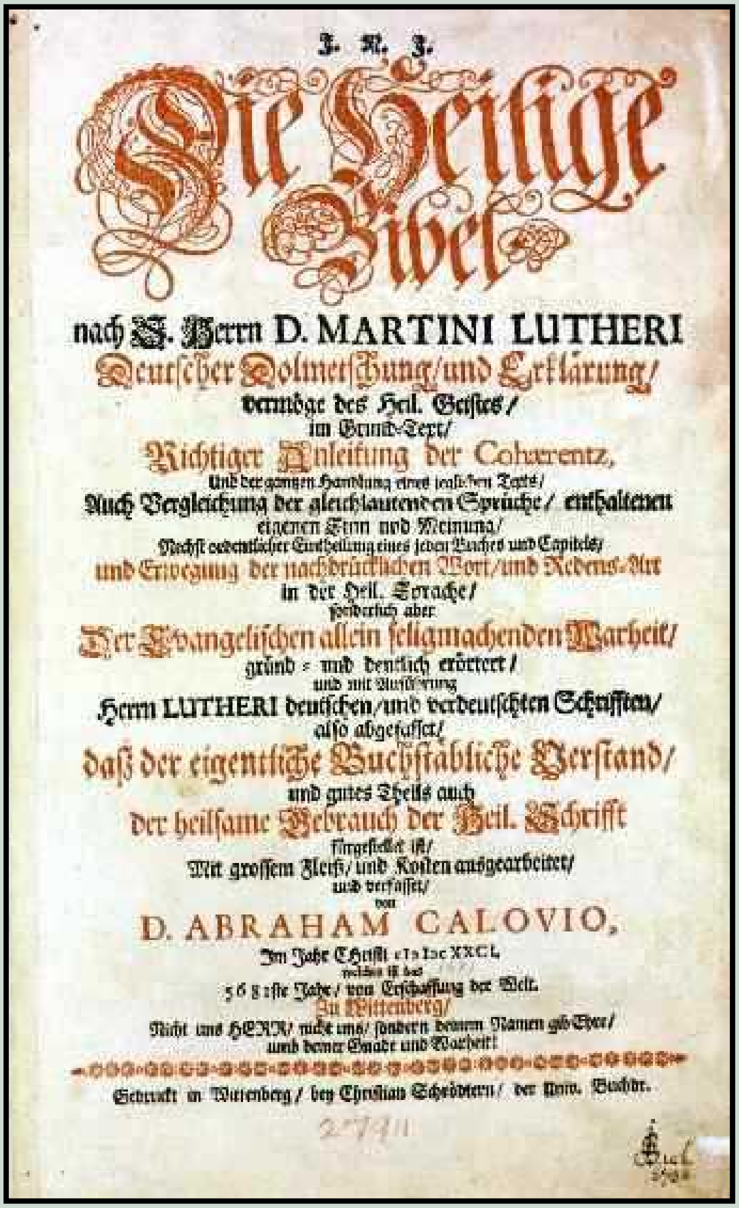
LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY


J. N. J.

Die Heilige Bibel

nach S. Herrn D. MARTINI LUTHERI

Deutscher Dolmetschung/ und Erklärung/

vermöge des Heil. Geistes/

im Grund-Text/

Richtiger Anleitung der Cohærentz,

Und der gantzen Handlung eines jeglichen Texts/

Auch Vergleichung der gleichlautenden Sprüche/ enthaltenen

eigenen Sinn und Meinung/

Nechst ordentlicher Eintheilung eines jeden Buches und Capitels/

und Erwegung der nachdrücklichen Wort/ und Redens-Art

in der Heil. Sprache/

sonderlich aber

Der Evangelischen allein seligmachenden Warheit/

gründ- und deutlich erörtert/

und mit Anführung

Herrn LUTHERI deutschen/ und verdeutschten Schrifften/

also abgefasset/

daß der eigentliche Buchstäbliche Verstand/

und gutes Theils auch

der heilsame Gebrauch der Heil. Schrifft

fürgestellet ist/

Mit grossem Fleiß/ und Kosten ausgearbeitet/

und verfasset/

von

D. ABRAHAM CALOVIO,

Im Jahr Christi ... XXCI,

welches ist das

5 6 8 1ste Jahr/ von Erschaffung der Welt.

Zu Wittenberg/

Nicht uns HERR/ nicht uns/ sondern deinem Namen gib Ehre/

umb deiner Gnade und Warheit!

Gedruckt in Wittenberg/ bey Christian Schrödtern/ der Univ. Buchdr.

Bach the Theologian

HOLY TRINITY 2000 VOLUME IX, NUMBER 3

εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

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

LOGIA (ISSN #1064–0398) is published quarterly by the Luther Academy, 9228 Lavant Drive, Crestwood, MO 63126. Non-profit postage paid (permit #4) at Cresbard, SD and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Logia, PO Box 94, Cresbard, SD 57435.

Editorial Department: 314 Pearl St., Mankato, MN 56001. Unsolicited material is welcomed but cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. All submissions must be accompanied by a 300 word or less abstract of the article.

Book Review Department: 1101 University Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. All books received will be listed.

Correspondence Department: 314 Pearl St., Mankato, MN 56001. Letters selected for publication are subject to editorial modification, must be typed or computer printed, and must contain the writer's name and complete address.

Logia Forum: 2313 S. Hanna St., Fort Wayne, IN 46803-2477.

Subscription & Advertising Department: PO Box 94, Cresbard, SD 57435. Advertising rates and specifications are available upon request.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: U.S.A.: one year (four issues), $22; two years (eight issues), $40. **Canada and Mexico:** one year surface, $25; one year air, $32. **Overseas:** one year air, $42; one year surface, $29. All funds in U.S. currency only.

Cover Art

Title page facsimile from the first volume of Abraham Calov's Bible commentary (Wittenberg, 1681) with signature of J. S. Bach (1733). Courtesy of Concordia Seminary Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

The three volumes the composer owned and notated are in Concordia's Library. Next to passages are comments written by Bach in addition to underlinings and other markings he made in the text. Bach used his "study" Bible, and it is invaluable for understanding the composer's faith and the expression that it took in his music. (compare with *J. S. Bach and Scripture: Glosses from the Calov Bible Commentary*, Robin A. Leaver, St. Louis: Concordia, 1985.)

The cover art is provided by the Reverend Mark Loest, Assistant Director for Reference and Museum at Concordia Historical Institute.

Logia is indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, published by the *American Theological Library Association,* 250 S. Wacker Drive, 16th floor, Chicago, IL 60606, *E-mail:* atla@atla.com ~ *WWW:* http://www.atla.com/

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
Triglotta	*Concordia Triglotta*
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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Correspondence

To the editors:

I am writing in response to the article by Thomas A. Von Hagel (Trinity 1999) entitled "A Eucharistic Interpretation of the Synoptic Apocalypse" (hereafter referred to as EISA). The title intrigued me especially because my doctoral dissertation, written under Jack Dean Kingsbury at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, offered an interpretation of Matthew 24 and 25 in its literary context. In this letter, I wish to protest several smaller points in EISA and (more importantly) to register my strong objection to the method of exegesis reflected in the basic argument. Because I am most thoroughly familiar with Matthew's Gospel, I will limit my comments to EISA's treatment of that text.

In the first place, EISA asserts on page 21 that all three of the Synoptic apocalypses "are easily divided in two." For Matthew 24, the article perceives a major break into two sections, verses 1–28 and verses 29–51. To be quite frank, I know of no Matthean scholar who follows this structural understanding; perhaps there are some (although the author gives no support). Rather, two positions predominate, On the one hand, a large number of scholars, including such well-known and diverse writers as Willoughby Allen (old ICC), Joachim Gnilka, Walter Grundmann, R. C. H. Lenski, and (according to David Turner, "The Structure and Sequence of Matthew 24:1–41," *Grace Theological Journal* 10:4) "most evangelicals" perceive the major break between Matthew 24:31 and 24:32. On the other hand, a group of writers including Francis Beare, D. A. Carson, Jack Kingsbury, Jan Lambrecht, and myself discern the major structural break point between Matthew 24:35 and 24:36. Since this is a point of some importance in EISA's argument and the view is not widely held, support should have been forthcoming.

In the second place, EISA's argument depends upon reading a future indicative verb in a way that no grammar of which I am aware will permit. On page 21, the article cites Matthew 24:29 as follows: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light . . . ." EISA omits the adverb "immediately" ("And *immediately* after the tribulation of those days, the sun . . ."), which the author has earlier claimed marks "the transition between the earlier signs and events that correspond to the destruction of Jerusalem and the latter ones to Jesus' second advent." His point seems to be that *immediately* after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the signs of Matthew 24:29 will *begin* to happen. In fact, he explicitly says as much: "They will *begin* to occur immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem." The future indicative in Greek cannot bear an inceptive force, however, and may not be translated in that fashion (BDF 348–351). An inceptive translation certainly removes the difficulty of Matthew's "immediately." But such a translation is impossible, and there is nothing in the text of Matthew 24:29–31 to indicate that the events described there are specifically the beginning of a process of several millennia (at the least!).

So far my smaller objections. But now I must register my objections to the exegetical method embodied in the article. I confess that I had to read the EISA four times before I became clear on the "moves" of the argument. I hope I have read rightly; I certainly am open to correction and to ongoing conversation.

The large strokes of EISA's argument run as follows:

1. When the Bible speaks of events of "cosmic distress" (sun darkened, etc.), these references can be understood either figuratively or literally, although the literal reading is to be preferred.
2. The literal signs referred to in Matthew 24:29 "begin to happen" immediately after 70 A.D. (I have disputed the grammar in the comments above).
3. Such signs occur in the creation when the Creator (here, the Son of Man) "comes" to the creation, that is, at his advent.
4. This is true of the final advent of the Son of Man, but it also may apply to other "advents" such as the Sinai revelation and other events associated with the exodus from Egypt. It is especially true of the eschatological first advent of Jesus (cf Mt 27:51–54).
5. The eucharistic presence of Jesus is a kind of coming of the Lord to his creation, an "advent." This is *the crucial move of the argument.*
6. Therefore, "contemporary signs of nature in the heavens and upon the earth are not arbitrary predictions of the coming of the Son of Man on the Last Day. While they are prophetic in nature and point to the Last Day, these signs are the appropriate reaction of the creation to the advent of its Creator in the Lord's Supper" (26).

This is a clear example of what I have come to think of as exegesis by creative paraphrase. I register the following objections and issue a plea for a more controlled and sober exegesis.

First, no text in the entire Bible says what EISA argues. Matthew 24 does not mention the Lord's Supper, and there is no exegetical data from within the entire Gospel that would support his argument. Jesus never speaks of the Lord's Supper as his "advent" or his "coming." Moreover, no biblical text of which I am aware explicitly describes the Lord's Supper as Jesus' "coming" or "advent" to his creation. Theologically, this may be a sort of valid paraphrase of biblical data (as in the hymn "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"). But the language is not there in Scripture itself.

Second, EISA rightly seeks to interpret Matthew 24:29 in light of other passages: Scripture interpreting Scripture, if you will. But there must be a disciplined approach that determines which passages are joined together for mutual interpretation. Two cardinal rules are that (1) passages for mutual interpretation should be actually talking about the same thing, and (2) passages for mutual interpretation should use common language. The logic of EISA follows neither of these two rules. (One can recall, as a marvelous example of how to follow the first rule, the argument of Apology IV, 218 and following [Tappert, 137 ff.], where Melanchthon refutes the Roman use of certain passages of Scripture in the debate over the role of faith and love in justification.)

Third, EISA's argument can be said to have a certain coherence. But it only works because of the use of the paraphrased term "advent." This is what I have referred to above as exegesis by creative paraphrase. The Scripture itself nowhere joins together the Lord's Supper and divine theophanies. In the logic of the argument they are linked only through the paraphrased term "advent." This method can be used to associate a wild variety of items, and cannot be regarded as disciplined historical-grammatical exegesis that pays the homage due the biblical text and to the text's own way of speaking.

The method displayed in EISA's argument unfortunately opens itself to somewhat ridiculous responses. If the contemporary signs in nature are responses to Christ's advent in the eucharist, is this also true of his coming in holy baptism, or in the preaching of the gospel, or in the speaking of holy absolution? If not, why not?

Jesus never speaks of the Lord's Supper as his "advent" or his "coming."

I might finally add that EISA concludes on an extremely dubious note. On the basis of one quotation from Gregory the Great and another from Martin Luther, the article declares that "the Last Day will occur, not so much on a day foreordained by the Creator [cf. Mt 24:36], but when the creation reacts for the last time and literally falls apart and collapses in complete exhaustion." Once again, the obvious objection is the best one. This is not biblical language. It is a pious and perhaps engaging speculation, to be sure— but only a speculation.

I hope I have not written unfairly or too harshly. Moreover, I share the article's theology of the Lord's Supper. But I object strongly to EISA's exegetical method. In my own teaching of seminary students, I continually see this urgent need for careful, disciplined, responsible exegetical method.

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Professor Thomas A. Von Hagel wrote an article entitled "A Eucharistic Interpretation of the Synoptic Apocalypse" in *Logia* 8, no. 3. This appears to go at the pastoral work of interpretation backwards. "The Lord's Supper in the Synoptic Apocalypse" would be a much more profitable study for the average minister in the parish to have at hand. Whenever an interpretation is preceded by some modifier other than "biblical," it is suspicious, even if it is a worthy topic in and of itself, such as "christological," "eucharistic," "incarnational," "baptismal," "escatological," "ecclesiastical," or "postmodern."

One of the prime directives of Lutheran interpretation is that the Bible interprets itself. All interpretation ought to be first and foremost biblical, drawing directly from the plain and clear words of the Scripture what God says. Arranging meaning about various topics relating to our justification before the Father through the living, dying, and rising again of the Christ is the work of theology or systematics.

The ordinary approach is to ask a question like, "What does God say about the Lord's Supper in his Synoptic Apocalypse that will be helpful to my people's faith in Christ and participation in his body and blood?" An approach that endeavors to examine these Scriptures with "eucharistic-colored glasses" is forcing the issue. "In light of the Lord's Supper, this article will interpret the signs of nature that Jesus delineates in the synoptic apocalypse." Should not this effort be to discover if the "signs of nature" say anything about the Lord's Supper, rather than assuming "in light of the Lord's Supper" that they do? This approach leaves too much latitude for the views of the interpreter to enter into the conclusion of the interpretation. This very thing has been done in the latter part of this article.

In fact, the author states the results of his inquiry in the middle of his article and then goes on to buttress it and restate it at the end. "Not only do the signs of nature that Jesus prophesied in the synoptic apocalypse correspond to the Creator's numerous advents to his creation in the Old Testament and the singularly momentous advent in the Incarnation, but also in the repeated advents of Jesus to his creation in his Supper" (23). This is adding significantly to what the bare words of the "synoptic apocalypse" say and are worthily and accurately summarized in the first sentence of the paragraph from which the above quotation comes: "In the synoptic apocalypse Jesus clearly delineates the signs that precede and foretell his second Advent." Amen!

After this Von Hagel reviews the views of C. H. Dodd and Adrio Koenig, both of whom posit a "realized escha-

ton," that is, that the end of the age arrived already when Jesus was incarnate in our world. This is rightly called by the author God's "principal advent to his creation," and he mentions that their conclusion "does not directly address a eucharistic interpretation of the signs of nature in the synoptic apocalypse." This the author attempts to do.

But this effort is not what attracted my attention to the article in the first place. It was the novel terminology he employs to describe the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine, to use the classical, confessional definition of the sacramental presence.

But first, a brief excursus regarding the contrast that Von Hagel sets up between the Reformed and the Lutherans. His description of the Reformed position is accurate. They indeed misunderstood the Lutherans' position and terminology. The Lutherans did occasionally speak of the "bodily presence of Christ" in their disputations and Confessions. But did they mean thereby the Roman position that was urged upon them at Augsburg, that "Christ is wholly in each kind?" This was rejected at Augsburg, and not merely because of liturgical reasons for desiring to have both kinds in the sacrament. It was rejected because even the early doctrine of the reformers was the simple words of institution: the bread is the body of Christ, the bread remaining, and the wine is the blood, the wine remaining, with neither nor both of them being the whole and entire Christ, body and soul.

The Reformed accused the Lutherans of Romish doctrines; that is, that Christ was giving himself personally, wholly, and completely, body and soul, in the bread and wine. The Lutherans did not claim that at all. They insisted that Christ was the host of the meal, offering the body and blood with which he obtained forgiveness by his death on the cross of Calvary. The definitive descriptions of the doctrine of the real presence in the Confessions never use "Christ's presence" or "Christ himself" or "Jesus himself" or even "bodily presence," but always "the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in the bread and wine" (AC x; SC; FC SD vii).

Obviously the Lutheran use of the phrase "bodily presence of Christ" indicated the presence of the true body rather than the physical presence of Christ himself in the bread, the wine, or both. The same goes for the two times when similar terminology appears in the Formula. The first is in SD vii, 105, where it speaks of the modes of presence: "When Dr. Luther or we use the word 'spiritual' in this discussion, we have in mind the spiritual, supernatural, heavenly mode according to which Christ is present in the Holy Supper." This, they say, "is not the gross, carnal presence which the Sacramentarians ascribe to . . . our churches." The second is in SD vii, 126, where the Lutherans reject the adoration of the elements. "Of course, no one but an Arian heretic can or will deny that Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used, should be adored in spirit and truth." Our theologians wanted to emphasize and introduce the subject (SD viii) of the mystical union of the divine and human natures of Christ that the Reformed had had to deny in order to defend their perception of the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence in the holy Supper—that is, that Jesus was offering the real presence of himself personally in the bread and wine. One can readily see that this passage is saying the same thing as SD vii, 113, and should be understood in its light: "The assertion that the words of institution are not to be simply understood in their strict sense, as they read, concerning the true essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper."

It is as if he understands the words of our Lord to say, "Take, eat, this is me."

The phrase "present in the Supper" is akin to the phrase "Christ is present with his body and blood" in SD vii, 122, and elsewhere. The German and Latin words *mit* and *cum* indicate clearly that Christ himself is present and that he has his body and blood with him to distribute to the communicants. "With" does not mean he is "in" his body and blood. His divine and human body and blood are "in" the bread and wine. His own words indicate that he personally is apart from the elements he serves. This also casts light on the above passage, "Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used," cited above. "Present in the Supper" means "present in the right use of the Supper." The right use of the Supper is, in part, "recognizing the body," not recognizing Christ's physical, carnal, personal presence in the bread and wine.

Von Hagel seems to react to the Reformed erroneous reading of the Lutheran's position by positing the opposite of the Reformed position as the true Lutheran one. The Reformed deny the substantive and local presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. So, he claims, we Lutherans must affirm the substantive and local presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. But the Lutherans were not claiming the substantive and and local presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper at all, but rather the substantive and local presence of Jesus' body and blood in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

Von Hagel says, "In the Lord's Supper, the Creator concretely comes to his creation as both the server and the one who is served." It is as if he understands the words of our Lord to say, "Take, eat, this is me." He has no problem with "is" meaning "is," apparently, but he imagines that "my body" means "me myself as the human and divine person." Hermann Sasse in "The Lord's Supper in the New Testament" (1941) from the *We Confess* Anthology says: "Also unteneble is Otto's [Rudolf Otto, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn,* 214] further assumption that the words 'This is my body,' in Aramaic *den hu gufi*, should mean nothing more than 'This is I Myself'" (60). He continues, "And so the understanding of 'body' in the sense of 'person' enjoys great popularity in our day" (71), referring to the 1940s, when this terminology was becoming frequent in Europe and in the LCA and ALC. Sasse concludes that "the church has always taken 'body' to be the actual body and 'blood' to be the actual blood of the Lord" (73).

