that the grace of transformation becomes the carrier in personal salvation.[29] In the measure that Zinzendorf lays weight on man's passivity in relation to grace, his position is unmistakably related to the Roman Catholic position, except that a spiritualistic foundation takes the place of sacramentalism. In this spiritualistic understanding, the activity of the Holy Spirit is more or less independent of both word and sacrament.[30] From this point on, the line of development proceeds further to Schleiermacher and fully developed liberal Neo-Protestantism.[31] Here rationalism also comes forward as a dominant factor in such a way that Neo-Protestantism and Rationalism tend to become coterminus. Grace remains an unloosing of the potential for development in man's moral-religious strivings, and the means of grace remain only outward vehicles of a redemption that essentially proceeds in man's inner life and is no longer separated from his "own reason or strength."[32]

22. The Orthodox teach an election *ex praevisa fide,* cf. Heinrich Schmid, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 6th ed. (Frankfurt a/M.: Heyder & Zimmer,1876), 196 ff. Compare the synergistic interpretation of the Orthodox teaching concerning *conversio,* pp. 351–52.
23. The derailment in the Melanchthonian-Orthodox tradition does not lie in the strictly forensic interpretation of justification in and of itself, as modern Luther research wants to assert, for example, Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Samlerens forlag, 1946), 67 and 79. The "Orthodox" interpretation of Luther here remains relatively correct. See Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie, vol. 2, New ed. (*Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1927).
24. According to Erich Seeberg (*Gottfried Arnold [Meerane i. Sa.: E.R. Herzog,* 1923], 340), Spener's attempt to join a mystical piety to the churchly dogma "planted the seeds of death in Orthodoxy."
25. Spener already teaches a human *cooperatio* before regeneration, a clear synergism. See, for example, *Die Evangelische Glaubens-Gerechtigkeit* (Franckfurt am Mayn: Zunner, 1684), 743 ff. Francke posits penance as simply an antecedent work by means of which the new birth from above at the same time remains a result of man's own active struggle toward "revival." See, for example, Predigten über die Sonn- und Fest-Tags-Episteln*, vol. 1* (Halle: Waysenhaus, 1726), 762.
26. See his *Lectiones paraenetici (Halle: Im Wäysen-Hause, 1726–1736), 6:*36 ff. Here lies the decisive step from the old to the Neo-Protestant basic viewpoint.
27. This most often comes to expression in Zinzendorf's oft-repeated teaching that the faith that makes righteous is precisely love for the Savior, for example, in Neun oeffentliche Reden über wichtige in die Religion einschlagende Materien (N.p.: Brüder-Gemeinen, 1747), 985. When this whole approach takes on a "Lutheran" appearance, it is because "Christ in us" to Zinzendorf stands for imputed righteousness. See Einiger seit 1751. von dem Ordinario Fratrum zu London gehaltenen Predigten (London: Seminario Theologico, 1756–1757), 2:358. This is similar to Osiander's teaching. See Emanuel Hirsch, *Die Theologie des Andreas Osiander und ihre geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1919), 191 ff.
28. See Gösta Hök, *Zinzendorfs Begriff der Religion* (Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhandeln, 1948), 177 ff.
29. In spite of all the polemics against the old Pietism, Zinzendorf follows essentially the same line of thinking: from the standpoint of the history of salvation *favor* is primary, but in terms of personal salvation *donum* is interpreted as grace that transforms. Consequently regeneration, in the sense of transformation, remains central in the appropriation of salvation. See my article "*Gjenfødelsen i luthersk læretradisjon," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke 17 (*1946): 60 ff.; and "*Evangeliet or Nådemiddlene," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke 18 (*1947): 67 ff. The difference lies in the fact that Zinzendorf tends against the so-called doctrine of universal justification. In addition, this teaching surely goes back to Osiander, who speaks of a delivery of the forgiveness of sins "*vor fünfzehn hundert jahrn,*" Schmeckbier *(1552 B og D iv).*
30. According to Zinzendorf, the notion that the activity of the Savior should be bound to the word is a "Wittenbergian-Lutheran whimsy." See Otto Uttendörfer, Zinzendorfs christliches Lebensideal (Herrnhut: G. Winter, 1940), 403.
31. Note Schleiermacher's description of himself as *"Herrnhuter—von einer höheren Ordnung," Briefe, vol. 1,* 2nd ed. The "higher" consists in the synthesis of revivalist piety and rationalism.
32. See Leiv Aalen, Testimonium Spiritus Sancti som teologisk "prinsipp" (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsens Forlag, 1938), 19 ff.

II. THE WORD AS THE MEANS OF GRACE

A critical consideration of the development we have sketched in the foregoing section has an important ramification for the systematic statement of our subject: The gift of faith is no longer understood as an activity of the gospel's *favor* alone. Lost also is the radical re-creating character of the word as a means of grace. In its place we find a basic sacramentalistic or spiritualistic (or rationalistic) point of view that makes grace dependent on man's own activity. This indicates that we need to take hold of and hold to the basic structure of the evangelical chain of reasoning and then apply it seriously, that by the gospel there occurs not only a kind of inner transformation on the basis of the natural man's spiritual potentialities (note the Roman Catholic proposition: *gratia non tollit, sed perficit naturam),*[33] but a complete rebirth. Without at this point going further into the biblical-exegetical foundation of the evangelical doctrine, we can safely establish that the character of the gospel as the forgiveness of sins *(favor)* and the radical rebirth through the gospel *(donum)* both stand as immovable chief points in the biblical message of redemption. In the formula *simul justus et peccator,* the Reformation's revival of the biblical gospel is summed up succinctly. The two aspects are inexorably wrapped together and the evangelical view of the depth of sin and its seriousness calls for something radical: both a total redemption from the guilt of sin in the form of the forgiveness of sins *and* a faith that is in every respect God's gift and therefore represents a totally new beginning in relation to the total command that the power of sin exercises in man.

According to Calvin, word and sacrament cannot be instruments of giving faith in the sense of Augustana v, because the Spirit's call is actively conveyed only to the elect.

The relationship between the two sides in this matter can best be expressed by going at it this way: that the *donum* of faith is an effect of the *favor* of the gospel, and then to emphasize that relationship in the strongest possible terms. Approached in this way, the gospel really cannot be thought of as a mystical-magical "power," but as a message that needs to be proclaimed and believed. This indicates that the word, together with the sacraments, is the *means* that the Spirit of God uses to create faith. A right understanding of the relationship lays more weight on the word's work that happens only through the activity of the Holy Spirit without some human factor intervening. It also means that spiritual rebirth comes about through the outward means of the word and not by means of a direct inner activity of the Spirit. Both parts are included in the strictly "instrumental" view of the means of grace we find in Augustana v: "*Through the word and the sacraments as means the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith when and where it pleases God in those who hear the gospel."* Here the faith is completely *donum Dei* in the strictest sense of the term. In line with this, the Formula of Concord speaks of a divine election of faith (*SD* xi).[34]

This whole train of thought is at the same time a clear rebuttal of the Calvinistic form of predestination. In Calvinism election has actually pulled loose from the person and work of Christ with the result that it opens up a rift between the work of the Spirit and the word as means of grace.[35] The divine working of grace that creates faith and by that means calls forth a new man to life (2 Cor 5:17) is wholly sovereign in relation to the old man (Gal 6:15). But for precisely this reason it moved forward not in a mystical sphere in man's interior life, but it always happens in and with and never apart from the outward means of grace. It always happens that faith first comes by the preaching of the gospel (Rom 10:17), and that is not of man's own doing; it is of God (Eph 2:8–10).

Here we can touch only briefly on the gospel way of thinking that is bound together with this evangelical doctrine. Here an election to faith, active through the word, is seen to be in conflict with God's universal free will, which, of course, is also active through the word.[36] The same holds true for the question about how every human factor can be excluded from the word's life-giving activity without at the same time ruling out faith's inner freedom.[37] A logical-rational solution cannot be found for the questions, which are placed among the paradoxes of faith (the doctrine of the Trinity, Christology, and so forth). On the other hand, there is what we may call a *practical-Christological* solution. This lies in the indissoluble inner connection between *favor* and *donum.* That the Spirit's life-giving activity

33. On salvation as ransoming and "supernatural" fulfillment of the human *eros* see the Roman Catholic dogmatician Karl Adam, *Das Wesen des Katholizismus*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1925), 196 ff. To what extent *eros* appears again as a basic religious motif in Neo-Protestant piety, we have strong testimony in Zinzendorf's youthful work *Sacrates*, which is both formally and essentially a kind of parallel to Schleiermacher's Reden über die Religion.

34. The Formula of Concord expressly dismisses "a cause in us" as a basis of election and knows nothing of any election *ex praevisa fide;* see SD xi, 88 and 45.

35. Concerning the spiritualist element in Calvin, see K. F. Noesgen, *Geschichte der Lehre vom heiligen Geist* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1899), 156 ff.

36. See further my article *"Den lutherske lære om nådevalget"* in *Vår lutherske arv: Et festskrift til 400 års-jubileet for reformasjonens innførelse i Norge,* ed. Sigurd Normann (Oslo: Norges Lutherlags Forlag, 1937), 96 ff.

37. My article "*Sola fide—Sola gratia,"* in Ordet og livet: Festskrift ved den eksegetiske forening Philobiblica's 60-årsjubileum (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsens forlag, 1937), 73 ff., looks at the same unfortunately formulated perspective as the present article: the Lutheran unity of *favor* and *donum.*

occurs by means of the word and not immediately is the same as the fact that election happens always and only "in Christ," the Christ who is proclaimed for the salvation of all, and who in no wise casts anyone away from him (John 6:37).[38] That the rebirth is at the same time sovereign in relation to man himself means that the faith that is called to life through the word dares to depend completely from its beginning and throughout its continuing life on the divine, creative activity that is active in and with Christ's resurrection, and that it is for that reason raised above human impotence (Eph 2:5–7).[39] The collective expression for both parts is the *freedom from the law* that lies in the *favor* of the forgiveness of sins. Only when the claim of the law and the judgment that the law renders have found their fullest expression in Christ can the spiritual impotence of the old man be put out of play so that it gives place to the new spiritual freedom that belongs to the new man (2 Cor 3).

Accordingly, what is active in the word is the *gospel as distinguished from the law,* or to put it another way, the unconditional divine *favor* that is precisely the forgiveness of sins (Rom 3:21–31, Eph 1:7). This is, so to speak, the spiritual sphere in which the *donum* of rebirth generally comes into being and in which at the same time the judgment that is always announced to the old man is such that there is really no "point of connection" for the word in man's natural-spiritual potentialities (1 Cor 2).[40] This makes it important to note well that in an exclusive sense *grace* also *does not create any such connection* by which the old man's will is transformed—such as both Roman Catholics and Neo-Protestants postulate. According to this hypothesis, the grace that transforms is introduced to move man to choose Christ, so that faith and its freedom are actually the product of the potential of natural man and not the result of a really new birth.[41]

At this point it will be objected that in any case the gospel must first of all sound forth into the ears of the natural man, and that a point of transition in man has to be postulated at which the "converted" ceases to be unwilling and becomes instead a willing hearer of the word. But this represents a confusion of rebirth and the gospel, for a man actually hears the gospel, instead of the letter of the law, in an instant, and hears it in such a way that the understanding and acts come forth, according to the word, in repentance and faith, prayer and confession. Faith is already present, because the Spirit always accompanies the word and the beginning of faith's new man is in every case the result of the strength of the Spirit's life-giving activity (1 Cor 2, 2 Cor 3).

Grace also does not create any such connection by which the old man's will is transformed — such as both Roman Catholics and Neo-Protestants postulate.

At the same time, it can be said that there is in the new man a point of connection that forms the basis for a new understanding and a new way of handling all that pertains to the old man.[42] This depends on the fact that with the faith which is created through the gospel alone, the activity of the law consists in the service of the gospel. Thus the law remains a taskmaster that impels us toward Christ.[43] When faith is not present, the law leads only to self-justification or desperation, but where the gospel brings faith to life, there the law's judgment and its claim changes into a means for true repentance and struggle against sin (Rom 6–7).[44] Repentance is just as little a measure as faith is the point of departure in the spiritual potential of the old man. Therefore repentance, either with or without the help of grace (that is, transforming grace), does

38. The fundamental distinction between the Lutheran and Calvinistic doctrines of election is that the first teaches election on the basis of *gratia universalis* and for that reason through the outward means of grace, whereas the latter knows only a *gratia particularis* that is not bound to the outward means.
39. The basic error in the Roman Catholic and Neo-Protestant interpretation of the relationship between grace and freedom is defective, for faith not only denotes an inner transformation that is never "total" but participation in an absolutely new reality, *the new aeon* that is planted in and with the miracle of the resurrection, and which is not only "supernatural," but strongly eschatological.
40. The debate on the "point of connection" between Emil Brunner (*Natur und Gnade, 2nd ed. [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr,* 1935]) and Karl Barth *(Nein!* [München: Kaiser, 1934]) represents the first Neo-Protestant articulation that answers to the Roman Catholic *gratia non tollit, sed perficit naturam.*
41. Franz Pieper, the Missouri Synod dogmatician, rightly asserts that it really makes no difference whether man's conversion is attributed to the use of new "powers of grace," since in both cases unregenerate man is thought to be in a position to employ that grace rightly: *Christliche Dogmatik* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917–1924), 2:544. [In English, see Franz Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis, 1950–1957), 2:453.]
42. See my "God's Word and the Human Point of Connection as a Dogmatic Problem" *[Guds Ord og den menneskelige tilknytning som dogmatisk problem].*
43. According to Luther's interpretation of Galatians 3:24, the right use of the law consists in faith's seeking and contending with the chastising of the law. Here the law drives us to Christ. Therefore it is only in connection with faith that the law remains our taskmaster (*WA* 40, I: 529 ff.).
44. According to Luther there is a threefold misuse of the law: (1) for self-righteousness; (2) for carnal liberty (essentially a misuse of the gospel); and (3) to drive one to despair (the "remorse of Judas") (*WA* 40, I: 528.21). All three depend on the notion that use of the law is not connected with true faith. The right use of the law demands that the Holy Spirit enlighten a person by the gospel (*WA* 40, I: 528.35). See also *WA* 40, II: 539: "*Nec agnoscimus peccatum nisi ex tali promissione.*" This is also determinative for Augustine's doctrine of penance. See Ap XII, 8: "*Fides enim facit discrimens, inter contritionem Judas et Petri.*"

not constitute a kind of transitional phase from the position of the natural man to the position of grace any more than faith does.[45] Both repentance and faith belong to the new man from the first moment, for only those who already have come into the light of the gospel can really know and confess their sin (1 John 1:7–9).[46] But in this indissoluble conjoining of repentance and faith also consists the necessary "*psychological" continuity* between man before grace and man under grace. The relationship can be expressed in this way: it is the sins of the old man against which the new man holds to the forgiveness of sins, and there it is *faith* that creates the point of connection between the old and the new. Therefore it is also only through faith in the gospel that man really remains in a position to fulfill the law and thus, in both life and activity, to find the inner connection between the revelation of salvation in Christ and the "natural orders" of this world.[47]

Thus, while sin and grace in Roman Catholic and Neo-Protestant terms are really successive conditions (since a Christian must be transformed and cannot be a sinner in the sense that he was previously) in the evangelical sense, both are present in the Christian's present condition. The new life consists only in and with the faith that hears and receives the promise of the gospel. Therefore the new life is primarily and essentially eschatological rather than empirical.[48] From the standpoint of empiricism, the believer is still a sinner, and in the final analysis the problem is how the new freedom of faith brought about by the new-creating activity of the word can at the same time contain within it the very same totality of human life that is ruled by the captive natural will. The expression *simul justus et peccator* does not simply signify an opposition between an already transformed "higher" part of human nature and what is left of the untransformed "lower" part (spiritual part over against natural part). It means that the whole man, both soul and body, is engaged in a struggle between "spirit" and "flesh." It is I who am and remain a sinner in the very center of my being.[49]

The resolution of this paradox of faith lies beyond all rational human ways of thinking and also beyond any psychologizing of an *ordo salutis.* It is found in the hidden creative activity that is hidden in the mystery of God and that is wholly available to us in his word. This means that *the gift of faith is a miracle of grace,* something I awaken to with astonishment and gratitude and have my portion in *before I have done anything.*[50] This foundation of the evangelical faith and confession never seeks a place to hang on to in man's inner experience of faith by which man shares in grace. There is instead only the outward word, and to the word belongs as well the sign/mark of the sacrament. In that sign lies the fullness of the promise for the elect.[51] For that reason, word and sacrament belong indissolubly together. And for the same reason, the evangelical faith builds upon baptism, the place of grace, but faith is and remains always *faith in the word of the gospel.* LOGIA

45. Luther rejects the law-minded notion that later comes to the surface again in the Old-Pietist doctrine of repentance—that man must first be under the law before he enters the state of grace. See especially *WA* 7: 355 ff. (Thesis 6). While the Roman Catholic and Neo-Protestant doctrine understands the call and awakening as the beginning of an intermediate stage of conversion in which man is no longer a natural man but not yet born-again (see Seeberg, Lehrbuch, 3:457 ff.; and Francke's "struggle of repentance"), evangelical doctrine confesses no such "preparation" for faith through prior remorse or indications. This is the reason for the consequent rejection of all *cooperatio* in advance of the state of grace in FC II.
46. This is indicated by the fact that in Luther the thesis on *simul justus et peccator* is expressed in such a way that only he who is born again (*spiritualis)* can struggle against sin, see Rom 7; Ficker, 168 ff. When he can at the same time speak of *tempus legis et tempus evangelii* as two distinct times, it needs to be noted that both *tempi* can be spoken of only *in Christiano*—precisely within the state of grace. See *WA* 40, I: 524.32; Gustaf Karl Ljungren, *Synd och skuld i Luthers teologi (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag), 310.*
47. See my article "*Human og kristen etikk," Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift 49 (1948): 1–38.*
48. On the problem of faith and experience in Luther, see Walther von Loewenich, *Luthers theologia crucis,* 2nd ed. (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1933), 96 ff.
49. See Luther on Romans 7. Ficker, 172, 12: "*eadem persona est spiritus et caro"; 176, 8: "ego, inquit (i.e., Paulus) totus homo, persona eadem, servio utraque servitutem."*
50. In the Formula of Concord this is put in such a way that human *cooperatio* can be found only in the born-again, that is, the person who by faith stands in the grace of baptism (see SD II, 16, 65). Therefore the evangelical understanding of "awakening" is an awakening to the true faith. See Luther on Isaiah 60:1 ff. (*WA* 41: 503 ff.).
51. For Luther, the relationship of faith that is characterized by the evangelical *simul* has his primary point of departure in baptism. See Rudolf Hermann, *Luthers These "Gerecht und Sünder zugleich": Eine systematische Untersuchung* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1930), 78: "*Die Pointe ist also diese: Die Gerechtigkeit des Zugleich ist—und bleibt!—die Tauf-Gerechtigkeit" (emphasis in original).* See LC IV.

Philip Jacob Spener and the Demise of the Practice of Holy Absolution in the Lutheran Church

Gerald S. Krispin

Sacramental holy absolution in the way of the Lutheran Confessions came under severe criticism during the last years of the seventeenth century. Yet while this criticism was not without validity at certain points, it also eventually led to the translation of penitents away from the face of God (*coram Deo*) as present in a father confessor into the presence of a spiritual counseling professional (*coram hominibus*). Spearheading this critique of the practice of Holy Absolution during the seventeenth century was Philipp Jacob Spener (1635–1705), whose pious desire was to awaken those who had been lulled into the sleep of a damnable false security by the "cheap grace" offered all too indiscriminately, as he evaluated it, in the confessional practice of his time. The success of this endeavor has not only garnered Spener the title "Father of Pietism," but also reveals him as the methodological father of modern pastoral counseling. It is thus instructive to trace how Spener sought to diagnose what was wrong with the practice of Holy Absolution in his day and how he sought to cure the discovered ills in the way of a new, truly pious pastoral practice.[1] Yet our first task is to outline the historical framework for the discussion of Spener's understanding of confession and absolution[2] and to evaluate the apparent abuses that find mention in Spener's own works.[3]

HOLY ABSOLUTION DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Lutheran confession and absolution since the time of Luther had retained the character that was given it by Luther in the Wittenberg reforms of 1524. It invariably preceded the Lord's Supper and was usually made at the time of the announcement (*Anmeldung*). It had as its content a confessional examination (*Beichtverhör*), sometimes a catechesis, and concluded with the absolution and subsequent deposition of the confessional coin (*Beichtgeld*). A "compulsory confession" (*Beichtzwang*) for all who desired to receive the Lord's body and blood was in effect for both confessor and penitent. In other words, the parishioners were obligated to confess and the pastors were duty-bound to exercise the office of the keys. The usual *locus* of this confession was the confessional chair, though the aristocracy could in certain places reserve for itself either the parsonage or the sacristy. These, then, in the most general terms, were the usual elements of the Lutheran practice of confession by the end of the seventeenth century.

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1. [This article first appeared in the Reformation 1999 issue of *Logia* (vol. 8, no. 4). The author's first note indicates: "In this article a large number of quotations are presented, the most significant of which are given in translation by myself, with the original text in the endnotes. The reason for the extensive quotations is that many of the Spener documents cited exist in very few locations in the libraries of the world, and this usually in their respective rare-book rooms (for example, that of the Concordia Seminary Library in St. Louis, Missouri). Consequently, I have included the primary data so that it is readily available both for evaluating the quality of the translations and also for further primary source investigation." Since the primary data is available in the previous issue of *Logia* for anyone interested, the editors have decided to eliminate the lengthy original language quotations from the footnotes for this reprint of the article.—Ed.]
2. Among the works that deal with the history of confession and absolution, there are a number that might be mentioned here, which are particularly instructive as to the specific abuses of confession and the objections raised about the practice by Pietism. See Ernst Bezzel, *Frei zum Eingeständnis* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1982); Kurt Aland, "Die Privatbeichte im Luthertum von ihren Anfängen bis zu ihrer Auflösung," in *Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1960); Helmut Obst, *Der Berliner Beichtstuhlstreit: Die Kritik des Pietismus an der Beichtpraxis der lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1972); Laurentius Klein, *Evangelisch-lutherische Beichte: Lehre und Praxis* (Paderborn: Bonifacius Verlag, 1961).
3. A very helpful compendium of Spener's theology of confession and absolution, and a means of tracing its development, is to be found in a book by Philipp Jacob Spener entitled *Gründlicher Unterricht von dem Ammte der Versöhnung, und insonderheit von der in der Evangelischen Kirche gebräuchlichen Privat-Absolution; in unterschiedlichen Predigten vorgestellt* (Frankfurt am Mayn: Zunnerischund Jungischem Buchladen, 1716). In English, the title is *Thorough Instruction in the Office of Reconciliation, Specifically of the Common Lutheran Practice of Private Absolution: Depicted in Various Sermons*. This book contains thirteen sermons about private confession that span the years 1666 to 1699, in other words, most of Spener's public ministry in Frankfurt and in Berlin. In the process, Spener made use of the common Gospel readings to address the subject of confession and absolution. Although this compendium is certainly not all that Spener had to say on confession and absolution, it does provide the primary source on the basis of which his teachings on this subject may be approached in an historically cohesive and theologically comprehensive manner. Hereafter this work will be cited as Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht,* where the Roman numeral that follows will signify the number of the sermon and the Arabic numeral will signify the page numbers. Among the other texts that will be used in the following discussion are Philipp Jakob Spener, *Theologische Bedenken*, vol. 1 (Halle: Im Verlage des Weysenhauses, 1700); *Theologische Bedenken*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (Halle: Im Verlage des Weysenhauses, 1716); Philipp Jakob Spener, *Schriften*, edited by Erich Beyreuther, *Letzte Theologische Bedencken*, vols. 1–3 (1711) (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1987); and finally Spener's Catechism, the *Einfälltige Erklärung der christlichen Lehr nach der Ordnung des kleinen Catechismi des teuren Manns Gottes Lutheri* (1677), edited by Erich Beyreuther (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1982).

As far as a general complaint about confession is concerned, pastors were most distressed that the penitents did not sit on the confessional chair (*Beichtstuhl*) as though they were confessing *coram Deo* or receiving the absolution *in statu Christi,* while the penitents were disturbed by the lack of privacy, and at times dignity, that the current practice afforded them.[4] Thus a pastor in Saxony complained of the penitents that "some stand before the confessional chair and laugh . . . others stink of tobacco like field workers; still others refuse to be reconciled to their neighbor, nor do they want to forgive."[5] Another lamented that they "run to confession, but emit no words of humility from their throat, and instead start to argue with the pastor as if they had sat next to him in a beer hall."[6] The pastors themselves were admonished to hear confession appropriately prepared and vested. "He should not have red slippers on his feet, white socks, or wear a travel coat; he should not pronounce absolution in the parsonage nor hear confession wearing his nightgown."[7] Finally, the confessional payment (*Beichtgeld*) might be mentioned. It constituted a special *scandalon* for the Pietists, as it was not merely an extra source of income for the pastors—one that they guarded jealously, it seems, especially when it came to the position and wealth of the penitents—but a practice that created the impression that absolution and the *Beichtgeld* were in some way connected. Yet it also served as a helpful platform to critique the abuses found in the confessional practice of the day and afforded the opportunity to transform the theology of confession itself.[8]

***Spener attempted to have the second type of confession, which is in consequence reinterpreted in terms of a mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren* (mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum).**

SPENER'S CRITIQUE OF HOLY ABSOLUTION

In some respects, Spener's critique of confession and absolution shared in the criticisms of others of his day, some of which parallel those mentioned above. Spener thus lamented the abuses that confronted him and his fellow pastors "in that most often nothing happens [in confession] other than that a penitent thoughtlessly utters a memorized [confessional] formula, the content of which he sometimes does not even understand, which in fact does not even apply to this person in any way."[9] In other words, as he saw the matter, no sins were actually being confessed. Furthermore, he was also concerned that there were not enough pastors available to hear confession properly. Neither was there sufficient time to instruct, nor was the location appropriate to afford the desirable privacy for confession: "Confessional chairs have been built in such a way that the father confessor and the penitent are unable to pour out their hearts to each other mutually, as would be proper, [nor are they able to confess] without others hearing or being aware." Noticeable is that this criticism of confession directs itself to its relation to the life and practice of the regenerate inner man (*wiedergeborene innere Mensch*) and actually presses on toward a reinterpretation of confession itself. This reinterpretation is indicated by the word "mutually" (*gegeneinander*) in the quotation above. Spener seems to be saying that a mutual, fraternal confession would thus be going on that would lead to reciprocal edification and encouragement. In order to facilitate this mutual exchange, Spener suggested that the study of the pastor would provide a more fitting place for such a confessional conversation. What is most notable, therefore, is that Spener attempted to have the second type of confession, of which Luther speaks in the Large Catechism—that which is before the brother—subsume sacramental private confession, which is in consequence reinterpreted in terms of a mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren (*mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*).[10]

Though it is not to be denied that the gospel can be given in such circumstances, as Luther indeed states in the Smalcald Articles (*BSLK,* 449.6–14), lost is Luther's contention that individual confession takes place *before Christ* (*coram Christi*), where it is the ear of Christ that hears and Christ's words

4. Bezzel, *Frei,* 151. Bezzel provides a number of pages of examples. Only a few are recounted here and in the next couple of notes. A multiplication of examples is certainly not necessary. Yet these, it appears, are illustrative of some of the problems that seventeenth-century parishes faced with private confession. Some of the problems on an even more serious note can be found in Klaus Harms, "Die Einzelbeichte," *Monatschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 42 (1953): 381–82. He cites Christian Hohburg, who was not altogether unbiased in the matter of confession. Hohburg laments that Holy Absolution was given indiscriminately to "drunkards, robbers, and johns" [Säufer, Räuber, Hurer], and all this "contrary to better knowledge and conscience" [wider besseres Wissen und Gewissen).
5. Bezzel, *Frei,* 151.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. See especially Spener's discussion of the confessional offering (*Beichtpfennig*) in his Letzte Bedencken, 1:606–10. See also Theodor Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen, 2. Bd., Die Beichte und Absolution* (Schwerin: Verlag der Stiller'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1865), 468–69. Kliefoth goes on to explain that all talk about the *Beichtpfennig* had the *confession* itself in view, "By dealing with the issue of the confessional payment one was able to deal with confession itself; if one was able to present confessional payment as being odious, one sought to present confession itself as being odious. In that one sought to eliminate paying money at the time of confession one sought to eliminate confession itself" (469).
9. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 297.
10. Kliefoth also notes that Spener's understanding of confession pointed in this direction: "Er [Spener] faßte erstens die seelsorgerliche Beichtunterredung etwas anders, als die Reformatoren gethan hatten, nehmlich pietistischer . . . als ein gegenseitiges Ausschütten der Herzen; und dafür gab ihm auch die richtig gehaltene Privatbeichte nicht den Ort und die Zeit her" (Beichte, 441).

found in the mouth of the father confessor that give absolution. Spener's suggestion, however, that a place be found to meet that would give opportunity for mutual counseling met with little favorable response during his lifetime, as church officials were concerned to preserve a "location that would not arouse suspicion" (*unverdächtigen Ort*), which the church sanctuary afforded. Confession and absolution before the altar therefore remained a public act located where all of God's gifts are distributed through the servant who has been called and ordained to give the gifts there. One might also add that the question of the location of confession was therefore deemed not to be a matter of adiaphora but itself made Lutheran confessional theology visible as it related to confessional practice.[11]

Luther's purpose in retaining confession was to lead to the* in statu Christi absolution. *Spener's purpose was to lead to a deeper kind of repentance.

While Spener failed in his lifetime to change the location of confession, he did manage, by way of his criticism, to reinterpret confession and absolution for the Pietist generation that followed. The nature and extent of this reinterpretation can be most clearly assessed when seen in the light of what must be regarded as Spener's key concept in his discussion of confession and absolution: true (*wahre*) or proper (*rechte*) repentance (*Buße*).[12] It will thus prove most instructive to recall that Luther's central purpose in retaining confession was to lead to the *in statu Christi* absolution. By contrast, Spener's purpose was to lead to a deeper kind of repentance.

TRUE REPENTANCE AND HOLY ABSOLUTION

Throughout Spener's preaching and teaching about confession and absolution, the term *rechte* or *wahre Buße* recurs and designates that which is fundamental to the Christian life, indeed, to faith itself. *Buße* is thus not merely a *status,* but an actual *habitus* for him who is *regenerate,* one that in fact defines faith. Spener argued, as one faithful to the Confessions, that true repentance consists in contrition for his sins (*Reue seiner Sünden*) and faith (*der Glaube*).[13] Spener thus defined repentance (*Buße*) in terms of faith, in other words, that which attains the state of being a gracious child of God (*Gnadenkindschaft*) and an obedient heart (*ein gehorsames hertz*). This is to stand in contrast to the misunderstanding of *Buße* that Spener saw as so prevalent in the parishes of Germany: "Many think that repentance is merely an external ceremony that at most consists of reading some prayers of repentance, going to church several days in a row, and making confession: and this comes to be called having repented."[14] True repentance, however, is of a different composition. It so circumscribes faith that it can be externally ascertainable and verifiable in its practical application. Repentance is thus "true" or "authentic" if it meets the following three criteria: "that you are an enemy of sin from your heart, truly believe in Jesus Christ, and have the earnest intention to amend your life."[15] Accordingly, repentance is in constant need of being examined as being true in light of these criteria lest there be a lapse into passive belief without the active hatred of sin "from the foundation of your soul" (*von grund der seelen*) and a subsequent failure to amend the life.[16] Spener therefore clearly urged an active repentance that needs and seeks to establish its own veracity. Luther, on the other hand, warned against such a repentance and spoke instead of a "passive contrition" (*passiva contritio*).[17] Now, while the basic three criteria for true repentance have already been discussed above, it proves to be most telling that Spener continually added elements to the list of criteria in order to assess the quality of repentance. To the three basic elements, that is, hatred of sin, the desire to amend one's life, and faith in Jesus Christ, Spener went on to add a fourth criterion, a vow of obedience to God's commandments:

> You must make your vow to God that you will endeavor to be obedient to his commandments throughout your entire life. That is what it means to be repentant. *If one of these elements is missing, specifically, if you intend to continue in your sins, then you may be assured that you are unrepentant* (italics added).[18]

Nor did he remain with these four. He added at least seven more, all of which are to provide further aid in determining an accurate diagnosis of the state of one's repentance: (1) sorrow that one has offended God; (2) knowledge that one has earned damnation; (3) shame before the heavenly Father; (4) desire for the grace of Christ; (5) the intent to put away everything that has been discovered in the self-examination; (6) resolve to carry

11. So the suggestion of Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard in "Die Wiederbelebung der Privatbeichte," *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Kirche* 11 (1933–34): 482.
12. See Otto Hof, "Die Privatbeichte bei Luther," in *Schriftauslegung und Rechtfertigungsglaube* (Karlsruhe: Evangelischer Presseverband für Baden e.V., 1982), 27–28; 36.
13. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, vi, 137.
14. Ibid., viii, 189. See also *BSLK,* 260.5–27. Important to add, however, is that Melanchthon regards these two in terms of law and gospel, both of which are the works of God: "For the two chief works of God in men are these, to terrify, and to justify and quicken those who have been terrified" (*Triglotta,* 265, bottom of column 1; *BSLK,* 261.43–45). See also Kliefoth, Beichte, 264–65.
15. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xiii, 406). These three elements—to be an enemy of sin with all one's heart, to believe in Jesus truly, and to have the earnest desire to amend one's life—consistently recur wherever Spener speaks about determining the nature of one's repentance. They are thus the *nota* of true *Buße,* and as such are the *sine qua non* of absolution.
16. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, vi, 155.
17. See *Triglotta,* 479; *BSLK,* 437.2–4.
18. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, vi, 137; 182–83; 214.

out all the demands of the "rules of the Christian life" (*christliche lebensregel*); and (7) the knowledge that it is the Holy Spirit who has led one to make this resolution.[19]

Spener clearly affirmed the* dependability *of the words of God but placed the onus of their appropriation upon the repentant disposition of the penitent.

Confession thus provides the testing ground for repentance. For here the pastor has the opportunity to examine the penitent thoroughly as to his true spiritual state. Thus Spener could ask, "What then belongs to confession? That the penitent confesses his sin and demonstrates his contrition for them: then also to request forgiveness with a faithful appeal to the grace of Christ and *the promise of new obedience*." Perhaps it may be entered here that this matter of "demonstrating" (*bezeugen*) contrition is most dubious. It almost would appear that Spener was completely ignorant of Luther's strong stand against such an emphasis upon contrition. For example, Luther, preaching on Matthew 18 in the late 1530s, said of the loosing key the Roman church had taught,

> I can never know if I have truly confessed or had sufficient contrition. It is the pope who establishes the power of absolution upon contrition. . . . For [in this case] I can never be certain of the forgiveness of sin, because I cannot know if I am sufficiently contrite. (WA 47: 334.24–33)

And this was precisely Spener's point when it comes to Holy Absolution: it does not give certainty of forgiveness because of the uncertainty of one's repentance.[20]

Thus, to be discovered as being "unrepentant" (*unbußfertig*) also means to be found incapable of receiving absolution, even if one should *believe* otherwise. In fact, Spener went as far as saying that to trust in the absolution simply is not enough, for such belief does not meet all the criteria for proper reception. He wrote:

> This then is true repentance, whereby one becomes worthy of absolution, not that one has read a few prayers prior to coming to confession, then to say confession and listen to what remains in order to receive absolution trustingly, which is about as far as this usually goes: instead, repentance has to be a complete change of heart; namely, to bring about in the heart that desire whereby you would never again commit the previous sin, and instead commit yourself to apply yourself to live a God-pleasing life in all things: *if this intention is not forthright and earnest, you are also not repentant, even if you have thoroughly read the entire prayerbook and made your confession with tears upon your knees. . . . Now, without such repentance absolution is always of no benefit to a person* (italics added).[21]

Again, Luther's sole criterion for receiving absolution is faith, which is manifested by virtue of the penitent coming to confession of his own volition.[22] Thus he could write, "The priest therefore has enough signs and reason to absolve in that one desires to receive the absolution. He is not bound to know anything more" (WA 2: 719.26–28). Yet Spener indeed felt duty-bound to know more. And he went on to meet the objection of those who would protest that they come to confession believing the words of God as actually giving what they say by affirming that the words are indeed dependable. Yet for him it was critical to understand that these words are to be depended upon *not* by the one who simply believes, but *only* by the one who repents properly:

> Indeed, someone might say, the absolution is nevertheless God's word, which must be true; and I receive it in faith, so I also receive its power. Answer: The absolution is in itself God's word, which cannot deceive; but its application to you, if you are unrepentant, is a human error.[23]

Thus Spener clearly affirmed the *dependability* of the words of God but placed the onus of their appropriation upon the repentant disposition of the penitent. Yet he continued to lament that people do not come to church to hear the sermon or to study the word of God but are content with absolution and the Lord's Supper, admitting that they are sinners but having no desire for amendment of life. This leads to false security, due to what Spener considers an *ex opere operato* understanding of the sacraments:

> And so they freely confess that they have not lived as they should have, but also did not desire to better their lives, but insisted that Christ had established the confessional chair for this reason, and commanded his apostles and all preachers to forgive the sins of all those who confess them, with the precious assurance that that which they forgive has been forgiven before him.[24]

19. Ibid., viii, 202–3.
20. See Hof, "Privatbeichte," 30.
21. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 304–5.
22. It must be kept in mind that Spener was confronting a *Beichtzwang* and therefore met people who were there under duress. Yet his theological position goes beyond the one who is compelled to confess, as his intended audience was the regenerate who wanted to be Christians in earnest. Cf. Fred L. Precht, "Changing Theologies of Private and Public Confession and Absolution" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1965), 78.
23. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht,* xi, 304–5.
24. Ibid., xi, 302–3.

Consequently the father confessor (*Beichtvater*) would make a frightful mistake by absolving what might be an *impenitent believer*. This most dubious oxymoron is indeed implied by what Spener says here and is emphasized as being an altogether heinous reality in the confessional practice of his day. Repentance is basic to faith. Indeed, repentance is followed by faith, which only on this basis becomes more than intellectual assent and becomes the means by which absolution is appropriated. Spener wrote:

> For this reason true faith should also be added, which attains and receives such forgiveness, whereby all the previous requirements are certainly elements of the divine order, but not the means themselves.[25]

Thus, while *repentance* is argued as not being meritorious, nor the means of salvation per se, it is nevertheless the necessary presuppositions *due to the divine order*, to which faith *is added*, as the quotation above states.

HOLY ABSOLUTION AND THE DIVINE ORDER

Spener noted that such misapplication of the absolution to the alleged believer who is perceived by the father confessor to be unrepentant is in effect the delivery of absolution contrary to the order of God. Spener made much of this divine order as he sought accurately to reflect orthodox theology:

> Such are the parts that divine order demands of us, that have been established within the church for some time. This has also been retained by our Lutheran Church, that one must confess to a preacher. The purpose of this confession is to enable the preacher to ascertain the willingness of a person to repent.[26]

Spener thus placed the means of grace in a prevenient order, namely, an *ordo salutis* in which each condition must be met in the prescribed order so as to ensure the validity of all that follows:

> Therefore there exists also a divine order in this case, that absolution and forgiveness should not be distributed to any but those who are repentant: That is why Christ called for the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47). These we may not invert or separate (Acts 5:31). Faith alone is that whereby we are justified on our part, that is, attain to the forgiveness of sins. . . . Therefore no one is able to attain the forgiveness of sins in himself except he who has a living faith: but this [faith] exists with no one who stands outside repentance. "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). But it must be a true and earnest repentance, one that does not consist in a few external rites or works, but in a full transformation of the heart: that a person is an enemy of his sins from the bottom of his heart and hates them, sets his trust upon Christ, never again to serve certain sins willingly, but no matter how much he desires these, to resist and begin to live such a life that he will seek to walk according to the commandments of God (1 John 2:3–4). *Where any one of these is lacking, and where one does not value the grace of God in Jesus Christ so highly as to abandon gladly all servitude to sin, then no true repentance is present, and according to the divine order no valid forgiveness and absolution are present* (italics added).[27]

Luther affirmed that the gifts are always given, albeit capable of being rejected by unbelief

It is clear that this "order" necessitates and legitimatizes the *exploratio* for which Spener called in confession.[28] Thus he could maintain the power of the absolution yet restrict it as being given only to the truly repentant according to the divine order. An absolution that is given outside of this order, that is, to a believer who has not demonstrated a valid repentance, remains completely invalid before God:

> Where absolution is therefore given without true repentance, or is just presumed to be received, it has no value before God; for God cannot, according to his truth, countenance the performance of the tasks of his servants, unless they have carried these out according to his ordering. Whatever is done outside of this order and instruction is invalid in itself.[29]

Spener thus lamented that this practice has led to the damnation of many. That is why the existing practice of confession and absolution needed to change, as he was convinced that the present practice did not provide the opportunity to instruct and warn of misapplying the absolution to oneself if a true repentance was not present.[30] Thus the believer who

25. Ibid., xi, 302–3. Cf. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, ix , 236: "Wir haben oben bemercket / daß göttliche ordnung die buß und vergebung genau mit einander verbinde / daher sie nicht voneinander trennen lasse."
26. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht,* ix, 231.
27. Ibid., xi, 289–90.
28. "That such absolution must be preceded by a certain repentance. Repentance is the cause of absolution, because forgiveness belongs to no one except the repentant. The preacher, who is thus to declare absolution, *should in some way have a testimony of repentance upon which he can base his absolution,* since there may be another who presents himself for confession as being repentant; even though this testimony is very minimal" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 186; italics added).
29. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 304. Cf. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht,* vi, 155: "We acknowledge the full power of absolution, but for the repentant for whom it is ordained."
30. See Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 192.

wants to receive what the words of God proclaim without first being certain of the integrity of his repentance runs the risk of plunging into a false security, which ultimately can lead to damnation. Spener wrote:

> ***For Spener, they are not the words of God* pro me *until one has met the proper conditions that actually enable the individual to appropriate them to his benefit.***

> If only everyone would contemplate this in his heart! That most certainly many hundreds and thousands are eternally lost because they constantly depend upon confession and absolution, and have erroneously believed that their sins have been forgiven; whereas they actually had never attained to true repentance and had remained stuck in their sins, and probably died in them as well. *Such as these could have been helped if they had recognized the deception of their false trust in the absolution while in an unrepentant state, might have abandoned* [*such false trust*] *and thereby could have been driven to true repentance and fled their previous false security* (italics added).[31]

The proper preparation for confession and absolution is therefore to examine oneself—not for one's sins, however, but as to the nature of one's repentance. Spener thus expressed his wish that the opportunity be taken to awaken people from their misplaced trust in absolution in and of itself:

> Namely, that we more often take the opportunity to remove from the people their illusion of an absolution as being *opere operato,* and instead impress upon them that even though the absolution that is spoken is the word of God, which has power within it, it nevertheless does not come to anyone except him who is truly repentant.[32]

Again, only the truly repentant can have the assurance that what is spoken by the pastor *in statu Christi* can indeed be safely applied to himself:

> If you then want to be assured that the absolution is a word of God that applies also to you, then it is not enough that they are spoken to you by the preacher, but that you have assured yourself, after diligent self-examination, that your repentance is authentically earnest. It is indeed possible to discover this within: if your repentance is sincere, you are an enemy of your sins with all your heart, truly believe in Jesus Christ, and have the earnest intent to better your life, then the absolution coming from God applies to you, even if it is received from a human being. It is nevertheless certain, as though you had heard it unmediated from heaven above. Then it is God's word with its appropriation by you.[33]

This "appropriation" (*Zueignung*) of which Spener speaks here requires some further examination.

THE APPROPRIATION OF HOLY ABSOLUTION

According to Spener, the words of absolution spoken after the confession are words of God that one can apply to oneself safely only if all the criteria of true repentance have been met. Any other *Zueignung* would be presumption. Implied by all of this is that the words of God must be appropriated, namely, claimed for oneself, rather than letting oneself be given what they say. In other words, they are not the words of God *pro me* until one has met the proper conditions that actually enable the individual to appropriate them to his benefit. Thus Spener drew the analogy of the *Zueignung* of absolution to a debt that is due to be paid and cast it into an eschatological framework: Ultimately the debt is only paid up for those who are truly penitent. The heart that is truly repentant can take this bill—the words of absolution—as being applied to itself. On the other hand, for the one who is not properly repentant, the bill is invalid. Even though one understands it to be paid, God will instead add to one's debt the guilt of misappropriation as well. In other words, an absolution received without the right repentance becomes a stolen absolution that multiplies guilt. There was for Spener therefore an "unworthy confession" (*confessio indignorum*) as there was for Luther, albeit with this most startling difference: for Luther the sole criterion was faith, that is, whether or not the individual lets himself be given the forgiveness that the words of absolution deliver. This is not to deny the role of repentance, and specifically contrition, in the Christian life. Luther spoke specifically of contrition in the Smalcald Articles. But in contrast to Spener, he spoke of a *passiva contritio* worked by God's law, which as such cannot be quantified in any way nor defined in terms of a set number of criteria (BSLK 437.1–4). Luther therefore rejected any kind of piecemeal (*partim*) repentance in the Smalcald Articles, which state:

31. Spener, Bedenken, 2:157–58.
32. Ibid., 1:196. See also Precht, "Changing Theologies," 138–139.
33. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xiii, 406. See also a sermon found in his *Theologische Bedenken* from 10 October 1697. The text is virtually a verbatim repetition of the above citation. What is to be noted, however, is that Spener urges the examination not only *before* the confession but also *after* the absolution. What the absolved are to obtain is the "testimony of their conscience . . . that they are truly earnest in their repentance" (zeugnuß ihres gewissens . . . daß es ihnen mit ihrer buß ein ernst seye"). If all criteria are in order, they can be assured of the validity of the divine absolution: "So sind sie alsdan der *absolution* und dero gültigkeit göttlich versichert" (Bedenken, 2:157).

> This repentance is not piecemeal or beggarly as that one [in the papacy], and so actually repents of sin; it is also not uncertain as the former. . . . That is why contrition is also not uncertain, but only a mere, certain despairing of everything that we are, speak, or do. (*BSLK,* 446.19–447.3)

Thus a confession of sin that is *totus* leads to certain *contrition,* certain because it leads away from the self and everything that is within and leaves the penitent open to receive a *totus* absolution that is given to faith from outside of us.

Luther simply sought the confession of faith that both confesses sin and lets itself be given the absolution.

