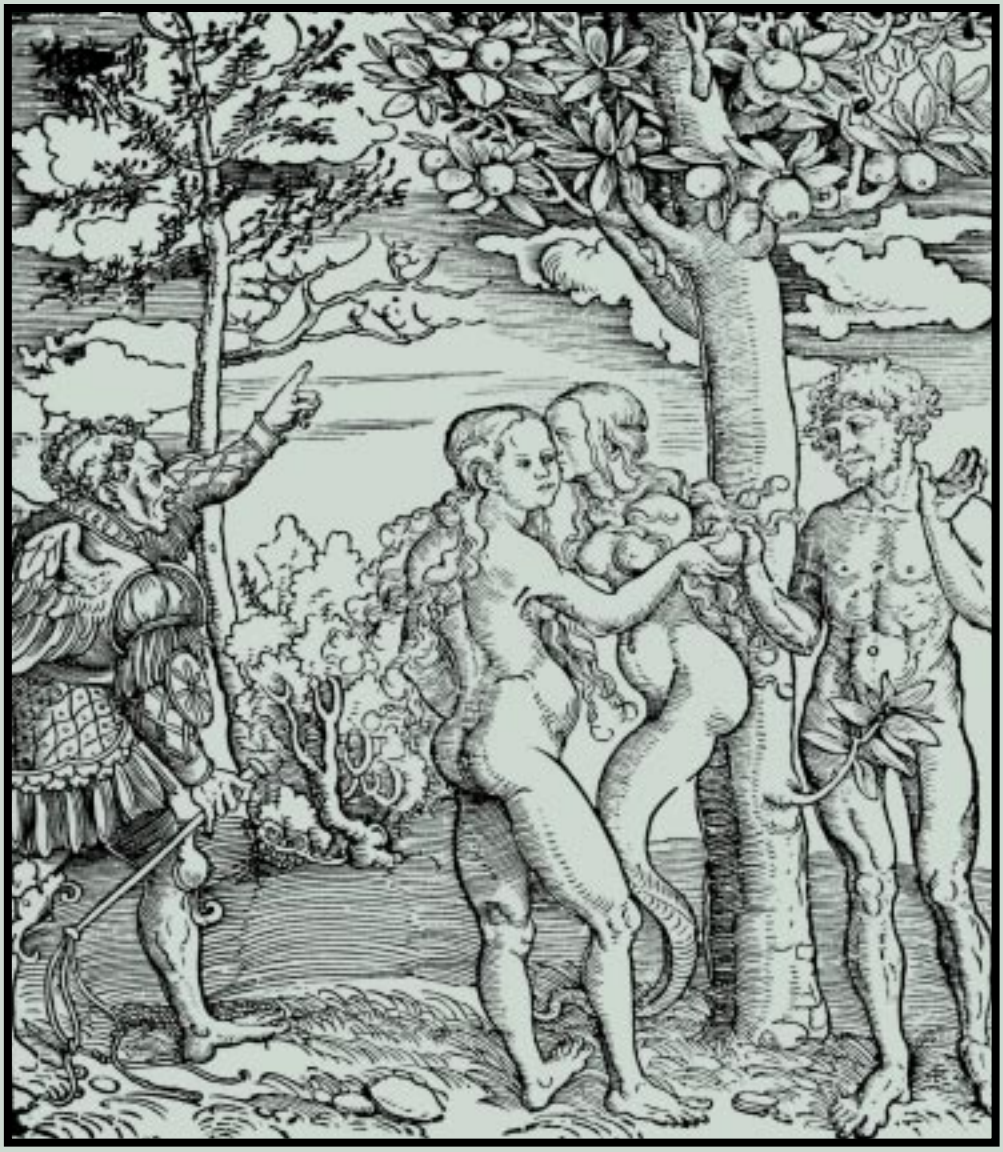
# LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



# Feminism

EPIPHANY 2000 VOLUME IX, NUMBER 1

## εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

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

It is difficult to speak theologically on Feminism without addressing the Garden of Eden. At first glance, this particular depiction by Lucas Cranach the Elder appears to substantiate the notion that Feminism is quite literally Satan incarnate. Actually, the artist is not depicting Satan as a woman (in general) but as Eve; and that does make a big difference. You see, Satan is appearing to Eve in a "pleasing form" — that is in a form with which she can readily identify — herself! He does this in order to help him persuade Eve away from God's Word and focus on herself.

As for Feminism, the "pleasing form" that it takes can also tend to make one focus on self rather than on God's Word. Do women in particular have a penchant for this? Hardly. It is the nature of our rebellion as human, not as either male or female. Feminism is simply one form in which this appears — albeit a rather "pleasing (and deceptive) form."

"Did God *really* say...?" Why yes; He did.

The woodcut comes from *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut,* by Max Geisberg, vol. 2, p. 504: Hacker Art Books, 1974. The cover art is provided by Concordia Seminary Library, Saint Louis, by the Rev. Ernest Bernet.

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### FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

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

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# *Christology and Feminism*

David P. Scaer

The church already has a Christology perpetuated in her liturgy, preached in her sermons, and preserved in her theology. Without Christology the church would not be the church. Christology is ultimately an in-house enterprise. What really matters is not what others say about Jesus, but how he understood himself and how he was defined in the apostolic proclamation.

Theology has the task of perpetuating that picture of Christ revealed in the Bible so that it may be proclaimed in the church. Who he was and what he did have been adjusted in every age to match the prevailing attitudes and philosophies of the time. Several years ago Jaroslav Pelikan prepared a book showing how artists depict Jesus. Artists do with pictures what theologians attempt to do with words. The church's history may inform our Christology, but should it be the final determining factor in shaping and informing it?

History shapes the picture of Jesus for both the scholar and the less-informed laity. We do not know what the last few years' events in the former Soviet Union will mean for the church and theology. They seem to indicate a reverse of philosophical and religious thinking since the age of reason. Since the age of the enlightenment there has been a steady and relentless march toward a culture without religion and specifically without Christianity. The high points in this evolution were the French and Bolshevik revolutions, which were economic and political expressions of humanism. Whether Christianity will emerge as the dominant force is still to be proven, but the humanistic philosophy that opposed Christianity has proven to be bankrupt.

It has been said that we are living in the post-Christian era. But we may now be on the verge of the post-secular age. For all the secularism of western culture in the last two centuries, this secularism could not blot out the figure of Christ. He seems indelibly imprinted on the collective consciousness. As a result, rather than ignore Christ, religious and philosophical movements reinterpret him. It is easier to make him fit the prevailing thought than to dispose of him. Perhaps the motivation was a good one, namely, to readjust the image of Christ to make him a more believable figure. Even the nineteenth-century Christologies, with all their reductionism in their quest for the historical Jesus, were attempts to salvage as much of Christ as possible in the face of radical historical agnosticism.

There are many christological options current in critical thought, but I will focus on how Christology relates to the doctrine of the ministry and how both Christology and ministry have been affected by and adjusted to feminist thought.

In theology, feminist thought necessarily involves the ordination of women. It requires participation of women in decision-making roles in the church. It retools the liturgy to remove any form of sexism by using a different language to minimize or eliminate any masculine references to God. It requires a softening of the hardened, masculine, patriarchal God with feminine characteristics.

Politically, feminism expresses itself in unlimited right to abortion, marriage between people of the same gender, and providing government-supported child care for working mothers. The political agenda of feminists need not detain us here, except that political goals have become part of the church agenda in some cases.

All of this could lead to a desire to isolate ourselves from the feminist theological and political ideologues. As attractive as theological isolation from other philosophies, political programs, and aberrant theologies is, isolation is impossible. We only have to look to the ELCA, which is experiencing all of these phenomena to one degree or another. We are only deceiving ourselves if we believe that the LCMS has not been affected by feminist thought.

We should examine what changes we make in deference to feminist sensitivities. What might be unextraordinary adjustments in our practice take on a greater symbolical meaning simply because of the situation. It is the nature of adiaphora that they are not always adiaphora. Thus we might agree that nonsexist language is appropriate to express the biblical distinction between human beings in general and males in particular. Thus humankind might express the unity of our race in a way that mankind does not. But we should not deceive ourselves into believing that we are motivated by scholarly precision, when in fact we are accommodating our practices to prevailing egalitarian and feminist thought. Linguistically, we might find to our surprise that substituting humankind for mankind is an unnecessary affront to our language. Our deception is even more profound if we acquiesce on any point of church practice and liturgy without being aware that we may be leaving the bounds of a biblical theology for a contemporary philosophical movement. The prevalent Christology with

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regard to the current discussions within the LCMS gives sufficient evidence of this theological departure.

At this moment the LCMS is discussing the participation of women in the public liturgical functions, as well as some suggested changes in the liturgy and hymns. In so doing we must make sure that we are not blind in claiming that these matters are adiaphora. We Lutherans may have played the adiaphoristic card too often as a convenient way of absolving ourselves from the requirements of difficult questions. The things we may call adiaphora have christological consequences.

***Feminist theology recognizes the profound influence of symbols and makes it their first order of business that the right symbols are in place to convey the right message.***

What we do reflects what we believe. We fail to see how our practices and doctrines are intimately related to each other. But I assure you that the rest of the theological world does not suffer from this failure. Feminist theology recognizes the profound influence of symbols and makes it their first order of business that the right symbols are in place to convey the right message. They remove what they consider aberrant symbols. For theological feminism an all-male clergy is as symbolically offensive as is the crucified male figure of Jesus. The person of the pastor speaks volumes about our image of God. When a woman claims to be the pastor, the volumes are opened to what feminists think about God.

Within our tradition, the necessary relationship between the person of the pastor and the person of Christ within the liturgical framework may not be exceptionally pronounced and developed, but this relationship is evident for the worshipping congregation and not lost upon feminist theology. Putting women pastors in place makes it easier to offer a concept of God that is acceptable to feminist theology. When it is viewed from the inside, it becomes obvious that feminist theologians see their movement and the future they see for it within Christianity. Some find Christianity, even with major adjustments, unredeemable. Two feminist theologians who are incidentally women, Jacquelyn Grant and Daphne Hampson, evidence this feminist vision in their work.

Jacquelyn Grant, a professor at the Gammon Theological Seminary of the Interdenominational Theological Center, presumably in Atlanta, Georgia, is the author of *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus* with the subtitle *Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*.[1] Though the title seems to step outside the bounds of normal theology, her book cannot be dismissed. It was published by the America Academy of Religion, a group that acclaims its own scholarly prestige. Former LCMS clergymen Martin Marty and Robert Wilkens have recently headed the group. Grant attempts to construct a Christology that is bound neither by what she considers the white racist Christology of Europe and North America or by a male-dominated expression of it. She wants to offer a Christology that is both black and feminist, with racism as a greater heresy than is the sexism of male domination. In general terms she is a liberation theologian desiring to free the church from the evils of racism and sexism. With her stress on black theology, she even distances herself from white women's feminism, which has not gone far enough. She depicts Christ coming to the aid of poor black women through the experiences of oppressed black women in America. She advocates reading the Bible in the light of their experience, accepting those sections favoring liberation and rejecting those that speak of subjection.[2]

Here is a method of interpretation that we find strange, but it is typical of feminist theology in general. It involves an adjustment of liturgical practices and of our perception of Jesus. This method unashamedly reads the Scriptures selectively. Even if we want to avoid the oversimplification that there has been nothing new in theology since Schleiermacher, we can still say that Schleiermacher is as contemporary as he was two centuries ago. (What Francis Pieper said about Schleiermacher in his *Christian Dogmatics* may be long forgotten, but his analysis and critique of experience theology are as relevant as they were in his day.)

For Grant, as for Schleiermacher, Christology is not derived or critiqued by a normative Scripture or tradition, but by how it calibrates and corresponds to her feelings. As a black woman, she finds the current feminist theology to be inadequate and in need of being supplemented by her experience as a black. As with Schleiermacher, her theology is an attempt to formulate in a systematic way her feelings that provide the basis and boundaries for what we call religion. There is no place for supernatural intervention. Religion can be explained totally by the human experience. Even Christ is not sacrosanct or immune from adjustment.

Daphne Hampson operates from the same starting point, but she makes no attempt to salvage anything from Christianity, including Christ. Christianity is an historical religion with patriarchal origins. It is incapable of redemption through reformulation. Religious thought is the articulation of personal experiences or of the combined experiences of the community. Until recent times, that community was dominated by white European males.

Before we briefly survey Grant's analysis of feminist theology, reference should be made to the approach taken by one vocal proponent for feminist causes in LCMS circles—we do have feminists—who for our purposes will remain anonymous here. The constant theme in her public speeches is her determination to find her relationship as a woman to God and then to discover what God intends for her to do in the church. Though it may sound innocent enough, this approach is neither right nor safe. The searcher seeking for the proper relationship to God craves peace, but is forever deprived of peace, since a relationship is sought outside of God's revelation in Christ. It is not right, because it makes human need, rather than the supernatural intervention or revelation of God, the starting point of theology. Such theology constantly changes because no single experience can be normative for the experience of others. It is dangerous because it makes the human being the final factor in

determining the form of theology. A feminist theology also threatens the traditional biblical anthropology.

When one gender is divorced from the other in its understanding of its relationship to God, we are no longer dealing with a biblical anthropology. The male and female as a one-flesh concept becomes inoperative. Feminist theology is intent in understanding male and female in isolation from each other. Any thought that the female is contained in the male is rejected out of hand.[3]

Feminist theology, like any theology that is derived from religious experience, will only incidentally and accidentally and not necessarily be Christian. Feminist Christianity places the stress on feminism rather than on Christianity. This is not to deny that it retains certain Christian concepts in their coarsest terms. Yet critiques of feminist theology in its mild or most extreme forms will need go little further than the critique of Schleiermacher. The idea that theology emerges from a religious community as the place where individual feelings come to expression is as essential for feminism as it was for Schleiermacher. Just how does feminist theology proceed from that point?

Grant dispels any ideas that all feminists are cut from the same cloth and that they are all saying the same things and desiring the same goals. The movement is complex. Some want to express their feminist ideals in Christian terms, while others find such a task hopeless. For Grant, in speaking of feminist theologians and theologies, we are not speaking of women who do theology. Rather, we are speaking of both men and women who believe that understanding the place of woman, as woman, is a factor in understanding God, in comprehending his revelation to us, and in formulating theology. Grant provides a useful service in dividing feminists into three categories.

***The idea that theology emerges from a religious community as the place where individual feelings come to expression is as essential for feminism as it was for Schleiermacher.***

For biblical feminists, the first category of feminists, the Bible is authoritative, but they read it in the light of their own experience. They make the Bible agree with their own views, all the time claiming that they are following the Bible. This approach urges equality in the ministry based on Galatians 3. That there is in Christ no male or female is exemplary of this first kind of feminist theology that wants to be understood as Christian.

The second group consists of liberation feminists who try to remain within biblical dimensions, but with significant adjustments to their Christology. The "Christ-ness" of Jesus is emphasized at the expense of his maleness. Christ can be conceived of as sister. In this philosophical Nestorianism, the figure of the male Jesus is ignored in favor of the more neutral Christ figure. In other cases Jesus is no longer understood in terms of leadership, power, and domination. He identifies with the downtrodden to give power to the powerless. Still another form of liberation feminism associates Jesus with those oppressed not only by sexism, but racism, classism and anti-Semitism.[4] The approach makes one part of the biblical revelation criticize another part. Grant generally takes this approach.

Grant's third classification is the Rejection feminists for whom the "women's experience and not the Bible is solely authoritative. Because the Bible has been used primarily against women, it is used by negative source by rejectionists."[5] The Bible is a valuable source of negative examples because of what it says about God, Jesus, and the relationship between men and women.

Feminist theology has already become engrained in American theological education, and it would be naive to think that we have remained or will remain unaffected by it.

One year after Grant's study, Daphne Hampson's *Theology and Feminism* was published. Hampson could be classified in the group identified by Grant as rejectionist. Hampson goes one step further in not only rejecting the Bible, but renouncing Christianity. She belongs to the far left of the rejectionist group, not even bothering to use the Bible in providing negative examples. The Bible is simply ignored. The value of Hampson's study is that it shows how logically feminism and Christianity are incompatible. (Thus her emergence from Christian feminist circles must be an embarrassment to them.) Looking for the foundational principle of sexual equality is absurd, simply because the Bible teaches no such thing. The readjustment of the Christ figure to fit feminist thought is simply rejected by her out of hand. She does credit Christianity for alerting her to ideas about goodness that has moved her to reject Christianity. Feminism is seen as the overarching reality corresponding to her views that God is to be found in nature. The historical particularism of Christianity and Jesus must be rejected.

Thus we come to the point where a nature religion finds the historical religion of incarnation objectionable. We are on the verge of paganism. In the opinion of Daphne Hampson, as long as Christianity understands itself as a historical religion, it can never be completely free from being a male-biased or male-dominated religion, because its history is patriarchal.[6] "The figure of Christ," she writes, "is that of a male figure, and that is not to be evaded. God is conveyed through the use of metaphors which are male not female."[7]

A milder form of theological feminism attempts to do what Hampson rejects, that is, to express God in feminine metaphors. Her rejection of Christianity certainly places Hampson among the most radical theologians, but she is perhaps more honest than those who have only kept Christianity by adjusting it to fit their views. She refuses to replace male metaphors with female ones and to call God mother and not Father. For her, an adjusted Christianity is no Christianity.

Something similar happened in the nineteenth century. At one end of the spectrum was the radical David Frederick Strauss, who in his *Das Leben Jesus* dismissed all the Gospels as myth. At the other end was Hengenstenberg, who accepted all of them as historically true. Both men recognized that the biblical texts and the Christian religion, especially what it said

about Jesus, had to be taken as one cloth and could not be adjusted to fit the prevailing philosophical needs.

By refusing any accommodation with Christianity, Hampson is playing the role of Frederick David Strauss. The maleness of Jesus is just as offensive as the prohibition of women from the ministry. Either gives a sufficient cause for renouncing Christianity, which in fact she has done.[8] Hampson correctly points out that Christians who support the ordination of women are faced with the question of what the maleness of Jesus signifies. For Daphne Hampson the practice of ordaining women pastors and the maleness of Jesus were insurmountable barriers. In order to be true to her feminist ideals, she renounced Christianity, because the maleness of Jesus was in itself an obstacle to her continuing as an ordained minister in the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

*No church can have a feminized clergy and still insist on a masculine Christ.*

Feminism must address the connection between the maleness of Jesus and the apostles by adjusting or ignoring Jesus. This is rarely if ever used in our arguments for an all-male clergy and for the prohibition of women's ordination. This refusal or inability to bring Christ's maleness into the question of who may serve in the ministry may indicate that our concept of the incarnation is incomplete and that we find it difficult to see that ministry exists primarily in Christ and only secondarily in us. No longer is it an issue of apostolic succession but of christological succession. The historical dimension of the ministry becomes so unimportant as not to play a part in our theology.

Now back to Hampson's critique. The historical Christian religion emerging from the Bible is so male-ridden that Hampson has taken the only alternative open to her: reject it entirely. She admits that the conservative approach that rejects feminism in all of its points, including the ordination of women, is unanswerable.[9] For her it is all or nothing. It is again the battle between the biblically conservative Hengstenberg and the radically agnostic David Frederick Strauss. Conservatives have taken the all and she the nothing. We might want to take note that Daphne Hampson has taken as her conservative whipping-boy Karl Barth, who finds the ordination of women to be biblically offensive.

Hampson's position is not beyond criticism. She assumes the basic tenet of feminism that both genders are on the same level. To support her position she incessantly cites Darwin that the human descent from ape-like creatures has effectively destroyed the biblical belief that the male was created before the female. Thus she finds that the very foundation for male dominance has been destroyed. Whether Darwin or anyone else has conclusively proven that the male was not the first creature, whether that was an amoeba or a human being, is beyond my ken. It is hard for me to believe that the male and female emerged simultaneously, regardless of what level of evolution took place. This requires from me a faith that I am incapable of having.

Hampson is simply opposed to any male-dominated religion. She will go to any lengths to prove her points. Basic beliefs, especially those derived from experience, are excused from demonstration. She assumes, for example, that in the Bible men are painted in a more favorable light than women. Since she defines the feminism's goal as the possession and exercise of authority and power, she may be consistent in her critique. The Bible does, however, portray such women as Eve, Sarah, Rachel, Rebekah, Rahab, and Bathsheba as wielding great power and shaping the course of history. One could just as well argue that males are more likely to be pictured unfavorably than females. After all, Satan is a male figure. Condemnation comes through Adam and not Eve.

Hampson concludes that the male oppression of the female in western culture has its origin in understanding God as Father and Jesus as a male.[10] She points out that "Christology gives a male human being a status which is given to no woman."[11] This cannot be disrupted and the maleness of Christ cannot be altered without changing the shape of Christianity. Here we must agree with her argument. Of all the cultural expressions of Christ—white, brown, yellow—the only female expression was Christa, a figure in the Cathedral of St. John in New York that had to be identified with a name, simply because Christ cannot be expressed in feminine terms.[12]

Hampson will not accept the Christa figure, nor will she read the Bible selectively, favoring those sections that support her position, nor will she adjust the Bible to match her mindset. Though she prefers Schleiermacher's concept of a god who cannot be known apart from ourselves,[13] she is aware that feminist theology may evolve into a goddess religion with attachment to the earth.[14]

After leaving the church, Hampson attached herself to a coven of witches where she was more at home in the syncretism of a goddess religion.[15] Perhaps Hampson has done us a great service. She has alerted us to the fact that we cannot do theology piecemeal. In rejecting Christianity totally—the patriarchal history, the masculine images of God, the incarnation of God in the man Jesus, the selection of males as apostles, and a totally male clergy—Hampson has shown us that the Christianity is a unified system of thought. On its own terms, Christianity is a completely defensible system. She correctly ridicules every historical attempt to make an unbelievable Christianity believable. Rowan Williams, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, remarks on the book's back cover that Hampson has set out "with sensitivity and disturbing clarity the difficulties in reconciling any kind of Christian theology with feminist insights." What this means is that it is indefensible logic to understand one issue in the Christian religion as divorced from another.

How we stand on incarnation must be related to our understanding of ministry. No church can have a feminized clergy and still insist on a masculine Christ. The inconsistency will soon be noticed. Hampson sees this and has made her choice. The LCMS

remains one of the few Protestant churches of any significance with a recognizable theological position, including one on the ordination of women. The Southern Baptists are opposed to the practice as a group, but they have no control over what the individual congregations do. Our weakness is that we do not seem capable of the same kind of integration that Daphne Hampson demonstrated, even if it was only in a negative way. A successful leader for the ordination of women in Scotland, she concluded that the biblical and historical Christian truths of the incarnation and the prohibitions against women clergy made it impossible for her to remain a Christian. For her, biblical Christology simply is not true. We should reverse the process and let our Christology determine the shape and form of what we think about the ministry and who may and may not be ministers. Only from such a holistic approach that involves a firm commitment to the biblical revelation and to the incarnation of God in Jesus can we come to a complete understanding of what it means to be ministers of the gospel. LOGIA

## NOTES

1. Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).
2. Grant, 195–230.
3. Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 51.
4. Grant, 144–145.
5. Ibid., 177.
6. Hampson, 5.
7. Ibid., 9.
8. Ibid., 16.
9. Ibid., 20.
10. Ibid., 75.
11. Ibid., 76.
12. Ibid., 77.
13. Ibid., 172.
14. Ibid., 135.
15. Ibid., 111–112.

## HYMN ON MARRIAGE

Lent 5, 1999
10 10 10 10

Adam and Eve in Paradise were wed,
Two people, yet one body and one head.
It was not good that man should be alone;
God joined them flesh to flesh and bone to bone.

Eve was the body, Adam was the head;
United, they shared food and drink and bed.
To Eve, his body, Adam gave his life,
Eve, to her head was a submissive wife.

In Mary's womb, Christ and His Church were wed,
United as one body and one Head.
It was not good that Christ should be alone;
God joined them flesh to flesh and bone to bone.

The Church, the body, Jesus is the head;
His life to her flows in the blood He shed.
In nuptial joy the holy two embrace,
In chalice, font, and absolution's grace.

On this glad day when man and wife are wed,
God joins the two, one body and one head.
As Eve and Adam, Jesus and His Bride,
May you in peace and joy and love abide.

*Chad L. Bird*

# *The Ordination of Women and Feminist Theology*

Armin-Ernst Buchrucker

The demand for the ordination of women and for the admission of women to the ministry was not originally viewed as a question of theology but as one of emancipation. When most of the Protestant state churches became receptive to the ordination of women, especially during the 1970s, the concern was a matter of equal rights. Ordination of women was viewed as offering to both sexes equal access to all congregational and church offices. This was viewed as enhancing reconciliation between the sexes and providing new impulses to congregational life. The matter has turned out differently than intended.

The ordination of women has not only opened the door for women to enter the pastorate, and even the office of bishop; it has also opened the door for feminist theology to enter the church. As a result, feminist theology has established a firm position for itself in the church and continuously expands it. In significant areas of doctrine, proclamation, and congregational activity, the churches of the Reformation (and now also in part the Roman Catholic Church) have been subjected to feminist theology's demands for power. Feminist theologians not only appear regularly at church conventions (where they clearly determine some of the agenda); they also preach from many pulpits. Under their influence, congregational activity manifests a reversal of traditional theology.

There are quite a few feminist theologians who eschew ecclesiastical office for themselves on the grounds that it would only serve to support "repressive structures." At the same time, others desire to penetrate the "patriarchal structures" of the church in order to deliberately undermine them and change them from the inside.[1] Publications by feminist theologians have increased to the point that in the past twenty years two thousand titles have appeared on the market.

*In the last analysis, the rise of feminist theology has been enabled by the introduction of the ordination of women, not the other way around.* The fact that the two of them long ago found common ground together is clearly self-evident. The result of this development has been a near-total restructuring and reversal of theology because of feminist theology's demands for a fundamentally new orientation in the church of its concept of the Bible and exegesis, of dogmatics, of ethics, and of daily piety and life. The introduction of the ordination of women has proven to be the catalyst that has initiated and driven these developments.

## From the Women's Movement of the Nineteenth Century to Feminist Theology

The ordination of women to the pastoral office arose from the women's movement of the previous century, coupled with the liberation and emancipation movements rooted in student revolts and secular feminism of the 1960s.[2] Feminism's "first wave" arose in the nineteenth century in connection with civil revolutions—the romanticists' attempt to "humanize" society. This first wave of feminism demanded equal rights for women in education, careers, and citizenship—specifically the right to vote—and full legal equality in civil and criminal law. In the 1960s, secular feminism took as its goal the general liberation of women from every restraint of male dominance. It was not satisfied with achieving equality of status between men and women. Rather, it sought the destruction of the very categories of maleness and femaleness. The feminism of the 1960s did not merely demand equal rights, but a radical emancipation of women and the establishment of autonomous womanhood through the destruction of patriarchy.[3] In short, it strove to feminize society. Secular feminism objected ostensibly to every kind of sexism—broadly conceived as every kind of discrimination a person experiences because of gender—but sexism invariably was viewed only as male domination and oppression of women. Feminist demands for the total emancipation of women also included "reproductive freedom," which was effectively translated as the right to abortion on demand in keeping with the motto "My body, my choice." Feminism exalted lesbianism as a more equitable love relationship for women. As one American lesbian slogan succinctly put it: "Feminism is theory; lesbianism is the theory in practice."[4]

In her 1975 book about the liberation of women, A. Schwarzer states:

> Feminism is . . . the expression of a consciousness . . . . [It] becomes concrete when two or three women talk and act together; when women begin to ask questions instead of obeying, to fight instead of being on the receiving end . . . . The aim is not to gain emancipation apart from men, but rather to cease pleading for understanding and to confront men with the consequences drawn from one's own understanding.[5]

This article has appeared twice before, first in a publication by SELK in 1995, responding to a series of articles published by the Oberursel faculty, then in *Forum News,* Australia, translated into English by Hans Obersicht. Not all bibliographical information was included in the translated version. We present the article here as it appeared in Australia.

In the main, feminist *theology* emerged from secular feminism and its world of thought. Feminist theology sees itself as a contextual theology: like all liberation movements, it conceives of itself as "within the context" of the demand for liberation. It strives, above all, for liberation from all-male rule and domination in theology and in the church. By it theology is not only turned inside out—from being *theocentric* to *anthropocentric*—but it is also thoroughly feminized to be *gynaikocentric*. Feminist theology, as it pursues the "theological emancipation" of women in the church, wants to determine what applies in theology and the church, that is, what must be classified as right or wrong. Sola scriptura, Scripture and tradition, or any other dogmatic formulation (for example, ancient church symbols, confessional writings, decisions of the Council of Trent) are not regarded as normative. Rather, "the subject and the object of theology is female consciousness alone."[6] Women are "the focus and subject of feminist theology; women make their relationship to God and divinity the central object of their theology."[7] Catharina Halkes has been true to this aim and has reversed the customary understanding of theology as rational talk about God to being a talk about a person's desire for God.

***As an explicit theology by women for women, feminist theology originated in the United States.***

Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel wants to replace theology with *theo-phantasy*.[8] Like the historical-critical method of exegesis, which rejects the need to submit one's thinking to church dogma, Moltmann-Wendel asserts her life experience over every timeless truth, whether expressed in Scripture, confessions, or dogma. In 1906 Albert Schweitzer wrote: "Historical research into the life of Jesus did not originate with a pure, historical interest in the topic, but rather from the need to discover the Jesus of history as a helper in the struggle to be free from dogma."[9] In a similar vein, Meyer-Wilmes declares unequivocally: "Feminist theology can justify itself as a new paradigm of theology only when it is preceded by a break with the customary presuppositions of theology."[10]

As an explicit theology by women for women, feminist theology originated in the United States. Feminist theology began with the "discovery" that over the centuries Christianity not only failed to support the humanizing of women, but actively prevented it.

> The theology we have learned has omitted women . . . . Feminist theology has shown that this was not a historical accident, but was caused by an androcentric understanding of reality and science. . . . Women in the church have begun to ask their own theological questions and to reflect on their own history.[11]

Feminist theology wants to integrate women's experiences into the Bible and the church. "The issue, therefore, is not to fit women into the patriarchal system of the church and theology. The issue is to change the system."[12] Feminist theology is the emancipation of the sisterhood, and so to achieve social change—particularly the exposure, denouncement, and removal of all oppression of women.

## FEMINIST THEOLOGY IS THE THEOLOGICAL EXPRESSION OF SECULAR FEMINISM

Feminist theology is not a homogeneous movement. It has its radicals and moderates like all other movements. The boundary between them is fluid, however. Certain currents are found consistently among all representatives of feminist theology: antipatriarchialism, antisexism, antiandrocentrism, gynocentrism, self-discovery, sisterhood, and others. One can, *cum grano salis,* distinguish between three major streams of feminist theology. While such a distinction may be made in the abstract, in practice such distinctions are often difficult to uphold: any particular representative of feminist theology may defy easy identification with one of the three streams.

The first might be termed the radical, post-Christian stream. This position is tied to God-is-dead theology, to post-God-is-dead theology, and to post-theistic theology. Mary Daly, a former catholic nun, is the primary representative of this radical wing. She has burned her bridges to the church, Christianity, Christian theology, and the Christian faith. Her theological formulations, which betray at times a brutal, destructive, and nihilistic spirit, fit well into the world of thought for which she fights.

The second stream is the matriarchal position, which integrates non-Christian, goddess traditions into Christianity. Its most radical representatives are Christa Mulack, Elga Sorge, Heide Göttner-Abendroth, and Gerda Weiler.

The third stream runs counter to the supposedly androcentric direction of the church's tradition, of biblical theology, and of Christianity as a whole. It attempts to re-discover those matriarchal aspects that have been buried, marginalized, and deliberately eliminated by the "patriarchialism" of Judeo-Christian faith in God. This position tries to supplant such patriarchialism with its own view and so make itself felt in biblical exegesis and ecclesiastical tradition. One could call this stream the "liberation theology position" because it focuses on the theological (and ethical) liberation of the theological (and ethical) oppression of women. This third stream's most important representatives are Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, Rosemary R. Ruether, Catherina J. M. Halkes, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, and Luise Schottroff.

Nearly all feminist theological publications produced by all three streams acknowledge a debt to Mary Daly. Her decisive role for feminist theology is repeatedly highlighted. Halkes calls her a "bolt of lightning which has put everything into a new light."[13] Most feminist theologians also cite the exegete Schüssler-Fiorenza without criticism: one could give her the title "feminist mother of the church." Ruether is also held in high regard by feminist theologians.

Among the most important and principal contributors to the foundation of feminist theology are Paul Tillich and the psychiatrist Carl G. Jung. Providing essential input to feminist theology

are ancient gnosticism, neo-platonism, and the Jewish Kabbala. Marxism forms the spiritual background of feminist theology, especially the existentialism of Simone de Beauvoir, and the neo-Marxism of Herbert Marcuse. Marxism is also the specific source of feminist theology's strategy of "marching through institutions" in order to achieve its stated aims. Serving as catalyst is the demand for the ordination of women and the admission of women into the ministry.

In any case, feminist theology is diverse and is constantly in flux. It varies in its manifestations and forms from year to year. "Feminist theology" is thus an inclusive term for a variety of theories and activities that do not form a cohesive, uniform system. Even those familiar with feminist theology find writing about it systematically and methodically difficult. Since 1991, however, Gütersloh's *Dictionary of the Feminist Theology* has provided a great deal of information. It confirms that one can only detect the "basic outlines of feminist theology," that is, of a "feminist-theological position." It is virtually impossible to obtain a complete picture of the situation.

Nevertheless, after more than fifteen years of research into and debate with feminist theology, it is possible to determine certain systematic positions that correspond to traditional dogmatic theology. What follows examines feminist theology with respect to its concept of Scripture, its doctrines of man, God, Christ and the redemption he won, the church, the sacraments, and Christian living.

## THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE AND EXEGESIS

In 1993 the book *Streitfall Feministische Theologie* appeared. In it, feminist contributors Schüssler-Fiorenza and Buhler, in their article"Die Bibel Verstehen," state:

> the most important basis for the interpretation of the Bible can be neither biblical research nor the official church but only the women's movement in church and society .... Christian women [must] assume the authority to interpret biblical texts and to evaluate them theologically .... Patriarchal, oppressive texts must no longer be proclaimed as God's Word.[14]

Feminist theology approaches biblical texts with this presupposition. On the basis of feminist theology's own self-appraisal, one could also suggest that for feminist theology the subjectivism of personal experience (of women as women) is *the* norm and criterion for the evaluation of Holy Scripture as the source and basis of theology.

One needs to bear in mind in this regard that subjective experience by women "concerns the experience of social oppression."[15] The emphasis must lie on *experience,* for it alone entitles one "to judge whether biblical ideas are still wholesome and make sense."[16] Schüssler-Fiorenza postulates, "that revelation and truth are given in only such traditions and texts which critically appraise and transcend [the Bible's] patriarchal culture and androcentric religion."[17]

A long list of feminist theologians discard Holy Scripture as "hopelessly sexist." Heading this list is Mary Daly. Halkes calls the Bible a "nasty book" because of its patriarchal basis. The Old Testament is said to be fighting against the cult of the goddess; the entire Bible is said to have its origins in patriarchal culture. Many passages must therefore be re-interpreted, excluded, or rewritten altogether.[18] The Bible as the Word of God in its received form is not and cannot be normative for feminist theology. Feminists stress, moreover, how different the modern social environment is from the time when the Old and New Testaments were written. Feminist theologians constantly use the refrain "If Jesus were alive today." Their implication is, "then he would teach and decide quite differently from the way he did it in the first century."

***For feminist theology the subjectivism of personal experience (of women as women) is the norm and criterion for the evaluation of Holy Scripture as the source and basis of theology.***

Exegesis is undertaken in keeping with feminist theology's rule and guiding principle. Anything that deviates from it is declared to be outdated, in error, and in need of elimination. All Bible passages that suggest the subordination of women to men are automatically suspect. The "rascal Paul" is charged with primary responsibility of creating an "anti-flesh, neurotic Christian tradition." Feminist theology attacks the Apostle and the church fathers with undisguised hatred. Colossians, Ephesians, the pastoral epistles, and 1 Peter are charged with exhibiting a clear contempt for women.[19] First Corinthians 14:34 ff. is declared to be a later insertion dating from an anti-female, established church. Feminist theology accepts only those passages of the Bible that support the feminist theological view. Legendary material and personal experience must supplement the Bible. In this regard, one can speak of a *re-mythologizing* by feminism through their rediscoveries of the "original matriarchal circumstances"of the Bible. An example is the Tetragrammaton. On the basis of "history," feminism claims that behind this name lies a more ancient concept of God, namely that of "mother." The creation account is then rewritten in keeping with this claim: The ancestress, Eve, gave birth to the god Jahwe and chose him to help her give birth to Adam. But Jahwe, in league with the other gods (Elohim, Baal) and Adam subjugated the world and displaced the feminine, thus initiating a patriarchal system. The myth of the fall into sin reflects Jahwe's fear of the primeval divinity of Eve and his displacement of what was originally a feminine creation.[20]

This is how the feminist theological system uses the Bible and does exegesis. Some feminists describe this method of using the Holy Scripture as *Hexegesis,* combining the German *Hexe* ("witch") with "exegesis" to make a new word meaning "wild exegesis."[21] In addition to hexagesis is the "contextual method," which reads the Bible "in the context" of female experiences of suffering and of other texts (some of them contemporary.) As far as feminist theology is concerned, all these are of equal impor-

tance. Finally, it is necessary to point out that feminist theology subordinates the Bible to the goal of the liberation of women and consequently treats the Bible from the angle of liberation theology. The Virgin Mary serves as a prime example of this: feminist theology radically changes the "official" image of Mary from someone who lived a life of faith-filled sacrifice and service into a symbol for the prophetic power of liberation and of the new "sisterhood." Mary is declared to be a revolutionary and an example of autonomous womanhood. The Magnificat serves as the primary text for this transformation through Mary's words: "God puts down the mighty from their thrones, and exalts the humble" (Luke 1:52). Ruether interprets this passage as

> a call for revolutionary change . . . . Mary cannot become a symbol for the liberation of women unless she becomes a radical symbol of a new humanity which is set free from the conditions of power applying to hierarchy or even to that existing between God and humans.[22]

Together with Mary, other biblical women such as Miriam, Deborah, Mary Magdalene, Martha, Ruth, Esther, and Suzanna become symbols of this purported revolution.