What novel terminology does Professor Von Hagel introduce to this discussion? Obviously, he has adopted the "Jesus' local presence" or "Christ present" terminology that was so popular in liberal circles in the past. It is clear that he understands the Words of Institution to mean that Jesus himself is in the bread and wine. This is not merely novel terminology, but the old, defensive Roman theology that Zwingli was reacting against and falsely accusing the Lutherans of holding.

While Von Hagel quotes the *verba* and Luther with the correct expression of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine, he never expresses this orthodox and confessional view in his own words. The editors of this journal of Lutheran theology should have picked this up. I have the ELCA's *Affirm* Catechism that does the same thing. It quotes the Words of Jesus, "This is My body," and blithely claims that this means "Jesus is present," not that his body is present.

The Advent terminology used in this article is confusing. While the author is careful to clarify that he means "Jesus' advent in his Supper," this has no classical or confessional meaning with which we can identify. It almost seems that he wants to start another terminology fad with this new phrase.

We all understand and celebrate Jesus' first advent into the flesh. We have biblical, historical, and liturgical support for his coming into the flesh. But where are the clear and simple words with which to nourish our faith in him? Certainly not in the signs of nature. As we have seen, the whole concept of Christ coming personally to us in the bread and wine of his Supper is not from the words of institution, but from the mind of rationalizing men. The only way we can possibly "baptize" this term is to define it contrary to the intention of the author of the article.

"Jesus' advent in his Supper" could be rightly understood in the same sense as "Christ is present with his body and blood" in SD VII, 122. In this way we could understand that Jesus personally is spiritually present, but "concretely" (to use the term of the author) represented by his minister who serves the sacred meal. Jesus, therefore, comes to us in his Supper as one who serves, not himself for eating and drinking, but his actual body and blood with the bread and wine. But this is exactly 180 degrees out of phase with Von Hagel's assertion: "In the Lord's Supper, the Creator concretely comes to his creation as both the server and the one who is served."

The reference to Christ as the Creator and the "creation" in relation to his Supper is also confusing and novel. Perhaps it is forced on the author because of the nature of his topic and the incarnational, christological, eucharistic hermaneutic he is using, but it just does not seem to echo the sound of a clear trumpet of biblical thematic. If you are looking through that many glasses, you must see something relating to the creation, the unity of the Godhead, and the Lord's Supper in the texts under consideration. So let it be, even if the texts do not speak of these matters.

The pastor in a confessional congregation who begins to refer to the Lord's Supper in these ways had better be able to explain himself better than Von Hagel does. They will ask, as Sunday School teachers in South Dakota asked a vicar from the St. Louis seminary in the early 1960s who was spouting off the latest historical critical drivel, "But, Vicar, where is that in the Bible?"

Perhaps this was written for more ethereal folks than parish pastors, but the basic thrust and conclusion of the article describing the creation as falling apart and reacting violently to the Creator's advent in the Lord's Supper seems to cast the sacrament in a primarily law and judgement role. Perhaps this is so for the unbeliever and impenitent; but for the humble sinner who comes at the invitation of his Savior and Redeemer, the sacred meal is pure gospel, grace, forgiveness, and righteousness. To receive the actual body and blood that atoned for the sins of the world on the cross is to embrace all that Jesus is and has done to bring us into the presence of the Creator. Who cares if the world is decaying? He is building you up. Who cares if the creation is groaning? He is giving you cause for singing psalms of praise.

Perhaps the question is open to the criticism of being simplistic, but what is wrong with interpreting the Lord's Supper with a biblical hermeneutic? This is the same, then, as a eucharistic interpretation. What is wrong with approaching the eschaton with a biblical hermeneutic? The result is an eschatological interpretation. Explain the incarnation of Christ biblically, and you get an incarnational locus of theology. Forcing the conclusions of one area of interpretation leads to conclusions such as Professor Von Hagel and others appear to have come to regarding the real presence: that the classical and confessional expressions are not adequate for the church today. It might even lead to revamping our catechism to teach the advent of the Creator in the Lord's Supper as the Lutheran understanding of the sacrament of the altar.

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LOGIA CORRESPONDENCE AND COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM

We encourage our readers to respond to the material they find in Logia *— whether it be in the articles, book reviews, or letters of other readers. While we cannot print everything that is sent, we hope that our Colloquium Fratrum section will allow for longer response/counter-response exchanges, whereas our Correspondence section is a place for shorter "Letters to the Editors."*

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Bach, Chronicles, and Church Music

John W. Kleinig

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

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

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

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

BACH, CHRONICLES, AND THE CALOV BIBLE

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

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

In 1969 a German scholar called Christoph Trautmann tracked down the commentary and arranged for it to be borrowed and displayed in a Bach festival held at Heidelberg.[1] It was he who discovered the various markings in Bach's hand, deciphered them, and alerted the scholarly community to their existence and significance. Robin A. Leaver examined these notations and arranged for the publication of facsimiles of them, together with a translation and commentary.[2] Howard H. Cox also published another facsimile edition, together with the results of a scientific analysis of the annotations and a literal translation of the text with Bach's reactions to it.[3]

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

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musicians. Then he added in the margin: "N.B. This chapter is the true foundation for all God-pleasing church music."

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHRONICLES AND LITURGICAL MUSIC

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

THE DIVINE INSTITUTION OF SACRED MUSIC

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

In response to God's command, David is said to have organized the musicians for their task. They were, as I have already noted, taken from the three clans of the Levites, to which all the clergy belonged (1 Chr 6:33–47). David divided them into three guilds, which were named after their leaders: Heman, Asaph, and Ethan (also named Jeduthun). Each of these leaders was accountable to David and under his authority. From a pool of four thousand candidates (1 Chr 23:5) came 288 fully trained musicians who were involved in the performance of praise at the temple (1 Chr 25:7). These musicians were divided into twenty-four shifts with twelve

musicians rostered on each shift (1 Chr 25:8–31). Apparently, each shift was on duty for a week twice a year as well as for the three great festivals. In addition to the Levitical musicians, at least two priests were appointed to sound the golden trumpets over the daily burnt offering (1 Chr 16:6; 2 Chr 29:26, 28; cf. 1 Chr 15:24 and 2 Chr 5:12), just as God had commanded Moses (Nm 10:10).

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

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

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

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

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRED SONG

The significance of sacred song is determined by its ritual setting. For the writer of Chronicles and the Israelites in the post-exilic period, the daily burnt offering presented on the altar at the temple in Jerusalem was, as it were, the sacred bridge between heaven and earth. In it the Lord met in audience with the assembled congregation who, in turn, appeared there in his presence and presented their petitions to him there (2 Chr 7:12–16). Like a king at his palace, God held an audience twice a day at the temple during the times of sacrifice. There his people had access to him and his grace. There they petitioned him for justice in the face of manifest injustice, for charity as people in need, and for mercy as sinners. There they ate and drank in his presence. There they received his blessing and were honored by him. Sacred song then gained its significance from association with that momentous interaction between God and his people.

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

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

As is shown by this refrain, the choir did three things in their performance of praise. First, they invoked God by using his holy name, "Yahweh," translated as "Lord" in English. They, as it were, identified him and introduced him by name to the congregation, so that the people had access to him there through his holy name. Second, the choir praised the Lord. They did not address their praise to God but to the congregation. In their praise they sang about his goodness and proclaimed his loving-kindness to the assembled congregation, even as they stood in God's presence. Because God was utterly good and far more generous than any

human being, his presence could only be communicated via full-bodied praise. He was so wonderful and great that they could only acclaim him and proclaim his presence with them in the language and posture of praise. Third, as is shown by the psalm given in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36, the singers called on the congregation, all the nations, and the whole of creation to join them in acknowledging God's gracious presence with his people and in praising him for his steadfast love for them and his whole creation.

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

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

NOTES

1. See Christoph Trautmann, "J.S. Bach: New Light on His Faith," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42 (1971): 88–99; and Christoph Trautmann, "Bach's Bible," *American Choral Review* 14, no. 4 (Oct. 1972): 3–11.
2. Robin A. Leaver, *J.S. Bach and Scripture: Glosses from the Calov Bible Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985).
3. Howard H. Cox, *The Calov Bible of J. S. Bach* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985).
4. John W. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

The Sacrament of the Altar and Its Relationship to Justification

Scott R. Murray

At the end of the twentieth century, while the church may still be wrangling about the doctrine of church and ministry (and that doctrinal issue is still worth wrangling over), the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is the watershed doctrinal issue in the twenty-first century. Luther said of the Lord's Supper, "The sacrament is the gospel."[1] Luther's most significant (not to mention long-winded) writings were directly about the sacrament of the altar. But what of the much-praised but often ignored *Hauptartikel*, the doctrine of justification? Could Luther possibly have been guilty of ignoring his favorite doctrine? Did Luther stray from the center of the Bible in an attempt to develop a polemical case against Bucer, Zwingli, Oecolompadius, Carlstadt, and others? Theoretically, it is possible. Of course, the questions remain rhetorical.

Any gift of God brings with it the whole of the faith, the whole gospel, all given in the triune Name as at baptism.[2] This is the import of Luther's statement "the sacrament is the gospel." Luther may have been able to say the same for any article of the faith. Our generous God grants all gifts in abundance and at once. Martin Chemnitz wrote, "the whole treasury of all the benefits which Christ the Mediator procured by the offering up of his body . . . [are] certainly communicated to [the believer] and firmly given and pledged to him."[3] The sacrament of the altar is and is about the gospel, and the gospel is and is about the sacrament. Thus a crisis of understanding in the doctrine of the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood is a crisis of the doctrine of justification and the gospel itself.

This is Luther's *Hauptartikel* at work. Luther made justification central to the whole Lutheran theological program: "The article of justification is master and prince, lord, president and judge above all kinds of doctrine. It preserves and guides every churchly doctrine and cheers our consciences before God."[4] In the Smalcald Articles, Luther identified the article of justification as the *Hauptartikel* along with the article of the person of Christ (SA II, 1; II, II, 25). Luther used the doctrine of justification as a critical tool to repulse every false practice and every human pretense before God (SA III, XIV, 1; cf. LC Preface).

True Lutheranism, guided by the doctrine of justification, will take a certain doctrinal stand on the teaching of the Lord's Supper. While the Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper has been shamefully abandoned by the ELCA, we too ought to beware of the plague of a purely formal confessionalism. Perhaps we are guilty of crypto-Calvinism, all the while congratulating ourselves for and crowing loudly about how deeply Lutheran we are. Now, I do not mean to say that we are intentionally crypto-Calvinistic, as was the faculty majority at the University of Wittenberg in the 1560s. Nevertheless, we may be guilty of the theological laziness that leads to mouthing oft-repeated truisms, for which there may be little basis in our Lutheran confessional witness. So we may be "crypto" of a different and far worse kind: our theological failure may be hidden from ourselves.

THE PROBLEM OF RECEPTIONISM

The long-lingering doctrine of receptionism among conservative Lutherans is the crypto-Calvinistic Trojan horse in American Lutheranism. Receptionism is the doctrine that the presence of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is finally produced only at the reception of the elements themselves. Receptionists believe that the bread remains bread until all three parts of the Lutheran sacramental action are actually completed. In this way my eating of the bread makes it the body of Christ. My drinking of the wine makes it the blood of Christ. The bread on the altar remains bread until I eat it. The wine on the altar remains wine until I drink it.

The doctrine of receptionism is in conflict with the doctrine of justification and is tantamount to a denial of it. The words of institution, which are the word of God, solely and entirely cause the presence, so that the bread and wine become the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ lies upon our altars. This is the truly Lutheran position held by Luther and repeated by the Formula of Concord.

We come to the holy of holies of our faith when we come to the altar to receive Christ's body and blood. We have said a great deal when we have said that the receptionistic view of the sacrament conflicts with the doctrine of justification. This is especially troubling since our theological hero, Francis Pieper, was a defender of this doctrine. At one time, following Pieper, I myself adhered faithfully to this understanding of the cause of the presence in the sacrament of the altar.

Pieper inherited this doctrine from a long line of seventeenth-century theologians, beginning with Aegidius Hunnius (d. 1603) and including the great John Gerhard, as well as John Andrew Quenstedt. Hunnius wrote a book published in 1590 (just ten years after the publication of the Book of Concord) in which he specifically denies that the word of God brings about the real presence.[5] "No union of the bread and the body of Christ takes place

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during the recitation of the words, before the very act of the bread being eaten."[6] For Hunnius the bread does not become the body of Christ at the consecration. Bjarne Teigen says that Hunnius "depotentiates" the words of institution when Hunnius argues that we cannot be sure of the power of the word until the bread of the sacrament is actually consumed.[7]

Misunderstandings of several different kinds lead to the doctrine of receptionism.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE SACRAMENTAL ACTION

Of course, the defenders of receptionism point to the Formula of Concord as the ultimate bulwark against the so-called error of consecrationism. Consecrationism is the shorthand for the teaching that the word of God alone causes the sacramental union of the bread and the body of Christ with the wine and blood of Christ.

The doctrine of receptionism is in conflict with the doctrine of justification and is tantamount to a denial of it.

Article VII of the Formula of Concord deals with the crypto-Calvinisitic doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Formula confessed for the Lutheran church the threefold sacramental action or use of the Lord's Supper. The three elements were (1) consecration, (2) distribution, and (3) reception. The Formula of Concord offered this theological principle: "Nothing is a sacrament outside the use," the famous *extra usum* canon (SD VII, 73, 85). The point of the *extra usum* canon was to protect the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ from being abused, by being used in ways not in keeping with the gospel character of the sacrament's institution. The Formula of Concord disapproved the private masses, Corpus Christi parades, and reservation of the consecrated bread of the sacrament common in the Roman Catholic liturgical practice of the sixteenth century.

> The command of Christ, "This do" (which embraces the entire action or administration in this Sacrament, that in an assembly of Christians bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, eaten, drunk, and the Lord's death is shown forth at the same time) must be observed unseparated and inviolate, as also St. Paul places before our eyes the entire action of the breaking of bread or of distribution and reception, 1 Cor 10, 16 (SD VII, 83–84).

The doctrine of justification forbids that we should take the body of Christ and turn it to purposes other than that for which it was given for us to eat and to drink. To do so would be work-righteousness. The Supper must remain a gift given by God to his people. His Word is plain. The Word tells us that our heavenly Father has given us this life-giving food of Christ's body and blood for us Christians to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sin.

> Since a misunderstanding and dissension among some teachers of the *Augsburg Confession* also has occurred concerning consecration and the common rule, that *nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use* [or divinely instituted act], we have made a fraternal and unanimous declaration to one another also concerning this matter to the following purport, namely, that not the word or work of any man produces the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, whether it be the merit or recitation of the minister, or the eating and drinking or faith of the communicants; but all this should be ascribed alone to the power of Almighty God and the word, institution, and ordination of our Lord Jesus Christ (SD VII, 73–74).

The goal of the *extra usum* canon, then, is to keep the Lord's body and blood from being used for purposes that the Lord himself did not intend. The *extra usum* canon does not function as the Lutheran description of the cause of the presence.

FAULTY DOCTRINE OF ARISTOTELIAN CAUSATION

How then did the threefold sacramental action come to be understood as the cause of the sacramental presence? This came about by the application of what we would today call a faulty paradigm for describing the problem. That paradigm was provided by the Aristotelian philosophy employed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theological discourse. Aristotelian philosophy employed a flawed variation of Aristotle's doctrine of causation. In this variation receptionists, like Hunnius, applied a four-causes paradigm to the sacramental action in the Lord's Supper. The four causes were material, formal, efficient, and final. For example, in the famous case of a marble sculpture, the marble block would be the material cause, the sculpting the efficient cause, the shape of the statue the formal cause, and the final cause would be the purpose for which the sculpture would be created. In this paradigm it is not really a statue until it is admired by those who look upon it.[8] This is its purpose. Thus for Hunnius the elements could not be body and blood until they were employed for the purpose for which they had been consecrated.

There are a couple of problems with this paradigm. First, Aristotelianism becomes more than a matrix in which we may hang theological truth; it takes on a controlling power over the biblical data. In our minds Luther's warnings against Dame Reason should arise against this approach. This is magisterial reason smoothing out the mysteries. Second, this is not even good philosophy. Aristotle himself would not recognize this use of the doctrine of the causes. He never applied the fourfold causation to a single natural object. Aristotle always used different examples when describing each of the four causes. How much less could the fourfold causation of late medieval Aristotelianism elicit the truth of the situation in this supernatural gift in the sacrament of the altar![9]

Unfortunately, modern-day receptionists no longer hold to the tripartite action as the cause of the presence. Rather, they will readily admit that the reception itself causes the presence. So, until it is taken, bread it is and bread it will remain. When I receive it, it becomes the body of Christ. What makes the reception superior to the word of God?

CONFUSION OF TERMS IN THE ARGUMENT

Sometimes confusing the terms muddied the discussion of the relationship between the word and presence. Pieper provides a good example of this confusion in his *Dogmatics* when he says, "We must ask, what makes this sacred rite really the Lord's Supper? We answer: The Sacrament instituted by Christ, comes into being not by the state of the administrant, nor by the faith of the communicants, but by the institution of Christ."[10] Part of the problem here may be in Albrecht's translation, but the problem in the English is that it does not account for the fact that the celebration of the rite and the cause of the presence may be distinguished. In fact, this is begging the question. Pieper did not do this intentionally, because the text includes a quote from the Formula of Concord to the effect that indicates that the Formula's position is that the presence is effected by the declaration "This is my body; this is my blood."[11] Perhaps Pieper himself gives us here a personal example of his famous felicitous inconsistency. The rite and the presence are distinguishable from each other. It is the difference between what a thing is and what it is to be used for, that is, the difference between essence and purpose. Essence precedes purpose. Purpose does not give essence. Careful use of the terms and a clear definition of them are necessary to speak clearly about a difficult subject.

FEAR OF A PAPISTIC MASS

Proponents of receptionism often raise the specter of the introduction of the Roman Catholic mass into the Lutheran church. Lutherans have never shied from the truth, even when the truth is shared with the Church of Rome. The earliest opponents to the Formula of Concord charged that the Formula's doctrine of consecration was identical to the Roman doctrine of the consecration.[12] The Lutheran and the Roman doctrine of the consecration differ in clear and significant ways. The Roman doctrine puts the power of creating the presence of the body and blood of the Lord personally into the hands of the priest by reason of the indelible mark of his priestly ordination. For Lutherans there is no such personal power; there is only a pastoral office conferring on the office holder the duty of acting in the stead of the Lord to carry out the Lord's will in administering the sacraments. Hermann Sasse warned against priestcraft: "No beauty of the ancient liturgies can gloss over the fact that in them a human priest treads beside the eternal high priest, a sacrifice done by man beside Christ's sacrifice."[13] Thus in the Roman sacramental rites the power to consecrate means that the word of God alone does not give the divinely ordained gift, but the human power and authority of the priest together with the divinely conferred sacrament give the gift of the presence. Bjarne Teigen commented:

> This obviously makes the consecration and absolution partly the work of God and of man (the ordained priest). There is cooperation here between man and God, with the result that the consecration and the absolution are an integral part of the whole Roman synergistic system.[14]

Any attempt by humans to make complete what God has given in the gospel is by definition synergism. One can see immediately that this conflicts with the *Hauptartikel*. Chemnitz, Timothy Kirchner, and Nicolas Selneccer responded to the charge that the Roman consecration and the Lutheran doctrine of the consecration taught in the Formula were the same.

> Concerning the foregoing they allege that if the repetition of the Words of Institution brings about the body of Christ in the supper, then it must be a sacrament apart from the correct use as Christ has instituted it; and this, they say, simply constitutes papist idolatry. Come, come now, Gentlemen! The Christian Concord goes no farther than the correct use instituted by Christ. And it does not say anywhere either that it is to be placed in a pyx and locked up in the eucharistic tabernacle and, as previously stated, it speaks only about the use instituted by Christ himself.[15]

To say that the Lutheran doctrine of consecration is the same as the Roman doctrine of consecration is either intentionally dishonest or just confused. The Lutheran doctrine of consecration entails no abuses of the holy body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Can wicked humans abuse the elements? Yes, but should human abuse cause us to modify Christ's institution. Surely not, or every doctrine would be susceptible to radical and constant modification.