Spener, on the other hand, went beyond faith to the proper attitude as reflected in true repentance, namely, contrition within us (*contritio in nobis*). If the proper attitude is not present, absolution has not been received. Thus Spener left the unrepentant as remaining without the gifts: no forgiveness of sin, eternal life, or salvation. This again stands in marked contrast to Luther, who affirmed that the gifts are always given, albeit capable of being rejected by unbelief to the detriment and eventual damnation of the unbeliever.[34] On the other hand, for Spener damnation occurred not for rejecting the absolution in unbelief but for misrepresenting one's repentance:

> If someone now comes who is unrepentant, but confesses as one who is repentant and is absolved by us as such, then he has certainly deceived us: but the absolution benefits him not one hairsbreadth before God, but damns him all the more, because he sought to deceive God.[35]

Spener indeed went on to emphasize that true repentance thus requires a conscious effort, without which one is simply not *capable* of receiving absolution:

> Thus it remains true once and for all: as long as you are not truly repentant in a conscious manner, you are unworthy of absolution. And should the most notable of preachers in the world lay his hands upon you upon your confession while you are in such a state, and declare you absolved, not only once but two hundred times in the name of the holy God, not a single one, let alone all of your sins, would be forgiven. *And you have in all this deceived yourself with the trust you have placed in absolution: indeed, you will be all the more bound in your sins* (italics added).[36]

One's faith is thus placed squarely *not* upon the absolution, even though Spener agreed that the sure words of God *potentially* give what they say,[37] but upon one's own repentance. For Spener this "in us" (*in nobis*) status of repentance thus became the sole ground of assurance for the forgiveness of sins. The absence of repentance points furthermore to the fact that the regenerate man who alone can receive absolution worthily is not actually present. For such an unregenerate person, that is, one who does not meet the criteria of true repentance, to sit in the *Beichtstuhl* is thus altogether deceptive.

This is also the case for those who make confession due to fear, not on the basis of the true inner birth. For what appears to be contrition to the eye might indeed be no more than attrition, that is, fear of punishment.[38] Spener thus warned those who do not possess the proper sorrow for sins, who lack faith, or whose intent for amendment is not earnest, of ever-increasing bondage to sin rather than absolution from it. Such as these should stay away from the *Beichtstuhl*. He wrote:

> First, the absolution is of no benefit to any person, nor are those sins forgiven any *who are not truly repentant*. Therefore he who is not truly repentant, that is, who does not hate his sin henceforth, nor desires to abandon them in all earnestness, remain in the true faith, resolving to live a truly godly life, and all this from the depths of one's soul,

34. "According to Lutheran doctrine the word of absolution does its work in the repentant as well as the unrepentant, albeit for the latter it is not a blessing but judgment. This is contested by Spener. For him it is important that . . . the repentant should actually receive the fruits of absolution. . . . He does not say with Luther, that God actually bestows forgiveness of sins with his word upon the unrepentant in absolution . . . and that this person . . . in the coming judgment . . . will recognize that he had been forgiven his sins indeed, but that he did not take it. [Spener] states that absolution accomplishes nothing in the one who is unrepentant: it passes him by" (Kliefoth, Beichte, 445). Cf. Spener, Bedenken, 1:84.
35. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 200.
36. Ibid., xi, 306–7. Cf. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht* xi, 284–285: "The abuse is this, that all people, be they repentant or unrepentant, depend upon confession and absolution to their great detriment. This state leads to the deceiving of those who think they are absolved, but really are not. Wherein then lies the deception? In this: see that we have just heard above that no person is capable of forgiveness of sin without repentance and faith; that the Lord also has not given the authority to forgive sins to preachers for any but those who are repentant; therefore the absolution is also not valid for any, except those who are repentant."
37. For Luther the matter was not so contingent. Christ's words always give what they say, though unbelief *de facto* rejects the gifts toward damnation.
38. In a sermon from 1666, Spener preached on the unjust steward of Matthew 18. According to Spener, Jesus teaches through the example of the servant that a false repentance can be created when "the water reaches his neck." Thus he showed that all wicked people "are able to assume a false but not sufficiently rooted repentance" [sich können einer obwohl falschen / oder doch nicht gnugsamen gewurzelten buße annehmen]. And he observed that upon such false repentance, sin is actually not forgiven, "because sin is not forgiven on the basis of a false and hypocritical repentance" [weil auf bloß heuchlerische buß die sünde nicht verziehen wäre] (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, i, 10). On the other hand, Spener did recognize that the truly penitent can experience fear because of their sins, given that it is joined to the other criteria discussed above. He thus stated that those who have felt fear because of their sins ("der seine sünde wegen angst gefühlet hätte") and desire absolution certainly have it (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 289).

> such a one has no benefit from absolution, even if the most holy man on earth would declare it to him one hundred times a day. Instead, because he wants to bully or wrest forgiveness from God despite his unrepentance, he will be bound all the more firmly in his sins, because he continues to add to them (italics added).[39]

Since the absolution is expressly given upon *the condition* of one's *Buße,* it also necessarily remains conditional:

> *Thus all our absolution, no matter which words are used, is in itself conditional to this extent, that it depends upon the true extent of repentance of a person,* for we have no authority from God to forgive sins except of any but who are repentant of their sins (italics added).[40]

If all criteria *are* in order, however, one can receive great consolation from the absolution.

It goes without saying that for Spener the criterion for absolution was not faith alone in the external words of Christ for me (*extra nos verba Christi pro me*), as was the case for Luther, but the *in nobis* true repentance, the authenticity of which is established only by the most careful introspective scrutiny.[41] The qualifying "true extent" (*wahrhafftig*) in the quotation above is again most notable since it implies that such *Buße* must meet the said set of criteria to be validated as authentic.[42] Spener thus demanded the existence of a true *contritio,* that element of the sacrament of penance that Luther had left behind precisely because it is not possible to determine its extent or ultimate authenticity because of its location *in nobis.* According to Spener:

> Wherever you might come from, receive this assurance, that the absolution truly applies to you, *yet again out of the assurance of repentance.* For even though the forgiveness of sin that you receive in absolution is not a fruit of your repentance, but a gift of grace from God *that is grasped by faith within repentance*, repentance is nevertheless that element in the divine order which enables us to believe and *which is required before faith* (italics added).[43]

In this, Spener came full circle and made central the very bane that Luther sought to eschew from confession and absolution.[44] Far from exploring the state of repentance in the soul, Luther simply sought the confession of faith that both confesses sin and lets itself be given the absolution, *the* ultimate reason for retaining confession. Luther could indeed say:

> Therefore remember that the keys or forgiveness of sins do not rest upon our contrition or worthiness, as they teach and twist [this doctrine]. For this is completely Pelagian, Turk, Heathen, Jewish, Anabaptist, Enthusiast, and Antichrist. But again, our contrition, works, and heart should build upon the keys and depend upon it with complete trust, as upon God's word. . . . But if you doubt, you make God into a liar, invert his order and build the keys upon your contrition and worthiness. *You should indeed have contrition, but that you should derive the certainty of the forgiveness of your sins or confirm the work of the keys through it* [*contrition*]*, that is nothing other than to abandon faith and to deny Christ.* (WA 30, II: 496.26–31, 34–38; italics added)

That Spener indeed did not understand Luther's concern (*Anliegen*) becomes clear when one reads his evaluation of Luther's reasons for the retention of private confession:

> It is clear that the reasons why our beloved Luther retained confession was *so that a preacher might be able to deal with each penitent individually as was needed: to evaluate the state of his soul, to encourage, explore, instruct, chastise, exhort, give counsel, and the like*, so that both might deal with each other in confidence.[45]

39. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 199.
40. Ibid.
41. "If one of these is lacking you are without repentance; and be warned not to come to confession upon pains of death, for absolution does not apply to such as these" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, vi, 153–54). Here again is a checklist, which explicitly demands all elements to be present, with a warning that even *one* may not be missing. When faith is mentioned in the context of this list, it too is qualified by the anthropocentric and therefore quantifiable "heartfelt" [*hertzlich*] which cannot but lead to further uncertainty. Kliefoth pointed to the contrast provided by the Lutheran Church, which simply took the penitent at his word: "The Lutheran Church did not call into question the authenticity of the confession of anyone who was not manifestly unrepentant; it did warn him that he must have contrition and faith if his absolution would not become a matter of judgment for him; but if he nevertheless remained with his good words, it absolved him unconditionally, earnestly, as God's word" (Kliefoth, Beichte, 463).
42. It might be mentioned, however, that AC XII also speaks of "wahre rechte Buß" (*BSLK,* 66.15). What must be distinguished, however, is that the confessors sought to distinguish the repentance that God works and gives through the law, the *passiva contritio* of Luther's Smalcald Articles, from the anthropocentric repentance called for by the Roman penitential system. Spener, on the other hand, was looking for authenticity, which ultimately turns out to be a renewed anthropocentricity.
43. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 312–13. As in this *locus*, Spener argued for the necessity of repentance while in the same breath affirming the unmerited grace of Christ in absolution in other sermons, for example, Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht,* iii, 70.
44. Maurer reached this very poignant conclusion when he wrote: "Luther had seen the greatest danger for confession in this, that the certainty of forgiveness was based upon his own repentance: *Therefore take heed not to place the certainty of the forgiveness of your sins in your own contrition, confidence, or sorrow*" (Wilhelm Maurer, "Der Pietismus und die Privatbeichte," *Evangelische Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* 10 [1956]: 220, citing WA 6: 545.25–27). With Maurer one is compelled to agree that this is precisely what Spener was setting out to do, that is, not to deny Christ, but to build upon repentance and effectively being forced to doubt the words of God. Yet according to Luther, in complete opposition to Spener, one is clearly to look away from one's repentance and depend solely upon the words of absolution as giving what they say. See Hof, "Privatbeichte," 37; Precht, "Changing Theologies," 84; Ernst Sommerlath, "Der Sakramentale Charakter der Absolution nach Luthers Schrift *Von den Schlüsseln*," in *Die Leibhaftigkeit des Wortes: Festgabe für Adolf Köberle*, ed. Otto Michel and Ulrich Mann, (Hamburg: Im FurcheVerlag, 1958), 229; Jos E. Vercruysse, "Schlüsselgewalt und Beichte bei Luther," in *Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von* 1526–1546, ed. Helmar Junghans (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 154.
45. Spener, Bedenken, 2:162.

And yet Spener demanded confession for the purpose of ensuring (*Versicherung*) what ultimately cannot ever be completely sure because of its *in nobis* locatedness. The requirement for receiving absolution is thus consistently a truly repentant heart of which one is cognizant, where the extent of one's repentance must be constantly ascertained.[46] Yet for Spener a most dubious "but" (*aber*) also imposes itself upon the absolution even after it has been given: "God willingly forgives us our sins, *but in this way, that he also demands alongside it that we become obedient and let our neighbor enjoy it as well"* (italics added).[47]

Thus for Spener Holy Absolution, indeed, the gospel itself, has as its goal *not* the salvation of the individual but a renewed life in obedience to the laws of God.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it may have become clear that it is not in fact the absolution that was important to Spener but the betterment of life, or renewal (*Erneuerung*), characterized by obedience, which is promised by the penitent. Yet the uncertainty of this *in nobis* repentance, with its dependence upon the amendment of life, which amounts to a new *satisfactio,* cannot but cast an equally dubitable light upon absolution itself. For those who followed Spener, the certainty of salvation (*Heilsgewißheit*) that Luther found in the certain words of Christ, given to faith by the mouth of the father confessor, was to be sought within the experience of one's own repentance. Thus the pastor's role in confession also needed to be recast from being the distribution point of the gifts of Christ with the words of absolution, to providing an expert diagnosis of the true nature of the penitent's repentance. In this *coram hominibus* context, the promises of Christ and an actual giving out of the forgiveness of sins no longer had any place. Consequently, the confessional no longer existed "for the sake of the absolution," but for the sake of self-discovery, both with respect to repentance and regeneration. The confirmation of this reality thus made any further "confession" unnecessary, since the absolution gave nothing more than a confirmation of an already existent state of grace.[48]

Therefore, wherever Pietism won the day, it came to render confession and absolution unnecessary at best, and a dangerous practice in the hands of impious clergy and laity leading to false security and damnation at worst. The demise and disposition of what had become an onerous practice for many thus was facilitated by the theological reinterpretation of Holy Absolution by Spener. Indeed, Spener's work ultimately not only proved to be the death knell of individual confession in the Lutheran Church but has also made any revival of the practice inherently difficult, since his teachings, in their manifold evangelical incarnations, continue to be pervasive even within the pastoral (counseling) practice of much of the Lutheran Church. To turn a phrase by the poet William Wordsworth, "Pietism is too much with us." LOGIA

46. See Albrecht Peters, "Buße-Beichte-Schuldvergebung," *Kerygma und Dogma* 28 (1982): 58. Peters, on the basis of Luther, summarizes: "Proper trust rises above all Pharisaic self-assurance, but also over all meticulous introspection and rests without reservation in the God's promise of grace." Though Spener certainly avoided the former, his entire focus was on introspection (*Selbstbeobachtung*) in which the pastor is then to provide assistance.
47. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, x, 248.
48. While I deem it somewhat pedantic to reference one's own work, I am compelled to do so here, since this point is developed most fully in my unpublished Th.D. dissertation "*Propter Absolutionem: Holy Absolution in the Theology of Martin Luther and Philipp Jacob Spener—A Comparative Study,*" 213–23; available from the library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

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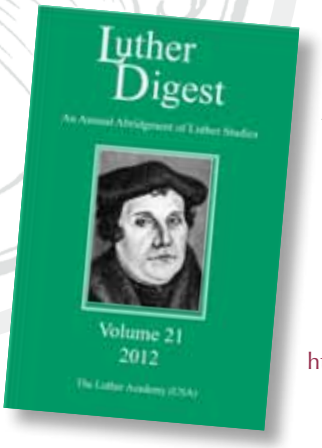

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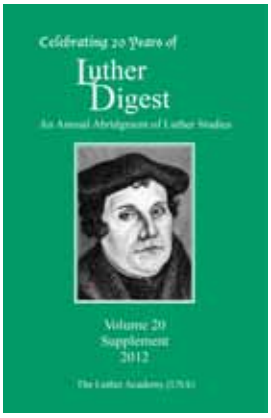

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Forgiveness of Sins and Restoration to Office

James A. Nestingen

There are two theological issues involved in the question of restoring to the pastoral office those who have lost it through some public offense. The first is the nature of forgiveness; the second, qualifications for the office of the ministry. To provide perspective for further discussion of the problem, these issues are considered here in light of the New Testament and the Lutheran tradition.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Understandings of forgiveness and sin in both the New Testament and the Lutheran Confessions are controlled by what might be called eschatological afterthought. Instead of moving from an analysis of the problem to a proffered solution, they move backwards from the solution to the problem. This reversal, in which the work of Christ takes priority, radicalizes the concepts of forgiveness and sin.

The driving force of New Testament theology is its eschatology. The cross and the resurrection of Jesus are understood as disclosure of both his identity and the creation's future. He is identified as Lord (Rom 1:3; 14:9), as the ultimate authority placed in control of all things so that at his name every knee shall bow, on the earth, above the earth, and under it (Phil 2:9–11). The early Christian confession, "Jesus is Lord," is an assertion of his power. Raised from the dead, he has been given authority over all things.

Identifying Jesus as Lord, the resurrection discloses the future of the earth as well. The classic expression of this hope is in 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul speaks of Christ subjecting all of the other powers (finally death) to his control and then, in effect, handing things over to the Creator (vv. 20–28). If the language remains strange, the hope that it expresses is certain: the ultimate purpose of Christ's work is the restoration of the creation to its rightful owner. Taking on all the other powers that have claimed sovereignty, Christ is establishing his claim so that he will be manifest as "the one in whom all things hold together" (Col 1:17) and so that the creation will finally be what it was meant to be.

There were early Christian communities, such as Corinth, where anticipation of the resurrection in this life undermined the cross. Counteracting this, Paul's letters and the Gospels tie the resurrection and the cross together as closely as possible. Paul's power-in-weakness discussion toward the end of 2 Corinthians, for example, is to show that the power of the resurrection is to be had only under the sign of the cross. Similarly, in the Gospels the risen Christ always appears with his wounds so that the continuity of the risen and the crucified are beyond any doubt. The resurrection is the vindication of Jesus' crucifixion. In the light of his rising, the one who was "crucified outside the camp" (Heb 13:11–13) under the curse of the law (Gal 3:13) among the godless (the two thieves, Golgotha) is known for who he is and what he does; he is the Lord of all, giving himself under the sign of the opposite in the midst of rejection and shame.

It is in the light of this hope, held in varying degrees of anticipation by all of the New Testament writers, that matters of forgiveness and sin are considered. The hope functions as the first premise in the line of reasoning, with everything else falling into place behind it.

Forgiveness is the entrance to new life in Christ. By forgiving sin, Christ takes the sinner under his lordship, gathering a new community of those who are being freed from the other powers that have held them. Forgiveness is thus equivalent to justification, both being rooted in the presence of the Spirit of the resurrected Lord. Forgiven, the believer is incorporated into Christ to be conformed to his image (Rom 8:29), dying with him to be raised with him.

The classic text here is John 20:19–23. The risen Christ makes his first appearance to his disciples as they are attempting to protect themselves by hiding in an upper room. He appears among them without knock or warning and then, without statement of intention or explanation, breathes on them, granting the Holy Spirit in the power to forgive and retain sin. The forgiveness of sins is the present equivalent of the resurrection of the dead.

This connection is maintained throughout the New Testament. Even before his limbs are unlocked, the paralytic has already received new life in Christ's words of forgiveness (Mark 2:3–12). Zacchaeus and other tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners of all kinds (Luke 19:1–10; Matt 9:10–12; 21:31)—"the offscouring of all things" as Paul speaks of the early community (1 Cor 4:13)—are all treated accordingly. Forgiveness breaks them out of a situation in which their future is shaped by their sin and puts them into a relationship in which the future is given to them in Christ.

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Once the eschatological purpose of Christ's work and the power of forgiveness are clear, the basis of the New Testament's discussion of sin becomes apparent. It is no longer simply a moral problem, a chronic appetite for the titillating. Rather, as Paul declares in Romans, "anything that does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). Since faith defines the relationship between the risen Lord and those who have been called into his community, anything—anything in its broadest and most inclusive sense—that undermines this relationship in any way not only is sin but also reveals the power of sin. It is a turning away once again from the Creator to the creature. The creature becomes ensnared all over again by the powers that identify the passing age, death, the devil, the law.

For Luther as for the New Testament, forgiveness is never simply a negative transaction dependent on perceived guilt. Rather, it is a future-opening, freedom-bestowing gift in which the believer lives.

For all of the emphasis on the power of forgiveness, some question remains about the possibility of restoring to the community one who has fallen away from it. The problematic text is Hebrews 6:4–8, where any return from apostasy without repentance is flatly denied. Paul, in dealing with a similar problem in Corinth, where members of the community apparently had come to the conclusion that the power of the resurrection so protected them that it was no longer possible for them to sin, instructs the community to drive these evildoers out of the fellowship (1 Cor 5).

Matthew and Luke, on the other side, give close attention to the restoration of the lost. Matthew 18:12–14 speaks of the restoration of "the little ones"; the well-known parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal in Luke 15 broaden it to a concern for the lost of any kind. Matthew 18:15–17 provides specific instructions for restoring sinners to the community or finally excluding them; Luke 17:3 calls for unlimited forgiveness on condition of repentance.

It may be that this range of data represents continuing discussion of the problem of discipline in the New Testament community. As hope for an imminent eschaton cooled, problems of community discipline had to be dealt with, policies being developed accordingly. Whatever the case, the eschatological power of forgiveness, at least in the Pauline writings and the Gospels, is such that it blurs any clear line between sinners and saints. The exegesis of Romans 7 that Luther appealed to for the *simul* may be disputed by some, but the presence of Peter—whose apostasy was known in such detail that it is one of the most fully documented stories in the Gospels—in a position of leadership in the early community makes it clear that forgiveness was not considered a one-time clearance. Rather, it is the hallmark of the early Christian witness in the power of the crucified and risen Christ.

The logic of this New Testament eschatological afterthought carries over into the Lutheran tradition. Luther himself was driven by apocalyptic expectations that in turn animated his whole witness. While the tradition after him cooled the drive of Luther's hope, Lutheran teaching still reflects the basic features of that eschatology, at least in its classic documents. Unlike the Augustinian tradition from which he came, Luther does not begin his theology with an assumption about the law. Instead he begins christologically and reasons backwards from the work of Christ to forgiveness, the law, and sin. If Christ alone saves, then there can be no other force in human experience capable of saving. Forgiveness must therefore be understood in relation to justification as the saving declaration of God in Christ. Unable to save, the law has to serve some other necessary but ancillary purpose. Sin can then be spoken of on two levels: in relation to faith and in relation to the law.

"Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation" (SC VI, 6). For Luther as for the New Testament, forgiveness is never simply a negative transaction dependent on perceived guilt. Rather, it is a future-opening, freedom-bestowing gift in which the believer lives. Baptized into the forgiveness of sin, living under promise, renewed in faith, the believer receives life in Christ under the sign of absolution. Forgiveness and justification are two aspects of the same event: being incorporated into Christ, being defined by him in a life-determining relationship.

This said, the law is put in its place. It is "demythologized," confined to its proper realm. Unable to save, it is doing the work of law when it states the Creator's demands upon his creatures. And it is doing its best when it brings home, in an inchoate, indiscriminate way, the need for some kind of help. It is only when the gospel takes control of the law that this "second use" actually serves its proper end: driving a person to Christ. Otherwise, left to its own resources, the law simply drives and keeps driving, insatiably. Under the power of the gospel, however, it is used by the Holy Spirit. Then and only then can it convict of sin. The confession of sin is the confession of faith.

For Luther and the early Lutherans, the sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts through the law is "person sin," "root or hereditary sin," the sin of the first table of the Commandments. It is unbelief, the idolatrous quest of the heart that seeks in the creature what the Creator alone can give. This is the realm of "unbelief, despair, and other great and shameful sins" (SC III, 16), an arena of life in which human inability to fear, love, or trust God above all things is revealed. Here the believer is driven to confess, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel . . ." (SC II, 6).

The sins of the second table follow out of the sin of the first. Fearing, loving, and trusting something other than God, the

sinner is at odds with the neighbor as well. But here, maybe surprisingly, the law can be of some help. In the second table there is some possibility of self-discipline, of community restraint and encouragement. The law cannot produce faith, but it can by its coercive power place some check on the sinful self. It can even go further, encouraging a civil righteousness which is a positive good.

There is no question about the possibility of restoring the sinner to community in the Lutheran tradition. The confession of faith that the Holy Spirit has "enlightened" and "sanctified" stands side by side with the conviction that "in the church, day after day, he fully forgives my sins and the sins of all believers" (SC II, 6). The sanctified are sinners who continue to live in forgiveness until the last day. Impenitent sinners, those who have not been moved to penance by the gospel, may be excluded from the church, however. This "lesser excommunication" is carried out for the sake of witness to the one being sent away, in hopes that restoration will result.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE

There are two primary traditions of ministry in the New Testament, one defining it in terms of charismatic power, the other in terms of apostolic authority. Each sets its own standards for ministry. But in both cases ministry belongs to the community; it is neither a personal endowment nor a right of the individual.

The tradition of ministry rooted in charismatic power is the oldest in the New Testament and characteristic of the Pauline congregations. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 11–13 define its basic features. As the Spirit of the risen Lord takes believers under the power of grace (χάρις), they are endowed with gifts of grace (χαρίσματα) that range from prophetic speech to financial stewardship and administration. The gift is the believer's calling, the particular piece of the action assigned in the endowment: "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (Rom 12:6). The gift is also for what has been given: "each according to the measure God has assigned" (Rom 12:3), "but let each one test his own work . . . for each man will have to bear his own load" (Gal 6:4–5).

The Spirit's specific endowment or gift of power is the one qualification for ministry, which is understood to be the continuing work of the risen Christ through the community. Paul vehemently resisted any attempt to establish other requirements, as for instance in Galatia where outsiders came insisting on obedience to a particular understanding of the law. At the same time, however, he set a test for ministry, namely, edification, building up the body (1 Cor 14). This test was to be a basis for challenging self-serving and disruptive ministries.

The second tradition, in which ministry is defined in terms of apostolic authority, grew up a little later in the New Testament church, possibly in reaction to the disorder of the Pauline congregations. Whereas for Paul and his communities, ministry was the continuing work of the Holy Spirit carried out through a body of incorporated individuals, in the later tradition ministry was seen as the work of the Holy Spirit mediated through offices. The apostles themselves were not replaced when they died; there was no continuation of an office of "apostle" in the Christian community. There arose, however, a tradition of derived authority in which the ministry is handed on through the succession of offices.

Luke-Acts holds a variation of this understanding of ministry, but the primary source for this tradition is the Pastoral Epistles. The threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon became the working structure of the early church. The clergy appear to have taken over the ministry that in the earlier tradition had belonged to the whole congregation. Now it became ordered, delegated, and passed along from office to office.

Qualifications for office were set out in terms of desired personal characteristics. In 1 Timothy 3:2, for instance, a bishop should be "above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified," while a deacon must be "serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain" (v. 8). Using these qualifications, congregations could seek persons to lead them in ministry.

Whether ministry is by charismatic power bestowed from above or by apostolic authority delegated through office, it is clearly neither a possession nor a right of the individual. In Paul's understanding the charismatic gift is a commission to service; unused or exploited, it turns on its bearer in indictment. In the Pastorals, those who do not live up to the qualifications of the office are unfit for it.

The Lutheran tradition of ministry combines characteristics of both of these traditions, a factor in the continuing disputes about it. Ministry is defined eschatologically in terms of the Spirit's work. The means of the Spirit's working, however, is not a person, an office, or the community itself, but rather the word and sacraments. It is a confessional understanding in the sense that the ministry is defined by confessing, by the declaration of the word and the administration of the sacraments.

There is no question about the possibility of restoring the sinner to community in the Lutheran tradition.

The Augustana provides the classic definition. Article v lays down the working premise: the Spirit works faith through the means of grace. The fact that the Spirit works through the word requires speakers, establishing an office. The speaking in turn brings about a gathering of hearers (Articles vii and viii). But as it establishes both the office of the ministry and the gathering of the church, the word also limits both. Articles xiv and xxviii limit the office of the ministry: it is not a personal prerogative but a calling (xiv). As such, its authority is limited to what is given in the word itself (xxviii). While the gathering is not limited as explicitly, the word clearly defines

its boundaries as well: the gathering requires speakers of the word (V and XIV) and it is subject to the word proclaimed to it (XXVIII).

The essential qualification for ministry in the Lutheran Confessions, then, is the word itself. A pastor called to speak it must know it and be able to tell it in such a way that the community receives its service. The community may also set other appropriate standards for its pastors. The Augustana doesn't ask for anything more than a "regular call." But the "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" speaks of ministry as a "right of the congregation" (Tr 24). Dependent on the word, the community has to have access to it and may then set standards for its speakers.

The word of forgiveness in Christ cannot be abstracted or reduced to a general policy of tolerance.

These standards certainly include the second table of the Commandments. As reluctant as he was to support coercive measures in matters of the first table, Luther left no question about expectations for personal discipline. Article VI of the Formula of Concord is an echo, though the language has changed somewhat. "The law is for the body," Luther argued. Personal discipline in matters of the second table is on the order of table manners—an elementary requirement to be handled without either fuss or concession.

So, for example, sexual trustworthiness as defined in the Sixth Commandment is a minimal standard that cannot be compromised without disrupting the community. In the case of pastors, it is demanded by the workings of the ministry itself. If a pastor is going to be relied upon to speak the word in the intimate contexts of daily life where people are the most vulnerable, that pastor must be sexually reliable. A pastor who is not predictable, who cannot be counted on to honor appropriate pastoral relations within the community, will not be able to function as a speaker of the word in it.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of these considerations it is possible to draw out two implications that may be helpful in considering the problem of restoring to the pastoral office those who have lost it through some public offense.

First, the promise of forgiveness in Christ cannot be reduced to therapy, treated as entitlement, or abstracted into a general policy of tolerance. Forgiveness is therapeutic. Silencing the accusing voice of the law, it undermines the very basis of the attack on the conscience. Released, a person is no longer divided within at that point—there is healing in the self. In the absolution guilt may end, the future may open; there may be a great sense of relief.

But eschatologically considered, the gift is inseparable from the giver. While restoring a person to a proper sense of self may be an appropriate therapeutic goal, in faith the objective is different. In faith the sought-for result is that one be brought into such a relationship with Christ as to be defined by him. If the goal of therapy is self-recovery, life in faith is self-loss, literally dying with Christ.

In neither case can forgiveness be considered entitlement. As powerfully as Christ's forgiveness functions, both therapeutically and eschatologically, it does not automatically resolve the question of restoration to office. Though the sin is forgiven, the sinner may have forfeited by public offense the trust necessary to function effectively in office. Likewise, considerations of the integrity of the witness may demand qualifications—for example, in relation to marital conduct—that automatically eliminate people who do not conform to them. As an institution of the earthly kingdom, the church is duty-bound to set standards of office that are appropriate to its function. Further, a person who invokes forgiveness in an attempt to override the legitimate concerns of the community for its proclamation can hardly be considered a penitent!

For the same reasons the word of forgiveness in Christ cannot be abstracted or reduced to a general policy of tolerance. This reduction happens when forgiveness is treated as a concept and its implications pressed, either in relation to God as a universalism or in relation to other people as a principle of openness or general acceptance. Tolerance is negative; at best, it is a generalized willingness to overlook offense. In Christ, forgiveness is not an idea but an event that happens. As such, it is positive; a person is taken on in the specifics, the offense is dealt with, and a new relationship is established.

Second, the call to the ministry and the language of personal rights are antithetical. Biblically and confessionally, whether empowered by the Spirit or authorized by a succession of offices, ministry is always a trust that is given. The very concept of call involves the presence of others who take the initiative in seeking out a person for service. The language of rights, however, is by its nature individualistic. It defines powers or prerogatives that the individual already holds and which may not be taken by the community.

Only the gathering of believers, at whatever level they may be organized, can speak of a right to the ministry. Holding this right, they may set whatever theological, educational, moral, or other standards they consider appropriate to the call. The limit on their right, whether it is delegated to a bishop or exercised in a congregational procedure, is the word. No individual can claim as a right what the community of the saints bestows as a trust under the power of the Holy Spirit. LOGIA

Theology as Unfolding the Article of Justification

Klaus Schwarzwäller

Current theology can be described as scholastic. It offers an immense knowledge about anything and everything. When it integrates new insights into its current framework, however, such changes only end up feeding this existing paradigm. Such work fails to provide a new outlook. For example, theologians know almost everything there is to know about Luther. They can tell us exactly when and why he did what he did. But the spirit that made him who he was and still is is far from them. They profess knowledge that they have about him. Any new insights, though, only enlarge this prior framework so that, ironically, as our knowledge increases, the paradigm offers less and less. Knowledge of Luther that actually delivers his theology, however, is rare. In spite of our growth in knowledge, we are not making much progress.

The reason for this state of affairs can be found in our appropriation of contemporary scholarly methods. Generally speaking, these methods are metaphysical, rationalistic, and, above all, positivistic, which dominates all the others. This thesis merits an explanation.

I will start with positivism. This is the ideology that reduces our epistemic horizon to what "is the case" by means of specifying exact evidence, measurement, or proof through numbers and statistics, or demonstrating it logically. In a word, it is the method of science. This method, however, assumes far more than it usually admits. After all, mathematics cannot be done apart from fictions and several *quid pro quos*. Nevertheless, since this method was deemed to be successful in science, resulting in science's dominance in our lives, the academy has enthusiastically followed it. The question as to whether or not this method was able to get at more than a narrow sector of reality was sidestepped. Also, the fact was ignored that proving anything about existence assumes things happening above it or before it that are simply assumed. For example, a murder can be proved on the basis of traces that are left. But as we adequately follow these traces, we must already presuppose some knowledge that cannot itself be proved, as, for instance, when police officers engage in racial profiling. The subsequent trial will reveal many additional facts that no one would have guessed and of which, often enough, nothing could have been known unless it was confessed. In many ways, we are taught this daily in life experiences. In spite of these facts, today the positivistic method rules without question. Under its sway, life experiences and science are strictly separated from one another.

Now we will look at rationalism. It narrows our focus on reality in a twofold way. First, the Latin *ratio* is a translation of the Greek word λογος, which includes what is usually meant by *ratio* but also, more extensively, denotes sense and language, as well as mind. Language and sense certainly contain many things that exceed *ratio*. However, this bias towards rational inquiry indicates that from the beginning our mental capacities are conceived of apart from language, sense, and other mental possibilities. Second, this narrowed conception became dominant again due to the rise of science. The result has been that anything exceeding the unencumbered *ratio,* such as miracles, nonlogical behavior, and unprecedented events, is done away with. I am reminded of a colleague who presented a remarkable reconstruction of some Old Testament events. When I asked him what made him sure that his reconstruction matched reality, he answered that his method was to proceed strictly logically. How would he react if somebody, on the basis of only a couple of dates, tried to reconstruct his life strictly logically?

Now I will turn to metaphysics. Of late metaphysics has become a derogatory label that one can pin on anyone with whom one disagrees. Strictly speaking, however, it is a way of thinking that seeks a vantage point from which one can comprehend the whole of reality in order to grasp and interpret any part of reality. Or, conversely, one can move from any point in reality to its ultimate comprehension. The former path is deductive; the latter is inductive. But whether induction or deduction, it is tantamount to seduction. It makes us believe that our thoughts could comprehend, even match, reality and sum it up in conceptions or definitions. However, think of this: What—for heaven's sake—is terrorism? Its various forms are found on so many different levels that finally this word lacks any clarity at all. Or, take the concept of "revelation." We have "revelation" by creation and "revelation" by the law and "revelation" in Christ and "revelation" in general, and so forth. Consequently, our dogmatics are occupied with clarifications to try to explain how these various kinds of "revelation" differ among themselves and yet belong together, how they are included in or excluded by each other.

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Since theology is done within this framework and kept within its own autonomous sphere, it naturally requires a unique approach to reality. This is what hermeneutics aims to do. It flourishes to the degree that theology is less in touch with real life and is supposed to be better able to lead us to the things of earth. If, however, you step back in order to have a look at the whole from a remote point of view, from a metalevel, it is quite clear that, compared to what is expected from hermeneutics, the change of water into wine is a mere incidental triviality. Well, the only change that I have found so far—with much effort—was the change of wine into water.

Contemporary theology in general is disappointing, because it is scholastic.

Thus, contemporary theology in general is, as I see it, disappointing, because it is scholastic. And, this scholasticism is grounded in the trifocal way of metaphysics, rationalism, and positivism. These three lead us astray in at least three ways:

1. Contemporary theology is eager to prove what, at least within these given terms, cannot be proved at all.
2. Contemporary theology makes us cope with pseudoproblems, such as *creatio* versus *creatio continua*.
3. Contemporary theology, in its structure, can only maintain, but not realize, that the "article" of justification is by no means an article, but that it is the whole scope of theology.

To summarize what has just been said: Our goal is to deal with the foundation of our business and with the problems of how to approach it in a proper way. Said differently, it is not to take any given way for granted but always to ask whether it is right and adequate; or again, it is to expend the effort to find the right beginning. This is our enduring task, especially since, over time, inherited and reliable paradigms tend to develop a different meaning. Fortunately, however, we are not forced to start from zero but rather have solid and time-tested models at hand, specifically the article of justification.

THEOLOGY AS THE UNFOLDING OF THE ARTICLE OF JUSTIFICATION

It is still the article of justification from which, as Luther once put it, "flows" the whole rest of theology so that, if this article is treated properly, all the others are, likewise, sound (*eoque salvo salvi sunt et alii*). This is because this article makes us do theology from theology's core and, at the same time, marks its borders. There is no more concise characterization than what Ernst Wolf gave to this article in the title of an essay, "The Doctrine of Justification as Center and Border of Reformation Theology."[1] We treat it properly when it is neither postponed, nor taken as merely one article among others, but when it is at the core of things from the beginning. Negatively, this means:

1. We do not have nor can we get any proper knowledge of God methodologically apart from this article.
2. We are not interested in getting answers to questions that arise from our traditional presuppositions but instead aim to get adequate questions on the basis of this article.
3. We do not intend to gain a system, or a sort of complete theological view on the whole, but instead are eager to follow the lines that result from this article.

What does this mean? And particularly, how does this work?

I will resist the temptation to demonstrate this theoretically. I prefer to get right into the matter and demonstrate it. In order to do this, I will refer to Melanchthon, who proves in the Augsburg Confession that he understood this truth. In Article IX he deals with Baptism, in Article X with the Lord's Supper, in Article XI with Confession, in Article XII with Repentance. In other words, he follows the traditional listing of the sacraments, but now interprets them in a new way. When reading these articles one after the other the question of Article XIII arises almost automatically: what, after all, are the sacraments now? Having been led through them, one is eager to learn how they are to be seen in relation to each other as well as altogether. Look at the Augsburg Confession itself. Article XIII is headed: "The Use of the Sacraments" (*De usu sacramentorum*). This indicates that the headings explain what the sacraments require from us. Incidentally, in Luther's Booklet on Baptism (Taufbüchlein), the question is put this way: What does the sacrament require so that we cannot help doing it?[2] To paraphrase, once God has instituted the sacraments and put them in our hands, the proper question is not "How do we handle them in the right or correct manner?" Instead, the proper question is "What is up to us because the sacrament itself leads us to it?"

This change of perspective and reframing of the question offered at this juncture is truly exciting. For, according to our tradition, we should ask what exactly we are given, from which we can draw inferences that apply to every matter and may thus act because we are in the know. This means that we can grasp what God gives us. Thus having the gift in our hands, we can be obedient on the basis of our insights about what is right or wrong. On the basis of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII, however, we can affirm that the sacraments as God's gifts to us contain by themselves what they are for and that consequently it is up to us to do things accordingly because of them. Therefore, in pursuing this new question, the (modern) role of being a subject is done away with. Instead, we are to be "perfect" in the sense of Matthew 5:48, free of care, totally devoted, and

1. Ernst Wolf, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre als Mitte und Grenze reformatorischer Theologie," *Evangelische Theologie* 9 (1949/1950): 298–308 (reprinted in Ernst Wolf, *Peregrinatio* [München: Kaiser, 1965], 2:11–21).
2. Kolb-Wengert, 371–75.

without the controlling subject in between. But, as can easily be seen, according to our tradition we do not actually want to be obedient to God just the way he wants us to be; instead, we prefer to serve him on the basis of our sight and knowledge of the matter. To put it sharply, but quite aptly, once we receive and know God's gifts, we are enabled to think about how to handle them correctly.

Let us make this insight clearer. Check the standard dogmatics texts and you will always find an article on "Creation." So, in *Christian Dogmatics,* edited by Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson, the fourth locus, *The Creation,* is outlined as (1) The Biblical Witness, (2) The Creation of the World, (3) The Human Being, (4) The Continuing Work of Creation, and (5) Challenges to the Ongoing Doctrinal Task.[3] From the section headings alone we get the impression that creation, especially humanity, is something that has its very own being. Humans are dealt with as if they were, in philosophical terms, subsistent, having an existence of their own. One may well ask if they do not. They may or may not. However, as long as we treat them in this way, new problems will arise: the relationship between the Creator and creation, the relationship between God's providence and our "free will," the problem of human responsibility versus the Almighty's, how to treat creation—and what not. Attempting to solve these problems fills whole libraries.

To make it quite clear, this is the traditional, metaphysical way of dealing with this locus. And in following this paradigm, one normally appropriates rationalism, which likewise entangles us with the questions and objections of positivism. In this connection, think of Wolfhart Pannenberg's struggle to match creation with modern science, especially with regard to humankind. But this way of treating creation does not square with a theology that starts with the "article" of justification. For theology when centered on the article of justification starts by taking things—in this example, the world—as being in God's hands, since they come from his hands, stay in his hands, and are brought to their end by his hands. So one cannot take them as if they were subsistent. Instead, one has to view them not as existing in themselves but as really being in God's hands and with regard to his goals for them. This does not mean that there is no earth on which we live and from which we can observe and ask (or even not ask) what it is and means, what we should do, and for what reasons. Instead, the proper viewpoint is this: now that we live in the world, we need to ask what God wants us to do in it, with it, and under what circumstances.

In this view, God is the Father of Jesus Christ and no one else. So we cannot ask for him and his will apart from Jesus Christ. Instead, we are aware of him only in asking for him as related to Jesus Christ. To be sure, God does not lead us to knowledge of the world as such, nor does he inhibit this. This task has nothing to do with theology; it may be a task of science or philosophy or whatever. And, of course, we are free to do research in these fields. Theology, however, asks, and asks only for God the Father of Jesus Christ and his will. As Luther put it, "The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and God justifying and the Savior of the sinful man. Whatever apart from this subject in theology is either asked for or discussed, is error and poison."[4]

This may lead to the objection that, after all, we need to have sufficient knowledge about the world as such, or we will do theology in a vacuum. This objection is helpful; it leads to further insights. Here, there are two points which need to be made.

Theology deals with sinful humanity and God who justifies lost sinners. That is all.

First, we must take leave of any positivism and ask instead for things that cannot be proved or measured at all. We must do research in vast fields of facts and matters that are totally invisible—God's will, Christ's grace, the Spirit's work: how do they interact with the situation and what do they require from us? What, for example, is the difference between trusting in God and tempting him? Who dares, and on what basis, to go this or that way? How is it to be found at all?

And second, it reminds us of the fact, which has never been refuted, that theology does not deal with everything there is to know nor was it ever intended to do so. I have already specifically touched upon this. Theology deals with sinful humanity and God who justifies lost sinners. That is all. Since this, of course, does comprehend our life as a whole, but not all the details, there have to be, and there are, other fields of scientific research and scholarly investigations, such as physics, astronomy, medicine, political science, and so forth. So, if we want to act properly, we cannot be blamed for negotiating these matters with others. What, for example, is God's will with respect to the Israel-Lebanon conflict? To say "peace, peace" or that "the violence must stop," says nothing. Everyone would agree with this. But now,[5] unfortunately, there is no peace, and fighting may surface at any moment. So we must discuss matters with people experienced in the circumstances of this conflict—on the basis of theology as just noted. Perhaps they will not wish to talk to us, or they may even despise us because we are theologians. Should this be any reason to deny our own way of dealing with the matter?

This brief summary of the right way to do theology shows that we need to shift the weight of work. The discussion with ra-

3. Philip J. Hefner, "Fourth Locus, The Creation," in *Christian Dogmatics,* ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1:269–357.

4. AE 12: 311 (WA 40, II: 328 Dr). Translation slightly altered.

5. This article was written in August 2006.

tionalism about possibilities and probabilities, the quarrel with positivism about the reality and the wholeness of its perception, the concern about adequate and, above all, comprehensive definitions or at least conceptions—all of this now becomes incidental or rather superfluous. We have a more important job to do than to contest matters impressed upon us by mere ideologies. Instead, we are challenged to be what we are or at least pretend to be, theologians who are engaged in asking for God's holy will.

The article of justification is narrowed and distorted unless one has in mind the two kingdoms.

This way of doing theology and of finding the way to theology has a tradition. To think of German theologians, Hans Joachim Iwand, Julius Schniewind, Ernst Wolf, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer have all helped us. Among the living, I single out the work of Friedrich Mildenberger, because he consciously and radically broke with the tradition in the three volumes of his *Biblische Dogmatik* (1991–93) and gave a detailed account of this new way in the first volume of his dogmatics.[6]

IMPLICATION ONE: REEXAMINING THE TWO KINGDOMS

Once theology starts from the article of justification, the various doctrines such as the two kingdoms, law and gospel, and the distinction between *Deus absconditus and Deus revelatus* receive their proper place, whereas otherwise they are treated as if they were their own distinct loci. Thus, for example, the two kingdoms are dealt with as if this were a specific doctrine. But by referring to this specific doctrine, one normally has in mind a German invention of the decade of the 1930s. Any reference to Luther with regard to this invention is, to say the least, nonsense. What is normally meant in these cases, is neither a doctrine nor the two kingdoms, but rather Luther's constant urging us to (a) discern (b) God's—*God's!*—(c) two ways of governing the world, which serves the aim—as is evident from the foreword of *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit*—(d) to "let Christ remain the Lord," and the lords and princes remain Christians.[7] Thus one has to distinguish between spiritual and nonspiritual governments but, to be sure, both under the lordship of Christ. For example, the question of whether a street is to be repaved is not a spiritual matter and thus should be decided rationally. However, this decision is not to be made apart from the Lord and his will: if this street is designed to take people to concentration camps or to transport heroin, it should not get fixed, but rather should be totally destroyed. Hence, it is neither doctrine nor "two kingdoms" but continuous distinction in the process of ongoing social life. To be sure, this is much more demanding than merely to reel off a scheme of "the two kingdoms."

Yet, these remarks are only an aside. The two kingdoms are our topic. This is not off the track of justification. On the contrary, it belongs essentially to it. And the article of justification is narrowed and distorted unless one has in mind the two kingdoms. The framework is simple; but when one tries to explain it, it may sound rather complicated. Nevertheless, I will try.

What does justification mean? To Luther, this is unmistakably clear: God wrenches sinners from Satan's control. He snatches sinners from the kingdom of Satan and makes them members of his own kingdom. On this basis, they are allowed and even supposed to address God as their heavenly Father. This is something quite different from getting a person into heaven or forgiving his or her sins. All of this is included, no doubt; but it is almost incidental. This is quite easy to understand. If God's aim, as the triune God, were our beatitude, then human arrogance is magnified. Humans would suppose that they were the center of the whole universe! Oh no, God, the triune God, has another aim. His aim is godly, namely his honor! His honor is that he eventually defeats Satan. This is the horizon for Luther when he wrote in *The Bondage of Will*

> that there are two kingdoms in the world that fight each other most fiercely (*pugnantissima*). In the one Satan is ruling, whom, therefore, Christ calls the prince of this world and Paul the god of this time and world. He holds all people captive, according to his will, who are not, by the Spirit of Christ, wrenched from him, as Paul testifies, and he does not allow them to be snatched by any power with the exception of God's Spirit, as Christ testifies in the parable of the strong one who is keeping his home in peace. In the other one Christ is ruling. This kingdom strongly resists the kingdom of Satan and fights against it. Into this kingdom we are transferred not by our own power but by the grace of God, by which we are freed from the present evil world and are wrenched from the might of darkness.[8]

This is, in a nutshell, Luther's so-called doctrine of the two kingdoms. It teaches, as it were, God's permanent and, in the end, successful fight against his enemy, the devil. And—although it is not that clear from this very quotation—this fight is a fight about God's glory and honor. As long as Satan still controls any part of the world, God's glory is limited. As long

6. Friedrich Mildenberger, *Biblische Dogmatik: Eine biblische Theologie in dogmatischer Perspektive,* Band 1, *Verstehen und Geltung der Bibel* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991).
7. AE 45: 83 (*Luthers Werke in Auswahl,* ed. Otto Clemen [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1959], 2:361.20ff).
8. AE 33: 287. Translation by the author (*Luthers Werke in Auswahl,* ed. Otto Clemen [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1959], 3:287.24–33).

as there are human beings serving Satan and his aims, God's honor is restricted. Since, however, Satan's power over us is unlimited, we are unable to escape it or to free ourselves from it, unless God himself frees us. Apart from God's gracious action for us, we remain slaves in the kingdom of Satan. But God does free us. Why? For the sake of his honor and glory, as I have already stated. This is correct, yet this is not all.

