

LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



PIETISMUS REDIVIVUS

REFORMATION 1999

VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 4

εἰ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. LOGIA considers itself a *free conference in print* and is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. At the heart of our journal we want our readers to find a love for the sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God, not merely as rule and norm, but especially as Spirit, truth, and life 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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COVER ART

Pietismus Redivivus? No problem—Time again to break out the Loescher! What? Could it be that some of you are not familiar with Loescher? You know Spener and Francke, Arnold and Rambach, Shuetz and Woltersdorf, Zinzendorf and Muhlenberg; but do you recall one of the greatest defenders of orthodoxy in the face of Pietism? Valetin Ernst Loescher.

The woodcut on the cover is from Loescher's book, *The Complete Timotheous Verinus* (Part 1, 1718). In the woodcut Loescher is at his desk with the Bible. At his feet are "books by fanatics." From God above shines the light of revelation that warns: "Guard against false prophets."

Most interesting, for our purposes here, is the devil shooting "the latest arrow" which is one of many "arguments of the fanatics." These are easily deflected by the angel who is "armed with the shield of orthodoxy."

The woodcut and a more complete description appear on pages xiv–xv in *The Complete Timotheous Verinus* by Valetin E. Loescher, translated by James L. Langebartels and Robert J. Koester, Northwestern Publishing House, 1998. Used by permission.

The cover art is provided by the Concordia Seminary Library, Saint Louis, by the Rev. Ernest Bernet.

FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	<i>Luther's Works</i> , American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LW	<i>Lutheran Worship</i>
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	<i>Service Book and Hymnal</i>
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	<i>The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</i> . Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
TLH	<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i>
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	<i>Luthers Werke</i> , Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]

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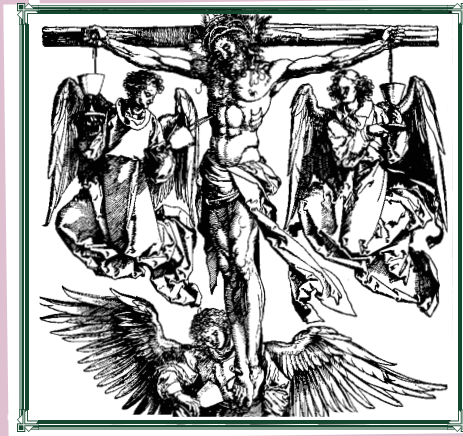
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DYING TO LIVE



A Conference for Lutheran Youth

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Parkers Prairie, MN 56361
218.943.4774 woodring@midwestinfo.com

What Can Presbyterians Learn From Lutherans?

D. G. HART



CELEBRATING REFORMATION DAY IS AN ACTIVITY typically reserved for Lutherans. After all, October thirty-first marks the day when Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the castle church door and launched the Protestant Reformation. James Nuechterlein, a Lutheran historian who now edits the journal *First Things*, recalls that when he was a child Lutherans “enthusiastically celebrated” October thirty-first. The services he remembers were “unabashed exercises in Protestant triumphalism.” The reason for such enthusiastic celebration owed to the marginal status of the German-Americans who comprised the majority of American Lutherans. “Protestantism in those days,” Nuechterlein explains, “still constituted the vital center of American religious culture.” Lutherans, in turn, “were located some distance from the center of that center—which was occupied, more or less in order, by Episcopalians, Presbyterians—mainline, that is, not Orthodox—Methodists, and Congregationalists.” But on Reformation Day, Lutherans “could escape our marginal status and enter fully into the grand anti-papist communion” of American Protestantism.

In some ways it is ironic that Presbyterians celebrate Reformation Day since it is a day of greater importance to the theological descendants of Martin Luther. I wonder too if part of the reason why members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) would observe Reformation Day has to do with their own feelings of cultural inferiority. Lutherans may have been at the margins of American Protestantism, but at least they could point to professors of church history like Sydney Ahlstrom and Jaroslav Pelikan at Yale, Martin Marty and the University of Chicago, and Lewis Spitz at Stanford, who had moved from the province of Lutheranism into the centers of American learning and mainstream Protestantism. George Marsden, who now teaches at the University of Notre Dame, is the closest the OPC has come to producing a scholar to achieve national recognition in the United States. All the more reason, then, for Orthodox Presbyterians to celebrate Reformation Day with gusto because for one brief day they go from a denomination in need of explanation to the central current of western history since the sixteenth century.

The desire to feel important, even if only for one day, may also explain why on Reformation Day Presbyterians often hear glowing and inspiring words about the genius not only of the Protestant Reformation but of the Reformed tradition more narrowly. Of course, Calvinists trace their lineage back to Luther’s initial discovery of the doctrine of justification by faith, a doctrine on which Presbyterians and Lutherans agree, a doctrine that moved the likes of Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and Martin Bucer to initiate even greater reforms in the church. But those greater reforms are just the point where Presbyterians and Reformed begin to part company with Lutherans. Martin Luther, some Calvinists argue, only went so far and not far enough at that. So the Calvinist wing of the Reformation pushed beyond Luther’s initial efforts and reformed all aspects of the church, from its theology all the way to its polity and worship, according to the Word of God. And for some Presbyterians and Reformed, this reform effort did not stop with the church. It kept on going all the way out the doors of the church and into the markets and city councils of Western Europe, thus transforming the life and culture of the West.

This is how Christopher Dawson described the difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism:

there lies the spiritual world of Calvinism and the Free Churches, which is . . . completely different in its political and social outlook from the world of Lutheranism, and which has had a far greater influence and closer connection with what we know as western civilization without further qualification. . . . The genius of Calvin was that of an organizer and legislator, severe, logical, and inflexible in purpose, and consequently it was he and not Luther who inspired Protestantism with the will to dominate the world and to change society and culture.

So much for Lutheran triumphalism.

Abraham Kuyper rendered a similar estimate of the differences between Calvinism and Lutheranism in his famous *Lectures on Calvinism*, given one hundred years ago at Princeton Seminary. Kuyper said,

Luther never worked out his fundamental thought. And Protestantism, taken in a general sense, without further differentiation, is either a purely negative conception without content, or a chameleon-like name which the deniers

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of the God-Man like to adopt as their shield. Only of Calvinism can it be said that it has consistently and logically followed out the lines of the Reformation, has established not only Churches but also States, has set its stamp upon social and public life, and has thus, in the full sense of the word, created for the whole life of man a world of thought entirely its own.

What then do Presbyterians have to learn from Lutherans? Is it simply to figure out a way to be as enthusiastic in our celebrations of Reformation Day as Lutherans used to be? Or could it be that Lutherans have something to teach Calvinists and themselves about the dangers of Protestant triumphalism? What follows are a few observations about the genius of Lutheranism for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the Reformation's significance. Not only does an appreciation of Lutheranism lead to a greater regard for Luther's accomplishments, but it may help Presbyterians learn that the real spirit of Reformation Day is not pride and celebration, but humility and sobriety.

It was he [Calvin] and not Luther who inspired Protestantism with the will to dominate the world and to change society and culture.

One reason for learning humility from Lutherans has simply to do with statistics. Those in the conservative neck of the Presbyterian woods tend to think of themselves as prominent and gaining even more importance. In some OPC and Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) circles one even hears talk about transforming the culture, to the point where a piece recently appeared about PCA church planting efforts in New York City, the goal of which is to redeem the Big Apple, a tall order that might call for a little more restraint. It may not be that the world is a Calvinist's oyster, but sometimes conservative Presbyterians think and act as if they aspire to be power brokers in American life.

And then Calvinists run into the wall of American Lutheranism, a world that is foreign to most Presbyterians, whether conservative or liberal. The OPC, for instance, numbers approximately 22,000 members: not so many, but growth over the past few years has been encouraging. Then there is the PCA with around 275,000 members, a figure that often tempts Orthodox Presbyterians to break the Tenth Commandment. If we are such a good church, some lament, then why is the OPC so small? And what is the PCA doing right to be so big? But these questions do not make a whole lot of difference in comparison to statistics for comparable Lutheran denominations. The Wisconsin Synod, which some Protestant observers say is the Lutheran equivalent of the OPC, has approximately 410,000 members, which means that this virtually unknown denomination—what Presbyterian ever heard of the Wisconsin Synod?—is bigger than the OPC and the PCA put

together. And then there is the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the rough Lutheran equivalent of the PCA, meaning that it is a little more progressive, a little more affluent, and a little more open to evangelicalism than the Wisconsin Synod. The Missouri Synod—hold on to your seats—has a whopping 2.5 million members. Which means that even if all of the conservative Presbyterian and Reformed denominations that comprised the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (NAPARC) were lumped together before the Christian Reformed Church was removed, there would only be one conservative Calvinist in America for every five conservative Lutherans. And if this comparison extended all the way to include both mainline and conservative Lutherans and Presbyterians, the statistics are not much more encouraging for American Presbyterianism. The OPC, the PCA, and the mainline Presbyterian Church in the USA only account for four million Americans who identify themselves as Presbyterian. In contrast, combined membership in the Wisconsin Synod, the Missouri Synod, and the mainline Evangelical Lutheran Church in America weighs in at approximately eight million church members. Which raises an interesting question about whether America is more hospitable to Lutherans than Presbyterians.

Now the point is not that numbers are a good index to the health of a church. Faithfulness matters more than size. The OPC should not compromise its witness, teachings, or worship in order to gain more members. Still, statistics are telling about what kind of mark conservative Presbyterianism is making on American society. If conservative Presbyterians want to talk about transforming culture and the best they can do is muster only 300,000 members, then Calvinists might want to consider the example of confessional Lutherans in America, who are much less inclined to talk about the transformation of culture and yet outnumber confessional Presbyterians ten to one. Comparisons with Lutherans does teach Presbyterians a lesson of humility. (By the way, humility need not be limited to a comparison of church membership statistics. Confessional Lutherans sponsor any number of good universities and colleges, publish a variety of learned theological journals, and count within their ranks Christian scholars who write thoughtfully about most aspects of the Christian life.)

Nevertheless, statistics are not the best source for learning humility from Lutherans: much more important is the theology of Lutheranism itself. One of the reasons why Lutherans talk less about the transformation of culture, and so talk and act more humbly with regard to their own abilities and accomplishments, stems from the theology of the cross that lies at the heart of Martin Luther's understanding of justification by faith. As much as Luther's doctrine of justification revolutionized Christianity in sixteenth-century Western Europe, his notion of the theology of the cross is perhaps just as pivotal for understanding the gospel revealed in God's holy Word.

The theology of cross is basically a way of considering how God makes himself known to man. It stands in direct contrast with the theology of glory. In 1518 Luther wrote, "the man who looks upon the invisible things of God as they are perceived in created things does not deserve to be called a theologian." In other words, the man who tries to know God on the basis of nature and the created world will always fail. But, Luther continued, "the man who perceives the visible rearward parts of

God as seen in suffering and the cross does . . . deserve to be called a theologian.” Just as Moses could not bear to see the face of God (Exodus 33) but had to content himself with God’s back, what Luther called God’s rearward parts, so men and women cannot know God except through the cross and suffering of Christ. For Luther, God’s ways run directly contrary to the wisdom of the world or the speculations of the theology of glory. Instead of making himself known through the splendor of creation and the power of his sovereign rule over the world, God chooses to reveal himself through what the world considers foolish, base, ignoble, and weak.

His notion of the theology of the cross is perhaps just as pivotal for understanding the gospel revealed in God’s holy Word.

The theology of the cross, however, is not simply a way of understanding the way God reveals himself and his purpose in history. For Luther, true knowledge of God could not be separated from a right relationship with God. For this reason the theology of the cross not only opposes the efforts of man to know God through creation, but it also condemns man’s endeavor to make himself righteous before God’s justice. The theology of glory tempts man to make a deal with God on the basis of his own moral goodness. The theology of glory is in effect a theology of works or self-righteousness. But the theology of the cross undercuts any grounds for man’s self-confidence. Through the theology of the cross man moves from trying to earn salvation to leaning upon God entirely for redemption. In sum, just as the cross demonstrates the ultimate humility of Christ in his earthly ministry, so the theology of the cross humbles man by revealing that he cannot know God or be righteous before God apart from the saving work of Christ. That saving work paradoxically uses what is weak, foolish, and poor to triumph over the strong, wise, and rich.

A good way to illustrate how the theology of the cross functioned in Luther’s teaching is to look at his commentary on the Magnificat, that is, the prayer that the virgin Mary prayed after hearing that she would give birth to the Messiah. In this prayer Mary began by praising God for regarding her poor and lowly estate and for still making her an instrument of his blessing. She also recounts the mighty deeds that God has done, generation after generation, for those who fear him. God has, she says, “scattered the proud in the thoughts of their heart; he has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed.” This is precisely the sort of paradox that Luther had in mind with the theology of the cross: how God could do great and mighty things by humbling the powerful and making the humble strong. Luther writes in the introduction to his commentary,

Just as God in the beginning of creation made the world out of nothing, whence He is called the Creator and Almighty, so His manner of working continues unchanged. Even now and to the end of the world, all His works are such that out of that which is nothing, worthless, despised, wretched, and dead, He makes that which is something, precious, honorable, blessed and living.

In Luther’s estimation, nothing better illustrated the ways of God than his selection of Mary to be the human vehicle through which our Lord would be conceived. “Let us make it very plain for the sake of the simple,” Luther writes.

Doubtless there were in Jerusalem daughters of the chief priests and counselors who were rich, comely, youthful, cultured, and held in high renown by all the people; even as it is today with the daughters of kings, princes, and men of wealth . . . Even in her own town of Nazareth [Mary] was not the daughter of one of the chief rulers, but a poor and plain citizen’s daughter, whom none looked up to or esteemed. To her neighbors and their daughters she was but a simple maiden, tending the cattle and doing the housework, and doubtless esteemed no more than any poor maid-servant today, who does as she is told around the house.

This was hardly the stem and root from which the world would have expected the rod and flower of King David to spring.

It was, of course, incredible that a virgin could give birth to a child. It was equally miraculous for a branch to grow out of a dead tree stump as the prophet Isaiah had predicted. What made the incarnation of Christ through the womb of the virgin Mary all the more remarkable was the utter disparity between mother and son. Luther explained,

In the days of David and Solomon the royal stem and line of David had been green and flourishing, fortunate in its great glory, might, and riches, and famous in the eyes of the world. But in the latter days, when Christ was to come, the priests had usurped this honor and were the sole rulers, while the royal line of David had become so impoverished and despised that it was like a dead stump, so that there was no hope or likelihood that a king descended from it would ever attain to any great glory. But when all seemed most unlikely—comes Christ, and is born of the despised stump, of the poor and lowly maiden. The rod and flower springs from her whom Sir Annas’ or Caiaphas’ daughter would not have deigned to have for her humblest lady’s maid.

The mother of Christ is a perfect illustration of the theology of the cross. As 1 Peter 5:5 says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” This paradox is, according to Luther, the source of the believer’s love and praise of God. When we know that God is one who “looks into the depths and helps only the poor, despised, afflicted, miserable, forsaken and those who are nothing,” then we will have a “heartly love” for God. And the theology of the cross helps to explain why God acts and reveals himself the way he does. “For this reason,” Luther also wrote in

his commentary on the Magnificat, “God has also imposed death on us all and laid the cross of Christ together with countless sufferings and afflictions on His beloved children.” In the depths of suffering and trials, God is our refuge and shows himself “known and worthy of love and praise.”

Instead of “Christ and Culture in Paradox,” the Reformed view is “Christ the Transformer of Culture.”

The history of redemption recorded in Scripture not only illustrates the theology of the cross, but Luther’s insights on the way that God uses suffering and affliction also has important repercussions for the way Presbyterians understand history and our place in it since the time of the Bible. Just as God’s salvation comes through weak and lowly means, so his ongoing work of the church goes forward in the same manner. Instead of hoping for the kingdom of God in this life to display riches, power, and glory, the kingdom of God follows a different course. The church, which for Luther is the manifestation of God’s kingdom in this life, has means and ends that the world considers foolish and weak. Her members are blessed in the sight of God but in the world’s eyes are “the most wretched of all.”

One implication of this understanding of the church is the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms. Just as there are two kinds of righteousness according to the theology of the cross and the theology of glory, so the two kingdoms, that of the church and that of the state, have two standards for good conduct. Christian righteousness is rooted in faith that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Only those who trust the promises that God makes in the gospel of Jesus Christ are righteous before him. Civil righteousness, in contrast, stems from a code of human conduct that all citizens are capable of maintaining, whether Christian or not. The norms for the church are faith and love, but the standards for public order are reason and justice. Consequently, the doctrine of the two kingdoms teaches that while one may be righteous before the eyes of men, the same individual is unrighteous in the sight of God unless clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ, received by faith alone. One kingdom, that of the state, is earthly and temporal, but the kingdom of God is spiritual and eternal. As the Augsburg Confession puts it,

Christ’s kingdom is spiritual; it is the knowledge of God in the heart, the fear of God and faith, the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life. At the same time it lets us make outward use of the legitimate political ordinances of the nation in which we live, just as it lets us make use of medicine or architecture, food or drink or air. The gospel does not introduce any new laws about the civil estate, but commands us to obey the existing laws, whether they were formulated by heathens or by others, and in this obedience to practice love.

At this point some Presbyterians might begin to object to Luther’s doctrine of the theology of the cross. The doctrine of the two kingdoms, you see, is supposed to be an idea foreign to Calvinism. In his classic book *Christ and Culture*, H. Richard Niebuhr contrasted the Reformed and Lutheran understandings of the relationship between Christ and culture precisely at this point of the doctrine of the two kingdoms. Niebuhr said that Lutherans held to the model of “Christ and Culture in Paradox.” According to this perspective man is “seen as subject to two moralities, and as citizen of two worlds that are not only discontinuous with each other but largely opposed. In the *polarity* and *tension* of Christ and culture life must be lived precariously and sinfully in the hope of a justification which lies beyond history.” The last stanza of “A Mighty Fortress” echoes this conception of the Christian life.

That Word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through him who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God’s truth abideth still;
His Kingdom is forever.

For Luther the kingdom of God did not depend upon earthly rulers or believers’ prosperity in this world. God’s kingdom is otherworldly and will gain the victory in the end, even though his people may in the meantime be forced to live without “goods” or “kindred.”

The Calvinistic worldview, according to Niebuhr, stood in contrast to the Lutheran outlook. Instead of “Christ and Culture in Paradox,” the Reformed view is “Christ the Transformer of Culture.” Niebuhr wrote that Calvin, more than Luther, “looks for the present permeation of all life by the gospel.” In addition to his understanding of vocation, the relation between church and state, human nature, and the resurrection of the body, Calvin’s idea of God’s sovereignty “leads to the thought that what the gospel promises and makes possible . . . is the transformation of mankind and all its nature and culture into a kingdom of God in which the laws of the kingdom have been written upon inward parts.” Rather than looking for salvation in the world to come, the Calvinist looks for evidence of redemption in this world, not only in the sanctification of individuals but in the transformation of all spheres of life.

Whether or not Niebuhr was entirely accurate, the contrast he draws between Lutheranism and Calvinism raises serious concerns if Presbyterians begin to think too highly of their contribution to human history. One obvious concern is pride. The other is confusing the ways of the church with those of the world. Both of these problems are evident in the words of one of the all-time great Calvinist transformers of culture, Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper was the Dutch Calvinist minister and theologian who became a journalist, founded a university, led in the formation of a new church, began a political party, and ruled as Prime Minister in the Netherlands at the beginning of the twentieth century. If anyone could legitimately claim to speak of the transformation of culture,

Kuyper could. Kuyper's articulation of the Reformed world-and-life view has inspired countless Calvinists to go into all walks of life, pursue them to the glory of God, and show the difference that Calvinism makes not simply for religion but for all spheres of life. Here is how Kuyper explained the Reformed world-and-life view one hundred years ago at Princeton Theological Seminary,

Everything that has been created was, in its creation, furnished by God with an unchangeable law of existence. And because God has fully ordained such laws and ordinances for all of life, therefore the Calvinist demands that all life be consecrated to His service, in strict obedience. A religion confined to the closet, the cell, or the church, therefore Calvin abhors. . . . God is present in all life, with the influence of His omnipresent and almighty power, and no sphere of human life is conceivable in which religion does not maintain its demands that God shall be praised, that God's ordinances shall be observed, and that every *labora* shall be permeated with its *ora* in fervent and ceaseless prayer.

As inspiring as Kuyper's vision of Calvinism may be, it has at times fostered pride that seeks to attribute all of the advances of western civilization to the Reformed tradition. According to Kuyper, "the history of the Netherlands, of Europe, and of the world would have been . . . painfully sad" without the influence of Calvinism, which has made that history "bright and inspiring." Aside from fostering an overly high estimate of the Calvinist contribution to culture that other Christian traditions would certainly dispute, Kuyper's idea of the Reformed world-and-life view also nurtures a tendency to look to worldly accomplishments, rather than theological, liturgical, or ecclesiastical faithfulness, as marks of Calvinism's success. It was not enough that Calvinism reformed the church and her teaching. This was a defective understanding of the Reformed faith. Instead, for Kuyper what proves the truth of Calvinism is its "indomitable energy" that fermented in "every department of human activity" and "imparted a new impulse for an entirely new development of life to the whole of Western Europe."

Kuyper's effort to rehabilitate Calvinism, as admirable and rigorous as it was, is at least indirectly responsible for the misunderstanding of the Reformed tradition that has most recently plagued the Christian Reformed Church. Here being Reformed has less to do with the Five Points of Calvinism and the teachings of the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort, and more to do with a Reformed world-and-life view about all spheres of life, from agriculture to quantum physics. For instance, one writer recently said that to be Reformed means extending the sovereignty of God in personal salvation to all of life.

We want everything around us to be brought into conformity with Jesus' plan to make all things new. . . . [W]e are not shy about poking our noses into every nook and cranny of the world . . . we Reformed Christians are not content to confine the Lord to our hearts.

The application of the Reformed worldview to all of life has progressed so far that it is now possible to be Reformed without being

a Calvinist. And this is what happens when you begin to give the Reformed world-and-life-view priority over the Calvinistic understanding of sin and grace. If being Reformed means that "creation has priority over salvation, that salvation is not the escape from or elevation above creation but the *restoration* of creation," then life in this world begins to look more important than preparation for the life to come. And again, Kuyper may have introduced this problem into Reformed circles by insisting that Calvinists needed to go beyond Lutherans. The Reformed could not be content with salvation or the church; they had a holy duty to transform their society according to God's revealed principles. According to Kuyper, salvation of souls was not enough. Real Calvinism had to change society.

Kuyper may have introduced this problem into Reformed circles by insisting that Calvinists needed to go beyond Lutherans.

If Calvinists were more Lutheran, would they be less inclined to yield to the temptation of triumphalism and social Christianity that afflicts the Reformed tradition? Obviously, the humility taught by the theology of the cross and the doctrine of the two kingdoms puts a strong break upon conceiving of Christianity as the transformation of culture. Lutheranism especially teaches that God is gaining the victory not through human accomplishments in making a better world, but through the suffering and turmoil of our pilgrimage here. Could it be, in fact, that the aggressiveness associated with Reformed world-and-life view is a form of the theology of glory to which the Corinthian church aspired? The Corinthians wanted a return to the glory days of Israel and could not see that God had actually accomplished far more through the cross of Christ—foolishness to the Gentiles—than all the glories of David or Solomon ever did. The cross, as Paul taught, reverses all human expectations and shows, through the eyes of faith, that when Christians are weak, God is strong. When they are poor, God is rich. When they are defeated, God triumphs. This is a lesson that Presbyterians could well learn from Lutherans. It not only keeps them humble, but it also teaches Calvinists how to regard the present earthly life.

But Presbyterians may not have to go to Lutherans only to learn this lesson. Ironically, they can learn it from Calvin himself, who was closer to Luther's theology of the cross than Kuyper's theology of cultural transformation. According to Calvin, the Christian life is a pilgrimage filled with suffering and defeat. He wrote,

Then only do we rightly advance by the discipline of the cross, when we learn that this life, judged in itself, is troubled, turbulent, unhappy, in countless ways, and in no respect clearly happy; that all those things which are judged to be its goods are uncertain, fleeting, vain, and vitiated by

many intermingled evils. From this, at the same time, we conclude that in this life we are to seek and hope for nothing but struggle; when we think of our crown, we are to raise our eyes to heaven. For this we must believe; that the mind is never seriously aroused to desire and ponder the life to come unless it be previously imbued with contempt for the present life. Indeed, there is no middle ground between these two: either world must become worthless to us or hold us bound by intemperate love of it.

Calvin's teaching suggests that the theology of the cross is not foreign to the Reformed tradition but actually flows directly from a proper understanding of justification and sanctification. His attitude toward life in this world is clearly not the one usually associated with the Reformed worldview. But it was not an aberration in Calvin's thinking. It is constantly on display in all the expressions of Calvin's piety.

For instance, in the hymn "I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art," one commonly attributed to Calvin, we have a sober estimate of the trials and suffering of this life, coupled with the reassuring hope of salvation through Jesus Christ, our only comfort in life and death. The last stanza reads,

Our hope is in no other save in thee;
Our faith is built upon thy promise free;
O grant to us such stronger hope and sure;
That we can boldly conquer and endure.

Here is a different picture of Calvinism. It is not one of the triumphant crusader conquering the world for Christ and his kingdom, but rather one of the suffering pilgrim who endures pain and persecution, just as his savior did, who hopes for the

life to come, and whose hope for victory lies only in what God has done to conquer sin and death through the suffering and death of Christ.

In closing, let one of the prayers that Calvin wrote be a reminder of the humility that all Christians, whether Lutherans or Calvinists, need to keep close at hand. Its theme of suffering, endurance, and hope for the world to come is precisely what Presbyterians need to learn from Lutherans. But whether Calvinists go to Luther or return to Calvin for that lesson, it is one that comes closest to capturing the real significance of the Protestant Reformation, a reform movement that on its best behavior boasted not in the glories and might of human effort but rather in the merits and benefits of a suffering savior. Calvin wrote,

Grant, Almighty God, that as you try us in the warfare of the cross, and arouse most powerful enemies whose barbarity might justly terrify and dishearten us, were we not depending on your aid,—O grant, that we may call to mind how wonderfully you did in former times deliver your people, and how seasonably you did bring them help, when they were oppressed and entirely overwhelmed, so that we may learn at this day to flee to your protection, and not doubt, that when you become propitious to us there is in you sufficient power to preserve us, and to lay prostrate our enemies, how much so ever they may now exult and think to triumph above the heavens, so that they may at length know by experience that they are earthly and frail creatures, whose life and condition is like the mist which soon vanishes; and may we learn to aspire after that blessed eternity which is laid up for us in heaven through Christ our Lord. Amen. LOGIA

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

GERALD S. KRISPIN



SACRAMENTAL HOLY ABSOLUTION IN THE WAY of the Lutheran Confessions came under severe criticism during the last years of the seventeenth century. Yet while this criticism was not without validity at certain points, it also eventually led to the translation of penitents away from the face of God (*coram Deo*) as present in a father confessor, into the presence of a spiritual counseling professional (*coram hominibus*). Spearheading this critique of the practice of Holy Absolution during the seventeenth century was Philipp Jacob Spener (1635–1705), whose pious desire was to awaken those who had been lulled into the sleep of a damnable false security by the “cheap grace” offered all too indiscriminately, as he evaluated it, in the confessional practice of his time. The success of this endeavor has not only garnered Spener the title “Father of Pietism,” but also reveals him as the methodological father of modern pastoral counseling. It is thus instructive to trace how Spener sought to diagnose what was wrong with the practice of Holy Absolution in his day, and how he sought to cure the discovered ills in the way of a new, truly pious pastoral practice.¹ Yet our first task is to outline the historical framework for the discussion of Spener’s understanding of confession and absolution² and to evaluate the apparent abuses that find mention in Spener’s own works.³

HOLY ABSOLUTION DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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

These, then, in the most general terms, were the usual elements of the Lutheran practice of confession by the end of the seventeenth century.

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

SPENER’S CRITIQUE OF HOLY ABSOLUTION

In some respects, Spener’s critique of confession and absolution shared in the criticisms of others of his day, some of which parallel those mentioned above. Spener thus lamented the abuses that confronted him and his fellow pastors “in that most often nothing happens [in confession] other than that a penitent thoughtlessly utters a memorized [confessional] formula, the content of which he sometimes does not even understand, which in fact does not even apply to this person in any way.”⁹ In other words, as he saw the matter, no sins were actually being confessed. Furthermore, he was also concerned that there were not enough pastors available to hear confession properly. Neither was there sufficient time to instruct, nor was the loca-

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tion appropriate to afford the desirable privacy for confession, “confessional chairs have been built in such a way that the father confessor and the penitent are unable to pour out their hearts to each other mutually, as would be proper, [nor are they able to confess] without others hearing or being aware.” Noticeable is that this criticism of confession directs itself to its relation to the life and practice of the regenerate inner man (*wiedergeborene innere Mensch*) and actually presses on toward a reinterpretation of confession itself. This reinterpretation is indicated by the word “mutually” (*gegenseinander*) in the quotation above. Spener seems to be saying that a mutual, fraternal confession would thus be going on, which would lead to reciprocal edification and encouragement. In order to facilitate this mutual exchange, Spener suggested that the study of the pastor would provide a more fitting place for such a confessional conversation. What is most notable, therefore, is that Spener attempted to have the second type of confession, of which Luther speaks in the Large Catechism—that which is before the brother—subsume sacramental private confession, which is in consequence reinterpreted in terms of a mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren (*mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*).¹⁰ Though it is not to be denied that the gospel can be given in such circumstances, as Luther indeed states in the Smalcald Articles (BSLK, 449, 6–14), lost is Luther’s contention that individual confession takes place *before Christ* (*coram Christi*), where it is the ear of Christ that hears, and Christ’s words found in the mouth of the father confessor that give absolution. Spener’s suggestion, however, that a place be found to meet that would give opportunity for mutual counseling met with little favorable response during his lifetime, as church officials were concerned to preserve a “location that would not arouse suspicion” (*unverdächtigen Ort*), which the church sanctuary afforded. Confession and absolution before the altar therefore remained a public act located where all of God’s gifts are distributed through the servant who has been called and ordained to give the gifts there. One might also add that the question of the location of confession was therefore deemed not to be a matter of adiaphora, but itself made Lutheran confessional theology visible as it related to confessional practice.¹¹

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

TRUE REPENTANCE AND HOLY ABSOLUTION

Throughout Spener’s preaching and teaching about confession and absolution, the term *rechte* or *wahre Buße* recurs and designates that which is fundamental to the Christian life, indeed, to faith itself. *Buße* is thus not merely a *status*, but an actual *habitus* for him who is *regenerate*, one that in fact defines faith. Spener

argued, as one faithful to the Confessions, that true repentance consists in contrition for his sins (*Reue seiner Sünden*) and faith (*der Glaube*).¹³ Spener thus defined repentance (*Buße*) in terms of faith, in other words, that which attains the state of being a gracious child of God (*Gnadenkindschaft*) and an obedient heart (*ein gehorsames hertz*). This is to stand in contrast to the misunderstanding of *Buße* that Spener saw as so prevalent in the parishes of Germany: “Many think that repentance is merely an external ceremony that at most consists of reading some prayers of repen-

Luther’s central purpose in retaining confession was to lead to the in statu Christi absolution. By contrast, Spener’s purpose was to lead to a deeper kind of repentance.

tance, going to church several days in a row, and making confession: and this comes to be called having repented.”¹⁴ True repentance, however, is of a different composition. It so circumscribes faith that it can be externally ascertainable and verifiable in its practical application. Repentance is thus “true” or “authentic” if it meets the following three criteria: “that you are an enemy of sin from your heart, truly believe in Jesus Christ, and have the earnest intention to amend your life.”¹⁵ Accordingly, repentance is in constant need of being examined as being true in light of these criteria, lest there be a lapse into passive belief without the active hate of sin “from the foundation of your soul” (*von grund der seelen*) and a subsequent failure to amend the life.¹⁶ Spener therefore clearly urged an active repentance, that needs and seeks to establish its own veracity. Luther, on the other hand, warned against such a repentance and spoke instead of a “passive contrition” (*passiva contritio*).¹⁷ Now, while the basic three criteria for true repentance have already been discussed above, it proves to be most telling that Spener continually added elements to the list of criteria in order to assess the quality of repentance. To the three basic elements, that is, hatred of sin, the desire to amend one’s life, and faith in Jesus Christ, Spener went on to add a fourth criterion, a vow of obedience to God’s commandments:

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

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

been discovered in the self-examination; (6) resolutely to carry out all the demands of the “rules of the Christian life” (*christliche lebensregel*); (7) and the knowledge that it is the Holy Spirit who has led one to make this resolution.¹⁹

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

I can never know if I have truly confessed or had sufficient contrition. It is the pope who establishes the power of absolution upon contrition . . . For [in this case] I can never be certain of the forgiveness of sin, because I cannot know if I am sufficiently contrite.²⁰

And this was precisely Spener’s point when it comes to Holy Absolution: it does not give certainty of forgiveness because of the uncertainty of one’s repentance.²¹

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

This then is true repentance, whereby one becomes worthy of absolution, not that one has read a few prayers prior to coming to confession, then to say confession and listen to what remains in order to receive absolution trustingly, which is about as far as this usually goes: instead, repentance has to be a complete change of heart; namely, to bring about in the heart that desire whereby you would never again commit the previous sin, and instead commit yourself to apply yourself to live a God-pleasing life in all things: *if this intention is not forthright and earnest, you are also not repentant, even if you have thoroughly read the entire prayer-book and made your confession with tears upon your knees . . . Now, without such repentance absolution is always of no benefit to a person* (italics added).²²

Again, Luther’s sole criterion for receiving absolution is faith, which is manifested by virtue of the penitent coming to confession of his own volition.²³ Thus he could write, “The priest therefore has enough signs and reason to absolve in that one desires to receive the absolution. He is not bound to know anything more.”²⁴ Yet Spener indeed felt duty-bound to know more. And he went on to meet the objection of those who would protest that they come to confession believing the words of God as actually giving what they say by affirming that the words are indeed dependable. Yet for him it was critical to understand that

these words are to be depended upon *not* by the one who simply believes, but *only* by the one who repents properly:

Indeed, someone might say, the absolution is nevertheless God’s word, which must be true; and I receive it in faith, so I also receive its power. Answer: The absolution is in itself God’s word, which cannot deceive; but its application to you, if you are unrepentant, is a human error.²⁵

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

And so they freely confess that they have not lived as they should have, but also did not desire to better their lives, but insisted that Christ had established the confessional chair for this reason, and commanded his apostles and all preachers to forgive the sins of all those who confess them, with the precious assurance that that which they forgive has been forgiven before him.²⁶

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

For this reason true faith should also be added, which attains and receives such forgiveness, whereby all the previous requirements are certainly elements of the divine order, but not the means themselves.²⁷

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

HOLY ABSOLUTION AND THE DIVINE ORDER

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

Such are the parts that divine order demands of us, that have been established within the church for some time. This has also been retained by our Lutheran church, that

one must confess to a preacher. The purpose of this confession is to enable the preacher to ascertain the willingness of a person to repent.²⁸

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

Therefore there exists also a divine order in this case, that absolution and forgiveness should not be distributed to any but those who are repentant: That is why Christ called for the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Lk 24:47). These we may not invert or separate (Acts 5:31). Faith alone is that whereby we are justified on our part, that is attain to the forgiveness of sins . . . therefore no one is able to attain the forgiveness of sins in himself except he who has a living faith: but this [faith] exists with no one who stands outside repentance. “Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:15). But it must be a true and earnest repentance, one that does not consist in a few external rites or works, but in a full transformation of the heart: that a person is an enemy of his sins from the bottom of his heart and hates them, sets his trust upon Christ, never again to serve certain sins willingly, but no matter how much he desires these, to resist and begin to live such a life that he will seek to walk according to the commandments of God (1 Jn 2:3–4). *Where any one of these is lacking, and where one does not value the grace of God in Jesus Christ so highly as to abandon gladly all servitude to sin, then no true repentance is present, and according to the divine order no valid forgiveness and absolution are present* (italics added).²⁹

It is clear that this “order” necessitates and legitimizes the *exploratio* for which Spener called in confession.³⁰ Thus he could maintain the power of the absolution, yet restrict it as being given only to the truly repentant according to the divine order. An absolution that is given outside of this order, that is, to a believer who has not demonstrated a valid repentance, remains completely invalid before God:

Where absolution is therefore given without true repentance, or is just presumed to be received, it has no value before God; for God cannot, according to his truth, countenance the performance of the tasks of his servants, unless they have carried these out according to his ordering. Whatever is done outside of this order and instruction is invalid in itself.³¹

Spener thus lamented that this practice has led to the damnation of many. That is why the existing practice of confession and absolution needed to change, as he was convinced that the present practice did not provide the opportunity to instruct and warn of misapplying the absolution to oneself if a true repentance was not present.³² Thus the believer who wants to receive what the words of God proclaim without first being certain of the integrity of his repentance runs the risk of plunging into a false security, which ultimately can lead to damnation. Spener wrote:

If only everyone would contemplate this in his heart! That most certainly many hundreds and thousands are eternally lost because they constantly depend upon confession and absolution, and have erroneously believed that their sins have been forgiven; whereas they actually had never attained to true repentance and had remained stuck in their sins, and probably died in them as well. *Such as these could have been helped if they had recognized the deception of their false trust in the absolution while in an unrepentant state, might have abandoned [such false trust] and thereby could have been driven to true repentance and fled their previous false security* (italics added).³³

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

Namely, that we more often take the opportunity to remove from the people their illusion of an absolution as being *opere operato*, and instead impress upon them that even though the absolution that is spoken is the word of God, which has power within it, it nevertheless does not come to anyone except him who is truly repentant.³⁴

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

If you then want to be assured that the absolution is a word of God that applies also to you, then it is not enough that they are spoken to you by the preacher, but that you have assured yourself, after diligent self-examination, that your repentance is authentically earnest. It is indeed possible to discover this within: if your repentance is sincere, you are an enemy of your sins with all your heart, truly believe in Jesus Christ, and have the earnest intent to better your life, then the absolution coming from God applies to you, even if it is received from a human being. It is nevertheless certain, as though you had heard it unmediated from heaven above. Then it is God’s word with its appropriation by you.³⁵

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

THE APPROPRIATION OF HOLY ABSOLUTION

According to Spener, the words of absolution spoken after the confession are words of God that one can apply to oneself safely only if all the criteria of true repentance have been met. Any other *Zueignung* would be presumption. Implied by all of this is that the words of God must be appropriated, namely, claimed for oneself, rather than letting oneself be given what they say. In other words, they are not the words of God *pro me* until one has met the proper conditions that actually enable the individual to appropriate them to his benefit. Thus Spener drew the analogy of the *Zueignung* of absolution to a debt that is due to be paid, and cast

it into an eschatological framework: Ultimately the debt is only paid up for those who are truly penitent. The heart that is truly repentant can take this bill—the words of absolution—as being applied to itself. On the other hand, for the one who is not properly repentant, the bill is invalid. Even though one understands it to be paid, God will instead add to one's debt the guilt of misappropriation as well. In other words, an absolution received without the right repentance becomes a stolen absolution that multiplies guilt. There was for Spener therefore an “unworthy confession” (*confessio indignorum*) as there was for Luther, albeit with this most startling difference: for Luther the sole criterion was faith, that is, whether or not the individual lets himself be given the forgiveness which the words of absolution deliver. This is not to deny the role of repentance, and specifically contrition, in the Christian life. Luther spoke specifically of contrition in the Smalcald Articles. But in contrast to Spener, he spoke of a *passiva contritio*, worked by God's law, which as such cannot be quantified in any way, nor defined in terms of a set number of criteria (BSLK 437, 1–4). Luther therefore rejected any kind of piecemeal (*partim*) repentance in the Smalcald Articles, which state:

This repentance is not piecemeal or beggarly as that one [in the papacy], and so actually repents of sin; it is also not uncertain as the former That is why contrition is also not uncertain, but only a mere, certain despairing of everything that we are, speak, or do.³⁶

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

Spener, on the other hand, went beyond faith to the proper attitude as reflected in true repentance, namely, contrition within us (*contritio in nobis*). If the proper attitude is not present, absolution has not been received. Thus Spener left the unrepentant as remaining without the gifts: no forgiveness of sin, eternal life, or salvation. This again stands in marked contrast to Luther, who affirmed that the gifts are always given, albeit capable of being rejected by unbelief to the detriment and eventual damnation of the unbeliever.³⁷ On the other hand, for Spener damnation occurred not for rejecting the absolution in unbelief, but for misrepresenting one's repentance:

If someone now comes who is unrepentant, but confesses as one who is repentant and is absolved by us as such, then he has certainly deceived us: but the absolution benefits him not one hair breadth before God, but damns him all the more, because he sought to deceive God.³⁸

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

Thus it remains true once and for all: as long as you are not truly repentant in a conscious manner, you are unworthy of absolution. And should the most notable of preachers in the world lay his hands upon you upon your confession

while you are in such a state, and declare you absolved, not only once but two hundred times in the name of the holy God, not a single one, let alone all of your sins, would be forgiven. *And you have in all this deceived yourself with the trust you have placed in absolution: indeed, you will be all the more bound in your sins* (italics added).³⁹

One's faith is thus placed squarely *not* upon the absolution, even though Spener agreed that the sure words of God *potentially* give what they say,⁴⁰ but upon one's own repentance. For Spener this “in us” (*in nobis*) status of repentance thus became the sole ground of assurance for the forgiveness of sins. The absence of repentance points furthermore to the fact that the regenerate man who alone can receive absolution worthily is not actually present. For such an unregenerate person, that is, one who does not meet the criteria of true repentance, to sit in the *Beichtstuhl* is thus altogether deceptive.