FEAR OF "HOCUS POCUS"

Our term "hocus pocus" is an elision of the Latin terms used at the consecration of the host at the sacrament of the altar, "hoc est corpus meum" ("this is my body"). Already in 1528 Melanchthon had doubts as to whether or not the consecration effected the presence. He said that it did not occur "by the power of the words, for that, as it is said, is magic."[16] If the word does not make the presence, what does? Our action? How is that different from priestly consecrationism in the Roman Church? Does it matter whether it is our word or rather our actions that effect the presence? Either is synergistic and a betrayal of justification. It is not magic to do what is commanded by God. It is not magic when what takes place is precisely what God says, because it is a powerful word. The consecration is not the pastor's work or word but God's work and word.

FALSE FASTIDIOUSNESS

Some years ago an altar guild member demurred about cleaning up the sacramental vessels for fear that if she spilled the consecrated wine on the floor she would be guilty of spilling the blood of Christ. My reply included the comfort that the Lord Christ has placed the most precious gifts into the hands of fallible, even wicked persons like us, pastors and lay people alike. The point of the incarnation is that God comes into the world to get dirty with us dirty humans (1 Jn 1:1–2). "He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:20). God does not need us to rescue him from his own radicality. We will then receive the stinging rebuke received by Peter, "Get behind me, Satan."

There have been many silly examples used to deny that the presence is effected by the words of institution. The classic example is the mouse getting on the altar and helping himself to a host during the distribution (we have all seen that happen!). Hunnius offers an example that is equally risible.

> For if it should happen when the Words of Institution have been recited by the minister and the consecration, as they call it, has been made, that a fire should break out or some other tumult before anyone had approached the Lord's table, and thus in such a case the sacred action would be prevented, it is asked whether by the power of the recitation which has been completed there is in some secret way a union between the body of Christ and the bread, even outside the ordained use of the bread in the eating, which has been prevented by the unforeseen circumstance? Here certainly anyone who is not stupid prefers to respond in the negative rather than the affirmative.[17]

There are several errors here. First, such examples cannot be used to establish the Bible's teaching of the sacrament. By the use of such trivial examples one could set aside any Christian teaching.

Already in 1528 Melanchthon had doubts as to whether or not the consecration effected the presence.

Second, this is not a question of preference. St. Peter preferred that Jesus not go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Here the axiom of St. Augustine, "Abusus non tollit usus" (the abuse does not negate the rule), applies. Actually, on the basis of Hunnius's illustration we could just as easily argue that churches should never be built for fear that they might burn down! Such fastidiousness would have prevented the very incarnation of our Lord.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN COMMAND WORDS AND EFFECT WORDS

Lutheran doctrine distinguishes between command words (*Heisselwort*) and effect words (*Taetelwort*). The command word "do this" embraces the effect "this is my body." The words "this is my body" would be without effect if the Lord had not commanded us to do this. Luther himself offers analogies from holy baptism and holy absolution.

> Likewise when the priest baptizes and says, "I baptize you," etc. that of course is simply a declarative, but because it stands in the context of an imperative, when Christ says, "Go ye therefore and baptize," it must be nonetheless a baptism in the sight of God. And if Peter or Paul says, "Your sins are forgiven," as Christ said to Mary Magdalene [Luke 7:48]—well, that is simply a declarative, nevertheless the sins are forgiven as the words declare, because it is embraced and commanded in an imperative, since Christ says in the last chapter of John, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any," etc.[18]

The words "this is my body" are effect words that do what the Lord says, not because they have magical power, but because the Lord has commanded us to use them in connection with the sacred action of the sacrament of the altar.

The command words show what is to be done with what the Lord sets in our mouths at the altar. Let me give a clumsy illustration. If when the food for luncheon is set out, our hosts would say, "Take, eat. This is Texas Barbecue," who would conclude that this would not be barbecue if we did not eat it? The words of gracious invitation do not create the thing of which we partake. "Take, eat" is a command word. But "this is Texas Barbecue" remains a declarative word. The difference in the case of the words of institution is that "this is my body" are the words of the Son of God who graciously makes things be that are not (Romans 4:17). Our eating does not make things so.

Another illustration may be in order. The Lord our God created light on the first day of creation. He spoke, "Let there be light." And there was light. There was light apart from a natural purpose and indeed apart from a natural source. But who would deny that there was light when God spoke? Who could deny the presence of the body and blood of the Lord when the Lord speaks at our altars?

THE IMPLICATION OF SYNERGISM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO JUSTIFICATION

In the monergistic faith of the Lutheran Church, the people of God receive the faith and its every blessing as a gift from God our heavenly Father. This is what our Lutheran fathers called the *pure passive,* the pure receptivity of faith.[19] It creates nothing. It only receives. Any claim to cooperation with God in the creation of the gifts is nothing other than synergism. Synergism is the doctrine that humans cooperate with God in their salvation. Receptionism is synergistic.

MANDUCATIO INDIGNORUM, MANDUCATIO DIGNORUM

The Lutheran church distinguishes its doctrine of real presence from the Reformed by three terms, oral eating (*manducatio oralis*), the eating of the unworthy (*manducatio indignorum*), and the sacramental union (*unio sacramentalis*). I would like to focus on the eating of the unworthy here. The visitation articles prepared in 1592 at the command of the Elector of Saxony indicated that both the worthy and the unworthy receive the body and blood of the Lord in the sacrament of the altar.

> VI. That the oral partaking of the body and blood of Christ is done not only by the worthy, but also by the unworthy, who approach without repentance and true faith; nevertheless, with a different result: by the worthy for salvation, by the unworthy for judgment.[20]

This is also the teaching of the Formula of Concord. If reception of the elements causes the presence in the sacrament, then we are in the strange position of arguing that the unbeliever's eating causes the presence in the sacrament of the altar. The rule of the eating of the unworthy means that both the worthy and the unworthy receive at the sacrament the same things and for the same cause. The worthy, however, receive them for salvation; the unworthy, for judgment. If the reception of the unbeliever effects the presence, then we are arguing that what the word of God cannot do by itself an unbeliever has

accomplished by his unworthy reception. Even Big Bird of Sesame Street would say, There is something wrong with this picture.

LUTHERAN LITURGICAL USE

If receptionism is true, the Lutheran words of distribution "Take eat, this is the true body" are at best meaningless, at worst, false. It would be misleading to describe the elements as the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, when it would be correct only to say, "this will become the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" if the elements do not become the body and blood until they are distributed. This is hardly the comforting monergistic gift of salvation given by a gracious God. This is synergistic nonsense.

Early Lutheran church orders denominate the elements on the altar after the consecration as "body and blood." Lowell Green argues that the American agendas that use the terms bread and wine were influenced by Reformed theology.[21] What shall we call it? A colleague had a bulletin announcement about the sacrament that said that the communicants should treat the consecrated elements "as if [*sic*] they were the body and blood of Christ"! One wonders what kind of doctrine of the sacrament stands behind that verbal gaff.

The churchly practice and piety that should derive from this doctrine of the sacrament is one that is almost never intentionally practiced today in the Lutheran Church.

ADORATION

Chemnitz encouraged an appropriate adoration of the presence of Christ within the sacramental action. First, no matter what else happens as the sacrament is celebrated, not to adore and worship would be a sacrilege. Who, in the presence of God, would not bow down, whether in body or in spirit (Isaiah 6)? Second, the Lutheran piety still includes bodily signs of worship surrounding the communion action. In most Lutheran churches the communicants still kneel, heads bowed in reverence. Many communicants bow before leaving the altar. It would be blasphemous to kneel and bow if there were not a real presence on the altar of the Lutheran church.

Now let it be said clearly that Chemnitz did not encourage adoration outside of the sacramental action. This would be an offense to God. Chemnitz made three points to defend the principle of the adoration in the sacrament.

1. That Christ, God and Man, is to be worshiped, no one but an Arian denies . . .
2. That also His human nature, because of its union with the divinity, is to be worshiped, no one but a Nestorian calls into question. . . .
3. That no one therefore denies that Christ, God and Man, truly and substantially present in His divine and human nature *in the action of the Lord's Supper,* should be worshiped in spirit and in truth, except someone, who, with the Sacramentarians, either denies or harbors doubt concerning the presence of Christ in the Supper. Neither can the *anamnesis* and proclamation of the death of Christ in the Supper be rightly done without that worship which is done in spirit and in truth.[22]

Chemnitz was not expressing a personal opinion, but reflecting the position of Luther himself, a position with which the Formula of Concord was entirely in harmony. Luther encouraged the veneration of the holy sacrament both early and late in his career.

> Now to come back to the Sacrament: he who does not believe that Christ's body and blood are present does well to worship neither with his spirit or with his body. But he who does believe, as sufficient demonstration is shown it ought to be believed, can surely not withhold his adoration of the body and blood of Christ without sinning. For I must always confess that Christ is present when His body and blood are present. His words do not lie to me and he is not separated from His body and blood.[23]

If we intentionally withhold adoration, we are implicitly denying the real presence of the Lord's body and blood. Unfortunately, among us this adoration is denigrated as a distasteful part of Roman Catholic piety, when it is in fact a solid part of the Lutheran piety of the holy sacrament.

THE MOMENT OF THE PRESENCE

Supporters of the receptionistic doctrine of the presence leap on the question of the moment of the presence with great relish, gleefully pointing out that after all the problem of the moment of the presence is a Roman Catholic relic. Therefore all Lutherans that advance opinions about this question are papists.

Early Lutheran church orders denominate the elements on the altar after the consecration as "body and blood."

Two things may be said to this. First, the receptionists have themselves set a moment of the presence. When the communicant has taken the bread into his mouth, the bread becomes the body of Christ. That advances a theory about the moment of the presence. The only time when the problem of the "moment" does not arise is when there is no presence. Those who deny the presence never ask about the time of the presence.

Second, Luther too offered an opinion on this matter. Luther held there was a span of time when the presence is "there."

> Therefore we shall define the time of the sacramental action in this way: that it starts with the beginning of the Word of the Lord, and lasts until all have communicated, have emptied the chalice, have consumed the Hosts, until the people have been dismissed (the benediction), and the priests have left the altar.[24]

For Luther the presence stretches from the consecration until the service is complete. Because the word creates the presence, we know that the body and blood of the Lord are present throughout the action. The Lutheran church is not interested in answering the

question as to when during the words of institution the presence is effected. Nevertheless, it confesses unequivocally that the body of Christ is on the Lutheran altar after the consecration.

CONCLUSION

Near the end of his life in the winter of 1546, while he was traveling to Mansfeld, Luther was asked to preach at a parish church. During the distribution of the Lord's body and blood, he, being infirm in his old age, spilled the blood of Christ onto the chancel floor. Luther got down on his hands and knees and licked up the spill to a chorus of weeping from the communicants.[25] If he had spilled that which had never become the blood of the Lord, he would not have stooped to do what he did. But Luther throughout his life had a high regard for that of which the Lord had said, "This is my body." Luther was not merely some romantic high-church guru, of the "bells-and-smells" crowd. No, Luther knew that our gracious God gave this supper out of love and for our need. Luther knew that God was willing to risk himself by giving into our weak and shaking hands the gift of his own blood shed for us for the forgiveness of sins. He knew that to think differently of the word of God that causes the bread and wine to be body and blood would be to deny the power of the word and depths of God's radical grace and mercy.

May God in his mercy grant that it be so for us too. Our faith and practice need constant adjustment in the face of the authoritative speaking of God. Help us to confess our weakness, O Lord, as we confess your strong Word and its power to both give and forgive. LOGIA

NOTES

1. Martin Luther, "The Adoration of the Sacrament," in AE, 36: 289.
2. This is as close to "implicit faith" as the Lutheran church gets.
3. Martin Chemnitz, *The Examination of the Council of Trent,* 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: CPH, 1978), 2: 232.
4. WA, 39[1]: 205, 2–3, "articulus justificationis est magister et princeps, dominus, rector et judex super omnia genera doctrinarum, qui conservet et gubernat omnem doctrinam ecclesiasticam et erigit conscientiam nostram coram Deo."
5. Hermann Sasse, who had no anti-Missourian bias, was also critical of Hunnius and Pieper on this point.
6. Aegidius Hunnius, *Articulus sive Locus De Sacramentis Veteris et Novi Testamenti, praecipue de Baptismo et Coena Domini* (Franfort, 1590), 712, quoted in Bjarne W. Teigen, *The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Brewster: Trinity Lutheran Press, 1986), 90.
7. Teigen, 131.
8. Teigen, 91.
9. See note 65 in Teigen, 206–207.
10. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* 3 vols., trans. Walter W. F. Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3: 365.
11. Ibid.; SD VII, 76.
12. Teigen, 86.
13. Hermann Sasse, "The Lutheran Understanding of the Consecration," in *We Confess the Sacraments*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 127.
14. Teigen, 96.
15. Martin Chemnitz, Timothy Kirchner, and Nicolaus Selneccer, *Apologia oder Verantwortung des christlichen concordien Buchs* (Dresden, 1584), 157–158, quoted in Teigen, 88.
16. CR 1: 948–949, quoted in Teigen, 83.
17. Quoted in Teigen, 90.
18. AE, 37: 183.
19. Robert D. Preus, "The Significance of Luther's Term *Pure Passive* as Quoted in Article II of the Formula of Concord" *Concordia Theological Monthly* 29 (August 1958): 561–70.
20. *Concordia Triglotta,* 1151.
21. Lowell Green, in *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord,* Robert D. Preus and Wilbert H. Rosin, eds. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 304.
22. *Examination,* 2: 277–79.
23. AE, 36: 293–94.
24. Quoted in Teigen, 139; Teigen's translation. More can be said about the way in which these words of Luther can be construed. Teigen's view, which I have represented here, is in the end most convincing.
25. Sasse, 134.

Luther's Theology of the Cross in Preaching And as Spiritual Warfare

Perry Toso

"Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which you have broken may rejoice" (Psalm 51:8).

What was it about Luther's theology that not only made it new, but generated the power to overthrow fifteen hundred years of accumulated theological tradition? What made his preaching so authoritative that today he is still recognized as perhaps the finest expositor of Scripture the world has ever known? Surely the clue lies in his *Heidelberg Disputation;* he called it the theology of the cross.

A HERMENEUTIC INVOLVING GOD, MAN, DEVIL, AND CONSCIENCE

The theology of the cross is understood in many different ways. I propose that it can be understood as a phenomenon predicated of the person, and as such it cannot be properly understood apart from a careful analysis of what particularly is being said about that person. Gerhard Forde has repeatedly observed that the theology of the cross is an abstraction of the practice of being a theologian of the cross. "Note carefully that the immediate focus is on theologians and their mode of operating, not on theology as such."[1] This more properly emphasizes the importance of the person. Nor can the theology of the cross be properly understood apart from the dramatic warfare it describes. Preaching is nothing less than mortal combat for the conscience. The theology of the cross reveals to the hearer the full horror of the situation in which he finds himself when his conscience is attacked or tempted, and then delivers that conscience safely to faith in Christ.

Preaching, as understood by Luther, is not only meant to be clearly understood, but actually to *create* understanding. Thus preaching is actually a saving event where the word the preacher speaks will grasp, shape, and save the hearer.

> The most astonishing thing about the Christian understanding of salvation as interpreted by the Reformers is this *identification of word-event and salvation-event* . . . . In what does perdition consist, if it is a lack or misuse of the proper word-event? In what does salvation consist if a single, mere word can put everything to rights and save? How does it come about that the decision on man is made in the conscience, so that he is written off, lost and dead when his conscience is written off, lost and dead, and he is raised, rescued and made alive to the extent that in his conscience he is raised, rescued and made alive?[2]

"Theological reflexions . . . are an effort to learn the language which affects the conscience and reaches to the point at which decisive things happen."[3] Thus there are three players in the drama of salvation: God, man who hears God's word, and the devil.

GOD

God is not to be understood simply by speculation on our part based on that which has been revealed in nature. For Luther, God is God as revealed in Christ. The central interpretive principle of the theology of the cross is that the Scriptures are about one thing: Jesus Christ. Every book of the Old Testament is unabashedly treated this way. To study Luther's Psalms lectures, for example, is to encounter a breathtaking confidence that they are all about Christ, and nothing else. But that is still not a sufficient criterion. The Scriptures are about Christ alone *and him crucified.* This is where man's reason, intellect, and wisdom are undone, because the way God reveals himself is under his opposite, under his contrary, at the cross of Jesus Christ. This revelation is absolutely unintelligible to reason apart from faith. God does this "that there may be room for faith." Luther quotes 1 Corinthians 1:18, "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Thus the First Actor in the drama of the theology of the cross is God—understood as God revealed in Christ, God revealed in the word preached.

That God speaks clearly, convincingly, almost overpoweringly in his word is axiomatic to understanding the theology of the cross. Such an understanding undergirds the assertion that Scripture is its own interpreter.

> It does not need to seek elsewhere for sources of understanding to throw light upon it, as though it were obscure, difficult, and unapproachable. On the contrary, it is itself the source of understanding, illumination and certainty in the very measure in which it brings everything into light.[4]

Though this does not mean that interpretation is superfluous, it does declare what kind of interpretation is appropriate. And if the

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Scripture alone is to be the authority to establish the conscience, against the whole world if necessary, then its interpretation obviously needs to be certain and consistent. The shorthand for this entire complex of thought is *sola Scriptura.* Contrasted to the Roman Catholic position of Scripture and tradition, *sola Scriptura* performs three tasks: it preserves intact the distinction between text and interpretation, it maintains that the Word of God has absolute precedence over the church that it creates, and it maintains the distinction between Christ as the head of the church and the church herself.

> Directly connected with *sola scriptura* is the certainty of faith, which adheres to the Word of the Gospel that gives assurance to the conscience. Where faith is concerned, there can be no appeal to any other authority on the question of certainty; on the contrary, it is faith that gives a man certainty through Christ before God . . . certainty does not rest on the decision of an ecclesiastical decree, but on the actual decision of faith in Christ.[5]

Thus God, when he speaks to us in his word, creates faith in Christ and its correlate, certainty. This does not happen mechanically, but through the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, who writes upon the heart of the hearer the conviction of the absolute validity of this witness. How this takes place and why it is given to some and not to others is not answered. Here it is important to state the distinction made by Luther, for the sake of terrified consciences, between the God preached and the God not preached. We rely with our whole existence upon the God preached. The very heart of God is revealed in the preaching of Christ crucified. The God not preached is none of our business, and will terrify us and drive us from faith into despair, should we try to pry into these things and thus divert our eyes from Christ alone.

All this necessitates a spiritual combat called preaching.

MAN

Man is defined in Luther as one who is essentially a being created, called into question, either established or condemned by an address that he cannot escape, but which throws him into one of two places—blessing or curse. There is absolutely no other option. The two words that create these two spheres are both the word of God. They are law and gospel. These two words are heard in man's conscience, where the two most strictly opposed powers on earth are in conflict. The powers of law and gospel create the two most absolutely definitive results for existence—salvation or damnation. Luther writes in a sermon from 1524, "The heart and conscience have a word, either good or bad. Thus the conscience, either good or bad, trusts either in God or the opposite. There is no middle ground, where the conscience would have neither God nor the devil" (WA, xv: 426, 27–29). Luther, following the Aaronic benediction, acknowledged only two possibilities: God's face toward you in blessing, or away in curse. Thus man is understood as a creature of conscience who is always *coram Deo* (in the presence of God).

THE DEVIL

The devil, as the opponent of both God and man, seeks to confuse these two words in the conscience by preaching gospel to the snoring so that they will never turn to God, and law to the penitent so that they will despair. In each case, the result is the strict opposite of salvation. A third case is identified in *The Bondage of the Will:* the clarity of Scripture may become garbled by a hermeneutic tradition that exalts itself over Scripture. Again the result is the direct opposite of salvation. With the stakes this high, no pastor could accede to Erasmus's request that, for the sake of harmony in the church, one should not press the question of the interpretation of Scripture.