For God does not free us by an act of heavenly power. He frees us by Jesus Christ, who was crucified and resurrected, and by sending us his Spirit. This clearly indicates that it is to the glory and honor of the merciful, gracious, loving God. So this is his honor and glory, that he is adored and praised as the Almighty, and as Father, and as the God who seeks to regain sinners for his realm.

Thus the so-called doctrine of the two kingdoms makes us realize the dimensions of God's acting and, at the same time, the context of our salvation. Since Jesus Christ is "very God" so that the way and work of Christ are the way and work of God himself, it is impossible to know God and adore him apart from Jesus Christ. God the Father is revealed in his Son. Since we cannot even become aware of Jesus Christ but rather see only an interesting person—perhaps the person who caused the writing of early Christian literature—and consequently cannot be in touch with him unless God the Holy Spirit acts upon us, we have to acknowledge that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Therefore, to have anything to do with God is to have to do with the triune God. Otherwise, it is not God, but our picture of a god. If, however, we deal with the triune God, we deal with the justifying God.

So now we can summarize things correctly. God, the triune God, seeks his own glory and honor. He seeks it by destroying the kingdom of Satan. Thus, the justification of his lost creature is included. This means (and we can imagine now the dimensions of this subtle distinction) that the justification of the sinner is part of the glorification and honor of God—not vice versa—so that God's glorification and honor were part of his justification of the sinner! To say it more succinctly, God's honor and glory include our salvation and are triumphant in it. But God's honor and glory are by no means all wrapped up in his justifying lost sinners. Thus in clarifying the dimensions and context of justification, this "doctrine" helps us to be aware of God and his will: that all of this happens to the glory of God.

IMPLICATION TWO: GOD'S HIDDENNESS AND LAW AND GOSPEL

Thus we have come to the center of the article of justification. It teaches us to have our eyes steadily fixed on Jesus Christ and to resist any temptation to look aside. It is in Christ that we find God, for God wills that we find him in Christ and nowhere else. It is this context in which the distinction just worked out becomes important, the distinction that God's glory includes our justification, but that our justification as such is not God's glorification. If we neglect this distinction and simply identify our salvation with God's glory, the whole "article" is distorted or even ruined. For then the metaphysical temptation arises and it cannot be done away with effectively at this level.

The reason is obvious. If God finds his glory and end in our salvation, then one single look around the world with its misery, injustice, and cruelty raises questions about God, who he is, how he is, about the rules of his government, and so on. There is an inner necessity in these questions. For our justification and, along with it, God's credibility and our relationship to him, now depend altogether on sufficient answers. Otherwise, we could not be sure about God and his grace. This inevitably leads not only to the construction of God out of aspects of the Bible and philosophical principles but also to unsolvable problems such as why God allows suffering and pain, the question of theodicy. At this stage, however, the separation particularly between the Father and the Son becomes inevitable—with associated problems included.

Apart from God's gracious action for us, we remain slaves in the kingdom of Satan. But God does free us.

In the sketch I have presented here, none of these problems arises, at least as long as one straightforwardly follows the argument. Of course, we are concerned about evil in the world and we are afflicted by the fact that God allows many things that (as experience tells us) we are not able to connect with Jesus Christ. Now it becomes evident what it means that God equally is Son and Holy Spirit, as he is Father. As this triune God, we get to know him as our heavenly Father who loves us—"God so loved the world . . . "—and seeks the lost and redeems them "e'en though it be a cross that raiseth me" or rather one of the modern hells. And we are quite certain that his grace and truth "endure forever" albeit they are and remain totally invisible, as his love and grace were invisible at Calvary.

At the same time, we do not claim to have an adequate or complete image or conception of God, nor do we strive to get it. On the contrary, we concede that this very God, of course, exceeds our understanding and all our conceptions. We are unable to overview him. Correspondingly, we have no "solutions" to the pressing questions arising at this point. Therefore the many ways in which he rules the world are beyond our comprehension. We leave them up to him, yes, sighing and longing for resolution and strongly afflicted by them. But, to put it this way: we can live with this very God hidden from our sight, thoughts, and conceptions. For in Jesus Christ, "the Lord of hosts is he!" as Luther put it.[9] Once we belong to him, we have all we need and can have, especially since we are secure in him by God the Holy Spirit, even if we are shaken by radical doubts. Above all, we are busy with the tasks we receive from him so that there is no capacity left for metaphysics.

The problem addressed here is that of the hidden God. Once more, we hit upon a simplification of a difficult matter, one that

makes everything else almost preposterous. When we look at Luther we see that with him things do not find the simple resolution that Lutheranism would offer. For his distinction between the hidden and the revealed God is by no means that between the Father and the Son. Both of them are both hidden and revealed. As to God's hiddenness, this is the hiddenness either in his majesty or in the flesh. The meaning in both cases is that you cannot find or even have God just as you would find or have a brush or a McDonald's at the next corner. To find God, let alone have him, always means to engage with his word and will. So if, thanks to the guidance of the Spirit, we do so, God's hiddenness turns into his manifestation as the gracious God. This requires an explanation.

To find God, let alone have him, always means to engage with his word and will.

As long as we do not find the revealed God, we ask and look after the hidden God. Unless he in his mercy enlightens our minds, this search, if undertaken seriously, will drive us crazy and make us altogether despair of God. He is hidden to us and he remains hidden to us in the flesh as well as in his majesty. Correspondingly, whatever we get to know of him at least includes or even is in itself a demand, "You shall." It imposes an obligation on us that we must fulfill or we will miss God. In the terminology of theology it is law. Conversely, if you hear law, and as long as you hear it, you deal with the hidden God even if you invoke him or think you believe in Jesus Christ. That he reveals himself as man, or rather, that he makes us perceive him as our heavenly Father and recognize him in the crucified man Jesus Christ is the result of his acting upon us. By such action, he all of a sudden is revealed to us, revealed as the Father and Jesus Christ as the "very God." Thus we are enabled to hear his will and word as gospel, thanks to the Holy Spirit who enables us to hear the gospel at all. And what does the gospel say?

To be sure, it includes laws marking the borders beyond which we not only miss God's will but likewise our human integrity, as can be shown with regard to the Decalogue. Above all, however, it opens up a new way for a new life, a life under the guidance of the question for God's will. This question is a personal one and is therefore to be answered by myself, some persons themselves, a parish itself, a nation itself, or whatever, but in any case by persons. And even for my personal answer, I need the advice of others. So, this new way is a way shared with other persons and among them. Merely private Christianity is not, and cannot be, the normal way. The normal way is that I am a Christian within the Christian community.

In that the gospel makes us go a new way, it frees us, too, from the fixation on our sin. Our sins are no longer ours but now are God's matter and up to him. As Luther once remarked,

> If Satan tortures our conscience by the law, as is outlined in the Revelation that he accuses the saints day and night before God's face, it is useful to oppose the devil and to say: What's that to you? To be sure, I did not sin against you but against my God. I am not your sinner; so which right over me do you have? If I thus sinned and if it is sin that you are accusing . . . then I sinned against God who is merciful and forbearing. I did not sin against you, nor against the law, nor against the conscience, against no angel, against no human being, but solely against God. God however is no devil nor man-eater nor slaughterer as you are who terrifies us and wishes death. . . . Against this God I sinned but not against a tyrant or man-murderer. Therefore you do not have any right on me but God alone.[10]

Of course we suffer from our sins and repent and are longing for improvement. But they no longer burden us. And we do not have time and energy to ponder them constantly. For God gives us tasks (John 21:15–17). And particularly it is the gospel that keeps us free from all that is behind us, as it were, so that we can concentrate on these tasks. It opens to us the way of God's will every day anew. It is up to us to take our steps on this way and thus to experience the truth: it does work. And it frees us from so many silly things that always bother us and are as important as the color of my handkerchief.

CONCLUSIONS

In a broad brushstroke I have returned to a theology drawn from the article of justification and guided by the new way of putting questions as found in AC XIII. In this regard, all those difficult features, such as law and gospel, God hidden versus God revealed, the two kingdoms, and whatnot, have found or will find a solution that is simple in itself but difficult and complicated to explain. My guess is that in our history we have seldom seen or gone the way opened to us here because of the dogmas of metaphysics, rationalism, and positivism. My conviction, however, is that mostly we did not even dare to find this way, let alone walk in it, because we prefer being servants of metaphysics, rationalism, and positivism and thus doers of scholastic theology although we call ourselves Lutheran theologians.

In conclusion, the way of theology can no longer be the way of conventional scholarship, for this, under the guidance of metaphysics, rationalism, and positivism leads more or less straight into scholasticism. Our way instead should be asked for and be done under the guidance of the question about the glory of God's justifying and saving sinful humans. LOGIA

9. *Lutheran Book of Worship,* 228:2; *Lutheran Service Book,* 657:2.

10. AE 12: 346–47. Translation by the author (WA 40, II: 378 Dr).

Ecumenism as Fellowship and Confession

In the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America

Erling T. Teigen

Professor Armin Schuetze subtitled his book on the history of The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America *Ecumenical Endeavor*.[1] For contemporary world Lutheranism, such a use of ecumenical might be taken as downright silly, or at least naïve. But I think Schuetze has gotten it exactly right. In this article, I propose that the ecumenical approach to church relations and church union found in the establishment of the Synodical Conference represented a high point in post-seventeenth-century Lutheran confessionalism. This is not to say that the Synodical Conference was a perfect union; but it is to suggest that it established itself on the only principle possible if one wished to maintain a Lutheran identity.

Since the collapse of the Synodical Conference there have been frequent calls for a realignment of Lutheranism in America, if not in the world. I also propose that if such a realignment were ever to take place, it would have to be on the basis of these principles that were enunciated by our confessional fathers of the Synodical Conference in 1872: (1) A strict unconditional subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, with a confessional concomitant intention to practice doctrinal discipline on the basis of that commitment. (2) A biblical understanding of church fellowship demanding substantial agreement in doctrine for the exercise of church fellowship; in other words, that confessional fellowship is required for church fellowship.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When the Missouri Synod organized in 1847, American Lutherans could already celebrate the centennial of a Lutheran Church in America. But even in 1747, there was confessional dissension among American Lutherans. Those whom contemporary histories have labeled "orthodoxists" had been accusing Muhlenberg of indifferentism and Pietism and thus did not participate in the founding of the Pennsylvania Ministerium. In 1820, the General Synod was organized with three synods: Pennsylvania Ministerium, North Carolina, and Maryland-Virginia. At the same time, there was a rupture in the North Carolina Synod with the departure of the Henkels, whose history predated the Pennsylvania Ministerium.

The rupture was caused by the Henkels' confessional orthodoxy and led to the formation of the Tennessee Synod. This family was responsible for the first publications of the confessional writings in English. The New York Ministerium did not join because the new synodical federation was, apparently, too Lutheran, and the newly organized Ohio Synod stayed out because of a growing conservatism among the pastors there who had recently separated from Pennsylvania, mostly for geographical reasons. Only three years after its founding, the Pennsylvania Ministerium left the General Synod, seemingly in the interest of pursuing a closer relationship with the Reformed. So the first ecumenical endeavor got off to a shaky start.

Nevertheless, the General Synod grew and, by the 1850s, included most of the Lutherans in the United States. At Missouri's organizing convention in Chicago a different strain of Lutheranism came together with the union of elements from Missouri, represented by Walther, and Indiana-Michigan, represented by F. C. D. Wyneken (formerly from the General Synod) and Wilhelm Sihler (who had been with the Ohio Synod but found it wanting in its confessional commitment and left in 1845). Wisconsin was organized in 1850, with ties not only to German union mission societies but to the General Synod as well, and ten years later, the Minnesota Synod, also with some ties to the General Synod. Wisconsin's swing to confessional orthodoxy did not begin until the arrival of Professor Adolph Hoenecke and the presidency of John Bading.

During the late 1840s, immigrating Norwegian Lutherans were organizing themselves into two opposing camps: on the one side, churchly confessionalists, and the other side, pietists with an emphasis on lay leadership and personal experience. When the Norwegian Synod, organized in 1853, began to look for fellowship and a place to train its preachers, a delegation traveled around the United States and found spiritual kinship with Fort Wayne-St. Louis orthodoxy and not in Ohio or Pennsylvania.[2]

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1. Armin W. Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000).
2. It has often been asserted by church historians who should know better that the Norwegian Synod became hyper-confessional after it fell under the spell of C. F. W. Walther and Missouri. That view

The disruption of the General Synod in the 1850s and 1860s certainly had many causes, but a major factor was the rising confessionalism in parts of that body, as well as some pressure from Missouri and other newly arrived "old Lutherans." One issue was the ferment following the failed efforts of S. S. Schmucker and his cohorts to present a unique form of Lutheranism for American Christians, if not in response to, at least in harmony with Ralph Waldo Emerson's appeal for cultural and spiritual independence from the European continent. More to the point, however, the movement within the General Synod, with Charles Porterfield Krauth at the center, was playing out on American soil the same confessional revival that in Europe was reacting against rationalism and the Prussian Union. In part, the 1820 formation of the General Synod was in itself an attempt to provide a basis for a Reformed-Lutheran union in America.

A more immediate catalyst for the disruption of the General Synod, however, was the unclear confessional standard in the General Synod. The issue was forced into the open in the dispute about the admission of the Franckean Synod, which did not subscribe to the Augustana in its constitution. Even without that dispute, however, it seems that a rupture was inevitable.

In* Denkschrift *there was not a sign of the deep rupture that was to come later between Schmidt and Walther.

The formation of Krauth's General Council, it would seem, should have included Missouri, Ohio (by this time in fellowship with Missouri), and the Norwegians. Anyone who reads Krauth's *Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* must come away mystified as to what could possibly have kept the new Midwestern synods out of the General Council. The doctrinal position clearly presented in Krauth's articles is certainly something that confessional Lutherans today would want to adopt as their own.

In December 1866, Krauth presented a set of theses on Faith and Polity[3] as the basis for a new general synodical organization, and it was signed by thirteen synods, including Pennsylvania, Joint Synod of Ohio, Missouri, Norwegian, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, Canada, and New York. A year later, however, in November 1867, when the General Council was formally organized, the Missouri and Norwegian Synods were absent. Later they were joined by Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, groups with whom Missouri had not been amicable ten years earlier.

Why could they not join the General Council? Their thinking is revealed in a key document published in 1871. In 1870 the convention of the Joint Ohio Synod appointed a committee to confer with other synods with whom they were in doctrinal agreement in order to organize a conference of synods. The invitation went to the Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Norwegian synods. In January 1871, a consultation was held in Chicago with representatives from the Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Norwegian, and Wisconsin Synods. They agreed to meet again in November of the same year, when the chief order of business was to be a presentation of the reasons for forming a separate conference of synodical organizations.

DENKSCHRIFT

Denkschrift or *Memorial* was published as a pamphlet in 1871.[4] According to the Norwegian Synod church paper, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende,* the draft was prepared by F. A. Schmidt of the Norwegian Synod, which circumstance has its own irony.[5] In *Denkschrift* there was not a sign of the deep rupture that was to come later between Schmidt and Walther, and within the Synodical Conference itself, when Schmidt became the leader of the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, which broke with the Norwegian Synod in the election controversy.

The importance of *Denkschrift* ought not be underestimated. In a 1956 essay, "The Synodical Conference—The Voice of Lutheran Confessionalism," Carl S. Meyer observes that *Denkschrift* "is the platform, perhaps even more so than the actual constitution of this body."[6] Even a cursory reading of *Denkschrift* reveals that the issue that brought the conference into

has been shown to be false especially by Carl S. Meyer in *Pioneers Find Friends* (Decorah, IA: Luther College Press, 1963), and Torald N. Teigen in unpublished research and papers, mostly located in the ELS archives, Mankato, Minnesota.

3. Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 143–48.

4. *Denkschrift, enthaltend eine eingehende Darlegung der Gründe, weshalb die zur Synodal-Conferenz der evang.-luth. Kirche von Nord-Amerika . . . (Memorial Containing a Comprehensive Statement of the Reasons Why the Synods Forming "The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference" Could not Join Any of the Existing Unions of Synods Bearing the Lutheran Name),* which appeared in the Ohio Synod's *Lutheran Standard* (May–July, 1872): 73 ff., 1 ff. The German text was published as a pamphlet, Columbus, 1871. My English text is a compilation of the four parts, copied from the *Standard* and printed in mimeograph, sometime between 1956 and 1960, during the crisis that led to the breakup of the conference. Page references will be to the mimeographed text. A newer translation, but printed with extensive elisions, appears in Wolf, Documents, 187–96. According to *Maanedstidende (*December 1871): 361, F. A. Schmidt was the drafting author.

5. F. A. Schmidt had been a pupil of Walther and a Missouri Synod pastor in Baltimore. In 1861 he was called to the fledgling Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, to join Lauritz Larsen on the faculty there. When Walther's paper on election was read in 1877, Schmidt at first offered no objections, but soon after, Schmidt along with others accused Walther and those in the Norwegian Synod who agreed with him of Calvinism. Schmidt's role in the election controversy was pivotal. In 1884, Schmidt left the Norwegian Synod as a part of the "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood."

6. Carl S. Meyer, "The Synodical Conference: The Voice of Lutheran Confessionalism," *Proceedings of the Forty-Fourth Convention of*

being was the doctrine of church fellowship. In the doctrines directly related to the gospel, justification, word and sacrament, church and ministry, there was nothing to disagree about with the followers of Krauth. On some issues, one might even find Krauth to have penetrated the Lutheran Confessions more thoroughly than Walther. The doctrinal position that predominated among those who followed Krauth into the council could hardly be seen to differ from the Missouri/Norwegian/Ohio group. But the question that finally divided them was the question of church fellowship: What is the nature of the unity of the external church? In what way and to what extent does the church give witness to the unity of faith?

Denkschrift isolates the issue at the very outset:

> Various Synods have stood opposed to each other and manifested a lamentably discordant spirit, not only in reference to this or that essential part of our Lutheran doctrine and practice, but even in regard to such primary questions as: the normative character of our symbols, the conditions of Lutheran church fellowship, the Scripturalness of our Lutheran Distinctive doctrines, the fundamental character of the difference between our Lutheran doctrine and church on the one hand, and on the other the various practices of the so-called Reformed church. Even in these and kindred questions—questions that concern the real basis of our church as an independent visible church-communion—there was no unanimity.

The critical issues are confessional subscription and the doctrine of church fellowship. *Denkschrift* disavows any party spirit, and says that if there were any way that conscience could allow it, they would join one of the existing organizations. But as matters stand, that is not possible, and they find in the "character and churchly position of those associations of synods hindrances more or less insurmountable."[7]

The first part is devoted to the General Synod, on which the judgment is harsh: it has "tenaciously held fast to its original hollowness and unsoundness." Since its founding, it has "become more and more guilty of a deplorable, deliberate apostasy from Lutheran doctrine and practice." After a bill of particulars, focusing particularly on the General Synod's admission of the Franckean Synod, *Denkschrift* concludes,

> Our Christian and Lutheran conscience therefore forbids us to recognize the General Synod as a Lutheran body, and constrains us rather to pronounce it a sectarian and syncretistic communion which is condemned by the word of the Apostle.

This is followed by quotations of Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10, along with several other key passages referred to in a footnote.

A brief space is given to the United Synod of the South (USS), which *Denkschrift* finds to be much more Lutheran than the General Synod and even sees signs of doctrinal discipline. Nevertheless, the USS is not an alternative for the bodies contemplating forming the Synodical Conference because

> it has been proclaimed openly and loudly, that these southern Lutherans, whilst they formally strictly adhere to the Augsburg confession, will yet have nothing to do with the "exclusive Lutheranism of the Formula of Concord" or the so-called "Old Lutherans."

It is likewise regretted that the USS tolerates groups that follow the "New Measures" and revivalism.

The critical issues are confessional subscription and the doctrine of church fellowship.

The third part is devoted to the newly formed General Council. Here one might expect a large dose of "Minnesota nice." And indeed, there is high praise for the efforts exerted in *The Lutheran and Missionary* through the pen of Dr. Krauth. *Denkschrift* singles out especially Krauth's writings on the Lord's Supper, which also appeared later in *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*. But the writer of *Denkschrift* and his readers know that the unity of spirit expected between those who followed Dr. Krauth and those about to form the Synodical Conference did not materialize. *Denkschrift* is quite sure that if there had first been free conferences after the manner of those held in 1857–1859, dealing with these issues, among those leaving the General Synod and the other Lutherans (Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Norwegian, and others), they certainly would have grown together on these issues. There is praise for the "old Pennsylvania Synod [Ministerium] and those who withdrew from the General Synod," but it was unfortunate that it was "without giving due prominence to the difference in doctrine as the real cause of their separation."[8] In fact, examination of the records of the disruption will verify that the issues were largely parliamentary and political. But even if perfect agreement had not been the result of such conferences, the General Council "would doubtless have been more honest and less ambiguous."[9]

Denkschrift examines the reasons for the failure to achieve unity. It is decidedly not because the General Council subscribes directly to the Augsburg Confession alone. The Synodi-

the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference of North America Assembled at First St. Paul's Church, Chicago, Ill., December 4–7, 1956 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), 14–71.

7. *Denkschrift*, 2.
8. Ibid., 9.
9. Ibid., 10.

cal Conference would prefer to see an explicit acceptance also of the entire Book of Concord; yet,

> so far as the doctrinal basis is concerned which the council has officially adopted in its constitution, we might be perfectly satisfied with that just as it is, and we would not make a change in it an absolute condition of our attaching ourselves to the Council.[10]

Fom the Prussian Union to the General Synod Union, the avowed purpose was to present a united front against Deism and Romanism.

But for the Conference organizers, the real issue is whether or not one actually abides by its doctrinal basis, whether it be Augustana alone, or the whole corpus of the confessional writings.

> But it is quite a different question whether such a verbally correct confession is all that can be legitimately required of a communion for the purpose of testing its Lutheran character. . . . The Confessions of the church are certainly not intended to be merely an empty formula in the shape of one or more paragraphs in the Constitution.[11]

Its relationship to the Iowa Synod becomes a test case for whether or not the council actually will abide by its acceptable doctrinal base. Even though the Iowa Synod was not received into full membership in the council, it was given a kind of associate membership. But, *Denkschrift* says,

> we cannot suppose that the Council was ignorant of the fact that the Synod of Iowa refuses to adopt the symbols without restrictions, and will not abandon its dangerous doctrine concerning "open questions," (i.e., doctrines contained in Scripture and in the Confession, in which, however, diversity of teaching is not to interfere with church-fellowship).[12]

So long as the council does not even censure Iowa for its ambiguous "and dangerous position on the authority of our church-symbols and even of the Scriptures themselves," the position of the council itself on its adherence to the Lutheran Confessions and its position on Scripture is called into question.

Equally serious for *Denkschrift* is the council's practice of altar and pulpit fellowship, allowing pulpit exchange and intercommunion with Calvinists and other heterodox church parties. *Denkschrift* grants that the council has come up with some answers, when asked, which were helpful (such as the Galesburg Rule), "although visibly not with joyful willingness," and they find the resolutions on church fellowship to be "for the most part ambiguous or at least understood and explained in opposite senses."[13] A final time, *Denkschrift* faults the council for not explicitly condemning or censuring unionistic practices in its own midst that are in harmony with the General Synod.

The bottom line for the Synodical Conference founders is that this "deficiency in regard to confessional fidelity is of itself sufficient to render our connection with the Council an impossible matter."[14] But in the last analysis, the difference goes even beyond a disagreement on the practice of church fellowship: "We cannot but regard it as revealing a fundamental difference of spirit between ourselves and the council." As foundational as the doctrine of church fellowship is, the disagreement reveals that there must be a deeper difference in spirit beyond that, possibly in the whole of their ecclesiology.

The remainder of *Denkschrift* takes issue with some arguments offered by General Council writers and offers a long quotation from the January 1871 *Lehre und Wehre*. But finally, the dispute is over the doctrine of church fellowship, and it is clear that the standards of those forming the Synodical Conference and those of the General Council are different.

In the end, *Denkschrift* confesses that it is indeed scandalous that Lutheranism in America is so divided and promises to labor and pray for the truth. They hope especially that the coming third centennial jubilee of the Book of Concord

> might also become to our Lutheran Church a Jubilee of thanksgiving for the attainment of a true and therefore also truly blessed harmony. . . . Then our Lutheran Church, after having attained true concord and harmony, will occupy its position over against popery and the multitude of sects as a United Church.[15]

Denkschrift is quite aware that from the Prussian Union to the General Synod Union, the avowed purpose was to present a united front against Deism and Romanism.

It is easy to understand, therefore, how Carl Meyer could designate *Denkschrift* the real "platform" of the Synodical Conference. What divided the synods of the Synodical Conference from those of the General Council and the General Synod was not a full-blown apostasy from the articles of the Lutheran Confessions. It should be remembered that Schmucker's *Definite Platform* and *American Rescension of the Augsburg Confession* were *not* accepted even in the General Synod, and the Americanizing and unionizing programs were a real failure (though,

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 11.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 12.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 21.

as in the Scopes evolution trial, the loser was the ultimate victor). But after the debacle of "American Lutheranism," and as a result of pressure exerted by Krauth and his confessional revival, there was a gradual tendency toward Lutheranism in the General Synod. The platform for the Synodical Conference, therefore, did not offer a restoration of the creedal doctrinal statements, or a refocusing on justification by faith. The issue for *Denkschrift* was rather the doctrine of church fellowship, and its fundamental assertion was that where there is only a formal doctrinal basis, but not a real consistency of practice, there can be no church fellowship. From its very beginning, a strict subscription to the Lutheran confessional writings and concordant practice *is* the basis for church fellowship.

The primary purpose of confessional symbols is to make a clear and distinct statement of doctrine to the world.

CONFESSIONAL SUBSCRIPTION

The first plank in the Synodical Conference platform was that the churches had to insist that teachers interpret Scripture according to the Lutheran Confessions. Not only must the authority of the Confessions be clear, but there must be a practiced fidelity to that norm. This counterintuitive principle sounds as though it elevates the Confessions above Scripture. In fact it does the opposite and is an attempt to guarantee that Scripture remains the sole authority. C. F. W. Walther and the other Synodical Conference fathers with him understood that in order to escape the grip of both Pietism and rationalism, the subjective interpretation of Scripture, in which each individual could find his own meaning in Scripture, had to be superseded by an objective understanding of the sacred text.

The argument for this understanding of the confessional writings was set forth in an essay by Walther on confessional subscription, delivered to the 1858 meeting of the Western District of the Missouri Synod. The essay was published in the district proceedings and then appeared in *Der Lutheraner,* 10 August 1858, under the full title, "Why Are the Symbolic Books of Our Church to Be Subscribed not Conditionally but Unconditionally by the Ministers of Our Church."[16]

For Walther, *every* doctrinal position of the confessional writings,

> no matter what position a teaching may occupy in the doctrinal system of the Confessions and no matter what the form in which it may occur . . . unconditional subscription bears upon every one of the teachings, and none of them may be set aside by any reservation of the subscriber.

Walther defines *conditional* subscription as subscribing to the Confessions

> with the condition that not every doctrine contained in the symbols needs to be accepted as in complete agreement with the Holy Scriptures and that a distinction may be made even in the doctrines appearing in them.

Walther then proceeds to describe various kinds of conditional acknowledgment of the Confessions. The key for Walther is that the pious appeal that one simply accept the Scriptures is not a confession at all:

> The confession that one believes what is in the Bible is not a clear confession of faith that distinguishes one from false believers, for in spite of this declaration nobody knows whether one takes the Scriptures in their true sense or not.[17]

The primary purpose of confessional symbols is to make a clear and distinct statement of doctrine to the world and to distinguish the true church from the heterodox and the sects. But especially important is the third purpose:

> (3) that the church may have a unanimous, definite, and common norm and form of teaching for its ministers out of which and according to which all other writings and teachings that are offered for test and adoption can and should be judged and regulated.[18]

And that finally leads Walther to say:

> The symbols should be subscribed by ministers in the church in order to assure the church that they acknowledge as correct the interpretation and understanding of the Scriptures which is set forth in the symbols and *consequently intend to expound the Scriptures as the church does which they bind themselves to serve.*
>
> Consequently if the church conceded that its ministers should not be required to interpret the Scriptures accord-

16. It was more or less forgotten until a loose, abridged translation by A. W. C. Guebert was printed in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 18 (April 1947). The Guebert translation was reprinted in the *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter* no. 2 (Quinquagesima 1986). It was reprinted also in *Concordia Journal* 15 (1989): 274–75. A more thorough translation (under the title "The Kind of Confessional Subscription Required") appears in *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America, 1840–1880*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 55–77. Most recently, it appears in *Essays for the Church: C. F. W. Walther,* vol. 1 (St. Louis: CPH, 1992), as a reprint of the edition appearing in Tappert.
17. Walther, "Confessional Subscription," in Tappert, Theology, 58, 60, 64.
18. Ibid., 64.

> ing to the symbols but interpret the symbols according to the Scriptures, subscription would not give the church any guarantee that the pledged minister would understand and expound the Scriptures as it does but rather as he himself thinks right. Thus the church would actually set up the changing personal convictions of its ministers as the symbol to which it would obligate them.[19]

For Walther, what would be sacrificed in a subscription that says that the Confessions will be interpreted according to the Scriptures, as evangelical and pious as this sounds, is the very objectivity of God's revelation. This objectivity would be destroyed and for it would be substituted a purely subjective and individualistic approach to biblical revelation, which, in fact, is the heart of the pietistic aberration. Here Walther has expressed the principle negatively. In affirmative form *the confessional principle means that our pastors and teachers are required to interpret Scripture according to the Confessions, not the Confessions according to Scripture.*[20]

In his *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie,* Walther makes the distinction between Scripture and Confession clear and makes the further distinction between a source of doctrine and a criterion for teaching and confessing:

> 1. We do not regard the Symbols as the basis of our faith, for only the Sacred Scriptures are that. We regard them merely as the criterion of our confession concerning that faith, and through a written statement of intention to teach only according to them we are merely seeking a guarantee that our church will have in its teachers upright ministers and pastors, and not foxes and wolves. No one is exerting any absolute compulsion [on the candidate], and if he is reluctant to subscribe the Symbols, he can go off and earn his livelihood some other way.[21]

Walther's view of confessional subscription was neither a parochial peculiarity nor simply another version of Waltherian dogmatism. The same view had already been written into the constitution of the Norwegian Synod five years before.

The confessional principle means that our pastors and teachers are required to interpret Scripture according to the Confessions, not the Confessions according to Scripture.

The Norwegian Synod faced a serious problem as it organized itself. Norway, in its struggle to cope with both Pietism and rationalism, had fallen victim to the so-called Grundtvigian error because of its close association with the Church of Denmark. This error saw the Apostles' Creed as divinely inspired. The first constitution was prepared by J. W. C. Dietrichsen, who was in the United States only temporarily. Nevertheless, at the constituting meeting in 1851, Dietrichsen's constitution was adopted, and Adolph Carl Preus was elected president. Paragraph 2 defined the doctrine of the synod as "revealed through God's holy word in our baptismal covenant as well as in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments."

Later in 1851, Herman Amberg Preus, younger cousin of A. C. Preus, arrived. With other pastors who came to serve the immigrants, he had moved in the Norwegian circles fighting against Grundtvigianism. They had already seen the constitution before they left Norway and expressed their concern to some at that time. At the 1852 meeting, Preus, along with other new arrivals, offered their formal objections. Since the offending statement was embedded in an "unalterable" paragraph, the synod was dissolved (or its organizing process was suspended). The constitution was revised and presented anew in 1853. Now paragraph 2 read:

> The doctrine of the Church is that which is revealed through God's holy Word in the canonical writings of the

19. Ibid., 66, emphasis added.
20. Walther addressed the issue also in his 1863 *Die Rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen evangelisch-lutherischen Ortsgemeinde*:
    "Regarding the binding of the ministers to the Symbolical Books of the church, it is to be noted that this is a congregation's chief bulwark against any attempt on the part of the ministers to become lords over their faith (2 Cor 1:24: 'Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy, for by faith ye stand'). All false teachers declare that they want to teach according to Holy Scripture. But if ministers refuse to be bound to the acknowledged Confessions of the orthodox church, the congregations have no guarantee that they will not teach papistic, Calvinistic, chiliastic, Methodistic, rationalistic, and other [erroneous] doctrines; nor could the congregation discipline and depose them as apostates. Or even if they could do this, they would always be exposed to new disputations and controversies, even regarding articles of the general Christian creed. By binding ministers to the Symbols of the church these disputes would be eliminated once for all. Hence since a Lutheran congregation dearly loves the pure doctrine of the divine Word, its faith, its Christian liberty, its rest and peace, it ought earnestly to refuse to accept a minister who declines to be bound to our precious *Concordia.* From its very beginning, therefore, our church, after the pattern of the ancient orthodox church, did not receive anyone as its minister who did not previous solemnly promise to teach according to its Confessions and never to depart from the doctrines taught in it or from the expressions used therein" (C. F. W. Walther, *The Form of a Christian Congregation*, trans. J. T. Mueller [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], 71–72).
21. C. F. W. Walther, *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, 5th ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), 53, n. 1, as cited in Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Walther and the Lutheran Symbols," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 33 (1961): 614. According to Piepkorn, Walther is here using F. E. Rambach.

> Old and New Testaments interpreted in accord with the symbols or confessional writings of the Church of Norway, namely: (1) The Apostles' Creed; (2) The Nicene Creed; (3) The Athanasian Creed; (4) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession, delivered to Emperor Charles V at Augsburg, 1530; (5) Luther's Small Catechism.[22]

The doctrinal standard is simply that of the Church of Norway, which they saw no need to change. The form of confessional subscription, however, is quite clearly a *quia* subscription, demanding that the Scriptures be "interpreted in accord with" the confessional writings. This paragraph was formulated well before the Norwegian Synod met Walther and five years before Walther's paper on confessional subscription was presented.

In August 1857, still a year before Walther's essay was presented, J. A. Ottesen and Nils Brandt wrote a report on their visit to the seminaries at Columbus, Fort Wayne, and St. Louis, in which they characterized the Missourians as having

> a heartfelt trust in God, a sincere love for the symbols and the doctrines of the fathers, and a belief that in them His holy Word is rightly explained and interpreted, and therefore a sacrificial, burning zeal to apply these old-Lutheran principles of doctrine and order. May the Lord graciously revive this spirit throughout the entire Lutheran church, so that those who call themselves Lutherans may no longer wrangle over questions settled by the Lutheran Confessions. May they rather show their true Lutheranism by truly believing that God's Word is taught rightly and without error in the Lutheran Confessions. Otherwise, the Lutheran name is but duplicity and hypocrisy.[23]

This understanding of confessional subscription is essentially the same as Walther's, and indeed it is the view of the Book of Concord itself. Anything less condemns one to a hopeless relativism in which private views are normative, and there can only follow theological solipsism, as is the case in the vast majority of Lutheran churches today. Dogma is so privatized that confession is impossible. Those who want to call themselves confessional and yet cannot take an absolute, authoritative, infallible Scripture as the *norma normans,* the infallible, norming norm, are neither better nor worse than those who take a fundamentalistic and biblicistic view—who, even while making a clear confession of biblical inerrancy and infallibility, persist in doing end runs around the Confessions, and in doctrinal discussions haughtily assert that they do not want to hear about the Confessions but about Scripture.

Thus, when as the platform for the Synodical Conference *Denkschrift* observed the lack of unity in the present fellowships on American soil, it credited the discord to lack of clarity about "the normative character of our symbols" and "the scripturalness of our Lutheran distinctive doctrines." Thereby, it announced that in the new association of synods the confessional writings would be of paramount importance.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Denkschrift also made the second plank in the Synodical Conference platform "the conditions of Lutheran church fellowship." The two issues are closely connected. The Synodical Conference's focus on the doctrine of church fellowship was not set aside after the publication of *Denkschrift.* In 1873 Wilhelm Sihler presented to the Synodical Conference a set of eighteen theses. They were discussed at the annual conventions from 1873 until 1879, after which attention was necessarily turned to the doctrine of election. Each year, two or three theses would be considered, discussed, and adopted. The final two theses were never taken up.[24]

The Synodical Conference did not erect a barrier between doctrine and practice so that practice and doctrinal formulation could be viewed in isolation from each other.

The basis for external, visible church fellowship, according to Thesis 2, is the Augsburg Confession. In a note, the same rubric given in *Denkschrift* is repeated: they will not insist on direct subscription to the other documents in the Book of Concord, but it cannot be "disavowed that they are connected to the unaltered Augsburg Confession in an orthodox conformity." Thesis 3 explicitly asserts the ecumenicity of the Augustana ("which in its origin is as historically particular as it is ecumenical in its doctrinal content"), and therefore "the consciences of all Lutherans, whether as individuals, congregations, or church bodies, are bound to it." The consequence of this is that the Augustana is the standard of orthodoxy. Any congregation or church body that does not accept "the teaching and defending words of these Confessions as they stand" is not orthodox, and

22. Clifford E. Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold, *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1960), 1: 344.
23. Carl Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends* (Minneapolis: Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Society, 1963), Appendix A, 69.
24. Wilhelm Sihler, Thesen über Kirchengemeinschaft *(Theses on Church Fellowship)* (discussed at Synodical Conference conventions, 1873–1879), in *Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16. bis zum 22. Juli 1873* (Columbus, Ohio: John I. Gassmann, 1873), 5–8, my translation, with the help of Jon S. Bruss. For another translation, see Lewis W. Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 144–45. See Appendix for the theses.

furthermore, "one who denies the binding nature of the conclusions which follow from the words of this confession" is not Lutheran (Thesis 5).

In 1868, the rapprochement between Missouri and Wisconsin had taken place.

In *Denkschrift* the framers of the Synodical Conference rejected fellowship with the General Council because, even though the doctrinal basis (clear subscription to the Augustana) was acceptable, there was no accordant practice. In Theses 6 and 7, the same assertions about practice were repeated:

> From the character and nature of this orthodox confession it necessarily follows that the ecclesial practice be in accord with it. For every ecclesial act is either a direct expression and actual realization of it

—or indirectly, an ecclesial act cannot contradict the confession (Thesis 6). And the consequence of this connection between doctrine and practice is that a synod "in which the ruling practice of the Confessions is in harmony" will not join in fellowship with any church body where the "governing practice of the Confessions is contradicted." This assertion strikes the point where the Synodical Conference differed from others on the doctrine of church fellowship: they did not erect a barrier between doctrine and practice so that practice and doctrinal formulation could be viewed in isolation from each other.

The remainder of the theses spell out what these contradictions might be, and most of them are aimed toward the General Council: altar and pulpit fellowship with non-Lutheran preachers, even if they call themselves Lutheran; or the toleration of chiliasm (Thesis 8); toleration of secret societies (Thesis 9); toleration of pastors serving Union churches; aberrations in the doctrine of the call (if the church body allows its pastors to have not regular calls but only temporary calls, or if they even confirm this confusion through the practice of "licensing," Thesis 11). Contradictions that would be divisive of fellowship are revealed in some even more practical ways: an orthodox Lutheran church body must establish orthodox parish schools (Thesis 12); and it must insist on orthodox worship materials, seeing to it that "in its congregations only orthodox agendas, hymnbooks, catechisms, doctrinal and educational books are used." It must also be diligent about "removing heterodox books . . . and introducing orthodox books" (Thesis 13). There must be regular doctrinal and moral discipline according to Matthew 18 (Theses 14 and 15), and it must actively maintain educational institutions for pastors and teachers (Thesis 16). Theses 17 and 18 were not discussed and adopted, since the 1880s brought some new concerns, but these insisted on a demonstration of "an active love in providing for the needy widows, orphans, and the like" (Thesis 17) and support of home and foreign missions (Thesis 18).

The theses, which might today strike us as far too prescriptive, nevertheless make it clear that the Synodical Conference's idea of Lutheran orthodoxy and its description of a healthy church life were not limited to an orthodoxy of doctrinal formulation but were a very practical orthodoxy—practical, not in superficial *utility,* but in *praxis,* the way in which the church and the believers carry out biblical teaching, dogma, in their church life and their life of confession in the world.

The view of church fellowship advocated in *Denkschrift* and Sihler's theses were not an isolated concept that came to the fore only with the formation of the Synodical Conference. In 1868 Herman Amberg Preus, president of the Norwegian Synod, wrote an article in *Luthersk Kirketidende,* which was added to his report on the church situation in America. This report had been delivered to church officials in Norway in the form of "Seven Lectures." In this supplement, Preus wrote:

> Given the expectations we nourished when the old General Synod ruptured we have been sadly disappointed by the General Council's position in this matter. What good are any constitutions and orthodox confessions on paper when at the same time one's life displays weakness, when truth is suppressed, and when a blind eye is turned to error? What confidence can anyone have in the orthodoxy of such a society that will, by a conspiracy of silence, permit non-Lutherans to enjoy the body and blood of Christ in spite of the fact that they do not believe them to be present in the sacrament and that will tolerate the abandonment of the pulpit to those who will propound false doctrine and ensnare souls? . . . Unfortunately it is clear to us that the new General Council has not been able to free itself from the *unionistic* spiritual tendency that was the old General Synod's distinctive characteristic and its ruination. The future will show that this spiritual tendency which is in its essence indifference and truth-denying will dominate the General Council. God grant that this may not be the case.[25]

Written three years before *Denkschrift,* the basic premise for the foundation of the Synodical Conference was already in place: the General Council had an acceptable doctrinal statement. But an adequate doctrinal statement by itself is not a sufficient basis for fellowship. The doctrinal statement must be accompanied by a practice demonstrably consistent with the doctrinal standard or the confession of the church body.

Also in 1868, the rapprochement between Missouri and Wisconsin had taken place. The origins of the Wisconsin Syn-

25. H. A. Preus, "Den lutherske Kirke in Nordamerika," in *Luthersk Kirketidende* 11 (1868): 17–26, cited in Todd Nichol, *Vivacious Daughter* (Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), 197.

od, and to a lesser degree that of the Minnesota Synod, were shrouded in the support offered by the General Synod and some pietistic and union mission societies in Germany. In 1850, when the Wisconsin Synod was organized in Milwaukee, there were Buffalo Synod and Missouri Synod congregations in Milwaukee; but they were "old Lutheran" and thus not acceptable to the earliest Wisconsin Synod leadership. Under the leadership of President John Bading and Professor Adolph Hoenecke, however, a decidedly confessional direction was adopted. In 1866–1867, Wisconsin and Minnesota participated in the formation of the General Council. But the issue of open questions was troubling to them, as it was also to the Ohio, Missouri, and Norwegian synods and others. In a series of meetings that culminated in October 1868, Missouri and Wisconsin came to agreement. Their agreement was based in part on a set of theses on open questions. Until this meeting there had not been reported complete agreement in Wisconsin on the issue of open questions, but on the basis of the theses prepared by Walther complete unanimity was achieved. The result was that the synods adopted a statement declaring themselves to be in fellowship. The declaration ended with this point:

> If in the one synod or in the other an error in doctrine should appear, each synod shall be held to remove such error by all means at its disposal. And as long as this is being done, the orthodoxy of the respective synod shall not be questioned.[26]

The theses address not only the matter of open questions, but also the doctrine of church fellowship. They state:

I. It cannot be denied that in the field of religion or theology there are questions which, because they are not answered in the word of God, may be called open in the sense that agreement in answering them is not required for the unity of faith and doctrine which is demanded in the word of God, nor does it belong to the conditions required for church fellowship, for the association of brethren or colleagues.

II. The error of an individual member of the church even against a clear word of God does not involve immediately his actual forfeiture of church fellowship, nor of the association of brethren and colleagues.

III. Even if an open error against the word of God has infected a whole church body, this does not in itself make that church body a false church, a body with which an orthodox Christian or the orthodox church would abruptly have to sever relations.

IV. A Christian may be so weak in understanding that he cannot grasp, even in a case of a fundamental article of the second order, that an error which he holds is contrary to the Scriptures. Because of his ignorance he may also continue in his error, without thereby making it necessary for the orthodox church to exclude him.

V. The church militant must indeed aim at and strive for complete unity of faith and doctrine, but it never will attain a higher degree of unity than a fundamental one.

VI. Even errors in the writings of recognized orthodox teachers of the church, now deceased, concerning nonfundamental doctrines or even fundamental doctrines of the second order, do not brand them as errorists nor deprive them of the honor of orthodoxy.

VII. No man has the privilege, and to no man may the privilege be granted, to believe and to teach otherwise than God has revealed in his word, no matter whether it pertain to primary or secondary fundamental articles of faith, to fundamental or nonfundamental doctrines, to matters of faith or of practice, to historical matters or others that are subject to the light of reason, to important matters or others that are subject to the light of reason, to important or seemingly unimportant matters.

VIII. The church must take steps against any deviation from the doctrine of the word of God, whether this be done by teachers or by so-called laymen, by individuals or by entire church bodies.

IX. Such members as willfully persist in deviating from the word of God, no matter what question it may concern, must be excluded.

X. From the fact that the church militant cannot attain a higher degree of unity than a fundamental one, it does not follow that any error against the word of God may be granted equal rights in the church with the truth, nor that it may be tolerated.

XI. The idea that Christian doctrines are formed gradually, and that accordingly any doctrine which has not completed such a process of development must be considered as an open question, militates against the doctrine that the church at all times is strictly one, and that the Scripture is the one and only, but fully sufficient, source of knowledge in the field of Christian religion and theology.

XII. The idea that such doctrines as have not yet been fixed symbolically must be counted among the open questions, militates against the historical origin of the symbols, particularly against the fact that these were never intended to present a complete doctrinal system, while they indeed acknowledge the entire content of the Scriptures as the object of the faith held by the church.

XIII. Also the idea that such doctrines in which even recognized orthodox teachers have erred must be admitted as open questions, militates against the canonical authority and dignity of the Scriptures.

