LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

SCRIPTURE & AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

REFORMATION/OCTOBER 1993 VOLUME II, NUMBER 4

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 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 which 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 which we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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Correspondence

■ Satire which is based upon documented evidence can be a powerful polemic device. Satire, on the other hand, which is based merely upon conjecture, results in nothing more than alarming, misdirected suspicion. Such was the case with the article that appeared in the *Forum* section of your most recent issue, "The Night of the Living Reconcilers."

In the scenario which was pictured, efforts are made to show the erring pastor his mistake, but without success. So, the accuser appeals to the Missouri Synod's reconciliation process. In reality, it would probably have been the *accused* who would have requested the reconciliation input, *after* the District President upheld the charge of false doctrine according Bylaw 2.27 ff. of the synod handbook. Could a Synod Dispute Resolution Panel be brought into the procedure? Yes, but in doing so, it must be remembered that that panel is still under the obligation to support and uphold the doctrinal stance of the synod (see Bylaw 8.21.a of the Synod Handbook). Neither should indictments of non-biblical motives be issued over the fact that lay people would sit on this panel. While it is true that Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession attributes the judging of doctrine to bishops, it does not do so exclusively; paragraphs 41 ff. of the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope declare that this right to judge doctrine belongs to "all Christians [by whom] ungodly teachers should be shunned and execrated."

Much ballyhoo has been made over the concept of a "win-win" approach where it has been erroneously theorized that such an approach is untenable when it comes to defending doctrinal disputes. Not true. Leading someone to acknowledge his error (especially in doctrinal matters) and to repent of them is, most definitely, a "win-win" situation.

The synod's reconciliation process is brand-new and, as such, has not yet been fairly tested. It may very well be that time will prove it to be detrimental and consequently abolished by the 1996 date cited in the aforesaid article. One thing is for certain though: the process will, in no way, be aided by cynical, theorized, pre-conjecture.

If the author of the article in question is searching for a theme for a satirical piece, why not draw upon those events which have occurred and are even now unfolding wherein Bylaw 2.27 is being ignored? The bottom line is: don't fault the reconciliation process when those on a district or synodical level are unwilling to employ the responsibilities which have been entrusted to them. If doctrinal issues were properly dealt with on those levels, people wouldn't have to lose sleep wondering whether the fictional horror stories might come true.

LOGIA is a wonderful, scholarly publication. Keep it that way. Leave the red herring out.

Rev. William R. Kilps
East Moline, Illinois

LOGIA CORRESPONDENCE AND 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. Some of your suggestions have already been taken to heart as we consider the readability of everything from the typeface and line spacing (leading) to the content and length of articles. While we cannot print everything that comes across our desks, we hope that our new COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM section will allow for longer response/counter-response exchanges, whereas our CORRESPONDENCE section is a place for shorter "Letters to the Editors."

If you wish to respond to something in an issue of LOGIA, please do so soon after you receive an issue. Since LOGIA is a quarterly periodical, we are often meeting deadlines for the subsequent issue about the time you receive your current issue. Getting your responses in early will help keep them timely. Send your CORRESPONDENCE contributions to: LOGIA Correspondence, 707 N. Eighth St., Vincennes, IN, 47591-3111, or your COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM contributions to LOGIA Editorial Department, 1004 Plum St., Mankato, MN, 56001.

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"Inerrancy"— The ὁμοούσιον of Our Time

JOHN R. STEPHENSON

PROPONENTS OF BIBLICAL INERRANCY, BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT Lutheran Christendom, are certainly aware that one would search in vain for a single occurrence of the controversial term "inerrancy" itself in the biblical concordances of any language. Nor would advocates of this doctrine wish to aver that it offers, of itself, an exhaustive account of all that needs to be said on the subject of the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. But one would also scan the concordances in vain in pursuit of the crucial ὁμοούσιον of the Council of Nicea, whose framers and defenders have never supposed for a moment that this single adjective presents us with an all-sufficient summary of the church's christology. There is a parallel between the fourth century debate on the ὁμοούσιον and the disputes around the concept of biblical inerrancy which have arisen since the European Enlightenment issued its challenge to the presuppositional consensus that had hitherto obtained within all confessions of Western Christendom, on all sides of the reformational divide. Both concepts essentially define by negation: what God is in himself is unknowable by his rational creatures, but whatever it is, we may not suppose the essence of the Son to be other than the essence of the Father; and, while the deficient mind of the sin-sick creature cannot fathom the mystery of divine inspiration, the believing sinner may take comfort from the promise that the God-breathed external word of Holy Scripture will in no respect deceive or mislead him. The Nicene ὁμοούσιον and the catholic insistence on the predication of "inerrancy" of the canonical Scriptures warn us of which directions not to take; they guarantee freedom of thought, research, and expression, at all events if we understand our evangelical liberty as bounded by the God "whose service is perfect freedom." And for what other freedom does the Christian scholar crave?

The universal conviction of the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture may also be compared with the normative christology of the Council of Chalcedon, which, significantly, is concentrated in four *negative* adverbs. We should misunderstand both the Chalcedonian Definition and the belief in scriptural inerrancy were we to entertain the notion that advocates of these dogmas take them for exhaustive statements on the Person of Christ or on the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. Rather, what we have here are the *sine quibus non* of doctrinal stability in the church of Jesus Christ; and since souls are saved by truth and imperiled by error, these definitions may not be considered negotiable or in any way capable of "reinterpretation" in a sense which would blatantly contradict classical usage.

One can have no respect for any who would urge that the concept of biblical inerrancy only entered the church's bloodstream with the emergence of the Fundamentalist movement in certain Reformed circles of Anglo-Saxon Christendom at the beginning of this century. The utter truthfulness and unqualified trustworthiness of inspired Scripture, along with the implied corollary of biblical inerrancy, were joyfully and unanimously acknowledged by Christendom during the seventeen centuries that preceded the European Enlightenment. Clearly, there is nothing exclusively Lutheran about recognition of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, so that the confessional Lutheran will rejoice to find kindred spirits in the Orthodox, Roman, and Reformed communions. The purpose of the present paper, however, is to examine the issue of biblical inerrancy from a Confessional Lutheran perspective. My thesis is as follows: Should we no longer be able, in keeping with Scripture's implicit and explicit claims concerning itself, and in company with the universal Christian consensus (including Luther, Melanchthon, the authors of the Formula of Concord, and the great figures of Lutheran Orthodoxy), joyfully to affirm biblical inerrancy, then the pivotal articles I-V of the Augsburg Confession will inevitably begin to shake like a reed in the wind. In short, "certitude of salvation" will necessarily give way to "probability" and finally to "possibility of salvation." The consequences of public disavowal (or even tacit surrender) of biblical inerrancy will be grave, not only for the uneasy sinner, but also for the church as a whole: Unless we are certain *how* we may ascertain the gospel, we shall not long continue to know *what* the gospel is.

A Lutheranism which has been infected with pietism and rationalism will predictably laugh to scorn any invocation of the Vincentian Canon in favor of biblical inerrancy. In this case, meticulous proof that scriptural inerrancy belonged—at least until the Enlightenment—to those things *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est,* will meet with a brusque "So what?" It is appropriate here to recall the attitude of the Reformer and the Confessions to the antecedent tradition of the whole church. *Sola*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN R. STEPHENSON is Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario. This essay was written in 1983 while he was a member of the American Lutheran Church.

Scriptura was invoked against those elements of the church's tradition—viz., the sacrifice of the mass, purgatory, the invocation of saints—which run contrary to the clear teachings of Holy Writ, but not against those contents of tradition which either explicitly or implicitly conform to Holy Scripture. The appeal to antiquity was characteristic of Luther and Melanchthon, and a churchman who disdained the judgments of the fathers would never have painstakingly brought together the *Catalogus Testimoniorum*. The slightest acquaintance with Johann Gerhard, to take but one of the theologians of the Orthodox period, will demonstrate how a foray into classical Lutheran writings is apt to turn into perusal of patristic anthology. Should confessional Lutheranism wish to remain true to its classical exponents, therefore, it will be predisposed to listen to the testimony of the fathers with humility and openness. A statement made by Luther in 1532, in the context of our Lord's bodily presence in the Holy Supper, offers us much food for thought: "For it is perilous and shocking to hear or believe anything contrary to the unanimous testimony, belief and teaching of the entire Holy Christian Church" (*WA* 30 III 52, 9-15).

Sola Scriptura is, of course, the bracket and the limit of this assertion of the authority of the Christian tradition. Should we wish to think in a Lutheran way here, while at the same time rejecting the traditional appraisal of Holy Scripture, then we must appeal over the heads of the fathers to the Bible itself to furnish disclaimers of its own inerrancy. Such an appeal would have to confront an apostle who boasted before Felix of his belief in "*everything* laid down by the law or written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14), not to mention a Savior confident that David uttered Psalm 110 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Mt 22:43). Many a theologian may find out too late that a blow directed at Franz Pieper has landed on the face of Christ himself.

The confessional Lutheran who adheres to the classical belief in biblical inerrancy is apt to be derided as a "fundamentalist," a term which in common usage bears comparison with the insulting epithets coined by one ethnic group to abuse another. "Mindless moron" and "blockheaded bigot" would be appropriate synonyms for "fundamentalist," at any rate as this term is prone to fall from the lips of the liberal intelligentsia. The increasingly promiscuous use of this term might indeed cause a subliminal association of classical Christianity with the murderous mad mullahs of Persia, or with the recalcitrant hard-line Maoists of China. Should we restrict the description "fundamentalist" to those in essential agreement with *The Fundamentals,* then we may say that while some Lutherans may be or have been fundamentalists, none ought to concur uncritically or wholeheartedly with the platform of this group. Fundamentalism was intrinsically a reductionist movement—agree on certain basics, while agreeing to live and let live with respect to the small print of doctrine.

In company with Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox East, Confessional Lutheranism eschews the reductionist path which is praised as the quick and painless way to repair the fissures in external Christendom. Not only does orthodox Lutheranism insist on recognition of the inspiration and inerrancy of Holy Scripture as the basis for altar and pulpit fellowship among divided Christians; it also insists that unless church fellowship is to forfeit its integrity, Christians must agree on the saving doctrines of the Bible. To confess the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures would amount to nothing if the church cannot confess in unison (ὁμολογία!) *what* God's Word clearly teaches.

The Reformer invariably declined to confuse the divinely revealed objects of faith with our human apprehension of them, whether in faith or unbelief, so that he would make short shrift of any attempt to downgrade the Holy Scriptures into the record of the religious experiences of ancient Israel and primitive Christianity respectively. Luther's dogged and uncompromising stress on the *extra nos* quality of the objects of faith bespeaks his conviction that almighty God's biblically attested—and mediated!—self-impartation in Christ is true and will remain true, quite apart from my or anyone else's acknowledgment of it. The essential godhead of the incarnate Christ was not enhanced by St. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, nor was it impaired by the brutal disregard for the Lord of Glory evidenced by those who nailed him to his cross. The Christian confesses that the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord was taken up into the unity of his divine person from the moment when the Mother of God was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, rejoicing that the assumed manhood of Christ will perpetually blossom within the hypostatic union, whereby the Son at once glorifies the Father and graciously supplies the ontological foundation of our salvation. But the truth of the incarnation is contingent on the truthfulness of almighty God in his word, and not on the creaturely acceptance of this word.

The confessional Lutheran who adheres to the classical belief in biblical inerrancy is apt to be derided as a "fundamentalist" . . .

Denial of the incarnation did not begin with the English Deists, nor does this carnal attitude need the scholarly support of the authors of the symposium volume with the blasphemous title *The Myth of God Incarnate.* Our Lord came face to face with impenitent Caiaphas, just as St. John was confronted by Cerinthus and Origen by Celsus. There is no reason to suppose that twentieth-century Christendom is meant to be privileged with immunity from such attack from within. To justify denial of the incarnation with an appeal to modernity would be a superfluous exercise indeed: reliance on the judgments of autonomous reason is by no means a novel ploy, for St. Paul already had to contend with the "mind of the flesh." Nor is any time limit set on the rule that the "natural man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). Theology is not simply a matter of practicing certain scholarly techniques; rather, the latter must be employed *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* and in accordance with the faith of the church, if one is to speak of theology at all. When we hear of "theologians," even "exegetes," who deny the historicity of our Lord's virginal conception or bodily resurrection from the dead, we should not suppress the candid question: Is "modern" scholarship speaking here, or merely old-fashioned unbelief?

The confessional Lutheran cannot ponder the "taking up of manhood into God" at the incarnation without at the same time

revelling in the *pro nobis, pro vobis, et pro me* of the eternal Son's communication of himself to the assumed humanity of our Lord, that is, the incarnation is perceived as somehow truncated apart from the spatio-temporal adoption of sinners into the sonship enjoyed by our Lord Christ from eternity. The Lutheran's faith is not grounded on itself—the flimsiest of foundations—but exclusively on the Christ who communicates himself to us in the means of grace which he himself instituted. Recollection of the Reformer's testimony to the means of grace will forcefully bring to mind his careful distinction between the means of grace in themselves and our believing appropriation of them. The words of the faithful preacher *are* the very word of God himself, whatever the human response may be (*WA TR* 3, 673-674). Correspondingly, "my faith does not make baptism, but rather recognizes and grasps it" (*BS GK* 701, 41-43, Lat. Tappert p. 443); nor do the sacred body and blood of Christ dissolve their sacramental union with the consecrated elements in the event of an unbeliever's partaking of the Holy Supper (*BS SA* 450-451, 14-15, 1-2, Tappert p. 311). And to the penitent sinner the confessor addresses the forthright question, "Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?" (*BS KK* 519, 16, 17, Tappert p. 351).

The Reformer invariably declined to confuse the divinely revealed objects of faith with our human apprehension of them . . .

Now may we, without grievously breaking the First Commandment, repose our *fiducia* in the Jesus of Nazareth whom the New Testament proclaims as the Savior promised in the Old? Not unless we are persuaded of the historical reliability of the Gospels which report as fact his conception of a virgin, the words and deeds spoken and performed during his public ministry, and his bodily resurrection from the dead. Moreover, may we trust word and sacrament to convey to us supernatural grace, *unless* we may be confident that the risen Christ actually commanded his apostles to preach "repentance and forgiveness of sins . . . in his name to all nations" (Lk 24:47), that he truly gave the promise "he who hears you hears me" (Lk 10:16), and that St. Paul was speaking not as a private theologian, but under inspiration, when he described the proclamation of the apostolic ministry as the appeal to mankind of almighty God himself (2 Cor 5:18-20)? May Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar remain the fourth and fifth "chief parts" of Christian doctrine, containing in themselves the very quintessence of the gospel, *unless* we may rest assured that they were in fact instituted by our Lord himself as the New Testament writers claim? We see here that the whole matter of "inerrancy" is not arbitrarily foisted on an essentially happy-go-lucky text from without; on the contrary, it emerges from the pages of Holy Scripture itself as an inescapable question concerning the trustworthiness of our Lord and the means of grace which he himself instituted. For, if the *logia* alluded to here are in fact the product of a fantasy-prone "primitive community" or of evangelists who would thereby show themselves to be mere historical novelists, then the Christian faith is incontrovertibly no more than a pious (or not so pious?) illusion.

The church's formal teaching concerning the Bible cannot be separated from the use actually made of the Bible in proclamation and catechesis. Acknowledgment of all that is involved in the great formulae, *sola Scriptura, claritas externa Sacrae Scripturae, sensus grammaticus Scripturae,* and *Sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpres,* fits ill with the teaching of unscriptural and even frankly anti-scriptural doctrines. Can the Scripture principle of the Reformation flourish in the absence of the exercise of doctrinal discipline, of a constant "testing the spirits"? And can actual and grievous departure from concrete biblical-confessional doctrine fail to undermine even the sincerest avowal of *sola scriptura?*

Much of North American Lutheranism presents the tragic spectacle of a venerable tradition with deep and distinctive confessional roots threatening to fall under the spell of a wholly alien religious culture. An outbreak of crypto-Calvinism would be bad enough, yet we are obliged to witness the ghastly infection of Christendom in its purest form by the virus of the most contemptible forms of *Schwärmerei.* Nowhere is this intrusion of the Anabaptist mentality fostered by the *ecclesia electronica* more painfully apparent than in the uncritical acclaim and unthinking emulation of the false "decision theology" which represents a piteous μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος on the part of the semi-Pelagianism of yesteryear.

Given the scriptural definition of the fallen creature as one "*dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1,5), it is obvious that any appeal to the unregenerate to "decide for Christ" is about as sensible as ordering a corpse to supervise its own laying-out. The Confessions know of only two "efficient causes" of conversion, "namely the Holy Spirit and the word of God, as the instrument of the Holy Spirit whereby he effects conversion" (*BS FC Ep* 781, 5-8, Tappert p. 472). This authoritative rejection of the semi-Pelagianism of the later Melanchthon underscores the truth that the sole working of almighty God is recognized and praised in all three articles of the Creed: Just as the Father created all things by his word and Spirit without the aid of humankind, and just as the Son assumed our flesh without the procreative cooperation of a human father and went on to redeem us without our assistance, even so "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel" (*BS KK* 511, 46-512, 3). Any concession to the enticing *aliquid in homine* will invariably fly in the face of Ephesians 2:8,9. Stout refusal of the anti-Scriptural *aliquid in homine* would be an antidote to the *Schwärmerei* which wants to elevate ambiguous human emotions and feelings above exclusive reliance on the life-giving presence of Christ in his word and sacraments.

The refined academic correlate of the *Schwärmerei* evident in Reformed-Anabaptist semi-Pelagianism is the enthronement of "critical reason" as judge over what is and is not word of God in Holy Scripture. Following J.S. Semler, who contended that "The root . . . evil in theology is the confusion of Scripture and Word of God" (quoted in *The End of the Historical-Critical Method,* Gerhard Maier, tr. E. Leverenz and R. Norden, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977, p. 15), such contemporary Lutherans as have been hypnotized by the subliminal Hegelianism of the theology of Karl Barth have endeavored to combine mouthing of the orthodox watchwords concerning biblical authority with profes-

sion and application of the "historical-critical method." However "conservative" the results achieved by the use of this method on the sacred text—e.g., Pannenberg's welcome espousal of the historicity of our Savior's bodily resurrection—one cannot overlook the fact that the ultimate determinant in the application of historical-critical method is the "critical reason" of its practitioner. A magisterial role is thus attributed to the "damnable *aliquid in homine*" (see in this context Norman E. Nagel, "The Authority of Scripture," *Concordia Theological Monthly* , XXVIII, 9, September 1956, pp. 693-706, especially p. 700). So Pannenberg accepts the resurrection while caviling at the virginal conception, himself deciding what is true and what is untrue in the evangelists' reports, i.e., sovereignly judging what is and what is not word of God in Holy Scripture. This procedure inescapably involves the demise of any notion of normative doctrine in the church.

Let us be quite clear concerning the consequences of embracing historical-critical method: Since there is no longer a standard *extra nos*, such fathers as Athanasius and Luther are deprived of the basis on which they contended for God's truth, with the corollary that the heresiarchs Arius and Zwingli must be accorded "equal rights" within the church of God. Subjectivist picking and choosing within the canon is not, by the way, a catholic characteristic, but the hallmark of second-century Gnosticism.

The suggestion that either the Reformer or the Confessions, or both, did not wholeheartedly share the traditional conviction of the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture is sufficiently amusing to provoke a cat to gales of hysterical laughter. The authors of the Formula of Concord expressly quote Luther in his distinction between "the Word of God" (which in this context, even those cursed with "bats' eyes" must acknowledge to be synonymous with Scripture) that "is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine," on the one hand, and "any human being's writings," on the other (*BS FC SD* 837, 10-15 Ger.; 10-16 Lat.—note: "*hoc discrimen, inter divina et humana scripta,*" Tappert pp. 505-507). The Reformer is concerned to assert the divine authorship of Holy Scripture, a proposition which had been succinctly affirmed by Aquinas: "*auctor sacrae Scripturae est Deus*" (*Summa Theologica* 1, qu. 1, art. 10). This authorship is conceived as having been exercised through the special divine inspiration of the sacred writers (2 Tim 3:16, a verse which occurs as the second proof text cited by Thomas in *ST*); and, if God is to inspire authors, then what can he inspire, but first, their thoughts and, secondly, their *words?* How can 2 Timothy 3:16 be understood other than in terms of *verbal* inspiration?

The Lutheran upholder of verbal inspiration sees no reason to downplay the full reality of the human writers of the Scripture, with all their distinctive individual characteristics; indeed, such a procedure would amount to an unbecoming rebuff to the incarnation of God. Since our models are the chalcedonian understanding of the incarnate Person and the eucharistic presence of the sacred body and blood not alongside of or instead of, but precisely "in, with, and under" the bread and wine, we shall have no taste for a Docetic-Monophysite "transubstantiated Scripture" (Nagel, p. 702). The inspiration of the Spirit is discerned "in, with, and under" the pen of the sacred writer, whose own labors must under no circumstances be minimized. As Hermann Sasse somewhere observed, with his preface, St. Luke stepped forth as the "first higher critic—albeit one in the livery of the Holy Ghost." Yet the analog of the incarnate Person must be taken utterly seriously. The genuine creatureliness of our Lord's humanity is not surrendered, but rather only appreciated aright, by recognition of his sinlessness (Heb 4:15). The miraculous preservation from error of the sacred writers is a precise parallel of the sinlessness of Jesus. *Errare est humanum* is not a Lutheran sentiment, and must be understood in the light of the distinctions propounded in *FC* II. Theological scholarship can prove the errorlessness of Holy Writ just as little as historical investigation can demonstrate the sinlessness of Jesus. Both affirmations are, in the strict sense, articles of faith, propositions believed *because the Bible says so.* Our Australian brethren were right to urge some time ago that "This inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures cannot be seen with human eyes, nor can it be proved to human reason; it is an article of faith, a belief in something that is hidden and not obvious" (*Theses of Agreement Adopted by the U.E.L.C.A and the E.L.C.A,* p. 21). The unbeliever will see no reason to acknowledge the divine credentials of the Bible, but, once the Holy Spirit has led him to faith in Christ, he will come to share the convictions of our Lord and his apostles concerning the book that alone mediates the Mediator to him. The text of Holy Scripture will undoubtedly cause scholarly *Kopfzerbrechen* until "that which is perfect is come": apparent contradictions may remain unsolved, perplexing witnesses to the untidiness of the revelation of a God who was not pleased to give us as Holy Scripture an airtight volume of dogmatics. Above all, our old Adam will not cease to rebel against the clear judgments of God's word until baptism is consummated in the fallen creature's final drowning in the whirlpool of bodily death. But, notwithstanding the *Anfechtung* involved in the jagged edges of the written revelation, confessors of the truth of God will, as Luther unforgettably put it, "pay the Holy Ghost the compliment of believing that he is wiser than they are" (*WA* 24, 19, 7ff.).

. . . the ultimate determinant in the application of historical-critical method is the "critical reason" of its practitioner.

In an essay in which he was unable to reaffirm *inerrantia absoluta* in the fullest sense, the late Dr. A.C. Piepkorn warned against the slippery slope that leads to an irreverent humanist approach to Holy Scripture. For reasons of piety, urged Piepkorn, "we must take care not to *deny* the inerrancy of the Sacred Scriptures, both for pastoral reasons and because the initial affirmation of the freedom of the Sacred Scriptures from error was designed to reinforce and to affirm in other words the doctrine that the Sacred Scriptures have the Holy Spirit as their principal author and that they are the truthful word of the God of Truth to men. An explicit denial of inerrancy would almost certainly be interpreted as a rejection of the main thesis of which inerrancy is a *Schutzlehre*" ("What does Inerrancy Mean?" *Concordia Theological Monthly,* XXXVI, 8, September 1965, pp. 577-593). The theologian's ultimate judge is neither his peers nor popular opinion, but the one who will return "to judge the quick and the dead." The same reverence before the holi-

ness of the incarnate Christ is demanded in the lecture room as before the altar, in the study as in the pulpit. For the confessional Lutheran, there can be no such thing as a study of Christian origins that is not guided by the faith of the church; and where is the integrity of the man who cannot affirm in his lecture room what he confesses before the altar of God on a Sunday morning? The solemn setting of Christian theology was well discerned by one of the fathers of the old A.L.C., Dr. Johann Michael Reu, who would surely underscore all the more forcefully his account of his own progression from a looser to a stricter avowal of biblical inerrancy: "Even in the Lutheran Church of our own country the development is on the downgrade. Some already doubt not only the inspiration of Scripture, but also its authority and trustworthiness even in religious matters and reserve the right to distinguish between the binding and not binding force of Scripture for their enlightened modern minds. This downgrade development in our own Lutheran Church causes me to emphasize the Scripture truth of the inerrancy of the Bible more than I did before" ("What is Scripture and how can we become certain of its divine origin?" *Two Treatises on the Means of Grace,* p. 27).

Dr. Reu saw well the link between inerrancy and the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae:* "But when, in the time of trial, the feeling of God's gracious presence vanishes, when we are compelled to inquire about the ultimate ground of our state of grace and after definite assurance of our salvation, then we need some objective reality, something absolutely independent of vacillating emotions, something on which we can stand and which will offer a safe refuge. Such objective realities are the means of grace, the spoken word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the written Word of God, namely Scripture. Even the spoken word of absolution, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, in turn, however, can be such firm realities only if they are divinely instituted and if the Spirit testifies to me, that Scripture which relates their institution, is reliable ground, created by God himself, that it is the Word of God itself" (Reu, p. 38).

LOGIA

The Church and the Word of God

Hermann Sasse

Translated by Matthew Harrison

I.

Of all the questions before us, the theme "the church and the Word" presents our conference with the most difficult, indeed the final question we have to answer. If we would have found a common answer to this question, which were not merely a compromise formula, rather the expression of consensus existing among us, then the World Conference for Faith and Order would have attained its goal. For if we were united on what the church and the word of God are, and the relationship in which they stand one to the other, then absolutely nothing would stand in the way of the union of our churches. All the other questions which we find so difficult, such as the question of mutual recognition of our offices and inter-communion, would then be only technical questions of ecclesiastical organization. What separates us today, and indeed, so deeply separates us that human eyes see no possibility of spanning the chasm, is the question posed by our theme, the question of the relationship between church and the word of God.

For we do not have to do here with one of the many controverted theological questions which have always existed and will always exist in the church, but rather with the question which once shattered the unity of the Western Church when the Reformation posed this question to Christianity. By it the Reformation distinguished itself from other events in the history of the church, and thereby its meaning for the church universal is clear. The Reformation has posed the question to all of Christendom concerning the deepest essence of the church, and this question absolutely demands a clear response. No denomination can avoid the necessity of answering this question with a clear "Yes" or "No." Even the churches in India and China and in the mission fields among the primitive peoples of the world, which otherwise know nothing of European church history, must nevertheless give an answer to the question posed by the Reformation on the relationship of church and word of God, just as they must decide for or against the Nicene Creed.

And though over four hundred years ago the unity of the Western Church was shattered by this question, the resulting parting of ways must not simply be compared with other schisms and splinters in the history of the church. At that time not only did new ecclesiastical fellowships arise out of an old communion through excommunication and separation: the form of existence of the entire church was changed. After the expulsions of Luther and his followers from the communion of the papal church, for the first time the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in spite of the papal claim to be the one holy catholic church, had begun to gather around her confession to the truth of the Holy Scriptures and stepped before the world, a self-conscious confessional church. Since then, in like manner, the other western communions had to take on at least the form of confessional churches. They had to do this even if this form did not suit their peculiarities, as was the case for instance with the Church of England, for which the *Thirty-Nine Articles* have always presented a certain dilemma. Indeed, the Roman Church had to make this change along with the others as well. The Council of Trent in effect meant for it the passage from its form of existence as universal church of the medieval West to the form of one of the great confessional churches of the modern world. Thus the one holy catholic church, which previously existed "in, with and under" the world church of the middle ages, exists, since the middle ages, "in, with and under" a series of confessional churches. By "confessional church" we mean an ecclesiastical communion which by an expressed consensus measured by confession is unified in its answer to the question posed by the Reformation.

If this form of existence of the church is to be replaced by another, in which the confessional antitheses are removed, it can only happen in the following way. The lack of agreement of the sixteenth century concerning the relationship of church and word of God must be replaced by consensus. Any attempt to unify churches by circumventing the question posed by the Reformation would from the outset be doomed to failure. We can't go back to the days before the Reformation. The call "Back to the Middle Ages!" is as unfeasible as the call "Back to the old undivided church!" This applies all the more to the call "Back to the Reformation!" There is no such return because neither does the unrepeatable recur, nor can that which has happened be made not to have happened. The dissension in which the age of the Reformation left Christianity cannot be removed from the world in a way that ignores the question of the Reformation. It can only be overcome if the question answered incompletely and incorrectly in the sixteenth century by the confessional churches will finally be answered completely and

ABOUT THE ARTICLE

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correctly. Since our World Conference has called the church to do just this, it has called Christianity and the theology of all confessions to a task of worldwide, historical greatness.

It is self-evident that everything which we have to say today on the theme "church and word" can only be something preliminary. The humble work of entire generations of theologians in all churches will be required, if the great dialogue between the confessional churches, which was carried on into the seventeenth century, shall again be taken up with real consequence. And it is also self-evident for our conference that this dialogue will only lead to a good end if, in the course of this interaction, churches encounter one another as churches. For we have not to do with the uniting of theological professors, rather with the uniting of churches, which in any case, is after all the more difficult task. Therefore, in everything we have to say regarding our theme, we must have in view not so much our private opinions as our positions as teachers of the church.

. . . The struggle over the authority of the Bible and the church in modern times has become a struggle over the concept of revelation.

II.

Canon Hodgson in his remarks on our theme rightly called attention to the fact that the question of the relationship of church and word of God can only be discussed on the basis of a clear conception of revelation: "What do we understand by revelation? What do we mean when we speak of Christianity as the religion of revelation?"

We must indeed proceed from this question, and not because Scripture and church doctrine [*Kirchenlehre*] point us in this direction—neither the Bible nor the ecclesiastical confessions contain a theory of revelation—rather because the struggle over the authority of the Bible and the church in modern times has become a struggle over the concept of revelation. The appreciation for that which church and word of God properly are has been shaken, and finally destroyed for the greater part of Christianity, by the criticism which modern philosophy since the Enlightenment has often leveled at Christendom's concept of revelation and its claim of revelation. The essence of what revelation means for the Christian faith, and what it is as the presupposition for the existence of the church and the Holy Scriptures, can be clarified directly in light of modern criticism of revelation, and in light of what of the concept of revelation is granted validity by modern thought.

In one of the first writings on the philosophy of religion at the time of the Enlightenment, the document "*De Veritate*" by Herbert of Cherbury, from the year 1624, a theory of revelation is found which anticipated everything which was later leveled against the Christian concept of revelation. The chapter "*De revelatione*" discusses the conditions which must be met for the acknowledgement of supernatural revelation by philosophy. Among other things the following conditions are mentioned: *Ut tibi ipsi patefiat*; *quod enim tanquam revelatum ab aliis habenda est*; furthermore: *Ut afflatum divini numinis sentias*. "That is evident to you; what is also believed to be revelation by others; that you feel the blowing of the divine will." Here we find already clearly expressed, the three conditions which must be met before the modern man, so far as he is concerned about religious matters, is prepared to acknowledge revelation: 1) Revelation must not be sought only in Christianity; Christian revelation is rather only a particular case of a general revelation of which all religions have a part; 2) Revelation is for me only that which I experience as a self-manifestation of the divine, but not what another recounts to me as his experience; 3) Historical events in which those in the past experienced revelation cannot be of value as revelation today.

These three conditions have been tirelessly repeated since, and indeed, as much by the alleged conquerors of the Enlightenment as the representatives of the Enlightenment themselves. Thus Fichte repeated Lessing's protest against the nature of revelation as "accidental historical truths"; "Only the metaphysical saves, and by no means the historical; the latter only makes it intelligible"; and, "One should not say, 'What harm does it do should one hold to these historical [phenomena]?' It is harmful when peripheral matters [*Nebensachen*] are placed on the same level as the chief thing, or even passed off as the chief thing, which is thereby suppressed, and the conscience is tormented about grasping and believing what it can no longer believe under such compulsion [*Anweisung*]." This same Fichte said positively: "Religion is not a matter of believing on the assurance of others that there is a God, rather that one have and possess an immediate vision of God in his own person and not via another, with his own spiritual eyes and not through the eyes of another."

Hear the young Schleiermacher express this theology in his *Speeches on Religion*: "What is revelation? Every new and original perception of the universe is a revelation, and each individual best knows what is to him original and new, and if something in another which was original is still new to you, his revelation is also a revelation for you, and I will council you to consider it well."[1] And further: "Every man, a few choice souls excepted, does, to be sure, require a guide to lead and stimulate, to wake his religious sense from its first slumber, and to give it its first direction. But this you accord to all powers and functions of the human soul, and why not to this one? For your satisfaction, be it said, that here, if anywhere, this tutelage is only a passing state. Hereafter, shall each man see with his own eyes, and shall produce some contribution to the treasures of religion. . . . You are right in despising the wretched echoes who derive their religion entirely from another, or depend on a dead writing, swearing by it and proving out of it. Every sacred writing is in itself only a mausoleum of religion, a memorial that a greater spirit was there, but is now no more. Were this spirit still alive and at work how could he place such great worth upon dead letters, which can only be a weak impress of himself? The one who has religion is not the one who believes in a holy writing, rather the one who needs none, and indeed, can produce one himself."[2]

There is no need for further proof that the Christian faith has not the least to do with what Schleiermacher here calls religion and

revelation. Our faith understands by revelation an event which does not happen wherever there obtains a higher spiritual life and thus "religion." Revelation is not a general phenomenon of religious history, of which the Christian revelation is a particular case. Furthermore, the revelation which is the presupposition for the Christian faith is bound throughout to "accidental historical truths." Angelus Silesius wrote: "Were Christ born a thousand times in Bethlehem, and not in you, you would be eternally lost." Thus speaks the mystic who knows only a timeless revelation. The Christian faith would assert the direct opposite: "Were Christ born a thousand times in your heart, and not in Bethlehem, you would be eternally lost." That is, the truth of our faith, the fact of our redemption, depends upon "accidental historical truths" of salvation history. The truth of our faith depends upon the fact that Jesus Christ appeared once, was sacrificed *once* for us (Heb 7:27; 9:26,28), that he suffered "under Pontius Pilate." Should it be shown that the New Testament recounts not historical truth in its witness to Christ, rather only a myth, the apostles would be false witnesses (1 Cor 15:15). Then what Paul wrote would apply: "Your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1 Cor 15:17-18, NKJV). And finally, Christian revelation, directly because of this historical character, is bound to the witness of history and thus also the witnesses of history. It is bound to their word and to the written record of this word.

The contents of the Christian faith are not simply the objects of our experience. The incarnation, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ are not facts which we can know from our own experience. We know of them only through the testimony of the Scriptures. Thus that which is revelation for Herbert of Cherbury, Lessing, Fichte, the young Schleiermacher, and the entire modern world, insofar as these all have a religious interest in the matter, does not interest the Christian faith at all. And that which is revelation for the Christian faith, by which it stands or falls, does not interest the modern world. For the modern world the Christian idea of revelation is unbelievable, or indeed meaningless. But this not only for the modern world! Biblical revelation is an "offense" for the religious and moral man of every age, just as it is "foolishness" to the philosophies of all ages. It is a foreigner also in the world of religions. According to Acts 17:32, the most difficult obstacle which the Greek world found in the apostolic preaching lay in its insistence that the life of one historical man, which had been lived only shortly before, should be *the* revelation. The myths of dying and rising divinities were beautiful, but the message of Christ was hideous and senseless. The myth of the dying and rising of Osiris contained a "necessary reasonable truth," namely the unchanging law of life and the world of "death and coming to be." The proclamation of the "accidental historical truth" of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ met with rejection. It spoke of a one-time, unique happening, of a revelation which occurred once, not of a "revelation" which obtains always and everywhere. This message is no general religious-moral truth to draw upon.

The content of all other "revelations" in the history of religions can be expressed in the form of general theses; for the reception of revelation there always means the knowledge of some theoretic truth. The content of Bible revelation cannot be expressed in any theoretical thesis, neither in a thesis concerning the love of God and men, nor in the form of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men." The content of Biblical revelation is much more the truth as a person; it is Jesus Christ. "To him all the prophets witness that, through his name, whoever believes in him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). This is the content of the gospel, the content of the Holy Scriptures. From the first page to the last every word points to him. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).

III.

Insofar as this unique revelation, to which the Bible bears witness and which also presents a riddle for those who study the history of religions, finds no place in the categories of the history of religions [*Religionsgeschichte]*, it can only be understood by one who understands its bearers and witnesses. They are the apostles and prophets. [Like the Christian concept of revelation], for these offices as well there are no proper analogies in the history of religion. Indeed, the "disciples" of Jesus may be compared to the disciples of Socrates and Buddha. But as apostles, they are without parallel. For it belongs to the essence of an apostle, according to Acts 1:22, that he be a "witness of the resurrection" and that the Lord himself has called him. This office belonged to a single generation of history, thus it is unrepeatable in the church. Prophecy has its apparent parallels in other religions. Here we need only mention Zarathustra and Mohammed, whose forms of "prophecy" are most similar to Biblical prophecy. These apparent parallel forms are the "prophets," that is, the ecstatic seers and speakers in whose mouths a message is placed, which they received in a state of inspiration. But in the Bible itself there is a clear distinction between one who in the eastern religions is called a "prophet," and one who is a genuine prophet, who really is "no prophet nor the son of a prophet" (Amos 7:14), rather of whom the unprecedented applies, that the almighty God himself has spoken to him: "Behold, I place my word in your mouth" (Jer 1:9), and who can say of himself: "The word of the Lord came to me."

The contents of the Christian faith are not simply the objects of our experience. . . . We know of them only through the testimony of the Scriptures.

In contrast to the office of apostle, the office of prophet is found throughout salvation history; indeed, it still exists in the church. Both offices, that of the prophets and that of the apostles, point to Christ: "Concerning this One all the prophets testify"—even though they apparently speak of something completely different, [such as] the judgment of God on Israel and the nations, or whatever may be the exact content of the message they bear. They all point to Christ with an outstretched finger as did the last of the prophets before Christ, who was indeed more than a prophet: "Behold the Lamb of God." And the apostles testify of him and only of him. They know nothing other than Jesus, the Crucified: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which

we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, concerning this word of life . . . That we have seen and heard we declare to you. . . . And these things we write to you . . .” (1 Jn 1:1-4, NKJV).

Apostles and prophets—the New Testament names them in this order—are the bearers of the revelation. They are men to whom a word has come and this word is to be given to others. *God's revelation is God's word.* Even where the prophet must say, “I have *seen* the King, the Lord of Sabbaoth with my eyes” (Is 6:5), the revelation remains God's *word*. And also there where the content of all the promises, the incarnate Word, became *visible*, where “*Many prophets desired to see* what you see, and did not see it” (Lk 10:24) came true; still, the One seen remains the *Word*. Thus the consummation of revelation, the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God is described in the sentence: “The *Word* became *flesh* and dwelt among us, and we *beheld* his glory” (Jn 1:14). The characteristic feature of biblical revelation is that it is *historical* revelation. This feature belongs together with a second, namely, it is a revelation of the *word* [*Wort-Offenbarung*]. Because God came forth out of the hiddenness of the “light, where no man can approach” only in His word, the revelation of God is identical with His word. Indeed, God “had not left Himself without a witness” (Acts 14:17) even among the pagans, but he has remained for them the unknown God; for he speaks his name only there, he makes his essence known only there, where he *speaks*: “I am the Lord, your God,” and thus he makes himself known only in his *word*.

He does not tell us who he is in the works of creation which at the same time both bear witness to him and yet veil him; rather he does so only in the revelation, of which the beginning of the Letter to the Hebrews says: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power . . . “ (Heb 1:1-3 NKJV). Only this revelation through the word is real revelation. For in it God tells us *who* he is when he addresses us. Certainly for us men, words [*das Wort*] are the only means by which one person can communicate with another, or really make himself known to another. Only when God has first spoken to us in Christ, that is, in his person, in his word-revelation, can we conceive that God also speaks the word of his power and love in creation. This can also happen through the Old Testament, for the Old Testament is also revelation which already had its aim in Christ. The Old Testament speaks of him even where his name is not yet mentioned, and can only be understood from him as the Alpha and the Omega and the center of the entire Bible.

The word of revelation is the word which God has spoken “to the fathers by the prophets” and finally, “in the Son.” It is a word which has been spoken in history (e.g., the dating of the calling of the prophets and the prophetic messages such as Is 6:1, Amos 1:1, etc., and the dating of the life and arrival of Jesus such as Lk 3:1, furthermore the “under Pontius Pilate” in the Creed). Because it actually entered history, the word of God had to take on the form of the human word, similar to the way the eternal Son of God, who entered history, actually became a man. Because the word of God is spoken to men, and heard by men, it partakes of the fate of that word which is comprehended by men: It fades away, it is forgotten, it remains without effect, if it is not passed on and preserved by those two means for the propagation and preservation of words: oral proclamation and the written record. Thus the word of God spoken in history becomes a human word, and yet it does not cease to be God's word. The “revealed” word becomes the “proclaimed” and “written” word.

Apostles and prophets—the New Testament names them in this order—are the bearers of the revelation.

We agree with Karl Barth (*Die Kirchliche Dogmatik. Erster Band: Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes,* 1. Halbband, Münich, 1932, p. 89ff.) when we distinguish between the three forms of the word of God as the *revealed word*, the *preached word*, and the *written word*. And we maintain with Barth that we actually have to do here with three distinct *forms* of the *one* word of God. They belong inseparably together, yet must be distinguished. In their distinctiveness and in their unity Barth compares them with the three persons of the Trinity.

The three forms of the word of God are already present in the prophets of the Old Testament. “The word of the Lord came to me”—this is the revealed word. “Go and tell this people . . .” (Is 6:9)—this is the proclaimed word. “Take a scroll and write on it all the words” (Jer 36:2)—this is the written word. That these three forms of the word of God are already clearly perceivable in the salvation history of the old and new covenants must mean “And the three are one.” The power which the *revealed* word possesses indwells the *proclaimed* word. Thus God can say to the prophets, “Behold, I have placed my words in your mouth. Behold, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant” (Jer 1:9-10). And [as proof that the power of the revealed word also indwells the written word] the Son of God himself availed himself of the *written* word, for example, as a weapon in the fight against the devil (Mt 4:4,7,10; *cf.* Eph 6:17). The three forms of the word of God are really one. What can be said of the word of God itself can be said of all three forms of the word, namely, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105); that it is “living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . a discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12). It applies to the word of God in its unity as much as to each of its three forms, that we men live from it (Mt 4:4).

IV.

What the Evangelical Lutheran Church teaches regarding the relationship of the word of God and the church is to be understood from the vantage of this view of the word of God, as it was discovered anew at the time of the Reformation. Here we can only briefly draw a cursory sketch of this doctrine, which after all, agrees with the doctrine of the Reformed church at essential points.