They are not the words of God pro me until one has met the proper conditions that actually enable the individual to appropriate them to his benefit.

This is also the case for those who make confession due to fear, not on the basis of the true inner birth. For what appears to be contrition to the eye, might indeed be no more than the attrition, that is, fear of punishment.⁴¹ Spener thus warned those who do not possess the proper sorrow for sins, who lack faith, or whose intent for amendment is not earnest, of ever-increasing bondage to sin rather than absolution from it. Such as these should stay away from the *Beichtstuhl*. He wrote:

First, the absolution is of no benefit to any person, nor are those sins forgiven any *who are not truly repentant*. Therefore he who is not truly repentant, that is, who does not hate his sin henceforth, nor desires to abandon them in all earnestness, remain in the true faith, resolving to live a truly godly life, and all this from the depths of one's soul, such a one has no benefit from absolution, even if the most holy man on earth would declare it to him one hundred times a day. Instead, because he wants to bully or wrest forgiveness from God despite his unrepentance, he will be bound all the more firmly in his sins, because he continues to add to them (italics added).⁴²

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

Thus all our absolution, no matter which words are used, is in itself conditional to this extent, that it depends upon the true extent of repentance of a person, for we have no authority

from God to forgive sins except of any but who are repentant of their sins.⁴³

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

It goes without saying that for Spener the criterion for absolution was not faith alone in the external words of Christ for me (*extra nos verba Christi pro me*), as was the case for Luther, but the *in nobis* true repentance, the authenticity of which is established only by the most careful introspective scrutiny.⁴⁴ The qualifying “true extent” (*wahrhaftig*) in the quotation above is again most notable, since it implies that such *Buße* must meet the said set of criteria to be validated as authentic.⁴⁵ Spener thus demanded the existence of a true *contritio*, that element of the sacrament of penance which Luther had left behind precisely because it is not possible to determine its extent or ultimate authenticity because of its location *in nobis*. According to Spener:

Wherever you might come from, receive this assurance, that the absolution truly applies to you, *yet again out of the assurance of repentance*. For even though the forgiveness of sin that you receive in absolution is not a fruit of your repentance, but a gift of grace from God *that is grasped by faith within repentance*, repentance is nevertheless that element in the divine order which enables us to believe and *which is required before faith* (italics added).⁴⁶

In this, Spener came full circle and made central the very bane that Luther sought to eschew from confession and absolution.⁴⁷ Far from exploring the state of repentance in the soul, Luther simply sought the confession of faith that both confesses sin and lets itself be given the absolution, *the* ultimate reason for retaining confession. Luther could indeed say:

Therefore remember that the keys or forgiveness of sins do not rest upon our contrition or worthiness, as they teach and twist [this doctrine]. For this is completely Pelagian, Turk, Heathen, Jewish, Anabaptist, Enthusiast, and Antichrist. But again, our contrition, works, and heart should build upon the keys and depend upon it with complete trust, as upon God’s word. . . . But if you doubt, you make God into a liar, invert his order and build the keys upon your contrition and worthiness. *You should indeed have contrition, but that you should derive the certainty of the forgiveness of your sins or confirm the work of the keys through it [contrition], that is nothing other than to abandon faith and to deny Christ.*⁴⁸

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

It is clear that the reasons why our beloved Luther retained confession was *so that a preacher might be able to deal with each penitent individually as was needed: to evaluate the state*

*of his soul, to encourage, explore, instruct, chastise, exhort, give counsel, and the like, so that both might deal with each other in confidence.*⁴⁹

And yet Spener demanded confession for the purpose of ensuring (*Versicherung*) what ultimately cannot ever be completely sure because of its *in nobis* locatedness. The requirement for receiving absolution is thus consistently a truly repentant heart of which one is cognizant, where the extent of one’s repentance must be constantly ascertained.⁵⁰ Yet for Spener a most dubious “but” (*aber*) also imposes itself upon the absolution even after it has been given: “God willingly forgives us our sins, *but in this way, that he also demands along side it that we become obedient and let our neighbor enjoy it as well*” (italics added).⁵¹

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

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it may have become clear that it is not in fact the absolution that was important to Spener, but the betterment of life, or renewal (*Erneuerung*), characterized by obedience, which is promised by the penitent. Yet the uncertainty of this *in nobis* repentance, with its dependence upon the amendment of life, which amounts to be a new *satisfactio*, cannot but cast an equally dubitable light upon absolution itself. For those who followed Spener, the certainty of salvation (*Heilsgewißheit*) that Luther found in the certain words of Christ, given to faith by the mouth of the father confessor, was to be sought within the experience of one’s own repentance. Thus the pastor’s role in confession also needed to be recast from being the distribution point of the gifts of Christ with the words of absolution, to providing an expert diagnosis of the true nature of the penitent’s repentance. In this *coram hominibus* context, the promises of Christ and an actual giving out of the forgiveness of sins no longer had any place. Consequently, the confessional no longer existed “for the sake of the absolution,” but for the sake of self-discovery, both with respect to repentance and regeneration. The confirmation of this reality thus made any further “confession” unnecessary, since the absolution gave nothing more than a confirmation of an already existent state of grace.⁵²

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

NOTES

1. In this article a large number of quotations are presented, the most significant of which are given in translation by myself, with the original text in the endnotes. The reason for the extensive quotations is that many of the Spener documents cited exist in very few locations in the libraries of the world, and this usually in their respective rare-book rooms (e.g., that of the Concordia Seminary Library in St. Louis, Missouri). Consequently, I have included the primary data so that it is readily available both for evaluating the quality of the translations and also for further primary source investigation.

2. Among the works that deal with the history of confession and absolution, there are a number that might be mentioned here which are particularly instructive as to the specific abuses of confession and the objections raised about the practice by Pietism. See Ernst Bezzel, *Frei zum Eingeständnis* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1982); Kurt Aland, "Die Privatbeichte im Luthertum von ihren Anfängen bis zu ihrer Auflösung," chap. in *Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1960); Helmut Obst, *Der Berliner Beichtstuhlstreit: Die Kritik des Pietismus an der Beichtpraxis der lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1972); Laurenz Klein, *Evangelisch-lutherische Beichte: Lehre und Praxis* (Paderborn: Bonifacius Verlag, 1961).

3. A very helpful compendium of Spener's theology of confession and absolution, and a means of tracing its development, is to be found in a book by Philipp Jacob Spener entitled *Gründlicher Unterricht von dem Amte der Versöhnung, und insonderheit von der in der Evangelischen Kirche gebräuchlichen Privat-Absolution; in unterschiedlichen Predigten vorgestellt* (Frankfurt am Mayn: Zunnerisch- und Jungischem Buchladen, 1716). In English, the title is *Thorough Instruction in the Office of Reconciliation, Specifically of the Common Lutheran Practice of Private Absolution: Depicted in Various Sermons*. This book contains thirteen sermons about private confession that span the years 1666 to 1699, in other words, most of Spener's public ministry in Frankfurt and in Berlin. In the process, Spener made use of the common Gospel readings to address the subject of confession and absolution. Although this compendium is certainly not all that Spener had to say on confession and absolution, it does provide the primary source on the basis of which his teachings on this subject may be approached in an historically cohesive and theologically comprehensive manner. Hereafter this work will be cited as Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, where the Roman numeral that follows will signify the number of the sermon and the Arabic numeral will signify the page numbers. Among the other texts that will be used in the following discussion are Philipp Jakob Spener, *Theologische Bedenken*, vol. 1 (Halle: Im Verlage des Weysenhausen, 1700) [hereafter cited as TB, 1]; *Theologische Bedenken*, vol. 2, 3d ed. (Halle: Im Verlage des Weysenhausen, 1716) [hereafter cited as TB, 113]; Philipp Jakob Spener, *Schriften*, edited by Erich Beyreuther, *Letzte Theologische Bedenken*, vols. 1–3 (1711) (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1987) [hereafter cited as LTB, 1, II, or III]; and finally Spener's Catechism, the *Einfallige Erklärung der christlichen Lehr nach der Ordnung des kleinen Catechismi des teuren Manns Gottes Lutheri* (1677), edited by Erich Beyreuther (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1982). It will be cited as *Einfallige Erklärung*.

4. Bezzel, 151. Bezzel provides a number of pages of examples. Only a few are recounted here and the next couple of notes. A multiplication of examples is certainly not necessary. Yet these, it appears, are illustrative of some of the problems that seventeenth-century parishes faced with private confession. Some of the problems on an even more serious note can be found in Klaus Harms, "Die Einzelbeichte," *Monatschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 42 (1953): 381–382. He cites Christian Hohburg, who was not altogether unbiased in the matter of confession. Hohburg laments that holy absolution was given indiscriminately to "drunkards, robbers, and Johns," and all this "contrary to better knowledge and conscience" ("Säufer, Räuber, Hurer," and all "wider besseres Wissen und Gewissen").

5. "etliche für dem Beichtstuhl stehen und lachen . . . Etliche stinken im Beichtstuhl von Taback wie die Landsknechte; etliche aber wollen sich mit ihrem Nächsten nicht zuvor aussöhnen, noch ihnen vergeben" (Bezzel, 151).

6. "[Andere] laufen zur Beichte / lassen kein demütig Wort aus ihrem Halse gehen / fangen in der Beichte mit dem Pfarrer an zu zancken / als wenn sie sich zu ihm auff die Bierbank gesetzt" (Bezzel, 151).

7. "Er soll nicht in rothen Pantoffeln, weißen Strümpfen oder im Reiserock sich bei der Beicht sistieren; er soll nicht im Pfarrhause, noch weniger im Schlafrock Beichte und Absolution aussprechen" (Bezzel, 151).

8. See especially Spener's discussion of the confessional offering (*Beichtpfennig*) in his LTB, 1, 606–610. See also Theodor Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen: Die Beichte und Absolution* (Schwerin: Verlag der Stiller'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1865), 468–469. Kliefoth goes on to explain that all talk about the *Beichtpfennig* had the *confession* itself in view, "By dealing with the issue of the confessional payment one was able to deal with confession itself; if one was able to present confessional payment as being odious, one sought to present confession itself as being odious. In that one sought to eliminate paying money at the time of confession one sought to eliminate confession itself." The original states, "Indem man über das Beichtgeld verhandelte, verhandelte man über die Beichte; indem man das Beichtgeld als odios hinstellte, suchte man die Beichte als odios hinzustellen; indem man die Abschaffung des Beichtgeldes anstrebte, suchte man die Abschaffung der Beichte" (Kliefoth, 469).

9. "Indem meistens nichts weiter geshiehet / als daß einerseits das beicht-kind eine außwendig gelernte formul / die es manchmal nicht versteht / was damit gesagt seye / ja die sich oft auff die person in vielen stücken gar nicht schicket / her erzehlet / ohne dran zu gedencken"; "Indem die beichtstühle meistens also gebaut / daß beicht-vatter und beicht-kind nicht gegeneinander ihr hertz also außschütten können / wie sichs geziemet / ohne daß andere es auch hören und gewahr werden" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 297).

10. Kliefoth also notes that Spener's understanding of confession pointed in this direction: "Er [Spener] faßte erstens die seelsorgerliche Beichtunterredung etwas anders, als die Reformatoren gethan hatten, nemlich pietistischer . . . als ein gegenseitiges Ausschütten der Herzen; und dafür gab ihm auch die richtig gehaltene Privatbeichte nicht den Ort und die Zeit her" (Kliefoth, 441).

11. So the suggestion of Fuglsang-Damgaard in H. Fuglsang-Damgaard, "Die Wiederbelebung der Privatbeichte," *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Kirche* 11 (1933–34): 482.

12. See Otto Hof, "Die Privatbeichte bei Luther," chapter in *Schriftauslegung und Rechtfertigungs-glaube*, with a foreword by Edmund Schlink (Karlsruhe: Evangelischer Presseverband für Baden e.V., 1982), 27–28; 36.

13. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VI, 137.

14. "Die buß / meynen gewißlich ihrer viele / seye nur eine solche äusserliche ceremonie / daß auffs höchste einige bußgebete lese / etliche tage in die kirche gehe / und seine beicht herspreche; das heisst dann buß getan" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VIII, 189). See also BSLK, 260, 5–27. Important to add, however, is that Melancthon regards these two in terms of law and gospel, both of which are the works of God, "For the two chief works of God in men are these, to terrify, and to justify and quicken those who have been terrified" (*Triglotta*, 265, bottom of column 1). The original states, "Haec enim sunt duo praecipua opera Dei in hominibus, perterrefacere, et iustificare ac vivificare perterrefactos" (BSLK, 261, 43–45). See also Kliefoth, 264–265.

15. "Du bist deiner sünden von hertzen feind / glaubest wahrhaftig an JEsum Christum / und hast einen ernstlichen vorsatz dein leben zu bessern" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XIII, 406). These three elements, to be an enemy of sin with all one's heart, to believe in Jesus truly, and to have the earnest desire to amend one's life, consistently recur wherever Spener speaks about determining the nature of one's repentance. They are thus the *nota* of true *Buße*, and as such are the *sine qua non* of absolution.

16. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VI, 155.

17. See *Triglotta*, 479; BSLK, 437, 2–4.

18. "Du must vor GOTT dein gelübde thun / in deinem gantzen leben dich des gehorsams gegen seine gebote zu befeissen. Das heisst bußfertig sein. Mangelst dir an einem dieser stücke / sonderlich / wo du noch in deinen sünden fortfahren wilt / so seye versichert du bist unbußfertig" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VI, 137; 182–183; 214).

19. "Findet ihr nun bey solcher euer prüffung / daß ihr wahrhaftig durch die betrachtung eurer sünden zu einem haß dagegen erregt werdet

/ daß es euch leyd thut / GOtt dermassen beleidiget zu haben / daß ihr erkennt / wie ihr die verdammnuß verdienet / und dem lieben Vatter zu wider gewesen seyd / daß ihr deßwegen eine forcht und kindliche schaaam vor ihm fühlet. Findet ihr auch ein hertzliches verlangen / nach der gnade Jesu Christi / und suchet in demselben allein eure seligkeit / fühlet auch eine sehnliche begierde euer leben in der wahrheit zu bessern / alles abzuschaffen / was ihr in der prüffung unrechts befunden / oder was auch noch ferner euch gezeigt werden möchte / hingegen ohne außnahm euch zu allem nach allem vermögen zu verstehen / was euere christliche regeln von euch fordern / und treibt euch der Geist GOttes solchen entschluß bey euch zu fassen / so seyd gewiß / daß sich die wahre buß bey euch finde / da möcht ihr dann getrost zu der beicht kommen / und euch der absolution versichern" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VIII, 202–203).

20. The translation is rendered only from the italicized sentences in the following quotation: "Die Absolution kondte zuweilen irren. Das ist ein rechter Widerteufferissher grieff gewesen. Lehrete also: ich Absolvire dich von allen deinen Sunden, wen du gnug die sudne bereuet hast, und als dan ist die Absolution recht, so du aber nicht gnugsam bereuet bist, so ist sie nicht recht. Wer kan nun alhier sagen, das ehr gnug reu und Leidt über seine sünde getragen hab? und ich sol gleichwohl nicht eher absolviret sein, es sey dan, das ich gnug bereuet hab, und vorher gehe die Bekendtnis aller sünde, eine gnugsame reue und Contrition. *Ich kan nimmer mehr wissen, das ich recht alles gebeichtet und bereuet hab. Stellet also der Bapst die krafft der Absolution auff die reue . . .* So wisse jederman, das man Gottes vergebung nicht bauen solle auf meine Beicht und reue, wie der Bapst und seine Doctores gethan, und hie in diesem stücke natürlich Widderteuffer gewesen sind . . . *Den ich kan der vergebung der sünde nicht versichert werden, weil ich nicht weiss, wen ich gnug bereuet hab*" (WA 47, 334, 24–33 N.b.; italics added).

21. See Hof, 30.

22. "Es heist aber wahre buß / dardurch wir der absolution fähig werden / nicht nur daß man / ehe man zur beicht gehe / einige gebete lese / darnach die beicht hersage / das übrige anhöre / und die absolution mit vertrauen annehme / wie weit es etwa insgemein kommet: sondern die buß muß eine ganze änderung des hertzens seyn; nemlich in demselben zu wircken / daß du nimmermehr deine vorige sünde wiederum begehen / hingegen dich in allen stücken eines gottseligen lebens befeissen wollest: *Wo dieser vorsatz nicht redlich und ernstlich ist / so bist du nicht bußfertig / wenn du auch das gantze gebätbuch außgelesen / und deine beicht gar mit thränen und auf den knien gethan hättest . . . Nun / ohne solche buß ist aber allezeit die absolution einem menschen nichts nütze*" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 304–305).

23. It must be kept in mind that Spener was confronting a *Beichtzwang*, and therefore met people who were there under duress. Yet his theological position goes beyond the one who is compelled to confess, as his intended audience were the regenerate who wanted to be Christians in earnest. Cf. Fred L. Precht, "Changing Theologies of Private and Public Confession and Absolution" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1965), 78.

24. "Auch hatt der priester gnugsam zeychenn unnd ursacht, zu absolvirenn, wan er siht, das man vonn yhm begeret der Absolution. Hoher ist er zu wissen nit verbunden" (WA 2, 719, 26–28).

25. "Ja, spricht einer / es ist aber gleichwol die absolution ein göttliches wort / das muß denn wahr seyn / und ich nehme es in glauben an / so habe ich ja dessen krafft. Antwort: Die absolution an sich selbst ist ein unbetrüglich Göttliches wort / aber dero verrichtung auf dich / wenn du unbußfertig bist / ist ein menschlicher fehler" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 304–305).

26. "Also bekennen sie freylich / sie lebten nicht wie sie solten / begehren sich auch dessen nicht zu befeißigen / aber Christus habe darzu den beichtstuhl verordnet / und seinen Aposteln und allen predigern befohlen / die sünde denjenigen / die sie bekennen / zu vergeben / mit der theuren versicherung / was sie vergeben das solle warhafftig auch vor ihm vergeben seyn" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 302–303).

27. "Dazu aber soll nachmal der wahre glaube kommen / welcher allen solche vergebung erlangt und annimmt / da das vorher erforderte alles zwar stücke göttlicher ordnung / nicht aber die mittel selbst gewesen sind" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 302–303). Cf. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, IX, 236, "Wir haben oben bemercket / daß göttliche ordnung die

buß und vergebung genau mit einander verbinde / daher sie nicht voneinander trennen lasse."

28. "Wie nun dieses die stücke sind / welche göttliche ordnung von uns erfordert / so ist nun von ziemlicher zeit her in der kirchen eingeführt / und zwar auch bey unserer Evangelischen kirchen beybehalten worden / das man vorhin bey einem prediger beichten müsse / welche beicht dazu solle dienlich seyn / daß der prediger die bußfertigkeit eines solchen menschen darauf abnehme" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht* IX, 231).

29. "So ist auch göttliche ordnung in dieser sache / daß die absolution und vergebung keinem solle ertheilet werden / als den bußfertigen: Darum hat Christus predigen lassen busse und vergebung der sünden / Luc. XXIV, 47. die dürffen wir nicht umkehren oder trennen / Apost. Gesch. v, 31. Es ist der glaube allein dasjenige / wodurch wir unser seiten gerechtfertiget werden / das ist / vergebung der sünden erlangen / . . . also ist keiner von seiner seiten der vergebung / sie zu erlangen / fähig / als der den lebendigen glauben hat: Dieser aber ist bey keinem / ausser der busse stehet: Thut busse / und glaubet dem Evangelio / Marc. I, 15. Es muß aber auch eine wahre und ernstliche busse seyn; die nicht in einigen äusserlichen ceremonien oder wercken bestehen / sondern in einer gantzen änderung des hertzens. Daß nemlich der mensch allen seinen sünden von grund der seelen feind seye / und sie hasse / auf Christum sein vertrauen setze / nimmermehr einiger sünde mit willen diene / sondern sich allen / wie lieb sie ihm auch sonst seyn möchten / mit ernst widersetze / und ein solche leben / darinnen er in allen stücken nach GOttes geboten einher gehen wolle / antrette / 1 Joh. II, 3.4. *Wo eines unter diesen mangelt / und man die gnade GOttes in Christo Jesu nicht so hoch hält / daß man deßwegen sich gern des sünden-dienstes begeben wolle / da ist keine wahre busse / und also nach Göttlicher ordnung auch keine gültige vergebung oder absolution vorhanden*" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 289–290).

30. "That such absolution must be preceded by a certain repentance. Repentance is the cause of absolution, because forgiveness belongs to no one except the repentant. The preacher, who is thus to declare absolution, should in some way have a testimony of repentance upon which he can base his absolution, since there may be another who presents himself for confession as being repentant; even though this testimony is very minimal." The original reads, "Daß vor solcher absolution eine gewisse beicht vorhergehe. Dessen ursach diese ist / weil die vergebung keinen andern als den bußfertigen gehöret / daß der prediger / welcher solche sprechen solle / einigerley massen ein zeugnuß der busse habe / darauff er seine absolution gründen möge / da sich der andere als einen bußfertigen durch die beicht anzeigt; wiewol leider solches zeugnuß sehr gering ist" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VIII, 186; italics added).

31. "Wo also ohne wahre busse die absolution gegeben / oder vermeintlich angenommen wird / gilt es vor GOtt nichts; dann GOtt darff nach seiner wahrheit keine andere seiner diener verrichtungen genehm halten / als wo sie nach seiner ordnung verfahren haben. Was ausser solcher ordnung und instruction gehet und von ihnen gethan wird / ist an sich selbst ungültig" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 304). Cf. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VI, 155, "We acknowledge the full power of absolution, but for the repentant for whom it is ordained." The original reads, "Wir lassen der absolution die völlige krafft / aber vor die bußfertigen / vor die sie verodnet ist."

32. See Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, VIII, 192.

33. "Ach daß doch jederman dieses hertzlich erwege! da hingegen gewiß / viele hundert und tausend darüber ewig verlohren gehen / daß sie sich immer auf die beicht und absolution verlassen / und daß ihnen ihre sünde vergeben worden / betrieglich geglaubt haben; da sie doch niemals zur wahren buß gekommen / und also immer in ihren sünden stecken geblieben / auch wol darinnen gestorben sind. *Denen geholfen hätte werden können / wann sie den betrug ihres falschen vertrauens auff die absolution bey unbußfertigem stand hätten erkannt und fahren lassen / und dadurch zur wahren buß angetrieben worden wären / aus ihrer vorigen sicherheit zu entfliehen*" (TB, II, 157–158; italics added).

34. "Nemlich / daß wir zum öffteren in den predigten gelegenheit nemen / den leuten ihren falschen wahn von der absolution und dem opere operato in derselbigen zu benehmen / hingegen ihnen nachdrücklich zu zeigen / daß ob wol die absolution, als ein wort GOttes gesprochen / ihre krafft in sich habe / daß sie dennoch keinem zu statten komme / als welch-

er wahrhaftig bußfertig ist /" (TB, 13, 196). See also Precht, 138–139.

35. "Also wo du wilt versichert seyn / daß die absolution auch dir ein wort Gottes seye / so ist nicht genug / daß sie dir vom prediger gesprochen werde / sondern daß du auch in redlicher prüfung deiner selbst versichert seyst / daß es dir mit deiner buß ein redlicher ernst seye: welches man wohl bey sich finden kann / ist also deine buß aufrichtig / du bist deiner sünden von hertzen feind / glaubest wahrhaftig an JEsu CHristum /und hast einen ernstlichen vorsatz dein leben zu bessern / so gilt dir die absolution von Gottes wegen / und ob sie wohl von einem menschen empfangen / ist sie doch gewiß / als hättest du sie vom himmel unmittelbar herab gehöret. *Da ist sie auch mit der Zueignung auff dich Gottes wort*" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xiii, 406). See also a sermon found in his *Theologische Bedenken II* from October 10, 1697. The text is virtually a verbatim repetition of the above citation. What is to be noted, however, is that Spener urges the examination not only *before* the confession but also *after* the absolution. What the absolved are to obtain is the "testimony of their conscience . . . that they are truly earnest in their repentance" ("zeugnuß ihres gewissens . . . daß es ihnen mit ihrer buß ein ernst seye."). If all criteria are in order, they can be assured of the validity of the divine absolution, "So sind sie alsdan der *absolution* und dero gültigkeit göttlich versichert" (TB, 113, 157).

36. "Diese Buß ist nicht stucklich und bettelisch wie jene, so die wirklichen Sunde bußet, und ist auch nicht ungewiß wie jene; . . . Darumb so ist auch hie die Reu nicht ungewiß; denn es bleibt nichts da, damit wir mochten was Guts gedenken, die Sunde zu bezahlen, sondern ein bloß, gewiß Verzagen an allem, das wir sind, gedenken, reden oder tun etc" (BSLK, 446, 19–447, 3).

37. "According to Lutheran doctrine the word of absolution does its work in the repentant as well as the unrepentant, albeit for the latter it is not a blessing but judgement. This is contested by Spener. For him it is important that . . . the repentant should actually receive the fruits of absolution He does not say with Luther, that God actually bestows forgiveness of sins with his word upon the unrepentant in absolution . . . and that this person . . . in the coming judgment . . . will recognize that he had been forgiven his sins indeed, but that he did not take it. [Spener] states that absolution accomplishes nothing in the one who is unrepentant: it passes him by." The original states, "Nach lutherischer Lehre wirkt das Wort der Absolution nicht allein bei dem Bußfertigen sondern auch bei dem Unbußfertigen, nur natürlich bei dem Letzteren nicht zum Segen sondern zum Gericht. Dies bestreitet Spener. Es kommt ihm sehr darauf an, . . . daß nur der Bußfertige wirkliche Frucht von der Absolution habe Er sagt nicht mit Luther, daß Gott in der Absolution um seines Wortes willen wahrhaftig auch dem Unbußfertigen Vergebung der Sünden beilege, . . . und das derselbe . . . im folgenden Gericht . . . erkennen werde, wie ihm in der That Vergebung der Sünden sei gegeben gewesen und er sie nicht genommen habe; sondern er [Spener] sagt, daß die Absolution an dem Unbußfertigen gar Nichts wirke: sie 'geht an ihm vorüber.'" (Kliefoth, 445). Cf. TB, 13, 84.

38. "Kommt jetzt einer / der in der that unbußfertig ist / thut aber seine beicht als ein bußfertiger / wird also von uns als ein solcher absolviret / so hat er uns zwar so fern betrogen: Aber die absolution nutzt ihm nicht ein haar vor GOtt, sonder verdammt ihn so viel schwerer / weil er noch GOtt hatt betrügen wollen" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 200).

39. "Also bleibts einmahl vor allemahl dabey / so lang du nicht auff gedachte maß wahrhaftig bußfertig bist / bist du auch keiner absolution fähig / und wo dir in solchem stande auff deine beichte der vornehmste prediger in der welt die hand auflegte / und nicht nur eine sondern zehnzwanzigmal die wort der absolution in dem name des heiligen Gottes vörsprache / so wird dir nicht eine einige / geschweige alle / deine sünde / vergeben / und was du also vor vertrauen auff die absolution setzest / betreuest du dich in allem selbst: ja du wirst nur desto mehr in deinen sünden gebunden" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 306–307). Cf. Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht* xi, 284–285, "The abuse is this, that all people, be they repentant or unrepentant, depend upon confession and absolution to their great detriment. This state leads to the deceiving of those who think they are absolved, but really are not. Wherein then lies the deception? In this: see that we have just heard above that no person is capable of forgiveness of sin without repentance and faith; that the Lord also has not given

the authority to forgive sins to preachers for any but those who are repentant; therefore the absolution is also not valid for any, except those who are repentant." The original reads, "Der mißbrauch aber ist der / daß sich alle leute / sie seyen bußfertig oder unbußfertig / diese zu ihrem großen schaden / auff die beicht und absolution verlassen. Worinnen aber bestehet der betrug: darinnen: Sehe / wir haben oben gehöret / daß kein mensch der vergebung der sünden fähig sey / ohne buß und glauben: Daß auch der HErr die sünde keinem andern zu vergeben / den predigern macht verliehen habe / als den bußfertigen: so gilt dann auch die absolution keinem als dem bußfertigen."

40. For Luther the matter was not so contingent. Christ's words always give what they say, though unbelief *de facto* rejects the gifts toward damnation.

41. In a sermon from 1666, Spener preached on the Unjust Steward of Matthew 18. According to Spener, Jesus teaches through the example of the servant that a false repentance can be created when "the water reaches his neck." Thus he showed that all wicked people, "are able to assume a false but not sufficiently rooted repentance" ("sich können einer obwohl falschen / oder doch nicht gnugsamen gewurzelten buße annehmen"). And he observed that upon such false repentance, sin is actually not forgiven, "because sin is not forgiven on the basis of a false and hypocritical repentance" ("weil auß bloß heuchlerische buß die sünde nicht verziehen wäre") (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, i, 10). On the other hand, Spener did recognize that the truly penitent can experience fear because of their sins, given that it is joined to the other criteria discussed above. He thus stated that those who have felt fear because of their sins ("der seine sünde wegen angst gefühlet hätte") and desire absolution certainly have it (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, xi, 289).

42. "Erstlich / die absolution nutzt keinem menschen / oder werden einigem einige sünden vergeben / der nicht wahrhaftig bußfertig ist. Also wer nicht wahrhaftig bußfertig ist / als der nicht seine sünde nunmehr hasset / und alle mit ernst lassen will / im wahren glauben stehet / und zu einem wahrhaftig-gottseligen leben sich resolviret / und solches alles von grund der seelen / demselben nutzt keine absolution / und wann der heiligste mann in der ganzen welt ihm dieselbe hundert mahl in einem tag spräche. Sondern / weil er noch dazu bey seiner unbußfertigkeit GOtt gleichsam die vergebung abtrotzen oder abpracticiren will / so wird er in sünden nur immer so viel härter gebunden / weil immer noch mehr dazu thut" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 199).

43. "Also ist alle unsere absolution / sie werde mit worten abgefasst / wie sie will / an sich selbst so fern contitionata / das ist mit dieser bedingung wofern der mensch wahrhaftig bußfertig ist; dann wir haben von GOtt keine weitere macht / als nur den bußfertigen die sünde zu vergeben" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, viii, 199; italics added).

44. "Und zwar / daß ihr wisset / es muß eine redliche busse seyn / nicht ein angenommenes wesen / es muß euch eure sünde von grund der seelen leyd seyn / daß ihr sie auch dermassen hasset / daß ihr sie mit willen die tag eures lebens nicht mehr begehen wollet. Ihr müsset so hertzlich an Christum glauben / daß ihr seine / und also die geistliche güter so erkennet / daß ihr alle eure seligkeit darinnen allein sucht. Es muß ein solcher vorsatz seyn / daß ihr mit redlichem verschweren aller wissentlichen sünden euch zu einem heiligen leben resolviret. *Mangelt eines unter denen / so seyd ihr ohne buß / und kommet bey leib nicht zum beichtstul / dann die absolution findet an solchem keinen platz*" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, vi, 153–154; italics added). The italics are here translated, "If one of these is lacking you are without repentance; and be warned not to come to confession upon pains of death, for absolution does not apply to such as these." Here again is a checklist, which explicitly demands all elements to be present, with a warning that even *one* may not be missing. When faith is mentioned in the context of this list, it too is qualified by the anthropocentric and therefore quantifiable "heartfelt" ["hertzlich"] which cannot but lead to further uncertainty. Kliefoth pointed to the contrast provided the Lutheran church, which simply took the penitent at his word: "The Lutheran church did not call into question the authenticity of the confession of anyone who was not manifestly unrepentant; it did warn him that he must have contrition and faith if his absolution would not become a matter of judgment for him; but if he nevertheless remained with his good words, it absolved him unconditionally, earnestly, as God's word." The

original reads, "Die lutherische Kirche hatte Dem, dessen Unbußfertigkeit nicht thatsächlich feststand, die Aufrichtigkeit seiner Beichte nicht angezweifelt; sie hatte ihn verwarnt, daß er Reue und Glaube haben müsse, wenn ihn nicht die Absolution zum Gericht werden solle; aber wenn er dennoch bei seinen guten Worten blieb, hatte sie ihn absolvirt unbedingt, ernstlich, wie Gottes Wort" (Kliefoth, 463).

45. It might be mentioned, however, that AC XII also speaks of "wahre rechte Buß" (BSLK, 66, 15). What must be distinguished, however, is that the confessors sought to distinguish the repentance that God works and gives through the law, the *passiva contritio* of Luther's Smalcald Articles, from the anthropocentric repentance called for by the Roman penitential system. Spener, on the other hand, was looking for authenticity, which ultimately turns out to be a renewed anthropocentricity.

46. "Wo ihr auch davon kommt / so nehmet auch die versicherung / daß euch die absolution warhafftig angehe / *allerdings wieder aus der versicherung der busse*. Denn obwol die vergebung der sünden / die ihr in der absolution empfanget / nicht eigentlich eine frucht ist euerer busse / sondern ein gnaden-geschenck GOTTes / *welches der glaube in der busse ergreift*, so ist doch die busse dasjenige stück göttlicher ordnung / so uns zu dem glauben tüchtig machet / *und das vor dem glauben erfordert wird*" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, XI, 312-313). As in this *locus*, Spener argued for the necessity of repentance while in the same breath affirming the unmerited grace of Christ in absolution in other sermons, e.g., Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht* III, 70.

47. Maurer reached this very poignant conclusion when he wrote: "Luther had seen the greatest danger for confession in this, that the certainty of forgiveness was based upon his own repentance: *Therefore take heed not to place the certainty of the forgiveness of your sins in your own contrition, confidence, or sorrow*." The original reads, "Luther hat die größte Gefahr für die Beichte darin gesehen, daß einer auf seine eigene Buße die Gewißheit seiner Vergebung gründe: *Cave ergo, in contritionem tuam confidas aut dolorio tuo tribuas remissionem peccatorum*. Gerade das hat Spener gelehrt und getan" (Wilhelm Maurer, "Der Pietismus und die Privatbeichte," *Evangelische Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* 10 (1956): 220, citing WA 6, 545, 25-27). With Maurer one is compelled to agree that this is precisely what Spener was setting out to do, that is, not to deny Christ, but to build upon repentance and effectively being forced to doubt the words of God. Yet according to Luther, in complete opposition to Spener, one is clearly to look away from one's repentance and depend solely upon the words of absolution as giving what they say. See Hof, 37; Precht, 84; Ernst Sommerlath, "Der Sakramentale Charakter der Absolution nach Luthers

Schrift *Von den Schlüsseln*," in *Die Leibhaftigkeit des Wortes: Festgabe für Adolf Köberle*, ed. Otto Michel and Ulrich Mann, (Hamburg: Im Furchen-Verlag, 1958), 229; Jos E. Vercruysse, "Schlüsselgewalt und Beichte bei Luther," in *Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von 1526-1546*, ed. Helmar Junghans (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 154.

48. "Darnach dencke, das die schlüssel odder vergebung der sunden nicht stehet auff unser rew odder wirdigkeit, wie sie leren und verkeren, Denn das ist gantz Pelagianisch, Türckisch, Heidnenisch, Jüdisch, Widder-teuffisch, Schwermerisch und Endchristlich, sondern widderumb, das unser rew, werck hertz und was wir sind, sollen sich auff die schlüssel bawen und mit gantzem erwegen getrost drauff verlassen, als auff Gottes wort, . . . Zweifelstu aber, so lügenstraffestu Gott, verkerest seine ordnung und bawest seine schlüssel auff deine rew und wirdigkeit. *Rewen soltu (das ist war), Aber das darumb die vergebung der sunden solt gewis werden und des schlüssels werck bestettigen, das heisst den glauben verlassen und Christum verleugnet*" (WA 30 II, 496, 26-31; 34-38; italics added).

49. "Es ist offenbahr / daß diejenige ursachen / warum unser liebe Lutherus die beicht behalten / *damit ein Prediger mit einem jeden beicht-kind nach nothdurfft handeln / den zustand dessen seelen / so viel ihm nöthigen / erkundigen / es unterrichten / straffen / vermahnen / rathen / und dergleichen an ihm ausrichten* / also beyde mit einander vertraulich handeln solten" (TB, II, 162).

50. See Albrecht Peters, "Buße-Beichte-Schuldvergebung," *Kerygma und Dogma* 28 (1982): 58. Peters, on the basis of Luther, summarizes: "Proper trust rises above all Pharisaic self-assurance, but also over all meticulous introspection and rests without reservation in the God's promise of grace" ("Rechtes Vertrauen schwingt sich über jegliche pharisäische Selbstgewißheit aber auch über alle skrupulöse Selbstbeobachtung hinaus und birgt sich rückhaltlos hinein in Gottes Gnadenzusage"). Though Spener certainly avoided the former, his entire focus was on introspection (*Selbstbeobachtung*) in which the pastor is then to provide assistance.

51. "Gott vergiebt uns die sünde willig / *aber also / daß er darneben forcere / daß wir ihm auch davor gehorsam werden / und unsern nächsten auch solches wiederum geniessen lasse sollen*" (Spener, *Gründlicher Unterricht*, x, 248).

52. While I deem it somewhat pedantic to reference one's own work, I am compelled to do so here, since this point is developed most fully in my unpublished Th.D. dissertation *Propter Absolutionem: Holy Absolution in the Theology of Martin Luther and Philipp Jacob Spener—A Comparative Study*, 213-223; available from the library of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis.

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Liturgy and Pietism

Then and Now

JOHN T. PLESS



DAVID LUECKE HAS ADVOCATED PIETISM as a slice of the Lutheran heritage that holds promise for the renewal of mission, congregational life, and worship. Luecke argues that pietism is the “other story”¹ of worship among Lutherans, a story that he claims has been ignored by the “restorationists” who have written liturgical histories and prepared the hymnals. According to Luecke, pietism is part of a tradition that is finding expression in congregations that have abandoned or radically altered traditional Lutheran liturgical forms and hymnody.

The alternative worship movement, which has become so attractive to many within American Lutheranism, draws more deeply on revivalism or the “frontier tradition”² of worship, as James White calls it, and pentecostalism via the charismatic movement, than it does on classical pietism. One could only wish that contemporary praise hymns had the theological and spiritual depth of hymns such as Johann Schroeder’s “One Thing’s Needful; Lord this Treasure” (277 *LW*), which Wilhelm Nelle called “the most blessed hymn of the entire circle of Halle Pietists.”³

When we compare the changes in liturgical texts and structures introduced by pietism with those brought about by the advocates of so-called alternative worship, we might be tempted to conclude that the innovations of pietism were rather minor. For the most part, pietism did not produce new liturgical orders. What pietism did was to shift away from the centrality of the divine service in the life of the church. This shift was necessitated by a prior shift from justification to sanctification, from the objective reality of the means of grace to the subjective experience of the believer, from *beneficium* to *sacrificium*, from the office of the holy ministry to the priesthood of believers. This was the crucial shift that prepared the way for later developments in pietism’s offspring, revivalism and pentecostalism, which in turn have exercised a destructive influence in the liturgical life of North American Lutheranism. The central themes of pietism were unable to sustain the liturgical life envisioned in the Book of Concord.