XIV. The assumption that there are Christian doctrines of faith contained in the Holy Scriptures, which nevertheless are not presented in them clearly, distinctly, and unmistakably, and that hence they must be counted with the open questions, militates against the clarity, and thus against the very purpose or the divinity, of

26. "Agreement of Missouri and Wisconsin Synods, 1868," in Wolf, Documents, 182.

the Holy Scriptures, which is offered to us as the divine revelation.

xv. The modern theology that among the clearly revealed doctrines of the word of God there are open questions, is the most dangerous unionistic principle of our day, which will lead consistently to skepticism and finally to naturalism.[27]

It is clear from these theses that Walther and the other Synodical Conference fathers did not hold to a notion of confessional purity that was unachievably utopian. Church fathers may have erred on a particular point, but were not to be declared heterodox. A church body was not to be declared heterodox on the basis of the doctrinal error of an individual, or the entire church body, but discussion needed to ensue in order to come to agreement, or to find that the position in question is willful and persistent.

The Missouri Synod declared that the doctrinal differences that had previously divided it from the American Lutheran Church (organized in 1930) were to be non-divisive.

A final expression on the issue of church fellowship came from the pen of Walther, in a paper on communion fellowship, delivered in 1870 to the Fifteenth Convention of the Western District. As a preface to the theses dealing specifically with altar fellowship, Walther put forward these propositions:

Thesis IV. Everyone is obligated to avoid heterodox churches, and if one belongs to one like that, he is obligated to renounce it and leave it.

Thesis V. True Christians are also found in heterodox fellowships, to which they adhere as a result of their weak understanding.

Thesis VI. Those who become convinced of the partial apostasy of the church fellowship to which they belong and yet continue in it are not among the weak but are either luke-warm, whom the Lord will spit out of His mouth, or Epicurean religious cynics who in their hearts ask with Pilate: "What is truth?"[28]

27. The theses appear in *Lehre und Wehre 14* (October, 1868). This translation was given to me by Prof. Carl Lawrenz in the 1970s; I assume that he is the translator.
28. C. F. W. Walther, *Essays for the Church,* trans. Lawrence White (St. Louis: CPH, 1992), 1: 202–28.

For Walther, church fellowship *was* altar, communion fellowship. The two simply cannot be separated; they are one and the same. The Synodical Conference understanding of church fellowship has often been caricatured as requiring an absolute and complete uniformity, and closed communion has been taken to mean the same thing as excommunication. But for Walther and others, refusal to admit someone to the table because he is a member of a heterodox church, whether Lutheran, Roman, or Reformed, was not the same thing as declaring him to be non-Christian. The greater sin, if one may speak that way, was viewed to be not in the pious, humble believer who, out of ignorance or weak understanding, belongs to a heterodox church. The greater sin, rather, belonged to the one who is aware that his church is apostate, even partially, whatever that means, and yet continues in it, that is, because of willful persistence in error.

DISSOLUTION OF THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE

It is not so easy to fix when the divergence on the doctrine of church fellowship began in the Synodical Conference. But the rough spots certainly were visible in 1938, when it appeared that the Missouri Synod declared that the doctrinal differences that had previously divided it from the American Lutheran Church (ALC—organized in 1930) were to be nondivisive. As early as 1916, conferences of the German synods in the Midwest met together and discussed the doctrines that had divided them since the 1860s. Before 1920, the Buffalo, Iowa, Ohio, Missouri, and Wisconsin synods had appointed an Intersynodical Committee, which attempted to work out a set of theses that could be the basis for church fellowship. In 1925 a set of theses called the Chicago Theses or the Intersynodical Theses was formulated. It did not find approval in the synods, and in 1929 Missouri rejected the theses and a new committee in Missouri was appointed, which included Dr. Franz Pieper. The result of its deliberations was the *Brief Statement,* which was to be the basis for any Missouri negotiations. The by-then-merged Buffalo, Ohio, and Iowa synods—as the 1930 ALC—responded to the *Brief Statement* with the *Declaration,* which was supposed to clarify points on which the *Brief Statement* was not so clear. In the view of many in the Synodical Conference, the *Declaration* emasculated those "unclear" points. In 1938, Missouri adopted the *Declaration,* but no fellowship could be declared until there was consultation with the other members of the Synodical Conference. When the *Declaration* was opposed at the meeting of the Synodical Conference, it was set aside, and in 1941 Missouri called for a single document of agreement.

The debate within the Synodical Conference intensified during the 1940s, exacerbated by the *Statement of the Forty-Four* in 1945, which, among other things, rejected the exegesis of Romans 16:17 that had been standard, and also raised questions about prayer fellowship. In answer to Missouri's call for a single doctrinal statement that could be agreed to by both parties, namely, by the ALC and Missouri, the *Doctrinal Affirmation* was produced. In Wolf's words, this was an "attempt to adjust the differences between the *Brief Statement* and the *Declaration*."[29] But it failed to gain acceptance in Missouri. In the Synodical Conference it was regarded as a weakening of

the *Brief Statement,* and in the ALC it was regarded as giving away too much to Synodical Conference dogmatism, so by 1947 it was dead. Nevertheless, commissions between the ALC and Missouri continued to work, and by 1950 these had produced a document called the *Common Confession.* Part 1 of this document was accepted by the ALC in 1950. Missouri stated that in it they found nothing that contradicted Scripture. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and Wisconsin, however, objected that the *Common Confession* could not be considered an agreement, because nothing was said about the issues that had always been the cause of separation from the churches of the old ALC, especially the Iowa and Buffalo synods. Ohio had broken with Missouri over the doctrine of election; Iowa could never unite with Missouri because of the issue of open questions; and with Buffalo, the doctrine of the ministry had been at issue. Confessional integrity could not operate with a principle of "let bygones be bygones." Issues that divided in the past had to be confronted and dealt with head-on. When part 2 of the *Common Confession* was presented, it became unclear whether Part 1 was to be read in the light of Part 2, or otherwise.

The doctrine of church fellowship in the Synodical Conference was a consistent application of AC VII and FC SD X.

It was, of course, in the Synodical Conference that the issue of the *Common Confession* had to be dealt with. At that convention a floor committee, with representatives from all the member synods, came to the floor with a resolution that found the *Common Confession* to be inadequate as a settlement of the previous doctrinal disagreements. That report was tabled by a majority of the delegates, cutting off discussion of the resolution.[30] As a result the Wisconsin Synod declared itself to be *in statu confessionis*. From that point on, the relationships in the Synodical Conference deteriorated, with occasional signs of hope. The basic question was not simply a quarrel over the issue of prayer fellowship, but rather about the adequacy of doctrinal, confessional agreements. In 1955 the ELS suspended fellowship with Missouri, though remaining in the Conference. During the next years, the ELS and Wisconsin Synod also were nearly torn apart by disputes as to when to leave the Synodical Conference, resulting in the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

In 1962 the CLC published a doctrinal statement on church fellowship that is very thorough and represents most clearly, I believe, the doctrine of church fellowship on which the Synodical Conference was founded.[31] To say that does not imply approval of the way in which this doctrine has been applied in that church. Yet in spite of some exegetical issues that arise, it is clear that the doctrine of church fellowship expressed there is that of the Synodical Conference at its beginning. Whether or not this understanding is faithful to the teaching of Scripture is a question in need of dogmatic and exegetical investigation. I believe such investigation was necessary, but it is not clear that the question ever got a fair hearing.

It is clear that the issue on which the Synodical Conference foundered was the doctrine of church fellowship, and on nothing else. In spite of a miscellany of bones of contention—prayer fellowship and joint prayer, military chaplaincy, boy scouts, and other issues—it is not clear that any amalgam of those issues would have led necessarily to a rupture in fellowship. Rather, the issue had to do with the nature of doctrinal, confessional statements. The issue was whether past disagreements had to be addressed directly in a polemical way, with condemnations and antitheses, or whether affirmative statements were sufficient, and whether fellowship can be established on the basis of parallel documents. A serious question was whether complete doctrinal unanimity was necessary to establish church fellowship, and what the nature of that unanimity might be. Equally serious was how the church is to deal with doctrinal disunity that arises amongst those who have previously agreed. As much as anything else, the disruption of the Conference noted the failure of the original agreement between Missouri and Wisconsin:

> If in one synod or in the other an error in doctrine should appear, each synod shall be held to remove such error by all means at its disposal. And as long as this is being done, the orthodoxy of the respective synod shall not be questioned.[32]

No longer was the Synodical Conference what it had called itself in Article II of its constitution: "The external expression of the spiritual unity of the respective synods."

CONCLUSION

To say that the Synodical Conference was both founded and dissolved on the doctrine of church fellowship is not to say that the Synodical Conference was an extremist group that had an unbalanced view of Lutheran theology, that it was essentially separatistic and schismatic in nature, and that it focused so much legalistic attention on this one doctrine to the exclusion of the doctrine of the gospel. Rather, the doctrine of church fellowship in the Synodical Conference was the confessional principle and was a consistent application of AC VII and FC SD X. It

29. Wolf, Documents, 381.
30. The Synodical Conference was so constructed that all voting was proportional; this meant that the Missouri Synod delegates could outvote all of the others. In this case, the floor committee was represented by all of the synods and came with a recommendation, which was tabled by the majority, thus avoiding discussion of it.
31. See *Logia* 5, no. 1 (Epiphany 1996): 41–52.
32. "Agreement . . . 1868," in Wolf, Documents, 182.

was also the application of the principle laid out in the Preface to the Book of Concord:

> Our disposition and intention has always been directed toward the goal that no other doctrine be treated and taught in our lands, territories, schools, and churches than that alone which is based on the Holy Scriptures of God and is embodied in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, correctly understood, and that no doctrine be permitted entrance which is contrary to these. . . .
>
> Such an explanation must be thoroughly grounded in God's Word so that pure doctrine can be recognized and distinguished from adulterated doctrine and so that the way may not be left free and open to restless, contentious individuals, who do not want to be bound to any certain formula of pure doctrine, to start scandalous controversies at will and to introduce and defend monstrous errors, the only possible consequence of which is that finally correct doctrine will be entirely obscured and lost and nothing beyond uncertain opinions and dubious, disputable imaginations and views will be transmitted to subsequent generations.[33]

The doctrine of church fellowship is a clear principle taught by Scripture, which, along with all other doctrines of Scripture, is to be believed, taught, and confessed—and therefore practiced. Such clear doctrines do not need other doctrines to interpret or modify them. But at the same time, the doctrine of church fellowship belongs to the very fabric of Lutheran ecclesiology as confessed in the Book of Concord. The idea that one can confess oneself unconditionally to be Lutheran by holding to the confessional writings without an accordant commitment to maintain the substance of those Confessions by teaching and defense and by straightforward doctrinal discipline was unthinkable for the Synodical Conference confessors as much as it was for the sixteenth-century Concordists.

The Synodical Conference doctrine of church fellowship was regarded by other American Lutherans, as well as by most in Europe, as sectarian and schismatic. Sadly, it became an embarrassment to the successors of some of the Synodical Conference fathers. Like the Concordists, the Synodical Conference fathers were not at all troubled by the charges of sectarianism and separatism attributed to them. It was the furthest thing from the minds of both that they were cutting themselves off from the mainstream of a purely external or formal ecumenism. It was precisely by separating themselves from error, concretely in their unconditional commitment to the Lutheran Confessions and the practiced doctrine of church fellowship, that they were connecting themselves to the true catholic and ecumenical church, with its apostolic foundations in Jesus Christ himself.

One of those who was active in the Synodical Conference on behalf of the Norwegian Synod was Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, successor of Herman Amberg Preus as president of the Norwegian Synod from 1894 to 1910. Writing in 1905 at a time when the Norwegians were in fellowship with, but not members of, the Synodical Conference, Koren captured the ecumenical spirit of the doctrine of church fellowship held by the Conference:

> We are indeed ridiculed by being accused of holding that our Lutheran Church is the one Church outside of which there is no salvation. But this is a false charge that is brought against us. . . .
>
> By the "Christian Church" we mean all the people who by faith base their hope upon our Lord Jesus Christ alone, and we hold there are such souls also among Episcopalians and Catholics and Baptists, etc. . . .
>
> We do not want Christian people to join the Lutheran Church because they cannot be saved outside of it, but so that they may honor God by the right confession and be delivered from the dangers to faith that go with errors. . . .
>
> We do not contend against true Christians among the sects, but against false doctrine.[34] LOGIA

33. Tappert, 12, 13.

34. Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, "What Hinders the Merger of the Various Norwegian Lutheran Synods?" in *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging* (Lake Mills, IA: ELS Board for Publications, 1978), 200–201.

Bach, Chronicles, and Church Music

John W. Kleinig

The use of instrumental music in worship has often been challenged in the history of the church. It has been attacked for two main theological reasons. While it was rejected in the early church because of its association with pagan religion and culture, Zwingli and many Protestant teachers after him rejected it because it had not been instituted by Christ and his apostles. They therefore argued that it lacked proper biblical authorization.

Like many musicians before and since, Bach pursued his vocation as a cantor in the face of theological criticism and rejection of what he had been, as he so firmly believed, called to do. These attacks came from people who had been influenced by the Pietist movement with its concern for inward experience, spontaneous spirituality, and religious sensibility. For them liturgy and liturgical music was, at best, a distraction and, at worst, a hindrance to the cultivation of personal faith and the expression of individual piety.

Bach obviously rejected the Pietist critique of his project to provide "well-regulated church music." While scholars have been able to deduce why he may have done so, they have not, until recently, been able to document his actual theological position. But we now have at our disposal material from Bach himself that, briefly and epigrammatically, outlines his theology of church music. This material shows us that Bach found divine authorization for his vocation as cantor, as well as the foundation for his theology of church music, in the two books of Chronicles in the Old Testament. Chronicles provided him with his charter as a church musician. And more than that, it set out for him how church music was to function ritually and theologically in the liturgy of the church.

This article explores that theological rationale from two points of view. First, I shall examine how Bach used the Book of Chronicles to understand the theological function of church music and the liturgical significance of his role as cantor. Second, I would like to take a step back further in time and trace what Chronicles has to say about the nature and function of sacred music in the divine service as performed at the temple in Jerusalem.

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BACH, CHRONICLES, AND THE CALOV BIBLE

The story of rediscovery that I have to tell begins with the purchase by Bach, in 1733, of a Bible commentary in three volumes. It was written by Abraham Calov, a Lutheran theologian of orthodox persuasion, who taught at the University of Wittenberg and was well-known for his opposition to the Pietist movement. Markings in the text and comments in the margin from Bach's own hand show that he studied this commentary eagerly and carefully. He corrected obvious mistakes in it, underlined passages of personal interest to him, highlighted key sections of it by putting "N.B." in the margin, and, most significantly of all, added occasional comments of his own to the text.

After Bach died, the commentary remained unclaimed by his sons, was listed in the inventory of his estate together with what was left of his library, and was eventually sold. Nothing further was heard of it until it turned up in America in a second-hand German bookshop in Philadelphia. There it was bought by a pious emigrant German farmer called Leonard Reichle who, soon thereafter, settled at Frankenmuth in Michigan. The original ownership of these three volumes remained undetected until 1934, when his son brought them down out of the attic of the farmhouse and showed them to a certain Pastor Christian G. Riedel, who happened to be visiting him. That pastor recognized Bach's monogram on the title page and alerted some Missouri Synod church officials to its existence. At that stage no one seems to have examined the three books any further. Eventually, in 1938, they were presented to the library of Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, where they remained hidden in the stacks, unexamined and unappreciated.

In 1969 a German scholar called Christoph Trautmann tracked down the commentary and arranged for it to be borrowed and displayed in a Bach festival held at Heidelberg.[1] It was he who discovered the various markings in Bach's hand, deciphered them, and alerted the scholarly community to their existence and significance. Robin A. Leaver examined these notations and arranged for the publication of facsimiles of them, together with a translation and commentary.[2] Howard

1. See Christoph Trautmann, "J. S. Bach: New Light on His Faith," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42 (1971): 88–99; and Christoph Trautmann, "Bach's Bible," *American Choral Review* 14, no. 4 (Oct. 1972): 3–11.
2. Robin A. Leaver, *J. S. Bach and Scripture: Glosses from the Calov Bible Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985).

H. Cox also published another facsimile edition, together with the results of a scientific analysis of the annotations and a literal translation of the text with Bach's reactions to it.[3]

Three comments were made by Bach on the topic of church music in Calov's commentary on Chronicles. The first occurs in connection with 1 Chronicles 25:1. There we read how David appointed three guilds of Levitical musicians to "prophesy" in the divine service at the temple in Jerusalem. Calov says, "They were to turn God's word into spiritual songs and psalms and sing them at the temple set to the accompaniment of music played on instruments." Bach underlined the verse as well as Calov's explanation of the prophetic function of the musical performance by the musicians. Then he added in the margin: "N.B. This chapter is the true foundation for all God-pleasing church music."

Bach wrote: "N.B. In a reverent performance of music God is always present with his grace."

This comment needs to be understood in the light of the reasons given by Bach's opponents for the rejection of instrumental church music. The implied argument runs as follows: God has provided the foundation for the performance of instrumental music in the divine service. Through David he has instituted the singing of songs to instrumental accompaniment by Levites. The musicians, called cantors in Chronicles, have priestly status and perform a divinely given role in the worship at the temple. Since instrumental music has been authorized by God, the church can be sure that God is pleased with the singing of the liturgy and liturgical songs to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Such church music serves a prophetic purpose by virtue of its combination with the word of God. It assists the proclamation of God's word powerfully and effectually to the congregation, so that the people of God are moved by it spiritually and respond to it in a God-pleasing way.

The second comment is given in connection with 1 Chronicles 28:21. This verse comes at the end of David's formal delivery to Solomon of the divinely inspired model of the temple and its appointments. It emphasizes that this model, which David has received like a prophet directly from God, includes the arrangement of the clergy for the services at the temple and their division into two classes. Calov notes:

> It is clear from this divine model and the whole prophetic directive given to David that he did nothing by his own efforts, in building the temple and arranging the divine service, but did everything for it and its offices according to the model which the Lord presented to him through his Spirit.

Bach highlighted the reference to the divine model in this comment, marked the extended discussion on the difference between ritual devised by human beings and ritual ordained by God, and then added this remark: "N.B. A wonderful proof that, together with the other arrangements for the divine service, music too was instituted by God's Spirit through David." The argument here is that music had not been added to the liturgy as a dubious, if not idolatrous, human innovation, as the Pietists had claimed, but had been instituted by the Holy Spirit as an important part of the divine service. Hence, just as the musicians belonged to the order of the Levites in the Old Testament, so the position of Bach as a cantor was a divinely sanctioned office in the church.

The third remark is, by all counts, the most telling of all. In 2 Chronicles 5:11–14 the story is told that as a massed choir began to sing a psalm of praise at the dedication of the temple, the temple was covered with a cloud, and the glory of God filled the temple. Calov introduced this section with the caption, "How the glory of God appeared during the performance of beautiful music." In the margin to verse 13 Bach wrote: "N.B. In a reverent performance of music God is always present with his grace." This gives us Bach's theology of church music in a single sentence. In brief it is this: God's presence in grace and mercy, through the means of access provided by him for the divine service, must be distinguished from his presence in wrath. God's glory is his gracious presence with his people, which is, however, hidden from human sight. That hidden glory is announced and revealed to the congregation by the performance of praise at the temple. Sacred music therefore preaches the gospel in the liturgy. Wedded to the word and performed with reverence, it proclaims God's presence and favor to those who listen to it. The congregation can therefore be sure that God approves of them and is pleased to grant them what they request of him.

CHRONICLES AND LITURGICAL MUSIC

The book of Psalms tells us that songs of praise were sung at the temple in Jerusalem as part of the services which were conducted there. References to musical instruments indicate that they were sung to instrumental accompaniment. Yet despite all this data, they do not actually say how, when, where, and why these songs were performed there. For information about that, we need to turn to the Book of Chronicles which, among other things, sets out the theological foundations for the performance of sacred music and song at the temple. Since I have dealt with this topic in some detail in my book *The Lord's Song*,[4] I shall merely outline the findings of that study here.

3. Howard H. Cox, *The Calov Bible of J. S. Bach* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985).

4. John W. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

THE DIVINE INSTITUTION OF SACRED MUSIC

The Book of Chronicles holds that two people were appointed by God to establish the worship of Israel. While Moses was the founder of the sacrificial ritual that was enacted twice daily at the temple, David was the founder of the choral music that was established at Jerusalem and coordinated with the sacrificial ritual (1 Chr 6:31–48; 16:4–42; 23:2–5, 30, 31; 25:1–31). The stimulus for this innovation did not come from David himself, but from God, who commanded the prophets Nathan and Gad to tell David to appoint the choir for the temple that his son Solomon was to build after David's death (2 Chr 29:25). The choir was therefore a divinely sanctioned royal institution. Even though the musicians for it were taken from the Levites, who were, traditionally, minor clergy under the leadership of the Aaronic priesthood, they were endowed by the king and were directly responsible to him (1 Chr 25:2, 6). They therefore represented the king and performed their musical offerings on his behalf.

In response to God's command, David is said to have organized the musicians for their task. They were, as I have already noted, taken from the three clans of the Levites, to which all the clergy belonged (1 Chr 6:33–47). David divided them into three guilds, which were named after their leaders: Heman, Asaph, and Ethan (also named Jeduthun). Each of these leaders was accountable to David and under his authority. From a pool of four thousand candidates (1 Chr 23:5) came 288 fully trained musicians who were involved in the performance of praise at the temple (1 Chr 25:7). These musicians were divided into twenty-four shifts with twelve musicians rostered on each shift (1 Chr 25:8–31). Apparently, each shift was on duty for a week twice a year as well as for the three great festivals. In addition to the Levitical musicians, at least two priests were appointed to sound the golden trumpets over the daily burnt offering (1 Chr 16:6; 2 Chr 29:26, 28; cf. 1 Chr 15:24 and 2 Chr 5:12), just as God had commanded Moses (Num 10:10).

David is also said to have decreed which musical instruments were to be used liturgically (1 Chr 23:5; 2 Chr 29:25) and what the choir was to sing (1 Chr 16:41; 2 Chr 7:6). The leader of the choir used small metal cymbals to call the choir and congregation to attention at the beginning of the performance (1 Chr 15:16, 19; 16:5; 2 Chr 29:25). The song of the Lord was accompanied by lyres and harps. While the lyre provided the melody of the song, the harp was most likely used to provide a deeper bass line. The trumpets, however, were not used melodically or harmonically. They signaled the presence of God the heavenly king and called on the people to perform an act of prostration in his presence, for in the ancient world the trumpet was used royally to announce the public advent and appearance of a king. David also prescribed that the choir was to sing a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord (1 Chr 16:4, 41; 23:5, 30), like the one given as a model in 1 Chronicles 16:7–36.

David also assigned the musicians their places in the temple (2 Chr 35:15; cf. 2 Chr 7:6). Their place in the temple complex was consistent with ritual status and function. They stood at the top of the fifteen stairs that led from the ceremonially clean outer court of the temple to the holy inner court and performed their songs of praise in front of the altar for burnt offering (2 Chr 5:12). As they sang the Lord's song they had the altar behind them and the congregation in front of them. They therefore stood in the intermediate zone between God the heavenly king and his people. Like courtiers standing before a king enthroned in his palace, they served as his advance guard and mediated between him and his people as they addressed their song of praise to the people.

The performance of choral music was then established by David at God's command.

Lastly and most importantly, David determined the ritual function of the musical performance in the sacrificial ritual. The song of praise was quite deliberately synchronized with the burning of the daily sacrifice on the altar (1 Chr 16:39–41; 23:30, 31; 2 Chr 23:18). This was most significant, for the burnt offering was the focus and center of the daily services at the temple. By means of it the Lord God met with his people (Ex 29:42, 43) to hear their petitions and help them (2 Chr 7:12–16). Through the burnt offering the people had access to their heavenly king. So when David decreed that the sacred song should be sung together with this important ritual enactment, he established its ritual function and significance. The actual sequence of events is presented quite clearly in 2 Chronicles 29:27–29. As soon as the priests on duty began to set out the burnt offering on the altar, the choir began to sing the Lord's song. Whenever the priests blew their trumpets, whether at the beginning, at the end of each verse, or at the end of the ritual enactment, the people, led by their earthly king, paid homage to their heavenly king by prostrating themselves in his presence. So practically speaking, sacrifice came to be closely associated and ritually connected with praise.

The performance of choral music was then established by David at God's command. Even after his death it was regulated by the charter that he gave to the musicians (1 Chr 6:32; 2 Chr 8:14; 23:18; 35:15). Their instruments were the instruments of David (2 Chr 29:26; cf. Neh 12:36). Through the agency of the choir and these instruments David continued to praise the Lord long after he had died (2 Chr 7:6). These musicians represented David and praised the Lord on his behalf, just as Christian musicians represent Jesus Christ who, through them, leads the congregation in its praises (Heb 2:12; 13:15).

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRED SONG

The significance of sacred song is determined by its ritual setting. For the writer of Chronicles and the Israelites in the postexilic period, the daily burnt offering presented on the altar at the temple in Jerusalem was, as it were, the sacred bridge

between heaven and earth. In it the Lord met in audience with the assembled congregation who, in turn, appeared there in his presence and presented their petitions to him there (2 Chr 7:12–16). Like a king at his palace, God held an audience twice a day at the temple during the times of sacrifice. There his people had access to him and his grace. There they petitioned him for justice in the face of manifest injustice, for charity as people in need, and for mercy as sinners. There they ate and drank in his presence. There they received his blessing and were honored by him. Sacred song then gained its significance from association with that momentous interaction between God and his people.

The Book of Chronicles articulates its theology of praise. It connects the glorious presence of God with the performance of praise at the temple.

As far as we can gather, preaching and teaching was not a regular part of the sacrificial service. Instead the Levitical choir sang its song of praise during the daily burnt offering. Thus we read in 1 Chronicles 16:4, "David appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord to announce, thank and praise the Lord, the God of Israel." Since the Lord was believed to be invisibly and mysteriously enthroned as king on the ark, the choir stood there in his presence and announced his presence to the assembled congregation with a song of praise. In essence it consisted of the following refrain (1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 2:3, 6; 20:21): "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever."

As is shown by this refrain, the choir did three things in their performance of praise. First, they invoked God by using his holy name, "Yahweh," translated as "Lord" in English. They, as it were, identified him and introduced him by name to the congregation, so that the people had access to him there through his holy name. Second, the choir praised the Lord. They did not address their praise to God but to the congregation. In their praise they sang about his goodness and proclaimed his loving-kindness to the assembled congregation, even as they stood in God's presence. Because God was utterly good and far more generous than any human being, his presence could only be communicated via full-bodied praise. He was so wonderful and great that they could only acclaim him and proclaim his presence with them in the language and posture of praise. Third, as is shown by the psalm given in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36, the singers called on the congregation, all the nations, and the whole of creation to join them in acknowledging God's gracious presence with his people and in praising him for his steadfast love for them and his whole creation.

In the story of the dedication of the temple by Solomon, the Book of Chronicles further explains the significance of the praises that were sung by the choir in the daily sacrifice. 1 Kings 8:6–11 had reported that when the priests had placed the ark of the covenant in the temple, the glory of the Lord, enveloped in a cloud, filled the temple. The presence of the glory-cloud was therefore associated with the location of the ark in the temple. In contrast to this, 2 Chronicles 5:11–14 claims that the appearance of the glory-cloud coincided with the performance of praise by the massed choir, standing in front of the altar for burnt offering.

Thus the Book of Chronicles articulates its theology of praise. It connects the glorious presence of God with the performance of praise at the temple. Like the sun behind a dark cloud, God's presence with his people is hidden from their sight. In fact, God conceals himself in order to reveal himself to them without dazzling, overwhelming, and annihilating them. His glory remains hidden from them until it is revealed by the performance of praise. Praise announces God's invisible presence. His glory, therefore, is not revealed visibly in a theophany to human eyes, but audibly to human ears in sacred music and song. Every day as the smoke, which conceals the holy perpetual fire and symbolizes the Lord's appearance to his people, rises from the altar, the choir proclaims his presence there (2 Chr 7:1–3). As the singers glorify God with their song, his glory is proclaimed and so made known to the people. The people, in turn, acclaim him as graciously present with them there by joining the choir in praising the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Like the writer of Chronicles, Bach was convinced that the presence of the triune God could not be adequately confessed and expressed by human beings without praise. If God is much better and far more loving than any human being, then his presence could only be proclaimed in full-bodied praise. Words by themselves would not suffice, for no matter how eloquently they were arranged in poetry, they by themselves could not engage us fully and involve us entirely at all levels of our being. They could only do that if they were combined with music. Music affects us most profoundly when it links our brain waves with the vibration of string instruments, our breathing with the sound of wind instruments, and our bodily movements with the rhythms of percussion. Yet no matter how powerful the effect of instrumental music could be, it could never be divorced from the name of God and the word of God in Christian worship, which, after all, celebrated the incarnation of God's Word. Both Bach and Chronicles are right. By the marriage of God's word to human music and song, the liturgy of the church celebrates the glory and mystery of heaven here on earth with us. LOGIA

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The Porvoo Common Statement

58. We recommend that our churches jointly make the following Declaration:

We, the Church of Denmark, the Church of England, the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland, the Church of Ireland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Church of Norway, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church of Sweden and the Church in Wales, on the basis of our common understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church, fundamental agreement in faith and our agreement on episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church, contained in Chapters II–IV of The Porvoo Common Statement, make the following acknowledgements and commitments:

A (i) we acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;

(ii) we acknowledge that in all our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are duly administered;

(iii) we acknowledge that all our churches share in the common confession of the apostolic faith;

(iv) we acknowledge that one another's ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of his grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ's commission through his Body, the Church;

(v) we acknowledge that personal, collegial and communal oversight (episcope) is embodied and exercised in all our churches in a variety of forms, in continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry;

(vi) we acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission, and ministry.

B We commit ourselves:

(i) to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources;

(ii) to welcome one another's members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations;

(iii) to regard baptized members of all our churches as members of our own;

(iv) to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous churches, to their mutual enrichment;

(v) to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination;

(vi) to invite one another's bishops normally to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church;

(vii) to workerstanding of diaconal ministry;

(viii) to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, life and work;

(ix) to encourage consultations of representatives of our churches, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information in theological and pastoral matters;

(x) to establish a contact group to nurture our growth in communion and to co-ordinate the implementation of this agreement.

The following churches have signed the Declaration:

The Church of England — July 9, 1995
The Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church — April 19, 1994
The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland — November 8, 1995
The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland — October 17– 27, 1995
The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania — July 29– 30, 1995
The Church of Ireland — May 16, 1995
The Church of Norway — November 15, 1994
The Scottish Episcopal Church — December 9, 1994
The Church of Sweden — August 24, 1994
The Church in Wales — September 1995

"The Porvoo Common Statement," Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England, London, 1993,
 http://www.porvoochurches.org/whatis/resources-0201-english-5.php#A
Text prepared by the Fourth Plenary Meeting held at Järvenpää, Finland, 9–13 October 1992.

The Borgå (Porvoo) "Common Statement"

Lecture delivered on the 22nd of May, 1996 in the Cathedral Chapter of Riga

Tom G. A. Hardt

Before I start treating the topic that has been submitted to me, I think it of some importance to make a clarification of my own stand. My presentation, rightly expected to be a criticism of the Borgå document as a kind of submission to Anglicanism from the Lutheran side, is not in any way based upon ignorance of the Anglican Church or upon hostility towards it.

As to my own person, it can be said that I already as a young boy with some frequency attended the Anglican church of Stockholm, St. Peter and St. Sigfrid. Actually, that was the place where I for the first time met the Athanasian Creed. When traveling abroad I often looked for the Anglican Embassy church. The copy of the Common Prayer Book that I use even for scholarly work is a Christmas gift from my mother, with an elegant white cover, apparently intended as some bridal gift.

It is even possible that the real start of my theological career took place when my teacher in divinity at school put into my hands Archbishop Yngve Brilioth's famous treatment of the Tractarian Movement, the high-church renewal within the Church of England in the nineteenth century. I well remember how Mother Margareth of the Anglo-Catholic Saint Hilda's priory at Whitby sent me lectures from the Swedish-Anglican conferences in her convent. Yet there was at that time a strange reservation from my side: I never approached the Lord's table in an Anglican church, and I perfectly well know the reason, which will sound a bit childish to your ears. Since I was accustomed to my own parish church's altar in marble and gold, the wooden altar of Saint Peter and Saint Sigfrid made me feel that something was wrong. Besides, I saw the communicants touch the cup with their hands, which looked almost blasphemous to my mind.

One day—I now was a university student—I thought another letter from Mother Margareth had come by the mail, as the stamp showed the picture of Queen Elizabeth. When I opened the letter I found it was from Australia, from the famous Lutheran confessor Professor Dr. Hermann Sasse, formerly of Erlangen, to whom I had written asking for an explanation of some words by him about the invalidity of the sacrament in churches not professing the real presence. I now learned about the reality behind the wooden altar, about the consequences of the so-called Black Rubric, and other such things, which we will touch more closely later. Yet Hermann Sasse was in no way a foe of Anglicanism. In his humble house in Adelaide in South Australia, Anglican archbishops and bishops often appeared to receive help and support, and his dear friend was a famous Anglican monk and liturgist, residing as he himself in exile in the Southern hemisphere.

Hermann Sasse taught me what confessional Lutheranism was but also to respect another faith, knowing that it was another faith, not my own. He stressed that those who took their creeds seriously were much closer to each other, even when they differed, than to those of no dogmatical persuasion at all. This is the background of what I am now going to tell you. It is based on neither ignorance nor malignance.

After the short personal confession of faith and of my personal closeness to the subject, I wish to point to the frame of the "Borgå Common Statement"[1] with its head rubric, "Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches." The Borgå document is, as I see it, only a minor, almost unimportant part of a far greater movement towards what is called the unity of the church. What I aim at is the fact that the ecumenical movement, known since the beginning of this century, is the background of what we are to discuss today. If we accept that movement, we will either have to accept the Borgå document, or we will at least be very open to such a step. This means today that a criticism of the Borgå document must by necessity also be a criticism of the ecumenical movement. It is, of course, impossible to cover such a great topic in a lecture like this one; but let me direct your attention to two statements concerning the theology of the so-called father of the ecumenical movement, Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Uppsala. One of his great admirers, Bishop Tor Andræ of Linköping, member of the Swedish academy, thus not a foe, not a critic, aptly summarizes Söderblom's belief in the following way: Söderblom's reformation of the Christian religion consists of a "consistently applied and purely historical conception of the origin of Christianity, of its founder, and of its original sacred documents, *to the exclusion of everything supernatural* as

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1. Porvoo (*Por´voh*) is the city in Finland that was a site of the conversations. Many cities in Finland have both a Finnish and Swedish name; a Swedish speaker will naturally refer to Porvoo by its Swedish name, Borgå—ed.

far as we understand thereby events and interventions that are, in principle, of a different nature from those that otherwise go to make human life and the web of history."[2] That Andræ does not exaggerate can be proven by Söderblom's own statement:

> If we understand Christianity as a historically given complexity of notions about God and the world, there is no doubt that its time as a dominating factor in culture is past. . . . A divinity which created and rules this earth—and the other celestial bodies as its accessories—a humanity created perfect, fallen in Adam's fall and then saved through a series of physical miracles, testified to by the infallible word of the Bible. . . . This is doomed.[3]

Thus spoke the father of the ecumenical movement, its very founder. The Christian faith and the Christian church, as we understand them, were said by him to be doomed. Instead of the Christian church, overcome by natural science and philosophy, by Darwin and Kant, according to Söderblom, he gave us the ecumenical movement, thought to become the new dominant factor in culture. Not all the adherents of the ecumenical movement have believed like Söderblom, but his views are there from the beginning, have gained the hearts of many, shaped the thoughts of many theologians, and cannot be separated from the ecumenical movement, which is, as we will soon see, mainly interested in the creation of a new world order. The World Council of Churches has, as it should be known especially in this place, for decades been a faithful supporter of the communist world, its peace messages and peace conferences. That is one of the ways that the ecumenical movement has tried to become a dominating factor. Another one is the Borgå document, admittedly, however, of secondary importance.

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S FALSE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The ambition to become a dominating factor in culture, to reshape the world, is found within the Borgå document. It is not only said that once accepted it "will be a very significant contribution towards restoring the visible unity of Christ's Church" (foreword, 11),[4] but also that this visible nature of the church is part of the task of the church to serve the "the reconciliation of humankind and of all creation," being sent "into the world as a sign"(18); yea, the church "manifests through its visible communion the healing and uniting power of God amidst the divisions of humankind" (20). It is this socially revolutionary oneness, creating a new world order, anticipating as a "foretaste" the visible kingdom of God (18), that Christ is said to have been praying for in John 17:21 (21), although until now apparently with no special success, leaving us with our present disunity as "an anomalous situation" (22).

The idea of the church's being through its visible oneness a pattern for the unification of the world, healing the divisions of mankind, is thoroughly erroneous.

We now understand why the Borgå document is of such importance, delivered "at a time of unparalleled opportunity, which may properly be called a *kairos*" (6), that is, a God-given turning point of history. The high-priestly prayer of our Lord now comes to its fulfillment after centuries of darkness and dissent and unilluminated theologians—through, at least partly, the endeavors of the participants of the Borgå statement. These claims are certainly most pretentious and absurd, but even more, they are not only unbiblical but antichristian. We easily see how all this fits within the scheme of Archbishop Söderblom.

I must at first state that the idea of the church's being through its visible oneness a pattern for the unification of the world, healing the divisions of mankind, is thoroughly erroneous. It entirely neglects the decisive biblical notion that the church is in no way such an external entity. The kingdom of God is an invisible reality that "cometh not with observation; . . . the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). The church is thus invisible, and the idea of a visible kingdom is that of the Pharisees in all centuries. This notion is of capital importance to the Lutheran Confessions, which make it clear that the church is "mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. To make it recognizable, this association has outward marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ" (Ap VII and VIII, 5; Tappert, 169). Only in this sense, as an inward, spiritual, invisible reality, the church is the body of Christ, which is thus not a description of an outward, visible corporation, as the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century meant. The only way of recognizing this invisible church is to look at the means of grace. Otherwise it would be unrecognizable. It is thus quite impossible to write, as the Borgå document does, that the church may "be seen to be, through the Holy Spirit, the one body of Christ" through "fuller visible embodiment in structured form" (22). The church, the body of Christ, cannot be seen, and it is exactly as invisible as the body

2. Tor Andræ, *Nathan Söderblom* (Upsala: J. A. Lindblads Förlag, 1931), 104; italics added.
3. Nathan Söderblom, *Religionsproblemet inom katolicism och protestantism (Stockholm: H. Gebers, 1910),* 352.
4. All references are to numbered paragraphs in David Tustin and Tore Furberg, *Porvoo Common Statement* (London: Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England, 1993). The Porvoo Common Statement consists of a text by the authors detailing the agreement on church, ministry, and sacraments, followed by the "Declaration" (paragraph 58, a and b), to be signed by the churches. http://www.porvoochurches.org/whatis/resources-0201-english.php.

of Christ in the sacrament. Accordingly it cannot be split, divided, or "reunited," as little as the body of Christ under the bread can be broken, hurt, or healed. It is never *ein Sehartikel,* an article of seeing, but *ein Höhrartikel,* an article of hearing, being forever the *ecclesia abscondita,* the hidden church. Here must be observed most carefully the difference between the Augsburg Confession Article VII and Article XIX in the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles of religion, which openly speaks of the church in the following way: "The visible Church of God is a congregation of faithful men." This is not the church as taught by Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. The visibility of the church is not to be reconciled with its hiddenness.

This church, the one and only, has as its one and only task to administer the means of grace: "This power of the keys or of bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching the Word of God and by administering the sacraments." The confession adds here the warning: "Temporal authority is concerned with matters altogether different from the Gospel" (AC XXVIII, 8; Tappert, 82). In the following passage all theocratic ideas are condemned: "My kingship is not of this world" (John 18:36). Thereby the Roman ecclesiology is condemned, a view that certainly intended to convey blessings to the world by introducing the pope as a kind of president of a kind of medieval United Nations in order to preserve and promote peace and unity, exactly as the visible kingdom of the Jewish Messiah according to the Pharisees was thought to do, a temptation that equally and constantly is present in the Reformed church, of which Anglicanism dogmatically is part and parcel.

The biblical testimony is quite clear when it comes to describing the role of the Christian church in relationship to the world. It is contained in the words of Christ in Matthew 24, where the church of God is said to be "hated by all nations," where Christ predicts that many false prophets will come and that many Christians "shall wax cold." It is the persecuted minority in conflict with the nations that is thus described. The Lutheran Confessions see the hardship of such a life under the cross: "We see the infinite dangers that threaten the church with ruin. There is an infinite number of ungodly within the church who oppress it. The church will abide nevertheless; it exists despite the great multitude of the wicked, and Christ supplies it with the gifts he has promised" (Ap VII and VIII, 9; Tappert, 169). "To dissent from the consensus of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a serious matter" (Tr 42; Tappert, 332). Yet the demand of Christ that we have nothing to do with the false prophets forces the true church to suffer its loneliness. It should once for all be remembered that the Augsburg Confession was not the confession accepted by the Diet of Augsburg, but the confession condemned by the same diet, and that the Lutheran confessing princes were fully aware that their lives could be in danger. This is the fate of the suffering church, and we are today asked to share this suffering, not to join "the consensus of so many nations."

There was nothing in the presentation of our Lutheran Confessions in the sixteenth century that unified the world or external Christendom. It split and will continue to split, and if it does not split it is no longer gospel or confession. This cannot be refuted by a reference to John 17:21. It is a serious mistake to let this prayer of Christ imply that he would in any way have prayed for the unification of the church—or the world!—in the sense now embraced by the ecumenical movement. The words "may be one in us that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" do not permit an interpretation that the visible unity of the Christians ("fuller visible embodiment"!) would provoke the faith of the world, a faith that then would be a false, human faith in signs and wonders. According to the high-priestly prayer, there is only one way of creating faith: "which shall believe on me *through their word"* (John 17:20). The word and the word alone, the gospel, preached by the apostles and

There was nothing in the presentation of our Lutheran Confessions in the sixteenth century that unified the world or external Christendom.

their successors, creates faith, and it creates faith even when spoken by one single apostle, refuted and persecuted by those who claim to be the true church, the true Israel. The link between being grafted into the oneness with the Father and the Son, and the world's coming to faith is to be found in the fact that without this basis in God through faith, without the oneness with God in the communion of the saints, no Christian testimony will ever be delivered, because no courage, no strength, no wisdom, no other fruits of the faith will be available in order to contradict the world, to suffer martyrdom, to refute the false teachers and their documents, and to remain steadfast under the word. If we have no recourse to the consolations of the gospel, if we are not one with God, we will give up preaching the gospel, and neither we nor the world will be saved. This is how this passage in Holy Writ must be understood, and this is how it was understood by such great doctors of the church as Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, and Saint Augustine of Hippo.

The idea of "restoring the visible unity of Christ's Church" (foreword, 11) is not only a serious doctrinal error, but also the worst kind of false understanding of church history. As Werner Elert has pointed out in his study of church fellowship,[5] the ancient church was as split as modern Christianity and even more, as no one dreamed of breaking the commonly accepted rule not to commune outside one's own faith. It may be even

5. Werner Elert, *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche, hauptsächlich des Ostens* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954); English translation, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries,* trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).

more important to stress that the church fathers never thought of impressive unity and of great numbers as indications of true faith. They constantly returned to the biblical axiom, "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14) and spoke like Saint Jerome against a Pelagian: "That you have many like you will not make you a Catholic; on the contrary, it proves that you are a heretic." To the fullness of the catholic faith belongs the fact that in the controversy about the faith, this faith is often cherished by only a minority. An abyss separates the Borgå document not only from the church of the Reformation, but also from the ancient church.

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S FALSE CONCEPT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Borgå document says of the canonical Scriptures that "they contain everything necessary to salvation" (32), which is simply a repetition of Article VI in the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required by any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought to be necessary to salvation." This is the source of what can be called the Reformed or Anglican broad-mindness that during the centuries has made its adherents approach the Lutheran Church, offering her a church fellowship that would imply that the Lutherans may keep their old beliefs, still tainted by the darkness of the papacy, provided that they do not claim them to be church divisive, "not to be required by any man." This is also the background of Charles Wesley's notorious "think and let think" and of the difference between essentials and nonessentials.

The Lutheran Church teaches in quite another way about Holy Writ: "that no other doctrine be treated and taught in our lands, territories, schools, and churches than that alone which is based on the Holy Scriptures of God" (Preface to the Book of Concord; Tappert, 12). Thereby all doctrines not found in Scripture are excluded and may not be taught at all, leaving no room for private opinions from the pulpit. The principle of *Sola Scriptura* must be understood literally. Thus the Lutheran Church cannot accept the false Reformed and Anglican concept of Scripture but must keep to the doctrine that

> we believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged, as it is written in Ps. 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." And St. Paul says in Galatians 1:8: "Even if an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed." (FC Ep Preface, 1)

We will reject any teaching lacking biblical support and will not tolerate theological pluralism. By saying so we forever step out of the company of socially acceptable people, out of the inner circle of recognized theologians; that is, we take up the cross of Christ and join the glorious company of apostles, prophets, church fathers, and reformers, the one, holy, apostolic, and catholic church, because she has always believed in that way.

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S DUBIOUS CONCEPT OF SALVATION

Although there is no difference on justification as such between Lutheranism and Anglicanism, it must be pointed out that the Borgå document affirms (32, c) the new agreements with the Church of Rome on justification, which greatly obscures the purity of the gospel in that it confuses justification and sanctification, which must be kept apart. The fact that the one cannot be without the other cannot uphold the sentence that they are "aspects of the same divine act." This comes at least offensively close to the sentence, rightly condemned by the Lutheran Confessions, "that righteousness by faith before God consists of two pieces or parts, namely, the gracious forgiveness of sins and, as a second element, renewal or sanctification" (FC SD III, 48; Tappert, 548).

It is indeed to be regretted that the document did not use the opportunity to stress the common ground that exists for the Anglican and Lutheran Confessions in their common defense of the doctrine of original sin, where that sin is confessed to deserve eternal damnation, and that it remains also in the reborn, having in itself the nature of sin, contrary to both Methodism and the Church of Rome. The battle hymn against denial of original sin, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," by Toplady, is to be found not only in the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* of the Common Prayer Book, but also in *The Lutheran Hymnal* of the Synodical Conference in the United States. In today's revival of naked Pelagianism especially through the present pope, it would have indeed been refreshing to hear the sound of those stanzas in the Borgå document—but we do not.

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S FALSE CONCEPT OF CHRISTOLOGY

What is said on Christology (32, d) contains two important deviations from orthodox Christology. The first point is the remarkable absence of the Athanasian Creed, that long, strictly dogmatical, most majestic confession of the three Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity and their unity. One of the three ecumenical creeds has suddenly disappeared, although the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican church in Article VIII says about it that it "ought thoroughly to be received and believed." This confession has always, however, been exposed to utter disapproval from the side of liberal theologians, and that is undoubtedly the reason why it has been left out of the Borgå document. It is not to be assumed that today's liberal-minded bishops will stand up and confess the Athanasian Creed and its so-called damnatory clauses: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except everyone do keep and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." The omission of this creed throws the most serious doubts on the orthodoxy of the Borgå document. This can be said both from an Anglican and a Lutheran point of view.