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIV, the

evangelicals declared that they were prepared to continue to acknowledge the old canonical form of church government and the authority of the Roman Catholic bishops if the bishops would allow the pure preaching of the gospel. The doctrine of the gospel could under no circumstances be given up. Because the ecclesiastical authorities demanded this, and thereby desired something which violated the commandment of God, they determined to "let the bishops go and be obedient to God and know *that the Christian church is there where the word of God is correctly taught.*" Here, with absolute clarity at the moment when the church of the west was disintegrating, the fundamental evangelical truth proclaimed that the word of God stands over the church, that the church is born of the word of God, and that the word of God is also the final and highest authority for the church.

In order to understand the position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on this question, it is best to proceed from Article V of the Augsburg Confession, which treats of the spiritual office (*de ministerio ecclesiastico*). Here we read: *Ut hanc fidem* (namely the justifying faith in the merits of Christ alone, of which Article IV spoke) *consequamur, institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta. Nam per verbum et sacramenta tamquam per instrumenta donatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in his qui audiunt evangelium.* "That we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the word and sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel" (AC V). That this faith might be obtained God has given us men something, and not, as one might expect, the Holy Scriptures. The old evangelical church still knew that the Scriptures are only one form of the word of God. To be sure, they also knew Holy Scripture actually is one form of the word of God. They knew that the Bible contains everything which is necessary for us to know for our salvation. But they also knew that Jesus Christ did not leave behind a holy book in the same way Mohammed left behind the Koran, rather that He left behind the ministry of teaching the gospel, the charge to proclaim His gospel to all peoples and all generations of world history. For the church of the Reformation, both belong inseparably together: The written and the proclaimed word, the Bible and the "preaching office or oral word" [*Predigtamt oder mündlich Wort*] as Luther said in *Schwabach Article* VII, the forerunner of Augustana V. This homogeneity explains how the church sunk roots among hitherto pagan peoples. If the word of God were identical with the Bible it would suffice to send the Bible to the people concerned in their own language. But because the Bible and the word of God are not identical, there is sent to every people one or more preachers of the word. But neither would it suffice were these preachers to come without the Holy Scriptures, bearing the word of God only in their heads and hearts. The Scriptures and the preaching office, the written and the proclaimed word, belong together. The content of the Scriptures must be preached, and not *only* read in private. And the preaching office should expound the Scriptures, as the content of its sermon is bound throughout to the Scriptures. But because every form of the word of God is truly the word of God, the church of necessity can never be deprived of one of these two forms. We have in the history of the evangelical church (e.g. in the Hapsburg lands) many cases where the pastors were expelled, the ecclesiastical organization destroyed, but the church remained alive because the Bible remained in individual homes and because a new preaching office and a new congregation arose from the use of the Bible. On the other hand, we also know—e.g. from the history of missions—of cases where the Bible is not yet translated into the language of the people, thus it is essentially not yet available for the mission congregation. In these situations the content of the Bible is present in the proclaimed word. The greatest example of this is the early church, which indeed from the beginning possessed the Holy Scriptures, namely the Old Testament, but not yet the writings of the New Testament. It is completely inverted to say that in this case the church produced the Holy Scriptures. It merely delineated the canon in the very same way the synagogue once delineated the canon of the Old Testament. But the church produced the Letter to the Romans or the Gospel of John as little as the Israelite or post-exilic synagogue produced the prophesies of the Old Testament.

The word of God, the written and proclaimed word, creates and builds the church. There is no other means to build the church of Christ. For the word of God alone creates faith. Certainly the sacraments belong to the word, and it is the experience of church history that wherever the significance of the sacraments is misunderstood or neglected, the word will also be despised or falsified. But the sacraments exist only together with the word, with the word of the institution and the word of promise. Thus the Augustana says that through the word and the sacraments the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith, "where and when it pleases God." This means we cannot prescribe the effectual power of word and sacrament. It is God's free grace, should he bring a man to faith through them. But we have the promise that the word of God "shall not return void" (Is 55:11). Thus the church will exist everywhere the gospel is rightly preached, but only there. And it must be the continual prayer of the church that it be and remain the true church of Christ, as we pray in Luther's hymn in the worship service: "Lord keep us steadfast in your word." Herein as we pray we also admit that we cannot keep ourselves steadfast in this word, nor can the church by itself do so.

The Scriptures and the preaching office, the written and the proclaimed word, belong together.

The teaching of the Reformation on the word of God and on the relationship between word of God and church was directed against two opponents, against "*Schwärmertum*," that is, against the fanatic Anabaptists and spiritualists (i.e. Schwenckfeld), who subordinated the revelation of Scripture to a direct revelation in the present; and against the Roman Church, which subordinated the Bible to the teaching office of the church by declaring that only this teaching office could legitimately interpret the Scriptures, and could also announce doctrines which go beyond what the Scriptures teach. Both these opponents charge that the evangelical

church restricts the living revelation of God by a dependence upon the letter of the Bible. Over against both opponents the churches of the Reformation have emphatically asserted that any alleged revelation which goes beyond the Scriptures goes beyond Christ who is the truth in person, and thus is no revelation, rather illusion. Nor can John 16:12f. be cited in this regard. All the great heresies of ancient (Montanus, Mani, Mohammed) and modern times have done this. Where the word of Scripture has been forsaken by proceeding beyond it, there the unadulterated office of proclamation has also been lost. But then that which is preached does not long remain the revealed word of God. For the revealed word, the proclaimed word and the written word of God are only forms of the one unique word, in which God has revealed himself to mankind, and upon which the church is founded. LOGIA

NOTES

1. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, translated by John Oman with an introduction by Rudolf Otto (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 89.

2. Schleiermacher, p. 91 (I have altered Oman's translation to more literally represent Schleiermacher's original).

Luther on Verbal Inspiration

A Critical Review

TOM G.A. HARDT

Doctrina divinitus inspirata. Martin Luther's position in the ecumenical problem of biblical inspiration. By Mikka Ruokanen. Publication of Luther-Agricola Society B 14, Helsingfors 1985. 163 pages.

This article is the major portion (20 of 35 pages) of an English translation from the Swedish original. The parts dealing with the ancient church and the Middle Ages have been omitted and only the part on Luther has been retained. The Swedish original has been published as a brochure by *Arbetsgemenskapn Kyrkligt Forum*, Helsingfors 1988, 29 pages (a Swedish-speaking conservative group within the State Church of Finland). The English translation has been circulated in Finland for those who cannot read Swedish.

The Reverend Doctor Mikka Ruokanen's work which is reviewed below has been printed in English. A shortened Finnish translation has been distributed by the central church authorities within the Church of Finland to all the pastors in Finland, which shows the importance attributed to the book. A shortened English version of the book has been published in *Thesaurus Lutheri, Veröffentlichungen der Finnischen Theologischen Literaturgesellschaft*, 153, Helsingfors 1987, pp. 259-278. According to a footnote in that volume (p. 258), the same summary appeared in *Modern Theology* in October 1987. The international circulation of Dr. Ruokanen's work makes further publication of this review necessary.

Having finished the Middle Ages, the author turns to his real subject, Luther's doctrine of inspiration. He has here taken pains to make use of the sources. His list of sources embraces four pages, which give account of different works by Luther in the Weimar edition. There are, however, already at this point, serious objections to raise. The short preface of the book gives reason for suspicions that later seem to be confirmed. Ruokanen here thanks a person "who generously provided information from the Luther archives of the University of Tübingen" (p. 5). The author has procured information from a computer-generated concordance which has been put together in Tübingen from the Weimar edition. It is from this source that Ruokanen fetches material like: "The theological concept 'inspiration' (and its derivatives) occurs 96 times in the writings of Luther" (p. 49). Not the learned labor of the author but a machine affords this insight. It is true that it seems permissible and even laudable that the achievements of technology profit also the arts, but the result is devastating. First of all it must be pointed out that the archivist in Tübingen in no way has got hold of the "concept" of inspiration. She has found the *word* "inspiration." The danger involved in this is revealed on pages 50-57, where we face Ruokanen's description of "inspiration in creation," "inspiration in salvation," and where it is shown that Luther—as many other Latin writing theologians—uses the word *inspirare* for God's infusion of the breath of life into Adam, for God's outpouring of the Spirit in the renewal of man, etc. We are even shown the occurrence of "satanic inspiration" (p. 52), when, as the reader easily understands, the devil inspires to something evil. All this, of course, is of no interest at all in a book about the inspiration of Scripture, and is a consequence of the author's being bound to the concordance of *words* in Tübingen. The loss may seem limited to a waste of time and printer's ink, but unfortunately, it is far worse than that. For, and this is the second point, the author commits the considerably worse mistake of disregarding the fact that a concept can be expressed through many words, and that one single word which has a connection with the concept does not necessarily give an exhaustive account of the occurrence of a certain idea within an author. Hence, a false security arises in a scholar who makes use of such a method, and this reviewer is of the opinion that Ruokanen's treatment of Luther has suffered badly through this procedure. It is not true, as Ruokanen says that "The sources of the present study consist of all the written works of Luther, published in the critical edition of Weimar" (p. 26). What he should have said but does not say is that the machine, the prisoner of which he has become, provides only the occurrences of a certain word in all the works in question. This is certainly quite correct, but it does not mean that the author has a survey of all the works of Luther. No one demands this of the author, and neither is it necessary to embrace such an encyclopedic method of investigation. But to believe that one has attained it is utterly hazardous.

Accordingly, this reviewer does not intend to scrutinize Ruokanen's references to divine and satanic inspirations in creation and salvation, which extend over no fewer than seven pages. Yet he will not leave without pointing out that Ruokanen has illustrated his account of Luther on this point with an unambiguously pre-Reformation quotation from "*Dictata super psalterium*" (p. 54)

ABOUT THE ARTICLE

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of 1515-1516, where the audible gospel is called an impossible law, which in itself lacks the Spirit who must be added through a direct interference by God, all according to Augustine's scheme of thought. As a representation of "Luther's soteriology" the quotation is not very well chosen.

On the other hand, there are reasons to look more closely into the section that does treat Luther and the inspiration of Scripture. Ruokanen begins (p. 61 f.) by connecting to a distinction by Luther between mental word (*verbum mentale*), spoken word *verbum vocale*) and written word (*verbum scriptum*) of 1515. This division is in itself pre-Reformation, as it is based on the thought that the naked, written or spoken word does not give anything before the Spirit comes. In this connection this is of less importance, as Luther here only speaks about mediation of the Spirit in the sense of mediation of salvation and not as inspiration of Scripture. To this, however, Ruokanen connects the statement that only the direct meeting of the apostles and the prophets with God was inspired, and that Luther would have excluded the subsequent writing down of Scripture from inspiration: "Luther calls only this mode of direct prophetic inspiration 'divine inspiration and revelation.' He never applies the concept of inspiration when speaking of the vocal or scriptural modes of the word, ministered by the 'wise' and the 'scribes'"(p. 63). According to the author this means that in Luther's theology, revelation (God's speaking to the prophet) and inspiration coincide.

For these theses the text invoked gives no support, as it simply does not deal with the problem under discussion. Ruokanen states nevertheless that "These line[s] of interpretation remained consistently unchanged in the later writings of Luther" (p. 62, note 8), but exactly in this later material he happens to include formulations by Luther, where the office of the prophet also contains the writing down of Scripture: "Those are prophets who preach through the mere inspiration by the Holy Spirit . . . they are wise and could make others wise, *make and expose Scripture*" (*WA* 10:1:1, 271, 19 ff., italics here, cf. Bucer's translation: "*scripturas componere et enarrare*," from *WA*'s notes). Ruokanen seems to have interpreted those words as if the prophets could make others wise *in order to* write down Scripture. The latter interpretation is the only possible one, as they, who have been made wise by the prophets, are expressly said to have their wisdom through Scripture. Those wise men are the second group and teach orally. The third group, the scribes, teach through books "as the apostles have been, earlier the evangelists," which is a parallel to the writing down by the first group, not a transference of the authors of Scripture to the scribes, the third group, which according to Luther expressly is said to fetch its scriptural learning through the two previous groups which "have learned from the wise men and from Scripture." The books of the scribes are thus not to be confused with Scripture.

For further support of his thesis, Ruokanen refers to *WA* 47, 526, 21ff., but this passage happens to contain exactly the words: "Thus also Isaiah and David and others were prophets, *who have written*" (emphasis ours) *and* "scribes who have learned from the apostles' books." The prophet is thus a writing prophet, and the scribes are expositors of Scripture. Ruokanen's exclusion of the written word from the inspired prophetic word, which would only mean the thought, mental word in the moment of the divine revelation, lacks support in the texts. The problem will be dealt with further in a later passage.

The threefold division of the Word described above is followed by "the three modes of prophetic inspiration." For Luther has, in dealing with Numbers 12:6-8, divided prophetic inspiration into visions, dreams and direct meetings with God, the latter being "*prophetia per se*" (p. 64). It should by way of introduction be interposed that this connection of Luther's to the classification of the biblical text itself cannot reasonably be anything especially characteristic of him. We find, for example, the same division with Thomas Aquinas (*ST* II:II, q. 174, a. 3 and 4, QDV, q. 11, co.). When Ruokanen is to describe the third way more closely, he says that it is a "direct, ecstatic encounter between God and a prophetic person." The relationship is described utterly elaborately, and it is said: "This is the *theologia perfectissima*" (p. 70).

. . . Luther here only speaks about mediation of the Spirit in the sense of mediation of salvation and not as inspiration of Scripture.

It is apparent that Ruokanen treats a theme that is central to him, nay, the central theme. This ecstatic phenomenon is explained over no fewer than 16 pages, and to illuminate it the machine in Tübingen has also been consulted: "ecstasy [occurs] 37 times in Luther's works" (p. 49). The description is crowned by the concluding formulation: "In this case, ecstatic faith and special revelatory inspiration belong together. In the case of other believers, ecstatic faith and salvific inspiration belong together" (p. 82).

Ruokanen's account is based on a misunderstanding. He has transferred the "ecstatic" features, which according to Luther belong to the inferior, visionary kind, to the direct meeting with God, the third way of inspiration. Ruokanen has not observed how the revelations to Abraham, which are decisive for his text, are of different kinds. It is said, for example in the exposition of Genesis 17:22: ". . . occasionally through an ecstatic vision, when man thinks that he has been taken outside of himself, as when God brought Abraham forth to number the stars, as reported above. *In this case, however,* God appeared in his own person with Abraham, not through a man or an angel" (*WA* 42. 666. 4 ff., emphasis ours). This direct, non-visionary, non-ecstatic form of meeting God, where God speaks in a visible shape, occurs also in Genesis 12. In Genesis 15, on the other hand, the revelation occurs "in a vision," to which is added an explanation which stresses the inferior position of visions and dreams compared to the "the third degree of revelation," the sublimity of which is emphasized. Here God speaks face to face with a man (*WA* 45, 556). These lines are reprinted by Ruokanen, who unfortunately after this quotation with a few explanations, in this case misleading, passes over to quoting what is said about visions (p. 68).

How little ecstasy is involved in the third-highest form of revelation is made clear by the fact that Luther equates this Old Testament form—where God under some visible, terrestrial shape, speaks and deals with his servant—with the New Testament form

of revelation, where God meets under the shape of the means of grace: "Nor do we lack this gift. Even if God does not appear to us in a special form, as to Abraham, yet it is a common appearance, and a very friendly and familiar one, when he offers himself to us in the word, in the use of the keys, in Baptism, in the Lord's Supper" (*WA* 42, 666, 13ff.). "Thus we should be able to be as proud as the patriarch Abraham. If he had seen God's love of mankind, how he speaks and talks with us every day through the ministry in Baptism and in the Lord's Supper, he would have admired that unto death and he would have rejoiced at it" (*WA*, 42, 667, 2). With regard to the continuously repeated character of the New Testament revelation in the different pastoral acts of the ecclesiastical ministry, one could think that "Abraham, if he was compared with us, who live in the new covenant, if the matter is considered rightly, is inferior to us" (*WA* 42, 667, 2ff.). The parallel that Luther here draws between Abraham's and today's Christian's meeting with God is the opposite of the theses about the ecstatic revelation as a model for the ecstatic faith put forward so very emphatically by Ruokanen.

It is indeed the normal meeting with God in his earthly shape that is emphasized by Luther, and this expressly in opposition to the monastic legends about Benedict's and Bernhard's ecstatic experiences. In this connection it can be pointed out that the normal, non-visionary, non-ecstatic art of the third-highest meeting with God, as described by Luther, distinguishes Luther's description of these things from, for example, Thomas Aquinas, who perceives Moses' meeting with God as quite an extra-normal act, "*visio imaginaria*" (*ST* ii:ii, q. 174, art. 4). Thus there is a difference which deserves to be emphasized, but instead Ruokanen depicts Luther as the special representative of ecstasy.

Ruokanen's account is thus misleading in a fundamental way. To what has already been said above it should be added that vision's "ecstatic" character with Luther gets a less satisfactory description by Ruokanen. The picture he gives creates the impression that Luther in his doctrine about the visionary forms of prophetic inspiration renews the Montanistic idea about prophetic ecstasy, i.e. that the prophet is out of his mind at the delivery of prophecy. Ruokanen writes: "Ecstasy is a natural, generally human phenomenon which may be used or abused in regard to the reception of divine revelation. Positive ecstasy is an experience of being enraptured from natural self-consciousness to a state of peaceful rest. After ecstasy, a person feels as though he has been somewhere but he does not know where" (p. 69). The author speaks about waking up from ecstasy: "He was waked up from his ecstasy" (p. 69). Although ecstasy in itself is "rest and peace," it is preceded by "strong emotional experiences." In its highest form it is "a silent contemplation of God's majesty in wordless amazement" (p. 70). Nay, "Luther compares ecstasy with death" (p. 69, note 24).

What has been quoted above from Ruokanen's pen about Luther's idea of ecstasy ought to be examined in the light of the following texts from Luther. When Abraham in Genesis 15 receives the lower degree of revelation, thus a vision, which is covered by Luther's expression "ecstasy," it is emphasized that a revelation like that one to Abraham is communicated "not as in sleep but to those who are awake." "For he came out and was commanded to look toward heaven and count the stars. This spiritual vision was no imagination but occurred at open and waking eyes" (*WA* 42, 555, 26 ff. Cf the German translation in St L 1, 930: "*Darum war die geistige Erscheinung keine schwärmerische Einbildung, sondern geschah bei offenen und wachenden Augen*"). To Luther it is essential that the "ecstatic" has kept his bodily and mental powers, in contrast to fanatical experiences. Abraham is in full control of his abilities, although it is said: "Abraham was totally enraptured out of himself in this vision." That latter statement implies that through the overwhelming, extraordinary character of the experience, it happens as in the case of St. Peter's being liberated from prison, that the event is, naturally enough, experienced as unreal, in which sense the affected person is "outside of himself" and not until he is "coming to himself" (*WA* 42, 561, 14, cf. Acts 12:11), is he able to state that what has happened has indeed taken place in the material world. What has been described above as being put "out of himself," respectively coming "to himself" does not correspond to the ecstatic's leaving his senses and consciousness respectively returning to them. Quite alien to Luther is the idea of associating to "a natural, generally human phenomenon," as if the revelation to Abraham could be classified according to a pattern from the psychology of religion.

Nor has Luther intended to equate ecstasy, in the ordinary sense of the word, with death, which would have brought Luther from Montanism to shamanism. Luther does not speak about the different degrees of inspiration but treats the believing soul's rest in God after death (*WA* 44, 813, 31ff., Ruokanen, p. 69, note 24). Ignorance about what is happening during the sleep of blessedness is compared with the rapture that at one occasion made Augustine and his mother ignorant about where they had been. To support the sentence "Luther compares ecstasy with death" by referring to this text and applying it to inspiration is not quite correct.

It is indeed the normal meeting with God in his earthly shape that is emphasized by Luther. . . .

Moreover Ruokanen does not even touch on the development through which Luther passes in his relation to mysticism, first appreciation and then rejection. In regard to mysticism Ruokanen mixes the pre-Reformation formulations of Luther in the first lecture on the Psalms from 1513, his first work, with material from the lecture on Genesis, which could be called Luther's last work. Such a mixture is absurd. Ruokanen leaves out the Genesis lecture's condemnations of the medieval, mystic or ecstatic experience, which can be found there, for example, in Genesis 30:9-11: "And further there is a book, the revelations of Saint Bridget, which contains the conversations of Christ with the souls. But these are mere satanic illusions, by which I was almost captured myself when I was still a monk . . ." (*WA* 43, 667, 29 ff.). Nor do we hear anything about the rejection of mysticism by the Galatians commentary: "And yet, these very spiritual things, as reason thinks, are according to St. Paul the work of the flesh" (*WA* 40:2, 110, 21). Ruokanen's silence on this point gives an unhistorical and one-sided picture of Luther, whereby the author provides support for his idea, untenable also

for other reasons, about the ecstatic inspiration as a parallel and model for faith (p. 82).

The inspiration that Ruokanen wants to attribute to Luther shows up other peculiarities as well. Ruokanen writes: "Luther never calls law inspired. The law has to do with the outer man. Furthermore, the law is known to all people on the basis of the creation as the natural law, which has also been expressed in an intensified form, for instance in the decalogue given indirectly 'through angels.' As the law is already known, there is no need to call the mediation of any commandments revelation" (Ruokanen, p. 76). The law is thus not given by God, but prophets and apostles "learned the content of the law as a normal part of their culture" (p. 77). Ruokanen thus makes the doctrine of inspiration a part of a clearly Antinomian pattern of thought. A refutation of this view can start in the most unsophisticated way by Luther's words in the Smalcald Articles: "This hereditary sin is so deep a corruption of nature that reason cannot understand it. It must be believed because of the revelation in the Scriptures . . ." (*SA* III, 1, 3, Tappert, p. 302). Far from understanding the law and thereby the seriousness of sin, man is blind to these things and needs the words of Scripture. The interpretation given by Ruokanen is refuted by Luther in the following way in his theses (2:37) against the Antinomians: "But also this is false that law would accuse sin without the Holy Spirit for the law is written by the finger of God" (*WA* 39:1, 349, 23f.). The law is thus a work by the Holy Spirit and this through the writing by God's finger on Mount Sinai. More clearly the law's supernatural, Spirit-filled work cannot be described, a work that is based on the law's equally supernatural and Spirit-filled origin. Luther contrasts this true doctrine of the law as the gift and work of the Holy Spirit to the false doctrine of the Antinomians, which they have formulated thus: "The law is not worthy to be called the Word of God" ("*lex non est digna, ut vocetur verbum Dei*" *WA* 39:1, 344, 25). This is exactly Ruokanen's sentence: "Luther never calls the law inspired."

The spirit-filled work of the law is exclusively intra-biblical. When Luther speaks of the natural law, he points out that it is "so very much obscured" (*WA* 16 447, 33), and in need of the revealed law as a completion, "as the law is made known to him." This revealed, severe law with its threats is unknown among the peoples: "Such threats he has not let be proclaimed to the heathen, but only to the Jews, as Psalm 147 says: 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them'" (*WA* 16, 448, 17ff.). Further examples of Luther expressly speaking about the law as given by the Spirit will follow. Yet it can already be said that Ruokanen's picture of Luther's view on the law and its inspiration by the Spirit is completely contrary to reality and rather reproduces the thoughts of Luther's adversaries, rejected by him.

Ruokanen adduces as support a number of Luther quotations, the meaning of which he does not, however, understand. A quotation from *WA* 47, 526, 27f. (Ruokanen, p. 77) says that "*das Gesetze haben sie gehört, aber diese Wahrheit des Euangelij haben sie aus der Offenbarung des heiligen Geistes,*" or "They have heard the law, but this truth of the gospel they have from the revelation of the Holy Spirit." This passage does not speak about any contrast between the law as present in nature and the gospel as revealed according to Ruokanen's pattern. It simply says that the Old Testament prophets certainly heard the law of Moses from the high priests but in addition to that they have received the gospel from the Spirit. What Ruokanen in his quotation leaves out is significant: The revelation of the Spirit occurs according to Luther's words to "those who have written" (*WA* 47, 526, 25f., cf. above).

Ruokanen's inability to grasp the contents of the pre-Reformation sayings, to which this reviewer has already pointed, makes him dwell on formulations like "*spiritus est verbum bonum, quia verbum gratie*" (p. 78) to prove that to Luther only the gospel would be inspired by the Spirit. Ruokanen is ignorant about the medieval pattern of salvation, according to which, without the slightest connection to the inspiration of Scripture, the Old Testament law is said to be powerless and remains an outward regulation until it is filled by the Spirit through the New Testament law, which brings salvation. This is a testimony from a time when Luther could not yet distinguish between law and gospel, and about which he later speaks with regret.

Moreover Ruokanen does not even touch on the development through which Luther passes in his relation to mysticism, first appreciation and then rejection.

It has already been made evident that one of Ruokanen's fundamental ideas is that "Luther never says that the Scriptures are inspired" (p. 89). As support, he quotes Luther as saying that God has not revealed "*grammatical vocabula*" ("grammatical words") but "*subsistentes res*" ("substantial realities"). Once more Ruokanen has overlooked the context. Luther here does not set against each other the letters of Scripture and its content, but treats the difference between human words and the Creator's powerful words: "We talk but only according to the grammar, i.e., we give names to those things that have already been created. But God's grammar is different namely when he speaks: 'Sun, shine!' Then the sun is immediately there, shining. So God's words are real things, no mere designations" (*WA* 42, 17, 16ff.).

Equally lacking in support, Ruokanen cites other material from Luther to prove his thesis that inspiration does not aim at Scripture but merely at "the ecstatic mode of prophetic inspiration and . . . the christological content of the inspired message received" (p. 90), by which it is expressly maintained that according to Luther Scripture contains errors concerning "times, places and other historical details." As support for this statement, Ruokanen makes use of a number of quotations, all of which are misunderstood, although, in the course of Luther research, they have been often discussed, apparently to little avail.

Ruokanen first adduces a well-known passage from *WA* 17:2, 39, 30ff., where it is said about the prophets that they "often erred." For the correct understanding of those words it is important to see the passage in its context and in the light of other similar passages. The text speaks about the threefold activity of the prophets: 1) prophecy about Christ; 2) exposition of Scripture; 3) prophecy

about temporal things, at which they "also often erred." This view about the facticity of the prophets ought to be compared with what Luther writes in *WA* 54, 3, 21ff., where it is said that one ought to inquire into Scripture, during which inquiry one ought with a pencil put down what is *inspired* into one's mind during these studies, in order that one's thoughts are preserved for the future. In this way the prophets too have studied Moses, and the later prophets the earlier ones, and they have during their studies put down their thoughts, *inspired* by the Holy Spirit into a book. Doing so, those faithful inquirers into Scripture have sometimes brought along also "*Heu, Stroh, und Holz*" ("hay, straw and wood") and not only noble material. That book, which does contain also errors, is, according to Luther's argumentation of the same kind as other human commentaries and is not to be equated with the right, canonical writings. This is even less to be assumed because according to Luther's description the later prophets write their commentaries on the earlier prophets, who then must be the infallible foundation of the commentaries. The inspiration, which is said to be imparted to the prophets writing their commentaries, is not said to differ in any way from that spiritual inspiration that Luther expects to be present also among the Bible readers of his own time.

The above mentioned, so called "*Heu, Stroh, und Holz*" quotation has been much debated and has by some been interpreted to mean that Scripture would contain the errors mentioned. Apparently this is not a correct exposition of Luther's meaning, which is based on the idea that the prophets do not always exercise their prophetic, inspired ministry but in addition to that have served in the same way as the ordinary faithful with an inspiration by the Spirit on that level. One can here also point to the classical saying, also used by Luther: "*Spiritus sanctus non semper tangit corda prophetarum*" ("The Holy Spirit does not always touch the hearts of the prophets"), commented on by Luther thus: "*Illuminationes propheticae non sunt continuae et perpetuae,*" "The prophetic illuminations do not occur continuously and perpetually" (*WA* 44, 575, 25ff., also quoted by Ruokanen, p. 70, note 27). With this view of the work of the prophets as a background, Luther's words "*offt auch feyleten*" quoted by Ruokanen do not need to be given any other meaning than the above mentioned "*Heu, Stroh, und Holz*" quotation. Seen in connection with Luther's subsequent maintenance of the plenary inspiration of Scripture (that in the following will be more completely elucidated), no other interpretation is possible.

As a further support Ruokanen invokes *WA* 10:1:1, 605, 11f., where, however, the reader who has the Weimar edition available, can read what the author does not reproduce: "*Sso ist droben gesagt, wie die heyligen viel mal yrren und ergerlich sind ynn menschlichen leren und werken,*" "It has been said above, how the saints many a time err and are offensive in their human teachings and works." By these words Luther aims at the magi, with whom this sermon deals, and who in different ways have been taken in. There is in the text not the slightest hint that Luther by the expression "*die heyligen*" should have aimed at the authors of Scripture. On the contrary, Luther exactly in this passage points away from the unreliable behavior of the saints to the pure and clear Scripture. Ruokanen's reference to this passage as support for his assertion about the fallibility of Scripture in Luther's works must be characterized as untenable.

Also untenable is the position he takes on the theses of the *disputatio* of September 11, 1535 (*WA* 39:1, 48, 5f.). Ruokanen here aims at the passage, thesis 61, where the apostles are said not to be able to "err in faith," whereby he apparently understands that the formulation would make it necessary that errors in non-central questions of faith are conceded. There is no support whatsoever for this assumption. On the contrary it can be read a few lines before, in thesis 57, that the apostles through the Spirit "have spoken all that we have in Scripture," respectively, in thesis 59, that the apostles are "infallible teachers." The theses thus speak about all that is in Scripture as inspired by the Holy Spirit and attribute infallibility to the apostles *per se*. Here it should be pointed out that exactly that formulation:—"[apostles who] have been sent to us as infallible teachers by God's firm decision" (*WA* 39, 1, 48, 1f.)—erects a difference between prophets and apostles, of which Ruokanen is in no way aware, *viz.*, that while the prophet depends on the special inspiration of the Spirit which does not always touch his heart, the apostle is, as sent by God, once and for all endowed with infallibility. One ought to compare with this the theses at the disputation of October 10, 1536, thesis 3: "The apostle has, not only generally but also individually, a firm promise of the Holy Spirit" (*WA* 39:1, 184, 10ff.). In the defense of these theses it is made clear that the opposite of the infallibility of the apostles "*in fide*" is not fallibility in peripheral questions: "Peter did not sin by teaching but by hypocrisy. To fall in life is something else than to err in faith." As a contrast to "*fides*" stands "*vita*," life, where apostles too can err (*WA* 39:1, 194, 28ff.).

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Further on, Ruokanen states that Luther "recognized a historical mistake in Acts 7" with reference to *WA* 53, 179, 10ff. (p. 91, note 20). If one verifies the reference (Ruokanen's text as a rule only contains information about the place of the support in the Weimar edition) one finds that according to Luther the biblical text here is "corrupted by some [pretendly] wise men." The original biblical text is thus *a priori* presupposed to possess infallibility: The error must be with some incompetent copyist. The reader must once more conclude that Ruokanen is not a trustworthy guide into the contents of the Weimar edition.

The same is also true about a reference to *WA* 8, 485, 19f. (p. 91, note 20). Once more Luther speaks about the mistakes of the fathers, against which he puts the clear and certain testimony of Scripture. Nothing in the text gives reason for uncertainty or obscurity concerning the content, which is evident to any reader. Yet Ruokanen invokes it.

Ruokanen then passes over to the well-known words of the Galatians commentary about "one single point in the doctrine being more than heaven and earth," which, according to Ruokanen, seems to imply that "Luther emphasizes the dominance of the concept of *doctrina pura* over the concept of *scriptura*: the divinely

inspired doctrine is much greater and more certain than the letters of the Scriptures can ever express." In this case, Ruokanen reproduces the text on which he relies (*WA* 40:2, 53, 13 ff., Ruokanen p. 91), and every reader who masters the Latin language is able to find out that not one single word supports Ruokanen's interpretation. "More than heaven and earth" certainly does not mean "more than Scripture," for the quotation ends with an assurance that the doctrine is founded on Scripture: "We have all the articles of faith firmly founded in Scripture." Ruokanen's interpretation is once more not only erroneous but also a distortion of the text to its opposite.

None of these sayings by Luther make use of any form of the word "inspirare" but all of them express the reality of inspiration.

As noted above, Ruokanen urges the thesis that inspiration only covers the very moment of revelation and does not extend to the writing down of the text. That written down, revealed word, which thus lacks the inspiration of the Spirit, is designated as the "word of God" in Luther's works, according to Ruokanen's concession ("which Luther calls 'the word of God,'" p. 93). The designation is thus improper. To support this argumentation the lecture on Genesis is invoked, as namely here Abraham is called out of Ur of the Chaldees through the word of God from the patriarch Shem, who has been divinely inspired for the task to convey the word. It is quite evident that to Luther the decisive point of the tale is the full identity of the word of God to Shem and the word of God to Abraham: "Whatever men speak out of the Spirit, that God speaks himself, as Christ says: 'He that heareth you heareth me'" (*WA* 42, 439, 15ff.). This identity which Luther emphasized as all-important is changed by Ruokanen to a denial of the identity. Behind this procedure, repeated in a following quotation about Adam's word to Cain (*WA* 42, 209, 4ff., Ruokanen, p. 94, note 26), there is the indefensible fixation on the very word *inspirare* which is articulated only about God's speaking to the first person in the row.

Ruokanen's deficient knowledge about the Luther material and the clumsiness of his method become especially evident in this connection, as the Genesis lecture overflows with descriptions that emphasize the Holy Spirit as the origin of every particular word and expression in Scripture. As examples of this fact, the reader should consider the following quotations, which, of course, are not to be found in Ruokanen, since they lack the word "*inspirare*." "But in the following, the Holy Spirit will dilate and more elaborately develop everything" (*WA* 42, 436, 14f.). "For the Holy Spirit is not in vain verbose" (*WA* 42, 362, 39f.). "But the Holy Spirit has a more chaste mouth and eyes than the pope. Hence he is not afraid of mentioning the matrimonial cohabitation between the husband and the wife. . . . Nor does the Holy Spirit so speak only in one place; the entire Scripture is full of such tales" (*WA* 42, 177, 32 ff.). "Here we hear the Holy Spirit talk about these things, and his mouth is chaste" (*WA* 42, 178, 27f.). "It is not enough for the Holy Spirit to say: 'Adam knew Eve,' but he adds 'his wife'" (*WA* 42, 173, 3). "The Holy Spirit praises the natural feelings" (*WA* 42, 277, 15). None of these sayings by Luther make use of any form of the word *inspirare* but all of them express the reality of inspiration. The Holy Spirit here is the one coming forward, speaking in the texts, and he chooses special words and expressions in order to more clearly express his meaning. We thus face the expression so detested by Ruokanen—*verbal inspiration* in the literal meaning of the word. This verbal inspiration, which is so clearly, so emphatically and so accessibly described, is in no way, according to Ruokanen's self-willed pattern for the extension of revelation, limited to soteriological or christological sayings, to the gospel. The quotations above all speak of the sphere of the law or the commandments, in this case, primarily about matrimony. So Ruokanen shows himself on every point and in every aspect unreliable as a Luther commentator.

Ruokanen dwells on the fact that in an Epiphany sermon in the *Church Postil* Luther brings out the oral character of the New Testament message, and that Christ has not given any command to write down the gospel. Ruokanen overlooks the fact that Luther here speaks about the sermon as a means of grace and about its precedence in the mediation of salvation, not about inspiration. One may put it like this: According to Luther, Christ has certainly not commanded the writing down of the gospel, but on the other hand, the Holy Spirit has taken care of that writing down. Ruokanen points to the fact that according to Luther the writing down is an enforced necessity, but he also ought to show how, e.g., St. Paul is said to have written his epistles "only that he should keep what he had previously taught" (*WA* 10:1:1, 627, 14f.). Even if the oral preaching was more abundant, its content is being preserved by the epistles, and no difference as regards the contents between the two forms of apostolic message is expressed. In this connection, one should look at Luther's concluding words in that part of the *Church Postil*, that if only Scripture is left, his own exposition may well perish.

Ruokanen returns to his assertion that Luther does not call the written form of the gospel inspired (p. 96). This is not true in any sense whatsoever. Even the very formulation is to be found: "That only Holy Scripture can do inspired and taught by God Himself" (*WA* 48, 218, 11ff.). More important than the word "inspire" is, of course, the reality behind it, to which Ruokanen in such a remarkable way closes his mind. The reviewer here wants to point to the fact that Luther's Bible editions, in this case those of 1544-1545, have illustrations that show the Evangelists writing their gospels with all the signs of inspiration clearly indicated. St. Matthew with a pencil in his hand over the gospel manuscript is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove. An angel, the symbol of the evangelist, leans over the desk and points to a page in the manuscript. Naturally the evangelist's head is surrounded by a halo. That applies also to St. Mark, who is pictured at his desk, the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove hovering over him. From the mandorle, which surrounds the dove, rays of light proceed, illuminating the evangelist and his writing desk. St. Luke, crowned by a halo, is pictured writing, receiving a revelation of Christ; the crucified Lord appears through the window. St. John with a halo beholds the heavenly Lord; the picture shows the vision at Patmos. The vignettes of the epistles show St. Peter and St. Paul with halos. As a background, one should consider *WA* B 6, lxxxvii, where a proof-

reader in the printing house where the Luther Bible was printed, is quoted: "Luther has partly indicated the figures in the Wittenberg Bible himself, how they should be drawn or painted, and has ordered that one in a very simple way should paint and draw the content of the text, and he did not want to suffer that one should jot down something unnecessary and needless, which did not serve the text" (cf. also Hans Volz's edition of *D. Martin Luther: Die gantze Heilige Schrifft Deudsch*, Munich, 1972, Preface, p. 99). Thus there is a reasonable cause for seeing those illustrations as a refutation of Ruokanen's thesis.

Yet Ruokanen is of another opinion on Luther's view of the Bible than the one held by the illustrators of Luther's Bible. If those latter had been able to learn the truth propagated by Ruokanen, a very plain and profane picture would have disfigured these editions. For according to Ruokanen the truth is that "the Gospels are comparable to any history writing and need no special concept of inspiration" (p. 96). In favor of this idea, the author invokes a preface to the *Church Postil*, where Luther says that the Gospels "are nothing else than a speech or story about Christ, exactly as it happens among men that one writes a book about a king . . . which can be described in many ways, some in a more lengthy way, others in a shorter one" (*WA* 10:1:1, 9, 11f.). Ruokanen thus understands that Luther here has declared that the Gospels are products of the same kind as profane literature. Once more Ruokanen has disregarded the context of Luther's words. What are common to the Gospels and human historiography, according to Luther, are not mistakes and deficiencies, but the possibility of expressing the same circumstances in different ways, more explicitly or more condensed "in many ways." For Luther here wants to bring out the epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter as equal to the four Gospels, the apostolic letters having been unduly regarded as mere "additions" (*WA* 10:1:1, 8, 17) to the writings of the evangelists. For this reason Luther stresses that the epistles, as also Acts, are a Gospel, "although they do not tell all the deeds and words of Christ but contain one thing shorter and less than the other" (*WA* 10:1:1, 9, 8ff.). Here is the parallel to the biography of temporal lords, which can be done more shortly or more elaborately. Nothing else is said in this Luther text, especially not what Ruokanen believes to have found.

To give the reader a correct picture of Ruokanen's survey it should be pointed out that when he is sometimes forced to the concession that "Luther boldly says that the Scriptures are 'the written word of God'" (p. 101), that assertion does not imply any revocation of earlier positions, but is an argumentation, reminiscent of Barth, where the statement gets the complementary addition: ". . . fully in accordance with the sound doctrine of incarnation and the theology of the cross." This means nothing else than that behind the human, erroneous word a perfect truth hides according to the pattern "the sign does not agree with the things signified" (p. 101). The human nature of Jesus ("sound doctrine of incarnation") is thus supposed to be in a state of tension in its relationship to the divine nature. This christology is not that of Luther, and neither is the doctrine on Scripture that is developed accordingly. The christology that must have been in Ruokanen's mind is rather that of Zwingli, whose watchword is that "*alloeosis*" about which the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church say: ". . . the blasphemous *alloeosis* of Zwingli, who taught that one nature must be taken and understood for the other. Luther called this the devil's mask and damned it to the depths of hell" (*FC SD* VIII, 21, Tappert, p. 595). Through an "*alloeosis*" one can formally confirm but materially deny the identity between Scripture and the word of God. That piece of artistry cannot, however, be executed by invoking Luther.

Under the heading "The differentiated value of the biblical texts" Ruokanen develops more closely his distinction between the divine doctrine and its variable textual expressions (p. 103). Here we face a traditional polemic, which wants to show that Luther has a canon within the canon, whereby valuable parts are separated from those less valuable according to Luther. Ruokanen stands on this point in a broad tradition of Luther research, and his errors, for errors they are indeed, are shared by many. On the other hand, this implies that when Ruokanen writes: "The dialectic of Luther has perplexed the Luther researchers" (p. 107), he exaggerates the unique position of his own interpretation. The dialectic about which Ruokanen speaks is, under different designations, a well-known phenomenon within the theological, liberal tradition of research, in which Ruokanen is an insignificant link. Thereby it should not be denied that Ruokanen on other points has produced quite unique scholarly results without parallel among other scholars.

First comes (this reviewer feels tempted to write "of course," because the show is old and rather boring) Luther's treatment of St. James' epistle, which is supposed to prove that "the true apostolic doctrine, not the person of the proclaimer, is the ultimate criterion of apostolicity" (p. 103). Ruokanen thereby overlooks what Luther writes in his preface to this writing—that it was rejected by the ancient church, and thus lacks documentation as apostolic. In addition to this fundamental, historical fact Luther adduces two reasons: that the epistle contradicts St. Paul and other biblical writings, and that it does not give prominence to Christ, which is "the ministry of a real apostle" (*WA* B 7, 385, 22). Real apostles urge Christ. "What does not teach Christ, that is neither apostolic, even if St. Peter and St. Paul taught so. On the other hand, what preaches Christ that would be apostolic, even if Judas, Annas, Pilate and Herod did so" (*WA* B 7, 385, 29ff.). Thus Luther has, by way of introduction, laid down that real apostles teach rightly. The continuation cannot invalidate the premise and thus cannot imply that an apostle teaches falsely. Luther's words about St. Paul and Pilate thus imply an unreal case, a hypothetical assumption of the same type as "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you . . ." Gal 1:8). No more than St. Paul here concedes that he himself or St. Gabriel could lie, can Luther here be said to deny the apostolate that infallibility that he defends in the way that has been shown above. To Luther, St. James' epistle is "no apostle's writing" (*WA* B 7, 385, 17), not an apostolic writing with false doctrine.

. . . Luther's Bible editions, in this case those of 1544-1545, have illustrations that show the Evangelists writing their gospels with all the signs of inspiration clearly indicated.