All this necessitates a spiritual combat called preaching. The task of preaching is to comfort (again and again) the attacked conscience, which is in terror and agony over God's impending wrath, and establish it once again safe and secure—certain of God's gracious verdict in Jesus Christ. Thus preaching has as its primary task to undo the confusion continually sown by the devil. To this end it is necessary rightly to distinguish law and gospel and then to apply each of them appropriately to the persons and occasion. This requires discernment on the part of the preacher, who must be led by the Spirit. Significantly, it is not the preacher, as such, who makes the distinction effective for the hearer. The Spirit in his sovereign rule does that. He is the one who works salvation when and where he pleases.

CONSCIENCE

The term conscience has been almost hopelessly muddled by idealistic interpretation and definition. But I believe, along with many theologians, including Lohse and Ebeling, that the recovery of a proper and robust conception of conscience is not only possible, but may also serve critically to reorient theology toward its primary function, preaching.

The Greek term συνείδησις, translated into Latin by two words, *synteresis* and *conscientia*, bears witness, by its very etymology, that man is a creature who relates to himself by *joint* cognizance.

> Scholastic usage defined *synteresis* as an ability to incline toward the good, whereas *conscientia* made practical application of the principle of *synteresis.* Whether, following Thomas and Duns, *synteresis* is primarily associated with reason, or following Bonaventura, with the will, or whether it is regarded as a *habitus*, as Thomas did, or as *potentia*, as Biel did, makes little difference.[6]

While Luther began by accepting this usage, as early as the first Psalm lectures his unprecedented concentration of the themes of judgment and gospel had driven him to a new conception of conscience as the venue where man experiences the effects of

both. Luther's exegesis and personal *Anfechtungen* combine to make his a conscience theology, where conscience now is the "bearer of man's relationship to God."[7]

It is not adequate to say of Luther's theology that conscience is an organ of ethical consciousness or that conscience is a characteristic of our humanity. A person doesn't "have" a conscience. For Luther, a person "is" conscience. Man experiences himself as oriented toward a verdict that comes from outside himself. He experiences conscience as an accusing force. He is called to give account. So in the *Advent Postil* of 1522 we find these words:

> For where there is sin there is no clear conscience; where there is no clear conscience, there is a life of uncertainty and an unquenchable fear of death and hell in the presence of which no real joy can exist in the heart, as Lev. 26,36 says: "The sound of a driven leaf shall chase them."[8]

Or in the lectures on Genesis from the 1540s: "Conscience is an evil beast which makes a man take a stand against himself" (AE, 7: 331). The attacked conscience hears the voice of the law (and whether the law is used by God or misused by the devil makes no difference), while the good conscience hears and is established by the gospel in proper confidence in Christ. This equation is found in full formulation in the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518:

> Nevertheless, faith in Christ is a good conscience, as Peter says: "As an appeal to God for a good conscience" [1 Pet. 3:21], that means that it thoroughly confides in God. If therefore a work without faith were not a mortal sin, it would follow that Paul would greatly concern himself with a venial sin, which is false, since no one can live without venial sin. Therefore, everything that does not proceed from faith is a mortal damnable sin, because it is also contrary to the conscience, the conscience, I say, of faith in Christ, because man does not act with confidence in Christ. For he does not believe that he pleases God in order thereby to merit something, and nevertheless he acts in such lack of faith and according to his conscience (AE, 31: 67).

In the deepest sense there is simply nothing you can do about an attacked conscience. You must wait for something to be done to you. David knew this when he cried out in anguish, "Make me to hear joy and gladness!" (Psalm 51:8).

Anfechtung (the experience of the attack and absolute judgment of God) and *Heilsgewissheit* (the confidence in the objective and complete righteousness that is alien to the believer, external, and in Christ) intersect in the individual under the power of the preached word. At their intersection is the mysterious border/location where salvation or justification takes place. One cannot arrive at Christian certainty without having been through what can only be described with an oxymoron: a saving destruction. According to Luther's theology of the cross, because God and man are not related by analogy but by contradiction, God first must be your opponent before he can be your Savior. And this is not a one-time deal. It is a sequence; it is a dialectical reality that is always operative. For Luther this involves not just severe anxiety, but being brought utterly and completely to one's end. This is experienced as despair or death. *Anfechtung,* for Luther, is the proleptic experience of hell itself in the here and now, the knowledge of God's wrath and condemnation. Luther wrote in 1518:

> I too know a man who . . . has suffered such punishments . . . . In them God appears terrible in his anger, and so, in the same way, does the whole creation. There is no refuge, no comfort, neither within nor without, but everything accuses. Then he screams this verse, "I am driven far from thy sight" (Psalm 31:22). And he does not even dare to say, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy anger" (Psalm 6:1). At such a moment, strange to say, the soul is not able to believe that it can ever be redeemed, but merely feels that the punishment is not yet at an end. This punishment is in fact eternal, and the soul cannot regard it as merely temporary. All that remains is a naked desire for help and a dreadful sighing, but the soul does not know where to cry out for help. The soul is stretched out with [the crucified] Christ, so that all its bones can be counted, and there is not a single corner in it which is not full of the bitterest bitterness, of terror, of fear, and of sadness, but in such a way as though everything without exception were eternal . . . and this inner fire is far more terrible than the outward fire (WA 1: 557, 33–558, 15).

When one has come to this *Anfechtung* and is falling, falling into the abyss, then one is astonishingly caught, where it is past all hope or human help to be caught. *Anfechtung* thus serves to locate what can only be God's work. But what is done by God alone locates the absolutely valid—the one thing the conscience seeks. The result is certainty written on the heart of the one who has experienced this. God is faithful, not in some generic sense, but to *you*, and *for you.* It is a certainty that has nothing to do with speculation about God. The birth of this faith is always a miracle where the Holy Spirit is the midwife who helps us. Faith is hard-won through mortal combat where death and life contended, and where victory belonged to life.

The attacked conscience hears the voice of the law, while the good conscience hears and is established by the gospel in proper confidence in Christ.

I believe that the experience of terror and death in the conscience of the believer or preacher, under the power of God's word, which kills first in order to make alive, is one reason Luther places this assertion in full caps: CRUX SOLA EST NOSTRA THEOLOGIA ("The cross alone is our theology"). Iwand is right here: when a sinful conscience justifies God's verdict, utterly, in its own condemnation, there only does freedom start as something *solo Christo*, alien, alien in Christ. That which the conscience longs for, the absolutely valid, has for the first time been encountered—the Word who is

Jesus Christ. The gospel is a word of promise that Christ's righteousness is ours, and our sin is his. The sinner and Christ are more one than husband and wife. All that is his is mine. Our theology is certain, says Luther, because it places us outside ourselves. Both the oneness and the *extra nos* are necessary comfort for the conscience that has daily to deal with the *simul justus et peccator.*

> The church's teaching and scholastic theology in general asserted as self-evident that the grace infused in the first place in baptism, and renewed after each mortal sin in the sacrament of penance, inhered in the person who received it as a new supernatural faculty enabling him to live a saintly life, even though still imperfectly. Thus grace ultimately cast man back upon himself, towards his own striving for sanctification, and consequently also into uncertainty regarding himself . . . . [But Luther maintained that] the grace of the Holy Spirit never becomes our own *virtus* but is always effective as the *virtus* of God. This was the change of outlook, as great as that brought about by the Copernican view of the universe, which led to a certainty based upon the relationship between the word and faith.[9]

Luther never treated certainty as an abstract idea. Nor is certainty to be understood as epistemological indubitability, a new and promising field of inquiry in philosophy. In Luther it is always certainty of salvation. It is proper confidence—confidence that, in Christ, God is graciously disposed toward me. It is confidence written by the Holy Spirt in the heart of the believer. Even more narrowly, when this issue is discussed by Luther, not only is the venue always the conscience, but certainty is also the unique kind of conscience created in a Christian by the Holy Spirit under the word of God. The "established conscience" in Luther, as we shall see in *The Bondage of the Will,* is certain, bold, secure, stronger than all the world, because the Holy Spirit is no skeptic. Finally, this is a dynamic conception of the conscience, where preaching serves to deliver the tempted conscience over and over again. It is this paradigm of conscience delivered from destruction, by a word made certain, which provoked the response, from his students who flocked to his classroom from all over Europe and from his hearers in church alike, that something new and revolutionary had come upon them.

Being a theologian of the cross both drives preaching and dictates its content.

The second use of *Anfechtung* in Luther's theology is conformity to the much-troubled Christ. In Hebrews 5 we read, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered, and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." Luther repeatedly observes that if the master underwent this cross and suffering, we who follow should not be afraid to wear the colors of the court.

With Luther, there is absolute necessity in these two works of God, death and faith. They intersect. We Americans need to rediscover the language of the cross in order to describe more adequately the mysterious borderland between unbelief and faith—something that tells the truth far better than the hackneyed and false volitional paradigm, "Accept Jesus as your personal Savior." The problem is that in remembering our own conversion, it is too easy to remember it as a volitional act on our part. Luther always leaves the "how" of the birth of faith in strict mystery. Nevertheless, he is insistent that it has nothing to do with human volition, because that would render all of salvation uncertain. It is the Holy Spirit who writes the certainty of the "for you" upon your heart through the proclamation of the word.

Being a theologian of the cross both drives preaching and dictates its content. Note Luther's closing words in his sermon for the Fourth Sunday in Advent:

> Not that you can strip off your sins or make yourselves pious through your works; another man is needed for this; nor can I do it, I can point him out, however. It is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. He, he, and no one else either in heaven or on earth takes our sins upon himself . . . . Now, if you are able to believe that this voice of John speaks the truth, and if you are able to follow his finger and recognize the Lamb of God carrying your sin, then you have gained the victory, then you are a Christian, a master of sin, death, hell and all things. Then your conscience will rejoice and become heartily fond of this gentle Lamb of God. . . . And finally you will become cheerful and willing to do his divine will, as best you can, with all your strength. . . . Now may God our Father according to his infinite mercy bestow upon us this knowledge of Christ, and may he send into the world the voice of John, with great numbers of evangelists! Amen.[10]

HEILSGEWISSHEIT AND *THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL*

In a 1532 sermon on Matthew 5:1–12, Martin Luther said,

> If you want to preach to a person in a comforting way, then do it so that he who hears you is certain that he has a gracious God, or be silent altogether . . . preachers who leave their hearers doubting are good for nothing, for in the kingdom of God we must be sure that we have a gracious God, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life (WA 47, 307–308).

The Bondage of the Will illustrates that the whole goal of his new hermeneutic of the theology of the cross was to serve preaching. Such preaching must have as its target, not the will, but the conscience. Such preaching sounds completely different because its aim is to establish the hearer's conscience, its certainty of salvation resting upon Christ alone. Perhaps that is why, in Luther's estimation, this was his theology *in nuce,* one of his two or three finest theological efforts. "Only this book was really a book of mine," he wrote in a letter late in life (WA, Br 8: 99).

The current form of the treatise is unfortunate because it takes the refutation of Erasmus's argument point by point as the structure of the major part of the work. Nevertheless, Luther's treatise still does two characteristic things that can be observed throughout Luther's works: he thinks rigorously from a central premise, and all the assembled thoughts and assertions come from that dominant center like rays from a light. With Bernhard Lohse, I propose that *The Bondage of the Will* is a certainty project.

> In contrast to many attempted interpretations, we must maintain that the basis of Luther's argument is the certainty of faith . . . . The central point of departure for any interpretation of this whole writing of Luther's must obviously be the climax of its concluding section.[11]

As such it will have to deal with absolute authority, which alone can locate that which is certainly true. This in turn requires that it be a hermeneutical project. The Word of God must be the sole authority in this discussion, and that Word must have its interpretation secured. Finally, that it is a certainty project simply indicates that it is a pastoral project where the hearer's conscience is established under the address of a gracious God. Certainty is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of a believer; thus it cannot be understood in an abstract, philosophical, speculative manner. Certainty of faith is spoken of concretely, interpersonally, narratively, theologically. It is a matter of faith and not of reason. Yet it is something that must be proclaimed. This is the paradox of preaching. The purpose of preaching is certainty of faith. All seven of the following points come from this common center, as rays coming from a light source.

THE NECESSITY OF ASSERTIONS (AE 33: 19–24, 50)

This is the characteristic language of faith. When the Holy Spirit writes upon his heart, the believer declares, "This is most certainly true." "The Holy Spirit is no skeptic." When one speaks Christianly, it is painful to hear about probabilities and speculations, which in the very form of their expression (let alone their content), are not only inappropriate, but false. One must be assertive, bold, intrepid, unyielding when one begins to speak of the things of faith. Here there can be no equivocating for the sake of worldly peace. Assertions reveal the central object and characteristic nature of Christian faith: certainty.

THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE (AE 33: 24–28, 89–100)

Scriptura sui ipse interpres, said Luther later. Here he asserts the same thing by saying that Scripture has two clarities, one internal and the other external. This must be asserted, because in its absence it is inevitable that another magisterium to interpret Scripture is proposed (as witness the Roman Catholic insistence upon the interpretive authority of the church). A magisterium is problematic for three reasons in this context. First, the immediacy of the scriptural witness is removed one step from the hearer. Second, it removes the certain authority that inheres in the address as being from God alone. Third, it assumes that a subject-object distinction obtains between interpreter and Scripture that does not allow the radical understanding that the interpreter himself is being called into question by this address. Luther understood the word both as something it was his duty to understand and utter, as well as something by which he himself was called into question when it was uttered.

The external clarity inheres in the fact that Scripture is really about one and only one thing: Jesus Christ and him crucified. Without Christ, asks Luther, what is left in Scripture? In Christ alone do all the Old Testament stories attain coherent and definitive meaning. The New Testament is seen as the definitive interpretation of Scripture (the Old Testament). It is a shame that so many books have been written about the meaning of Scripture, as if the New Testament were not clear enough, says Luther.

One can assert the freedom of the will, which inevitably results in the uncertainty of the conscience and thus despair.

In addition, Scripture has an internal clarity. Although he disapproves of "those who have recourse to boasting of the Spirit . . . and who subject Scriptures to the interpretation of their own spirit," (AE 33:90) one cannot understand one thing in all of Scripture apart from faith. The person of faith judges and discerns with greatest certainty the dogmas and opinions of all men. (For this Luther quotes 1 Corinthians 2:15.) The very subject of Scripture has to do with faith in what is unseen, in what is promised, in Jesus Christ and his accomplished work for sinners. This content, discerned by faith, goes against reason and experience much of the time. Any attempt to get around the necessity of speaking to the person of faith, in talking about scriptural interpretation, will arrive at useless abstractions, including such modern examples as the Jesus of history/Christ of faith, or the idea of religion, or Jesus as a teacher of moral (eternal, timeless) truths.

THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL AND THE CONSCIENCE (AE 33: 29–36, 287–289)

Here is the core of Luther's thought. It is the goal toward which this whole treatise drives. It is the motivating force behind Luther's powerful expression. Here is the center he was seeking when he began his monastic career, "the kernel of the nut, the marrow of the bone." One has precisely two alternatives here. One can assert the freedom of the will, which inevitably results in the uncertainty of the conscience and thus despair. This follows because by asserting freedom of the will *in the realm of salvation,* the boundaries between what God does in salvation and what man does become indefinite. Their interface is a confused calculus of what God does, what man does, and what is done by their cooperation (as witness the Thomistic distinction between condign and congruous merit). On the other hand, if one proposes and asserts the bound will for the sake of establishing the

conscience under the address of a gracious God, here for the first time certainty emerges not only as a possibility but as a secured result, because God does all in all. The entire thought can be rendered into the two mathematical alternatives: free will => bound conscience or bound will => free conscience.

SALVATION BELONGS TO GOD ALONE (AE 33: 36–58)

The location of the *sola* in Luther's theology indicates that his hermeneutic has arrived at its rightful goal, the location of God's work alone. The many *solas* in his theology—grace alone, the Word alone, Christ alone, God alone, the cross alone, faith alone—all signify one common thing. Clearly, one cannot seriously posit five or six *solas* operating in one's theology if they do not focus on a common goal. But if God is responsible for all in all, one runs directly into the conundrum of theodicy (excusing God for the horrors that happen in a world under bondage to sin and death), which has led countless theologians to reject this conception of God out of hand. If God does all in all, however, for the first time one has the foundation for asserting the non-contingency of our salvation, and thus its certainty.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN LAW AND GOSPEL (AE 33: 132–138)

The authority of Scripture inheres in its effect, in what it does to the hearer. Its effect testifies to the Spirit's living presence and activity. (This is a profoundly different conception from that of Calvin, who would say that God's Word is authoritative because it was inspired by and bears witness to God, and therefore, it is reliable and authoritative.) For Luther the same word can have two opposite effects upon the hearer, depending upon how it is heard. "I am the Lord your God" can be heard as an absolutely terrifying threat, which overthrows all notions of personal sovereignty, or it can be heard as the most beautiful of promises. It is necessary to distinguish between these two effects because the faithful proclamation of the word of God rests upon this distinction, which it is our duty to preach, because the Holy Spirit works in the hearer through preaching. Failure to make this distinction, says Luther, underlies Erasmus's fundamental misinterpretation of Ezekiel 18:23, "I do not desire the death of the sinner." Erasmus understands this passage to mean that it was the sinner's misuse of freedom that brought this situation upon him. This is to understand the passage from Ezekiel as law: "Stop sinning!" But this is to arrive at precisely the opposite use or effect from that which God intends, says Luther. It is given as the most pure and sweet promise to establish the sinner's conscience.

If one does not make the distinction between law and gospel, one does not properly understand either one. The law is misunderstood as a moral system leading toward salvation, which is precisely the opposite function God assigned to it according to Paul, the function of shutting all mouths and creating a dead end. Erasmus inevitably arrived at this false conclusion because of his false operating paradigm—the same paradigm that drives too much modern preaching! The gospel is misunderstood as a help rather than as complete and gracious rescue from death and destruction. Erasmus's failure to recognize this distinction caused his misunderstanding. He misunderstood the very facts of the case that obtain between God and man. There is no possible way a man can stop sinning. This fact necessitates a new understanding of both law and gospel, and of the necessity of their proper distinction by faith. The functional reason for the distinction is critical: establishing the conscience secure in the certainty that, although you are a sinner, you have a gracious God. Confusion of law and gospel creates the very opposite of salvation, an uncertain conscience.

GOD DOES ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING—THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOD PREACHED AND GOD IN SECRET (AE 33: 138–147)

What Luther says in this section, which is so controversial, is that while it may be true absolutely that God does not desire the death of the sinner, one can only make that statement about God *preached*. God in his hidden majesty wills many things that we are not able to understand, and which it is not our business to know about. *Why* God not only does not repair the fault through which man sins, but also imputes it to him as guilt—this we may not inquire into. This belongs to the God not preached. This relates not to the God revealed in the Word, but to God in himself, God in his mystery and secret. Though we may inquire into it as much as we are able, we shall never find the answer, but rather run headlong into despair. For such a God terrifies us and must terrify us. What theology has been unable to juggle through all the centuries of its greatest fathers and theologians is identified here, but not resolved. A tension is thus proposed under which we must live. Autobiographically, Luther writes, "I almost died of despair over this until I realized how close to grace despair is" (AE 33: 190).

Scriptural witness is fatally compromised by the importation of neoplatonic theory about free will into Christian theology.

One cannot solve the problem of maintaining God's sovereignty and his goodness at the same time. One alternative is sacrificed if the other alternative is emphasized, by reason of the existence of evil. Biblically, one cannot answer the question of the origin of evil. This alone supports Luther's approach. But to add more confusion to an already insoluble riddle, proposing free will (in the sense that it is mutable and can be changed by man's agency) makes the Bible's account of God's sovereignty, understood in terms of predestination to salvation, a logical impossibility. Scriptural witness is fatally compromised by the importation of neoplatonic theory about free will into Christian theology. This is why Luther directs his central attack against scholastic theology.