*Feminist theology, which has established and which continues to establish itself in the church through the ordination of women into the ministry, insists that its concept of Scripture and its exegesis of the Bible determines all theology.*

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CONCEPT OF SIN

The doctrine of man (anthropology) and not—as is customary in dogmatics—the doctrine of God (theology) provides the starting point for feminist theology. At the outset, it is very important to note that this anthropological starting point is crucial for all of feminist theology's other dogmatic statements. The anthropology of feminist theology departs fundamentally from biblical anthropology in that it denies the "different-but-complementary" nature of man and woman and replaces it with androgyny. It postulates that maleness and femaleness are present in equal measure in every individual. In this respect feminist theology frequently makes use such terms as "wholeness" and "completeness." Halkes speaks of the integration of the different male-female polarities as a personal union.[23] "Androgyny-wholeness" is emphatically one of feminist theology's basic principles. Feminist theology thereby adopts gnostic concepts according to which God did not create humans as man and woman but as "man-woman," that is, as androgynous.[24]

Feminist theologians do not include the complementary nature of man and woman in their thinking because that would lead to the oppression of women through men assuming a governing role. This would, in turn, lead to a lessening of what it means to be human. Feminist theology is convinced that it can find orderly structures in the mere *classification* of man as man and woman as woman. This is why it favors androgyny above all.[25]

Marriage and family are devalued because their history demonstrates the suppression of women. The "elimination of enforced heterosexuality is one of the most pressing tasks facing feminist theology," asserts E. Wollrad in the *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*.[26] "It is about time that women and men stop complementing each other."[27] Feminist anthropology approves lesbian activity, or at least its toleration. Abortion is evaluated exclusively from the point of view of the woman's body, and is demanded and applauded on the basis of a "justified autonomy over one's body."[28] The *Book of Rituals* of the feminist Church for Women includes among its rites a "healing ritual following an abortion."[29] A child's right to life plays no role in the matter.

***It postulates that maleness and femaleness are present in equal measure in every individual.***

All this has not contributed much to the real question of what humans really are, that is, what they are before God, and how God sees them. An essential aspect of biblical anthropology is that humans are sinners. Feminist theology rejects this out of hand.

> Feminist theology is interested in a different process altogether, *viz.,* the process of liberation, of women becoming total beings in a social and patriarchal diaspora, and in the latter's dissolution. There is, therefore, no prior assumption of humans being sinners.[30]

The concept of sin as pride is said to merely reflect the experience of men. The problem with women is not that they have too much pride: they have too little of it. They do not need to overcome their selfishness, but their lack of self-awareness.

"I am good—I am whole—I am beautiful" is the title of one of the most significant contributions by Moltmann-Wendel in the collaborative book *Feministische Theologie-Praxis* (Bad Boll, 1981). Moltmann-Wendel asserts:

> I am good: I am what I am, not because of what I achieve. I am good because I exist, because God accepted me, loved me, created me, liberated me . . . . The Gospel is the liberation of humans . . . of human goodness; we must once again learn to understand this existentially for women. We have to interpret it feministically, i.e., from the totality of a woman's view. The statement "I am good" is therefore only an introduction to the other two statements: I am whole, I am beautiful. I am whole: from within myself . . . . When we rediscover God as mother and emotionalism as a being that embraces our being and precedes it; as joy and wholeness, which is nature and creation . . . then we can . . . see . . . ourselves as totally human . . . . Because God is father and mother—a whole—I, too, can be whole . . . . I am beautiful: "Beautiful": that has to complement "good" and "whole." That is the matriarchal magic we need in order to conquer a patriarchal culture. To see oneself as beautiful needs to replace the antiquated notion of accepting oneself as one is. That should be the feminist interpretation of justification by grace alone.

According to such thinking, the sinful nature does not exist. Rather, women are, in every case, free from sin and bear paradise within themselves. They are much closer to the divine because they think in terms of the totality of being. They are closer to the cosmos. Indeed, they are one with the cosmos and therefore at one with the Creator. They do not think about sin and the wrath of God like men do. Feminist theology removes sin from the nexus of God and humans, and declares it to be a purely secular problem. To women, sin is a lack of self-awareness and self-development, for it is "their original sin to obey men instead of God."[31] Therefore, Moltmann-Wendel, in her article "I am good—I am whole—I am beautiful," demands:

> Let us return to ourselves, away from the patriarchal values and norms which have been poured over our heads, and away from the sin of serving men. Let us rediscover ourselves, our instincts, our emotions, our sense of justice, our wisdom, our love. Let us once more begin to trust in ourselves, our spirit, our bodies, and our world—the creation of God which Jesus has liberated.

Feminist theology's primary concern is the identification of women with sin because of "biblical patriarchialism," that is, the entanglement of women in living situations and relationships dominated by men thus making women victims of male oppression and the like. That is why it regards every mention of subordination, every "overlordship," and every "hierarchy" as an embodiment of evil. The one and only sin women commit is to seek attachment instead of autonomy, thereby denying their self-development. There could hardly be a more radical reinterpretation of what the Holy Scriptures understand by sin.

*Feminist theology, which has established and which continues to establish itself in the church through the ordination of women into the ministry, insists that its principles determine the doctrine of humans and sin and all theology.*

## THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

What feminist theology's anthropology begins, it continues in its doctrine of God. On the one hand, the slightest hint of what feminism considers patriarchialism must be excluded. On the other hand, feminist theology inserts androgyny into its concept of God: masculinity and femininity are mingled in God. The rejection of every hint of patriarchialism includes denying marriage as symbolic of the relationship between God and his church. The metaphor of bride and groom as well as the concept of covenant are likewise denied. In the final analysis feminist theology operates with a gynocentric concept of God, rather than with even an androgynous concept.

Earlier, Mary Daly stood for a radical "depatriarchialisation" of the biblical concept of God (*Beyond God the Father,* 1973; *Jenseits von Gottvater, Sohn und Co.*, 1980). But since 1978 all her efforts have been concentrated on the veneration of the goddess (*Gyn/Oekologie: Die Metaethik des radikalen Feminismus*, 1978 English, 1981 German). Elga Sorge, following this line, composed a polemical "Our Mother" prayer instead of the "Our Father," while Christa Mulack demanded, *expressis verbis*, a matriarchal concept of God for Christian theology. R. R. Ruether rejects every form of divine transcendence, and in its place proclaims the divine being as "an all-embracing source of life," "an all-embracing matrix," "mother earth," "a cosmic egg giving birth," and "the maternal source."[32] Moltmann-Wendel regards Jesus' familiar address of "Abba" as "disrespectful," and the phrase "obedience toward God" as a "traumatic expression."[33] In her search for "matriarchal presuppositions for the concept of God," Mulack writes about Jesus' experience with the Father in these terms:

***The one and only sin women commit is to seek attachment instead of autonomy, thereby denying their self-development.***

The Father has become one with the Great Mother. He embodies her. She has entered into him and through him embodies herself. One can therefore no longer distinguish between them. The letters of the word "Abba" point to this connection. In the view of the Kabbala one cannot establish the meaning of a word without its letters. At first sight "Abba" represents something masculine. However, the deeper meaning is feminine because the maternal symbol *aleph* brackets the double and thoroughly feminine symbol *beth*. "Abba," therefore, contains two letters. On the one hand, there is the masculine concept "Abba" which is made up of feminine letters. On the other hand, there is the masculine concept in the form of "Abba" which has become feminine. The purpose of the paternal concept of God, as coined by Jesus, is to achieve this very thing.[34]

The Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—is replaced with the "Mother, Daughter, and Old Woman," or with the "threefold protennoia" of gnosticism. Mary Daly holds, "If God is masculine, then masculinity must be God."[35] Feminist theology concludes that the Christian (= masculine) concept of God cements in transcendence itself a subordination of women to men. Therefore, if one is to eliminate the subordination of women to men, one must eliminate the transcendent, masculine concept of God. Feminism is therefore keen to join Tillich in speaking of God as the "Depth of Existence," or even as the "deepest dimension of this world." Ruether rejects the idea of divine creation on the ground that it is "patriarchal" because it presupposes the transcendence of God beyond this world.[36] Moreover, it would mean that God is far superior to the world, and that again suggests notions of subordination.

Feminist theology demands at least parity between masculine and feminine characteristics in the concept of God because the Bible compares God to a mother in several passages. There is also the Hebrew word for "mercy" (which very strongly characterizes and directs God's activity), meaning "womb." There is the feminine personification of Wisdom, which—tragically in the feminist view—was replaced with the masculine image of the divine Word (*Logos*) after the incarnation of Jesus as a man. The

*Dictionary of Feminist Theology* states, *expressis verbis*, "'As male and female God created them' (Gen 1:27) *must* mean that the masculine and feminine exist in God. Nothing can exist outside of God which was not first within him."[37] The reader needs to remember, again, that this androgynous concept of God, as well as the androgynous concept of mankind, both date back to ancient gnosticism.[38] "Feminist theologians have easier access to God the Spirit than to the Father and the Son. The Spirit embodies everything that is rational and dynamic, and ignites the spark through the interaction between people."[39] Therefore, feminist theology must necessarily be a pneumatic theology. Since *ruach*/spirit is feminine in Hebrew, feminist theology demands that we speak of a "Holy Spiritess."

Elga Sorge asks whether representatives of feminist theology might not still be giving too much credit to masculinity. The fact that they continue to use the term *God* instead of *goddess* suggests it to her.[40] "The highest contemplation of divine activity is possible only in terms of feminine categories, as it happens in *Second Sefira*."[41] Is God the Father to be described as a Mother in the future? In that case we would have a feminine instead of a patriarchal theism. The term "femininity of God" is used by feminist theology to show that they experience God differently, and that they have to respond to God differently in everyday life and in theological reflection. Feminist theology understands God's divinity from the human perspective rather than understanding human nature from God's perspective.[42]

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## CHRISTOLOGY AND DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

"The notion of a singular incarnation of God in the form of a man, the God-human of the 'Holy Trinity,' is basically sexist and opens the floodgates of oppression. The worship of Christ is idol worship."[43] This sentence says virtually everything feminist theology thinks about Jesus Christ and how it values him. Feminist theology rejects the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ for our redemption. It rejects the doctrine of Jesus' self-sacrifice for the salvation of humankind. Such a "scapegoat syndrome" would encourage women to emulate the sacrificing love of Jesus, and that would contradict the feminist-theological concept of humanity![44]

Feminist theology claims that the image of a unique, male Redeemer invokes and undergirds notions of male superiority. "The myth of sin and the myth of redemption have to be castrated because they are both symptoms of the same disease."[45] Moltmann-Wendel disagrees with biblical Christology in which God demands the active obedience of the Son and provides satisfaction for sin through the sacrificial death of Christ, for this is a "sexist way of thinking about God."[46]

The notions "I am good—I am whole—I am beautiful" and "an inclusive sinfulness does not exist," which direct feminism's concept of humanity (see above), make every mode of human redemption unnecessary, especially that which proclaims a vicarious, atoning sacrifice on a cross! Mary Daly replaces the cross of Jesus Christ with the matriarchal goddess's tree of life:

> This cosmic tree, this living fountain of radiating energy, of radiating Being, is the deepest truth behind the Christian cross, that structure made of dead wood on which a dying body was fastened with nails . . . . Thus the Tree of Life was changed into the symbol of a sadomasochistic society.[47]

Schottroff explains the cross as an event that all suffering people experience in the same manner.[48] Jutta Voss asserts that the blood of Jesus is "death-effecting blood" and can only be symbolically understood. Menstrual blood, on the other hand, is real, and the most important thing in the life of humanity.[49] The Pauline and Reformation doctrine of justification is rejected because it is an expression of the very thing that traps male theologians into an Oedipus complex, that is, that they were and are sexually inhibited. "The man ensnared by the Oedipus [complex] swears by Paul's Letter to the Romans as the center of the Scriptures because it alone takes up the Oedipus complex and resolves it with the sacrificial blood of Jesus on the cross."[50]

***Since* ruach*/spirit is feminine in Hebrew, feminist theology demands that we speak of a "Holy Spiritess."***

The Christian doctrine of redemption is turned by feminist theology into an altogether different kind of salvation. It becomes an androgynous liberation of internal, secular circumstances. This liberation is not to be expected from God, or from outside the self, or from anywhere else. The true power of redemption lies within women themselves, in their feminine abilities. People liberated from the slavery of sexism become a united whole "all by themselves." Femininity leads to true and complete human existence; indeed, it provides redemption.[51] Redemption, for Ruether, occurs essentially "in the recognition of who we are."[52] The essential issue in redemption is immersion into one's own ego. This self-redemption includes redemption from the "original sin of sexism"[53] and can occur only by means of women's liberation.

## THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD LIES IN THE REDEMPTION OF WOMEN

It needs to be added that, in respect to the person of Jesus, feminist theology describes him as androgynous. His androgyny determines his concept of God, which is also androgynous. According to Hanna Wolff, Jesus lived the female side of his personality, the *anima*, in a complete unity of his psychic being. He is "the first anima-integrated man in world history . . . who, being born of a woman, is himself a woman in a man . . . . Jesus allows the feminine values of existence in the concept of God to play a dominant role."[54] Therefore feminist theology frequently refers to a "Jesa Christa" and portrays "her" in depictions of the crucifixion.

Wenck asserts that Jesus' maleness has hindered God's cause and earned women disadvantages, restrictions, and rejection.[55] Feminist theology is especially offended by the incarnation of God in Jesus as a man. It is offended by Jesus' Sonship. As far as feminist theology is concerned, such a sonship does not exist. The "myth" of Jesus as the Messiah, or the divine Logos, has to be vanquished. Jesus was merely a homeless Jewish prophet who was in need of redemption himself.[56] "A Christology which tries to do justice to feminine criteria must surrender the claim that God has revealed himself in a special and final manner in Jesus Christ, or of humankind's redemption through him."[57] Halkes proclaims,

> Feminist theology believes in a continuing incarnation which manifests itself in a new birth of all the oppressed, of all women who have only lately attained their own existence and their own expression of faith. The incarnation of God continues. Jesus Christ has shown us how God empties himself of his power in order to serve. His own life is an example of it.[58]

Schüssler-Fiorenza goes so far as to derive Jesus' authority from women. A woman is said to have anointed him as Messiah and given him the name of Christ.[59] According to Mulack, it was Mary Magdalene who, as the priestess of the oriental Mother Goddess, had maintained a secret school of mysteries at Bethany. As the representative of the goddess she had anointed her beloved as Messiah, set him free to die, and finally helped him to attain new life.[60]

Thus feminist theology denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, his eternal Sonship, his incarnation, and redemption through his death on the cross. It would be difficult to express anti-Christian tendencies more clearly than this. In *Jenseits von Gottvater, Sohn & Co.*, Mary Daly blatantly admits: "At its greatest depth the women's movement, pressing beyond the Christ-idolatry, in fact searches for the original, all-present, and future Antichrist."[61]

*Feminist theology, which has established and which continues to establish itself in the church through the ordination of women into the ministry, insists that its principles determine the doctrines of Christ, redemption, and all theology.*

## CONCEPT OF CHURCH

Mary Daly, by way of accusation, labels the church as "an instrument for the oppression of women . . . This position is strengthened by the fact that one calls God 'Father,' that Christ is a man, and that the angels have masculine names."[62] In 1983, proponents of women's ordination established a "Church for Women" in the United States. It has its own liturgy and excludes men in order to more successfully combat patriarchialism, as Schüssler-Fiorenza and Ruether assure us.[63] According to feminist theology, Jesus did not found the church. The history of the church begins with,

> a few women going on their way to perform their last, loving service on their dead friend, Jesus. It began with a few women giving their allegiance to a traitor against all reason and against all hope, and with doing what they regarded as right and what was for them the quality of life, namely, to love expired life and never to abandon anything that is dead.[64]

Thus, the church was established by the solidarity of women and by their initiative. It soon became perverted, however, because men began to exercise lordship over it. This introduced a fateful development:

> God is predominantly thought of as masculine. His actions are in line with male leadership roles: to rule, to judge, to reign; he is everything that masculine wishful thinking wants him to be . . . . The experiences of women, namely that Jesus is a friend who shares their lives and gives them warmth, nearness, tenderness in all their loneliness and helplessness, has been forgotten as a result of this.[65]

Naturally, these last-mentioned characteristics are peculiar to the "Church for Women."

***Feminist theology is especially offended by the incarnation of God in Jesus as a man. It is offended by Jesus' Sonship.***

According to Schüssler-Fiorenza, the first Christian congregations had an egalitarian structure because Jesus rejected all lordship structures. The church is said to have adjusted itself to fit the surrounding patriarchal culture at a later stage. The letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, and the First Epistle of Peter are said to be the product of this adaptation strategy.[66] But, this new church is a church of the fellowship of sisters, a place for one's self-development, a sacred place, a charismatic fellowship where women can discover themselves and where they "prophetically rise up against all de-humanizing structures . . . a fellowship with a mission, namely, the task to proclaim the good news of liberation."[67]

Concern for one's eternal salvation is not an issue to the Church for Women. Its exclusive concern is with women's internal secular struggles against social domination by men. The Church for Women is feminism's fellowship for liberation from patriarchy. It sees its "origin-myth" in the exodus of the children of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt; it moves towards the dawn of a "new age" that will be completely free from domination of any kind.[68]

The Church for Women, the new fellowship of sisters, the "cosmic sisterhood," is, in fact, a feminist anti-church. Daly hopes that the tragic manner in which patriarchy has destroyed the original matriarchy will be followed by a reestablishment of that matriarchy; so Daly prepares for the "second coming of the woman" said to be synonymous with the coming of Antichrist.[69]

The Church for Women "introduces a new being into the world."[70] In order to destroy the influence of the established church, feminists must decide between (officially) leaving the church for the Church for Women, or seeking the deliberate undermining of the church. The latter promises the best results:

"In my opinion, the feminist movement has a much better chance to achieve its objectives if it can secure a role within the existing churches."[71]

*Feminist theology, which has established and which continues to establish itself in the church through the ordination of women into the ministry, insists that its principles determine the doctrine of the church and all theology.*

## UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRAMENTS

Feminist theology has no coherent view of the sacraments. Anything that might be said about the sacraments falls by the wayside because of feminist theology's views of sin and redemption. Since feminist theology considers baptism, the Lord's Supper, and even the church's liturgical calendar to be a "patriarchal deformation," such things are suspect from the outset. The *Book of Rites* of the American Church for Women mentions baptism, but not as an act of grace by which humans become participants in Christ's resurrection. Ruether writes in this connection:

> The Church for Women builds on a conception which was recently defined as "creation-orientated spirituality." This means that grace and redemption are not to be found beyond human nature, but that grace and being in God lies within human nature itself. They are based on nature. Creation itself is the original grace, or the original blessing of God.

A sacrament, therefore, cannot grant anything additional to humans. It is merely a "symbol of our mutual enabling powers through which we discover our real identity. It is something that already exists within us."[72]

Feminist baptism concerns itself with liberation from patriarchy in ritual linked to relevant exorcisms.[73] With respect to the "ceremony of the Last Supper," the *Book of Rites* of the Church for Women instructs that it be celebrated with milk, honey, and sweet pastry.

> We bake our total love, our hope and our trust in life into these loaves of bread. We give them to each other as a present. It is a secret covenant decision which we offer to God: For as long as bread is baked . . . there shall be no end to seedtime and harvest . . . . The baking of bread is symbolic of resistance to the daily estrangement which we must endure in suffering. The baking of bread is a protest against the despoliation in our lives of everything that was created . . . . In our search for wholeness, or God, we not only eat bread but we also desire to produce it. We want to participate in the establishment of the meaning of our existence . . . . The Last Supper [*sic*], however, is the sacrament which possesses the terrific power to offer an alternative to world starvation and the greed of humans. Indeed, it can do more than that: it can make an end of it. The Last Supper [*sic*] is the unmistakable, provocative example of the correct distribution of wealth, for it is the symbol of unselfish sharing.[74]

Former hospital chaplain Jutta Voss exalts female menstrual blood over the "masculine death-effecting blood" of Jesus because, for her, the mystery of the Real Presence can only be symbolically understood. Women's menstrual blood, on the other hand, is real and the most important thing in the life of humanity.[75] Long before Voss, Mary Daly had already called the Lord's Supper "blatant cannibalism" and "concealed vampirism" practiced by Christian priests in an attempt to get hold of the "gynocentric energy of the Great Goddess":

> The priest plays the role of a priestess. By hiding behind her symbol he tries to change wine into holy blood, a Christian version of masculine menstruation. In this case, however, we find nothing of that original, creative power which is an integral part of the vessel/chalice. Instead, the Christian chalice turns into a focal point of a cannibalistic, cadaver-eating ritual.[76]

Feminist theology rejects Holy Communion because it also rejects the atoning death of Christ. The blood of women, mythically linked with "Mother Earth," replaces the blood of the divine Redeemer that was shed on Golgotha. Feminism declares the redemption of humanity through women.

***Feminist theology insists that its principles determine the doctrine of the church and all theology.***

In the workshop book *Feminist Theological Practice* (1981), now considered a classic, there is a contribution entitled "The Woman with a Flow of Blood: A Sister's *Hexegesis* of Luke 8:43–48." This (unsigned) article takes issue with Christianity's "blood theology:"

> I want to return once more to the matter of blood, a concept we still use in connection with the word "unclean" . . . . Now, blood is really the thing we need in order to live. If the blood no longer circulates, life is gone. This disappearing flow of blood here may also mean the disappearance of life. Why must a woman's blood be regarded as unclean while the same is not the case when men shed their blood? Men also shed blood, not by themselves, but through others, as in wars. Why is that shedding of blood not regarded as unclean and horrible, but only that applying to women, where it happens quite naturally and without destructive consequences?
>
> It is indeed important that the Last Supper [*sic*] is shed blood. But there it is suddenly clean. Why is it that men need the blood from one wound—even the blood from the wound on the cross—but not the blood which women constantly shed? There is something special and mysterious about the blood of women in respect to its connection with the earth. It is a pure, direct connection with the earth. It is a birthing experience to give something to the earth, and it is a very intimate connection to the earth. I experience this also with the help of self-examinations and self-tests. It is a very

> special situation. Long ago there used to be menstruation huts. I know that in some cultures it was always a taboo when a woman bled, but she was a saint. Later it became a filthy taboo. In other words, the blood that was taboo was sacred blood . . . . It used to be [the same] as the things that are in the earth, and used to be sacred in its own right and in its connection with the earth. We have lost that [understanding] (37).

*Feminist theology, which has established and which continues to establish itself in the church through the ordination of women into the ministry, insists that its principles determine the sacraments of the church and all theology.*

### ETHICS

In a 1978 publication Moltmann-Wendel writes:

> The women of today are no longer satisfied to be allowed to practice their love in existing orders only to see that the political and social arenas remain unaffected by it. They have discovered a revolutionary potential, called love, and regard themselves responsible for social justice in the existing orders . . . . Parallel with the liberation of women, they are also engaged in the liberation of classes and races and are committed to a liberation theology . . . . A little of the Kingdom of God is already becoming a reality right now, and Christians are called upon to establish early signs of the future righteousness and to live by it. This enables women to enter a new dimension of Christian-social engagement.

Feminist theology, therefore, does not follow the Lutheran distinction between the two kingdoms, namely, the order of creation and that of Christ. Feminist theology does not view Christian social engagement as a result of faith, but instead sees faith becoming a reality through social engagement. This is a total abandonment of the New Testament's linking of faith and love and of the customary preeminence of dogmatics over ethics. The God whom Jesus declared (*Sölle*) can be experienced and theologically explained only by putting faith into practice. The arena in which divine revelation is given is, therefore, the concrete (political) struggle of groups and communities that strive for the gift of life and attempt to shake off everything that makes living difficult. Feminist ethics are an ethic of radical freedom of humans for good or evil (including murder within the framework of post-"God-is-dead" theology).[77]

Feminist theology rejects the use of biblical commandments (including the Table of Duties) as a guide in Christian education and society because domination occurs in connection with them. The Ten Commandments are seen as an instrument of domination by a masculine God and his representatives. These assessments take place against the background of Marxist thinking and of that of the neo-Marxist "critical theory" (Frankfurt School) that declares as its utopia a society free from domination.

The alliance between Marxism and secular feminism continues in feminist theology. Bärbel von Wartenberg, Catharina Halkes, Luise Schottroff, Dorothee Sölle, and others have acknowledged this, more or less openly.[78] Given this background, the transformation of the Ten Commandments into the "Ten Permissions" (first read at a Catholic Church convention in Aachen in September 1986) by feminist theologian Elga Sorge is nothing but a logical consequence. The "Ten Permissions" are said to come from *Theasophia,* the goddess of wisdom and strength,[79] and are meant to be signs of women's liberation. They are meant to serve as aids in the liberation of women from thousands of years of oppression, and in the liberation of men living under a false perception of their dominant position.

***Feminist theology does not view Christian social engagement as a result of faith, but instead sees faith becoming a reality through social engagement.***

It is plain that such utter arrogance, exhibited by these new definitions, will result in the dissolution of the order established by God for the preservation of the world. It will lead to chaos. Everyone will (supposedly) "act in love," but in the end they will do only what they themselves want.

Indeed, this is what Moltmann-Wendel proposed as fundamental for feminist theology in the *Werkstattbuch* of 1981:

> I am good . . . . I do good because I am good; I am whole . . . from within myself . . . . Because God is Father and Mother, a whole, I, too, can be whole; I am beautiful . . . . "Beautiful," that has to complement "good" and "whole" . . . . To see oneself as beautiful needs to replace the antiquated notion of accepting oneself as one is. That should be the feminist interpretation of justification by grace alone.

In this connection, it should be noted that feminist theology views the gratification of personal desires as the purpose of life. This has led to a glorification of lesbian love and to feminist theology's promotion of abortion on demand. Feminist theology does not view life within the womb as sacred; the unborn do not count at all. All that counts is self-determination and freedom for women. What counts is that women themselves are empowered to shape their lives without outside interference of any kind.[80]

In connection with this, it should be noted that two women lecturers have been formally called and inducted into the EKiD's Center for Women's Studies and Education at Gelnhausen. Herta Leistner and Renate Jost are two feminist theologians who have become famous because of their support of lesbian partnerships and their demand for the equality of homosexual/lesbian relationships with heterosexual. Leistner values same-sex partnerships above marriage. In 1987 the pair published their book *Hättest Du Gedacht, Dass Wir So Viele Sind? Lesbische Frauen in the Kirche.* Regarding marriage as God's clear and only will for the cohabitation of men and women, it says,

> We refuse to accept this any longer, but instead consciously fashion our lives and live accordingly . . . . For us lesbians . . . feminist theology plays a central role because it reflects our questions, searching, research and discoveries . . . . We hold the view that lesbian relationships on a small scale are a model for those types of relationships in which humans do not possess each other but share themselves with each other, support and respect each other, care for one another, and are bound to one another in fellowship with others.[81]

Bishop Maria Jespen praises the calling of Leistner and Jost to Gelnhausen, and would regard it as awful if either were excluded on the basis of being a lesbian. The same thing applies to the ethics of feminist theology as applies to all its theological statements: feminist theology's anthropology shapes its ethics.

*Feminist theology, which has established and which continues to establish itself in the church through the ordination of women into the ministry, insists that its principles determine church ethics and all theology.*

## CONCLUSION

Feminist theology is not Christian theology, but a radical atheistic, antitheistic ideology that passes itself off as theology. To put it differently: it is a post-theistic theology, a post-God-is-dead theology. It is blatantly anti-Christian; it comprises an anti-Christian, alien religion.[82] Feminist theology is anthropocentric, glorifies the ego, and worships its "messianic ideals" of self-redemption and self-development. Its anthropology is God-less.[83] Feminist theology undermines the Christian faith, dissolves its essence, and sidelines every transcendental aspect of faith because it concentrates on purely immanent existence. Its presuppositions and philosophical premises declare that patriarchal oppression of women is the central cause of everything negative in church and society. On the basis of its emancipation ideology, feminist theology alters, reinterprets, abbreviates, falsifies, and finally destroys the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, and promulgates, in collusion with the historical-critical method, false exegesis.[84]

Feminist interpretation of the Bible and the history of the church have already become acceptable as proclamation and historical exposition. In accordance with the 1968 movement, feminist theology has begun its "march through the institutions" via women's ordination. Its aim is to decide everything concerning theology and church. The goal it strives for is the destruction of the official church and its patriarchy, and to establish a feminist anti-church.[85] It displays an unmistakable revolutionary attitude under its guise as an emancipating protest movement against all unacceptable masculine behavior, domination, and arrogance.

Those who have had little or no contact with feminist theology and whose experience in church politics has been limited might think that this analysis of feminist theology's basic principles and citation of some of its provocative statements are merely an attempt to paint a horrific picture of it. Some might be tempted to say, "Surely, it cannot be as bad as all that: the movement is still in its infancy, is still in flux, and rather complex. There are moderates and radicals, as in other movements, but in the end everything will fall into place reasonably well." But this view is contradicted by harsh realities. Feminist theology long ago established itself in theological study, in the church and society, and it continues to increase its influence, especially through the ordination of women. From its beginnings, feminist theology has considered the demand for the ordination of women and their admission into the ministry to be of fundamental importance.

Maria Jespen, who holds the office of bishop, clearly acknowledges her allegiance to feminist theology. Bishops and presidents pay homage to feminist theology. And although feminist theology no longer has any common ground with Christian theology, but denies basic truths of the faith, rejects revelation, and distorts the doctrines of God, Christ, and the Church, an authoritative, authentic answer on the part of church councils against this new, syncretistic religion is still lacking.[86]

***Feminist theology is not Christian theology, but a radical atheistic, antitheistic ideology.***

Feminist theology sets much of the agenda of church conventions. There are hardly any theological faculties left that do not have a separate chair of feminist theology. Influential professorships involved in the education of pastors are occupied by provocative representatives of feminist theology. Feminist theology is proclaimed and taught openly or in disguise from many pulpits, at congregational activities, at local and smaller church conventions, at academic events, in Sunday bulletins, and in official publications of the church. The World Council of Churches officially accepted many of the ideas of feminist theology long ago. The liturgy of the World Women's Day of Prayer has followed feminist theological ideas for several years.[87]

During the past fifteen to twenty years the members of the church at large have been severely feminized. There is hardly an ecclesiastical or theological subject left that can be discussed without taking the feminist demand for power into consideration. The SELK faces these realities if it opens the floodgates to women's ordination. A proverb from secular history states, "The only thing nations learn from history is that they learn nothing from history," and another says, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Does this not also apply to the history of the church and the history of theology? And will it be said about the SELK some day? LOGIA

## NOTES

1. Halkes, Söhne, 45; Raming, 88 ff.
2. H. Schenk, *Die feministische Herausforderung.* 150 Jahre Frauenbewegung in Deutschland. München, 1980. J. Menschick, *Feminismus: Geschichte, Theorie, Praxis.* Köln (2) 1979. R. Wiggershaus, *Geschichte der Frauen und Frauenbewegung In der BRD and DDR nach 1945.* Wuppertal, 1979.
3. Moltmann-Wendel, *Werkstattbuch*, 23: "Women no longer desire to identify themselves with the patriarchal world. They see in feminism a necessary change to our private and public life."
4. In *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970); German: *Frauenbefreiung und sex-*

*uelle Revolution*. The most radical American feminist demands the elimination of even genital distinctions. These differences would allow a certain subjugation of the female gender in the world of animals. The "reproduction of the genre" enslaves the woman. "Pregnancy is a temporary deformation of the human body for the maintenance of the species,"19, 185. According to Simone de Beauvoir, *Das andere Geschlech,* 265, a pre-determined nature of woman (and man) does not exist. One is not born as a woman; one becomes a woman. Every distinction of essential differences between the sexes is rejected because even talking about differences contains the seeds of a lesser evaluation (subjugation, oppression) of the women. Among the feminist theologians, Beauvoir has been considered the "bible of feminism."

5. Schwarzer, *Unterschied,* 235 ff.
6. Halkes, *Söhne*, 32.
7. Ibid. Moltmann-Wendel, *Werkstattbuch* 23: "Now, feminist theology the attempt by women to find a place in theology for their forgotten and suppressed ideas, values and images, and to speak about God as women."
8. To become one's own person, 17 ff. Cf. *Menschenwerden in einer neuen Gemeinschaft,* 88.
9. Albert Schweitzer, "Von Reimarus zu Wrede," *Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (1906), 4.
10. *Rebellion auf the Grenze.*
11. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Emanzipation aus der Bibel*, 195.
12. Ibid.
13. Halkes, *Söhne*, 10.
14. Ed. B. Hübener and H. Meesmann (Düsseldorf, 1993).
15. Moltmann-Wendel, *Milch,* 77.
16. Halkes, *Suchen,* 25.
17. *Concilium* (1978), 292.
18. Halkes, *Söhne,* 55, 58 ff. A non-sexist Bible translation, which omits "father" and other male symbols or compliments them with feminine terms, and the like, is already under way in the USA. In her book *Lydias ungeduldige Schwester,* Schottroff demands that even the canon of biblical books "must be examined in a new light," 119.
19. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Gedächtnis,* 400 ff.
20. Sorge: "er aber soll nicht dein Herr sein," 3 ff.; cf. Göttner-Abendroth, *Matriarchale Mythologie.*
21. *Werkstattbuch,* 34 ff. Daly sees herself as a witch who has discovered an esoteric knowledge of ancient matriarchal culture (*Gyn/Oekologie,* 240). Goddesses and witches have already played a role at meetings; figures of Baal-Astarte and Isis have been venerated. Cultic dances were a part of it. Witches like Starhawk not only participated in the "liturgy" of the Church for Women in the USA, but also in a hotel in the Black Forest, in the summer of 1985 (report in *BRIGITTE,* 10.7.1985). Some have advanced the idea that the ancient Canaanitic practice of temple prostitution was not all that bad (cf. Balz-Cochoi, *Gomer und die Macht der Astarte*, 38 ff.). Meanwhile, Elga Sorge has founded an independent Confessing Church / Church of Witches.
22. Ruether, *Sexismus,* 186, and, *Frauen,* 75. Daly describes Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a "domesticated goddess," and as "a remnant of the primeval image of a divine mother. As 'mother of God,' Christianity has put her in chains and subordinated her" (*Vater*, 103).
23. Halkes, *Söhne*, 20.
24. Cf. E. Pagels, *Versuchung durch Erkenntnis*: Die gnostischen Evangelien (Frankfurst/M, 1987).
25. Simone de Beauvoir promotes the ideal future human as a genderless being. She recommends that the natural process of the reproduction of children be replaced by artificial insemination. Of course, she demands the legalising of abortion (*Das andere Geschlecht*, 675 ff., 133, 478, 652, 470).
26. *Wörterbuch*, 245.
27. Strahm, *Aufbruch*, 128.
28. *Wörterbuch*, 219.
29. *Rituale*, 183.
30. Moltmann-Wendel, *Milch*, 79.
31. Moltmann-Wendel, *Frau und Religion*, 33.
32. *Sexismus*, 69, 72–74, 99, 315; *Frauen*, 25, 229.
33. *Milch*, 107.
34. Mulack, *Weiblichkeit*, 333.
35. Daly, *Vater,* 33.
36. Ruether, *Frauen,* 28.
37. *Wörterbuch*, 161.
38. Cf. G. Quispel, *Gnosticism as World Religion* (Zürich, 1951).
39. Halkes, *Söhne*, 42.
40. Sorge, *Religion und Frau*, 49.
41. Mulack, *Weiblichkeit*, 224.
42. Cf. Krattiger, *Mönchin*, 16. "In the post-Father world of faith, and through feminist theology, I experience myself as God-within. I become a religious self-provider: I am provided for from within myself." A report about the Workshop on Feminist Theology at Büsum (1982) states, "Women from within the church were there to learn how to 'feel' things by touching the grass and silently looking at each other." Table grace was replaced with a Finnish round dance "during which the arms were symbolically raised towards the sun and alternately lowered towards the earth." During a meditation on Sarah's and Hagar's experiences of God the conclusion was reached that "God is a scoundrel!"
43. Daly in Moltmann-Wendel, *Frau und Religion*, 110.
44. Daly, *Vater*, 94 ff.
45. Daly in Moltmann-Wendel, *Frau und Religion*, 90.
46. *Neue Trends in der feministishe Theologie.* In: epd. 25/1978, page 11 ff. Cf. in this respect the demand by feminism to eliminate the "religion of sacrifices," Strahm/Strobel, *Vom Verlangen nach Heilwerden.*Cf. also Schottroff in *Evangelische Kommentare* 4, (1992): "The concept of God in the Christian theology of the cross projects a despotic, patriarchal Father in heaven who sacrifices his son. This concept of God can only be a horror picture for women. It has sadistic and cannibalistic aspects precisely because of the theology of the cross." R. Bultmann, "Neues Testament und Mythologie," in *Kerygma und Dogma*, 1954, 1: 20, wrote already then: "How can my guilt be atoned for by the death of someone who is innocent (if one can even speak of someone like that)? What kind of primitive understanding of guilt and righteousness lies at the bottom of such a notion? and what kind of primitive concept of God? If the picture of the death of Christ for the removal of sin is to be understood from the concept of sacrifice: what a primitive mythologie [this is which declares] that an incarnate divine being can atone with his blood for the sins of mankind!"
47. *Vater*, 102 f.
48. *Wörterbuch*, 229. Cf. Schottroff, *et al.*, *Das Kreuz*, 9 and 12 ff., and Wöller, *Glaube an den Dreieinigen Gott*, 102 ff.: "In the case of Jesus, death is a process of fertilization, a marriage of the seed with the earth, and through it a conception, production, and birth of new life . . . . Our view of the death of Jesus on the cross is filled with horror. From the point of view of Mother-God it is the final arrival of her bridegroom, her marriage to him."
49. *Schwarzmondtabu*, 50 f.
50. Wöller, *Zum Glauben verführen*, 221.
51. Cf. Mulack, *Weiblichkeit,* in several places.
52. *Rituale*, 59 f.
53. Ruether, *Sexismus*, 219.
54. Wolff, *Jesus der Mann*, 47, 51, 70, 22, 121.
55. Wenck, *Gott ist im Mann*, 126.
56. Ruether, *Sexismus*, 145, 166, 169. That too has already been taught by gnosticism.
57. *Wörterbuch*, 204.
58. In Brooten/Greinacher, *Frauen in der Männerkirche*, 168.
59. *Gedächtnis*, 11 f.
60. *Jesus - der Gesalbte der Frauen*, 271 f.
61. 115. Daly calls the virgin birth a "Christian rape myth," and the resurrection of Christ the "autonomous pregnancy of the androgynous Christ,"108, 110.
62. S*exismus*, 19, 30.
63. Ruether, *Frauenkirche*, 275 ff.; *Rituale*, 19 ff.
64. Moltmann-Wendel, *Menschwerdung*, 80.
65. Ibid., 80 f.
66. *Gedächtnis*, 183, 199, 201, 400 f.
67. Halkes, *Söhne,* 45.
68. *Rituale*, various places, but especially 53 f., 72, 79.
69. Daly, *Vater*, 153 ff., 176 ff., 115 f.