If we are to understand the influence of pietism on the liturgy in contemporary Lutheranism, it is essential that we see that pietism was more than a renewal movement. It was a theological movement. Bengt Haeggglund writes:

The Pietist movement, which penetrated Lutheran territory in the latter part of the seventeenth century and contributed to the diminution or the internal transformation of the orthodox Lutheran tradition, was not simply a reaction against certain weaknesses in the church life of the time; it was rather a new theological position, which was based on a new concept of reality and which bore within itself the seeds of the modern point of view.⁴

Most of the standard treatments of pietism see pietism as a necessary corrective to the alleged frigidity and formality of Lutheran orthodoxy. Pietism is said to have recaptured the vitality of Luther’s evangelical insight. Examples of the living piety of orthodoxy as embodied in Johann Gerhard’s devotional writings or the hymnody of Philip Nicolai and Paul Gerhardt are ignored, or else they are classified as a germinal form of pietism.⁵ Pietism’s reliance on a selected slice of the early Luther to the exclusion of his later sacramental writings is overlooked. Whatever deficiencies there may have been in the church life of Lutheran orthodoxy, it cannot be claimed that pietism was a return to Luther. Pietism was seeking something new. Jeremiah Ohl summarizes the outcome of pietism’s search as it relates to worship:

in a word, what pietism set out to do finally resulted not in bringing about again a proper union between the objective and the subjective, but in the overthrow of the former and the triumph of the latter. The sacramental and the sacrificial were divorced, and the sacrificial alone remained. Public worship ceased to be a celebration of redemption, and became only an act of edification.⁶

Pietism succeeded in introducing a new theology of worship grounded not in the delivery of the fruits of Christ’s redeeming work but rather in the edification of the saint.

While Spener in his programmatic work *Pia Desideria* did not set forth a plan for liturgical innovation, we observe a shift away from objective understanding of the divine service in Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy.⁷ Spener began not with the Lord’s gifts but with the Lord’s people, and what he saw was lamentable: clergy whose lives did not conform to their teaching, contentiousness among the theologians, worldliness and drunkenness on the part of the common people. When Spener finally came to discuss the efficacy of the word of God and the place of baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and absolution, he focused not on the character of these

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gifts but on their right use. Spener gave assurances that he had not departed from the orthodox Lutheran understanding of the power of God's word:

We also gladly acknowledge the power of the Word of God when it is preached, since it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith (Rom 1:16). We are bound diligently to hear the Word of God not only because we are commanded to do so but because it is the divine hand which offers and presents grace to the believer, whom the Word itself awakens through the Holy Spirit.⁸

Likewise he affirmed baptismal regeneration and the sacramental presence of Christ's body and blood:

Nor do I know how to praise Baptism and its power highly enough. I believe that it is the real "washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Ti 3:5), or as Luther says in the Catechism, "it effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death, and grants (not merely promises) eternal salvation. Not less gladly do I acknowledge the glorious power in the sacramental, oral, and not merely spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood of the Lord in the Holy Supper. On this account I heartily reject the position of the Reformed when they deny that we receive such a pledge of salvation in, with, and under the bread and the wine, when they weaken its power, and when they see in it no more than exists outside the holy sacrament in spiritual eating and drinking."⁹

Yet after confessing these gifts, Spener once again returns to what he observed in the majority of those who heard the word, were baptized, and received Christ's body and blood. It was not enough to be baptized. Baptism is described as a two-sided covenant: from God's side a covenant of grace, from man's side a covenant of faith.¹⁰ The efficacy of the Word is judged in light of what it accomplishes in the interior life of the auditor. Spener writes:

But it is not enough that your ear hears it. Do you let it penetrate inwardly into your heart and allow the heavenly food to be digested there, so that you get the benefit of its vitality and power, or does it go in one ear and out the other?¹¹

Spener worried that confession and absolution as well as the Lord's Supper were being used *opus operatum*.¹² In his desire to guard against a fleshly *securitas*, Spener undermined the certainty of faith so clearly articulated in Luther's sacramental writings.

In part 3 of *Pia Desideria*, Spener provides six proposals to correct conditions in the church. His first proposal is "a more extensive use of the Word of God among us."¹³ Spener notes that there already is frequent and in some cases daily preaching in the churches. But increased preaching was not what Spener had in mind. The lectionary provides the church with a limited exposure to Scripture. Later Gottfried Arnold would conclude that the pericop system is

a vicious and abominable mutilation of the Bible; and Spener himself declared: "How I wish with all my heart, that our Church had never adopted the use of Pericopes, but had allowed a free choice, or else had made the Epistles instead of the Gospels the chief texts."¹⁴

Quoting 2 Timothy 3:16, Spener argues that as all Scripture is inspired by God "all Scripture, without exception, should be known by the congregation if we are to receive the necessary benefit."¹⁵

Spener offers three suggestions for the increased use of the Bible: (1) Every housefather should have a Bible, or at least a New Testament, and read it aloud for his household daily; (2) books of the Bible should be read one after another at specified times in public services of the congregation; (3) special meetings should be organized for the reading and application of the Scriptures. It is the development of this third point that was to be most influential in pietism.

According to Spener, these gatherings would be "the ancient and apostolic kind of church meeting."¹⁶ These meetings were not designed to replace the divine service but to supplement it. Spener describes how these assemblies would function:

In addition to our customary services with preaching, other assemblies would also be held in the manner which Paul describes them in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. One person would not rise to preach (although the practice would be continued at other times), but others who have been blessed with gifts and knowledge would also speak and present their pious opinions on the proposed subject to the judgment of the rest, doing all this in such a way as to avoid disorder and strife. This might conveniently be done by having several ministers (in places where a number of them live in a town) meet together or by having several members of a congregation who have a fair knowledge of God or desire to increase their knowledge meet under the leadership of a minister, take up the Holy Scriptures, read aloud from them, and fraternally discuss each verse in order to discover its simple meaning and whatever may be useful to the edification of all. Anybody who is not satisfied with his understanding of a matter should be permitted to express his doubts and seek further explanation. On the other hand those (including the ministers) who have made progress should be allowed the freedom to state how they understand each passage. Then all that has been contributed, insofar as it accords with the sense of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, should be carefully considered by the rest, especially by the ordained ministers, and applied to the edification of the whole meeting.¹⁷

Thus the conventicle was born as a paraliturgical assembly. Spener outlines what he sees to be the benefits of these assemblies. Preachers would gain a more intimate knowledge of the spiritual weaknesses of their people while the people would grow in confidence in their ministers. Those who participate would experience personal growth better enabling them to give religious instruction to their children and servants at home. Both sermons and the private reading of the Bible would be better understood.

The apostolic admonition of Colossians 3:16 would be fulfilled as “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” were used in these gatherings “for the praise of God and the inspiration of the participants.”¹⁸ While Spener did not envision the conventicle as a replacement for the divine service, the history of pietism provides evidence that these meetings, not the divine service, came to be the focal point of the spiritual life. Ultimately the songs of the conventicle would find their way into the liturgical services.

The objectivity (extra nos) of the means of grace is overcome by the subjectivity of the believer's experience.

Other themes in *Pia Desideria* were developed that would influence the shape of liturgy within pietism. Spener's second proposal calls for “the establishment and diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood.”¹⁹ The spiritual priesthood was seen in contrast to the office of the holy ministry. While Spener argued that members of this priesthood may not take it upon themselves to preach or administer the sacraments, priests were to be actively involved in the exercise of spiritual functions including the study of the Word of God, prayer, teaching, admonishing, comforting, and chastising the erring. Spener saw the ministry as inadequate without the involvement of the spiritual priesthood. He writes:

one man is incapable of doing all that is necessary for the edification of the many persons who are generally entrusted to his pastoral care. However, if the priests do their duty, the minister, as director and oldest brother, has splendid assistance in the performance of his duties and his public and private acts, and thus his burden will not be too heavy.²⁰

While Spener did not advocate any special function of the spiritual priesthood in the liturgy, his understanding of the priesthood in terms of its activities and his stress on true faith as practice prepared the way of increased involvement of the laity in the conduct of the services.

A third theme with liturgical consequences in *Pia Desideria* is that of preaching. We have already noted that Spener called for a wider use of the Word of God in the congregation, a use that would go beyond the preaching that takes place in the services. He found the preaching of his contemporaries lacking. After criticizing his colleagues for making an ostentatious display of their homiletical skills, their quotation of phrases in foreign languages, and the polemical content of their sermons, Spener goes on to describe the goal of the sermon:

Our whole Christian religion consists of the inner man or the new man, whose soul is faith and whose expressions are the fruits of life, and all sermons should be aimed at this. On the one hand, the precious benefactions of God, which are

directed toward the inner man, may ever be strengthened more. On the other hand, works should be set in motion that we may by no means be content merely to have people refrain from outward vices and practice outward virtues and thus be concerned only with the outward man, which the ethics of the heathen can also accomplish, but that we lay a right foundation in the heart, show that what does not proceed from this foundation is mere hypocrisy, and hence accustom the people first to work on what is inward (awaken love of God and neighbor through suitable means) and only then to act accordingly.²¹

Spener broadened his understanding of the goal of the sermon to include the sacraments also. Worship is internalized.

One should therefore emphasize that the divine means of Word and sacrament are concerned with the inner man. Hence it is not enough that we hear the Word with our outward ear, but we must let it penetrate to our heart, so that we may hear the Holy Spirit speak there, that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit and the power of the Word. Nor is it enough to be baptized, but the inner man, where we have put on Christ in Baptism, must also keep Christ on and bear witness to him in our outward life. Nor is it enough to have received the Lord's Supper externally, but the inner man must truly be fed with that blessed food. Nor is it enough to pray outwardly with our mouth, but true prayer, and the best prayer, occurs in the inner man, and it either breaks forth in words or remains in the soul, yet God will find and hit upon it. Nor, again, is it enough to worship God in an external temple, but the inner man worships God best in his own temple, whether or not he is in an external temple at the time.²²

The preached word, baptism, and supper still remain, but clearly the focus is no longer on these, for they are *externals*; rather, the concern is with that which is *internal* to man. This is fundamental to the theology of worship in pietism. The objectivity (*extra nos*) of the means of grace is overcome by the subjectivity of the believer's experience.²³

This shift can be seen both in the way the classical liturgical forms of Lutheranism were diminished under the influence of pietism as well as in the new hymns and styles of preaching. Frank Senn notes, “Pietism did not have a liturgical program of its own with which to replace that of orthodoxy; but its emphasis did have a profound impact on public worship.”²⁴ The impact of pietism on Lutheran liturgy is seen, at least originally, not in the production of new church orders but in the way in which the subjective and personal impulses were given expression in the church service. The spiritual character and effectiveness of the officiant was seen as a necessary condition for the right hearing of the Word. *Ex corde* prayers were substituted for churchly, liturgical prayers. Exorcisms were omitted from the baptismal rite.²⁵ Eucharistic vestments were discarded. The Lord's Supper was celebrated less frequently and given less emphasis in preaching. The church year became less influential in shaping the preaching as pericopal

preaching declined along with the use of hymns reflective of the themes of the lectionary. Ohl observes:

the objective and sacramental elements came to be underestimated to the same extent that Orthodoxy had overestimated them, and public worship became more and more subjective and sacrificial. Its value and the value of its component parts were gauged altogether according to subjective results; the claim was made that spiritual life could be awakened only by those who were themselves spiritually alive; and edification was sought not so much in the worship of the whole congregation as in the exercise of the small private assemblies. This however, was virtually putting the awakened personality above the Means of Grace, the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* above the *ecclesia*.²⁶

This subjectivity was given expression both in the hymnody and preaching that issued from pietism. The most significant hymnals to come out of pietism were the two books produced by the son-in-law of August Francke, Johann Freylinghausen, in 1704 and 1714. These two hymnals were combined into a single volume in 1741 that was known as the “Freylinghausen *Gesangbuch*” or the “Halle Hymnal.” The theological faculty at Wittenberg rendered a negative evaluation of this hymnal, declaring that it was not suitable for use in church or home, not only because it omitted several of the classical Lutheran hymns, but also because many of the hymns which it did contain were theologically wrong. Among the hymns criticized by the Wittenbergers was Ludwig Andreas Gotter’s “*Treuer Vater und Deine Liebe*” (“True Father and Thy Love”), which contains this stanza:

Since I thought I was a Christian
And knew how to speak about it,
I needed the church and altar,
I sang and gave to the poor.
I had no terrible vices,
And yet it was only hypocrisy.²⁷

The hymns of pietism reflect a “warm Jesus-mysticism,” as Senn calls it.²⁸ Coupled with this “Jesus-mysticism” was a stress on sanctification with an accent on the *imitatio Christi*. The pietist hymnals arranged hymns not according to the church calendar but according to the *ordo salutis* and selected situations in the Christian life. New tunes were composed that fit with the sentimental character of the pietist texts.

The preaching of pietism, like its hymnody, directs the hearer inward. In “A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Most Useful Way of Preaching,” August Hermann Francke advised that a minister should frequently

lay down in his sermons the distinguishing marks and characters both of the converted and the unconverted, and that with all possible plainness so that every one of his hearers may be able to judge his own estate, and may know to which of these two classes he belongs.²⁹

The sermon should lead to self-examinations so hearers are exhorted to see

whether they can find in themselves the genuine marks of a true conversion to God and living faith in Christ, or whether, on the other hand, they do not conclude that they are true Christians and in a state of salvation, different from being merely moral honest men, and not living in any gross and scandalous sin; and perhaps too, from saying their prayers, hearing sermons, and frequenting the places of public worship, and from their practicing such outward duties of religion?³⁰

Francke understood the preaching of the gospel to be less a proclamation of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ than a proclamation of Christ as the source of the newness of life and the enabler of God-pleasing works. Preachers were to preach in such a way as to bring their hearers “under the influence of the Spirit of Christ” so that “they find themselves transported as it were into a new life, and now they go on with vigor and pleasure in the practice of universal piety.”³¹ Sermons were to set forth the way of salvation, which Francke explains as the “whole progress of conversion.”³² Genuine conversion would be accompanied by penitential struggle and sensations of grace. The preacher should urge his hearers to make a fervent use of prayer. The effective preacher must love Christ and love his people so that by his example, those committed to his care might learn to love Jesus. Preaching, for Francke, aimed at the edification of the individual using all the spiritual resources that the preacher can muster within himself and from his own experience as a believer.

The absolution is anchored in the sincerity of the penitent.

The pietism of Spener and Francke was to have far-reaching effects on the liturgical ethos of Lutheranism, not only in Germany and Scandinavia but eventually in North America. While pietism may not be the direct source of the liturgical chaos that has come upon North American Lutherans, it surely has provided contemporary Lutherans with an orientation that is predisposed toward an anti-liturgical bias. This orientation can be observed in the history of American Lutheranism in a wide spectrum of Lutherans of both German and Scandinavian descent, from the revivalism of Hauge to the milder pietism of Muhlenberg to the neo-pietism of Schmucker.

It was through Muhlenberg that the heritage of Halle shaped the liturgical life of the early American Lutherans. The Church Agenda of 1748 gives evidence of this, especially in section 5, where instructions are provided for the care of those who are preparing to come to the Lord’s Supper. These questions are put to the communicants:

I now ask you in the presence of the omniscient God, and upon testimony of your own conscience: I ask you: Whether you are fully resolved, with the help of God, to

yield yourselves entirely to the gracious direction of the Holy Spirit, by His Word; in order that by His power, the help, and grace of the same, sin may be subdued in you, the old man with all his evil deeds and corrupt affections be weakened and overcome by daily sorrow and repentance, and that you may win a complete victory over the world and all its allurements?

If this be your serious purpose, confess it and answer, Yes. Finally, I ask you: Whether any one of you yet has, in his heart, any complaint against another.³³

After this scrutiny, the rubrics call for the communicants and the pastor to kneel as one of the communicants leads the group in speaking a confessional prayer. The pastor is further instructed to “a few words of prayer.”³⁴ Then the pastors forgives and retains sins in these words:

Upon this confession of sin which you have now made, I, a minister of my Lord Jesus Christ, hereby do declare, to all who are truly penitent and heartily believe in Jesus Christ, and are sincerely resolved, in heart, to amend their lives and daily to grow in grace, to them I declare the forgiveness of all their sins; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

But, on the other hand, I declare to all who are impenitent, to the hypocritical as well as the openly ungodly, and I testify, by the Word of God, and in the name of Jesus, that so long as they continue in their impenitent state, loving sin and hating righteousness, God will not forgive their sins, but retains their sin against them, and will assuredly punish and condemn them for their iniquities, in the end, except they turn to him now, in His day of grace; except they sincerely forsake all their evil ways, and come to Christ in true repentance and faith; which we heartily pray they may do. Amen.³⁵

Here we note that the absolution is anchored in the sincerity of the penitent. The penitent is directed to the strength of his repentance and the resolve to amend his life. Thus pietism has left its fingerprints on this early American Lutheran liturgy.

In 1782, the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in North America, meeting in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, appointed Muhlenberg and others to begin work on a new hymnal. The ministerium’s resolution gives five directives to the committee:

1. As far as possible to follow the arrangement of the Halle Hymn Book.
2. Not to omit any of the old standard hymns, especially those of Luther and Gerhardt.
3. To omit the Gospel and Epistles for Apostles’ Days, Minor Festivals, and the History of the Destruction of Jerusalem, together with the collection of prayers and the Catechism.
4. To report all this together with incidental changes, for example, the Litany, to a special meeting of Synod.
5. Not to admit more than 750 hymns into the collection.³⁶

As he worked on the this new hymnal, Muhlenberg made the following entry in his journal:

Those hymns which expect the last judgment of the world in the too-near future and mention the signs that precede it I have left out. I also have not included those which, inspired by the Song of Solomon, are composed too close to the verge of sensuality, and also those that dally with diminutives—for example, “little Jesus,” “little brother,” “little angels,” etc. These appear to me to be too childish and not in accord with Scripture, even though they were intended to be childlike and familiar. The ancient and medieval hymns, which have been familiar to Lutherans from childhood on, cannot well be left out; even though they sound somewhat harsh in construction, rhyme, etc., they are nevertheless orthodox.³⁷

The pietistically flavored confessionalism of Muhlenberg³⁸ would ultimately give way to the neo-pietism of Samuel Simon Schmucker. In Schmucker the central motifs of pietism were given an American expression. Indifference to doctrinal distinctives where there is unity in spiritual experience marked the thought of Schmucker as it had for the pietists. Like the earlier pietists, Schmucker defined Lutheranism in opposition to Roman Catholicism. What Rome is, Lutheranism is not. For Schmucker as for the pietists, the Reformation was a return to the primitivism of genuine Christianity. “The Reformation restored the church to the ‘primitive, simple ordinances of the Gospel’ instead of corrupted sacraments.”³⁹ Schmucker, like pietists, believed that the Reformation was fundamentally unfinished; Luther and his colleagues had not gone far enough. The essence of Lutheranism was to be found not in the confessional documents but in the brave, reformatory spirit of Luther, who replaced the pope with the Bible and freed believers to engage in a genuine spirituality unhampered by external ritualism.

Schmucker defined Lutheranism in opposition to Roman Catholicism.

This can be seen in Schmucker’s *Definite Platform* as it identifies five errors in the *Augustana*: (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 blood of the Savior in the Lord’s Supper. Schmucker’s rejection of these confessional teachings as remnants of Romish error echoed similar sentiments in pietism. Schmucker’s pietism made it possible for him to adapt the new measures of revivalism for Lutheran use. This adaptation can be seen clearly in the General Synod’s *Hymns Selected and Original* of 1828. This hymnal stands in the pietistic tradition with hymns arranged topically, not according to the liturgical year or catechetical themes, but the being and characteristics of God and the *ordo salutis*. It is especially telling that in the section designated “The Means of Grace” six hymns were included on prayer, nineteen on the spiritual pleasures of worship in God’s house, five on Baptism, and fourteen on the Lord’s Supper. None of the great

sacramental hymns of Lutheranism were included in this collection. Typical of the hymns on the Lord's Supper are stanzas 3 and 4 of "My God! And Is Thy Table Spread":

Let crowds approach; with hearts prepar'd
With warm desire, let all attend;
Nor, when we leave our Father's board,
The pleasure or the profit end.
Revive thy dying churches, Lord!
And bid our drooping graces live;
And more that energy afford,
A Savior's death alone can give."⁴⁰

Not a single hymn in this section contains an unambiguous statement of the Lord's Supper as the place where Christ's body and blood are bestowed for the forgiveness of sins. Instead the hymns are dominated by the themes of remembrance, the need for heartfelt repentance and preparation, the delights of personal communion with Christ, the eucharistic nature of the Supper, and the Lord's Supper as the expression of a communion of love between believers.

While Schmucker and his co-religionists in the General Synod were not the only perpetrators of the pietistic legacy, their efforts surely resulted in the ecclesiastical establishment of pietism as a clearly defined element within American Lutheranism, an element that would be hospitable to and further shaped by revivalism, ecumenism, and eventually the charismatic movement.⁴¹ Pietism's theological orientation provided a context for the impulse of these three movements to shape both the theological understanding of liturgy as well as actual liturgical texts, practices, and hymnody among modern North American Lutherans. It is to these contemporary developments that we shall now turn.

Pietism left its imprint on Lutheran hymnody as texts and tunes from pietist authors and composers found a permanent place in Lutheran hymnals. The hymns of Tersteegen, Zinzendorf, and Freylinghausen have been widely used in American Lutheran hymnals. The use of pietistic hymns opened the way for the inclusion of hymns from the Wesleyan tradition in England and from a variety of American Protestant traditions that accented themes identical or similar to the central motifs of pietism.⁴²

The sentiments of pietism are given a contemporary voice in Dave Anderson's *The Other Song Book*. Telling is the comment that Anderson quotes in the inside front cover the book: "Music prepares the heart for worship and commitment. Music is the greatest mood alternator of all, and unlocks the ministry of God in the untrodden soil of a person's soul."⁴³ The continuity with pietism is clear. John Weborg writes:

Various proposals for reform were made such as would contribute to the renewal of the spiritual life of persons and congregations investing as it were "soul" into the music and manner of life. These reforms . . . contributed the *experiential* aspect to the pietistic movement. I have chosen this word because the Pietists did not necessarily see a cause and effect relation between these proposals for reform and their results. Rather, they sought to create occasions within the context of which God's Holy Spirit in, with, and under Word and Sacrament, could do the work of renewal and

regeneration in persons and in the church. God made certain promises to the church regarding the future as such and regarding the power of the Word of God itself. It was a human responsibility, motivated by the obedience of faith, to provide tangible instances whereby this Word could embody itself in creative and regenerative activity.⁴⁴

Music is used to create a mood, to provide such an occasion for the Spirit to work. Hence it is common in many "alternative services" to begin with a period of mood-setting music, of so-called "praise and worship" songs.

The vast majority of songs in *The Other Song Book* (TOSB) reflect the theological themes of pietism while also fitting in with the pietistic goal of creating a "moment" for the Spirit. The language of the heart, so common in pietism, predominates. A few examples will suffice:

There is a flag flown from the castle of my heart
When the King is in residence there.
So raise it high in the sky,
Let the whole world know, let the whole world know,
Let the whole world know.
So raise it high in the sky,
Let the whole know
that the King is in residence there (TOSB 226).

Like pietism of old, this song is *Christus in nobis*, not *Christus pro nobis*. Another song invites the worshiper to "feel the faith":

Feel the faith swell up inside you,
Lift your voice with us and sing.
Accept him with your whole heart,
Oo-and use your own two hands;
With one reach out to Jesus,
And with the other bring a friend (TOSB 242).

Most telling, however, is the total subjectivity of a song entitled "He Lives," which ends with this line: "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart" (TOSB 61)⁴⁵

References to baptism and the Lord's Supper are all but nonexistent in the songs included in *The Other Song Book*; however, songs describing the blessings of prayer abound:

The blessings come down as the prayers go up,
The blessings come down as the prayers go up,
The blessings come down as the prayers go up,
So build your Life on the Lord (TOSB 224).

Songs having to do with the church generally define the church as a community of love or a fellowship of shared experience, as in "There's a Quiet Understanding," which contains these words:

And we know when we're together,
Sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and sisters feel the oneness that He brings.
Thank you, thank You, Jesus,
For the way you love and feed us,
For the many times You lead us,
When we gather in His name.
Thank you, thank You, Lord (TOSB 223).

A look at “contemporary Christian music” reveals that much of it is really not that contemporary, as it embodies themes set in place by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pietism.

Pietism has also shaped preaching. We have already noted that the pietists found difficulty with the lectionary, judging it to be too restrictive. In a recent article in *Worship Innovations*, entitled “The Lectionary Captivity of the Church . . . Or Ten Reasons to Kick the Lectionary ‘Habit,’” Philip Bickel offers ten arguments against lectionary-based preaching:

1. Freedom to preach on one subject.
2. Freedom to develop worship services with a single focus.
3. Freedom to encourage lay Bible reading.
4. Freedom to develop sermons and services specific to the needs of the local church.
5. Freedom for local leaders to LEAD!
6. Freedom to utilize Bible narratives.
7. Freedom to shape and cast a vision.
8. Freedom to be creative rather than conform.
9. Freedom to have immediate relevancy.
10. Freedom for preachers to share what God is teaching them.⁴⁶

The parallels with pietism are obvious. Lectionaries inhibit the preacher’s freedom by binding the preacher to the text, making it more difficult for him to share “what God is teaching him.” The assumptions that fuel Bickel’s call to abandon the lectionary are already there in pietism. The text is no longer the bearer of the Spirit’s presence and the instrument through which he works to create and sustain faith. Instead the preacher’s own experiences and spiritual insights become primary. Bickel’s exposition of his tenth point could have been written by Gottfried Arnold himself:

A pastor may be personally stirred through study of a standard pericope. But personal, devotional Bible reading is often the crucible where the Lord refines his servant. Lectionaries tend to limit you from preaching on what God is teaching you. When you preach on the biblical texts which God has been using to encourage and disciple you, many good things happen. First, you speak with the ardor of personal conviction. Second, you model the growth that is to occur in people’s lives. Third, they will see you not as the religious know-it-all of the church but as a fellow traveler on the journey.⁴⁷

The chief aim of preaching in pietism was not the delivery of the forgiveness of sins but the spiritual edification of the believer. The goal of the sermon was to change the life of the hearer. Preaching was seen as an appeal to the heart that would result in a changed life. Philip Bickel’s diatribe against lectionary preaching is consistent with the major thrust of the book that he co-authored with Robert Nordlie, *The Goal of the Gospel*.⁴⁸ Here the goal of preaching is not absolution but obedience to the commandments. The law predominates over the gospel as the “effectiveness of the sermon” is determined by “the obedience of faith” evidenced in the conduct of the hearers.

Pietistic preaching demands visible results. Such results are best achieved by preaching that inspires or motivates. Narrative preaching or stories from the life of the preacher become a funda-

mental medium for such preaching, not unlike the place of the preacher’s own testimony in pietism. Gerald Krispin aptly summarizes this trend within pietism:

Ultimately only that pastor who himself is a true Christian can lead people rightly in the ways of God. As a guide, he therefore becomes the *primus inter pares*, who is in fact the director, the older brother to all priests in the faith. Thus the pastoral office is not so much a *Predigtamt* as the means by which a godly example and encouragement provide concrete help for the formation of the inner man.⁴⁹

The same can be seen in much contemporary Lutheran writing on preaching.⁵⁰

Gerhard Forde has coined the term “decadent pietism”⁵¹ for the contemporary replacement of the pietism of Spener and Francke. Decadent pietism indulges the “felt needs” of the potential believer, offering a cafeteria of religious options, encouraging imagination and creativity in preaching. Sermons must be practical, offering solutions for the problems of daily life.⁵² While the sermons of classical pietism at least dealt with issues of sin and grace, the sermons of the decadent pietists are shaped by therapeutic concerns. Self-realization replaces salvation,⁵³ and right feelings overshadow right doctrine.

The chief aim of preaching in pietism was the spiritual edification of the believer.

We observe in pietism a shift from congregation to conventicle that is not unlike the Meta-Church emphasis of recent memory. It is beyond the scope of this article to draw out the many parallels between the pietistic *collegium* and the Meta-Church cell groups. Nevertheless, a few comments are in order. According to Spener’s original proposal, the small, informal gatherings would operate under the oversight of the pastor and would supplement the divine service. With the passage of time, the conventicles became the central feature of the corporate life of the Christian, in some cases, such as that of Gerhard Tersteegen, to the exclusion of the divine service. In other cases, believers continued to attend the divine service, but the prayer group was clearly the foundational assembly. The divine service where the word was proclaimed and the Lord’s body and blood were distributed was seen as inferior to the prayer group and at best as a supplement to it.⁵⁴

The Meta-Church method, as it is set forth by Carl George, does not need preaching and sacraments in order to exist. Prayer and Bible study are essential, but not the means of grace. Larger gatherings, called “celebrations” by Carl George, support and supplement the cell groups, but these gatherings are not the church of Augustana VII. These gatherings are not assemblies drawn together around the preached and sacramental word. Instead they are

“praise celebrations” in which participation is the key. George writes that these celebrations provide “a sense of significance” that “emerges in the consciousness of the group, an apprehension that God is accomplishing something big enough to be worthy of their involvement and investment.”⁵⁵ Both the cell groups with their focus on the “felt needs” of the participants and the “praise celebrations” are centered in man and not in the bestowal of the forgiveness of sins in gospel and sacrament.⁵⁶

One of the ways in which the Liturgical Movement has a decidedly pietistic flavor is its definition of liturgy as “the work of the people.”

Pietism, both classical and contemporary, calls for active involvement of the laity in worship. There is a convergence here between the modern liturgical movement and pietism. In a very short but intriguing section of his *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church*, Ernest Koenker has noted how the liturgical movement challenged complacency within the church. He entitled this section “Sociological Classification of the Movement as a *Collegium Pietism*.”⁵⁷ We generally do not think of the Liturgical Movement as pietistic. But perhaps one of the ways in which this movement has a decidedly pietistic flavor is its definition of liturgy as “the work of the people” and its concomitant desire to make sure everybody has something to do. Hence the call for lay readers, communion assistants, and so forth. We have been slow to think through the theological implications of this trend. Especially pietistic is the rationale that is given for lay readers that ties this practice to the royal priesthood, arguing that the word of God comes out of the believing congregation. *Worship Alive*, a publication of Fellowship Ministries, contains this rubric: “assign various people within the congregation to stand up right where they are and read out the verses boldly! The ‘Word of God

coming from among the people of God’—a nice concept.”⁵⁸ So much for the *extra nos* character of the word and the Lutheran assertion that the church is created by the word.

The influence of pietism can be seen in the subjectivity of liturgical texts. We have confessions that do not confess sin and absolutions that do not absolve. Assurance, and it is not a blessed assurance, has replaced absolution. We have homemade creeds that engage in creativity but never come close to saying back to God what he has said to us. Note this example from “Worship Order No. 3” in *The Other Song Book*:

I believe in God who created all things and continues to create new life within us.

I believe in Jesus—son of God—son of man—the Savior of the World. By His life, His death, and His resurrection I can know the true depth of human possibility and experience the true joy of a meaningful life.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is present—now and always—calling us to faith, giving us His gifts and empowering us for service. I believe that the community of believers called the church can experience the fullness of life through the Word, the sacraments and all that we do. Amen.

The subjectivity of pietism can be seen in Francke’s reshaping of the confirmation rite. He omitted the Apostles’ Creed as the form of confession, and in its place as the confirmands expressed their faith in their own words—a practice has also been encouraged by some in Lutheran circles today.

Finally, it must be noted that today’s pietism, like its counterpart three hundred years ago, collapses the *beneficium* into the *sacrificium*. Man is the actor and God is the audience. The Chicago Folk Mass of the 1960s went so far as to call the Service of the Sacrament “the Service of the Doers.” You cannot get much more pietistic than that! The focus in the divine service is not on our response but on God’s gifts. Pietism ancient and modern confuses the two. Where these are confused, law and gospel are mingled and faith is anchored not in the gifts of God, which are always *extra nos*, but in the subjectivity of the religious ego. This was the great mischief of pietism, and it remains a threat yet today. LOGIA

NOTES

1. See David Luecke, *The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship: Reclaiming Our Heritage of Diversity* (Tempe, AZ: Fellowship Ministries, 1995), 74–97; and *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance: Facing America’s Mission Challenge* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 86–92. For an insightful critique of Luecke’s misuse of the data, see R. Stuckwisch, “The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship?” *LOGIA* 5 (Holy Trinity 1996): 39–44.

2. James White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 171–191.

3. Quoted in Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship: Hymnal Companion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 297.

4. Bengt Haeggblund, *History of Theology* trans. Gene Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 325.

5. Both James White and Carl Schalk identify Nicolai and Gerhardt with pietism. White identifies Gerhardt as “the greatest of the pietistic hymn writers.” See *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition*, 52. Also

Carl Schalk, *God’s Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in America* (St. Louis: CPH, 1995), 40. For a refutation of this charge, see Robin Leaver, “Bach and Pietism,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January 1991): 9. Pietism is not to be confused with piety.

6. Jeremiah Ohl, “The Liturgical Deterioration of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association IV* (1901–1902), 70. Also see Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Aufloesung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands*, 2 vols. (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1939).

7. For helpful treatments of liturgical theology in Luther and early Lutheranism are Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism*, trans. Henry P. A. Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965); Norman Nagel, “Luther’s Liturgical Reform,” *LOGIA* 7 (Eastertide 1998), 23–26; Bryan Spinks, *Luther’s Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass* (Bramcotte Notts: Grove Books, 1982); Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, trans. U. S. Leupold

(Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958). For a description of the vitality of the liturgical life of Lutheran orthodoxy, see Guenther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984).

8. Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 63.

9. *Ibid.*, 63.

10. *Ibid.*, 66. In contrast to Spener, note Luther's understanding of the baptismal "covenant" as described by Bryan Spinks, "Luther's Timely Theology of Unilateral Baptism" *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 1995): 23–45.

11. Spener, 66.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, 87.

14. Ohl, 70.

15. Spener, 88.

16. *Ibid.*, 89.

17. *Ibid.*, 89–90.

18. *Ibid.*, 91.

19. *Ibid.*, 92.

20. *Ibid.*, 95.

21. *Ibid.*, 116–117.

22. *Ibid.*, 117. On this point see Vilmos Vajta, "Worship and Sacramental Life" in *The Lutheran Church Past and Present*, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 128–131.

23. This was the criticism of Valentin Loescher, *The Complete Timotheus Verinus*, trans. James Langebartels and Robert Koester (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998), 63–92. Also note Gerald Krispin, *Propter Absolutionem: Holy Absolution in the Theology of Martin Luther and Philipp Jacob Spener: A Comparative Study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1992), 160–161.

24. Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 498.

25. Loescher, 243.

26. Ohl, 70. Also see Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* trans. Walter Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 334–338.

27. Leaver, 12.

28. Frank Senn, "Worship Alive: An Analysis and Critique of Alternative Worship Services," *Worship* (May 1995), 197.

29. August Hermann Francke, "A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Most Useful Way of Preaching," in *Pietists: Selected Writings*, ed. Peter Orb (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 117.

30. *Ibid.*, 118.

31. *Ibid.*, 120.

32. *Ibid.*

33. "The Church Agenda (Liturgy) of 1748," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (Summer 1998): 98.

34. *Ibid.*, 98.

35. *Ibid.*, 99. This form survives in the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958): "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, hath had mercy upon us, and for the sake of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, forgiveth us all our sins. As a Minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare unto to you who do truly repent and believe in him, the entire forgiveness of all your sins: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. . . . On the other hand, by the same authority, I declare unto the impenitent and unbelieving, that so long as they continue in their impenitence, God hath not forgiven their sins, and will assuredly visit their iniquities upon them, if they do not turn from their evil ways, and come to true repentance and faith in Christ, ere the day of grace be ended" (*Service Book and Hymnal*, Philadelphia: Board of Publications—Lutheran Church in America, 1958), 252.

36. Schalk, 45.

37. *Ibid.*, 46–47.

38. See Robert F. Scholz, "Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's Relation to the Ongoing Pietist Tradition," in *Lutheranism and Pietism*, ed. August Suelflow (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1992), 40–66.

39. David Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 68.

40. *Hymns, Selected and Original for Public and Private Worship* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1857), #526.

41. For a study of the connections between pietism and the charismatic movement see Carter Lindberg, *The Third Reformation?* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983).

42. Pietism was influenced by several non-Lutheran movements, including English Puritanism. See James Stein, *Philipp Jakob Spener: Pietist Patriarch* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1986), 36–42, for an account of how young Spener was shaped by the devotional writings of the Puritan divines. Also note F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 24–108. Avoiding doctrinal polemics, pietism became increasingly indifferent to doctrine. This indifference is reflected in the hymns which the pietists were willing to incorporate into their hymnals.

43. *The Other Song Book*, compiled by David Anderson (Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1984), inside front cover.

44. John Weborg, "Pietism: The Fire of God Which . . . Flames in the Heart of Germany," in *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*, ed. Frank Senn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 184.

45. Note Krispin: "Pietism pointed to the God whose presence was both felt and awesome in one's own experience. . . . Experience also came to be the measure of the ultimate source of truth" (61).

46. Philip Bickel, "The Lectionary Captivity of the Church . . . Or Ten Reasons to Kick the Lectionary Habit," *Worship Innovations* (Winter 1997), 6–7.

47. *Ibid.*, 7.

48. Robert Nordlie and Philip Bickel, *The Goal of the Gospel: God's Purpose in Saving You* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992). For an excellent analysis of the underlying problem of this book, see Edward Kettner, "The 'Third use of the Law' and the Homiletical Task" *Lutheran Theological Review* (Fall/Winter 1994), 67–90.

49. Krispin, 170.

50. See, for example, Bradley D. Hoefs, "Surviving Sunday Morning!" *Concordia Pulpit Helps* (Pentecost 16–Last Sunday of the Church Year, 1994), 8–9; and Dean Nadasdy, "Monuments and Footprints: The Art of Pilgrimage Preaching," *Concordia Journal* (January 1996): 12–26.

51. Gerhard Forde, "Radical Lutheranism," *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 1987): 5. For a further development of this theme, see Philip Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1987.

52. See Timothy Wright, *A Community of Joy: How to Create Contemporary Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 85–118.

53. See E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983).

54. Carter Lindberg, "Pietism and the Church Growth Movement in a Confessional Lutheran Perspective," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (April–July 1988): 130.

55. Carl George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1992), 60. Also see the review essay by Timothy Quill, "Meta-Church and its Implications for a Confessional Lutheran Church," *LOGIA 2* (Reformation 1993), 61–65.

56. See Kenneth Wieting, "The Method of Meta-Church: The Point of Truth and the Points that Trouble," *LOGIA 2* (Holy Trinity 1993): 14–20. Also see "The Opinion of the Department of Systematic Theology on 'Meta-Church,'" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (July 1995): 219–224.

57. Ernest Koenker, *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 6.

58. Cindy Warnier, "What is Worship Anyway?" *Worship Alive* (Tempe, AZ: Fellowship Ministries, n.d.), 5. This view squares with the emphasis on liturgy as human action in the liturgical movement. See Eugene Brand, *The Rite Thing* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1970). Brand's first chapter is entitled "To Be Involved," 17–33. For a Lutheran evaluation of the use of lay assistants in the liturgy, see Timothy Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement on American Lutheranism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 152–167; and Thomas Winger, "Assisting Ministers," *LOGIA 7* (Eastertide 1998): 66–67.



Kingdom of Piety

Map of the Kingdom of Piety

VALENTINE ERNST LOESCHER

Translated by Matthew C. Harrison



THE KINGDOM OF PIETY [*Reich der Pietæet*]* lays directly below the Tropic of Cancer [*Tropicus Cancrî*], or that great world encompassing circle, where the sun of divine grace reverses its course, and beyond which it does not rise, and thus [this kingdom] is in a region which enjoys more warm weather than cold. On the east it borders the Land of Persecution [*Land der Verfolgung*], which very often encroaches upon the inhabitants of the kingdom. On the west it borders the Land of Vanity [*Land der Eitelkeit*], which has often done harm to our kingdom from that side. At the meridian is the *Mare Pacificum* or Sea of Tranquility. Toward the north is the noted Tropic of Cancer [*Tropicum Cancrî*]. In the center, below the same, flows the exceedingly clear and pure River of the Divine Word [*Fluss des goettlichen Worts*], which springs from two sources in the north, below the tropic. One comes from Mount Sinai [*Berg Sinâi*], the other from The Mount of Olives [*Oelberg*]. But they quickly flow together, and the confluence flows by Patriarchopolis, Jerusalem and Christiana, and finally empties into the Sea of Tranquility. There also originates in our land, toward the east, the River of Ceremonies [*Ceremonien-Fluss*] that teems with fish. This river begins in the Mountains of Antiquity [*Gebuerge der Antiquitæet*], which is near the Land of Persecution [*Land der Vervolgung*]. It passes through the vast Forest of the Fathers [*Wald der Vaeter*], afterwards wending its way ever northward, emptying into the Sea of Councils [*See der Concilien*] which flows quickly to the Tropic [of Cancer] where all sorts of impurity is already evident in it.