> If the will of man is neither mutable nor even subject to his own sovereignty, if in addition it is also bound always to rebel against God, if free will is even a name for God, since God alone can always accomplish what he wills, then it follows that the assertion of the bondage of man's will is neces-

sary simply to say what the Word of God reveals as true, and this alone creates the certainty of salvation.

The Council of Trent did not miss the certainty of salvation as the central thrust of Luther's revolution in theology and preaching. In chapter 9, "Against the Vain Confidence of Heretics," we read, "No one can know, by assurance of faith which excludes all falsehood, that he has obtained the grace of God." Again in chapter 12, "No one, so long as he remains in this present life, ought so to presume about the hidden mystery of divine predestination as to hold for certain that he is unquestionably of the number of the predestined." Again in Canons concerning Justification #12, "If anyone says that the faith which justifies is nothing else but trust in the divine mercy, which pardons sins because of Christ; or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified: let him be anathema."[12]

BEING A THEOLOGIAN OF THE CROSS (AE 33: 190, 289–292)

Here Luther asserts that, in the experience of being abandoned by God, and in his opposition to you (here one cannot distinguish between God and the devil, since this is the realm of curse)—in this very experience of the cross, God is doing the precise opposite of what reason and experience tell you is going on. Salvation of the Christian is always through *Anfechtungen.* Thus the practice of being a theologian of the cross entails and draws on all of the foregoing discussion. It is a practice of faith. It is the art of holding to the word alone in spite of feeling and experience. And Luther says he still is not very good at it. It is a warfare (AE 33: 288) that will not cease this side of the resurrection. It is the skill of using God against God, to the end that the gospel will be heard proclaimed over you, "God saves sinners. You qualify!" Finally, it is this experience that qualifies one to preach. One bears witness only from *Anfechtung* to the *Gewissheit* that is written upon the heart by the Holy Spirit. He is not only the Comforter, but he also has the office of convicting the world of sin. First the Spirit must be our terror. You shall *fear* and love God. Then, and only then, does the gospel effect its full rescue and release. This happens in the conscience. The theology of the cross says that the preaching of God's word is used by the Spirit to create an event of death-life in a person, who must be understood inescapably *coram Deo,* created, established, condemned, and saved by that word to the conscience.

Thus the attacked, tempted conscience (not the will) is the target of preaching. Preaching the gospel establishes the conscience safe and secure by giving Christ and his righteousness to the sinner. Demonstrating that this was Luther's controlling hermeneutic is the subject of the following treatment of the *Church Postil.*

ANFECHTUNGEN IN THE *CHURCH POSTIL* AS IT RELATES TO *GEWISSHEIT*

In the *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* from the Fall of 1517 are the following theses:

25. Hope does not grow out of merits, but out of suffering which destroys merits.
29. The best and infallible preparation for grace and the sole disposition toward grace is the eternal election and predestination of God.
30. On the part of man, however, nothing precedes grace except indisposition and even rebellion against grace (AE, 31: 10, 11).

In these assertions, five years previous to the *Church Postil,* one hears already the major presuppositions that undergird and inform both Luther's content and strategy in preaching. Through virtually all the sermons in volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the *Church Postil* runs the theme of surviving the crises of faith, crises that God must produce in order to strengthen us in that very faith. These sermons are a vivid testament to a preacher who has been there, who has experienced the depths of God's assaults (he felt) more than any other church father. Preaching must interpret reality as it is experienced by all the sheep. If one cannot interpret through preaching the terrors that faith must go through (at least in the final *Anfechtung,* death), then one abandons the sheep to the devil and his false preachers, who always create one effect, despair. While *The Bondage of the Will* centers almost exclusively on certainty, the *Church Postil* treats not only certainty of faith, but also the way in which suffering gives birth to such faith.

Luther never did theology for the sake of creating abstract propositions, but always in the service of proclamation.

It is useful to note here also how Luther differs in his hermeneutics from Erasmus and the whole scholastic tradition. That hermeneutical tradition operated in a gnostic system, searching for timeless truths. One looked past the literal to get at the "real," the "spiritual" meaning of the text. The law indicated that which was inadequate. The text was treated as a sort of code to be cracked by the spiritually elite hermeneuts. Luther would have none of this. All readings of Scripture that are not informed by faith and the Spirit are law. The law does not merely point out our inadequacy; the law puts us to death. The gospel is defined again by function. The literal meaning of the text is its primary foundation. One does not go past the literal to get at the "spiritual." Here Luther takes Origen to task and finds support in Augustine's treatise *On the Spirit and the Letter.*

In reviewing the *Church Postil*, I will refer to several sermons to demonstrate the consistent theme of Luther's pastoral project. He never did theology for the sake of creating abstract propositions, but always in the service of proclamation. This is what is meant when he said that whatever does not narrowly deal with the gracious God who redeems sinful man is a poison to theology.

In *A Sermon on How to Contemplate Christ's Holy Sufferings,*[13] at least seven points are made:

1. When you look at the wrath displayed at the cross, note there the earnestness of God's wrath against all sin, and how horrible is its effect, that it must cause the death of the very Son of God himself.

2. Note that this wrath is against *you.* It was your sins that caused this death, not someone else's. You are the one that stands accused before God and his holy judgment.
3. *Anfechtungen* come from God, and they are not subject to one's own control, but come unexpectedly. Although they are God's alien work, they are necessary to your growth in faith.
4. When you are under such assault and accusation, throw all your weight on promises like the one in Isaiah 53—"on *him* the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all." Look there, and do not look to yourself. Cling to the Word alone, or there is no hope of deliverance.
5. Faith comes from God. This relates to item 3 intimately, not least because both are the description of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Here Luther acknowledges the borderland that must be crossed. Here he writes narratively in many postils of the longing of the heart for faith, and its apparent impossibility. So one is driven to pray, "Increase our faith!"
6. Press forward with the Word until through that Word you see God's face in blessing toward you, and you know with certainty that his verdict over you and his judgment are gracious.
7. When you are thus firmly established in your hatred against sin, then you serve him, not from fear, but from joy and gladness.

Here in this sermon is an intentional compendium of the Reformation teaching on justification. This is what the whole revolution was, and is, all about. Here is a pastor doing soul care (more properly, conscience care), which names our problem completely by diagnosing it biblically, and then effects the rescue through the proclamation of what God does for sinners at the cross of Jesus Christ. Here is God who speaks in his word. Here is the person who hears in his conscience. Here is the person, Jesus Christ, who saves by establishing the conscience safe and secure under God's gracious new verdict of forgiveness. Here is the warfare for faith against the devil waged through proclamation.

The third sermon for Easter[14] on Mark 16 is the natural partner of the sermon on how rightly to view the cross of Christ. Here Luther presents the hearers as saying in their hearts, "I wish that I had faith!" But this very longing, this very terror at not being able to believe, this is the work of the Holy Spirit! God's Spirit must stretch us out and salt us like a pig's bladder so that we become ready for faith and so that our faith may grow. This never happens without great pain and resistance on our part. "You may tie up a pig ever so tightly, but you will never stop him from grunting!" says Luther, in describing the fight our old nature always puts up in resisting the Holy Spirit's work. So the Spirit is now the Author of both faith and the *Anfechtungen* that accompany faith's birth. Now, warns Luther, when you have heard and believed the forgiveness of sins, do not go back and keep remembering the sin that God has forgotten! This is the sin against the Holy Spirit. Rather, when you pray the "Our Father," be sure to recognize that such unbelief in effect makes God himself into a liar in his command for us to call him our Father. Pray to him to prevent such blasphemy against his name from taking root in your heart, by reason of your unwillingness to believe the verdict of forgiveness. The point of all God's work of salvation in Jesus Christ, and of all proclamation is to get rid of sin! When forgiveness is proclaimed, the second objective happens, and that is that the conscience is established.

This Easter sermon is about where certainty is located, how it is established, who is its agent, and what existential opposition it must overcome. It is proclamation, person to person, highly narrative, inviting, warm, encouraging, establishing that which was not there before, confidence in the graciousness and love of God for you. This address teaches the sheep to recognize the unique characteristics of the Shepherd's voice. This content and strategy is universal in the *Church Postil,* where the two themes, *Anfechtung* and *Gewissheit*, almost always intersect.

In volume 1, all four Advent sermons have to do with this central proclamation. God no longer comes to us as he did to Adam in the garden, where sin made the conscience fear God and flee. Now God comes "meek" to speak consolingly to the sin-burdened conscience.[15] In this sermon, where Luther emphasizes the number of times that the prophet says "for you," "your king comes to you." He has a whole page on his reformation discovery of the new interpretation of God's justice/righteousness.[16] Here is the introduction to a robust proclamation of the Holy Spirit's work.

The second Advent sermon depicts the perplexity of the nations as the agonized conscience, and tells us that we are to look up and see the salvation of our God.

There is no biblically ordained confirmation service other than temptation.

The third sermon has no fewer than eight pages devoted to the necessity of making the proper distinction between law and gospel.[17] A Christian does not have to wait for a preacher to save him, because it is the heart of Christian faith to read the Word with discernment, for the sake of one's own faith. Every Christian, then, must be willing to hear, accede to, and experience God's wrath pronounced over him. Each Christian is called to believe more strongly still in the gracious salvation that has been completed, that is found in Christ alone. The intersection of these two events in the conscience of the hearer is described in shorthand form as law and gospel. Preachers need to recognize what they are dealing with—a hammer that smashes rocks.

The fourth sermon for Advent has John the Baptist performing these two functions: He accuses the world of sin, that all alike are under God's terrible wrath, and then he directs them with his finger to Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That is, he preaches to them the two words that comprise all of Scripture.

In the Christmas sermons, Luther lays out the text in direct, concrete, personal, earthy form. The Incarnation affects the very form of its proclamation. He stresses the pitiableness of the birth. No docetism here. Mary's experience of childbirth is like every

mother's experience of childbirth. God greatly condescends to us in love. The lowliest caste of people is chosen to be the first hearers of the good news that the Savior is for *all* people. *For you* receives its emblematic emphasis here with all its sweetness.

Volume 2 contains three Epiphany sermons, three Lenten sermons, and eight Easter sermons, which have as their theme the conflict (*Anfechtung*) that is necessary in bringing faith to birth, and the glad certainty that results. The first of these involves the terror of the Virgin Mary(!) upon losing her Son for three days. Her heart accuses her: it was your fault; not only were you a careless parent, you have betrayed the calling of caring for God's own Son; now God must judge you harshly. Upon her finding him in the temple, the twelve-year-old Jesus' reproach was, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Luther notes here that deliverance from such terror as was experienced by Mary (and by us, by reason of our sins) is only accomplished by paying attention to what the Word says, and clinging to it alone.

The classic story describing the doubts and terrors encountered by the church in her everyday experience of faith is presented in the story of the disciples on the sea in a storm that threatens to kill them all.[18] Christ sleeps in the back of the boat, apparently unconcerned about their crisis. Luther depicts the storm arising precisely because Christ is in the boat. Death appears triumphant. The end has come. So it goes, says Luther, in our conscience. Deliverance from this terror creates faith. Through this deliverance faith itself is born. It is a necessary experience, neither ancillary nor secondary in Christian experience.

The blind man crying to Jesus at the side of the road provides Luther with another example of how the believer's conscience seeks Christ's blessing.[19] First his own conscience betrays him by being bashful. It assures the blind man that he is unworthy. Added to the accusing conscience is the resistance of the crowd, telling him to be quiet. But he calls out in spite of these hindrances, these *Anfechtungen,* these hard knocks that faith must survive. And Christ hears him and not only rewards his faith, but through this test confirms and strengthens his faith, so that he follows Jesus joyfully on the road.

The Lenten sermon on the temptation of Jesus makes the salient point that temptation itself is the school of faith. There is no biblically ordained confirmation service other than temptation. (Luther does not say it that way, but that is the import.) Luther notes that the only way to overcome temptation is to do as Christ did, to cling to and assert the authority of God's Word against every evil sling and dart of the devil. Here the borderland is, even for the believer, the borderland between unbelief and faith. It is a struggle that one must fight anew each day, using the one tool that alone wins the victory, God's Word. Here it would be ridiculous to say that the strife has anything to do with human volition. It is much more a strife between the two powers who seek to possess the person, God and the devil. Modern preaching is timid or embarrassed to note this conflict and this whole paradigm of thought. (Does Scripture really reveal the truth to us at this point or not? Is it hopelessly mythical in its expression because it served a now out-dated worldview? What does this say about Scripture's authority and truth claims?) Consequently, the free-will paradigm seems to have taken over by default, rendering this whole exercise by Luther (the *Church Postil*) either quaintly superstitious, or irrelevant to modern preaching.

Perhaps the most vivid of all Luther's sermons about *Anfechtung* is his proclamation concerning the Syrophoenician woman.[20] Here Jesus is depicted as the hunter after faith. He gives the woman who comes to him three incredibly hard knocks, where it *seems* that he is absolutely the opposite of what she has heard. It is interesting that Luther is insistent that she has heard something about Jesus, upon which she hangs her whole existence. The first hard knock (*Anfechtung*) is Jesus' silence. Surely that is uncharacteristic of him, thinks the woman, in faith. The second *Anfechtung* is the disciples' brusque treatment and command to be quiet. Her faith also overcomes this. She throws herself at Jesus' feet. "Save my daughter!" she cries. But here is the hardest *Anfechtung* of all: Jesus says he is sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In effect, the promise is there, it is just not for you. You are a dog! You are not among the elect.

Luther did not think that this was a subject too dangerous to preach about.

For Luther this was the worst *Anfechtung* of all because it involved God's election, something that by definition we can do nothing about. Here you can only throw yourself back on God alone, and use God against God. It is noteworthy that Luther did not think that this was a subject too dangerous to preach about, as if there were some things in theology that only the elite could deal with (Erasmus). The woman's response, says Luther, catches Jesus at his very own word! Yes, but even the dogs get to eat the scraps that fall from the children's table. "Woman, great is your faith!" says Jesus. "In all Israel I have not found such great faith!" And so faith is tested by the great hunter after faith, in order to bring it to birth, establish it, and make it grow.

The outcome is never assured. Here is the place where death and life contend, and about which Jesus asks us to pray each day, "Save us from strong testing." In the Romans commentary from about the same period, Luther notes in his exposition of Romans 5:1–8 that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint because the Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts. Then he does the reverse, to show what *Anfechtung,* miscarried, produces. Suffering produces bitterness, and bitterness produces anger, and anger produces despair. *Anfechtung* is a dangerous place indeed! What joy on Jesus' part and on the woman's part when the birth pains of *Anfechtung* are passed, and faith new and strong comes into existence from this dark place.

The Easter part of Luther's *Church Postil* is always the locus for the sweetest preaching of faith, for the most engaging depiction of Jesus the Savior. If one looks at no other place in Luther's sermons, let him look here.

In Luther's exposition of Luke 24, Jesus comes to the side of the two disciples to minister to them personally, because they were so close to despair. (In a similar way, Jesus comes first to Peter, and for the same reason.) Luther notes that even if faith only existed in

Mary on this particular morning, that is so because God has ordained that faith and the true church shall never be completely absent from the earth. (This is a statement about the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.)

Then Jesus stands strong and alive amongst his disciples, who are sitting in abject fear. Peace be with you! Where is this peace? In the conscience. In the exposition of John 20, Luther notes the three results of Jesus preaching to them, "Peace be with you!" There is created gladness, peace, and strength for ministry. And what has changed for the disciples? Nothing outwardly. But inwardly everything is different. Though the Jews still rage, though their sins still continue to threaten, they have Jesus, and they have the new verdict of God, "Peace be with you."

Luther's theology of the cross is a hermeneutical principle to help the Christian hear God's word as the Spirit does his work.

Here is Luther's wonderful picture of Christ the Bridegroom married to the believer. The conscience of the believer convicts him of sin. Christ butts his head right up against that accusation and says, "You and I are one." Every other voice must stay out of the bridal chamber. Though I have sins that remain, I am one with Christ, and they cannot hurt me, because all that belongs to Christ is mine, his righteousness, his holiness, his eternal life, his Father's face turned toward me in blessing. I will hear only his voice in my conscience. This theme becomes a primary motif in the *Lectures on Galatians* more than a decade later.

The story of doubting Thomas involves describing the conscience in its characteristic diffidence. It is as bashful as water or oil, says Luther. Yet it is as adamant as stone in its refusal of God's goodness. Do you see what the Holy Spirit has to work with? And what is produced in Thomas is the great confession: "My Lord and my God!" The Holy Spirit overcomes consciences like Thomas's and like yours.

Volume 3 contains Luther's exposition of John 16, "I will not leave you comfortless."[21] Luther stresses the image of travail. Here a woman is alone; although friends and the midwife may try to comfort her, she must go through it alone. This is how it is with a Christian. A Christian must believe for himself, even if he is surrounded by the church. A Christian must also die for himself. Here *Anfechtung*'s characteristic result "for you" gets its start. There can be no general faith for a Christian, just as there can be no generic temptation. The travail, moreover, may result in death. The woman and the Christian both know this. The following joy, the birth of glad confidence, is more than worth the pain that it took to bear it.

Volume 5 has numerous stories from the ministry of Jesus. At least four of these sermons have the theme of the intersection of *Anfechtung* and *Gewissheit* as their core. I will deal with the nobleman's son, the widow of Nain, and Jairus's daughter and the woman with the flow of blood.

The nobleman has to overcome a strong *Anfechtung* in the response of Jesus to his request that he come down to his house to heal his son. Jesus answers, "This generation seeks only signs and wonders." Taken aback by the precise opposite of what he expected (again, based upon what he had heard), the man's faith is thrown into complete jeopardy. But he responds with a renewed request. Jesus' response, this time, is an *Anfechtung* of a different nature. "Go down, your child will live." Here the man is given absolutely nothing to depend upon but a bare word. He had expected Jesus to come along. Could Jesus do what he said by a plain word? Forced to exercise far greater faith than what he came with, the man returns, and finds it is as Jesus says. Faith, says Luther, must cling to the bare word, just like this, in order to triumph.

In the story of the widow of Nain, there is not even a request, but Jesus, moved by pity and love, acts unilaterally. He makes something out of nothing. That is God's way. That is what you must become before God can do anything with you.

In the paired stories of Jairus and the woman, Jesus uses his ministry with the woman to support the failing hope of Jairus as he waits through this interruption of an urgently needed salvation. Her constant bleeding is like our conscience, constantly bleeding until the ministry of the gospel heals it. It is not enough for Jesus that the woman had the great faith to come out, again, on the strength of what she had heard. She must confess it publicly. This was her *Anfechtung*. But Jesus uses her confession to bring her salvation and faith to completion and to new strength. Meanwhile, although Jairus is encouraged by what he sees between Jesus and the woman, Jairus receives what appears to be the definitive word that all hope is lost. Your daughter is dead. The wailing of the beginning funeral greets them at the house. Jesus announces the impossible, "Your daughter is not dead, but sleeping." Taking only his disciples with him, he commands the girl, "Talitha cumi," that is, "I say to you, arise." Even when there is no hope, in the face of death itself, even there, precisely there, Jesus creates faith.

Volume 5 begins with an exposition on the Good Samaritan, where Luther parts company with the majority of expositors in making Jesus himself the Good Samaritan. He begins by expounding the law, noting that the law is not understood at all if it is understood superficially. Next he proclaims the gospel. Christ is depicted as the One who pours on oil and wine (the Spirit who heals our wounds through the gospel).

Volume 7 has a sermon on Acts 13 in which peace is the subject. Peace where?