70. Ibid., 170.

71. *Rituale*, 51. cf. Schottroff, et al., *Kreuz*, 61.

72. *Rituale*, 103 f.

73. Ibid., 149 ff. Even the "Rite of Reconciliation" does not mention a confession of sins. Instead, it contains angry accusations against the patriarchy and the "official church"! The liturgy for Ash Wednesday, "Repentance for the Sins of the Church," deals exclusively with its patriarchal , women-hating attitudes and practices, 265 ff.

74. *Von Wartenberg-Potter*, in Schottroff, et al., *Kreuz*, 32, 35.

75. *Schwarzmondtabu,* 50 f. Black Moon, synonymous with new moon, is a mythical circumscription of menstruation. Apparently it was not enough for Voss to discover that the mystery of change of female blood was venerated in the Greek goddesses of Kore, Demeter, and Persophone, and that Black Moon, menstruation, and the sacred pig formed one entity in matriarchal cultures which were, supposedly, turned into a taboo and something to be cursed by patriarchal development. According to Jutta Voss, if one were to reflect on the female cycle as a model for all cosmic rhythms, then "earth-uterus" and damaged nature could regenerate themselves.

76. *Vater*, 104 f. The gifts of grace in the Eucharist (forgiveness of sins, life and salvation) play no role at all any more. With respect to the bodily resurrection, Ruether remarks: "The hope for personal immortality fortifies a masculine egotism and only serves to divert from the problems of physical reality and social fellowship," *Sexismus,* 281, 304. "From a feminist's point of view, the notion of an immortal soul is at enmity with the reality of the body and women because of the dualism of body and soul and the rejection of the body as fundamental to our existence," *Wörterbuch*, 35 f., 87 f.

77. Cf. the essay by B.W. Harrison, "Die Macht des Zorns im Werk der Liebe," in Brooten/Greinacher, *Frauen in der Männerkirche.*

78. Cf. H. Marcuse*, Marxismus und Feminismus, Jahrbuch Politik* (Berlin, 1974), 86–95.

79. Thus Sorge, who used to describe herself as a "goddess" during the course of ecclesiastical judicial proceedings against her (Evang. Church of Kurhessen and Waldeck, 1988). Daly, in *Jenseits von Gottvater*, already verbalized the self-appointment of women as goddesses of the new world: "Women had to ignite the spark of divinity within them," 335. This is also one of the central ideas in her *Gyn/Oekologie.*

80. Schwarzer, *Unterschied*, 205 ff., openly declares herself for the lesbian activity of women. In the Rites of the Church for Women there is the "Ceremony for the life-long commitment of a lesbian couple" and a "Healing ceremony after an abortion." The well-known slogan of American lesbianism (coined by the American Ti-Grace Atkinson) is: "Feminism is the theory, the practice is to be a lesbian." It should be defined more precisely as, "Feminist theology is the theory, the practice is to be a lesbian." cf. Menschik, *Feminismus*, 55.

81. Eds. Barz, Leistner, Wild, especially 208 ff. In her commentary on the Book of Ruth (*Freundin in der Fremde*, Stuttgart, 1992), Renate Jost suggested a lesbian relationship existed between Naomi and Ruth. Doris Strahm demands the abolition of enforced heterosexuality in this sentence, "It is time that women and men stop complementing each other" (*Aufbruch*, 128). Cf. *Wörterbuch, Artikel 'Lesbische Existenz'*, 245 ff., and Prüller, *Wir Frauen sind Kirche.*

82. Faithful feminist theologians regard Christianity as an antiquated, patriarchal religion.

83. "Where two or three self-asserting women come together in our own name, there we light our own fire" (Krattiger, Mönchin, 73).

84. The written word is no longer binding on the feminist theology's understanding of the Bible. Their ignoring of the Bible as the Word of God with respect to the Pauline passages about women in the church's ministry is in line with their doubt concerning Luke 1 and 2, the miracles, the raising of the dead by Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the appearance of the risen Christ, his ascension, etc. W. Pannenberg rightly states, "The disintegration of the doctrine of the Scripture is the fundamental crisis facing modern Protestant theology."

85. Cf. note 69 above. At the heart of feminist theology lies the struggle for power in this world: "The revolutionary women's movement is concerned with power, and with a new definition of power" (Daly, *Der qualitative Sprung,* 111).

86. How differently the ancient church would have reacted to all of this! In its own time is had spoken a clear *quod non* in response to gnosticism and all its false teachings. The fathers of the Reformation spoke their *damnamus*; even the Council of Trent insisted on its *anathemata.* No member-church of the EKiD employs a pastor who does not, *expressis verbis*, accept women's ordination. The former assurance of tolerance for anyone holding a contrary view on the basis of theological conviction has been put on ice. Nearly all the renowned theological publishers refuse to print critical responses to the feminist theology.

87. Articles in church magazines with these headlines: "Holy Spiritess," "Mary and Feminism," "God: Father or Mother?" "Prayers to the Goddess," "You, our Father, our Mother," "The maternal nature of the soul," "The Revolutionary Hymn of Christianity" (= the Magnificat), and many more.

# *Women and the Ministry*

Ulla Hindbeck

God created mankind as man and woman. In creation, God provided various qualifications and gifts—different ones for men and women. The Apostle Paul in the so-called *Kephale* theology describes a sequence that rules, a sort of connection between heaven and earth, which is united in the creation. He says that God is the head of Christ, Christ is the glory of God (*doxa*) and the head of man. Man is the glory (*doxa,* brightness) of Christ and the head of the woman. Woman is the glory of man (*doxa*). The Father is not over the Son. Man is not over the woman, but they are different, not identical. Both have part in Christ in the same high degree, but in a different manner. This is expressed in this way, that the man has a special calling and the woman has another.

Man's special calling is in the apostolic office or ministerial office. This office has its basis in the testimony of God's Word so that we need not be in doubt that this calling of man is pleasing to God. Jesus himself instituted the apostolic office. He calls apostles. They are to be his, the Son's, representatives in the church. Here Jesus takes something that already is in place: the father, the rabbi, the teacher, the leader of the congregation, the house-father who blessed the gifts at the great festival meals, above all at the paschal banquet of the passover lamb; and God hallows it by Christ and gives it his blessing. Jesus was himself a man, the Son who is the image of the Father. He called only men to be apostles, and at the institution of the Lord's Supper only men were present. It was to these apostles that Jesus gave the commission. It was to them that he gave the binding and loosing keys; it was on them that Jesus breathed and sent them out into the world to teach people all that he has commanded.

The apostles carried on in agreement with the order that Jesus himself had shown them, and chose a man to take the place of Judas as a new apostle. There was no thought of placing a woman there. Nor did any women come asking, Why can't I be an apostle? They were satisfied to follow the Lord's own example.

That this has an even deeper weight, we learn from the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34–38. There, the apostle clearly states that this is the Lord's command and that it is decisive for salvation as to how we conduct ourselves toward this command. This is strongly confirmed in 1 Timothy 2:12.

This article previously appeared in the *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter 21* (Easter 1991). Ulla Hindbeck was ordained and served as a pastor in the church of Sweden until she became convinced that the Bible does not permit women to hold the ministerial office. She therefore surrendered her office. This essay, which first appeared in Nya Väktaren, was translated by Milton E. Tweit, Lawler, Iowa.

Thus it is only men who can be called to the apostolic office. God calls his shepherds or pastors only and alone from among men. We can imagine a closed circle where only men can enter and where Christ holds the center. He calls his apostles and representatives in the church.

This call applies to all men. They have the possibility of being apostles because they are men—in accordance with the order of creation. But there are not many of them who end up being ministers, because few are chosen. Unfortunately, not all who become ministers or shepherds are true shepherds—there are found among them ungodly shepherds. But this has no influence on the means of grace. By the grace of God they continue to have effective power. But we cannot for that reason use God's means of grace as we ourselves desire, or let anyone who pleases distribute the sacrament. We have no promise from God that he blesses any such thing. He has given us a definite order, definite commands, and only when we follow them do we have the promise that God is with us and blesses what is taking place.

Into that closed circle, the apostolic office, within this calling, a woman cannot enter, precisely because she is not a man. This is the order of creation. If anyone insists that there is no difference between women and men, such a person is without a doubt both blind and deaf and has neither sense nor understanding.

Woman is not called to be an apostle. She has another calling, namely, motherhood. In that way it is in agreement with creation. God has blessed woman and made her mother. We need not doubt that this pleases God. Motherhood also can be set forth as a closed circle where Christ is at the center. Into this circle no man can come because he is not a woman.

In the New Testament, motherhood becomes something very special. The call to it becomes something holy, just as the calling to the apostolic office by Christ is holy. Christ is born of a woman. His whole human nature comes from her—hence he is a true man. This is an unbelievably great proclamation. God is born of a woman and comes to human beings so that human beings can come to God.

When God calls woman to her special calling, he also uses something that already is in place and hallows it. In this call to motherhood, all women are included because they are women. All women are potential mothers, even if not everyone can or desires to give birth to children. Man's calling, the apostolic office, and woman's calling, motherhood, both have salvatory significance for human beings. The shepherd, the minister, leads people to heaven; woman, the mother, gives birth to the Savior of the world.

On the basis of the order of creation, the man's calling to the apostolic office is not accessible to the woman. On the basis of the order of creation, the woman's calling to motherhood is not accessible to the man. Other gifts of grace or callings are to serve each other, the common priesthood, where we are called to witness to each other about God, to prophesy, to be able to heal by prayer, etc. None of these is dependent on the order of creation, but each is given to both women and men, girls and boys.

Since the order of creation cannot be abolished, women and girls who want to take part in the apostolic office and be ministers, thus put themselves outside of God's calling and blessing. They become nothing else than self-appointed apostles and only make it clear that they are dissatisfied with their lot and desire to become something which they never can become, namely, man. Whether there are women ministers or not is only a form of question that is already decided. There are no women ministers. Such a calling is not to be found, nor does it effect the special ministerial office.

In Dean Nils Johansson's book on 1 Corinthians 11–14 and the ordination of women (*Women and the Church's Ministry*, trans. C. J. Catanzaro, privately published), it is firmly established that this whole section is a unity. In 1 Corinthians 13, about love's hymn of praise, it is said that the entire chapter is a praise only and alone to Christ and his work. It is not speaking of love as an ideological concept, but "love" (*agape*) means Christ. Love-*agape* = Christ.

Everything the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 13 is a polemic against gnosis, human wisdom. He puts gnosis in opposition to *agape,* human wisdom in opposition to Christ. Paul here opposes those who apply their human wisdom to assert a much-too-great freedom, a freedom that becomes an offense to the weak. Johansson states that in this chapter Paul means that all gifts of grace, for example, *gnosis,* wisdom, must be placed under *agape,* under Christ, in order to have any worth. The apostle states that all must be done in Christ, in *agape*; otherwise, it is without worth and not normative. No gift of grace must set itself over or above Christ, for then it becomes something evil.

How does it come about that there are women who perform the apostolic office in the outward church in spite of being forbidden by God? Indeed, that is due to the fact that *gnosis,* human wisdom, has set itself above God, above Christ, above *agape.* It is not done in Christ, but above, beyond Christ. This so-called human wisdom that has brought forth a female ministerial office comes precisely from this human wisdom, equality, democracy, socialism.

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession xv, there is a reference to human traditions in the church. There are, for example, orders in the church about worship services that have been established by people, but that have no direct basis in the Bible—rituals, times for worship services, rubrics about repentance, etc. It says that these orders of worship (liturgy) established by the fathers are indeed something good, which we ought to follow for the sake of order, *if they do not violate God's Word. Furthermore, these orders must not be regarded as decisive for salvation.*

Accordingly, we have to come to the judgment that the woman's right to perform the apostolic office is a "human tradition," a regulation in the church that has been established by human beings. There is no basis in Scripture for this human tradition. Nor do we find in the Bible any pious woman who performs this office, or even one who asked for permission to perform it. On the contrary, there are direct prohibitions in God's Word regarding such an arrangement—1 Corinthians 14:34–38; 1 Timothy 2:12. This arrangement established by human beings in the church stands in opposition to the Word of God and belongs to human traditions that we are not to follow. It is not of God, but of the antichrist, of the devil.

The apostle Paul makes us aware that the prohibition of woman ministers is a commandment from God (1 Cor 14:37), and we learn to know that what position we take toward it is decisive for salvation (which is in no way an innovation in the 1990s, but was an actuality already in the time of the apostles). The apostle states: "If there is anyone who does not acknowledge this prohibition, he will not himself be acknowledged (by God)."

Women ministers in the church is an arrangement that is in conflict with God's Word, an order that has set itself above God and has been introduced in his church, a kind of an office that God has forbidden. It is a regulation we must oppose because it is in opposition to God's Word. Moreover, it is clear that this regulation is considered by its supporters to be of significance for salvation, justification, because there is a clearly formulated and practiced attack, a prohibition, against all those who do not acknowledge this new order and who refuse to bow to it. Article xv of the Apology cites St. Paul, Romans 14:23: "Whatsoever is not from faith is sin" (Ap xv, 17). When these services do not have any testimony in God's Word, then conscience must doubt whether they please God. Indeed, why is there need of many words in a matter that is so clear? If our opponents maintain such human worship as earning justification, grace, forgiveness of sins, they establish really the kingdom of antichrist. The antichrist's kingdom is a new worship of God, devised by human authority, which casts out Christ.

Our fathers in our apostolic church did not know such a god who calls women to the apostolic office. It is a new god who is worshiped here—woman-god, socialism's god, a god of human reason, a new god, and a new belief. It is not Christianity but another religion.

Since women pastors are a human order in the church that conflicts with God's Word, a woman cannot be considered to be among the ungodly pastors, who, thanks be to God's grace in spite of their ungodliness, administer a valid sacrament. Women do not have the binding and loosing key, and can therefore neither bind nor loose a person in respect to sin. Those who attend the Lord's Table administered by women have not received absolution.

The Lord's Supper administered by a woman has no blessing. She is not leading people to God, but away from God. The one they are serving in their female-pastoral office is not God, but the devil, antichrist.

Doctor of Theology Tom G. A. Hardt writes in an essay, "The Evangelical Office":

> Since God in his word prohibits female pastors, the administering of the means of grace that on each side of the pulpit builds on a definite violation of God's order, in no way becomes justifying, but destructive. That the means of grace remain valid, insofar as word and elements are present, does not increase or lessen the guilt thereby brought forth.

A woman pastor's administration of the sacrament will, therefore, lead people directly to condemnation. LOGIA

# *Ritual Behavior and Celebration in the Liturgy*

Heidi D. Mueller

A young girl, approximately five years of age, stands in the front pew of Concordia Theological Seminary's Kramer Chapel as the glorious sounds of the Kyrie fill the air. With child-like innocence she investigates her surroundings, while at the same time she joins the unity of the assembly singing the words "Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy." Another young girl, about the same age, stands next to her father and gazes curiously at the interpreter for the deaf as he signs the liturgy. Without forethought her hands slowly raise to mimick the interpreter as he signs "Alleluia!" In another pew, a ninety-six-year-old woman with Alzheimer's disease struggles to remember various members of her family, yet sits in the pew reciting many parts of the Communion Liturgy, including the Lord's Prayer, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. All of these images cause one to wonder how these ritual behaviors develop. How does the ritual behavior involved in liturgy unite young and old as they come before God and experience the celebration of his gifts? This article will examine ritual in terms of its meaning, development, relationship to liturgy and worship, and importance in the life of the church.

## MEANING

Interest in ritual studies emerged during the 1960s among liturgical and human science scholars. These studies have explored ritual in terms of its definition, function, and purpose. The following sentences are a collection of statements, thoughts, and definitions related to understanding ritual by scholars who have studied it:

- Ritual concerns relationships, either between people or between the human and supernatural.[1]
- Ritual behaviors have a purpose in that they are created in order to deal with critical moments.[2]
- "Any change in ritual dislocates people who have participated in it previously and is, therefore, resisted."[3]
- Change can cause ritual to become ineffective (or less effective).[4]
- The rituals of a community preserve the stability of that society.[5]
- Ritual patterns exist to deal with reality and establish coherence of human response to the real.[6]
- Public ritual allows individuals to communicate that which is incommunicable.[7]
- "Rituals, ceremonies, and even games, reveal the convictions a society has about life."[8]
- "Ritual actions are empty neither of meaning nor of effect, and even their absence sometimes speaks."[9]
- "Ritual is essentially dramatic. It has a symbolic character, and functions in ways that practical activities do not."[10]
- "To be human is to act symbolically and to symbolize through actions."[11]
- "Human life is marked, defined, and given shape by symbolic activities."[12]
- Rituals are "acts in which meaning or emotion takes a perceivable outward form—a form which speaks not only to the ritualizer, but also has dimensions of communication and community."[13]
- "All ritual is communication. As communication, ritual speaks to our minds, and spirits, and intuitions, by means of words, sights, sounds, and smells."[14]
- "Ritual must consist of an agreed upon interplay between at least two persons who repeat it at meaningful intervals and in recurring contexts. The interplay should have adaptive value for both participants."[15]
- A ritual, or rite, is a formal pattern of worship, and ceremonial is movement and action in that worship.[16]
- "A society's ritual is the key to how that society understands itself and its world."[17]
- Ritual has the ability to maintain group solidarity, rehearse group values, maintain social distinctions and categories, stifle social conflict, and facilitate transitions between categories or stages of life.[18]
- Since ritual is communication and communication is self-revealing, ritual is self-revealing.[19]
- Ritual "refers to that part of a divine service which consists of its words, that is, the rite or the order of service."[20]
- "Rites and ceremonies are an outward expression of what a church believes and teaches."[21]

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These statements give a broad picture of what is understood about ritual and provide some general insights in the anthropological studies related to ritual. Behind these broad statements, however, stand more detailed descriptions and extensive development of significant concepts of rituals as they affect the individual and the community. Aidan Kavanagh refers to the function of ritual when he says that these repetitive human activities help organize the randomness of life into manageable proportions for both group and individual. He goes on to talk about the importance of ritual by saying that the patterns of these activities enable more effective communication in groups, reduce the possibility of intragroup damage, and create bonds that hold the group together.[22] This ritual communication can operate on several levels and in several fields at the same time. For example, in worship the ritual creates a contact and interaction with the Divine, while at the same time providing a social function of fellowship within the assembly of corporate worship. The ritual acts can be verbal or non-verbal and allow the assembly to act corporately and affirm its identity.[23] For any of these ritual functions to take place, however, the group must have "ritual awareness" so that the participants know the necessary behaviors involved in performing the ritual act.[24] This ritual awareness creates a sense of security in the assembly, freeing the assembly to engage in an authentic way. In the words of Margaret Mead: "Only if a ritual is conducted in the same way, only if the same words are spoken in the same order and accompanied by the same gestures, will the same feeling of security be present."[25] She goes on to say that this security integrates the past and the present, and people become dependent on the continuity for their sense of identity (individually and corporately).

*Unhappily, in a society such as ours, which is predicated upon change and life for the moment, ritual becomes an alien element.*

Unhappily, in a society such as ours, which is predicated upon change and life for the moment, ritual becomes an alien element. "This expectation of continuous change contributes to our inability to ritualize."[26] In such a society rituals thus come to be thought of as boring, superficial, meaningless, empty, phony, shallow, and insincere, since they fail to connect with the expectation of immediate gratification. The current pattern of thought, informed by the myriad of choices of products and programs as offered in a wide variety of media, holds that repetitive action is of no value and so finds no place for ritual. Ritual is by definition repetitive, however, and can only be effective through repetition and involvement. The unfortunate outcome of decreased ritual is a people left empty, with nothing to cling to in times of crisis.

Yet such generalizations about ritual in society as a whole fail to distinguish between the differences of everyday rituals in secular society and sacred rituals within the church. Within the context of sacred rituals people are met by God, insofar as they are drawn from the word.[27] The faithful are aware of this connection, which gives ritual real meaning. Edgar S. Brown Jr. thus writes: "Signs or symbols, to have any real meaning, are outward expressions of the innermost thoughts of our minds and hearts. Without this foundation within, all of the most solemn gestures, actions, or ceremonies are no more than a sham."[28] This latter thought may be seen to reflect a phrase often quoted within Lutheran circles: "lex orandi, lex credendi" (what is prayed [worship], that is believed). Thus, while the actions of ritual are important, its foundation is the meaning of those actions as defined by a group.

## RELATION TO LITURGY AND WORSHIP

As human beings stand before God they cannot but be passive, only able to receive. Nevertheless, as they relate to those around them, they stand in loving service toward one another. Rites and forms are necessary for outward life, as a means of discipline, but not as a means of justification. "While ceremonies cannot create the faith, they can point to it."[29] This pointing occurs in a number of ways, including the reflection of God in the ordering of chaos at creation. "This world needs order and form. And so does our worship here." Nor does the freedom of the gospel eliminate the need for order in the church. Thus Luther can state that "while the 'inner man' is free from rites and laws, the 'outer man' for the sake of love is bound to order and form."[30] In this, Luther is simply echoing the words of St. Paul : "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40 NKJV). God is a God of order, and this includes the establishing of order within the church among the individuals of which it is comprised. Edgar S. Brown Jr. discusses the importance of order when he writes:

> That there might be an understanding among the participants, a definite progression has to be fixed. People need to know what to expect. Worship in the church is a corporate expression and not just the response of individuals. It is important therefore that there be order."[31] Without this order, the assembly loses sight of whose they are and experiences a crisis of identity. Brian Wicker explains, "This is why a society that fails to sustain a psychologically valid religious initiation process, or ceases to believe with any conviction in the old-established rituals that used to give effect to it, must inevitably be faced with a crisis on a global scale.[32]

One is thus compelled to concur with Paul H. D. Lang's evaluation of the necessity and permanence of ritual:

First of all, it is impossible to live without some kind of rites and ceremonies, and secondly, the history of the church shows that the solution is not in trying to discard the traditional ceremonies, but in revitalizing them by constantly teaching their meaning and value.[33]

Furthermore, ritual gives new depth and meaning to the present. While on the one hand it represents discontinuity in the present because it does not fit into the norm of non-ritualisitic life, on the other hand it is continuous with our common experience, religious past, faith-perspective, and shared doctrine. All these indeed do create a common understanding in the community, allowing for true participation.[34] True partic-

ipation comes when the assembly understands the meaning of the rituals and then performs them. "An order of service written in a book is not liturgy, it is only a liturgical material. There is no liturgy until the order of service is done, is carried out. Liturgy is action."[35] These actions, rituals, and rites have meaning only insofar as they can be traced to the message of Christ himself. In this way the liturgy as ritual gives the church on earth a sense of the heavenly realm. "If the meaning of the ritual is not enlightened by an authentic divine word, it degenerates into magic or simple superstition."[36] There is therefore no inherent freedom in the church to create ritual forms beyond those mandated by Christ himself. In fact, "we may be free from man-made forms but we are bound to those instituted by Christ."[37] In our liturgy then, Christ is the "real actor" or liturgist. It is with him and through him that we are able to participate in the liturgy as his church. Our activity is a response to his activity, and even that response is initiated and motivated by God.[38] We are always receiving, even when we are responding. This is especially the case in the celebration of the sacraments.

***Failure to see in the worship service the God who gives to his faithful his gifts often causes a frustration that then leads to creative liturgies.***

Religious rituals as a whole carry with them a kind of reverence that is not seen in everyday rituals. With respect to the Lord's Supper, the real presence of Christ with his body and blood elicits such reverence. "'Here do I touch and handle things unseen.' If pastors feel this as do the people, how careful they must be of their actions. This is no time for play-acting and sentimental gestures. It is a time for reverent careful action."[39] Ceremony elicits reverence, and this reverence is based on the sacredness founded in Christ's institution. The sacraments also fulfill the inner need of man to belong to a socio-religious system and to live his life symbolically. Although this is not the purpose of the sacraments, the *right* to receive the sacraments as a member of the assembly does fulfill this need and in turn helps man to relate to the world, to other people, and to God.[40] In other words, it creates a sense of belonging.

## FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

This sense of belonging is fostered furthermore by the responsibility of those within to catechise those who come from without, including the young. H. Jacoby considers worship "an institute of the mature in faith for the training of the immature."[41] This "pedagogical" view of worship sees the church service as the training ground for faith. Clearly this does have some truth to it. This view, however, does not view the divine service in terms of God's giving to his people. A solely didactic view of ritual also leaves little of value for believers themselves. While training can certainly be an *outcome* of worship, it is not the *purpose* of worship.[42] For ultimately all divine service occurs for the purpose of creating and giving to faith. Nor is it possible "to describe faith in purely psychological categories, for it is being created for a Lord and being determined by a Lord."[43] The giving of God himself to faith in the divine service is thus the ultimate purpose of all faithful Christian ritual, as Luther himself maintained. "Luther's continuing emphasis is on the passive character of faith. Faith will never reach that degree of maturity where it could live without receiving."[44] This is especially the case in the case of the liturgy that surrounds the Lord's Supper, which points beyond the reception of the body and blood of Christ in the present to the eschatological fulfillment of the consumation.

As we receive the Lord's body and blood, we are thus reminded of the eschatalogical component of our worship. This celebration is an experience of wholeness and unity of the individuals of the assembly on earth with those in heaven. With Christ as the truly present giver, we are able to experience through him a piece of eternity while still here on earth. Yet when what is being given is regarded as an obligation rather than gift, there cannot be a celebration as a community, nor the experience of something that is "vitally significant to their lives."[45] Patrick Regan explains further: "Many reasons may be offered, but all seem reducible to the fact that both priest and faithful remain largely extrinsic to the event celebrated, to the ritual, or to both."[46] Unfortunately, this failure to see in the worship service the God who gives to his faithful his gifts often causes a frustration that then leads to creative liturgies in an attempt to experience the celebration. "The authenticity [of this] as liturgical celebration is questionable."[47] Clearly an inversion of the divine and human stands at the heart of such attempts.

As we study and understand ritual and its development, we begin to understand the importance of catechizing our young. If they are to experience authentic celebration, leaders need to teach meaning and purpose of the ritual actions of the liturgy so that the words become internalized. Wholeness and unity cannot be experienced if ritual remains extrinsic. Aidan Kavanagh says:

> Rite is sustained by rote and obedience far more than by restless creativity, and obedience is a subordinate part of the larger virtue of justice while creativity is not. In our day it seems to require more courage to obey a rubric or law than to break it.[48]

With this in mind, it is the responsibility of the church adequately to lead, teach, and encourage its young. In this way they can actually come to understand the meaning and purpose of worship, so that they may experience true celebration and have a stronghold in times of transition. Most of all, we need to remember to focus on God's actions and not man's, being dependent on his great love, infinite mercy, and abundant grace. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prv 22:6 (NKJV). LOGIA

## NOTES

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3. Ibid., 91.
4. Ibid., 95.
5. Brian Wicker, "Ritual and Culture: Some Dimensions of the Problem Today," in *The Roots of Ritual,* 15.
6. Aidan Kavanagh, "The Role of Ritual in Personal Development," in *The Roots of Ritual,* 153.
7. Ibid., 158.
8. John E. Burkhart, *Worship: A Searching Examination of the Liturgical Experience* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 24.
9. Ibid., 26.
10. Ibid., 24.
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12. Ibid., 23.
13. The Task Force on the Cultural Context of Ritual, *Ritual in a New Day: An Invitation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 11.
14. Edward Fischer, quoted in *Ritual in a New Day,* 11.
15. Erik Erikson, quoted in *Ritual in a New Day,* 11.
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17. Victor Turner, quoted in Mark Searle, "Ritual," in *The Study of Liturgy,* 2nd ed., ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainright, Edward Yarnold, S.J., and Paul Bradshaw (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 53.
18. Searle, 54.
19. Edward Fischer, "Ritual as Communication," in *The Roots of Ritual,* 169.
20. Paul H. D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 8.
21. Ibid., 12.
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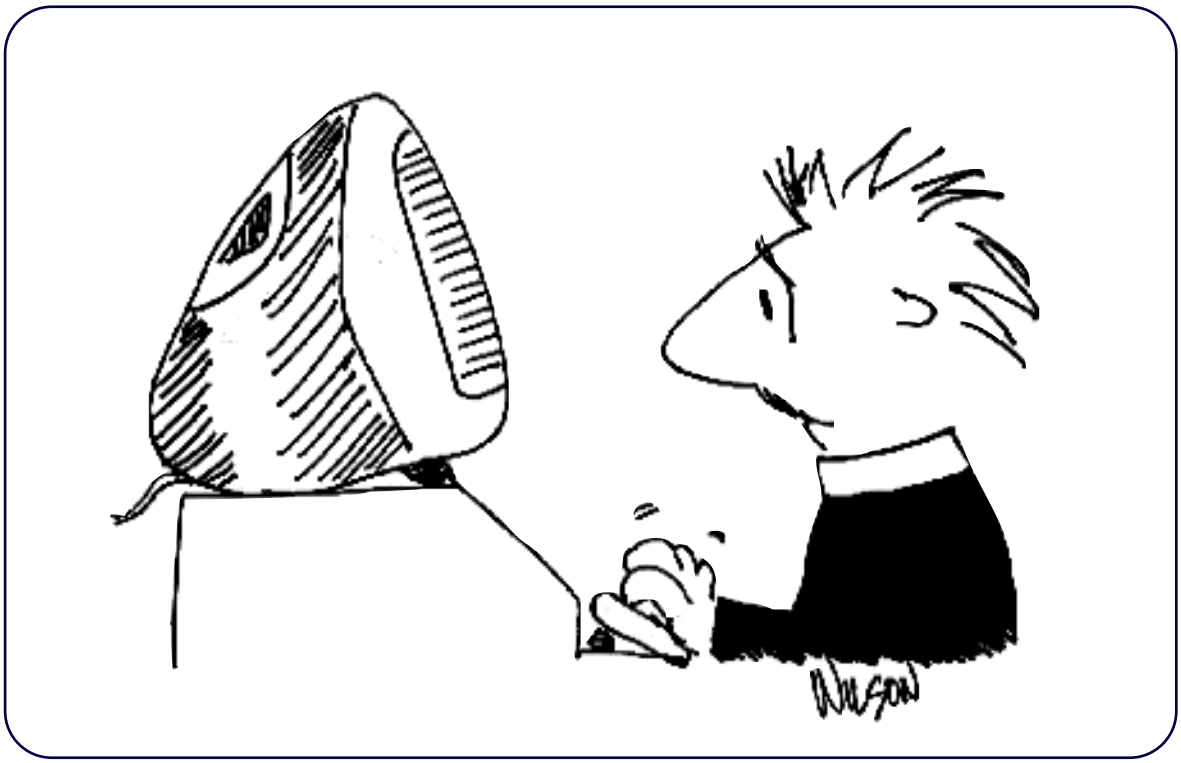
## Inklings



Hot theological debate . . .

# *The Place of the Luther Academy in Today's World*

Daniel Preus

In 1867 my great-great-grandfather Herman Amberg Preus delivered a series of seven lectures in Kristiania (now Oslo), Norway, later printed in Gisle Johnson's *Luthersk Kirketidende,* to describe the conditions of the Norwegian Lutheran immigrants in America. At the time Herman Amberg Preus was the pastor of a Norwegian Lutheran church in Spring Prairie, Wisconsin, and the president of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America *(Den norsk-evangelisk-lutherske Kirke i Amerika),* commonly known simply as the Norwegian Synod. In his lectures he attempted to show the living conditions of Norwegian immigrants, the religious context of America in which the Norwegian Lutheran churches had been planted, the confessional fidelity or the lack of it evident among the members of other Lutheran Scandinavian church bodies with which the Norwegians felt some kinship—and whatever else he thought might encourage the Lutherans in Norway to send desperately needed Lutheran pastors to America.

In spite of the fact that many in the Church of Norway considered the Norwegian Lutherans in America to be somewhat narrow-minded and argumentative, Preus did not hesitate to describe the doctrinal problems and controversies relevant to the American situation. In his sixth lecture he spoke about the lack of doctrinal unity in the Augustana Synod:

> Our conferences with them have shown us that they are not united in even basic doctrines, but that their apparent unity is based in part on pure ignorance and in part on indifference, which allows them to keep silent while their brethren in the synod preach quite contradictory, false doctrine.[1]

In this same lecture Preus spoke of the careless and un-Lutheran practice common in the Augustana Synod. For example, the Augustana Synod

> has allowed its pastors to use the Reformed formula for the Lord's Supper and the conditional form of absolution . . . . It has allowed Methodist pastors to be teachers in its Sunday schools and a Congregationalist pastor to preach at the dedication of one of its churches. It has allowed prayer meetings and "revivals" to be conducted Methodist-fashion in its congregations.[2]

After numerous other references to the unorthodox practice rampant in the Augustana Synod, Preus pointed to what he considered one of the most serious problems of all.

> The synod and its pastoral conferences have not only refused forceful invitations on our part to meet jointly with us, but they have even declined to discuss disputed doctrinal points with those among their own pastors who are troubled in conscience and have therefore requested that they do so.
>
> In my opinion all this sufficiently demonstrates the indifference reigning in this synod, how it is all for extending itself and winning respect, how it therefore seeks to avoid strife and controversy and prefers to allow errors and abuses and departures from both the doctrine of the church and good Lutheran ecclesiastical order. There has entered in here a genuinely American speculative spirit, a spirit that does not ask whether something is right, but whether it is clever or "expedient." Thus, in this synod, the Lutheran confession is in reality a display sign to decoy the naïve, since both its doctrine and its practice manifestly controvert this confession and God's Word.
>
> That this spirit of indifference also holds sway in congregational life speaks for itself. It naturally happens that there is a reciprocal effect between congregations and the synod.[3]

Herman Amberg Preus, along with Ulrik Koren and others in the Norwegian Synod, were struggling hard to establish an immigrant church in America that would be truly Lutheran. At precisely the same time C. F. W. Walther, F. C. D. Wyneken, and many others in the Missouri Synod were engaged in the same battle. It was a time of tremendous religious turmoil and confusion in America as our country experienced what was known as the Second Great Awakening. Nathan Hatch describes the chaotic condition of American religion in the mid-1800s.

> The first third of the nineteenth century experienced a period of religious ferment, chaos, and originality unmatched in American history. Few traditional claims to religious authority could weather such a relentless beating. There were competing claims of old denominations and a host of new ones. Wandering prophets appeared dramatically, and supremely

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> heterodox religious movements gained followings. People veered from one church to another . . . . The flexibility and innovation of religious organizations made it possible for an American to find an amenable group no matter what his or her preference in belief, practice or institutional structure. Churches ranged from egalitarian to autocratic and included all degrees of organizational complexity . . . . One could opt for traditional piety or join a perfectionist sect. Religious options in the early republic seemed unlimited; One could worship on Saturday, practice foot washing, ordain women, advocate pacifism, prohibit alcohol, or toy with spiritualism, phrenology, or health reform.[4]

This was the time of phenomenal growth among the Methodists at the expense of the mainline Protestant denominations, particularly the Presbyterians; this was the time of camp meetings and revivals; this was the time of growth and consolidation for the American-born cults. Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon* appeared in 1830; in 1847, the very year the Missouri Synod was founded, the Mormons arrived in Utah, where they would settle. Seventh-Day Adventism can trace its beginnings to the preaching of William Miller around 1831; Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science appeared on the religious horizon a few decades later, around 1870. The Jehovah's Witnesses, founded by Charles Taze Russell, came into being about four years later.