As further proof of Luther's indifferent attitude toward the authority of Scripture, Ruokanen brings forward in this connection (p. 104, note 58), among other things, where Luther in his commentary on the letter to the Galatians says that St. Peter's denial and the passion of Christ are "very much mixed up with each other" in the Gospels (*WA* 40:1, 126). Yet Luther merely says here that in this context he does not worry about a harmonization. If, on the other hand, one turns to a text where Luther has time and place to solve this specific problem, one finds that Luther gives a clear harmonization and solves the contradiction (*WA* 52, 754, 19ff.). St. Luke's version is said to depict an earlier phase than St. Matthew and St. Mark. Luther starts from the assumption that the texts correctly picture a historical course of events, only that the different accounts of the evangelists have to be put into a correct relationship between themselves, not immediately accessible to the reader.

Luther, however . . . stuck only to the old Hebrew canon and not to the wider, so-called Alexandrian one. . . .

Ruokanen goes so far as to let Luther in his rejection of biblical material be led by "a subjective experience of the believer." Luther is said to reject the book of Revelation "simply by saying: 'I say what I feel'" (p. 105). Thereby the biblical canon would be subordinate to one's emotions, resulting in unlimited arbitrariness. Ruokanen conceals the fact, however, that Luther here speaks about a writing which, according to the introduction to the non-canonical books in Luther's Bible, belongs to those spoken against (*antilegomenon) by the ancient church:* "had earlier another reputation," (*WA* B 7, 344, 3 f.). This is the starting point, repeated in the preface of 1522 (later replaced by one definitely more affirmative but yet with the same reservation) by the words: "Many church fathers have in former times rejected this book too" (*WA* 8 7, 404, 21). "I say what I feel" means only that Luther freely speaks out his opinion in a difficult question. The words are connected with expressions of a certain uncertainness; no one is to be bound by Luther's judgment. His "subjective experience" is not a decisive criterion.

After St. James' epistle and the Book of Revelation comes (the reviewer wants once more to add "of course") the book of Esther. Luther is "especially hostile towards the book of Esther, which he sees as a Judaic book containing a lot of paganism" (p. 107). Ruokanen here refers to Luther's *Table Talk*, a source which is unreliable: "And when he, Dr. Luther, corrected the Second Maccabees and Esther, he said: I am so very much hostile to this book and to Esther" (*WA TR* 1, 208, 29f.). This quotation is remarkable not only in view of the unreliability of the *Table Talk* as a source — all allegedly critical statements by Luther about Old Testament books are, by the way, taken from the *Table Talk* (Ruokanen, p. 107, note 70). The quotation is also remarkable because Ruokanen bypasses the classical example, so often displayed, of Luther's criticism of the book of Esther in *On the Bondage of the Will*, one of Luther's main works. That the will to such a quotation has not been lacking with Ruokanen can be taken for granted.

This reviewer here finds it urgent to hasten to help since a not insignificant light will be thrown on Ruokanen's less important quotation. The oft-quoted words are usually rendered in the following way: "Esther merits, although they have it in the canon, according to my opinion, more than others to be kept outside the canon" (Cl. 3, 156, 27 ff., *WA* 18, 666, 23f.); thus the words are quoted in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Kirche und Theologie* (3rd edition, 9, 765, 27ff.), although with the addition of the (non-existing) word *liber* before *Esther*.

As an introduction to the problem one ought first of all to pay attention to the fact that Luther is arguing against Erasmus of Rotterdam, who, as the reader must know, has quoted Ecclesiasticus as a support, and who could see no reason to keep this book outside the canon, as had been done in the Hebrew counting of the Bible books (Cf. St L 18, 1612, where Erasmus' *Diatribe* is printed in a German translation). Luther, however, sees himself entitled to reject that writing since he, from the public debate at Leipzig in 1519, stuck only to the old Hebrew canon and not to the wider, so-called Alexandrian one, which had become common during the Middle Ages. Yet Luther accepts Ecclesiasticus for the moment to avoid time-wasting disputes on a side-track.

Luther cannot, however, avoid attacking Erasmus for his undignified way of writing concerning the Hebrew canon, which both of them accept, i.e. the one nowadays found in Protestant editions of the Bible. Erasmus, who has been accused by Luther of being a skeptic and generally irreverent, has dared to ridicule two canonical writings, the Book of Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, the latter equivocally called "love song" by Erasmus. Erasmus has compared these sacred writings with writings that only exist in the Alexandrian canon, the so called apocrypha, which Erasmus also rejected with the exception of Ecclesiasticus. Luther enumerates from Erasmus' book the apocrypha which the blasphemers have equated with the true, sacred writings as the Book of Proverbs and the Song of Solomon: "the two books of Esdras, Judith, the History of Susanna, the History of [Bel and] the Dragon, Esther," the continuation is the one quoted above, "Esther merits . . . ." We can here quite simply establish that Luther in no way poses as a critic of the Hebrew canon but as its wholehearted defender. The attack is on Erasmus, whose criticism of the Hebrew canon in any of its parts amounts to plain godlessness. It must be regarded as an impossibility that Luther suddenly would render himself guilty of the same thing in this connection.

It is furthermore evident that neither Erasmus, from whom the enumeration of the apocrypha has been fetched, nor Luther, who has taken it over from him, can by the word "Esther" refer to the book of Esther which is part of the Alexandrian canon and which has gotten its place also in Luther's edition of the Apocrypha. There, Luther writes: "Here follow some pieces that we did not want to translate into German in the Book of the prophet Daniel and the Book of Esther, for we have pulled up such weeds, as they do not exist in the Hebrew Daniel and Esther" (*WA* 8, 12, 493, 3ff.). It is thus quite evident that the example so often displayed within Luther research of Luther's criticism of the canon concerning the Book of Esther is a misunderstanding. Luther speaks about the apocryphal additions to the Book of Esther.

Thereby light has been thrown on Ruokanen's quotation from *Table Talk* (from 1534). Luther's criticism, if it has been articulated, has to be directed against the apocryphal book of Esther. This is the more credible, since at the same time another apocryphal writing is mentioned, Second Maccabees, which immediately precedes Esther in Luther's edition of the Apocrypha. In 1534, Luther went over the Apocrypha to have them printed and on such an occasion, he could very well have made some comments of this type.

It can also be mentioned that one *Table Talk* directly states the inspired character of the Book of Esther: "Besides, the Holy Spirit praises women. Examples are Esther, Judith, Sara" (*WA TR* 4, 499, 3f.). Yet it gives at the same time a good picture of how Luther looks on the speaking of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

Ruokanen furthermore lets Luther criticize the Books of Kings "as mere Judaic calendars" (p. 107), but the passage quoted (*WA* TR 2, 603, 24f.) does not contain any criticism, only the fact that those books are written like chronicles. Job should, according to Luther, be merely poetry and not history, but this is a misinterpretation of: "Job has not talked, as it is written, but he had such thoughts. He does not speak so in his afflictions. The thing has, however, happened . . . ." (*WA* TR 1, 206).

Job has thus not verbally expressed his words but has had such thoughts in the dispute with God (*tentatione*). On the other hand, Luther stresses the facticity of the Book of Job: "the thing has, however, happened." Referring to *WA* TR 1, 206, 37ff., Ruokanen also maintains that Luther would have ascribed a far later date to the Book of Ecclesiastes than it assigns for itself, but Ruokanen is not aware that the recorder of the *Table Talk* is likely to have confused *Ecclesiastes* with *Ecclesiasticus*, about which book almost literally the same dating is expressed in *WA* TR 2, 653. The reader can also be referred to St L 21, 1824, where examples of confusion of *Ecclesiastes* and *Ecclesiasticus* are given.

. . . one cannot possibly adduce Luther's distinction between canonical and non-canonical books as an expression of a free evaluation of the kind that Ruokanen wants to attribute to the reformer.

In his treatment of Luther's distinction between canonical and non-canonical writings Ruokanen disregards the fact that the distinction builds on the fact that some books lack historical testimony as coming from the inspired authors. The reader thus never meets such formulations as "in former times had another reputation," (*WA* 8, 7, 344, 3f., preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews with comments on the non-canonical writings of the New Testament), "rejected by the ancient fathers," (*WA* B 7, 384, 3f., the Epistle of St. James), "moved the ancient father to throw this epistle out of main Scripture" (*WA* B 7, 386 26f., the Epistle of St. Jude), "regarded by some ancient fathers that it is not from St. John the Apostle, as it is said in (Eusebius') *Church History,* 3:25. In this doubt we want to leave the matter as concerns us, thereby denying no one to regard it as written by St. John the Apostle, or as he likes to have it" (*WA* B 7, 408, 16 f., concerning the Book of Revelation in the later preface of 1545, cf. above). Such words point to Luther's evaluation of the texts by means of the patristic testimony. In view of this background one cannot possibly adduce Luther's distinction between canonical and non-canonical books as an expression of a free evaluation of the kind that Ruokanen wants to attribute to the reformer.

When Ruokanen is going to give a closer description of that distinction, he contends that Luther would have counted among the non-apostolic writings the Second Epistle of St. Peter, which according to Luther would be "below the apostolic spirit" (p. 108). This is an erroneous statement. As can easily be shown, Luther incorporates into his Bible edition the Second Epistle of St. Peter among the true main writings with a recommending preface without any reservations. Ruokanen must accordingly not have had a Luther Bible in his hands, no more than he is likely to have seen the illustrations of that Bible. The words "below the apostolic spirit" are to be found in another context, not penetrated by Ruokanen. They come from a sermon of 1523-1524, where Luther, testing different arguments, repudiates the idea of the non-petrine provenance of the epistle by the following words: "There St. Peter testifies about the apostle's [St. Paul's] doctrine, which is a sufficient proof that this epistle was written long after St. Paul's epistles. And that is one of the sayings which could convince someone to believe that this epistle is not St. Peter's, as there is another earlier in this chapter that goes: 'the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' For it goes a little below the apostolic spirit. Yet it is to be assumed that it is nevertheless by the apostle. For as he writes here not about faith but about charity, he condescends, as it belongs to the ways of charity, that she condescends towards one's neighbor, as faith ascends above itself" (*WA* 14, 73, 20ff.). The sum of the reasoning is that the apostle is regarded as the author of the epistle, and that the curious way of writing that seemed "below the apostolic spirit" gets its explanation. Nothing of this comes out with Ruokanen. Neither do we learn that Luther in the introduction to his sermons on this epistle, which were later put together and printed, explains St. Peter to be the author and through all his exposition has this as his starting point.

As concerns the Second Epistle of St. Peter as being extra-canonical, Ruokanen would be far more entitled to refer to quite another theologian, Martin Chemnitz, who also excludes the Second and the Third Epistle of St. John.[1] This is a very instructive fact that shows that a rigorous, classical understanding of the verbal inspiration, as represented by Chemnitz, is very much compatible with a test of the authenticity of the biblical books, based on historical grounds. Thereby Ruokanen's idea that Luther's similar procedure would be a proof of his subjective, arbitrary attitude toward the biblical books must be regarded as invalid.

Over and above the difference between canonical books and non-apostolic writings, which has been described above, Ruokanen makes much noise of the fact that Luther in different connections has brought out certain writings within the canon as especially useful in the pastoral sense. Ruokanen goes so far as to classify according to the following pattern: 1) "the best": John, 1 John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Peter; 2) "Clearly criticized": Hebrews, 2 Peter, James, Jude, Revelation; 3) "Not as efficiently,

from the point of view of their capacity to arouse salvific faith": Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, 10 epistles of St. Paul, 2 John, 3 John" (Ruokanen, p. 108f). The third group should, of course, be enumerated as the second, if it ought to be distinguished from the first one at all.

From the point of view of inspiration, there is for Luther no difference whatsoever; both of the groups are entirely the word of God. The difference that exists for Luther is more or less a truism, i.e., that some books have a greater pastoral significance. That difference must, on the other hand, have been existing for Luther also *within* the writings of the first group. Evidently Romans 1:17 has had a greater spiritual significance for Luther than Romans 16, where the apostle greets the different members of the congregation. As we have seen above concerning the lecture on Genesis, Luther finds, however, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit also as regards the details of everyday life, and inspiration has for Luther a certainty equally real in every part of the letter to the Romans and in all the writings of the New Testament.

In a concluding chapter on Luther there are some more statements about the reformer, but this reviewer now must concede that he finds it meaningless to continue his scrutiny. Ruokanen has used up his capital of confidence, his right to be heard. This reviewer will also leave the remaining 25 pages to their destiny for the same reason. On this point it can furthermore be said that the criticism that in that final chapter is directed against Lutheran orthodoxy has, as a matter of fact, already been refuted. It is not, as Ruokanen wants us to believe, Lutheran orthodoxy that has invented verbal inspiration. It is to be found with Luther, and it is to be found in the entire church catholic, with church fathers, doctors of the church and reformers. Thereby Ruokanen's attempt to picture Lutheran orthodoxy as the time when something quite new, bizarre and strange came into existence fails.

About Ruokanen's book the reviewer wants to say two things by way of conclusion. The first point is, quite simply, a quotation from Pieper-Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*,[2] where the chapter on "Luther and the inspiration of the Holy Scripture" (which should be read by Ruokanen and many others) is concluded with the following words: "It is thus quite evident that the later theologians who want to make Luther a protector of the more liberal attitude toward Scripture, have either not at all read Luther and only copied the collections of others of his sayings without any investigation of their own, or, if they really have read Luther, they have not been able to understand him, because their yearning for his protection has been stronger than their sense for historical truth."

Secondly, Ruokanen's book carries the subtitle "Martin Luther's position in the ecumenical problem of biblical inspiration." The author has, as it has already been pointed out, evidently written his book as part of the ecumenical dialogue that is being conducted today. In these church political connections, the book is, perhaps, an admission ticket to the inner circle. That is no good testimonial for that kind of ecumenism. At the same time, Ruokanen's book is a deeply unecumenical book. Through that book, the author has stepped out of the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in the wonder of verbal inspiration, in that reality that that church confesses when in the Nicene Creed she comes to the words: "Who spake by the Prophets." The prophets are for that church nothing past but precisely that word that is read from the altar, that is Holy Scripture. That ecumenical fellowship is disowned by Ruokanen, and that fellowship is the only one that interests this reviewer. LOGIA

NOTES

1. See Chemnitz, *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, ed. Preuss, p. 58 ff., trans. Kramer I: 189ff.; see also *Enchiridion*, English tr. *Ministry, Word and Sacraments*, ed. Poellot, St. Louis, 1981, p. 44, 45 with a schedule of chart between the different books.

2. Quoted here in a translation from the Swedish edition, *Kristen dogmatik*, Upsala, 1985, p. 118f.

A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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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 which transforms against an evangelical grace which 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 which 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 the "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 two-fold 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 which put man in a position to do this.[8] Here personal redemption is a process of transformation which 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

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

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lead to condemnation if he is not at the same time under grace for the sake of Christ alone.[12]

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 the 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 which gradually separated Melanchthon from so-called Gnesio-Lutheranism. Synergism came to expression indirectly, 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 "over emphasis 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 which issued from Zinzendorf (the Brethren Congregation), and which in its wider development with his "New Evangelical" offshoot came to largely 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 which 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 which essentially proceeds in man's inner life and is no longer separated from his "own reason or strength."[32]

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

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 which 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 which is in every respect God's gift and therefore represents a totally new beginning in relation to the total command which the power of sin exercises in man.

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 which needs to be proclaimed and believed. This indicates that the word, together with the sacraments, is the *means* which the Spirit of God uses to create faith. A right understanding of the relationship lays more weight on the word's work which 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 which 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 which 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, etc.). On the other hand, there is what we may call a *practical-Christological* solution. This lies in the insoluble inner connection between *favor* and *donum.* That the Spirit's life-giving activity 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 (Jn 6:37).[38] That the rebirth is at the same time sovereign in relation to man himself means that the faith which is called to life through the word dares

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.

to depend completely from its beginning and throughout its continuing life on the divine, creative activity which 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* which lies in the *favor* of the forgiveness of sins. Only when the claim of the law and the judgment which 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 which 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* which 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 which 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 which 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 lifegiving activity (1 Cor 2, 2 Cor 3).

At the same time, it can be said that there is in the new man a point of connection which 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 which 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 (i.e. transforming grace), does 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 Jn 1:7-9).[46] But in this insoluble 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* which 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 which 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 which 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 which is hidden in the mystery of God and which 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 insolubly 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

NOTES

1. *WA* 8, 106ff.

2. *WA* 8, 106, 10 *Gratiam accipio hic proprie pro favore dei sicut debet, non pro qualitate enim.*

3. *WA* 8, 106, 15. See *WA* 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, 168ff. The same exegesis against Latomus, *WA* 8, 116ff.

7. *WA* 8, 114, 16. *Prius illud principale et robustissimum est, licet et alterum sit aliquid, sed in virtute prioris.* See also Galatians (1535), *WA* 401, 376, 27 and Psalm 51 (1532) *WA* 40II, 3257, 35 about *duae partes iustificationis.*

8. R. Seeberg. *Lehrbuch d. Dogmengesch.* III (4th edition, 1930), p. 456ff.

9. Seeberg. p. 458ff. and p. 467ff. Here the Thomistic thesis has value: *tota 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 Engeström, *Förlåtelsetanken hos Luther* etc. (1938), p. 136f.

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: *Hoc est mortalium mortalissimum, non credere se esse damnabili et mortali peccato obnoxium coram deo.*

13. *WA* 8, 106, 11. Compare 114, 20. *Nullius enim fides subsisteret, nisi in Christi propria iustititia niteretur et illius protectione servareture.* See also 111, 27.

14. *Favor* overcomes sin's guilt, *donum* contends against the power of sin. see *WA* 8, 107, 24: *Deus non fictos, sed veros peccatores salvos facit, non fictum, sed peccatum mortificare docet,* see also 91ff.

15. See *WA* 40I, 659, 10 concerning the law's conditional promise and the unconditional promise of the gospel. See also 40II, 91, 26: *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 Heppe/Bizer, *Die Dogmatik d. evang.-reformierten Kirche* (1935), p. 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* XX, 600.

19. See note 17. Herbert Olsson, *Calvin och reformationens teologi* (Lund's Universitets årsskrift I, 40, 1-1943) p. 559ff.

20. See *Loci* CR XXI, 916: *aliquam esse in accipiente causam, non dignitatem, sed quia promissionem apprehendit, cum qua spiritus sanctus est efficax.*

21. See *Epitome* XI (Election), 17-20.

22. The Orthodox teach an election *ex praevisa fide,* cf. H. Schmid, *Die Dogmatik d. evangel.-luth. Kirche* (6th edition, 1876), pp. 196ff. Compare the synergistic interpretation of the Orthodox teaching concerning *conversio,* pp. 351f.

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, e.g., Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator* (2nd edition, Copenhagen 1946), pp. 67 and 79. The "Orthodox" interpretation of Luther here remains relatively correct. See Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie II* (new edition, Munich, 1927).

24. According to Erich Seeberg (*Gottfried Arnold.* 1923, p. 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, e.g., *Die Evangelische Glaubens-Gerechtigkeit* (1648), pp. 743ff. 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, e.g., *Sonn- und Fest-Tags Predigten I* (edition of 1726) p. 762.

26. See *Lectiones paraenetici VI,* pp. 36ff. 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 which makes righteous is precisely love for the Savior, e.g., *Neun Lond. Red.* p. 985. When this whole approach takes on a "Lutheran" appearance, it is because "Christ in us" to Zinzendorf stands for imputed righteousness. See *Lonf. Pred. II,* p. 358. This is similar to Osiander's teaching. See E. Hirsch, *Die Theologie des Andreas Osiander* (Göttingen, 1919) pp. 191ff.

28. See Gösta Hök, *Zinzendorfs Begriff des Religion* (Uppsala, 1948) pp. 177ff.

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 which transforms. Consequently regeneration, in the sense of transformation, remains central in the appropriation of salvation. See my article *Gjenfødelsen i luthersk læretradisjon, T.T.K.* 1946, pp. 60ff. and *Evangeliet or Nådemiddlene, T.T.K* 1947, pp. 67ff. 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 Uttendörf, *Christl. Lebensideal* (1940) p. 403.

31. Note Schliermacher's description of himself as *"Herrnhuter—von einer höheren Ordnung," Briefe I* (2nd edition). The "higher" consists in the synthesis of revivalist piety and rationalism.

32. See L. Aalen, *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti . . .* (1943) pp. 19ff.

33. On salvation as ransoming and "supernatural" fulfillment of the human *eros* see the Roman Catholic dogmatician Karl Adam, *Das Wesen des katholizismus* (2nd edition, 1925) pp. 196ff. 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. . . .*

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* (Götersloh, 1899) pp. 156ff.

36. See further my article *"Den lutherske lære om nådevalget"* in *Vår lutherske arv,* 1937, pp. 96ff.

37. My article in *Ordet og Livet, festskrift for Philobiblica 1937,* under the heading "*Sola fide—Sola gratia*" pp. 73ff. looks at the same unfortunately formulated perspective as the present article: the Lutheran unity of *favor* and *donum.*

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* which 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 which is never "total" but participation in an absolutely new reality, *the new aeon* which 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., 1934) and Karl Barth *(Nein!,* 1934) represents the first Neo-Protestant articulation which 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 rightly employ that grace, *Christliche Dogmatik II* (St. Louis, 1917) p. 544.

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, 529ff.

44. According to Luther there is a three-fold 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, I, 539: *Nec agnoscimus peccatum nisi ex tali promissione.* This is also determinative for Augustine's doctrine of penance. See Apology XII, 8: *Fides enim facit discrimens, inter contritionem Judas et Petri.*

45. Luther rejects the law-minded notion which 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, 355ff. (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, III, 457ff. 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 p. 168ff. 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. Also G. Ljungren, *Synd och skuld i Luthers teologi (Stockholm, 1928) p. 310.*

47. See my article in *N.T.T.* 1949, No. 1 "*Human og kristen etikk.*"

48. On the problem of faith and experience in Luther, see W. von Loewenich, *Luthers theologia crucis (*2nd ed. 1933) p. 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, i.e., 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 60:1ff.; *WA* 41, 503ff.

51. For Luther, the relationship of faith which is characterized by the evangelical *simul* has his primary point of departure in baptism. See Rud. Hermann, *Luthers These: "Gerecht und Sünder zugleich* (Gütersloh, 1930) p. 78: *Die pointe ist also diese: Die Gerechtigkeit eds Zugleich ist—und bleibt!—die Taufgerechtigkeit."* See Large Catechism, IV.

Confessional Lutheranism versus Philippistic Conservatism

ERLING T. TEIGEN

I.

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT "CONSERVATIVE" IS A RELATIVE TERM. Before I went to Latvia for the first time in 1990, as the Soviet Union was in its death throes, I was cautioned not to describe myself as a *conservative* Lutheran, because at that time in the USSR, "conservative" meant "stubborn, neanderthal Marxist." But I think that the reasons for leaving behind the nomenclature "conservative/liberal" so far as our Lutheran stance is concerned lie deeper than that relativistic sense of the words. One realizes, of course, that we are not quickly going to change the habits of the secular press, whose reporters function on the basis of mindless stereotypes. So we are going to have to put up for a while longer not only with "conservative," but also with "ultra-conservative," whatever such a nonsense expression is supposed to mean.

But as a matter of fact, radical is precisely what Luther was, if and when radical means "to the root." One can argue that there was a conservative side of Luther. He sought to change only what violated Scripture, and was opposed to the extremists like Karlstadt and Münzer ("radical Reformers" is a misnomer—they were not trying to cut *to* the root, but they were trying to cut *out* the root). But I would argue that it was not that conservative tendency that controlled Luther and those who followed him faithfully in the struggle that led to the Formula of Concord. Robert Kolb offers an insight worth exploring:

> The differences between the two parties may be treated under at least four broad categories. In each, the Philippists appear to be more conservative (from a late medieval perspective); and the Gnesio-Lutherans seem more radical in their expression of Luther's message.
>
> (1) Out of the controversies over the Interims grew several doctrinal disputes. In each of them a more radical view of sin and grace was defended by the Gnesio-Lutherans, while the Philippists tended to express their opinions with something more of a traditional flavor.
>
> (2) The Gnesio-Lutherans rejected more of the medieval liturgical heritage than did the Philippists; and they were far more zealous in condemning the medieval system of church government, the papacy, which both parties regarded as the "AntiChrist."
>
> (3) The Philippists strove to accommodate themselves to the policies of their rulers and believed that the state should exercise some power over the church. The Gnesio-Lutherans sharply rejected any secular government's claim to power within the church and often sharply criticized their rulers for a variety of sins.
>
> (4) Finally, the Philippists sought peace within the church, and on occasion they chose silence over public expression of their views in order to preserve it. The Gnesio-Lutherans believed in bold and confrontational confession of the faith. This stance was intensified by a heightened eschatological awareness. They firmly believed that the last day was at hand. (Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530-1580,* St. Louis: Concordia, 1991, p. 70).

The conservatism of the Philippists shows itself also in their disinclination to rock the boat and in their tendency to preserve power structures. While Philippism's initial compromise in the Interims was toward Romanism, what became the more fundamental theme of Philippism was a motion toward the Reformed stance. Perhaps that can be explained by the inherent latitudinarianism of the Reformed on dogmatical issues, coupled with Philip Melanchthon's irenical spirit. (Luther himself can fool us too. In the liturgy, for example, Luther looks conservative, and in a sense he was, since on the surface and in contrast to the *Schwaermerei,* he sought to conserve the forms of the mass. But when one gets beyond the superficial matters, Luther is the radical; he was not satisfied to conserve what was, but rather was interested in a return to the root, to what was authentically apostolic.)

Paradoxically this philippistic conservatism especially preserved the root of medieval theology—man's cooperation and consent in divine grace. For that reason Luther's *Bondage of the Will* looms so large, as one of the most important documents of the Reformation. Erasmus, in fact, was the staunch conservative, while Luther was the radical. There Luther presents his thorough repudiation of human cooperation in salvation, which is summarized most succinctly in his explanation of the third article, "I

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believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts and sanctified and kept me in the true faith." Beginning with Melanchthon in the *Variata,* Philippism wanted to conserve the notion of human consent and human cooperation which was evident in the Melanchthonian account of conversion as well as in the various qualifications of the real presence in the sacrament, such as the four-cause concept, the delayed presence posited by the later dogmaticians, or crass receptionism. Those efforts were every bit as synergistic as the semi-pelagianism of medieval theology and they all belong to philippistic conservatism.

Conservatism can also stand for a mind-set that tends to value the status quo most highly, so that one can only be moved in a different direction by bulldozer or cataclysm, never by theological study or intellectual honesty. Adherence to the Reformation spirit would seem rather to dictate that the Reformation is not static but dynamic, and always stands ready to reevaluate itself and to make mid-course corrections. That does not mean that the Confessions as the Lutheran understanding of Scripture need to be "reinterpreted" for a new age, but it means that the teaching and the teachers of our churches need to be reevaluated always to see whether or not their teaching is in accord with the Lutheran Confessions, a matter we shall discuss in more detail later.

While conservatism can be construed as a desire to preserve that which is good, it doesn't necessarily work that way. The fundamental nature of conservatism is to preserve power structures and status quo. That, in fact, is the fundamental nature of bureaucracy, and not any less of church bureaucracies. The "chureaucrat" has to preserve the power structure within which he intends to function, for without the trappings of power he is lost. Business and bureaucracy are fundamentally conservative in that sense, and the more our church leaderships pattern themselves after the business world, the more conservative they will become. To think of ourselves in terms of "conservative" strikes me, then, as dangerous, and a stance that has taken us down the wrong path. Not only is it a stance which identifies us with stances that belong to the kingdom of the left hand, but it is a stance that locks us into a mode that is unhealthy. Just as it was disastrous for the Philippists to conserve scholasticism, it is disastrous for us when our primary notion is to conserve a Lutheranism of the 1870s or the 1920s; when we romanticize the recent past and think that we are good Lutherans if we have held to our Koren, Löhe, Walther, Pieper, Hoenecke, or Koehler, or whatever other hero of faith. We are not confessional Lutherans if we are interested only in recapturing some golden age such as the 1580s, the 1600s, the 1850s, or the 1920s. As much as we must honor those fathers, neither they nor their writings are our confession.

II.

The stance which in fact leads us back to a fundamental faithfulness to Scripture and to our Lutheran Confessions is to be found in C.F.W. Walther's radical confessionalism: "We interpret Scripture according to the Confessions; not the Confessions according to Scripture."

C.F.W. Walther delivered a remarkable essay at the 1858 meeting of the Western District of the Missouri Synod. The essay was published in the district proceedings, but, I think, was more or less forgotten until a loose, abridged translation by A.W.C. Guebert was printed in *Concordia Theological Monthly* April, 1947 (reprinted in the *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter,* Letter No. 2, Quinquagesima, 1986. It was reprinted also in *Concordia Journal,* Vol. 15, No. 3, July 1989, p. 274f. A more thorough translation appears in *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840-1880,* ed. Theodore G. Tappert, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

Walther's essay on confessional subscription needs to be seen in the light of its contemporary theological situation. Walther did not write his essay outside of the context of that situation. In 1858, American Lutheranism was in an uproar. Missouri was still something of an upstart newcomer on the American scene. She had found some new friends in the Norwegians who had organized a synod in 1853 along confessional lines in contrast to the pietism of other Scandinavian Lutheran immigrants. An indication of the direction in which their theology would go can be seen in the fact that the Norwegian Synod was first organized in 1851. When some newcomers, including Jakob Aal Ottesen and Herman Amberg Preus noticed that the constitution contained the so-called Grundtvigian error, they had the synod disbanded and then reorganized around a new constitution which was solidly confessional. In the latter half of the 1850s the Norwegian Synod went looking for friends because they needed a seminary at which to train pastors for the immigrant church. But they did not find those theological friends until they came to Fort Wayne and St. Louis. At least one representative of the Norwegian Synod was at that 1858 convention of the Western District. The larger General Synod, however, was being ripped apart by a controversy over seminary president S. S. Schmucker's "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession." Schmucker, a staunch pietist, had become president of the fledgling seminary of the General Synod at Gettysburg in 1826. At that time, he was considerably more conservative than many others in the Pennsylvania Ministerium. The Ministerium had gone along in organizing the General Synod in 1820, but then in 1823 pulled out not because the General Synod was too liberal, but because it was too Lutheran, and they wanted to pursue closer ties with the Reformed, as they had begun to do some years before, for example, in the 1787 organization of Franklin College. In 1823, the General Synod was more interested in reviving plans for a joint seminary in Pennsylvania with the Reformed.

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But as time went on, the leaven of the confessional revival made itself felt through men like Charles Porterfield Krauth, and gradually, it could be discerned that the General Synod and the Pennsylvania Ministerium were becoming more Lutheran. The test as to how Lutheran came when Schmucker, in concert with several colleagues, published a revised version of the Augsburg Confession, a document which intended to bring Lutherans into

the modern age and into closer alliance with the Reformed. Their new *variata* made the original Melanchthonians look like Gnesio-Lutherans. The fundamental doctrines of Lutheranism were destroyed. Krauth was among the leaders of the opposition; Krauth came from the new generation which was influenced by the confessional revival in Europe, and articulated his confessional theology in the monumental *The Conservative Reformation and its Theology* (1871). In 1866, in an uproar over the admission of the Franckean Synod to the General Synod, Krauth led the revolt which resulted in the formation of the General Council, which was decidedly more confessional. The Pennsylvania Ministerium opened its own seminary at Philadelphia which became the center of the more confessional movement in competition with Gettysburg.

The Missouri Synod, as well as the Norwegian and Ohio synods, was invited to the organization of the General Council. (Wisconsin and Minnesota did join, but remained for only two years; in 1869, they came to agreement with Missouri and left the General Council, and in 1872 participated in the organization of the Synodical Conference with the Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, and Norwegian Synods.) While it appeared that there should be agreement with the followers of Krauth, that surface agreement evaporated in the discussion of "The Four Points" (Chiliasm, Secret Societies, Altar Fellowship and Pulpit Fellowship) and open questions. In 1993, if we find someone who accepts the Galesburg Rule, "Lutheran Altars for Lutheran people; Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors," we think we have a rare bird indeed. But the principle was not precise enough for those who formed the Synodical Conference. In light of the General Synod fiasco, it was certainly not at all clear that all who called themselves Lutherans could partake of the Lord's Supper because, as we shall see, it was confessional fellowship which was really at stake. To make assertions about altar fellowship apart from confessional fellowship was not enough. In 1871, the bodies proposing to form a conference published an explanation of their intentions. The document sounds as though it were penned chiefly by Walther:

To make assertions about altar fellowship apart from confessional fellowship was not enough.

> This sad lack of confessional loyalty is sufficient to make it impossible for us to become members of the Council. . . . Now we can have nothing to do with the unionistic spirit nor with the errors, wrong principles and sins against God's word connected with it. We can in good conscience have no dealings with it . . . as long as the General Council knows how to say nothing but "mum mum" with regard to the questions of doctrine and discipline which we have touched upon and which are so decisive a test of true Lutheran faithfulness to the confession . . . (Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966 p. 194).

Walther's 1858 essay on the confessional principle set the stage for the position of the Synodical Conference. 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" (Tappert, p. 58). 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" (Tappert, p. 60). 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 accepts 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" (Tappert, p. 64). Luther himself points this out in his letter to the Christians in Frankfurt. Luther is alarmed at those pastors who say "Believe in the body, which Christ meant, and ask no further" (p. 337). It simply will not do to piously repeat the words of Scripture. "Here there is no use in rolling mush around the mouth and saying, 'Mmmm, mmmm.' One must not teach him 'Believe in the body, as Christ meant'." Luther's advice to those who have such Zwinglian preachers is:

> If his pastor is one of the double-tongued sort who mouths it out that in the Sacrament the body and blood of Christ are present and true, and yet who prompts an uneasiness that he is selling something in a sack and means something other than what the words say, you should go to him, be free to inquire of him and have him say quite plainly what it is he gives out to you with his hands and what you receive with your mouth. . . . One should put to him the straight question: "What is held here in hand and mouth? (WA III, 558-571, translated by Jon D. Vieker in *Concordia Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4 October 1990 p. 333ff.).

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" (Tappert, p. 64). 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 according 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 (Tappert, p. 66, emphasis added).

For Walther, what would be sacrificed in a subscription which says that the Confessions will be interpreted according to the Scriptures, as evangelical and pious as that sounds, is the very objectivity of God's revelation. That objectivity would be destroyed and for it would be substituted a purely subjective and individualistic approach to biblical revelation. 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.*

Walther's view of confessional subscription was not a parochial peculiarity nor just another version of Waltherian dogmatism. In 1941, Herman Sasse, who would hardly have been influenced by American Lutheranism, and who would not have uncritically appropriated any kind of American parochialism, expressed the same view ("Church and Confession—1941" *We Confess Jesus Christ,* tr. Norman Nagel, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984 p. 83).

Sasse could just as well be describing American Lutheranism in the second half of the twentieth century—either the current rapprochement between ELCA and the Reformed, or the general conservative tendency to feel cozy with the Reformed because of similar views on biblical inerrancy and moral issues. Sasse thinks that many problems could have been avoided in the 1930s in Germany had it been realized that the Lutherans and Reformed were divergent not only on miscellaneous issues (which Sasse certainly makes clear in his classic *Was heisst lutherisch*), "but also on the very nature of churchly confession" (p. 83). Sasse finds a colossal ignorance in certain theologians who "have with great show of learning and even more of eloquence laid on Lutheran pastors and churches the Reformed idea of what makes a confession, as if it alone were the truly evangelical one." And what is the difference? While Lutherans, according to Sasse, believe that the church is gathered around the confession, "Among the Reformed it is Holy Scripture around which the church is gathered." Sasse acknowledges that the Reformed view "immediately strikes one as the more evangelical. One can see why the Lutheran Church has always been reproached for valuing confessions too highly and indeed for putting them above the Bible." Sasse urges that we take the charge seriously, and make certain that it is not true. But finally, he says, "we can never concede that our church takes 'Scripture alone' less seriously than the Reformed and that it gives Scripture a lesser role for the church when it says that the church is gathered about the confession." The argument can be reduced to this simple issue:

> However, there is no denying that in this sinful world Scripture can also be misunderstood and misused. For a century before there was a New Testament the church had the same Bible as the synagogue. As soon as there was a New Testament it was commandeered by all the heretics. Today we share the same Bible with the worst of the sects. *The true church is gathered not around Scripture but around the rightly understood, the purely and correctly interpreted Bible.* It is the task of the church's confession to express the right understanding of Scripture which the church has reached (p. 84, emphasis in original).

This understanding of confession and subscription is essentially the same as Walther's and indeed, is the view that prevails in the Book of Concord itself. Anything less than this view condemns one to a hopeless relativism, in which private views are normative, and there can only result theological solipsism, as finally has resulted 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 with a clear confession of biblical inerrancy and infallibility, persist in doing end runs around the Confessions, and haughtily tell us in doctrinal discussions that they don't want to hear about the Confessions, but about Scripture. Both Sasse and Walther would echo Luther's words and tell such biblicists to go to their Zwinglians, just as much as they would tell the destructive critics and doctrinal relativists to return to their father of lies.

For Walther, what would be sacrificed in a subscription which says that the Confessions will be interpreted according to the Scriptures, as evangelical and pious as that sounds, is the very objectivity of God's revelation.

Sasse makes one other point which we ought to examine. While the Reformed churches do have some confessional documents, they are not really symbols. They are all private collections of writings which have some sort of significance for a geographically and temporally limited group. Sasse quotes Barth's definition of confession: "A Reformed confession of faith comes to formulation spontaneously and openly in a locally circumscribed Christian community, which in this way defines its character for the time being to those outside and gives direction for the time being to its inner teaching and life. It is a statement of the insight given provisionally also to the universal Christian church concerning the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which is witnessed alone in Holy Scripture" (Sasse, p. 80, quoting Barth's 1925 memorandum to the Reformed World Alliance on the "Desirability and Possibility of a General Reformed Confession of Faith"). But for Lutherans, the Confessions of the church are not so geographically and temporal-

ly limited. They are in fact ecumenical. The Lutheran Confessions are not level II to the level I of the ecumenical symbols, but they are a statement of the same faith, not merely "seen differently," but the same faith in essence as that expressed in the three ancient symbols. The Reformed confessions, the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, and the Book of Concord are not equally valid witnesses to the gospel. One is inherently the same as the ecumenical creeds and the others are not; one expresses the correct understanding of Holy Scripture and the others do not. The Lutheran Confessions see themselves as truly catholic, a catholicity which cannot be superseded by Trent or by the decrees of any synod, council or pope. And thus, Sasse notes, the Book of Concord alone sets the three ecumenical creeds at the beginning.

The same confessional understanding found in Walther and Sasse is found also in the Book of Concord. The confessors assert in Rule and Norm:

The true church is gathered not around Scripture but around the rightly understood, the purely and correctly interpreted Bible.

> Herewith, we again whole-heartedly subscribe this Christian and thoroughly scriptural Augsburg Confession, and we abide by the plain, clear, and pure meaning of its words. We consider this Confession *a genuinely Christian symbol which all true Christians ought to accept next to the Word of God,* just as in ancient times Christian symbols and Confessions were formulated in the church of God when great controversies broke out, and orthodox teachers and hearers pledged themselves to these symbols with heart and mouth. Similarly we are determined by the grace of the Almighty to abide until our end by this repeatedly cited Christian Confession as it was delivered to Emperor Charles in 1530. And we do not intend, either in this or in subsequent doctrinal statements, to depart from the aforementioned Confession or to set up a different confession (SD RN, Introduction, 4 Tappert, p. 502).
>
> The primary requirement for basic and permanent concord within the church is a summary formula and pattern, unanimously approved, in which *the summarized doctrine commonly confessed by the churches of the pure Christian religion* is drawn together out of the Word of God (RN 1, Tappert, p. 503, emphasis added).

To summarize this point, then, confessional Lutheranism is to be based on a subscription to the Lutheran Confessions where Scripture is to be interpreted according to the confession of the church, where the Lutheran Confessions are not provincial addendums to the ecumenical creeds, but are in themselves fully catholic. In that way, Scripture itself is elevated above the vagaries of subjective, individual interpretations. Only the church gathered around that rightly understood Word of God is "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tm 3:15).

III.

If the face of eastern Lutheranism was changed by Schmucker's attempt to introduce his new Melanchthonianism, the course of midwestern Lutheranism was changed by C.F.W. Walther's paper on the doctrine of election in 1877. Walther had expressed himself on the issue in 1868, upon which Gottfried Fritschl criticized his view. But when the matter came out into the open in 1877, a full bore debate began, and in the 1880s the Ohio Synod left the Synodical Conference, as did the Norwegian Synod. The latter in particular was tragically split by the conflict, so that approximately 40 percent of its pastors left the Norwegian synod and formed the "Anti-Missouri Brotherhood" and many congregations were divided. (After the division in the Norwegian Synod, the majority did not formally rejoin the Synodical Conference, but continued a close relationship. In 1918, after the old Synod reunited with the Anti-Missourians and the Hauge Synod, a small remnant reorganized the Synod and immediately rejoined the Synodical Conference. If the Norwegian Synod had rejoined the Synodical Conference in the 1880s or '90s, it is very possible that the 1917 merger would not have taken place). The Anti-Missourians were led by F. A. Schmidt, himself a Missourian who joined the Norwegian Synod. When the Norwegian Synod had opened Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, they needed someone who could speak English as well as German. Walther suggested one of his proteges, F.A. Schmidt, a pastor in Baltimore. Schmidt joined the Norwegian Synod in 1861 and learned Norwegian. He taught at Decorah until 1872 when he was moved to St. Louis to hold the Norwegian Synod's chair at the seminary. Then in 1876, when the Norwegian Synod opened its own seminary in Madison, Wisconsin, Schmidt was called there. It was while Schmidt was at Madison that Walther's paper was presented. Very soon after Walther's paper was presented, the Norwegian Synod representative at Springfield, Ole Asperheim, accused Walther of Calvinism. He left Springfield and soon was teaching at Madison. At first Schmidt said nothing, but after some time had passed, he, too, accused Walther of Calvinism, for teaching that "God is not conditioned by anything" in election, that election is entirely by grace, and not at all by any cooperation or willingness on the part of man, and moreover, that God does not elect because he foresees that man will come to faith, but purely out of grace, so that one's faith is a *consequence* of the election by grace, not the other way around. (There was always a nasty little rumor that Schmidt was piqued at Walther, because he felt cheated out of the chair at St. Louis to which Franz Pieper was called).

For some, the latter assertion was particularly problematic, because some of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians asserted precisely that God elects *intuitu fidei*—in view of faith. For catechetical instruction the Norwegian Synod brought from Norway the Pontoppidan catechism which taught, or at least implied, the election *intuitu fidei.* The idea was so widely accepted that to backtrack would take some conscious effort. Whether or not Walther changed his mind, having earlier held to the *intuitu fidei* notion, is probably not worth arguing about. But, as deeply steeped in the seventeenth-century dogmaticians as Walther was, he was not

afraid to dissent from them. But the Norwegians consciously and deliberately reversed their field—i.e. they consciously and deliberately rejected the teaching of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians, and especially painfully for them, their "*barnelaerdom,*" their childhood faith which they had learned in their Pontoppidan catechism.