> But this salvation—grace, life and peace—I behold not. On the contrary, I daily see and experience sin, terror, adversity, suffering and death, until it seems as if in all humanity none are so utterly forsaken by God as the Christians, who hear this message. But this is precisely the precious doctrine to be learned if we are to be God's children and sensible of his kingdom within us . . . our salvation stands in the word Paul here declares of Christ, a word which, in name and reality, is a word of salvation and peace.[22]

Volume 8 has two sermons, one on 1 Peter 5, and the other on Romans 8, where this theme is again central. In his exposition on the Romans 8 text, Luther emphasizes Paul's point that if we are joint heirs, then we are also joint sufferers with Christ. These are the colors of the court. To be ashamed or unwilling to wear them makes one cease to be a Christian. There is no way other than suffering for God to confirm our faith, strengthen it and conform us to Christ.

To summarize, Luther's theology of the cross is a hermeneutical principle to help the Christian hear God's word as the Spirit does his work, to reveal sin and to proclaim to the sinner the gracious forgiveness found in Christ alone. These two words of God speak to the conscience. These two words produce what Luther called *Anfechtung* and *Heilsgewissheit*. The birth of faith comes anew each day from their intersection. They are understood properly only if God is defined as the One whose address constitutes and defines his creatures, and if man is defined as one who is called into existence by this word, condemned and resurrected by this word. In short, man cannot be understood apart from his status *coram Deo*.

I hope that it is also clear just how vital the proper conception of preaching is for the progress of the Reformation among us. Luther's peculiar use of language is aimed at effecting the release of the conscience. It flows from his hermeneutic, which he called the theology of the cross, because he believed that he was engaged in nothing less than spiritual warfare each time he preached. Would that we would cease treating Scripture as quaint in its worldview, and adopt its view of reality as true revelation once again. Then preaching will once again become the urgent and dynamic prosecution of mortal spiritual combat, where the word is a sacrament of sound, where the person who hears is the subject of strife between two mortally opposed powers, and where God's new creation takes place in the speaking, both the killing and the making alive.

Scripture reveals what we could not see without its light. Enough of "applying" Scripture, as if it only operated on the level of meaning and not effect, and depended upon whatever magisterium we have contrived. Enough of making Scripture into an abstraction, as if it did not accomplish what the Holy Spirit uses it to do. Revival depends upon this generation of preachers learning from Martin Luther what made him the greatest expositor of Scripture the church has ever known. LOGIA

NOTES

1. Gerhard Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 71; see also 86–87.
2. Gerhard Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 409–410, italics his.
3. Ebeling, 421.
4. Gerhard Ebeling, *The Word of God and Tradition Historical Studies Interpreting the Divisions of Christianity*, trans. S. H. Hooke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 130–131; see also WA 7, 97: 23–34.
5. Ebeling, *The Word of God and Tradition*, 137.
6. Heiko Oberman, *Spaetsscholastik und Reformation* (Zurich, 1965), 1: 64–65.
7. *Traeger des menschlichen Gottesverhaeltnisses;* Emanuel Hirsch, *Lutherstudien Band 1* (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1954), 127.
8. *Sermons of Martin Luther*, 8 vols., ed. John Nicholas Lenker (reprint Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983) 1: 24.
9. Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought,* trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 71.
10. Lenker, 1: 132, 133.
11. Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, trans. Robert Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).
12. Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of The Ecumenical Councils, Volume 2, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 674, 676, 679.
13. Lenker, 2: 183–192.
14. Ibid., 248–266.
15. Ibid., 1: 28–30.
16. Ibid., 33.
17. Ibid., 96–103.
18. Ibid., 2: 70–91.
19. Ibid., 124–132.
20. Ibid., 148–154.
21. Ibid., 3: 72–109.
22. Ibid., 7: 207.

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
Eastertide 2001	Sin, Sickness, and Salvation—Seelsorge	November 1, 2000
Holy Trinity 2001	Symposium on the Ministry	February 15, 2001
Reformation 2001	Wittenberg and Rome	April 1, 2001
Epiphany 2002	Prayer & Fellowship—A Symposium	August 1, 2001

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Lutheran-Reformed Altar Fellowship and Augustana X

Albert J. Collver III

The signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (*JDDJ*) on October 31, 1999, between the Lutheran World Federation and Rome has, for the moment, overshadowed prior ecumenical agreements between Lutherans and other church bodies. While it is true that the dispute on justification between the Lutheran church and Rome goes back to the beginning of the Reformation, any agreement or consensus between these two bodies on justification would appear to be very significant, perhaps as significant as the events that caused the disagreement in the first place. Yet only a few years earlier the Lutherans and the Reformed came to doctrinal consensus not only on justification but also on the Lord's Supper. Quantitatively, it would appear that more was accomplished between the Lutherans and the Reformed than between Lutherans and Rome. The recognition that the Lutherans and Rome came to an agreement not only on justification but also on original sin at the Diet of Regensburg in 1541[1] further suggests that *JDDJ* is not quite as significant as its authors would have it thought. Although Eck and Melanchthon could agree on justification at Regensburg, they could not come to agreement on the Lord's Supper. They disputed for eight days on the Lord's Supper until they stopped due to lack of agreement.[2] Regensburg demonstrates that lack of agreement on the Lord's Supper does not permit an agreement on justification to remain intact. What will ultimately become of the most recent agreement between the Lutherans and Rome remains to be seen. Historically, it has been thought that what most separates the Lutherans from Rome is the doctrine of justification. On the other hand, it has been thought what most separates the Lutherans from the Reformed is the Lord's Supper. The difference between these two points is not as great as first appears. What is common to both is the gospel. In the rejection of "by faith alone," Rome denies the gospel. By rejecting the Lord's true body and blood given for you, the Reformed deny the gospel. In order to see how the gospel is ultimately at stake, it may be helpful to examine how the Lutherans and the Reformed came to agree on the Lord's Supper.

In 1997, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and three Reformed bodies ratified the *Formula of Agreement*,[3] declaring that they were in full communion. This agreement is the result of more than thirty years of discussion between the Lutherans and Reformed in America and represents what they call "an ecumenical proposal of historic importance." There is no doubt that an event of "historic importance" took place when these four "Reformation" churches created "a doctrinal consensus"[4] based on a common understanding of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments that bridged a division formed more than four hundred years ago at Marburg.[5] What is more remarkable about the agreement is that it was achieved without compromising each church body's "traditional confessional and ecclesiological character."[6] It would be presumptuous to suggest that there is no real consensus after the involved parties have signed a document declaring[7] such consensus. But a critique of *Forumula of Agreement* may be made on the basis of this statement. The hermeneutics leading up to this agreement have already been examined,[8] as has the document itself.[9] This essay will examine whether or not the statements on the Lord's Supper found in a *Formula of Agreement* are congruent with Article X of the *Augsburg Confession*, which is the historic confession of the Lutheran church on the Lord's Supper. Since a different understanding of the gospel manifests itself in the Lord's Supper, ultimately this essay will test the claim, "there are no substantive matters concerning justification that divide us."[10] In working through this, tools may be developed to assist in the diagnosis of other ecumenical agreements.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FORMULA OF AGREEMENT

Since the *Formula of Agreement* is the result of more than thirty years of dialog between the Lutheran and Reformed church bodies, it may be helpful to provide a brief sketch of the document's historical background. While official discussions between representatives of Reformed and Lutheran churches in America did not begin until 1962, it would be remiss to ignore the developments in Germany preceding this discussion. In order to grasp completely what brought the Lutheran and Reformed together in Germany, one would have to review the events from the time of the Reformation to World War II. Since space does not permit such a treatment, only a few brief comments can be provided.

Elert notes that the Lutherans have constantly complained about the attempts to read Reformed doctrine into the public statements of the evangelical church.[11] Luther complained of this very problem when he wrote in 1532 to the citizens of Frankfurt on the Main concerning reports he had heard that the Lord's Supper was taught there in the Zwinglian way, "yet under the

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appearance and with such words as if it were one and the same thing with us and our same teaching."[12] During this time the desire for union with the Lutherans was, no doubt, partially inspired by political motivations, since only the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of the Augsburg Confession were legally recognized. Nevertheless, to ascribe merely political reasons to the desire for union would be unfair. It appears that Zwingli genuinely desired union with Luther, as did Bucer and later Calvin, but they could not understand why the Lord's Supper was so essential to the Lutherans. What appeared, from their point of view, to be minor differences of opinion kept what became known as the Reformed church bodies separated from the Lutherans. As Zwingli found out at Marburg, ninety-three percent agreement is no agreement at all. It is because the Lord's Supper is the gospel (and not merely a proclamation of the gospel, as the Reformed teach)[13] that disagreement in the Supper evidences disagreement in the doctrine of justification.

Other events in Germany's history prompted the desire for union, such as the Prussian Union (1817), by which the government imposed unity between the Lutherans and the Reformed without regard for differences in confession. Some in the ecumenical movement regard the Prussian Union as an example that casts "glimmers of ecclesial geniality on an otherwise rather bleak Protestant landscape."[14] In 1934, Karl Barth proposed the Barmen Declaration on the foundation of the Prussian Union to unite the Christian churches, Lutheran, Union, and Reformed, to stand up against the false Christianity of the Nazis.[15] According to Barth, the Barmen declaration "does not have to do with matters of the Supper, but with matters of the first commandment."[16] While Barmen may not have intended to form altar and pulpit fellowship between the Lutherans and Reformed, Sasse notes that it received such acclaim that "it was placed next to, yes even above the confessions of the Reformation. The participants of the confessional synods were allowed to deviate from the Augustana."[17] Crisis, confronting the church in the form of Nazi persecution, "forced Christians of all denominations out of their doctrinal co-existence,"[18] resulting in the wartime confessing church, where Lutherans and Reformed shared the same table. The question that occupied German theologians for ten years, from 1947 to 1957, was this: could "wartime emergency fellowship be authorized as the norm for a new, official church fellowship?"[19] The answer to this post-war question was the Arnoldshain Theses.[20]

The *Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (EKiD) accepted the eight Arnoldshain Theses[21] on July 25, 1958, thus beginning full altar and pulpit fellowship between the Lutheran, Union, and Reformed churches in Germany. Whereas the Barmen Declaration had been supposedly based on an emergency situation that required a confessing church, the Arnoldshain Theses were, in part, based on sociological factors, namely, on population movements in Germany that erased the boundaries separating the differing confessions.[22] The population movements that presumably contributed to the Arnoldshain Theses initially were the result of World War II and later due to the ease of travel in the twentieth century. As a result of this increased mobility, "the awareness of *belonging to* a confessional tradition (Lutheran or Reformed) has weakened quite a bit among the faithful—and among many pastors."[23] This is not a dominical agreement based on the Lord's word, but an anthropocentric agreement based on sociological factors.

The Arnoldshain Theses form the foundation for all subsequent agreements between the Lutherans and Reformed.

The Arnoldshain Theses form the foundation for all subsequent agreements between the Lutherans and Reformed, whether in Europe or America. Only four years after the theses were ratified in Germany, discussions began between the Lutherans and Reformed in America. From 1962 to 1966, delegates from the North American Area of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order and the U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation held dis-

cussions and presented papers. In 1966, the delegates issued a non-binding report entitled *Marburg Revisited*, which reported:

> We have recognized in each other's teachings a common understanding of the Gospel and have concluded that the issues which divided the two major branches of the Reformation can no longer be regarded as constituting obstacles to mutual understanding and fellowship.[24]

Building on the foundation of Arnoldshain, *Marburg Revisited* picked up the phrase "He Himself gives"[25] from thesis 4 and concludes, "One thing we must insist on today is that there is only one proper Sacrament and that is Jesus Christ."[26] This is to say that Jesus gives himself in the Supper, or that he is personally present. One of the goals of this report was to avoid deadlock by steering clear of traditional Lutheran and Reformed language regarding the Lord's Supper. What this meant was that the Lutherans would avoid speaking of Christ's body and blood (what the report terms "realistic language") and the Reformed would avoid speaking of Christ being local circumscribed at the right hand of God. In this way, the Christological questions that divided the Lutheran and Reformed for five-hundred years could be avoided. Recognizing that the discussion of Christological issues did not bring the Lutherans and Reformed closer together in the past, the authors of the report needed alternative ways to speak about the issues. One such move was to speak of the body of Christ as the church. Thus, St. Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians concerning unworthy eating is redefined: "such unworthy eating takes place today in the failure to discern the body of Christ whenever we fail to act upon the truth that all who believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ are essentially one in him by admitting to fellowship at his table fellow-members of the *ecclesia* of God." The Arnoldshain Thesis had taught how modern exegesis could reinterpret not only the *verba Christi* but also the apostolic teaching on the Lord's Supper. This lesson on reinterpreting texts was learned well by the authors of *Marburg Revisited*. In this case, Saint Paul's warning about discerning the Lord's body and blood is reinterpreted to a discerning not of Christ's body born of the Virgin Mary, crucified on the cross, and ascended into heaven, but a discerning of the mystical body of Christ, that is, the church. The focus of this reinterpretation places the emphasis upon man and his love for the fellow Christian rather than on the body and blood of Jesus. In this way, the discussion of *manducatio impiorum* is avoided, thereby escaping deadlock. Not only is the historic deadlock avoided but also this new agreement implicitly heaps Saint Paul's condemnation of not discerning the Body of Christ on anyone who denies full altar and pulpit fellowship between Christians of differing confessions.

Marburg Revisited was the first step built in America on the foundation of Arnoldshain; although there was a second meeting in 1972–1974, no significant developments arose. Consequently, it is usually passed over, since the third major proposal, *An Invitation to Action*, does not even mention the second meeting. Instead, it refers to the Leuenberg Agreement, which took place in Europe at approximately the same time as the second meeting in the States. While the Leuenberg

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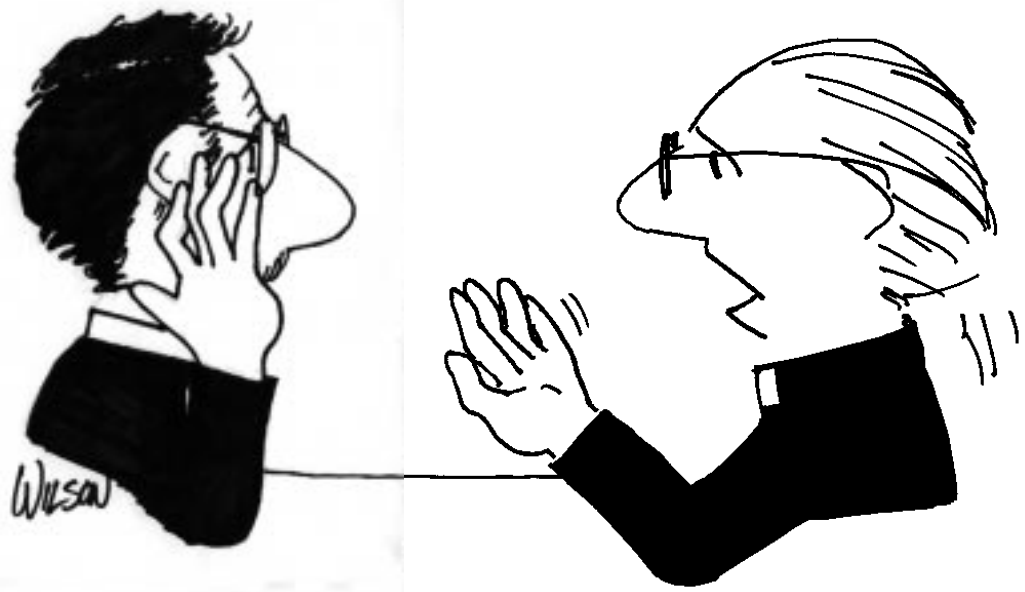

Everybody just seemed to lose all patience with my sermon after we put an espresso cart in the narthex!

Agreement also rested on the Arnoldshain foundation, it attempted to go further by adopting the approach followed by Bucer at the Wittenberg Agreement of 1536.[27] The Leuenberg Agreement's greatest contribution to Lutheran and Reformed dialog was the concentration on Augsburg Confession article VII and *satis est*: "It is enough for true unity to agree on the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments."[28] By interpreting AC VII as confessing justification as the least common denominator of agreement, full agreement in all matters and details of doctrine between church bodies was no longer necessary. The emphasis on AC VII and the *satis est* has remained a feature through all subsequent discussions between the Reformed and Lutherans.

This approach is evident in *An Invitation to Action,* which recommended that "the churches recognize one another 'as churches in which the gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments are administered according to the ordinance of Christ'."[29] As each document comes out, it carries with it the freight of the previous documents and adds more. In the case of *An Invitation To Action*, not only does it rest on the previous documents, but it also adds the World Council of Churches' document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* for consideration.[30] As a result, the scope of this document is broader than the previous documents. Other than the Leuenberg Agreement, all the previous documents focused almost exclusively on the Lord's Supper. *An Invitation To Action* includes joint statements on justification, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and ministry. Presumably, with each document the churches involved are coming closer to full fellowship.

While none of the documents in the series outlined has seen a reason for the Reformed and Lutherans to remain separate, with *An Invitation to Action* the momentum was building for a fellowship agreement between the churches. Before any action could take place, three Lutheran bodies in America merged to create the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Because not all of the Lutheran bodies that merged into ELCA adopted the previous "recommendations of *An Invitation To Action* and endorsed the establishment of full church fellowship among Reformed and Lutheran churches,"[31] another meeting had to be held between the churches. The result of this meeting

was the document *A Common Calling,* which is the immediate predecessor to *A Formula of Agreement.*

AUGUSTANA X

Thus far, this article has briefly recounted the documents preceding *A Formula of Agreement.* While this has not been simply a historical review, it may seem far afield from the stated goal of examining this Reformed-Lutheran agreement with AC x. Quite simply, until the the appearance of *A Common Calling,* AC x was conspicuously absent from the discussion. This can be partially explained by the desire to avoid sixteenth-century formulations as stated in the document *An Invitation to Action.* According to *An Invitation to Action,*

> changes in scientific and philosophical outlooks from one period of history to another also present problems of "translating" traditional doctrines. The truth of God's revelation in Jesus Christ is changeless, but the human language which gives it doctrinal expression undergoes constant modification.[32]

In other words, "static" doctrinal formulations were acceptable in the sixteenth century but today "these debates seem esoteric and purely scholastic."[33] Since there is no doctrinal reason for the Reformed and Lutherans not to have fellowship, the formulations of the sixteenth century, rather than being divisive, must be "seen as complementary, mutually enriching our common life and necessary for the church's total witness to the presence of God in the Lord's Supper."[34] As a result of this view, AC x of the Augsburg Confession must be marginalized, reinterpreted, and ultimately omitted.

When *A Common Calling* does deal with AC x, it is not in an affirming sense, but rather in an attempt to explain the condemnation against those who teach otherwise. Positive statements are easier to explain or ignore than negative statements, especially when they are condemnations. Since the Reformed did not use condemnations against the Lutherans,[35] the condemnation in AC x is especially offensive to those trying to forge an agreement. More important, the condemnation of AC x can no longer apply to the Reformed (if it ever did); otherwise agreement would be impossible as long as the Augsburg Confession is still used. *A Common Calling*'s solution is to confirm that the condemnation did apply to a particular person or group of people in the sixteenth century, but no longer applies to the current Reformed church. "The condemnation in CA 10 may have excluded Zwingli but did not address the nuanced position of Calvin and of many early Calvinist confessions, as the Formula of Concord VII, assumed."[36]

A Common Calling posits a reading of AC x that freezes a moment in time and suggests that using other documents from a later time to interpret AC x is hermeneutically untenable. Since the author of the Augsburg Confession had not yet encountered Calvin, he could not have been condemning a Calvinist view of the Lord's Supper. Once the sixteenth-century formulations are eliminated as acceptable ways of describing reality today, all that remains is to remove the condemnations. The lack of reference to AC x before *A Common Calling* and the mental gymnastics used to explain it, demonstrate that AC x does not play a significant role in the Lutheran and Reformed dialog. It seems difficult to understand how such an approach to AC x does not compromise the "traditional confessional and ecclesiological character" of the Lutheran church.