***Our identity as Lutherans is more precarious today than it has ever been before.***

It was an extremely turbulent time in the history of American religious life. And it was during this time that immigrant Norwegians and immigrant Germans were attempting to define how they could be truly Lutheran in America. Although both the Norwegians of the Norwegian Synod and the Germans of the Missouri Synod were isolated by language to some degree from the practices and teachings prevalent in a society intoxicated with the concept of freedom, they could not escape completely from the religious chaos around them. (There are a lot of Methodists and Mormons in America today with Norwegian or Swedish or Danish or German names.) But they did not admit that it was necessary to compromise, to give in to the spirit of the day. Instead, by God's grace, they established truly Lutheran churches on American soil. This was no small task, since even the older, more established Lutheran bodies in America had been influenced heavily by rationalism and by Methodistic, revivalistic measures meant to attract the masses. When the Saxons arrived in Perry County, when the Prussians arrived in New York and later in Wisconsin, when the Norwegians arrived in Wisconsin, "the older synodical [Lutheran] bodies of the East reflected the religious and social practices of other American Protestants of the time. The practice of revivalism and protracted meetings was carried over from earlier years and intensified."[5] In other words, the Lutherans in the East were losing their Lutheran character in their worship, in their practice, and in their doctrine. New confessional Lutheran church bodies were being founded in the Midwest of the United States, however, whose members were struggling seriously with the question, What does it mean to be Lutheran?

If this was an important question for Herman Amberg Preus and for C. F. W. Walther, surely it must be an important question for us today. If Preus and Walther and the other American, confessional Lutherans of the mid-nineteenth century were convinced they needed to contend for the truth in the face of ignorance and of doctrinal indifference, surely we face an even greater need today. It seems to me, at least, that our identity as Lutherans is more precarious today than it has ever been before.

*What is the place of the Luther Academy in today's world?* This is the question you asked me to address. I would like to suggest that it is the primary task of the Luther Academy in today's world and until our Lord returns continually to pose the question, What does it mean to be Lutheran? This question must be asked over and over again in America, in Europe, and all over the world. Today my words to you will deal primarily with the subject of Lutheran identity. I will do so by describing what I see as a serious identity crisis on the part of Lutherans in America and all over the world. I think the importance of the American Luther Academy in America and elsewhere will become all the more apparent. It will also become more apparent how important it is to continue asking the question, What does it mean to be Lutheran? and, having answered that question, to live out our answer in our respective churches.

What does it mean to be Lutheran? In 1873, C. F. W. Walther, the first president of the Missouri Synod, delivered a lecture at the Western District Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod entitled *The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God, an Irrefutable Proof that Its Doctrine Alone Is True.*[6] His presentation provided a number of theses supporting the theme of the essay. For the next thirteen conventions of the Western District Walther continued his treatment of the same theme until just a few months before his death. Of course, Walther was not saying that there was no truth in other Christian churches, nor was he saying, God forbid, that only Lutherans could possess truth and be saved. But he was saying that the teachings of the Lutheran Church are true, that whenever the teachings of other church bodies conflict with those of the Lutheran Church, their teachings are false.

In 1866 Walther delivered an address to the Convention of the Missouri Synod with the title *The Evangelical Lutheran Church: The True Visible Church of God upon Earth.* With this presentation Walther certainly did not wish to teach that all Christians are members of the Lutheran Church or that every member of the Lutheran Church is a Christian. Such nonsense never would have occurred to him. But he did mean to teach that the church has marks[7] by which it can be known and identified as the true church of Christ; these marks are the pure teaching of the gospel and the sacraments.

This, of course, is the position of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.[8] Faith cannot be seen, but the church is in a sense visible by virtue of its marks. Walther also clearly meant to teach, in common with Luther and in opposition to Erasmus,[9] that God's word of the gospel is clear, that it is not ambiguous, that doctrinal

assertions can be made with the confidence that they are correct, that truth can be known and one can know that one has it. When it comes to doctrine, the line between truth and error is not vague or gray. Therefore when we make confession of the faith in our creeds and symbols, we do so not with some nebulous hope that what we say may contain a kernel of truth. Rather we confess in the same spirit as the signers of the Formula of Concord who wrote concerning the confession they had made, "[This] is our teaching, belief, and confession in which by God's grace we shall appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and for which we shall give an account."[10]

How contrary this spirit is to today's postmodern, relativistic, "ecumenical" spirit! "We have come a long way! We no longer insist that those who disagree with us are incorrect. We simply possess different faith traditions. We are enlightened! Yes, enlightened in spite of the fact that we no longer know our own doctrine. We do not know what the differences were that once divided our church bodies, but we *do* know that they are not divisive of fellowship." This is the spirit that appears to reign among many American Lutherans today. It is precisely the same spirit that Herman Amberg Preus described as widespread in the Augustana Synod in 1867 when he declared that "their apparent unity is based in part on pure ignorance and in part on indifference." How ironic that after a number of mergers of American church bodies, the Norwegian Synod, which he helped to found, and the Augustana Synod, which he so strongly criticized for its doctrinal errors and indifference, were ultimately absorbed into the same large American Lutheran church known today as the ELCA—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.[11]

The concerns expressed by Herman Amberg Preus in regard to doctrinal indifference and unionism are hardly to be found in the ELCA today. In fact, the situation in the ELCA has become so serious that the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne at one point brought an overture, that is a request for action, to the Missouri Synod's Convention asking the delegates, in view of the doctrinal errors common in the ELCA and the fellowship practiced with others who teach false doctrine, to declare

> That, apart from local protests amounting to a genuine "state of confession," the LCMS cannot regard or treat the pulpits and altars of the ELCA as confessionally Lutheran, in the sense of the Book of Concord, but must recognize them as heterodox, union pulpits and altars.[12]

The Convention did not adopt this overture. Instead, while recognizing the differences existing between the two church bodies, the Missouri Synod delegates adopted a resolution much milder in tone, one which did not call into question the Lutheran identity of the ELCA.[13]

In 1995 a congregation of the Missouri Synod submitted an overture to the convention stating that if the ELCA were to declare fellowship with certain Reformed church bodies in America, she would thereby "cease to be Lutheran in any meaningful, confessional sense."[14] Once again, however, the convention of the Missouri Synod, though expressing grave concern about developments in the ELCA declined to call into question the Lutheran identity of the ELCA.[15]

In 1998 the relationship between the Missouri Synod and the ELCA became even more strained when the ELCA did declare pulpit and altar fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. Her obvious intention to sign the Joint Declaration on Justification added fuel to the fire. A number of overtures were submitted to the 1998 Missouri Synod convention that stated that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America had sacrificed her

***Since we no longer know how to define what Lutheranism is, we are incapable of determining whether a church body is genuinely Lutheran or not.***

Lutheran character. The ELCA has "further confused the understanding of what it means to be a Lutheran Church body in this country," said an overture from one of our pastoral conferences. "[T]he LCMS cannot regard or treat the pulpits and the altars of the ELCA as confessionally Lutheran in the sense of the Book of Concord, but must recognize them as heterodox, union pulpits and altars," said an overture from one of our congregations. Another overture from a pastoral conference: "*Resolved,* that we acknowledge that the ELCA has abandoned Lutheran doctrine and forfeited the name Lutheran to become a union church." Three congregations signed an overture which, "*Resolved,* that the LCMS declare in convention and in its publications that it no longer recognizes the ELCA as a Lutheran Church body." Another overture suggested that the Missouri Synod, "withdraw recognition of the ELCA as a legitimate Lutheran church." Finally, Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne once again requested that the Missouri Synod address the issue of the ELCA's departure from Lutheran doctrine and practice and called into question "the Lutheran character of the ELCA."[16] The Synodical Convention passed what I consider a very good resolution, which expressed "deep regret and profound disagreement with these actions taken by the ELCA."[17] Nevertheless, the convention continued its established pattern of avoiding the issue of Lutheran identity which had been raised in so many of the overtures to the convention. Apparently we are willing to condemn specific teachings and practices of another church body, but unwilling to define in a clear and direct way what it means to be Lutheran.

Am I making too much of this reluctance of the Missouri Synod to identify the ELCA as un-Lutheran? I don't think so. No fewer than six overtures in 1998 alone addressed the issue of Lutheran identity, but the resolution adopted by the convention did not. We were willing to say that the teachings of the ELCA were wrong, but for years we have backed away from saying to those who in their doctrine and practice are not Lutheran, "You are not Lutheran."

Why? Is it possible that we no longer know what it means to be Lutheran? I do not mean to say that nobody in our churches knows what it means. But is it possible that the vast majority of Lutherans

in all of our Lutheran churches have such a fuzzy notion of what it means to be specifically Lutheran, that whenever the issue of Lutheran identity rises, we hit a brick wall? We simply don't know how to deal with it. Since we no longer know how to define what Lutheranism is, we are incapable of determining whether a church body is genuinely Lutheran or not.

This unwillingness reveals another great irony; at least, I sense such an irony. At the same time that we are reluctant to call into question the Lutheran character of another church body, it is undeniable that American Lutherans—and this includes the Missouri Synod—seem embarrassed about their Lutheranism. They have swallowed at least a part of the ecumenical menu and now want to be known no longer as Lutherans but simply as Christians. The term "Lutheran" embarrasses them and the term "Missouri Synod" is best avoided.

***One of the most important issues today confronting the Missouri Synod and all American Lutherans is the doctrine of fellowship.***

Certainly we wish to be Christians and to be known as Christians, but not at the expense of our Lutheran confession. If Walther is correct—and I believe he is—then to the degree that we forsake our Lutheran doctrine, to the same degree we forsake Christianity. In 1844 Walther wrote an article entitled *Concerning the name "Lutheran,"* in which he insisted that, in the context of the American religious situation, the name absolutely needed to be retained if Lutherans are to make a clear and orthodox confession. In this article Walther stated,

> we can only confess the faith which is in our hearts purely and completely with the name Lutheran. If we would get rid of the name Lutheran the highest suspicion would be aroused that either we are ashamed of the old Lutheran doctrine, or that we no longer consider it to be the only true doctrine agreeing with God's clear Word and that a new false doctrine is in our hearts. As dear, therefore, as the truth is to us, as dear as God's honor and salvation of our souls is to us, so little can we, especially in the time of widespread error, give up the name Lutheran. By this name we separate ourselves from all the unorthodox of all times and publicly confess the right faith of all time . . . .
>
> And so all orthodox Lutherans of all times have thus thought and thereby operated. As one example, the Margrave of Brandenburg, at the time of the Reformation, when he was called a Lutheran in order to shame him, explained: "I am not baptized unto Dr. Luther; he is not my God and Savior. I do not believe in him and will not be saved through him. Therefore in this sense I am not Lutheran. When I am asked, however, whether I confess with heart and mouth the doctrine which God has again given to me through his instrument Dr. Luther, then I do not hesitate nor am I timid to call myself Lutheran. And in this sense I am and may I remain a Lutheran all my life.[18]

In the Missouri Synod we have an increasing number of congregations involved in what we call the "Church Growth Movement" that no longer wish to retain the word "Lutheran" in their name. It is difficult to believe that their embarrassment about the name does not include embarrassment in regard to Lutheran doctrine as Walther insisted is normally the case. This was surely the belief of the eleven congregations and circuits that submitted overtures to the 1998 Convention of the Missouri Synod insisting that congregations of the synod use the word "Lutheran" in their name.[19]

At least in America a large number of Lutherans seem to be suffering a major identity crisis. In the ELCA today the vast majority of the people and a larger majority of their leaders have lost the sense of their identity as Lutherans, or at least have a definition of the word "Lutheran" that is vastly different from that of their spiritual forefathers. Consider for a moment the decision of the ELCA to declare fellowship with three Reformed church bodies in America. I spoke briefly about this issue also last year, but it is of such great significance for our understanding of what it meant to be Lutheran and what it means to be a confessional church that I would like to deal with the issue again this year in more detail.

Of course, we know that the Reformed deny that in the Lord's Supper the bread is the body of Christ and the wine is his blood. This denial for Martin Luther was not simply a matter of differing exegesis or interpretation. The gospel itself was at stake. Already in 1520 he wrote in regard to the Lord's Supper,

> What is the whole gospel but an explanation of this testament? Christ has gathered up the whole gospel in a short summary with the words of the testament or sacrament. For the gospel is nothing but a proclamation of God's grace and of the forgiveness of all sins, granted us through the sufferings of Christ, as St. Paul proves in Romans 10 and as Christ says in Luke 24[:46–47]. And this same thing, as we have seen, is contained in the words of this testament.[20]

Therefore, for Luther, whoever tampers with the words of the Sacrament tampers with God's means of saving sinners and is worthy of the name "blasphemer" or "idolater." This view of Luther is no longer appreciated by the members of the ELCA. Hermann Sasse is quite correct when he observes that

> for Luther the denial of the Real Presence was heresy destructive to the church—closely related to the great heresies that threatened the existence of the church throughout the centuries . . . . The incarnation, the true divinity and true humanity in the one Person of the God-man, the virgin birth of Christ, his bodily resurrection, his exaltation to the right hand of the Father, his advent in glory, our own resurrection: All these are linked to the Real Presence of his true body and blood in such a way that the denial of this Presence is either the cause or the consequence of the denial of the other articles.[21]

When I had the opportunity last year of addressing the first meeting of the North European Luther Academy in Göteborg, I indicated then that I believed that one of the most important issues today confronting the Missouri Synod and all American Lutherans was the doctrine of fellowship. My father, Robert Preus, used to tell me that whenever a church body began to slide away from historic Lutheranism and Christianity, the first thing to go was always the doctrine of fellowship. It is not difficult to understand why he would say this. Consider for a few moments what is actually happening when the members of Lutheran and Reformed church bodies commune together. In such cases they do not even agree on what they are doing, much less on what they believe. The Reformed deny that the bread is Jesus' body, that the wine is Jesus' blood. They deny that the Sacrament bestows the forgiveness of sins and life and salvation. Why do they attend the Lord's Supper? Simply because the Lord has said, "This *do* in remembrance of me." They come in obedience to his command. They view the Lord's Supper simply as "a memorial meal in commemoration of the death of Christ" which in and of itself bestows no grace. The essence of the sacrament therefore, in their view, is the act of worship in which they engage in remembering Jesus in obedience to his command. In other words, they view the sacrament as law rather than gospel. This is true also, of course, of their view of baptism.

Regardless of the piety with which their "memorial meal" is celebrated, it remains true that if one regards the sacrament primarily as something pious Christians *do* in obedience to Jesus, one sees the sacrament as law. In their teaching on the Lord's Supper, therefore, the Reformed have deprived the church of *everything* our Lord Jesus placed into His precious Testament—grace, absolution, forgiveness, life, and salvation. They have bequeathed to the church instead the hollow shell of pious human obedience—this because they see the sacrament as law, not as gospel.

Obviously, their theft of our inheritance in the Lord's Supper is a result of their denial of the real presence. Luther asks in his Small Catechism, "What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?" And you know his answer well. "That is shown us by these words, 'given and shed for you for the remission of sins'; namely that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation." How can Jesus give us his body and his blood without giving us that which his body and blood purchased for us? Thus, when we participate in the Lord's Supper, we participate in the death and resurrection of Christ, and everything his death and resurrection achieved for us becomes ours.

Can such a confession be made by those who deny the real presence? If the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Lord's Supper is denied, all of the benefits which the Lord's Supper brings to us are denied to us. If the real presence is denied, the Lord's Supper ceases to be a celebration of the salvation that God gives to his church and becomes simply a corporate act of obedience. The Lord's Supper is then no longer a distinctively *Christian* sacrament.

Is the sacrament law or gospel? For those who do not even agree on the answer to this question, common participation in the sacrament is inconceivable. The very foundation of Christianity, the doctrine of justification, is involved. For Lutherans to permit Reformed to Lutheran altars is to show contempt (whether knowingly or not) for the doctrine of justification by grace, because such "Lutherans" are saying, are they not, that Sinai and Calvary are essentially the same. At least, they are saying it makes no difference whether one sees participation in the Lord's Supper as an act of obedience to the law or as a believing reception of the grace of God and participation in the atoning death of Jesus. To take such a position is an incredible mockery of Christ, whose last will and testament the Lord's Supper is. Doesn't one through such an action say, "Lord Jesus, it makes little difference to us what the meaning of your testament is. Law and gospel, Sinai and Calvary are not far apart when we come together at this altar."

***Whenever a church body began to slide away from historic Lutheranism and Christianity, the first thing to go was always the doctrine of fellowship.***

But this kind of attitude that sacrifices the gospel on the altar of a false ecumenism jeopardizes the survival of Christianity itself. Hermann Sasse saw this clearly and expresses himself on the subject far more eloquently than I can do. Sasse had lived and been trained and ordained in the Prussian Union Church and was well acquainted with the destruction caused by a false union of two opposing confessions as had happened in the German territorial churches via the Prussian Union. In an essay entitled *Union and Confession* Sasse refers to what he calls the "pious lie."

> Lies have been told in the church because of cowardice and weakness, vanity and avarice. But beyond all these there is in the church one particularly sweet piece of fruit on the broad canopy of the tree of lies. This is the pious lie. It is the hypocrisy by which a man lies to others and the intellectual self-deception by which he lies to himself . . . . The most fearful thing about the pious lie is that it will lie not only to men, but also to God in prayer, in confession, in the Holy Supper, in the sermon, and in theology.[22]

According to Sasse, the pious lie that devastated Lutheranism in Germany was a lie which for the sake of ecumenical ends permitted opposing confessions (in the form of the Lutheran and the Reformed—particularly in regard to the Lord's Supper) to stand side by side with equal validity within the same church. And what is the result when a church officially adopts the "pious lie"?

> This lie makes the return to the truth as good as impossible. A church can fall into terrible dogmatic error, it can open gate and door to heresy, by tolerating it and doing nothing about it. With the help of the Holy Spirit, such a church can later repent, return to the pure Word of God, and take up the fight against false doctrine commanded by this Word. But if it has solemnly acknowledged the right of heresy in its midst, then heresy itself has become an organic component of the church concerned. It can then no longer fight against heresy, and a

> burning struggle against false doctrine in its midst would be an entirely illegal fight of one wing of this church against another . . . . One of the most important functions of the church, the elimination of error, which is the function essential to the very life of the church, has in this case ceased.[23]

Sasse laments the inability of the Prussian Union church to identify and fight doctrinal error, and he makes it clear where such lack of attention to error will finally lead.

> That false doctrine must be fought, and that there could be no church fellowship where there was no unity on the basic understanding of the Gospel—that was indeed an understanding which had been learned from Luther, and which neither the Old Lutheran Church nor the Evangelical Lutheran Church of later times could have given up. Whoever does give it up—as the Enlightenment and Pietism did—abandons the Reformation.[24]

Has the ecumenistic, relativistic spirit of our postmodern time been so pervasive in its influence on Lutheranism that the Reformation itself is being lost in Lutheran churches? Unfortunately, yes. Churches that historically have been Lutheran are Lutheran no longer, except in name. In 1875 the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America, in an attempt to define Lutheran fellowship practices undermined by more liberal American Lutherans, passed what became known as the Galesburg Rule. It read as follows:

> 1. The rule which accords with the Word of God and with the confessions of our Church, is: Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran ministers only; Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only. 2. The exceptions to the rule belong to the sphere of privilege and not of right. 3. The determination of the exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles by the conscientious judgment of pastors, as the cases arise.[25]

The Galesburg Rule, which seemed a fairly irenic attempt to adhere to Lutheran fellowship practices, is now officially rejected by the ELCA and unofficially by many in the Missouri Synod. We clearly have an identity crisis among American Lutherans today. Hermann Sasse wrote regarding the Prussian Union of 1817,

> The church which came into existence on 31 October in Potsdam was no longer the Old Lutheran Church of Brandenburg-Prussia of the time of Paul Gerhardt. Nor was it any longer the Reformed Church of the great elector. In reality, it was a new church, the Prussian territorial Church so long desired, the soul of the Prussian state which was rising in greatness and coming into global political significance.[26]

In 1998 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established a new relationship with certain Reformed churches in North America. She was not forced to do so, as had been the case in Prussia. Rather, she embraced the ideology of the Prussian Union willingly, with open arms. Having done so, does she even know she is no longer the church she once was? She is no longer the church of the Lutheran Reformation. She has abandoned the Reformation.

I am distressed by the fact that the Missouri Synod is apparently unwilling to say this. But then, we are having our own identity crisis. It is only fair and right to point this out. I have been saying quite a bit about recent actions in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This is not due to any sense of superiority or anger or dislike. Most of Herman Amberg Preus's descendants and my relatives are members of the ELCA. But it is necessary to talk about the situation in the ELCA because this church body represents over five million Lutherans in a country that historically has had a strong confessional Lutheran emphasis. And what has happened in this large Lutheran church body is truly a tragedy. We must not avoid speaking the truth on this matter.

***Churches that historically have been Lutheran are Lutheran no longer, except in name.***

At the same time, it is by no means certain how things will turn out in the Missouri Synod. And now I speak not so much as the president of Luther Academy but as a member of that church body. We have not declared fellowship with any heterodox church bodies. On the other hand, we have many pastors who routinely give the Lord's Supper to those of heterodox church bodies, and they are not disciplined in any way. Pastors conduct joint worship services with pastors of other heterodox church bodies and nothing happens.

We are definitely experiencing an identity crisis in the area of worship. For the sake of what is called "church growth," many of our churches are opting for a worship experience that is anything but Lutheran. Our rich Lutheran hymns are being replaced by Baptist or charismatic songs or by theologically empty ditties. Pastors preach in suits, the historic creeds are replaced or rewritten, sermons have in many cases given place to inspirational speeches, and the confession and absolution are often omitted. Some congregations have literally abandoned the liturgy completely, and the time together on Sunday morning which we once called worship would now more accurately be described as entertainment. On the other side are pastors who view ordination as sacramental and for whom Rome and Constantinople definitely hold an attraction.

You may know that women's ordination has become a hot issue in the Lutheran Church of Australia and that it is of burning concern in the *Selbständige Evangelische Lutherische Kirche* in Germany. But you should not imagine that it is a completely dead issue in the Missouri Synod. There are many who think that it is only a matter of time before women's ordination is approved also by Missouri. Thus, in pointing out the deplorable theological conditions in the ELCA, I do not intend in any way to depict the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a church body without major difficulties. We are in the church militant.

We do have some bright spots in our church body, however. For the most part our seminaries have faithful, orthodox professors and

are producing pastors who are well trained theologically and who wish to be Lutheran. Among many in our churches there is a growing appreciation for the historic liturgies of the church. We have many groups of pastors and laymen around the country, groups similar to *Bibel og Bekennelse* in Norway, who gather regularly to address the theological issues of the day from a confessional, Lutheran perspective. At the same time, I don't think there is any denying that Missouri is also going through an identity crisis of her own, and nobody really knows what the Missouri Synod will be like twenty years from now.

So what is the place of the Luther Academy in the Lutheran world today? I believe I speak for all the officers of the Luther Academy when I say that we do not believe that the salvation of Lutheranism can be tied to any denomination, to any single church body or group of church bodies. But we do believe that the salvation of Lutheran orthodox teaching can be tied to a confession, and specifically to that confession that is contained in the symbolical writings of the Lutheran Church, the Book of Concord.

The Luther Academy, therefore, is not a church, nor a part of a church; it is affiliated with no denomination and it will affiliate with no church body. It wishes to remain free from the entanglements of denominational politics and bureaucratic procedures. As much as possible, in a sense from outside, we hope to provide an objective critique of what is going on in the world of Lutheranism today and to re-present historic Lutheran theology in ways that address the issues challenging the church today. Since we are committed to the classic, confessional, and orthodox Lutheran theology, we are better received by the members of some church bodies than we are by others. When we conduct conferences, for example, a very large percentage of those who attend come from the Missouri Synod. Members of the Wisconsin Synod and of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod also attend. We do not get a good attendance from members of the ELCA, although there are some who come to our conferences, and we hope to do a better job of reaching these people as well. We invite speakers from different American Lutheran church bodies, including the ELCA and sometimes from overseas, so that as much as possible, within the framework of our mission, we do not become simply an arm of any particular church body, but truly represent all Lutherans.

Thus, of our three officers, two are Missouri Synod and one is ELS—Evangelical Lutheran Synod[27]. Yet even though as much as possible we wish to reach all Lutherans, we are nevertheless committed to a specific confession and see no need to offer a forum to those whose speech would be destructive of that confession.

What is the place of the Luther Academy in today's world? We hope that we can act as a reliable compass to point people to that which is truly Lutheran and therefore truly evangelical and truly Christian. We believe that the primary battles we must fight as members of the church militant are doctrinal. And we believe that precisely because these battles are doctrinal they are extremely important to the life and existence of the church. We attempt to focus on doctrine because we believe that such an approach demonstrates true love for Christ's church. Dr. Charles Arand, a professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, recently expressed this truth well in a short article entitled "Doctrine as Pastoral Care." He says:

> Doctrine has come to be perceived as irrelevant and impractical. Perhaps that is partly our own fault, namely, the fault of those who cherish doctrine, teach doctrine, and devote their lives to studying doctrine. Perhaps we have treated it in too purely of an academic manner, with the result that people have lost sight of the very reason that the church has doctrine in the first place.
>
> In the end, we are facing the danger of losing the important role that doctrine has always played within the Christian church, and with that we are in danger of losing the heart and soul of Christianity. What we desperately need is to rediscover the reasons why the church formulated doctrine in the first place, how the church always regarded doctrine, and the use to which doctrine was put. Doctrine is not abstract theory to be contrasted with practical skills and how-to steps for daily living. If anything, the Reformers (and the church fathers before them) viewed doctrine as pastoral care. This is what made the study of doctrine so important. This is why they were willing to engage (however reluctantly) in doctrinal debates. Doctrine was a matter of life and death. This is what made doctrinal debates so heated. The church believed that false doctrine could actually harm a person. In other words, doctrine had consequences for the well-being of people. It had an impact on their spiritual health.[28]

The purpose of the Luther Academy is primarily doctrinal. It is to be a Lutheran voice in the midst of a multitude of voices crying out a multitude of messages, many of them false and dangerous. We do not have the ability to stifle the other messages, but we do have the ability, by God's grace, to declare the pure doctrine to a dying world in desperate need for the truth. As we proclaim this message, we believe it must be with a voice that is unashamed to call itself Lutheran. We believe that Lutheran is Christian, that Lutheran is evangelical, that Lutheran is ecumenical in the true sense for the Holy Spirit alone brings true unity to the church by means of the pure word and sacraments. We agree with Charles Porterfield Krauth, who authored the Galesburg Rule, and who said,

> No particular church has, on its own showing, a right to existence, except as it believes itself to be the most perfect form of Christianity . . . . No church has a right to a part which does not claim that to it should belong the whole. That communion confesses itself a sect which aims at no more than abiding as one of a number of equally legitimated bodies . . . . That which claims to be Catholic *de facto* claims to be Universal *de jure*.[29]

Does not a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions (which is the only meaningful subscription to the Lutheran Confessions) require us to agree with Krauth? Without apology, the Luther Academy will seek to place the Lutheran confession before the world with the conviction that in so doing it presents God's pure truth, which alone can save and grant eternal life though Jesus Christ. This we are doing in all of our publications, including our Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series. This we are doing in our two lecture series, the Congress on the Lutheran Confessions each spring and the Pieper Lectures each fall.

I have spent my time making a case for the importance of the Luther Academy particularly for the welfare of Lutheranism in the United States. Can one make the same case for Scandinavia, Germany, the whole of Europe and the rest of the world? To answer this question, one need only consider the actions of the Lutheran World Federation in adopting the *Joint Declaration on Justification*. In the dishonest and treasonous act of adopting this declaration, the Reformation itself has been abandoned, and the flock of Christ is viciously attacked by those who bear the name Lutheran. Never mind that the Roman church since the time of the Reformation has not changed its position on Purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass, the merits of the saints, works of supererogation; never mind that the dogma of the infallibility of the pope, adopted long after the Reformation, stands as strongly as ever, and that the veneration of Mary is more vigorously promoted by this pope, who believes she is co-redemptrix, than by any other in recent memory; never mind that the present pope is offering new indulgences to the faithful; never mind that the Roman church still views grace as an infused quality that gives the Christian the ability to please God with his works rather than as God's gracious disposition of favor toward the completely undeserving sinner; never mind that none of the blasphemous anathemas of Trent has been retracted. These doctrinal matters are all ignored and sacrificed once again on the altar of ecumenical fervor and the "pious lie." Hermann Sasse correctly pointed out that in the enforcement of the Prussian Union, it was the Lutherans who lost everything. In the adoption of the *Joint Declaration on Justification* it is once again the Lutherans who lose everything. For when truth meets falsehood in compromise, only truth can be the loser.

***In the enforcement of the Prussian Union, it was the Lutherans who lost everything.***

Is there a place for the Luther Academy in today's world? A Luther Academy will always have a place as long as the church militant exists, as long as the parousia has not yet arrived. But especially today, when all over the world Lutherans appear to be having an identity crisis, when it appears that the precious truths of the Lutheran Confessions are about to be swallowed up in numerous compromises, the Luther Academy can serve a healthy and holy and necessary purpose. We can do this by continually asking the question, What does it mean to be Lutheran? For the answer we will always go of course to "the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments as the pure and clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true norm [*die Einige Regel und Richtschnur*] according to which all teachers and teachings are to be judged" (FC SD, Rule and Norm, 3; cf. FC Ep, Rule and Norm, 7). And we will go to the Lutheran Confessions, which are a true and correct exposition of those Scriptures.

The ignorance of Christian doctrine and the indifference that Herman Amberg Preus so lamented will unfortunately be with us until Jesus returns. But our God has given us his gracious Word, which has the power to give wisdom to the ignorant and faith to the indifferent. I pray that he will use the Luther Academy to that end. LOGIA

## NOTES

1. Todd W. Nichol, ed., *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the religious situation among Norwegians in America by Herman Amberg Preus* (Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), 152.
2. Ibid., 152.
3. Ibid., 153.
4. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 22.
5. Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Brief History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955), 151.
6. *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther: Convention Essays*, trans. Aug. R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 11.
7. The English word translated "marks" is *notae* in Latin and *Zeichen* in German.
8. Ap VII/VIII, 20; *Triglotta*, 232–233.
9. See Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell , 1957), or AE, 33.
10. FC SD XII, 40; Tappert, 636.
11. A small group of Norwegians who were members of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America disapproved for doctrinal reasons the merger of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with two other Scandinavian church bodies in 1917. These doctrinally more conservative Norwegians formed the Norwegian Synod of the American Lutheran Church in 1918. Today this church body is known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and is in fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
12. *Reports and Overtures* of the 57th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 178–179.
13. Ibid., 115.
14. *Reports and Overtures* of the 59th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 156–157.
15. *Convention Proceedings* of the 59th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 125–126.
16. *Reports and Overtures* of the 60th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 165–169.
17. *Convention Proceedings* of the 60th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 116–117.
18. C. F. W. Walther, *Concerning the Name "Lutheran,"* trans. Mark Nispel (St. Clair Shores, MI: Redeemer Press), 19.
19. *Convention Workbook* of the 60th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 187–191.
20. AE, 35: 106.
21. Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body* (Adelaide, South Australia: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977), 153.
22. Hermann Sasse, *Christ and His Church: Essays by Hermann Sasse*, vol. 1, *Union and Confession* (St. Louis: Office of the President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1997): 1–2.
23. Ibid., 4–5.
24. Ibid., 50–51.
25. Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 234.
26. Sasse, *Union and Confession*, 13.
27. See note 11.
28. Charles Arand, "Doctrine as Pastoral Care," *Concordia Journal* 25 (July, 1999): 235.
29. Charles Porterfield Krauth, The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology as Represented in the Augsburg Confession, and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871), xiv–xv.

# *The Transfiguration of Our Lord*

Kurt Reinhardt

A few weekends ago I had the chance to go to the butterfly conservatory in Niagara Falls. I had never been there before; but I was looking forward to the splash of living color, which is noticeably absent from our St. Catharines' winters. As we went into the observatory it was refreshing to see those familiar summertime friends fluttering around with their usual grace and charm. But as I gazed around, one butterfly in particular caught my eye. At first glance it didn't even look like a butterfly. Sitting on the trunk of a tropical tree, it looked like a big hunk of bark that had been partially pulled off. It was various shades of brown with a few interesting marks on it. It was actually rather dingy-looking and looked more like giant moth than a butterfly. Its only beauty seemed to be God's ingenuity in making it so capable of hiding itself. But as I stood staring at it, it slowly opened its wings, and its hidden beauty overwhelmed me. The inside of its wings shimmered like a sapphire as they unfolded in the sunlight. They were alive with changing hues of blue that danced back and forth as they gently moved up and down. It was perhaps one of the most beautiful creatures I have ever seen.

As the disciples climbed up that mountain to pray with Jesus, nothing could have prepared them for what they were about to see. They knew that Jesus was no ordinary man. The miracles that he had been doing and his teaching made that quite clear. And eight days before their trip up the mountain Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ of God. But what they had seen and heard about his power didn't prepare them to behold his glory, because Jesus still looked and acted a lot like a normal man. Isaiah tells us, "He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him." As they made the long climb up the mountain, he got hungry and thirsty, and he grew tired and weak, just as the disciples did. And like them he would also eat, drink, and rest. He blended in well with his surroundings, just like the butterfly on the tree trunk.

But as he kneels down to pray on that mountaintop he unfolds his wings and his glory shines forth. "And the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white." The glory of God that once was hidden in a cloud at Sinai is now revealed in a man. The glory that once was reflected off the face of Moses now radiates out of the face of Jesus. The glory that once rested in the Holy of Holies of the temple now abides in the body of Mary's son. The glory of the only begotten Son of God shines out of Jesus, and the three disciples see the kingdom of God. Why does he reveal himself in this special way? He does it to prepare the disciples for that difficult day that lies ahead in Jerusalem. He unfolds his divinity before them now so that when he spreads out his wings on the cross they will know God is dying for them. He shows them that his flesh is the dwelling place of the most high, that his body is God's temple where his name rests forever. He reveals his glory now so that in his suffering and death they will also see glory—the glory of his love.

But a beautiful, glorious thing can also be a frightening, overpowering thing. Not far from the butterfly conservatory is another beautiful sight—the waters of Niagara Falls. Unlike the delicate beauty of the butterfly, the glory of the falls lies in their power and size. They are awe-inspiring, but their power is also frightening. As you stand up by the rail right at the point where you can see the waters rushing over the edge, you can imagine how terrifying it would be to be caught in that treacherous current. The thundering waters at the base of the falls make it clear that you could not survive the fall. Ever since that fateful day in Eden so long ago, God's glory has been just as overpowering as Niagara Falls. Gone are the days when we could walk with God in the garden in the evening and talk with him. Instead, our shame makes us hide from God. We have all known that shame, haven't we? You know the shame you feel when your sinful thoughts, words, and deeds are exposed to the light. No, our sinful flesh cannot stand the presence of his glory. And so when Moses asked to see God's glory, God had to hide him in the cleft of a rock and cover him with his hand so that his glory would not destroy him. And when Elijah went out from the cave to meet the Lord in the still, small voice, he covered his head with his mantle because of God's glory. And so too the disciples are afraid when the Glory of God confronts them there on that mountaintop.

In the Old Testament it says that no man can see the face of God and live. And yet here, as the glory of God shines in the face of Christ, it does not destroy the disciples. When God's glory is united with the flesh of Jesus, the disciples can see the face of God and live. The flesh of Jesus makes it possible for us to see God. His body and blood are a safe way for us to have communion with him. *In Christ* God comes down to walk with us in the evening. *In Christ* God speaks to us again as he did in the Garden. Jesus is the bridge between man and God. He

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purifies our flesh so that it is not destroyed by God's holiness. And he makes God's glory safe for us to come into contact with it. As Christ is nailed to the cross, his body fills the gap between the earth and the sky. His hands reach up to heaven and his feet stretch down to the earth. He is our meeting place—the place where holy God and sinful man can safely come together.

God first brings us to that meeting place in the waters of holy baptism. And in the Lord's supper he brings us back there again and again. There Jesus meets us and unites us with himself. There, through water and bread and wine, his body becomes our body; his life becomes our life; his glory becomes our glory. The glory that once shone out from Jesus now is hidden within us. Now we too are like the butterfly on the tree stump. Looking at us you would not think that the glory of the only begotten Son lies hidden within us. We blend in quite well with our surroundings. As we climb up the mountain we get hungry and thirsty. We grow tired and weak. We have to eat, drink, and rest. But the day is coming and will soon be here when we will lay aside this camouflage, when we too will unfold our wings and reveal the hidden beauty that lies inside: the beauty Christ has given us, the beauty of his glory. And what a glorious day that will be! Amen. LOGIA

## HYMN ON CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Lent 4, 1999
Tune: "Old 124th abbr."
10 10 10 10

Ground into powder and charred into ash,
Our sinful bones are scarred by judgment's lash.
Crushed by the tonnage of transgression's weight,
Souls sank in sorrow to hell's flaming gate.

Words steeped in venom slither from our lips,
Unloving deeds wrought by our fingertips;
Foul, wretched evils wallow in our minds;
In hell's dark dungeon we should be confined.

Our godless nature quakes with fright and shame
As we invoke that blest baptismal name:
O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we
Yearn for your absolution fervently.