This Kingdom of Piety [*Reich der Pietæet*] is divided into six provinces, which are separated by the River of the Divine Word [*Fluss des goettlichen Worts*]. On the western side of the river lay the Provinces of Purification [*Provinz der Reinigung*], of Devotion [*Andacht*] and Love [*Liebe*]. On the eastern side are the Provinces of Enlightenment [*Erleuchtung*], of Order [*Ordnung*] and Zeal [*Eyffers*]. The Province of Purification [*Reinigung*] borders on the Tropic of Cancer and is rough and desolate at certain places. Thus toward the west is found the great Desert of Fantasm [*Wueste der Phantasie*] in which many have lost their way, and gone astray into the bordering land of *Fanatica*. The capital of the entire area is called Self-Denial [*Selbst-Verlaeugnung*]. The Province of Devotion [*Provinz der Andacht*] lays deeper below, toward the south, and is a fairer land. Still, the Desert of Fantasm [*Wueste der Phantasie*], which borders to the north, affects it somewhat negatively. The Province of Love [*Provinz Liebe*] is the most southern, and thus the most habitable and fruitful [of the provinces]. The capital of this province is Philadelphia, an excellent harbor on the Sea of Tranquility, and a rich city of commerce, doing business with the Isle of Blissfulness [*Glueckselige Insul*]. Also found there is The Cape of Good Hope [*Capo de bona Esperanza*]. The Province of Enlightenment [*Provinz der Erleuchtung*] lays to the north and the east, directly on the Tropic [of Cancer], and at its extremity can be seen Mount Sinai and the Mount of Olives rising in the clouds. The capital is *Patriarchopolis* or The City of the Patriarchs, where God revealed himself visibly. Toward the east lays the Sea of Councils [*See der Concilien*], which is not pure in all places, especially toward the north. And a thick cloud rises out of this sea and it darkens the land. Farther to the south lays The Province of Order [*Provinz der Ordnung*], one of the most populous and powerful of the provinces. Its capital cities are the old city of Jerusalem and the new city, Christiana, from which the entire kingdom draws its institutions and laws, and where also are the courts of the general kingdom [*allgemeinen Reichs=Tribunalia*], and they lay on both sides of the River of the Divine Word. On the east is found the very extensive Forest of the Fathers [*Wald der Vaeter*], which in many places is very delightful, but at certain places is also absolutely dark and impassible.

*This is a translation of Val. Ernst Loeschers, D./Pastoris und Superint. Zu Delitzsch./Evangelische/ Zehenden/Gott-heiliger/Amts-Sorgen./In welchen lauter erbauliche/Materien, so meistens noch nicht/eroertert sind zur gemeinen Besse=/rung deutlich vorgetragen/ werden, Erster Theil./Nebst dem Sceleto eines Tractats/vom Reich Gottes./ Magdeburg und Leipzig./Verlegts Christoph Seidel, 1710./Neustadt Magdeb. Druckts Christian Leberecht Faber, pp. 334 ff.

There many thieves hide out. The last province toward the south is the Land of Zeal [*Land des Eyffers*], whose capital is Martyropolis, The City of Martyrs, where the most noble of the entire kingdom dwell. On the east lays the Mount of Antiquity [*gebuerge der Antiquitaet*] in which there are many rich metal mines. There are indeed many workers, but not enough mines have yet been opened. Likewise, it is generally lamentable that the pearls and valuable gold-laden sand, brought by the River of the Divine Word, have not been sought out diligently enough. This province borders on the Land of Persecution [*Land der Verfolgung*] and despite the fact that it has often been forcibly taken over by the same, still it draws manifold gain from this invasion. In the Sea of Tranquility is most notably the famous Isle of Blissfulness [*glueckselige Insel*], from which proceeds the nearest road to the Land of Heaven. It is separated from the mainland by a channel called the Strait of the Extraordinary [*Fretum Extraordinarium*], which cannot ordinarily be crossed unless a special and rare wind blows. On this island are the most delightful fields of divine certitude, a foretaste of eternal life, and the like.

Toward the north, across the Tropic of Cancer [*Tropicum Cancrī*] lays the Kingdom of False Piety. Toward the south of this kingdom is the noted Tropic, on the north, however, is the great Sea of Perdition, on which are found Chaldea and Egypt, as the two lands from which the greatest perdition has come upon the adjoining kingdom. Beyond lays the Land of Impiety [*Land der Impietaet*]. This great kingdom is divided into Fanatica, or the Kingdom of the *Schwaermer*, and Romania, or the Kingdom of the Pope. One, however, cannot say whether the residents of both these kingdoms are friends or foes. For on their common border lays the Land of Ignorance [*Land der Unwissenheit*], which they possess mutually, though they often attack each other. Romania encompasses the Province of Hypocrisy [*Provinz der Heucheley*], and the Province of the Perishing [*Provinz des Interesse*]. The people of Fanatica make a great pretension regarding the Province of Hypocrisy, and they possess a good portion of the same. The capital is the City of Saints [*Heiligen Stadt*]. The Province of the Perishing has the great city of Rome for its capital, as the richest city of commerce in the world. Its citizens, however, lament very much that they can bring nothing true back from the Sea of Tranquility and the Isle of Blissfulness. They have been at pains to build a canal from the River of the Divine Word into the Land [i.e. Province] of the Perishing, or even all the way to Rome. But because there was no way of burrowing through Mount Sinai nor the Mount of Olives, also, to [their] great amazement the water from [The River of the Divine Word] is impossible to carry over the Tropic [of Cancer], so it must remain. So what comes to Rome is, in general, brought by the River of Heresy [*Fluss des Aberglaubens*] or by the River of Ceremonies [*Ceremonien-Fluss*], which especially carry many counterfeit gems from the Mount of Antiquity [*Gebuerge der Antiquitaet*], ash from the Forest of the Fathers [*Wald der Vaeter*], and rotten fish from the Sea of Councils [*See der Concilien*]. All of Romania is watered by the River of Heresy [*Fluss des Aberglaubens*], which originates in the Black Forest [*Schwartz=Wald*], and flows in a complete circle until it finally empties into the Sea of Perdition [*See des Verderbens*]. Near Rome it joins with The River of Ceremonies [*Ceremonien-Fluss*], in which, after it crosses the Tropic of Cancer, nothing good is found. Not far from Rome it becomes a great infested bog, the likes of which are found throughout the land, but especially near the City of Saints [*Heiligen Stadt*]. Cloister Mountain divides the two provinces of this kingdom from each other, and there dwell the most skilled soldiers of this region.

The land Fanatica also has two provinces. The first is the Province of Renewal, in which Pseudophiladelphia is the capital city. All the valuable work of the citizens of Philadelphia in the Kingdom of Piety, indeed even those of the citizens of the Isle of Blissfulness are copied, but in a most fraudulent manner, and this deception goes on throughout the land, these works being sold for show. The other is the Province of Visions [*Provinz der Visionen*], which is very large and expansive. Its principal cities are (in the north) Chiliasmus, which borders on Egypt, and Apotheosis (Self-deification) on the south. The Tropic of Cancer very clearly separates Apotheosis from the City of Self-denial, directly on the other side. The inhabitants of the Land of Fanatica, however, assert that it is only one city. The River of Individualism [*Fluss der Singularitaet*], which originates on the border of The Kingdom of Piety in the Desert of Fantasm [*Wuesten der Phantasie*], crosses the Tropic of Cancer, and thereafter flows to the Sea of Perdition [*See des Verderbens*]. This river divides both these provinces from each other [the Province of Renewal, and of Visions]. Near Chiliasmus The River of Dreams [*Traum=Fluss*] which has its origin in the Black Forest [*Schwartz Wald*] flows into the River of Individualism.

That is the description of the map provided, which sets forth the true and false, especially papal and fanatic piety, their history, difference and marks. The explanation will not be difficult for those who have understanding. LOGIA

Oscar Feucht's *Everyone a Minister*

Pietismus Redivivus

BRENT KUHLMAN



IN HIS BOOK *EVERYONE A MINISTER* Oscar Feucht contends for the activation of the laity for mission by the clergy so that an institutionalized church may recover her true nature and successfully carry out the Lord's mandate to make disciples of all nations in the modern world. His book is a plea for the recovery of the "apostolate of the laity" or "the priesthood of all believers."¹ Why? Feucht believes that this teaching alone "is our greatest single hope for fulfilling God's mission."²

Such a plea and an assertion were not the solitary genius of Feucht. They flowed from a distinct twentieth-century *Zeitgeist* that developed after two world wars. This *Zeitgeist* is described by Elisabeth Adler as "the rediscovery of the laity." Adler asserts, "The rediscovery of the laity was probably the most important aspect of the renewal of the church in the 1950s and 1960s."³ Two major participants in the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches (WCC), John R. Mott (a Methodist layman) and Hendrik Kraemer (a Dutch Reformed layman), extolled this "rediscovery of the laity." Both of these men and the WCC exerted a heavy influence on Feucht and others in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod such as professors William J. Danker and Richard R. Caemmerer, who taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. This "rediscovery of the laity" flowed from investigations that restudied the teaching of the priesthood of all believers, Ephesians 4:11–12,⁴ the church, and the ministry. At the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, a committee was appointed to study and give a report regarding the "significance of the laity in the church." Hendrik Kraemer was its secretary. According to the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*,

The report underlines the need for "relevant Christianity" in the modern secularized world: "Only by the witness of a spiritually intelligent and active laity can the church meet the modern world in its actual perplexities and life situations." In 1949 Walz was appointed as WCC staff person responsible for a Secretariat for Laymen's Work. He organized a European laymen's conference in Bad Boll, Federal Republic of Germany (1951), followed by a North American conference in Buffalo (1952), and published a bulletin *Laymen's Work* (1951–55).

This secretariat and the Ecumenical Institute increasingly became the focal point for pioneer thinking and experimentation regarding the ministry of the laity. During the first post-war years the attention was on Europe and North America, but soon it became clear that it was a burning issue in the churches of all continents . . .

Evanston also acknowledged the importance of the issue by replacing the provisional Secretariat for Laymen's Work with a regular Department on the Laity, of which Hans-Ruedi Weber became the secretary (1955–61). He edited a new periodical, *Laity* (from 1959 onward), in which laypeople from all traditions and regions discussed and shared experiences. The publication had a wide circulation and considerable impact on the ecumenical thinking of laypeople and church leaders throughout the world. . . .

The increasing influence of the work of the Laity Department was obvious at the New Delhi assembly in 1961, where the ministry of the laity was a central issue in all three sections: witness, service and unity. Under the theme "The Laity: The Church in the World," three laypersons addressed the assembly. And the message from New Delhi contains the sentence: "The real letter written to the world today does not consist of words. We Christian people, wherever we are, are a letter from Christ to the world."

The assembly also decided that the Department on Evangelism should undertake a study on the missionary structure of the congregation, clearly a consequence of the new understanding of the church in the world, with the co-operation of the Laity Department.⁵

The slender volume *Everyone A Minister* did much to disseminate this viewpoint throughout Lutheranism in America. This "rediscovery of the laity" has much in common with Pietism. Consequently, some specific aspects of Pietism, like termites, have been relentlessly boring into Lutheran lumber for more than a quarter of a century.⁶

Dr. Valentin Ernst Loescher encountered Pietism in its maturity in the eighteenth century. He summarizes the essence of Pietism:

It is an evil in the church that arises in the context of the pursuit of piety. That is, it is a searching, striving, and demanding of piety that is ill-conceived and established in a sinful way. It creates an antithesis between (1) piety and its

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pursuit and (2) revealed truth and its pursuit. Moreover, it causes truth to be dependent on piety. Pietism completely absorbs truth into itself and so it nullifies the truth. By all this the church of Christ is thrown into confusion and a raft of other unholy things find their way into it. The evil of Pietism is among us as long as the pursuit of piety stirs up and sustains a conflict and sets up an antithesis between itself and even one important point of religion. It is among us as long as a person believes and teaches that piety must be pursued more strenuously than orthodoxy and given preferential treatment. Furthermore, it can come to the point that the truth and form of theology (namely the Word of God), the office of preacher, justification, matrimony, the church, and other matters are all put into a dependent relationship to piety, in which case the evil shows itself more forcefully and more clearly. Finally, it can come to the point where people think that wherever piety is not found in the form and to the degree hoped for, then no Word of God, no activity of the Holy Spirit, no light of grace, no office of teaching, no matrimony, no church can exist. Then Pietism has fully matured and come out into the open.⁷

Pietism can be defined and understood by way of *Pia Desideria* (1675), which was Philip Jacob Spener's proposal for the reform of the wretched conditions in the church of his day. In this work an entirely new theological matrix begins in Lutheranism. It is a shift from the objective to the subjective. Spener's hope for better conditions in the church flowed not from our Lord's *extra nos* gift-giving but from what was going on inside the believer, an *intra nos* piety.

This is clearly exhibited in Spener's discussion of the word and sacraments. Concerning baptism, which he calls a covenant, he warns: "It will be in vain that you comfort yourself in your baptism and in its promise of grace and salvation if for your part you do not also remain in the covenant of faith and a good conscience or, having departed therefrom, return to it with sincere repentance."⁸ Regarding the word of God Spener writes:

Again, you hear the Word of God. This is good. But it is not enough that your ear hears it. Do you let it penetrate inwardly into your heart and allow the heavenly food to be digested there, so that you get the benefit of its vitality and power, or does it go in one ear and out the other?⁹

Thus he proposes, a "*more extensive use of the Word of God among us*."¹⁰ More preaching is not the cure for the horrible conditions in the church. Instead, private Bible reading in the home with small groups is the corrective. "If we succeed in getting the people to seek eagerly and diligently in the book of life for their joy, their spiritual life will be wonderfully strengthened and they will become altogether different people."¹¹ Note also that another of Spener's proposals to correct conditions in the church was "*the establishment and diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood*."¹² What he emphasizes is that "all spiritual functions are open to all Christians without exception," and that "one of the principal reasons why the ministry cannot accomplish all that it ought is that it is too weak without the help of the universal priesthood. One man

is incapable of doing all that is necessary for the edification of the many persons who are generally entrusted to his pastoral care."¹³ Thus the need for the spiritual priesthood to hold private meetings for the cultivation of holiness, the so-called *collegia pietatis*.

Spener is also concerned that confession and absolution as well as the Lord's Supper have become an "*opus operatum*, for which we condemn the papists."¹⁴ The shift from the objective to the subjective is also witnessed in his discussion of the office of the ministry. "It is of the utmost importance that the office of the ministry be occupied by men who, above all, are themselves true Christians and, then, have the divine wisdom to guide others carefully on the way of the Lord."¹⁵ Note again the shift from *extra nos* divine gift-giving to the *intra nos* piety and how this shapes the pastor's preaching:

For Spener, good theology starts with what is inside the believer.

One should therefore emphasize that the divine means of Word and sacrament are concerned with the inner man. Hence it is not enough that we hear the Word with our outward ear, but we must let it penetrate to our heart, so that we may hear the Holy Spirit speak there, that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit and the power of the Word. Nor is it enough to be baptized, but the inner man, where we have put on Christ in Baptism, must also keep Christ on and bear witness to him in our outward life. Nor is it enough to have received the Lord's Supper externally, but the inner man must truly be fed with that blessed food. Nor is it enough to pray outwardly with our mouth, but true prayer, and the best prayer, occurs in the inner man, and it either breaks forth in words or remains in the soul, yet God will find and hit upon it. Nor, again, is it enough to worship God in an external temple, but the inner man worships God best in his own temple, whether or not he is in an external temple at the time. So one could go on.

Since the real power of all Christianity consists of this, it would be proper if sermons, on the whole, were pointed in such a direction. If this were to happen, much more edification would surely result than is presently the case.¹⁶

Ultimately then for Spener, good theology starts with what is inside the believer and then how this inside stuff of the believer gets put into practice. He is convinced that "the people must have impressed upon them and must accustom themselves to believing that *it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice*."¹⁷ This is a fundamental shift. Feucht echoes this fundamental axiom of Pietism when it campaigns for the thesis stated in his title, *Everyone A Minister*.

One of the fundamental presuppositions of *Everyone A Minister* is that the church needs to be reformed. Feucht sees her

as institutionalized and says that she has become irrelevant to modern people. He states:

It is now apparent that the organized church is in trouble. That includes the Roman, Greek, and Protestant branches of the church tree. The malady is not a minor illness. The diagnosis may be difficult. The case has historical dimensions that embrace many centuries. The present distress involves many factors related to culture, theology, sociology, and psychology. The current upheaval is not restricted to one or two church denominations. It is related to present-day Christendom in an age when science and secularization preoccupy the mind. There is unrest throughout the churches. Factors inside and outside the churches are involved, and they will need to be considered in any new reformations.¹⁸

He says quite bluntly, "*The institutionalism of the church can become its grave.* This is an extremely hard judgment. But it must be faced honestly."¹⁹ For the church to be relevant, for the church to "make the gospel relevant," she must recover the exercise of the priesthood of all believers from Holy Scripture and the Reformation. He maintains that this teaching, while never fully lost, has never been fully advocated and received in the Lutheran Church. It has essentially been a slogan or a paper doctrine.

Therefore, Feucht insists that it is time for the church "to become what God intended it to be: A ministerium of *all* who have Christ in their hearts."²⁰ The church's mission to convert the world is "a mission that can be fulfilled only by the participation of its members who are consciously the body of Christ."²¹ He quotes the Methodist writer Cyril Eastwood, who says, "If the Gospel is to reach all mankind, it must be preached by every person who has received it."²² Consequently, the priesthood of all believers is the "only one 'divine vocation'"²³ the church exercises in the world. The work of the priesthood of all believers is that "the Christ in our hearts want [*sic*] to express Himself in the totality of our lives, in service to others wherever we are, in whatever we do."²⁴ And then Feucht applauds this most remarkable quote from Cyril Eastwood: "Christ continues His ministry through His people."²⁵ Hence the renewal of the church is predicated upon the renewal of the ministry of the laity.

The model for such reform, according to Feucht, is the Book of Acts. The piety and activism of the New Testament church is exactly what the church of today lacks and must restore. He claims, "The church needs dedicated men and women who desire deeply to get beyond nominal church membership to active discipleship, and in this way recover the dynamic power of the early Christians as described in the Acts of the Apostles."²⁶

It is not an exaggeration to say that Feucht sees Acts as prescriptive. He challenges congregations to "be courageous enough to throw out what is weak and put in what is missing [the apostolate of the laity]. And this should be done in the light of the apostolic mission given to us in the New Testament."²⁷ In particular, he states: "We all need to recover the spirit of the early Christians when the church was young. The Book of Acts will need to become again our 'manual of work.'"²⁸ And finally, "The Book of Acts is the best documentation of the priesthood of all believers and the chief resource for its recovery in our day."²⁹

In Feucht's thinking such renewal will change the church's structure. Because everyone is a minister the church *is* mission. In fact, Feucht states, "The mission concept Scripture gives us is not an option. It belongs to the essence of the church."³⁰ Quite naturally then, "the congregation . . . should not only be a *gathering* agency but also a *deploying* agency."³¹ In this scheme the church of today sheds her institutional skin so that she is reformed to be like the early church in which "they who believed went everywhere preaching the Word."³² "To *be* that church," Feucht asserts, "we must be *living* witnesses to Christ. The Gospel belongs to all Christians. *It becomes visible when God's people are on a mission where they are!*"³³ When the church, as "the sum total of all who believe that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord,"³⁴ grants full participation of all Christians in the evangelistic action, she is the church. She is reformed. What was lacking is restored. She is the kind of church God wants her to be.

Feucht insists that it is time for the church "to become what God intended it to be: A ministerium of all who have Christ in their hearts."

The touchstone for all this is the priesthood of all believers. Apparently for Feucht, it is the article upon which the church stands or falls. He claims, "It is when the whole parish with all its members is committed to the task of evangelism that something exists which no force in the modern world can stop. The challenge is to mobilize the full manpower and womanpower of the church for evangelism."³⁵ There are no exceptions. Regain the full New Testament practice of everyone being a minister or die. "The spiritual life and mission of every parish is at stake here."³⁶ Feucht runs with the motto of John R. Mott: "*He that multiplies the workers is greater than he who does the work!*" This is God's basic strategy for the churches of the New Covenant. We, the chosen people of God, must implement it. It is a matter of life and breath!"³⁷

This reform of the priesthood of all believers presupposes an activism that is *the* priority for Christians. They are to be changed from passive onlookers and receivers to dynamic participants in service to the world. "By deeds, perhaps more than by words, the people make the church present where they are, provided they have a live consciousness of being *in Christ* and have not handed over their God-given priestly functions to officiants of the church."³⁸ Deeds and life are essential for the church to be the church. Feucht asserts that the laity should "move from learning to living. Every Christian should be confronted with such questions as: What am I doing with my life? What legacy will my life leave?"³⁹

What does all this mean for the clergy in the church? Based upon his survey of modern New Testament scholarship that maintains that *kleros* and *laos* are all God's people,⁴⁰ Feucht con-

cludes, “At this time [the New Testament] there was *no* pastoral office as we know it today!”⁴¹ In fact, he declares, “The establishment of the bishop’s office is *not* by divine order.”⁴² And yet Feucht insists, “*This study does not call into question the office of the pastoral ministry or the practice of ordination.*”⁴³

The pastor is the hinge upon which the success or failure of Ephesians 4:11–12 swings.

So what is the point of the pastoral ministry? The answer is: “It [this study] *does deal with the more strategic use of the pastoral office in the deployment of the whole congregation for the fuller use and exercise of every Christian’s God-given priesthood.*”⁴⁴ Since everything in the church is to be done in good order (1 Cor 14:40), the pastor essentially is the leader in the sense of an equipper.⁴⁵

Hence “*The pastor’s role and leadership are needed more than ever!*” The character of the congregation is very much determined by his image of the church.”⁴⁶ Feucht quotes William Hinson, who says, “It’s not the minister’s task to bear the burden alone of Christian witness for his people. He’s the quarterback calling the signals. It’s their job to carry the ball.”⁴⁷ Ephesians 4:11–12 is the proof passage *par excellence*.

Pastors and Christian teachers are supplied to equip all of God’s people for their ministry in whatever station they are in life and in all areas of life. Ephesians 4:11–12 gives us a basic directive. Today’s English Version puts it well: “It was He [Christ] who ‘gave gifts to men’; He appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to *prepare all God’s people* for the work of Christian service, to build up the body of Christ.” In plain English, this means the pastor’s role is not merely to “keep” people with Christ but to “develop” them for Christ’s service in the church and in the world. Whether he knows it or not, a pastor is the “head” of a “seminary,” a training school for workers. His most significant stewardship is not of money but of people. He is entrusted with a commission! (1 Corinthians 9:17).⁴⁸

Feucht stresses that the pastor’s first objective upon arrival at a congregation is to implement the strategy of Ephesians 4:11–12. The pastor is to be a change agent making more change agents. Every activity in the parish is to be arranged so that Ephesians 4:11–12 may be realized. Everyone is to be taught that they are ministers and have a ministry in the places where they live and work in the world. The pastor is necessary. He is to move the laity’s belief into action. Active membership is essential. Feucht urges the reader, “We all must help the church respond creatively to the real world of our day with the Christian Gospel and

with the Christian way of life.”⁴⁹ Furthermore he states, “*Self-identification with Christ’s mission, nothing less, is the goal. Growth to Christian maturity is the target. Incorporation into the body of Christ (the church) is true membership. To see only the organizational shape of the Church can mean death to a parish.*”⁵⁰

A major part of the church’s institutionalism, according to Feucht, is that she has separated the clergy from the people. This is manifest in the worship of the church where the clergy are the main actors instead of all the people of God. Passivity, such as listening to sermons and receiving the sacraments, should not be the norm. Feucht asserts, “Corporate worship is just the beginning. It is not the fulfillment most churchgoers believe it to be. *It is a commissioning! Not a dismissal!*”⁵¹ Feucht notes the success of Brazilian Pentecostals in mission work. He attributes their success to

full participation of the people in the worship services, in reading Scripture lessons, singing, teaching, preaching, training more new converts, and in the greater use of dialog . . . Worship is not something you *attend* but something you *do*. Their aim is not to produce a Sunday Christian, but rather a believer who is able to witness in the society in which he lives.⁵²

In such a church where everyone is a minister, the sermon does not stand alone. “We have too long depended on the sermon alone to do what it cannot fully do.”⁵³ Consequently, the pastor must allow small group study and devotion groups. Through these, “real teaching-learning is best achieved . . . not in a worship assembly.”⁵⁴ Small groups or cell groups is where the rubber hits the road, not the sermon preached by the pastor. This is not to say that the pastor is unimportant—by no means. According to Feucht, the pastor is the hinge upon which the success or failure of Ephesians 4:11–12 swings. “Achievement of Christ’s commission given to all Christians can be a possibility *only as pastor and people form a mission team.*”⁵⁵ Feucht quotes Donald Butler:

On him [the pastor] rests the burden to bring authenticity into the organization and life of the congregation . . . He is, as it were, at the center of the life of the congregation in a way in which no other person is, and there is a sense in which he can speak for the body of the church in a way that no other person can.⁵⁶

Feucht emphatically states, “*The pastor holds the key! He can keep his people merely as members on a church roll, or he can make them member-ministers.*”⁵⁷ The end result is “*belief that leads to action*—a whole life directed to mission and ministry to people.”⁵⁸

For such an important task a congregation cannot have just any pastor. The inside stuff of the man makes all the difference. “The quality of the people who administer the program and their spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm are even more important!”⁵⁹ The pastor has to have the ability to discover “each new member’s talents and abilities, involving that person in some service for Christ.”⁶⁰ Through a process of reeducation that is

absolutely necessary, the pastor must build the congregation into a “fellowship of the concerned” and a “company of the committed” that the formal church service cannot achieve.⁶¹ The pastor is to be a dispatcher. He is to make the most of every member’s potential for witness and service in taking the gospel to the world. He is to live up to John R. Mott’s motto: “*He that multiplies the workers is greater than he who does the work!*”⁶² The pastor who chooses not to follow this pattern “*can work alone; at his own pace; with his own preferences; according to what people and parishioners expect. But he will do so at the expense of his people, his community, and his Lord!*”⁶³

The parallels between *Everyone A Minister* and pietism are unmistakable. Both Spener and Feucht offer proposals for reforming the church. Both of their proposals reflect a shift in theology from God’s objective external gifts to the subjectivity and activism of the believer.

For both Spener and Feucht the real center of the church’s life is not the divine service where Jesus delivers the benefits of his dying and rising through the preached gospel and the sacraments. For Spener, the goal of the word and sacraments was the edification of the believer and the improvement of his life so that the church may be the church. For Feucht, the goal is changing the believer’s life so that he exercises his priesthood by doing his ministry of evangelism. When the believer carries out this one vocation, Christ is present, and an irrelevant church becomes a most relevant church. For Spener, the *collegia pietatis* were essential in carrying out a proper *intra nos* reform. Similarly for Feucht, the small group Bible study is where true teaching and learning take place. There a “conversion” for carrying out the Great Commission will occur. For Spener, the pastor should be a true believer, that is, a living example, for proper reform in the church to take place. For Feucht, the pastor is essential for good

order and the implementation of the everyone-a-minister ideal.

The Pietism of *Pia Desideria* and *Everyone A Minister* is quite dangerous. The *extra nos* character of the preached gospel and the sacramental gospel are exchanged for an *intra nos* subjectivity and activism of the believer. This is a confusion of law and gospel that does not serve the church faithfully or well.

What the church has received from the Lord, and what she continues to receive from him objectively and externally, is salvation’s achievement and salvation’s delivery. The Lord has instituted the *Predigtamt* for the delivery of his gift of forgiveness, so that justifying faith is created in those who hear the gospel. The crucified, risen, and ascended Lord is graciously present as he promised (Mt 28:20), gathering “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Pt 2:9) for himself in the Divine Service through the means of grace.

The church is created and sustained only by the gospel dispensed in the “when and where” (AC V) of word and sacrament. There the church declares “the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” There the members of the royal priesthood, both pastor and parishioner, who at one time were no people, are now God’s people. Such people, who once lived without mercy, now receive God’s mercy (1 Pt 2:9–10).

Into this church the Lord has put us. She is his bride, washed clean and sanctified with water and the word (Eph 5:26). Now is the time to hear and trust the Lord’s word. Although it appears that she wears only rags and will soon collapse under the enormous weight of her faults, we trust that Christ’s bride is holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle (Eph 5:27). The church belongs to the Lord. He has given his life for her. He has promised to see to it that not even the gates of hell will prevail against her. That is certain. That is sure. LOGIA

NOTES

1. The language of Holy Scripture is “holy priesthood” (1 Pt 2:5), “royal priesthood” (1 Pt 2:9), and “he made us a kingdom, priests to God” (Rv 1:6; see also Ex 19:6). For an excellent exegetical study of these texts see Thomas Winger, “The Priesthood of All the Baptized: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation,” unpublished S.T.M. thesis (Concordia Seminary, 1992). For the language of Luther see B. A. Gerrish, “Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther,” *Church History* 34 (December 1965): 421, n. 26, where he notes that Luther apparently never employed the language we are used to hearing, namely, “priesthood of all believers.” See also Winger’s “We Are All Priests”: A Contextual Study of the Priesthood in Luther,” *Lutheran Theological Review* 4 (Fall/Winter 1991 and Spring/Summer 1992): 129–156; and Norman Nagel, “Luther and the Priesthood of All Believers,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61 (October 1997): 277–298.

2. Oscar E. Feucht, *Everyone A Minister: A Guide to Churchmanship for Laity and Clergy* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 7, 143.

3. Elisabeth Adler, “Laity,” *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Nicholas Lossky, Jose Miguez Bonino, John S. Pobee, Tom F. Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, Pauline Webb (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 580.

4. See for example the commentary on this text by Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, Anchor Bible, ed. William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1974), 476–484. In a footnote on page 479, Barth notes that what he is propounding “since about 1940 has been promoted esp. by the work of D.

T. Niles and the World Council of Churches’ Departments of the Laity and of Evangelism.”

In LCMS circles this was adopted by men like Richard R. Caemmerer, who urged, “Take out the commas! He gave pastors and teachers for perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry which the saints are to do! The saints are the ministers, the servants!” *Feeding and Leading*, The Witnessing Church Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 38. William J. Danker was the editor of that series. This represents a change in Caemmerer’s convictions concerning Ephesians 4. In “The Universal Priesthood and the Pastor,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 19:8 (August 1948), he says: “In the New Testament, however, God has set up a specific ministry of the means of grace. The purpose of this ministry [the office of the ministry] is to feed the flock” (564, n. 19 references Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 4:11–16!).

Another LCMS proponent of the Niles, WCC, and Barth agenda was Walter J. Bartling. His paper, “A Ministry to Ministers: An Examination of the New Testament *Diakonia*,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 33 (June 1962): 325–336, put forth exegetical conclusions similar to those of Niles and Barth. He too references Hendrik Kraemer (330, 331, 335). He agrees with Kraemer that “the church does not *have* a ministry, it *is* ministry” (331). Bartling states, “It is through the average member in our average parishes that God would confront the world with the ministry of reconciliation. We must therefore be in the business of training ministers. That is our [pastors’] primary function” (335).

In opposition to Barth, Niles, and those Bible translations that reflect

this exegesis, see Henry P. Hamann, "The Translation of Ephesians 4:12—A Necessary Revision," *Concordia Journal* 14 (January 1988): 42–49; Philip J. Secker, "Ephesians 4:11–12 Reconsidered," *LOGIA* 5 (Eastertide 1996): 59–62; and James W. Voelz, "Dark Omens of Change," *Lutheran Witness* 106 (May 1987): 21, where he observes, "But a more serious problem seems to be afoot, one which is not essentially institutional in nature. There appears to be a general decrease of respect for the pastoral office. For many, this office—the only church office instituted by Christ or His apostles (cf. Apology XIII)—is not in any way unique or specially important at all. Rather, the pastor is just one minister among many (and then essentially an enabler). On the part of others, there is the feeling that, while the office of the pastor may be special, there is no longer any real necessity for well- or specially trained clergy, for what a pastor does is nothing more than can be done by a lay minister or a DCE."

5. "Laity," *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 581–582. Again it is worth noting that certain LCMS theologians were excited with the "rediscovery of the laity" expounded by and in the WCC, especially the pronouncements from the Third Assembly at New Delhi in 1962. William J. Danker spoke of the "Nuptials at New Delhi" because the International Missionary Council (IMC) was received as the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. Danker rejoiced. He contended that finally after nineteen centuries of disobedience and failure, church and mission have become one at New Delhi. He states, "In more ways than one this was an assembly of the laity." He points out that a special general session was devoted to "The Laity: the Church in the World." He continues, "New Delhi was frank to confess that the professional churchmen were not equal to the task of carrying out the missionary assignment by themselves, but that it is the whole *laos*, the entire people of God, which includes the clergy, that must confront the world with the good news of God's actions for man in Christ." *Two Worlds or None: Rediscovering Missions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 33. See also Danker's article "Missionary Training at Concordia Seminary," in *Toward a More Excellent Ministry* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 116, where he references the "provocative" WCC study of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism entitled *A Tent-Making Ministry*. Danker also appeals to a presentation given by Hendrik Kraemer in Japan (*Two Worlds or None*, 242).

6. It was the orthodox Lutheran pastor, professor, and superintendent, Dr. Valentin Ernst Loescher (1673–1749), who spoke of the "dangerous evil called Pietism" and then delineated many of the specific evils of Pietism that had gained the upper hand in the Lutheran Church of the eighteenth century. See his *The Complete Timotheus Verinus*, trans. James L. Langebartels and Robert J. Koester (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998). John M. Brenner, author of the forward to this translation of Loescher's work, argues that it "speaks to many of the temptations facing Lutherans in America today. Much of what we see in conservative Christianity in our modern society exhibits the same subjective spirit of eighteenth-century Pietism. Religious experience is often substituted for doctrinal integrity. Subjective feelings have often become more important than the objective truth of Scripture. Much evangelical literature today puts an emphasis on sanctification rather than justification, on what we are to do rather than on what Christ has done for us."

7. Loescher, 11, 19–20.

8. Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 66.

9. *Ibid.*, 66.

10. *Ibid.*, 87. Italics in quoted material are original throughout.

11. *Ibid.*, 91.

12. *Ibid.*, 92.

13. *Ibid.*, 93–95.

14. *Ibid.*, 67.

15. *Ibid.*, 103.

16. *Ibid.*, 117.

17. *Ibid.*, 95.

18. Feucht, 15–16.

19. *Ibid.*, 143. See also 7, 16, 34, 67–68, 81, 83.

20. *Ibid.*, 8. See also 24, 27–28, 31, 33.

21. *Ibid.*, 31.

22. *Ibid.*, 42.

23. *Ibid.*, 48.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, 8. See also 16, 34, 53, 59–60, 123–124, 149.

27. *Ibid.*, 127.

28. *Ibid.*, 16.

29. *Ibid.*, 33–34.

30. *Ibid.*, 120.

31. *Ibid.*, 107–108.

32. *Ibid.*, 47.

33. *Ibid.*, 46.

34. *Ibid.*, 32.

35. *Ibid.*, 47. See also 119–121.

36. *Ibid.*, 47. See also 52–53, 67–68, 123–124.

37. *Ibid.*, 148–149. "The church cannot possibly exist without the help of its volunteers" (108). See also 110.

38. *Ibid.*, 49–50.

39. *Ibid.*, 141.

40. *Ibid.*, 55–60.

41. *Ibid.*, 56. See also 65.

42. *Ibid.*, 65. If he meant the gradation of a hierarchy set up by human arrangement he would be correct.

43. *Ibid.*, 63.

44. *Ibid.*, 63.

45. William J. Danker put it this way: "The clericalism of the past is not the ideal to which we should seek to return but a distortion from which we should be glad to free ourselves . . . The laity are not supposed to help the pastor with *his* work; he is supposed to help them with *their* work. He is the playing coach, to use a favorite simile of Richard R. Caemmerer. One of the most important functions we need to recover and use to the hilt in the church of our time is the *apostolate* of the laity." "The International Student—Test of a Living Church," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 31 (September 1960): 549. He further stated, "All through Christendom there is a growing consciousness that clericalism is strangling the church" (*Two Worlds or None*, 34). See also 242, 305.

46. Feucht, 96.

47. *Ibid.*, 100.

48. *Ibid.*, 96.

49. *Ibid.*, 123.

50. *Ibid.*, 118.

51. *Ibid.*, 47.

52. *Ibid.*, 19.

53. *Ibid.*, 100.

54. *Ibid.*, 101.

55. *Ibid.*, 106–107.

56. *Ibid.*, 125.

57. *Ibid.*, 99. See also 125.

58. *Ibid.*, 101.

59. *Ibid.*, 131.

60. *Ibid.*, 139.

61. *Ibid.*, 139.

62. *Ibid.*, 148. Compare also Danker, "Missionary Training at Concordia Seminary," in *Toward a More Excellent Ministry* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 113, where he gives this exact quote from Mott as well.

63. Feucht, 1

The Lutheran Confessions on the Holy Ministry With a Few Thoughts on Hoefling

DAVID P. SCAER



DEFINING OUR SITUATION

CHURCH BODIES DO THEOLOGY WITHIN their own traditions. Historical quarrels are rehearsed and their outcomes affirmed. Martin Stephan with J. A. A. Grabau on one side and Vehse on the other are Charybdis of ecclesiastical authoritarianism and Scylla of proletarianism, through which the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has traditionally located her position.¹ Problematic for any definition of ministry today are the multiple meanings attached to the words *ministry* and *minister* so that their meanings cannot be directly determined from such phrases as ordained minister (ministry), lay minister (ministry), commissioned minister (ministry), and minister (ministry) of music. All are unceremoniously grouped as professional workers. Ultimate non-meaning is reached with the protestant decree that “everyone is a minister.” With this the parishioner no longer feels unfairly confined to the pew. Pulpit, lectern, and altar are within his or her reach.² No longer is the chancel the holy of holies, but “the friendly of friendlies.” Any meaningful distinction between clergy and congregation other than a functional one is lost. What the people do individually, the pastor does as a salaried worker of the church. The people are amateurs. He is a professional. The repercussions of such a view are enormous. One young man contemplating seminary said, “Why should I study for the ministry, if I am already a minister?” A professional minister is accountable to all other ministers as corporate stockholders who through boards supervise him and to whom he is accountable. He now provides annual reports as a corporate executive and can be removed if the directors determine that the company’s needs are not being met. Reversed is the New Testament idea of the pastor accountable to God for the church.³

Ministry is *the* issue today. Shortly after Dr. Robert Preus had been removed as Concordia Theological Seminary president (1989), the interim executive brought the matter up for faculty discussion, but without agreed result. In the wake of the LCMS 1989 convention resolution to authorize lay preachers, the 1992 convention assigned its Commission on Theology and Church Relations the task of preparing a paper on the call and the ministry. The immediate past president of CTS made setting straight matters on the ministry one of his goals for his short tenure and

placed it on the faculty study agenda for 1994–1995, though it seemed that the results were predetermined. Ours is the third conference in the last three months (as of this writing) to take up the topic. It was also the topic of a joint meeting of the Council of Presidents and the seminary faculties in August 1996. We are here not approaching a new issue. Clearly Lutherans are troubled.

Perhaps the issue is as much political as it is theological, since it has to do with who will run the church. In these terms we are speaking of a business and no longer a church. No more can the church be defined as a human organization than the ministry can be defined as simply another occupation. Simply put, the church is not a business and her clergy are not employees, *pace* the IRS, but Christ’s ministers.⁴ We confess *Una sancta catholica et apostolica ecclesia* as an article of the faith. The church receives her holiness from Christ, and she is established and maintained by his ministry given by him to his apostles.

Only with great peril can we ignore the ecumenical perspective. Membership in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) assumes women as pastors. Churches in the LWF ordain women and have no agreed biblical or theological reasons for it. We see the same process afoot in the LCMS where a doctrine of ministry is being crafted to fit nomenclature already in place in the *Lutheran Annual*. When the ministry is defined by and in regard to the church and not Christ, its distinctive character is lost. The self-consciously conservative Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) finds no specific biblical command for the pastoral office and logically has ordained her male parochial school teachers.⁵ Logic fails in her not ordaining women teachers.⁶ In the Roman Catholic Church in America, women’s ordination is supported by a majority of its bishops and people.