Second, there is not the slightest indication in the Borgå document that there is an essential disagreement on Christology

between Anglicanism and Lutheranism, as is made clear by the Formula of Concord, Article VIII. This is the article in which the Lutheran Church with many scriptural references shows that the human nature of Christ is already from the moment of its conception in the womb of the Virgin in possession of the attributes of the divine nature, although they are not always and entirely used during Christ's earthly life. Thus his flesh is life-giving, fully containing all the prerogatives of the Godhead, and it is penetrated by the divinity as glowing iron by fire. The human nature of Christ is no longer, as in Nestorian, scholastic, Reformed theology, a vestment assumed by the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. It is part of that Person, resting within it, not outside it. This is the Christology that the Lutheran Confessions proclaim, supporting it also with patristic material, which shows that the Lutheran Church stands within the so-called Cyrillian Christology, that is, follows the Christology of Saint Cyril of Alexandria as truly biblical. This doctrine has always been rejected by Reformed theology, of which Anglicanism here as in other cases is part and parcel. There is a most notorious case where the false Christology of the Anglican Church is once for all visible. It is in the so-called Black Rubric, printed after the liturgy for the communion service: "The natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven and not here." This Christ is not the divine Lord of the Lutheran Confessions, whose manhood forever after the incarnation participates in the divine Majesty's prerogatives, not the Christ in whom all the universe is present, who also according to his manhood governs and rules the world as its omnipresent creator and sustainer. Where God is, there is also the Son of Mary, as true as he is true God. Also in the sewers of Rome, into which the martyrs were thrown, also in the Siberian prison camps, not unknown to some of my listeners, he was and is present according to both of his natures, no less. The Christ of the Black Rubric is a false Christ, split into two parts, of which only one can make claim to the title of "Lord." It is the false Christ of Nestorius and Calvin, and that doctrine has no place in the Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

The Borgå statement reveals itself once more as the victory of the Reformed faith over Lutheranism.

It is not only negligence but also contempt when the Borgå document passes over in silence the very center of the Christian faith, the doctrine of Christ's person, his two natures and their union. The participants do not care about these things, which probably even remain unknown to them. If they should be forced to study them, they would ridicule them and turn to far more interesting things, "establishing the one valid centre for the unity of the whole human family" (32, l). He who has tasted the sweetness of that fruit will never spend one moment on Christology.

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S FALSE CONCEPT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Leaving aside for reasons of space what is said on liturgy and church, it is now our task to draw attention to the still existing and still unreconciled differences on the sacrament of holy baptism. The highly defective Reformed doctrine of holy baptism is apparent in Article XVII of the Thirty-nine Articles, where a typically Reformed parallel pattern is used to explain this sacrament: "The promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." The thought of a parallel means that as there is an external action, there is also, in the case of the believer, an internal, direct action, the external action merely confirming the internal, provided that it actually exists. This use of the word sign should not be confused with the Lutheran use of the same. The Reformed-Anglican and the Lutheran understandings of the word sign are contrary to and irreconcilable with each other. The Lutheran sign is an effective sign of the effective gospel, the visible word with all the indwelling power of audible word, giving the same as the word, proclaiming and distributing through the means of the visible sign, whereby even the unbeliever is exposed to the present fullness of grace, although he rejects it. Any Lutheran child who has learned his catechism knows the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, where we gladly confess about holy baptism that "it effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare," and that this sacrament is a "gracious water of life" (SC IV, 2, 3; Tappert, 348, 349).

It is also most significant for the typically Reformed attitude of Anglicanism towards this holy sacrament that Anglicanism does not know an emergency baptism by a layman, merely a private baptism performed by a minister. This aptly illustrates the difference between the attitude taken towards infant baptism in the Anglican and Lutheran Confessions. The Anglican Article XVII says no more than that "the baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." The Augsburg Confession, Article IX, has quite another strength in its wording: "About baptism they teach that it is necessary for salvation, that through baptism grace is offered, and that infants should be baptized, who are by baptism brought to God and received into the grace of God. They condemn the Anabaptists, who reject infant baptism and teach that infants are saved without baptism" (translation from the Latin).

Another revealing light is thrown upon Anglicanism when its catechism says:

> What is required of persons to be baptized? *Answer*: Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament. *Question*: Why then are Infants

> baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them? *Answer*: Because they promise them both by their Sureties, which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

Here the Lutheran teaching of the *fides infantium,* the faith of infants, is denied. Infant baptism merely anticipates what in reality exists only in the future. This is irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions: "We bring the child with purpose and hope that he may believe, and we pray God to grant him faith" (LC IV, 57; Tappert, 444). Only this does justice to the words of Christ: "these little ones which believe in me" (Matt 18:6). This plain denial of the fi*des infantium* is to be seen as the background of the statement of the Episcopalian bishops of the United States in 1872 that infant baptism shall not be understood as a rebirth. To the Reformed-Anglican faith no change in the state of the infant takes place through the sacrament of baptism, no miraculous creation of faith and repentance, thought to be made impossible by "their tender age."

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S LACK OF ANY DOCTRINE OF HOLY ABSOLUTION

As in so many other ecumenical documents, also in the Borgå document the sacrament of holy absolution is not mentioned. Yet the Lutheran Confessions make it perfectly clear that "the genuine sacraments, therefore, are Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution (which is the sacrament of penitence)" (Ap XIII, 4; Tappert, 211). This was no dead letter to the reformers: "With regard to the time, it is certain that most people in our churches use the sacraments, absolution and the Lord's Supper, many times in a year" (Ap XI, 3; Tappert, 180). Consequently it was a constant part of the Lutheran preaching: "It is well known that we have so explained and extolled the blessing of absolution and the power of the keys that many troubled consciences have received consolation from our teaching" (Ap XI, 2; Tappert, 180). Until the time of the Napoleonic wars, most Lutheran churches had accordingly one or more confessionals. The ritual used is found in the Lutheran Confessions, SC V, "Confession and Absolution," with the decisive "Ego te absolvo," "I absolve thee."

We find nothing about this in the Borgå statement or in the Anglican Church. What is called absolution in the Common Prayer Book is not an absolution according to Lutheranism. That God promises forgiveness to all who "turn to him," as said in the communion service, is an exposition of salvation. That God is asked to "pardon and deliver you from all your sins" is a pious prayer. The more orthodox-sounding "I absolve thee" in the Visitation of the Sick is to be understood within the framework given by the other texts, indicating merely the wish of God to deal with sinners. It is, however, not the sacrament of holy absolution, which cannot exist in a Reformed church. Nowhere will we hear the question of the Lutheran father confessor, "Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?" The reference to the power of the keys given in the Anglican ordination ritual goes no further than the ritual of the Common Prayer Book admits.

By its significant silence on this matter the Borgå statement reveals itself once more as the victory of the Reformed faith over Lutheranism, or rather, as a document made by people who never were Lutherans.

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S FALSE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

We now approach a point where Reformed cleverness has in all centuries been able to suggest false solutions, to make use of double-tongued expressions, to avoid confessing clearly. In future textbooks the Borgå document will have its place as an illustration of this. The document says that "the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received under the forms of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper (Eucharist). In this way we receive the body and blood of Christ, crucified and risen, and in him the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of his passion." Good and faithful Lutherans have also come to accept this as a genuine statement of their faith. Yet they must be reminded that they have not heard more than the Reformed, Anglican faith has always been able to express. These formulations are all possible as long as they have their presupposition in Article XXVIII, "Of the Lord's Supper," of the Thirty-nine Articles, where it is taught that "the Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith." Consequently the following Article XXIX has as rubric: "Of the Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper." The consequence of this is the already mentioned so-called Black Rubric in the Communion Ritual: "the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour are in heaven and not here."

This is in outspoken contradiction to what the Lutheran Confessions teach:

> Therefore we reject and condemn with heart and mouth as false, erroneous, and deceiving all Sacramentarian opinion and doctrines which are inconsistent with, opposed to, or contrary to the doctrine set forth above, based as it is on the Word of God. . . .
>
> 7. Or that the body and blood of Christ are only received and partaken through faith, spiritually. . . .
>
> 12. We also reject the doctrine that the unbelieving, unrepentant, and wicked Christians, who only bear the name of Christ but do not have a right, truthful, living, and saving faith, receive only bread and wine in the Supper and not the body and blood of Christ. (FC SD VII, 112, 118, 123; Tappert, 589, 590).

This is the very heart of Lutheran eucharistic theology, with which the Lutheran sacrament of the altar stands and falls. The Borgå document brings us back to the situation in Marburg, where Zwingli confessed exactly as the Thirty-nine Articles the spiritual eating of the body and blood of Christ, pleading a union between the Zwinglians and the Lutherans and conceding their right to retain their old teaching as long as they did not bind the conscience of other Christians. We must reject as did

Luther that "hand of brotherhood." We must as Luther point to the text "This is my body," which forever must be confessed. We must with Luther say to the Reformed: "You have another spirit than we." (He did not, by the way, say this to Zwingli, as so often maintained. He said it to Martin Bucer, later to become one of the fathers of Anglicanism through Thomas Cranmer.)

It should be added that the Lutheran Church accordingly cannot recognize the Reformed, Anglican supper as a valid sacrament, a true sacrament of the altar. Our Confessions teach, using a quotation from Martin Luther on the "enemies of the sacrament": "They, indeed, have only bread and wine, for they do not also have the Word and instituted ordinance of God but have perverted and changed it according to their own imagination" (SD VII, 32; Tappert, 574–75.). It is no longer the word of God that is read when the Anglican Common Prayer Book prescribes the reading of the words of institution at the communion service. These words have been perverted and changed to mean the very opposite of the real meaning of Christ, to say: "This is not my body," "This is my body only to faith." The mere repetition of external syllables constitutes no sacrament. The mystery religions of the dying Roman Empire had rituals where the words and expressions could be interpreted according to the taste of the participants, never fixed to any specific meaning, but the Christian sacraments are forever bound to a clear, distinctive doctrine, leaving no loophole for doubt and denial.

The Borgå statement says in its final declaration: "We recommend that this agreement and our new relationship be inaugurated and affirmed by three central celebrations of the Eucharist, at which all our churches would be represented" (59). It is the duty of all faithful Lutheran theologians to make it clear to the partakers of such celebrations and to all other Christians that in spite of all liturgical festivity that may be used at such an occasion, however magnificent and impressive the cathedrals used may be, whatever historical titles that the participants may carry, it is not the holy sacrament of the altar that is celebrated. Over this ceremony can be written the words "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him" (John 20:13).

THE BORGÅ DOCUMENT'S FALSE CONCEPT OF THE HOLY MINISTRY

The Borgå document dedicates seven lines to Holy Scripture, eight lines to Christology, seven lines to holy baptism (as well as eight lines to confirmation, upon which we have not commented), fourteen lines to the Lord's Supper, and twenty lines to the holy ministry (including episcopacy). To these twenty lines are added *eight pages* on episcopacy. This concentration on the ministry and especially on the external forms of it shows a regrettable preoccupation with the questions of order and a considerable neglect of the questions of faith. This is the fate of the so-called ecumenical movement. This confirms the prediction made by Martin Luther on the eschatological finale: tired of Scripture, seized by the *desperatio veritatis,* the apostate Christians will turn to externals.

It should not be denied, however, that the holy ministry as such is also part of "faith." There is a God-given, biblical doctrine of the ministry, which must be defended against those who falsely claim that the priesthood of all believers replaces the apostolic ministry and thus, for example, permit lay preaching. To the sound doctrine of the ministry belongs also a correct teaching about episcopacy as a good and laudable order of the church, even if it lacks an explicit divine mandate. The Lutheran Church does not in any way reject the episcopal office. It is in no way limited to the Nordic churches, but is equally present in German Lutheranism, the bishops of which under the name of superintendents often were, for example (contrary to Scandinavia), exclusive holders of the right to perform confirmation and issued their episcopal patents "by divine providence." Generally speaking, Lutheran Germany retained far more of traditional heritage both in liturgy and church order than did its more puritanical northern neighbors. Yet it must be said that the picture given by the Borgå document is a deeply erroneous one that must be rejected.

The Lutheran Church does not in any way reject the episcopal office.

First of all, it is false that the Lutheran superintendents or bishops, who were consecrated without the so-called apostolic succession, "were consecrated by priests following what was believed to be the precedent of the early Church" (34), "an occasional priestly/presbyterial ordination" (52). This formulation entirely distorts what the Lutheran Confessions have to say on this point: "For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers" (Tr 67; Tappert, 331); and "the true church, which since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right of electing and ordaining ministers" (Tr 69; Tappert, 331). Although it certainly is important to make clear that the difference between bishops and priests is not by divine command, as the Confession also does in this connection, the essential thing is that the church as such, the church understood in the way described above, alone is the holder of the keys and as such holds the right to ordain, which is never to be regarded as the property of some specific order within the church. The Lutheran doctrine of the ministry is not a variety of the medieval one, merely replacing episcopal succession with a presbyterial one, as, by the way, happened in Saxony a century before the Reformation, when abbots not episcopally consecrated were granted the right to ordain priests, deacons, and subdeacons. If we argue in that way, we have completely misunderstood Lutheranism. The Lutheran Church preaches on the basis of Holy Scripture another ecclesiology than the medieval one, present long before any Lutheran ordination was performed. What that ecclesiology means is very easy to express. The Lutheran Con-

fessions say with the words of Luther: "For, thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd." This is a dogmatical statement in the strictest sense, and it is turned against "surplices, tonsures, albs, and other ceremonies of theirs which they have invented over and above the Holy Scriptures" (SA III, XII, 2; Tappert, 315). To these "ceremonies" belong the entire idea of succession in any form, presbyterial or episcopal, where a tactual succession would confer any kind of authority whatsoever "over and above the Holy Scriptures."

The Borgå document tries to open a way to recognize the churches that lost apostolic succession (Denmark, Norway, Iceland, partly also Finland) by pointing to the many other bonds that knit these churches to the past: "Faithfulness to the apostolic calling of the whole Church is carried by more than one means of continuity" (52). This attitude is probably understood as more Lutheran than the strictly Anglo-Catholic attitude, which would plainly deny the validity of the orders of such churches. Yet there is not the slightest reason for a Lutheran to rejoice at it. The carnal, fleshly succession that the Reformation first of all condemned was exactly the idea that *successio localis* would in any way confer any authority. The bones of the apostles, the sacred memories of martyrdom, and a long tradition are no guarantee at all. Wittenberg is *urbs catholica,* Rome not. That the present bishop of Roskilde, for example, is incumbent of a sanctuary of considerable age and successor of many orthodox Lutheran bishops does not say anything at all about his ministry, his authority, and his position in the church today.

CONCLUSION

The Lutheran Church throughout the ages has always been exposed to the attempts of Anglicanism to influence it. Its spiritual father, Martin Bucer, is a notorious figure in this connection, not seldom acting in a way that even modern ecumenists must recognize as intellectually dishonest. Queen Elizabeth I sent emissaries to Germany to stop the Liber Concordiae, insisting that it would be most shocking to condemn her as a heretic. When the Elector of Brandenburg had apostatized from the Lutheran faith, turned Calvinist, sacked the cathedral of Berlin, and burned the crucifix, the first one to turn up at the new Reformed supper that replaced the Lutheran mass was the happy English ambassador. When in the nineteenth century the King of Prussia, of the Calvinistic house of Hohenzollern, introduced the union between Lutherans and Calvinists, persecuting the suffering, resistant Lutherans, he entered into conversation with the Church of England to erect the notorious bishopric of Jerusalem, which proves the close bonds between continental and British Protestantism.

Once more this temptation presents itself, although in a new shape. It must be resisted as a temptation and in the Holy Spirit that was given to us in holy baptism. He who consciously signs the Borgå declaration, knowing what it means, no longer belongs to the Lutheran Church. LOGIA

Does Luther Have a Future in Germany?

Jobst Schöne

If you give this question some thought, you will realize how difficult it is to give a reliable answer. We live in a constantly changing world. Beyond that, only a real prophet could make an accurate prognosis of Luther's future in Germany—and I am no prophet. Under these circumstances I can only attempt to analyze the situation in which we find ourselves and draw some conclusions. In the end I will leave the prognosis more or less to you, and you may determine for yourself what to make of my presentation. At any rate it will look more like a six-month weather forecast (that is, never accurate) than a solid statement. Right now nobody knows what will happen in the coming years and decades and how our churches will cope with and respond to the challenges before them.

Before we go into any details concerning the situation in Germany, we should clarify what sort of "Luther" we have in mind and are discussing.

WHAT "LUTHER" DO WE HAVE IN MIND?

Since the time of the Reformation there has been considerable change in the picture that people hold of Luther, the conception of what Lutheranism is all about, and the expectations of what to gain from the Reformation. In every age the Zeitgeist (a loanword in English, denoting the thought and feeling specific to a certain generation or period) has deeply influenced how Luther was accepted and adopted and how people wanted to see him. People always like to project their own ideas on certain figures in history. Luther is one example. People wish him and his heritage to be the way they want. Rarely has there been a completely objective and impartial acceptance of Luther and his legacy. This fact is well-documented and demonstrated in the exhibition found today in the Luther House in Wittenberg, the former Augustinian monastery in which Luther lived for many years. Simply compare the pictures, portraits, and monuments of Luther from various periods, and you will notice that many of them portray not only Luther but also the period when the display was constructed along with its feelings and conceptions of Luther. In some instances this is reflected in a quite revealing manner.

You can indeed make use of Luther in many different ways. You can consider him a genius, a liberator from the so-called darkness of the Middle Ages, a destroyer or a renovator of the church, a progressive or a conservative, a revolutionary, a national hero, the founder of a national church or concerned about the church catholic, a saint or a demon, an evil spirit or the savior of the church. Those who admire him use him for their own purposes just as those who hate him or simply cannot get out of his way. The Humanists and the Enthusiasts did so in the sixteenth century, the Pietists and the Enlighteners did so in the seventeenth century, the liberal theologians and the Nationalists did so in the nineteenth century, the Nazis and even the Communists did so in the twentieth century, and some silly materialists do so today. After all, Luther is still good for business, promoting tourism and selling souvenirs of all kinds, down to Luther-candies, Luther-cake, Luther-beer, and whatever else you can find in Wittenberg today. Ironically, while Luther's hometown no longer knows much of his teaching, it still celebrates his marriage by a public parade in historic costumes every year.

The Luther, however, on whom we are concentrating and whose future we are contemplating is not the sort of Luther good for tourists, good for business, or good for promoting all kinds of ideas. He is not the one placed on monuments but otherwise forgotten. Luther himself wanted to be nothing but a teacher of the church (catholic), a rediscoverer and confessor of the pure doctrine of the gospel. And that is how the church that accepted his reformation understood him until the end of the seventeenth century. Hermann Sasse, the well-known Lutheran theologian of Erlangen University and later Australia, tells us: "Then came the time when the nature of the doctrine of the gospel along with the contents of the church's doctrine were no longer understood, and false interpretations of the Reformation began."[1] Sasse makes the following point regarding the doctrine of the Eucharist (but it is true for all other Lutheran doctrines as well):

> If it is no longer confessed but only presented as an historic antiquity . . . it is going to die. . . . In the very moment when the church's doctrine disappears, the veneration of Luther [as a person] begins. . . . Luther scholars, replacing

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1. Hermann Sasse, *Was heißt lutherisch?* (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1934), 65.

> the guardians of Lutheran doctrine, will now collect his relics and exhibit them. . . . Processions of pilgrims . . . will survey them with the same reverence as the pilgrims of old viewed the collection of relics Frederic the Wise [Luther's Prince Elector] had gathered. . . . Only indulgences can no longer be earned, not because Luther has done away with them, but more for the reason Claus Harms [a Lutheran pastor and theologian at the beginning of the nineteenth century] . . . has given: "The forgiveness of sins cost money in the sixteenth century; in the nineteenth century you get it for nothing as you help yourself to it."[2]

When we ask if Luther has a future in Germany, we ask about Luther the teacher of the church; we ask about Lutheran doctrine and confession. Sasse observes:

> As teacher of the church he [Luther] stepped back behind his doctrine. For by this a true teacher of the church gives proof of his mission, just as a genuine apostle and prophet: that he is only a mediator of a doctrine which is not his own. . . . Ist doch die leer nit meyn, "the doctrine is not mine" (Luther, Eine treue Vermahnung . . . sich zu hüten vor Aufruhr . . . , 1522; WA 8: 685.6). Luther is protesting against those who label his followers by his name, which grew into a custom. That makes the difference between a reformer and the founder of a sect.[3]

Luther saw himself as dispensable. And in fact "in the history of the Reformation in Germany the person of Luther steps rather soon into the background. By far, Luther's person did not play a role in the years after 1530 as Calvin's person did until the end of his life."[4]

HAS LUTHER INFLUENCED GERMANY AND HOW SO?

This is the next question to address. Overseas tourists visiting Germany are often deeply disappointed. They expect a country full of Lutherans. They think of Germans as Lutherans by nature—if not all, at least a majority. It is quite normal to expect nothing but Lutherans in the motherland of the Reformation. The reality is quite different.

Today thirty-one percent of the German population holds membership in one of the twenty-three Protestant Territorial (State-related) Churches (Landeskirchen). All these churches are tied together in one organization by the name EKD (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) and have full church fellowship with and among each other. Another thirty-two percent of the German population is Roman Catholic. And then follows the frightening discovery that thirty-one percent (almost one-third!) have no church affiliation of any kind. Only two percent belong to other smaller Christian denominations (Orthodox, Baptist, Methodist, and so forth). Muslims make up four percent of the population.

Among the Protestants average church attendance on a typical Sunday is down to less than four percent of all members. The Roman Catholics are somewhat better off. Germany may be seen as a mission field. It used to be different, but since the age of Enlightenment and Rationalism there has been a constant turn away from the church. There have been short-lived interruptions to this departure, such as the Awakening at the beginning of the nineteenth century or the influence of political catastrophes like World Wars I and II. But in recent decades this development has reached stunning dimensions, due to political regimes hostile to Christianity (the Nazi regime and Communism in Eastern Germany) as well as the general secularization of the Western world. Protestant churches in Eastern Germany have lost half a million members only twelve years (1991–2003) after die Wende, the political turn around, while in Western Germany three and a half million members left the church within twenty years (1983–2003). Such rapidly declining membership figures and consequently shrinking financial resources accompany theological weakness and loss of confessional profile. Mainstream Protestantism in Germany is no longer characterized by a Lutheran heritage but by pluralism and a great variety of opinions, positions, and convictions, often contradicting one another. An official document describing the future prospects of the EKD (edited in 2006 by the Council of the EKD) quite frankly labels this church body as "a church of freedom" and "a church of individuality." It is theologically broad-minded and similar to what the Episcopal Church calls "Anglican comprehensiveness," in which nearly every opinion is accommodated.

Luther's influence in terms of doctrine and church practice, worship and prayer has declined remarkably. However, a good number of local congregations and pastors still hold to the Lutheran Confessions and want to retain their heritage. Yet they have a hard time coping with the widespread atmosphere of tolerance, openness, and indifference towards doctrine and confession. This comes from modern individualism and the privatization of the Christian faith that make doctrinal differences obsolete.

The present-day situation has developed in a history too long to recount in detail in this article. In my view the decline of Lutheranism in Germany has four basic reasons:

1. The close connection between state and church since the sixteenth century;
2. The Pietist movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;
3. The impact of the Enlightenment and Rationalism in the eighteenth century;
4. The formation of Union churches in the nineteenth century.

First, the Lutheran reformers in the sixteenth century found themselves confronted with bishops who rejected Lutheran doctrine and refused to ordain Lutheran pastors and care for Lutheran churches. Under these conditions they accepted the

2. Hermann Sasse, *Union und Bekenntnis* (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1936), 18.
3. Sasse, *Was heißt lutherisch?*, 67.
4. Ibid., 23.

secular rulers (electors, princes, and the like) and other secular authorities as "substitute bishops." These were regarded as preeminent members of the church (membra praecipua ecclesiae), fit for taking over at least the administration. Thereby the traditional ecclesiastical authorities were replaced by men of political power. This was obviously in contradiction to the reformers' own conviction (AC XXVIII) that there ought to be a separation or at least a clear distinction between state and church, but it seemed inevitable under prevailing conditions. In the end it established state churches on a regional basis. As these secular authorities began to turn away from the faith themselves, this system became intolerable and caused all kinds of problems. This was before the establishment of the modern secular political system that looks on the church as an association of people of a certain conviction, similar to other associations and possessing equal rights. As a result, public opinion saw the church more and more as a part of the state and dominated by the state. Pastors and bishops were seen simply as servants of the state who were paid by the state and were always loyal to the authorities. By state law church affiliation was enforced, along with baptism, confession, attendance at the Eucharist, and so forth. This did not foster a friendly attitude among the people or any greater love for the church, nor did it generate responsibility for the church's existence. Instead it alienated large parts of the population from the church.

Individualism and the privatization of the faith make doctrinal differences obsolete.

People began to look for their spiritual welfare in private circles, giving rise to the second reason for the decline of Lutheranism in Germany: the Pietist movement, a reaction against the established state church and—at least to some extent—against the official doctrine of the church. There are legitimate questions about the extent of this movement's influence and its effect on Lutheranism, but there is no doubt that Pietism still has a great impact on church life in Germany today.

Pietism accentuated private piety, seeking out like-minded believers and gathering them in small groups for Bible study and prayer. There was little interest in the traditional Lutheran worship service, doctrine, Confessions, the sacraments, or the ordained ministry—and all the current problems we have with these issues originate from pietistic influence. Pietism, emphasizing its foremost concern of the "priesthood of all believers," called for conversion as a spiritual event in a Christian's life. It accentuated feelings, personal piety, and sanctification over doctrine. Pietism activated Bible study and Bible distribution and organized mission work and social work to a previously unknown extent. At the same time it paved the way for ecumenism by seeking out fellow believers more than purity of doctrine. The activity of laypeople along with individuality began to shape church life. The traditional Lutheran position was questioned, and Luther's influence began to fade away.

Third, the spirit of the Enlightenment and Rationalism, overlapping with Pietism, influenced the church and became even more destructive. It undermined the authority of the Scriptures, rejected the doctrine of original sin, replaced biblical anthropology with an optimistic picture of man, and proclaimed a new age of progress. In the end it gave birth to liberal theology, widely characteristic of the nineteenth century.

Fourth, Lutheran churches and Lutheran doctrine were literally destroyed by the formation of Union churches in many of Germany's territories in the nineteenth century, depriving the Lutheran Confessions of their effect and exclusive right. During this time Lutheran doctrine was replaced by veneration of Luther; Lutheran piety was replaced by Luther monuments.

Today twelve out of twenty-three territorial churches in Germany are Union churches, resulting from the merger of Lutheran and Reformed church bodies. Ten more territorial churches are Lutheran by constitution but tied together with Union churches and Reformed churches as members of the same church body, the EKD. The EKD started out after World War II as a federation of autonomous church bodies but developed into a communion, a church body with full church fellowship among its members. This communion is based on the so-called Leuenberg Concord of 1973, a doctrinal agreement declaring that all former confessional differences are no longer divisive.

Has Luther influenced Germany, and how so? He has indeed, but long past are the times when his influence had great impact. Neither the confessional Awakening in the nineteenth century (the so-called Neuluthertum, new Lutheranism) nor the considerable body of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Luther research could stop the decline of Lutheranism.

What is left of Luther's influence? There is still his ingenious and unequaled translation of the Bible into German, although this is now found alongside numerous other translations. There is still Luther's Small Catechism, now as before used in numerous congregations. There are still hymns of Luther, Paul Gerhardt, and many others in use, disseminating Lutheran doctrine, although contemporary songs are taking over more and more. There are the timeless cantatas and oratorios of Johann Sebastian Bach attracting the crowds. In some places there is still a divine service following Luther's order. One should not underestimate the influence coming from this heritage. But how much impact it will have in the long run, or what influence will continue to come from it, remains an open question.

WHAT REPLACED LUTHER?

Two great theologians of striking effectiveness and penetrating power enduring up to our day help answer this question.

The first was a preacher and professor in Berlin in the early nineteenth century by the name of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Schleiermacher brought the heritage of Pietism and the Enlightenment together and gained the title of "Church

Father of the Union Church" (Kirchenvater der Union). Fighting the alienation of the people from the church of his time and the secularization of public and private life (by and large the private more than the public life), Schleiermacher believed in privatized religion based on feelings more than doctrine. He appeared to hold a Lutheran position when he described the fundamental difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the following way: Roman Catholicism "makes the individual's relation to Christ dependent on his relation to the church," while Protestantism "makes the individual's relation to the church dependent on his relation to Christ."[5] This, however, is not Luther's concept.

Schleiermacher's concept makes the church a merely sociological entity.

Schleiermacher saw the church not as a divine institution but as a free association of believing individuals for the purpose of serving their religious needs. His makes the church a merely sociological entity. This concept and idea (to value the church from a human point of view as composed of individuals joining by free-will agreement to do things together) has prevailed up to the present day in German Protestantism—and I suspect not only in Germany. Schleiermacher felt the tension between individual rights and all-encompassing institutions. He voted for individuality guided by the principle of freedom and progress originating from the Enlightenment. Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, many (perhaps most) Protestants followed him and considered freedom, individualism, critical thought, and suspicion of institutional authority to be the chief legacy of the Reformation and a decisive mark of Protestantism. For instance, Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), a famous representative of that era of liberal theology, declared Protestantism to be "the principle of subjective freedom, of the freedom of faith and conscience, of the authority of the subject in opposition to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic conception of the church."[6] Similar ideas are expressed by Ritschl, A. Harnack, Sohm, Troeltsch, Tillich, and many more.

Schleiermacher's influence did away with most of Luther—or what was left of him. Perhaps the most influential theologian of the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher's concept of the church, his accent on the individual, and his endeavor to place feelings above doctrine still dominate in today's Protestantism. It is no accident that the 2006 official statement of the EKD, dealing with perspectives of the Protestant church in the twenty-first century, has been published under the title Kirche der Freiheit [Church of Freedom] and characterizes this church as a "church of individuality."

Nevertheless, it was not Schleiermacher alone who shaped nineteenth-century theological thought. There were also Lutherans who stood up and cared for the legacy of the Reformation that they found in Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. Theologians and churchmen like Wilhelm Löhe, August Vilmar, Theodosius Harnack, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (though he was of rather little influence in Germany), Adolf Petri, and Theodor Kliefoth—to mention just a few and the most important—brought about a revival of Lutheranism, a new awareness of the Confessions. Their efforts, though one hundred fifty years old, are not altogether lost. Independent Lutheran churches emerging from the struggle against Unionism and liberal theology still exist. Lutherans worldwide began to take note of each other and developed forms of mutual assistance and cooperation. Luther survived, but so did Zwingli and Calvin, Pietism and Rationalism, not to mention secularism, indifference, and plain ignorance.

In the twentieth century, after World War I had shaken and undermined the prevailing feeling of security and optimism in Europe, another great theologian entered the stage and soon became famous and influential: Karl Barth (1886–1968). Barth, of Swiss Reformed descent, is known as the father of Dialectic Theology as well as the champion and chief theologian of the Bekennende Kirche, the "Confessing Church," in the Nazi period. He was at the same time an engaged and strong supporter of Unionism and vigorously opposed to Lutheranism. Not only did he reject the Lutheran distinction between law and gospel, he turned it upside down, altering the gospel into a law by which one can and should govern the state. Consequently he rejected the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms, the two ways of God's ruling. He could not accept the Lutheran concept of Christology and the doctrine of baptism and the Eucharist. He blamed the Lutherans for paving the way to Nazism by leaving the whole realm of politics, government, and state to the politicians alone, based on the distinction of the two kingdoms. Barth pleaded that the inherited differences between the Lutherans and the Reformed no longer be divisive. He called for a step forward to a new, actual confessing in his day. Thereby he prompted the classical Reformed understanding of confession as always timely, contemporary, addressing the given situation and existing challenges. He spoke of Lutheranism as nothing more than a "theological school of thought," a stream inside a broad and changing tradition of theology no longer demanding its own distinctive church. Mainstream Protestantism in Germany was eager to agree with Barth. Perhaps no one else in postwar Germany was as successful as Karl Barth in pushing Luther and Lutheranism into the background. According to public opinion, Lutheranism had gone out of fashion.

Karl Barth and all who followed him claimed to have resisted the Nazi regime consistently on the basis of a non-Lutheran theology. Indeed they have great and unquestionable merits

5. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. and ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 103.
6. Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Ferdinand Christian Baur on the Writing of Church History*, trans. and ed. Peter C. Hodgson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 249.

in this respect. Yet there was also much misinterpretation and misreading of Luther and Lutheranism, deliberately propagated and transformed into action.

In 1947 the EKD was founded as a federation of autonomous territorial churches, each having its own confessional basis and profile. Today it is entirely different. Lutherans, concerned to keep up their respective territorial churches, organized their own association at about the same time, the VELKD (United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany), but nowadays its headquarters are under the same roof as the EKD and there are recommendations to disband the VELKD completely. After all, the member churches of VELKD, all of the Lutheran tradition, have declared intercommunion or "eucharistic hospitality" not only with the Reformed and United churches but even with the Methodists and Mennonites. Luther would not and could not agree. But who cares for Luther? A different, modern attitude has largely replaced him and his doctrine.

WHAT CHARACTERIZES THE SITUATION TODAY?

Hermann Sasse (1895–1976), the great Lutheran theologian previously mentioned (who resigned from his position as a professor at Erlangen University after the EKD was founded and went to Australia to teach there), expressed deep skepticism and resignation concerning the future of the Lutheran Church in Germany already in 1934. In his booklet Was heißt lutherisch? he wrote: "From a human point of view and humanly spoken, today in Germany the Lutheran Church is a dying church."[7] Sasse's statement, in hindsight, appears genuinely prophetic. However, there is a saying: Totgesagte leben länger [those who are said to be dead live even longer].

Sasse spoke of the Lutheran Church. He knew (and we should know as well) that no Luther, no Lutheranism can exist and survive without a Lutheran Church—unless you are satisfied with a Luther erected as a monument for admiration without obligation. Numerous examples support this statement. For instance, those in the Union churches who had hoped that some Lutheran doctrine, tradition, and confession would survive inside their new Union church bodies failed totally; hardly anything is left. And what about those churches that were "Lutheran" according to their constitution? In Germany (and probably elsewhere) they are in danger of losing their confessional profile. They face a crisis as Luther and Lutheranism are in danger of being forgotten and discarded. It remains an open question: "Does Luther have a future in Germany?"

The crisis under discussion threatens not only Lutheran churches. It is the crisis of Christianity in the Western world regardless of confession. We are confronted with dangers, with thoughts and activities trying to destroy the Christian faith from outside the church as well as from inside.

There is the general secularization of our days, due to more than the periods of Nazism and Communism in Germany, which erased Christian faith from the hearts of so many people by actively fighting it. It is due also to modern materialism and self-centeredness. This leaves scarcely any space for church, church life, and the Christian confession in the contemporary Spassgesellschaft, the "party-and-pleasure mode of life." Many ask: What is the church—any church—good for? Is it not time to do away with faith and with the church altogether? The church seems to be useless and outdated, on the verge of disappearing. If anything is expected from the church, it is perhaps certain values and moral standards for which the church stands and which we might be afraid to lose. This identification of Christianity and church with ethics and some kind of moral system is not totally new.

Barth spoke of Lutheranism as a changing tradition no longer demanding its own distinctive church.

The German Lutheran theologian Werner Elert (1885–1954) already in 1933 deplored what he called the Ethicisierung des Kirchengedankens [ethicizing the concept of the church], that is, thinking of the church exclusively in the realm of ethics. This trend has increased dramatically ever since. It accompanies an increase of individualism, which deprives many of the ability to make any firm and permanent commitment. This phenomenon is widespread all over Europe. Political parties, labor unions, societies, and associations of all kinds (the Red Cross, to name one example)—all such organizations suffer from the loss of members to the same extent as the churches. The high percentage of divorce in our country indicates the same problem. Our society is falling apart, and widespread individualism prevails. Besides this, many people today are simply without orientation in relation to values, truth, and ethical standards. They are floating around, and this clearly reveals that churches in Germany today have lost much of their former influence. They have been marginalized and no longer stabilize society to their former extent. In this context the growing number of Muslims in our country determined to spread Islam are increasingly influential. Perhaps they will eventually cause the Christians in our country to remember what their heritage is all about, or, as an American author recently said: "Perhaps God is using the Muslims to bang our Christian heads together."[8] Churches

7. Sasse, *Was heißt lutherisch?*, 6: "*Die lutherische Kirche ist heute in Deutschland, menschlich gesehen und menschlich geredet, eine sterbende Kirche*" (italics in original). The English translation is from *Here We Stand*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1938).

8. Philip Jenkins, *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 259; see also 9.

seem uncertain about how to respond to this challenge. Watering down their confessional profile to unlimited tolerance cannot be the answer.

Dangers coming from inside Christianity and threatening Lutheranism are closely linked with the overall condition in society. Traditions are crumbling away, indifference replaces conviction, and accommodation supersedes confessional profile. Authority is questioned or even denied. This includes the authority of the Scriptures, once the foundation of Lutheran doctrine. The situation is characterized by a striking example in the bookstores. The present pope published a book on "Jesus of Nazareth" (which immediately became a bestseller by an incredible margin), teaching us the authority of Scriptures and presenting an appropriate exegesis, which Lutherans can only applaud. At the same time, bookstores carry a new translation of the Bible called Die Bibel in gerechter Sprache [The Bible in fair language], prepared by Protestant authors and supported by high-ranking church leaders of the EKD both financially and by written consent. The translation clearly denies what is written in the text in the interest of "doing justice" to women who have been discriminated against. The retired bishop Ulrich Wilkens, himself a New Testament scholar and translator, called this bungling work a scandal—and was immediately slandered for being a "fundamentalist" (about the worst name to be called in this context). To quote Hermann Sasse, already in 1934 writing a prophetic word: "The moment will come in which more respect for the authority of the Bible is found within the Roman Catholic Church than in the church which calls herself evangelical out of old custom or in memory of what existed once four hundred years ago."[9]

It is, by the way, the present pope who constantly deplores relativism as an infecting sickness of our time, relativism that attempts to escape the truth binding our conscience—and I think he is right (not because he is the pope, but because his analysis is correct). No longer does any truth exist that can be formulated and articulated; all is regarded to be in a process of constant change. So formulations of old, doctrine and confessions of the past, are regarded as possibly good for former generations and the time in which they were produced, but no longer good for us today. This corresponds to the idea that we need new confessions in our day to address the challenges before us. This idea has created more new doctrinal documents, statements, confessions, and creeds than ever before.

There is another danger confronting the church in Germany: we have lost the knowledge of sin; we are no longer conscious of the last judgment and no longer seem to have any need for forgiveness. We are unable to realize how vitally necessary it still is. In Germany being a Christian does not necessarily mean being concerned about one's eternal salvation but being much more concerned about social issues and problems. That is Christian faith at a flat rate.

DOES LUTHER HAVE A FUTURE IN GERMANY?

We have reduced our Lutheran Confessions to the level of old documents, stemming from a historic period that has passed away, a stage we have overcome. (The previously mentioned Leuenberg Concord does this.) If our Confessions are a statement that may once have been relatively true but no longer conforms to our present perception, we have lost much more than a book that established a great tradition. It is far more than that. A faith once shaped by this confession is no longer practiced. This is noticeable by the fact that confession of sin and Holy Absolution have become almost obsolete and have largely fallen out of use (and, by the way, not only in the Lutheran Church). Consequently the understanding of sin has grown flat. The celebration of the Lord's Supper has degenerated in some places into a celebration of mutual love for one another, replacing the theological emphasis with an anthropological one. Reducing the pastoral office to the job of a functionary or theological expert and advisor resulted in democratic structures of leadership in the church and made it hard to identify the bearer of authority given by Christ who can speak and act on behalf of his Lord. The fading of the concept of the church as the body of Christ gave room for a concept of a human organization, an assembly of like-minded fellow believers, concentrated on the needs and problems among themselves and in this world. Giving up the inherited order of worship and "old" hymns and replacing them with "contemporary" forms, songs, and music proved to be more destructive than helpful. There are a growing number of churchgoers who find themselves strangers to what they experience on Sunday morning. Their response is to stop attending.

Churchgoers who find themselves strangers to what they experience on Sunday morning stop attending.

There is a widespread feeling of helplessness, reflected in the statement called Kirche der Freiheit, an "impulse paper" of the EKD outlining perspectives for the Evangelical Church in the twenty-first century, edited in 2006 by the EKD headquarters. Found in this one-hundred-ten-page document is a rather realistic description of the present situation and what to expect if the present trend continues. In this case the EKD membership will drop from its current twenty-six million to seventeen million by 2030 (a drop of one-third!). Church taxes (the foremost financial basis of EKD member churches) will drop from four billion Euro per year to two billion. The number of clergy will fall from twenty thousand four hundred to thirteen thou-

9. "... wird der Zeitpunkt kommen, an dem in der römisch-katholischen Kirche mehr Achtung vor der Autorität der Bibel zu finden ist als in der Kirche, die sich aus alter Gewohnheit oder in Erinnerung an das, was vor 400 Jahren einmal war, evangelische Kirche nennt" (Sasse, *Was heißt lutherisch?*, 57).

sand—a reduction by one third. This may result in a large number of churches closing, or at least making pastors serve more than one congregation. By and large it is a rather depressing picture, revealing a deep crisis and a gloomy perspective, calling for repentance and a turnaround.

I am not going to comment in detail on all the suggestions and recommendations made in this article. There is a lively debate at the moment and there is no consensus in sight. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the committee of experts who wrote the document call for "venturing and forming more freedom,"[10] and for a "church of freedom, open and inviting, responsible for matters of this world and culture-orientated."[11] They praise "inward plurality" as "temptation and blessing of Protestantism at the same time,"[12] based on the pretension "to keep together Enlightenment and piety, reason and faith, knowledge and cultivation of the heart."[13] They want to form a "church of freedom and individuality," but one wonders if it is still the church of the apostles, the martyrs, and great teachers of the past, the church Luther wanted to cleanse, the church Löhe and Walther had in mind. In this 2006 document you will not find as much as you might expect about the church's main task, namely, to proclaim Christ and his gospel, to bring salvation and to lead to eternal life.

I frankly confess that after studying this document I have lost confidence in the future of an Evangelical Church in Germany, not to speak of a Lutheran one. If you no longer need the Scriptures and the Confessions to determine the church's identity, you have indeed lost your confessional profile and surrendered to modern pluralism.

We may have to accept that churches in general and a Lutheran Church in particular will gradually disappear from the public scene in Germany. There seems to be no need for the church. Christians in general and Lutherans in particular find themselves increasingly marginalized. A few years ago Johannes Gross, a well-known, brilliant German journalist and editor and an accurate observer of public life, made a remarkable point. By the end of the twenty-first century, he said, the Protestant and the Lutheran churches will not have survived. Only the Roman Catholic Church will be left. Perhaps he was too negative or altogether wrong with his prognosis. My guess is that some small groups, some small churches, will last. This includes Lutherans, but they will be marginalized.

We have asked whether Luther has a future in Germany, and I observed that I am not a prophet who can give a reliable answer to this question. That being said, I am quite skeptical. We must realize that there is no copyright for the name of Luther and Lutheranism. Anybody in Germany and elsewhere may and can make use of it. We have numerous institutions, organizations, and even churches in Germany that still call themselves Lutheran and claim to be Lutheran in all honesty. However, sometimes they simply embellish themselves with the name of the great Reformer and teacher of the church. What is sold by the name "Lutheran" is not always truly Lutheran.

Does Luther have a future? It depends on what Luther we think of. He will certainly be left on monuments; they do not harm anyone. He will remain an object of research and scholarly work. He will be remembered as a great man in history. His grave will be visited by multitudes of tourists and they will all sing "A Mighty Fortress" in Wittenberg's Castle Church (which, by the way, has not been a Lutheran church for almost two hundred years). But the Luther who once brought the gospel to flash up again, who confessed the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the blessed sacrament, who kneeled before the Scriptures as the living word of God and ultimate authority, who made the pope tremble and taught a whole nation to put our confidence in Christ alone: does he have a future in Germany? I do not know. And, in all sincerity, I am not really concerned about him or even for Lutheranism and a church body named Lutheran. I am not concerned about Luther. Why not? Because I know what Luther himself once expressed by these words:

> He cannot lie who says: "I am with you to the end of the world" and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." All the same, we are ordered to watch out and keep the light as well as we can. . . . May God help us, as he has helped our ancestors and will also help our descendants. . . . For it is not we who could preserve the church; our ancestors could not do so, nor will it be our descendants. Instead, it was and still is and will be he who says: "I am with you always, even to the end of the world," as is written in Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ heri et hodie et in saecula" [yesterday and today and forever], and Revelation 1:4: "Who was, and who is, and who is to come." Yes, the man is so named, and no one else bears this name; nor should any other be so named.[14]

If God wills, Luther will have a future—even in Germany. LOGIA

10. "mehr Freiheit wagen und gestalten" (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland Rat, *Kirche der Freiheit: Perspektiven für die Evangelische Kirche im 21. Jahrhundert: Ein Impulspapier des Rates der EKD* [Hannover: Kirchenamt der EKD, 2006], 34).
11. "Kirche der Freiheit . . . die offen und einladend, weltverantwortlich und kulturorientiert ist" (*Kirche der Freiheit*, 44).
12. "Die innere Pluralität . . . ist zugleich Versuchung und Segen des Protestantismus" (*Kirche der Freiheit*, 50).
13. "Aufklärung und Frömmigkeit, Vernunft und Glaube, Wissenschaft und Herzensbildung zusammen zu halten" (*Kirche der Freiheit,* 72).
14. " . . . Er kann nicht lügen, da er sagt: 'Ich bin bei euch bis zu Ende der Welt' 'und der Höllen Pforten sollen die Kirche nicht überwältigen', ohn daß uns gleichwohl auch befohlen ist zu wachen, und das Licht, so viel an uns ist, zu verwahren. . . . Gott helfe uns, wie er unsern Vorfahren geholfen, und unsern Nachkommen auch helfen wird. . . . Denn wir sind es doch nicht, die da könnten die Kirche erhalten; unsere Vorfahren sind es auch nicht gewesen; unsere Nachkommen werden's auch nicht sein; sondern der ist's gewest, ist's noch, wird's sein, der da spricht: 'Ich bin bei euch bis zur Welt Ende', wie Hebr. 13, 8 steht: 'Jesus Christus heri et hodie et in saecula', und Offenb. 1, 4: 'Der es war, der es ist, der es sein wird.' Ja, so heißt der Mann, und so heißt kein anderer Mann und soll auch keiner so heißen" (Martin Luther, *Wider die Antinomer*, 1539 [WA 50: 476; St. L. 20: 1621]).