Before that one who shepherds in Christ's stead,
We, through confession, strike the Old Man dead.
God, through that man, whose tongue He made a key,
Unshackles, breaks the chains, and sets us free.

Thoughts, words, and deeds which rendered us unclean
Are washed away in absolution's stream.
When we confess and grasp our Savior's love,
God's angels sing for joy in heaven above.

*Chad L. Bird*

# *A Historical Perspective of Walther's Position on Church, Ministry, and Polity*

John C. Wohlrabe Jr.

During the formative years of what became The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, struggling German Lutheran immigrants faced several traumatic events and controversies. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther came to the fore as the new synod's theological leader. Due in large part to his efforts, the Missouri Synod examined and expressed itself on the doctrine of church and ministry more fully than any other Lutheran group in America.[1] His theological analysis and expression became the model for the Missouri Synod down to the present day.

Much attention as of late has been given to the theology of Dr. C. F. W. Walther, particularly in the areas of church and ministry. People on differing sides of various issues claim Walther in support of their positions. Web sites and national free conferences call for a reclamation of Walther. Those who have not done an extensive study of C. F. W. Walther's writings may well feel like panelists on the old TV game show "To Tell the Truth": "Will the real C. F. W. Walther please stand up?!" Even an extensive study of Walther's works is complicated by the fact that most of his writings have not been compiled and many have not been translated from the nineteenth-century German that was his native language. Additionally, some may read the writings of Walther that have been translated without studying the historical context and thereby misunderstand the original intent of the author. Dr. Normal Nagel has correctly noted, "To abstract Walther from his specific setting is to lose what is best and most profound from him as a doctor of the church."[2]

This article is written in an attempt to clear the air of some misunderstandings that are now proliferating with respect to Walther's position on the doctrine of church and ministry, particularly in its relation to church polity. Mark Twain is reported to have said: "Get your facts straight first, then you can distort them as much as you please." Better yet, get the facts straight first, then refrain from any form of distortion altogether!

The position of Dr. C. F. W. Walther on the doctrine of church and ministry can be seen as a mediating position between two extremes. It favored neither those who would place the ministry over the church and the priesthood of all believers, nor those who would place the church and the priesthood of all believers over the ministry. Both the church and the ministry stood side by side, and to a certain extent, both the church and the ministry stood in tension. Yet in saying that, we must also recognize that there was a close relation between the office of the ministry and the congregation and between the office of the ministry and the function of that office.[3] Although C. F. W. Walther considered polity to be the practical application of the doctrine of church and ministry, and although he favored a democratic form of church polity for the Missouri Synod, he considered polity to be a matter of Christian freedom. The polity of a church did not determine whether or not it was truly church, nor did it affect the validity of the public office of the ministry in its midst. Furthermore, the democratic polity that Walther advocated maintained a balance between church and ministry so that neither was placed over the other.

## THE FIRST STRUGGLE

During the early nineteenth century, German Lutherans who emigrated to the United States, with its pluralistic and volunteristic religious culture, faced an ecclesiological dilemma that also had a profound affect upon their understanding of the ministry. In the fatherland they were accustomed to the well-established and regulated consistorial form of state-church polity as set forth in the centuries old *Kirchenordnungen.*[4] The pastor was a representative of both the state and the church. He was placed in a congregation by the *collator,* a member of the landed aristocracy, or his appointed *Consistorium.* Thus the pastor was responsible first and foremost to the state and not to his own appointed congregation. The congregation had little voice in the call of their pastor.[5]

Theological debate on the doctrine of church and ministry in early nineteenth-century Germany centered around the writings of two men: Richard Rothe, who published *Die Anfaenge der christlichen Kirche und ihrer Verfassung* in 1837, and Julius Stahl, who wrote *Die Kirchenverfassung nach Lehre und Recht der Protestanten* in 1840. Rothe, a disciple of Frederick Schleiermacher and J. A. W. Neander, determined that originally there had been no real church in Chistianity, that the church emerged gradually, and that the ministry grew out of the needs of the church.[6] Stahl countered that both church and ministry were present from the beginning and had immediate divine origin.[7] He also maintained that the pastoral office came into existence apart from the church or the local congregation. The pastoral office was separated and distinguished from both the church and from the priesthood of all believers. The public office of the ministry, or the *Predigerstand,* was a divinely instituted order in society, separate from the order of the government and the family. One enters the *Stand* of the ministry through the call to the pastoral office. For Stahl, however, this call is not possessed

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by the priesthood of believers or the church. It comes from God through the governing authorities. Ordination was a necessary part of the call to the public office of the ministry. Ordination conferred the pastoral office upon qualified individuals so that word and sacraments could be administered properly.[8]

This position was further developed and defended by Wilhelm Loehe, an important figure in the formation of the Missouri Synod, as well as by A. F. C. Vilmar, another prominent theologian in Germany.[9] Together with J. A. A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod in the United States, these men represented the hierarchical view in the controversy that followed after the founding of the Missouri Synod.

*"To abstract Walther from his specific setting is to lose what is best and most profound from him as a doctor of the church."*

Yet the distinctive understanding of the doctrine of church and ministry that was articulated by C. F. W. Walther, and which would become the position of the Missouri Synod, developed out of the experience of a group of Saxon emigrants who followed a Dresden pastor named Martin Stephan to St. Louis and the wilderness of Perry County, Missouri.[10] In the fall of 1838, about seven hundred Lutherans from various parts of Saxony departed Bremerhaven in five small sailing vessels. The immigration included five pastors, ten theological candidates, and four teachers, all closely attached to their leader. Among this group was Pastor C. F. W. Walther. It was determined that the ecclesiastical structure of the colony would be strictly hierarchical.[11] It was on board the Olbers, January 14, 1839, that Martin Stephan was officially declared "bishop" through the signing of a document called "Stephan's Investiture."[12] On February 16, 1839, aboard the riverboat Selma between New Orleans and St. Louis, the "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan" was endorsed, giving the bishop control over both the ecclesiastical and temporal affairs of the immigrants.[13] Yet only a few months after their arrival in Missouri, the Saxon Lutherans deposed and excommunicated their bishop for immoral behavior.[14] This, in turn, was the beginning of difficult and turbulent times for the Saxons that would last approximately two years. Almost immediately, many of the lay people began making unwarranted insinuations and accusations against the remaining clergy. The ministers managed to secure "calls" issued them orally on June 1, 1839, by the emigration company (*Gessellschaft*) as a body.[15] An influential layman, Carl Vehse, reported that the clergy wished to continue with an episcopal system and that they even considered appealing for ordination to the Swedish Lutheran Church.[16] The clergy, including C. F. W. Walther, still clung to a hierarchical system that commanded obedience by virtue of the *Amt* (office) of the ministry. Yet, while some of the laity began to protest, others despaired of their situation, taking on a defeatist attitude.

Carl Vehse came forward with a set of six propositions that offered a solution to the problems that beset the colony. Here Vehse asserted the Lutheran doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. He argued that the office of the ministry is only a public service, and only when it is committed to an individual by a congregation is it valid.[17] To this, the clergy responded by warning against those "who would unfairly abuse this declaration in order to discredit our office, maliciously sow the seeds of distrust against us, and bring about dissension and offense in the congregation."[18] Vehse and two other laymen responded on September 19, 1839, with a formal, detailed "Protest." Here they maintained a firm juxtaposition of laity and clergy, strenuously asserted the rights of the congregation as opposed to those of the clergy, and assumed the supremacy of the congregation. The following are the congregational rights Vehse claimed:

> First Right: appointment, calling, installation, and dismissal of the minister;
>
> Second Right: supervision, judgment, and discipline of the minister;
>
> Third Right: supervision, judgment, and discipline of the members of the congregation;
>
> Fourth Right: supervision and judgment of doctrine;
>
> Fifth Right: final decision in all religious and ecclesiastical matters;
>
> Sixth Right: final decision in all private quarrels coming to the attention of the congregation;
>
> Seventh Right: authorization to appear at councils with the same rights as clergymen;
>
> Eighth Right: the use of the keys of the church in disputed cases and in those of the most serious nature, namely, where excommunication is involved;
>
> Ninth Right: congregations have due power and authority to settle adiaphora, thus to regulate the entire liturgy and ritual and to devise their church constitutions;
>
> Tenth Right: congregations, as congregations, have preference over the clergy.[19]

Vehse and his two cohorts also came to the conclusion that the emigration was wrong from the start and urged that everyone return to Germany, which the three proceeded to do.[20]

Vehse's protests were soon replaced by those of Franz Adolph Marbach, Vehse's brother-in-law. On March 3, 1841, Marbach issued a manifesto in which he maintained that the entire foundation on which their church polity had been erected was sinful and that the blessings of God could not be expected until they repented and returned to Germany. A public debate was then arranged for April 15 and 20, 1841, in Perry County, Missouri.[21] The site for the disputation was the log cabin college that had been founded December 9, 1839, in Altenburg. On the whole, the debate, chiefly between C. F. W. Walther and Franz Marbach, was a relatively calm theological discussion. Marbach saw the problem as simply a moral issue. Walther saw in this a form of early nineteenth-century Pietism. He attacked the issue from the viewpoint

of sixteenth-century orthodoxy. He did not deal with polity but with the doctrine of the church. Walther set forth a series of propositions that have become known as the Altenburg Theses. Of special importance here is Thesis VI:

> Even heterodox companies have church power; even among them the goods of the church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised.[22]

Walther proceeded to show that the colonists were indeed a church, that they could call pastors, and that they could function as the church. He based his conclusions on the teaching of Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, Luther, and other prominent Lutheran theologians. This approach toward presenting a doctrinal position would become characteristic of Walther's theological method. It was first of all centered in the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. Walther's understanding of both church and ministry had a soteriological context in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the administration of the means of grace.[23]

In the notes that Walther prepared for the debate, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Vehse.[24] Nevertheless, Walther did not adopt the same line of argumentation that Vehse used. Vehse advocated extreme congregationalism and had leveled his attack on the members of the clergy. Walther started with the same premise as Vehse, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but his aim was constructive rather than destructive. Additionally, Walther did not place the church or congregation over the pastor.[25]

***Walther proceeded to show that the colonists were indeed a church, that they could call pastors, and that they could function as the church.***

In the Altenburg Theses, Walther did not articulate his complete understanding of the doctrine of church and ministry. This would come later. Yet the propositions established and accepted by all at Altenburg had a profound effect on the Saxon colony. Out of the confusion and chaos that had characterized the thinking and actions of the colonists, Walther had articulated an acceptable solution. After the Altenburg Debate Walther emerged as the unquestioned spiritual and theological leader of the colony.

On April 26, 1841, C. F. W. Walther accepted a call to serve as pastor to the Saxon Lutheran congregation in St. Louis. Two years later, he suggested the name Trinity, which was adopted, and persuaded the parish to adopt a constitution, which he drafted. The constitution established a democratic form of polity for the congregation in which decisions were made by a voters' assembly constituted of male members twenty-one years of age or older. The Trinity Lutheran Church Constitution served as the pattern or model for hundreds of other congregations that would eventually join the Missouri Synod. Yet it is important to note that this constitution was not mandated to these other congregations. They freely adopted this form of polity as newly established evangelical Lutheran congregations independent of the state.[26]

## THE SECOND STRUGGLE

Karl Wyneken has noted: "The historical development of the Missouri Synod's doctrine of the ministry is most intimately associated with the twenty-five year long controversy with the Synod of the Lutheran Church Emigrated from Prussia, commonly known as the Buffalo Synod."[27] In 1839, about the same time that the Saxons were settling in Missouri, a group of Prussians under the leadership of Pastor Johann Andreas August Grabau and a group of Silesians under the leadership of Pastor Leberecht Friedrich Ehregott Krause were emigrating to the United States. The Prussians settled in the area around Buffalo, New York, while the Silesians chose the territory of Wisconsin near Milwaukee and Freistadt.[28] While the Sileasians were settling in Wisconsin, Krause had to make a sudden return to Germany. With their pastor gone, a leading layman (who later became an ordained clergyman), Heinrich von Rohr, wrote to Grabau, asking permission to elect a layman who would temporarily conduct services and administer the sacraments. Grabau gave a negative response in the form of his so-called *Hirtenbrief* (Pastoral Letter) of December 1, 1840. This letter was also sent to various other German Lutheran immigrants for their inspection and approval, including the Saxons of Missouri.[29]

In the *Hirtenbrief,* Grabau rejected the request of the Silesian immigrants of Wisconsin, defending this position with his own analysis of Augsburg Confession Article XIV. Due to his fear of sectarians and vagabond preachers, which were common on the American frontier, Grabau put special emphasis on the word *rite* (*vocatus*). He also maintained that only an episcopal form of polity was proper for the church according to the old, accepted *Kirchenordnungen* of Germany. For Grabau, both the call and ordination were indispensable for the proper administration of the sacraments. A wicked or hypocritical ordained minister would not invalidate baptism and the Lord's Supper, but a layman selected by a congregation would only dispense the physical elements and not a proper sacrament. Grabau further maintained that a congregation must obey its pastor in all things. He also held that the one holy Christian church, outside of which there is no salvation, is the visible church of the pure word and sacrament, the Lutheran Church.[30]

Because of the problems that arose after the expulsion of Martin Stephan, the Saxon Lutherans of Missouri did not respond to Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* until more than two years after it was written.[31] On June 22, 1843, Pastors C. F. W. Walther, T. C. F. Gruber, G. H. Loeber, O. Fuerbringer, and G. A. Schieferdecker finally met in St. Louis to discuss Grabau's *Hirtenbrief*. Walther wrote the following about this meeting and the Saxons' reaction:

> As we read the *Hirtenbrief,* we became not a little afraid. For we found in it the same incorrect tenets whose destructive consequences we had but recently experienced, and from which only the overwhelming grace and patience God has saved us . . . . But previously we had embraced his [Grabau's] errors, and they had led us to the rim of destruc-

> tion, for which reason we could not now again agree to these errors intentionally. We came together in St. Louis for discussion, compared Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* with the Word of God, with the Lutheran Confessions, and particularly with Luther's writings, and thereupon designated Pastor Loeber in Altenberg, Mo., to write a critique of the *Hirtenbrief,* which we, the other Saxon pastors, then signed also.[32]

Grabau replied to the Saxons of Missouri on July 12, 1844. He insisted that the call from a congregation was not enough to make a man validly called. For this ordination by a servant of the church was necessary. Ordination was not an adiaphoron, as the Saxons asserted. To this the Saxons responded on January 15, 1845, and the heated controversy followed.[33]

***The conditions under which a congregation could join the synod and remain a member did not include a mandated democratic polity with voters' assemblies.***

Meanwhile, the Saxons of Missouri had been approached by the *Sendlinge* (sent ones) of Wilhelm Loehe. As pastor of the village church in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, Loehe had responded to the call for Lutheran clergy issued by Pastor Friedrick Wyneken of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Loehe established a training program for Lutheran pastors in Germany and then sent them to America. These Lutheran emissaries of Loehe were serving congregations in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. On April 26, 1847, in Chicago, Illinois, the Saxons of Missouri and the Loehe men ratified the constitution for Die Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten. This constitution established a democratic form of polity for the new synod. The conditions under which a congregation could join the synod and remain a member did not include a mandated democratic polity with voters' assemblies. It did, however, include the following condition: "Proper [not temporary] calling of the pastors and orderly election of congregational delegates by the congregation. The life of both minister and delegate must be beyond reproof."[34]

Back in Germany, Wilhelm Loehe was not happy with the constitution of the Missouri Synod. In his *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nordamerika* he wrote, "We have good reason to fear that the strong admixture of democratic, independent, and congregational principles in your constitution will do greater damage than the interference of princes and governmental agencies in the Church of our homeland."[35]

In 1849, Loehe published a book entitled *Aphorismen ueber die Neutestamentlichen Aemter und ihr Verhaeltnis zur Gemeinde.* This book furthered the debate on the doctrine of the ministry both in Europe and America. Then, two years later, Loehe published a revised edition of his work entitled *Kirche und Amt: Neue Aphorismen.* This book amplified the views set forth in the 1849 publication.[36] Loehe maintained that no clear text of Scripture speaks of the office (*Amt*) as derived from the congregation. The congregation does not and cannot hand its authority over to the *Amt.* The *Amt* does not originate from the congregation, but rather the congregation originates from the *Amt.* The Lord Jesus himself instituted the New Testament office. Thus the public ministry must be separated and distinguished from the universal priesthood of all believers. The public office of the ministry stems from the apostolic office. Although various titles of ministry in the New Testament have changed, the functions of minister exercised by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers are exercised by the surviving presbyter-bishop. The one office of the presbyter-bishop is the one public office of the ministry. This office is above every human calling. Furthermore, the election of ministers as recorded in the New Testament did not rest with the congregation, but rather with the apostles. The right to vote in the election of a minister on the part of the members of a congregation was seen as an unapostolic practice. Ordination is necessary for the public office of the ministry because it is the apostolic practice of the New Testament. It is the rite by which the office is conferred upon qualified individuals, and that rite is properly performed only by holders of that public office.[37]

In the face of opposition from both Europe and the United States, the Missouri Synod attempted to deal with the situation at their 1850 synodical convention. Walther opened the convention with an address lamenting the diverging views on the doctrine of church and ministry. He stated that this was not a matter of adiaphora, but concerned doctrine that was not in their power to dismiss or relax. Although the point of contention was not a fundamental article of the Christian faith, Walther believed that it stood in such close connection with the basic articles of Christian doctrine that departure would finally and necessarily invalidate the ground of faith.[38] The convention resolved that C. F. W. Walther should write and publish a book that would represent the Missouri Synod's position and serve as a defense against the Buffalo Synod's attacks. By 1851, Walther had prepared an outline for the book that was then presented to the convention in the form of theses. These theses were adopted by the synodical convention, and the Synod resolved to have the book published in Germany.[39]

In the theses of *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt,* Walther did not address polity, but rather doctrine. Here, Walther did not place the church over the ministry or the ministry over the church; instead, he placed them side by side. Part 1 offers nine theses on the doctrine of the church. Part 2 treats the office of the ministry in ten theses. After each thesis was stated, Walther set forth his support in three parts: proof from the Word of God, testimonies of the church in its official confessions, and testimonies of the church in the private writings of its teachers.[40]

In Part 1 of *Kirche und Amt,* Walther maintains that the holy Christian church (the *Una Sancta,* which in its proper sense is invisible) is divinely instituted. To this church Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The marks of the church are the pure preaching of God's word and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution. Part 2 of *Kirche und Amt* explains how the word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered. In addition to the divine institution of the church, the pastoral office is divinely instituted as well. This office is distinct from the priestly

office that all believers have. This is not an optional office, but the church is bound to it until the end of time. It is an office of service involving the power to preach the word of God and administer the sacraments and the authority of a spiritual court. Because the holy Christian church has the power of the keys, that power is conferred on the pastor through the call. Ordination is not a divine institution but an apostolic, churchly ordinance and a public confirmation of the call. The pastoral office is the highest office in the church, from which all other offices flow. Respect and also unconditional obedience are due to the ministry of the word if and when the preacher presents the word of God. But, the pastor cannot introduce new laws or ceremonies, or carry out excommunication alone. Along with the pastors, laymen also possess the right to judge doctrine.[41]

This teaching or doctrine of church and ministry, which is only briefly summarized here, is something Walther would not compromise. He felt that Scripture and the Confessions were very clear, and any compromise would be a denial of scriptural doctrine that would ultimately affect the teaching of justification by grace through faith. It is this understanding of church and ministry that became the accepted position of the Missouri Synod. Put another way, it became part of the doctrinal criteria both for those pastors and congregations who wished to join the Missouri Synod and for those synods that wished to establish fellowship with the Missouri Synod.[42] It is also important to note that polity was not part of the teaching set forth in *Kirche und Amt* and therefore not part of this criteria.

The controversy between Buffalo and Missouri continued. Wilhelm Loehe withdrew support from the Missouri Synod on August 4, 1853, and became instrumental in the formation of the Iowa Synod. During the initial struggle of the Saxon Lutherans and the following controversy with the Buffalo Synod and Wilhelm Loehe, C. F. W. Walther came to the fore as an astute theological leader who guided the Missouri Synod in establishing its position on the doctrines of church and ministry. This position would in turn shape the synod's understanding of congregational polity and life, synodical polity, and mission outreach. The practical application of doctrine in the form of polity, however, was not mandated, enforced, or held in the same regard as was the doctrine itself.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING POLITY

In the midst of the struggle with Grabau and Loehe over the doctrine of church and ministry, Walther, who was elected the first president of the Missouri Synod, gave a very insightful address at the second synodical convention in 1848. Several significant quotes are helpful in understanding where Walther stood with respect to church polity in relation to the doctrine of church and ministry:

> Christ not only declares that He is the only One who has the power in His church, exercised by His Word, but He denies to everyone any other power, rule, or imperative in His church but the Word.
>
> The holy apostles bestow only one power on those who serve the church in a governing capacity, i.e., the power of the Word . . . . The only power we possess, my honorable brothers in the ministry and esteemed congregational representatives, is without a doubt the power of the Word . . . . What about those who demand some kind of power in the church besides the power of the Word? These people are depriving Christ's church of the freedom that He earned for it with His precious blood.
>
> For example, who would dispute that the German consistories in their own time were a blessing to the church . . . . Anyone who knows a little history could not possibly deny that the Swedish church under its episcopal structure was gloriously edifying.

In our Evangelical Lutheran Church, however, we must preach to our congregations that the choice of the form of government for a church is an inalienable part of the Christian liberty and that Christians as members of the church are subject to no power in the world except the clear Word of the living God.

***He felt that any compromise . . . would ultimately affect the teaching of justification by grace through faith.***

How can such a democracy be a papacy when priestly Christians do not tolerate human laws that God has neither commanded nor forbidden, but unconditionally obey only the preacher of the Word as Christ Himself speaks through him when he proclaims Christ's Word? No, a democracy is disgraceful when people prescribe exactly what the preacher of God's Word may or may not proclaim; when people choose for themselves to contradict God's Word and in any way hinder the performance of the ministerial office according to the Word. A democracy is disgraceful when people claim for themselves to make ordinances in the church and exclude the pastor from this power and demand that he submit to their ordinances. The preacher who fears men or desires to please men does not serve Christ. Such a preacher is a slave of men and diverges from God's Word and says what his listeners want to hear. However, where the preacher is given only the power of the Word—the full power—and where the congregation hears Christ's Word preached and receives it as God's Word, then the preacher stands in the right relationship to his congregation; not as a hired hand but as one sent by God; not as a slave to men but as a servant of Christ who teaches, admonishes, and corrects in Christ's stead. This complies with the apostolic admonition, "Obey your teachers and follow them, for they are caring for your souls and must give an accounting; in order that they work joyfully, not sadly, for that would not help you" (Heb. 13:17).

Those who do not want the Word will separate from us; those who love the Word will find refuge in our fellowship.[43]

It is clear from his 1848 Presidential Address that Walther held only Christ and his Word as supreme in a congregation—the only true power. Polity was a matter of Christian freedom. Democracy became disgraceful when the congregation prescribed exactly what the preacher was to proclaim, when the people chose to contradict God's Word and hinder the performance of the ministeri-

al office. Congregations that did not respect the Word of God proclaimed by their divinely called pastors were expected to remove themselves from the fellowship of the synod.

In 1862, Walther presented an essay to the Western District convention of the Missouri Synod, entitled "The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State." The essay was not set forth as a doctrinal position, nor was it adopted as such; it was merely offered for discussion. Since time did not permit more than a reading of the essay and a brief discussion of only the first sixteen paragraphs, however, the members of the St. Louis Pastoral Conferences urged C. F. W. Walther to publish the essay in printed form. In this book, Walther intended to show the practical application of the doctrine set forth in *Kirche und Amt* and to show European Lutherans and other Lutherans in America that this form of polity had worked in the congregations of the Missouri Synod for more than twenty-four years.

***Walther is not saying that voters' assemblies have the right to lord it over pastors . . .***

In the essay and published book, Walther did not say that the type of polity he was proposing was divinely instituted, nor did he say that an evangelical Lutheran local congregation could only be established independent of the state. What he stated in *The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State* was that this form of democratic polity, with its voters' assembly, is the proper form (the best, most appropriate form) for a congregation independent of the state. Dr. Nagel rightly notes:

> Walther does not declare churchless anybody in congregations dependent on the state. He does not cast doubt on any pastor presented, elected, called, and ordained in places where congregations were dependent on the state. Those ordained authors whom he quotes as theological authorities were all implicated in some dependence on the state. This involvement did not render doubtful what was divine in their calls and ordinations. Walther does not question the divinity of these.[44]

In chapter 1, section 5, of *The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State,* Walther states that the congregation (by way of the true believers in the congregation, who are known only to God) is given the power of the keys. In such a congregation, the pastor is the steward of these keys and a servant of the congregation. "The congregation is represented as the supreme tribunal" (Matt. 18:15–18).[45] Walther is talking about the office of the keys here, particularly in matters of excommunication—nothing more. He is not saying that voters' assemblies have the right to lord it over pastors, any more than pastors have the right to lord it over congregations. In chapter 3 Walther goes on to talk about congregational meetings. Nowhere, however, does Walther say that these meetings or voters' assemblies are divinely instituted, nor does he say that voters' assemblies are over pastors. Both pastors and congregations are subject to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, which are a correct exposition of God's Word.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The position of C. F. W. Walther on the doctrine of church and ministry was shaped in the face of turmoil and controversy as well as the development and rapid expansion of the church body he helped form. It was grounded upon Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions with added support from various Lutheran church fathers, particularly Martin Luther. It also took form amidst what may be considered extreme positions. In that sense, it was a mediating position between the hierarchical tendencies of Martin Stephan, J. A. A. Grabau, Wilhelm Loehe, F. J. Stahl, and A. F. C. Vilmar on the one hand, and the anticlericalism of Carl Vehse or the disregard for the divine institution of the church and the public office of the ministry by Richard Rothe and J. W. F. Hoefling on the other hand.

Because Walther's doctrine of church and ministry was grounded in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the administration of the means of grace, it had a soteriological context centering first and foremost on the believer's relationship to God as he or she is justified (declared righteous) by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. "To obtain such faith, God instituted the office of the ministry."[46] Through their relationship to God, all believers have all churchly authority and power, that is, the office of the keys. Yet God does not will that all believers exercise this authority publicly. For this, God instituted the public office of the ministry. It is distinct from the office that all believers have in that its function is to exercise the power and authority of all believers publicly on behalf of all. This power and authority is conferred upon the office by way of the call. Because it is divinely mandated, this office is not optional but must be established within a congregation. It is the highest office in the church, from which all other offices flow. Yet it is not a special order in society but instead an office of service. Its authority and responsibility rest solely in the area of word and sacrament.

Walther's position maintained an equilibrium and tension between the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of the ministry. It favored neither those who would place the ministry over the church and the priesthood of all believers, nor those who would place the church and the priesthood of all believers over the ministry. Both the church and the ministry were divinely instituted. The church was bound to the office of the ministry, but the office of the ministry was conferred through the church. The pastor was to be obeyed when he proclaimed the Word of God. Nonetheless, laymen also had the right to judge doctrine. The pastoral office involved a divine call, and thus a congregation could not arbitrarily fire their pastor. If a pastor was faithful in his proclamation of God's Word and administration of the sacraments, and a congregation contradicted God's Word and then fired the pastor, that congregation had removed itself from the fellowship of the synod.

Although Walther saw church polity as the practical application of the doctrine of church and ministry, and although Walther believed that the democratic form of church polity was the best for a local evangelical Lutheran congregation in the United States of

America, he did not dictate this polity to the congregations of the Missouri Synod; it was not a requirement as a condition for membership within the synod. Church polity was considered by Walther to be a matter of Christian freedom. Pastors and congregations respected Walther's leadership and willingly used the constitution he drafted for Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, as a model. Later, pastors and congregations made use of the guidance Walther provided in "The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State."

The democratic polity that Walther proposed for a local evangelical Lutheran congregation maintained checks and balances so that the equilibrium between church and ministry was maintained. One was not above the other; both church and ministry stood side by side under Christ and his Word. This was the unique blessing that was the doctrine of church and ministry espoused by C. F. W. Walther, making it distinct both as a mediating position between extremes and in its application of the doctrine of church and ministry to ecclesiastical polity. LOGIA

## NOTES

1. Conrad Bergendof, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism* (Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1956), 27.

2. Norman E. Nagel, "The Divine Call in 'Die Rechte Gestalt' of C. F. W. Walther," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59 (July 1995): 162. Dr. Nagel also noted: "How we translate the title [of 'Die rechte Gestalt'] may indicate whether it has told us what is in the book or whether we are insisting on what we want to find in the book or, even worse, we are making it say what we want it to say whether Dr. Walther is saying it or not."

3. For confessional Lutherans, the relation of office to function is viewed in light of Augsburg Confession Article XIV and Augsburg Confession Article V. Another way of expressing this, first used by seventeenth-century theologian Ludwig Hartmann and then other Lutheran theologians, including Walther, was in terms of the public office of the ministry *in abstracto* (Augsburg Confession Article V) and the public office of the ministry *in concreto* (Augsburg Confession Article XIV). Norman Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's 'Kirche und Amt'," *Concordia Journal* 15 (October 1989): 426. Also, consider Karl L. Barth, "The Doctrine of the Ministry: Some Practical Dimensions," *Concordia Journal* 14 (July 1988): 204–214.

4. Karl Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry," the Graduate School of Concordia Seminary, Studies in Church and Ministry, ed. Erwin L. Lueker et. al. (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1967, 18): 3. In Germany, there was almost an endless variety of *Kirchenordnungen.* These were rules for government, worship, liturgy, discipline, marital relations, education, eleemosynary work, and property rights of the church. Ermil Sehling, *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen der 16. Jahrhunderts,* 5 vol. (Leipzig: Verlag von O. R. Reisland, 1902).

5. Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 26, 29–31.

6. Richard Rothe, *Die Anfaehnge der Christliche Kirche und ihrer Verfassung* (Wittenberg: Zimmermann'schen Buchhandlung, 1837), 1: 310. Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekenntnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Almqvist und Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1952), 101.

7. F. J. Stahl, *Die Kirchenverfassung nach Lehre und Recht der Protestanten* (Erlangen, Verlag von Theodor Blaesing, 1840), 58–61.

8. Ibid., 95–112, 125–144. Fagerberg, 101–102. James H. Pragmann, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 129–132.

9. A. F. C. Vilmar published *Die Lehre vom geistlichen Amt* in 1870. Here he maintained that the office of the ministry was an immediate institution of the Lord Jesus that lasts forever in the function of the pastor in the church. This shepherd is the center of the congregation. It is the shepherd who gathers the congregation around himself. The pastor, not the congregation, has received the mandate to preach the gospel so that the church can be gathered. The congregation does not possess the mandate to preach the word but instead has the mandate to hear the word. The pastor has the mandate to administer the sacraments while the congregation has the mandate to receive the sacraments. The pastor has the office of the keys, not the congregation. Ibid., 136.

10. A detailed analysis of the Stephanite Emigration from Saxony to the United States is set forth in Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), passim. Also see Christian Hochstetter, *Die Geschichte der Evangelische-lutherischen Missouri Synode in Nord-Amerika und ihrer Lehrkaempfe* (Dresden: Verlag von Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), 1–18.

11. Forster, 114–115.

12. Stephan's Investiture, MS., Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Mo. [hereafter CHI], trans. Forster, 288–290. Another translation may be found in Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 134–135.

13. "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan," Selma, February 16, 1839, MS., CHI, trans. Forster, 293–296.

14. "Sentence of Deposition Pronounced upon Stephan," MS., CHI, trans. Forster, 418.

15. Forster, 428–431.

16. Carl E. Vehse, *Die Stephan'sche Auswanderung nach Amerika. Mit Actenstuecken* (Dresden: H. Sillig, 1840), 24, 35, 111.

17. Vehse, 103–105. Mundinger, 95–96.

18. Forster, 463.

19. Carl Eduard Vehse, *Die Stephan'sche Auswanderung nach Amerika*, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66; trans. Karl Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry," the Graduate School of Concordia Seminary, Studies in Church and Ministry, ed. Erwin L. Lueker, 3: 22–23.

20. Vehse, , 54–60. Forster, 464. Mundinger, 97.

21. Walter Baepler stated that Pastor Buerger arranged for the debate. Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 15–52. Yet W. G. Polack believed that Walther, Keyl, and Loeber set up the meeting. W. G. Polack, *The Story of C. F. W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), 47. Mundinger held that Walther's involvement in arranging for the debate cannot be determined. Mundinger, 112.

22. The German original is found in J. F. Koestering, *Auswanderung der saechsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1839, ihre Niederlassung in Perry Co., Mo., und damit zusammenhaengende interessante Nachrichten* (St. Louis: A. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), 51–52. Translations may be found in Forster, 523–525, and Polack, *Walther*, 49–50.

23. Erwin L. Lueker, "Church and Ministry in the Thought and Policies of Lutherans in America," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* [hereafter *CHIQ*] 42 (August, 1969): 104.

24. Koestering, 42–52.

25. Walter O. Forster gave the following analysis: "It was vital to remember, furthermore, that belonging to an organized church body did not constitute one a Christian, but that a body of Christians could organize at any time to constitute a church." "A church," the word which seemed to have become a shibboleth of the controversy—"a church" was still extant among them. If this were so, they must possess all the rights of such a body and could exercise all its functions; specifically, they could call pastors and teachers and provide for the administration of the Sacraments and other rites normally connected with the existence of an organized congregation, of "a church." In practical application it meant the identification of the characteristics and powers of a congregation and "*the* church." Forster, 522. Mundinger maintained that Walther's *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* was an expansion of the Altenburg Theses. Mundinger, 123.

26. *Moving Frontiers*, 166–170. Erich B. Allwards, "The St. Louis *Gesammtgemeinde*—Its Demise," *CHIQ* 57 (Summer 1984): 60–80.

27. Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther's Doctrine of the

Ministry," 23.

28. Roy Suelflow, "The Relataions of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 2–3.

29. Suelflow, 4. *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840. Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. Der Oeffentlichkeit uebergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundasaesse innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche* (New York: H. Ludwig and Co., 1849). This is apparently the only edition of the *Hirtenbrief* extant today and is an edition published by the Saxons, together with other documents of the controversy that ensued, as part of a polemic against Grabau's position.

30. *Hirtenbrief*, 11–15. Roy Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 6. Also see [C. F. W. Walther ?], "Das Gemeindewahlrecht," *Der Lutheraner* 17 (September 18, 1860): 17. Grabau did soften this position somewhat by adding that in the emergency of a pastor's illness a layman could administer the sacraments. Yet congregations without a pastor were to wait until one came before the sacraments could be administered. Grabau believed that the Smalcald Articles supported this understanding of the *Amt*. *Hirtenbrief*, 16–19.

31. Instead, the Saxons apparently submitted their own document, "Missouri Church Principles and Parish Constitution of 1839 and 1840," to Grabau for his inspection. Like Vehse's proposition and the Altenburg Theses, the "Missouri Church Principles" strongly emphasized the priesthood of all believers with all its privileges. The rights and properties that the priesthood of all believers possess properly belong in a local congregation. The divine institution of the office of the ministry was also stressed, however. What is important to note is the use of the term "confer" (*uebertragen*) with respect to the call to the ministry and the authority of the minister to teach publicly and administer the Sacraments. The office of the keys, the public proclamation of God's word and administration of the sacraments, is "transferred" from the priesthood of all believers, to whom they originally belong, to the minister through the regular call. Unfortunately, no author for these theses is given. Since, according to its title, it seemingly was written between 1839 and 1840, well before the Altenberg Debate, it is very unlikely that the Saxon clergy had anything to do with writing it. The only extant copy of "Missouri Church Principles" is one that the Buffalo Synod later printed for polemical purposes. It probably can be trusted to be original to the same extent as the publication of the *Hirtenbrief* by the Saxons. Buffalo Synod, *Fifth Proceedings*, 1856, 49–52, trans. Karl Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry," 25–27.

32. Trans. Roy Suelflow, *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 10.

33. For more detail see Roy Suelflow, *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 12–14.

34. "Our First Synodical Constitution," trans. Roy Suelflow, *CHIQ* 16 (April 1943): 2–18.

35. Wilhelm Loehe, *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nordamerika* 6 (September 8, 1847): 44. Loehe called the government organization of the Missouri Synod's constitution "amerikanische Peobelherrschaft." He feared that the tactics used in political elections would soon be applied in the selection of pastors if laymen were given the right of suffrage in the calling of a pastor. Mundinger, 200. In *Der Lutheraner* 8 (1852): 97, Walther said that he was genuinely sorry that Loehe harbored the erroneous notion that "wir haetten dan falsch democratischen Grundsaetzen die goettliche Wuere des Predigtamtes geopfert." Mundinger, 209.

36. Wilhelm Loehe, *Aphorismen ueber die Neutestamentlichen Aemter und ihr Verhaeltnis zur Gemeinde* (Nuernberg: Verlag der Joh. Phil. Raw'schen Buchhandlung, 1849). Wilhelm Loehe, *Kirche und Amt: Neue Aphorismen* (Erlangen: Verlag von Theodore Blaesing, 1851).

37. For a more detailed analysis of Loehe's understanding, see Kenneth Frederick Korby, "The Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of the Liturgy and the Laity," Th.D. Diss., Concordia Seminary in Exile in Cooperation with Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, 222–235; and Pragmann, 132–136. Also consider [Arthur C.] D[ahms ?], "Loehe's Conception of the Church and the Ministry," *The Confessional Lutheran* 13 (December 1952):137–139; Carl Bergen, "Loehe's Concept of the Ministry," *Una Sancta* 12 (St. Michael's Day, 1955): 18–24; Ernst W. Seybold, "Wilhelm Loehe," *Una Sancta* 14 (Pentecost 1957):11–15.

38. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Vierter Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev. Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten vom Jahre 1850*, zweite Auflage (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten, 1876), 118 – 121.

39. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Fuenfter Synodal—Bericht der deutschen Ev. Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staatn vom Jahre 1851*, zweite Auflage (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten, 1876), 169–173. This book was published as *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1852). Translations may be found in *Walther on the Church*, trans. John M. Drickamer, in *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther*, 6 vols., ed. August R. Suelflow(St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981); and C. F. W. Walther, *Walther and the Church*, ed. Wm. Dallmann, W. H. T. Dau, and Th. Engelder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938). In "Vorwort des Redakeurs," *Der Lutheraner* 9 (August 31, 1852): 1–3, the year *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* was first published, Walther expressed himself concerning the historical background of his theses. Walther stated that the battle he and his synod were now waging against Grabau was not easy, and he then went on to give several reasons. First, Grabau sought to discredit the person of his opponents and misrepresented their teaching. Second, Walther believed that he was dealing with doctrinal points that called for an earnest and spiritual understanding that many of his day lacked. They saw it only as an idle squabbling and wrangling about insignificant matters. Third, Grabau's erroneous views had crept into the Lutheran Church a long time ago and would be difficult to change. Fourth, Grabau's views concerning church and ministry agree much more with what appeals to human reason than does the true scriptural doctrine.

40. See Norman Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*," 423–446.

41. *Die Stimme unswere Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, passim. Some had associated Walther and the position of the Missouri Synod with a group of Lutherans in Germany who set forth a contrasting position to that of Stahl, Loehe, and Vilmar. This group included Rudolph Sohm, Adolf von Harless, and J. W. F. Hoefling. Their position was more congregational, and even, to an extent, anti-institutional. Order and structure were of subordinate importance. The *Amt* does not exist independently of a congregation and is derived from the spiritual priesthood. The minister is only relatively necessary. Extreme advocates (at least according to their opponents) held that the office of the ministry is entirely a human arrangement, a sociological expediency, its very existence a matter of human discretion and therefore dispensable. This was the particular position of Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Hoefling, *Grundsaetz evang-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung*, 3d ed. (Erlangen: Theodor Blaesing, 1853), 63. Walther's first three theses on the ministry remove him categorically from the position of these German theologians. Thus Walther's position is most accurately described as a mediating one, an attempt to avoid both the one extreme of Stahl, Loehe, Grabau, and Vilmar and the other of Sohm, Harless, and Hoefling. Karl Wyneken, "Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission," *CHIQ* 45 (May 1972): 72–73.

42. The Ohio Synod adopted seven theses on the ministry that were instrumental in colloquies held with the Missouri Synod and that led to its joining the Synodical Conference. Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 183–184.

43. C. F. W. Walther, "Why Should We and Can We Carry on Our Work with Joy, Even Though We Possess No Power Other than the Power of the Word?" *Zweiter Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev. Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u.a. Staaten vom Jahre 1848*, zweite Auflage (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), 30–38. Translations can be found in *Moving Frontiers*, 170–177 and in *CHIQ* 33 (April 1960). There is also a translation available by John Pohanka, a graduate student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

44. Norman Nagel, "The Divine Call in 'Die Rechte Gestalt' of C. F. W. Walther," 173.

45. C. F. W. Walther, "The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State," trans. John M. Drickamer in *Walther on the Church*, 127. A translation is also available by John Theodore Mueller, *The Form of a Christian Congregation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963).

46. AC v.

# Reviews

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

## *Review Essay*

*Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*. Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998. Paper. 182 pages.

Since 1984, for the purposes of the Lutheran-Orthodox ecumenical dialogue, Finland's Academy of Sciences has financed a long-range research project on Martin Luther's thought. This project has involved research by the scholars whose essays are presented in this volume. The first task of this project was to analyze the philosophical assumptions of modern Luther research concerning the idea of the presence of Christ in faith. This analysis is presented in the first essay of the book, "Why Is Luther So Fascinating? Modern Finnish Luther Research," by Tuomo Mannermaa of Helsinki University, recognized as "the creative spirit leading the Finnish breakthrough in Luther research." Mannermaa points out that modern Luther scholars understand Luther to believe the presence (Being) of Christ in faith to be only an ethical presence, but according to Mannermaa this is a misinterpretation of Luther. Mannermaa argues instead that Luther has a very ontological understanding of the presence of Christ.

The second task of the project was to analyze Luther's own understanding of the believer's union with, or participation in, God, as realized in faith. This analysis is presented in three essays: Mannermaa's "Justification and Theosis in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective," Simo Peura's "Christ as Favor and Gift: The Challenge of Luther's Understanding of Justification," and Peura's "What God Gives, Man Receives: Luther on Salvation." In this review I concentrate on these three essays, but I do want to consider briefly two other tasks of the Finnish project, which are also reflected in this collection of essays.

The third study in the project was the work of Antti Raunio, presented in his essay "Natural Law and Faith: The Forgotten Foundations of Ethics in Luther's Theology." Raunio's conclusion, as summarized by Mannermaa, is that "The Golden Rule is for Luther not only an 'ethical' but also an eminently 'dogmatic' rule of his doctrine of faith. God himself follows the Golden Rule, which describes the essential dynamic of God's Being. Thus, the Golden Rule is the summa of the Christian faith and life."

The fourth study was by Sammeli Juntunen on the concept of "nothing" in Luther's theology, as presented in his essay "Luther and Metaphysics: What Is the Structure of Being According to Luther?" Again, as stated by Mannermaa, "In classical ontology 'nothing' is a central complementary notion to that of 'Being.' By analyzing the notion of 'nothing' that Luther frequently uses, Juntunen has been able to sketch out some interesting insights into Luther's underlying concept of Being."

This collection of essays also includes responses to the above-mentioned articles by Robert W. Jenson, Carl E. Braaten, William H. Lazareth, and Dennis Bielfeldt. The book concludes with a survey of some of the statements that have been produced in various Lutheran-Orthodox discussions, "Salvation in the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue: a Comparative Perspective," by Risto Saarinen.

At the beginning of his essay on justification and theosis, Mannermaa says:

> In the ecumenical dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church it has come out that the idea of theosis can be found at the core of the theology of Martin Luther himself. My task here is to expound this idea of theosis in Luther's theology and its relationship to his doctrine to justification (25).

Peura also writes:

> In the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue some have insisted that the forensic aspect of justification is characteristic of the Lutheran way of understanding it, and the effective aspect is typical of the Catholic understanding. And when Lutherans discuss the notion of salvation with Orthodox Christians, they seek to relate justification and theosis to each other. We Lutherans will encounter great difficulties if we try to represent only the forensic aspect of justification (42).

From these comments we can see that the Lutheran-Orthodox ecumenical agenda is a chief motivating factor behind this research. And this "new Finnish interpretation of Luther" would indeed make these ecumenical and theological problems more manageable and easier to overcome.

Mannermaa's key idea is that "in faith itself Christ is really present," a so-called literal translation of Luther's *in ipsa fide Christus adest*. This idea is contrasted to a purely forensic con-

cept of justification. Mannermaa and his colleagues reject the disputatious history of the Lutheran doctrine of justification and reread Luther's texts. In this way they are "new" interpreters of Luther. In their fresh reading of the reformer's writings they found that for Luther faith is a real participation in Christ, and that in faith a believer receives the righteousness of God in Christ, not only in a nominal and external way, but really and inwardly. They claim that, according to the forensic model of justification, it is as though a person is righteous, while in reality he is not. But on the other hand, according to the Finnish school, if through faith man really participates in Christ, he participates in the whole Christ, who in his divine person communicates to man the righteousness of God. Here lies the bridge to the Orthodox idea of salvation as theosis or deification.

To maintain this idea they need first of all to refute the teaching of the Formula of Concord on justification as a forensic act. To do this they try to separate Luther's theology from the theology of the Formula of Concord, show the contradictions between the two, as they perceive them, "at least insofar as terminology is concerned." After quoting FC SD III, 54, Mannermaa says:

> In Luther's theology, however, the relation between justification and the divine indwelling in the believer is, undoubtedly, defined differently from the formulation of the Formula of Concord . . . . Luther does not separate the person of Christ from his work. Rather, Christ himself, both his person and his work, is the ground of Christian righteousness. Christ is, in this unity of person and work, really present in the faith of the Christian . . . . In contrast to Luther's theology, forgiveness (favor), justification, and the real presence of God *(donum)* in faith are in danger of being separated by the one-sidedly forensic doctrine of justification adopted by the Formula of Concord and by subsequent Lutheranism. In Luther's theology, however, both of these motifs are closely united in his understanding of the person of Christ. Christ is both the *favor* and the *donum*. And this unity is, to use Chalcedonian expressions, both inseparable and unconfused (28).

Mannermaa shows his confused understanding of Luther's position and of the position of FC, however, when he says further, "One can characterize Luther's position in contrast to the position to the Formula of Concord also as follows: For Luther *evangelium* is not proclamation of the cross and/or of the forgiveness of sins only, but the proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ himself" (29). Mannermaa here draws a false distinction, not understanding that those two proclamations are perceived to be the same thing, both by Luther and by FC. For the proclamation of the cross is actually the proclamation of the crucified Christ, and the proclamation of the resurrection of our Lord is essentially the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins.

In his essay Peura also separates FC from Luther, simultaneously correcting Osiander on this issue:

> The FC then excludes from gift everything else that according to Luther is included in it . . . . According to the FC, the indwelling of Christ is not that righteousness by which we are declared righteous . . . . The FC came to this conclusion mainly because of its aim to reject Andreas Osiander, who emphasized the indwelling of the divine nature in his doctrine of justification. However, the problem of Osiander's doctrine was not actually his claim that justification was based on God's indwelling in a Christian, but the christological presuppositions of this claim. Osiander (in opposition to Luther) separated Christ's human nature and divine nature from each other and broke the *unio personalis* in Christ. Therefore Christ's human nature and everything he did as the human being on the cross had only an instrumental and subsidiary role in redemption as well as in justification (45–46).

But what about Luther? Does he really teach mystical justification rather than juridical justification? Is the theology of FC not, after all, a legitimate continuation of Luther's presentation of things? Are the Finns right in their opinion, and in their interpretation of Luther's 1535 *Lectures on Galatians,* which they quote extensively (and to which FC also refers)? The answer will become clear when we look carefully at how Luther describes justification in his "blessed exchange" teaching.

For the Finns, "blessed exchange" has a mystical character.

> The second person of the Trinity did not take upon himself merely human nature as such, in a "neutral" form, but precisely sinful human nature. This means that Christ has and bears the sins of all human beings in a real manner in the human nature he has assumed. The sins of humankind are not only imputed to Christ; he "has" the sins in his human nature. Therefore Christ is the greatest sinner (29).

Then, instead of the sin and death that we bring to the exchange, Christ "communicates to us his own divine attributes such as righteousness, wisdom and eternal life. Because of the indwelling Christ and his righteousness we find favor in the eyes of the Father as well" (90). Thus the "blessed exchange" for the Finns means that human sin now indwells Christ, and Christ or his divine righteousness indwells a believer. From this the conclusion could be that only the human nature of Christ bore the sins of humankind, as an accumulator of human sin "in a real manner" and not only by imputation. Therefore, not the whole person of Christ bore humanity's sins, but only the "sinful human nature" of Christ has done this. In regard to the attributes of his divine nature, "these divine attributes fight against sin, death, and curse," and in this way "He won the battle between righteousness and sin 'in himself'" (31). And so, according to Mannermaa, the divine nature represents the righteousness of Christ as the "Greatest Person," and the human nature represents his sinfulness as the "Greatest Sinner," in the one person of Christ. Mannermaa, using the Chalcedonian expression, does say that these natures, and all that pertains to them, are "inseparable."

But in contrast to the Finns and their interpretation, Luther himself actually brings two closely related motifs together, namely, Christ's imputed righteousness (*justitia aliena*) and

Christ's "blessed exchange" with us whereby "he took upon himself our personal sins and gave to us his personal innocence and victory" (AE 26: 284). God for Christ's sake imputes to the believer Christ's righteousness and imputes to Christ the believer's sin and guilt. To understand Luther as grounding the blessed exchange in the fact of the believer's union with Christ would be to deny that the *justitia aliena* is imputed and to put the two motifs in opposition to each other. Furthermore, union with Christ or his indwelling is the result of justification and not the other way around. Luther speaks precisely in this way, even in his *Lectures on Galatians.* He does use the terminology of a participation in a mystical union between the believer and Christ, but he also emphasizes the true meaning of justification. He says that "this is a marvelous definition of Christian righteousness: it is a divine imputation or reckoning as righteousness or to righteousness, for the sake of our faith in Christ or for the sake of Christ" (AE 26: 233).

Also, for Luther the true meaning of justification, *justitia aliena,* is inseparably connected to the certainty of faith (AE 26: 172). According to Peura, there is the possibility of a false security in "the possibility that a Christian might become 'saturated' or self-confident when he has received the gift" (59). For Peura a true security is based on the fact that "a Christian is protected by Christ's grace insofar as gift (i.e., renewal) is realized in his life. In this sense we could say that the Christian's renewal is the necessary condition for grace and for staying under Christ's protection" (57). Thus the proper distinction between the law and the gospel is not maintained by the Finns, who also give a prominent position to the third use of the law, saying very little about original sin, the bondage of the will, and the need for repentance. It is interesting enough that they never appeal to the Smalcald Articles, the "last will and testament" of Luther, where those questions are of paramount importance to him, and where he warned of those who offer "new" interpretations of his theology: "They tried to clothe their venomous spirits in the garments of my labor and thus mislead the poor people in my name" (SA Pr., 4).

In conclusion, let us consider the words of Peura, who in criticizing the doctrine of FC III says: "According to the Formula of Concord (FC) the doctrine of justification . . . includes only God's favor, that is, imputed righteousness. Justification is the same as absolution, the declared forgiveness of sins" (45). It is well known that Osiander's doctrine and character caused Luther much concern. The main disagreement between them was over the validity of the general confession and the general absolution. It became evident during a controversy on these matters in Nuernberg that Osiander did not accept the objective reconciliation and the objective validity of the gospel. Luther's response was to this effect: "The Gospel itself is a general absolution, for it is a promise which all and everyone should appropriate by God's order and command" (Letter to the Council of Nuernberg). This doctrine of Luther is reasserted, over against Osiandrianism, in FC III.

Let the reader decide for himself how "new" the "new Finnish interpretation of Luther" really is.

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***The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals.*** By Gene Edward Veith. St. Louis: CPH, 1999. 128 pages.

Though intended to introduce Lutheranism to non-Lutherans, this book will introduce many Lutherans to Lutheranism. Ignorance and apathy are the two great dangers facing significant segments of our church. One of the important things that Veith is doing in this book is warmly and kindly asking fellow Lutherans, "Do you have any idea what a treasure is to be found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church? Let's sit down and let's talk about it. Let me tell you how I discovered Lutheranism. And then, together, let's work at telling others about the way of the first evangelicals, about the spirituality of the cross, about the Lutheran Church." Those are my words not Veith's, but they summarize my reading of this wonderful little book.

Veith accomplishes the task masterfully and powerfully with his winsome eloquence. This is not a parochial exercise in navel gazing, or a retelling of what happened 150 years ago in Perry County, Missouri, or a "we alone have the truth" approach to the subject. Veith is extending a friendly invitation to step out of the entryway of Christendom, the "mere Christianity" of a C. S. Lewis, and step into the warm and inviting room that is the Evangelical Lutheran Church—the church on earth in which the gospel is preached according to the pure understanding of it and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution.

Some might wonder why the term "spirituality" was chosen, since it is so commonly used and abused. It makes perfect sense. This book is an antidote for the self-chosen "spirituality" of the new age movement, post-modernism, and even pietism. Veith helps us realize that "Spirituality . . . must be lived, not merely intellectualized, and its locus is the mysteries taking place in an ordinary local church." Veith compels the reader to follow him along as he provides a "walking tour" of the major features of Lutheranism.

Veith organizes his book into chapters on justification, the means of grace, the theology of the cross, vocation, and living in two kingdoms. He covers his subjects well. The book concludes with a poignant description of Lutheran worship. Appended to these chapters is a short essay that Veith had previously written for the journal *Touchstone.* There is a valuable "suggested reading" list at the very end of the book.

I highly recommend this book to clergy and lay readers alike. It would make an excellent text for an adult confirmation class. I could not think of any better supplement to the pastor's instruction than this book. It is also a great book simply to give to friends or family members who may not be members of the Lutheran Church. If it doesn't move them to become Lutherans, at least they will see why we are so serious about Lutheranism. The book also needs to be urged on life-long Lutherans as a wonderful reintroduction to the truth they cherish. It is always such a joy to take a look at what has become familiar through the eyes of a person who is seeing everything for the first time. We owe Gene Edward Veith our profound gratitude for helping us to see Lutheranism with fresh eyes.

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*Let All the People Praise You: A Songbook.* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999.

Anyone who has ever served on a committee putting together a new hymnal will tell you that often the hardest choices to be made are not what to put in the book but what to leave out. Our Lutheran heritage is so rich in its tradition of music and hymnody that one could easily compile a book devoted solely to Lutheran hymnody. At the same time there is music and hymnody from other traditions that, while not written by Lutherans, confesses the Christian faith as well as any Lutheran hymn (sometimes with a few edits to help it along). This too is worthwhile to sing and learn. Hymnal committees easily begin with three times as much material as they need; paring it down to the six hundred or so slots they have is a daunting task. At times hymns are cut from the roster not because they lack in doctrinal content or musical quality, but because there is simply no room.

One solution to this predicament, which we have especially seen in recent years, is the publication of a hymnal supplement. Almost every American Lutheran hymnbook since *The Lutheran Hymnal* has had a supplement of sorts, designed to include some of those hymns that did not make the final cut, hymns written or become prominent since the publication of the hymnbook, and songs normally used outside the Divine Service. With the publication of *Let All the People Praise You,* the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod provides a similar outlet for music not included in *Christian Worship*.

In the introduction, the editors make it clear that they are taking a different approach than most supplemental books. As it states on the cover, *Let All the People Praise You* is less a hymnal supplement than it is a songbook, a collection of approximately 230 songs not found in *Christian Worship*. No new orders of worship or prayers were included. I think the inclusion of some more prayers would have been helpful, perhaps along the lines of daily prayers or prayers especially for children and for use in Christian day schools. Nevertheless, the committee is to be commended for their decision not to include any new orders of worship. In an age where the church already suffers too much from "Xerox liturgies," we do well to direct our people and pastors to consistent use of the hymnal in our worship. As Prof. Prange writes in the Introduction, "A hymnal unites a church body as a worshiping community and allows its many congregations and members to confirm their confessional unity by means of hymns and songs [and, and I might add, liturgies] they share and sing together. The hymnal is wisely the preeminent and primary resource in the worship life of every congregation."

The collection of songs is rather eclectic, as is to be expected in a book of this sort. There are many usable songs, even some gems to be found. "Alleluia to Jesus" is a hymn on Jacob's dream, and provides a solid, Lutheran exegesis of that story. It is a good example of the Lutheran use of hymnody as catechesis. "Beside Your Manger Here I Stand" is among the finest of Lutheran Christmas hymns, and should be part of the repertoire of our congregations. Also appreciated is the use of the tune *Es Ist Gewisslich* with the Bach setting. "Jesus, Take Us to the Mountain" and "Once on a Mountaintop" are two good hymns for Transfiguration, a festival that seems to be lacking in such. "This Is He" is a fine confession of the true humanity of Christ with a tune that many congregations will enjoy. "Our Father in Heaven" is a metrical paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, set to the tune *St. Denio.* "On This Day, Earth Shall Ring" and "Unto Us Is Born a Son" are both good English translations and settings of Latin hymns ("Personent Hodie" and "Puer Nobis Nascitur" respectively), and are hymns that especially children will enjoy singing. "Lovely Child, Holy Child" is another hymn suitable for children and would be a welcome addition to a children's Christmas program. Welcome also are some hymns formerly found in the old *Children's Hymnal* published by Concordia, such as "Let Me Learn of Jesus," "There Is a Green Hill," and "The Snow Lay on the Ground."

"Before the Marvel of this Night," "For Since Christ's Feet," "Christ, Mighty Savior," and "These Things Did Thomas Count" are all good hymns, but are all likely better suited for choral than for congregational use. "Daughter of Zion," with altered lyrics provided by Mark Jeske, is suitable for either congregational or choral use on Palm Sunday or the first Sunday of Advent. "Holy, Holy, Holy" is a translation of a Spanish setting of the *Sanctus,* very suitable for choral use, especially by children. "The Coloring Song," while probably not suitable for congregational use, could easily be used in our Sunday Schools and Christian day schools and enjoyed by children in that setting. "Still, Still, Still" and "This Is My Father's World" are pretty songs, but rather weak theologically, thus probably better suited for use outside any worship setting. Also in this category would be "Borning Cry," a song that seems to be making its way into the repertoire of many Lutheran congregations, though it has no clear statement of the gospel.

The editors also included a number of shorter pieces, a number of which could work as choral responses in a divine service. Many of the psalm paraphrases, such as "As the Deer," "Listen to My Prayer, O Lord," "Oh, Magnify the Lord," and "Psalm 91" could be used as graduals. Settings of Scripture verses, such as "Behold, What Manner of Love," "The First Song of Isaiah," "Go into the World," "Let the Peace of Christ Rule in Your Heart," and "The Spirit of the Lord" could all be used as choral verses or sequences, or as tracts during Lent.

Much of the material I would find difficult to use, however. Again, the introduction to the book makes it clear that *Let All the People Praise You* was meant to be not so much a hymnal supplement as a songbook, a collection of music intended not so much for the sanctuary as for the home, the classroom and more informal gatherings such as youth gatherings, rallies, VBS. There is a history of such songbooks in the Lutheran church; many homes in the early Missouri synod had Walther's *Kirchengesangbuch* and the *Leiderperlein* side-by-side. Yet it was clearly recognized that the music in the *Leiderperlein* was not church music. It was made clear by their pastors and by the fact that the *Leiderperlein* contained songs that were clearly secular. In recent years, however, I'm not so sure this distinction has been maintained. The current trend among supplemental songbooks, such as *With One Voice, Hymnal Supplement '98,* and *Let All the People Praise You* blurs the distinction between church music and "Bible songs" to the point where it is no longer seen by our people or even by church musicians and pastors. While *Let All the People Praise You* may call itself a songbook, most will see it and use it as a hymnal.

The editors also point out that some of the music was collected with culturally-specific missions in mind, no doubt referring to the spirituals and songs such as "Blessed Assurance," "The Old Rugged Cross," and "Just a Closer Walk with Thee." While it is true that we should be culturally sensitive, especially in a mission setting, we should also be aware of the messages we are sending both in the music we use and in the music itself. In an age of ecumenism, it is important to establish a Lutheran identity among our people.

Certainly some of the music collected would be appropriate for informal settings, such as "Majesty" and "Great is the Lord," as well as popular Christian songs such as "They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love," "Seek Ye First," and "El Shaddai" (though I find it interesting that very often those who want to sing "El Shaddai" are the same who believe we should remove the parts of the liturgy that are in Latin or Greek because nobody can understand them). But I have to wonder if the message sent by using songs in our services and in devotional settings is that we are no different from any Evangelical church, rather than one of openness to other musical forms. It should also be recognized that the songs themselves are often doctrinally weak, even after attempts to shore them up. Many have no gospel. "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power" never declares exactly what the blood does for us. It may be true that "People Need the Lord," but this song never tells us why. "Standing on the Promises" never tells us what promise we are standing on. Worse yet, there are songs that actually find themselves at odds with our Lutheran confessions. Both "Somebody Knockin' at Your Door" and "Softly and Tenderly" strongly imply decision theology. "Let Us Break Bread Together" and "This Touch of Love" teach a Reformed perspective of the Lord's Supper. There is no reason why a Lutheran congregation should use them in any context. "Pass It On" teaches the Christian to look to his feelings rather than the means of grace for evidence of God's love. Stanza 2 of "Praise the Spirit of Creation" teaches that God's will is revealed to us "*by a still, small voice*," apparent to those who will listen. Stanza 4 of "What Does the Lord Require" teaches that we fulfill the law of God as Jesus gives us the strength of will to do so. The statement in the introduction that "not all songs will match the doctrinal precision of the Lutheran Confessions" should not be an excuse to lower the doctrinal bar for these songs, just because we know some people want to sing them. Aside from the fact that as Lutherans we have always understood the truth of *lex orandi, lex credendi,* we don't tolerate false or lukewarm doctrine proclaimed from our pulpits or synodical publications. Nor should we allow it to be sung in the pews, where, if the truth be told, it probably does more damage.

Prof. Prange wrote in his introduction, "[Luther] wanted Christians to sing of Christ and his love, [and] he wanted them to sing songs in which they confessed their faith in the teachings of the Bible." If a congregation or school purchases *Let All the People Praise You,* I hope the gems such as "Beside Your Manger Here I Stand," the Spanish Sanctus, and "Alleluia to Jesus" are used often, for they do just that: proclaim Christ to his people and provide worthy confession to our Christian faith. As far as the multitude of "praise songs" and spirituals, I'm sure there was pressure to include them; but I wish the editors had made the choice to leave them out, since they do little to promote the gospel, and indeed often detract from it. If they are used, I hope they are used sparingly and with caution. For as it does in our preaching and teaching, the gospel needs to predominate also in our singing.

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*Natural Church Development.* By Christian A. Schwarz. Mount Gravatt East: Direction Ministry Resources, 1996. 128 pages.

While critical of much Church Growth thinking, in this book Christian Schwarz presents his own definite plan for quantitative church growth. *Natural Church Development* is based on surveys of an initial 1,000 churches of every variety, found worldwide. It says that if a church is to grow, it must have eight quality characteristics in sufficient amounts ("a quality index of 65 in all eight areas," 40), and must operate according to six organizational principles. (Schwarz calls them "biotic principles.")

In the interests of brevity, this review will focus on the eight quality characteristics. They are headed as follows: (1) Empowering leadership, (2) gift-oriented ministry, (3) passionate spirituality, (4) functional structures, (5) inspiring worship services, (6) holistic small groups, (7) need-oriented evangelism, and (8) loving relationships.

"A quality index of 65 in all eight areas" delivered from "the abstraction of statistical language" is described as follows:

> this is a church in which the leadership is committed heart and soul to church growth; in which nearly every Christian is using his or her gifts to edify the church; in which most members are living out the faith with power and contagious enthusiasm; in which church structures are evaluated on whether they serve the growth of the church or not; in which worship services are a high point of the week for the majority of the congregation; in which the loving and healing power of Christian fellowship can be experienced in small groups; in which nearly all Christians, according to their gifts, help to fulfill the Great Commission; in which the love of Christ permeates almost all church activities. Is it even conceivable that such a church could stagnate or decline? (40)

Expressed in these general terms, such a church seems highly desirable. It is the specifics that become objectionable, while the means of obtaining them are either not mentioned or are wanting in the extreme.

The essential characteristic of the people of God is "faith expressing itself through love" (Gal 5:6). In the Revelation given to St. John, the Lord addresses the seven churches, which represent the whole, with these words: "You have forsaken your first love" (2:4); "Be faithful, even to the point of death" (2:10); "You did not renounce your faith in me"—nevertheless, there are some who hold to false teaching resulting in idolatry, possibly also literal sexual immorality (2:13–15; 20f); "You have a reputation of being

alive, but you are dead" (3:1); "You have kept my word and have not denied my name" (3:8); "You are lukewarm" (3:15–17). The five churches with failings are called to repent. The two that are commended are told to be faithful and to hold on to what they have. The Lord, having conducted his "church profile," does not talk about gifts, functional structures, *inspiring* worship, or *need-oriented* evangelism. He mentions faith and love.

The source of faith and love is the gospel of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, delivered through God's Spirit-filled word and sacraments. (See, for example, Jn 6:53–63; 20:22–23; Ac 19:1–3; 1 Cor 10:1–4; 1 Pt 1:23). As our Confessions say:

> In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel (AC v [Latin]; Tappert, 31).

> We should not and cannot pass judgment on the Holy Spirit's presence, operations, and gifts merely on the basis of our feeling, how and when we perceive it in our hearts. On the contrary, because the Holy Spirit's activity often is hidden, and happens under cover of great weakness, we should be certain, because of and on the basis of his promise, that the Word which is heard and preached is an office and work of the Holy Spirit, whereby he assuredly is potent and active in our hearts (2 Cor. 2:14) . . . .
>
> For Christ, in whom we are elected, offers his grace to all men in the Word and the holy sacraments, earnestly wills that we hear it, and has promised that, where two or three are gathered together in his name and occupy themselves with his holy Word, he is in the midst of them (FC SD 11, 56–57; Tappert, 532).

*Natural Church Development,* however, is unclear about how God's Spirit comes to people. It rightly says that even before setting any qualitative goals or applying biotic principles, believers must be gripped by a new devotion to Jesus. But how to bring this about? "What can be done if a church lacks spiritual momentum?" Its answer is no answer: "There are as many answers to this question as there are Christians on the globe. For some, contact with a 'model church' sparked a fire, others were inspired through a large Christian gathering or at a quiet retreat." Nevertheless, such events "will never set church growth in motion." They merely "get people to start asking the question, 'How can the things I experienced here become part of the everyday life of our congregation?'" (107).

The failure to link the Spirit of God with his saving word and sacraments means that Christian Schwarz has a deficient understanding of worship and a dislike of doctrine. Although St Paul says that "sound doctrine . . . conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim 1:10) and "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1), *Natural Church Development* links right doctrine with "legalism" and places a wedge between doctrine and "a genuine *relationship* with Jesus Christ" (26–27).

Likewise, the desire for all churches to use the same liturgy is disparaged as "technocratic" and is likened to monocultural farming (74). "Liturgy" is used here in the sense of "order of liturgy," which is not to be equated with divine liturgy in its broad sense, namely, God's service to us through word and sacraments. Yet even the order of service, when it is essentially words of Scripture, is important. The words that are used express the church's teaching. They are good soil in which the seed sown by God grows and produces fruit.

Schwarz's definition of "inspiring" worship is extremely shallow: "People attending truly 'inspired' services typically indicate that 'going to church is fun'" (31). Divine service is infinitely more than *fun.* Harold Senkbeil puts matters in their proper perspective in the following passage of his book *Dying to Live*:

> [W]e cannot discuss the liturgy apart from the incarnation of the Son of God in human flesh. The Incarnation is the sobering reminder that all talk about "invitational, entertaining, uplifting worship" must begin somewhere else. As we discuss "marketing the church" to the peculiar tastes of Americans at the end of the twentieth century, we have to begin with this solemn first century assumption: *You were dead in your transgressions and sins* (Eph. 2:1). We need more than just a lift; we need a resuscitation! (121)

While not enough is made of worship in *Natural Church Development,* too much is made of "holistic small groups" and of "gift-oriented ministry." About groups it is said that "much of the essence of true church life is worked out in small groups" (33). The essence of true church life is the Father bringing people the riches of his Son by the power of his Spirit, in word and sacrament. Regarding gifts, it is said that "the discovery and use of spiritual gifts is the only way to live out the Reformation watchword of the 'priesthood of all believers'" (24). Yet as Bishop Jobst Schoene has shown, the work of the "royal priesthood" is to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pt 2:5), explained by Luther as offering thanks and praise in prayer and devotion. "This includes the mortification of the old Adam in us . . ."(Rom 6:2-4) (*The Christological Character of the Office of the Ministry and the Royal Priesthood*, 16). Although identification of gifts is listed as a quality characteristic of growing churches, it is noteworthy that, according to the graph on page 25, of those who said that their "personal ministry involvements" matched their gifts, 5 percent more were in "high quality" yet declining churches than were in growing churches!

It is not the application of principles learned from nature or from empirical research that produces church development. The following statement has no rightful place in the church: "When asked what must happen to attract more people to our worship services, I can only offer one *scientifically defendable* reply: 'We must work at reaching an index of 65 in all eight quality areas'" (41, emphasis added). Church development is not natural but supernatural. The church consists of natural people, but is the supernatural creation of God. Christ's holy Bride grows not as scientific principles are applied, but as "the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the gospel."

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*A Passion for God's Reign: Theology, Christian Learning, and the Christian Self.* By Jurgen Moltmann, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and Ellen T. Charry. Edited by Miroslav Volf. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

This volume consists of five essays. Three were written by Jurgen Moltmann and one each by Nicholas Wolterstorff and Ellen T. Charry. Wolterstorff's and Charry's essays were ostensibly written as responses to Moltmann's. Four of the five essays were originally presented at Fuller Theological Seminary in April 1996, as part of Fuller's Payton Lecture Series. That conference was subsidized by Eerdmans Publishing Company, which then published this book.

Jurgen Moltmann is Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tubingen. The thesis of his three essays is that earth stands at the brink of catastrophic events that threaten the very survival of the human race. In Moltmann's view, this is a situation calling for the "revaluation of values," including Christian doctrine, so that only those beliefs and practices are retained that promote human survival.

In the first essay, Moltmann lays the groundwork for his thesis by tracing the rise of the modern world with all of its problems from a "spirit of messianic hope" that swept Europe in 1492. He states:

> The interpretive framework that mobilized Europe's various seizures of power over the world and gave them their orientation was millenarian expectation: the expectation that when Christ comes, the saints will reign with him for a thousand years and will judge the nations, and that this empire of Christ's will be the last golden age of humanity in history before the end of the world (7).

In Moltmann's view, European Christians decided that God is like us, and we are like God, and therefore God has promised that we will rule with him in his millennial kingdom. Therefore we are also justified in entering into lordship with God over the earth now. Consequently, European Christians enslaved Africans and exploited Latin American mineral resources, all to profit their Western, or First, World. But then the messianic dreams of Western civilization were shattered by the First and Second World Wars. The machine-gun slaughters of the First World War and the gas chambers and guilt of the Second World War caused the Western world to lose its assurance of God.

In the post-war world, Western Christian civilization has produced nuclear arsenals and other ecological and political dangers that threaten the very survival of the human race. As a result Moltmann concludes, "If humankind is to survive, the human economy will have to be carried on with an eye toward the preservation of life" (20).

Moltmann's first essay concludes with a rousing call to reinvent everything. He writes:

> We can neither continue as before without bringing about universal catastrophes, nor withdraw from this larger project and allow the world to come to ruin without us. Our only option is a thorough reformation of the modern world. Hence, let us reinvent the modern world! (21)

One would expect the next essay to provide clear examples of the methodology and conclusions of reinvention and to show how they serve the cause of human survival. But that is not the case. Instead, the second essay consists largely of a discussion of how Saint Augustine founded our individualistic Western understanding of self and how the Western view of human beings as persons contrasts with the Eastern view of humans as part of nature. These speculations about self-identity may be the kind of revaluation that Moltmann is calling for, but the second essay fails to show how they assist the survival of the human race. In fact, little is said in the second essay about the impending annihilation of humanity and the need to revalue values.

Moltmann's third and final essay is entitled "Theology for Christ's Church and the Kingdom of God in Modern Society." In this essay, Moltmann returns emphatically to his primary thesis. He says, "Today, life itself is in mortal danger" (54) and, "Since Hiroshima in 1945, humankind as a whole has become mortal" (54). Citing nuclear weapons, nuclear contamination of the environment, and overpopulation as threats to the continuation of human life, he says that what we need is a "new ecological theology" (55).

In this essay Moltmann also says that we need a new understanding of Christian mission (*missio Dei*) in the world. No longer should Christians see their mission as being the evangelization of those who do not know Christ, but rather now the goal should be to invite all religions to join us in affirming and guarding life. Now all religions should be subjected to a new criterion: "Anything that hinders, destroys, or sacrifices life is bad, and must be overcome as the 'barbarism of death'" (62). Whatever fosters life, especially the survival of the human species, ought to be embraced. Such a criterion, of course, can hardly embrace the theology of the cross in which the death of Christ brings life to all who are joined to him in his death and resurrection through baptism.

Moltmann says that we should adopt beliefs from other religions and see this, not as syncretism, but rather as "the charismatic adoption of other religions and as an engagement of their life forms in the service of the kingdom of God" (63). The goal of theology should now be, not the extension of the Christian church, but rather the extension of the kingdom of God in the world. This kingdom of God, as Moltmann conceives of it, consists of all spirituality that contributes to survival.

Nicholas Wolterstorff and Ellen T. Charry wrote the fourth and fifth essays in response to Moltmann's essays. Wolterstorff, a professor of philosophical theology at Yale Divinity School, defends the proposition that Christian theology and learning still rightly belong in modern universities despite objections to them. Ellen T. Charry, the Margaret W. Harmon Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, deals with the subject of Christian self-identity. Her essay asserts that Christian self-identity is formed by the Trinity, the cross of Christ, and the body of Christ. This is a conservative position in view of Moltmann's accusations that Christianity is largely responsible for modern problems and in view of his call for the radical revaluation of all values.

Both Wolterstorff and Charry focus primarily on individual trees in the Moltmann forest rather than on the forest as a whole. Both have taken up the challenge to revalue particular concepts in

Christianity, and both have argued for the status quo concerning those particulars. But neither writer has dealt at length with the broader implications of Moltmann's call for the total reinvention of all Christian theology.