It is easy to regard this election controversy as a tempest in a tea pot, or as a tedious distinction by theologians, or odious hair-splitting. But in fact, it was on the same level as the Luther-Erasmus debate over the fundamental issue of divine grace and whether or not grace is conditioned by the work of mankind. What was most highly offensive in the 1917 merger of the Norwegian Synod and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (Anti-Missouri Brotherhood), was that in the document *Opgjør* ("agreement") it put the two forms, *intuitu fidei* and election by grace, side by side in a confessional grab-bag. It was at that point, in its very founding, that the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (later renamed Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELC) ceased to be a confessional church—when the doctrine of the Confessions was placed on the same level as a misunderstanding of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians, when they could not distinguish between their teachers and the *norma normata*—the confessions of the church.

Many American church history writers, and some not so well versed, have persisted in asserting that the Norwegians got all their confessional ideas from Walther and Missouri. Tappert makes the typical claim in his reference to Herman A. Preus (1825-94): "in his adoption of the theology and piety of the Missouri Synod" (Tappert, p. 29). A careful study of the Norwegians, however, shows that they had gotten their confessional ideas and high regard for Luther as well as the seventeenth-century dogmaticians already in Norway, from teachers who had the same roots in the confessional revival in Leipzig and other places. The Norwegians got close to Missouri because they recognized a kindred spirit there, and it is not surprising that when they were confronted with the election controversy, they were fully able to leap over the dogmaticians, dissenting from their teachers and revising their teaching so as to put it into conformity with the Book of Concord. They did not do that blindly, however, for in all of their debate, they were never apart from Scripture. Yet, it was the confession of the church that they gathered around, and they judged their teachers on the basis of the Lutheran Confessions. The point is that it was the Confessions that drew the Missourians and the Norwegians together in 1858.

Walther was able to codify that as a principle when he wrote in his 1868 "Theses on Open Questions," Thesis 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." (Published in the October 1868 issue of *Lehre und Wehre*, the theses were the basis of agreement between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod in 1868, at which time Wisconsin was a member of the General Council. See *Forum* in this issue.)

The point of all of this is that Lutheran confessionalism means that we must be willing to correct our fathers, our Korens, Walthers, Hoeneckes, Piepers, Preuses when they have not seen the full implications of their teaching on some particular point, or when they have not been forced to examine it in controversy. We do not thereby dishonor them, nor is it arrogance to correct them. The honor due to our fathers in this or that church does not include elevating them above the confession of the church. Nor may we make them the interpreters of the Confessions. We honor them, in fact, when we subject them to the same standard of the Lutheran Confessions as well as the ecumenical creeds, that we ourselves are subject to.

The election controversy precisely illustrates that point. The Lutherans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had not had to examine their understanding of that doctrine; but when controversy struck, they did have to wrestle with what they had taught and been taught and they had to judge it on the basis of the Confessions. It was there that they found the truly biblical understanding. Just as in the election controversy, there are issues which confront us today in which some of our honored fathers in our various synods, fathers—living here now or in the church triumphant—have expressed themselves in ways that are not fully in accord with the Confessions of the church. We will not face those issues as confessional Lutherans if we are controlled by denominational or patriarchal pride and will not suffer our fathers to be criticized by the Confessions. LOGIA

Interim Theology and Confessional Integrity

WILLIAM E. THOMPSON

> MOREOVER, SHOULD [THE BISHOPS] SAY (WHICH, OF course they will not do) that they are ready to burden us, and even to be considered by us as tyrants, at their own responsibility, and thus demand that we not resist this evil, etc., then we must resist anyhow and must not obey with a single deed; we must do the opposite [of what they demand of us]. Because in this case not only would an evil be endured, but iniquity would be strengthened and godliness denied through the very work and endurance. Should they, however, compel us to fast by actual force, for instance by taking away food or by jailing us, then evil is endured [without harm to one's conscience], since neither by word or deed has agreement been given to it.[1]

Luther wrote these words from Coburg to Philip Melanchthon at Augsburg in a letter of July, 1530. Thereby he gave Philip counsel about how to handle requirements, neither commanded nor forbidden in Holy Scripture, which might be forced upon them following the presentation of the Augsburg Confession. The crucial point made by Luther is whether an action results in the impression that agreement is present with the papists where it actually is not. At stake is the entire doctrine of the gospel and most particularly the chief article (*Der Hauptartikel*), justification. However, it would not be until after Luther died that Melanchthon would be faced with this very situation as the Emperor sought to force the evangelicals to comply with the Augsburg Interim. At that time, Elector Maurice called upon Philip to draw up a modified version of the Interim for Saxony that might be acceptable both to the evangelical churches and to the Emperor, thus preventing military invasion by the Emperor. The document was designed to give in to the Roman Church on everything that was considered adiaphora, that is, neither commanded nor forbidden in Holy Scripture. The result was a document which became known as the Leipzig Interim. The name was given it by its chief opponent, Matthias Flacius. The Leipzig Interim was received with violent opposition led by Flacius and his followers.

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This paper attempts to compare a portion of the Leipzig Interim with the corresponding portion of the Formula of Concord. We will concern ourselves with the liturgical usages contained in the Interim and compare them to the confession made in Article X of the Formula of Concord. Finally, we will draw conclusions for today's context.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before addressing this comparison, it is necessary as a kind of prolegomenon to direct our attention to the foremost concern throughout all of the Lutheran confessional writings. This concern is for a right confession and practice of the article of justification.

> In the words of the Apology, this article of justification by faith is "the chief article of the entire Christian doctrine," "without which no poor conscience can have any abiding comfort or rightly understand the riches of the grace of Christ." In the same vein Dr. Luther declared: "Where this single article remains pure, Christendom will remain pure, in beautiful harmony, and without any schisms. But where it does not remain pure, it is impossible to repel any error or heretical spirit."[2]

Yet, the confessors recognized that this article is not an abstraction but takes shape in practice. For Lutherans, the discussion of liturgical matters must always be informed by a concern for the chief article, justification. The ancient dictum, *lex orandi, lex credendi* (as you pray so you believe), is certainly as true for Lutherans as it is for those of other confessions. Perhaps more important for Lutherans is the conviction that the reverse is true. As Lutherans believe so Lutherans pray. Luther understood this very clearly and it was his criterion for his liturgical work:

> The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, "was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification"(Rom 4:5). . . . Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed . . . . On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world.[3]

This is also seen in his conviction that catechesis and liturgical life must be a unity.

> First, 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 what they should believe, know, do, and leave undone, according to the Christian faith. This is why the candidates who had been admitted for such instruction and learned the Creed before Baptism used to be called *catechumenos*. This instruction or catechization I cannot put better or more plainly than has been done from the beginning of Christendom and retained till now, i.e., in these three parts, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Our Father. These three plainly and briefly contain exactly everything that a Christian needs to know. . . . And let no one think himself too wise for such child's play. Christ, to train men, had to become man himself. . . . Otherwise, people can go to church daily and come away the same as when they went. For they think they need only listen at the time, without any thought of learning or remembering anything.[4]

The concern for this article is emphasized again in Article X of the Formula of Concord.

> For here we are no longer dealing with external adiaphora which in their nature and essence are and remain of themselves free and which accordingly are not subject either to a command or a prohibition, requiring us to use them or discontinue them. Here we are dealing primarily with the chief article of our Christian faith, so that, as the apostle testifies, the truth of the gospel might be preserved (Gal 2:5).[5]

While there are many factors involved in the formation of both the Leipzig Interim and the Formula of Concord, the concern for the purity of this article must be considered at the center. Eternal salvation, the merits of Christ, and the righteousness of faith depend on this article.

OTHER PRESSURES

Added to this basic question was the imperial pressure to conform to the Interim. Following Luther's death and the defeat of the evangelical territories in the Smalcald War, Emperor Charles V was determined to have the Empire united religiously. His concern was not with the faith of his people, but with the ruling dynasty he sought to establish. Any form of dissension threatened that empire. As has already been stated, he sought to impose this harmony through the imposition of a confessional and liturgical document known as the Augsburg Interim. Elector Maurice of Saxony responded to this pressure by trying to produce a version of the Interim for Saxony which would convince the Emperor of their compliance and prevent an invasion by imperial troops.

Furthermore, the theologians of evangelical Lutheranism were often in the midst of heated discussions. The death of Luther brought to the surface many theological differences and controversies which would be contested in the coming years. At this time (1549), within the faculty at the University of Wittenburg there was friction between George Major and Philip Melanchthon on the one hand, and Matthias Flacius on the other. The pressures of the imperial and ducal power brought these differences to the surface. The differences centered in church practices and liturgical usages and how they impact the article of justification. What could be accepted and used liturgically in the church and still keep the article of justification pure?

TWO RESPONSES

SD X spells out two parties in the conflict:

> The one party held that even in a period of persecution and a case of confession, when enemies of the Holy Gospel have not come to an agreement with us in doctrine, one may still with a clear conscience, at the enemies' insistent demand, restore once more certain abrogated ceremonies that are in themselves matters of indifference and that are neither commanded nor forbidden by God, and that one may justifiably conform oneself to them such adiaphora or matters of indifference. The other party, however, contended that under no circumstances can this be done with a clear conscience and without prejudice to the divine truth, even as far as things indifferent are concerned, in a period of persecution and a case of confession, especially when the adversaries are attempting either by force and coercion or by surreptitious methods to suppress the pure doctrine and gradually to insinuate their false doctrines into our churches again.[6]

For Lutherans, the discussion of liturgical matters must always be informed by a concern for the chief article, justification.

The first party is the party led by Philip Melanchthon at the urging of Elector Maurice. The second party is the party led by Matthias Flacius. The discussion in the Formula of Concord centers on the definition of matters of indifference (adiaphora) and the circumstances under which things that are matters of indifference in and of themselves cease to be matters of indifference, for in the balance is the purity of the church's confession viz. the article of justification.

> We should not consider as matters of indifference, and we should avoid as forbidden by God, ceremonies which are basically contrary to the Word of God, even though they go under the name of external adiaphora and are given a different color from the true one. Nor do we include among truly free adiaphora or things indifferent those ceremonies which give or (to avoid persecution)

are designed to give the impression that our religion does not differ greatly from that of the papists, or that we are not seriously opposed to it. Nor are such rites matters of indifference when these ceremonies are intended to create the illusion (or are demanded or agreed to with that intention) that these two opposing religions have been brought into agreement and become one body, or that a return to the papacy and an apostasy from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and from true religion has taken place or will allegedly result little by little from these ceremonies. . . . Neither are useless and foolish spectacles, which serve neither good order, Christian discipline, nor evangelical decorum in the church, true adiaphora or things indifferent. We believe, teach and confess that true adiaphora or things indifferent, as defined above, are in and of themselves no worship of God or even a part of it, but that we should duly distinguish between the two, as it is written, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the precepts of men"(Matt. 15:9).[7]

The chief concern of Maurice was his political power. The chief concern of Melanchthon was the preservation of the Evangelical Church.

We believe teach, and confess that at a time of confession, as when the enemies of the Word of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God. In such a case we should not yield to adversaries even in matters of indifference, nor should we tolerate the imposition of such ceremonies on us by adversaries in order to undermine the genuine worship of God and to introduce and confirm their idolatry by force or chicanery.[8]

These statements set the basic parameters for discussion of adiaphora as the confessors responded to the Leipzig Interim and the influences of other liturgical scholars such as George of Anhalt.

The Leipzig Interim was drafted by Melanchthon to avert the imposition of the Augsburg Interim by force. This action originated from and was supported by Elector Maurice. The chief concern of Maurice was his political power. The chief concern of Melanchthon was the preservation of the Evangelical Church. The concessions to Rome contained in the Interim were obviously seen by Melanchthon as possible without threat to the chief article, justification. In fact, Melanchthon saw himself as a staunch defender of the Evangelical faith as well as an instrument to achieve peace in the church. He speaks of this in his comments about the Interim.

We strive not of our own forwardness, arrogance or pride, as some men have accused. God who knows all men's hearts knows how gladly we want to see and have peace with all our hearts. But this earnest and strong commandment, that we shall not forsake or persecute the knowledge of the truth, drives us to the defense of the true learning which is preached in our churches: and as for danger, we will have to have trust in God.[9]

The opposition to this position was led by Flacius who took the position that the concessions of Melanchthon in the Leipzig Interim did, in fact, give up the article of justification and with it the entire doctrine of the gospel.

What is significant for us today is not just the conclusions of the Formula of Concord on this matter, nor only the specific liturgical concessions of Melanchthon and how they impact the article of justification, but the overall churchmanship involved in this controversy. Confessional Lutheranism continues to be bombarded by situations which demand a response which maintains confessional integrity and clarity. For example, many liturgical questions continue to challenge the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not the least of which is the use of the Eucharistic Prayer. Article X of the Formula of Concord can inform us that we might walk in a pattern of churchmanship which clarifies rather than obscures the merits of Christ and the righteousness of faith.

THE LEIPZIG INTERIM

The chief author of the Leipzig Interim was Melanchthon. In order to address the liturgical portions of the Interim, we will take a moment to see the confession of justification, which informs them. A series of statements are significant.

Although God does not justify man by the merit of his own works which man does, but out of mercy, freely, without our merit, that the glory may not be ours, but Christ's, through whose merit alone we are redeemed from sins and justified, y*et the merciful God does not work with man as with a block, but draws him, so that his will also co-operates* if he be of understanding years. . . . Nevertheless, the *new virtues and good works are so highly necessary that if they were not quickened in the heart there would be no reception of divine grace*...As, now, this true knowledge must shine in us, it is certainly true that these virtues, faith, love, hope, and others, must be in us, and *are necessary to salvation.*[10]

Melanchthon has given up the Lutheran *sola fide* and has mingled works into the article of justification. These phrases are veiled somewhat cleverly in the midst of five long pages of very Lutheran-sounding statements. Given this Roman understanding of justification it should not surprise us to find similar concessions to Rome in the areas of liturgical matters.

On June 16, 1548 Elector Maurice directed Bugenhagen, Melanchthon, and other evangelical theologians to undertake the writing of an order for the Interim. Two weeks later, on July 1, 1548, under the leadership of Prince George of Anhalt, action was taken to have a liturgy prepared for use during the Leipzig Interim. The

assignment to prepare this liturgy was given to the evangelical theologians as a group. This included Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, George of Anhalt and others.[11]

The concessions to Rome in this order are significant. The first such concession is in the practice of confession and absolution. "Also, that no one be admitted to the highly-venerable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ unless he have first confessed to the priest and received of him absolution."[12] This mandatory requirement of confession before the priest had been rejected by Lutherans as a confusion of law and gospel. Luther writes in the Large Catechism:

> No one dare oppress you with requirements. Rather, whoever is a Christian, or would like to be one, has here the faithful advice to go and obtain this precious treasure. If you are no Christian, and desire no comfort, we shall leave you to another's power. Hereby we abolish the pope's tyranny, commandments, and coercion since we have no need of them. For our teaching, as I have said, is this: If anybody does not go to confession willingly and for the sake of the absolution, let him just forget about it.[13]

While Melanchthon maintains the centrality of the absolution and does not discuss satisfactions for sin, he does mandate coercion which the papists see as decisive. Apparently, Melanchthon felt that the necessity of confession before the priest was sufficient concession to win approval of the Romanists.

Secondly, Melanchthon addresses confirmation and affirms that it should be retained with the goal that "by the aid of divine grace be confirmed and established by the laying on of hands and Christian prayer and ceremonies."[14] While he never uses the terminology that confirmation is a sacrament, Melanchthon leaves room for this Roman understanding. He affirms that confirmation should be retained with its ceremonies, clearly leaving the impression that he stands with Rome in this matter. Here we see a difficulty in analyzing the Interim. Melanchthon very cleverly leaves his language ambiguous so that sufficient room is present for interpretation according to whichever confession is desired. This politically safe strategy is used throughout this document.

Thirdly, the Interim clearly concedes to Rome the practice of unction. Citing the text from James, Melanchthon concludes that "such unction, according to the apostle, may be hereafter observed, and Christian prayer and words of consolation from the Holy Scriptures be spoken over the sick; and that the people should be instructed concerning this in such a way as to reach the true understanding, and that all superstition and misunderstanding be removed and avoided."[15] It is clear that this is not extreme unction but rather anointing the sick. It demonstrates Melanchthon's approach. He is willing to concede anything which is not directly contrary to the Word of God and which will give the Emperor the appearance that this Saxon version of the Interim is in agreement with that of Augsburg. At the same time, he addresses the Lutheran concern that there not be any concession with regard to the benefits involved, ie., that there be no misunderstanding that this is not a magical, superstitious rite which confers grace.

Fourthly, the mass is given in a very specific order. By way of introduction, we are told that the mass will be observed "with ringing of bells, with lights and vessels, with chants, vestments and ceremonies."[16] The order is given part by part in specific rubrics. Of significance is the inclusion of the Confiteor, singing in German, the presence of the ambiguous term *consecratio*, the presence of the *communicatio* and the exclusion of the canon of the mass. Singing in German, the *communicatio* and the exclusion of the mass canon are solidly Lutheran. However, the inclusion of the Confiteor and the ambiguity regarding the *consecratio* are troublesome. Here the door is open once again for compromise at two points in the order which are most crucial, for the delivery of the forgiveness of sins is dependent on them. In addition, the mandate of a fixed order as necessary is alien to the Evangelical understanding of the freedom of form in ceremonies. This requirement binds consciences over and above the Word of God. Here again Melanchthon's concern seems to be more for the give and take of collective bargaining than for faithfully confessing, "thus saith the Lord."

Fifthly, and closely related to the mass, is the calendar of church holidays in the Interim document. Two festivals which are required are contrary to the Lutheran confession of justification: Corpus Christi and the festivals of the Holy Virgin Mary. Each usurps the merits of Christ and the righteousness of faith and substitutes law-works. In addition, there is more ambiguity as Melanchthon leaves room for "some others" when listing the festivals. Are these "others" to be days appointed for saints created by the Roman Church or are they days appointed for scriptural saints which are tied to Christ and, thus, acceptable to the Lutherans? Once again, the ambiguity with which this section is written raises more questions than answers.

Finally, a technique is used to give in to the Augsburg Interim. This is to assign the requirement to abstain from meat on Fridays and Saturdays as an order of the Emperor rather than as an ecclesiastical ordinance. In so doing, Melanchthon seeks to concede the matter but make it extra-confessional and thus avoid the issue in the church. His desire to find an acceptable compromise is obvious as is his willingness to capitulate on this point.

Melanchthon has given up the Lutheran* sola fide *and has mingled works into the article of justification.

THE RESPONSE OF FLACIUS

In 1549 Flacius was exiled from Wittenberg and took refuge briefly in Hamburg before moving on to Magdeburg. During this important time Flacius sent numerous letters to Melanchthon to encourage him to remain faithful to the *sola scriptura* principle. To give in to the Interim would mean that the Lutherans would tumble off the foundation of Holy Scripture and land on the chaff of Roman tradition. Again, at stake was the article of justification and the entire doctrine of the gospel. Though the Interim was to be a private document, Flacius obtained a copy of it. He was incensed at the concessions to Rome and began a propaganda campaign

against it, dubbing it the Leipzig Interim so that it might be closely linked with the Augsburg Interim. He clearly confessed the necessity to be faithful to Christ, not the Emperor.

> Confess the truth and suffer the consequences! A Christian cannot obtain peace by offending God and serving and satisfying tyrants. Rather be drowned by the Spaniards in the Elbe with a millstone about one's neck than offend a Christian, deny the truth and surrender the Church to Satan.[17]

Flacius was very clear in what could or could not be conceded to the Emperor and pope in these matters which in and of themselves were adiaphora.

> We do not believe that the robber will let the traveler keep his money, although first he only asks for his coat or similar things, at the same time, however, not obscurely hinting that, after, having taken these, he will also demand the rest. We certainly do not doubt that you yourselves, as well as all men endowed with a sound mind, believe that, since the beginning is always hardest, these small beginnings of changes are at present demanded only that a door may be opened for all the other impieties that are to follow.[18]

The position that he articulates here is one of *casus confessiones*. In a situation of confession there is a line drawn where nothing can be conceded even in those things which are deemed adiaphora. This situation occurred as the government was attempting to force an acceptance of doctrine and practice contrary to the gospel. Flacius' dictum is "*nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandali*" (nothing is an adiaphoron in a situation of confession).

THE VERDICT

The definition of adiaphora already cited in Article X of the Formula gives us clear direction regarding the liturgical practice promoted by the Interim. The Formula includes the description of four things which can be falsely disguised as adiaphora. Once again, these are ceremonies contrary to the Word of God, ceremonies which give the impression of unity with the papists, ceremonies which create the illusion that unity has been reached, and ceremonies which are foolish spectacles. Each of the items cited above from the Interim fall into at least one of these categories. By the second and third criteria each practice is disqualified as adiaphora. By the first criterion the Corpus Christi festival and other unbiblical celebrations are omitted. By the final criterion, the Corpus Christi would be omitted again.

Article X puts an added seal against the Interim by affirming Flacius' confession of *casu confessionis*.

> We believe, teach and confess that at a time of confession as when the enemies of the Word of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God.[19]

The great "*zeit der bekanntnus*" is clearly applicable to the Interim when public confession and practice was being challenged. Here the line is drawn that nothing is *adiaphoron* because clear distinctions must be made and maintained. Even if the liturgical practices of the Interim were adiaphora, they could not be conceded because it was a time of confession. At stake here is not some minor point but "the chief article of our Christian religion."[20] This necessity to hold fast at a time of confession affirms for Lutherans the legitimacy of resisting any authority, secular or ecclesiastical, which would attempt to force us to abandon our confession.

The pastors in America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches.

Not only are concessions in externals at a time of confession damaging to our church but they are also damaging to our opponents. "Hence yielding or conforming in external things, where Christian agreement in doctrine has not previously been achieved, will support the idolaters in their idolatry, and on the other hand, it will sadden the true believers and weaken them in their faith."[21]

Article X of the Formula of Concord answers the question of the liturgical practices of the Interim without equivocation. The political pressure to conform and make a semblance of ecclesiastical peace is denounced in bold language. Philip clearly had his priorities confused according to the Formula. He thought it necessary to concede to Rome in order that the Evangelical Church might survive. Flacius recognized that the truth must be confessed. God in his grace would preserve those faithful to his Word. Historically, the events surrounding the Interim and its content seem to provide clear evidence of the doctrine of justification Melanchthon confessed. Even though the Interim really never went into effect this document forced his hand and the hand of the writers of the Formula.

REFLECTIONS FOR TODAY

The events surrounding the Interim and the drafting of Article X of the Formula pose some interesting questions and applications for today. Clearly, SD X corrected the fatal error in the church of a "peace at all costs" approach to conflict. Through the clear thinking of Flacius it calls us back from rationalizing away the necessity of confessing our Lord before men regardless of the danger involved to a commitment to confess openly.

In democratic America the pressure to compromise the confession from outside the church typically does not come from the government but from recurring themes within our pluralistic culture. The sovereignty of the individual, the denial of binding

absolutes, moral relativism, changing understandings of authority and gender confusion are all themes which impose a kind of interim on the church. In addition, as a result of our culture, issues such as world hunger, Marxism and other economic theories, feminism, planned parenthood and abortion, gun control, discrimination, and genetic engineering are all discussed in the church. These issues are not to be confused with the subject of "good works" or the meaning of the Ten Commandments. Confessional categories do not seem to have been applied effectively in dealing within the church with such issues. They are matters which most of us would not call doctrine *per se* but which nevertheless affect Christian doctrine, impinge upon it, and in certain cases attack it.[22] These social issues and others have brought an outcry for "relevant" forms of worship. They have led us in a pattern which divorces doctrine and practice in much the same fashion as did the Interims of 1548. This interim of our culture would have these issues at the center of church life rather than the article of justification. They pressure us to conform our practice to the patterns of the world much like the Interims of 1548 pressured the evangelical churches into Roman practice. Underlying these shifts in practice are deep-seated doctrinal differences on the article of justification, the relationship between law and gospel, the third use of the law, creation and the orders of creation, hermeneutics, church and ministry, and many other points of doctrine.

As SD X points out, in such a time "every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the community of God are obligated to confess openly by words but also through their deeds and actions the true doctrine."[23] Luther, Flacius, Amsdorf and others can be our example in this act of open confession. Instead, this cultural interim has slowly been accepted by the majority of pastors. Eugene Peterson puts it this way:

> The pastors in America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper's concerns—how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from competitors down the street, how to package the goods so that customers will lay out more money. Some of them are very good shopkeepers. They attract a lot of customers, pull in great sums of money, develop splendid reputations. Yet, it is still shopkeeping; religious shopkeeping to be sure, but shopkeeping all the same. The marketing strategies of the fast-food franchise occupy the waking minds of these entrepreneurs; while asleep they dream of the kind of successes that will get the attention of journalists.[24]

This quest for success according to the standards of the world has resulted in an understanding of things classified as adiaphora to mean "anything goes." However, church rites and ceremonies which are adiaphora according to the definition in Article X are not thereby meaningless. They still require wise choices to maintain confessional integrity. Kurt Marquart has pointed out, "It would be wrong to infer from it, for instance, that ceremonies and liturgical forms simply don't matter, and may be left to proliferate—or stagnate!—like weeds or Topsy! The technical term 'indifferent things' for adiaphora was never meant to suggest 'indifference' in the popular sense of boredom, contempt, or carelessness."[25]

Within church bodies there is pressure from bureaucratic politicians to bring worship forms into line with the pagan culture around us so that we might attract larger crowds and offerings. The norms of our culture are quickly being accepted by the church so that church body after church body has begun ordaining women. In many circles "inclusive language" has been welcomed into liturgies, catechisms, and Bible translations without critical theological evaluation. All of these heterodox practices are a result of this cultural interim imposed on the church. This interim defines the context in which the church finds herself as a *"zeit der bekanntnus."* Clear lines must be drawn to maintain the evangelical integrity of the church's confession.

Interestingly, unlike the direct pressure of secular politics on the church of the sixteenth century, interim-like political pressure is being directed on the church from ecclesiastical and congregational governments. The politicized democratic system of secular government has been so accepted by the church, that she is more and more being exerted by the popular opinion of her members rather than the Scriptures as articulated in the Lutheran Confessions. Judge Robert Bork has articulated this pattern as being present in all institutions of our country which formerly were based on objective criteria:

> In the past few decades American institutions have struggled with the temptations of politics. Professions and academic disciplines that once possessed a life and structure of their own have steadily succumbed, in some cases almost entirely, to the belief that nothing matters beyond politically desirable results, however achieved. In this quest, politics invariably tries to dominate another discipline, to capture and use it for politics' own purposes, while the second subject—law, religion, literature, economics, science, journalism, or whatever—struggles to maintain its independence. But retaining a separate identity and integrity becomes increasingly difficult as more and more areas of our culture, including the life of the intellect, perhaps especially the life of the intellect, become politicized. It is coming to be denied that anything counts, not logic, not objectivity, not even intellectual honesty, that stands in the way of the "correct" political outcome. . . . "Heresy," Hilaire Belloc reminds us, "is the dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the introduction of a novel denial of some essential part therein. We mean by 'a complete and self-supporting scheme' any system of affirmation in physics or mathematics or philosophy or what-not, the various parts of which are coherent and sustain each other." . . . There is a story that two of the greatest figures in our law, Justice Holmes and Judge Learned Hand, had lunch together and afterward, as Holmes began to drive off in his carriage, Hand, in a sudden onset of enthusiasm, ran after him, crying, "Do justice, sir, do justice." Holmes stopped the carriage and reproved Hand: "That is not my job. It is my job to apply the law." . . . That is American orthodoxy. The heresy, which dislocates the constitution-

> al system, is that the ratifiers' original understanding of what the Constitution means is no longer of controlling, or perhaps of any, importance. . . . The orthodoxy of original understanding, and the political neutrality that judging it requires, are anathema to a liberal culture that for fifty years has won a succession of political victories from the courts and that hopes for more political victories in the future. The representatives of that culture hate the American orthodoxy because they have moral and political agendas of their own that cannot be found in the Constitution and that no legislature, or at least none whose members wish to be reelected, will enact. That is why these partisans want judges who will win their victories for them by altering the Constitution.[26]

The same forces which have drawn our court system away from the objective ground of the law and its interpretation in our country in these past decades have also been at work in the church. Lutheran orthodoxy based in the Scriptures as expressed in the Book of Concord has been supplanted through politicization which seeks to achieve new goals created by the "progressive" agendas of bureaucrats and idealogues. We see these forces hard at work in the ELCA as well as in the other Lutheran churches. In the ELCA it shows itself in the intrusion of quotas, liberation theology, Marxism, feminism, and a false ecumenism. In the LCMS and the smaller churches, it shows itself in church leadership basing decisions of direction on surveys of the "grass-roots" and their "felt needs." The political seduction as applied to the church shows itself more generally in synodical conventions and congregational voters' meetings where decisions of doctrine and practice are made by majority vote rather than looking to pastors and theologians to articulate and apply the church's confession. The result is that decisions which impinge on the central article are made by untrained people according to majority vote. This politicization of the church is the imposition of another form of interim. Decisions are not made according to their objective truth or falsehood based on the Confessions but on the basis of the will of the majority. Once again, this context is one of a "time of confession" and necessitates clear and open confession.

CONCLUSIONS

The Interims of the sixteenth century provided the context necessary for the Church of the Augsburg Confession to articulate parameters within which a necessary confessional stand must be taken. One fears that the individualistic, relativistic culture in which we live makes such a stand all the harder to make. If nothing else it sufficiently muddies the waters to make the salient point of controversy and confession difficult to articulate. The forces described above impose an interim on the church and, at their foundation, attack the article of justification by promoting a pervasive synergism. This synergism attacks *sola scriptura, sola fide* and *sola gratia.* It is characterized by a church life which is anthropocentric and thus strips the merits of Christ and the righteousness of faith.

It seems that the necessary corrective is for our Lord to raise up faithful confessors within the leadership of the church. These confessors must have the steadfast clarity of a Matthias Flacius so that they can "confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God."[27] LOGIA

NOTES

1. Martin Luther, "Letters: To Philip Melanchthon, July 21, 1530" *Luther's Works AE* Vol. 49 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972) p. 387.
2. FC SD III Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), p. 540.
3. AE 49 p. 292. See also Bryan Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass* (Bramcotte Notts: Grove Books), pp. 18-25.
4. Martin Luther, "The German Mass and Order of Service," *Luther's Works, AE* Vol. 53 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965) pp. 64-67.
5. Tappert, p. 613.
6. Tappert, p. 611.
7. Tappert, p. 611.
8. Tappert, p. 612.
9. Philip Melanchthon, "Thoughts on the Interim," *A Melanchthon Reader*, Trans. Ralph Keen (Bern: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 156.
10. Henry E. Jacobs, *The Book of Concord*, "The Leipzig Interim" (Philadelphia: G.W. Frederick, 1893) pp. 262-267.
11. Louis Novak, *An Historical Survey of the Liturgical Forms in the Church Orders of Johannes Bugenhagen* (Denver: Iliff Press, 1974) p. 158.
12. Novak, p. 269.
13. Tappert, p. 459.
14. Jacobs, p. 269.
15. Jacobs, p. 269.
16. Jacobs, p. 270.
17. F. Bente, "The Adiaphoristic Controversy," *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: CPH, 1965), p. 111.
18. Bente, p. 111.
19. Tappert, p. 612.
20. Tappert, p. 613.
21. Tappert, p. 613.
22. See Robert Preus, "Confessional Lutheranism in Today's World," *CTQ* 54:2-3 (1990) pp. 99-100. I paraphrase the observations and analysis of Dr. Preus and am indebted to him.
23. Tappert, p. 612.
24. Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles—The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) p. 1.
25. Kurt Marquart, "Article X Confession and Ceremonies," *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*, R. Preus and W. Rosin, eds. (St. Louis: CPH, 1978) p. 263.
26. Robert H. Bork, *The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law* (New York: Macmillan, 1990) pp. 1-7.
27. Tappert, p. 612.

Declining Denominational Loyalty

KEN SCHURB

ONE OF THE MORE WIDELY DISCUSSED FEATURES OF CONTEMPORARY church life is "declining denominational loyalty." A standard case in point: It is no longer a foregone conclusion that when Americans relocate they will likely join a congregation of the denomination to which their former church belonged. But "declining denominational loyalty" can also be seen in other forms: declining interest in national programs run by denominations, declining financial support from congregations to denominations, or a declining expectation that a denomination's confession of faith will be articulated and practically implemented in local pulpits, classrooms, etc.

Declining denominational loyalty faces all modern churchmen, and it would be foolish for those in any Lutheran church body to think themselves magically immune to it. In fact, our challenge can bulk larger and run deeper than we have perhaps wanted to imagine. In particular, we can only view with the gravest concern the aspects of declining denominational loyalty which downplay the importance of confessing the faith in our church life. When Lutheran laypeople become disinterested in the confession of faith made by their church body, something is wrong. And a larger problem looms when this goes hand-in-hand with a general tendency for church members neither to know nor care about such things. But what is that problem? Can we go beyond viewing it simply as a social phenomenon? Can we deal with it theologically?

It is no secret, sociologically speaking, that American society suffers from severe atomization—with no relief in sight. Over a decade ago Christopher Lasch wrote a book-length diagnosis of the problem, but he had no cure to offer. Now James Patterson and Peter Kim report that matters have in effect grown still worse. In *The Day America Told the Truth* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991), these pollsters give the results of research they designed to survey "what people really think" on a variety of subjects. They found that "America has no moral leadership," that "Americans are making up their own rules and laws." The researchers say, "Only 13 percent of us believe in all of the Ten Commandments. We choose which laws of God we believe. There is absolutely no moral consensus in this country—as there was in the 1950s and 1960s. There is very little respect for the law or any law" (p. 235). If the individual reigns supreme—undaunted by superior claims made by family, nation, churches, or even God—then individualization and atomization will continue to grow endemic and even epidemic in modern American culture. Even the moral crusades which Patterson and Kim predict for the 1990s will turn out to be "very personalized," in their terms (p. 236).

This result should not come as a surprise. Over a century ago Alexis de Tocqueville noted that "in democratic societies, each citizen is habitually busy with the contemplation of a very petty object, which is himself." But upon such contemplation, just how do modern individuals regard themselves? Social analysts have observed that one of the defining characteristics of modernity is the compartmentalization of lived experience. In other words, modern living becomes "chopped up": work has its patch on the quilt of life, leisure another, family another, community service another, religion another, etc. Each of these elements of life might occur in a setting different from the others, perhaps with different people than the others. In this situation, it grows tempting for us to assert control of our lives by determining to reserve certain patches—even some recognized as very important—for our personal ownership and determination, not God's. In other words, we resist the lordship of a God whose authority encompasses everything in our lives, and before whose judgment not one nook or cranny of our lives can pass muster.

In *The Closing of the American Mind,* Allan Bloom wondered whether one of the costs of democracy has turned out to be the emasculation of religion so that it lies impotent, incapable of addressing the truly deep and serious matters of life for most people. Patterson and Kim's findings yield frightening confirmation that Bloom's fears have been realized. While ninety percent of the people in the survey professed belief in God (p. 199), nonetheless religion does not affect the actual positions which most of them take on major issues. For example, listed below are several of Patterson and Kim's survey questions (p. 200). The number in parentheses is the percentage of respondents who said their religion is determinative in shaping their position on the matter. The number in brackets is the percentage of respondants who said they are not even sure of their church's position on the matter:

Death penalty (64%) [57%]
Communism (64%) [60%]
Abortion (56%) [52%]

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Homosexuality (55%) [52%]
Teaching creationism in schools (55%) [52%]
Premarital sex (53%) [43%]
Women in the clergy (52%) [47%]
Divorce (43%) [57%]

Notably, even on the obviously religious subject of women pastors, most respondents said their position is in no way shaped by their religion!

Patterson and Kim conclude, "We don't follow what our church says because we're not interested enough to find out what it's saying." But why are we Americans not interested? Because we have grown embarrassed over the foibles of our denominations, their structures and agencies? Because we distrust institutions in general?

I submit that something deeper lies beneath the surface, beneath these possibilities. Recall that a majority of Americans make up their minds about many issues on strictly nonreligious grounds. Could it be that they do not especially want to know what their churches say because they do not want to run the risk of anyone—even God—interfering with their self-determination? If so, is this a theological and spiritual issue?

Could it be that they do not especially want to know what their churches say because they do not want to run the risk of anyone—even God—interfering with their self-determination?

Another of Patterson and Kims findings tends to confirm this prospect. Only 37% of those responding said that they would accept the Bible's moral advice without question, and 34% said they would accept the moral advice of "religion" without question. Put differently, 63% to 66% of those in the survey wish to retain at least a measure of independence from God, if they think of him as speaking in the Bible or in religion (p. 209). They may take advice from these sources, but they want to remain the final arbiter. Granted, these responses came in answer to a question asked strictly about moral advice. But if two-thirds of those surveyed wanted autonomy from the law, how many more will crave it over against the more offensive Gospel of salvation?

These statistics raise a critical point. The urgent problem of our day—especially when viewed theologically—does not consist in declining "loyalty" to institutions called denominations. At most, this is only a symptom, not the disease. The real disease is declining "loyalty" to a God greater than ourselves. Put differently, the majority of Americans are not out to find a "user-friendly" church; rather, if they are "church-shopping" at all, they go in search of a church which proclaims a God who will not demand too much of them. They certainly want a God who will keep his hands off at least a few of the patches which make up the quilts of their lives. They desire churches which might boast spotless nurseries and a myriad of "need-meeting" programs, but in the long run the thing that will most likely keep them coming back is the potential of these churches to serve as havens for selective unbelief.

Theologically, of course, there is nothing new or modern about this problem, although modernity presents its own brand of temptations. The problem is the desire of humans to be God, or at least to wield god-like supreme authority over some aspect(s) of their lives. And the sinner who foolishly determines to keep God from having sway over a particular part of his life will thereby not only resist the Lord's judgment, but also his forgiveness. There lies the horrible heart of this theological and spiritual problem.

This problem will not be solved simply by making churches "user-friendly." It goes unanswered, even unaddressed, by sleek images which some congregations or church bodies might try to project in an effort to buoy up sagging denominational loyalties. Far from serving as a prompt for Lutheran churches to soft-pedal doctrine, this larger problem of unbelief can only be addressed by proclaiming law and gospel—the Word of God in all its articles.

Where Christ and the salvation he brings through the gospel are treasured by people who have received his forgiveness, the various facets of the gospel will be treasured. It will prove unthinkable to give any of them up, or even to minimize their importance, for they bring us life in the midst of death. The person who sets himself up as a law unto himself thereby lives under law. He needs the freedom of the gospel. Our Lord wants his church to show such a person the sweetness of that freedom and to press it into his hands, as it were, via all the aspects of his gracious word centering in Christ. The question for us is not:, "How much can we strip down the gospel-elements of our proclamation (sacraments, the authoritative Word of God, absolution, etc.) so as to appeal to the uncommitted with a mimimal gospel?"; but rather, "How can we maximize our proclamation of God's grace so as to unleash God's own creative power to turn uncommitted hearts into committed ones?"

Further, the place to start proclaiming the Word is right under our noses, with the people already assembled around the Word and sacraments. No doubt about it, we suffer from a "crisis of catechesis" these days, and the most urgent place to address it is in the local congregation. So much of what churches do tends to be regarded by people both within and without as the performance of archaic ritual which could easily be eliminated without much harm. Our catechesis needs to make it clear that "everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through [the sacraments] . . ." (Large Catechism II, 55), and our practice should follow suit. That is, the Church should "deliver the goods" of Word and sacrament. C.F.W. Walther noted that law and gospel are properly divided when the gospel enjoys a prominent place in preaching and teaching, and his words remain pertinent to this day. We moderns (or post-moderns) turn our backs on Christ no less than anyone else. But he died for us too.

Therefore we dare not let talk of "declining denominational loyalty" becloud our vision of the truly big horizon in missions. Yet this is precisely what can happen. When "declining denominational loyalty" and missions are mentioned together, usually one searches in vain for an accompanying description of the contemporary faith-crisis shown by Patterson and Kim or others. Thus, the picture turns out to be one in which, for example, "baby

boomers" Bill and Michele, who have been away from church for years, now are ready to come back along with their young children—but not necessarily to a congregation of their old denomination. The moral of the story: If you want them to join your church, you have as good a chance as any if you display the right trappings—that is, if you give them what they are looking for. Hold on to your doctrine and proclaim it, if you must, but be sure to spruce up your ladies' restroom. For the latter, not the former, ranks high on the list of things for which they look. It will make a real difference between whether they come back or not. With a new restroom, you are in the running. You can have a growing church, thanks in part to "declining denominational loyalty."

Add to the picture the impact of Patterson and Kim's results, though, and a less optimistic picture emerges. "Baby boomers" Bill and Michele may come to you with certain expectations about restroom quality, but it is statistically likely that they will also want a church to cater to their "nonreligious" ideas about any number of things. Even if no one in the congregation dares to say so out loud, a church can in effect set for itself the challenge of providing so many frills to such people as to keep attracting them back. If your church impresses them sufficiently, they will hopefully overlook a few things which might cause them to wince, like proclamation in which God exerts a claim on people in judgment and grace.

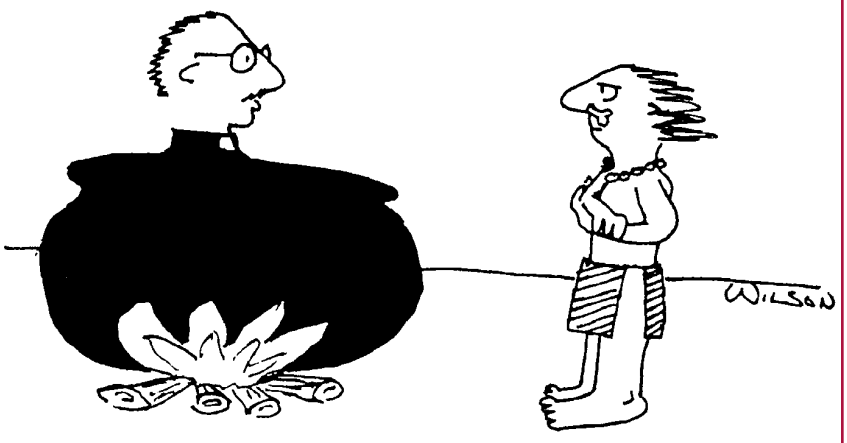
What is the alternative? What if these visitors do not return? This prospect has the potential to turn into the denominational leader's worst nightmare in an era of "declining denominational loyalty" fed by a misdirected faith. To describe the situation in crass business terms, fewer and fewer people demonstrate interest in the "product," so the "sales force" has to turn more aggressive to "sell" as many of the remaining customers as possible. Denominations end up vying with each other for a shrinking slice of the population pie. We find ourselves especially "targeting" folks who have cut themselves loose of previous church ties but who still wish a church contact. If we have to start looking and acting like their former churches in order to attract them, some might advise us to chalk it up to the price of organizational survival in a world where fewer and fewer people are interested in Christianity.