In my last conversation with Dr. Robert Preus, on November 1, 1995, on the way to the Buffalo Airport, we discussed an article in the *Concordia Journal* endorsing lay readers at the weekly communion. He simply said that we have never done this before. His argument was one of tradition, an argument used by Paul in regard to women preachers (1 Cor 11:16) and one more associated with the Church of Rome than with ours. But it is still valid. Ministry and church are not abstract doctrines only, but we actually see *something happening*, and sometimes that *something* is different. Roman Catholicism has caught the Protestant contagion and given up its tradition also. Authoritarian priests and ministers are replaced by friendly masters of ceremonies who are assisted by lay men and women reading the Scriptures and distributing the sacrament. Priest and minister are addressed by first

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names, “Father Joe” and “Pastor Mike.” “He’s not my pastor. He’s my friend.” Removing the distinction between clergy and people was once only common among Pentecostal churches. A confessional allegiance and conservative theology have not prevented these practices from becoming ritualized in our own congregations. Traditional practice is surrendered under the guise that what happens in a church service is really only an adiaphoron, a matter of indifference. The position of the minister is trivialized and the mystery of the church lost.

NEARLY RECENT EVENTS

The 1970s adoption of the practice of the ordination of women in the churches later comprising the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the same adoption by Seminex graduates found support among Lutherans in three commonly accepted theses: (1) the ministry is the possession of all Christians and not simply ministers; (2) ordination is simply a custom, albeit an apostolic and ancient one; and (3) congregations have a sovereign right to ordain and may exercise it without regard to other congregations of their fellowship. The ordination of Seminex graduates arose first as a political issue to challenge LCMS restrictions about candidates for its ministry, but it raised the theological issues of how one became a minister and by whose authority this was done. If congregations *separately* and their members *individually* are in possession of the ministry, and if ordination is merely a church custom without significations, there would have been no *theological* but only *procedural* reasons to deny them membership in the LCMS. After one congregation was determined to have the right to ordain a pastor without synodical approval in the 1950s and 1960s, the LCMS resolved that henceforth non-synodically approved candidates would no longer be allowed to serve its congregations as pastors. In principle a congregation had the right to ordain, but by common consent it was exercised by the Council of Presidents acting on the advice of seminary faculties—so it was argued. Synodical regulation was substituted for a theology of ministry and ordination. Those who ordained Seminex graduates could be removed for infractions against the *Handbook*.⁷ Differences over biblical interpretation, especially regarding historical questions, but not the ordinations as divinely instituted rites, were seen as disruptive.⁸ Ministry has again come into view in a former church president’s veiled criticism of his successor’s stated agreement with the pope that women are prohibited from the ministry because of Christ’s selection of male apostles.⁹ This criticism fails to recognize that behind the Word of God is a substantive reality from which that Word takes its form. *God is not arbitrary!* Laws do not exist for the sake of themselves. Consider that the gospel, the message of salvation, derives its reality from incarnation and atonement and is more than a bland declaration that God forgives. The “thou shalt not” concerning women in the ministry is only the reverse of allowing only men to occupy this office, behind which is a multifaceted reality encompassing the near-total reality of Christian truth, including the created order, the origin of sin, the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ as a man, his choosing men as his apostles, and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (Father-Son). Adam was the first preacher and Eve was the first church. Reversing this arrangement was the first sin (Gn 3:17). These internal relationships between these fundamen-

tal doctrines are either denied or ignored as inconsequential in the discussion of prohibiting women from holding the ministry, so it is no coincidence that those churches ordaining women inevitably see God in feministic terms. He or she is as much Mother as Father. Here is the modern gnosticism. It should be made clear that our Augsburg Confession showed a wide fundamental agreement with Rome on such doctrines as God, the Trinity, and the ministry. Finding agreement with Rome in opposing the ordination of women is as appropriate as finding agreement on the doctrine of God (Ap 1). Arguing from the male apostolate is proper within the context of our Confessions, which see the ministry as contained in the apostolic office. Opposing women’s ordination on the basis of Christ’s selection of his apostles is confessional. Allowing only specific biblical prohibitions against women ministers to determine our position is a type of un-Lutheran biblicism that leaves us at the mercy of the interpreters. In addition, such naked prohibition would also place the doctrine of the ministry in the category of the law. The ministry, like the apostolate and the sending of Christ, *belong to the gospel and not the law (order)*.¹⁰ Such is the position of our confessions,¹¹ *contra* Hoefling, as we shall soon see.

JOHANN WILHELM FRIEDRICH HOEFLING— STILL CONTEMPORARY

In the same conversation mentioned above, Dr. Preus suggested that I present a paper on the nineteenth-century German-Lutheran theologian Hoefling’s doctrine of the ministry. While I was enthusiastic about the topic, carrying my enthusiasm over to a remotely known theologian with a weakened reputation was another matter. Hoefling set forth his position in his *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung*.¹² Perhaps the best introduction to his position is the summary in the excellent index prepared by Walter W. F. Albrecht for Francis Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics*.¹³

1. No express command for ministry can be shown.
2. Ordaining elders (pastors) was only of temporary and local significance.
3. The ministry is sanctioned by God.
4. Finding a divine command for the ministry is reintroducing Old Testament legalism.
5. Functions of the apostles are not biblically defined.
6. In the apostolic era the office of a presbyter (elder, pastor) was one of governing.
7. Those opposing this position hold a strongly “Romanizing” doctrine of the ministry.¹⁴
8. The ministry is nothing more than the means of grace.

Hoefling’s view that the ministry is only of significance in the New Testament times was typical of the earlier eighteenth-century German Rationalism, which saw nothing permanent in the commands to baptize and celebrate communion. The ministry is an abstraction that takes form in the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. Ministry does not have to do with a once-and-for-all divinely instituted office, but is the “function of preaching the gospel,” or what Hoefling called “a special application of universal preaching of the gospel.”¹⁵ Through the ministry God’s gracious dealing in the gospel comes to expres-

sion and belongs by divine right to all Christians and accordingly finds its basis in the universal priesthood. Hoefling opposed understanding the ministry as an institution in order to avoid making the gospel a new law and making the ministry another means of grace.¹⁶ This was Rome's error. His idea of the church as invisible did not allow for the ministry as an institution. Criticism of his position that ministry was an office (*Amt*) belonging to all Christians led Hoefling to make a distinction between the office in wider and narrower senses. What was the common Christian possession (wider sense) was exercised by certain persons (narrow sense) for the sake of order and to distinguish between various gifts of the Spirit.¹⁷ Recently two scholars noted that Hoefling's position was strikingly similar to that of August Pieper (which is also the current WELS view) and of Schleiermacher.¹⁸ A contemporary LCMS view that the ministry in AC v is simply the means of grace also bears a marked resemblance to Hoefling's views and is in a sense already repudiated by Pieper.¹⁹ By establishing ministry in the divine necessity for order, Hoefling, who opposed the idea of ministry as an institution as Romanizing legalism, introduced a legalism of his own. In the end Hoefling fell into the trap of the very legalism he wanted to avoid. Common among us is the view that if the church authorizes this or that person, ordained or not, to preach and celebrate the sacraments, all things are in *order*. Hoefling's view that the minister is supervisor of others is also common today and also seems to have been borrowed from Schleiermacher.²⁰ Ministry in the narrow sense has chiefly an administrative function. Hoefling can rightfully be called the father and the archheretic; Schleiermacher, the grandfather of all functional views of the ministry.²¹ A functional view has no support in our Confessions, which place the establishment of the ministry in Christ's call of his apostles.

THE AUGUSTANA, THE APOLOGY, AND THE TREATISE

The proper understanding of ministry in AC v must be grounded in (1) the article itself; (2) its place in the Augsburg Confession; (3) Melancthon's Apology and Treatise, which offered interpretations of the Augsburg Confession; and (4) Luther's principles and practices. At first glance the German title of AC v, *Predigtamt*, suggests an office with the function of preaching. Article xiv on the proper calling of ministers, *rite vocatus*, addresses not the establishment of the ministry, but filling of this office *rite vocatus*.²² The matter of the general priesthood's right to choose its preachers is specifically handled not in the Augsburg Confession, but in the Treatise (69), without specifying the method.²³

The strategic location of the article on ministry (AC v) in the middle of the Augsburg Confession's first discussion on justification (AC iv and vi) cannot pass unnoticed. Since God justifies the world through the preaching of the ministry, it is a necessary office through which the church is established and maintained. As faith is perfected, that is, brought to its perfect conclusion in good works, so the office of the ministry is perfected, that is, brought to its perfect conclusion in the preaching of the gospel. The *raison d'être* for the ministry is the world's justification. It is not a self-contained office, but one established for salvation through preaching.

Article iv sets forth the heart of the Reformation doctrine by stating that justification happens not by works but freely through

faith on account of Christ, but it leaves it to Article v to show how this faith is obtained. "In order that we may obtain this faith [the faith that justifies us before God, Article iv], the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted" (AC v, Latin). Though Maurer is right in holding that "the emphasis in AC v falls entirely on the effect of preaching in creating faith,"²⁴ still a specific office is here in view.²⁵ The article on

In the end Hoefling fell into the trap of the very legalism he wanted to avoid.

ministry flows naturally out of the article on justification and is a continuation of it. The passive "was instituted" (*institutum est*) implies that God has instituted the ministry as an office with particular functions to perform.²⁶ The confession does not speak of functions derived from the congregation and accumulated into an office representing believers from whom it derives its authority, as in Hoefling's position. Rather, God establishes the office. AC xxviii, 7–10 and not AC v sets forth the biblical evidence on how the ministry was instituted, identifying Christ as its institutor. The fifth article of the Augsburg Confession was accepted by the Roman Catholic Confutation with no attempt to refute it. The parties agreed that the office was a divine institution, necessary for preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments, though they disagreed on the shape and purpose of the ministry.²⁷ With the condemnatory clause the Lutherans had distanced themselves from the Anabaptists who with their inner experience of the Spirit had made the ministry along with the sacraments unnecessary. Functionalists with their general view of ministry hold to a ministry *in abstracto* in AC v, the title *Predigtamt* notwithstanding.²⁸ They prefer the title "Means of Grace," which has no support within the article and would better fit in any event Article xiii on the sacraments, which are widely defined to allow for rites other than baptism and the Lord's Supper.

AC xxviii, 7 understands the ministry of the apostles and bishops as one, a point of agreement for Roman Catholics and Lutherans. The Treatise, intended as an addition to the Augsburg Confession, takes this argument one step further and places pastors on the same level as bishops and hence recognizes the ministry of pastors as also that of the apostles. The distinction between the titles of pastor and bishop is of human origin without a divine mandate. Each possesses the same office of preaching the gospel, but each is assigned different functions. Thus the Treatise (65) allows pastors to perform ordinations, though this was the bishops' customary function.²⁹ The office of the ministry is included in the institution of the apostolic office and derived not from the *una sancta*. Nor is it simply an abstraction, as Hoefling held.³⁰ This ministry perpetuates the function of the apostolic office in remitting sins through gospel preaching.³¹

AC xxviii is not a separate article, but like the fourteenth article is a commentary on the fifth.³² The bishops' power to administer the keys³³—forgiving and retaining sins and administering

the sacraments—was given to the ministry by Christ’s bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. John 20:21–23 is cited to explain under what circumstances the ministry was instituted. Note should be made of Justus Jonas’s “The Office of the Keys and Confession,” which was substituted in the now commonly used catechism for Luther’s “How the Plain People Are to Be Taught to

The preaching office (Predigtamt) is an extension of the apostolate and not of the una sancta.

Confess” in the Small Catechism.³⁴ Jonas’s insertion belongs to our heritage, not to our confessional subscription. But its use of the John 20 citation is similar to AC xxviii and the Treatise.³⁵ All three documents—AC xxviii, the Treatise, and Jonas’s “The Office of Keys and Confession”—work on the premise that Jesus’ commission to the apostles embodies the institution of the ministerial (pastoral) office. In giving the Spirit to the apostles, Christ established the office of the ministry to forgive and retain sins, a position also held by Chemnitz.³⁶ The preaching office (*Predigtamt*) is an extension of the apostolate and not of the *una sancta*. The latter is the foundational presupposition for the functionalist view of Hoefling, which makes no essential distinction between the ministry and the church.

MELANCHTHON’S EXEGESIS

Melanchthon settled on John 20 to make his case for the ministry, though later *Lutheran* theologians added Matthew 28:16–20.³⁷ The John 20 citation was probably favored by Melanchthon over Matthew 28 simply because John specifically refers to the apostolic authority to remit and retain sins with a special bestowal of the Holy Spirit. The relationship to justification, the central question of the Reformation, is obvious. Through the office of the ministry justification is transmitted to the people.³⁸

At this juncture a few exegetical comments may be in order. J. A. T. Robinson follows C. H. Dodd in seeing a parallel between John 20:21–23 and the commission to Peter in Matthew 16:18–20, but not between John 20 and Matthew 28:16–20.³⁹ Raymond E. Brown sees parallels to both Matthean citations.⁴⁰ Matthew’s and John’s apostolic commissions are strikingly similar.⁴¹ Melanchthon in the Treatise sees the commissioning of Peter as the establishment of the ministry. The rock on which the church is built is the ministry of the confession of Peter.⁴² “*Super hanc petra*” *id est, super hoc ministerium.*” In both Matthew 28 and John 20 the resurrected Lord confers on his disciples a commission to care for the church in his stead.⁴³

This apostolic ministry according to AC xxviii belongs to the bishops, and according to the Treatise to *ministers who, as the apostles did, speak in Christ’s stead remitting sins*. This is made explicit by Melanchthon in Ap VII, 28, 47, in which Luke 10:16 is cited.⁴⁴ Though Melanchthon did not use Matthew 28 to establish the

ministry, note should be made of the Latin version of AC xxviii. After the John 20 citation, it adds Mark 16:15 (“Go and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”) This is similar to Matthew 28:19, as Raymond Brown notes.⁴⁵ Both the disputed ending of Mark and Matthew 28:16 limit the audience addressed by Jesus to the eleven. Also significant is Melanchthon’s use of Luke 10:16 to establish the ministry as a divine office, the occupants of which speak in the name of Christ, and to whom the people listen (AC xxviii, 22). Since Luke 10:16 speaks of sending of the seventy(-two) and not the twelve, the suggestion is that the office of the ministry, while being derived through the apostles, was directly established by Christ. Melanchthon’s failure to make use of the commissioning of the twelve for the specific function as witnesses (Mt 10:2–4; Mk 3:14–19; Lk 6:13–19) may suggest that he considered this unique apostolic function to be untransferable,⁴⁶ but he does place the origin of the ministry in the commission given to Peter. “Therefore Christ addresses Peter as a minister. The ministry of the New Testament . . . exists wherever God gives his gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers.”⁴⁷ Ministers include the “apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers,” an allusion to Ephesians 4:11.⁴⁸

ONE MINISTRY: APOSTLES, BISHOPS, AND PASTORS

The dependency of the twenty-eighth article of the Augsburg Confession on the fifth article is seen that both articles center on the ministry’s task to preach and administer the sacraments. Originating in the ministry of the apostles is that of the bishops. Ministry is not a derivative of the *una sancta* as held by Hoefling. Rather, the ministry’s origin is in Christ’s commission to the apostles. Ministers now exercise Christ’s office of proclaiming forgiveness in his place, but, as Chemnitz contends, always in such a way that it remains his ministry and office, and not ours.⁴⁹ Hoefling, like all functionalists, does not see the ministerial office contained in the call to the apostles and may even be reluctant to claim that Christ held it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflects the confessional reality:

Above there is the office of proclamation and below there is the listening congregation. In the place of God and of Jesus Christ there stands before the congregation the bearer of the office of preaching with his proclamation. The preacher is not the spokesman of the congregation, but, if the expression may be allowed, he is the spokesman of God before the congregation. He is authorized to teach, to admonish and to comfort, to forgive sin, but also to retain sin. And at the same time he is the shepherd, the pastor of the flock. This office is instituted directly by Jesus Christ Himself; it does not derive its legitimation from the will of the congregation but from the will of Jesus Christ. It is established *in* the congregation and *by* the congregation, and at the same time it is *with* the congregation.⁵⁰

Preaching, according to the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession, refers not to a personal expression of faith in the private lives of Christians, but to the public, officially sanctioned proclamation, a distinction some times not clearly made.⁵¹ Article v uses *docendi*, the Latin equivalent of the Greek διδάσκω, meaning to teach in an official way, and used in the New Testament of

the official proclamation of the gospel by apostles and pastors, for example, in Matthew 28:19. The Larson *Concordance* shows that the words *teachers* and *teach* refer to the official proclaimers and proclamation of the preached word.⁵² Particularly instructive is the German rendition of the thirteenth article of Ap XIII, 9, 10. Tappert provides this translation of the Latin version: priests “are called to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people.” The German version, unavailable in Tappert, provides this:

If one wants to call the sacrament of orders [*Ordens*] a sacrament of the preaching office [*Predigtamt*], so there is no difficulty in calling ordination a sacrament. For God has established the preaching office [*Predigtamt*] and attached [to it] wonderful promises.⁵³

The German *Predigtamt* is the equivalent to the Latin *docendum evangelium*, the teaching of the gospel. Even the possibility that ordination may be called a sacrament rules out the possibility that this is a reference to activity which all Christians speaking of Christ carry out in common. Ordination is attached to an officially sanctioned preaching office and not functions common to all Christians.

OFFICE PRECEDES FUNCTIONS

Though the office is not derived from the functions, the absence of the functions suggests that the office may no longer be present. Where sinners are not hearing the justifying word, then the function of the ministry is not being carried out and one may also conclude that the office is absent. On the other hand, the office of the ministry is not present merely because someone proclaims that it is or is carrying out its functions. To demonstrate that works flow from faith, Luther in his *Freedom of the Christian Man* uses the analogy of a bishop and his functions.

A bishop, when he consecrates a church, confirms children, or performs some other duty belonging to his office, is not made a bishop by these works. Indeed, if he had not first been made a bishop, none of these works would be valid. They would be foolish, childish, and farcical.⁵⁴

Functions originate in the office and the office is not constituted by the aggregate of its functions. Luther’s analogy is paralleled by Apology VII, 48, where the German version offers this clear statement: “Of course false teachers should not be received or heard; because they do not stand in the place of Christ, but are antichrists.”⁵⁵

The ministry is carried out in the *congregatio sanctorum*, but may not be identified as their activity or as a derivative of it, as Schleiermacher and later Hoeftling held.⁵⁶ In line with this, the reformers did not envision the laity as public leaders of the Eucharist even in emergencies.

FALSE PRIESTS WITH A TRUE MINISTRY

Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession makes explicit reference to those priests who administer the sacraments in the *congregatio sanctorum*, and thus a connection is made back through the seventh article to the fifth. AC VIII begins by addressing the question

of unbelievers’ being mixed in among believers, but its major purpose is to uphold the value of sacraments administered by what the German version calls impious priests, “false Christians and hypocrites,” who are contrasted with believers (*Gläubige* [Latin: *vere credentium*]). For the people the real problem is not whether someone in the congregation was really a believer, but whether the priest at the altar was. The reference of the Latin version of AC VIII to the Donatists’ refusal to agree to the ministry of evil men shows that the term *ministry* refers not to a general activity common to all Christians, but to the ministers: *ministerium malorum in ecclesia*. This is reaffirmed by the German text, which uses the term “priest” in place of the Latin “evil men” in reference in their sacramental duties: “the sacraments are efficacious even if the priests [*die Priester*] who administer them are wicked men (that is, unbelievers).” Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession holds that the lack of faith in the administrators of the sacraments does not detract from their efficacy or validity. This was a practical question for those who discovered that their priests were impostors. Such people

Functions originate in the office and the office is not constituted by the aggregate of its functions.

might opt for rebaptism from the ever-willing Anabaptists. They would have raised questions about the salvation of deceased family members, who had received the sacraments from unbelieving priests.⁵⁷ This would have been a pressing issue at a time of still high infant mortality and when baptism was seen as an absolute necessity for salvation.

Article VIII’s citation of Matthew 23:2, with its reference to the scribes and Pharisees sitting in the seat of Moses, provides further interpretation of the fifth article. *Seat* refers to a position of authority, as when Roman Catholics speak of the pope occupying St. Peter’s chair. To speak *ex cathedra*, which means speaking from the chair, is to promulgate a doctrine in an official way. Jesus’ admonition to listen to the scribes and Pharisees who sit in the seat of Moses is his own recognition of the validity of their ministry despite their unbelief and immoral conduct. The ministry of the priests rests not on faith but upon Christ’s institution.

MINISTRY AS THE KEY ARTICLE IN THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

The articles of the Augsburg Confession on Baptism (IX), the Lord’s Supper (X), Confession (XI), Penance (XII), and the Use of the Sacraments (XIII) discuss issues first raised in Article V in conjunction with the institution of the office of the ministry and elaborated in Articles VII and VIII.⁵⁸ There is no thought of a disembodied preaching and sacramental activity, namely, means of grace without clergy, or of assigning these functions to those who do not hold the office. The connection between the office and its functions are as necessary as that between the person of Christ

and his works, or between faith and works. The ministry cannot be the ministry without its functions, but it does not come into existence because its functions are being carried out. The function no more creates reality than does tying apples to a tree make it an apple tree. As shown above, Luther asserted that one becomes a bishop by consecration and not by performing the works of bishop. Unless he was first made a bishop, everything he did would be foolish. Because Article xv of the Augsburg Confession, the one on liturgical practices, entitled "Church Usages," shows a remarkable resemblance to Article xiv, "Order in the Church" or "Ecclesiastical Order," each can serve to interpret the other. Both

articles develop and thus depend on previous articles. They do not introduce new subjects, but speak of regulating practices already in place. Article xiv does not establish the ministry, but speaks of setting aside persons to carry out baptism, the Lord's Supper, and confession and absolution, matters brought up in previous articles. Similarly, Article xv speaks about the liturgical forms in carrying out these functions. Just as the fifteenth article is not the first one to establish the sacraments, neither is the fourteenth the first one on the office of the ministry. For the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Treatise, "ministers function in the place of Christ" to their congregations.⁵⁹ LOGIA

NOTES

1. See my "Augustana v and the Doctrine of the Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 403–423, for a discussion of these divisions. A functional understanding of the ministry sees it as being established in AC xiv. This is the Protestant view. Those who see it as an office with functions see its establishment in AC v. This view is called Catholic or episcopal and some times Romanizing, an adjective that Hoefling used of those who hold that the ministry is an office.

2. For a defense of both male and female lay readers see "Lay Readers in Public Worship," *Concordia Journal* 21, no. 4 (October 1995): 400–414. Its author opines that this function belongs to the universal priesthood of believers, a position that could find support in Hoefling's view of church and ministry.

3. "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Heb 13:17).

4. John N. Collins has prepared excellent studies on ministers as representatives of Christ and not the congregation. His more popularly written *Are All Christians Ministers?* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) is based on his scholarly dissertation, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

5. While the great WELS theologian Adolf Hoenecke saw the ministry as an office distinct from the universal priesthood of all believers and inherent in the apostolate, WELS does hold the functionalist position now. See John F. Brug et al., *WELS and other Lutherans* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1995), 23: "The WELS continues to teach that Scripture sets up no particular form of the church or of the public ministry as specifically instituted by God. God has not given his New Testament church such ecclesiastical, ceremonial directives." More telling is this comment by the authors: "There are some [in the LCMS] who hold a position like that of the WELS."

6. Adjustments in the definition of ministry are still being made in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to accommodate women's ordination. Some women are dissatisfied with the functional view used to support their place in the ministry, since they rightly see it as common to all. "Open Letter: Turning Down 'Stirring Up,'" *Lutheran Forum* 24 (May 1990): 8–9.

7. It should be pointed out that our Confessions see the wider association of churches as divinely established. The "our churches teach" of the Augsburg Confession are territorial churches, for example, Electoral Saxony, and not separate congregations. More telling is that Luther and not the congregations to which the candidates were sent did the ordaining. Ministers have an association with one another as they do with the churches. In both fellowships the unity of faith is evident. Extreme congregationalism in which each congregation is seen as sovereign was not known to the Reformation and New Testament churches. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Die Erhaltung der Kirche* (Stuttgart: Alwer Verlag, 1987), 3: 280. Luther's ordination practice is worth noting. In spite of his suggestion that the Bohemians establish a ministry among themselves through ordination, candidates for the ministry were examined and ordained by him and Bugenhagen in Wittenberg and not in the congregations, as they were considered ill equipped to do this. Though Luther articulated the doctrine of the general priesthood, the congregation did not participate in the ordination but offered prayers for the ordinand. From 1537 until his death in 1546, 738 candidates from both German and non-German parts of Europe were ordained in Wittenberg, with Latin being used for non-Germans!

8. AE, 5: 249. Luther in his Genesis lectures placed ordination on the same level as baptism as an activity in which God works. "Thus the imposition of the hands is not a tradition of men, but God makes and ordains ministry. Nor is the pastor who absolves you, but the mouth and hand of God."

9. *Lutheran Forum* 30, no. 4 (Lent 1996), 14. "Please permit a parenthetical question while we're discussing this dimension of the *sola scriptura* principle: Ought not Lutherans, including both ELCA and LCMS, remind our Roman Catholic dialog partners, and some in Missouri who use similar arguments, that the supposed implications drawn from Jesus' choice of a male apostolate are not sufficient basis to deny

ordination to women. Personally, I would find that far more helpful and responsible than the actions of a Lutheran church body president who commended the Pope for his conclusions on that issue, while completely ignoring his unacceptable theological rationale."

10. AC xxviii, 5–6. "According to the Gospel the power of the keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments." John 20:21–23 is given as support for this view.

11. Tr 9: "According to John 20:21 Christ sent his disciples out as equals, without discrimination, when he said, 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' He sent out each one individually, he said, *in the same way in which he had himself been sent*" (italics added.)

12. Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Hoefling, *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung* (Erlangen: Theodor Blasing, 1950). See especially Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekenntnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Lundequistrska, 1952), 271–285.

13. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–1957), 4: 445–49. Fagerberg agrees with Pieper but makes no use of him, though he is quite knowledgeable.

14. Cf. *Lutheran Forum* 30, no. 4.

15. Hoefling, 79. See also Fagerberg, 275.

16. Pieper notes that Hoefling finds any command or imperative for the ministry legalistic. *Christian Dogmatics* 3: 445.

17. Fagerberg, 276–282. "There are two reasons for a special ministerial office: 'the common divine command for order' and 'the special capacity [*Weisung*] which places in order the differing charismas in relationship to the differences of individual callings in the congregation for the benefit of the congregation." Translation by the present writer. Pieper makes a distinction between ministry in the wider and narrower sense (*Christian Dogmatics* 3: 439). Collins questions whether in the New Testament the word *διακονία* is used of the possession of the means of grace which Christians have in common. Pieper, who distances himself from Hoefling on the idea that the ministry arises from the universal priesthood, makes no mention that his views on ministry in a wider and narrower sense bears a close resemblance to Hoefling's distinction.

18. John C. Wohlrabe, *Ministry in Missouri until 1962* (Privately published, 1992), and Erling Teigen, "The Universal Priesthood of All Believers," *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter* 25 (Advent 1991): 1–5. A further study should demonstrate Hoefling's obvious dependence on Schleiermacher.

19. *Christian Dogmatics* 4: 445. Pieper takes exception to Hoefling's denial of a special command for the ministry. Hoefling's other critic was A. F. C. Vilmar (*Die Lehre vom geistlichen Amt* [Marburg, 1870], 100–101).

20. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 2: 666–667. Cf. also the observations of Walter H. Conser, *Church and Confession* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 46. "For it was in the local congregation, composed of baptized and confirmed individuals, that most of the ministerial powers authority and powers of the church resided."

21. The similarity to the position of WELS theologian August Pieper can be noted. "The rights of the entire communion and the command to good order demand that within the congregation such functions of the ministry as cannot be carried out by all at the same time without disorder and also such functions for which all Christians are not equally capable be relinquished and turned over to capable persons so that they may carry them out in the name of the congregation." Taken from Wohlrabe, 22.

22. Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, trans. H. George Anderson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 191–197. Maurer points out that "the legal form of a call makes little difference to Luther" (193).

23. "Finally, this is confirmed by the declaration of Peter, 'You are a royal

priesthood' (1 Pe 2:9). These words apply to the true church, which, since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right of electing and ordaining ministers." For a discussion of the call process see Robert D. Preus, *The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Luther Academy: Monograph #1, April 1991), 33–48.

24. Maurer, 355.

25. Ibid., 187. "That article [AC v] of course bears the inclusive title 'The Office of the Ministry' and although it focuses on the spiritual engendering function of that office . . . it also includes the call to it."

26. The similarity of language between the articles on the ministry (v) and the sacraments (xiii) must be noted. Of the former it is said "institutum est ministerium" and the latter "sacramenta instituta sint." The office of the ministry is no less divinely instituted than are the sacraments. Both have their origin in God and consequently both share in a similar necessity.

27. Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, trans. John A. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 78–79.

28. WELS theologian August Pieper says as much. "There is one office in the Church, the office of the spiritual priesthood. The public ministry is only another phase of this same priesthood." Quoted from Wohlrabe, 21.

29. The Treatise is Melancthon's and not Luther's work, but the latter followed the principles set forth in that document by ordaining with Bugenhagen candidates for the ministry, presumably in St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg. Though the Prussian bishops who had joined the Reformation cause might have assisted in the ordination of Nicholas von Amsdorf as bishop of Naumburg in 1542, Luther, with the superintendents, performed the act without them. Some do not find reference to ordination conferred by a pastor as a divine act in Tr 65: "Since by divine right the grades of bishop and pastor are not different, it is manifest that an ordination performed by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right." The emphasis, so it is claimed, is on ordination as an act of the church and not the pastor. While the Latin makes it clear that the ordination by the pastor is divine: *manifestum est ordinationem a pastore in sua ecclesia factam jure divino ratam esse*, Melancthon reiterates his position in his *Loci Communes* of 1555. Since the ministry is necessary, the church has the right to choose qualified men as shepherds, his term for pastors, where those who are titled bishops refuse to do so. This of course is his argument in Tr 66–67. Ordaining these men is done by the pastors. "And from this it is clear that the ordination, if it occurs through our churches and shepherds, is right and Christian." Philip Melancthon, "Loci Communes 1555," in *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine*, trans. and ed. Clyde L. Manschreck, A Library of Christian Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 265. A purely congregational ordination is not in view.

30. Eugene Klug is rightly concerned about the view that sees "this office of ministry as the continuation of the apostolate in the sense that it is conveyed or conferred in an unbroken line from the apostles upon their successors through ordination" (30–31). Still this office is Christ's (Maurer, 357). As Maurer says: "Christ is the first in the church to hold this office," and "it continues in the succession of apostles." There is "no apostolic succession in the sense of divine right" (190).

31. "Our teachers assert that according to the Gospel the power of the keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments." AC xxviii, 5.

32. Robert D. Preus makes the same point: "Almost every reputable book or commentary on the Confessions sees a causal as well as organic relationship between AC v and AC iii and iv, AC xiv, AC vii and viii, and AC xxviii" (2). In support of his position Preus lists Norman Nagel, Frederick Mildenberger, and Edmund Schlinck.

33. The German word is *Predigtamt* and the Latin is *ministerium*. The translation for the German is "office of preaching" and for the Latin "ministry."

34. Justus Jonas was rector of the University of Wittenberg and Luther's colleague on the theological faculty. His name appears right after Luther's on the Smalcald Articles.

35. *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), 18–19.

36. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2: 559.

37. E.g., Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2: 468, 680, 695. See my "The Relation of Matthew 28:16–20 to the Rest of the Gospel," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (October 1991): 245–266.

38. Forde, who defines the ministry as public function ("The Ordained Ministry," *Called and Ordained*, 102), includes justification in his definition: "[it] is the actual doing of divine election in the living present by setting bound sinners free through the Word of the cross." Though the Augsburg Confession sees an interdependency between justification and the ministry, it keeps them distinct.

39. *The Priority of John*, ed. J. F. Coakley (Oak Park, IL: Meyerstone Books, 1987), 316–317.

40. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, XIII—XXI*, Anchor Bible 29a (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970): 1040–1042.

41. Though John's commissioning occurs in Jerusalem and not Galilee as does

Matthew's, the special commissioning of Peter occurs for John in Galilee (21:15–19) and corresponds to Matthew's commissioning of Peter in Caesarea Philippi (16:13), an area immediately bordering Galilee. Peter's commissioning before the crucifixion (Mt 16:17–19) and after the resurrection (Jn 21:15–19) happens within the company of the other apostles.

42. Tr, 25. The church is built "super auctoritatem hominis, sed super ministerium professionis illius, quam Petrus fecerat, in qua praedicat Jesum esse Christum, filium Dei."

43. John's explicit reference to the forgiveness of sins must also be implied in Matthew's command to baptize, since for Matthew baptism involves confession of sins and repentance (3:1–6). In both Matthew and John the apostolic ministry involves a revelation of the Trinity. Matthew's ecclesiastical (liturgical) "Father-Son-Holy Spirit" is replaced by John's conception of God in action whereby the Father sends the Son and the Son gives the Spirit. A complete doctrine of the Trinity must incorporate both realities of what God is in himself (the ontological Trinity: Matthew) and of how he relates to the world (the economic Trinity: John). In placing the apostles in the ministry on the occasion of Peter's confession, mention is made of the Father and the Son. Only when the Spirit, who assists Jesus in his death, has completed his work is the Spirit given. The problem of Matthew's eleven disciples and John's ten disciples is resolved by the later appearance to Thomas, which raises the apostolic cadre to eleven (Jn 20:26–8). Whereas Matthew's citation obligates the eleven to speak all the words of Jesus, John designates the apostles as those who possess the Holy Spirit and thus represent Christ in forgiving and remitting sins as he represented his Father. This ministry is of the Holy Spirit and parallels Paul's admonition to Timothy to stir up within himself the gift given him through the laying on of Paul's hands. This gift is identified as the "spirit of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:6, 7), which 'spirit' is none other than the Holy Spirit, as Chemnitz took it (2: 41).

44. Latin: "quia ministri funguntur vice Christi, non representant suam personam." German: "denn sie reichens an Christus statt und nicht für ihre Person."

45. Brown.

46. The sending of the seventy (seventy-two) in Luke 10:1–11 is problematic. There are no parallels in the other gospels, and these men are not identified, though later Hippolytus nominated each of them (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 5:254–255). The Lucan pericope is, however, strikingly similar but not identical to sending out of the twelve not only in Luke (9:1–6), but in Matthew (10:5–15) and Mark (6:7–13). In other words, their authority and responsibility are like that given the twelve, but for Luke they are clearly not to be equated with the twelve as apostles. In a chapel meditation, a colleague claiming to apply a hermeneutical principle of Luther stated the sending of the seventy was not applicable now because a specific reference to the current audience was missing. But Melancthon does in fact make this kind of specific identification with the ministry today. Here this reformer may have been extraordinarily modern in seeing that evangelist was establishing a ministry outside of the twelve in which ministers today belong. The list offered by Hippolytus may present its own problems, but by offering the names of otherwise known New Testament figures he attempted to solve the riddle and in some suggestions he may have been successful. There is the fear that those who see AC v as establishing the ministry as a distinct office may also hold to an unbroken line of apostolic succession. Melancthon's use of Luke's sending of the seventy may answer that concern.

47. Tr, 26.

48. Melancthon understands "prophets" in Ephesians 4:11 not as Old Testament figures, but as New Testament preachers.

49. Chemnitz, 2: 559. "Now this power of forgiving sin must not be understood to have been given to the priests in such a way that God had renounced it for Himself and had simply transferred it to the priests, with the result that in absolution it is not God Himself but the priest who remits sins."

50. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Neville Horton (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 293–294.

51. John Stephenson, "The Rightful Celebrant," *Lutheran Theological Review* 2 (Fall/Winter 1990): 27. "There is no difference in content between pulpit proclamation of the Gospel and everyday confession of our Lord and His benefits."

52. Larson, *Concordance*, 516–521.

53. *BSLK*, 293.

54. Martin Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," AE, 31: 360.

55. *BSLK*, 246: "denn dieselbigen nicht mehr an Christus statt, sondern sind Widerchrist."

56. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 2: 666.

57. This same issue has resurfaced in a reversed form in our time, perhaps also under the influence of Schleiermacher, with the suggestion that the level or sincerity of faith of the clergy is a contributing factor to the efficacy of preaching, since preaching is seen as an extension of faith. Sincere heartfelt sermons win more converts than those without such explicit enthusiasm. Schleiermacher, 2: 553.

58. Grane sees the same connection in these articles (80).

59. "ministri funguntur vice Christi"; "denn sie reichen an Christus statt und nicht fuer ihre Person." Ap vii, 48. See also Maurer's discussion of this, 190.

The Nicene Creed and the Filioque

A Lutheran Approach

DAVID JAY WEBBER



ON NOVEMBER 4, 1998, REPRESENTATIVES of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas approved “A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity.” This communiqué addresses, among other things, the historic debate between the eastern and western branches of Christendom on the *Filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed. The older Greek version of the creed, used in churches of the eastern or Byzantine tradition, confesses that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” The later Latin version, used in churches of the western tradition, confesses that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father *and the Son*” (*Filioque* in Latin). According to the recent ELCA-Orthodox statement,

the Lutheran members of this dialogue are prepared to recommend to their church that it publicly recognize that the permanently normative and universally binding form of the Nicene Creed is the Greek text of A.D. 381, and that it undertake steps to reflect this recognition in its worship and teaching. This would be a way of enacting in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the Lutheran World Federation resolution of 1990, which found it “appropriate” that member churches “which already use the Nicene Creed in their liturgies may use the version of 381, for example in ecumenical services,” and further found it appropriate that Lutherans preparing common vernacular texts of the Nicene Creed together with Orthodox churches “may agree to a version without the ‘western’ filioque.”¹

Does this mean that the ELCA and other LWF affiliates are now in doctrinal agreement with the canonical Orthodox churches on the question of the Holy Spirit’s procession? No, it does not. Again, according to the statement,

Lutherans are not prepared to regard the teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as a heresy—a teaching against faith in the Holy Trinity. It is part of their confessional documents, and many of the chief teachers of the Lutheran tradition, including Luther himself, taught it vigorously. Lutheran recognition that the *Filioque* is

not part of the Nicene Creed in its original and ecumenically binding form is not, therefore, to be equated with Lutheran rejection of all theological teaching which ascribes to the Son a role in the procession of the Holy Spirit, still less with an acknowledgment that all such teaching is heretical.²

In contrast, the statement also declares that

Orthodox do not regard the teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father to be one which they can accept. This teaching is opposed to the monarchy of the Father and to the equality of the Spirit to the Father and the Son as a hypostasis or person distinct from both, as expressed by the original creed. . . . That the Holy Spirit eternally comes forth from the Son, so as to depend for his being and his possession of the one divine nature on the Son as well as on the Father, is a teaching which Orthodox uniformly oppose.³

The ELCA members of the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue are willing to set aside, at least in certain respects, the version of the creed that they have always used, but at the same time they wish to retain the pneumatological theology that this version of the creed embraces and reflects. What are we to make of this?