Now a few concluding thoughts. Moltmann's theology is a theology of fear. Its driving force is the fear that human life may soon be extinguished. But St. Paul wrote, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7, KJV). Fear is not the basis for Christian theology. Also, Moltmann's theology focuses on the death of the human race and of planet earth, while ignoring the One who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10, KJV). Moltmann's proposed solution to the problem of death abandons Christian doctrine and adopts non-Christian forms of spirituality. How much better to look to Christ, the giver of life!

Each day thousands of Christians confront the reality of death as they stand beside the graves of loved ones, and in those dark hours they find hope in the words of Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" (Jn 11:25, NIV). Christ is the answer to the problem of death, whether on the global or individual level of human experience.

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***The Porvoo Statement and Declaration in Confessional Lutheran Perspective.*** The Office of the President and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999.

***The Formula of Agreement in Confessional Lutheran Perspective.*** The Office of the President and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999.

***The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.*** The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999.

These three booklets, *The Porvoo Statement and Declaration in Confessional Lutheran Perspective* (PSDCLP), *The Formula of Agreement in Confessional Lutheran Perspective* (FACLP), and *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in Confessional Lutheran Perspective* (JDDJCLP) arrived in the mailboxes of the approximately six thousand congregations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in August of 1999. A preliminary question, which is not readily answered at a glance, is the content of these booklets. The covers of all three are the same color and feature prominently the somewhat recently resurrected seal of the LCMS on the lower left-hand corner. A cover letter from the Reverend Dr. A. L. Barry, president of the synod, describes two of the works, the FACLP and JDDJCLP, as "evaluation[s] of the ELCA/Reformed A Formula of Agreement [(FOC)] and the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification [(JDDJ)]," for "use in discussing these issues through the Synod," which the synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) was asked to prepare by the synod's triennial convention held in St. Louis in the summer of 1998. The FACLP and JDDJCLP are not exactly evaluations by the CTCR for the FOC and JDDJ respectively, however. Breaking somewhat with its tradition of independent theological endeavor, the CTCR has prepared so-called study guides of evaluations already written by the systematics departments of the synod's two seminaries in St. Louis, Missouri (Concordia Seminary) and Fort Wayne, Indiana (Concordia Theological Seminary). The third booklet, the PSDCLP, does not contain a study guide, but was also the work of the departments of systematic theology at the synod's seminaries. The two study guides were published jointly by the office of the president and the CTCR, whereas the other booklet was the sole production of the office of the president. Still one more distinction must be noted: the FACLP is the work of the systematics department of the seminary in Ft. Wayne, the JDDJCLP contains separate opinions of both systematics departments (previously published, apparently, in the journals of their respective seminaries), and the PSDCLP is the result of both systematics departments' working in concert.

From the outset, then, it is important to note the dissimilar origins of these three booklets, which were nonetheless published with identical covers sporting the same authoritative seal—for a second question that is raised before even beginning to read them is their ecclesiastical status. For while the CTCR of the LCMS is charged by its synod's Handbook (1998 edition) with "guidance . . . in matters of theology and church relations" [3.925.b, p.76], specifically, in this case, "in bringing matters of theology and church relations through special studies and documents to the membership of the Synod and to conferences" [3.025.b. 1, ibid.], it is clear that the evaluations contained within these booklets do not address the ecumenical documents under consideration from the perspective of the church body known as the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, but from what in all three instances is described as a *confessional Lutheran perspective.* This distinction is important, for it appears to have given the systematics departments of the seminaries a critical freedom of assessment, while at the same time having freed them from the nitty-gritty of dredging up ecumenical decisions of the synod's past, or of clearly explaining the official ecumenical position of the LCMS. Such a distinction between the official perspective of the LCMS and a confessional Lutheran perspective is also problematic, for anyone outside of the synod who reads these booklets will get the impression that, in fact, they are a product of, or at least an official response to, the ecumenical endeavors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Baltic and Nordic Lutheran churches of Europe by the LCMS, which they may not in fact be. Let me explain. Insofar as the CTCR was given the responsibility by the synodical convention to prepare these documents, they certainly have some sort of official synodical status. What that status is, however, remains a question. At a minimum, it can be said that the three booklets contain the evaluations of the ecumenical documents in question by the departments of systematic theology at the seminaries of the synod.

Another related question that should be noted is the phrase *confessional Lutheran perspective.* Although contained in the title of all three booklets, nowhere in any of these documents is a confessional Lutheran perspective toward ecumenical endeavors in general clearly explained. Yes, confessional Lutheran perspectives toward various aspects of the ecumenical documents in question are clearly enunciated, but an explanation of how such a perspective is gained is missing. For documents which are to be for the education of individual members of congregations of the LCMS, most of whom, one can safely assume, do not even know what the Lutheran Confessions are, this is clearly a glaring omission.

Initial questions aside, it is clear that all three booklets accomplish what they set out to do, namely, to demonstrate that the JDDJ, the FOC, and the Porvoo Statement and Declaration (PSD) are, from a confessional Lutheran perspective, theologically problematic. Chiefly, the FOC and PSD obfuscate to the point of unintelligibility the doctrine of the presence and reception of the human nature of Christ in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (a doctrine featured prominently in the latest promotional campaign of the seminary in Ft. Wayne), and the JDDJ allows the demotion of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ from its place of primacy within Lutheran theology to just another doctrine among many. For these clear and simple conclusions the systematic departments of both seminaries should be lauded.

Unfortunately, the argumentation used to buttress these conclusions may prove to be incomprehensible to the laymen for whom these documents were apparently written. Of chief concern is the practice of referring to documents, people, and events, with little or no clarification of their significance. For the laymen, this can only mean that many sections of the booklets will be a hopeless confusion. What is the Leuenberg Concord? The World Council of Churches? The Lutheran World Federation? What are the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches? What was the Faith and Order conference in Lund (1952)? Who is Herman Sasse? Avery Dulles? Although certainly true, will the standard laymen understand a statement such as, "It signals a reversion to the position of Samuel S. Schmucker and a rejection of the great confessional tradition of Charles Porterfield Krauth" (FACLP, 14)? In view of the numerous church bodies, organizations, theologies, agreements, and histories that have come to be a part of the contemporary ecumenical scene, a discussion of specific ecumenical endeavors can be a challenge for even the most seasoned theologian. For the laymen who can barely distinguish between the doctrines of the LCMS and ELCA, these booklets will provide almost no access to the greater ecumenical issues at hand.

While the ecumenical vocabulary of these works will be the chief hindrance to the laymen in understanding their content, the logical construction of the argumentation will prove the biggest challenge to the pastor or theologian—especially the pastor or theologian who is not in agreement with their content. The most obvious weakness here is the format of the two CTCR study guides. First a summary of the evaluations of the systematics departments of the synodical seminaries is given, then questions are posited concerning the summary, then the evaluations of the systematic departments appear, and finally, the documents themselves are printed. Logically, and for credibility's sake, the order should have been reversed. For anyone hostile to the theological position taken in the study guides, it is obvious: the reader is told what to think about the JDDJ and the FOA before even reading them! An unsympathetic reader could therefore reject the study guides merely on the basis of their format. A second and similar weakness, which is apparent in all three booklets, is that the subject matter is in effect, not the FOA, JDDJ, and PSD exclusively, nor even their theology, but the theological climate that produced these documents, and the point at which the theology of these documents departs from a confessional Lutheran perspective. This is certainly a legitimate approach to the documents at hand, but because of the brief nature of the booklets, the result of such an approach is a presentation whose lines are blurred frequently between (a) what is officially confessed by a given church body at the present time, (b) what that church body has taught in the past, (c) what independent voices within that church body have said, and (d) the situation in which such statements were made. The following paragraph from the PSDCLP is an example of such a confusion:

> On the *sacramental presence* the language seems at first glance less ambiguous. The words "truly present, distributed" echo the Augsburg Confession's *"vere adsint et distribuantur"* verbatim. But then the 28th of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles also speaks of the Bread being "a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ." Yet that Article adds: "The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith." The very next Article (29) is titled "Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper." This reference to the Thirty-Nine Articles is not meant to prove that Anglicanism is today committed to Calvinism, since it has been acknowledged above (pp. 3–4) that the Articles do not officially determine an Anglican confessional stance. It is meant rather to illustrate the point that language which seems to affirm the Real Presence of Christ's body may in fact not do so at all. This is not to deny that many Anglicans agreeing with the Porvoo Statement and other ecumenical documents do teach the Real Presence. But it should be realized that denials of the Lutheran doctrine also exist in the Church of England, etc. See, e.g., *Evangelical Eucharistic Thought in the Church of England,* by Christopher Cocksworth, in which the Lutheran teaching is called "spatial speculation" and "scholastic schematizing," pp. 202–203 (16).

Such a paragraph leaves the reader to wonder: If the Thirty-Nine Articles do not have confessional status for Anglicanism today, why bring them up in this context? (Certainly better examples of language that is meant to express the doctrine of the real presence, but does not, could be found in the Lutheran tradition as well!) What is the confessional authority for Anglicanism today? And what does it matter whether there are those for, or against, the doctrine of the real presence within Anglicanism today, when what individual members within a church body believe is not the point of discussion, but the document to which their church body has become a signatory? One can only imagine

the confusion outside of the Missouri Synod, for example, if independent theological publications of individual members of the synod were used as fodder in an evaluation of an ecumenical document recently approved by the synod's convention.

Still a third weakness of all three booklets is their general tenor. Granted, what theologian, pastor or laymen, raised in the confessional Lutheran tradition, would not be frustrated by ecumenical documents that in essence nullify foundational assumptions upon which such a tradition is based? But even the pastor of the smallest parish knows that, although he does not personally agree with the theology of the knitted cross he was given by members of the ladies aid, a cross upon which a dove has been superimposed, he had better praise their efforts in making it. A vapid dismissal of their efforts would not bode well for his future work in that parish. In these documents, a simple recognition of the countless hours, meetings, publications, and forums that preceded the ratification of the FOA, JDDJ, and JDDJ is rarely if ever given. The brevity of the booklets themselves signals a lack of appreciation of the (unfortunate) momentousness of their ratification. And sometimes the sentiments expressed can be unduly sardonic. I am thinking here of a comment like, "Did theologians invent 'postmodernism' before it became a secular fashion?" (FACLP, 25). To those who agree with the sentiments therewith expressed, such a comment is clever. To those who don't agree, such a comment is simply offensive.

And still one more observation must be made in this regard: In that a confessional Lutheran perspective is not necessarily the rule of the day in the LCMS itself, how can it be expected that protestant theologians far removed from the dogmatic tradition of Lutheran theology and unfamiliar with the writings of the likes of Martin Chemnitz, C. F. W. Walther, Francis Pieper, or even Robert Preus will even take many of the concerns expressed in these booklets under consideration, since they are not argued in a fashion that removes unnecessary, non-theological, roadblocks from their path? Like it or not, the theology of confessional Lutheranism, especially as it is understood within the LCMS, is simply unknown within many ecumenical circles. That being the case, the critique of the FOA, JDDJ, and PSD by the seminary faculties will most probably fall on deaf ears beyond the pale of the congregations and institutions of the LCMS.

But should the style of these booklets really be a concern? Should not the content be the key? Should not such evaluations of ecumenical documents just "tell it like it is and let the chips fall where they may?" Certainly the content of such evaluations should be the chief concern of the authors. But then again, every pastor and teacher knows that if he does not correctly gauge the people to whom he is preaching or teaching, his preaching and teaching will simply miss the mark. While these booklets were meant chiefly for discussions within the LCMS, they no doubt will find themselves being read and discussed in circles outside of the synod, circles that will not be receptive to their content or tenor. The effect of the booklets upon church relationships may be undesirable—but not necessarily because of their theological content. Let me explain. While a student in Germany, I was told—whether this is absolutely true I cannot say—that right after World War II, the Missouri Synod worked diligently to distribute copies of J. T. Mueller's dogmatics to students of theology in Germany. Now, this truly was a pious act, undoubtedly undertaken with the best of intentions, but unfortunately, it had two unexpected results. First of all, it offended Germans, who took the gesture by the country of their conquerors to mean that now they would be properly taught what it was to be Lutheran. A second, no less disastrous effect, was that J. T. Mueller's dogmatics became the representative of the theology of the LCMS in Germany. Now, J. T. Mueller's dogmatics is a nice little summary of Missouri Synod theology, but its brevity and logical leaps of faith did not bode well for its future in a country with such a distinguished theological tradition. (Strangely enough, the dogmatics of Francis Pieper are still respected in Germany by those who have read them—not necessarily accepted, but respected.) The net effect of this well-meant but somewhat misguided gesture was to sour an entire generation of theologians in Germany on the theology of the Missouri Synod. Significant repair of this reputation has not been done in the last fifty years, as witnessed by what the religion instructor of a German exchange student my family hosted just last year had to tell him about American Lutherans: they're all fine, except the Missouri Synod, which practices faith healing!

The three booklets here reviewed, although clearly stating the theological weaknesses of the ecumenical documents considered, suffer from structural and stylistic weaknesses that may hinder their reception. This is, no doubt, partially due to the speed at which they were produced, and the difficulty of coordinating the various institutions within the synod that were forced to work together in their production. Their timely appearance, however, as well as their sponsorship by a major Lutheran church body, is certainly welcomed.

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***Justification and Rome.*** By Robert Preus. St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 1997.

The ecumenical sensation of October 1999, the formal adoption of *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church,* is a source of satisfaction for many joined in mixed matrimony. It is a relief to those looking to share the Thanksgiving turkey with a somebody-in-law who was formed by another catechism. In almost everybody's family these days, religious differences result in discomfort. To offer relief, to bask in popular support, and to get frequent airplane tickets to ecumenical gatherings—an insight not lost on ambitious clergymen—one can simply decree that divisions do not exist.

It is quite clear that unity is desirable. "There is world-wide agreement," writes President Christian Krause of the Lutheran World Federation, in *VELKD Informationen 84*, "that in the future the historical churches must work together more, in order effectively to be able to meet the growing challenges among social, ethnic and religious tensions." True enough.

The trouble about the Joint Declaration, however, according to more than 150 prominent German theologians, is that *it is not*

*true.* There is no genuine agreement between Evangelical Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the doctrine of justification. That point was made with persuasive erudition by the theological faculty at Göttingen in *Outmoded Condemnations? Antitheses between the Council of Trent and the Reformation on Justification, the Sacrament and the Ministry—Then and Now,* which at that faculty's request I translated, published in *Lutheran Quarterly,* and sent (obviously in vain) to all ELCA bishops. My posthumous thanks here, once again, to Dr. Preus for the hardcover reprint by the Fort Wayne Luther Academy in 1992.

In *Justification and Rome,* his final message to the church, Robert Preus makes the same point. Differences between Lutherans and Catholics, he writes, have been "absolved or dissolved, rather than resolved" (23). When Lutheran "concerns" were addressed (113), the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord were completely ignored. Although in the preparation stages there was a great deal of talk about "convergence," "new modes of thinking," "new insights," and "breakthroughs in biblical and historical studies," the participants did not explain what it was exactly that had changed. They even failed (53) to agree on any ground rules about definitions and use of terms.

In short, no real agreement on justification exists. Nothing has changed. Lutherans continue to believe that concupiscence—the desire to sin—is itself punishable sin whereas Roman Catholics (41) do not. Lutherans continue to understand "faith" as trust whereas Roman Catholics think of it as a virtue, alongside other virtues. Lutherans continue to believe that grace is a saving, loving disposition of God whereas Roman Catholics understand it (51) as a kind of quantum to be infused in a physical manner. Strangely, in a document that presumes to speak for Lutherans, the central motif, that justification is God's forensic act, is not even mentioned. Differences that have been considered as antitheses for four centuries were simply placed side-by-side and pronounced legitimate insights.

This slim volume, Preus's last word to the church and an act of filial piety by editors Daniel and Rolf Preus, is worth studying even as an elegant introduction to post-Reformation theology. More important, *Justification and Rome* is the word of a clear-eyed prophet to those in an ecumenical haze in which intention is confused with proof, and equivocation, with unity.

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***An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*** By Johann Gerhard. Translated by Elmer M. Hohle. Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 1999. 329 Pages. Hardcover. $20.

So much for "dead" orthodoxy. *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ,* by Johann Gerhard, is possibly the best book on the passion of Christ and the best book on preaching I have read recently. The *pro nobis* ("for us") character on every page is a testament to the preacher of the gospel of the final purpose of all preaching, namely, the absolution of the sinner and communion with Christ.

The book is a commentary on the passion history, with the history itself being divided into five acts: the garden of the Mount of Olives, before the ecclesiastical council, the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate, the crucifixion, and finally, the burial of Christ. Each act has a series of sermons, with the fifth act (the burial) being the shortest at about fifteen pages.

Gerhard's approach is to see "the Passion of Christ with Old Testament eyes" (prefatory note). He weaves the Old Testament prophecies, people, and events into the passion narrative with the skill of a master theologian and homiletician. For Gerhard, there is a seamless connection between the Old Testament, the life and death of Christ, and the life of the New Testament church. Christ's cruciform life is a pattern for the life of the Christian. Gerhard's attention to detail is nothing short of amazing. Every event in the passion is connected to the Old Testament and to the life of the Christian. But he does not fall into the pietistic trap of reveling in the gore of the crucifixion. Christ's suffering is always because of our sin and on behalf of the sinner.

The connection for Gerhard between the life of Christ and the life of the Christian is sacramental. Thus the only ones who can rejoice in Christ's burial are those who are baptized into his death (313–315). But more significant than this is Gerhard's interpretation of the water and blood flowing from Christ's side upon his death (301–304). Gerhard connects the flesh of Christ to John 6 and the fountain of eternal life. Because of this, Christ allows his side to have pure water and blood flow from it. Gerhard then compares the Christian hiding in the wounds of Christ to Noah opening the door of the ark through which they were kept safe. Gerhard then cites 1 John 5 regarding the water and the blood:

> Accordingly, these three parts testify of the Spirit, the blood, and the water of Christ, the Son of God. However, these three parts testified about Christ not only at that time; rather, to this very day they still testify about him. For the Spirit testifies to Christ in the Word, which Word and pastoral office are called the office of the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3. The water in holy Baptism and the blood in the holy Supper also still today testify about Christ. For these two holy Sacraments are nothing other than witnesses that God, for the sake of Christ, accepts us in grace and washed us from sin. For that reason the beloved ancients [Church fathers] compare this account with the story in Genesis 2. When God the Lord wanted to adjoin a wife to Adam, He let a deep sleep fall upon him, took out of his side a rib, and crafted from it a wife and brought her to Adam, who acknowledged that this was flesh from his flesh and bone from his bones. So also Christ, the second and heavenly Adam, fell asleep in death on the cross; and His side was opened, from which blood and water ran out. Hereby are signified both Sacraments, through which, along with the preaching of the Word, a spiritual Bride is gathered for the Lord Christ, which is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, as St. Paul says in Eph. 5, directing us with these words to this type (302–303).

For today's preacher, this book serves two purposes. First, it teaches a way of preaching the passion that is thoroughly biblical,

sacramental, and evangelical. The passion is seen with new eyes. Second, it demonstrates that the preachers of Lutheran Orthodoxy (particularly Gerhard) were not the proponents of "dead orthodoxy," but of a living faith tied into the life of Christ in the Divine Service. If you wish to be refreshed and renewed in your preaching of the gospel from one of the giants of Lutheranism, buy this book. You will not be disappointed.

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# Briefly Noted

*A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.* By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

Keener has provided scholars and pastors with a comprehensive and generally conservative treatment of Matthew's gospel from the perspective of the social-historical context of Matthew's presumed audience, a Jewish Christian community in the eastern Mediterranean world. In his analysis of specific pericopes, Keener pays close attention to genre and rhetorical devices unique to Matthew. This commentary provides a wealth of background material that sheds light on Matthew's gospel as well as concise summaries of contemporary interpretations of this gospel.

*Preaching Christ From the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method.* By Sidney Greidanus. Grand Rapids: Win. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Many readers of *Logia* are familiar with Greidanus, a professor of homiletics at Calvin Seminary, from his previous book, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature.* Greidanus argues not only for "the necessity of preaching Christ" but "the necessity of preaching Christ from the Old Testament." In a very helpful historical survey, Greidanus tells the story of how Christ has been proclaimed from the Old Testament by representative schools and individuals in church history. Greidanus shows himself to be an apt teacher of both hermeneutics and homiletics. He presents seven models for Old Testament preaching and outlines ten steps for the preacher to follow in constructing a sermon from an Old Testament text.

*The Didache: A Commentary.* By Kurt Niederwimmer. Translated by Linda M. Maloney. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

Fortress Press has expanded its "Hermenia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible" series to include extra-canonical literature as well. Hence, this series now includes a commentary on the ancient Christian handbook the *Didache.* Niederwimmer identifies the *Didache* as "a generically mixed composition" of liturgy and church order. The *Didache: A Commentary* is an in-depth, source-critical study of an important text in early Christianity.

*Elements of Religion.* By Henry E. Jacobs. Decatur, Illinois: Repristination Press, 1997.

Originally published in 1894, this volume from the pen of Philadelphia theologian Henry E. Jacobs has been made available to a new generation of Lutherans by Repristination Press. Organized around the motif of redemption, Jacobs's book unfolds God's revelation with clarity and conviction, providing readers with a solid introduction to Lutheran theology.

*JTP*

# Logia Forum

## Short Studies and Commentary

## Begin the Beguines

*Feminism is not unique to the twentieth century. Steven Ozment gives us a glimpse of a laywomen's movement from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in* Age of Reform 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pages 91–93).*

Two important forms of communal ascetic piety emerged among the laity in the later Middle Ages, the Beguines and the Modern Devotion. Beguines were at first pious laywomen who wore a habit and practiced poverty and chastity, while living with their families, or alone, and working in the world. Their male counterparts, far fewer in number, were known as Beghards. Beguines and Beghards exemplify several of the spiritual movements of the later Middle Ages. They fall under monastic piety, since they formed their own cells and cloisters, most of which were eventually integrated into the established orders of Cistercians, Dominicans, and Franciscans. Beguines can also be studied under mysticism, since some of the more famous "bridal mystics" were Beguines (Hadewich and Mechthilde of Magdeburg, for example). They can be treated among the varieties of heterodox spirituality and heresy, since some beguinages, or houses for these lay sisterhoods, succumbed to the teachings of Waldensians and Cathars ("pure ones") and were condemned and persecuted by the church as "Free Spirit" heretics. The term *beguine* appears to have derived from "Albigensian," a description of Cathars congregated around the French town of Albi in south-central France, who became the object of a papal crusade.



In the late twelfth and early thirteenth century beguinages sprang up in the towns of the Netherlands, the Rhineland, and France. The "religious women's movement," as it is today called, reflected the population explosion of the high Middle Ages as well as its heightened religiosity. There were increased numbers of women seeking to employ their talents in rewarding ways. The movement also reveals the plight of unmarried women, who had few vocational options in medieval society, yet tremendous energy and time on their hands. Large numbers of unmarried, unoccupied, and spiritually idealistic women, predominantly from the higher and middle social strata—that is, widows, spinsters, and daughters of noblemen and merchants—found in beguinages an outlet for both their emotional and social needs. In addition to regular participation in a variety of religious activities, these women also worked as seamstresses, baby-sitters, and nurses to the sick and needy. As the example of the city of Cologne attests, unattached women from the lower social classes also found their way into city sponsored beguinages, over one hundred of which, consisting of ten to twelve members each, were established in Cologne between 1250 and 1350.

In the mid-thirteenth century the church began to suppress convents that had fallen under the influence of heresy. The established religious orders strictly supervised the beguinages and conformed them to accepted doctrines and practices. Many Beguines were directly integrated into established orders. Heterodox convents persisted, however, especially in southern France.

The appeal of heterodox convents to medieval women, especially of the lower and middle social strata, was both social and religious. On one level the attraction seems to have been simply an available religious vocation, a need the established orders were not equipped to meet on the large scale required when the Beguine movement exploded. The need for community with one's social peers was more important to most Beguines than the degree of a convent's theological orthodoxy. Heterodox convents, however, appear also to have emancipated medieval women from their accustomed inferior status to a degree unknown in the orthodox convents, or anywhere else in medieval society for that matter. The dualist heresy to which some beguinages succumbed taught that women were the spiritual equals of men and permitted them to share religious authority and responsibility. The dogmatic basis for this enhancement of woman's religious role was the belief that men and women differed essentially only

in terms of their physical bodies, which held no importance in the larger scheme of things. Before God and in heaven, men and women were divine souls and their sexual differences and attendant inequalities nonexistent.

Such beliefs worked to give women a greater role in the religious cult; Cathars permitted women to perform priestly rites. These beliefs also recast sexual ethics as the medieval church conceived them. Rejecting the body as totally evil, Cathars urged their adherents not to procreate the species and apparently denied their sacrament, the *consolamentum,* a laying on of hands, to pregnant women. Their practices of contraception and abortion influenced the church's strictures against both. On the other hand, if the records of church inquisitors can be believed, Cathars, convinced that what counted religiously was the attitude of one's mind and soul, also permitted ordinary devotees to do as they pleased with their bodies, short of procreative marriage. Some medieval women might have found the prospect of guiltless fornication, a rare notion in medieval religious history, at the very least intriguing. A parallel may be drawn here with the celebration of unmarried erotic love in the court literature of southern France in the twelfth century, the promotion of which was another way some medieval women rebelled against masculine domination of their lives.

## Feminist Theology

*Dean William Ferm offers a number of helpful and concise overviews in his* Contemporary American Theologies: A Critical Survey (*Seabury Press, 1981*)*, including a chapter on feminist theology, from which this excerpt was taken* (*pages 77-79*)*. A companion book,* Contemporary American Theologies II: A Book of Readings*, offers selections from the primary works and authors cited in his survey.*

Feminist theology is largely a phenomenon of the 1970s that emerged from the larger parallel drive for women's liberation in the social-economic arena. To be sure, this drive for women's liberation was not a brand new phenomenon that appeared only in the last decade. The women's movement has had a long history, especially in the United States. The feminists in the nineteenth century sought to support the role of women in many different areas of society and, like their Counterparts today, blamed the oppression of women on the oppressor man. In 1895 Elizabeth Cady Stanton edited *The Women's Bible,* her biblical commentary documenting the deep religious roots of the economic and social oppression of women. However, the major drive for women's rights came to a virtual standstill in the 1920s with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment which gave women the right to vote, and it was not until the 1960s that the feminist movement reasserted itself to any significant degree.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women to make recommendations for overcoming the "prejudices and outmoded customs [that] act as barriers to the full realization of women's basic rights." Its report, issued two years later, though traditionalist in assigning to women the major responsibility for childrearing and homemaking, was an important impetus for the growing women's movement. In 1966 the National Organization of Women (NOW) was founded with Betty Friedan as the first president. Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) was perhaps the most important catalyst for women's liberation in the early 1960s. The avowed purpose of NOW was "to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society *now,* expressing all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men." The intent of NOW was to call into question the traditional stereotypes of the role of women: that women must make a choice between marriage and work outside the home and that the husband should be the primary source of support.

What began as a trickle in the 1960s became a raging stream for the rights of women in the 1970s. This trend is particularly obvious with respect to the proper role of women in the churches and in the emergence of what is called feminist theology. For it was not until the 1970s that women in large numbers began to question male-dominated theological assumptions, including the beliefs that the subordination of woman has been ordained by God, that woman is evil by nature, and that God is male. Once again this was not the first time that these assumptions had been challenged. Some churches had already made significant progress in urging equal treatment for women and a few denominations had acknowledged the rights of women for more than a century. In 1950 the World Council of Churches, founded only two years earlier, established the Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Church to study the role of women in the member churches. In 1956 the Methodist and Presbyterian churches gave full clergy rights to women.

One of the first major articles published in the area of feminist theology was Valerie Saiving's "The Human Situation: A Feminine View" (1960). Saiving's contention is that the theologian's sexual identity has much to do with how he or she perceives the proper role of theology, and that historically theology has been based on a male perception which has not only ignored the uniqueness of women's experience, but also strengthened the usual stereotype of women as inferior to men. Saiving declares that her purpose is

> to awaken theologians to the fact that the situation of women, however similar it may appear on the surface of our contemporary world to the situation of man . . . is, at bottom, quite different—that the specifically feminine dilemma is, in fact, precisely the opposite of the masculine . . . . If it is true that our society is moving from a masculine to a feminine orientation, then theology ought to reconsider its estimate of the human condition and redefine its categories of sin and redemption. For a feminist society will have its own special potentialities for good and evil, to which a theology based solely on masculine experience may well be irrelevant.

These views were far ahead of the times, as most of the books written in the early and middle 1960s on women and religion were conservative and traditionalist in tone. A few examples will

suffice. In Elizabeth Achtemeier's book *The Feminist Crisis in Christian Faith* (1965) the author writes of the contributions made by women to the social programs of the church. She complains about the extremes of the "professional" feminists and asserts, "It is true that we American women still find our principal joys within the context of our homes. We would not trade our role as wives and mothers for any other or any thing." Her stereotyped conservative view of the role of women becomes even more apparent in this statement: "The Christian woman can be tastefully dressed and run a well-furnished house. If she is a good cook or a polished hostess or an accomplished conversationalist, she will delight all who know her."

That same year in an article entitled "Neither Male nor Female" Doris and Howard Hunter pled for a larger role in the church for the woman theological student and say of such a person that she need not be masculine in appearance and personality. "Religion and the Feminine Mystique" by Hannah Bonsey Suthers, also published in 1965, applies Betty Friedan's views to the role of women in the church and urges women to avoid the evangelical double standard and "embrace their biological function without frustration or rationalization." Elsie Thomas Culver's *Women in the World of Religion* (1967) summarizes the historical record of women in the field of religion, noting that the idea of a woman having anything important to say theologically was as inconceivable to the sixteenth-century reformers as it would be to contemporary churches. However, the establishment of the women's caucus at the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches in Detroit in 1969 indicates the spread of more progressive views of the role of women. This caucus declared:

> Women's oppression and women's liberation is a basic part of the struggle of blacks, browns, youth, and others. We *will* not be able to create a new church and a new society until and unless women are full participants. We intend to be full participants . . . "the next great movement in history" will be ours.

## Piety and Equity

*"Equality of the Sexes" is one idea that Richard M. Weaver says has serious consequences for our society, especially with an eye toward piety and justice, as we read in his book* Ideas Have Consequences (*Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948*), *pages 177-180.*

Awareness of the past is an antidote to both egotism and shallow optimism. It restrains optimism because it teaches us to be cautious about man's perfectibility and to put a sober estimate on schemes to renovate the species. What coursebook in vanity and ambition is to be compared with Plutarch's *Lives*? What more soundly rebukes the theory of automatic progress than the measured tread of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall?* The reader of history is chastened, and, as he closes his book, he may say, with Dante, in the *Inferno:* "I had not thought death had undone so many."

Among the Romans piety was considered a part of *aequitas,* which expressed the Platonic concept of justice, or the rendering to each his due. I have endeavored to show that something is due to nature, and to our fellow-men, and to those who have passed out of temporal existence. Modern civilization, having lost all sense of obligation, is brought up against the fact that it does not know what is due to anything; consequently its affirmations grow feebler. For this reason I wish to take up next certain forms of impiety which operate as disintegrating forces. I shall follow my order and deal first with an impiety toward nature.

I put forward here an instance which not only is typical of contempt for natural order but which also is of transcendent importance. This is the foolish and destructive notion of the "equality" of the sexes. What but a profound blacking-out of our conception of nature and purpose could have borne this fantasy? Here is a distinction of so basic a character that one might suppose the most frenetic modern would regard it as part of the *donnée* to be respected. What God hath made distinct, let not man confuse! But no, profound differences of this kind seem only a challenge to the busy renovators of nature. The rage for equality has so blinded the last hundred years that every effort has been made to obliterate the divergence in role, in conduct, and in dress. It has been assumed, clearly out of this same impiety, that because the mission of woman is biological in a broader way, it is less to be admired. Therefore the attempt has been to masculinize women. (Has anyone heard arguments that the male should strive to imitate the female in anything?) A social subversion of the most spectacular kind has resulted. Today, in addition to lost generations, we have a self-pitying, lost sex.

There is a social history to this. At the source of the disorder there lies, I must repeat, an impiety toward nature, but we have seen how, when a perverse decision has been made, material factors begin to exert a disproportionate effect. Woman has increasingly gone into the world as an economic "equal" and therefore competitor of man (once again equality destroys fraternity). But a superficial explanation through economic changes is to be avoided. The economic cause is a cause that has a cause. The ultimate reason lies in the world picture, for once woman has been degraded in that picture—and putting her on a level with the male is more truly a degradation than an elevation—she is more at the mercy of economic circumstances. If we say that woman is identical with man except in that small matter of division of labor in the procreation of the species, which the most rabid egalitarian is driven to accept, there is no reason why she should not do man's work (and by extension, there is no reason why she should not be bombed along with him). So hordes of women have gone into industry and business, where the vast majority of them labor without heart and without incentive. Conscious of their displacement, they see no ideal in the task. And, in fact, they are not treated as equals; they have been made the victims of a transparent deception. Taken from a natural sphere in which they are superior, they are set to wandering between two

worlds. Women can neither have the prestige of the former nor, for the fact of stubborn nature, find a real standing in the latter.

So we began to see them, these *homunculae* of modern industrial society, swarming at evening from factories and insurance offices, going home, like the typist in *The Waste Land,* to lay out their food in tins. At length, amid the marvelous confusion of values attendant upon the Second World War, came the lady marine and the female armaments worker. It is as if the centripetal power of society had ceased. What is needed at center now drifts toward the outer edge. A social seduction of the female sex has occurred on a vast scale. And the men responsible for this seduction have been the white-slavers of business who traffic in the low wages of these creatures, the executives, the specialists in "reduction of labor costs"—the very economists and calculators whose emergence Burke predicted for us.

The anomalous phase of the situation is that the women themselves have not been more concerned to retrieve the mistake. Woman would seem to be the natural ally in any campaign to reverse this trend; in fact, it is alarming to think that her powerfully anchored defenses have not better withstood the tide of demoralization. With her superior closeness to nature, her intuitive realism, her unfailing ability to detect the sophistry in mere intellectuality, how was she ever cozened into the mistake of going modern? Perhaps it was the decay of chivalry in men that proved too much. After the gentleman went, the lady had to go too. No longer protected, the woman now has her career, in which she makes a drab pilgrimage from two-room apartment to job to divorce court.

Women of the world's *ancien regime* were practitioners of *Realpolitik* in this respect: they knew where the power lies. (One wonders what Queen Elizabeth would have said had feminist agitators appeared during her reign over England's green and pleasant isle.) They knew it lies in loyalty to what they are and not in imitativeness, exhibitionism, and cheap bids for attention. Well was it said that he who leaves his proper sphere shows that he is ignorant both of that which he quits and that which he enters. Women have been misled by the philosophy of activism into forgetting that for them, as custodians of the values, it is better to "be" than to "do." Maternity, after all, as Walt Whitman noted, is "an emblematical attribute."

If our society were minded to move resolutely toward an ideal, its women would find little appeal, I am sure, in lives of machine-tending and money-handling. And this is so just because woman will regain her superiority when again she finds privacy in the home and becomes, as it were, a priestess radiating the power of proper sentiment. Her life at its best is a ceremony. When William Butler Yeats in "A Prayer for My Daughter" says, "Let her think opinions are accursed," he indicts the modern displaced female, the nervous, hysterical, frustrated, unhappy female, who has lost all queenliness and obtained nothing.

What has this act of impiety brought us except, in the mordant phrase of Henry James's *The Bostonians,* an era of "long-haired men and short-haired women"?

## Where Technology Meets Theology

In the Reformation 1997 issue of *Logia* (p. 56) the development of the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education (CCLE [*ccle1538@aol.com*]) is described—a worthy undertaking. But a pillar in its educational concept is missing: that of scientific and mathematical literacy. The concept of the CCLE would be enhanced if the "technical" pillar were broadened along these lines. The Neil Postman citation included indicates that the developers of the CCLE are well cognizant of the fact that ability to use technology does not require an understanding of how technology influences society. Yet the paragraph describing this pillar describes only the tools of technology and not its influence. While the printing press was a technological achievement that greatly facilitated the spread of the Reformation, printing technology was not the Reformation. Similarly, the development of the internet may well be a technological development comparable to that of the printing press, and may affect the church and society in substantial ways. Yet the internet is only a means of disseminating information; it is not knowledge itself. Learning to use the internet requires a training program not unlike driver's education. Learning to understand its impact, now and in the future, likewise requires education—in the classical sense.

Furthermore, nowhere else in the piece is scientific, mathematical, and technological literacy mentioned; the entire educational concept presented is described in terms of inculcating an appreciation of the classical liberal arts. Yet it can be readily demonstrated that many of the most difficult moral issues facing the church today have their origins in scientific advance and technological developments: artificial reproduction, end-of-life issues, drug abuse, human cloning, wide-spread availability of pornography—just name the issue. It has been plausibly argued that the development of oral contraceptives by the chemist Carl Djerassi had more to do with changes in sexual behavior over the past generation than with any philosophical arguments against orthodox Christian sexual ethics. People may be persuaded that sky diving is a lot of fun, but they will not jump unless they trust the technology of the parachute. But how many people know who Carl Djerassi is, how oral contraceptives work, the philosophy behind their development, and how legal and moral objections to their use were overcome so as to have made them widely available and accepted by the end of the twentieth century? Lutheran children will be ill equipped to make ethical decisions in a technological world if they do not understand technology beyond how to use it.