In this setting the wider horizon in missions easily get lost. Recently, Prof. David P. Meyer perceptively expressed skepticism as to whether mere "tinkering" with programs or the worship service will suddenly fill the churches.

> In fact . . . major battles between Evangelicals and Lutherans, "Entertainment worship" versus historic Lutheran liturgical worship, and "Community Mega-Churches" and Lutheran Churches, is [sic] a struggle to win a very select and narrow segment of the American population, sometimes not from paganism but from one congregation to another, from one "sheep pen" to another, while the "unreached" remain so (*Issues in Christian Education,* 25 :24 [Summer, 1991]).

I do not cite these words to suggest that the "battles" listed above amount to mere tempests in so many teapots, for they do not. But we cannot avoid this question: Have we lost our resolve to reach out to the "tough" prospects, the ones who cannot envision themselves ever showing up at our door for a divine service? Are we prepared to engage in difficult preevangelism and evangelism work in order to expose an unbeliever to God's gracious power unto salvation? LOGIA

Inklings



FAMOUS LAST WORDS
"No it is *not* 'just how I read the Bible'
when I say that eating people is wrong!"

Gender Considerations on the Pastoral Office

In Light of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14

ROBERT W. SCHAIBLEY

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe, the Bavarian Lutheran pastor who was instrumental in establishing Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary at Fort Wayne 144 years ago, gives the following advice to one who would be a wise teacher in the congregation:

> He does not desire to interpret precisely each conjunction and preposition, each noun, each verb, but everywhere there are clear passages which he selects and uses to confirm what the congregation already knows and to present it in a new light. His proclamation is always similar to the Creed, and he always gives his people what they can understand on the basis of the light they have already received, the light from their catechism and the gospels. Not primarily explaining obscurities, but confirming and maintaining what is clear—this is his aim and intention.

It is in this spirit of Pastor Löhe that I take up the consideration of a pressing issue for our day, namely the question of whether a church is biblically justified in limiting the pastoral office to males, among the other limitations which it likewise imposes upon those who would be called into the pastoral office. This is, as you know, not a new question. But there is a new and driving intensity to this question, fueled without doubt by social and cultural pressures of our day. The current status of the question in confessional Lutheran churches is that we do limit the pastoral office to males, and we make the claim that this limitation is by biblical mandate.

This claim is under attack today, from many quarters and in many different forms. It is my intention to touch briefly on several of the forms of attack with which we have become familiar in recent times, and then to address more particularly a new approach which has arisen among us.

By way of introduction, it is important to note some patently true but often forgotten facts about our church's current practice of limiting the pastoral office to men. Our practice is not just a matter of some convenient device (notably the two passages in question: 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14) which we have used for centuries to limit the ministry of women in the church. Our practice is consistent with that of the historic, orthodox, catholic church throughout her millennia of existence, with the history of the Old Testament people of God, and with the explicit teachings and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ with regard to what we now call the pastoral office. While it might be argued that the church was in error for millennia, that the Old Testament practices are of no import to our question, and that the actions of our Lord are merely coincidental or culturally conditioned, the starting point yet remains that we who continue to recognize the validity and necessity of limiting the pastoral office to men have not been guilty of perpetrating some new fraud upon the church. Nor can one correctly assert that the question of the appropriateness of the church's practice never before arose, so as to be examined and corrected in the light of twentieth-century discoveries. On the contrary, evidence is abundant that the question of admitting females to the pastoral office has arisen from time to time throughout the life of the church, particularly among heretical groups who advocated and practiced just such a practice, such as the Marcosians, the Quintillians, and some groups of gnostic or spiritualistic enthusiasts in the early Middle Ages. Moreover, such a change in practice was usually urged on the basis of the same biblical evidence often adduced today, namely Galatians 3:28. So the church's historic practice cannot simply be excused and removed by an assertion of pre-modern day ignorance.

Nor can one simply write off this 2,000-year history as a matter of a low view of women. Dr. William Weinrich has shown:

> Nor, it must be said, did the church's faithfulness to the Apostle's prohibition of women in the pastoral office rest upon some notion of the natural inferiority of women to men in either intellect or virtue. One can, of course, find evidence of such thinking. But just as common, and certainly more true to biblical models were other much more positive evaluations of the innate gifts and abilities of women. John Chrysostom (4th cent.), often castigated as a misogynist, could write that "in virtue women are often enough the instructors of men: while the latter wander about like jackdaws in dust and smoke, the former soar like eagles into higher spheres."

In our day of the wholesale castigation of everything and anything that can be labeled "western, male, patriarchal, and linear"

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these words may offer little compelling evidence; however, it remains true that grounds other than male chauvinism stand under the historic practice of the church. I say this because most of the arguments against our current practice at least tacitly accuse the historic church practice regarding limitations on the pastoral office of having been in error all these years, an error we are now perpetuating.

What are some of the typical challenges to the historic practice of the Christian church? First, the earliest arguments, as noted above, appealed to Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This verse is marshalled regularly, also in our day, to argue that no distinction on the basis of gender should exist in the affairs of the church. But then, what about the Pauline passages cited above, which have been cited by the church throughout her history?

Three methods of facing these passages have been proffered over the years. Argument "A" maintains that these passages are not authentically Pauline, but rather are later additions to the sacred text, and therefore they are not authoritative for us, and women preachers are home free on the basis of Galatians 3:28. Now, there is no evidence, outside of twentieth-century prejudice, that the 1 Timothy passage is not Pauline. The 1 Corinthian passage (vs. 33-35) is found in a different place in some ancient manuscripts (namely, after verse 40), leading Semler, as early as the eighteenth century to suggest that these verses are not original. Most scholars have found this argument quite unconvincing, leaving us with the conclusion that Argument "A," namely that these verses are not authentic and authoritative for us, is a severely wounded duck.

Argument "B" approaches the authority issue from a different perspective. Argument "B" maintains that these statements from Paul are culturally conditioned; that is to say, these arguments are what Paul had to say because of the culture in which he was raised and in which his original readers lived. They applied back then, and if we were today like they were back then in thought, tradition, and upbringing, they would apply also to us. But, since that was then and this is now, they are not authoritative for us, just as is the case with the prohibition in Acts against eating blood of animals, and the prohibition in this very book of 1 Corinthians against women praying without the benefit of veils, and so forth. Well now, what is to be said about Argument "B"? Those very texts have something to say about Argument "B." Paul clearly shows that his appeal is not to some cultural way of thinking, for in 1 Timothy 2:13 he bases his argument on the creation of Adam and Eve: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve"; also, in 1 Corinthians, Paul refers as the basis of his argument to the "law": "as even the Law says" (14:34), which at the very least refers to Genesis 3:16 as a result of the fall into sin, and more likely refers generally to the Torah and more specifically to the story of creation. Least likely is the suggestion that this is a reference to the Fourth Commandment. In any case, Paul seems not at all to be modifying his instructions along the lines of cultural bias, so that if his word is authentic at all (and, recalling the fate of Argument "A," it is authentic), then it remains applicable to us today, thus dooming Argument "B" about being culturally conditioned.

This brings us to Argument "C." Argument "C" became the godchild of the ELIM movement in the Missouri Synod in the 1970s and goes like this: Yes, these texts are authentic (Argument "A" is wrong); and yes, these texts are authoritative also for us (Argument "B" is wrong). But these texts are law, and we live now under the gospel! Thus, we are free from the law, free from 1 Corinthians 14 and from 1 Timothy 2. And that, according to Argument "C," is precisely what Galatians 3:28 means when it says, "there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This position is a clarion example of what became known as "gospel reductionism," which regarded the gospel not only as the center of the Scriptures but also, in the end, as the extent of the Scriptures. Gospel reductionism was rejected by our church, and this particular argument is seldom, if ever, heard any more, even in the former AELC circles of the ELCA.

So, Arguments "A," "B," and "C" have failed. But the pressure remains, and is, in fact, increasing, to admit women to the pastoral office. Whence this pressure? The pressure is sociological, cultural, and even political. And in an age when concern is rising that our church be well-regarded in society, that pressure can be unbearable. All that seems to stand between our church and capitulation to this sociological pressure are these two passages: 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. If there is to be a change in our handling of the pastoral office, one of two things will have to happen: 1) We will have to eliminate the distinctiveness of the pastoral office, so that more and more it is merged into a general and murky collection of churchly functions, called "ministries" (and I must say that there are many signs that just such a merging of identities is occurring, but this is beyond the scope of this paper); or 2) some new argument will have to arise which will remove the binding character of these two passages on our treatment of the pastoral office. It is this second option which does fall within the parameters of this paper, and it is the case that a new argument has arisen, which I have chosen to call Argument "D," because "D" stands for what comes after "A," "B," "C."

. . . grounds other than male chauvinism stand under the historic practice of the church.

Let me tell you about Argument "D." Argument "D" is very subtle, very persuasive, and very dangerous. Argument "D" masquerades as an innocuous linguistic study, as an unbiased exercise in semantic field analysis, as a scientifically disinterested effort to evaluate the Scriptural passages to which the church has been pointing for nearly 2000 years, as having no axe to grind on the results of the study, and as even seeking to help both sides in the controversy. I should like to maintain that Argument "D" is none of these things. It is not unbiased; it is not scientifically neutral; it is not even conducted in a methodologically appropriate way in order to answer the basic question it seeks to address.

Argument "D" is, first and foremost, an exercise in logic. It makes a significant case because it asserts the following syllogism:

Major premise:	To be binding on the church any doctrinal position in the church must be supported by at least one clear, distinct and unambiguous Bible passage.
Minor premise:	The Bible passages cited in defense of limiting the pastoral office to men (1 Cor 14 and 1 Tim 2) do not clearly, distinctly, and unambiguously support our church's doctrinal stance.
Conclusion:	Therefore, our doctrinal position is not binding on the church.

To be fair to Argument "D," as currently constituted, the conclusion stated above has not been so stated; rather, the conclusion as stated in Argument "D," to date, is that *if* we are to continue to maintain our doctrinal position on limiting the pastoral office to males, *then* we shall have to find some other passages which can clearly and unambiguously uphold our position. On the other hand, to be fair to our current position as a matter of church doctrine for some 2,000 years, the conclusion that our doctrinal position is not binding on the church is what Argument "D" finally amounts to, since the idea of having to chase around the Scriptures to find other passages which have somehow eluded the church for two millennia (if we are to continue our present practice), is tantamount to conceding that our position is not binding on the church. Argument "D" means that 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 have, after all these centuries, been successfully removed as impediments to progress: confessional Lutheran churches can let the ordination of women begin. Argument "D" is very significant and very dangerous, indeed.

We begin by considering the logic: If it were the case that to be binding on the church any doctrinal position in the church must be supported by at least one clear and unambiguous Bible passage; and further, if it were the case that the Bible passages cited in defense of limiting the pastoral office to men (1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2) do not clearly and unambiguously support our church's doctrinal stance; is it true, therefore, that our doctrinal position is not binding on the church? The answer, it seems to me, is affirmative. The logic stands; the syllogism is sound; the conclusion flows from the premises. However, it remains to examine the factuality of the premises themselves. And we must start with the major premise.

Is it true that, to be binding on the church, any doctrinal position in the church must be supported by at least one clear, distinct and unambiguous Bible passage? The answer is, clearly, "No!" It is not the case that to be binding on the church, any doctrinal position in the church must be supported by at least one clear, distinct and unambiguous passage. Everyone in the church would love it so to be, but that is not the character of *sola scriptura*. *Sola scriptura* embraces us through its historical-grammatical sense, its context, its unity and diversity, and through the *analogia fidei*. It is in this matrix that the perspicuity of Scripture resides. But this does not guarantee at least one "clear, cogent, unambiguous" proof-text for every doctrine that Scripture teaches. For example, there is no single clear, cogent, unambiguous proof-text for the *filioque* ("and the Son" in Latin), the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit that he "proceeds from the Father and the Son." We read in John 15:26 (the passage often cited in our catechisms to proof-text the *filioque*): "But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me." Is this proof text for the *filioque* clear, cogent, and unambiguous? It hardly seems so, for when Jesus says, "I shall send to you from the Father," he is *not* speaking about the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, for if he were, the Son would also be said to be "proceeding" from the Father, since the Father "sends" the Son (John 20:21). No, this is a reference to what happens "in time," specifically to Pentecost and the new relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church which ensues from that point in time. All that we find in John 15:26 about the internal relationship among the persons of the Holy Trinity "outside of time" is that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father." But where do we get the phrase "and the Son"? Where is the clear, cogent, unambiguous passage that teaches us "and the Son"? The closest thing we have is Galatians 4:6: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. . . ." The phrase "Spirit *of* his Son" by itself does not clearly, cogently, and unambiguously teach the *filioque*, but when taken together with John 15:26 concerning the Spirit "who proceeds from the Father," grounds the confession of faith to which all of us Lutherans are bound, that the Holy Spirit is distinguished as that person of the Trinity who "proceeds from the Father and the Son." But it cannot be said that the *filioque*, or for that matter, the entire doctrine of the blessed Holy Trinity is supported by at least one clear and unambiguous Bible passage.

> ***Argument "D" masquerades as an innocuous linguistic study; as an unbiased exercise in semantic field analysis, as a scientifically disinterested effort to evaluate the Scriptural passages. . . .***

In short, either the major premise of Argument "D" or the church's doctrine of God has to go. This choice leaves a Christian with no option but to eject the major premise of Argument "D," and in so removing the major premise, thus falls to the ground the entire argument; its conclusion does not follow, it is not proved that our doctrinal position is not binding on the church, and we can all go home!

However, the possibility that the minor premise might remain true, namely that 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 do not clearly and cogently teach what the church has for 2,000 years taught, is such a troubling possibility that it demands that we stay around and take a careful look at it. Does Argument "D" have a point? How does Argument "D" make the case that these two venerable passages do not provide the necessary support for our doctrinal position?

Argument "D," as recently raised among us, asserts on the basis of a word-study analysis that certain terms in both 1 Corinthi-

ans 14 and 1 Timothy 2 are vague enough, ambiguous enough, to allow for an interpretation which has nothing to do with the question of women proclaiming God's word or teaching in the worship life of the church, and therefore, it is possible to understand them in a very different light than that in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church has heretofore understood them. As recently expressed in the Texas District of the LCMS, Argument "D" points to the term λαλεῖν (the infinitive form, "to speak") in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-34: "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the Law says." Concerning this term, Argument "D" suggests two things: a) for the passage to apply to the limitation of the pastoral office to men, this word would have to mean "to preach" in its use here; and b) most likely, the word means "to babble" in its use here. Therefore, because it has to mean "to preach" in order to sustain the old view of limiting the pastoral office to men, but it most likely means "to babble" when referencing the manner in which women were speaking, this passage does not address in a clear, cogent, and unambiguous manner, the issue of limiting the pastoral office to men.

How does Argument "D" defend this observation? By conducting a "word-study" of all the ways in which the term λαλεῖν is used in the New Testament. Such an analysis leads to the conclusion that when a direct object is connected to the word, such as "speak wisdom from God," then and only then could the word mean "to preach," unless, of course, the speaker is Jesus; in this case, it's preaching whether a direct object is attached to the verb or not. On those occasions when someone other than Jesus is described as "speaking," but without a direct object, then "to speak" does not mean "to preach" but only "to talk." Moreover, because of the assumed situation in the text, namely people gathered for worship in the manner of the Jewish synagogue, when the women are speaking this must mean "chatter" or "babbling," since they would be hidden behind a screen, separate from the men, while the latter prayed and participated in the service. So on the basis both of the word-study which showed that λαλεῖν could be used in other ways than to refer to preaching, together with the assumed background of a synagogue setting, Argument "D" asserts that 1 Corinthians 14 has nothing to say about the question of women exercising the pastoral office.

What are we to make of this? First, we need to consider the question of how one might discern the meaning of λαλεῖν in this context. While word studies may shed some secondary light on the matter, they certainly are not decisive. In fact, in this instance Argument "D" commits what is known as the "illegitimate totality transfer," which James Barr describes as "obscuring the value of a word in a context by imposing upon it the totality of its uses." It doesn't matter if 297 of the 298 uses of λαλεῖν in the New Testament all meant "to babble." That fact would not determine the meaning of λαλεῖν for the 298th passage. It is context which is determinative for the meaning of the word, because, as Barr puts it:

> The linguistic bearer of the theological statement is usually the sentence and the still larger literary complex and not the word of the morphological and syntactical mechanisms . . . but as a whole, the distinctiveness of biblical thought and language has to be settled at sentence level, that is, by the things the writers say, and not by the words they say them with.

What is the context of 1 Corinthians 14? It is the context of corporate worship; it is the context of a Greek, not Jewish, gathering in which males and females are not segregated by gender nor separated by privilege; it is the context of rampant confusion born of the loss of the centrality of proclamation for edification. In the context of "proclamation for edification," to λαλεῖν in tongues must be curtailed or even eliminated, because it does not bring edification. To λαλεῖν in spontaneous and unordered testimony (prophecy) is disruptive of edification, and must be controlled. In this precise context, with λαλεῖν being used consistently to describe the activity which either enhances or hinders edification, Paul says, "the women should keep silence in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the Law says." It is the context which compels us to understand λαλεῖν as public proclamatory speech. When Argument "D" posits a collection of women who are jabbering among themselves, who must be corrected by St. Paul as he interrupts apostolic admonition concerning the nature of edification in order to hush up a group of people whose murmuring causes confusion, and then follows this assumption with the conclusion that the passage is not clear and unambiguous, such a move commits the logical fallacy *petitio principii* (begging the question). Nothing in the context invites such an assumption, and therefore nothing in the context robs this passage of its clear and unambiguous message. As Barr again reminds us, it is the sentence (and of course the still larger literary complex . . .) which is the linguistic bearer of the usual theological statement, and not the word (the lexical unit) or the morphological and syntactical connection.

Is it true that, to be binding on the church, any doctrinal position in the church must be supported by at least one clear, distinct and unambiguous Bible passage? The answer is, clearly, "No!"

As a result of the context of this verse in 1 Corinthians 14, namely the clear and unambiguous intention of Paul to rein in and regulate the corporate worship life of the church at Corinth when it came to who "speaks," the verse in question can mean nothing else than the long-held belief of the historic Christian church that, in the corporate worship life of the congregation, women are not to "speak," in the sense of public proclamation for edification—the activity we today call "preaching." In this context it cannot mean anything else, least of all a reference to disturbing noises of gossiping women coming from behind some screen in a synagogue-type setting. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 14, the first focus of Argument "D's" minor premise is not the victim of ambiguity that Argument "D" asserts it to be.

While we are considering 1 Corinthians 14, I would like to note

the nature of St. Paul's argument on account of which he asserts that women should not engage in public proclamation for edification in the corporate life of the church. After all, Paul does not just command; rather, he asserts an argument, the conclusion of which is his admonition that women are not permitted "to speak" in the church. The argument is prefaced by the assertion that this is not just Pauline opinion, or just local custom, for he begins with the reminder that this practice is true "in all the churches of the saints" (v. 33). His argument embraces four facts:

(a) Women "should be subordinate, as even the Law says" (v. 34);
(b) Women should deal with questions through asking their husbands at home" (v. 35);
(c) "It is shameful for a woman to speak in church" (v. 35);
(d) What Paul is writing is not open to debate, "what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord" (v. 37).

. . . the verse in question can mean nothing else than the long-held belief of the historic Christian church that, in the corporate worship life of the congregation, women are not to "speak," in the sense of public proclamation for edification—the activity we today call "preaching."

These four factors boil down to one overriding issue. Paul bases his admonition on the matter of subordination. Both the direct reference to the role of women in the services, and the relationship between his instruction and the resistance he expected from his readers, boils down to the matter of subordination.

Perhaps, in our social and political environment, this is the most grievous part to bear of the whole matter: subordination. Our women hear that word, and they do not like it. It brings to mind all that is socially unholy and culturally intolerable today: second-class citizenship, wife abuse, rape, discrimination, and the list goes on. The word fares little better with most men, who have grown tired both of being labelled chauvinist-pig, misogynist, patriarchal boor, part of that breed which is responsible for all that is wrong in the world, namely western-European males. Many men have also grown a little tired of their fellows who truly still fit some of these labels. But most of all, both men and women have been raised in the American world of self-reliant, self-focused, self-centered individualism which rebels at the thought that anyone could inform any others that they are subordinate. Subordination just cannot be tolerated in today's world, but subordination remains Paul's chief premise in this passage under examination. What is this subordination?

To subordinate (Greek: ὑποτάσσω) is predicated of many things in the sacred Scriptures. The entire fallen creation is subordinate to futility by the will of the Creator. We Christians are to be subordinate to the government. Those who are young are to be subordinate to the elders. All believers are to be "subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21). St. Paul speaks of his on-going struggle against his flesh which resists being subordinate to God. But the greatest and most enlightening and hopeful use of the term in Scripture is with reference to the relationship between Christ and his heavenly Father. As George Wollenburg notes:

> In 1 Corinthians 15:28, the supreme power of the Son is not an end in itself. All things have been subordinated to him in order that he may render it back to God after completing his work, v. 24. By his own subordination to the Father, he also subordinates all things to God."

Nor is this simply a matter of the humiliation of Christ. Subordination finds expression within the mystery of the blessed Holy Trinity: The Son is who he is in relation to the Father. There is an eternal relationship of superordination and subordination within the Trinity, between the Father and the Son. This does not mean that the Son is not "of one substance with the Father" (Nicene Creed). He does not belong to a different order of being. Rather, it means that the Son is differentiated from the Father precisely in this, that he surrenders himself in the obedience of perfect love to the perfectly loving will of the Father.

In his subordination he receives from the Father: "the Son does nothing of his own accord" (John 5:19); the Father "has granted to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26); the Father has given the Son "authority to execute judgment" (John 5:27); he does those works which the Father has given him to do (John 5:36); he does not seek his own will, but the "will of him who sent me" (John 5:30); he speaks "what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28). He gives to his disciples (as he prayed to his Father) "the words which you gave me, and they have received them" (John 17:8).

That this subordination of the Son to the Father is not merely part of the state of humiliation is evident from 1 Corinthians 15:28. When the end comes the Son himself will be subordinated to him Who has subordinated all things to the Son. The eternal subordination of the Son to the Father involves the oneness of God, the unity of the Godhead. Without this subordination of the Son to the Father, it is not possible for Jesus to say, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

It is in light of this background of holy subordination, indeed in light of our reverence for Christ, that Christians acknowledge and accept the "ordering" which God does within his creation. With this background, then, we are to understand the subordination of woman to man. Paul discusses this particular ordering of God in 1 Corinthians 11 (thus making it part of the context for what we find in 1 Corinthians 14):

> I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled

> dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.) That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels. (Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God) (1 Cor 11:2-12).

First of all, Paul makes it clear in these verses of chapter 11 that his subsequent reference to "as even the Law says" is not referring to the judgment over sin in Genesis 3:16 ("He shall rule over you"), nor to some specific commandment, such as the Fourth Commandment, but rather he is referring to the entire Genesis account, the creation, the original ordering of all things, as taught in the Torah (Law). And that ordering always goes back to God. Nothing about this ordering is ever independent of God. Christ to God, man to Christ, woman to man. This relationship, this ordering which is elsewhere described by the term subordination as we have seen, is here pictured by the word "head" (κεφαλή). Headship in Scripture is not a matter of superiority or inferiority, not a matter of master and slave, not a matter of boss and worker. Headship is a matter of the source of life. God the Father is the eternal source of the life of the Son; Christ is the eternal source of life of sinners; and within God's created order, before the fall into sin, the man is the source of the life of the woman.

What does all this matter? It only matters in relationship to God. Apart from God, everything can be seen from its own perspective, independently. But the Christian faith recognizes what the world will not acknowledge: Nothing and no one is ever "apart from God." Therefore, within the life of the church, and especially the church at worship, the faithful are called upon consciously to order themselves with regard to the ordering of God. The same holds also in the Christian household. Therefore, St. Paul urges subordination, the ordering of God, not only in the question of whether women proclaim for edification in the services, but also in the question of whether the church will accept this instruction as it is intended: "If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord." This idea of subordination as the public, corporate, and family-household expressions of life under God is what stands behind Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 14, and it further informs us of the necessity of holding to the proper interpretation of this passage as it has been received and delivered in the church for two millennia.

I now want to consider briefly what Argument "D" does with the other passage upon which our doctrine and practice is based. For Argument "D" also questions the clear, cogent and unambiguous message of 1 Timothy 2:8-14:

> I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

Concerning this seemingly clear admonition which restricts women from teaching, Peter Brunner observes:

> Under teaching the apostle here understands, as one can already infer from the connection with the previous instructions concerning the correct conduct of the woman in worship, the public teaching in the congregation assembled for worship, that is, what we would nowadays call "preaching." This activity is forbidden the woman, just because she is a woman, in a very solemn manner since it is written in the style used for formal decrees. The reason given for the prohibition points to the order that God himself had established at the creation: first the man and then the woman. Furthermore it refers to the different roles that man and woman played in the story of the Fall. Both of these events of the protohistory, the creation and the fall, determine the status of contemporary woman, even the woman who is a Christian.

Headship in Scripture is not a matter of superiority or inferiority, not a matter of master and slave, not a matter of boss and worker. Headship is a matter of the source of life.

In the face of this, what does Argument "D" offer to demonstrate that this passage is unclear or ambiguous? Argument D turns again to word studies. Argument "D" notes that "men" could also mean "husbands" and therefore this might well be a passage about domestic relationships. Argument "D" notes that "teaching" might be something other than "preaching," that it might mean "giving working orders," so that the passage is saying that the wife shouldn't boss the husband. Argument "D" notes that "exercise authority" (αὐθεντεῖν) is a word found nowhere else in the New Testament, and therefore, from a word-study point of view, could mean just about anything. And on the basis of all of these "could be's," Argument "D" concludes that the passage is ambiguous, and therefore not binding.

Here, as is the case with 1 Corinthians 14, Argument "D" again commits the linguistic fallacy which Barr calls the fallacy of "illegitimate totality transfer," the practice of "obscuring the value of a word in a context by imposing on it the totality of its uses." Clearly, that is what is happening throughout the treatment of these verses

by Argument "D." The result is not that Argument "D" uncovers inherent ambiguity in the meaning of the text in its context, but rather that Argument "D" creates ambiguity in obscuring the value of the word in context by imposing on it the totality of its uses elsewhere. Thus, as already observed above in connection with 1 Corinthians 14, Argument "D" here also commits the logical fallacy *petitio principii* (begging the question). As with 1 Corinthians 14, the text of 1 Timothy 2 brings us its own interpretive matrix in its context, a context which refers to worship gatherings, not household dynamics, and which refers to the orders God has built into creation as Paul's inspired rationale for his admonition.

So in the end, what becomes of Argument "D"? The answer is not yet clear! To be sure, while we have discovered that the logical structure of Argument "D" is sound, we also have seen that both the major and the minor premises are faulty. Thus, on both counts we have seen that the conclusion is lost. So, why do I say that the fate of Argument "D" is not yet clear? Because in our church, as in the entire church world today, a growing number of people, pastors and laity alike, just have this feeling down in their gut that this limitation of the pastoral office to men just isn't right because they don't like it. Society has imposed certain perspectives and directions of thought upon us that will not tolerate the ordering of life around the all-encompassing centrality of God in Christ. This pressure upon us, from within as well as from without, is increasing daily.

Moreover, this pressure marshals otherwise noble and spiritual concerns as allies. This pressure reaches into the mission-minded crowd and argues that we need to draw on all the resources that both genders provide as the day is short and the night is soon coming when no man can work. This pressure reaches into the youth and says, we need to change so that you will be able to "be all that you can be," and especially so that you can be "you." This pressure reaches out to the lonely and desolate congregational settings where pastoral vacancies are many and long, and it says, why not make this change so that you can have more pastors from which to choose? And this pressure reaches to the administrative and public relations concerns in our churches, and it says, let's put a more progressive face on our church, for the sake of the gospel.

And all that appears to stand between us and some accommodation to ease these pressures and satisfy the demands of the irritated are two Bible passages and the Scriptural logic which stands behind them. I am convinced that the weight and momentum of opinion within the Lutheran Church today would give us the ordination of women tomorrow, no, yet tonight, if only some acceptable way could be found to neutralize the import of these two passages. Who knows whether Argument "D, "despite its faulty assumptions and its logical and linguistic fallacies might not yet be appealing enough to give this majority permission to knock down the barrier of gender now placed as a limit on the pastoral office? I therefore urge you to take it seriously, and to prepare to face it head on, which will require far more than mere slogans and politics. It will require serious, sober, and alert study of Holy Scripture by us all, so that we might yet deliver unto the next generation what has been delivered unto us down through the long history of the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. But we are not alone, just as this struggle we face is not a new one for the church. In the end, we need only be faithful: faithful to our baptism covenant; faithful to our confirmation vows; faithful to our callings; faithful to the revealed Word; faithful in our stewardship of that which has been delivered unto us; and faithful in the forms of "ordering," "subordination," and "headship" under which God has placed us. God bless you in this faithfulness! LOGIA

Colloquium Fratrum

"Through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren . . ."

Smalcald Articles III/IV

ROBERT D. PREUS: A CORRECTION AND SOME COMMENTS

In my review of Dr. John Tietjen's volume, *Memoirs in Exile* (*Logia* Reformation/October 1992, Vol. I No. 1, pp. 65-69) two serious mistakes were made which call for correction and comment. The corrections will, I hope, clarify the dynamics of the issues, both theological and politicoecclesiastical, underlying the five-year war (1969-1974) between the Tietjen forces (elected and appointed officials and bureaucrats, theological professors, et al.) and the rank-and-file pastors and people who had elected Dr. J.A.O. Preus to be the president of the LCMS.

First, I was wrong in my election figures. A friend of mine who met regularly with the leaders of the so-called moderates during the convention and who was a member of the "election committee" told me that Jack won the election on the sixth ballot by a scant four votes. The fact of the matter, confirmed by Dr. Herbert Mueller, secretary of the synod, in a letter to the newly elected president, was that Jack had received more nominating ballots (436) than the incumbent, Dr. Oliver Harms (417), and on the second ballot Jack won decisively by a 471 to 416 margin.

What is the significance of this sizable victory which Jack never revealed, but the Tietjen people must have known about? There were two overriding issues facing the Denver convention. First was the proposed declaration of full pulpit and altar fellowship between the LCMS and the ALC. President Harms had worked hard for two years toward this goal and staked his presidency on achieving it, although he was quite ignorant of the basis and far-reaching consequences of such a momentous action. On this issue Harms won, after he was defeated for the presidency, and won handily. Although full doctrinal consensus was never achieved between the two synods, Harms had powerful and prestigious forces working for his cause. Foremost were his respected court theologians, all on the synodical Commission on Theology and Church Relations: Dr. Fred Kramer of the Springfield seminary, Dr. Herbert Bouman and Dr. Martin Franzmann of the St. Louis seminary. These were the theological leaders—along with Dr. Richard Jungkuntz, executive secretary of the CTCR, and Dr. Alfred Fuerbringer, president of the St. Louis seminary—who won Harms over to the idea of establishing fellowship with the ALC in the first place. During the biennium, Harms, with a good deal of pressure, in turn won over a number of prominent district presidents. The opposition of the Springfield faculty was blunted by innuendos from Walter Wolbrecht, CEO of the synodical Board of Directors, that the seminary subsidy might be lowered. The *coup de grace* was delivered at the convention when the president of the ALC, Dr. Fred Schiotz, made a magnificent appeal for fellowship from the convention floor by professing his belief in the "inerrancy" of Scripture (even voicing "agreement" with an essay I had written on the subject) and reciting with conviction and fervor Luther's explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed. Fellowship was "established" impressively by a vote of 522 to 438. So the fellowship issue was not the reason Jack won. In fact, his mild but honest opposition to fellowship with the ALC might have lost him votes.

The second issue facing the synod at the convention was more important, but a wee bit more submerged, namely the situation at the St. Louis seminary. Since the days of President John W. Behnken, complaints had been streaming in to synod presidents, the seminary and other quarters, protesting essays and writings of various professors and accusing them of false doctrine on a broad range of points. The synod needed a theological leader to confront these doctrinal issues which centered in the divine origin and authority of Scripture. The highly controversial issues were simultaneously confusing and polarizing the synod, both clergy and people. What better man to choose as leader of the beleaguered synod than the president of a seminary who was a good theologian and was liked and respected and trusted by hundreds of pastors who had studied under him?

So Jack did not squeak into office by four votes. He won big by 55 votes. And thus when he immediately revealed his intention to investigate the doctrine taught at the St. Louis seminary and followed through with his intention, he did so not as a venturesome and trouble-making church politician, conjuring up issues to gain popularity and support, but as one who had a clear, inescapable mandate. And Jack carried out that mandate while at the same time never revealing to anyone the magnitude of his victory over his predecessor—until I made my mistake. He kept the election results secret out of consideration for Dr. Harms—and to appear nonthreatening to those alarmed by the unexpected turn of events.

The second correction which must be made in my review is to add an essential and highly significant portion of the review which was somehow omitted in the Reformation 1992 issue of Logia. The omission in the review as printed makes my fourth observation concerning the Tietjen-Preus conflict virtually incoherent. I wish to cite this omitted section of the review and then make some comments.

4. There are a couple of lessons to be learned from the Tietjen-Preus conflict. First, 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 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 Godfearing, 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.

The second lesson to be learned from Tietjen's *Memoirs* is that a president of a synod or church body can with resolve and pertinacity get rid of an able president of a good and respected seminary, if he wants to. As much as any Christian group of people in America, the constituency of the Missouri Synod loved and respected its seminaries and professors. Tietjen was surrounded and supported by an army of celebrated scholars and competent church leaders in every sphere of the synod's activities. The faculty was loyal to him. The students revered him. How could Jack ever bring him down, even armed with the pure doctrine of the Gospel and all its articles? Here is how Jack did it, step by step.

a) Realizing that he had been elected to address himself to the doctrinal situation at the seminary, Jack researched all the many complaints which had been made against professors by pastors, districts and all groups throughout the synod. And Jack frankly and honestly told the church what he was doing and that the situation was worrisome, if not alarming. Something would have to be done.

b) As stated above, Jack studied and mastered the synodical Handbook, and he took charge of the governance of the affairs of the synod, gradually gaining influence or even control over the various boards and commissions of the synod, especially those connected with the activities of the seminary. This was accomplished by appointments to commissions and boards, appointment of special committees, feeding candidates for elected office to preferred lists prepared for delegates before conventions, and similar legal devices. Overt politicking was left in the hands of the "troops."

c) A *casus belli* was established: in this case the preservation of Missouri's identity, the historic doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod, based squarely on Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions,

d) An investigation or some kind of (pastoral) visitation of the seminary must take place, if its leadership is to be toppled and replaced. The investigation could center in the doctrine taught at the seminary, the spiritual life on campus, turmoil on campus, or some other ostensible or contrived reason. In this instance the *casus belli* in the synod became the reason for the investigation, namely the doctrine taught at the seminary. And so the investigation, made to appear as benign as possible, was suggested, discussed with Tietjen and members of the faculty, debated, revised, hashed over—and publicized in a most dignified fashion. The faculty felt that they had no choice but to oppose it, and they did so vociferously, to their own detriment. The investigation progressed to its inexorable conclusion, duly reported to the New Orleans convention.

e) Another stratagem in Jack's arsenal was the attempt in a variety of ways to reconcile the irreconcilable theological differences at the seminary and in the synod while at the same time investigating the seminary. Thus we find Tietjen commenting in frustration, "In the hands of the Preus administration, mediation efforts meant quieting the opposition in order to confirm the actions that had prompted the need for mediation."

f) In the meantime Jack was blunting the effectiveness of Tietjen's role as president by keeping him from getting new men who shared the doctrinal position of the seminary leadership on the faculty. Jack had brought under his hegemony the Board for Higher Education, which, according to the Handbook, was required to give prior approval for all new faculty members. As far as I can recall, Tietjen was able to bring in only one new professor during his five-year administration, Dr. Edward Schroeder.

g) To accomplish his goal Jack had to take over the Board of Control which at the Milwaukee convention and through the following biennium had successfully defended Tietjen and the faculty against the many charges leveled against them. At New Orleans new faces appeared on the board, giving Jack a 6-to-5 majority. A majority of one is enough. Tietjen's downfall was sealed. The future was in the hands of the board.

h) Another step on Jack's agenda was, in a quiet and considerate manner, to ask Tietjen to step down from his presidency for the good of the school and the synod. The request to resign came not from Jack directly, but from Dr. Lewis Niemoeller, chairman of the Board for Higher Education (pp. 154-56). The request was made without any forewarning at the most hectic and busy time of the New Orleans convention after the faculty majority had been thoroughly discredited by the public and extensive "Blue Book" report of Jack's committee investigating the doctrinal conditions at the seminary. Tietjen saved Jack the trouble of leaking or announcing his request to the convention by immediately rejecting it from the convention floor.

i) The next step, essential to Jack's strategy, was to find reputable men in the synod to charge Tietjen with false doctrine and of tolerating the various doctrinal aberrations taught by various faculty and to persuade the Board of Control to suspend Tietjen on this basis. This action along with that of the New Orleans convention, which judged that the faculty majority taught false doctrine, was the proximate occasion for the faculty and students leaving the seminary and the formation of Seminex.

j) The final step, seemingly anticlimactic but totally consistent with Jack's plan, was his *coup de grace*. Since the New Orleans convention on the basis of the "Blue Book" had adjudged the faculty to be guilty of false doctrine which could not be tolerated in the church, Tietjen had to be dealt with as the leader and defender of those who taught such doctrinal aberrations. For, although he had helped to found an opposition seminary, he still remained a member of the Missouri Synod. The Board of Control asked Dr. Herman Scherer, a board member and president of the Missouri District, to deal with the matter and determine whether Tietjen should be suspended from the synod. Scherer turned the matter over to a highly respected pastor in the English District, for Tietjen belonged to a member congregation of that district. Surprisingly he exonerated Tietjen. His decision was appealed by the two pastors who had accused Tietjen of false doctrine, and the matter was turned over by Jack to Dr. Theodore Nickel, third vice president of the synod. A couple of years after the walkout Nickel wrote Tietjen, asking him to abjure "certain positions" (p. 286) he had held and fostered. When, after a meeting with Tietjen, Tietjen declined to do so, Nickel wrote an official notice to the *Lutheran Witness*, Oct. 16, 1977, which stated, "Dr. John Tietjen is, therefore, no longer a clergy member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and is not eligible for a call."

The aforementioned steps indicate how the president of a church body can turn the direction of a renowned seminary by ousting the leader of the seminary. Jack's war strategy and execution, played out with a lone hand, was brilliant. As far as I know nothing like that had ever been accomplished before in the history of Lutheranism. Jack broke the back of the St. Louis seminary; and the two LCMS seminaries have never regained their theological stature and influence in the leadership of the synod, and probably never will. After twelve stormy years of leadership Jack handed over to his successor a synod purged of false doctrine, committed to the traditional Missouri Synod understanding of the *sola Scriptura* and confessional subscription, committed to missions and honest, efficient administration—and the machinery for again ridding a seminary of its president, if he became unruly theologically or administratively—truly a remarkable accomplishment. And in doing so, he did not overtly violate the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions, or even the Handbook. Tietjen, as his *Memoirs* show, saw vaguely every step of the way what was happening, but his commitment to his friends and his cause prevented him from changing the course of events.

I would like to make one comment on the significance of Jack's remarkable accomplishment in the light of subsequent events in the LCMS. Almost every war leaves in its wake some kind of vacuum. When Jack broke the back of the St. Louis seminary and the great bulk of the faculty walked off and started a new seminary, a vacuum of theological leadership, already incipient during the Harms and late Behnken administrations, was created. This lack of confessional Lutheran theological leadership, leadership which once rivaled that of the great German Lutheran universities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries before the intrusion of pietism and the Enlightenment, and which was the hallmark of the St. Louis seminary for over a century, has not been filled. The seminary's influence was admittedly on the wane years before Tietjen arrived on the scene. But the events of 1974 brought about the eclipse of the seminary's commanding theological leadership. Like the University of Wittenberg in the eighteenth century, the former prestige and high position of Concordia Seminary as a bastion of orthodox confessional Lutheranism will probably never be regained. Meanwhile the Springfield/Fort Wayne seminary was not encouraged or allowed by Jack or his successor to fill the gap.

Nature abhors a vacuum. Where does the theological leadership in the Missouri Synod reside now that the seminaries no longer have it? Largely in the hands of the synodical president, that is, if he wants to exert it. What has happened is this. Theological opinions are ordinarily no longer rendered by the seminary faculties, but by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, a composite group consisting of laymen and preachers and teachers—and officials—elected or appointed in a variety of ways, in some cases by officials. And these decisions, while ordinarily ignored by the members of the synod, are binding in cases of doctrinal discipline, along with the decision of district presidents who are under the jurisdiction of the president of the synod. Censorship and doctrinal review of synodically produced literature and official publications no longer resides with the St. Louis faculty, but is placed in the hands of a large number of anonymous clergymen, appointed by the president of the synod. The *Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter/Alive*, the official organs of the synod, are no longer edited by the St. Louis seminary faculty, but by a clergyman responsible to a board, consisting of two pastors, two lay-women and a teacher. Whereas seminary faculty members forty years ago were almost exclusively chosen to deliver doctrinal essays at synodical and district conventions and larger pastoral conferences, today almost anyone, including laymen or women or members of non-Lutheran church bodies, can be invited to speak on theological or non-theological topics. At many such conventions and meetings there are no doctrinal essays or discussions at all anymore. The St. Louis seminary formerly edited an official journal, the *Concordia Theological Monthly*. There is no such official journal anymore. Clearly the role of seminary faculty members, "teachers of the whole church" as they were called in Luther's day, has been reduced radically in the synod's agenda.

Whether Jack planned it this way or in the heat of battle was even aware of what was happening is doubtful—the erosion of

serious theological leadership was probably gaining momentum in all church bodies in America at that time (see *No Place for Truth* by David F. Wells, Eerdmans, 1992) and was already in process when Jack took office—but he did little to restore the seminary to its former position of theological influence. Perhaps, in retrospect, there was little he could have done. At least, we must say to his credit, he did not try to humble or dominate the seminaries after the war, but left them alone to lick their wounds and adjust to the demise of their theological influence in a battered synod which probably does not know or care as much about Lutheran doctrine as it used to. And they continue to send out a goodly number of pious and confessionally Lutheran men into the ministry of word and sacrament.