CONCLUSION

This article has not addressed at great length *A Formula of Agreement* or AC x. *A Formula of Agreement* does not make a significant contribution beyond what has already been discussed in the preceding documents. It is the culmination of over thirty years of dialog, and consequently it is nothing more than an affirmation of what previously had been said. In *A Formula of Agreement,* the section dealing with the Lord's Supper consists chiefly of quotations from the previous documents. As for AC x, its *absence* says more about the ecumenical agreement between the ELCA and the Reformed than would an examination of the article itself.

This brings us back to the question, Are there any substantive disagreements in the gospel between the Reformed bodies and the ELCA? Considering that there is a ratified agreement between the Reformed bodies and the ELCA, no substantive disagreement concerning the gospel exists. The better question to ask is whether or not the ELCA has remained faithful to the teaching of the historic Lutheran Church regarding justification and the Lord's Supper. Although the ELCA imagines that it has kept the Lutheran confession of justification and the Lord's Supper, its agreements with the Reformed indicate that somewhere during the dialog there was a compromise. As Herman Sasse wrote,

> A doctrine such as that of the Lutheran Church regarding the Sacrament of the Altar has to be borne witness to. If it is no longer attested but only presented as an historical antiquity, even though it be presented with great care and correctness, it dies.[37]

As a result of the ecumenical agreement between the ELCA and the Reformed, the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper has died in the largest "Lutheran" church in America. In the construction of the ecumenical tower of Babel with the Barmen Declaration as the foundation and the *Formula of Agreement* as the spire reaching to the heavens, the ELCA desires to build even higher so as to have a unified church on earth built with the hands of men. The problem with devising clever formulations to avoid the problems and divisions of the sixteenth century is that they almost never resemble the words of the Lord. Jesus did not promise to be present in the Supper or to give himself; he promised to give his body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins. This is the Gospel! AC VII confesses that AC IV and AC X go together—because they both go to the forgiveness of sins. It is enough for unity in the church when men do not devise ways to stop the Lord from giving his gifts any way that he sees fit—in the water, the body and blood, and the word. These agree in one. LOGIA

NOTES

1. A recent article recognizing this fact is Paul T. McCain's "Regensburg Redivivus?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (1999): 305–309.

2. E. B. Pusey, *The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ: the Doctrine of the English Church, with a Vindication of the Reception by the Wicked and of the Adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ Truly Present* (Oxford: J. Parker, 1869), 64.

3. *A Formula of Agreement* [Web page], ELCA, 1997 [cited August 5, 1999]. Available from http://www.elca.org/ea/formula.html.

4. *A Formula of Agreement,* "Preface."

5. These church bodies see the Marburg Colloquy, September 30–October 3, 1529, as the point marking the division between their churches. While Marburg is a very important moment, it did not mark the beginning of the division between Luther and Zwingli. Rather, it was the result of previous disagreement on the Lord's Supper.

6. *A Formula of Agreement,* "Mutual Affirmation and Admonition."

7. It does cause one to wonder if this is an "imputed" consensus—that is a consensus that declares such and creates it or if it is a "sanative" consensus—that is a consensus that is made over time by moving toward the theological lowest common denominator.

8. The systematic department of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, wrote a reaction to *A Common Calling,* which provides the basis for the *Formula of Agreement.* See "Basic Understanding of and Reaction to A Common Calling: the ELCA-Reformed Conversations," *Concordia Journal* 20 (1994): 292–314.

9. The systematic department of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, IN, wrote a theological assessment of the *Formula of Agreement.* See "A Formula of Agreement—A Theological Assessment," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (1998): 107–124.

10. *A Formula of Agreement,* "A Fundamental Doctrinal Consensus."

11. Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums* (München: Beck, 1952), 265. "Sie war aber immerhin ehrlicher als die Versuche, die reformierte Abendmahlslehre in de öffentlichen Erklärungen der evangelischen Kirche hineinzuinterpretieren, über die man auf lutherischer Seite von Luthers Brief an die Frankfurter an beständig zu klagen hatte."

12. WA, 30^3: 558, 8–10: "doch unter dem Schein und mit solchen Worten, als solt es gar gleich und ein ding sein mit unser und unser gleichen Lere." This letter has been translated by Jon D. Vieker, "An Open Letter to Those in Frankfurt on the Main, 1533, by Martin Luther," *Concordia Journal* 16, no. 4 (1990): 333–351.

13. Hermann Sasse, "A Lutheran Contribution to the Present Discussions on the Lord's Supper," *Concordia Theological Monthly* (1959): 38.

14. Keith F. Nicle, "Real Presence—Really! The Eucharist in the Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue," *Reformed Liturgy and Music* 29, no. 3 (1995): 179.

15. For the text of Barmen, see John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches,* 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982), 517–522.

16. Hermann Sasse, *Union and Confession,* trans. Matthew C. Harrison, ed. Ronald R. Feuerhahn, Matthew C. Harrison, and Paul T. McCain (St. Louis: Office of the President, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1997), 29.

17. Ibid., 32.

18. Eugene M. Skibbe, "Discussion of Intercommunion in German Protestantism," *Lutheran Quarterly* 11 (1959): 91.

20. William G. Rusch and Daniel F. Martensen, eds., *The Leuenberg Agreement and Lutheran-Reformed Relationships* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989). Lienhard, a contributor in the volume just cited, notes how the Barmen Declaration provided the foundation for the Arnoldshain Theses, which provided the foundation for the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973. The authors of *A Common Calling,* which is the foundational document for *A Formula of Agreement,* cite the Leuenberg Agreement as foundational to their work. Thus there is an unbroken chain from Barmen to the current Lutheran-Reformed ecumenical agreement in America.

21. "Das Abendmahlsgespräch der EKD," *Evangelische Theologie* 18 (1958): 425–427; English translation with comment Paul M. Bretscher, "The Arnoldshain Theses on the Lord's Supper," *Concordia Theological Monthly* (1959): 83–91.

22. "Faith and Order—Arnoldshain Theses," *Lutheran World* 7 (1960–1961): 57. "Its aim is to bring closer together the Protestant churches of different confessions, whose boundaries have been erased to a great extent by the population movements in Germany."

23. Rusch, 15. Emphasis is in the original text.

24. Paul C. Empie and James I. McCord, eds., *Marburg Revisited* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1966), Preface.

25. "Das Abendmahlsgespräch der EKD," *Evangelische Theologie* 18 (1958): 426*:* "er selbst . . . gibt."

26. Empie and McCord, 52.

27. Rusch, 18–19.

28. "Et ad veram unitatem ecclesiae satis est consentire de doctrina evangelii et de administratione sacramentorum."

29. Keith F. Nickle and Timothy F. Lull, eds. *A Common Calling* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 10. Note that the document *A Common Calling* cites the *Invitation To Action.*

30. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: Faith and Order Paper no. 111* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982). James E. Andrews and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *An Invitation To Action*: *The Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue Series 3, 1981-1983* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2.

31. Nickle and Lull, 11.

32. Andrews and Burgess, 21.

33. Nickle and Lull, 40–41.

34. Ibid., 45.

35. Ibid., 39. While this statement may be true of the Reformed confessional documents, condemnations against the Lutheran confession of the Lord's Supper were a common feature of Reformed dogmatic writings. Luther notes in the "Disputation Concerning the Humanity and Divinity of Christ" (WA 39^2: 92–121) that Schwenkfeld accuses the Lutherans of teaching that Christ is a creature, that is, of Arianism. Pieper only reluctantly reports that the Reformed have called Lutheran Christology "Eutychianism" (Pieper, 2: 119) and "impious monstrosity" (Pieper, 2: 166) only to name a few. References are from Franz August Otto Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* 3 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951).

36. Nickle and Lull, 39.

37. Sasse, *Union and Confession*, 16.

The Discipline of Church Law and the Doctrine of Church and Ministry

Lowell C. Green

Recent discussions about church and ministry have touched upon problems that cannot be thoroughly addressed outside the context of church law. For example, some writers in Lutheran circles are ascribing divine origination to certain theories of church polity, such as the concept of congregational sovereignty or the idea of voter's assemblies. Such a heavenly derivation might be compatible with the theocratic tendencies in the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Reformed churches, but it militates against traditional Lutheranism with its distinction between divine and human law and its insistence that matters of church polity are matters of Christian liberty. The following essay is offered in the hope of providing a context for discussions of church and ministry under a more systematic understanding of church law.

THE NEED TO TAKE CHURCH LAW SERIOUSLY

Dare one speak of church law in the Lutheran churches of America? For years there have been voices that have decried church law and insisted that we are not governed by the law but by the gospel. One hears this argument on all sides, and especially among the more independent sorts of people who want to free themselves from synodical restraints. Such reasoning, however, is flawed. To deny the validity of church law is a form of antinomianism that contradicts the Lutheran distinction between law and gospel. The gospel is not a codex of rules for governing the church, but rather the announcement of forgiveness and reconciliation. To claim that we are governed by the gospel is to make of the gospel a *nova lex,* a new law, a procedure that is repudiated in the Lutheran Confessions. This is true whether the gospel is invoked in behalf of a theocentric or an anthropocentric form of church government.

The American churches do in fact employ church law.[1] The only question is whether such law and its proper use have been systematized or are subject to the caprices of church leaders and lay assemblies. In other words, is church law employed lawfully or lawlessly? We must address this question: What really is church law? German theological students are required to study church law, which they call *Kirchenrecht.* The word *Recht* is derived from the Latin word *jus,* "what is right or just," and not from the word *lex,* which refers to "what must be done," that is, statutory law.[2] As the word *Kirchenrecht* suggests, church law is a blending of theology and jurisprudence, or, we might say, it is the science of church polity.[3] An important repository of church law in the Missouri Synod is the *Handbook,* which is a codex of laws that has not always been worked out according to the systematic principles of church law, but has sometimes been altered by political pressures at synodical conventions.

What are sound principles of church law? There are two sets of principles that belong to an evangelical Lutheran system of church law. First, the distinction must be maintained between divine law, *jus divinum,* and human law, *jus humanum.* This terminology will be further explained below. Second, the decrees laid down by the church are *jure humano* and do not hold divine sanction, but they should be obeyed for the sake of love and Christian harmony. Whatever belongs to divine law comes from the sacred Scriptures and is absolutely mandatory and binding, whereas what comes from human law or what consists in church rules is accepted by the Christian believer for the sake of decency and order, even though a particular rule might be a flawed one, so long as it does not contradict divine law or the teachings of the sacred Scriptures.[4] Thus church law in Lutheran thinking is related both to the distinction between law and gospel and to its ethical counterpart, the distinction between the temporal and spiritual powers.

What topics are discussed under church law? Wilhelm Maurer points out that the two main principles of church law are faith and love: under faith, one considers the church as the place where word and sacrament are given, and under love, one sees the church as the place where the individual believer finds his opportunity for loving service. Church law itself embraces two main divisions: the structure of the church and the rights of pastors and the rules that regulate their actions.[5]

The terminology in church law is taken from a long historical tradition culminating in the Lutheran Confessions. Basic are the two terms *jus divinum* and *jus humanum,* divine law and human law, or, in their adverbial forms, *de jure divino* and *de jure humano,* meaning "according to divine law" and "according to human law." But these translations are over-simplified and can become rather misleading, and we must look for better equivalents. We shall turn to a brief word study in the Latin language, which distinguishes between *jus* and *lex,* a differentiation that is also helpful in the proper distinction between law and gospel. *Jus* means justice or what is right, more than "law," whereas *lex* means a law or a statute, preferably enacted upon the basis of *jus* in the sense of

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"that which is right." *Jus* or justice is the term embodied in the justification of the sinner before God (compare *justitia Dei*), a matter that belongs to the gospel more than to the law. The term for law in its accusatory function, under the proper distinction between law and gospel, is not *jus* but *lex*.

Are all the statements in the Bible that impinge upon church and ministry to be regarded as *jus divinum*? Reformed theologians, guided by the concept that the Bible is a book of inspired and inerrant laws, all of which are equal, would likely answer with a resounding *Yes!* Not so the Lutheran Confessions, which distinguish law and gospel within the Scriptures. They distinguish between two kinds of authority in church law: that which is *de jure divino* and that which is from reason and is *de jure humano*. Only the gospel is of divine right, and therefore the ministry of word and sacrament is the only jurisdiction in the church that we have *de jure divino* [AC XXVIII, 21]. For Lutheran theologians, only the words and institutions of Christ are *jus divinum*; the practices of the apostles (except where an apostle claims a direct message from the Lord) are only derived and are therefore *jus humanum*. Thus the institution of the office of deacon in the church at Jerusalem in order to relieve the apostles (Acts 6) does not lay down a "divine office" for the church of all time, unless one follows the teachings of the Reformed regarding various "ministries."

To assign "divine right" to a democratic mode of church government and popular vote is to confound that which is human with that which is divine, and is therefore blasphemy.

Since all good things come from God, and since human reason is the highest part of creation, that which is of human right is also to be esteemed, but to confuse it with what is of divine right (*jus divinum*) is wrong. In regard to church and ministry, the office of preaching is by divine right (spiritual kingdom); but much of what is written about the pastoral office is a human opinion (*jus humanum*). And especially church polity (how this office and how the church are to be administered in outward affairs) is a matter of human right (*jus humanum*), and belongs to the orders of creation. To assign "divine right" to a democratic mode of church government and popular vote is to confound that which is human with that which is divine, and is therefore blasphemy. And to invoke the guidance of the Holy Ghost before a popular vote is a form of enthusiasm; the Confessions teach that God speaks to us only in the Word. If anyone insists upon making certain views on church polity binding upon consciences today, he is making nonessentials into essentials and he is confounding law and gospel. Nevertheless, out of Christian love, the believer submits himself to the rules of the church (*jus humanum*). Thomas Winger writes: "When a bishop or even the apostle himself institutes a regulation apart from Christ's mandate, it is non-binding, and is observed only from Christian love" (AC XXVIII, 53–56).[6]

Some Reformed theologians, such as Karl Barth, have wanted to make the theological concept of Christian righteousness the basis for secular law and civil righteousness. Wilhelm Maurer rightly rejects this notion, pointing out that there is a fundamental difference between what civil law regards as righteousness and what the church teaches concerning our Christian righteousness. Thereby, Maurer refutes the theocratic notion of Barth that the mode of operation used by the church should be exemplary for civil law. Maurer responds:

> The righteousness that avails before God and bestows salvation upon the sinner is, in the eyes of the world, a screeching unrighteousness. A human judge, who, like God, would bestow forgiveness upon the guilty one out of free grace and without recompense, would fail to do justice to his calling.[7]

Whereas Karl Barth routinely confuses law and gospel, the right distinction between law and gospel will give us necessary guidance in solving the problems of church law. At any rate, the relation between church law and the doctrine of justification is apparent.

Let us briefly consider church law as an academic subject. Already from the start, a Reformed-style kind of biblicism will quickly sidetrack us. It is commonly said that the most important documents of church law are the sacred Scriptures and the symbols in the Lutheran Book of Concord. To this should be added previous church orders, particularly those of the sixteenth century, available in collections by scholars such as Aemilius Richter and Emil Sehling. The introductory discussion on "Rule and Norm" of the Formula of Concord states that the Scriptures are the only judge, rule, and norm by which any doctrine is to be evaluated. The adjective *sola* there modifies *judex, norma,* and *regula*. But since the nineteenth-century invention of a biblicistic doctrine of *sola scriptura,* its many supporters have attempted to have *sola* apply to *scriptura* in the hope of finding a confessional support for an unconfessional biblicism. Such a simplicistic application of a *sola scriptura* effectively destroys the authority of the Lutheran Confessions and historical precedence and removes them from consideration. If we had more Latin scholars around, this mistake would not be so glibly accepted. Thus exegetical departments in Lutheran seminaries sometimes talk about "the confessional doctrine of *sola scriptura,*" a doctrine that as such is not found in the Book of Concord. Moreover, a careless appeal to *sola scriptura* can lead to disaster. If, on the one hand, the Scriptures are to be *sola* or exclusive, and if we, accordingly, are to give up the Confessions, and if, on the other hand, the application of higher criticism is then allowed to destroy the authority of the Bible, then the church is defenseless against the inroads of liberalism and Church Growth strategies.[8]

Within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, there is an increasing tendency for rule by the *Handbook* to replace following guidelines drawn from the Scriptures and the Confessions. If one wants to change political matters in the Missouri Synod, this can be accomplished by changing the *Handbook* to conform to the new concept of how the synod should be. Actually, there are three

documents comprising "Kirchenrecht" in the Missouri Synod today: the Synodical *Handbook*, the Brief Statement, and, some say, Walther's book *Kirche und Amt*, which is regarded as *publica doctrina* by many. Others point out that it was not the book *Kirche und Amt,* but rather Walther's theses on church and ministry that were adopted by the synod; but in any case, some ascribe the quality of church law to Walther's position.[9] Besides these, opinions written by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of the Missouri Synod are sometimes cited as support for a given position. And what about convention resolutions? There is a real problem in giving legal status to theological statements adopted in a convention. Since the Bible is divinely inspired and since the gospel is *jus divinum,* doctrinal matters cannot be decided by a majority vote in a democratic assembly, nor can popular polls determine what should be called pure doctrine. To insist upon such a direct revelation replaces the supremacy of the sacred Scriptures with sectarian enthusiasm and places the church in a position close to that of neo-pentecostalism.

District President Orval Mueller gives an example of how CTCR statements are used to argue a legal case in the Missouri Synod in defending his participation in a mixed wedding service.[10] Mueller took copious quotations from a number of CTCR statements. Thus he cited the following: "Unionism, properly understood, does not describe various forms of joint Christian activity *per se.* Rather, its essence is church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, and it entails doctrinal indifference and/or compromise."[11] Mueller claimed that, as an uncle to the bride, it was his duty to be a pastor to her. He insisted that the wedding service, in which he and another Missouri Synod pastor (Clarence Rittmann) officiated together with an ELCA clergyman (Carl Volz), was not a unionisic action because the ceremony was held in a rented church and there was no "congregation" present. Mueller appealed to Article VI of the synod's constitution, "Conditions of Membership." A glance at this article will show that unionism is indeed restricted there by a narrow definition of the meaning of the word "congregation," and seems to support his own case. Mueller cited these requirements from the constitution of the synod:

> 2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as: a. Serving *congregations* of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church. b. Taking part in the service and sacramental rites of heterodox *congregations* or of *congregations* of mixed confession (emphasis by Mueller).[12]

In this writer's opinion, it was wrong of Mueller to have taken part in that wedding service, and it was a subterfuge supported by an unclear statement in the Constitution by which he was able to evade responsibility for his actions by claiming that the people assembled for the service did not constitute a "congregation of mixed confession," or, indeed, a congregation at all. Evidently, for Mueller, simply gathering around word and sacrament does not constitute a congregation, but in order for there to be a congregation, there must be a legal entity, duly incorporated according to the laws of the state of South Dakota. And the synod's constitution seems to support Mueller's claim. In any case, if a matter such as this is not handled according to systematic principles of church law, it will be difficult to deal effectually with fellowship questions.

As we know, there are some in our American churches who insist that a synod is not church because the church exists only in the form of local congregations (congregational sovereignty or independentism). The Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions cannot support such a contention. Nevertheless, it provided Orval Mueller with a slip-hole when he was under attack. A doctrine of fellowship that is based upon a crass congregationalism is unscriptural and will sooner or later harm sound practices in the church. We must not forget how the notion of congregational sovereignty supported the dissidents in the Missouri Synod during the controversies of the 1970s. Furthermore, Church Growth people today, who reject the authority of the greater church and advocate that a congregation even avoid using the name "Lutheran," endorse such independentism.

A simplicistic application of a* sola scriptura *effectively destroys the authority of the Lutheran Confessions.

We Lutherans in America, in neglecting church law, have made ourselves vulnerable to "hostile takeovers." Something like this took place twice in the former American Lutheran Church. I was there when these things happened! We of the American Lutheran Church of 1930 had accepted the 1960 union on the basis of merger papers that included both the new constitution and the "United Testimony on Faith and Life." These documents had espoused the doctrine of "the inerrancy of Scripture" as well as the statement from the Minneapolis Theses, "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only; Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only." Let us examine how these matters were disengaged in turn.