Liturgical Worship for Evangelism and Outreach

James Tiefel

INTRODUCTION

Put yourself in the shoes of poor pastor Luther. He wasn't thirty years old when the grim reality hit him that a good share of his world's population was depending on his efforts for its hope of heaven. Their numbers were staggering; their spirituality was worse. People had almost no concept of a biblical Christ. Only a few parents had any ability to pass on to their children even the simplest Christian doctrine or the most basic Christian morality. The average man was more interested in food for his table than food for his soul and, together with the average woman, spent most of the day scraping for what would be gone by the next day. There was a fear of hell and a desire for heaven in almost every home, but the overwhelming point of view held that something resembling morality could avoid the one and gain the other.

As Luther contemplated reaching these masses, he realized he would find little help from the organized churches of his era. He was surrounded by a belly-serving clergy that was directing more souls away from Christ than toward him. Church hierarchy was more interested in social and political endeavors than in spirituality. The megachurches offered little more than ceremonial glitz and artistic entertainment.

Things were not much better on the local scene. It was the rarest shepherd who did anything else but turn searchers inward, toward their own reaction and response to God. Then there were the mystics, coming at the people from outside the church, who joined the language of Christianity to non-Christian superstition, much of which was surely cultic in nature. Academic circles were infiltrated by humanism. In most cases, government was devoid of anything resembling moral leadership. When Pastor Luther looked out at the streets of his society, he saw much more than a lethargic church body needing a little spiritual renewing. Instead he saw millions and more who required a radical religious transformation. For all intents and purposes, these were men, women, and children who did not know Christ and his forgiveness by faith and who were bound by Satan for hell.

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It is impossible to know, of course, how deeply Luther worked at strategic planning and five-year programs. We have no idea if he had a master plan in the early 1520s that he felt would allow him to serve the people of his world. He claimed no divine revelations (and even the famous Satanic revelation is probably nothing more than a good story!). He was not impelled by inspiration in the same way Peter and Paul were. And his handling of the peasant uprising proves he could be overly idealistic. The man made mistakes. On the other hand, we know that he prayed a great deal and that he studied the Scriptures more. From his writings we gain a clear picture of his understanding of and attitudes toward the gospel and the means of grace. More than any of his followers then and now, he deserved to wear the hat of doctor of theology, which he insisted himself belonged only to the man who grasped the doctrine of justification.

This is the man we find in the 1520s looking for a way to proclaim the gospel that, to his joy, he had so recently discovered for himself. He was not a practical theologian at heart; he was certainly not infallible. But his field was not so different from ours and he loved the gospel as much as any of us. What did he do? Where did he begin the monumental task that stood before him?

He began with corporate worship. Every other proclamation tool except for his translation of the New Testament came after his work on worship: the catechisms, the Old Testament translation, the confessions, the sermon books. And what style of worship did he determine to use? He used the style we call still today liturgical. In both of his worship orders, the *Formula Missae* and the *Deutsche Messe*, he employed the time-honored worship order of the Western Christian Church, the liturgy. Along with the liturgy came the historic progression of the ordinary and the proper, the church year and the sacrament of the altar. He was not interested in one traditional form; the two orders are very different. It was a style to which he was committed, a style that focused Sunday by Sunday and year after year on the words and works of Christ, carried to Christ's people in word and sacrament.

From the onset, Luther made it clear that this was a purposeful decision, not at all born out of convenience or pragmatism. He did not lean toward liturgical style only because he loved traditional forms. By his choice, he was not going with the flow. He actually was going against the contemporary grain with his worship principles. Ulrich Zwingli was in the process of setting a standard in Zurich that was decidedly nonliturgi-

cal. There were strong voices even in Wittenberg urging radical worship reforms. In numerous places throughout Germany other reform-minded pastors were drawing large followings by rejecting everything but a simple New Testament style of worship. Luther surely noticed what appealed to the masses. He also understood how easily the ceremonies inherent in a liturgical style could obfuscate the gospel; they had, in fact, often replaced gospel proclamation. He insisted that "when God's Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read, or even come together" (AE 53: 11). There were dozens of good reasons why Luther might have chosen something besides liturgical form as a vehicle for gospel proclamation, but in the very first sentence of his very first treatise specifically on the subject of worship, he made it clear why he was heading where he was:

> The service now in common use everywhere goes back to genuine Christian beginnings, as does the office of preaching. But as the latter has been perverted by the spiritual tyrants, so the former has been corrupted by the hypocrites. As we do not on that account abolish the office of preaching, but aim to restore it again to its right and proper place, so it is not our intention to do away with the service, but to restore it again to its rightful use. (AE 53: 11)

In the introduction to his Latin service, he was even clearer about his determination:

> We therefore first assert: It is not now nor ever has been our intention to abolish the liturgical service of God completely, but rather to purify the one that is now in use from the wretched accretions which corrupt it and to point out an evangelical use. (AE 53: 20)

With that lengthy prelude, I refer now to the title of this essay: "Liturgical Worship for Evangelism and Outreach." There is almost a contradiction in terms in that phrase. Not much of what we read by or about the pastors of growing churches advocates a liturgical style of worship. David Luecke insists that "liturgical renewal [in recent history] has not been associated with a burst of church growth,"[1] and urges liturgical Lutherans to "package their [gospel] offering better."[2] Walther Kallestad, who looks out at more than four thousand worshipers Sunday after Sunday at his Lutheran Community Church of Joy (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA]), recently wrote, "If we are absolutely honest—what most churches do on Sunday morning is not working."[3] No pastor who is honestly interested in outreach can avoid dealing with the implications of that opinion. In fact, most evangelism-geared pastors don't need experts to tell them that. In their own ministries, and even more in the ministries around them, they see what draws and what does not draw people to worship. Lutheran pastors are by no means the only pastors affected by this nonliturgical point of view. The Methodist editor Keith Pohl recently wrote that he is "afraid the battle is over." According to him, the popular, nonliturgical style has won and has moved to local churches. "I suspect that many of our churches are copying what they see. 'Come worship with us and be entertained.'"[4] So here is the pastor in the last years of the twentieth century, aching to carry the gospel of Jesus to a dying world, reaching for forms and methods that allow him to do that as well as he can. And in the midst of this deep desire, both conventional wisdom and personal experience are leading him away from his liturgical moorings.

In numerous places throughout Germany other reform-minded pastors were drawing large followings by rejecting everything but a simple New Testament style of worship.

What is the connection between our situation and Luther's? It surely could not have escaped us that pastors serving at the end of the twentieth century do not face a very different world from the theologian-reformer who ministered at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The people of our society are not much more caught up in paganism, hedonism, subjectivism, and humanism than were the people of Luther's era. There were voices then as there are now advocating a radical reform of worship styles and principles. Yet Martin Luther, perhaps our situational brother as much as our confessional brother, did worship in the form and style called liturgical. Why he did that and how he did that 450 years ago can be very helpful to us today. The paragraphs that follow mean to help pastors—those in mission congregations and those in established parishes—understand the value of liturgical worship for evangelism and outreach and to assist them in using it in their ministries.

PART I: LITURGICAL WORSHIP
The Work of God and the Work of the People

Worship is first of all God's work *(Gottesdienst)*. The Greek word that gives us our word liturgy (λειτουργέω), as well as its close companion λατρεύω, may emphasize the response of the believer to God. The first is the more formal term, signifying a public response; the second is the more general word for serving. What faith-filled people do at worship is pray, praise, and

1. David Luecke, *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1988), 109.
2. Ibid., 72.
3. Walther Kallestad, "Entertainment Evangelism," *The Lutheran*, 23 May 1990, 17.
4. Martin E. Marty, "From the Editor," *The Christian Century*, 8 October 1990.

give thanks. And yet we must not assume that such activity is the only form of worship, nor even that these are the highest forms of worship. Believers worship God best when they listen to him. Luther wrote:

> As God at first gives faith through the Word, so he thereafter also exercises, increases, confirms, and perfects it through the Word. Therefore the worship of God at its best and the finest keeping of the Sabbath consist in exercising oneself in piety and in dealing with the Word and hearing it.[5]

We therefore find two primary ingredients in public worship: God speaking and people responding. Carl Halter coined what may be the perfect definition of corporate worship when he wrote, "Worship is a joyful concern with God through Christ."[6] God's people love to hear God speak and they love to speak to God. Whenever we think about the church's worship, we need to keep both of these elements in mind.

When we come to grips with the twofold nature of public worship, we will arrive at the conclusion that only Christians can worship. No prayer, confession, acclamation—not even a desire to hear God speak—is true worship unless it flows from faith. When the psalm writer encouraged Israel to "sing to the Lord a new song," he was urging the people to sing the song that came from the new heart of faith. Worship that does not come from such a heart is nothing more than civic righteousness. The Jews of Jesus' day worshiped without that heart. Jesus said of them: "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he said about you: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain . . . '" (Matt 15:7–9). It is not the sound of the worship that counts, but the source. Jesus told the Samaritan woman: "God is a spirit, and his worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The noted liturgical scholar Peter Brunner understood that God must act before people can act. In his book *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, he wrote:

> The congregation's service before God becomes real by reason of the fact that God Himself presents the congregation with the act of service as His gift. If God does not arouse us to His service through the Holy Spirit, all that we do in worship remains dead.[7]

> It is true that nothing in our worship activity serves God unless it has first been given to us by God. All that we do in worship is God-pleasing service only insofar as it issues from the Spirit poured out over us.[8]

The very idea of inviting an unbeliever to "worship" is almost ludicrous. Imagine encouraging a Unitarian to join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." Think of the idea of leading a Mormon in the Nicene Creed ("God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God") or asking an Arminian Baptist to confess that he is "by nature sinful and unclean." "Come join us for worship" is an invitation that, in many cases, surely borders on encouraging hypocrisy.

It becomes obvious with that review why the church of both the Old Testament and the New Testament never considered corporate worship to be an important forum for evangelization. Even in what was likely the greatest mission era of church history, the first two centuries after Christ, we find the Savior's witnesses looking for opportunities to proclaim the good news away from their public worship. Only after instruction had begun were the unbaptized invited to the word section of the service (the part of the service from introit to sermon was even called the "Mass of the Catechumens"). The unbaptized were not allowed even to observe the mysteries in the communion section (the "Mass of the Faithful") until after instruction and baptism were done. Referring to corporate worship, Werner Elert wrote:

> Admission was not just for anybody. . . . The gathering for worship in the early church was not a public but a closed assembly, while the celebration of the Eucharist was reserved for the saints with the utmost strictness.[9]

Despite his deep commitment to the common man and his determined effort to make liturgical worship something in which the common man could easily participate, Martin Luther did not consider the Sunday service to be the primary entrance level for many in Germany who literally were nonbelievers.

> The German service needs a plain and simple, fair and square catechism. Catechism means the instruction in which the heathen who want to be Christians are taught and guided in what they should believe, know, and do, and leave undone, according to the Christian faith. (AE 53: 64)

The practice of the New Testament church was not essentially different from that of the Old Testament. Instruction by the fathers and, later in history, by the rabbis in the synagogue, preceded participation in the rites of the tabernacle and temple. It can be seen from even a cursory study of church history that never until the dawn of American Revivalism did the church consider its corporate worship to be an appropriate forum for evangelization. Rather, it understood that initiation into the Christian faith was accomplished more easily through some form of education.

It stands to reason that worship, which is essentially an *inter*-action between God and his people, is not going to work

5. Martin Luther, *What Luther Says*, ed. Ewald Plass (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 1545.
6. Carl Halter, *The Practice of Sacred Music* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 6.
7. Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 197.
8. Ibid., 199.
9. Werner Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966), 75, 76.

well as a replacement for witness, which is essentially an action by God toward people who are not his. Think of the vast difference between worship and witness. Worship expects a response and is formed in such a way as to demand a response. Witness, while it prays for a response, accepts only what the Holy Spirit creates. Because worship involves believers, it sets a full banquet of God's means of grace. Imagine trying to witness to a nonbeliever by means of baptism and the Supper! Worship includes a review of all God's sacred secrets. Witness demands simplicity and clarity. Consider the vast differences between the Letter to the (believing) Hebrews and Peter's Pentecost sermon to unbelieving Hebrews. Consider as well the difference between Peter's sermon and Paul's witness to the Greeks at the Areopagus.

It is altogether possible for us to let worship be Gottesdienst for the sake of the churched believers, and yet not feel bound thereby to write off the unchurched and non-believers.

The point is that the objectives of corporate worship and evangelism are not the same. Therefore, the forms and methods used to reach these objectives cannot be the same, either. No teacher worth his salt would dream of using a twenty-minute discourse, emptied of questions and visual aids, to implant Bible teachings on the minds of a classroom full of energetic fourth graders. But the worship leader understands that a sermon works very well for reviewing God's truth and for motivating God's people, especially since the people at worship come from various stages of life and are at various ages and educational levels. In the same way, the wise worship leader does not give to the churched what is essential for the unchurched, and the wise evangelist does not give to the unchurched what is essential for the churched. Worship is *Gottesdienst*; witness is διδαχή. Both are essential in the faith-walk of the disciple, but each is essential at a different point in that walk. Church planters need to come to grips with the difference between the two, both as to objective and methods.

Does this mean that pastors and evangelism committee members ought to stand guard at the doors of their churches and refuse entrance to any unchurched or non-Lutheran visitor? Of course not. It does mean that we ought not put too many of our outreach eggs into the corporate worship basket.

We have tended in the past to use a front-door approach with prospects and searchers, and there was a time when this was the best approach in most cases. When America was still a Christian nation, the Christ-centered sermons our pastors preached to their members satisfied what most visitors wanted. Although the visitor might have been of a different confessional stripe, he likely as not knew about Jesus and was searching for a way to heaven. Add to this the observation that a generation ago the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) was primarily a preaching church. Until the mid-1940s our corporate worship was decidedly nonliturgical and nonsacramental. The order of service in most congregations was very sparse; into the 1950s respected WELS pastors were denouncing the "high church" liturgy of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Babies were most often baptized in private ceremonies, not in the service. The Lord's Supper was offered no more than four or six times a year, and then often in a separate service preceded by a confessional address. Even if a visitor did wander into a communion service by chance, our close communion policy was not likely to be so different from that of the church of his heritage.

Much has changed in fifty years. The historic Lutheran liturgy has been stuck in our heads since our youth. Church-year preaching is our ultimate style. Both pastors and people have come to value the sacrament and desire to receive it often. Baptisms are invariably a part of Sunday worship. But in the same span of time during which the WELS progressed toward liturgical fullness, the society around it digressed into liberalism, humanism, and hedonism. The average visitor may come to our churches looking for salvation, but not the kind of salvation we're offering. There is a good chance he will not understand even the simplest theological terms, and whatever brush he's had with America's syncretistic denominations will have left him totally unprepared for our exclusivity in both doctrine and communion practices. The front door may still be a valid entrance point for some searchers, but at the very least it should be only one of several entrance points. Anywhere a congregation has come to enjoy the rich fullness of liturgical worship, a pastor is wise to spend a good share of his time developing side-door approaches to reach the sheep that are still not found.

By side-door approaches I refer to anything that is not corporate worship but that may attract the interest of the people in the community. Side-door approaches may be molded with either actual spiritual needs or perceived needs in mind.

The preeminent approach in the first-mentioned category is adult Bible study. Most of our congregations ought to be able to give to more spiritual searchers several options for finding answers to life's questions from God's word. These classes ought to be taught under optimum teaching/learning circumstances. Introductions that present real maladies, questions that lead students into the text of the Bible, and discussion statements that allow participants to interact on the basis of scriptural principles are vital for these classes. Hour-long lectures serve only very specialized situations. Pastors will want to take a careful look at their Bible Information Classes (BIC) and determine whether the course's length and depth is a deterrent to enrollment. (Our traditional approach to adult confirmation/instruction has tended to favor long and detailed courses. Shorter courses can work well if both the pastor and the participant see the BIC as only the first step in a lifelong study of Scripture. The concept will leave us with poorly trained members only if con-

gregations fail to establish an expanding and sequential Bible study curriculum.)

Side-door entries that are molded to meet perceived needs are limited only by imagination, the community's needs, and the congregation's man- (or woman-) power. Courses on stress management, successful parenting, and loneliness are obvious attractions in some communities. Day care may be the preeminent side-door approach of the 1990s. Social opportunities, sports activities (for example, aerobics classes) and English-language courses fall into the same category. Obviously, none of these offers a direct and immediate gospel witness, and none of them dares stand above the proclamation of the gospel on a congregation's list of priorities, but all create opportunities for evangelization.

The Evangelical movement has put an "organized religion" stamp of approval on a consumer approach to worship.

Pastors who work at developing side-door entrance points will also lead the sheep they have to be aware of and equipped for friendship evangelism. When visitors do come to worship, the apparatus for immediate follow-up by pastor and members will be firmly in place.

In this writer's opinion, it is altogether possible for us to let worship be *Gottesdienst* for the sake of the churched believers and yet not feel bound thereby to write off the unchurched and nonbelievers. A commitment to serve both the mature and the immature does, however, demand extra work, a degree of creativity, and even, perhaps, a willingness to challenge a few preconceived notions.

PART II: LITURGICAL WORSHIP
The Confession of the Church

The theory works pretty well on paper: assign worship to the believers, evangelism to the nonbelievers; use the front door for the churched, the side door for the unchurched. The reality is not quite so neat. The fact is that the unchurched want to come to church; they don't want to enter by some side door!

The contention that America is no longer a Christian nation is pretty convincing, but there is evidence that seems to suggest that many of those non-Christians are finding life pretty empty without Christianity. There are many unchurched people in our society who are searching for answers that they know only God can give. The trouble is that they aren't sure where to find God. To look for him in organized religion makes a good deal of sense, but they see hundreds of organized religions on the horizon, each offering God in a slightly different package. The confusion that that segment of society must feel is obvious, and it is intensified by several additional factors. These unchurched likely have been churched at least once during their lives. They are unchurched now because their previous church experience failed to give them the answers they wanted to get. Add to that the likelihood that they are not quite sure what answers they wanted to get—or, for that matter, what questions they wanted to ask. There are two realities for millions of unchurched Americans: Somehow, they do not feel at peace, and somehow, they feel religion must be able to supply what they're missing. They have no objective means to gauge what they're looking for and no objective means to judge what God must supply. And so they apply to their spiritual search the same yardstick their culture has led them to employ in other areas of life. They look for God in his various denominational appearances with one question in mind: Does this feel right? Tragically, the narcissism of contemporary American society has joined forces with the *opinio legis.* Richard Neuhaus offers this analysis of the situation:

> Truth is measured by what is frequently called "expressive individualism." The ability to express myself, to be in touch with my feelings, to find my own voice, in sum—To Be Me—this is what matters, this is substance.[10]

Although David Luecke writes from the opposite perspective, he agrees essentially with Neuhaus's analysis. We live in a culture, he contends, that "stresses personal choices to a previously unimaginable degree."[11] The church growth consultant Win Arn quotes from a study by the United Methodists that insists that churched and unchurched alike want a church where they will feel warm and comfortable.[12] The implications for today's pastor are enormous. Here are the realities he faces:

- Most seekers of spirituality have almost no concept of what actually ails the human spirit, that is, sin as guilt before God. Therefore, few are ready to hear about what cures the human spirit, that is, a forgiving God. Many have had a try already at a "sin-forgiveness" religion and have found it lacking.
- Most seekers are looking for a spiritual experience which makes them feel better about and with themselves. They are victims of a hedonistic environment which insists, "If it feels good, it must be good."
- Most seekers search for this feel-good spirituality in church, that is, at worship. If they fail to find it at one church, they will look for it at another.

An article in *Eternity* magazine summarized the situation like this:

10. Richard Neuhaus, "The Lutheran Difference," *Lutheran Forum*, Reformation 1990.
11. Luecke, *Evangelical Style,* 62.
12. Win Arn, "How To Attract First-Time Visitors," *The Win Arn Growth Report*, no. 24.

> Worship . . . fits right into the consumerism that so characterizes American religious life. Church-shopping has become common. A believer will compare First Presbyterian, St. John's Lutheran, Epiphany Episcopal, Brookwood Methodist and Bethany Baptist for the "best buy." The church plant, programs, and personnel are scrutinized, but the bottom line is, "How did it feel?" Worship must be sensational. "Start with an earthquake and work up from there," advised one professor of homiletics. "Be sure you have the four prerequisites of a successful church," warned another; "upbeat music, adequate parking, a warm welcome, and a dynamite sermon." The slogan is "Try it, you'll like it."[13]

The situation would be serious enough if only natural religion were leading society to its experiential concept of salvation. In many ways, however, the Evangelical movement has put an "organized religion" stamp of approval on a consumer approach to worship. The worship life of many Evangelical churches is characterized by a free, informal, charismatic style that breezily allows the worshiper a warm, personal experience. C. Peter Wagner describes this style of worship like this:

> When a lot of people come together, hungry to meet God, a special kind of worship can occur. That experience is what I want to call celebration. . . . The great camp meetings of a century ago, Finney's revivals, Billy Graham's crusades . . . all these operated basically as celebrations. Christians love to go to them. They are a lot of fun.[14]

Given the societal scene, does it really surprise you that Evangelical churches are growing? It doesn't surprise the leaders of the Church Growth Movement. They notice what kind of worship attracts the unchurched and suggest that any church that is interested in growth needs to adopt this free and informal Evangelical style.

What do these observations have to say to liturgical Lutherans? Liturgical worship, with its Western rite, church year, and sacramental emphasis, can hardly be described as free, informal, or breezy. If Church Growth theory is correct, we stand to lose most of our visitors for two reasons: they will not be attracted to our worship and they will be attracted to Evangelical worship. There is a practical concern if there ever was one!

The situation presents a theoretical concern as well. Have the Evangelicals and their Church Growth supporters caught something Lutherans have missed? The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastor David Luecke contends that they have in his book *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance*. Many in his church body and in the ELCA obviously agree. Richard Neuhaus recently passed on the rumor that there are more Missouri Synod students doing graduate work at Fuller Theological Seminary than at the graduate schools of the two Concordias combined. In some cases a literal war has broken out between the defenders of liturgical form and those who favor the Evangelical style. The rhetoric from both camps fills hundreds of pages. And no one ought to assume that WELS pastors are not carefully and critically examining both sides of the issue.

There is also a theological issue here. Are some trying to retain a liturgical style simply because that is tradition? And here is a more serious question: Are we hindering growth because we have made a law out of what ought to be an adiaphoron? Have we erected a barrier to the Holy Spirit and his means with our Western rite, church year, and sacramental emphasis? This question gets to the heart of the issue: Ought we change our style for the sake of carrying out the Great Commission?

If Church Growth theory is correct, we stand to lose most of our visitors for two reasons: they will not be attracted to our worship and they will be attracted to Evangelical worship.

The informal, nonliturgical style of worship we find in Evangelical churches was born out of a determined effort to rescue the perishing. It has its roots in the evangelistic era of the first and second Great Awakenings. Those sources alone compel us to consider the validity of the style. Yet, as the following paragraphs will show, this informal style has as much to do with Evangelical theology as it does with evangelizing objectives.

Today's Evangelicals have their heritage in American revivalism that began in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Revivalism first of all intended to call to repentance the smug mainliners of the eastern religious establishment and then to reclaim the vast numbers who had left the east for a better life on the frontier. The leaders of Revivalism never lacked for zeal. They were on fire against hypocrisy and for saving. In many cases unsophisticated and poorly educated, they nevertheless set the theological standards for religious life on the frontier and, although they would be surprised to know it, eventually influenced all of American Protestantism and especially the Evangelical movement.

From their battles with the eastern denominations these Revivalists developed a deep distrust of any sort of confessionalism. Like the German Pietists, they determined that the "orthodox" churches spent too much time with creeds and not enough time with Christ. But they were sternly committed to an inspired Bible and established their worship forms with the simplicity of the New Testament in mind. The Disciples of

13. Duane Arnold and George Fry, "Weothscrip," *Eternity*, September 1986.
14. C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, 1976), 98.

Christ leader Thomas Campbell wrote in the 1830s: "Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church or to be made a term of communion among Christians that is not as old as the New Testament."[15]

Revivalism's dual emphases on the Christ of the Bible and on the simplicity of the New Testament served well for reaching the lost, but its anticreedalism allowed it to become an amalgam of various Reformed emphases. From traditional Calvinism the Revivalists inherited a theological emphasis no Lutheran could accept. The law, to John Calvin the "moral equivalent of the gospel," was much more the pattern of salvation than the mirror of God's wrath. Rather than release from the guilt of sin, salvation became primarily freedom from the power of sin; and Christ, the Son of the Sovereign, became the empowerer of such freedom. From traditional Arminianism and John Wesley's Methodism the Revivalists gained their doctrines of man, faith, and conversion. Free will gave man the ability to make a cognitive decision to choose for good or evil: a choice for evil left him with guilt before God; a choice for good gave him faith. Combine Calvinism and Arminianism and you have Revivalism's emphasis on empirical results: since salvation consists in the ability to obey the law, and since conversion is man's free choice, those who are actually converted will display an obvious lifestyle metamorphosis. That empirical change became the guarantee of conversion, the evidence of success. Now add to all this the general Reformed denial of word and sacraments as the Spirit's means of grace and you begin to understand why the great Revivalist Charles Finney made the essential test for worship forms a pragmatic one: Does it work to make converts? If so, keep it; if not, discard it. "Finney and his associates represent a liturgical revolution based on pure pragmatism," writes James White. "The test for worship is its effectiveness in producing converts."[16] To this add a dose of twentieth-century liberalism and you have a summary of Evangelical and Church Growth thought that is not, I think, inaccurate:

- Salvation is freedom from whatever keeps one from a happy life. Robert Schuller says, "Find a need and fill it."
- Christ is the Empowerer for meeting these perceived needs in Evangelical worship. "Jesus is [held up as] the Giver of new life, the Performer of miracles . . . the source of power for new God-pleasing living."[17]
- Conversion is a free, cognitive choice and is, therefore, accompanied by empirical evidence that the choice for salvation has been made and that Christ, the key to problem solving, has entered the picture.
- Not the means of grace, but environment, ambience, and circumstance move people to a cognitive choice for salvation.
- Since conversion includes empirical evidence, the environment, ambience, and circumstance must be molded so that they are able to produce the empirical evidence.

The nonliturgical Evangelical worship style is based on perfect Evangelical logic: Since salvation is what man perceives he needs, since salvation is attained by a cognitive decision, since the decision includes empirical evidence, since the evidence is brought about by environment, ambience, and circumstance, therefore, people determine the form of worship in Evangelical churches. To put it simply: Culture sets the liturgy.

The informal, non-liturgical style of worship we find in Evangelical churches was born out of a determined effort to rescue the perishing.

We have described the contemporary American culture and its philosophy as being a blend of self-serving narcissism and the *opinio legis*. We have pointed out the culture's disenchantment with a "sin/forgiveness" religion and its antipathy toward the traditional denominations. We are well aware of the entertainment industry's influence. We know about our society's lust for leisure, its love of instant pleasure, and its refusal to make lasting commitments. These are the forces that combine to make our culture what it is. And it is this culture that determines the style of Evangelical worship!

Given the presuppositions, it is little wonder that Evangelical worship is informal, casual, breezy, laid-back, nontraditional (although often including the nostalgic), encouraging no commitment, and including music in popular styles. Evangelical worship intends to make people happy, to put them at ease, to allow them to feel good. When they feel good, they will be eager to give themselves to Christ and so to gain his power for becoming what they want to become. In many cases, what also makes people feel good is a de-emphasis on sin as guilt, Christ as Redeemer, and God as justifier. The Church Growth guru C. Peter Wagner writes approvingly of Robert Schuller's ministry:

> He rarely quotes the Bible because he did a research project some years ago and discovered that unchurched people in Orange County don't believe the Bible. So he directs his sermons to their felt needs such as the family, their job, their financial situation, their self-esteem or their emotions, explaining how Jesus can meet those needs.[18]

15. James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 174.
16. Ibid., 177.
17. Luecke, *Evangelical Style,* 77.
18. C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1984), 177.

Wagner's conclusion? "If you can serve a diet of positive sermons focused on the real felt needs of the people, you will be preaching for growth."[19] It is not this writer's intent to present a thorough analysis of Evangelical and Church Growth theology and methodology. There are several excellent studies available, and every Lutheran pastor (and many laypeople, for that matter) ought to read at least one of them.[20] This short summary means to prove the premise, however, that Evangelical churches are not nonliturgical only or even primarily because they are evangelistic but because a nonliturgical style matches their theology. Their style is their substance!

Lutheran pastors need to come to grips with the reality that not culture but God sets the liturgy. Obviously, I do not mean that in an absolute sense. Martin Luther reestablished the New Testament principle that form in worship is the free choice of the church. When he presented his German order to the people of his day he wrote, "We heartily beg, in the name of Christ, that if in time something better should be revealed to them [that is, to other Christians], they would tell us to be silent, so that by common effort we may aid the common cause" (AE 53: 90). But to gain from Luther that, in worship, any style will do, is to misread Luther. Werner Elert says this about the reformer:

> No matter how strongly he emphasizes the Christian freedom in connection with the forms of this rite, no matter how much he deviates from the form handed down at the end of the Middle Ages, no matter how earnestly he warns against the belief that external customs could commend us to God, still there are certain ceremonial elements that he, too, regards as indispensable.[21]

What Luther was not willing to abandon, as both his Latin and German services show, was the basic structure of the historic Christian rite, which included the church year and the sacrament. In short, Luther was committed to liturgical worship. "For among Christians," he wrote, "the whole service should center on Word and Sacrament" (AE 53: 90). The Augsburg Confession and the Apology, composed within a decade after he established his worship principles, echo Luther:

> The Mass is retained among us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence. Almost all the customary ceremonies are also retained. (AC XXIV, 1–3)

> So in our churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord's day, and the other important feast days. With a very thankful spirit we cherish the useful and ancient ordinances. (Ap VII & VIII, 33)
>
> We can truthfully say that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs. (Ap XV, 38–40)

The Lutheran fathers understood what their sons need to understand: The Lutheran Church is not liturgical only, or even primarily, because this has been its tradition but because liturgical worship confesses its theology.

In many cases, what also makes people feel good is a de-emphasis on sin as guilt, Christ as redeemer and God a justifier.

In every way the liturgy points the worshiper away from himself and his culture and toward his Savior on the cross. The liturgy always presents sin as damning guilt, Christ as atoning mediator, God as justifying Father, conversion as free gift, and means of grace as the Spirit's tools. Therefore, the liturgy continually presents Christ in action for the world: "*Lord*, have mercy," "Glory be to *God* on high," "I believe in *God*, the Father . . . ," "Holy, holy, holy, *Lord God* . . . ," "*O Christ, Lamb of God*, you take away the sins of the world." The liturgy carries the worshiper through Christ's birth, appearing, victory over Satan, passion and death, resurrection, ascension, and the commissioning of his church. The liturgy offers to the believer what Christ told the church to offer, his body and blood, given and shed for the forgiveness of sins. The liturgy does not care so much how people feel about Christ, how they choose Christ, and what they do for Christ. It cares instead that Christ felt enough love for the people to choose to give up his place in heaven and come down to suffer and die. When it comes to the Christian response, the liturgy expects what God has promised: "My Word will not return empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isa 55:11). The liturgy allows for response and even expects response, but it correctly puts justification before sanctification and allows the means of grace to promote sanctification according to the Spirit's desire and will ("It produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" [Matt 13:8]). In every way the liturgy presents *Christus pro nobis.* Compare this liturgical text (from the Service of Word and Sacrament in the new WELS hymnal) with the testimonials, lifestyle preaching, and popular music so often found in Evangelical worship:

19. Ibid., 218.
20. Four studies are suggested: Harold Senkbeil, *Sanctification* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1988); David Valleskey, "Evangelical Lutheranism and Today's Evangelicals and Fundamentalists," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 80 (1983): 180–220; David Valleskey, "The Church Growth Movement: An Evaluation," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 88 (1991): 83–123; Robert Koester, *Law and Gospel: The Foundation of Lutheran Ministry With Reference to the Church Growth Movement*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993).
21. Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962), 325, quoted in Larry M. Vogel, "Mission Across Cultures and Traditional Lutheran Cultus," Concordia Journal 12 (1986): 83.

O Lord, our Lord,
how glorious is your name in all the earth.
Almighty God, merciful Father,
you crown our life with your love.
You took away our sin;
You comfort our spirit;
You make us pure and holy in your sight.
You did not spare your only Son,
but gave him up for us all.
O Lord, our Lord,
how glorious is your name in all the earth.
O Son of God, eternal Word of the Father,
You came to live with us;
You made your Father known;
You washed us from our sins in your own blood.
You are the King of Glory, you are the Lord!
O Lord, our Lord,
how glorious is your name in all the earth.

As liturgical worship confesses what the Lutheran Church believes about Christ, so it confesses what we believe about the word. Because Lutherans believe that the Holy Spirit works through the word to create, maintain, and strengthen faith, they value the "pattern of sound teaching." And nowhere is the pattern of sound teaching more important than in the forms of corporate worship. For this reason the orthodox Lutheran Church of the past and present views its liturgy as a precise (though not exhaustive) confession of biblical theology.

Someone has properly called the hymnal the "layman's Bible," for it is in hymns and liturgy that the majority of Christians regularly review the teachings of Scripture. Even before the Reformation, the church realized the influence worship forms had on Christians. Luther's enemies were convinced that, by means of his hymns, Luther's followers were singing their way into hell. They understood the centuries-old principle, *lex orandi, lex credendi,* that is, the pattern of worship is the pattern of faith. It was precisely for the cause of sound doctrine among the people of the medieval church that the Nicene Creed was added to the liturgy and the Festival of the Holy Trinity to the church year. Lutherans have carefully observed the same principle. In the years following 1817, orthodox Lutherans in Germany furiously opposed the Prussian king's pan-Prussian agenda because they realized that the addition of only two words, "Jesus said," before the distribution formula ("Take eat, this is my body . . . ") was a sellout to the king's Calvinistic citizens. Lutheran leaders in Germany and in the United States (for example, Wilhelm Löhe and Charles Porterfield Krauth) realized that the Lutheran Church could not reclaim its orthodox heritage and repudiate Pietism and rationalism without the liturgy. The Common Service was the result of their determined efforts.

Liturgical worship neither insists nor expects that every congregation will worship in lockstep formation. Not only our doctrine but also the liturgy itself allows freedom and variety. But since there is as much value in repetition as there is in variation, the liturgy offers an unchanging core that reviews the most important teachings of Scripture Sunday by Sunday. There is room in liturgical worship for some homemade forms. There may be good reasons to use from time to time what has not been tried and tested. There may even be a place for what is avant garde, esoteric, unclear, or simplistic. It is precisely so that there might be variety that the liturgy offers clarity in its unchanging core. And the liturgy serves even after false doctrine has entered the church. Like the unfortunates of Luther's era, the poor people in many Lutheran churches do not hear much of God's word from their pulpits. But as in medieval Europe, the liturgy proclaims the word and gives the Spirit access to human hearts.

In every way the liturgy points the worshiper away from himself and his culture.

With this in mind the church has tended to look to its theologians to design its liturgical rite, just as it looks to theologians to draw up its confessions. Despite the fact that Luther encouraged freedom, he never expected that all worship forms would come from the grass roots. The Lutheran Confessions clearly say that "the congregation of God of every place and every time has the power . . . to change such ceremonies in such manner as may be most useful" (FC Ep x). They say just as clearly:

> Pastors and bishops may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order. It is proper for the Christian assembly to keep such ordinances for the sake of love and peace, to be obedient to the bishops and parish ministers in such matters, and to observe the regulations in such a way that one does not give offense to another and so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church. (Ap xviii, 53–55)

There are good reasons why a standard liturgical core has value in the church. One that is as important as any is that not all pastors or worship committees have equal ability to design worship forms that are clear and precise as well as beautiful and appealing. Luther hesitated to produce a replacement for the historic Roman rite because he feared shocking the weak. But he hesitated more because he did not want to encourage a multitude of service orders from "fickle and fastidious spirits who rush in like unclean swine without faith or reason and who delight only in novelty and tire of it just as quickly when it has worn off" (AE 53: 19). Perhaps you can understand why Luther added this admonition in his German service:

> I would like to ask that this paraphrase or admonition follow a prescribed wording or be formulated in a definite manner for the sake of the common people. We cannot

> have one do it one way today, and another, another way tomorrow, and let everybody parade his talents and confuse the people so that they can neither learn nor retain anything. (AE 53: 80)

Liturgical worship expects that the liturgy will be used and it expects that the liturgy will be right. As those expectations are met, the Lutheran Church confesses what it believes about the word.

It was deeply comforting to Luther to know that his church was not a sectarian renegade, but part of the continuity of the "one, holy, Christian and Apostolic Church."

Liturgical worship confesses what Lutherans believe about the Christian. This essay has reviewed the New Testament emphasis on worship as λειτουργία, the people's work. Luther, the champion of the doctrine of justification, was also the emancipator of the believer at worship. To a medieval church that had removed the action of worship from the believers and reserved it for a "spiritual" caste of priests, monks, and nuns, Luther thundered:

> All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in 1 Corinthians that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people. (AE 44: 127)

This is, of course, a summary of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Luther made that doctrine come alive by leading the people to worship by means of both hymns and liturgy. He produced or borrowed settings for all the songs of the Ordinary (Kyrie, Creed, Sanctus, and so forth). While his versions were paraphrases, nineteenth-century Lutherans produced the musical settings of the historic prose texts we use in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Add to the parts of the Ordinary the hymns, recitations (of the Confession and the Creed), responsive prayers, and litanies (and, with the coming of the new hymnal, congregational settings of the Psalms), and you see how the liturgy prompts and promotes the people's work. And the work of the people is not only directed to God. By means of their participation the people also exercise their part in the ministry of the gospel as they "speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Col 3:16). Consider how different the people's action is in liturgical worship and in the nonliturgical forms used in Robert Schuller's and D. James Kennedy's churches!

Liturgical worship confesses what Lutherans believe about the church. It was already John Calvin who felt few ties to the church of history; he was not ready to emphasize either the church's continuity or its historic witness. He insisted, for instance, that only Psalms could be sung in worship. His contemporaries maintained that the bread had to be received by the communicants with their hands and that they had to gather around the altar table, since such was the custom of the New Testament. Luther understood that the forms of worship found in the New Testament were descriptive but not prescriptive. Besides, he knew and valued the church's historical voice. Notice how often the fathers are quoted in the Lutheran Confessions. It was deeply comforting to Luther and his Wittenberg associates to know that their church was not a sectarian renegade, but part of the continuity of the "one, holy, Christian and Apostolic Church." In 1524, just as he was mulling over his worship principles, Luther wrote, "We teach nothing new. We teach what is old and what the apostles and all godly teachers have taught."[22] With that idea in mind, Luther chose to retain the church's historic worship forms.

In the liturgy twentieth-century believers repeat word for word forms that were repeated by believers in the second century. In the liturgy Lutheran believers join with unseen and unknown believers throughout the world. Recently a pastor said, "When you make those liturgies, make them as different as you can. I want my people to know instantly when they're not in a WELS church!" I wondered to what extreme he wanted us to go. Shall we eliminate the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer? The Roman Catholics are singing "A Mighty Fortress" these days; should we keep that out of our new hymnal? In a recent essay Prof. Theodore Hartwig presented an eloquent (and more realistic, I think) summary of Lutheran thought on this issue:

> In matters of outward form, past Lutheran practice . . . has avoided the sectarianism of going it alone, being different, striving for the unique. Thus Luther kept with the church year and the general structure of the Mass inherited from the medieval church. . . . Though for confessional reasons, we live in a state of outwardly divided communions, the Christian Church nevertheless remains a single, catholic community of believers confessing one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. In this light would anyone want to gainsay that the sameness of outward form . . . has been a heart-warming and compelling witness to the true unity of the Church?[23]

Liturgical worship confesses what the Lutheran Church teaches about the arts and music. Again, the difference between

22. Martin Luther, *What Luther Says*, 861.
23. Theodore J. Hartwig, "The Creeds in Contemporary English," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 86 (1989): 203.

the liturgical Luther and the nonliturgical Calvin is striking. In the foreword to Johann Walther's 1524 hymnal, Luther wrote:

> Nor am I of the opinion that the gospel should destroy and blight all of the arts, as some of the super-religious claim. But I would like to see all the arts, especially music, used in the service of him who gave and made them. I therefore pray that every pious Christian would be pleased with this and lend his help if God has given him like or greater gifts. (AE 53: 316)

Calvin, on the other hand, disallowed all but unaccompanied Psalm singing and never encouraged the artists of Geneva or of Reformed Europe in any way or form.[24]

The differences between Evangelicalism and Lutheranism are more subtle, but just as real—and just as in step with the theological emphasis of each. Lutheranism considers art to be a part of worship and therefore calls for the giving of one's best to God. Whether in music, poetry, sculpture, tapestry, or painting, whether in historic or contemporary form, Lutherans bring their art first to God. But Lutherans also bring their art for the benefit of their fellow believer and employ it in the church to affect intellect and emotion for the strengthening of faith. Thus art proclaims Christ and glorifies Christ at the same time. The mainstream of Evangelicalism looks at art in the same way it looks at all worship forms, that is, with pure pragmatism: Does it "work" to meet the culture-influenced needs of the seeker? Even some Evangelicals despair over this point of view. Frank Schaeffer has written:

> Today, Christian endeavor in the arts is typified by the contents of your local Christian bookstore-accessory-paraphernalia shop. For the coffee table we have a set of praying hands out of some sort of pressed muck. Christian posters are ready to adorn your walls with suitable Christian graffiti to sanctify them and make them a justifiable expense. Perhaps a little plastic cube with a mustard seed entombed within to boost your understanding of faith. And as if this were not enough, a toothbrush with a Bible verse stamped on its plastic handle, and a comb with a Christian slogan or two impressed on it. On a flimsy rack are stacked a pile of records. You may choose them at random blindfolded, for most of them will be the same idle rehash of acceptable spiritual slogans, endlessly recycled as pablum for the tone-deaf, television-softened brains of our present-day Christians.
>
> In fact, without making the list endless, one could sum up by saying that the modern Christian world and what is known as evangelicalism is marked, in the area of the arts and cultural endeavor, by one outstanding feature, and this is its addiction to mediocrity.[25]

That's strong language, but Schaeffer is not the only Evangelical making that kind of statement.

Within the liturgy the Christian artist has opportunities to give his best to God and his Christ to his neighbor. The liturgy almost demands music; it encourages the choir and the cantor/soloist. It seeks beauty of language in prayers and hymns. It has room for respectable designs in architecture, symbolism, and ceremony. In countless ways liturgical worship allows Lutherans to practice what they preach about art, which is a gift of God, they say, *ad gloriam Dei et aedificationem hominis.*

Ought we to adopt an Evangelical style of worship for the sake of carrying out the Great Commission? Liturgical worship, with its liturgy, church year, and sacramental emphasis, fits with what orthodox Lutherans have believed for more than four centuries. Neither Luther nor his conservative descendants chose a liturgical style only or primarily for the sake of tradition, but for the sake of confession. The nonliturgical style of the Evangelicals is part of the substance of Evangelicalism. I cannot say that every liturgical denomination is also a confessional denomination, or that everyone who chooses a liturgical style chooses it for the right reason. Nor can one say that any conservative Lutheran congregation that opts for a nonliturgical style is flamingly Evangelical! However, in the light of the evidence, we can and ought ask: Why would one want to adopt the Evangelical style?

This question becomes especially vital when we notice that even some Evangelicals are beginning to see the emptiness of their nonliturgical style. A recent issue of *U.S. News and World Report* included an article on the growth of liturgical churches. The article included an observation from a Church of the Nazarene pastor, Randall Davey.

> He found himself becoming increasingly dissatisfied with what he sees as the "chatty informality" and the "entertainment orientation" characteristic of much of evangelical worship. "I felt something was radically out of focus with a type of service that directed our attention to ourselves and what benefits we derive rather than to Christ."[26]

It seems to me that there is a sad irony in the fact that some Lutherans seem to be moving toward a worship style that even longtime proponents of the style have found to be lacking.

PART III: LITURGICAL WORSHIP
The Demand for the Best

If Lutheran congregations retain a liturgical style of worship, are they destined for minimal growth at best and for losses at worst? David Luecke and Walther Kallestad contend that perhaps they are, as we have noted. They are joined by a chorus of witnesses from Evangelicalism, from the Church Growth Movement, and from that sector of Lutheranism that has been influenced by Church Growth thought.

24. Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 82.
25. Frank Schaeffer, *Addicted to Mediocrity* (Westchester, Ill.: Good News Publications, 1980), 22, 23.
26. Jeffrey L. Sheler, "From Evangelicalism to Orthodoxy," *U.S. News and World Report*, 15 January 1990, 59.

Confessional Lutheran pastors can be comforted in knowing that this "conventional wisdom" is aimed not only at liturgical churches but at any church that takes the message of Scripture seriously. Conservative Protestants fall under criticism just as often as do liturgical Lutherans. We have reviewed the close connection between Evangelical style and Evangelical substance, and that review should have led us to understand that it is as much the lifestyle salvation that draws the unchurched to the Evangelicals as it is the nonliturgical style. Lutheran church planters may be intrigued by Evangelical worship style, but they have no desire to empty themselves of Lutheran substance. The reality is that the substance may turn away the unchurched no matter what style we use to package it. Recently I heard Pastor Robert Nordlie, an LCMS evangelism executive, tell a seminar audience that if we wanted to eliminate from our worship everything that offends the unchurched, we would have to eliminate the gospel! Nordlie contended that Lutherans may as well retain liturgical style because they are going to proclaim sin and grace anyway. He insists, by the way, that liturgical churches can grow.

This question becomes especially vital when we notice that even some Evangelicals are beginning to see the emptiness of their non-liturgical style.