The Greek version of the Nicene Creed, which is the only version that has ever been used in the Eastern Orthodox Church, was,

according to the traditional view, constructed at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, as a revision of the creed of Nicaea (N). There is no doubt that this text (designated as C) was ratified at the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, and that within a half-century it was in general use. The uncertainty concerning its composition arises from the lack of documentary evidence from the Council of Constantinople, together with alleged silence concerning it in the literature of the time, as well as discrepancies in wording. . . . It is probable, however, that the Council of Constantinople did indeed approve the text C, not as a revision of N, but as a parallel statement fully in the Nicene spirit.⁴

The version of the Nicene Creed that appears in the Book of Concord, and that therefore forms a part of the historic confessional basis of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, is, of course, the Latin version, which includes the *Filioque*.⁵ This form of the creed

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originated on the occasion of the reception of the Visigoths into the communion of the Catholic Church in sixth-century Spain. The *Filioque* clause “was officially sanctioned and incorporated into the Constantinopolitan Symbol at the third council at Toledo (589), in order to express the rejection of Arianism which had been held by the Visigoths.”⁶ The Latin fathers, most notably St. Augustine, had always taught that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (on the basis of passages such as John 16:14–15, Galatians 4:6, Philippians 1:19, and 1 Peter 1:11). This teaching had

The absence of the Filioque is not necessarily a denial of the Filioque.

also already found symbolical expression in the so-called Athanasian Creed. The participants in this council therefore did not think that what they were doing would be seen as divisive or doctrinally problematic. Nevertheless, this alteration was not immediately accepted by all segments of the Latin Church. It eventually did achieve normative status in the West, but only after several centuries. When the Council of Toledo (a local council) added the *Filioque* to the text of the creed,

The pope protested, not for dogmatic reasons, but because he considered it technically incorrect to add this word to an official document of an ecumenical council. Leo III, the contemporary of Charlemagne, also opposed the *Filioque*. By the middle of the eleventh century the Roman Church included the *Filioque* in the symbol or creed.⁷

As we study the history of each version of the creed and the theological tradition that lay behind each version, we must begin by noting that no reputable theologian in the Latin Christian tradition (including the Lutheran confessors of the sixteenth century) ever considered the creed that was adopted at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381 to be a heterodox statement. When the Constantinopolitan fathers confessed that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father,” they were, of course, directly quoting the words of Jesus as recorded in John 15:26. In their theological correspondence with the Patriarch of Constantinople in the latter part of the sixteenth century, Jacob Andreae⁸ and his colleagues on the faculty of Tübingen University commented on this passage, with reference to the *Filioque* issue:

Yes, we too, of course, believe in that saying; but we cannot see how it follows if someone would thus say: that because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, He [the Spirit] does not proceed from the Son. For the procession of the Spirit from the Father does not negate the procession from the Son.⁹

And as Andreae and his colleagues note further, the creed adopted at Constantinople “states that the Spirit proceeds from the

Father, but it does not teach that He proceeds from the Father alone.”¹⁰ In other words, the absence of the *Filioque* is not necessarily a denial of the *Filioque*, just as the absence in both versions of the creed of explicit references to many other important articles of faith, such as original sin or the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, is not a denial of those doctrines.

The ancient Greek and Latin fathers certainly acknowledged each other as brethren, with whom they enjoyed the blessings of church fellowship. Because of their linguistic differences, however, these fathers frequently used different words and concepts in their theological writing. This was not perceived as a major problem, since the differences in terminology did not reflect differences in doctrine. The ancient fathers understood that the same biblical truth can be stated in a variety of ways, just as Lutherans recognize the Augsburg Confession and the Smalcald Articles as mutually compatible expressions of the same faith, despite the marked differences in style and vocabulary between Philip Melancthon and Martin Luther.

In regard to the historic discussions among the Greek and Latin fathers on the eternal interrelationships of the Persons of the Godhead, Martin Chemnitz¹¹ observes that

Both parties confessed that the Spirit is of the Son as well as of the Father; but the Greeks said that He is “from the Father through the Son,” and the Latins said “from the Father and the Son.” They each had reasons for speaking the way they did. Gregory of Nazianzus, on the basis of Romans 11[:36], says that the prepositions *ek*, *dia*, and *eis* express the properties of one unconfused essence.¹² Therefore, the Greeks said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from (*ek*, *ex*) the Father through (*dia*) the Son, so that the property of each nature is preserved. Nor did the Latins take offense at this formula for describing the matter. For Jerome and Augustine both say that the Holy Spirit properly and principally proceeds from the Father, and they explain this by saying that the Son in being begotten of the Father receives that which proceeds from the Father, namely, the Holy Spirit; but the Father receives from none, but has everything from Himself, as Lombard says, Bk. 1, dist. 12.¹³

Andreae and his colleagues interpreted this history in much the same way. The leading fathers of the Greek Church did not explicitly teach that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from” the Son. The Tübingen theologians still believed, however, that these fathers “hold the same opinion with us, even though they might differ somewhat in expression.”¹⁴ They cited as an example St. Epiphanius of Salamis (+403), who had written that the Holy Spirit “is from the same essence of the Father and the Son,”¹⁵ and who had also written that the Spirit is “truly of the Father and the Son, being of the same Godhead, proceeding from the Father, and forever receiving from the Son.”¹⁶ Another Greek Father who “agrees with us,” according to Andreae and company, is St. Cyril of Alexandria (+444), who had taught that the divine nature of the Holy Spirit “is of God the Father and certainly also of the Son,” and “that the Spirit comes forth from the Father through the Son.”¹⁷

Regarding the phrase “from the Father through the Son,” frequently employed in the Greek Church as an alternative to the *Filioque* formula, the Tübingen theologians stated that “for us it is not customary to speak thus.”¹⁸ They also forthrightly rejected any interpretation of the phrase that would make it mean “that the Holy Spirit proceeds indirectly.”¹⁹ But the phrase could be understood and used correctly. According to the Tübingen faculty, the words “through” (*dia*) and “from” (*ek*), as they are used in this context by St. Cyril, “are here to be understood in the same way as in the statement: ‘yet we know that a man is not justified by works of the law but “through” faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not “from” works of the law’ [Gal 2:16].”²⁰

Andreae and his co-laborers recognized that there is indeed an eternal order among the divine persons.

As the Tübingen theologians stated their own position regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit, they were very careful to identify themselves with the teaching of the ancient fathers, especially St. Augustine of Hippo (+430), who understood and appreciated the legitimate doctrinal concerns of the Greek Church more clearly than the Scholastic theologians of a later era.²¹ On the basis of the many trinitarian statements in the Gospel of John, and elsewhere in Scripture, Andreae and his co-laborers recognized that there is indeed an eternal order among the divine persons. They acknowledged that the Father is “the source of the Godhead, but outside of time so that we will not place the Son after the Father [in time].”²² Elaborating on this point, they explained that

The Father, indeed, is the first hypostasis of the All-Holy Trinity, for He is the origin, source, and cause of the others [Son and Holy Spirit]. And the Son is the second [hypostasis], by reason of origin but not of time, being posterior to the Father and anterior to the Holy Spirit. Also, the Holy Spirit is the third [hypostasis], being posterior to both [Father and Son] by reason of origin.²³

This statement clearly echoes the position of Luther, who like Andreae and his colleagues was a student of the patristic tradition in his understanding and explanation of intra-Trinitarian distinctions. For example, Luther had written:

All of this has been said so that we may recognize and believe in three distinct Persons in the one Godhead and not jumble the Persons together nor divide the essence. The distinction of the Father, as we have heard, is this, that He derived His deity from no one, but gave it from eternity, through the eternal birth, to the Son. Therefore the Son is God and

Creator, just like the Father, but the Son derived all of this from the Father, and not, in turn, the Father from the Son. The Father does not owe the fact that He is God and Creator to the Son, but the Son owes the fact that He is God and Creator to the Father. And the fact that Father and Son are God and Creator they do not owe to the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit owes the fact that He is God and Creator to the Father and the Son. Thus the words “God Almighty, Creator” are found [in the creed] as attributes of the Father and not of the Son and of the Holy Spirit to mark the distinction of the Father from the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead, again, the distinction of the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the distinction of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son; namely, that the Father is the source, or the fountainhead (if we may use that term as the fathers do) of the Godhead, that the Son derives it from Him and that the Holy Spirit derives it from Him and the Son, and not vice versa.²⁴

The Tübingen theologians also explained why the Spirit’s procession from the Son should not be conceived of in exactly the same way as his procession from the Father:

Indeed, it is a matter of perfection that the Father with the Son, but not without Him, is to emit the Holy Spirit. . . . And even though the two, the Father and the Son, emit the one, the Holy Spirit, yet they do not emit Him [the Spirit] as two, separately and distinctly, but they emit Him as one conjoined together; and the primacy of the emission returns to the Father, who indeed has given this perfect power of breathing to the Son through the begetting as Augustine in Book fifteen in *The Holy Trinity* says: from whom the Son has [power] to be God; certainly, from the same He has the [power] so that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him [the Son] also.²⁵

St. Augustine’s actual words, in his treatise *On the Trinity*, are as follows:

And yet it is not to no purpose that in this Trinity the Son and none other is called the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit and none other the Gift of God, and God the Father alone is He from whom the Word is born, and from whom the Holy Spirit principally [*principaliter*] proceeds. And therefore I have added the word principally, because we find that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also. But the Father gave Him this too, not as to one already existing, and not yet having it; but whatever He gave to the only-begotten Word, He gave by begetting Him. Therefore He so begat Him as that the common Gift should proceed from Him also, and the Holy Spirit should be the Spirit of both.²⁶

Elsewhere in this treatise, Augustine says that “in their mutual relation to one another in the Trinity itself, . . . the Father is a beginning [*principium*] in relation to the Son, because He begets Him.” He says furthermore “that the Father and the Son are a Beginning [*Principium*] of the Holy Spirit, not two beginnings.”²⁷

At the risk of oversimplifying a very nuanced discussion, we might say that the Latin fathers taught that the Holy Spirit eternally *proceeds from* the Father in the “proper” and “principal” sense, and that the Holy Spirit eternally *proceeds from* the Son in a secondary and derivative sense (because of the Son’s eternal “begottenness” of the Father). The Son’s co-emission of the Spirit, in conjunction with the Father’s emission of the Spirit, is, of course, an eternal and timeless co-emission, since “among these three persons none is before or after another, none is greater or less than another, but all three persons are coequal and coeternal.”²⁸

The Greek fathers taught that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father.

By comparison, the Greek fathers did not categorize the concept of “procession from” into two senses. Instead, they taught that the Holy Spirit eternally *proceeds from* the Father, with a meaning that is comparable to the Latin understanding of “proceeds from” in the “proper” and “principal” sense. In describing the eternal relationship of the Spirit to the Son, they used different terminology altogether, stating that the Holy Spirit eternally *proceeds through* the Son, or that he eternally *receives from* the Son, and similar expressions. The Greek fathers certainly believed that the Spirit “is from the same essence of the Father and the Son,” but they were hesitant to say that the Spirit *proceeds from* the Son. In their theological vocabulary that phrase was reserved to describe the eternal relationship of the Spirit to the Father, who, as the eternal “source” of the Godhead, is the ultimate “source” of the Holy Spirit. In their careful use of this distinct and precise terminology, they hoped to preserve the church’s understanding of the distinct “internal” operations of each of the divine persons as taught in Holy Scripture. And especially in their teaching on the eternal emission of the Holy Spirit, they wanted it to be clearly understood that “the primacy of the emission returns to the Father.” The version of the Nicene Creed that was adopted at Constantinople confesses, in effect, “that the Holy Spirit properly and principally proceeds from the Father.” The Latin Church, at a later time, added to the creed a confession of the Spirit’s procession from the Son (in a secondary and derivative sense), while the Greek church never made such an addition. If it had, it almost definitely would not have followed the distinctive Latin approach, for the reasons given above.

According to Chemnitz and Andreae (who studied this subject more intensely than most Lutheran theologians have done), the intended meaning of the classic Greek terminology was essentially the same as the intended meaning of the classic Latin terminology. It was therefore not necessary for Christians in the Greek tradition to say, in so many words, that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from” the Son, since the terms they did use to describe this rela-

tionship conveyed the same thought. But this ancient patristic consensus on the procession of the Holy Spirit, which the Lutheran Concordists recognized, began to be obscured in the eighth and ninth centuries. The overall relationship between East and West had started to sour, due largely to the Pope’s increasingly vocal claims to universal authority and jurisdiction over the entire church. In this climate of strained relations and mutual suspicions, the differences in theological vocabulary that had always existed between the two traditions, in reference to the intra-Trinitarian relationships, began to be portrayed by the more contentious elements on each side as evidence of real doctrinal differences. The eastern church was also offended by what it perceived as the unfraternal presumptuousness of those segments of the western church that had altered the official conciliar text of the Nicene Creed without its concurrence. The Greeks were especially displeased by the active efforts of Carolingian theologians and missionaries to promote and disseminate the altered version of the creed with the *Filioque* addition.

The growing tensions over the *Filioque* issue finally flared up in the year 867 when Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, accused the western church of heresy because of its belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.²⁹ According to Photius the Latin teaching represented a new form of modalism or “semi-Sabellianism,” which “relativizes the reality of personal, or *hypostatic* existence, in the Trinity.”³⁰ Communion between the Pope and the Patriarch was actually suspended for a time, although before Photius’s death that communion had been restored. It was, however, an uneasy peace. When fellowship between Rome and Constantinople was finally broken in 1054, disagreement over the *Filioque* was cited as a major cause of the separation.³¹

Some moderate and conciliatory voices were occasionally raised in the East, however. Theophylact of Ohrid, an orthodox bishop and theologian from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is described in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession as “a sensible writer.”³² His evaluation of the significance of the differences in expression regarding the Spirit’s eternal relationship with the Father and the Son is very similar to that of Chemnitz and Andreae, who may in fact have been influenced by him.³³ Theophylact lived and wrote in the period immediately after the Great Schism (1054), when tensions between the eastern and western churches were high. Nevertheless,

in the matter of the *Filioque* Theophylact was surprisingly irenic, and he sought to transfer the whole controversy from the dogmatic to the linguistic level. The basic problem, in his view, was the poverty of the Latin language, which possessed only the one word *procedere* where Greek possessed three or four terms: as a result the Latins were unable to distinguish with precision between the different types of relationship within the Trinity. In this way Theophylact refrained from accusing the west of downright error in doctrine.³⁴

Gregory of Cyprus, Patriarch of Constantinople in the thirteenth century, and Gregory of Palamas, an influential Orthodox theologian and bishop who wrote in the fourteenth century, also

attempted to build theological bridges to the West on this issue. These men maintained that there is,

within the inner life of the Trinity, an “eternal manifestation” (*aïdios ekphansis*) of the Spirit by the Son. In this sense of “eternal manifestation,” so they argued, the Spirit may correctly be said to proceed “through” (*dia*) or even “from” (*ek*) the Son. But the two Gregories were careful to distinguish this “manifestation” from “procession” in the strict sense.³⁵

According to Chemnitz, “This division was healed at the Council of Florence,”³⁶ which met from 1438 to 1445. This was a “union council,” with participants from the Latin and Greek churches. Its aim was to heal the breach between eastern and western Christendom by reaching agreement on four divisive issues: papal primacy, the form of bread to be used in the Eucharist (leavened or unleavened), purgatory, and the *Filioque*.³⁷ From the Latin side, the Pope was prompted toward this effort in part by the fear that the “conciliarists,” who believed in a limited papacy, might attempt to achieve union with the Byzantines on their own terms, without him. From the Greek side, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Byzantine emperor (who both attended) were prompted toward this effort in part by the imminent threat of conquest at the hands of the Turks. They hoped that one result of ecclesiastical reunion with the West would be much-needed military assistance from the West.

Chemnitz notes that the proceedings of the council are extant,

showing what each side said. When the Greeks saw the explanation of the Latins and how they believed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and on the basis of what evidence they established their case, they agreed with the statement. . . . It is worthy of note that the Greeks said and proved on the basis of authentic manuscripts of the Nicene Canon, not only in the Greek manuscripts but also in the Latin ones which had been preserved at Rome, that the [original] wording was, “The Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father.” They were vehement in their contentions that the Latin manuscripts had been falsified because they had added the words “who proceeds from the Father and the Son.” But when the explanation of the Latins was heard, they approved with general consensus that this had been done because when the controversy had arisen, this expression, “proceeds from the Father,” had been taken in a sinister sense as if the Son were not in all respects equal and consubstantial with the Father. Therefore the Latins had not added the words “who proceeds from the Father and the Son,” but had taken them over from the Athanasian Creed because the statement there is more explicit.³⁸

The Latin participants at Florence reassured the Greeks that in their teaching on the Spirit’s procession from the Father and the Son they were not implying that there are two processions within the Godhead, or that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from two principles. Rather, as stated in the conciliar decree *Laetentur caeli*, “The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally and substantially as it were from one source and

cause.”³⁹ On their part, the overwhelming majority of the Greek participants who signed the decree accepted the legitimacy of the *Filioque* addition to the Nicene Creed, “but with the stipulation that they were not to be required to introduce the *Filioque* clause when they used the creed.”⁴⁰ This was acceptable to the Latins. If the *Filioque* clause in the creed would imply in a Greek context that the Father is not the ultimate source of the Godhead (something that was confessed in common by East and West), but that somehow the Father and the Son together are the ultimate source, or that there is no ultimate source, then Christians in a Greek context need not be required to use the *Filioque* clause in their version of the creed. *Laetentur caeli* also declared that the two phrases, “from the Father and the Son” and “from the Father through the Son,” are, when properly understood, identical in meaning.⁴¹

***“The Spirit proceeds from the Father
and the Son eternally and substantially
as it were from one source and cause.”***

The Council of Florence was ultimately unsuccessful in achieving the general union between East and West that its participants had hoped to see. This failure was due largely to the fact that the agreement that was reached on papal authority strongly reflected the Roman viewpoint, and was unacceptable to the majority of Orthodox Christians. Many of the Orthodox were also unwilling to acknowledge the *Filioque* teaching in any form, and repudiated the concessions that had been made by the Greeks at Florence. Still, at least from a Lutheran perspective, Chemnitz’s endorsement of the council’s settlement of the *Filioque* controversy is theologically and ecumenically significant.

While the deliberations at Florence did not result in a comprehensive reunion of the Latin and Greek Churches, they very definitely did provide a backdrop for later successful union efforts between Rome and certain sections of the Byzantine Church. In 1595, for example, as a prelude to the 1596 Union of Brest (which brought the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church into fellowship with Rome), the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) bishops drafted, and sent to the Pope, “Articles for Which We Need Guarantees from the Lord Romans before We Enter into Unity with the Roman Church.” The very first of these articles (to which the Pope did acquiesce) addressed the *Filioque* issue in a very Florentine fashion:

Firstly, since among the Romans and the Greeks there is a dispute as to the procession of the H(oly) Spirit, which is a considerable obstacle to unification and which probably endures for no other reason than that we do not want to understand each other, we, therefore, request that we not be constrained to a different confession [of faith], but that we remain with the one that we find expressed in the S(acred) Scriptures, in the Gospels, and also in the writings of the

H(oly) Greek Doctors [i.e. Church fathers], namely that the H(oly) Spirit does not have two origins, nor a double procession, but that He proceeds from one origin, as from a source—from the Father through the Son.⁴²

The Ukrainians also requested, and were granted, the right to retain their own eastern-rite liturgies, ceremonies, and rites. This would, and still does, include the continuing use of the Greek version of the Nicene Creed.⁴³ Chemnitz certainly would have disapproved of the Union of Brest as a whole, since it involved the Ukrainians' submission to papal authority and their acceptance of the Tridentine theological system. He would probably have been very sympathetic to the Florentine approach of the Union of Brest, however, on the specific question of the procession of the Holy Spirit, and on the question of which version of the creed would be used by the Ukrainian Catholics.

Returning now to an earlier question, what are we to make of the recent proposal that the Greek version of the Nicene Creed may be used in place of the Latin version, even in western-rite Lutheran churches where the Latin version has always been used? On the basis of what we have seen in the writings of Chemnitz and Andreae, and from the perspective of the confessional Lutheran theology that they represent, it is the judgment of the present writer that the implementation of this proposal would too easily be misunderstood as a repudiation of the Lutheran belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. Historically considered, "perhaps it was not a good idea to add new phrases to the Nicene Creed."⁴⁴ But since the *Filioque* has in fact been added to the creed, it would not be a good idea now, after all this time, to take it out. Such an obvious change would certainly not go unnoticed, and would invariably be interpreted by many people as an admission that there was something doctrinally wrong with the deleted portion of the creed. The *Filioque* teaching in the Latin Christian tradition, and the parallel forms of expression that were used by many of the Greek fathers, do in fact reflect an important biblical truth that is intimately connected to the christocentric soteriology of Holy Scripture. St. Paul writes: "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Rom 8:9 NKJV).

Lutherans should not minimize the importance of this teaching. The creedal change that is proposed by the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue would very likely give the impression that agreement on this matter has now been reached with the modern-day Eastern Orthodox Church, on Orthodox terms. It would be another example of putting the ecumenical cart before the horse of doctrinal unity.⁴⁵

It is true that the Latin version of the creed was never approved by an ecumenical council.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, it has been given formal symbolical status within the Lutheran Church through its incorporation in the Book of Concord. And according to the confessional principle of our church, which must not be sacrificed on the altar of modern ecumenism, this has as much standing among us as a doctrinal decree of an ecumenical council.

On the basis of what we have seen in the writings of Chemnitz and Andreae, however, and from the perspective of

the confessional Lutheran theology that they represent, it is the judgment of the present writer that a Lutheran church that might emerge from, or take root in, the Byzantine Christian tradition, need not be required to start using the Latin version of the creed in place of the traditional Greek version, if the members of that church are accustomed to the Greek version. The chief concern would be whether or not such a group has come to agree with the biblical and confessional teaching that the Holy Spirit is, from all eternity, the Spirit of the Son as well as the Spirit of the Father, and whether or not it has come to agree with the theological point that the *Filioque* addition was intended to make, even if it would prefer to use different terms to make that point. The Latin version of the creed is present in the Book of Concord as a scripturally based doctrinal standard for the church, in which certain ancient heresies "are clearly and solidly refuted."⁴⁷ Its presence in the Book of Concord is not a liturgical rubric, implying that this version of this creed must be chanted or recited in Lutheran worship services.⁴⁸ If Greek-Rite Lutherans are in doctrinal agreement with the Lutheran Confessions, and in doctrinal unity with confessional Lutheranism, then there should be no objection if they wish to continue to use the more ancient, and to them the more familiar, version of the creed in their liturgy. The members of such a church would not be *removing* the *Filioque* clause from the Nicene Creed, but in Christian freedom they would simply be declining to *insert* the *Filioque* clause.

In their liturgical use of the Greek version of the creed, the Ukrainian Lutherans were not in any way renouncing or rejecting the teaching of the Book of Concord on the procession of the Holy Spirit.


This is not merely a theoretical discussion. The Ukrainian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession was organized in 1926 in the Galicia region of Ukraine, which was at that time under the government of Poland.⁴⁹ These Ukrainian Lutherans, with roots in the Greek Catholic Church and in the Eastern Orthodox Church, were Byzantine-Rite Lutherans who used in their worship services a Lutheran revision of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The version of the Nicene Creed that they employed was the Greek version, without the *Filioque* addition. In their liturgical use of the Greek version of the creed, the Ukrainian Lutherans were not in any way renouncing or rejecting the teaching of the Book of Concord on the procession of the Holy Spirit. But they were, in a sense, reconnecting with an ancient and orthodox theological tradition that would be well represented by such notable churchmen as Epiphanius of Salamis and Cyril of Alexandria. Those Greek fathers did not

reject the doctrinal point that the Latin fathers were making in their *Filioque* teaching, and they in fact made the same point themselves in their own writings. But in making this point they used terms and concepts that were more natural to their own linguistic and theological context than the Latin term and concept would have been. They and their theological tradition should not be faulted for this.

In conclusion, let us never forget that when we consider and discuss such sublime questions regarding the Holy Trinity, we are, more than at any other time, treading on the holy ground of God's unfathomable mysteries. We therefore should always do so humbly, circumspectly, and prayerfully.

Almighty God, by Your grace alone
we are called into Your kingdom,
to confess the true faith,
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity,
and in the power of the divine majesty
to worship the true Unity:

We beseech You,
that You would keep us steadfast in this faith,
and evermore defend us from all adversities;
for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
live and reign, one true God, now and forever.

Amen.⁵⁰ 

NOTES

1. "A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity," paragraph 9.
2. Ibid., paragraph 10.
3. Ibid., paragraph 11. This would seem to be an expression of what Kallistos Ware calls the "rigorist" position within the Orthodox Church ("Christian Theology in the East," in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980], 209.) Ware maintains that a more "liberal" position on this issue is "also held by many Orthodox at the present time." He writes: "According to the 'liberal' view, the Greek and the Latin doctrines on the procession of the Holy Spirit may both alike be regarded as theologically defensible. The Greeks affirm that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *through* the Son, the Latins that He proceeds from the Father and *from* the Son; but when applied to the relationship between Son and Spirit, these two prepositions 'through' and 'from' amount to the same thing." (Ware, 208.)
4. Willard D. Allbeck, *Studies in the Lutheran Confessions*, revised ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 30.
5. Tappert, 18–19. The *Filioque* teaching is also expressed in the Athanasian Creed, 22 (Tappert, 20), in SA, 1 (Tappert, 291), and in FC SD, VIII, 73 (Tappert, 605).
6. J. L. Neve, *Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church*, 2d revised ed. (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1926), 70.
7. Lars P. Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936), 149. See also Henry R. Percival, "Historical Excursus on the Introduction into the creed of the Words 'And the Son,'" in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers of the Christian Church*, 2d Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 14: 165–169.
8. Andreae was a co-author of the Formula of Concord.
9. George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982), 235.
10. Ibid., 242.
11. Chemnitz was a co-author of the Formula of Concord.
12. Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration on the Holy Lights" (Oration XXXIV), 12.
23. Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, 2 vols., trans. J. A. O. Preus (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 2: 143.
34. Mastrantonis, 240.
15. *Against Heresies*, 3:1; quoted in Mastrantonis, 120.
16. *Homily Against Sabellians*; quoted in Mastrantonis, 229.
17. Mastrantonis, 120. The Cyril quotations are from *The Adoration and Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth*, Homily 1.
18. Ibid., 237.
49. Ibid., 120.
20. Ibid.
21. Ware, 210–211. We do not agree with Ware's generally negative evaluation of the settlement of the *Filioque* controversy that was reached at the Council of Florence, or with his conclusion that it represented a significant departure from the basic ideas of Augustine's trinitarian theology.

22. Mastrantonis, 238.
23. Ibid., 225.
24. Martin Luther, "Treatise on the Last Words of David," AE, 15: 309–310.
25. Mastrantonis, 232–233. The Augustine reference is to *On the Trinity*, 15:45.
26. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Book xv, 17:29, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 3: 216.
27. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Book v, 14:15, 94, 95.
28. Athanasian Creed, 24–25 (Tappert, 20).
29. Ware, 203–204. For a detailed discussion of the "Photian Schism," and of the factors that led up to it, see Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 105–218.
30. Quoted in John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 92.
31. See Walter F. Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 237–241; see also Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 4: 476–489. For an excellent discussion of the theological, linguistic, and ecclesiastical issues that have played a role in the *Filioque* controversy, see Nichols, 218–228.
32. Apology x, 2 (Tappert, 179). Luther pays the Bulgarian churchman this compliment: "Among the teachers Theophylact is the best interpreter of Paul" (*What Luther Says*, compiled by Ewald M. Plass [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959], 313.)
33. We do know that at least Chemnitz was familiar with Theophylact's writings on the subject. See Chemnitz, 1: 143.
34. Ware, 206.
35. Ibid., 210.
36. Chemnitz, 1: 143. Chemnitz assigns the date 1441 to the healing of the division, but the decree of union, *Laetentur caeli*, was actually signed on July 6, 1439 (Meyendorff, 110.)
37. Meyendorff, 109–11.
38. Chemnitz, 1: 143.
39. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 6: 182. See also Meyendorff, 110.
40. Schaff, 6: 182.
41. Ibid.
42. Quoted in Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 264. Isidore, Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Rus', was one of the key participants in the Council of Florence. He actively supported, and unsuccessfully tried to implement, the would-be "Union of Florence." His efforts received a favorable reception among his Ruthenian constituents, laying the groundwork for the acceptance of the Union of Brest some 150 years later, but the Muscovites were completely unsympathetic and hostile in their response (Gudziak, 43–58).

43. In the most recent published edition of the Divine Liturgy, as authorized for use in the Greek Catholic Church of Ukraine, the text of the Nicene Creed includes the *Filioque* clause only in parentheses. Its liturgical use is therefore seen as permissible, but not obligatory.

44. John C. Lawrenz and Glen L. Thompson, *History of the Ancient and Medieval Church* (n.p., 1997), 107.

45. The last two sentences of the ELCA-Orthodox statement are quite telling: "We look forward to a time when our churches will affirm the Nicene faith through common liturgical usage of the unaltered creed of A.D. 381. We trust that such common affirmation of faith will lead to the resolution of those theological differences which are still before us." ("A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity," paragraph 13.)

46. According to its own criteria, the Roman Catholic Church does, of course, consider the Council of Florence, which endorsed the *Filioque* addition to the Nicene Creed, to be an "ecumenical" council.

47. FC SD, Rule and Norm, 4 (Tappert 504).

48. The rubrics in some Lutheran liturgical orders call for the Apostles' Creed to be used in public worship on all occasions. Lutherans have also frequently used hymn paraphrases of the creed in place of the creed itself. Luther's well-known paraphrase, *Wir glauben all' an einen Gott*, says nothing

about the Holy Spirit's procession. And while the official confessional version of the Nicene Creed is in the singular number ("I believe"), some Lutheran bodies now use in their worship services a version of the creed that is rendered in the plural number ("We believe"). (See Peter Toon, *Yesterday, Today, and Forever* [Swedesboro, NJ: Preservation Press, 1996], 197–201, where the author explains why such a creedal change is, in his judgment, very ill-advised. See also *An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* [Mankato, MN: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1981], 96.) Hugh Wybrew notes that "Creeds certainly played no part in the early liturgy of the Eucharist. Exactly when, where and why the creed was introduced into the service is unclear. Peter the Fuller, the monophysite Patriarch of Antioch towards the end of the fifth century, is said to have started the practice there in 473" (*The Orthodox Liturgy* [Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990], 84–85).

49. This church body ceased to exist on the territory of Ukraine, at an institutional level, when Galicia was occupied and then annexed by the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War. It was reorganized in 1994, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the Ukrainian Lutheran Church.

50. Collect for Trinity Sunday, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (Saint Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc., 1996), 157.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

Christ Jesus Born in Bethlehem

Tune: Puer Nobis (LW: 52)

Meter: LM

Richard S. Cody

Christ Jesus, born in Bethlehem—
Behold the Lord yet Son of Man!
Our lowly king born free from sin,
The Word made flesh to dwell within.

Christ Jesus is the child we see.
From fleshly temple out came he
From heav'n above to earth below,
His priceless blessings to bestow.

Christ Jesus in a manger lay,
A ransom price for sins to pay!
His shrine to live is in our hearts,
So we from faith will not depart.

Christ Jesus, born our lives to save,
From Satan's bondage and the grave!
He lived and suffered agony
To grant us all the victory.

Christ Jesus born the Father's Son,
Who with the Spirit's Three in One,
Who lives and reigns the King of kings,
Salvation for the world he brings!

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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

Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death. By Richard Marius. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. Hardcover. 542 pages.

❖ A new biography of Martin Luther will probably evoke interest, but also questions: given that there has been so much written about Luther, what would motivate a person to write yet another account of his life and work? Author Richard Marius has anticipated these inquiries. He notes in his preface that most biographical work on Luther has been largely parochial, the product of those who are either deeply impressed or deeply repulsed by the fiery and uncompromising reformer. Marius has attempted "to write about a man whose views [the author does not] share, and to write both sympathetically and critically without distorting the evidence, with neither malice nor partisanship toward any religious confession" (xii). Marius uses careful assessment and reevaluation of previous Luther scholarship to give a fresh account of Luther's personal struggles of faith and how they shaped what became the Reformation.

Proof that previous biographers/detractors may have been too close to their subject to see influences and motivations objectively comes in his review of the social and intellectual climate of Europe in the sixteenth century. Against the French historian Lucien Febvre, who maintained that it was impossible for a society like mediaeval Europe not to believe in God, Marius contends that atheism lapped relentlessly at the shores of the theological *status quo*. Its effect was to bring an unprecedented acedia concerning faith, and an existential crisis concerning death not seen since the Greco-Roman world. It is against such an environment that Marius believes one can acquire a truly accurate picture of the terror Luther needed to assuage. The usual assumption (following Karl Holl) is that Luther's fear of God consisted in a terror over his sins. Yet Marius notes that when Luther spoke of his sins, he was notoriously vague. While others spoke of the punishment of the soul in hell, Luther rarely ruminated on it. Instead, following Romans 6:23, "the wages of sin is death," the content of Luther's fear of God's wrath is in his nearly inconsolable fear of death (or perhaps more accurately, dying). Marius argues that Luther's struggle with the *Anfechtungen*—which he defines as "attacks of horror at his

unworthiness before God" (60)—did not have as their content the torments of hell, but the darker uncertainties of an Old Testament view of death. According to Marius, Luther's own view of eternal death was an end to existence, though not annihilation as such. It brooded in the mystery that eternal death was an eternal punishment of God, and took enough terror from the fact that one would die that fanciful flights into the nature of hell were not necessary.

To make matters worse for Luther, he was aware that a belief in the mortality of the soul consistent with the pagans was the most reasonable thing to believe. As he fought with reason, he also fought the omnipresent specter of predestination, where his temptation to believe reason was evidence that he had not been elected to salvation. He could not find solace in the ragged edges of predestination.

Before 1519 (Marius veers toward "late-dating" the reformation discovery), Luther's challenge was to find in Christ faith that gave serenity in the face of death, and with it, proof that one was chosen. After 1519, Luther came to confess that one had to accept the fear of death, and find the consolation of the crucified and risen Christ in the midst of death. This was to be the full meaning for justification by grace through faith. "Faith is a commitment to [eternal] life while knowing that death couches at the door" (313).

As Marius leads the reader through the well-worn paths of Luther's reformation, including the best-known of his writings, he manages to include helpful correspondence that reflects Luther's state of mind, and the humanity of the person behind the increasingly implacable personality. The characters and circumstances provide a refreshing humanity and spirit that comes from one whose objectivity allows a fulsome appreciation for the quirks of all of the characters. But throughout, the theme of death underscores Luther's sense of urgency. This urgency became impatience as the Reformation did not seem to follow in the path Luther had envisioned. With this came Luther's gnawing doubt that the Reformation could be sustained with the weight of tradition seemingly against it. His dismay grew with the lack of appreciation for the gospel even amongst his fellow citizens in electoral Saxony. Reflecting on these in light of Luther's fear of death and his temptation to skepticism, Marius paints a particularly poignant portrait of the reformer. The more he had to confront the grave question "Are you alone wise?" the more he inveighed against this doubt as he personified it in the arguments of others. Time and again, through Marius's account, Luther's

stubborn defense of the faith stands out as the window on Luther's great weakness: his violent temperament, at least in print. In fact, the reader may begin to wonder if Marius becomes somewhat obsessed with Luther's vehemence. The words "invective," "vituperative," "ferocious," and "bloodthirsty" pepper Marius's assessment of Luther's polemics. While Marius tries to bring a perspective to Luther's unrelenting approach—Luther was unconcerned with appearances, only with the preaching of the gospel—he cannot shake a disdain for this aspect of Luther's character that colors the account of his struggles. This comes to a head in what in many ways is the climax of the book: Luther's grand debate with Erasmus. This war in print is for Marius the culmination of all of Luther's fears. For Marius, Erasmus embodied the very core of Luther's deepest fears. If God's sovereignty is not absolute, human will must account for something. But Luther had long ago despaired of his own will being valuable in the face of death. Marius suggests implicitly that Luther had to force the issue of the sovereignty of God's will as completely as possible to emphasize that only with an absolutely powerful God is there even the remotest possibility of a merciful Christ who is the true and only antidote to death. But Marius is quite clearly shocked at how hateful Luther was with Erasmus, with whom Marius is clearly more sympathetic. He dismisses *De Servo Arbitrio* as "insulting, vehement, monstrously unfair, and utterly uncompromising—which is to say it shows Luther reacting in accordance with the character that temperament and experience had stamped upon him by 1525" (456).

Perhaps the distraction with Luther's unrefined character is the source of the most substantive flaw in the biography: the crass distinction. That Luther the man lacked subtlety does not necessarily mean that his theology similarly lacked such. Yet repeatedly the reader finds examples where this is assumed. The most problematic is Marius's misunderstanding of Luther's emphasis on predestination, with its intricate distinction between the inscrutable will of the hidden God and the consolation of the revealed God in Jesus Christ. Hence his repeated contention that "Luther never claimed absolute certainty that he was predestined to salvation or that we can be certain that anyone is one of the elect" (199). There are moments where one would be forgiven for believing that he was reading a biography of a noted reformer from Geneva. But Marius's misreading of Luther is not unique. No less than close friends like Nicholas von Amsdorf believed that Luther taught an election to perdition. Many otherwise well-read scholars seem to make a similar mistake continually. Still, while Marius concedes that Luther distinguished between the God of grace and the God of glory, he never grapples with it to a degree that may have been more helpful to the reader. In the end, Luther may have cherished *De Servo Arbitrio* not because he vanquished a hated foe, but simply because he defended the catholic tradition against an incipient Pelagianism in the same way Augustine did against Pelagius himself.

When Marius recognizes the overarching importance for Luther of faith in the revealed God in the risen Savior Jesus Christ, it is the source of another curious assumption: for Marius, Luther

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believed that faith rested on one's experience of God. He grants that it is not emotion or mysticism, but there is subjectivity to faith that Marius ascribes to Luther. "[A]s his theology is liberated from the external, it is made captive to his own experience. To accept Luther's theology, one had to believe that his experience with God was normative" (225). Yet Marius demonstrates continually that the Word of God was normative for Luther (even if Marius contends that it was only Pauline scripture which was normative) and that its objectivity was paramount. Luther sought such objectivity precisely because of his doubts in the face of the centuries-old accretion of canonical traditions. These doubts, Marius himself contends, constitute the foundation of Luther's most polemical attacks on the papacy.

There are many other examples of misreading and misinterpretation that the Lutheran reader in particular will find abrasive. But these are criticisms wrought by one who has a stake in Lutheran theology, precisely what Marius does not have. The criticisms regard nuances in Luther's thought often not perceived by Lutherans themselves. There is an overall strength to a relatively disinterested commentary like Marius's. He simply wishes to paint as accurate a portrait of Martin Luther the man as he can. It is true that often it is not a pretty picture. Marius's Luther is a deeply desperate man who wears his weaknesses obviously and unpretentiously on his sleeve. But this is what is most consistently engaging about Luther. Perhaps true to his nominalist influences, Luther is not obsessed with portraying an ideal, but reflecting the reality. Marius reminds us helpfully that Luther is not a Christian exemplar, another saint whose sanitized biography forms the basis of pious imitation. He is a Christian, struggling with precisely the same failures of character that we all do. Marius is often impressed that Luther is as hard on himself as he is on others, another feature nearly unique to Christian literature. And while the biography is by Marius's own admission hardly definitive, his assessment of Luther and the Jews may well be. Though it is sobering to read, it is admirably even-handed, and works very hard to articulate the difference between Luther's disgust with Judaism and disappointment with the Jews (who never did convert, contrary to his expectations) and the race hatred of modern anti-Semitism. Luther is not exonerated for his more extreme invective against the Jews. "It was as bad as Luther could make it," he writes, "and that was bad enough to leave a legacy that had hateful consequences for centuries" (380).

But the lasting legacy of this biography will be the thrust of its thesis. Given Marius's argument, it is indeed persuasive to believe that Luther's fear of death is a central concern that is important in understanding his theology. It gives credence to the few scholars and pastors who have recognized this most profound of struggles to be essential in understanding the Christian faith, among them Gerhard Forde and Harold Senkbeil. Marius may even have brought the raw material for a pastoral focus. His thesis may serve to preempt any more tiresome attempts to inject a programmatic view of the church into Lutheranism. All of these hinge upon a materialism that ties faith to the distractions of this life rather than to the odious specter of death. And finally, all must face death, no matter how moral and godly they may be.

While *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* may be a somewhat unsatisfying biography (when compared par-

ticularly to Brecht's or even Bainton's), it is a refreshing account of Luther and his life and is important in its underlying emphasis. Marius has reviewed the secondary literature with an equanimity and consideration that will likely stand as normative for any who wish to assess Luther scholarship. It may even serve as something of a watershed amongst Lutherans, both clergy and laypeople. In the wake of this book, the Lutheran reader will finally have to stand *with* Luther the redeemed sinner before the deepest questions that our living Christ addresses, rather than follow Luther the hero in a futile attempt to mimic him.

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The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundation of Doctrinal Criticism. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997.

❖ Readers of Alister McGrath, Research Professor of systematic theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, have come to expect a great deal from his work—careful historical research, penetrating analysis, and provocative insights on issues connected to what he is writing about. They will not be disappointed with this volume.

McGrath offers a historically oriented approach to doctrinal criticism in which he both defends the claims of doctrine against relativizing attacks from without and, perhaps more importantly, offers some bases for the church's ongoing activity of self-criticism for the purposes of doctrinal development and clarification. For McGrath, the term "doctrine" may be defined as those communally authoritative teachings regarded as essential to the identity of the Christian community. In this work, which McGrath intends as a sort of prolegomenon to a series of books of more specific doctrinal criticism, he addresses especially three questions of a preliminary nature: What pressures and factors cause the generation of doctrinal formulations? What is doctrine, anyway? And what authority is to be ascribed to the heritage of the past in Christian doctrinal reflection? In addressing these issues, McGrath defends the church's right to draw its identity from the past, and, on the other hand, demonstrates that the past must be appropriated critically.