The CCLE intends to provide an education "that enlarges the mind, cultivates civic virtue, and develops the full human potential." But students who do not understand the natural world (God's creation) are certainly limited in mind and potential. Furthermore, we live in a society that is driven by technology, and technology is driven by math and science. Hence scientific illiteracy also leads directly to promulgation of poor public policy and poor citizenship. Scientific and mathematical illiteracy among the general population has been recognized as a serious

problem in the U.S., at least since the publication in 1983 of "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Improvement in the mathematical and scientific education of the general population has also received emphasis by the National Science Foundation, and the National Research Council has published in 1996 "National Science Education Standards," which describes an educational system that can produce scientifically literate students. The journal *Science* has begun a regular feature of essays on the subject of "Science and Society," and most scientific organizations have made outreach to the general population a priority. It would be valuable for the CCLE to determine how it might modify or implement these guidelines in accord with orthodox Lutheran theology. Since there is so much literature on the subject available elsewhere, I will not take up space with further examples or with descriptions of the proposed solutions. But I would like to go on to point out to readers of this journal that scientific illiteracy is a problem for the church as well as for society in general.

Theologically orthodox churches have identified New Age philosophy and post-modernism as among the most significant challenges to Christianity at the end of the twentieth century. Yet a sound training in mathematics and science is a key element necessary for individuals to comprehend the intellectual fallacies built into these philosophies, which are based in the denial of objective truth and rely heavily on the mystical, the illogical, the irreproducible, and the anecdotal—all of which are as much anti-science as they may be anti-Christian. After all, the modern scientific enterprise grew out of the Christian conception of the universe as a comprehensible place designed by a rational, creative God. Science is still based on the idea of nature as understandable, reproducible, and logical (even if the twentieth century metaphysic behind the scientific establishment has been to ignore evidence of intelligent design in nature). In fact, the scientific establishment views the rise of these philosophies with a degree of alarm matching that of theologically orthodox Christians (hence its calls for improved science education). But intellectually rigorous patterns of thinking promoted in math and science courses are quite compatible with the systematic nature of Lutheran theology, as long as the boundaries on what types of knowledge are accessible to human reason and what types require special revelation are respected. (An example of the need for education along these lines can be found in the same issue of *Logia*, p. 50, where the author fails to make the proper distinction between good experimental science and questionable scientific speculation, in that no distinction is made between direct measurement of water entering the earth's atmosphere from outer space daily [even if the data leading to this conclusion can be contested, as it has been by many atmospheric scientists] and the questionable extrapolation of today's rate back over a billions of years in an attempt to explain the presence of water on earth [a hypothesis that is not empirically testable]). Teaching students how to discern such boundaries properly would be a highly desirable feature of a distinctively Lutheran education. But such an intellectual enterprise requires teachers trained in both science and theology. The question is whether such teachers exist to staff the schools of the CCLE, and who will train them. But it inevitably does require discussions between theologians and scientists.

Theology had been known as the "queen of the sciences." Since theology in the broadest sense provides the framework for interpreting all of human experience, this metaphor makes logical sense. But this also implies that theology must incorporate into its purview a proper understanding of the subservient sciences, including the natural sciences. If this is not the case, then theologians will be unable to assume their rightful leadership in the comprehension of human knowledge. If they lack knowledge of mathematics and science, then they must accept on faith the statements of others about the significance and interpretation of new developments in these fields. They will also have difficulty integrating such developments into their broader theological framework.

This seems to have played itself out in the fact that theological conservatives generally have aligned with political conservatives, and theological liberals have generally aligned with political liberals on controversies involving relationships between science and society. Yet there is no logical reason why the theological orthodox necessarily should align with political conservatives rather than political liberals on such matters as health care, environmental protection, alternative energy sources, and so forth. As David Scaer points out elsewhere in the aforementioned issue of *Logia* (p. 28), the fact that neo-evangelicals have a common view of the biblical inspiration with the LCMS does not mean that members of the LCMS can accept all of the conclusions of neo-evangelicals regarding sanctification—and the theology of sanctification significantly affects views regarding the Christian's role in society. It is similarly true that agreement with secular groups on social issues does not necessarily translate to agreement with these groups on issues regarding science, technology, and society.

The church ought to attempt to reclaim for theology the title "queen of the sciences" by gaining an independent understanding of such issues, just as it has been able to do with other social issues. If the teachers of the church are not up to date on science and technology, they are inevitably thrown into a reactive mode. They will find it increasingly difficult to lead the church in the face of an ever-changing technology that causes an ever-changing society.

Let me conclude with a positive example from my own experiences in scientific research in the area of tissue engineering. Tissue engineering is one of the hottest areas of medical research today; it involves reconstructing damaged or diseased body parts by regrowing a replacement tissue by incorporating living cells in a supporting matrix. The use of fetal tissue is the logical route to take for a variety of scientific reasons, such as ready availability of healthy tissue, undeveloped immune systems in such tissues (hence less likelihood of being rejected upon implantation), and the natural tendency of fetal tissue to grow. But theological objections to the use of aborted fetal tissues were well known and well argued on the basis of Scripture at the time such tissue engineering was conceived. As a result, development of replacement tissues and organs using tissues from adults is being actively pursued, even though use of fetal tissue is potentially the easier route (and a route unobjectionable to those who hold to utili-

tarian ethics). Imagine, however, that such theological objections to the use of fetal tissue were not raised until after fetal tissue-derived organs were proven as successful, lifesaving treatments for adults.

It is highly unlikely that the technology would therefore be abandoned, even by believers. But since theological objections to the use of fetal tissue have been well known and were theologically well developed from the outset, it has been possible to drive the development of a medical technology in a direction different from what it might have done otherwise, though fetal tissue research is still underway. One hopes that more such ethical success stories could derive from closer relationships between scientists and theologians.

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## The New Book of Concord

On November 13, 1999, the Fortress Press New Books Spring 2000 catalog arrived with its list of delicacies—a little pre-seasonal, but nevertheless welcome. Some offerings were predictable and ho-hum. *Taboo or Not Taboo* is subtitled "Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible." Price $22. *Excavating Q* is subtitled "The History and Setting of the Sayings of the Gospel." Priced at $32, James M. Robinson calls it a must for those interested in literary reconstruction. Just how will we know when we have found the authentic and original Q? Not for a long time, I hope. That would spell the end of seminars and books. Of course, conservatives have their elusive *autographa* to search for. Just how will we know that we have come upon real thing? *In Her Own Time* is the only purely recognizable feminist-type offering. A collection of essays, it is subtitled "Religion and Women's Life Cycles." A brief italicized phrase describes its contents as *"possibilities and hurdles in the life span of women."* One of its conclusions is that "women's developmental stages cannot automatically be assumed to match those of men." Speak of revolutionary ideas! Price $21. *New Faith* describes itself as "A Black Christian Woman's Guide to Reformation, Re-Creation, Rediscovery, Renaissance, Resurrection and Revival." Feministic and Afro-American theologies are brought together. Apart from its limited intended audience, how can any book with 112 pages cover such vast topics? Leaving out "re-creation," these words in another context covered a period of about five hundred years. Price $13.00. Five other books either guiding women clergy in giving pastoral care or in giving such care to women are located in icon-sized spaces at the bottom of the pages. The good news is such topics account for a diminishing percentage of Fortress's offerings. This is also true of the seminars at the 1999 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and American Academy of Religion. Just how much can one say on such topics and remain original? Is it too much to say that if you have read one, you have read the others?

The good news is that the Fortress catalog announces that a new edition of the Book of Concord, edited by LCMS professor Robert Kolb of Saint Louis and ELCA professor Timothy J. Wengert of Philadelphia, will be available in May 2000. Hardcovered with 768 pages, it will list at $45. The old synodical conference *Triglotta,* now published by Northwestern (WELS), provides a single English translation for both the Latin and German versions of the Lutheran Confessions that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to appreciate either one. It cannot really be used for serious study, though it has served nobly in our circles for years. The currently used Tappert Edition is sometimes just wrong, and the editorial notes in the footnotes take on a confessional authority by themselves. This would not be a bad thing, if only they were right in each instance. So we look with anticipation to May in order to do our own sleuthing through the new edition.

A new edition of The Book of Concord could result in the kind of confessional awakening that happened in the Tennessee Synod in the mid-1800s when the Henkel brothers published the first English translation of the Lutheran Confessions, an astounding feat on the American frontier. Shortly before, Samuel S. Schmucker had prepared *An American Recession of the Augsburg Confession,* which got rid of such annoying elements as baptismal regeneration. Confessional Lutheranism seemed a lost cause among her American children. The other confessions did not count much for Schmucker and could be ignored. They did count for the Henkels. Fortress notes that the May 2000 edition will take into consideration a wealth of scholarly developments, and on that account we can only await its publication with enthusiastic anticipation.

Now for the irony of it all. Even this new edition of the Book of Concord contains documents that condemn the alliances and agreements that the owners have made with the Reformed and the Vatican. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which owns Fortress Press, is now in full formal pulpit and altar fellowship with Reformed and Episcopal denominations and has participated in a declaration with the Church of Rome to live and let live in regard to the doctrine of justification. These alliances let ELCA Lutherans continue to be Lutherans; they just may not complain about what these churches teach. But this is what the Lutheran Confessions are all about. Traditionally, Lutheran Reformation services have had a slightly anti-Roman Catholic tinge. With an armistice called on justification—that's what the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is—just how is this done now?

Then there is the other side of spectrum. Luther was not too far into the Reformation (about 1525) when he realized that his real problem was not the pope but the Reformed. Rome at least had sacraments that worked. Zwingli had sacramental rites that he said didn't work, though his Lutheran opponents were convinced that his baptism did something supernal, even though he denied it. The Reformed with whom the Lutherans signed the *Formula of Agreement* have not come much further. The *Agreement* with the Reformed is much worse that the *Declaration* with Rome. The *Declaration* is a live-and-let-live with Rome. Terms of the *Agreement* let and encourage Lutherans to do with the Reformed what before they could only do with other Lutherans.

What Lutherans believe can be found in the Book of Concord. What Lutherans do not believe can also be found there, but these

are the very things that the ELCA says it is permissible for Christians in other churches to believe. The subtitle for the May 2000 Fortress edition of the Book of Concord is *The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* But this book is listed as the one option in the catalog's category of church history (p. 3). That might just be where the Lutheran Confessions now belong for a lot of Lutherans. Perhaps this can be explained by the absence in the catalog of a category of "theology," under which an edition of the Lutheran Confessions could be listed. Page 1, however, offers the category of "black theology" with a book entitled *Down, Up, and Over* (a title that could be used to describe ELCA happenings at their 1997 and 1999 conventions). Somehow one gets the impression that confessional Lutheranism no longer qualifies as theology in the same sense that such up-to-date theologies as liberation, feministic, and black theologies do.

We extend our congratulations and thanks to Fortress and the editors and translators of the new edition and wish them success in its sales in its parent church. This might be another case where the sower went out to sow some seed and some fell on the good ground. Annual sales at the LCMS seminaries should account for 200–300 copies. A ray of hope will be seen if the ELCA seminaries can work for 100-percent coverage.

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## Bull of Indiction

*Some, like Rev. Michael Ernst of Hales Corners Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, have publicly aired their displeasure at the fact that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod did not sign the* Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification *along with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Roman Catholic Church. They say that Dr. Barry's objection to the document is merely personal and that the joint declaration actually portrays a praiseworthy concord between churches formerly divided by the Reformation. One of the camels they quaff in doing so, however, is the* Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 *or* Incarnationis Mysterium *proclaimed by Pope John Paul II. How could anyone imagine that a church that still commends works of indulgence possibly understands justification in a way worthy of a joint declaration with the Lutheran confession? What follows is from the final pages 31-35 of the document (Publication No. 5-313), which can be ordered by calling 1-800-235-8722.*

*Conditions for Gaining the Jubilee Indulgence.* By the present decree, which implements the will of the Holy Father expressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, and by virtue of faculties granted by the same Supreme Pontiff, the Apostolic Penitentiary defines the discipline to be observed for gaining the jubilee indulgence.

All the faithful, properly prepared, can fully enjoy, throughout the Jubilee, the gift of the indulgence, in accordance with the following norms.

While indulgences granted either generally or by special rescript remain in force during the Great Jubilee, it should be noted that the jubilee indulgence also can be applied in suffrage to the souls of the deceased: such an offering constitutes an outstanding act of supernatural charity, in virtue of the bond which, in the Mystical Body of Christ, unites the faithful still on pilgrimage here below and those who have already ended their earthly journey. Then too, the rule that a plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day remains in force during the entire jubilee year.

The high point of the jubilee is the encounter with God the Father, through Christ the Saviour present in his Church and in a special way in the Sacraments. For this reason, the whole jubilee journey, prepared for by pilgrimage, has as its starting point and its conclusion the celebration of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Eucharist, the paschal mystery of Christ, our peace and our reconciliation: this is the transforming encounter which opens us to the gift of the indulgence for ourselves and for others.

After worthily celebrating sacramental confession, which ordinarily, according to the norm of Canon 960 of the Code of Canon Law and of Canon 720 § 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, must be individual and complete, each member of the faithful, having fulfilled the required conditions, can receive or apply the gift of the plenary indulgence during a suitable period of time, even daily, without needing to go to confession again. It is fitting however that the faithful should frequently receive the grace of the Sacrament of Penance, in order to grow in conversion and in purity of heart. Participation in the Eucharist, which is required for all indulgences, should properly take place on the same day as the prescribed works are performed.

These two culminating moments must be accompanied, first of all, by the witness of communion with the Church, manifested by prayer for the intentions of the Roman Pontiff, and also by acts of charity and penance, following the indications given below: these acts are meant to express the true conversion of heart to which communion with Christ in the Sacraments leads. Christ is truly our forgiveness and the expiation of our sins (cf. 1 Jn 2:2). By pouring into the hearts of the faithful the Holy Spirit who is the "remission of all sins," he guides each individual towards a filial and trusting encounter with the Father of mercies. From this encounter springs a commitment to conversion and renewal, to ecclesial communion and to charity towards our brothers and sisters.

Likewise confirmed for the coming jubilee is the norm whereby confessors can commute, on behalf of those legitimately impeded, both the work prescribed and the conditions required. Cloistered men and women religious, the infirm (and all those who for whatever reason are not able to leave their own house) can carry out, in lieu of a visit to a certain Church, a visit to the chapel of their house; should even this be impossible for them, they can gain the indulgence by spiritually uniting themselves with those carrying out the prescribed work in the ordinary manner and by offering to God their prayers, sufferings and discomforts. With regard to the required conditions, the faithful can gain the jubilee indulgence:

1. *In Rome,* if they make a pious pilgrimage to one of the Patriarchal Basilicas, namely, the Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican, the Archbasilica of the Most Holy Saviour at the Lateran, the Basilica of Saint Mary Major and the Basilica of

Saint Paul on the Ostian Way, and there take part devoutly in Holy Mass or another liturgical celebration such as Lauds or Vespers, or some pious exercise (e.g., the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, the recitation of the *Akathistos* Hymn in honour of the Mother of God); furthermore, if they visit, as a group or individually, one of the four Patriarchal Basilicas and there spend some time in Eucharistic adoration and pious mediations, ending with the "Our Father," the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. To the four Patriarchal Basilicas are added, on this special occasion of the Great Jubilee, the following further places, under the same conditions: the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, the Basilica of Saint Lawrence in Campo Verano, the Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love, and the Christian Catacombs.

2. *In the Holy Land,* if, keeping the same conditions, they visit the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, or the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem or the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

3. *In other ecclesiastical territories,* if they make a sacred pilgrimage to the Cathedral Church or to other Churches or places designated by the Ordinary, and there assist devoutly at a liturgical celebration or other pious exercise, such as those mentioned above for the City of Rome; in addition, if they visit, in a group or individually, the Cathedral Church or a Shrine designated by the Ordinary, and there spend some time in pious meditation, ending with the "Our Father," the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4. *In any place,* if they visit for a suitable time their brothers and sisters in need or in difficulty (the sick, the imprisoned, the elderly living alone, the handicapped, etc.), as if making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. *Mt 25:34-36*), and fulfilling the usual spiritual and sacramental conditions and saying the usual prayers. The faithful will certainly wish to repeat these visits throughout the Holy Year, since on each occasion they can gain the plenary indulgence, although obviously not more than once a day.

The plenary indulgence of the jubilee can also be gained through actions which express in a practical and generous way the penitential spirit which is, as it were, the heart of the Jubilee. This would include abstaining for at least one whole day from unnecessary consumption (e.g., from smoking or alcohol, or fasting or practising abstinence according to the general rules of the Church and the norms laid down by the Bishops' Conferences) and donating a proportionate sum of money to the poor; supporting by a significant contribution works of a religious or social nature (especially for the benefit of abandoned children, young people in trouble, the elderly in need, foreigners in various countries seeking better living conditions); devoting a suitable portion of personal free time to activities benefitting the community, or other similar forms of personal sacrifice.

Given in Rome, at the Apostolic Penitentiary,
on *29* November *1998,* the First Sunday of Advent.
William Wakefield Card. Baum, *Major Penitentiary*,
Luigi De Magistris, *Regent.*

## Priestesses in the Church?

*Is sex irrelevant with regard to the office of the holy ministry? C. S. Lewis says no in his article "Priestesses in the Church," reprinted in* God in the Dock (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970*), *pages 234-239.*

"I should like Balls infinitely better," said Caroline Bingley, "if they were carried on in a different manner . . . it would surely be much more rational if conversation instead of dancing made the order of the day."

"Much more rational, I dare say," replied her brother, "but it would not be near so much like a Ball." We are told that the lady was silenced: yet it could be maintained that Jane Austen has not allowed Bingley to put forward the full strength of his position. He ought to have replied with a *distinguo.* In one sense conversation is more rational for conversation may exercise the reason alone, dancing does not. But there is nothing irrational in exercising other powers than our reason. On certain occasions and for certain purposes the real irrationality is with those who will not do so. The man who would try to break a horse or write a poem or beget a child by pure syllogizing would be an irrational man; though at the same time syllogizing is in itself a more rational activity than the activities demanded by these achievements. It is rational not to reason, or not to limit oneself to reason, in the wrong place; and the more rational a man is the better he knows this.

These remarks are not intended as a contribution to the criticism of *Pride and Prejudice.* They came into my head when I heard that the Church of England was being advised to declare women capable of Priests' Orders. I am, indeed, informed that such a proposal is very unlikely to be seriously considered by the authorities. To take such a revolutionary step at the present moment, to cut ourselves off from the Christian past and to widen the divisions between ourselves and other Churches by establishing an order of priestesses in our midst, would be an almost wanton degree of imprudence. And the Church of England herself would be torn in shreds by the operation. My concern with the proposal is of a more theoretical kind. The question involves something even deeper than a revolution in order.

I have every respect for those who wish women to be priestesses. I think they are sincere and pious and sensible people. Indeed, in a way they are too sensible. That is where my dissent from them resembles Bingley's dissent from his sister. I am tempted to say that the proposed arrangement would make us much more rational "but not near so much like a Church."

For at first sight all the rationality (in Caroline Bingley's sense) is on the side of the innovators. We are short of priests. We have discovered in one profession after another that women can do very well all sorts of things which were once supposed to be in the power of men alone. No one among those who dislike the proposal is maintaining that women are less capable than men of piety, zeal, learning and whatever else seems necessary for the pastoral office. What, then, except prejudice begotten by tradition, forbids us to draw on the huge reserves which could pour into the priesthood if women were here, as in so many other professions, put on the same footing as men? And against this flood of common sense, the opposers (many of them

women) can produce at first nothing but an inarticulate distaste, a sense of discomfort which they themselves find it hard to analyse . . . .

The innovators are really implying that sex is something superficial, irrelevant to the spiritual life. To say that men and women are equally eligible for a certain profession is to say that for the purposes of that profession their sex is irrelevant. We are, within that context, treating both as neuters. As the State grows more like a hive or an ant-hill it needs an increasing number of workers who can be treated as neuters. This may be inevitable for our secular life. But in our Christian life we must return to reality. There we are not homogeneous units, but different and complementary organs of a mystical body. Lady Nunburnholme has claimed that the equality of men and women is a "Christian principle." I do not remember the text in scripture nor the Fathers, nor Hooker, nor the Prayer Book which asserts it; but that is not here my point. The point is that unless "equal" means "interchangeable," equality makes nothing for the priesthood of women. And the kind of equality which implies that the equals are interchangeable (like counters or identical machines) is, among humans, a legal fiction. It may be a useful legal fiction. But in church we turn our back on fictions. One of the ends for which sex was created was to symbolize to us the hidden things of God. One of the functions of human marriage is to express the nature of the union between Christ and the Church. We have no authority to take the living and sensitive figures which God has painted on the canvas of our nature and shift them about as if they were mere geometrical figures.

This is what common sense will call "mystical." Exactly. The Church claims to be the bearer of a revelation. If that claim is false then we want not to make priestesses but to abolish priests. If it is true, then we should expect to find in the Church an element which unbelievers will call irrational and which believers will call supra-rational. There ought to be something in it opaque to our reason though not contrary to it—as the facts of sex and sense on the natural level are opaque. And that is the real issue. The Church of England can remain a church only if she retains this opaque element. If we abandon that, if we retain only what can be justified by standards of prudence and convenience at the bar of enlightened common sense, then we exchange revelation for that old wraith Natural Religion.

It is painful, being a man, to have to assert the privilege, or the burden, which Christianity lays upon my own sex. I am crushingly aware how inadequate most of us are, in our actual and historical individualities, to fill the place prepared for us. But it is an old saying in the army that you salute the uniform not the wearer. Only one wearing the masculine uniform can (provisionally, and till the *Parousia*) represent the Lord to the Church: for we are all, corporately and individually, feminine to Him. We men may often make very bad priests. That is because we are insufficiently masculine. It is no cure to call in those who are not masculine at all. A given man may make a very bad husband; you cannot mend matters by trying to reverse the roles. He may make a bad male partner in a dance. The cure for that is that men should more diligently attend dancing classes; not that the ballroom should henceforward ignore distinctions of sex and treat all dancers as neuter. That would, of course, be eminently sensible, civilized, and enlightened, but, once more, "not near so much like a Ball."

And this parallel between the Church and the Ball is not so fanciful as some would think. The Church ought to be more like a Ball than it is like a factory or a political party. Or, to speak more strictly, they are at the circumference and the Church at the Centre and the Ball comes in between. The factory and the political party are artificial creations—"a breath can make them as a breath has made." In them we are not dealing with human beings in their concrete entirety only with "hands" or voters. I am not of course using "artificial" in any derogatory sense. Such artifices are necessary: but because they are our artifices we are free to shuffle, scrap and experiment as we please. But the Ball exists to stylize something which is natural and which concerns human beings in their entirety—namely, courtship. We cannot shuffle or tamper so much. With the Church, we are farther in: for there we are dealing with male and female not merely as facts of nature but as the live and awful shadows of realities utterly beyond our control and largely beyond our direct knowledge. Or rather, we are not dealing with them but (as we shall soon learn if we meddle) they are dealing with us.

## Ersatz Hymns

*This selection by Martin Franzmann is found on page 95 of* "Theology Must Sing," *from* Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets (*St. Louis: Concordia, 1966*) *and was commended to us by the Reverend Dr. Ronald R. Feuerhahn, who writes: "Martin Franzmann was a gentle man, slow to criticize. 'Criticism is the adventure of a soul among masterpieces,' he once noted. Nevertheless, there were occasions for criticism and none more urgent than in the area of modern hymnody, especially with what he called Ersatz hymns. Now, it is necessary to explain this German word* Ersatz: *it means substitute or imitation. During World War II people talked about Ersatz coffee. It was usually made of chicory; it was not the real thing!"*

There has always been a terrible fascination in *Ersatz,* especially for a sick church, a church grown so languid that it cannot bear to live in the tension of the last days. And so we have, instead of the splendid picture of the church universal making a full-throated, joyful noise unto the Lord, the picture of the weary church sitting in a padded pew, weeping softly and elegantly into a lace handkerchief.

And the amazing thing is how eloquent men can grow in defense of this shoddy *Ersatz* hymnody. They begin by criticizing the good hymns as "hard to sing." One might ask in return, Why must a hymn be easy? Who has ever said that it should be easy? . . .

The fact that there is an amazing agreement on the part of hymnodists and musicians in all parts of the church as to what constitutes a good hymn counts for little with these critics. The hymnodists' passion for perfection is viewed with suspicion, as a sort of professional snobbery, and is usually countered with, "I don't know much about it, but I know what I like." That is

really the ultimate in snobbery. To pit my piping, squeaking, little ego against all the good gifts that God has given His church! It is worse than snobbery; it is ingratitude.

## Unavoidable Obligations

*Written in 1965 by the pastor of Wesley Methodist Church in Bloomington, Illinois,* How to Be A Bishop Without Being Religious (*Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Co., 1965*) *was intended by Dr. Charles Merrill Smith to be a satire upon the "superficial and phony aspects of American church life." His satire may not be entirely welcome thirty-five years later, addressing as it does some rather poignant aspects of church life, but satire is always harsh to those who have no sense of humor. On the jacket he notes that the book was written "late at night, only after the completion of the daily duties required of a parish minister who may or may not wind up a bishop." (Does anyone know if he did?) The following is from pages 92-97.*

A medical doctor can slice and/or dose his patients and be done with them, except for collecting the bill. A lawyer can draw a will or sue. A teacher can bore his classes three or four hours a day and spend his evenings with a pipe and a detective story. We live in the time of the specialist. The daily routine of most business and professional men is more or less the same. Their activities are related to a field of endeavor which they have mastered because nearly anyone can master a certain task if he performs it often enough and is not distracted by duties of a different nature and calling for another set of skills.

Not so the preacher. He is supposed to be an orator, administrator, business manager, psychologist, school superintendent, scholar, community leader, fund raiser, teacher, after-dinner speaker and master of ceremonies, to name a few of the trades in which he needs some degree of proficiency.

No one, of course, is going to shine at all these things. And it is not necessary that you should. Recent research has shown us that 93.786 percent of those men who do become bishops are not especially good at any single pastoral skill but are passably capable in all of them. What you need to do, as you prepare yourself in the early days of your career for eventual membership in the select circle of the ecclesiastical elite, is to learn how to discharge the miscellaneous duties of the ministry so that you will be recognized as competent but without letting them consume any considerable portion of your time or energy.

Among those duties which you will be expected to perform satisfactorily is a group which are of a minor nature but each of which some of your good people think is your major task.

*How to live with the Sunday School.* Every church, as you know, has attached to it a number of subsidiary organizations. Most important of these is the Sunday School. While the church has been going now for some two thousand years the Sunday School has been around only about two hundred years. Amazingly, in those two hundred years it has nearly caught up with the church in size, organizational loyalty, and the reverence with which its zealots treat it. It is, in fact, a separate religious institution masquerading as a part of your church but actually in direct competition with the church. It has its own organizational structure, its own budget, its own promotional program, its own worship services. Therefore many of its adherents consider it an adequate substitute for the church, as witness the big procession heading for home as soon as Sunday School is dismissed. These people never think of attending church. They get their weekly dose of religion in Sunday School.

You may be distressed at this state of affairs in your early pastorates, but the wisest course for you to follow is to learn to live with it, because the situation will not change. Remember that you are responsible for the Sunday School. You will have to work with it. So we include two principles to keep in mind at all times as you deal with it, which—if you observe them scrupulously—should enable you to stay out of trouble.

The first principle is that the Sunday School is a sacred cow, and thus should never be criticized, improved or tampered with in any way. The fury of a woman scorned is a mild irritation compared with the animosity elicited from a good and faithful Sunday School superintendent to whom it is suggested that the S.S. could stand a little refurbishing. If you, his pastor, are so witless as to suggest it you will succeed only in mobilizing the entire Sunday School organization to a dedicated and unrelenting effort to oust you from the church.

So, whatever your private opinion, let your public utterances as to the S.S. be excessively laudatory. Lay it on thick. It is like complimenting a woman—never be afraid that you are overdoing it because you can't.

The second principle is that you must not confuse the function of the Sunday School with education. Admittedly the name "school" is misleading, and inexperienced pastors nearly always waste enormous amounts of time and effort trying to make of the S.S. a teaching enterprise before they discover that the Sunday School does not exist in order that the pupils may learn anything. In fact, the genuinely superior Sunday Schools are those which impart the least factual information to their students. This apparent paradox is explained when you remember that S.S. teachers are volunteers, that they are dealing with material they know nothing about (and probably haven't even read), so whatever they do manage to teach is likely to be misinformation—which is worse than no information.

What the S.S. does exist for is:

(1) A baby-sitting service. Harassed young parents, badly in need of sleep or time for other activities impracticable with small children all over the place, look on the S.S. as the perfect, or nearly perfect, solution to their Sunday morning problem. It is entirely free (except for pennies for the collection), and enlightened churches have what is known as "extended sessions" in their Sunday Schools which keep the kids for upwards of three hours. Little wonder that the S.S. is highly thought of by the young families of the community.

(2) A form of entertainment for adults who get up early on Sunday morning and don't care to read the Sunday paper or watch TV. And what else is there for older people to do at 9 A.M. on Sunday morning?

Most churches have one to four large, enthusiastic and loyal adult Sunday School classes. Sometimes they are built around

the personality of a teacher. In such instances the teacher is a direct competitor of the preacher and nothing delights him so much as outdrawing the preacher Sunday morning, a not infrequent situation.

Other adult classes prosper by appealing to a certain age group. The so-called young married class is an example of this species. It usually has a clever and distinctive name such as "Cum Duble," "Twosies" or "Ball-and-Chain," and goes in heavily for social events.

You will be expected to visit these classes, and the average freshly minted seminary graduate is appalled at the theology dispensed in them. It ranges from fundamentalist pietism through salvation by thinking gorgeous thoughts, with both extremes frequently included in the same lesson by the same teacher, with no one bothered in the least by the inconsistencies.

Take your cue from the class and don't be bothered either. You simply can't afford to be finicky about theology when dealing with the S.S. The surest way to kill off a large, popular adult Sunday School class is to insist that it devote itself to serious study. Americans have, for a long time now, been told that if a group of people who know nothing whatever about a subject spend an hour or so pooling their ignorant and uninformed opinions the end product will be insights whose truth is beyond question and an occult wisdom unobtainable by lesser methods. This is the faith on which the adult S.S. class is founded, and to destroy it is to destroy the institution.

Remember, too, that the religious education enterprise of your denomination is a powerful vested interest. Your publishing house sells S.S. lesson materials by the bale, a vastly profitable undertaking. Also, there is a strongly entrenched religious education hierarchy with hundreds of employees which is dedicated to keeping the S.S. movement large and vigorous. You are in no position to fight a battle with this well-equipped army, so don't try. Accept the Sunday School as a fact of your professional life, pat it on the back as often as possible, and refrain from any attempt to change it.

*Hitting it off with the ladies.* Like unto the Sunday School is the Women's Society or Ladies' Aid or whatever your denomination calls its female auxiliary organization. It, too, has aspects of a separate denomination—a local president and an astonishingly large slate of officers, a separate and complete religious program including worship services, mission projects, budget, etc., and an aggressive national hierarchical structure. It also has many members who find in it a sufficient source for their religious needs and who therefore have little or nothing to do with the church.

If you think the author issued a strong warning against tampering with the Sunday School, then double it and raise it to the tenth power when dealing with the ladies. If there is any one rule the breaking of which you cannot survive, it is "Never, never, interfere in any way with the operation of the female auxiliary of your Church." These good faithful Marthas will try your patience with the incredible dullness of their programs, the unpredictability of their administrative decisions, and their taste in wallpaper, paint, etc., which—in your early and smaller churches—they express, by decorating the parsonage. But they do raise whopping amounts of hard cash, a portion of which finds it way into the operating budget of the church and thus helps underwrite your salary. So to offend the ladies in any way is to work against your own best interests.

The author has little counsel to offer in the matter of getting along with the Ladies' Aid. Some clergymen distinguish themselves in this pastoral activity, some don't. But an analysis of fifty-three preachers who have had signal success in dealing with female auxiliaries, even though the latest research methods were employed (including feeding statistical data into the maw of an electronic computer) has failed to isolate any clear-cut method of approach guaranteed to work. In the light of these confusing results the author can only conclude that some charismatic quality as yet undetectable by IBM is probably what gets the job done. Some pastors with outstanding records in hitting it off with the ladies claim that charm is the answer—which you either have or you don't have. Others rely heavily on prayer . . . .

## Three Miracles

*A sermon on Luke 1:26-38, preached by the Reverend Dr. Norman Nagel for the Feast of the Annunciation, 1999.*

Three miracles here, says Dr. Luther: an angel, a virgin conceives, and she believed it. Faith the most amazing miracle of all.

As for the angel, our attention is not drawn to the angel. No description. He behaves like a man, and was so called when he brought a message to Daniel: "You are greatly beloved." And for a man to come bursting in on a woman in her home and addressing her thus simply wasn't done. No wonder she was taken aback. Yet the greeting with which he accosts her was nothing out of the ordinary. We say, "Hi. How are you doing?" and "Have a nice day." They said, "The Lord be with you," and "Goodbye."

Overcoming her surprise, her next move would be to put the kettle on. We are not told of that. What we are told is the message Gabriel delivers. That's what matters with the angel: the message. The message, not the messenger: angelic ministry, apostolic ministry, holy ministry. And the message has its worth only by him who sends it. Angels never make up messages; they deliver only the words they are sent to deliver: the Lord's words, which deliver what they say.

"You will conceive in your womb." Not possible, says Mary, without a husband. She was well brought up. You can tell that from how much Scripture she had by heart.

The angel continues: It's not up to you. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." *Overshadow* evokes the cloud which declares that God is on the scene and doing what he does—here enlivening the creaturely, taking to his use the human, Mary's womb, as we confess of the Holy Spirit every Holy Communion, bread and wine to body and blood. It's a boy and his name is Jesus. Angel's words, divine words, they deliver and do what they say.

"I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son." Thus angelic Nathan to David; those words are now here fulfilled, beyond the reach of any of our imaginary, bursting the prophe-

cy. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end . . . . The child conceived in you will be called holy, the Son of God."

*Conceived.* How could she tell? She had only the messenger's words, the words of the Lord God. So it is them. Faith says, Amen. Gift received. "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. What then? Did she just dream it? She did not just sit and stare into the blue. There was her cousin to visit. People said she'd never have children. Elizabeth the Barren was with child. What should Mary prepare as a gift for the child? Some knitting, baking and praying to be done.

Main thing is that she should be with Elizabeth. So off she goes to the hill country, the two impossible first-time mothers together. What all they had to talk about! We shall hear some of that, but we shall have to wait until May 31 for the Visitation; then it'll be roughly only six months to Christmas.

How many miracles did those two pregnant women count up together? Was there ever a woman without some inkling that what was alive in her womb was a miracle? That makes at least four miracles. Are you keeping count? Dr. Luther counted only three, and worse than that, he said some were bigger than others. You can't lay measurements on the Lord, says Dr. Luther in his Large Confession. Measurements are only possible with comparisons. In his 1523 sermon on the Annunciation he says, "Das Evangelium will immer die Einzigkeit." "The way of the gospel is to do things only once, for the first time." To conceive without a husband was a problem for Mary—never happened before. But that doesn't stop the Lord from doing it for the first time—not as a theoretical possibility, but with his words delivered by his messenger to "a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, in Nazareth of Galilee," of all places. Not whether the Lord can. Mary is drawn beyond that problem to, "This is what he says he is doing, and doing with me." Too much.

Dr. Luther illustrates this by picturing Mary as engaged in milking the cow or scrubbing the floor when the message comes. The words tell what the Lord is doing with his words, but what blows Mary away is that it's to *her* he's doing it. Why me? The answer to that can't possibly be in me, but only in him, as Hannah too had realized. Mary has no answer from herself. The Lord's words have their way with her. Amen. "Let it be to me according to your word."

That's faith. That's the faith Dr. Luther extols as the greatest miracle of all, faith that is created by the words which bestow the gift they say. To be nothing but given to is faith, and faith then rolls on, in the life of faith, to extol whatever the Lord gives as a gift from him. "My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior." And is there anything then that is not a miracle from him, "who has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden"?

Have you ever been surprised why the Lord ever noticed that you were there, were worth bothering about? The only reason is that he did; that's the sort of Lord he is. He put his name on you with the water. "The Lord is with you." He puts into you his body and blood. Like Mary, better than Mary, says Dr. Luther. Not better. There's only one Mary, only one you. Not by likeness but by love. The ways he loves and deals with you he does only once.

He is the Savior he is as we follow him this week of Judica to "remember and give thanks for our Lord's passion that we may receive the forgiveness of sins." That is for us all, and yet the way of his gifts in each one of us is unique. With each of us the Lord is doing something for the first time. He's made a start. His gifts are new every morning. What he brings out of it all, only heaven will show. What surprises await us there! How could you ever possibly recognize me when I'm all the way the Lord wants me to be? There'll doubtless be introductions.

For the way today, thither: "Let it be to me according to your word." Then, don't miss any miracles. Amen.

## A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The editors of *Logia* hereby request manuscripts, book reviews, and forum material for the following issues and themes:

| ISSUE | THEME | DEADLINE |
|---|---|---|
| Holy Trinity 2000 | Bach the Theologian | February 15, 2000 |
| Reformation 2000 | Wittenberg and/or Constantinople | April 1, 2000 |
| Epiphany 2001 | Luther and Bible Translation | August 1, 2000 |
| Eastertide 2001 | Sin, Sickness, and Salvation—Pastoral Theology | November 1, 2000 |

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