There are many who agree with him. The same issue of *The Lutheran* that included Walther Kallestad's article "Entertainment Evangelism" featured four growing ELCA churches that are decidedly liturgical. Randall Davey's Church of the Nazarene congregation in Overland Park, Kansas, is growing, too, as *U.S. News and World Report* noted. The same article reported the spectacular growth experienced in the last several years by the Anthiochian Orthodox Church! Jeffrey Sheler concluded, "While no one expects ritualism to replace evangelical traditions, there is a clear recognition that the pendulum has begun to swing in that direction."[27] Even the Pentecostals are experimenting with the liturgy, as *Christianity Today* reported in September 1990. Randall Balmer noted that Evangel Assembly of God Church in Valdosta, Georgia, was, in 1987, "the only Pentecostal church in the nation to open its service with a procession."[28] In a recent issue of the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly,* Dr. John Brug commented on an article in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Dallas Theological Seminary) in which the author contended that the three aspirations that today's church can and must address are the need for transcendence, significance, and community. Brug noted that

> the church can best address this need [transcendence] through worship which expresses a mixture of awe, wonder and joy at the close encounter with the living God. As Lutherans, we are especially equipped to address this perceived need for transcendence if we can communicate a fresh and clear understanding of the depth and beauty of our worship tradition.[29]

Even Lyle Schaller, the noted consultant and author, has said that liturgical churches can attract people and grow, but he added—and right at this point we must take note—they must do their liturgical worship extremely well.[30]

It shouldn't take a consultant to tell us that. It stands to reason that God and our neighbor should receive our best as we worship. But for one reason or another, we have taken our inherited liturgical style and too often treated it like some embarrassing old antique: we don't like it, we don't know what to do with it, but we're stuck with it. I must admit that even before my work at the seminary increased my sensitivity in this area, I was appalled too often at how I saw liturgical worship abused in our congregations. I am not referring to a problem of actual inability; I am speaking about poor preparation, both for a specific liturgical service and for liturgical worship in general. It serves little purpose to present some catalog of testimonies, but this little article, clipped from a WELS congregation's newsletter, illustrates my point:

> What do we, the church's current and future leaders, accept as tolerable for ourselves and others?
>
> Sundays we "go to church" because "we're supposed to be there." We walk in and pick up a bulletin. Only nine typos this week! The ushers arrive after the church is already half full. After everyone is seated, they get to the real reason they came: to sit in the narthex and talk. We enter the nave. Dusty? What *is* that under the pew? The light bulb over the cracked window has yet to be replaced. Then we notice the quiet. Did the organ conk out again? No, wait, here she comes, books flying! "What a crazy week! No time to practice!" No kidding! We stumble through the first hymn as we take off our coats and comb our hair. The liturgy begins: " . . . that we are by nature sinful and unclean . . . " The glassy smooth flow is broken by the Scripture lessons. Is this the first time he's read them through? The choir is next. Something akin to dragging a fingernail across a blackboard. No wonder the good singers in the church

27. Ibid.
28. Randall Balmer, "Why the Bishops Came to Valdosta," *Christianity Today*, 24 September 1990, 23.
29. John Brug, "Perceived Needs," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 85 (1988): 303, 304.
30. Schaller's comments were made to a meeting of the Lutheran Council in the USA just before the formation of the ELCA. They are mentioned by Larry Peters in his essay. See footnote 32.

> don't join. The sermon text is read—and never mentioned again. In twenty-two minutes it's over. It sounded familiar, especially the story about the doctor's car. . . . [31]

Obviously, the problems with worship are not that severe at every WELS congregation on every Sunday of the year, and one hesitates to generalize. But Larry Peters has noticed the same kind of problem in the Missouri Synod that some have noticed in the WELS. He wrote:

> Lutherans have generally not done a great job utilizing the resources for worship their liturgical forms provide. It is a sad truth that much Lutheran worship is dull, boring, and seemingly irrelevant. This is an abuse of the liturgical form and not a proper use of it.[32]

Anyone who insists that visitors are "turned off" by liturgical worship must first ask himself if it is the liturgy or the way the liturgy is done that offends. If the charge has any validity that we have failed to put our best efforts into worship, we have come to a serious matter. If we give less than our best in worship, we offend God, for we take advantage of his gracious offer to receive our praise. Furthermore we offend our visitors, because we give them the impression that it is permissible to take advantage of God's grace.

Anyone who insists that visitors are "turned off" by liturgical worship must first ask himself if it is the liturgy or the way the liturgy is done that offends.

Let's not dwell on the abuses, however, but rather on better uses of a liturgical style of worship. Let me begin by suggesting that the time has come to be done with the proliferation of homemade services and return to a unified liturgical pattern. For twenty years pastors in our synod have been coming to the conclusion that the liturgical service in *The Lutheran Hymnal* is inadequate for their purposes. The fact of the matter is, it is likely inadequate for all purposes. Unfortunately, we have not had much to replace it. During these last years we have entered what I call the "liturgical period of the judges, in which everyone does what is right in his own eyes." *The Lutheran Hymnal* has become one of many worship books and hymnals that pastors use as resources. These join to become a liturgical salad bar from which we take a little of this and a little of that. For ten years this writer was as much involved in this as anyone. Let's face it: hymnal revision was long overdue.

Within several months a new hymnal will be ready for use in WELS churches. Many of our congregations have reviewed the services that will appear in that hymnal. I sincerely believe that these new services will serve the needs of outreach and evangelism.

But if they are going to serve our congregation, we will have to use them. A commitment to use them means that we have accepted the concept that there is great value in a repeated, theologically precise liturgical core. I have already summarized how that concept squares with our doctrine of the word. I repeat here that no one is asking for lockstep submission; I reiterate that both our doctrine and the liturgy allow for variety. But I encourage you with Luther's own words:

> I pray all of you, my dear sirs, let each one surrender his own opinion and get together in a friendly way and come to a common decision about these external matters, so that there will be one uniform practice. . . . [For] those who ordain and establish nothing succeed only in creating as many factions as there are heads, to the detriment of Christian harmony and unity. (AE 53: 46, 47)

Is there, in this advice, the inherent implication that the new rites prepared for the hymnal are better in one way or another than those prepared in pastors' studies? I think not. But it stands to reason that a committee of seven men with wide-ranging pastoral backgrounds, with almost two hundred years of combined experience, and with a deep interest in and a thorough knowledge of worship forms and theology are going to be able to produce something over a period of five years (with help from critical review and field testing) that has at least as much value as a form that is composed in a pastor's busy office late on a Thursday night. If one is willing to grant these new services at least an equal value, then the observation that their use will bring about some liturgical unity in our synod ought to tip the scales in favor of using them.

The second suggestion I want to make has to do with the differences between liturgical and traditional. There have been no pleas in this essay for the retaining of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. I have indicated that I feel its time has passed. Obviously, there are valuable jewels in that book that ought to be cherished, but at present many of them are being stored in linguistic and artistic styles that are outdated and passé. Let us beware of hanging on to those styles, even though, for the sake of tradition, many longtime WELS and former LCMS Lutherans encourage us to do so. The felt need for the "traditional" way can interfere with vital gospel proclamation as surely as can the felt need for stress management. It is one matter to retain a general wor-

31. *The Lion's Mouth*, newsletter of St. Mark's Church, Mankato, Minnesota, February, 1987.
32. Larry Peters, *Lutheran Worship and Church Growth*, an essay prepared for and distributed by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Commission on Worship.

ship style because it inherently confesses Lutheran theology; it is another to retain a particular worship form because it has been our tradition. If David Luecke is thinking of worship that stubbornly retains forms only for the sake of tradition, he is probably correct when he writes:

> I think Lutherans shape and package their Gospel offering according to the felt needs of only a small segment of American society. That market is getting smaller. . . . Can Lutherans package their offering better?[33]

I think we can, and as someone who has seen all of the new hymnal's services, I think we have.

Pastors need to lead the way as congregations strive to place into the service of the King of kings that which is an offering worthy of his attention.

My third suggestion concerns not the liturgical core, but that which surrounds the core. In this basket I include language, music, liturgical art (in brass, wood, tapestry, and so forth), symbolism, ceremony, and architecture. It would be wise for us to pay more attention to the gifts God has given to his church that serve as vessels for our praise and his proclamation. We have heard the charge that liturgical worship drives away the visitors. But I wonder how many artistically sensitive searchers have left a WELS worship service disgusted by cheap, mundane, and trivial language, music, and art. We justify too much shoddiness too often. This has to do with what we do as worship leaders and what we allow as worship leaders. Francis Rossow wrote:

> The foolishness of preaching consists in its content, not its style. What is foolish is our message, not the manner of communicating the message. The foolishness of preaching does not necessitate foolish preaching.[34]

Years ago Martin Marty complained, "More junk, more tawdriness, more slip-shodhood, more mediocrity is peddled in church circles than in many others. Yet are we not supposed to give God our best gifts?"[35] Pastors need to lead the way as congregations strive to place into the service of the King of kings that which is an offering worthy of his attention.

Recently, I came across two items that will be helpful in applying the principle that has been presented in this section of the essay. First, from *Parish Renewal: Theses and Implications* by Pastor Paul Kelm:

> Worship must be what the church does best, for in our worship we minister to the greatest number of our members and introduce visitors to our Lord. Our worship is still the most apparent statement of the "worth" we ascribe to our God. The challenge for Lutherans today is to combine the best of our tradition with contemporary communication, to be both faithful to Scripture and relevant to contemporary life, to touch head and heart with the message of sin and grace in an age of anti-Christian philosophy, to lift refugees from a jaded generation in praise to their God.

a. Lutherans must strive for the best preaching possible. That is the product of quality time spent in text study and sermon preparation. Preachers need continuing education in homiletics. Those whose dominant gifts lie in other areas of ministry can benefit from published sermon studies. We need to be both open to the Lord as we study his Word and open to improvement in our crafting and delivery of the message.
b. Lutheran worship should have clear liturgical progression and a "freshness" each week that is combined with familiarity. That requires easy-to-follow orders of worship, a "personal" tone by the officiant and his conviction that corporate worship is much more than sandwiching a sermon.
c. Lutherans will want to offer the best instrumental and choral music possible. That will mean training opportunities for church musicians and the availability of music appropriate to a variety of abilities, occasions and preferences. That may mean more than one choir where possible, with varied musical styles. That may mean more than one musical instrument.
d. Lutheran worship should combine warmth and reverence, avoiding the extremes of cold ritual and trivial fads. That means attention to detail so that slip-ups don't distract our focus. That means also a style of leading worship that reflects God's love for people.
e. The Lord's Supper should have deep significance and a clear focus on God's grace. Churches may need to find better ways to prepare communicants for the sacrament than the sign-up sheets that have replaced the confessional service and personal "communion announcements" of an earlier generation.[36]

Secondly, from an essay prepared for the LCMS Commission on Worship by Larry Peters:

33. Luecke, *Evangelical Style,* 72.
34. Francis Rossow, *Preaching the Creative Gospel Creatively* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1983), 14.
35. Martin Marty, *Context*, 1 July 1975.
36. Paul Kelm, *Parish Renewal: Theses and Implications*, a document available through the Wisconsin Synod's Spiritual Renewal office.

It may come as a great surprise to many that liturgical worship does not mean a rigid formalism. The goal of liturgy is not to recreate a Gothic cathedral setting or any other ideal. The goal of liturgy is to provide an outline of what is believed and to give the local community of believers the freedom to use that form as elaborately or simply as they choose and their context allows.

The responsibility for planning and presiding at liturgy is not an easy one. It requires a deep familiarity with the form, its options and opportunities, and a close familiarity with the local context, the people of a given congregation, their culture, and their roots. It is not enough for Lutherans to hide behind a book or a liturgical form expecting the unchurched to drop into the pews informed about and appreciative of the liturgy. We must work to present the form in a way which neither confuses nor confounds the visitor or new Christian. Examine some worship bulletins and you will find an array of directions, references, and technical jargon decipherable only to the active member of long standing. Lutherans must learn to use common sense and carefully present the liturgy so that its use is a joy instead of a burden.

No congregation can do all things well. Choose carefully what can be done well and build upon it. A simple, spoken liturgy is a much more eloquent spokesman for the faith than an elaborately sung liturgy which is done poorly. If the liturgy requires too many explanations, page turns, or verbal directions, it will distract and frustrate even the informed worshiper. Especially in the new mission, printing out the liturgy and hymns each week may be an important key to the success of the service.

Presiding at the liturgy is a gift which must be developed. Those leading worship need to remember that their responsibility is pivotal to the success of the liturgy. Plan carefully. Choose the themes to be emphasized and use all the resources of the liturgy toward that purpose. Be deliberate and construct each service intentionally. Effective liturgy and worship is never an accident. Plan for the flow of what is happening and help the service move logically from one part to another.

No tradition depends more upon the music of the service than does the Lutheran. Use competent musicians and be prepared to compensate them adequately and include them in the worship planning. Rehearse the liturgy with those who will lead it before the service and iron out any problems prior to the service time. It has been generally assumed by some that "good Lutheran hymnody" is unsingable while "gospel hymns" are known and loved by all (except pastors). There are both good and bad hymns to be found in Lutheran and Gospel hymnody. Hymns and choral music should be chosen for the content of the words, for the way the melody supports the text, and with an eye toward the musical ability of the parish musicians and the congregational singers. Good musical leadership can help a hesitant congregation through a difficult hymn while even the most singable hymn can be rendered impossible by weak musical leadership. If you are using contemporary "Scripture" songs, there is a difference between good and bad. Make sure you have an idea of the distinction and do not abandon traditional hymnody altogether.

Lutherans must learn to use the language of today, and especially of the growing Evangelical churches, as well as the traditional Lutheran liturgical and theological vocabulary.

Lutherans need to watch their vocabulary. Technical jargon exists in every group. Lutherans must become "bilingual." Learn to use the language of today, and especially of the growing Evangelical churches, as well as the traditional Lutheran liturgical and theological vocabulary. Sermons should express the faith less in terms of logical truth propositions and more through picture language. A good sermon not only appeals to the intellect but paints memorable pictures upon the canvas of the heart as well. Sermons should not be directed only to the emotions but Lutheran preachers need to preach more to the heart as well as the head. Preachers also need to be more attentive to the people and become more aware of how the listener is following the sermon. While some may be suspicious of preachers in general, most listen carefully to see if the preacher is genuine (believing what he says) and personal (identifying with his people and the message he proclaims). Good preaching, like good liturgy, is seldom an accident. Both require hard work.

Good worship is inspirational. When the liturgy celebrates the Good News of God's love in Christ Jesus, it should encourage, uplift, and inspire. No one wants to leave the church depressed. Part of the task of the liturgy is to encourage people to lose themselves in the adoration of God and in the grace God provides through Word and Sacrament. Reverence does not mean somber. The liturgy, like the sermon, will reflect the joy and excitement of the people leading and responding to it. If the people leading worship are stiff, wooden and unnatural, the liturgy will be stiff, wooden, and unnatural. We need to use the resources the liturgy provides to build community through a warm, welcome and natural style. When the person presiding communicates a warm, comfortable, personable style, then the liturgy will be seen as warm and welcoming and natural to the people using it. Those leading worship need to allow some of their personal excitement and joy to show through as they preside. An honest smile and an attitude of

concern and affection should not be hidden behind a "pulpit tone" or a worship personality distinct from the personality of the presider outside the chancel.

We must be aware of who the congregation is. A congregation of young families is a different congregation than one made up of middle-aged and retired folk. Those planning worship must be cognizant of those who will be worshiping and how that affects the liturgy. Parents with small children cannot be expected to sit as quietly as an elderly group of people. They cannot juggle hymnals, bulletins, and inserts (can anyone?).[37]

CONCLUSION

Despite everything we know about the slow working of the word, the Spirit's own timetable, and God's planting and watering promises, we want our churches to grow. We live in a growth-oriented society, and, sometimes, even the church gives the impression that success is gauged by numbers. We are only being consistent with our culture when we fret about growth. The fire in our hearts for the lost only makes the fretting more real.

Those planning worship must be cognizant of those who will be worshiping and how that affects the liturgy.

"It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Cor 4:2). God calls us to proclaim Christ faithfully through the means of grace. God calls us to bring him our worship faithfully and to lead others to do the same. Faithfulness is faithfulness, whether God grants visible success or whether he does not. God has not asked us to grow the church. This task he has assumed for himself. He has asked us to be faithful and promised that, in his own way, he will be fruitful.

I submit to you that we can be faithful in both our proclamation and our praise through the vehicle called *liturgical worship*, a worship style that retains the core of the historic Christian liturgy, employs the church year, and emphasizes the sacrament. I believe this point of view is consistent with that of Luther (our situational as well as our theological brother), as I have tried to show. I do not make liturgical style a law, as Luther did not, but like him I recommend it with what I feel is sound and scriptural logic. I also believe that history will show that the liturgy, carefully prepared and pastorally led, has contributed as much to the growth of disciples inside and outside the church as anything the church has ever done. This is true, I believe, because the liturgy showcases that which the Holy Spirit uses to make disciples: word and sacrament. Harold Senkbeil defends the Lutheran liturgical style like this:

> The Lutheran Church has a rich legacy to offer in its worship. Here is reality, not symbolism. Here we have real contact with God; not as we come to him, but as he comes to us. He meets us in the proclamation of the Word. Here the Son of God distributes his actual body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Here the people of God gather to offer him their thanks, their praise and their prayers. This is the real thing.
>
> It's time for a new initiative in worship. People are longing for God. Where are they going to find him? In the shifting sands of their inner life or on the solid rock of his gospel? How are they to offer him their thanks and praise? With trivial methods borrowed from the entertainment industry or in worship forms which focus on the praise of God's gracious glory? This is the kind of worship which lifts the heart while it exalts Christ. And this is what Lutheran worship does.[38]

Our era is not the first in American church history in which Lutherans have been intrigued by the growth potential of a nonliturgical worship style. One hundred and fifty years ago Lutherans were also casting envious glances at the Evangelicals (then called Revivalists). Both America's lone Lutheran seminary (Gettysburg) and its most influential Lutheran voice (*The Lutheran Observer*) were advocating the full use of revivalistic methods in worship.[39] It is interesting (and frightening!) to note that the same voices were denouncing the Augsburg Confession because it accepted the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the real presence in the Lord's Supper! By God's grace (and through the efforts of a few of his good men like Charles Porterfield Krauth and C. F. W. Walther) Lutheranism reclaimed its liturgy—and its confessionalism.

As other Lutheran congregations explore opportunities for outreach, they will take note of what those in the vanguard are doing. They will watch the pattern of those who are most committed to outreach—and many will follow it. By God's grace and with the Spirit's power, may you bring in a rich harvest and add many to the dignity and destiny of his elect. By God's grace and with the Spirit's wisdom, may you set a course for your church that will allow it to retain that which truly grows the church: *Christ for us and the Spirit's means of grace.* LOGIA

37. Peters, Lutheran Worship, 11–13.

38. Senkbeil, *Sanctification,* 182.

39. E. Clifford Nelson's church history text, *The Lutherans in North America*, includes this quotation from an article by Benjamin Kurtz in the 1 December 1843 issue of *The Lutheran Observer*: "If the great object of the anxious bench [the emotional, revivalistic style] can be accomplished in some other way, less obnoxious but equally efficient—be it so. But we greatly doubt this. We consider it necessary in many cases, and we believe there are circumstances when no measure equally good can be substituted. Hence we are free to confess that we go for this measure *with all our heart*" (italics in the original).

Reviews

"It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read."
Martin Luther

Review Essay

Memoirs in Exile, Confessional Hope and Institutional Conflict, by John H. Tietjen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990. This review essay was written by Robert D. Preus (1924–1995) when he was President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. It first appeared in the Reformation 1992 issue of *Logia* (vol. 1, no. 1).

Often there is an advantage in reviewing a book after it has received other reviews. There is also a bit of guilt involved by procrastinating so long. In the present case I am glad, because the reviews I have read of Dr. John Tietjen's *Memoirs* have not been kind or fair to him nor empathetic to his struggles and situation; and, with the exception of a review by Leigh Jordahl, have shown little understanding of what was happening before, during, and after his tumultuous administration as president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. With this review I wish to give John Tietjen and his many colleagues, friends, and followers a fairer hearing and a fairer commentary on his memoirs. I was his colleague and next-door neighbor while he led the seminary and I know the background and all the principals, all the issues and events of those turbulent years (1969–1974) that changed more than most realize—or might care to admit—the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the lives of Tietjen and all of us involved.

Tietjen writes not a history, autobiography, apology, or hagiography, but his memoirs, a unique genre. One's memoirs may be limited to only part of one's life and may be selective and presented in any way and for any purpose the author desires. There is a risk in writing memoirs, especially if one's readers choose to judge one's memoirs by strictly historical and critical standards. Memory is often fragile and not always accurate, even in the most honest and most scrupulous of men. "We construct meanings and remember our constructions," Jeremy Campbell points out in his *Grammatical Man* (p. 226). And he goes on to say,

> There is evidence, too, to suggest that we reconstruct information when retrieving it from memory. Only the gist of the information is stored. The details are added at the time of recollection, on the basis of what we expect to have been true. Reconstruction may seriously distort that original information, but the rememberer may be quite unaware of the distortion. If the material given to us is consistent with our knowledge and expectations, it is more likely to be recalled correctly, but if it is inconsistent, then there are likely to be systematic distortions.

This will be true of Tietjen's memoirs or those of Vespasian or Benvenuto Cellini or anyone else. But allowing for this, Tietjen's *Memoirs* will be of great value to the historian, the Lutheran theologian, and anyone who cares to know what happened at Concordia Seminary and Seminex while John Tietjen was president or how it feels for a minister of the word to be put out of his call and to undergo such extreme experiences as John Tietjen did. For John Tietjen is without doubt a principled, sincere, and honest man—that is clear from his *Memoirs* and his history. And so, although employing a narrative style throughout, reminiscing and, like Herodotus, reconstructing past conversations as they would probably have taken place, Tietjen offers the reader a true account of things and the reader will learn much from his book.

Tietjen briefly outlines the purpose of his book in a preface. He owes a debt to posterity to tell what happened as he experienced it and to give his side of a very partisan struggle. His purpose is to write without recrimination or self-justification. Throughout the book he traces a recurring theme in the history of the church, the tension between "confessional hope and institutional conflict." I think he succeeds, and better than one would expect from one so deeply involved in "institutional conflict," that is, church war.

The book is written in an epic form. The obvious theme of the story is a great contest, or war, between two individuals, each with large followings, representing two divergent ideologies, loyalties, parties, theologies, and theories of politics in the church. Each side is in search of its own "confessional hope" in the midst of institutional conflict. The protagonists, or heroes, in the unfolding drama are Dr. John Tietjen, newly elected president of Concordia Seminary, and Dr. J. A. O. Preus, newly elected president of the Missouri Synod. Each of the two great warriors has his own army, his elite or scraggly "troops" (as they were so often called during the controversy), his inner council of strategists, and his own machinery and style of warfare. This is the plot of Tietjen's epic.

There is a little understandable schmaltz and occasional rhetoric in the book—and some errors as Tietjen at times recounts not his, but others' perceptions and stories. For instance, early in his memoirs Tietjen relates at least one fictitious account provided him by Fred Danker, a highly original and imaginative professor who believed in redaction criticism—and practiced it. According to Danker I had engaged in conversation with Jack Preus, my brother, in my seminary office commencing at 3:15 P.M. on 29 March 1970. From outside my window in Sieck Hall, Danker allegedly heard us speaking. During this conversation I allegedly told Jack that the exegetical department was "clamming up," not publicly admitting what they really believed and had taught. Jack had told me that he was planning to conduct an investigation of the theology at the seminary. Now this account is clearly fictitious. Jack never visited me in my office at the seminary. My home with its privacy was right nearby. It was physically impossible to listen to a conversation through my office window. Danker, two offices down the hall, could, if he wished, listen through my door, which was, conveniently, almost always open. But more importantly, the date is wrong. A half a year before, Prof. Martin Scharlemann and I had already told Jack that the exegetical department was no longer speaking openly about its uncritical use of the historical-critical method. And almost immediately after he was elected president of the synod Jack had made it clear that he was going to investigate the theology of the seminary—at least the exegetical department—according to the criterion of the *Book of Concord* (see Preface, p.14). Perhaps Tietjen inserted this piece of fiction for literary purposes. At any rate it illustrates the danger one faces when one who writes memoirs cites as fact the recollections of others.

But I am getting sidetracked and ahead of myself. Tietjen's plot itself is right on target. It fits the facts in the controversy and the events we all lived through, as well as his basic theme.

Like many epics Tietjen's *Memoirs* start *in medias res*. To understand the plot the reader will require some background and context. Early in 1969 Dr. Alfred Fuerbringer unexpectedly retired from his call as president of Concordia Seminary while remaining on as a nonteaching professor. The call process for a new president was implemented immediately by the Board of Control, and Dr. John Tietjen, who had received few nominations compared with many others, including Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, a young professor, and Dr. Martin Scharlemann, a seasoned professor, was chosen—a surprise to almost all. The electors were the Board of Control, the Board for Higher Education, Rev. Kurt Biel, president of the Missouri District, and synod president Oliver Harms, who in the nature of the case could control the election. Harms, who was strongly pushing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church (ALC), was persuaded that Tietjen would be an ideal president to lead the seminary and thus also the synod to a more open posture toward the ALC and world Lutheranism. At the 1967 New York convention Harms had tried (unsuccessfully) to get the LCMS to declare fellowship with the ALC. This was to have been the first step in an elaborate scheme devised by Dr. Richard Jungkuntz, executive secretary of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and Dr. Walter Wohlbrecht, executive secretary of the LCMS, and others, to bring the LCMS into membership in the Lutheran World Federation and ultimately into the orbit of the World Council of Churches. If not clearly delineated and outlined, the plan had at least been adumbrated in a book written by Tietjen in 1966 entitled *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* In this book Tietjen clearly broke with the historic Lutheran doctrine of church fellowship and offered a "union" definition of "confessional Lutheranism" and a new formula for inter-Lutheran relationships. Harms was under the influence of Wohlbrecht and Jungkuntz and other leaders at the seminary. And they were following Tietjen's prescriptions. There was always the outside chance that Harms would not be elected at the Denver convention in 1969, so the election was made, the call extended and accepted with celerity.

But things went wrong at Denver. Harms had not counted on the mounting dissatisfaction throughout the LCMS toward the St. Louis seminary faculty. Except for Scharlemann and a few professors in the department of systematic theology, the exegetical department had taken over the theological leadership of the school. The so-called historical-critical method with its fuzzy, non-Christian presuppositions and its ever-changing, bizarre, sometimes irrelevant, sometimes heretical conclusions was used with uncritical abandon by the members of the department; and the faculty and students were confused by this departure from the *sola scriptura* principle and the canons of responsible exegetical scholarship.

But many of the pastors and laypeople in the synod were not confused; they were suspicious and angry. Harms was defeated at the convention. He came out of the first ballot with a solid plurality of the votes. Wohlbrecht, who had been pounded in the pages of *Christian News* by Dr. Waldo Werning and other anonymous writers as "boss Wohlbrecht," then made the supreme mistake of issuing an impassioned *ad hominem* philippic from the floor of the convention against Preus, who was second in the balloting, something Wohlbrecht but not the convention knew, having been provided the information by a "mole" on the floor election committee. Jack was permitted to take the floor to defend himself and disavow Wohlbrecht's charges that there had been illicit politicking by *Christian News* and others in campaigning for his presidency. This gave Jack more exposure. In the sixth ballot Jack had picked up the supporters of the three other candidates, Dr. Edwin Weber, Dr. Theodore Nickel, and Dr. Victor Behnken, and won the election by a scant four votes.

The Harms-Tietjen forces understood far better than the disorganized Preus supporters the significance of Jack's election. It meant the setback and possible disintegration of the entire ecumenical program that had been so carefully planned for Missouri. Even if the LCMS in Denver established the first step of fellowship with the ALC, Preus would do nothing actively to implement it. But worse—and something not fully realized by Wohlbrecht, Harms, Tietjen, and others outside the seminary community—Preus was committed to finding out what was taught at the seminary concerning biblical authority,

inspiration, and inerrancy and just how the Bible was being interpreted—and to do something about it.

There was a tremendous amount of positioning and politicizing before and after the Denver convention. On the Harms-Tietjen side, meeting before and during the convention, were prestigious pastors, leaders, and officials: Dr. A. R. Kretzmann, Dr. O. P. Kretzmann (in his last appearance at an LCMS convention), Pres. Rudolph Ressmeyer, Pres. Bertwin Frey, Rev. Dean Lueking, Rev. Harlan Hartner, Prof. Richard Caemmerer, Tietjen himself, and lesser figures (few of whom are mentioned in Tietjen's book). On the Preus side, meeting before and during the convention, were, in the main, active laymen and pastors who had not gained a great deal of renown: Mr. Larry Marquardt, Mr. Glen Peglau, Mr. Richard Hannenberg, Rev. O. A. Gebauer, Pres. Edwin Weber, Rev. Waldo Werning, Mr. Art Brackebusch, and many others. Tietjen's supporters were convinced that Jack was using Rev. Herman Otten, which was not true. Although Jack had some communication with Otten, others (for example, Peglau and Werning) were writing regularly for Otten's magazine. Jack's supporters were worried that Harms would somehow steal the elections; Tietjen's were concerned that Preus was controlling Otten. Both concerns were unfounded.

And now the Tietjen epic unfolds. With force and pathos he tells his story, relating the events and battles of the war as he experienced them. Anyone who went through these struggles, as I did, a foot soldier on the other side, bitter struggles between good friends and colleagues and Christian brothers, cannot fail to be impressed by Tietjen's story. And the dispassionate outsider too will learn much about the dynamics and phenomenology of theological warfare. And anyone at all—whatever his theological predilections may be—who reads Tietjen's memoirs will find himself in sympathy with a man who is thrust into leadership of a cause he does not fully understand, a position (president of Concordia Seminary) for which he has no experience, and a church war that from the outset (one perceives from his *Memoirs*) he senses he will not win. I lived through these events of Tietjen's tenure at the seminary and never saw him compromise or bend. From his book I see something different: how hard it is for a man and how hard it is on a man to go through five years of bitter theological and ecclesiastical warfare and then to be put out of his divine call. Tietjen, who always seemed to me to be a strong and private man, bares his soul in his book. He reveals his deep feelings, his frustrations, his disappointments, even his bitterness at times. His *Memoirs* are worth reading for that reason alone. Church wars take a heavy toll.

But now I wish to offer some observations and commentary on the book and on the war. And I hope they will be helpful to Lutherans who seek to retain their confessional identity and to anyone who might read these pages.

1. Tietjen, for all his background in Lutheran church relations and as director of the Division of Public Relations for the Lutheran Council in the USA, really did not understand what was happening in ecumenical endeavors worldwide or at the seminary. Fellowship with the ALC was foisted on the LCMS. The rank and file, engrossed in their own parochial interests, didn't really care. Outreach and missions had slowed down. The "glory days" of the seminary were coming to a close, although the faculty was unaware of the fact. The seminary, with its embarrassment over its past (Pieper was not even used as a textbook in some dogmatics classes), its pedantic, unproductive interest in "scholarship" (few books of substance were produced by faculty members in the years preceding Tietjen's arrival), its preoccupation with un-Missourian and un-Lutheran theological fads emanating from just about any source and touching just about any topic, and its exalted opinion of its own uncommon consequence impressed Tietjen long before he received his divine call to be president. Like the faculty, he failed to see that the seminary had grown apart from the synod and had lost the synod's confidence. Like the faculty, he was unaware of the poverty of the ecumenical movement, the continuing involvement in Lutheran union and fellowship negotiations, the historical-critical method, and other concerns. Lutheran pastors and people were not interested in those kinds of things, not even if they were baptized with "Lutheran presuppositions" or the predicate "confessional."

2. A word about the two combatants in the conflict. Tietjen seemed to exude self-confidence and determination. According to his *Memoirs* he was strong on the latter, weak on the former. Jack, folksy, hesitant, and jocular in demeanor, seemed almost to lack confidence and purpose. But underneath was a man of supreme self-confidence and iron determination. Jack was a chess player, moving pawns and bishops and horses back and forth, always protecting the king. Tietjen was Shakespeare's Henry V at the battle of Agincourt, haranguing and leading his troops. Each knew exactly what the other's goal and game plan was. Tietjen's goal, in brief, was to lead the seminary and the synod into pan-fellowship with nominal Lutherans worldwide on the basis of formal confessional loyalty and into a more open posture toward new and progressive theological trends (that is, the historical-critical movement). Jack's goal was to lead Missouri to maintain the authentic Confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice it had had since its inception. To achieve this goal he had to turn the seminary around, if not like Saul of Tarsus, then like a ship at sea. And to achieve this goal he had to get rid of Tietjen and keep the faculty majority off balance.

To carry out their objectives neither saw fit to employ theological means. There was a reason for this. Jack saw and insisted from the very first that there was a serious controversy in the synod, emanating from the seminary and centering in the doctrine of Scripture but spreading out to articles touching the gospel itself. But Tietjen, egged on by a militant faculty majority, which was alarmed by the threat of a full-scale investigation, adamantly and without making any investigation himself, refused from the outset to admit that any false doctrine was taught at the seminary. He canceled all meetings between the exegetical and systematic departments, saying that it would be disastrous if the church learned how great the cleavage in the faculty was regarding the historicity and reliability of such pericopes as Genesis 3 and the stories of Jesus'

miracles and sayings. His actions were too late. The students knew what was being taught, and so did the pastors throughout the synod. The faculty opposition to an investigation only made Jack more suspicious and determined to find out what was really being taught. Tietjen's *Memoirs* trace the many faculty and other meetings and the negotiations that were calculated to blunt an investigation but inexorably led to what was finally a fair and honest inquiry.

Since it was not possible to debate according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, both adversaries employed the strategies possible for them. Tietjen, a master in media and public relations, got to the press. His advisors and cohorts smeared Preus as a Caiaphas and "Chairman JAO," while Tietjen marked him as un-Lutheran, unconfessional, and "legalistic." In the last stages of the controversy Jack was branded as one who obscured the gospel. I rather doubt that Tietjen himself was responsible for that type of slander, but it was all over the campus and in the papers, religious (*Missouri in Perspective*) and secular. Only *Time* and *Christianity Today* gave Jack and the old-Missouri type of confessional Lutheranism a fair hearing.

Meanwhile Jack resorted to "canon law," the *Handbook*. He quickly studied and learned *Kirchenrecht* and soon after his election was deftly and masterfully deploying the *Kirchenregiment*. Ralph Bohlmann was his "court theologian." Ralph was the executive secretary of the CTCR and on leave much of the time from the seminary. He wrote many things for Jack, including the "Statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles" that was used to "evaluate" (p. 105) the faculty theologically. Previously Ralph and I had met a few times with Dr. Paul Zimmermann, chairman of the investigation committee, at the Mark Twain Hotel in St. Louis to help Paul ask the right questions of faculty members who were reluctant to answer questions forthrightly during the investigation. We felt justified in such action, for certain faculty members had made it clear that they were not going to answer unequivocally the questions asked by Zimmermann's investigation committee. It was only toward the end, when it was too late, that Tietjen and his supporters used theology as their weapon and accused Jack and his supporters of aberrations in respect to law and gospel, legalism, and so forth, a belated and futile attempt to justify their position on doctrinal grounds. They protested their own "confessional position" and stance, without ever explaining what it meant (p. 227, 260, *passim*)—theirs was not a *quia* subscription to the Confessions; how often did Tietjen proclaim that they were not bound by the exegesis of the Confessions?—and imputed to Jack and the synodical leaders a bogus theological position supposedly based upon synodical tradition rather than Scripture and the Confessions. But the counterattack was incredible. In the end few really believed such an argument.

However, Jack was vulnerable on another front. Again and again, using the *Handbook*, he hearkened back to the position of the synod, rather than that of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and his only act of discipline was to put out of office four district presidents for violating the *Handbook* (because they had ordained Seminex graduates in LCMS congregations) rather than the Scriptures or the Confessions. Thus, Jack for good and necessary reasons set in motion a bad precedent that has been followed to this day, to the detriment of the LCMS.

Tietjen saw this, but again too late. To a group of sympathetic district presidents on May 17 after the Seminex walkout, he said:

> Look what is happening to this church of ours that bears Luther's name. . . . We have reinvented canon law and call it the *Synodical Handbook*. We carry it around in our briefcases and rarely make a move without consulting its bylaws. The Commission on Constitutional Matters, which in times past met rarely, now meets almost every month to hand down rulings about how the bylaws have to be understood, adding bylaw on top of bylaw. . . . Maybe it's time for another bonfire.

3. There was a marked difference between Tietjen and Jack as they played their roles in the controversy. Tietjen was an intensely loyal man, loyal to the students who supported him, to his friends and colleagues on the faculty and in the Church at large; loyal to a fault, for he trusted not only the integrity but the judgment of his advisors. Throughout the *Memoirs* Tietjen tells us to whom he listened: many of the group mentioned above, but mostly colleagues at the seminary, especially his close friend, Prof. John Damm, and his brother-in-law, Prof. Andrew Weyermann. This was sometimes a big mistake, for their counsel, often colored by their close involvement in the many battles, was bad and counterproductive. And it seems from the *Memoirs* that Tietjen rarely disdained the counsel given. Always loyal, he kept the loyalty of his allies; and he kept his many friends. But he made serious mistakes.

Jack, on the other hand, while seeking advice from friend and foe, competent and incompetent, and almost anyone who happened along, rarely trusted the judgment of others. Dr. Herbert Mueller, the secretary of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, was perhaps Jack's most trusted and important consultant as Jack strove to abide always by the *Handbook*. Those who tried to impose their counsel on Jack, often in virtue of their "support" in his election, were quickly but amiably "tuned out" by Jack. That wasn't always easy for Jack, for some of his would-be counselors were very aggressive. Less than a month after the Denver convention Dr. Waldo Werning invited himself to Jack's lake cabin in Ontario to advise him and see if Jack might appoint him to Wohlbrecht's position as CEO of the synodical Board of Directors. Shortly thereafter Mr. Glen Peglau, another Preus supporter, invited himself up to the lake cabin to advise him and see if he could secure Jack's appointment to the CCM. Werning and Peglau knew where the power was. Neither ever received anything from Jack (cf. *Memoirs,* 223, 251), and he did not take their advice. Thus, Jack made enemies and lost friends. But nobody ever ran him.

Tietjen, however, was a captive of his friends and cohorts and sycophants, like an ungifted field marshal directed and

led by headstrong and inept lieutenants. His intense loyalty became his undoing. He was, at bottom, not a leader but a follower, impressed by well-meaning, impractical mentors. But leadership had been thrust upon him. Unlike Jack, he always was reactive in ecclesiastical warfare, off balance, on the defense. And without the word and the Confessions he had no defense, no strategy, no direction. His supreme mistake was to follow someone's harebrained idea to start a "Seminary in Exile," one of his few proactive decisions. Thus, he and the faculty not only violated the Scriptures and Confessions by abandoning their calls (AC XIV), but they broke the *Handbook*, and were left defenseless.

4. There is a lesson to be learned from the Tietjen-Preus conflict. In any war a general must never underestimate his adversary. Tietjen did this; Jack did not. Jack was not only a good theologian, a good scholar, a sincere confessional Lutheran, and a good church politician; he was a superb tactician in the art of ecclesiastical warfare. Tietjen, leaning on the counsel of his friends and advisors, for the most part so contemptuous of Jack and his supporters, never knew what he was up against. Moreover, he did not realize or even consider that Jack was utterly sincere as he sought to supervise the doctrine taught at the seminary and in the synod. Finally, Tietjen and his colleagues did not ever sufficiently understand the thinking of ordinary Missouri Synod pastors and people. Jack did. They were God-fearing, pious people who wanted to remain Lutheran and who believed the Bible. They were not interested in ecumenical relations with other church bodies, and they were confused and frightened by the so-called historical-critical method whose apologists could never explain it and rarely knew what it was. They were parochial in the good Lutheran sense of the word. And they should never have been taken for granted.

In 1833 the *opus magnum* of the renowned Prussian general, Karl von Clausewitz, was published posthumously. It was entitled *Vom Kriege* and presented an exposition of his philosophy of war. In succeeding generations it became the basis of military studies and action, not only in Prussia, but in war colleges all over the world. It is doubtful if Tietjen or Jack will ever write such a *Leitfaden* on ecclesiastical warfare in our country where the constraints of the First Amendment obtain and such an effort might appear unbecoming. But the outline of the manual has been clearly provided in Tietjen's *Memoirs*. The *Memoirs* tell us as much of Jack's philosophy of war and his victorious campaigns as the failures of Tietjen and the debacle of the St. Louis faculty. And the *Memoirs* offer invaluable advice to future bishops, church presidents, superintendents, and other officials within the Lutheran Church.

Two important questions must be broached in conclusion. First, was the bitter and costly war justified? Was it a "just war"? I am persuaded that in retrospect both parties would now say yes. For the *causa belli* was the preservation of the *sola scriptura* principle and the gospel. And it is not an option for any Christian to fight such a war, but his duty and privilege.

Second, who won the war? According to Tietjen's honest account, Jack won almost every major battle between the two adversaries. But not just Tietjen and Jack participated in the conflict. Thousands of others—professors, pastors, people throughout Lutheranism—were involved to some degree or another. Who, then, really won and who lost? Perhaps a few observations are in order from one who was close to all the events and the major figures and groups involved.

I think Jack left the synod better than he found it. In this sense he was victorious. No longer were professors of theology offending students and the church with bizarre and heretical conclusions offered as the "assured results" of modern exegetical scholarship. *Sola scriptura* and its necessary concomitant, biblical inerrancy (according to the confessional Lutheran understanding), were affirmed and practiced at the seminaries. "Gospel reductionism," with its accompanying denial of the third use of the law and its ethical relativism, never clearly articulated and never clearly understood, faded away. Incipient universalism, the bane of mission endeavors, which had invaded segments of the faculty and pervaded the mission staff (in strenuously combatting this Dr. Waldo Werning got into his trouble with Jack [p. 251]) no longer raised its ugly head. Missions began to perk up. The synod again came to the support of the beleaguered St. Louis seminary. A high degree of conscious unity under the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions was restored.

But there were ominous signs of malaise accompanying the uneasy peace, won in part, ironically, by the departure of hundreds of congregations and pastors and almost an entire talented theological faculty. Working under the shadow of former teachers, the revived St. Louis faculty, not fully trusted by many in the synod, was not sure of itself. And neither of the two seminaries was able to exert the theological leadership necessary to fill the vacuum left by Seminex. The pastors and laypeople are war-weary and not able to fight old or new enemies at the gates. Today Missouri is closer to many of the goals Tietjen and his colleagues set than when he and his colleagues left the synod. Recognition of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and some level of cooperation or "fellowship" seem close at hand, if the present administration gets its way. A more active role in inter-Christian relationships seems already in place. At least part of Tietjen's agenda is now Missouri's agenda. Adherence to biblical inerrancy still prevails but is rarely any longer a factor in Missouri's discussions with other Lutherans and seems to have little hermeneutical significance as many pastors and teachers in the synod do their Bible study and teach in the church. Missouri still seems not to have learned that there is a Lutheran hermeneutic, based upon Scripture itself and consonant with the Lutheran Confessions, and this must be operative in the lives and activities of the ministers, schools, and parishes of the church. The influence of Tietjen and his colleagues is still alive in Missouri.

A final observation: Tietjen and his colleagues often warned that the synod in its fear of liberalism and a low view of Scripture would be caught up in the opposite extreme, "fundamentalism"—subjective, triumphalistic Evangelicalism. Jack and many of his supporters were acutely aware of this danger. And during his administration the various manifestations

of this great movement were quite effectively resisted. Today Missouri stands in grave danger of being affected by this amorphous, emotional, noncreedal, indefinable, increasingly neo-Anabaptistic movement that now permeates American culture. Not that the synod will succumb or capitulate overnight. But the influence of what can be accurately called the Methodization of American religion is quite apparent in Missouri's church life and programs. The historic liturgy is being abandoned in some congregations. Laymen without calls are carrying out the work of the public ministry of the word. Though called "church growth" principles, the fundamental tenants of this movement are more compatible with Erasmian humanism and the blatant synergism or the coarse fanaticism of Luther's day. Sadly such principles are preferable in some quarters to a Lutheran word and sacrament ministry. Open communion is becoming common, if not rife, in many congregations. Missouri's historic doctrine and practice of church fellowship seems to be changing to a more latitudinarian position. The doctrine of the Ministry of the Word and the divinity of the call to that office are eroding and being challenged in certain quarters. Church officialdom is claiming and gaining more power. The people are listening more and more to TV evangelists and don't like being criticized for doing so. Most of these gradual developments would have been opposed by Tietjen, all of them by Jack.

So who won the war? No one and everyone. This verdict will be not only the judgment of history but is most surely God's verdict (Rom 8:28, 37).

Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

The Logia Forum

Early in 1989, *Logia* took its fledgling shape on the photocopier of the congregation I was serving in Vincennes, Indiana. I had returned from a symposium in Fort Wayne wishing there was something I could do to make Lutheran theology accessible to the laypeople. After all, the fact that the original subscribers to the Augsburg Confession were laymen, not clergymen, illustrated that Lutheran theology was not to be monopolized by theologians.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) had its professional journals of theology, but the content wasn't intended to engage laypeople. The official periodicals of the synod contained contemporary life stories but were fairly light on substantive theology in the vein of *Der Lutheraner.* Besides, I also had come to learn that the LCMS did not have a monopoly on confessional Lutheran theologians. I was eager to connect with faithful members in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), and other associations—even with a few outlanders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

I intended to produce a publication that had a saltiness to it (Matt 5:13; Col 4:6), offering both bite and savor. I wanted it to get readers into Luther, the Book of Concord, and primary sources. I hoped to provide excerpted contemporary readings that would give readers an appetite to read more on their own—to get them to consider populist religious views with confessional Lutheran theology and to test all things in light of such doctrine (1 John 3:1).

Logia was the name I chose for the endeavor because it lent itself well to the various facets for consideration. I composed the rationale and put it inside the front cover:

> *Logia* is an independent quarterly publication for the communication of theological studies, especially as they relate to Lutheran confessional writings. Brief position papers are solicited primarily from pastors of the Indiana District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. However, the views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, its districts, or individual members.
>
> Each issue will contain columns devoted to one or more of the following: *homologia*—studies in the Lutheran Confessions as they have been understood historically and as they are properly applied to our present age; *apologia*—exegetical expositions of God's Word in response to current concerns; *logia*—brief excerpts from the writings of Luther, Chemnitz, Walther, Sasse, Elert, and others; *analogia*—the airing of concerns about orthodoxy and orthopraxy which face pastors in their congregations.

After a few years, I found that the number of subscriptions and associated bookkeeping was becoming more than I could manage while serving as a parish pastor. I had announced in a 1992 issue that *Logia* would be closing up shop—but then something happened. I got a call out of the blue from Erling Teigen, a distinguished theologian whom I knew only by reputation, who expressed an interest in a joint venture with Paul McCain. I was delighted to have the work taken over by such dedicated and accomplished men who could take the project much further than I ever could. I then noted in a final proto-*Logia* issue:

> Much can happen in the period between our quarterly mailings! Just after the last issue was posted, a plan developed for the merging of three similar periodicals: *Logia, Lutheran Confessional Review,* and *The Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter.*
>
> Rather than reduplicate our efforts, the decision was made to merge under the name *Logia* while retaining a bit of the character and standards from each journal. The new publication will continue to address current theological matters in light of the Scriptures as expressed in the historic confessions of Lutheranism.