The acquisition of greater theological influence in the office of the synodical president was actively pursued by Jack's successor, Dr. Ralph Bohlmann. Thus far today's synodical president, Dr. Alvin Barry, has shown no propensity to control and lead the seminaries in their theological program. It remains to be seen whether he will want them to regain their former stature and, if he does, whether he will be able to enhance their leadership role, so fundamental to a confessional Lutheran church body. Ironically, the future of the two Missouri Synod seminaries depends in large measure upon the strong theological leadership of the synodical president. If President Barry decides actively to rehabilitate the seminaries' theological position in the synod, if he decides for real peace in his war-torn synod, he will have a fight on his hands, not only against the devil, the world, and his flesh, but against the majority of officialdom in his own synod—just as Jack did.

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LEIGH JORDAHL: ANGELS

Bjarne Teigen, in an otherwise good review of Heiko Oberman's excellent book on Luther, simply missed my sermonic thesis statement when he referred to me as having bade farewell to angels, both good and bad. The thrust of the quoted sermon, clearly understood at the time by the hearers, was precisely to make the opposite point. That is, the Bible uses mythological language, but as God's revelation does not employ myth to assert untruth. The point was the proclamation of the sovereignty of God's act of grace in Jesus Christ, and St. Michael as a picture exactly of that "strange and dreadful strife when life and death contended." The hymn sung on the occasion was that hymn of Luther with its "the victory remained with life, the reign of death was ended." Of course, Bjarne Teigen, Heiko Oberman, and I all live in a different world than Luther. None of us is afraid to walk into a forest lest the devil should meet us there; nor would we throw an inkwell at him. That does not mean that the devil is less a reality than to Luther.

Teigen, as though to reinforce his point about loss of faith, goes on to mention the professor at my college who maintains that the "Judeo-Christian" won't do any longer. Loyal D. Rue, the man referred to, knows that he and I are at exactly opposite poles on that subject. In fact, I suspect he regards me as something of an unreconstructed, traditional Lutheran. I doubt if my favorite morning prayer would much suit him unless perhaps radically demythologized: "Let thy holy angels have charge concerning me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me."

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BJARNE TEIGEN RESPONDS:

Since I would not want to do Prof. Jordahl an injustice, I reread his homily, which I first read twenty-five years ago. In his letter he insists that at that time he was not bidding farewell to the angels, good and evil, but rather that "the thrust of the quoted sermon, clearly understood at the time by the hearers, was precisely to make the opposite point."

I recognize that in the sermon Prof. Jordahl does make the point (and that eloquently) that man in this world is faced with the "dreadful mystery of evil," that dreadful things not only happen to man but also within man. He also confesses that God will not allow evil to be the final word or the word that wins the victory.

For these words I am grateful. But my point in quoting Prof. Jordahl's statement regarding angels was not to make a judgment with respect to the entire sermon, but to point out that he had in no uncertain terms rejected the biblical doctrine of angels. Now he states that he does believe in angels: "The thrust of the quoted sermon, clearly understood at the time by the hearers, was precisely to make the opposite point" [i.e., that he has bade farewell to angels, both good and bad]. However, I still cannot force myself to conclude that I misread him with regard to the doctrine of the angels. His last words that I quoted are so final: "For better or worse, modern men (and that certainly includes us) simply don't believe in these things anymore."

I can't escape the conviction that he has jettisoned the biblical doctrine of angels as useless baggage for modern man. It is, of course, quite obvious that his faculty colleague, Prof. Loyal Rue, has ditched the entire biblical doctrine, hoping to find a satisfactory substitute while en route.

The fundamental difference between Prof. Jordahl's position and mine lies in the fact that I accept the Bible as God's revelation of his will to mankind, while he must first demythologize at least part of its contents before it is usable to mankind: "The Bible uses mythological language, but as God's revelation does not employ myth to assert untruth." The Reformation 1993 *Logia* has as its theme "Scripture and Authority in the Church." Perhaps the topic can be discussed at greater length by the specialists who will write for that issue.

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JON S. BRUSS: EPHESIANS 2:10 AND SANCTIFICATION

I read with great pleasure the reply to Dr. Nordlie's rebuttal of Pastor Senkbeil's critique of *The Goal of the Gospel*, a book co-authored by Nordlie (*Logia* Vol II, Holy Trinity/July 1993, pp. 55-57). I was happy to see Nordlie addressed as to the arguments he marshaled for his position on the basis of the Greek text of Ephesians 2:8-10.

However, having identified the problem involved with Nordlie's understanding of Ephesians 2:10, a specific exegetical solution to the problem presented by the contemporary understanding of Ephesians 2:10 was not offered (unless it was implicit in your appeal to the confessional Lutheran paradigm of the economy of salvation—although I for one remained quite unconvinced, and I imagine there are many others of us). I am writing, then, to pick up the argument where it was left.

First of all (and this is where the modern versions and the commentators make their first and foundational mistake) the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς does not imply any sort of "purpose or intention" as, unfortunately, many have been misguided into thinking. Rather, as is elsewhere encountered in Pauline Greek, ἐπί + dative has the force of "on the basis of" (cf. e.g., Romans 5.12: ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον). Hence, the good works referred to by Paul here are the *basis* of our creation in Christ Jesus, not the *goal* of our creation in Christ. (Even St. Jerome handles it more correctly than the modern translations with his Vulgate reading *in operibus bonis.*)

When we have correctly understood this, the passage is brought back to its proper christological and soteriological focus which Paul has been developing since verse one of chapter two. The logical progression of Paul's argument from 2:1-10 is basically this: "We were dead in trespasses and sins. God in his mercy and grace, although we were dead, made us alive in Christ and raised us with him and seated us with him in heaven. But we may not vaunt this; it is God's doing by his grace, not ours by our own works. He has created us as live beings (*his* grace) on the basis of his Son's good works (not *our own* works)."

Furthermore, we do violence to what follows if we try to make ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς say "for good works." If Paul's argument in 2:1-10 had been, "You were dead in trespasses and sins. God made you alive in Christ. Therefore do good works," we would expect Paul to pick up that very thought in verses eleven and following, especially since verse eleven is introduced by διό, "Looking back on what I just said, and on the basis of it. . . ." However, he only encourages his readers to remember their salvation, and discusses soteriology again, only this time using a different picture.

If you've been following along in your Greek text, then you probably want some explanation of the expression οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεός. The relative οἷς is in the dative case by attraction to ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς. The compaction of the full expression ἐπί . . . θεός is such that this attraction naturally occurs, and οἷς stands in the place of ἅ (the accusative plural neuter relative pronoun), as the direct object of προητοίμασεν. This preparation of the good works which are the basis of our creation in Christ took place in the eternal counsel of the Trinity and sprang forth as the Word Incarnate in his active obedience; before they were done in time, they had already been prepared in eternity. In Christ, time and eternity meet, and talk of precedent action becomes irrelevant. These good works, which *God* (I italicize "God" because ὁ θεός is emphatic by virtue of position) prepared beforehand, have been in force before the beginning of the world in the Son of God in whom also we have been set aside beforehand Eph 1:11).

Thus what some make out to be an anthropocentric directive to prove our faith is actually a Christocentric description of the eternal counsel of the Holy Trinity as it is focused on the economy of salvation. Hence, instead of implicitly calling our salvation into question on the basis of our lack of willingness to engage in good works, it explicitly moves the onus of our salvation from ourselves to the eternal counsel of the Holy Trinity revealed in the hypostatic Word. If you stand and shout at a tree and tell it to grow fruit because you expect it to, and if it does grow and does provide fruit, it's despite your shouting. But if you fertilize it and water it, allowing the roots to grow deeper and stronger, the fruit it provides comes naturally and the growth can be sustained.

ἵνα is always purposive (except for a few cases in Johannine Greek: cf. e.g., John 2:25 where ἵνα is a stylistic substitute for ὅτι). The emphatic position of the prepositional phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς in this purpose clause draws attention away from the verb (which, at any rate, although active, does not mean much more than "exist" or "go through life") to itself and hence also the good works. These good works of Christ which become ours by the grace of God define us as Christians, and contrast sharply with the evil works of our death to God outside of his grace (Eph 2:1-2).

In summary, then, Ephesians 2:10 teaches nothing of sanctification, unless by sanctification we mean the holiness which God imputes to us in Christ. (This, in fact, may well be the generally accepted Pauline meaning of sanctification. See 1 Corinthians 1:30, ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεις ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ιησοῦ, ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμὸς [sanctification, holiness!] καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις). I offer this as a proper translation of Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his creation, having been created in Christ Jesus on the basis of good works which *God* has prepared beforehand so that we might walk about in them." These good works are therefore nothing less than the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus which is the basis of our justification by God's grace. Furthermore, such a reading buttresses the integrity of the claims of Ephesians 2:8 by returning the focus again to the Christocentric nature of the economy of salvation.

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Reviews

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

Review Essay

Meta-Church and its Implications for a Confessional Lutheran Church

Prepare Your Church for the Future. By Carl F. George, Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1992.

The Meta-Church paradigm has been adopted by the Board for Mission Services of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as its method for doing foreign and North American missions. It is one of the latest methods developed and promoted by the Church Growth Movement. The primary exponent of this new church model is Carl F. George, director of the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth. George credits Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Central Full Gospel Church, in Seoul, South Korea, along with other similarly structured churches for aiding his discovery of the Meta-Church model (p. 53).

The technical name Meta-Church was coined by missionary anthropologist Paul Heibert, a colleague of Carl George for several years at Fuller Theological Seminary School for World Missions. "The prefix *meta-* means 'change,' as in *meta*bolism, *meta*morphosis, *meta*physical, and the Greek word *metanoia* ('to change one's mind' or 'repent')" (p. 51).

"The name Meta-Church, then, is quite distinct from mega church. This new label allows for greater numbers, but its *deepest focus is on change: pastors changing their minds about how ministry is to be done, and churches changing their organizational form in order to be free from constraints. A Meta-Church pastor understands how a church can be structured so that its most fundamental spiritual and emotional support centers never become obsolete, no matter how large it becomes overall*" (pp. 51-52).

This change in thinking about the church and ministry will have a profound effect on the doctrine of justification and the means of grace, the office of the holy ministry, the proper role of the laity, orthodox worship, the conservation and promotion of the true faith and defense against heresy.

Practitioners of the Meta-Church within the Missouri Synod who are introducing this structure and way of thinking into the local congregations of our North American districts and foreign mission fields ought to take seriously the warning of Carl George. He cautions, "In the process, you'll learn why *it is difficult to incorporate portions* of Meta-Church methodology into an existing church in the *same eclectic manner you assimilate other church programs. Such adaptation meets with consistent frustration and produces only marginal result*" (p. 59).

It is important to stress at the outset that it is not the intent of this essay to criticize the use of small groups, large festive Divine Services, active laity, strong evangelism and the necessity of proper administrative structures. The purpose is to examine the Meta-Church approach on the basis of a scriptural and confessional understanding of the church and the ministry. This critique is primarily an examination of Carl F. George's book, *Prepare Your Church for the Future.* The book is the major source of the Meta-Church model being introduced into the LCMS. Future studies need to be undertaken which scrutinize the materials produced by the mission departments of the Missouri Synod (e.g., training materials, strategy statements, videos) and ascertain the extent to which they are consistent with pure Lutheran theology.[1] A beginning has been made in an article by Rev. Kenneth W. Wieting titled "The Method of Meta-Church: The Point of Truth and the Points That Trouble."[2]

META-CHURCH MODEL: SMALL GROUP CELL & CELEBRATIVE WORSHIP

"The two most visible elements of the Meta-Church are the small home-based group [cell of about ten people] and the celebration-sized group" (p. 59). The understanding of the small group in the Meta-Church model is radically different from the place small groups have traditionally held in most churches. These cell groups are not just another form of traditional groups within a congregation such as the family, boards and committees, the youth group, LLL, LWML, or even home Bible study groups. Cells are the "fundamental building blocks of the Meta-Church" (p. 87); ". . . cells are units of redemption" (p. 99); "As the cells fare, so goes the whole Meta-Church movement" (p. 98). The term "meta" is in reference to a radically new way of thinking about the church as consisting of "semi-autonomous" cells. To grasp what is "new" and different about the Meta-Church one must understand the relationship of the small cell group to the larger church.[3]

The "Meta-Zoo" chart in George's book, though somewhat puerile, is effective in communicating the radical nature of the Meta-Church. The "Meta-Zoo" chart (as Carl George himself labels it) includes the following: The house *group* (3-35 people) is labeled and pictured as a mouse; the small church (35-75) a cat;

medium church (74-200) a lap dog; large church (200-1,000) a yard dog; very large super church (1,000-3,000) a horse; and the huge mega-church (3,000-10,000) an elephant. Finally there is the "beyond huge meta-church?" [sic] (10,000+) which is labeled a "dinosaur?" [sic] and a "convention of mice." To illustrate the profound departure from the form and practice of the traditional church, the illustration consists of the outline of a brontosaurus filled in with numerous mice. A question mark is attached to both the words "church?" and "dinosaur?" The mice are the primary unit. The Meta-Church is primarily a loose convention of "house *groups*."

The Lutheran Confessions teach that the church is created, built and sustained by the Holy Spirit who works through the gospel and the sacraments (AC V & VII). The center and focus of the church is the assembly gathered about the pastor who does what he has been given to do by God. This he does in Divine Service where the gospel is preached and Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution and Holy Communion are administered, through which saving faith is created and sustained. Good works and devotions flow from this center and take place in that "holy order or estate" into which God has placed the individual Christian (see Table of Duties in the Small Catechism).

The Meta-Church shifts from the primary locus of the font-confessional-altar-pulpit around which the royal priesthood gathers to the *loci* [or *loca*] of small home groups. Interpersonal relations (anthropocentric) and "tender loving care"[4] (remember that love is the summary of the law, not the gospel) replace a personal relationship with Jesus where he has chosen to be known personally by his grace through the word of law and gospel (properly distinguished), through Baptism, through his very body and blood, and through Holy Absolution (where the pastor stands in the stead and by the command of Christ when he speaks the Lord's forgiveness). The latter is a truly Christocentric, theocentric, grace-centered model and method.

The Meta-Church cell is a small, home-based group. Carl George explains it as: ". . . an ongoing relational gathering—a little flock or cell—in which about ten participants model and learn how to care for one another. They receive the Lord Jesus as Savior. They study the written Word of God and apply its teaching to their lives. They experience the ministry of the Holy Spirit as they build up and encourage one another" (p. 59).

The above explanation is quite revealing in that the "theology" (ideology, sociology or anthropology may be more appropriate terms) driving the Meta-Church does not flow from the gospel and the sacraments, but from the law and experience. The Holy Spirit has slipped loose from the word and sacraments. Yes, the groups are to "study the written Word of God and apply its teaching to their lives," but an objective, critical reading of the whole book leaves no question that this is referring to discipleship and sanctification. Lutherans must not read into this what is not there. What is not found in Meta-Church thinking (nor in Reformed thinking) is that the Word of God applies the very forgiveness of sins won for us on the cross. "His Word bestows what it says" (*Lutheran Worship*, p. 6). The means of grace are truly the means which deliver the forgiveness of sins, life, salvation and the Holy Spirit.

If the synodical and district mission departments are going to insist on the Meta-Church model for new mission starts and attempt to introduce this way of thinking into existing congregations, then it is absolutely necessary for them to first think through the theological ramifications—and there are a host of issues to be carefully worked through. Theological and ethical integrity demands this of churchmen in the Lord's church. Style, form, structure and method may be adiaphora, but they are not neutral. Style must be determined by substance, for style in turn will have a positive or negative effect on the preservation of the substance (*fides quae creditur*).

Meta-Church style, structure and method are shaped and determined by a goal. The goal is growth. This growth is two-fold: growth in numbers and growth in personal faith and discipleship. In this respect "meta-thinking" is suitable for churches of the Reformed and Arminian traditions whose substance is centered on sanctification (measurable growth in man—*inter nos*). George writes, "A goal of the Meta-Church is to multiply large numbers of green zone groups [ten person cells] so that people can be nurtured and loved toward maturity in Christ" (p. 168).

Fuller Seminary Meta-Church thinking does not operate with a Lutheran (biblical) understanding of the means of grace in which the living word actually delivers what it says. In Meta-Church thinking, the sacraments are not an integral part of the bestowal of grace, but merely supplementary laws.

In Meta-Church thinking, the doctrine of the church begins with man. The synergistic decision for Christ is made in man (*inter nos*). Where the Holy Spirit slips free from the Word and man participates in his decision for Christ, the individual becomes the starting point. It begins with a personal relationship with Jesus (*inter nos*), rather than a personal relationship with Jesus through the Word and Sacraments (*extra nos*).

One is then free to organize individuals in any number of sociopolitical structures from homogeneous units to cell groups. Whatever works best to foster growth in discipleship or in the number of disciples. Whatever works best—pragmatism. Success, health, strategy, methods are built according to measurements. Numbers become the marks of the church. Numbers can be seen—theology of glory versus the theology of the cross. Get the numbers right rather than get the gospel and sacraments right.

This shift in paradigm poses great dangers for the church. A church which is centered on man and his love for others results in legalism and work-righteousness. The appealing talk about concern for others and tender loving care will not change the fact that a church built on sociopolitical structures, methods and goals will go the way of the law rather than the way of the Gospel. People will awake to discover a church more legalistic and rigid than they ever dreamed possible. Meta-Church paradigms will not—indeed they cannot—tolerate the confessional understanding of the church and the ministry. The truly evangelical church operates with the gospel. The freedom of the gospel defies measurements. Meta-Church-thinking mission boards will not call pastors whose theology is shaped by the Augsburg Confession. It will take great courage for subsidized sister Lutheran Churches in foreign countries to resist the pressure put on them to adopt Meta-Church models. Foreign and North American mission executives will discourage the use of doctrinally pure hymnals and liturgies in new mission starts. Subsidized mission congregations and pastors in North America will also be pressured to accept the Meta-Church program.

THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY MINISTRY AND LAY LEADERSHIP

Meta-Church thinking demands a rethinking of the office of the holy ministry to correspond with the new paradigm. The harmonization of the office of the holy ministry with the Meta-Church model involves a transfer of titles and responsibilities.

Since the cell is now the primary place of redemption, the cell lay leader is given the duties and titles originally given to the pastor. The biblical terms historically ascribed only to the pastor are transferred to the lay leaders. They become "lay ministers" (p. 102), they are called "shepherds," "lay pastors," who "do the pastoring" (p. 97). George writes: "The leader of each nurturing group functions as a lay pastor to that ten-or-so-person flock. This shepherd takes responsibility for the spiritual vitality of the cell and receives careful oversight from the senior pastor or pastoral staff."

The pastor's catechetical responsibility is also transferred to the cell group. "Many churches follow a pastor's-class, sponsor-family or otherwise centralized model of helping new people feel at home. What if that responsibility shifted to the cell groups? What if every ten-person group saw itself as the initial pastor's class and sponsoring family? Assimilation would be more personalized, more spontaneous, and more widespread. Plus, people who think relationally to a church fall through the cracks when it comes to the large units, such as the worship celebration."

The preferred technical term reserved solely for the pastor seems to be the secular expression, "professional clergy." The void left by transferring the pastor's titles to lay leaders is filled by borrowing titles from the business and entertainment world. The pastor is now a "coach" as opposed to player (p. 120), "manager," "communicator" (p.93), "rancher" (p. 192), "director" (as in symphony director) and "chief executive officer" or CEO (p. 185).

The CEO's new function is described as follows: "Whether a church is a cat-size fellowship of fifty or a beyond-huge, metropolis-wide gathering of mice, its CEO's overriding message will still be directed at the X [cell group of ten], saying, 'Bless you, because you are the key to everything. Don't call the church staff first. We're always available for backup work, coaching work, and referral work. God will use you. You lay hands on the sick. You prepare them to receive the blessings of the Spirit of God'" (p. 192).

Nowhere does Carl George actually state that the lay leaders should baptize. The role and place of the sacraments are not addressed in the book. One suspects the transferring of sacramental acts is acceptable if not preferred. If Lutheran pastors and missionaries are to adopt the Meta-Church method and thinking, the question of where the sacraments fit into the picture needs to be clearly explained. The Board for Mission Services has adopted the Meta-Church paradigm. The 1993 Summer edition of the BFMS publication *Our Mission* contained a disconcerting account of a new manner of baptizing. Twenty-seven adults and children were baptized. According to *Our Mission*, "On November 8, 1992, in Kuna community of Loma Coba, west of Panama City, a special event was taking place. [The] Missionary, assisted by [a] Vicar, officiated over the rites. *Whole families were baptized by the fathers, emphasizing the father's role as spiritual leader in the home*" (emphasis added).[5] One wonders if this novelty is in any way the product of Meta-Church thinking. Such baptismal practice is more consistent with Meta-Church thinking than with Confessional Lutheran thinking. In fact, this practice is in opposition to Augustana XIV, "Order in the Church," which confesses, "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call."

Carl George continues: "I am convinced more than ever that the Meta-Church offers a manager's and communicator's perspective viable for any church of any size. It repeats a basic question of training, found in 2 Timothy 2:2 and elsewhere: Am I doing the ministry myself, or am I committing others to do it?" (p. 193). 2 Timothy 2:2 reads, "And the things you (Timothy) have heard me (Paul) say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." Given the nature of the pastoral epistles, the context would hardly argue for lay leaders of Meta-Church cell groups.

In answer to the question "Am I committing others to do the ministry or am I doing it myself?" Carl George responds with another question, "What management structure sees to it that churches have a proliferation of ministry-centered nurture cells? Meta-Church theory teaches that the central leadership task of the church, after hearing from God, is the development of laypeople who can minister the grace of God in its many forms and, as a result, create obedient disciples of Jesus Christ who apply the truths of the Bible to their everyday lives" (p. 193).

The stress on the pastor as primarily a coach is seen in this quote: "A minister who wants to experience a championship season must come to view every group leader as a team coach and every parishioner as a potential player. Otherwise, the pastor will become so wrapped up in other tasks that *the most important one slips: the developing of lay cell-group leaders*" (p. 120).

There it is—the priority clearly articulated! It is not preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments and giving faithful pastoral care that is the priority, but "developing the lay cell-group leaders." What actually is it that the pastor is to give to the laity to do that he has historically "selfishly" kept for himself? Teaching is one responsibility, however, this is not to say that this job goes automatically to the cell-group leader. George insists: "Leaders don't bear the label of teacher or any other gift-related title, because that may be the calling of someone else in the group! Their agenda typically involves worship, Bible study, sharing, and prayer, but the greatest emphasis is relating truth to life" (p. 103).

"Discovery of spiritual talent is one of the most important factors in the development of the Meta-Church. The Holy Spirit promised to make gifts and gifted people available to the churches for mutually edifying one-another ministry (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:3-13)" (p. 103).

The Meta-Church paints a negative picture of the traditional role of the clergy as detrimental to the development of the gifts and talents of the laity. People are said to have been overly dependent on the pastor, and of course, "Generations of clergy have worked diligently to preserve this expectation" (p. 67). It is at this point that the deficiency in the Church Growth understanding of office of the holy ministry is especially evident.

That a pastor may or may not possess some or many of the gifts described in I Corinthians and Ephesians is not relevant. Just because the pastor is understood (in biblical terms) to be a "steward of the mysteries" (publicly serving out the word and sacraments), does it follow that the rest of the congregation can't use

their gifts and do their best to show love and concern to those in need?

During the 1980s, spiritual gifts assessment instruments made their way into the Missouri Synod from Church Growth circles. Mission executives who have adopted the Church Growth and Meta-Church methods stress the so-called spiritual gifts of the individual pastor plus his ability to train the laity in their discovery and use of so-called spiritual gifts. (Note: Resolution 3-16, "To Study Subject of Spiritual Gifts," was adopted at the 1989 Synodical Convention in Wichita. It directs the CTCR to "study in more detail the subject of spiritual gifts and specifically the use of spiritual gift inventories . . ." See *Proceedings*, p. 119).[6]

A Meta-Church mission board puts more emphasis on developing leadership training for the laity than on the intensive task of building seminaries for training a highly theological and sound pastorate. The reason behind this is clearly articulated by Carl George who writes, "The leader of each home-cell group receives careful training and supervision. In fact, the net effect of all these lay ministers combined is what drives, perpetuates and ensures the quality of the entire church! The role of the church staff is to effectively manage the leadership development structures" (p. 59). George emphasizes that "By organizing the caring and the leadership formation around the building block of a ten-person cell, a church of any overall size can insure quality or care at very intense levels" (pp. 59-60).

The Meta-Church people do not grasp the extent to which theologically competent pastors/theologians are necessary in both establishing and maintaining a confessional church. Meta-Church thinking also fails to grasp the incarnational and sacramental nature of the holy ministry. In Lutheran theology the pastor stands in the place of Christ when he speaks the gospel. The pastor presides over the distribution of the very body and blood of our Lord.

The intimate connection between the divinely instituted means of grace and the office of the holy ministry can be observed in the nearly interchangeable titles. "Holy ministry" could be translated "Divine Service." It is "holy" or "divine" because it belongs to God and he is the one doing it. "Ministry" and "service" say the same thing. The Divine Service and the holy ministry serve and administer, that is, give out the gifts of the Word and Sacraments and thus the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation to those who repent and believe the gospel.

CELEBRATIVE WORSHIP

According to George, "The second visible dimension in a Meta-Church is the corporate celebration. Cell groups will seem to lack significance if they're not joined to (or alternated with) a praise celebration of worship . . . the worship celebration demands no size limitations. In fact, the bigger the better! It's like a professional football game. The stadium may be packed with 70,000 people, but how did each person get there? Probably through one or two carloads of friends who have a tailgate party and then sit together to 'participate' in the cheering" (pp. 60-61).

"When believers come together in a huge crowd, for example, an extra festival-like dimension of excitement attaches itself to the singing of praise or consciousness of the group, an apprehension that God is accomplishing something big enough to be worthy of their involvement and investment" (p. 61). This explains the Meta-Church slogan found on the front cover of the book, "Large enough to celebrate, small enough to care."

According to George, the traditional church model typically falls into a category larger than a cell and smaller than a celebration. George then gives it the less-than-flattering title "(Sub) congregation." Of this size church he concludes: "It often tries, without the greatest success, to bridge both worlds: to be intimate and caring like a cell and to generate the excitement and festival effect of a celebration" (p. 61). The words "intimate and caring," "excitement" and "effect" reveal that the Meta-Church is indeed experience-driven. The popular expression "felt need" substantiates this. A chart describing the celebration includes the category "Advantages—Needs Met." Under this heading one reads, "Corporate worship characterized by festival-like atmosphere of praise and excitement."

There is absolutely no mention of the forgiveness of sins given out in worship. In those churches which deny the means of grace as effecting the forgiveness of sins, the liturgy, hymns and sermons slip into assurance language. It becomes the job of the pastor and music director to assure the folks that their sins are forgiven. Such worship centers on mood and emotion.

Worship is by nature the theological enterprise par excellence. It is not a psychological enterprise. Some of the big buzz words today are "fun," "excitement," "entertainment," and "celebration." Worship does celebrate, but this is because the bridegroom is present in his body and blood—a bridegroom who was slain for the sins of the world. In the ultimate sense, worship is not even an evangelism enterprise. In eternity, evangelism will cease, but the worship of the Lamb who was slain will go on forever. Meta-Church celebrative worship has lost this sacramental and eschatological emphasis. We sing with the angels and all the company of heaven because Jesus says, "This is my body and blood," not because exciting emotional music and large crowds effect a sense of it being so. It is not the size of the assembly but the word and the body and blood that create the reality. It is a reality that cannot be seen—theology of the cross, not a theology of glory. Large-scale celebrations of the liturgy in grand spaces are indeed wonderful. The challenge is always to fill the space with appropriate liturgy and song without succumbing to a theology of glory. The humble "(sub) congregation" may just be a more appropriate size for a congregation that wishes to be primarily sustained on the weekly fare of the word and sacraments.

The emphasis in the celebration model is praise and excitement. What the people do is the big thing. Prayer is described as the atmosphere of the Meta-Church. "First, the atmosphere (analogous to the unseen spiritual realm and prayer) is the life breath of all that happens" (p.157).

The theology of worship in the Lutheran Church is completely opposite. Prayer is important, but it is not a means of grace. Worship is called Divine Service because it is defined as where God is giving out his divine gifts. God gives, we receive. In Meta-Church worship the focus has clearly shifted to man—"Man is the actor, God is the audience," or liturgy is the "work of the people." In Lutheran worship God acts and gives, we receive—the holy liturgy is the work of God (*opus Dei*). God serves (*Gottesdienst*) the repentant sinner the free gifts of the forgiveness of sin, life and salvation.

"PATHS TO THE FUTURE"

George summarizes the "underlying assumptions on which the Meta-Church capitalizes" with seven statements.

1. "Churches of the future will be committed to making more and better disciples" (p. 154).
2. "Churches of the future will be more concerned with the size of the harvest than with the capacity of their facilities" (p. 154).
3. "Churches will be known primarily as caring places rather than as teaching associations. These churches of the future realize that God measures His people more by their obedience than by their knowledge of Bible facts. Therefore, they've shifted their priorities from teaching to caring, from understanding to application" (pp. 154-55). It should be noted that Lutheran churches which adopt this meta-thinking are adopting a new legalism. As attractive as it may be, Lutherans must never enter the "measuring" game. The only measuring fallen man is able to withstand is that of the perfect righteousness of Christ which is credited to him by grace alone through faith. In reference to "teaching versus caring," again the question is phrased in Reformed terms. Lutherans understand teaching/preaching as more than just facts about the Bible. The Word bestows what it says. *Viva vox evangelii.* It bestows the very forgiveness of sins won by our caring Savior. Our caring always comes as a consequence.
4. "Pastors will genuinely encourage ministry by the laity, despite centuries of modeling to the contrary" (p. 155).
5. "Lay-ministry assignments will involve leadership of a group"(p. 155).
6. "Laity, given the opportunity, will invest time, energy, and money to learn skills required to do a competent job of pastoring." This suggests that Carl George hopes "the Church Growth Movement" will continue to be a growth industry for church growth consultants.
7. "Finally, in the church of the future, pastors and people will remain dependent on the Holy Spirit to make His gifts available for mutually edifying one-another's ministry."

SUMMARY

The restructuring of the churches of the Missouri Synod around the focal points of lay-led "units of redemption" and praise celebrations will have a profoundly negative effect on the doctrine and practice of the synod. It will undermine the means of grace as the powerful means by which God delivers his saving gifts to people today.

It is incumbent upon the practitioners of the Meta-Church to articulate how this practice flows out of, is consistent with, and is driven by the confessions of our church. It is not enough to beg the question by claiming the paradigm is neutral. As with other Church Growth programs and principles, the Meta-Church claims to be merely ideological, sociological and structural and thus neutral. This supposedly justifies its use by any denomination regardless of its doctrine and practice. But the church is not primarily a sociological or political organism. The Holy Christian Church is a theological body. Evangelical, theological thinking must determine its practice. It is audacious to encourage a paradigm shift (meta) to thinking primarily in sociological, anthropocentric, Reformed and pietistic categories. If this is done, the theology of the cross will be replaced with the theology of glory—legalism will replace the freedom of the gospel.

NOTES

1. Further study needs to be done on the Meta-Church and the doctrine of the two kingdoms. The Meta-Church model encourages churches to become involved in first-article things which have been given by God to state and family. With the breakup of society and the family, it may be appropriate for the church to attempt to meet some of these needs, however, such "emergency measures" must not be confused with those second- and third-article things which God has given to the church and are peculiar to it.

2. *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* (Holy Trinity/July 1993), Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 14-20.

3. A study of church history reveals that the Meta-Church paradigm is not so much a new model but a revival of the *ecclesiolae in ecclesia* and *collegia pietatis* of seventeenth-century pietism. A virtual blueprint of the Meta-Church paradigm and themes is easily accessible in the book *The Third Reformation?* by Carter Lindberg. See chapter three, "The 'Second Reformation'-Pietism," pp. 131-178. See also: Carter Lindberg, "Pietism and the Church Growth Movement in a Confessional Lutheran Perspective," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (April-July 1988), Vol. 52, No. 2-3, pp. 129-147, and "Church Growth and Confessional Integrity," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (April-July 1990), Vol. 54, No. 2-3, pp. 131-154.

4. Lindberg, *The Third Reformation,* p. 144. Another tendency in pietism is to expand the marks of the church from the Word and sacraments to include "love."

5. Glenn O'Shoney, *Our Mission: A Quarterly Letter to Pastors of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, From Dr. Glenn O'Shoney, Executive Director, LCMS World Mission* (Summer 1993), p.3.

6. Robert W. Schaibley, "Measuring Spiritual Gifts," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Winter 1989), pp. 423-441. Schaibley has done a great service to the church with this exegetical study of the so-called "spiritual gifts" passages of Scripture. He concludes: "Specifically, it is *not* the *contextually identified intent* of those passages which are cited as 'spiritual gifts lists' to instigate, promote or encourage a gift discovery process. Discovering one's gift is not an apostolic emphasis.

"The Bible is silent on the need, necessity, or desirability of the church guiding her members in a spiritual gifts discovery process. . . . Therefore, the Scriptures do not provide the basis for the pressure we are experiencing in our synod to become involved in the 'spiritual gifts' focus (a pressure so sensitive that those who disagree with the spiritual gifts focus find themselves being at least informally charged with lack of churchmanship, or worse; to be against the spiritual gifts emphasis in our synod today often earns one an 'unsportsmanlike conduct penalty' from officialdom!)" pp. 426-427.

Schaibley also notes that "every nonbeliever who participates in a spiritual gifts discovery process shows the existence of spiritual gifts! This is not just a defect in testing methodology; it is a defect in the assumption that spiritual reality is capable of measurement at all" (p. 436).

See also Norman Nagel, "Spiritual Gifts in the Confessions and in Corinth," *Concordia Journal* (July 1992) Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 230-243.

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Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic. By David Gustafson. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Over thirty years ago, the historian of American Christianity, Winthrop Hudson offered the following prognosis for Protestantism in the United States:

> The final prospect for a vigorous renewal of Protestant life and witness rests with the Lutheran Churches. . . . The Lutheran Churches are in the fortunate position of having been, in varying degrees, insulated from American life for a long period of time. As a result, they have been less subject to theological erosion, which so largely stripped other denominations of an awareness of their continuity with a historic Christian tradition. Thus the resources of the Christian past have been more readily available to them, and this fact suggests that they may have an increasingly important role in a Protestant recovery. Among the assets immediately at hand among the Lutherans are a confessional tradition, a surviving liturgical structure, and a sense of community which, however much it may be the product of cultural factors, may make it easier for them than for most Protestant denominations to recover the integrity of church membership without which Protestants are ill-equipped to participate effectively in the dialogue of a pluralistic society (quoted by William Weinrich in "Gnosticism: Alive and Well in the Twentieth Century Church" in *Theological Papers* edited by James Cavener. Omaha: Campus Lutheran Chapel, 1993, p. 1).

As one surveys the landscape of American Lutheranism in 1993, one can only conclude that Hudson's vision for an American Protestantism renewed by a Lutheran catalyst failed to materialize. Instead we observe Lutheranism becoming increasingly like its Protestant neighbors to the left and to the right. While the ELCA takes on the characteristics of either Episcopalians or Presbyterians (depending on which camp one looks at), the LCMS and the WELS are busy in attempted imitations of the conservative Evangelicals. The theological orientation of all branches of American Lutheranism has suffered serious erosion from sources as diverse as feminism and fundamentalism. Liturgical structures have been so seriously mangled that the worship life in many congregations can no longer be identified as Lutheran. The Catechism is an unknown book to many new converts to Lutheranism who are brought into communicant membership with a catechesis that is limited to friendly chat with the pastor or a "new member orientation." Lutheranism has become American, but is it still Lutheran?

David Gustafson has rendered a fine service to Lutherans who are concerned about the current state of affairs in our churches. His historical research helps us understand the dynamics that have shaped our current predicament. In this fascinating study of the so-called American Lutheran controversy of 1849-1867, Gustafson examines the forces that were at work shaping and defining religious identity among Protestants, isolating four broad aspects that most American Protestants held in common in the early 1800s: (1) Protestants tended to define themselves in opposition to Roman Catholicism, sometimes vehemently so; (2) The right of private judgment in matters of biblical or doctrinal interpretation was championed; (3) A personal experience of conversion, usually accomplished through a revival, was often thought of as essential to salvation; (4) Sacraments were viewed as religious symbols rather than actual means of grace. These four aspects become issues in the controversy between Samuel S. Schmucker (1799-1873) and the General Synod on the one hand and Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883) and the General Council on the other.

It was Schmucker's goal to contextualize the Lutheran Church. As Gustafson points out, under the influence of Pietism, Schmucker envisioned a Lutheran Church that would be ecumenical and missionary. But in Schmucker's mind these twin aims could be accomplished only by a recasting of the Lutheran Confessions in a form that would make them acceptable to Protestant America and by an abandonment of distinctively Lutheran forms of liturgy and hymnody. To achieve this goal, Schmucker authored the small book entitled *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod* or simply the *Definite Platform* for short. This book contained Schmucker's "American Recension" of the Augsburg Confession. In his redaction of the Augustana, Schmucker omitted those doctrines which he deemed to be "unscriptural, remnants of Romish error." These "alleged errors" were: (1) the approval of the ceremonies of the mass; (2) private confession and absolution; (3) denial of the divine obligation of the Christian sabbath; (4) baptismal regeneration; (5) the real presence of the body and the blood of the Savior in the Lord's Supper (p. 127).

The most significant responses to Schmucker were those of William Julius Mann and Charles Porterfield Krauth. Mann penned *A Plea for the Augsburg Confession* and *Lutheranism in America.* Gustafson notes that "when one compares the *Definite Platform* to Mann's *Plea for the Augsburg Confession*, it is obvious that the two documents and their authors were not even describing the same church" (p. 137). Krauth, in his many articles and editorials, and finally in his monumental work, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, roundly rejects Schmucker's dismemberment of the full-bodied theology of the Lutheran Confessions and his substitution of the methodistic "new measures" for the churchly life shaped by catechism and liturgy. "Krauth believed that American Lutheranism would end up being nothing more than a sect" (p. 167).

The concluding chapter of Gustafson's book is most significant. In "Unfinished Issues Regarding Confessional Identity," Gustafson notes that "The Lutheran Church is, in some respects, reliving the American Lutheran controversy today" (p. 178), calling attention to David Preus' ecumenical agenda of "unity in reconciled diversity," Paul Kuenning's attempt to resurrect Pietism as a model for Lutherans to use in addressing social questions, and David Luecke's call for Lutherans to adapt their theological substance to Evangelical style. Luecke is not unlike Schmucker. Gustafson writes:

> Luecke's proposals undermine Lutheran confessional liturgical integrity. In spite of his talk about "Lutheran substance," there is finally much that is not

> Lutheran in them. His emphasis on decision and conversion is more reminiscent of revival meeting techniques than the Lutheran doctrine of justification. In spite of his invocation of *sola gratia*, Luecke is open to the charge of Pelagianism, which advocates that salvation comes, in part, as a result of human effort, whether it be through techniques that are employed or human decision. The Lutheran emphasis that God through Christ alone, justifies sinners and brings salvation is compromised if not absent. In Luecke's scheme, the sacraments are reduced to being marginal. In the church Luecke envisions, infant baptism in all likelihood would eventually become the exception and adult baptism the norm. The Lord's Supper would be infrequently celebrated, and a symbolic meaning of that sacrament would eventually replace the doctrine of the real presence. Traditional liturgical forms would quickly disappear and be replaced by a simpler service. If the Confessions no longer have binding authority and the liturgical tradition is discarded, anything can happen, all in the name of democratic structures and growth in numbers. In the last analysis, Luecke's proposals contain the potential for the collapse of all Lutheran doctrinal and liturgical substance and the destruction of the Office of the Ministry. Growth in numbers is an admirable goal, but sacrificing one's identity is not the way to achieve it. (p. 177).

Gustafson is no unbiased observer. As a working parish pastor (Peace Lutheran Church, Poplar, Wisconsin), Gustafson realizes what is at stake and draws this observation from his study of the American Lutheran controversy as it relates to our current plight:

> History teaches us lessons. The American Lutheran controversy can provide guidance to the Lutheran church in the twentieth century as it struggles with the ongoing question of what it means to be Lutheran in America. The Lutheran church, as a confessing movement in the church catholic, has an integrity of its own, and that integrity ought not to be compromised. The Lutheran church has a particular view of the gospel, communicated through Word and sacrament and expressed in the liturgy, and it must hold on to these things in order to be faithful to and maintain its identity. The Lutheran church has a vital theological heritage to offer Americans, and the only way it can offer an effective witness in this land is to maintain the integrity of that heritage (p. 179).

In the very best sense of the word, *Lutherans in Crisis* is a polemic. But it also serves the useful function of being a preface to a band of confessional Lutheran theologians who need to be read today: Charles Porterfield Krauth, William Julius Mann, and Friedrich C.D. Wyneken. A reading of these Lutheran fathers who lived, ministered, and contended for the faith of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession on American soil will perhaps also lead us back to the unclaimed heritage we have in their German counterparts: August Vilmar, John G. Scheibel, Adolf von Harless, Theodosius Harnack, and Wilhelm Loehe. The battles which confessional Lutheranism faces in these fading years of the twentieth century are not new; they were fought by our fathers in the faith over a 125 years ago. Will we have the learning and the nerve to meet these challenges, as they did, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Symbols?

JTP

***Patriarchal Politics and Christoph Kress 1484-1535*, No. 14 in Studies in German Thought and History.** By Jonathan W. Zophy. Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

This is a biography of an important layman involved in introducing the Lutheran Reformation into Nürnberg in the 1520s. Christoph Kress, the son of an old patrician family of the imperial city with important business and political connections, was a distinguished diplomat and military leader. Although he had become a Lutheran, he was so highly regarded by Charles V that the fanatically Catholic emperor knighted him at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, in spite of Charles' brusque rejection of the Augsburg Confession which Kress staunchly supported.

Zophy's book displays much research in the sources and historical methodology. It is interestingly written and is well printed, attractively bound, and incorporates a number of good pictures and maps. The will of Christoph Kress is printed in an appendix in the original German together with a short English abstract. There is also a good bibliography and a useful index. Unfortunately, like many other publications today, the book is marred at times by its literary style (diction, punctuation, unclear sentence structure, and the like).

Although Zophy is concerned more with history than with theology, the book will be of interest to theologians as well as historians, since it provides an interesting description of the 1530 Diet of Augsburg and an explanation of Nürnberg's pro-imperial politics, with its rejection of the teaching of the right to resist the emperor. It presents the views of men such as Lazarus Spengler and Kress, who rejected the right of resistance, and of others such as Andreas Osiander (and the hesitant Luther) who held that since by the constitution the emperor was an elected official, the lower estates had the right and duty to resist Charles V when he attempted to suppress the gospel. The view of Spengler and Kress also kept the powerful city-state of Nürnberg out of the Schmalkald League.