A chapter of the book is devoted to a critique of George Lindbeck's work *The Nature of Doctrine*. His balanced discussion of Lindbeck's analysis is fair, nuanced, and provocative. Lindbeck suggests that theories of doctrine may be grouped into three general types: (1) the "cognitive-propositionalist," stressing the cognitive aspects of religion that emphasize doctrine as truth claim or informative proposition; (2) the "experiential-expressive" type, which interprets doctrines as non-cognitive symbols of inner human feelings or attitudes; and (3) the "cultural-linguistic" type (favored by Lindbeck himself), in which doctrine functions as the grammar and syntax of the communal cultural-linguistic framework that shapes subjective experience. In addition to Lindbeck's tendency to portray in caricature those types with which he dis-

agrees, a major problem with his approach, notes McGrath, is that it does not address the question of the “origin of the cultural-linguistic tradition regulated by doctrine.” Lindbeck seems to bypass entirely the question of whether that tradition has any external referent at all, that is, the question of whether that tradition makes truth claims in an ontological sense rather than merely in an intrasystematic sense referring to internal consistency. What is needed in a theory of doctrine is “a precise understanding of the genesis of doctrine . . . in all (its) historical and systematic complexity (33). Lindbeck’s approach constitutes a flight from history that reduces the phenomenon of doctrine to his model and doctrine itself to insights already available in the social sciences.

For his part, McGrath advances a number of positive theses concerning the nature of doctrine. First, doctrine serves as a social demarcator, providing social definition to a group where other factors do not suffice. Second and more important, doctrine is generated by, and subsequently interprets, the narrative of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Because what is involved in doctrine is a movement from the narrative that is “mediated through Scripture and eucharistic celebration” to a conceptual framework, that framework needs to be tested in terms of its adequacy in relation to that narrative. Third, doctrine interprets the experience of the community of the faithful. There is a “fundamental resonance” between Christian doctrine and the experience of the Christian community; this correspondence between doctrine and experience is presupposed, says McGrath, because Christian doctrine attempts to shape the Christian’s life by laying the foundation for and subsequently interpreting Christian experience. Finally, doctrine makes truth claims. Doctrine unfolds the significance of the history of Jesus of Nazareth, which is transmitted in narrative form. In unfolding this significance, doctrine is concerned with the internal consistency of Christian affirmations of truth.

McGrath’s target in much of his discussion is any theory of doctrinal formulation that relativizes doctrinal statements by affording too much license to leave the narrative of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth behind rather than taking that narrative as foundational and normative. He emphasizes that it is the concrete, historical narrative of Jesus of Nazareth rather than a static, universal concept that must ground doctrine for the Christian community. The conceptual framework must not be allowed to become a speculative tool that eliminates or distorts the narrative of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Here one might wish that McGrath had been even more specific, not so much in the direction of a biblicistic consideration of the “narrative” as a whole. Rather, it is the narrative grounded in and informed by the sacramental *mandata* that serves as the contextual foundation of doctrine. Thus in the doctrine of the Trinity, the terms “essence” and “person” express the oneness and threeness that are included in Christ’s command to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Again, in Christology, the doctrine of two natures in one person means for the church what Christ says in his institution of his supper, that the risen Christ can and does distribute his body and blood to be eaten and drunk by his people. In this sense, Lutherans assert the propriety of the rule *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

In the second half of the book, McGrath takes up the question of the authority of the past in Christian doctrinal reflection. For

confessional Lutherans, who maintain the binding authority of sixteenth-century doctrinal statements, this may not seem to be much of a question. McGrath, however, has in mind those with the perspective, a legacy of the Enlightenment, that the past is irrelevant to us today and, since the doctrinal formulations of the past are entirely products of bygone worldviews, they have no authority at all in the present. McGrath draws from the field of the sociology of knowledge to point out that the glib rejections of the authority of tradition by the Enlightenment were themselves historically conditioned. He offers a model framework, adapted from the Marxist theorist Walter Benjamin, to account for the influence of the past for Christians. McGrath’s aim here is to show that traditional Christianity’s ascription of authority to the tradition, specifically to the narrative of the history of Jesus of Nazareth, does not really involve special pleading.

The primary value of McGrath’s work for confessional Lutherans, however, will not, in my opinion, lie in apologetics directed at Enlightenment-minded critics of traditional Christianity. It will connect rather to the project of self-criticism in doctrinal matters (at which conservative Lutherans tend not to be particularly keen, practiced, or adept). McGrath’s insight that all frameworks and patterns of rationality in general are socially and historically conditioned also has relevance here. McGrath suggests the kinds of questions that need to be asked in order to effect the kind of critical appropriation of the tradition that he advocates: Is a belief part of the routine cognitive and technical competence handed down from generation to generation? Is it enjoined by the authorities of society? Is it transmitted by established institutions of socialization or supported by accepted agencies of social control? Is it bound up with patterns of vested interest? Questions such as these, and the hermeneutic of suspicion that they reflect, need to be addressed to our own heritage of doctrines and practices in order to uncover possible ideological conditioning either in the genesis of those doctrines and practices or in our reception and application of them.

Confessional Lutherans can now recognize that an uncritical appropriation of the tradition in the name of “conservatism,” and biblicistic justifications of that uncritical attitude, have proven just as disastrous for the church as the rejection of the authority of the tradition by Enlightenment rationalism, pietism, or the pragmatism of Church-Growthers. It has been, after all, also in the dogmatics courses of conservative seminaries that the Philippist rejection of Luther’s understanding of the eucharistic consecration has been firmly entrenched, defended, and taught, and the crude kind of ahistorical biblicism that once defended the practice of slavery as an adiaphoron on the grounds that Paul told servants to obey their masters can still be heard doing its damage in discussions about the Sacrament of the Altar (“It doesn’t *say* in the Bible that the body and blood of Christ are on the altar after the consecration!”). Behind the absence of confessional booths in modern Lutheran churches lies an uncritical appropriation of a doctrinal understanding and practice of relatively recent vintage. Discussions between confessional Lutherans of various synods over such concerns as sacramental doctrine and practice, ecclesiology, the nature of the ministry and who may be ordained, and the like can be enriched and elevated through the incorporation of McGrath’s kind of critical approach.

McGrath's book would make a worthwhile focus for pastoral study groups and other forums of theological discussion. The book makes for good reading, with lots of wide-ranging insights on matters connected with his topics. The bibliography is a bit breathtaking, an indication of the level of McGrath's erudition. His command of historical material makes the work informative and provocative even when he occasionally goes off on a tangent. His treatment of Luther is insightful, except for one lapse, found in one of his notes in the back, where his misunderstanding of Luther's ecclesiology is puzzling. But that simply shows that McGrath, too, needs to be appropriated critically.

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Shattering the Myths of Darwinism. By Richard Milton. Rochester, Vermont: Park Street, 1997. 308 pages. \$24.95.

❖ Howler monkeys intimidate outsiders who venture too near their turf by swarming together, screaming so loudly that they can be heard three miles away, and throwing their own excrement at intruders. Their evolutionary significance lies in the fact that Darwinists participating in internet scientific discussion groups deliberately model their own behavior on the howlers whenever someone is perceived to depart from the true faith. Dr. Peter Nyikos, mathematics professor at the University of South Carolina, commented, "Even fellow believers in evolution, like myself, get flamed without mercy if they aren't good 'team players' for the 'howler monkey' side."

This anecdote appears towards the end of a book full of scientific evidence damaging to the Darwinian theory of evolution (that species develop, and indeed life itself appears, as the result of chance plus time plus genetic mutation plus "survival of the fittest"). The author is a science journalist and member of Mensa, the high-IQ organization. So far as I can tell, his book has received one review in the United States, a paragraph in *Library Journal* ("selective evidence," "twisted logic," "morass of falsehoods," and the like).

For my part, I enjoyed the author's demolition of carbon dating as a means of proving the antiquity of the earth and human relics (Oxford University dates South African rock paintings at 1200 years old, then a lady shows up to claim the paintings as her student's work, stolen by vandals); his explanation of the endlessly confirmed message of the fossils ("no transitional forms intermediate between the various species"); his refreshing observation that actual observation of nature does not reveal it to be ferociously "red in tooth and claw"—rather, most animals "do not fight, do not kill for food and do not compete aggressively for space in a way that results in the 'loser' dying out;" his discussion of Richard Dawkins's fallacious mathematical argumentation (162); his account of what the famous moths exposed to Manchester air pollution really mean; and the differing genetics that result in similar-appearing structures (thus crippling the Darwinian showpiece based on homology); and others. Some of these may be "dated illustrations" to which the *Library Journal* reviewer objects. Maybe the reason some of the same examples

frequently show up in anti-Darwinian books is that the Darwinians have never been able to refute them.

Milton, who states he has no religious beliefs of any kind (269), has come round to the conclusion of the Christian writer Philip Johnson: in Milton's words, neo-Darwinism "has ceased to be a scientific theory," because the evidence is against it and it is unable to make predictions about what experiment or discovery will show to be true, "and has been transformed into an ideology." Those who criticize the Darwinian establishment are likely not to be ignored but "quarantined." Milton himself was slated to write on evolution for the *London Times Educational Supplement*, but his piece was spiked after a leading evolutionary popularizer (Dawkins) leaned on the editor. Milton says the public pays for science, and so we, as consumers, have a right to demand something better than what we usually get.

Darwinists will be increasingly on the defensive in the next few years. Several books attacking Darwinian evolution have appeared recently from non-Christian publishers. The time was when Darwin made the universe safe for those who did not want to believe in God. Now, as the Darwinian straitjacket is loosened, we increasingly hear of a variety of non-Christian alternatives, which call upon quantum indeterminacy, "morphogenetic fields," or pantheistic divinities such as Gaia to account for life.

At the moment the Darwinian faith is still firmly entrenched. This book helps to show that this is so not for respectable scientific reasons. The book might be a useful one to put into the hands of an inquirer skeptical of anti-evolutionary books by religious believers. Scientifically literate Christians, however, had better get ready to oppose new, non-Darwinian strong delusions that are likely to command more attention in the near future.

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Baptism: My Adoption into God's Family. By Gaylin R. Schmeling. People's Bible Teachings. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999. 168 pages. Paper.

❖ The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) has produced two fine books on Baptism: A. Andrew Das's *Baptized into God's Family* (1991) and now one with a strikingly similar subtitle by the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) seminary. Schmeling's approach is direct and easy to follow. Fifteen chapters are divided into four sections: The Scriptural Basis of the Sacrament; the Blessing of the Sacrament; the Meaning of the Sacrament for Daily Life; and the Sacrament in Church History. Wherever I dipped into Schmeling's arguments, I found myself in agreement and pleasantly surprised, especially on those points where some Lutherans are weak. All children are to be baptized and not just those born of Christian parents. No distinction is made between infant and adult Baptism. Exorcisms have a place in the baptismal rite.

Several items struck me. If the following, "the Lord has instituted the public ministry . . ." (33), represents the official position of WELS, then a major hurdle in rapprochement with the

LCMS has been overcome. If not, Schmeling's views differ from those found in *Church-Mission-Ministry* in the same series. (See my review in *LOGIA* 6 [Epiphany 1997], 46–47.) In the final chapter, "Baptism in the Reformation and Modern Era," Roman Catholic (143–45) and Reformed (146–49) views are engaged, but omitted are much more dangerous positions of the Baptists, who make baptism an option. They do not even deserve a place in the index. The Reformed may baptize children for the wrong reason, but at least they do it. Catholics may believe that grace is infused, but they hold that baptism is necessary for salvation. While a Trinitarian formula is required (37), nothing is said about aberrant feministic or borderline formulas like "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the God who is the Mother of us all," used in such traditional Trinitarian churches as the ELCA (see *Lutheran Forum* 33, no. 1 [Easter/Spring 1999]: 8, 25). Not discussed is the related matter of publicly administered baptisms by women clergy. Since the WELS/ELS and the ELCA share a common turf in the upper Midwest, these are not irrelevant issues for the audience for whom the book is intended.

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The Divorce Culture. By Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited, 1996. 224 pages. Hardcover.

❖ It happened on vicarage. One morning as I prepared to go to the church, I heard the morning news program promote an upcoming interview with an author of a new book about divorce. Having read and written previously on this topic and tentatively (at that time) planning for divorce to be my treatise topic, I stayed tuned. The author, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, spoke for only a few minutes about her book *The Divorce Culture*, and I heard enough to know that I wanted to read it. She traced the growth of the divorce problem as society changed its idea about what was acceptable. In response to the interviewer's question about the most interesting thing she found in her research, she pointed to humankind's self-centered autonomy as the ultimate cause of the problem of divorce. Whether Whitehead knew it or not, she was echoing Jesus' comments in Matthew 19:8: "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning." Throughout her book, she reaches conclusions from a secular starting point that Christians might reach from a spiritual starting point. This review will not document all of Whitehead's discussion, but it will center on several points especially relevant to those in the church.

The hard hearts, the unbelieving hearts, or the hearts unwilling to submit to God might be described today as self-centered and autonomous. In her book, Whitehead pinpoints the lack of concern for others and the feeling that one is only accountable to oneself as key factors in the growth and spread of divorce, which came about, she writes, "only as the result of recent and revolutionary change" (3). She attributes this change to three overlapping factors: the emergence of new ideas about divorce,

promotion of divorce to an independent institution over family relationships, and a shift in thinking about marriage and parenthood (4). Whitehead does not offer "easy optimism" because, she writes, "the culture of divorce has generational momentum." Instead, she offers "a critique of the ideas behind current divorce trends," directing her argument "against the ideas about divorce that have gained ascendancy, won our support, and lodged in our consciousness as 'proven' and incontrovertible." Her book "challenges the popular idea of divorce as an individual right and freedom" (11).

Striking for growing theologians, Whitehead's discussion reveals that no one appears to be immune to these changes. Much as Jesus found that the religious leaders of the day did not hold to God's unchanging truth, so Whitehead found that even today's religions have dismissed the previous concerns about divorce as "old-fashioned and excessively moralistic" (6). Based on Don Browning's work, she reports that the Church of Christ, the Mennonites, and the Mormons are the only religious denominations still strongly anti-divorce today (201, note 11). Once, Whitehead claims, clergy were a part of a chorus of voices criticizing the spread of divorce (23). Eventually, however, that changed as clergy relinquished their role in serving God's institution of marriage and as they were sought out less for help (49). With the rise of the "discipline" of psychology, secular marriage counselors took on some of the pastors' duties, and the declining number of pastors doing counseling took an approach like that of the secular counselors. Whitehead quotes Specht and Courtney: "ministers and priests have come to look and act more and more like psychotherapists, just as psychotherapists have come to look and act more like priests" (48). She documents how pastoral counseling took a client-centered approach with clergy staying within the client's "value system." Marital dissolution was seen in psychological terms. Theologically challenging an individual's values was thought to be "damaging," "preachy," and "moralistic" (48–49). The fundamental presuppositions of each were mutually exclusive, for psychology held that "Marital breakdown was caused not by moral weakness or characterological defects but by individual personality problems" (40).

According to Whitehead, the influence of psychology changed the ethic surrounding divorce so that even social and moral obligations radically changed (66). Thus there was no basis for making judgments about the decision to divorce. The new ethic of divorce was morally relativistic: There could be no right or wrong reasons for divorce; there were only reasons, which it was the task of therapy to elicit and affirm (67).

The legal system in effect said that "individuals who are unhappy in their marriages have a 'right' to get a divorce and that it is unfair and inappropriate for the state to erect legal barriers to prevent them from exercising that right" (68). Soon after, so-called marriage counselors became divorce counselors with a bias toward divorce, where a belief in "a commitment for 'better or worse'" would be dismissed as a copout or an excuse for not making a decision based on one's own needs (71–72). Whitehead observes how the church was ill-suited to "respond to the individual needs and preferences in the dissolution of marriages." Soon, instead of faith in God to see the marriage through, one man reported he had "faith" in counseling (77).

Whitehead's primary concern in writing is to promote children's well-being (9). To this end, she cites numerous empirical studies that have demonstrated the ill effects of divorce on children. She even traces how children's literature has changed over the years not only to reflect then-current thinking on divorce but also to serve a therapeutic function to help children cope with divorce. Perhaps that is symptomatic of the lack of more traditional places for children to turn. Whitehead notes how moving around disrupts family and school life. Between those two in importance she lists the church (176). Anecdotal evidence suggests, and it stands to reason, that divorce also disrupts a child's relationship with this institution, which can have impact for eternity. Whitehead writes: "A culture of divorce soothes children with antidepressants, consoles them with storybooks on divorce, and watches over their lives from family court" (181). We might contrast that to the care and blessings of the Good Shepherd, which these children as a result of their disrupted family might be denied.

"With each passing year," Whitehead writes, "the culture of divorce becomes more deeply entrenched" (11). As the divorce culture became more entrenched, it began to externalize the problem. The person divorcing did not have the problem, but the person critical of the person divorcing had the problem: "divorcism."

Expressive divorce did not simply argue that the social world should remove the impediments to divorce and remain neutral about its practice. It made a more presumptuous claim: it sought the good opinion of others. One of the leading academic exponents of this argument was University of California therapist Constance Ahrons, author of the 1994 book *The Good Divorce*. According to Ahrons, it is not divorce itself but "divorcism"—a set of harshly discriminatory and cruelly stigmatizing attitudes and stereotypes—that makes divorcing so personally traumatic (73).

This might be characterized as shifting from an expectation of tolerance, to expecting equal rights, to asserting supremacy. Again, most likely without knowing it, Whitehead demonstrates how divorce has followed the progression of error outlined by C. P. Krauth in *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*.

Truth started with *tolerating*; it comes to be merely tolerated, and that only for a time. Error claims a preference for its judgments on all disputed points. It puts men into positions, not as at first in spite of their departure from the Church's faith, but in consequence of it (196).

From the outset, Whitehead observes how the broader moral assumptions need to be considered (9–10). She closes in that vein, suggesting "the goal should be to change the way we think about the meaning and purpose of divorce" (188). To that end, Whitehead offers two steps towards dismantling the culture of divorce: to acknowledge divorce as a family and social event in order to address the social problem; and to "repeal the language and ethic of expressive divorce and treat divorce as a morally as well as socially consequential event" (189). Then, she posits, clergy and others "will be more likely to attend to the claims and interests of children"; there will be "a stronger effort at educating the public about the risks of divorce to children"; and there will be a "greater societal effort

aimed at preventing the dissolution of [marriages with children]" (190). Since she claims that in recent years unhappy parents and family professionals have "all but abandoned" efforts to strengthen and preserve marriage (190), Whitehead charges clergy to "renew their commitment and redouble their efforts to provide pastoral care to married couples with children, especially at times when marriages are likely to be stressed" (191).

As throughout the book, Whitehead, a secular author, concludes by touching on points that spiritual caregivers would make. Indeed, to this author, one of the most striking things was her perception and uncanny ability to diagnose the problem, even if her etiology and prescription are somewhat lacking. Witness the following:

To be sure, public policy and the bully pulpit can be used to support and encourage an effort toward strengthening marriages with children. But the breakdown of marriage was not caused by changes in the tax code or divorce laws, and it is unlikely to be resolved by the legislative actions of Congress or the states. If men and women are to find a way to share the tasks of parenthood in marriage, that way can *come about only through a change of heart and mind*, a new consciousness about the meaning of commitment itself, and a turning away from the contemporary model of relationships offered by Madison Avenue, Wall Street, or Hollywood (192, emphasis added).

From where can this change of heart and mind come? An orthodox Christian knows, and it appears that Whitehead does, as well.

A voluntary pledge taken in abject ignorance of the future, imposing lifelong obligations and secured only by mutual affections, is an extravagant thing, impossible and unsustainable without the cultivation of certain *beliefs*, habits, and shared understandings about the nature and purpose of such voluntary bonds (194, emphasis added).

And:

If we are to strengthen marriage as the central institution for child-rearing, therefore, it may be necessary to recover fluency in the language and ideas of another American tradition, one deriving from our civic and *religious life* and our identity as a nation of immigrants. It is in this tradition that our aspirations toward individual perfectibility and happiness are linked to the pursuit of the well-being of others. It is this tradition that recognizes the entirety of a 'for better, for worse' commitment in our lives as family members, neighbors, and citizens, summoning us together in bad as well as good times. Without such abiding commitments, we would not be able to endure the disasters, losses, and personal tragedies that befall us and that are part of our human condition. Our civic and *religious traditions* offer a vision of the obligated self, voluntarily bound to a set of roles, duties, and responsibilities, and of a nation where sacrifice for the next generation guides adult ambitions and purposes and where wholeness of self is found in service and commitment to others (194–195, emphasis added).

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's *The Divorce Culture* is required reading for anyone who wants to better understand the various forces that have conspired in society to produce the divorce problem we face today, the need for change, and the challenges such change must overcome.

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The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts.

Edited by Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999. 652 Pages. Hardcover.

❖ The title of this work holds forth an exciting promise. To have at hand in your own library transcriptions of *The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* (all the extant Greek manuscripts of the first three Christian centuries) at a cost of only around \$50.00 is a prospect to engender interest, if not excitement, in anyone with concern for the text of the New Testament. Sadly, the book falls short of fulfilling its promise. I will provide a brief description of the structure and contents of the book before discussing its shortcomings.

With sewn leaves bound in a hard binding, rather than the glue strip on the back of individual sheets (the "hard cover paperbacks" that pass for hardcover books these days), the volume is made to stand up to years of use. The introduction provides instructive and helpful information for those who do not work with ancient manuscripts as their main field of endeavor. Information on such topics as the ancient practice of copying manuscripts, palaeography, and dating of manuscripts is included. The intent of the book is to include transcriptions of all of the extant New Testament manuscripts up to A.D. 300. Sixty manuscripts are included. There is not universal agreement on the dating of all manuscripts, so there is a relatively small number of manuscripts that some scholars feel should have been included and are not, and others that were included which some scholars might believe should not have been. Nevertheless, the bulk of the manuscripts transcribed in the volume are generally agreed to have been produced in that period, and there are only a small number that scholars would argue were produced between A.D. 100–300 that are not included.

The book contains photographs of forty-four manuscripts. It might well be worth the investment if for no other reason than to have photographs of two-thirds of the manuscripts from this early period. Introductions for each manuscript provide helpful information on its contents, date, provenance, housing location, bibliography, and textual character.

The complaint against this work is that its transcriptions contain far too many errors. There are, as is to be expected in a first printing, typographical errors, but there are also a number of outright blunders, some of which can be identified by a novice comparing the transcriptions with the photographs of the manuscripts. There are instances of letters omitted or added, for example. In his review article, D.C. Parker concludes:

The final judgment on a book of transcriptions will be of its accuracy. It sometimes requires extensive use of such work before one can form that final judgment. It may be the case that some of the transcriptions here are acceptable, but there are enough errors in the ones that I have examined for one to lack confidence in the others ("Review of Comfort and Barrett, *The Complete Text of the Earliest new Testament Manuscripts*," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism*, para. 34).

The transcriptions are, of course, the main reason for the book. It is a great disappointment that as presented these cannot be relied upon. While I feel strongly that a high level of accuracy in such works is essential for scholarly pursuits in the field of textual criticism, I am still pleased to have this volume on my shelves. In the introduction to each of the manuscripts there is a wealth of information that I would otherwise not have available. As I have stated above, the included photographs themselves are of great value. The danger is, of course, that one might purchase and use the book without being aware of the errors it contains.

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The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade. By Thomas Lynch. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. xx + 202 pages. \$23.00.

❖ Here in Fairgrove, without any notice at all by the world, I just put another one in the ground. A fifty-three-year-old man; married, two sons, four grandchildren. He used to tell people I was the best pastor they ever had, and they had better be good to me, because I was a rising star, and they would never keep me. He had me over to his house for dinner. He took me golfing. He befriended me, but never called me by my first name. To him I was always "Pastor." He got sick the end of April; his funeral was June 13th. When it came, I wanted to cry, but I had to preach. I was glad that I had nearly finished Thomas Lynch's book.

In 198 pages Thomas Lynch, the funeral director and poet turned essayist, cuts through much of our culture's nonsense about death, often to my strong agreement, but frequently also to my surprise, and offers real comfort, but no answers. He uses the dead to teach the living about life. His Roman Catholicism is not very pious, and his explanations of the faith and eternity would probably not even sit well with our local, and famously liberal, Bishop Utner of the Saginaw diocese. So do not read this book to learn the theology of death. He seems to hold the typical funeral director's belief that there must be something out there for the dead, and that only a truly evil person, like Hitler or Stalin, would be denied bliss. Heaven, Valhalla, or the Fiddlers' Green is all the same. But there is comfort and insight here nonetheless. It is in the analysis of death as reality, and of life as worthwhile. Even we professionals need a dose of that now and then.

His direct comments concerning those called to preach prove quite insightful:

Uncles find nickels behind our ears. Magicians pull rabbits from out of hats. Any good talker can preach pie in the sky or break out the warm fuzzies when the time is right. But only by faith do the dead arise and walk among us or speak to us in our soul's dark night.

So rabbi and preacher, pooh-bah and high priest do well to understand the deadly pretext of their vocation. But for our mortality there would be no need for churches, mosques, temples, or synagogues. Those clerics who regard funerals as so much fuss and bother, a waste of time better spent in prayer, a waste of money better spent on stained glass or bell towers, should not wonder for whom the bell tolls. They may have heard the call but they've missed the point. The afterlife begins to make the most sense *after life*—when someone we love is dead on the premises. The *bon vivant* abob in his hot tub needs heaven like another belly button. Faith is for the heartbroken, the embittered, the doubting, and the dead. And funerals are the venue at which such folks gather. Some among the clergy have learned to like it. Thus they present themselves at funerals with a good cheer and an unambiguous sympathy that would seem like duplicity in anyone other than a person of faith. I count among the great blessings of my calling that I have known men and women of such bold faith, such powerful witness, that they stand upright between the dead and the living and say, "Behold I tell you a mystery" (81).

All of the essays, however, draw the conclusion, though not so directly, that all of us, clergy and laity alike, live with the inevitability of death. Lynch's writing reminds me of Garrison Keller's explanation of why we do not laugh at the recently beheaded chicken's hi-jinks. It is something along the lines of, "Life and death are serious. The chicken gave its life for yours, so that you could eat. We don't kill for sport. It ain't funny." Likewise, the death of a human is no trivial matter and deserves some serious, and reverent, attention. In fact, all of our lives ought to be lived with the realization that they are fleeting.

Besides his comments on the conduct of funerals, Lynch provides much that can easily be transferred to the pulpit. His humor is as outrageous at times as it is funny, and generally borders on irreverent, but it always makes its point. His exposure of the flush toilet as denial of life's unpleasant realities, and at least a good example of how we try to fool ourselves, if not the very beginning of modern man's flying away from anything difficult, might be useable, as is his exposure of his famous neighbor Jack Kevorkian as sham artist:

(It is not suicide.) We've always had that. It's the *assistance* that there is a market for. Janet Adkins didn't need the help. Not with the killing part. She had the physical resources to swallow pills, pull a trigger, start a car, turn on the gas stove and thus avail herself of traditional methods. She had the psychological resources to overcome her fear of dying, a fear like the fear of any unknown. She had the spiritual resources to understand that God or Whatever Is Out There would, by virtue of its job description, understand her. What she

lacked was the voice to shout down her own voices that whispered to her the case for living—part nature part nurture, the voice that says to take life, however painful and imperfect, does damage to the rest of life. Dr. Jack with his half-baked rationality and his jerry-rigged contraption—his Thanatron—and his ethically neutered lexicon made Janet his *patient* and poison, the *treatment*, and what they were doing, *medicide*; proving yet again the modern axiom that the big lie is easier to sell than the small one. By all the equipment he made it seem that his assistance had to do with *method*. By the mid-afternoon in early June in north Oakland County, in the back of his van, it all must have seemed normal, natural, a right and entitlement, a matter of choice, protected by the Constitution, maybe someday worthy of public funding. "Have a nice trip," he had told her, after she had done her part, as if she were off to the Bahamas or the Berkshires (163–164).

Nearly every page of this National Book Award Finalist has something on it that jumps out as sermon illustration material. Not in the way of Concordia Publishing House's *Pulpit Resources* stories and anecdotes, but more in the way of teaching us how to analyze life from the point of view of death, and not just heaven. So that rather than telling a story or a joke along the lines of "You never see a hearse pulling a U-haul," the reader of this collection of essays might be able to say something about the way a hearse processes through the streets, or to consider the role of comforter and mourner as they actually play out in reverse of what we expect, in a way that might cause his hearers to think.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

The 1529 Holy Week and Easter Sermons of Dr. Martin Luther. Translated by Irving L. Sandberg. Annotated with an introduction by Timothy J. Wengert. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.

❖ These eighteen sermons preached by Luther from Palm Sunday through Easter Wednesday in 1529 demonstrate the vitality of the Reformer's preaching of Christ crucified. These sermons are especially significant in light of the fact that they were originally preached in the same year that Luther was crafting the Catechisms. The first six sermons are directed toward instructing communicants on benefits of a faithful reception of Christ's Supper. The remaining twelve sermons are evangelical proclamations of Christ's atoning work. Wengert's introduction to these sermons provides not only a good description of the historical circumstances and key themes, but a fine summary of Luther's overall approach to preaching.

Where in the World is God? By Harold Senkbeil. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999.

❖ Dr. Beverly K. Yanke, a member of the congregation served by Pastor Senkbeil (Elm Grove Lutheran Church, Elm Grove, Wisconsin), has distilled material from her pastor's sermons into seventy devotional articles. While much contemporary devotional writing draws the reader inward, these meditations anchor the reader in God's own delivery of salvation in baptism, preaching, the word of absolution, and the supper. These devotions are marked by a vivid use of biblical imagery and a pastoral tone. Each devotional is prefaced with a scriptural text and concludes with a prayer, most often one of the church's collects. *Where in the World is God?* is a welcome addition to the deposit of Lutheran devotional literature.

The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church. Volume 1: The Biblical Period. Volume 2: The Patristic Age. By Hughes Oliphant Old. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.

❖ Hughes Oliphant Old, an authority on worship in the Reformed tradition and a member of the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton, has undertaken to prepare a multivolume

history of the place of Scripture (both read and preached) in the liturgical life of the church. Volume 1 traces this history from the reading and preaching of the Torah in Israel through early Christian worship in the third century. Volume 2 picks up with Cyril of Jerusalem and concludes with Gregory the Great. Old's generally impressive summary and analysis of the place of Scripture is only occasionally marred by the interjection of personal opinion that tends to reflect his Reformed bias (elevation of word over sacrament). Nevertheless, the first two volumes in this series give us reason to believe that this work will be a standard reference work for the study of the history of biblical interpretation, liturgy, and homiletics.

Hebrews. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. By Thomas G. Long. Louisville: John Knox, 1997.

❖ This volume is not a technical, exegetical commentary, but rather a homiletical exposition of the Book of Hebrews. Long, the Francis Landey Patton Professor of Preaching and Worship at Princeton, understands Hebrews to be addressed to a group of struggling, exhausted Christians in danger of apostasy. According to Long, Hebrews is more of an evocative and dialogical homily than an epistle.

JTP

LOGIA Forum

SHORT STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

LUTHER AND LONGFELLOW

While meandering through old texts with which we hope to shore up our curriculum at the Academy, I came across the Concordia Edition of the Bobbs Merrill Eighth Reader, originally published in 1923. Clara B. Baker (Professor, Curriculum and Method, National Elementary College, Chicago) and Edna D. Baker (President, National Elementary College, Chicago) compiled these readings, and A. C. Stellhorn (Executive Secretary, General School Board, Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod) revised and adapted the text for use in Lutheran schools.

Here, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow pictures Dr. Martin Luther at the Castle of Wartburg during his temporary “imprisonment,” meditating over the contents of his battle hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” or possibly in the act of composing it. This may be historically correct, though the hymn was not published until 1527. Note that each stanza of the hymn is followed by a meditation of Luther on what he has written, and how this leads him over to the next stanza. Pages 18–24. Included at the end are the Study Notes as they appear in the textbook.

IM

Our God, a Tower of Strength is He,
A goodly wall and weapon;
From all our need He helps us free
That now to us doth happen.
The old evil foe
Doth in earnest grow,
In grim armor dight,
Much guile and great might;
On earth there is none like him.

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O yes; a tower of strength, indeed,
A present help in all our need,
A sword and buckler is our God!
Innocent men have walked unshod
O'er burning ploughshares, and have trod
Unharm'd on serpents in their path,
And laugh'd to scorn the Devil's wrath!
Safe in this Wartburg tower I stand,
Where God hath led me by the hand,
And look down, with a heart at ease,
Over the pleasant neighborhoods,
Over the vast Thuringian Woods,
With flash of river and gloom of trees,
With castles crowning the dizzy heights,
And farms and pastoral delights,
And the morning pouring everywhere
Its golden glory on the air.
Safe, yes, safe am I here at last,
Safe from the overwhelming blast
Of the mouths of Hell, that followed me fast,
And the howling demons of despair
That hunted me like a beast to his lair.

IIM

Of our own might we nothing can
We soon are unprotected;
There fighteth for us the right
Whom God himself elected.
Who is He, ye exclaim?
Christus is His name,
Lord of Sabaoth,
Very God in troth;
The field He holds forever.

Nothing can vex the Devil more
Than the name of Him whom we adore.
Therefore doth it delight me best
To stand in the choir among the rest,
With the great organ trumpeting
Through its metallic tubes, and sing:
Et verbum caro factum est!
[And the word was made flesh]

*These words the Devil cannot endure,
For he knoweth their meaning well!
Him they trouble and repel,
Us they comfort and allure,
And happy it were, if our delight
Were as great as his affright!
Yea, music is the Prophets' art;
Among the gifts that God hath sent,
One of the most magnificent!
It calms the agitated heart;
Temptations, evil thoughts, and all
The passions that disturb the soul
Are quelled by its divine control,
As the Evil Spirit fled from Saul,
And his distemper was allayed,
When David took his harp and played.*

IIIM

*This world may full of devils be,
All ready to devour us;
Yet not so sore afraid are we,
They shall not overpower us.
This World's Prince, howe'er
Fierce he may appear,
He can harm us not,
He is doomed, God wot!
One little word can slay him!*

*Incredible it seems to some,
And to myself a mystery,
That such weak flesh and blood as we,
Armed with no other shield or sword
Or other weapon than the Word,
Should combat, and should overcome,
A spirit powerful as he!
He summons forth the Pope of Rome
With all his diabolic crew,
His shorn and shaven retinue
Of priests and children of the dark;
"Kill! kill!" they cry, "the Heresiarch,
Who rouseth up all Christendom
Against us, and at one fell blow
Seeks the whole Church to overthrow!"
Not yet; my hour is not yet come.*

*Yesterday, in an idle mood,
Hunting with others in the wood,
I did not pass the hours in vain,
For, in the very heart of all
The joyous tumult raised around,
Shouting of men, and baying of hound,
And the bugle's blithe and cheery call,
And echoes answering back again,
From crags of the distant mountain chain,
In the very heart of this, I found
A mystery of grief and pain.*

*It was an image of the power
Of Satan, hunting the world about,
With his nets and traps and well-trained dogs,
His bishops and priests and theologues,
And all the rest of the rabble rout,
Seeking whom he may devour!
Enough have I had of hunting hares,
Enough of these hours of idle mirth,
Enough of nets and traps and gins!
The only hunting of any worth
Is where I can pierce with javelins
The cunning foxes and wolves and bears,
The whole iniquitous troop of beasts,
The Roman Pope and the Roman priests
That sorely infest and afflict the earth!*

*Ye nuns, ye singing birds of the air!
The fowler hath caught you in his snare,
And keeps you safe in his gilded cage
Singing the song that never tires,
To lure down others from their nests;
How ye flutter and beat your breasts,
Warm and soft with young desires,
Against the cruel, pitiless wires,
Reclaiming your lost heritage
Behold! a hand unbars the door, —
Ye shall be captives held no more.*

IVM

*The word they shall perforce let stand,
And little thanks they merit!
For He is with us in the land,
With gifts of his own Spirit!
Though they take our life,
Goods, honor, child and wife,
Let these pass away,
Little gain have they;
The Kingdom still remaineth!*

*Yea, it remaineth forevermore,
However Satan may rage and roar;
Though often he whispers in my ears:
"What if thy doctrines false should be?"
And wrings from me a bitter sweat.
Then I put him to flight with jeers,
Saying: "Saint Satan! pray for me,
If thou thinkest I am not saved yet!"
And my mortal foes that lie in wait
In every avenue and gate!
As to that odious monk, John Tetzel,
Hawking about his hollow wares
Like a huckster at village fairs, Wetzel,
And those mischievous fellows,
Campanus, Carlstadt, Martin Cellarius,
And all the busy, multifarious
Heretics, and disciples of Arius,*

*Half-learned, dunce-bold, dry and hard,
They are not worthy of my regard,
Poor and humble as I am.*

*But ah! Erasmus of Rotterdam,
He is the vilest miscreant
That ever walked this world below!
A Momus, making his mock and mow
At Papist and at Protestant,
Sneering at St. John and St. Paul,
At God and man, at one and all;
And yet as hollow and false and drear,
As a cracked pitcher to the ear,
And ever growing worse and worse!
Whenever I pray, I pray for a curse
On Erasmus the Insincere!*

*Philip Melancthon! thou alone
Faithful among the faithless known,
Thee I hail, and only thee!
Behold the record of us three!
Res et verba Philippus,
[Philip has the facts and the words.]
Res sine verbis Lutherus;
[Luther has the facts without the words.]
Erasmus verba sine re!
[Erasmus has the words without the facts.]*

*My Philip, prayest thou for me?
Lifted above all earthly care,
From these high regions of the air,
Among the birds that day and night
Upon the branches of tall trees
Sing their lauds and litanies,
Praising God with all their might,
My Philip, unto thee I write.*

*My Philip! thou who knowest best
All that is passing in this breast;
The spiritual agonies,
The inward deaths, the inward hell,
And the divine new births as well,
That surely follow after these,
As after winter follows spring;
My Philip, in the nighttime sing
This song of the Lord I send to thee,
And I will sing it for thy sake,
Until our answering voices make
A glorious antiphony,
And choral chant of victory!*

Study Notes

Luther's hymn. Find out just when *A Mighty Fortress* was written. *The New International Encyclopedia* gives the date as 1521. When was the hymn first published? How do you like Longfellow's translation of it? Compare it with the version in your Hymnal and, if you know German, with the original.

Longfellow knew the German language, and translated a number of German literary classics. *A Mighty Fortress* has become world-renowned. Try to find instances where it was given prominence by Lutherans, or non-Lutherans. Who wrote the melody for this hymn? Do you know that the musical world includes Luther among the prominent musicians of Germany? You may find some evidences of this.

The poem. In what situation is Luther here presented? Was this before or after his heroic stand at the Diet of Worms? By whom and why was Luther held at the Wartburg? Observe how the great dangers which beset Luther at the time are reflected in the hymn. Does one find any trace of fear in the hymn? Does Longfellow say at any place that Luther feared his enemies? Why was Luther so confident?

Who is the speaker in the remarks which Longfellow added to each stanza? Did Luther actually say what the poet places on his lips? If not, whose thoughts and words are they? Was Longfellow a Lutheran? Observe carefully whether he has given the true spirit and faith of Luther. Where did Longfellow get these thoughts? Do you suppose it was necessary for him to have an intimate knowledge of the history of the Reformation?

Things to do. List words and expressions unfamiliar to you, and with the aid of the dictionary find their exact meaning in the poem. List the names of people mentioned in the poem, and tell who they were, or what they had to do with Luther.

CREATIVE WORSHIP A LA 1732

This Forum has occasionally contained spoofs, but what follows is no fabricated satire. "The Litany of the Life, Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ," by Nicolas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf, as reproduced in Pietists: Selected Writings, found in the Classics of Western Spirituality series (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), pages 296–300. This volume was edited by Peter C. Erb with a Preface by F. Ernest Stoeffler, translated from Hans Uerner, Der Pietismus (Glabeck, 1961), 56–59. "L:" designates "Leader" [sic] and "C:" designates "Congregation." Note, too, that it is the congregation who begins the litany, not the "leader."

It takes Zinzendorf a few lines to warm up, but by the time you get to the words "By your blood, death, and suffering, give us a warm, completely submissive heart," you may have a difficult time wondering if this litany wasn't written last week by a "leadership initiative" group or "congregational services" board.