Paul McCain is to be credited with masterfully producing the first issue with the fine print quality that the journal enjoys to this day. He put together a publication whose medium was as attractive as the substance of the articles. From the selection of the beautiful Minion typeface to the layout and texture of the paper, *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* was an admirable work.

What had been the ur-*Logia* meagerly printed on a photocopier became the "Logia Forum." I had the pleasure and privilege of producing that part of the journal for a little over a decade. Born in the Age of Elvis, growing through the days of Bill Gaither and the Chicago Folk Mass, and serving in a church body under the direction of such diverse leaders as Bohlmann, Barry, Kuhn, Kieschnick, and Harrison, I had plenty of material to keep me busy. Too much, in fact. Rather than contending "naked in the public square," I have been content to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ in the kingdom of God with the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Admittedly an encyclopedist rather than a scholar, I strove to present both old and new to the present generation (Matt 13:52). Levity and brevity, substantive with a splash of lightheartedness when possible, in a place that has been waiting to forget me, and gladly so where Christ has the increase. And thus, a few years ago in the wake of other endeavors that demanded growing amounts of my time, I left the "Logia Forum" to others. Still, I am happy that the current editors have allowed me, for good or ill, to produce one more "Logia Forum" for this anniversary issue. And I hope that you will enjoy these excerpts as threads for pulling or grist for milling.

Joel A. Brondos

On the Shortness of Life

Luther frequently referenced such classical authors as Terence and Plautus. Having occasional leisure to read them for myself, I can see why. As readers mark the twentieth anniversary of Logia*'s maiden voyage (which some predicted would be about as short as the* Titanic*'s), I thought it appropriate to juxtapose Seneca,* On the Shortness of Life*, translated by C. D. N. Costa (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 1–2 and 32–33.*

Most human beings, Paulinus, complain about the meanness of nature, because we are born for a brief span of life, and because this spell of time that has been given to us rushes by so swiftly and rapidly that with very few exceptions life ceases for the rest of us just when we are getting ready for it.

Nor is it just the man in the street and the unthinking mass of people who groan over this—as they see it—universal evil: the same feeling lies behind complaints from even distinguished men. Hence the dictum of the greatest of doctors [Hippocrates]: "Life is short, art is long." Hence too the grievance, most improper to a wise man, which Aristotle expressed when he was taking nature to task for indulging animals with such long existences that they can live through five or ten human lifetimes, while a far shorter limit is set for men who are born to a great and extensive destiny.

It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested. But when it is wasted in heedless luxury and spent on no good activity, we are forced at last by death's final constraint to realize that it has passed away before we knew it was passing.

So it is: we are not given a short life but we make it short, and we are not ill-supplied but wasteful of it. Just as when ample and princely wealth falls to a bad owner it is squandered in a moment, but wealth however modest, if entrusted to a good custodian, increases with use, so our lifetime extends amply if you manage it properly. . . .

So, when you see a man repeatedly wearing the robe of office, or one whose name is often spoken in the Forum, do not envy him: these things are won at the cost of life. In order that one year may be dated from their names they will waste all their own years.

Life has left some men struggling at the start of their careers before they could force their way to the height of their ambition. Some men, after they have crawled through a thousand indignities to the supreme dignity, have been assailed by the gloomy thought that all their labours were but for the sake of an epitaph. Some try to adjust their extreme old age to new hopes as though it were youth, but find its weakness fails them in the midst of efforts that overtax it.

It is a shameful sight when an elderly man runs out of breath while he is pleading in court for litigants who are total strangers to him, and trying to win the applause of the ignorant bystanders. It is disgraceful to see a man collapsing in the middle of his duties, worn out more by his life-style than by his labours. . . .

Their desire for their work outlasts their ability to do it. They fight against their own bodily weakness, and they regard old age as a hardship on no other grounds than that it puts them on the shelf. The law does not make a man a soldier after fifty or a senator after sixty: men find it more difficult to gain leisure from themselves than from the law. Meanwhile, as they rob and are robbed, as they disturb each other's peace, as they make each other miserable, their lives pass without satisfaction, without pleasure, without mental improvement.

No one keeps death in view, no one refrains from hopes that look far ahead; indeed, some people even arrange things that are beyond life—massive tombs, dedications of public buildings, shows for their funerals, and ostentatious burials. But in truth, such people's funerals should be conducted with torches and wax tapers, as though they had lived the shortest of lives.

Learning How to See Again

An unstated goal of Logia *is to give readers perspective, helping them to see what they had otherwise missed. Josef Pieper speaks of the danger of losing that perspective in* Only the Lover Sings: Art and Contemplation *(San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 31–33.*

Man's ability to see is in decline. Those who nowadays concern themselves with culture and education will experience this fact again and again. We do not mean here, of course, the physiological sensitivity of the human eye. We mean the spiritual capacity to perceive the visible reality as it truly is.

To be sure, no human being has ever really seen everything that lies visibly in front of his eyes. The world, including its tangible side, is unfathomable. Who would ever have perfectly perceived the countless shapes and shades of just one wave swelling and ebbing in the ocean! And yet, there are degrees of perception. Going below a certain bottom line quite obviously will endanger the integrity of man as a spiritual being. It seems that nowadays we have arrived at this bottom line.

I am writing this on my return from Canada, aboard a ship sailing from New York to Rotterdam. Most of the other passengers have spent quite some time in the United States, many for one reason only: to visit and see the New World with their own eyes. With their own eyes: in this lies the difficulty.

During the various conversations on deck and at the dinner table I am always amazed at hearing almost without exception rather generalized statements and pronouncements that are plainly the common fare of travel guides. It turns out that hardly anybody has noticed those frequent small signs in the streets of New York that indicate public fallout shelters. And visiting New York University, who would have noticed those stone-hewn chess tables in front of it, placed in Washington Square by a caring city administration for the Italian chess enthusiasts of that area?!

Or again, at table I had mentioned those magnificent fluorescent sea creatures whirled up to the surface by the hundreds in our ship's bow wake. The next day it was casually mentioned that "last night there was nothing to be seen." Indeed, for nobody had the patience to let the eyes adapt to the darkness. To repeat, then: man's ability to see is in decline.

Searching for the reasons, we could point to various things: modern man's restlessness and stress, quite sufficiently denounced by now, or his total absorption and enslavement by practical goals and purposes. Yet one reason must not be overlooked either: the average person of our time loses the ability to see because there is too much to see!

There does exist something like "visual noise," which just like the acoustical counterpart, makes clear perception impossible. One might perhaps presume that TV watchers, tabloid readers, and movie goers exercise and sharpen their eyes. But the opposite is true. The ancient sages knew exactly why they called the "concupiscence of the eyes" a "destroyer." The restoration of man's inner eyes can hardly be expected in this day and age—unless, first of all, one were willing and determined simply to exclude from one's realm of life all those inane and contrived but titillating illusions incessantly generated by the entertainment industry.

Too Catholic

In the early days, we regularly reprinted sermons by The Rev. Dr. Norman E. Nagel, who would often send us his manuscripts for reprinting in the "Logia Forum." What follows comes from a much earlier period—Reformation Day, based on Matthew 18:20, preached at Westfield House on 31 October 1963. It is found in the CPH publication Selected Sermons of Norman Nagel *(St. Louis, 2004), 302–7. Highly recommended.*

You have probably heard the remark or made it yourself about some church or other that it is "too catholic." What is meant by that? Too much liturgy? Too many candles or vestments? Is that what you mean by "catholic"? Every time we celebrate Holy Communion, we confess, "I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church." Scarcely, but what has gone wrong? We had better start at the beginning.

Catholic is not a word used in Scripture. In ordinary Greek usage it means "universal." A stoic philosopher wrote a book about catholic things and dealt with matters found everywhere. The first Christian use of the word we find in Irenaeus, who died about the year A.D. 200. He says, "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church." Notice how this is rather like another way of saying our text, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Whatever we say about the catholic church must have Jesus Christ as its center. Apart from Jesus Christ there is no catholic church, and there is only one catholic church, for there is only one Jesus Christ. Although we may muddle and contradict this fact, Jesus has His one church. The particular job the word catholic has is to affirm that no kind of distance divides us.

Those gathered together in the name of Jesus in two different places are not cut off by the miles, sea, or mountains between them for the compelling reason that Jesus is in the midst of them in both places. Both lots are with Him; therefore, they are together, united in Him. Not only both places are united but also any place where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus. Catholic also means not separated by any distance of time. The catholic church embraces Abraham, Athanasius, grandfather, Aunt Agatha who died three weeks ago, you, and me. All who were and are with Jesus Christ at any time or place are in His one catholic

church. As a great Greek theologian observed about the house of the church, the important thing is not whether you are downstairs or upstairs but whether you are in or out.

In the fourth century the word catholic developed another meaning. The church was then particularly troubled by heresy. The leading heretic, Arius, denied that Christ is truly God. To say that you belonged to the catholic church meant that you confessed Jesus Christ as He was confessed at the Council of Nicaea and in the resulting creed. This meaning of the word catholic is not a foreign item but of a piece with our text and with what Irenaeus said, "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church."

If you held with the Arians to a Jesus Christ who was not God from all eternity, then you were not with Jesus Christ and not in the catholic church, which is only where He is, true God and true man. This doctrinal and confessional significance of the word catholic, together with its affirmation that place and time do not divide Christ's one church, is beautifully expressed in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology: "It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel."

Here the church is tied closely to Jesus Christ. As Irenaeus pointed out, only where He is, there is the catholic church. Where is Jesus Christ? You won't find Him up there or in here among flowers and birds, babbling brooks, or glorious sunsets. Christ is there, of course, but that is not the place appointed by Him, the place where He first does His real work with us. He addresses us, takes hold of us, and imparts Himself and His gifts to us through His Word and Sacraments. Where they are in action, there Jesus is present and in action, and wherever He is thus, there is the catholic church. Notice here how we have all solid factors, Jesus factors, His Word and Sacraments.

These factors, being divine and His, are sure foundation. Pushing in some other factors, human factors, will undo this certainty. This, sad to say, has happened. Other factors have been introduced that should guarantee the catholic church and also identify it. When these are human factors, the impudence is recognizably colossal. Certain forms of organization, institution, or government came to be insisted on as safeguards and guarantees of the catholic church. Thus rule by bishops was insisted on, and later rule by the pope, and still later some insisted that the church organization must be presbyterian while others said it must be congregational.

Support was claimed for each one of these from the New Testament. You should look to see whether you can find anything of that sort in the New Testament. Nor will you find there anything special for a particular place or people. To say Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, or Anglo-Catholic is to squash the meaning of catholic. If it is particularly Roman, it can't be particularly catholic.

There is one more use of the word catholic we should look at before we come to the tidying up that took place at the Reformation. This usage was started by the heretic Celsus who used the phrase "catholic church" to mean the "great church," the biggest one, as if you could be assured the catholic church was where there were the most Christian noses to count. This sort of thinking got worse when the church was approved by Caesar, and his way of thinking and ruling seeped into the church.

The tragedy of the Reformation was that when Luther raised questions of the Gospel, he was given no such answer. The government of the church felt itself bothered by some unheard of little Augustinian monk from the remote cow pasture of Wittenberg, and it told him to be quiet. Luther pleaded for discussion of the Gospel. He was met with the naked demand to recant and to submit to the pope. The Ninety-five Theses were no Declaration of Independence but a request for discussion and debate. When Luther recognized that the pope pulled one way and the Gospel the other, the Reformation began in earnest.

The Reformation may be described as cleaning out the human factors that had been intruded into the church and her message. On Reformation Sunday we most often consider what this meant in the basic relationship of God and us. This was expressed in the doctrine of justification by faith alone with its affirmation that we cannot stand before God on the basis of any human factors but only on the basis of Jesus Christ, His atoning death, and His victorious resurrection.

Something similar happens in the understanding of the catholic church that we are thinking about this Reformation Sunday. Irenaeus said, "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church." The Apostles' Creed puts it more closely: Wherever Christ's Word and Sacraments are in action, there is the catholic church. Everything else is subordinate to that—the pope too. In the early church some bishops who were guilty of false teaching were sacked. They were no guarantee, that alone is Scripture and its doctrine.

Now the Lutherans did not fall into the same error as the pope by saying that not the pope but some other form of church government was commanded by God. They held that no particular form of church government is laid down in the New Testament. They were even willing to have the pope continue running the affairs of the church by human right, so long as he did not hinder the Gospel. The pope, however, would not have that. He insisted on being Christ's vicar by divine right and cursed the Gospel held by the Lutherans. "Let it be anathema," said the Council of Trent concerning the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

The Lutherans, as their enemies called them, or Evangelicals, as they called themselves—we still carry both names, and evangelical tells you nothing about how many candles or vestments as catholic truly does neither—had no notion of starting a new church. Same old church there has always been; there is only one. They kept everything that did not contradict the Gospel. That is why the Calvinist Reformation regarded the Lutheran Reformation as only half a reformation and blamed the Lutherans for not throwing away the vestments, crucifixes, candles, altars, organs, stained-glass

windows, and statues, as happened most notably north of the border in Scotland.

Luther recognized that as the same old error in different clothes. The catholic church is not shown to be catholic by having or by not having candles, crucifixes, vestments, etc. It is catholic by having Jesus Christ, and He is there for us in His Word and Sacraments. Where they are, He is, and there is the catholic church.

Let us, then, rejoice in our catholic heritage centered in Jesus Christ and freed from the intrusion of human factors and reliance. Let us live our catholic heritage in relation to other Christians. Luther said, "Rome is surely worse than Sodom and Gomorrah but there they yet have the Sacraments and the Scripture and the name of Christ. There is the catholic church." No matter whether it be Rome, Geneva, Constantinople, Canterbury, or Timbuktu—no matter what the denominational label—if the Word and the Sacraments are there, if there two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, there is the catholic church.

Even if the flow of the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, may be only a trickle, there is yet the catholic church. This does not mean that impeding the flow with human factors is not a fearfully dangerous thing. Luther was not exhorting people to affiliate with Sodom and Gomorrah. And if we love people, we will want to help them loosen their hold on the impeding human factors.

But we always have a considerable job of such loosening to do with ourselves. The Reformation certainly cleaned out the pipe, but that may not lead us Lutherans to suppose that we have a corner on the catholic church. We may put no confidence in the fact that there are a lot of Lutheran noses to be counted in the world or that we have efficient organization. The only ground for confidence, and this is then a joyful and unshakable confidence, is Jesus Christ, who is there for us and imparts Himself through Word and Sacraments. Sharing them in Jesus' name, we know that He is in our midst and we are in the catholic church.

All this comes to clear expression here in church, but it must be remembered that our being in the catholic church is not something that can be divided by place or time. We cannot be members of the catholic church in our homes and not members of the catholic church at our work. We cannot be members of the catholic church on Sunday and not on Monday nor hope to be much in the way of Christians on Monday if not on Sunday. That is flat contradiction of catholic.

When you stay away from church for no good reason, the bad reason is basically some diminishing of Jesus and intrusion of human factors. You are content with yourself and feel that you can manage another week without gathering in the name of Jesus and receiving forgiveness and strength from Him through Word and Sacrament. You can do without the catholic church. You know jolly well you can't, and if you allow these intrusions, this pushing off of Jesus, you are in danger, you need some reformation.

Don't give up your reformation, your centering in Jesus Christ, your membership in the catholic church. That membership is powerfully expressed as you worship your way through the liturgy, which is a pattern of worship in which you join fellow members in the catholic church of many centuries and many places. This reaches a climax in Holy Communion when we acknowledge ourselves to be together with the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.

Do you belong there? If you look at yourself closely, you may well doubt it, but look to Jesus. He says you do. He died and rose again for you. With Him there is forgiveness and the life that lasts, and from Him there is nothing that can separate you, neither time, distance, nor death itself. He holds you together with all who are His, together in His catholic church or, as we usually say, the Christian church—same thing, His church. Amen.

Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States

Fifty years ago, there were nearly 1400 elementary schools associated with Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations. Today the number is under 975. Whether one credits economics, worldliness, or some other reason, the disappearance of Lutheran schools ought to alarm us all.

In his unpublished doctrinal thesis, "The Growth and Decline of Lutheran Parochial Schools in the United States, 1638–1962," John Silber Damm wrote (341–42):

> The development of the Missouri Synod parochial school system shows a direct correlation between a church body's insistence on the cultivation of its distinct identity and the conservation of its confessional heritage and the expression of belief in and support for a parochial school system.
>
> The cultivation of "pure" doctrine and teaching has been a major concern of Lutherans since the time of the Reformation, and the educational history of the Lutheran Church in the United States demonstrates that when such doctrinal concern is present then it is possible for the cause of the parochial school to be promoted and encouraged.

Early editions of the constitutions of the LCMS stated that every congregation affiliated with the synod must organize and support a parochial school whenever possible. The difference today is not merely economics but resolve. Consider what Walter H. Beck wrote about the same time as John Silber Damm (Walter H. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States, 2nd ed. [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965], 175–77). See also Luther's Sermon on Keeping Children in School *and letter to maintain and establish schools.*

In a lengthy consideration of the theses presented the Synod held that one of the prime tasks which its congregations would have to fulfill for the preservation of these blessings was "the establishment and promotion of Christian congregational schools." It held that

> it was a set policy not to send their children to public schools but rather to maintain their own; that a mere Sunday-school would not satisfy the requirements and was but a miserable substitute. Their parochial schools were the nurseries of the Church, out of which the seedlings were to be transplanted into the orchards of the Church. The better their schools, the better would conditions be within their congregations; therefore no congregation ought to fear the burden connected with the establishment of a school.
>
> Schools, however, were not only to be started and carried on indifferently but to be given tender and fostering care, so there would be no excuse for parents to take their children out of the school and send them to public schools. For this reason, too, the congregations needed to strive to improve their schools particularly in regard to the subjects which pertain to this temporal life, inasmuch as they had the means, since God had wondrously prospered so many of their people who not long ago had come as paupers to this land. Why had God blessed them? To leave vast treasures behind for their descendants? Nay, certainly not; but above all in order that they might preserve for them their heavenly treasures.
>
> The members must not feel disgruntled because they must also pay the public-school tax; for it is vitally necessary for the State to maintain its schools. Likewise it must be realized by the entire membership of the congregations that the school is the concern of all and not merely of those who have children of school age; therefore people who had no children at school needed to be liberal in their support of them. The many negligences, particularly in rural congregations, were looming up as a heavy impediment to the growth of the schools.
>
> Their schools, from a pure doctrinal point of view, are the greatest treasure which they possess. The worst evil in American churches, aside from false doctrines, is their lack of parochial schools, their practice of putting their children into public schools, their failure to have the schools they had in times past established.
>
> The change to public education was not at first so evil, since people then were more religious-minded and piously read their Bibles; today, however, things are in a most evil state because too many atheistic, irreligious, and unmoral people are appointed to teach in public schools. God's dire punishment upon our nation for this sin will not fail to come.
>
> The improvement of their parochial schools, they must note, lay not in cramming their children with a mass of knowledge concerning their temporal life, but above all in the improvement of their religious instruction. It is a grave error for our elementary schools to seek to compete with the godless public schools in regard to all manner of sciences at the expense of religion. It were indeed better to rear simple-hearted children of God than cunning children of Satan. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" must be their motto.
>
> There is still time after the thirteenth year or the age of confirmation for their children to learn all that is necessary and useful for this earthly life. Their elementary schools should accordingly impart to their pupils a goodly supply of Bible-verses, the chief parts of the Catechism, Bible-stories and history, psalms and hymns. Provisions for higher education are necessary, and the congregations in the larger cities should therefore show more concern in establishing such institutions.

On the Miseries of Teachers

The Praeceptor of Germany, Philipp Melanchthon, had his days when dealing with students. This is made abundantly clear for us in Edward Naumann's marvelous translation of Melanchthon's De Miseriis paedagogorum oratio. *I am especially grateful that he permitted me to include it in my compendium of Luther's writings on education,* No Greater Treasure: Foundational Readings in Luther and Melanchthon on Education. *I reference his work as printed in this booklet that I have primarily made available in conjunction with lectures and workshops I have given on classical Lutheran education, pp. 124–25.*

But I will begin, at last, my case, which my soul shudders to remember and shrinks back from in lamentation; and I will complain before you about the condition of teachers. Compared to this group of men, none seem to me, not even in slave houses, to be more miserable. For when a boy is first handed over to his teacher to be taught and educated in humanity and virtue, see I beg, what a hard duty he takes up; one full of most wretched work and full of dangers.

By the time a boy seems mature enough to be sent to a school of letters, not only is he spoilt by the indulgence of his family, but also understands and has experienced corruption; he brings out from his house the most disgraceful examples, not merely no love or adoration for letter, but a most passionate hatred towards them, and a contempt for rules. A battle must be fought with such a monstrous instructor.

If you ever teach, the mind of a boy wanders, and even when he is at his best, the same thing must be impressed upon him six hundred times before it sticks in his unwilling mind. Only when you despise the little chap do all those things you so often said repeatedly to the boy flow back from his mind. If you should make him repeat the things he has learned, then you would really see that the teacher is considered distinctly

as an object of derision. For a boy, as much as he is stubborn, takes enjoyment in saying anything that might vex or trouble his teacher. If anyone should be compelled to teach a camel to dance or a donkey to play the harp, surely you would call him admirably wretched who takes upon himself the greatest toil in vain? But that is more bearable than teaching our boys. For although you make no improvement in training the camel or the donkey, at least they pile up the annoyance without injury. But when those charming boys have worn us out, how are they abusive towards us in addition?

You would find, the one who dares openly to insult a teacher also acts like his ears are white from a swift hand. And they bring such customs from the home to their teachers; they formerly treated their parents no more respectfully than they now treat their masters. And gradually, a bad habit turns into natural disposition, with the result that these faults can never be set right and corrected. What is this, if it is not misery; to be worn out by endless troubles and toil and to be employed in teaching without effect; then for your services to become but games and delights and to a boy at that?

They draw Sisyphus in the lower world rolling an enormous rock up an unfavorable hill, but it presently slips back from the highest summit and hurriedly seeks the flat surface of the level plain, and they write that what is meant by him going up and down is that many mortal men are exhausted by pointless work.

It would seem to me that vain exertion were being far more clearly represented if a teacher were drawn there with a boy of the sort that we described but a little earlier. For how much greater is the task for a teacher than for Sisyphus? Yet the reward for the task does not get greater. His task of rolling a rock is a single one, and he is free from anxiety. See how a teacher's task, to my discomfort, is many-sided.

Never, unless compelled by a teacher, does a boy take a book into his hands. When he receives it, and his eyes and mind wander off, then it is as if incitements need to be added in order to remind him of courtesy. A teacher explains something, presently sleep creeps up on the spoilt boy, and carefree, he sleeps on one of his ears, while the teacher shatters himself by teaching. Then the new task for the teacher becomes that of waking up his pupil.

The things that were said are gone over again, the young man, having been woken up, is told to apply his mind to the things that are being taught, but he has no care for Hippolytus. His mind is outside, as if in another world, in brothels, at the dice game, in the schools of ruinous secret society. He is so far away that he is eager to remember something, like that law, which the Greeks had about feasts, "I hate the drinking partner who remembers"; he himself thinks that it was said about students, and, not cut into bronze, but engraved in his mind, he carries it around as, "I hate the pupil who remembers."

And so if on the next day you ask back again the things that have been said, because everything flows through his ears, he holds fast nothing in his mind. Then toil comes again to the master; that of going around in a circle. He begins what he spoke of before, and goes over it many times, until one word and another one, is struck into that trunk of his. Who is so hard-hearted that they would not be angry that they lost so much work, especially since in the meantime a loss of good health must also be suffered? For the body's strengths are worn away and shaken not only by the task of speaking, but also by worry and grief of the soul, which the vileness of the matter brings forth, since the children's studies do not respond to our attentiveness. Our generation is being wasted away in these miseries, while that boy will have learned his first letters.

The Pious Infidel

Those who maintain that the United States was founded on "Christian principles" ought to read Founding Faith: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America *by Steven Waldman (New York: Random House, 2008), 72–84.*

To understand Thomas Jefferson and the religious concepts embodied in the Declaration of Independence—we must flash forward to 1803. There sat Jefferson in the new presidential mansion in Washington City. Done with his official work for the day, he opened his Bible—not to pray, but to cut. He scoured the text for Jesus's greatest teachings, sliced out his favorite portions, and glued them into an empty volume. He called it "The Philosophy of Jesus." In 1819, he started over and created a new version called "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth," often referred to now as the Jefferson Bible. In Jefferson's version, Jesus was not divine. The virgin birth—gone. Christ's bodily resurrection—gone. The miracles of the loaves, walking on water, raising Lazarus—none of them made Jefferson's book.

He transformed the Bible from the revelation of God into a collection of teachings of a brilliant, wise religious reformer—author of "the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has ever been offered to man." Conservatives who can't bear to think that the Declaration of Independence was written by a Bible defacer have spread the rumor that Jefferson did this to create an ethical guide to civilize American Indians. "The so-called 'Jefferson Bible' was really a tool to introduce the teachings of Jesus to the Indians," declared the Reverend D. James Kennedy.

Actually, Jefferson's editing of the Bible flowed directly from a well-thought-out, long-stewing view that Christianity had been fundamentally corrupted—by the Apostle Paul, by the early church, by great Protestant reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, and by nearly the entire clerical class for more than a millennium. Secularists love to point to the Jefferson Bible as evidence of his heathen nature, but that misses the point, too. Jefferson was driven to edit the Bible the way a parent whose child had been

kidnapped is driven to find the culprit. Jefferson loved Jesus and was attempting to rescue him. . . .

Jefferson had studied early Christian history and was particularly influenced by Joseph Priestley's book *The History of the Corruptions of Christianity,* which he read "over and over again." In Jefferson's view, Christianity was ruined almost from the start. "But a short time elapsed after the death of the great reformer of the Jewish religion, before his principles were departed from by those who professed to be his special servants, and perverted into an engine for enslaving mankind, and aggrandizing their oppressors in church and state." The authors of the canonical Gospels were "ignorant, unlettered men" who laid "a groundwork of vulgar ignorance, of things impossible, of superstitions, fanaticisms, and fabrications." The Apostle Paul made things worse. "Of this band of dupes and imposters, Paul was the great Coryphaeus, and first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus."

Megatrended

It was popular in the '70s and '80s for Church Growth gurus and consultants to look to secular trends in an attempt to direct Christ's church into the future. One of the books frequently cited was John Naisbitt's Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming our Lives *(New York: Warner Books, 1982). Here is what we today looked like back then.*

The United States is today undergoing a revival in religious belief and church attendance. But except for the Southern Baptists, none of the major old-line denominations is benefitting; they all continue in a two-decade decline.

The new interest in religion is multiple option: No one religious group claims a significant portion of the growth. Rather, increases are occurring across the board in bottom-up, made-in-America churches, representing a checkered variety of beliefs and preferences.

A very important point is that the strictest and most demanding denominations, especially the Southern Baptists, are growing fastest, while the liberal churches continue to lose members.

This should not be surprising. During turbulent times many people need structure—not ambiguity—in their lives. They need something to hang on to, not something to debate. The demand for structure will increase, supplied not by the old, established denominations—Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans—but by the Southern Baptists, the Mormons, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and by the great array of the new, native-grown fundamentalist faiths, by the charismatic Christian movement and the youthful Jesus movement.

There are thousands of independent Christian churches and communities in the United States today. The Reverend Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, and the Reverend Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, are well-known independent churches. Their congregations are among the largest in the nation, but thousands and thousands of others, many with fewer than a hundred members, have sprung up across the country. Since the 1960s there has also been the widespread interest in Eastern religions, and such groups as the Hare Krishnas are gaining a growing number of followers.

One measure of the extraordinary growth of America's religious revival is that evangelical publishers now account for a third of the total domestic commercial book sales.

The phenomenon of the electronic churches has been widely reported. There are today more than 1,300 radio stations and dozens of television stations devoting all or most of their time to religion.

The revival of religion in America will continue, I think, for as long as we remain in a transitional era because of the need for structure during times of great change. The nation experienced a similar increase in religious pluralism during the Great Religious Awakening of America's mid-1700s, a period when we were transforming from an agricultural to an industrial society.

Not as to Frenchmen, But as to Lutherans

Lutheran theology has been so detestable that some have suffered for the sake of the name even though they didn't make the same confession, as Kenneth C. Davis has illustrated in America's Hidden History: Untold Tales of the First Pilgrims, Fighting Women, and Forgotten Founders Who Shaped a Nation (New York: Harper Collins, 2008). This excerpt is also available online at the Smithsonian.com website (http://goo.gl/8t40F) *with additional references.*

St. Augustine, Florida—September 1565. It was a storm-dark night in late summer as Admiral Pedro Menéndez pressed his army of 500 infantrymen up Florida's Atlantic Coast with a Crusader's fervor. Lashed by hurricane winds and sheets of driving rain, these sixteenth-century Spanish shock troops slogged through the tropical downpour in their heavy armor, carrying pikes, broadswords and the "harquebus," a primitive, front-loading musket which had been used with devastating effect by the conquistador armies of Cortés and Pizarro in Mexico and Peru. Each man also carried a twelve-pound sack of bread and a bottle of wine.

Guided by friendly Timucuan tribesmen, the Spanish assault force had spent two difficult days negotiating the treacherous 38-mile trek from St. Augustine, their recently established settlement further down the coast. Slowed by

knee-deep muck that sucked at their boots, they had been forced to cross rain-swollen rivers, home to the man-eating monsters and flying fish of legend. Wet, tired and miserable, they were far from home in a land that had completely swallowed two previous Spanish armies-conquistadors who themselves had been conquered by tropical diseases, starvation and hostile native warriors.

But Admiral Menéndez was undeterred. Far more at home on sea than leading infantry, Admiral Menéndez drove his men with such ferocity because he was gambling—throwing the dice that he could reach the enemy before they struck him. His objective was the French settlement of Fort Caroline, France's first foothold in the Americas, located near present-day Jacksonville, on what the French called the River of May. On this pitch-black night, the small, triangular, wood-palisaded fort was occupied by a few hundred men, women and children. They were France's first colonists in the New World—and the true first "Pilgrims" in America.

Attacking before dawn on September 20, 1565 with the frenzy of holy warriors, the Spanish easily overwhelmed Fort Caroline. With information provided by a French turncoat, the battle-tested Spanish soldiers used ladders to quickly mount the fort's wooden walls. Inside the settlement, the sleeping Frenchmen—most of them farmers or laborers rather than soldiers—were caught off-guard, convinced that no attack could possibly come in the midst of such a terrible storm. But they had fatally miscalculated. The veteran Spanish harquebusiers swept in on the nightshirted and naked Frenchmen who leapt from their beds and grabbed futilely for weapons. Their attempts to mount any real defense were hopeless. The battle lasted less than an hour.

Although some of the French defenders managed to escape the carnage, 132 soldiers and civilians were killed in the fighting in the small fort. The Spanish suffered no losses and only a single man was wounded. The forty or so French survivors fortunate enough to reach the safety of some boats anchored nearby, watched helplessly as Spanish soldiers flicked the eyeballs of the French dead with the points of their daggers. The shaken survivors then scuttled one of their boats and sailed the other two back to France.

The handful of Fort Caroline's defenders who were not lucky enough to escape were quickly rounded up by the Spanish. About fifty women and children were also taken captive, later to be shipped to Puerto Rico. The men were hung without hesitation. Above the dead men, the victorious Admiral Menéndez placed a sign reading, "I do this, not as to Frenchmen, but as to Lutherans." Renaming the captured French settlement San Mateo (St. Matthew) and its river San Juan (St. John's), Menéndez later reported to Spain's King Philip II that he had taken care of the "evil Lutheran sect." [But] Victims of the political and religious wars raging across Europe, the ill-fated inhabitants of Fort Caroline were not "Lutherans" at all. For the most part, they were Huguenots, French Protestants who followed the teachings of John Calvin, the French-born Protestant theologian.

Kepler's Witch

Looking for "famous Lutherans"? Some like to count the mathematician/astronomer Johannes Kepler among them. James A. Connor lends us some perspective in Kepler's Witch: An Astronomer's Discovery of Cosmic Order Amid Religious War, Political Intrigue, and the Heresy Trial of His Mother *(San Franciso: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004), 247–50. One can find theological discussions in places where one would not have expected to find it, as in Connor's works.*

Kepler, as a good Lutheran, found himself at odds with the Lutheran church, but as a thinking Lutheran he almost had to. He believed that to be a good Lutheran, he had to follow his faith, which meant attending to his own conscience, which also meant that if he did not agree with the Formula of Concord in every detail, then he must not sign it. This did not mean that he stood against his church; it meant that he participated in it more fully. For the Wurttemberg consistory, however, if anyone, especially a famous man such as Kepler, were to be allowed that kind of freedom of conscience, it could eventually spell the end of the church itself.

Kepler and his own church were at odds, and there was no solution in sight. But his position was not completely eccentric. He had searched the works of Christian antiquity, the writings of John of Damascus, Gregory Nazianzen, Fulgentius, Origen, Virgilius, and Cyril, and he could find no trace of the ubiquity doctrine. It was, in his opinion, not part of the Christian heritage. Oddly enough, while the consistory condemned Kepler as a dangerous innovator, Kepler himself believed that the Formula of Concord, by including the ubiquity doctrine, was itself dangerously innovative.

Therefore, Kepler's fight with the consistory continued. He informed them in a return letter that he would avoid scandal and cause no further troubles for Pastor Hitzler. However, he would not abandon his request for admission to Communion, stating that he would return to it at a later date, perhaps in a different community. Neither the consistory nor Pastor Hitzler would let the matter rest, however. Much of Europe was heading blindly toward the Thirty Years' War, and the tensions between the Christian confessions drove the authorities in each church to demand rigorous compliance from all of their members. Kepler the famous mathematician could not be allowed to step out of line, which of course was the very attitude that led to the Thirty Years' War itself. Accusations against Kepler mounted daily:

> I have been denounced as a man without principle, approving everyone, incited not by an honest heart, but by a desire to have the friendship of all parties, whatever may happen, today or tomorrow. I have been called a godless scoffer of God's word and of God's holy Communion, who cares nothing about whether the church accepted him or not, and who, instead of being eager to receive Communion, decided that it should be kept from him.

> I have been attacked as a skeptic who in his old age has yet to find a foundation for his faith. I have been condemned as unsteady, now siding with this group, now with that group, as each new and unusual thing is brought into the arena.

Accusations grew up all around like fungus. Some people accused him of taking sides with the Catholics on specific points just to help his career. Others said he was a Calvinist because he believed in their ideas on Communion. He was like a weathervane turning in the wind—Calvinist in some things, Catholic in others. So he rejected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, calling it "barbarous." This didn't make him a true Lutheran. He wouldn't accept Dr. Luther's great book on the captive will either. He even agreed with the Jesuits on the doctrine of ubiquity. So was he Catholic or Lutheran or a Calvinist? He wasn't any of these things, but a man alone, unchurched, a man who wanted to start his own confession, the Church of Kepler! He was a newcomer, and perhaps an atheist and a heretic. So much for the great mathematician.

Signing the Roster

The translation of so much of C. F. W. Walther's work has been a dedicated and skillful work of love by the Rev. Joel R. Baseley. Translating not only sermons and addresses otherwise inaccessible to those who don't read German, Pastor Baseley has also been translating and producing PDF facsimiles of Der Lutheraner, *an early periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. What follows is among Walther's "Brief Addresses to New Members at Voters' Assemblies." What if such things were to be read at your next congregational meeting?*

Now that you have publicly signed our Congregational roster, and, thereby, some of you have completed your initial reception into our congregations, and some of you are being added to the roster of voting members, I welcome you with all my heart in the name of this congregation. But, at the same time, I cannot help myself from directing a Word of encouragement to you.

In the second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke describes for us the founding of the first Christian congregation, as you know, in Jerusalem. In the last verse of this Chapter it says this: "But the Lord added daily to the congregation those who were being saved."

Here we observe two things: 1) Who it is alone that sees to it that new members join a Christian congregation, and 2) what an important event that is, for time and eternity.

So, first it says: "But the Lord added daily to the congregation." We should not wonder that this is attributed to the Lord, for you recall that just a few weeks before, Christ had died on the cross, which had greatly offended even the disciples. So, would even a single soul have joined the Christian church if the Lord had not enlightened them by his Holy Ghost, and made them sure that the One who had been crucified and was risen from the dead was the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world? Certainly not! Now add to this another fact, that the people in Jerusalem could not only expect no earthly gain by their joining the Christian church but, rather, to the contrary, could expect only shame, rejection, yes, bloody persecution. So truly, at that time, had a person not been driven into a Christian congregation by the Spirit of God, with divine power, he would never have felt it was safe to enter into the church!

But the Lord is still the only one who adds people to the Christian congregation. Indeed, bloody persecution is no longer expected as a proof that the Lord, alone, brings people into the Christian congregation, but it is something even worse than persecution. First, we live in an age of almost universal apostasy and unbelief. There are now millions of baptized Christians who no longer care a bit about God, religion, about the church, and who regard Christianity as superstition and enthusiasm (Schwaermerei), or as a complete fraud, invented by preachers. So then, who would join a Christian congregation now, if the Lord had not drawn him in? In addition to this, even among Christians, love has grown so cold and even the wise virgins have fallen asleep. So who would still join a congregation, if the Lord had not opened his eyes?

It is obviously true that now most become congregational members already as unreasoning infants by no choice of their own, or, later, many walk into the church for the sake of their relationships, sons and daughters because of their parents, some wives for their husbands, and husbands for their wives, and many for other friends and relatives. But, nevertheless, it is always the Lord that calls them to do what no one else could compel them to. That is, God is the one that wants to bring them to faith in the congregation.

Yet, when Luke writes: "But the Lord added daily, those who were being saved, to the congregation," we observe two things here which make joining a congregation an important matter for time and eternity. It is a matter dealing with nothing less than the soul's salvation.

If a person desires to approach some other harmless association, if he wants to become a citizen of a state, or to enter into marriage, or wants to enter into a business contract or the like, that is a matter decided by his free will. But if he would enter into a Christian congregation, it is not a matter of his freedom. This is something he must do, so much as God's grace and his salvation is precious to him.

The main reason for this is, obviously, that a person becomes a member of the invisible church through faith, apart from which there is absolutely no salvation. Only, a person who has become a member of the invisible church, when it is possible for him, must also become a member of an orthodox visible church to give evidence of this. He must remain here with those with whom he will someday be

together, eternally, in heaven. He must here engage in battle, as part of the church militant, if he desires to someday celebrate with the church triumphant. For as a man relates to Christians, that is how he also relates to Christ. For Christ says: "What you have done to the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me."

So then, be glad that today you have entered into this congregation and never forget what Luke writes: "The Lord added daily to those who were being saved to the congregation."

May the faithful Savior preserve you, and us all, in faith unto the end and, so, let us reach the end of faith, that is, our soul's salvation. Amen.

Congratulations to *Lutheran Quarterly* on its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology from its inception in 1992 has endeavored to serve global Lutheranism as "a free conference in print" providing a venue for an informed study of Lutheran theology leading to pastoral and churchly practice consistent with the Book of Concord. Yet *Logia* does not stand alone. Our journal relies on the solid theological and historical work done by the best of Lutheran scholars in North America and Europe. A careful reading of the footnotes in *Logia* will indicate that a prime source for the scholarly work used by *Logia* authors is *Lutheran Quarterly.*

Like *Logia, Lutheran Quarterly* is an independent theological journal. It traces its roots back to the nineteenth century with a lineage that runs through Theodore Tappert and Oliver Olson. It was Oliver Olson who revived it in 1984 with the aim that this journal would provide a forum for the discussion of Christian faith and life on the basis of the Lutheran confession. Not only do *Logia* and *Lutheran Quarterly* have similar goals, but many of those associated with *Logia* also serve as authors, book reviewers, or are involved in editorial capacities with *Lutheran Quarterly.*

Lutheran Quarterly is not a substitute for *Logia*. The two journals enjoy a lively symbiotic connection as each enriches and supplements the other. Informed Lutheran clergy and laity will benefit from both journals. *Logia* readers will recognize many familiar authors in *Lutheran Quarterly,* including Oswald Bayer, Mark Mattes, James Nestingen, and Steven Paulson, to name a few.

It was through the pages of *Lutheran Quarterly* that Oswald Bayer was introduced to an English-speaking audience. Two of Bayer's essential works, *Living by Faith* and *Theology the Lutheran Way,* have been published by Eerdmans in their series Lutheran Quarterly Books. Several of the many Bayer essays published in Lutheran Quarterly will soon be available in a new book from Wipf & Stock, *Justification is for Preaching: Essays by Oswald Bayer, Gerhard Forde, and Others,* edited by Virgil Thompson, long-time Managing Editor of *Lutheran Quarterly.*

Paul Rorem has served with distinction as editor of *Lutheran Quarterly* for the last fifteen years. Dr. Olson, Dr. Rorem, and those who serve on the editorial staff of *Lutheran Quarterly* are deserving of congratulations in this jubilee year for their journal. It has served the Lutheran cause well. Readers of *Logia* are encouraged to reap the benefits of their labors by also subscribing to *Lutheran Quarterly.* More information may be found at www.lutheranquarterly.com

John T. Pless

CORRESPONDENCE & COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM

We encourage our readers to respond to the material they find in Logia — whether it be in the articles, book reviews, or letters of other readers. While we cannot print everything that is sent, our Colloquium Fratrum section will allow for longer response/counter-response exchanges. Our Correspondence section is a place for shorter "Letters to the Editors."

If you wish to respond to something in Logia, please do so soon after you receive an issue. Since Logia is a quarterly periodical, we are often meeting deadlines for the next issue about the time you receive your current issue. Getting your responses in early will help keep them timely. Send Correspondence or Colloquium Fratrum contributions to

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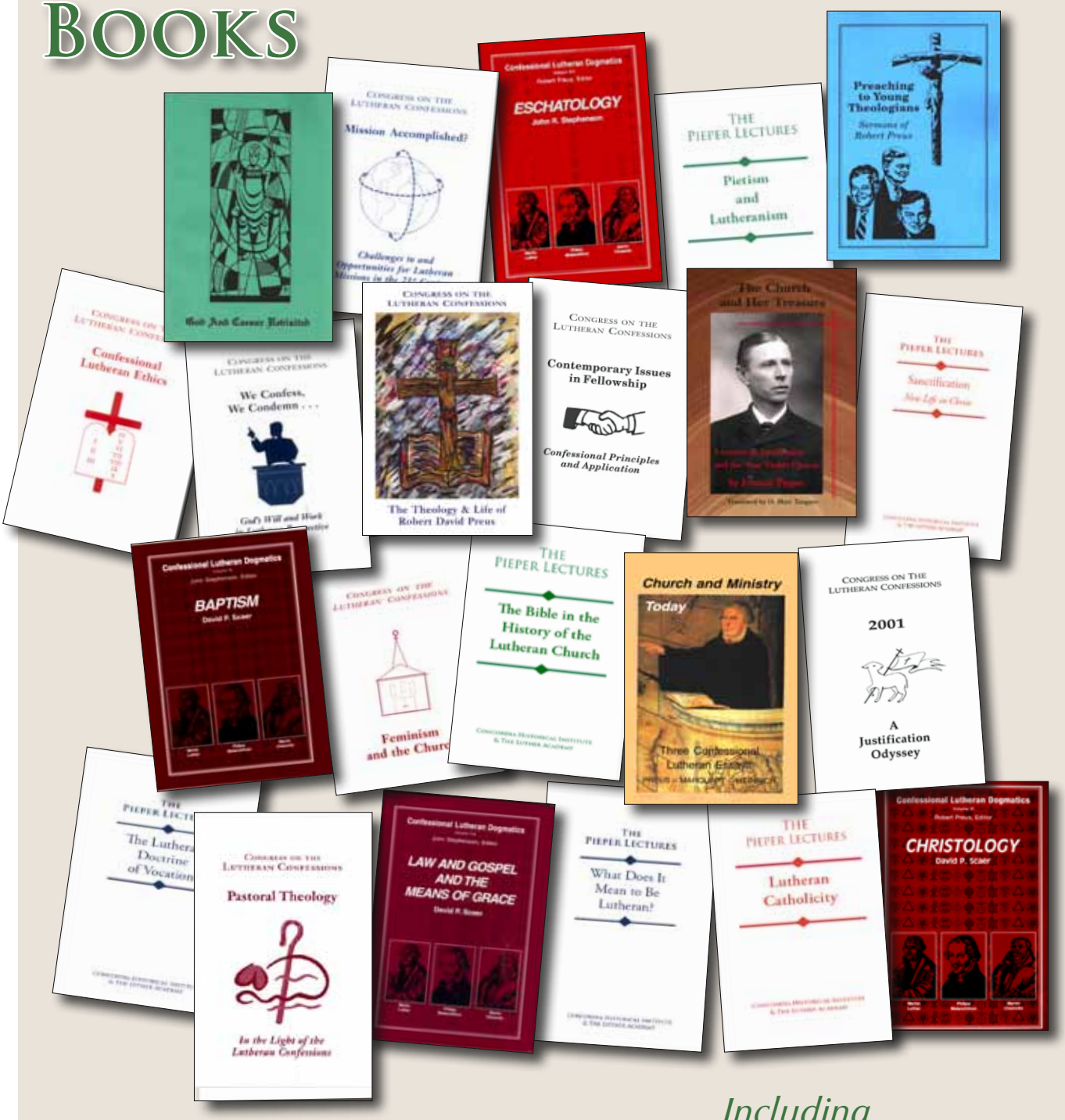

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SURPRISE! We've got a brand new store at cafepress!

It all started as the brain child of Rev. James Braun, a *Logia* editorial associate, who proposed that we open a CafePress shop. We all agreed that it would be really cool to buy, say, a t-shirt with everyone's favorite Inklings drawing on it. Like this one.

So now we've got a whole shop with "Decisions, decisions..." products at CafePress! We've also got items with the Martin Luther sketch by Rev. George Clausen that was featured in the Reformation 2011 issue. It's a gorgeous drawing, made up entirely of tiny little scribbles.

GREAT GIFT for a pastor or theologically-minded friend

More Inklings products will be available in the shop very soon as well.
If you have a special request for a particular Inklings cartoon, let us know.

If you have any original art you'd like to contribute to our new store, feel free to send it to Sarah at customerservice@logia.org.

Thank you to Rev. James Dale Wilson for his many contributions to the humorous side of Logia, as well as Rev. George Clausen for his beautiful drawing.

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