The book shows how Kress, in spite of his skill and wisdom, put too much trust in the reliability of Emperor Charles V. Not only was he wrong in predicting that Charles would be won over to permitting Lutheran teachings and practices, but he failed to use his bargaining powers in behalf of his fellow Lutherans. Nevertheless, Kress stands as one of the great politicians, diplomats, and military leaders of his day. In spite of some misjudgment on his part, he was able to safeguard the Reformation in his native Nürnberg, which was one of the most important and powerful imperial cities.

Visitors to Franconia today can find Kress' country estate near the village of Kraftshof, where the St. George Church, largely built by Christoph Kress and needlessly damaged by a stray bomb in World War II, was rebuilt by the generosity of Rush Kress, an

American merchant descendant. This is one of the few remaining fortified churches surrounded by a wall as a refuge for peasants in event of a hostile attack. The American philanthropist also provided for the rebuilding of the St. Lorenz Church, Nürnberg, where Anton Kress, the brother of Christoph, had served as provost. Both churches are monuments to the moderation of the Lutheran Reformation which avoided iconoclasm and lovingly preserved their artistic treasures from the Middle Ages.

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Luther and Liberation. By Walter Altmann. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992. 148 pages.

"Supporting the organizations of the people, participating in them, and working toward the transformation of the established, oppressive system, is the political praxis, or action, that *the will of God demands* from Christians and their churches in most of Latin America today" (p. 83, emphasis mine). Critical readers ought to appreciate statements of this kind in *Luther and Liberation,* because they reveal both the strengths and the weaknesses in Altmann's work. The strength is that he is willing to articulate his agenda just that bluntly; on the weak side, there's plenty of room for doubt whether the will of God makes precisely those demands which are so dear to his heart.

Altmann writes interestingly for those who, like this reviewer, may have had little previous exposure to the work of liberation theologians. He has a sincere, if critical, love for Luther. One can hardly quibble with his repeated assertions that the details of Luther's political and economic thought, for example, cannot simply be imposed as a program on contemporary societies whose structures are quite different from those in Germany at the time of the Reformation. He is also surely right when he bemoans the tendency of some later Lutherans to over-spiritualize Luther's teaching so that they could make themselves comfortable in a world where even Christians found it easy to ignore much responsibility toward poor and hurting neighbors. As Altmann points out, Luther never was satisfied with a merely "me and my God" stance toward the Christian life, and with good reason: The sacred Scriptures don't teach it, either.

On the other hand, some of Altmann's attempts to "Lutheranize" the concerns of liberation theology seem questionable. Who will disagree with his lament that the institutional church often displayed pathetically little concern for the poor guy on the street? It's one thing to condemn the imperialistic excesses of the Christian Spanish and Portuguese conquerors of Latin America. But it's quite another to speak almost approvingly of syncretism simply because it's "the people's faith" (p. 58) and to try to claim any credible link with Luther's theology. There is a vast difference between a theology whose thrust serves people and one whose thrust almost deifies them, just because they happen to be poor. In this latter arrangement, listening to Altmann, the church finds its "historical definition in the struggle for the liberation of those made poor" (p. 68), and if you really want to understand that, you had better picture it primarily in political and economic terms. That, I submit, places you miles away from Luther's basic thrust, although he had plenty to say about politics and economics. Altmann freely suggests, for example, that the old concerns about guilt and condemnation (dare we say, sin and forgiveness?) from Luther's day have been replaced now by questions about the meaning of life and prospects for material survival (pp. 4-5).

Well, that may be in a great many places. Has it, then, become the task of theology and church to measure their proclamation and work by what the people have decided is relevant? Did Jesus err in refusing to give the longing masses the sort of political liberator many of them wanted him to be, or did he know very well what he was doing when he reached deeper and gave them what they needed by dying so that they could have the forgiveness of sins? Did Martin Luther make a grave mistake on all the occasions when he sided against what he called "the murderous hordes of peasants," or did he oppose them at times because he understood that their agenda was not automatically God's agenda just because they were poor and had some legitimate gripes against the political powers of their time?

One notices in the book a tendency to overplay elements in Luther that might seem congenial to liberation theology. Without wanting to make too much of the footnotes, one of them (p. 32) proved telling. There Altmann criticizes the LBW translation of "*Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein*" (#299, stanza 5) for sentimentalizing Luther's original "salvation *for the poor*" into "bring *to all* salvation," as if Luther's rendering would somehow bolster liberationist concerns. In fact, Luther's entire original at that point reads, "*...und sei das Heil dem Armen* ***und hilf ihm aus der Sünden Not,***" which does seem to locate Luther's thrust elsewhere than primarily in one's political or economic situation.

Luther doesn't fare much better in the treatment of his view on Holy Scripture. "The emphasis Luther gives to the literal sense of the biblical text is relevant not because it arrives at the absolute sense of Scripture (which we know does not exist) but rather because it locates its meaning relevantly, in a particular historical-ecclesial context," says Atmann (p. 54). He later points out that Luther refused to be restricted just to the literal sense of Scripture, despite his emphasis on it. One can gladly grant the point that Luther was not a rigid literalist. But does that demonstrate that he was so uninterested in the idea of absolute truth? Wasn't Luther's entire opposition to the established church of his day built precisely on the ground of an absolute revelation? One can hardly help but recall some of his robust statements, e.g., "Stick to Scripture and God's Word. There is the truth; there you will be safe; there are reliableness and faithfulness, completely, purely, sufficiently, and constantly" (St. L., 15, 1565). Attempts to place into his mouth the presuppositions of more contemporary exegetes generally seem forced, to say the least.

To scratch a personal itch, I also find myself repeatedly wearied and even irritated at the tendency of people like Altmann (p. 28) to caricature Lutheran orthodoxy as if it never cared for anything but intellectual assent to doctrinal formulations. Perhaps people ought to memorize and sing a few more of Paul Gerhardt's hymns from

that period; the warm piety in them is anything but sterile.

So, if you're interested in a taste of some of the thinking of Latin American liberation theologians, then read Altmann by all means. If you are hoping, however, to get close to the heartbeat of Luther, you will have to look somewhere else.

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The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy. By Robert D. Preus. Fort Wayne: The Luther Academy, 1991. Paper. 63 pages.

The doctrine of the ministry has long been discussed in orthodox Lutheran circles, together with its counterpart, the doctrine of the church.

Much of the debate has centered in semantics, some insisting the word "ministry" can be used only in reference to the office defining strictly pastoral functions, others giving a broader meaning to the term and including a wide range of appointed/elected positions of the church alongside what is generally regarded as "the pastoral office."

Dr. Preus in this monograph builds his case for the former (often known as the "Missouri view") by quoting extensively from the Lutheran Confessions and from the seventeenth-century dogmaticians. There is a wealth of material provided for the reader on the subject of the call, the forbiddance of women serving as pastors, the historical ecclesiastical ranks/arrangements following Luther's day, the practice of removing men from a pastorate, and the relationship of the pastor's call to the universal priesthood of all believers. The author's view becomes crystal-clear when he says, "There simply is no call from God through the church but the call to the preaching of the Word (and administration of the Sacraments), no call to monkery, exorcists, ostiaries, social work, political office, military service; no call in our day to fund raising, accounting, public relations, Sunday School or parochial school teaching, or even so-called directorships of Christian education, evangelism or church administration." For Preus, only the pastor of a congregation can rightfully be spoken of as being "called"; however, this status can also be applied to professors at the theological institutions, because (as he states) "in Luther's and Gerhard's day, the office was combined with a pastorate."

But could we not counter that, although God has indeed instituted the public ministry and has given a *command* for the church to select pastors, there is a freedom for the church to distinguish the *functions* of the public ministry (in the wide sense) in order to give focus to various needs that arise from time to time? Granted, it has been established that there is a *mandatum Dei* for the office of the public servant of the word whose function is to preach and teach the word of God and administer the Sacraments, but does this eliminate the right of the church at any time in history not only to assign certain ministerial functions to qualified persons but also actually to issue them a divine call?

In 1 Corinthians 12 the Apostle Paul makes it clear that from the same Lord flow various kinds of ministry, but all come under the one umbrella of the divinely instituted office of the public ministry ["ministry" not confined here to the pastoral office]. "And in the church God has appointed ('did appoint') first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues" (v. 28).

As to having public preachers of the word, we must uphold that "the church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it" (Ap. XIII, par. 12). But it is important to observe that the *prerogative* (under God) belongs to the church to implement different forms of the ministry as long as things are done in a fitting and orderly way (1 Cor 14:40) and under the "authorization" of the body. There are forms of ministry that were used in apostolic times which have not been utilized in our midst today; at the same time, other forms of ministry can be used today which were not expedient in the apostolic age. All are to serve the one chief goal of bringing Word and Sacrament to the hearts of sinners. This is the scope of the entire public ministry. And the dignity is to go with it. "For the sake of good order it is useful and prudent that, corresponding to the disparity of gifts, there should be, among the ministers of the church, distinct degrees of dignity and influence" (Hollaz' *Examen Theol.*, 1351).

Under Preus' discussion of the call reference was made to Romans 10:15 as one of the proofs of the *mandatum Dei* for the church to call pastors. It would have been appropriate also to draw specific attention to Romans 10:17, which can be more precisely translated: "Therefore the faith is from what is heard, and the thing heard through the saying of Christ." The REMA ("saying") in this verse should be seen as a *command* from our Lord to call men to preach the gospel. H. Meyer remarks on this verse: "The heard preaching of the gospel brings about in men's minds faith in Christ; but preaching is brought about by God's behest (Luke 3:2; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 9:3), set to work by the fact that God commands preachers to their office" (from his commentary on Romans).

Surely this monograph demonstrates once again the scholarly expertise of Preus to expound and encapsulate the theology of Luther and the confessions of the following century. In any future dialogue on the ministry among those whose desire it is to be orthodox Lutherans, what is set forth in this essay demands careful consideration. But the question will remain: Is the usage of the term "call" into the public ministry to be limited to the pastoral office and theological professorships?

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Briefly Noted

Dining With the Devil—the Megachurch Movement Flirts With Modemity by Os Guinness. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993. Paper. 113 pages.

This is a fascinating little volume by a leading American Evangelical scholar and apologist. Guinness worries that contemporary evangelicalism comes perilously close to the old-style liberalism criticized by Richard Niebuhr as preaching "a God without wrath bringing men without sin into a kingdom without judgement through the ministrations of Christ without a cross." It is the Evangelicals who are the new modernists as they sacrifice their theology to the idolatries of growth and effectiveness. Lutheran hearts that have been strangely warmed by the methodism of the "megachurch model" need to listen to the questions that Guinness raises and his analysis of the flabby ecclesiology that is so prone to make an idol of growth and sacrifice theological and pastoral integrity upon its altar.

Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church. By Stuart G. Hall. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1991. Paper. 262 pages.

Accessible and concise treatment of crucial doctrinal developments in the early church and the way in which doctrine gave shape to churchly practice, especially liturgical life. A sturdy introduction to the early church.

The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition. By Robert Kolb. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993. Paper. 298 pages.

This volume is largely a recasting of Kolb's earlier book, *Speaking the Gospel Today: A Theology for Evangelism,* into the mold of a dogmatics text for use in college religion courses. Kolb develops each locus from the perspective of doctrine as a "verbal noun," that is "true doctrine is not only the correct content of Scripture, but that content conveyed effectively into the lives of the hearers of God's Word" (p. 11).

Commentary on Romans. By Philip Melanchthon..Trans. by Fred Kramer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992. Cloth. 297 pages.

An English translation of the 1540 edition of a commentary on Romans by the "Preceptor of Germany" based on the text found in the *Corpus Reformatorum.*

Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources. By Cyrille Vogel. Translated and revised by William Storey and Niels Rasmussen. Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1986. Paper. 442 pages.

This volume first appeared in French in the form of several articles in the early 1960s. Vogel's masterful introduction and guide to the liturgical documents of the Middle Ages is here translated, revised, and supplemented with additional materials by two Notre Dame liturgical scholars.

Worship: Wonderful and Sacred Mystery. By Kenneth W. Stevenson. Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1992. Paper. 219 pages.

Kenneth Stevenson is one of the most prolific liturgical scholars in England. *Worship: A Wonderful and Sacred Mystery* is an anthology of articles organized around three themes: Eucharist, marriage, and ashes and light (Ash Wednesday and Easter Vigil).

Law and Gospel: Foundation of Lutheran Ministry With Special Reference to the Church Growth Movement. By Robert J. Koester. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993. Paper. 234 pages.

Robert Koester, a WELS pastor currently serving Ascension Lutheran Church in Moorhead, Minnesota, completed a Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. His book was born out of that experience. Koester contends that the Church Growth Movement is completely consistent with Reformed theology and therefore irreconcilable with a confessional Lutheran understanding of the proper distinction between law and gospel. The author demonstrates a first-hand knowledge of Church Growth literature. An excellent resource for those who are inclined to try to Lutheranize Church Growth techniques.

Knowing God through the Liturgy. By Peter Toon. Largo, Fla. The Prayer Book Society Publishing Company, 1992. Paper. 141 pages.

A spirited apologetic for the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* by one of Nashotah House's best-known theologians. While this book has as its primary audience Christians of the Anglican communion, Toon offers many helpful insights into the nature of the liturgy that would be of benefit to confessional Lutherans.

Documents of Christian Worship: Descriptive and Interpretive Sources. By James F. White. Louisville: Westminster and John Knox Press, 1992. Paper. 257 pages.

Complete with photographs, charts, and maps, White outlines the historical development of liturgical texts, the church year, church architecture, and sacramental practices using primary source material.

Speaking of the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism. Edited by Alvin F. Kimmel, Jr. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992. Paper. 337 pages.

Alvin Kimmel is well known for his vigorous defense of Christian orthodoxy against the onslaught of feminism in his monograph *The Holy Trinity meets Ashtoreth: A Critique of Inclusive Liturgies.* In *Speaking of the Christian God,* Kimmel marshalls theologians from a variety of disciplines and confessional backgrounds to assist him in the cause. Lutheran contributors to this anthology include Robert and Blanche Jenson and Gerhard Forde. This book is essential reading for those who take seriously the threat that feminism poses to the Trinitarian faith.

The Means of Grace in the Life of Our Evangelical Lutheran Congregations. By Mark F. Bartling. LaCrosse, Wis.: Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 1993. Paper. 30 pages.

Using the altar painting by Cranach in the city church of Wittenberg as an illustration of the Lutheran ethos, Bartling calls for a return to a congregational life that is constituted in the Means of Grace, not in mission statements and programs. Copies of this essay may be obtained from the Rev. Mark F. Bartling, c/o Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 1411 S. 16th Street, LaCrosse, WI 54601 for $2.00 per copy.

JTP

Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

A Broken Net

One goes too far if he considers Luther to be an evangelical Nostradamus—but one may still read his writings today with great profit. The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, commends Dr. Luther by saying that he "is rightly to be regarded as the most eminent teacher of the churches which adhere to the Augsburg Confession . . ." (FC SD VII:41). In his 1527 treatise "That These Words of Christ, 'This is My Body,' etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," Luther prophesies what happens when Scripture is lost. The following is from the Robert H. Fischer translation in the American Edition of Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961) volume 37, pp 14-17.

Once Scripture had become like a broken net and no one would be restrained by it, but everyone made a hole in it wherever it pleased him to poke his snout, and followed his own opinions, interpreting and twisting Scripture any way he pleased, the Christians knew no other way to cope with these problems than to call many councils. In these they issued many outward laws and ordinances alongside Scripture, in order to keep the people together in the face of these divisions. As a result of this undertaking (though they meant well), arose the sayings that the Scriptures were not sufficient, that we also needed the laws and the interpretations of the councils and the fathers, and that the Holy Spirit did not reveal everything to the apostles but reserved certain things for the fathers. Out of this finally developed the papacy, in which there is no authority but man-made laws and interpretations according to the "chamber of the holy father's heart."

When the devil saw this he jeered and thought: now I have won! Scripture lies prostrate, the fortress is destroyed, the weapons are beaten down. In their place they now weave walls of straw and make weapons of hay, i.e., they intend now to array themselves against me with man-made laws. Ah, this is serious! What shall I do? I shall not fight against this, but pitch in and help them build so that they remain nicely united, and help them gather enough straw and hay. It serves my purpose well that they should neglect the Word and not dispute over the Scriptures, but that at this very point they should be at peace and believe what the councils and the fathers say. But within this peace and unity I shall stir up many another controversy and quarrel, so that the pope will contend against emperor and kings, bishops against princes and lords, scholars against scholars, clerics against clerics, and everyone against the other, for the sake of temporal honor, possessions, and pleasure, yet leaving untouched their unity of belief in the holy fathers. The fools! What can they expect to accomplish with quarrels over the Scriptures and the things of God they do not understand? It is better for them to quarrel over honor, kingdoms, principalities, property, pleasure, and bodily needs, which they do understand, and meanwhile remain faithful Christians united in the glossed faith of the fathers, i.e., a flimsy faith.

This is the way the plot worked out for the fathers: Since they contrived to have the Scriptures without quarreling and dissension, they thereby became the cause of men's turning wholly and completely away from the Scriptures to mere human drivel. Then, of course, dissension and contention over the Scriptures necessarily ceased, which is a divine quarrel wherein God contends with the devil as St. Paul says in Ephesians 6 [:12], "We have to contend not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in the air." But in place of this, there has broken out human dissension over temporal honor and goods on earth, yet there remain a united blindness and ignorance of the Scriptures and a loss of the true Christian faith, i.e., a united obedience to the glosses of the fathers and to the holy see at Rome. Isn't this also a piece of devilish craftiness? No matter what play we make, he is a master and an expert at the game.

Now in our day, having seen that Scripture was utterly neglected and the devil was making captives and fools of us by the mere straw and hay of man-made laws, we have tried by God's grace to offer some help in this matter. With immense and bitter effort indeed we have brought the Scriptures to the fore again and released the people from man-made laws, freed ourselves and escaped the devil, although he stubbornly resisted and still continues to do so.

However, even though he has had to let us go, he does not forget his tricks. He has secretly sown his seed among us so that they may take hold of our teachings and words, not to aid and assist us in fostering the Scriptures, but while we were leading in the fight against human drivel to fall upon our host from the rear, incite rebellion and raise an uproar against us, in order that caught between two enemies, we may be more easily destroyed. This is what I call throwing quicksilver into the pond!

However, he does not leave the matter there, but quick as a flash goes to work on the sacraments, although in this respect he has already torn at least ten rips and loopholes in the Scriptures. I

have never read of a more shameful heresy, which from the outset has gathered to itself so many heads, so many factions and dissensions, although on the main point, the persecution of Christ, they are united. But he will keep on and attack still other articles of faith, as he already declares with flashing eyes that baptism, original sin, and Christ are nothing. Once more there will arise a brawl over the Scriptures, and such dissension and so many factions that we may well say with St. Paul, "The mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (2 Th 2:7), just as he also saw that many more factions would arise after him.

If the world lasts much longer, men will, as the ancients did, once more turn to human schemes on account of this dissension, and again issue laws and regulations to keep the people in the unity of the faith. Their success will be the same as it was in the past.

In short, the devil is too clever and too mighty for us. He resists and hinders us at every point. When we wish to deal with Scripture, he stirs up so much dissension and quarreling over it that we lose our interest in it and become reluctant to trust it. We must forever be scuffling and wrestling with him. If we wish to stand upon the councils and counsels of men, we lose the Scriptures altogether and remain in the devil's possession body and soul. He is Satan, and Satan is his name, i.e., an adversary. He must obstruct and cause misfortune; he cannot do otherwise. Moreover, he is the prince and god of this world, so that he has sufficient power to do so. Since he is able and determined to do all this, we must not imagine that we shall have peace from him. He takes no vacation and he does not sleep. Choose, then, whether you prefer to wrestle with the devil or whether you prefer to belong to him. If you consent to be his, you will receive his guarantee to leave you in peace with the Scriptures. If you refuse to be his, defend yourself, go at him! He will not pass you by; he will create such dissension and sectarianism over the Scriptures that you will not know where Scriptures, faith, Christ, and you yourself stand.

The Means for Mission

Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872) is best remembered for his determined support of the missionary endeavor of the nineteenth century. Yet this man, who spent thirty-five years as a parish pastor in a tiny Bavarian village, also found time to write, and his works contain insights that are being hailed as new in our own day. Held suspect in his own time by many fellow Lutherans, and accused of being a "Romanizer," Löhe is now regarded as a spiritual father by Lutherans on three continents. Three Books About the Church *was originally published in 1969 by Fortress Press and sold for $2.95, but book hunters will be lucky to find even a used copy at that price. Translated and edited by James L. Schaaf, this excerpt comes from pages 167-169.*

Among the means which the church uses for the salvation of souls, preaching occupies the first place. It is the means for calling those who are far off and for confirming the call and election of those who have been called and have drawn near.

In preaching, the church does not think it necessary to support the holy Word by human artifice. The important thing is not to hinder its power and effectiveness and not to impose any sort of method upon the Word which does not befit it. The preacher proclaims salvation in Jesus Christ with the consciousness that it is not anything he adds but the precious contents of the Word itself which will separate souls from the world and bring them close to God.

Naturally, the preacher will speak what he himself believes, for it is a hideous contradiction for an unbeliever to attempt to preach. However, a true preacher will not try to bring men to the truth by talking about his own faith and experience; he will rather seek so to guide his people in that direction that they may be able to say with the Samaritans, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" [John 4:42].

A sincere preacher, therefore, will not intentionally withdraw himself nor intentionally make himself prominent, but he comes with the Word and the Word comes with him. He is a simple, faithful witness to the Word, and the Word witnesses to him—he and the Word appear as one.

All his preaching is based on holy calm. Even when he condemns and the zeal of God's house consumes him, it is not the wrath of the warlike world but the wrath of the invulnerable, peace-loving God which is kindled in him. It is not primarily he who speaks but the Lord who speaks in him and through him. The way he performs his duty is worthy of the Lord. Always it is the measure of manliness and maturity which distinguishes the preacher of the truth.

With great trust in the divine Word, therefore, he despises any sort of methodism [*Ed.—Löhe here has in mind the revivalism that was characteristic of Methodists and others in nineteenth century America rather than the Methodist movement in England under John Wesley*]. He has a method—the method of factual and biblical simplicity—but it is precisely this of which no methodism is capable. He will use neither human eloquence, nor stimulation of the emotions, nor the impure means of exciting nerves to win friends for the Lord Jesus.

What he desires is not the excitement of an awakening, but the turning of men's thoughts to God. Just as calling proceeds to enlightenment and every advance in the inner life is conditioned by an advance in knowledge, so he seeks above all to have the holy ideas of the divine Word rightly understood and to have them brought very close to the memory, contemplation, will, and inmost being of his hearers. He does not reject men's feelings but arouses them by quietly holding up the heavenly light, or rather by letting the light shine and knowing that its beams will be accompanied by warmth. His slogans are not "*Awakening!*" and the like, but the words of the Scriptures which tell of the gradual, silent growth of the divine mustard seed.

His insistence and compulsion are not the insistence and compulsion of human impatience but are patient perseverance with the Word. He is happy to wait, knowing that precious fruits do not grow overnight, and he waits for *all* his sheep since he knows that the Lord has his own hour, his own haste, and also his own delays. The preacher of the church is therefore no friend of "new measures," as the methodists call them, but he sticks to the old measures of patient, faithful loyalty to the Word and pure doctrine.

The Church Enters the Cola Wars

The September 1992 issue of Fidelity *magazine (Vol. 11, No. 9) features an article by its editor, E. Michael Jones, entitled* Kulturkampf In Our Time: Why Hollywood Wants Catholics to Sing Like Negroes, *subtitled,* Sister Act Instructs the Bishops: How the Church Continues to Lose the Cultural Wars, *(pp. 26-40). In this response to the U.S. bishops' pastoral conference at the University of Notre Dame, Jones discusses the role of culture in general while addressing the "impossibility of reconciling feminism and Christianity" in particular.* Fidelity *magazine is published monthly, except for the July/August combined issue, by Ultramontane Associates, Inc., 206 Marquette Ave., South Bend, IN 46617. Subscription price is $19.95 per year. The following excerpt is from p. 27f.*

All of the things which modernity believes in most deeply—moral relativism, sexual liberation, the transvaluation of all values—have never been propagated directly. They have been, in a sense, smuggled into consciousness under the guise of various modern styles—a style in architecture, a style of painting, a style of music—which dominated the aesthetic vocabulary of the era. When the bishops want to address their age, they invariably fall back on thought patterns or styles which subvert their message.

This was especially evident in the film on evangelization which they previewed. Evangelization films are generally insipid and this one was no exception. It was a series of personal testimonies from people of various races in various sterile-looking churches, talking about their feelings about the Catholic faith. It was something like a long Pepsi commercial for the faith, with the exception that the Pepsi commercials always seem much more professionally competent.

Virtually all advertisements are paeans to multiculturalism, probably because we are so inept at solving our racial difficulties, and this video is no exception. "Why is it," I found myself wondering, "that the Church which is the world's premier multicultural institution, puts out a video that makes it seem that she is limping behind the purveyors of Pepsi, in terms of universality?" The answer to that question, I think, can only be found in the realm of culture.

The bishops find themselves caught in an ideological cross fire between those who have adopted the categories of modernity more wholeheartedly than they have, and those who refuse to see the struggle and place all of the blame for the disarray in the Church on what they perceive as bad will on the part of the bishops.

A Devil in the Pulpit

This selection is found in Luther's 1534 Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15, translated by Martin H. Bertram in the American Edition of Luther's Works (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), volume 28, pp 60-63:

It is the very devil when this finds its way into the pulpit and the article of faith is assailed by those who are preachers and, following Paul, ascend the pulpit and govern Christendom in his stead. When such men open their despicable mouths and instill this in the people, they above all others work this murderous damage, especially if they are learned and very intelligent. For if only the pastors remain faithful and preserve the doctrine, God will bestow His grace and there will always be a number to accept it; for where the Word is pure and unadulterated, there will, of course, be fruit.

Therefore I have exhorted so often, and still exhort, that all who wish to be saved pray diligently, as Christ himself commands us to pray (Mt 9:38), that God may grant us faithful laborers and pastors who are sincere and adhere to the Word. Then if God be willing, there will be no danger. For the pulpit can and must alone preserve baptism, sacrament, doctrine, articles of faith, and all estates in their purity.

However, if we neglect to pray and if we anger God with our security, weariness, and ingratitude, he will send us, instead of St. Paul and all upright pastors, stupid asses who will snatch away both Sacrament and Word, and we lose everything, both in the doctrine and the office. Thus we can observe today that this has already befallen several countries and cities, which have not only lost the Word through such men but have also been led into every sort of misery.

Through his lies and deceit the devil always leads to murder and ruin. But if faithful pastors had remained in those places, the pure doctrine would surely also have remained, and other misery would have been spared them even though the rabble had espoused the error enthusiastically. For it does not dismay me so much to have a lout or a dolt blaspheme or to have a plebeian, insolent nobleman rave and rant, or to have some other wiseacre jeer. For all of these, Christendom and the pulpit will remain intact. But the damage is wrought when they who teach become factious spirits themselves and the people are obliged to preserve themselves, and not only to preserve themselves, but also to be on guard and defend against their own pastors. That is done only with great difficulty. For even without this the poor multitude is soon misled; it cannot govern and lead itself. . . .

Therefore it is indeed necessary that we pray earnestly, sincerely, and incessantly to have the pulpit remain pure, so that such affliction may be prevented or checked. For the pulpit can still staunchly resist all sorts of error and endure the whole world's malice. Let whoever will be converted, be converted; and whoever does not wish to be, let him be gone. At least some will be saved. But where darkness encompasses the whole world andChristians are few in number and, moreover, when the pulpits are occupied by worthless, pernicious pastors, the time will not be far distant when thunder, lightning, and every plague of false doctrine will burst in upon us unexpectedly and before we are aware of it, which believes neither this nor any other article of faith. And we will have to tolerate pastors who mislead us with such loose prattle of reason, yes, even of the vulgar, beastly understanding which sows also have. . . .

Open Communion as *Ex Opere Operato*

The rationale for open communion is not monolithic. In some circles, the invitation to the altar may be open because the eucharist is merely a symbolic remembrance. In other circles, however, the open invitation may be the result of an *ex opere operato* understanding of the Lord's Supper.

Ex opere operato has been defined: "The holy sacraments give grace to anyone even if he does not repent his sin and has no intention to do good." In effect, we must acknowlege an open communion which confesses the same, maintaining that the Lord's Supper gives grace to anyone, regardless of what he believes. The surprising thing, however, is that it can now be found within *Lutheran* circles. Lutherans who exhibit an indifference toward or an ignorance of their historic confession of faith may now espouse a form of this formerly anathematized doctrine.

Those who maintain such a position wish to put forth the idea that there is no quality in man that renders the grace of God inoperative. From that perspective it would seem that the grace of God in the means of grace can be effective without regard for anything in the minister or the receiver. Thus, proponents of open communion maintain that the Lord's Supper can be given to anyone who comes to the altar so that the grace of God can do its work. Work performed—grace given. Nothing can get in the way of God's grace, unless one retains the *obex* (obstacle) of rank unrepentant immorality, though some today would even discount that, welcoming everyone to the Lord's Table.

At the heart of the matter, however, there is something drastically wrong with "work performed—grace given." Reduced to the absurd, who would commend the proposition that a pastor should open a hydrant on the public street corner, dousing passersby with water "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," trusting that, *ex opere operato*, baptism has worked the grace of God? And who would stand in a supermarket and offer free samples of the body and blood of Christ "given unto death for your sins" to shoppers that walk by? If the grace of God is not hindered by personal qualities, liturgies, or locations, then the sacraments *ex opere operato* seem a very constructive thing to do.

While these manufactured extremes of baptism on the streets or holy communion in the supermarket are not likely, the principle behind open communion is basically the same: Give the means of grace without regard to the particulars so that God's grace can do its stuff. Open communion maintains that it is in fact immoral and unloving to withhold the grace of God by denying Christ's body and blood when the effective grace of God could be given.

For this reason, proponents of open communion also deny the *manducatio indignorum*. They must find some other interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 because this variation of *ex opere operato* cannot conceive of the possibility of an unworthy eating and drinking which imparts condemnation and judgment instead of mercy and grace.

In addition, there are irregularities among advocates of this kind of open communion, beginning with the establishment of an arbitrary boundary. They are willing to give communion to "any *baptized* Christian." Why? What quality of baptism renders the Lord's Supper effective and valid *ex opere operato* which was not present prior to baptism? One suspects that even if an unbaptized person were to approach with a sincere heart, the body and blood of Christ would not be denied.

An *ex opere operato* kind of "grace" is not really grace at all. It is contrary to the nature of grace to be automatic. Grace is never achieved by a mere performance. An *ex opere operato* definition separates grace from faith and Christ as far as the east is from the west—grace which is "performed by the deed which is done" is in effect a grace worked apart from faith rather than apart from the deeds of the law.

Jaroslav Pelikan notes that "When grace is made into a kind of supernatural stuff which automatically conferred this forgiveness of sins, it seemed to Luther that the free and sovereign Lord stood in danger of becoming the captive of His own Sacraments" (*Luther the Expositor*, companion volume to the American Edition of Luther's Works, p. 159.)

Luther indeed wrestled with this manner of speaking in a way that few Lutherans have fully grasped. For many, *ex opere operato* merely refers to a "magical" use of the Lord's Supper which has been imposed, perhaps initially by Melanchthon, upon the Roman Catholic Church. Yet Carl Wisløff writes that "Protestants clearly misunderstand the Catholic teaching concerning the operation of the sacrament *ex opere operato*. This doctrine aims to express two things. Negatively, the sacramental grace is not given on the basis of the subjective worthiness of the officiant or the recipient. Positively, the sacramental grace is occasioned by the validly administered sacramental sign" (*The Gift of Communion*, p. 47).

Thus stated, many Lutherans, who have not come free from an Augustinian bent, might tend to be less harsh—perhaps even espousing a "right" understanding of *ex opere operato*. "If one understands the term rightly, it might be used profitably." It is not too difficult then to understand the implementation of an evangelical catholicism which is in fact an open communion, susceptible to a vulgar sacramentalism wherein God is coerced to yield his grace on the basis of a rite performed upon those who come on their own terms.

JAB

The Ministry: Professional or Confessional?

Does anyone remember the days when seminary students were taught that they were to behave as "pre-professionals"? In his recent work No Place for Truth *(Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1993) David Wells describes what the fruits of such thinking may have been. He describes the "professionalization" of the ministry on pages 236-238 and 243-244.*

The pastoral ministry is thus being professionalized. It is being anchored firmly in the middle class, and the attitudes of those who are themselves professionals or who constantly deal with them are increasingly defining who the minister is. Once again, it is the old market mechanism at work—ministers defining themselves as a product for which there is a market. And so they feel they must present themselves as having a desired competence,

and that competence, as it turns out, is largely managerial. They must be able to manage the unruly and painful forces within the human psyche as well as the turbulent and equally unruly forces in the organization of the Church.

But in all this maneuvering, they are losing precisely what makes this professional, this technician of church life, different from any other manager of a human enterprize. Virtually everything that the minister does has a secular counterpart. Preaching finds its echoes in secular teaching and counseling. Evangelism finds its echoes in sales . . . So what is it that distinguishes ministers from their secular counterparts?

. . . In 1912, Washington Gladden published *The Christian Pastor and the Working Church*, in which he argued that the older idea of the pastor as the broker of truth should give way to the newer idea of the pastor as the friend of all. This was the genesis of pastoral psychology and the clinical movement, and further, it was the first stirring of an anti-theological breeze that soon grew to gale force. In the interests of serving "life, not doctrine," the Liberals sought to remake Christian faith. It is no small irony that the evangelical faith that so stiffly resisted this modernism has now been substantially overcome by modernization, that what one could not succeed in doing the other has achieved with little effort or notice.

. . . Although the stated aim of this shift in direction is to produce greater pastoral proficiency, the means adopted has allowed the needs of the profession to define the course of training that is offered. And this means that the determination of what is to be studied is no longer grounded in theology, as has been the case over most of the church's life, but in the vocation to which the student is headed.

The unifying center, therefore, is no longer theological truth but whatever it is that the student needs in order to become a religious professional. Whereas the unity once lay in the theology that was taught, it now lies in the needs in the church that the minister will have to manage. There is not, therefore, a conceptual link between what is studied in theology and what will be practiced in the church, but simply a pragmatic rationale that asks only what specific help theological knowledge can offer for the needs that arise.

A New Gospel Dynamic

We all enjoy a good turn of phrase, a clever expression of thought, a "catchy" way to express our hopes, beliefs and dreams. In some Lutheran think-tanks and planning committees, a winsome expression has become popular: *A New Gospel Dynamic.* This phrase will surely win an audience for one's point of view, whatever that might be. Who would not be in favor of something that is "new" and "Gospel" and "dynamic"?

"New" as in "new and improved" leads one, upon further reflection, to wonder, what was the "old" Gospel dynamic that needed to be "improved"? Out with the old and in with the new. Sometimes, however, it is a good thing to ask the mechanics to return the used and worn-out parts. In the case of the church, perhaps it isn't an altogether bad thing to see one last time what is being thrown out—though it might disgruntle the mechanics who sense the implication of distrust.

What is it that is being thrown out today as "old" and out of touch with the times? And why has the "old" lost its "dynamic"? I remember as a youth wanting to throw out "perfectly good" items just so I could have the new and improved. The results were not often as satisfying as I had imagined they would be. As the Proverbs say, "Do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two can bring?" (Prov 24:21b-22)

Admittedly anything "new" will sound suspicious to the staunchly "conservative" mind. "Dynamic" seems to threaten those who are staid in their ways. Sandwiching "Gospel" between "new" and "dynamic," however, may do something more than make evangelical sticks-in-the-mud ill at ease. It may also intimate a self-referenced agenda imposed upon what has at all times and in all places been received from the Lord.

It is easy to brand opponents of any "new Gospel dynamic" as being closed-minded conservatives who are standing in the way of progress and growth, i.e., "real Gospel advances." That caricature (currently being proliferated in mission and evangelism circles as well as in seminary curriculae) will only be unmasked when what is now "new" and "dynamic" has itself become old and dross. "New Gospel dynamic" will face the hottest furnace for evaluation. Of the three—"new" and "Gospel" and "dynamic"—which is likely to remain? It will be that which the Church has had pure and unobscured by innovations all along.

JAB

Outmoded Condemnations?

In 1980, the four-hundredth anniversary year of the Augsburg Confession, the pope made a visit to Germany. An interdenominational study group met, led by Pannenberg for the Lutherans and Lehmann for the Roman Catholics. One result was a report, The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide? *The following is an excerpt from the English translation of the reaction made by the theology faculty of Göttingen University to that report. It originally appeared in the 1991 Spring, Autumn, and Winter issues of* Lutheran Quarterly.

Translated by Oliver K. Olson with Franz Posset and made possible by the Luther Academy, the booklet Outmoded Condemnations? Antithesis Between the Council of Trent and the Reformation on Justification, the Sacrament, and the Ministry—Then and Now *is available through the* Logia *subscription offices, $5.00 plus $1.00 for shipping and handling.*

The common return to the Sacred Scriptures as norm does represent great progress—it is a basic feature not only of *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era* but also of all the Evangelical-Catholic papers of recent times. However, precisely this *methodological* presupposition is *theologically* unfounded since it is never explained in which way Scripture is to be the norm. As already suggested, the document deliberately dispenses with an explicit discussion of the theological priority of the Bible, and that, although the question of "scripture and tradition" belongs, even from a positivistic consideration, in the self-designated framework.

Indeed, in the introductory chapter, in which the role of Scripture for the study is dealt with, the following statement is found, in the context of some not very clear, general observations: "There is as yet no explicit consensus about the critical function of Scripture over against the formation of the church's tradition" (27:3-5).

Does that mean that there is an implicit, yet undeveloped consensus? This seems to be the case since *de facto* both sides use the same approach to the Bible. But are they doing this in harmony with their theologies? The document itself hints at the limits of a realistic hope in this regard when it talks about the role of the tradition and of the magisterium for interpreting the Scriptures in the Roman Catholic Church (25:8-10; 33-39).

In its summary the study explicitly states that concerning "the question of the critical function of the Scriptures, no full consensus has as yet been achieved" (26:34-36). As the adjective "full" indicates—and the context makes clear—it is not viewed as a matter of principle. But precisely that is difficult to conceive from a Reformation point of view, for which the critical role of the Holy Scriptures over against the church is of the highest basic significance. Therefore, it must be said that the primary methodological presupposition for the way in which the document proceeds rests on feet of clay.

For the Catholic dialog partner, the scriptural authority appealed to cannot be turned against tradition and the magisterium. When they bring the authority of the Scriptures into battle alongside with the Evangelicals, they also do it under the implicit condition that such a way of proceeding will not result in contradicting the tradition and the magisterium.

In what is said thus far, the suspicion comes to mind that with the ostensible common return to the Bible a certain concept of the Scriptures is tacitly at work: Holy Scriptures are understood as the sum of obligatory statements, and not primarily as the living word, that is, as the testimony to God's action for us in history, which convinces and which creates certitude.

The second step forward claimed, which allegedly overcomes the old differences, is the historical-critical approach to the Scriptures and to the history of dogma. Here again, one relies on the experience that today *de facto* both sides proceed in this way. There is no discussion of principles on the matter. This is all the more conspicuous since otherwise in this document the modern intellectual history and the history of theology are judged negatively, at least as far as Protestant theology is concerned (187:6-7). But the tool, "historical-critical method," grew in the context of modern intellectual history, a tool which in an isolated fashion, they unquestioningly take for granted.

At any rate, for *The Condemnations*, historical criticism bears two fruits. First, historical criticism allegedly resulted in the insight that the differences which broke out, and which were articulated during the course of church history, are themselves historically conditioned (15-18). That is supposedly true for those *loci* in the Bible to which the churches appealed. These, too, are relativized in their respective historical context. Second, the historical-critical approach to the Bible and to church history is seen to have resulted in the insight that everything is history, or in other words, everything is tradition, from the Sacred Scriptures on, via dogmas and confessions up to present-day expressions of life in the church.

With this statement, however, the axiomatic historical relativization turns into the assertion that if everything is tradition, nothing of that tradition may come under criticism any longer. Therefore, the programmatic introduction states: "None of today's churches should be expected to break with the tradition that lends them their particular character" (22:27-28). The Reformation, which insists that, at times, exactly such breaches might be necessary, is itself incorporated into this stream of the tradition and is thereby negated.

Theses on Open Questions

Church fellowship was established in 1868 between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods on the basis of agreement on these theses drawn up by C.F.W. Walther. This translation from Lehre und Wehre, *Vol XIV, No. 10, October 1868, pp. 318-319, was found among your editor's "paper mountain" from an unknown source. We beg the indulgence of the translator that we may provide this for the thoughtful reflection of our readers.*

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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 non-fundamental 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 seemingly unimportant matters.

Thesis 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.

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

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

Thesis 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.

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

Thesis 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.

Lutheran Hymnal, Jr.

Dear Sir,

After reading the many excellent articles on liturgy and hymnody in the Eastertide 1993 issue of Logia, *I happened upon the Preface to a hymnal titled,* The Lutheran Hymnary, Junior (1916). *I couldn't help being struck by the similarities between the discussions regarding church music then and now. Truly, "there is nothing new under the sun." The editor of that hymnal wrote:*

Most objection will no doubt be directed against the choral tunes selected. Concerning choral tunes we shall therefore let F.L. Humphreys, S.T.D., MusD., an American authority on church music (who is not a Lutheran), say a few words. In his "Evolution of Church Music" he speaks as follows of the lighter songs which unfortunately are at present demanded also by many Lutheran church people:

"The character of piety they encourage is somewhat superficial, not to say hysterical; they are full of extravagant and often foolish statements; but it can not be denied that they stir the hearts of the common throng. The refrains which are generally attached to them are readily caught by the ear; and that wave of emotional sympathy, easily started in large audiences, soon sweeps over the meeting, and choir and congregation are at once drawn into close accord. The musical structure of these hymns is very slight; the harmony has hardly any variety, seldom changing more than once in a bar, and they employ the march rhythms so frequently that they produce an effect of monotony. The slight structure and trivial harmony of these tunes only vitiate the public taste and strengthen the impression abroad that in America only the cheapest forms of art can flourish."

Rev. Humphreys continues: "It is a pity that the compilers of almost all hymn books have failed to borrow as many of the German chorals as they should. These *chorale* are so elevated, and at the same time so simple and devotional that they are beyond question the most perfect models of hymn tunes. It is humiliating to compare our collections with those used in the German (Lutheran) churches. ln one for the use in their Sunday schools the title page bears the inscription: 'for our children only the best is good enough.' If our compilers would give us a few more of these *chorale* instead of the feeble and sensuous melodies which are too numerous in our collections, our psalmody would be greatly improved; and more important still, the public taste would be better trained.

"In the Lutheran Church (of Germany) the introduction of those trifling tunes, even for Sunday School use, would not be permitted. There is a dignity in the German music, and indeed, in their entire purity of style, fullness of harmony, fine modulation and rhythm—all these are characteristics of good music; they are essential to the formation of model tunes. . . ."