- ☐ Praised be Jesus, Lamb of God!
May he be adored forever!
How mightily and how marvelously are we saved by him.
Praised be his grace which lives and has breath, and
lets his praise be sounded in heaven and on earth.
He is worthy of this.
- ☐ Praised be Jesus who though he was in the form of God
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being

born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father [Phil 2:6–11].

- © Indeed he is eternally worthy of this, that in a thousand ways all beings in Heaven and on earth praise him.
- ℟ Lord God Father in Heaven, you so loved the world that you gave your only son that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
Lord God Son, Savior of the world, like a human child you took on flesh and blood. Lord God Holy Spirit, you came to him and remained in him; in him the complete fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.
- © Holy Trinity, be blessed because of the Lamb of God.
Amen, Halleluja!
Halleluja!
Amen, Halleluja!
- ℟ Christ came here in the flesh from the Father. He is God above all, praised in eternity. He left us an image which we are to follow in his footsteps. He was like to his brothers in all ways, because he was merciful and a true High Priest before God. He was tempted in all ways like us, but without sin. Because he suffered and was tempted, he can help those who are tempted.
- © Lamb of God, holy Lord God, hear our prayer of need; have mercy upon us.
- ℟ From the sin of not believing in you,
From all sins of the flesh and the spirit,
From all self-righteousness,
From all lukewarmness and drunkenness,
From all indifference to your wounds and death.
- © Defend us, dear Lord God. There is nothing in us but Poverty. By your blood, death, and suffering give us a warm, completely submissive heart.
- ℟ O Immanuel, Savior of the World
- © Make yourself known to us!
- ℟ By your holy incarnation and birth
- © Make us love our humanity!
- ℟ By your poverty and servanthood
- © Teach us to be lowly in this world!
- ℟ By your powerlessness and weakness
- © Strengthen our weakness!
- ℟ By your gracious childlikeness
- © Help us reach the joy of children!
- ℟ By your correct understanding of the Scripture
- © Make firm the word of truth in us!
- ℟ By your holy simplicity
- © Make our hearts and minds simple!
- ℟ By your obedience and servanthood
- © Help us to be obedient in heart
Make me like in mind to you,
as an obedient child, meek and still.
Jesus, now, help me that I might be obedient as you.

- ℟ By your holy life on earth
- © Teach us to walk peacefully!
- ℟ By your endurance and industry
- © Help us patiently endure!
- ℟ By your faithfulness
- © Make us faithful on our part!
- ℟ By your pilgrim life on earth
- © Teach us to be at home everywhere!
- ℟ By your watching and praying
- © Teach us to be wakeful in prayer!
- ℟ By your humility, meekness, and patience
- © Make us proud to bear your yoke!
- ℟ By your mildness and mercy
- © Teach us to be merciful!
- ℟ By your zeal for your Father's house
- © Make us zealous for your kingdom!
Now, our King, you have our heart and mind!
We are able to do little but we bring ourselves to you,
so that each of us in our whole person might read
your holy image.
- ℟ Christ, Lamb of God, you who take away the sins
of the world
- © Give us your peace!
- ℟ By your willingness to die
- © Give us the mystery of your love!
- ℟ By your holy baptism of blood
- © Set us forth upon God's earth!
- ℟ By your tears and cry of dread
- © Console us in dread and pain!
You shed so many tears for us,
So many drops of blood flowed out from you,
So many are the voices which pray for us and plead for us.
- ℟ By your head crowned with thorns
- © Teach us the nature of the kingdom of the Cross!
- ℟ By your outstretched hands on the Cross
- © Be open to us at all times!
- ℟ By your nail-pierced hands
- © Show us where our names stand written!
- ℟ By your wounded feet
- © Make our path certain!
- ℟ By your pale beautiful lips
- © Speak to us consolation and peace!
- ℟ By the last look of your breaking eyes
- © Lead us into the Father's hands!
Holy Lord God,
Holy strong God,
Holy merciful Savior,
You eternal God.
Never let us fall
From the consolation in your death!
Kyrie eleison.
- ℟ By the form of your suffering and death
- © Remain continually before our eyes!
- ℟ May the impression of your passing
- © Be before us always.
- ℟ May your martyrdom and blood
- © Nourish us to eternal life!

- ① May the permanent testament of death
 - © Be a rule for your heirs!
 - ① May the Word of your Cross
 - © Remain our confession of faith!
- We wish to remain by the Cross, and to follow your martyrdom until we see you face to face.
- ① Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing [Rev. 5:12].
 - © From eternity to eternity. Amen.
- Therefore you, heart without comparison, in your beautiful death you are never to leave our sight until we look upon you forever. In the hymn "Jesus Is Without Compare" our voices are never to tire until they are formed together in the highest congregation.

VIEKER INSTALLATION

A sermon preached by the Reverend Dr. Norman Nagel on the occasion of the installation of Rev. Jon Vieker, Friday of Pentecost 22, A.D. 1999, based on 2 Timothy 3:14–4:5.

Two things are given young Pastor Timothy for his work, his ministry: apostolic doctrine and the Holy Scriptures. That is what the scrolls of the Old Testament were called in the liturgy. You have been given no less generously. At your ordination you were pledged to Scripture and the Confessions. Thus you too are equipped for every good work that a man of God is put there for. "Man of God" is the Old Testament title for the prophets. Their work was to deliver the words which the Lord gave them to deliver. Hence the Lutheran *Predigtamt* for the Office of the Holy Ministry. However, before he gets to more of that, the Apostle speaks with the weight of putting under oath.

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ who is the judge of the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom." If that makes you tremble, you are yet in the company of the confessors of the Book of Concord, which concludes: "In the presence of God and all Christians, of those living now and those who come after us," this "is our doctrine, faith, and confession in which by God's grace we shall appear with intrepid hearts before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and give answer for it" (SD XII, 40).

Thus then also in the *Predigtamt* "with intrepid heart." The first thing with the *Predigtamt* is the *Predigt*. "Preach the word." That involves everything else. "He who hears you hears me," and the Apology goes on to say you had better be jolly well sure it is the Lord's words that are being heard and not just your two bits' worth (xxviii, 19). The Lord can be trusted to work his words. That is why the liturgy has traditionally been 98 percent Scripture. And your special gift with the words is the music that goes best in their service. First the words, the Lord's words. Preach them, whether people want to hear them or do not want to hear them. Convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. What is to be taught is given: apostolic doctrine and Holy Scripture.

That is "sound doctrine," wholesome, the real thing. If you do not want that, then you have to hunt for something you do want, but what do you want? You collect opinions. You accumulate for yourself teachers who say what you like to hear them say, and they can tell such fascinating stories. Just as one idol is never enough. Pluralistic, consumeristic, what sells. Yesterday's *St. Louis Post Dispatch* characterized our society with "the impulse to be entertained." Timothy had to face it, and you do too.

"As for you, be steady." A steady man can be a patient man, having patience that goes then with the teaching. Itching ears are not cured simply by diagnosis, but by the sound doctrine, the Lord's words. They alone can do the sound job, cleansing, curing, enlivening, invigorating, rejoicing. For his words are alive with the Holy Spirit to work their work on us, into us, through our ears, but not stopping at the ears just to tickle them, but going in, deep in.

"Be steady, endure suffering." Patience does that. Never may your impatience hinder our Lord's having his way with his words. Only what he achieves with his gospel is what lasts. You are only worth what he does with the gospel he puts you here to deliver. Never for your own sake.

"Do the work of an evangelist; fulfil your ministry." Ministry and work here run together. For the work of the ministry our Lord gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. All are in the work of the ministry with titles which indicate something specific they are there for. Today a specific man with specific gifts is put to a specific task in the work of the ministry. "Do the work of an evangelist; fulfil your ministry." Amen.

REBUKING PIETISM

What follows is an excerpt from Valentin Ernst Loescher's Timotheus Verinus—Part II (translated by Robert J. Koester), published by Northwestern Publishing House, 1998, pages 122–125. In his introduction to the volume, John M. Brenner writes, "The last few decades have seen an increased interest among scholars in the subject of Lutheran Pietism, the movement that grew up in opposition to Lutheran Orthodoxy in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany. Pietism was a reaction to the religious polemics of the day, the over-intellectualization of Christianity in the pulpits and classrooms of Germany, and a perceived lack of spiritual life in the state church congregations. Pietism made religious experience more important than Christian doctrine and stressed sanctification more than justification. Not enough attention, however, has been given to the Orthodox Lutheran response to Pietism. Historians have devoted much print to the leaders of Pietism like Philipp Jacob Spener (1635–1705) and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), but few words have been written about their most capable opponent, Valentin Loescher."

1. Our account of Pietism has now been brought to a close. God grant that this is the last time I will have to write about it. May God heal the breach of shattered Zion!

In chapter one we dealt with the word "Pietism" in order to put away all ambiguity and double meaning. In the second and

third chapters we dealt with this church evil in a general way and also described its current makeup and distinguishing characteristics. We also took a look at its nature and the different kinds of Pietism that exist. From the fourth through the thirteenth chapters we described in detail its beginning and how it progressed. In the fourteenth chapter we made various necessary observations about this beginning and progression, as well as the activities associated with them. In the fifteenth chapter we presented our opponent's objections to how we recorded the history of Pietism.

Whoever still doubts that along with an ever-increasing number of fanatics, there exists an evil called Pietism, must have his eyes shut and be unwilling to bear the shame of Joseph or unwilling to be concerned about it.

2. Since this evil exists, we must also find a remedy for it and use this remedy, unless we want to let the church and its souls be condemned. It is the obligation of the past and present leaders and teachers of our church to oppose this evil in the most fitting way possible in order to keep our faith from becoming extinct. This cannot be denied. But how can this happen when people say that this sort of opposition can be carried on through silence and that the matter and times do not allow us to use rebuking or public refutation? As far as the matter and times are concerned, I acknowledge that they are dreadful and have been spoiled to the point that we should show patience with the many teachers who find the attacks leveled against them too difficult to endure. But we should hope and pray that the Lord would strengthen them with his grace and that the wickedness be diverted from its course or made less severe. As far as the matter itself is concerned, I would be acting against my knowledge and my conscience if I gave it my approval.

Necessity and true interest for the Evangelical Lutheran Church bids me go in a different direction than my opponents wish. I ask the reader to ponder what I had to refer to above in chapter six. If we don't want to fall back into indifferentism, millennialism, fanaticism, and similar corrupt ways, we must oppose Pietism. It is simply not true that evil can be lessened by teachers remaining silent. In the end it will be lost. The entire Bible and church history go against the idea that we will win if we remain silent. It is reason, philosophy, and politics that influence us in that direction.

3. Some say we must rebuke only heretics, sectarians, and public errorists. They speak partly from a lack of knowledge and partly against better knowledge. To be sure, we should primarily rebuke such publicly harmful people—but not just them. We should not use God's Word only to drive wild boars out of the vineyard (who root up the vineyard), but the little foxes as well, for they also do it harm.

Moreover, there are various levels of rebuke. The highest and strongest form should be used against public enemies of the Word—atheists, slanderers, heretics, and errorists. But there are still other methods and levels of rebuke that one must use in approaching suspicious teachers and false brothers. Such rebuke can and ought to be given without implying that we are calling our brothers heretics, and without confusing it with the kind of rebuking one must use against heretics.

Each evil religious situation, which is what Pietism is, demands our rebuke. Rebuke is a necessary means of opposition. Rebuking that speaks about specifics is also necessary, because Pietism is a series of specific events. Yet it must be used with certain restrictions.

Whoever denies that this should be done goes against the apostle Paul, who considered it necessary. He said, "I did not yield to the false brothers for even one hour so that the truth of the Gospel might endure" (Gal 4:5). He was so intent on this course of action that he found it necessary to oppose Peter publicly, who personally was not a suspected teacher, but who yielded to human weakness and gave the false brothers room to express themselves.

To reject rebuking is to reject the Holy Spirit's general command given through Paul that one should refute "the opposer" and not just the coarsest kind of heretic (Tit 1:9). Such a person also rejects the Holy Spirit's admonition to "separate from those who cause divisions and scandals that are *in addition* to the teaching we have learned" (Ro 16:17).

He does not take to heart the church's benefit or harm in this matter. To that extent, he is serving lies and unrighteousness. He promotes a certain kind of indifferentism. Indeed, since the external security and preservation of our church demands that the organization of 1624 not be lost or altered, he must be opposed and suppressed. (Loss or adulteration of this order can easily happen at the hand of suspect teachers, as it has sadly happened so many times in the past.) Nevertheless, this phrase applies here: "The proper method lies in the circumstances." Being quiet and speaking out both have their time and place, the former when the suspicious activity is minor or concealed, and the latter when it grows larger and breaks out into the open.

4. I know well enough that there will be various objections raised to what I have said. But they are easy to answer.

One person said that it is unnecessary, or it is unimportant, or it is a kind of spiritual domineering when a teacher becomes concerned about the teachings of other servants and theologians of the church and closely examines their work. I say, these were the very statements of the Crypto-Arians (who are still very dangerous) and of the Ursacians, Valentians, Auxentians, and others who spoke at the Council of Rimini.

Another might say, one ought not try to erect divisions, and one should spare other people as much as possible. I reply, we must by all means look into the teaching of those who have risen to prominent positions and with whom we must be concerned. (I include their disciples, also.)

Another says, to deal too sharply with another person makes for jagged relationships; one can do too much of a good thing (i.e., rebuking), and the middle road is the best. I say, this is true. Yet it does not negate our responsibility to oppose openly suspect teachers. For when this is done properly, it is not too sharp nor does it create too much of a good thing, and the true middle road (the one pleasing to God) will be followed.

Dr. Spener and others praise the Calvinistic Reformed because of their moderation. They allow many things to pass without objecting to them. But when they see their own church in a state

of confusion, they handle the matter differently and become quite sharp. The Formula of Agreement between the churches at Zurich, Bern, and other Swiss cities serves as a good example of this. For example, Capellius' notion about the recent advent of Hebrew pointing was rejected so sharply that no one who is infected with it is permitted to hold the office of pastor. What's more, they say that the teaching is to be publicly opposed everywhere. In this same vein, the bishop of Zurich wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1719, in the name of the pastors of Zurich, Bern, Glaris, Schaffhausen, Appenzell, Saint Gall, and the Graubundts. He said they intended to watch over their confession and view it as a bulwark. The organization of their church demanded it; yet, he wrote, they would not demand that foreign congregations strive as earnestly and zealously for what they had to strive for among their own.

Finally, someone might object that if a person proceeds to rebuke another using specific and personal references, the evil will become worse, misfortune will come to a head, and Pietism will become a sect or heresy. I reply, this is another example of a philosophical and political objection. It is similar to the one made to the pious Bishop of Alexandria when he wouldn't stop opposing the Arianism that was breaking into the church. He was told that he had brought Arianism to a head with his numerous books and circular letters and in particular had made Eusebius worse when otherwise he would have been held in check. However, in this case, the Church of Christ vindicated his faithful witness to the truth and even today thanks him for his diligence and courage.

When rebuking is done properly, it does not in itself make the matter worse. Rather, it corrects and improves even false brothers. But whatever wickedness arises in an accidental way due to human weakness must not be charged to the act of rebuking.

5. Moreover, the rebuking that must be done against Pietism is not a small or easy thing. If it is to be done correctly, it takes special diligence, thought, and care.

Usually, rebuking can be carried out in one of two ways. First, it can be a warning. The errorists, along with the congregation, are shown where the error comes from, what it finally results in, how a little leaven leavens the whole lump, and how false teaching consumes like cancer.

Second, it can be an act of convicting. Here one brings before a judge the harm and corruption that is already out in the open and makes a legal case against it, so to speak. This latter method properly belongs in an ecclesiastical court of justice similar to what was held in the councils. If one wants to be judged there in accordance with God's Word, he must realize that according to human customs, this process demands that one be satisfied with the judicial protocol used in the world in general and present his proof accordingly. Furthermore, it demands that, humanly speaking, it be based on the judgment of clear truth and that the records of public activities and proof be binding—only that fear (as fair as using it might be in other situations) and the threat of consequences be set aside.

By contrast, when one carries out a rebuke in the first way, the judgment of fear is primarily in force. One is authorized, in fact has the obligation, to present the danger and, in a reasonable

way, state that the accused is under suspicion. This is an act each teacher can do for himself. Such rebuking must be done in a theological consultation without there being any obligation to arrive at a legal verdict. Rather, the matter should be dealt with according to theological wisdom.

It is clear that there are difficulties in carrying out both kinds of rebuking, particularly when they have to be carried out against a suspect teacher. For a theologian, the first kind is easier to use than the second. However, because of human weakness, passions, and blunders, one can err more easily when doing the first than the second. The second keeps the heart, mouth, and pen in closer bounds and does not allow many things to happen that otherwise could.

Most of the teachers who have spoken out against Pietism have chosen the first method of rebuke. No one can blame them for this and certainly cannot prevent them from doing it this way. As long as one does not go further than to issue a warning, this sort of rebuke is certainly necessary.

It happens all too easily, though, that people are not content merely to issue a warning. Rather, they come down with judgments against the person when the issue itself, so to speak, has not fully matured.

The reason why rebuking has generally been done with the judgment of fear may well be this: The solemn judgment of the church against false teachers and harmful practices has been made difficult and nearly impossible. This is true for any number of reasons. Justice (so to speak) has been suppressed for more than a hundred years, specifically from the time of the Formula of Concord, especially after the well-intentioned Saxon Declaration on the cases of Rathman, Tuebingen, and others, since this declaration was so badly received. This is something on which the general populace ought to reflect and for which they should bear some of the blame, along with the theologians.

6. My own humble opinion is that for the sake of the present time and circumstances, the second method of rebuking [using a judicial court] ought to be used against Pietism. When using the first method [personal warning], the favor of the reader and listener is necessary. This favor, sad to say, has for many years eluded our teachers when it comes to rebuking and writing polemical literature—especially in regard to points that are not crystal-clear. Consequently, most people decry everything the teacher does using the judgment of fear, calling it self-will, passion, quarrelsomeness, and dogmatic wrangling.

By contrast, when using the second method of rebuking, even if it doesn't please the world either, the common rules of legal justice demand that just ways and natural rights be observed. Otherwise both of these would cease.

Along with Paul, we teachers must become all things to all people so that we win some. So we should conform to our times, for they are evil.

We clearly see how hatefully and disdainfully people have viewed and dealt with polemical writings against Pietism. But this does not discourage us. It only makes us more careful. The second method of rebuking is good and in the context of our times, it does not create scandals. Therefore, we can dare hope that God will bless this good method.

In view of the present nature of things, we cannot hope for a formal judgment of the church, yet it is still necessary that the matter be handled in such a way that the door remains open for a public judgment in the case. We can still hope that the majority of those who confess the Evangelical Lutheran teaching might arrive at a tacit judgment against the present wrongs—or perhaps even a tool for healing might be found. Meanwhile, we dare not denounce the first kind of rebuking even though we are compelled to give it up to some degree—and with great difficulty follow after the sheep who are running away into false teaching.

EMOTIONS FROM PHILOSOPHY TO PIETISM

Could the Pietistic tendency towards an emotionalized spirituality in the seventeenth century be explained in part as a natural outgrowth of emotional views inherent in the Augustinian Neo-Platonism and the Scholastic Aristotelianism of the previous century? John M. Cooper, in his introduction of Lucius Annaeus Seneca's treatise on Anger, describes a seventeenth-century revival of Epicurianism and Stoicism that occurred at the same time as the pietistic phenomenon. Was this merely coincidental? Can the reaction against the emotionalism of praise services today be described in a way that is sympathetic with Seneca's Stoicism? This piece is taken from Seneca: Moral and Political Essays in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, edited by John M. Cooper and J. F. Procope, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pages 5–10.

It is no accident that our fundamentally favourable attitude towards the emotions was advanced by Plato in the *Republic* and by Aristotle in his ethical treatises. In later antiquity, Platonism and Aristotelianism triumphed over rival systems; and their view of the emotions, with only temporary challenges during the seventeenth-century revival of Epicureanism and Stoicism, remained standard in medieval and modern philosophy. For Plato and Aristotle an emotion or “passion” or “affection”—the three terms all cover the same range of phenomena—is an evaluative response to some significant event in our lives, or to one anticipated in the future: and it derives from a part of our psyche separate from the central “reasoning” capacity in which our identity as persons, as responsible agents, rests. According to this conception, anger is an agitated feeling that arises—indeed, it boils up—when we have a strong sense of having been unjustly treated or slighted in some significant way, quite independently of what we *think* or how we judge at the time about whatever it may be that has occurred. We may think that no injustice or slight really occurred, that it was all a mistake, that no ground for getting upset really exists. Yet, in another “part” of our psyche, it may strike us, and continue to strike us, that it has. We may go on *feeling* misused even if, as we say, our “reason tells us” that we were not.

On this view, emotions are involuntary forces from which “we”—the reasoning, responsible agents who have to judge what to do in the light of events and circumstances—stand aside and which we are sometimes unable to control. The result is that we lash out against our better judgment and respond angrily to something that was not, and that we judged at the time was not, worth our anger. It can often happen, of course, that things strike us, and so engage our anger, in a way that conforms quite precisely to “our” judgments of what has happened, of how we have been treated, and of what sort of counter-action is justified. In that case, anger can be said to aid “us,” reinforcing the possibly inadequate motivation that “we” feel to vindicate ourselves or punish the wrongdoing done to us. But the challenge that faces us as responsible adults, who wish to live in accordance with our own judgment of what is true and what is best, is to train ourselves to the point where things will not automatically arouse emotions in us, except on those occasions and to the extent that our judgments of what is best, what is justified, may dictate. For Plato and Aristotle, a very large part of ethical self-discipline consists in gradually working upon this other “part” of the psyche to the point where we are no longer struck so forcibly by events and circumstances as to feel emotions with whose evaluative, normative content “we”—the reasoning, planning agents—do not agree.

The Stoics rejected this analysis of what an emotion is, of its relation to the central “reasoning” capacity, of how it comes to affect a person’s behaviour, and of the task that, in consequence, faces a responsible, rational adult. They believed as indeed did Plato and Aristotle—that whenever we get carried away by an emotion so as to do something which “we” (that is, the reasoning, planning, responsible agent in us) would disown, we are none the less responsible for doing what we have done. For Plato and Aristotle, however, the responsibility would lie in our not having controlled ourselves at the time or, further back, in our not having trained ourselves beforehand to the point of not having such involuntary impulses to be controlled then at all. It was not the reasoning planning agent in us that acted then; rather, that other “part” of our psyche was the sole source of the psychic energy that expressed itself in the action and so of the action itself. “We” were responsible only for “our” inaction, at the time and previously.

For the Stoics this consequence of the Platonic-Aristotelian view was deeply objectionable, both as psychological analysis and in its implications for moral, if not legal, accountability. It is false, they thought, to insist that when people have acted wrongly under the influence of emotion “they” (the reasoning, planning, responsible agents) have not positively endorsed the action, but have only failed, as it were, to intervene and prevent it. What is more, to say this encourages people to make excuses in a way very damaging to themselves. What really happens in the case of anger, for instance, is that, before getting carried away and lashing out contrary to their better judgment, “they” have been divided in “their own” view of the facts about what has happened to them and what sort of reaction is merited. In feeling angry “they”—and not some other “part” of their psyche, acting on its own—are judging that an insult has occurred

and that it requires a response in kind. If at the same time “they” also judge that that is not so, that is only because “they” are torn between these two views and cannot make up their minds which view to adopt and hold on to. When finally they get “carried away,” what happens is that the provocative view of things has got the upper hand with “them”; “they” adopt and stick to it long enough to decide upon action and to lash out in angry retaliation. In fact, the reasoning, planning agent in them is behind the action throughout. Hence no one can be allowed an easy excuse like “The devil” (i.e., the anger in some other part of the psyche) “made me do it!” It may have been only a momentary decision, only a momentary view of the circumstances, that caused the outburst. The circumstances may not have been seen in that light a moment earlier, the decision may have been regretted and withdrawn immediately afterwards. But the agent’s own decision, the agent’s own view of things—and nothing else—was responsible for the action. So the Stoics insisted that emotions are conditions into which the “reasoning” capacity itself may fall. They are evaluative responses to, or anticipations of, significant events in our lives; and they represent views held at the time by us in our “reasoning” capacity itself.

But the Stoics went further. On the Platonic-Aristotelian view the ultimate goal of moral self-discipline was to train the alleged other “part” of one’s psyche to the point where it would not be stirred up by events and circumstances into emotions except when, or to the extent that, a correct judgment by the “reasoning” capacity would itself confirm that emotional view of things. But, as Seneca rightly notes (19.2), this means that there are times when an emotion does correctly represent things, when the “reasoning” capacity will approve of it and indeed make use of it in giving rise to an action that responds, with appropriate force and feeling, to the circumstances, as viewed jointly by itself and the other “part.” To this, too, the Stoics strenuously objected. On their analysis, the only things that are good or bad for a human being, and so merit what one might call ultimate concern, are certain features of one’s own mind. Things external to it are of only secondary concern; what primarily matters is how one deals with them—how one approaches them or distances oneself from them. In other words, what matters is how, in one’s own mind, one regards them. But emotions are characteristically directed at just such external things, at the things that befall one: one becomes angry when someone acts dismissively or arrogantly towards oneself or towards someone or something one cares about; one grieves at the death of a parent or a friend; one feels elated at coming first in some competition; one glories in the accomplishments or success of one’s children; one feels depressed or anxious at not seeing one’s way through some difficulty or finding oneself in some other respect seriously incompetent. Moreover, emotions (even phenomenologically, since they are by definition elevated or depressed—but in any event agitated—states of mind) betray the fact that they represent all these matters as being of really grave importance. When grieving for someone who is gone, one feels that life is no longer worth living, that one cannot go on in any satisfactory way, without the presence and assistance

of that person. Glory at being successful and recognized, or resentment at lack of success and recognition, can leave one with a sense of one’s whole life as transfigured or blighted. But all such reactions are in fact exaggerated, if the Stoics are right that the only things of ultimate concern are certain features of one’s own mind. In reacting in these ways to external events one is showing that in one’s own mind one has a wrong—an excessive—regard for them.

In the very act of responding emotionally to significant events and circumstances in life, then, one displays for all to see the fact that one’s own state of mind lacks some of those very features which, on the Stoic analysis, it is of ultimate concern to any human being to possess. Hence it is vital to rid oneself of emotions altogether. For they systematically misrepresent the actual value to oneself of the “external” things in one’s life, and so the effects of such things on its quality and character. Responsible adults who wish to live in accordance with their own judgment of what is true and what is best must learn never to view things in an emotional—that is to say, in a distorted—way. Thus the standard picture of the Stoics, as recommending the total eradication of the emotions, is entirely accurate, though one should bear in mind that it applies only to such feelings, desires and other responses as are “emotional”—that is, agitated and excessive. Calm, rational desires, feelings of rational wariness in the face of threats to one’s life, rational determination to punish ill treatment, are all perfectly acceptable, indeed they are positively recommended by the theory. From this point of view, it is not difficult to see how anger could rank for Seneca as the worst of the emotions. It is the most agitated and violent of them, as well as the most likely to make people act against their rational, “better judgment.”

A PIOUS WALK

In his exposition on Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, Luther shows that Christians in their daily lives are no less pious than those who seem more religious—like the monks and nuns of his day. In this reading, Luther refers to “Carthusians,” monks who were especially severe on themselves, practicing extreme isolation not only from the world, but also from other monks. This translation by Jaroslav Pelikan is taken from AE 21: 256–259.

If you are a prince or a judge, a servant or a maid, and you are expected to practice and prove your faith, to administer your office and station correctly, and to act properly, then you will surely get such a task and assignment that no Carthusian will have a more stringent routine than yours. Why is it such great trouble and hard work for him to wear a gray coat or a cowl or wooden shoes, or to cause his body a little trouble—if he is a strict one—and meanwhile to live without concern or worry and have plenty for his gluttony and guzzling? This other person has to eat his daily bread in the sweat of his face (Gen. 3:19) with bitter toil. Not only his body but also his heart has to be tormented by the wicked world and his neighbors. And he has to expect and suffer every kind of trouble,

discord, and sorrow. Thus real citizenship, when carried on in a Christian manner, is ten times as hard as a Carthusian routine, except that it does not shine the way a monk does when he wears a cowl and lives in isolation from society. If you open your eyes and really compare the two, even your reason will have to draw this same conclusion.

Thus a prince may wear golden chains and a mantle of sable. But if he is pious, he is such a tormented and miserable man under that mantle of sable that you could not find his equal in any monastery. In this way you can go through all the offices and stations. Wherever you find a pious man or woman, you do not have to go looking for a monk or a nun. For such a person is already enough of a monk and is following a harder routine than the whole hooded and tonsured crowd. Before God all the monks and hermits are foolishness in comparison with one pious child, servant, or maid who is obedient and faithful in the performance of his duty. Just do what a pious man or woman should do, and you will have a rule more stringent than the rules, the cowls, and the tonsures of Francis and all the monks, which are more likely to cover a villain than a pious Christian,

Our crazy reason refuses to pay attention to this. It decries it and thinks to itself: "Why, that is an ordinary thing that anyone could do in his own home!" It yearns for something else that is strange and special, stares at it, and lets itself be led by all the clatter.

Yet this is all just a pretense. They come along and rebuke us with their worthless way of life, in order to make every other way, though it may be God's ordinance and station, seem contemptible and worthless. Our inadequacy comes from our failure to hold on to the Word of God seriously enough; otherwise we would soon say: "Bring on the Carthusians, the Anabaptists, the devil himself, or his mother! None of them could make a better station or way of life than God has made." Every pious husband, servant, maid or faithful worker, therefore, must be said to have a station that is excellent, high, and godly. If we could evaluate all occupations and stations correctly on the basis of the Word, then everyone could teach and live correctly, and everything would go along just fine. The proper stations then would be those which God has created and ordained and with which He is pleased. And if God made it possible for us to get to the point that one city would have many such pious citizens—men, women, and children; masters, servants, and maids we would have the kingdom of heaven on earth. We would not need any monasteries. People would not have to fast or pray and sing all day long in church but simply do no more than what their various stations and occupations required.

Now you see what the sheep's clothing is with which they make the people stare. But what are they inwardly and at heart? Nothing else, Christ says, than ravenous wolves. The aim of these desperate scoundrels with the beautiful appearance of their doctrine and life is to destroy souls and to tear them up. They will not do it outwardly, like the tyrants and persecutors who tear up life and property, or like the preachers who preach against us publicly and condemn our doctrine. They will do it inwardly, by secretly tearing away the treasure

in our heart, which has now become the throne and kingdom and dwelling place of God. In other words, the aim of their villainy, which they decorate with their doctrine and life, is to tear up the faith and chief doctrine about Christ. Right now the Anabaptists are bearing our name outwardly. They even acknowledge that we have the Gospel in our word and proclamation; but they say, "The fruit does not follow." With this phrase, "no fruit," they divert people from faith to works, and they remove the chief item, which is faith in Christ, leading us away to look only at the fruit. When this is present, then the Gospel is the correct one, and vice versa. Their whole teaching is nothing else than that you have to take bold and prove your faith by your fruit, by owning no private property, and by forsaking everything. Thus they fall back on their works again and put their trust in them for their salvation.

The worst part of it is that they do not even teach the real fruit, which the Gospel teaches and demands after faith, but their own dreams and imaginations. They do not say anything about the fact that everyone should carry out his station correctly and faithfully and should remain in it. On the contrary, they lead the people away from these stations. They teach them to desert them and run away from them as something secular and to take up something special to wear a sour expression, to live strictly, not to eat and drink and dress like other people, to let themselves be tortured and killed voluntarily and unnecessarily. "Otherwise," they say, "the Gospel is not bringing any fruit in you, and you are still not a Christian, though you may have been believing for a long time,"

They decorate these dreams of theirs with Scripture and with statements from the Gospel. Never, either by precept or example, did Christ teach or command that we should run away from human society, forsake everything, and own no private property, except in case of necessity, when we must either forsake this or forsake His Word. You must not, therefore, forsake all this until He commands you to and you are forced to. If it comes to that, then you must say: "Before I forsake Christ and the Gospel, let my wife and children, my body and goods, sun and moon and all the creatures be gone." Except in the case of such a necessity, you have God's commandment: love your neighbor, serve him and help him with your body and goods; love and rule your wife, children, and servants; do not run away and leave them sitting there. Yet that is what these people do, in opposition to the Word and ordinance of God, and without any necessity. And they claim to be special saints and brag about the great fruit of the Gospel.

Learn to recognize how, under the sheep's clothing, these spirits inwardly tear up and take away your faith. They lead you away from Christ back upon yourself, and this they call the fruit of the Gospel, something they themselves have thought up to destroy the genuine fruit. These are the ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing who have corrupted Christianity in every age. Until recently they were called monks; now they are the Anabaptists, the new monks. In previous ages it was the Pelagians, Ishmaelites, Esauites, and Cainites. This faith has lasted since the beginning of the world; and though these Anabaptists may be on the way out, others are on their way in.

BEATITUDES A LA PIETISM

From Walther's Eleventh Evening Lecture dealing with incorrect sermon outlines, in The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, Dau translation, pages 95-96.

The view of the Pietists is certainly wrong when they claimed that the various stages of the order of salvation are described in the Sermon on the Mount. They were tempted to adopt this view by the fact that Christ at the opening of this great sermon says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But that view is untenable, for the phrase "poor in spirit" signifies "to have nothing to which the heart is attached." A millionaire may be poor in spirit if his heart has not become attached to his money and chattels, he does not really possess them. On the other hand, a beggar may be the very opposite when he puts his trust in the little money he still has. The former is a "blessed" man, the latter is not.

In the view of the Pietists, the second beatitude which Christ pronounced: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted," refers to mourning over sin. They called this the second stage of the order of salvation. But Christ refers to the sorrowing and cross-bearing which His followers have to do in this life for His name's sake.

Continuing, Christ says: "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." Here the Pietists have labored mightily to find a passable meaning. They were troubled by the fact that up to this point no mention has yet been made of justification by faith. That clogs their scheme of the order of salvation. They turn marvelous mental somersaults in an attempt to evolve their "stages" from the beatitudes; but their efforts are futile.

Next, Christ says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This is to represent the fourth "stage." Aye, but does meekness actually precede the other stages? If you ever preach on the Beatitudes, have a care not to follow Pietistic preachers.

PROSTITUTING THE OFFICE

The Lutheran Pastor, by G. H. Gerberding, written in 1902, pages 123-124. Thanks to Rev. David Jay Webber for passing this along to us.

In almost every community there are distractions and vexations from those who claim to have a superior grade of piety. Because of the skepticism that permeates our atmosphere; because faith in Christ, in His Word, His church, and His means of grace, has been so utterly weakened, if not lost; because faith in man, in self, in one's own ability to make himself acceptable to God, has grown to such colossal proportions, therefore extremes meet and fanaticism joins hands with rationalism. Immersionists, revivalists, sanctificationists, Adventists, and healers of every hue, name, and grade, are

abroad in the land. They invade the school-house, the barn, and the woods. They spread their tents on the common and on the vacant lot in village, town, and city. Each one offers a new way of salvation. All cry: "Lo, here is Christ," or, "Lo, there." They all claim that the church which teaches the old doctrines and walks in the old ways is a failure. They unsettle the minds of the uninformed and the unreflecting. They bring heartache and sorrow to the earnest pastor.

All this skepticism, uncertainty, and experimenting has unfortunately unsettled only too many pastors in the churches around us. These pastors themselves have lost faith, more or less, in the divinely ordained means of grace. They are casting about for new means and methods by which to reach and hold men. They are experimenting with all sorts of novelties and attractions. Their churches and services are becoming more and more places of entertainment. They try to outbid and outdo each other in sensations calculated to draw. And so the church, like Samson of old, is shorn of her locks, and is degraded to make sport for the Philistines of the world. No true Lutheran pastor can stoop to such prostitution of his office and of his church. But he suffers from the misdeeds of others. His people are influenced by their surroundings. Some are drawn away from him, others make trouble in his own church. And so he is caused to grieve for the hurt of Joseph, and sighs "for the hurt of my people am I hurt" (Jer. 8:21).

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- Catechesis, Baptism and the Liturgy of Life

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

It is the first week of September as I type in the finishing lines for this LOGIA Forum—and just today I spied a Walgreen's marquee announcing that the 1999 Hallmark Christmas ornaments have just arrived. Thus this reference to a piece by G. K. Chesterton from a collection of his works dealing with men and women, children, sex, divorce, marriage, and the family, entitled Brave New Family (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), pages 255–257. Also worthy of note is the essay on pages 261–264, entitled “The New War on Christmas,” in which he writes, “Christmas, which in the seventeenth century had to be saved from gloom, in the twentieth century has to be saved from frivolity.” Thus we close this issue having traveled from the pietistic seventeenth century to the postmodern twentieth century.

I have rather rashly undertaken to write of the Spirit of Christmas; and it presents a preliminary difficulty about which I must be candid. People are very curious nowadays in their way of talking about “the spirit” of a thing. There is, for example, a particular sort of prig who is always lecturing us about having the spirit of true Christianity, apart from all names and forms. As far as I can make out, he means the very opposite of what he says. He means that we are to go on using the names “Christian” and “Christianity,” and so on, for something in which it is quite specially the spirit that is not Christian; something that is a sort of combination of the baseless optimism of an American atheist with the pacifism of a mild Hindoo. In the same way, we read a great deal about the Spirit of Christmas in modern journalism or commercialism; but it is really a reversal of the same kind. So far from preserving the essentials without the externals, it is rather preserving the externals where there cannot be the essentials. It means taking two mere material substances, like holly and mistletoe, and spreading them all over huge and homeless cosmopolitan hotels or round the Doric columns of impersonal clubs full of jaded and cynical old gentlemen; or in any other place where the actual spirit of Christmas is least likely to be. But there is also another way in which modern commercial complexity eats out the heart of the thing, while actually leaving the painted shell of it. And that is the much too elaborate system of dependence on buying and selling, and therefore on bustle and hustle; and the actual neglect of the new things that might be done by the old Christmas.

Normally, if anything were normal nowadays, it would seem a truism to say that Christmas has been a family festival. But it is now possible (as I have had the good or bad luck to discover) to earn a reputation for paradox simply by going on saying that truisms are true. In this case, of course, the reason, the only reasonable reason, was religious. It was concerned with a happy family because it was consecrated to the Holy Family. But it is perfectly true that many men saw the fact without specially

feeling the reason. When we say the root was religious, we do not mean that Sam Weller was concentrated on theological values when he told the Fat Boy to “put a bit of Christmas,” into some object, probably edible. We do not mean that the Fat Boy had gone into a trance of mystical contemplation like a monk seeing a vision. We do not even mean that Bob Cratchit defended punch by saying he was only looking on the wine when it was yellow; or that Tiny Tim quoted Timothy. We only mean that they, including their author, would have confessed humbly and heartily that there was someone historically quite anterior to Mr. Scrooge, who might be called the Founder of the Feast. But in any case, whatever the reason, all would have agreed about the result. Mr. Wardle's feast centred in Mr. Wardle's family; and none the less because the romantic shadows of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass threatened to break it up for the formation of other families.

The Christmas season is domestic; and for that reason most people now prepare for it by struggling in tramcars, standing in queues, rushing away in trains, crowding despairingly into teashops, and wondering when or whether they will ever get home. I do not know whether some of them disappear for ever in the toy department or simply lie down and die in the tearooms; but by the look of them, it is quite likely. Just before the great festival of the home the whole population seems to have become homeless. It is the supreme triumph of industrial civilisation that, in the huge cities which seem to have far too many houses, there is a hopeless shortage of housing. For a long time past great numbers of our poor have become practically nomadic. We even confess the fact; for we talk of some of them as Street Arabs. But this domestic institution, in its present ironical phase, has gone beyond such normal abnormality. The feast of the family turns the rich as well as the poor into vagabonds. They are so scattered over the bewildering labyrinth of our traffic and our trade, that they sometimes cannot even reach the teashop; it would be indelicate, of course, to mention the tavern. They have a difficulty in crowding into their hotels, let alone separating to reach their houses. I mean quite the reverse of irreverence when I say that their only point of resemblance to the archetypal Christmas family is that there is no room for them at the inn.

Now Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home. But the other sort of paradox is not intentional and is certainly not beautiful. It is bad enough that we cannot altogether disentangle the tragedy of poverty. It is bad enough that the birth of the homeless, celebrated at hearth and altar, should sometimes synchronise with the death of the homeless in workhouses and slums. But we need not rejoice in this universal restlessness brought upon rich and poor alike; and it seems to me that in this matter we need a reform of the modern Christmas.

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