We have seen that a new song book has been demanded. The popular demand is for novelty. To lower the standard of the Lutheran church music to suit the popular demand would be a disastrous policy. There is besides a deeper demand for a book to "train up the children and youth in the way they should *wander*."

To give the children and youth of the Lutheran Church a song book which they could learn the songs and teachings, the spirit

and the ways of the Lutheran Church, is the object of this book. The book should be given a fair trial before it is condemned as not answering the needs of the Lutheran children and youth. The juniors do not determine what catechism they are to study and should not determine what song book they are to adopt, for a song book ought to have a confessional character as well as a catechism. . . .

In our day, here in America . . . we are having a "hymn book misery" in that we are throwing overboard our choicest hymns and tunes from the past and manufacturing a multitude of more commonplace ones. We are being forced to listen to the demand from the children attending our public schools and living in a Reformed atmosphere to provide our Lutheran books with American tunes and Reformed music. All the English Lutheran church books, including our own "Lutheran Hymnary," are over 50 percent from Reformed sources. Most unwarranted and uncritical judgments against the Lutheran portion of our English Lutheran songbooks are freely offered not only by children, but also by parents, pastors, teachers, publishers and sellers. . . .

The committee that has prepared "Lutheran Hymnary, Junior" has recognized the "hymn book misery" of our times and in the light of history has sought to choose songs and tunes for this book chiefly from Lutheran sources. It is their hope that the book may in some measure serve as a check against the temptations from Reformed quarters that plague our people and lead them away from their Lutheran song treasures and into Reformed tastes.

Pr. Thomas L. Rank
Scarville, Iowa

Empty Hearing

The following is from a sermon based on James 1:22-27 ("But be doers of the word of God . . .") preached by Hermann Sasse on Rogate Sunday, May 18, 1941, translated by Jeffrey J. Kloha. The sermon is found in its entirety in the Easter 1993 issue of the Concordia Student Journal *(Vol. 16, No. 3). Mr. Kloha also serves as the editor for the journal. Many interesting and thoughtful articles have appeared in this publication over the years—well worth looking into. Subscription inquiries should be directed to Editor,* Concordia Student Journal, *801 DeMun Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105.*

"But be doers of the word and not only hearers," "not an empty hearer, but a doer." These words cannot be understood as if the hearing and the doing were antitheses in opposition to each other: here the hearing and there the doing; here a Christianity of hearers and there a Christianity of doers; here a theoretical and there a practical Christianity. Then, after all, the Epistle of James would be an epistle of straw.

The writer was not as foolish as the wise people of our time who would redeem themselves with the famous "Practical Christianity," with the complete earnestness of the Christian faith, with the deep earnestness of repentance. He knew that there is no Christian life without doctrine, no Christian deed without the divine word, no doing of the divine will without the hearing of the word of God. No, the entire early church knew, even where it did not grasp the unfathomable depths of the Christian faith as deeply as did Paul and John, that the act of obedience can come only from hearing, from deep, devout self-contemplation of God's commands. The self-deception that James warns about is a hearing that remains only a hearing—a hearing that is indeed not proper hearing. Such superficial hearing, which exists even in the church, is a hearing that brings no fruits and remains empty. . . .

Have we not—I willingly include myself—so often been annoyed with the sermon without asking whether the deepest source of our discontent might perhaps lie in ourselves? If a hearer cannot deal at all with a sermon, it is not always the fault of the sermon and the preacher. Listening to a sermon is a skill, an art to be learned. Hearing a genuine sermon and taking it unto oneself requires a measure of Christian formation and spiritual receptivity which many of us no longer possess. What this formation and receptivity means, I have, if I may say so, seen the strongest in completely simple people, in farmers and laborers and their wives in the village churches of Franconia or Brandenburg. Nothing is able to replace the lack of this spiritual formation, least of all the thunderous rhetoric and the stirring of the emotions by all the methods of oratory, which many people require of a preacher lest they fall asleep. Nothing shows more clearly that this is really the ultimate source of our non-hearing or our empty hearing than the fact that this same inability to hear stands also with respect to Holy Scripture. . . .

God's Service to Us

The classical Evangelical-Lutheran definition of worship is that God serves man (cf Ap XV.42). In this way, Christian worship differs from all other kinds of worship. Other kinds of worship have, as their object, communicating with, manipulating or pleasing the deity in some way so that it might help or benefit the worshipers. Where that is done, the great stress must be placed on the worshiper and his activity—his singing and praying, his motivations and intentions, his "putting something into it," and making sure that the event meets his criterion of meaningfulness.

In Evangelical-Lutheran worship, however, the emphasis is not on what is done but on what is *given*; not on activity but on receptivity. So, for example, St. Paul and the Catechism say that one is worthy to receive the Lord's Supper not based on his own self preparations and feeling of readiness, but based solely on faith given by the Spirit which "discerns the Body of Christ."

Yet it is readily apparent that, even in Evangelical-Lutheran worship, activity is not entirely ruled out. The Lutheran worshiper does not just sit in his pew waiting for God to act. He sings, he prays, he actively listens, he even chooses to go or not to go to receive the Sacrament. He is not a rock or lump, but a participant. But how does this fit in with the passive "God serving man" understanding of worship? What is the relationship between passivity and activity in Evangelical-Lutheran worship?

Friedrich Kalb, in summarizing the understanding of worship among Lutheran theologians of seventeenth-century Lutheran Orthodoxy, offers this answer [Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Worship In 17th Century Lutheranism*, trans. by Henry P.A. Hamann, St. Louis: CPH, 1965, pp 30-31]:

> Man can give only what he has received. By looking only for fruits and remaining indifferent toward the means of grace, Pietism blocked up the spring whence new life could gush forth. All action of regenerate man is reaction, because he previously allowed God to act on himself; he is capable of glorifying God only because he experienced the glory of God. For this reason all definitions of religio and cultus refer to the passive element in faith and the active element in love. This division into sacramental and sacrificial action must of course not be applied to specific external portions of the divine service, as though, for instance, the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments made up the sacramental part, the other features (prayer, confession, hymns) the sacrificial part. We are here dealing with the service as a whole. The determinative factor is our position in salvation history. The Christian is saint and sinner at one and the same time (simul justus, simul peccator). As a sinner he can only receive; as a justified person he can also give, or give back.

The debate over form and substance in matters of worship is not new. In the seventeenth century, the Lutheran Orthodoxy was frequently charged with unwittingly promoting an unenergetic worship, worship that had not caught onto the fervency of pure doctrine. And so the cry was heard for renewal and revitalization in the congregational worship life. The group leading the charge on this front became known as the Pietists. They drew the picture that Christianity was more than head knowledge, that right doctrine needed to be supplemented by heart-warming worship, that emphasis on purity of doctrine produced dull and staid worship, and that doctrinal purity could be presupposed and assumed and so needed not be stressed so often.

Gunther Stiller's book *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* goes a long way in refuting this attack, as Friedrich Kalb's earlier book on *Theology of Worship in 17th Century Lutheranism.* Stiller makes the point that the liturgical life in Leipzig in the time of Bach was so rich and full precisely because pietism had been turned back by the town clergy at the end of the 17th century and was not allowed to make inroads during Bach's tenure.

To prove his point, Stiller amasses a great deal of evidence comparing pietistic Dresden with orthodox Leipzig as well as pre-Bach Leipzig (when pietism was trying to gain ascendancy) with Leipzig in Bach's time (when pastors suspected of pietism were dismissed or disciplined). Reading the evidence, it becomes clear that orthodox Leipzig had quite a rich and vital worship life and a particularly strong sacramental piety (as well as remarkable participation in private confession) which Stiller directly attributes precisely to its stress on orthodox doctrine.

Unintentionally, Friedrich Kalb makes the same point. He produces reference after reference to back up his claim that the fathers of Lutheran orthodox theology saw worship and liturgics not as a separate part in their treatment of doctrine, but as the application of doctrine. For the goal of doctrine, they claimed again and again, was the right glorification and worship of God. In fact, Kalb implies, the fathers of orthodoxy laid such a heavy emphasis on purity of doctrine because they desired pure worship. In other words, it was not pure doctrine which then had to be incorporated into right worship, but right worship which demanded and flowed from and depended on pure doctrine. Or, as Kalb puts it, "for Orthodoxy, right knowledge or purity of doctrine necessarily formed part and parcel of 'beholding the beauty of the Lord and inquiring in His temple' (Ps. 27:4)."

Lutheran orthodoxy, then, placed a great deal of emphasis on pure doctrine while orthodox churches greatly emphasized frequent catechesis—all for the sake of worship. For the key question was no different from what it is today: How should we worship God? For Chemnitz, Calov, Gerhard and others, the answer depended on answering which God was worshiped and who he was. As Chemnitz summarized it, "The worship of the true God presupposes the knowledge of the true God." Or, in the words of Gerhard, "To worship God is nothing else than to recognize the divine nature in Him." And recognizing the divine nature rightly and most surely was the very reason for the insistence on purity in doctrine. In effect, then, Lutheran orthodoxy reversed the age old liturgical motto: It was not so much that how one prayed demonstrated what one believed (*lex orandi lex credendi est*) but rather that what one believed determined how one prayed (*lex credendi lex orandi est*).

The understanding of what one believed, furthermore, was radically different among the orthodox than for others. Hahn relates: "For the Enlightenment, worship was nothing more than instruction *about* God, instead of God's revelation and communication of Himself to His people, and their response of faith and service in the sacrifice of praise. For Lutherans today, however, worship is the proclamation of the very words of God. A man standing before a judge knows the difference between a judge who is merely talking *about* a not guilty sentence and a judge who is actually proclaiming a not guilty sentence."

Style and form are therefore not seen as adiaphora. Kalb makes a very good observation which also applies to today's form/substance debate. Consider what he has to say here, especially, the second paragraph:

"Ceremonies must not only be in harmony with the Gospel; they must also be attuned to the human beings for whom they are to have validity. Hence, a second criterion, which is of a purely human nature. Whether ceremonies are profitable for the Christian, that is, whether they possess the virtue to assist, to enrich, to arrange, to beautify the course of the service: these are questions that must be answered by psychology and aesthetics. It is to these human considerations that Paul appeals with his admonition in 1 Corinthians 14:40. To contend for the right form with strenuous energy is just as necessary as other good works are necessary.

"It is a strange phenomenon that within the various currents of Protestantism the *moral* conduct of the regenerate man is stressed without fear of thereby calling into question the doctrine of justification, but that with respect to *liturgical* action a peculiar paralysis develops from the appeal to the same doctrine of justification, because a 'work' is to be avoided at all costs. In the opinion of [17th century Lutheran] Orthodoxy, endeavors to arrange beautiful and dignified services belong to the category of good works . . ." (p. 114).

The Rev. John W. Fenton
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From Mega to Meta

Lutherans have denied the formula "faith + good works = salvation." In the same manner, we ought to deny the formula which says the means of "grace + methodological principles = church growth." In his commentary on Isaiah 55, Luther writes:

"The Word seems so weak and foolish that there appears to be no strength in it. How can it be believed that all the power, victory, and triumph of God are in the word of a feeble human mouth? And so He comes to meet this scandal of the weak and the stubborn. For all the enemies say, 'Do you really think that everything depends upon the Word? We must act, work, and think.'

"Here the text confounds their thoughts. He does not say, 'Our works and our thoughts do this,' but 'My Word.' It is therefore a consolation for the purpose of lifting up the weak, lest they be offended at the lowliness of God who has every victory in His Word.

"At the same time, He provides an illustration: *As they come down.* Rain and snow are not useless, but they *water* the earth, *giving seed to the sower.* The rain can achieve everything for the earth. 'So also My Word accomplishes everything.' The effect is the same. For neither one is understood. Reason says, 'The strength belongs not to the rain and snow but to the earth.' But when we experience the absence of rain, we see what the earth produces. So He takes away the glory of the earth and shows that it is not the earth that does it but that it is accomplished by the rain.

"So our building and promotion of the church is not the result of our works but of the Word of God which we preach. He rails against the Enthusiasts who despise the Word. Here you see that everything is produced by the Word" (AE 17:257f).

So what is it that is being emphasized by those among us who are foisting the Mega and Meta church models on our campus ministries and congregations? Does the Word need to adopt the patterns and styles of the world in order to be successful? This too shall pass. It is a phenomenon candidly illustrated in the stanzas of "Evangelism Twins," written by Kenneth Kosche and set to the tune of "St. Denio" (the tune many of us are familiar with in the hymn "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"):

Once Mega-, now Meta-, next what shall we say?
Evangelists come with a method-a-day.
The Gospel seems such an inadequate route
We must have a method of helping God out.

First bigger is better—what size can you claim?
Then intimate cell groups where each knows your name.
The style is essential, attracting the lost,
But substance is gone without counting the cost.

O Lord, send your Spirit to hearts and to minds
Of feelers and thinkers alike, that they find
Your "method," your Means which are able to feed
By grace, all sufficient, the soul's great felt need.

JAB

Bedside Manners

One volume of the Library of Christian Classics *was neither reprinted nor issued in paperback form. It was Volume XVIII*—Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, *edited and translated by Theodore G. Tappert and published by the Westminster Press, of Philadelphia. In this volume are many comforting and encouraging words from the pen of Luther to those who were suffering or in distress.*

The following piece is from that volume (p. 36f) recorded as table talk by a former Roman Catholic priest, Conrad Cordatus (1475-1546), who became a bold and tenacious follower of Luther. He was involved in various controversies and made to suffer for his faith. Driven out of Zwickau, he spent some time in Wittenberg where he was a table companion of Luther. This excerpt does not appear in the American Edition of Luther's Works, but may be found in WA, TR, II, no. 2194b.

When [Luther] approaches a sick man, he converses with him in a very friendly way, bends down as close to him as he can with his whole body, and first inquires about his illness, what his ailment is, how long he has been sick, what physician he has called, and what kind of medicine he has been using. Then he asks whether the sick man has been patient before God.

When he has assured himself that the sick man's will is inclined toward God, that he acknowledges the illness, sent upon him by the will of God, is to be borne with patience, and that he is prepared to die in God's name, if this be his will, Luther highly praises this disposition of his as a work wrought in him by the Holy Ghost himself.

It is a great mercy of God, he says, when a man comes to a knowledge of the Word, his Savior Jesus Christ, especially if he perceives in himself such a disposition and such a faith as the Word of God brings and if he thinks it excels all things that may be esteemed precious. Because he has such faith, he has an ever-present and gracious God. Luther commends such faith to others, at the same time admonishing the sick man to continue steadfast in his faith and promising to pray for him.

When the sick man begins to thank Luther and declares that he can never repay him for the blessing of his visit, Luther is accustomed to reply that this is his office and duty and that it is therefore not necessary to thank him so profusely. He also makes use of this consolation, that the sick man should not be afraid because God, who has provided him with a letter and seal (that is, with his Word and Sacrament), has also given himself for the man's redemption.

Surfing the Internet

Whatever impact the automobile and the telephone may have had upon the office of the holy ministry, the computer is bound to have even more. The leaps which technology has made in this century alone may be considered as bane or blessing—or maybe just bring forth new instruments for the sinful nature to manipulate. Where the Lord, however, has redeemed his people, he also

redeems the time and sanctifies the tools and works of their hands.

We would like to take this opportunity to mention a resource for pastors, missionaries and laypeople around the globe made possible through this new technology—a networking of electrical bits and bytes which may convey words of comfort and edification.

If you have a computer, a modem, and some simple communications software, you can access this resource. First, go to your local computer store or contact the nearest university, community college, or high school, and enquire about any "bulletin boards" (or BBS's as the jargon goes) in your area, particularly those which may have USENET or Internet access. When you have the opportunity to "log on," type a note to your "sysop" (such notes to the "System Operator" are commonly known as "feedback") and find out how you can send a note to either of the following addresses:

jab@valnet.vincennes.in.us
j.vieker2@genie.geis.com

We are especially looking for foreign readers to send us their Internet addresses and to put together a worldwide "news group" which can be easily accessed by confessional Lutherans around the globe. This address ought to be good at least through February 1994, but if there are problems, write to the LOGIA Forum address.

If all this is still a bit enigmatic and you would like further details, drop your LOGIA Forum editor a note in the "snail mail" (i.e. U.S. Postal Service) and help will be on the way!

JAB

ENGLAND DIVIDED

The historic November vote in the Church of England to ordain women, "How have English Anglicans had to rethink their ecclesiology, and what can Confessional Lutherans learn from their experience?" is the question addressed in this essay by Dr. Jonathan C. Naumann, Pastor of St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Ruislip, England, and part-time lecturer at Westfield House, Cambridge (seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England). His notes include a list of resources helpful to those interested in taking a closer look at the current affairs in the Church of England regarding the ordination of women. Readers may request a copy of it by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the LOGIA Forum editor.

Since the vote of its General Synod in November 1992 to ordain women into the priesthood, the Church of England has joined the ranks of other historic Reformation churches marching lemming-like into the abyss of ecclesiological chaos. Anglican belief in other areas had recently tended toward chaos even more than usual, but its ecclesiology, its ordering of the church and ministry, had seemed stable, at least in the British Isles. Now even that has been plunged into crisis.

The fateful legislation is, at the writing of this article, before a parliamentary "Ecclesiastical Committee" in which politicians of the state will decide whether or not it is "expedient" for the British public to be given female priests by their established church in this way. Whether the British public, ninety percent of whom don't attend church regularly anyway, care or not whether the seventeenth-century "Elizabethan Settlement" is violated by the General Synod of the Church of England is surely a secondary question. The primary question before Anglicans is how their church has arrived at the position of so radically redefining its fellowship and ministry.

The answer to this question is that the Anglican Church has become deformed by a combination of pressure from outside itself and weakness within. From history it is apparent that such a combination of Erastianism and equivocation over theological truth is the usual recipe for disaster encountered by churches. Sweden, a country which makes Britain look like a churchgoing nation, found its ministry crippled by such a combination of external and internal factors, too. It was its position as a public institution which made it vulnerable to such pressures. The two proposals which were made in 1957-1958 to ordain women into the Lutheran priesthood there both came from the Swedish government. The liberal agenda in modern thought had led 'politicians, journalists and their flock (to) argue for ordination of women as a civil right' (*The Free Synod of the Church of Sweden,* a brochure published by them in 1986, p. 13).

Linked as it was to the democratic decisions of the state, the Church of Sweden had little choice. Similar stories may be told concerning the Lutheran churches in Norway, Denmark, Finland and Germany where the influence of modern tax-payers outweighed any lingering influence the doctrinal formularies in the Lutheran Confessions might have had. Those in such churches who will not tolerate the ordination of women have been either forced out altogether or have formed minority movements within the established churches, consigned to ever-diminishing influence.

In North America, where neither the Anglican nor the Lutheran churches are 'established' in the European sense, modernistic challenges to historic practices of church and ministry have nevertheless taken their toll. Secular humanism (which enjoys a most-favored-religion status in the U.S.A.) exerts a powerful influence. As a result, the Anglican (Episcopal) and Lutheran churches which account for the majority of Anglicans and Lutherans have their theological output dominated by dogmatic liberalism and ordain women. The effect upon the Anglican communion of such foreign influence has been noted by British Anglicans who now see the erosion of the historic agenda in England.

Erosion of British seashores is a common problem cured with solid rock interposed between the island and the sea. The ecclesiological crisis in Britain likewise requires the interposition of the solid rock of divine truth between the church and the erosive forces which jeopardize it. Writing in a series of tracts called *Toward Reasoned Debate About the Priesting of Women* (*TRD*), Nigel Kinsella blames the crisis in England on the ripples caused in "executive authority" within it. He attributes the source of unity in that communion to "acceptance of its authoritative standards and observance of Anglican Church Order." The recent problems have revealed a valuable insight into their cause:

> The unprecedented willingness of some provinces to act unilaterally in consecrating and priesting women has shown up what seemed to be a strength of Anglicanism to be in fact a potential weakness.

In a profoundly apt summary, Kinsella states:

> Those who exercise authority in the Church can only do so properly to the extent that they acknowledge the authority over them—and ultimately that is church order (Nigel Kinsella, *Towards Reasoned Debate about the Priesting of Women*, Short Papers by Clergy and Laity in the Diocese of Bradford Questioning the Proposed Legislation, 4, "Church Authority," 1990, p. 2).

Whether they acknowledge it or not, all who call themselves Christians, be they pope or archbishop, men or women, ordained or laity, are under authority—the authority of God. The question is: Who will let God speak authoritatively through his word and who will try to limit the authority of Holy Scripture on the modern church? The two sides of the women's ordination debate line up quite neatly on either side of the debate over the authority of the Bible as God's revelation of his truth, and his vision of the exercise of spiritual authority in his church.

The Roman Catholic Church has been rightly criticized for its unilateral changes in Christian belief regarding Marian or Papal doctrines. That church has exceeded the limits of its authority by making controversial changes to the body of orthodox Christian doctrine. The culprit in their case was not the tyranny of the state but the tyranny of the papacy. Clearly they failed to properly acknowledge the authority over them.

In the *WAOW* [Women Against the Ordination of Women] *Information Pack*, the appeal to the authority of the *Rule of Faith* is put in a way that is typical of the argument found in the Anglican campaign in England against the ordination of women. It harks back to the axiom of Vincent of Lerins, popular with Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformers, that all things the church wishes to do must be tested as to whether they have been believed *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus* [always, everywhere and by everyone]. It is thought by them that traditionalistic authority should be added to Scriptural authority to add weight to their appeal against the change. Yet the appeal to Scripture and Tradition can backfire when human tradition, despite any inertia it may have, begins to take the church down a path in an opposing direction to that of Scripture. How else could the bishop of Guildford have reasoned in his speech at the November 1992 Synod that women must be ordained because "tradition demands it"?

Over against such a vulnerable traditionalism, the principle must be advanced that Scripture and apostolic tradition offer the church a finished expression of belief to be embraced, not judged on our terms. Human beings naturally resist such limits on their imaginations, however. *WAOW* observe that people today are against taking Scripture and tradition on their own terms, and want to have the authority to sit in judgment on both:

> But if we take it on our own terms, we are free to "see" new revelations and to "feel convinced" that they are from God. This present age exalts the importance and uniqueness of the individual, who in consequence has no feeling that a personal experience should be checked against the Church's vision of truth. On the other hand, this present age stresses the importance of the community. ln consequence, an inner conviction, if shared by a number of other people, is felt to be true.

The danger to the teachings of Jesus Christ concerning everything from sexual conduct to spiritual leadership inherent in this approach to truth "on our own terms" is clearly seen: ". . . if Scriptural authority is set aside, how easy it is to see Jesus as a man of his times, and pooh-pooh away his unwelcome teaching!"

Making a unique contribution to the task of reinforcing Scriptural authority with the glue of traditionalism, Nigel Kinsella in the eleventh tract in the *TRD* series, writes of how certain church usages should be retained in the church because they date from within a period he calls "the Time of Inspiration." This was the time during which the ecumenical creeds and the "threefold male ministry of the Church" took their "final shape. "Only the "widest possible consensus" could permit such church usages to be changed. Because the "hand of God" was uniquely part of the Time of Inspiration, the authority of its usages could be described as more than merely a human authority. The authority of the usages of that time is an extension of divine authority.

His attempt to extend divine authority is interesting, but the genuine source of divine authority is the Bible. It is that divine authority which is being rejected by dogmatic liberalism, quite apart from any other evidence of the "hand of God." As Paul Gardner in his occasional paper for the *Orthos* series notes, while the General Synod of the Church of England in its 1972 document *The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood* ". . . started in the right place and raised the right question—the authority of Scripture—. . . this has been lost sight of in the gradual acquiescence, apparently by most of those involved in the debate, to the view that the . . . 'pluriform' understanding of Scripture is the right one."

In other words, through equivocation regarding divine truth, dogmatic liberalism struck again to reduce the Scriptures from having a self-authenticating, completely trustworthy, infallible message to having no infallible answers—merely one witness (among others) to the operation of the Spirit in human hearts.

If the authority of Scripture is to take second place to the "operation of the Spirit" manifested subjectively to individuals (or two-thirds majorities in Synod), then a consensus of faith will be impossible for the church. Personal opinions and majority votes for or against matters of theology will come and go without having compelling authority over all. What would become of the unity for which the church has prayed for centuries? Just as importantly, what would stop a church from gradually evolving from one religion into another different religion?

The only way for the unity of the church to be safeguarded is to safeguard its orthodoxy. To do that, churches, be they Anglican or Lutheran, must take authority out of the hands of Synods, and certainly out of the hands of any individuals, and return it to a higher, absolute authority—God himself who speaks in Scripture of how spiritual authority is to be exercised among men and women in his church. Only the argument from Scripture gives people God's view of the issues.

In the history of the war of words which has surrounded the women priests controversy, the arguments of those who opposed the idea of female priest have been published widely by means of tracts. Francis Gardom and Geoffrey Kirk, Oxford-educated heirs

to Anglican Tractarianism, made such tracts a prominent part of their "Cost of Conscience" (COC) campaign from the start. (The COC now has three and a half thousand priests among its constituents.) Consistent with the Tractarian tradition, most COC priests, like Gardom and Kirk, are strongly loyal to the theory of Apostolic Succession, but ironically find themselves opposed to bishops whose traditional apostolic authority they would otherwise uphold. Bishops in the Church of England (and the Worldwide Anglican Communion) from John Spong, the Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, must be judged by the COC as guilty of abdicating their apostolic obligation to act as priests in the church of God. By their public heterodoxy, in voting to ordain women, they have reduced themselves to mere authorities within a sect: The Church of England.

Until the 1992 vote the Church of England was not regarded as a sect by its members, especially those of the Anglo-catholic variety. It was, in theory, the catholic church of the nation, rendering the Roman Catholic see at Westminster, indeed any other Christian church, theologically unnecessary. Protestants and Roman Catholics had a legal right but not a theological necessity to be in England. But since the vote for legislation which enables women to be priests "in the Church of England," the Anglican church faces the prospect of having clergy which many of its own members cannot recognize as priests in the church of God, but merely "Anglican."

An understanding that had been basic to the Anglican theology of ordination was that clergy were ordained into an objective "order" which was recognized by all, at least theologically. The opposing theology, that clergy were just locally recognized spiritual leaders who had felt moved by the Spirit and acquired a following in their own sphere, was the theology of the "free churches," the "non-conformists," "Enthusiasts," "Pentecostalists," and "Evangelicals." Yet that latter understanding of the pastoral ministry is what the Church of England is embracing. With the advent of women clergy who present themselves for ordination because of a feeling they have, and receive an ordination that is not recognized by every congregation, but only applies to some, a different theology of the Holy Ministry has taken hold. Like the enthusiastic woman candidate, the bishop also will be acting according to his personal judgment, rather than that of the whole church.

The current Archbishop of Canterbury has stated his affinity with the Evangelical style of churchmanship. He is likely to be in favor of making the whole church of England conform to its fastest growing branch, the Evangelical. Within evangelical Lutheranism too, a certain admiration has been felt for the growth in numbers associated with non-Lutheran Evangelicalism. Both churches stand to lose their historic doctrine of the office of the Holy Ministry if they sacrifice their historic doctrine in favor of the less organized, but "vibrant" and "vital" Evangelical style of church leadership.

The Evangelical style claims to appreciate being "contact-based." But contact with God's Word and Sacrament, the means of grace taught by historic orthodoxy, is less important than contact with a style of ministry which attracts large groups of excited people. The changing church looks to a "mobile God" to be present where the numbers are and people are experiencing something exciting. The orthodox doctrine of the Office of the Ministry is dismissed as but one "style" based on "institutional" leadership. Evangelical style on the other hand is regarded by many as the only redeeming hope on the horizon for the institutional church, as it focuses more on the person of the worship leader rather than on the position, freeing him or her to exercise their gifts. Functionalism thus reduces any doctrine of office to a mere abstraction.

The same question must be asked again: "Where does the authority to do this come from?" Does Evangelicalism, speaking in many tongues, have the voice of authority concerning pastoral leadership in the church which we must obey? Does any threat, from dogmatic liberalism or the women's revolution urging the church to change its ways or go out of business, discredit the Bible which has spoken authoritatively for thousands of years? For those who are willing to listen to it in humility, the voice of the Lord of the "one holy catholic and apostolic church" may still be heard. It is a comforting voice for the soul because it is the voice of the gospel. For he who has ears let him hear—God infallibly speaks in his word, he touches with certainty and forgiving grace, by sure and certain means of his appointment and ordination in his church: Holy Scripture, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, Holy Supper, Holy Ministry.

Dr. Jonathan C. Naumann
Ruislip, England

Scripture and Confession

From *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles. Report of the Synodical President, LCMS, 1972*

IV. HOLY SCRIPTURE

A. The Inspiration of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit and that God is therefore the true Author of every word of Scripture. We acknowledge that there is a qualitative difference between the inspired witness of Holy Scripture in all its parts and words and the witness of every other form of human expression, making the Bible a unique book.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the Holy Scriptures are inspired only in the sense that all Christians are "inspired" to confess the lordship of Jesus Christ.
2. That the Holy Spirit did not inspire the actual words of the biblical authors but merely provided these men with special guidance.
3. That only those matters in Holy Scripture were inspired by the Holy Spirit which directly pertain to Jesus Christ and man's salvation.
4. That noncanonical writings in the Christian tradition can be regarded as "inspired" in the same sense as Holy Scripture.
5. That portions of the New Testament witness to Jesus Christ contain imaginative additions which had their origin in the early Christian community and do not present actual facts.

B. The Purpose of Scripture

We believe that all Scripture bears witness to Jesus Christ and that its primary purpose is to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We therefore affirm that the Scriptures are rightly used only when they are read from the perspective of justification by faith and the proper distinction between law and gospel. Since the saving work of Jesus Christ was accomplished through his personal entrance into our history and his genuinely historical life, death, and resurrection, we acknowledge that the recognition of the soteriological purpose of Scripture in no sense permits us to call into question or deny the historicity or factuality of matters recorded in the Bible.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That knowing the facts and data presented in the Scripture, without relating them to Jesus Christ and his work of salvation, represents an adequate approach to Holy Scripture.
2. That the Old Testament read on its own terms, does not bear witness to Jesus Christ.
3. That it is permissible to reject the historicity of events or the occurrence of miracles recorded in the Scriptures so long as there is no confusion of law and gospel.
4. That recognition of the primary purpose of Scripture makes it irrelevant whether such questions of fact as the following are answered in the affirmative: Were Adam and Eve real historical individuals? Did Israel cross the Red Sea on dry land? Did the brazen serpent miracle actually take place? Was Jesus really born of a virgin? Did Jesus perform all the miracles attributed to him? Did Jesus' resurrection **actually** involved the return to life of his dead body?

C. The Gospel and Holy Scripture (Material and Formal Principles)

We believe, teach, and confess that the gospel of the gracious justification of the sinner through faith in Jesus Christ is not only the chief doctrine of Holy Scripture and a basic presupposition for the interpretation of Scripture but the heart and center of our Christian faith and theology (material principle). We also believe, teach, and confess that only "the Word of God shall establish articles of faith" (SA, II, ii, 15), and 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" (FC, Ep, Rule and Norm, 1) (formal principle). The gospel which is the center of our theology is the gospel to which the Scriptures bear witness, while the Scriptures from which we derive our theology direct us steadfastly to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We reject the following distortions of the relationship between the gospel and the Bible (the material and formal principles):

1. That acceptance of the Bible as such, rather than the gospel, is the heart and center of Christian faith and theology, and the way to eternal salvation.
2. That the gospel, rather than Scripture, is the norm for appraising and judging all doctrines and teachers (as for example, when a decision on the permissibility of ordaining women into the pastoral office is made on the basis of the "gospel" rather than on the teaching of Scripture as such).
3. That the historicity or facticity of certain biblical accounts (such as the Flood or the Fall) may be questioned provided this does not distort the gospel.
4. That Christians need not accept matters taught in the Scriptures that are not a part of the "gospel."

D. The Authority of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that because the Scriptures have God as their author, they possess both the divine power to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (causative authority), as well as the divine authority to serve as the church's sole standard of doctrine and life (normative authority). We recognize that the authority of Scripture can be accepted only through faith and not merely by rational demonstration. As men of faith, we affirm not only that Holy Scripture is powerful and efficacious, but also that it is "the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong." (FC, Ep, Rule and Norm, 7)

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the authority of Scripture is limited to its efficacy in bringing men to salvation in Jesus Christ.
2. That the authority of Scripture has reference only to what the Scriptures do (as means of grace) rather than to what they are (as the inspired Word of God).
3. That the Scriptures are authoritative for the doctrine and life of the church, not because of their character as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, but because they are the oldest available written sources for the history of ancient Israel and for the life and message of Jesus Christ, or because they were written by the chosen and appointed leaders of Israel and of the early church, or because the church declared them to be canonical.
4. That the Christian community in every age is directly inspired by the Holy Spirit and is therefore free to go beyond the doctrine of the prophets and apostles in determining the content of certain aspects of its faith and witness.

E. The Canonical Text of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that the authoritative word for the church today is the *canonical* word, not precanonical sources, forms, or traditions—however useful the investigation of these possibilities may on occasion be for a clearer understanding of what the canonical text intends to say.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That there are various "meanings" of a biblical text or pericope to be discovered at various stages of its precanonical history, or that the meaning a canonical text has now may differ from the meaning it had when it was first written.
2. That biblical materials that are judged to be "authentic" (for example, "authentic" words of Jesus, "authentic" books of Paul, or "authentic" ideas of Moses) have greater authority than "non-authentic" biblical statements.
3. That certain pericopes or passages in the canonical text of

Scripture may be regarded as imaginative additions of the biblical authors or of the early Christian community and therefore need not be accepted as fully authoritative.

4. That extracanonical sources may be used in such a way as to call into question the clear meaning of the canonical text.
5. That the essential theological data of biblical theology is to be found in the precanonical history of the biblical text.
6. That certain canonical materials have greater authority than other canonical materials because of their greater antiquity or because they are allegedly more "genuine" or "authentic."
7. That various statements of Jesus recorded in the Gospels may not actually be from Jesus and therefore lack historical factuality or the full measure of his authority.

F. The Infallibility of Scripture

With Luther, we confess that "God's Word cannot err" (LC, IV 57). We therefore believe, teach, and confess that since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, they contain no errors or contradictions but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth. We hold that the opinion that Scripture contains errors is a violation of the *sola scriptura* principle, for it rests upon the acceptance of some norm or criterion of truth above the Scriptures. We recognize that there are apparent contradictions or discrepancies and problems which arise because of uncertainty over the original text.

We reject the following views:

1. That the Scriptures contain theological as well as factual contradictions and errors.
2. That the Scriptures are inerrant only in matters pertaining directly to the gospel message of salvation.
3. That the Scriptures are only functionally inerrant, that is, that the Scriptures are "inerrant" only in the sense that they accomplish their aim of bringing the gospel of salvation to men.
4. That the biblical authors accommodated themselves to using and repeating as true the erroneous notions of their day (for example, the claim that Paul's statements on the role of women in the church are not binding today because they are the culturally conditioned result of the apostle's sharing the views of contemporary Judaism as a child of his time).
5. That statements of Jesus and the New Testament writers concerning the human authorship of portions of the Old Testament or the historicity of certain Old Testament persons and events need not be regarded as true (for example, the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110, the historicity of Jonah, or the fall of Adam and Eve).
6. That only those aspects of a biblical statement need to be regarded as true that are in keeping with the alleged *intent* of the passage (for example, that Paul's statement about Adam and Eve in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 11 do not prove the historicity of Adam and Eve because this was not the specific intent of the apostle; or that the virgin birth of our Lord may be denied because the **infancy narratives** in Matthew and Luke did not have the specific intent to discuss a biological miracle).
7. That Jesus did not make some of the statements or perform some of the deeds attributed to him in the Gospels but that they were in fact invented or created by the early Christian community or the evangelists to meet their specific needs.
8. That the biblical authors sometimes placed statements into the mouths of people who in fact did not make them (for example, the claim that the "Deuteronomist" places a speech in Solomon's mouth which Solomon never actually made), or that they relate events as having actually taken place that did not in fact occur (for example, the fall of Adam and Eve, the crossing of the Red Sea on dry land, the episode of the brazen serpent, Jesus' cursing of the fig tree, John the Baptist's experiences in the wilderness, Jesus' changing water into wine, Jesus' walking on water, or even Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead or the fact of his empty tomb).
9. That the use of certain "literary forms" necessarily calls into question the historicity of that which is being described (for example, that the alleged midrashic form of the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke suggests that no virgin birth actually occurred, or that the literary form of Genesis 3 argues against the historicity of the Fall).

G. The Unity of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that since the same God speaks throughout Holy Scripture, there is an organic unity both within and between the Old and New Testaments. While acknowledging the rich variety of language and style in Scripture and recognizing differences of emphasis in various accounts of the same event or topic, we nevertheless affirm that the same doctrine of the gospel, in all its articles, *is* presented throughout the entire Scripture.

We reject the view that Holy Scripture, both within and between its various books and authors, presents us with conflicting or contradictory teachings and theologies. We regard this view not only as violating the Scripture's own understanding of itself, but also as making it impossible for the church to have and confess a unified theological position that is truly biblical and evangelical.

H. Old Testament Prophecy

Since the New Testament is the culminating written revelation of God, we affirm that it is decisive in determining the relation between the two Testaments and the meaning of Old Testament prophecies in particular, for the meaning of a prophecy becomes known in full only from its fulfillment. With the Lutheran Confessions, we recognize the presence of Messianic prophecies about Jesus Christ throughout the Old Testament. Accordingly, we acknowledge that the Old Testament "promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for his sake" (Apology, IV, 5) and that the patriarchs and their descendants comforted themselves with such Messianic promises (cf. FC, SD, V, 23).

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the New Testament statements about Old Testament texts and events do not establish their meaning (for

example, the claim that Jesus' reference to Psalm 110 in Matthew 22:43-44 does not establish either that Psalm's Davidic authorship or its predictive Messianic character).

2. That Old Testament prophecies are to be regarded as Messianic prophecies, not in the sense of being genuinely predictive, but only in the sense that the New Testament later applies them to New Testament events.
3. That the Old Testament prophets never recognized that their prophecies reached beyond their own time to the time of Christ.

I. Historical Methods of Biblical Interpretation

Since God is the Lord of history and has revealed himself by acts in history and has in the person of his Son actually entered into man's history, we acknowledge that the historical framework in which the gospel message is set in Scripture is an essential part of the Word. Furthermore, we recognize that the inspired Scriptures are historical documents written in various times, places, and circumstances. We therefore believe that the Scriptures invite historical investigation and are to be taken seriously as historical documents. We affirm, however, that the Christian interpreter of Scripture cannot adopt uncritically the presuppositions and canons of the secular historian, but that he will be guided in his use of historical techniques by the presuppositions of his faith in the Lord of history, who reveals himself in Holy Scripture as the one who creates, sustains and even enters our history in order to lead it to his end.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the question of whether certain events described in the Scripture actually happened is unimportant in view of the purpose and function of Holy Scripture.
2. That methods based on secularistic and naturalistic notions of history, such as the following, may have a valid biblical interpretation:
   a. That the universe is closed to the intervention of God or any supernatural force.
   b. That miracles are to be explained in naturalistic terms whenever possible.
   c. That the principle of the economy of miracles may lead us to deny certain miracles reported in the Scriptures.
   d. That the doctrines of Holy Scripture are the result of a natural development or evolution of ideas and experiences within Israel and the early church.
   e. That the message of Scripture can be adequately measured by laws derived exclusively from empirical data and rational observation.
   f. That man's inability to know the future makes genuine predictive prophecy an impossibility.
3. That our primary concern in biblical interpretation is not with explaining the meaning of the primary sources namely, the canonical Scriptures, on the basis of the sources themselves.
4. That if the use of historical methods leads to conclusions at variance with the evident meaning of the biblical text, such conclusions may be accepted without violating the Lutheran view of Scripture or our commitment to the Lutheran Confessions (for example, the claim that it is permissible to deny the existence of angels or a personal devil because of literary, historical, or theological considerations).

VI. CONFESSIONAL SUBSCRIPTION

We reaffirm our acceptance of the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, and our unconditional subscription to "all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God" (Constitution, Article II; cf. also Bylaw 4.21). We accept the Confessions because they are drawn from the Word of God and on that account regard their doctrinal content as a true and binding exposition of Holy Scripture and as authoritative for our work as ministers of Jesus Christ and servants of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

We accept the following clarifications of the nature of our confessional subscription:

1. We acknowledge that the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions includes not only those doctrines of Holy Scripture explicity treated in the Confessions but also those biblical doctrines set forth somewhat indirectly or incidentally, such as the doctrines of Holy Scripture, creation the Holy Spirit, and eschatology.
2. With the fathers, we recognize that not everything in the Lutheran Confessions is a part of its doctrinal content but we reject all attempts to abridge the extent of this doctrinal content in an arbitrary or subjective manner. We recognize, for example, that subscription to the Lutheran Confessions does not bind us to all strictly exegetical details contained in the Confessions, or even to the confessional use of certain Bible passages to support a particular theological statement. However, since the Confessions want to be understood as biblical expositions, we reject the notion that we are not bound by our confessional subscription to the exposition of Scripture contained in the Confessions or to the doctrinal content which the Confessions derive from individual Bible passages.
3. We recognize that the Confessions must be read and studied in terms of the historical situations in which they were written, but we reject the view that our confessional subscription means only that we regard the Confessions as a historically correct response to the problems encountered by the church when the Confessions were written.
4. We recognize that the doctrinal content of the Confessions centers in Jesus Christ and the gospel of our justification by grace through faith, but we reject the view that the doctrinal content of the Confessions includes only those confessional statements which explicitly and directly deal with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, we do not accept the idea that our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions permits us to reject such confessional positions as the existence of the devil and of angels or that Adam and Eve were real historical persons whose fall into sin was a real historical event.
5. We recognize that the Lutheran Confessions contain no distinct article on the nature of Holy Scripture and its

interpretation, but we acknowledge and accept the confessional understanding of the nature of Holy Scripture and of the proper theological principles for its interpretation.

6. We recognize the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scripture and therefore reject the opinion that our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions leaves us free to reject any doctrinal statements of the Confessions where we feel there is no supporting biblical evidence.
7. We acknowledge that our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions pledges us to preach and teach in accordance with the entire Holy Scripture. We therefore reject the opinion that all biblical matters not explicitly treated in the Lutheran Confessions are open questions.
8. We confess that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule and norm for faith and life, and that other writings "should not be put on a par with Holy Scripture" (FC, Ep, 1-2). We therefore reject the notion that it is legitimate to maintain the doctrinal conclusions of the Confessions without accepting their biblical basis, or to regard formal confessional subscription as an adequate safeguard against improper exegetical conclusions.
9. Finally, we affirm that our acceptance of the Lutheran Confessions means not only that we tolerate the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions as a viable option for Lutheran Christians today, but that we in fact preach, teach and confess the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions as our very own.