During the presidency of Fredrik Schiotz, a coalition of college and seminary professors set out to nullify the statement on biblical inerrancy. I have voluminous correspondence on this matter from an eyewitness and participant, Dr. Edward Sagebiel, then president emeritus of the Texas District of the ALC. He was a pupil of Dr. J. Michael Reu and a graduate of Wartburg Seminary, a militant conservative, and, as district president, had been a true bishop to his pastors. In a letter to this writer, Sagebiel describes a secret meeting, which he attended at the Green Lake Bible Camp in Wisconsin. The liberal professors said: "We can't live with the doctrine of inerrancy, and we'll all resign if you don't nullify it." The upshot was that President Schiotz consented to their demands and agreed that no professor would be prosecuted for rejecting the inerrancy of the Bible. This story has never been published but has remained in relative secrecy.

A few years later, under the presidency of David Preus, the position on closed communion was completely abandoned by the

synod. When the "Statement on Communion Practices" was worked out by representatives of the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America, Preus allowed them simply to set aside that statement from the Minneapolis Theses, "Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only," even though it belonged to the "United Testimony on Faith and Life" and had been part of the joint commitment among the synods in the 1960 merger. There was seemingly no one around who knew enough about church law to challenge this infraction. I myself followed the offer of David Preus to send him my comments, but he never answered my letter or addressed himself to my objections; instead, he had an office assistant send me an acknowledgement with the notice that Dr. Preus was too busy to frame a reply.[13]

There is a powerful warning and lesson in this for confessional Lutherans in America today. Simply having a rule in one's church law does not mean that this rule will be followed if legal procedures are disregarded by the churchmen who are responsible for what is done. Under the wrong leadership, the best rules can be transgressed, or can even be changed by legal manipulations. We need to become wise in church law in order to counteract the inroads that are occurring. Problems of church law that need clarification among our churches today include the following: how did Luther, Melanchthon, and the confessors differ from us in their understanding of "church" "or congregation," and how does our understanding of a congregation as a legal entity incorporated under the laws of the several American states differ from theirs? What legislative, judicial, and administrative authorities inhere in the pastor and congregation, the district and its president, the synodical president and the so-called college of presidents and the praesidium, and such commissions as the one on higher education? Why are the provisions of the synodical constitution being violated, and how are such infractions to be addressed and remedied? The wrong notion that we do not need to study church law has not made these problems any easier. Let us turn to a recent example.

Simply having a rule in one's church law does not mean that this rule will be followed if legal procedures are disregarded.

When Robert Preus was ousted by President Ralph Bohlmann and the Praesidium of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for engaging a civil lawyer, he properly pointed out that, according to Article XVI of the Augsburg Confession, Christian citizens have the right of legal redress in civil courts. President Bohlmann and the Praesidium had acted contrary to the Confessions! Unfortunately, such enthusiastic notions are widespread. At any rate, it raises the question, Just how is law properly used in the church?

The indifference to church law in American seminaries is connected with the failure to distinguish the two kingdoms. One misunderstanding is that the church is related only to the spiritual kingdom and the state only to the temporal kingdom. There are two things wrong with such a hasty judgment. First, the church has temporal affairs as well as a spiritual task; as a legal corporation, every congregation has to administer certain mandates of the state. Where there is a Christian day school, matters are even more complex. And, second, the failure to distinguish clearly between its temporal and spiritual aspects has made it difficult for the church to solve problems regarding the doctrine of church and ministry. Fostering the proper distinction between law and gospel, establishing the right connection between the temporal and spiritual kingdoms, and solving the difficult relationship of church and ministry are all problems that require a sound understanding of church law.

CHURCH POLITY AND CHURCH AND MINISTRY IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Pivotal in importance are the statements in Augustana XXVIII, "On the Power of Bishops." The word "bishop" is quickly defined in Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession as pertaining to local pastors as well as to hierarchical bishops. In writing this article, Melanchthon had to work around two problems. First, the bishops of his time were temporal lords as well as church administrators; half the temporal rule of Germany was by bishops and archbishops instead of by lay princes. Second, the church work of a pastor or bishop dealt with temporal as well as with spiritual matters. Therefore, Article XXVIII insisted that the true power of bishops and pastors, the *potestas ecclesiastica,* was a power held only in spiritual matters. To explain this, Melanchthon followed the traditional distinction between divine power (*jus divinum*) and human power in the church (*jus humanum*). Whatever has to do with the gospel (the preached word, the sacraments, the power of the keys and absolution, the pastor's conversation with the brethren) is of divine ordinance; the divine power inherent in the gospel belongs to "bishops," which includes parish pastors, insofar as they are presenting word and sacrament, and to supervisory bishops, when they are at that point operating with word and sacrament. Thus, when a parish pastor is preaching the word, he is carrying out a higher work than the bishop who at that moment is carrying out administrational work for his diocese. Preaching is a divine work under divine law, but governing is a human work under human law and reason. Matters of polity and organization belong to *jus humanum,* and, since God has given us intelligence and reason, it is not pious to ascribe divine qualities to matters that he has entrusted to our human wisdom.

This is essentially what is written in Apology XXVIII, 13–14 and in the Treatise 60–61, where Melanchthon uses also the term *potestas jurisdictionis* (power in respect to jurisdiction, an ablative of respect). He articulates a twofold power given "those who preside in the churches, whether they be called pastors, elders, or bishops" (Tr 61). First, they hold the *potestas ordinis* (power of order), "the mandate of teaching the gospel, remitting sins, and administering the sacraments." Second, they hold the *potestas jurisdictionis,* "the mandate of excommunicating those whose crimes are known, and again of absolving those who repent" (Ap XXVIII, 13; Tr 60–61). Of course, when Melanchthon speaks of "elders," he is not thinking of lay leaders as the term is used in American churches, but he is referring to the New Testament sense of elders as pastors or bishops.

The "power of jurisdiction" had been exercised by the mediaeval prince-bishops and had included the public ban by which church members were deprived of their civic rights; this was an arrangement rejected by the Lutheran reformers but retained in the Calvinist church in Geneva. Ordinarily, the *potestas ordini* was called the *potestas ecclesiastica* and included preaching, the Supper, and the power of the keys. The usefulness of the distinction in Ap XXVIII, 13–14 and in Tr 60, 61, however, is that it clearly places the power of excommunication under the called pastor and not under the laity, as, for example, in today's voters' assembly.

ROME AND GENEVA VERSUS LUTHERANS ON CHURCH POLITY AND CHURCH LAW

Whereas matters of polity are considered *jus humanum* and therefore as adiaphora among Lutherans, they are regarded as fundamental articles in Roman Catholic and Reformed circles. Let us briefly review these differences.

We start with a consideration of the Roman Catholic understanding of church law. Teachings in the eastern and western catholic churches regarding church polity and the means of grace had been very strongly conditioned by the neoplatonic philosophy of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (ca. A.D. 500). We call this a dualistic philosophy because it makes a sharp distinction between matter and spirit, body and soul, and God and man; it also differentiates between clergy and laity. This philosophy set up a series of hierarchies of prime importance, both for the relation between God and man, and for the structure of the mediaeval church. Let us examine this doctrine of hierarchies further.

Pseudo-Dionysius taught that there was both a celestial hierarchy and an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The members of the celestial hierarchy, who contemplated the divine perfection and shared in it, reflected its light downward through their several ranks: seraphim, cherubim, thrones; dominions, powers, authorities; principalities, archangels, and angels. Those who were highest stood nearest to God, and those who were lowest were closest to man. The celestial hierarchy was continued on earth and in visible form by the ecclesiastical hierarchy; the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in descending triads, are as follows: chrism, communion, baptism; bishops, priests, deacons; monks, laity, catechumens. Just as God is the head of the celestial hierarchy, Jesus is the head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[14]

Regarding the relation between God and man, Dionysianism set up a system of mystic contemplation; the soul was to ascend to heaven and thereby bridge the gap between God and man. (As Lutherans, we recognize this mystic contemplation as a form of works-righteousness, which sets aside the redemptive work of Christ and replaces it with the efforts of the pious soul to lift itself into communion with God.) Dionysian philosophy also provided the doctrine upon which the mediaeval hierarchy of church government was assembled, with the parish priest at the bottom and the pope and Mary, the queen of heaven, near the top.

Since Pseudo-Dionysius had masqueraded as the Dionysius who met Paul at Athens and had become his disciple at that time (Acts 17:34), his writings on church polity were thought to have apostolic authority. The system of the Roman hierarchy that developed from his thinking, with the pope and bishops at the top and the priests on a lower level, with the bishops possessing temporal as well as spiritual authority, was thought to be divinely inspired. Therefore, church polity was not a matter of evangelical liberty but was *de jure divino,* by divine right or institution.

Reformed understandings of church law and ecclesial polity bore some resemblances to those of the Roman Catholics. The Swiss reformers failed to follow Luther in rejecting Dionysianism. Dualistic neoplatonism retained a strong grip in Reformed theology. In contrast to Wittenberg, Geneva emphasized the mediaeval concept of the "imitation of Christ," which also links it to the philosophy of the Areopagite. The sacrament of the altar was thought of as a reenactment of the last supper in the upper room at Jerusalem. And Reformed ecclesiology sought to imitate the polity of the apostolic church. (We are being affected by this primitivism today when liturgiologists insist we must imitate the practices of the ancient church.)

The Reformed taught that a certain form of church government as practiced in the book of Acts and as documented in the pastoral epistles had been so ordered by God himself. That the church must be led by an assembly of elders was therefore obligatory for every individual congregation, in accordance with Ephesians 4:11–12, Romans 12:7, and 1 Corinthians 12:28. From this, they concluded there were two types of elders: the teaching elders or pastors (Eph 4:11–12), who, as in the Lutheran Confessions, were limited to word and sacrament, and the governing elders (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:7), who also had a spiritual office but who dealt with administration of the church, moral censure, and caring for the poor, rather than preaching the word.[15] In Reformed thinking, the Word did not refer to preaching so much as to a book, the Holy Bible. The Bible was seen as a collection of laws in which all parts were equal and in which the Holy Ghost equally inspired all sentences. Therefore, little room remained for the Lutheran distinction between law and gospel, by which the gospel was more important than the law, or for the Lutheran distinction between the old and new testaments.

For Lutherans, the ministry of word and sacrament alone had divine sanction and therefore church polity is regarded as a human arrangement.

Let us now contrast the views on church government held by Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and the Reformed. For Lutherans, the ministry of word and sacrament alone had divine sanction (*jus divinum*), and therefore church polity is regarded as a human arrangement (*jus humanum*). The administration and government of the church should be done in accord with human reason and is adiaphorous. The Roman Catholic Church had based its church law on the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. Therefore, mediaeval catholic thinking on church polity was regarded as being divinely given (*de jure divino*). In this mediaeval system, there was a marked hierarchy with the pope and the bishops at the top; bish-

ops had both spiritual and temporal powers. Their use of the ban was criticized repeatedly in the Lutheran Confessions. In Calvinism, the concept of *Kirchenregiment* stood closer to Rome than to Wittenberg, for it taught that God mandated a certain form of church government, albeit in the Holy Scriptures. Let us now consider Lutheran church law further.

CHURCH LAW ACCORDING TO SOME GERMAN LUTHERAN SCHOLARS

At the University of Erlangen, as in other Lutheran universities of Germany, *Kirchenrecht* or church law was an important subject, studied by future pastors as well as future lawyers. Noted professors at Erlangen in this field included Emil Sehling (1860–1928), founding editor of the huge collection of church orders of the sixteenth century, and Hans Liermann (1893–1976), a colleague of Werner Elert. Both Sehling and Liermann were strong confessional Lutherans. This is not surprising, for we know the Lutheran Confessions are a part of the church orders of the sixteenth century, and that they have held legal status in German civil law. For example, during the Third Reich, virtually the only weapon of Lutheran churchmen in resisting the Nazis was to present citations from the Lutheran symbols. Theologians from Luther to Elert had studied law. And it is significant that the noted church historian at Erlangen, Wilhelm Maurer, not only wrote a two-volume commentary on the Augsburg Confession, but also published a collection of his essays on church law nearly 600 pages in length, entitled *Die Kirche und ihr Recht* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1976).

The Lutheran Church has clearly distinguished between the ministry of Word and Sacrament, on the one hand, and church governance or administration, on the other, and has kept them separate.

Sehling writes that church law in German Lutheranism understands itself as covering only the temporal relationships of the church, such as its relation to state and society. He notes that, whereas the Roman Catholic Church has combined the ruling power of the church and the spiritual care of the faithful under one office, the pope or bishop, the Lutheran Church has clearly distinguished between the ministry of Word and Sacrament, on the one hand, and church governance or administration, on the other, and has kept them separate.[16]

Sehling points out that a Lutheran understanding of church law differs from both the Roman and Genevan form in two respects: First, it holds that there is no dogmatic basis for church government, and therefore rejects the notion that any one form of ecclesial government rests upon a divine mandate, but insists instead that every form of governing is acceptable so long as it provides for the right administration of word and sacrament. Second, most Lutherans found themselves in state churches, where they accepted governance from the territorial lords and princes.[17]

It has often been said that Melanchthon favored letting the princes control the church, but Luther was against such a development. Sehling disputes that there was a great difference here between Luther and Melanchthon. He correctly points out that in his "Address to the German Nobility" (1520) Luther called on the princes to serve as emergency bishops and that, in practice, Luther depended upon the governance of the church by the princes. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers applied also to the prince, who, as the *praecipuum ecclesiae membrum,* was made the guardian of both tables of the Decalog (*custodia utriusque tabulae*) and was responsible for leading and protecting the church. Sehling further points out that the idea of a separation of the church from the state was fully unknown to Luther.[18]

Werner Elert discusses church law in his dogmatics, *Der christliche Glaube.* He bases all church law upon the distinction between divine law and human law. *Potestas divina* is the power of the preached word, the sacraments, absolution, and the keys (AC xxvii; Tr 61 ff.). Thus the ministerial office is of divine origin. These instruments of salvation all go back to Christ and are therefore divine; there is nothing else divine in the church, no other office. All other church laws are *de jure humano,* even the ordinances set up by the apostles to govern the church in the New Testament.[19]

For example, when the apostles said in Acts 6:2, "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables," and chose seven men of honest report to take over the task of feeding the poor, they were inaugurating a practical arrangement for saving their own time but were not setting up a divinely ordered office of deacon that was binding on the church for all time. This was a *jus humanum.* But the apostles also set up certain practical provisions in the New Testament that are still binding upon us today. Elert writes: "They apply unconditionally and unchangeably insofar as they are called for by the disposition of the church in word and sacrament." Accordingly, orders of human origin, set up by the apostles or others in the church, are to be given due respect. Certain rules, *jus humanum*, are necessary for carrying out the task given the church by Christ, the *jus divinum* or divine justice. This implies that those who make such ordinances have a serious responsibility. "They do this upon their own responsibility, for which they must answer to the divine judge. Before the other members of the church they must be in the position to justify their ordinances on the basis of the *jus divinum*, that is, by the demonstration that the Word and sacrament provide the direction, purpose, and boundaries of all human ordinances in the church."[20]

Elert points out that when Paul gave instructions on correcting communion piety at Corinth, he used the command of the Lord, which is *jus divinum* (1 Cor 11:23–25), as the basis for his own instruction, which is *jus humanum,* and, because it is based upon the word of Christ, is still binding upon us today. If, however, Paul gave an instruction based only upon his own authority, such as that women should keep their heads covered in church or that the preachers should not speak all at once but in order, this is not necessarily binding for all time (see AC xxviii, 53–56). Another example is Paul's injunction that women not preach in the church. This is still binding, not because Paul said it, but because of the argument that Paul employed. Elert writes:

> When Paul forbade public teaching by women, a different organizational principle was involved. The prohibition lay in the creational relation of the genders with each other (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:12; cf. 1 Cor 11:3ff.; Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; Ti 2:5). The prohibition of public teaching by women was therefore not an autogenous pronouncement of a church statute, but it was a clear implication of the doctrine of Creation.[21]

In his 1935 essay "Lutherische Grundsätze für die Kirchenverfassung," Elert makes some other meaningful observations. He notes the important shift in Luther's thinking from the perspective of the local congregation (1520–1523) to the fuller perspective of the church at large in his later years. Elert states that the later Luther generally speaks of *Kirche,* but even where he uses the word *Gemein* or *Gemeinde,* he means the total church. We think that Elert is right in his understanding of Luther, and that those who cite Luther in support of an extreme local autonomy are incorrect when, for example, they claim that the church exists only in the independent congregation but not in the synod or the church at large.

Instruments of salvation are given to the church as a whole, and that it is as a part of the whole church that the local congregation shares in these privileges.

Elert points to the wide divergences of sixteenth-century church government in the Lutheran city republics such as Nuernberg, Ulm, Hamburg, Riga, and Reval, contrasted with the situation in the Duchy of Prussia, where the Catholic bishops of Samland and Pomerania adopted the Lutheran Confession and thereby remained in office. Elert concludes:

> From this it is clear that the Lutheran Church does not raise any specific claims in regard to a church constitution. However, this principle applies in all cases: no constitution, whether it is episcopal or synodical, can demand for itself the claim of divine right, *de jure divino.* The persons who are named in a constitution can claim divine right for themselves only if they are carriers of the spiritual office, i.e., insofar as they exercise a pastoral function.[22]

There are some who insist that there is no spiritual office besides that of a parish pastor in a local congregation; thereby, district presidents, seminary professors, and other church leaders are said to have no spiritual office. Elert does not agree with this. He points out that there are needful spiritual actions that go beyond the competency of the local congregation, such as the education of pastors, the ongoing supervision of pastors, and the assignment of pastors during a vacancy. In order that all may be done decently and in order, as the apostle admonishes, there must be an organization that is above the congregation to administer these matters. Elert writes concerning the existence of the church at large or the super-congregational church:

> On the basis of such a principle, which at first can only be regarded as theoretical, there are only two possibilities. Either a super-congregational organization is a purely practical arrangement that can only claim human authority, *de jure humano,* in which case it cannot exercise any spiritual functions. In such a case it would be unable to supervise the doctrine of the pastors. Under this supposition they could not even be examined regarding their doctrine before being called. They could not ordain pastors. Thereby, one of the most important reasons for arranging super-congregational organizations would not be satisfied. Or there is the second possibility: this super-congregational organization is supposed to exercise precisely these spiritual functions. In that case, it can only have such authority by divine command, *de jure divino,* because, without this, no spiritual functions can dare to be exercised in the church. But then legitimate carriers of these super-congregational functions are truly carriers of the divine office.[23]

Likewise, Wilhelm Maurer denies that the church exists only in local congregations, but speaks of work done by the church at large. He points to the teaching of the Confessions that the instruments of salvation are given to the church as a whole, and that it is as a part of the whole church that the local congregation shares in these privileges. Commenting on the restoration of ordination at Wittenberg in 1536, Maurer writes:

> But who should do the ordaining? Melanchthon declared in the Treatise (§65) that on the basis of divine right there was no specific way of doing it, but that every Ordination carried out by an evangelical pastor in his own church was valid according to church law. Thereby, he once more emphasized the thesis that all power for spiritual leadership belongs to Christendom as a whole. But by virtue of human right, he holds it possible for there to be different ranks among the ministers of the church, and thereby also a special Office of Ordination, to which is given the examination and instruction of the pastors who are called by the congregations, and thereby—again on the basis of human right—they also possess a certain limited measure of spiritual leadership over against pastors and congregations [Tr §§ 60 ff., BSLK pp. 489–490].[24]

Let us listen further to Wilhelm Maurer. In 1963 he delivered an address in Sweden entitled "Bekenntnis und Kirchenrecht" ("Confession and Church Law"). Here he finds much of church law in the Lutheran Confessions, and particularly in the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Treatise on the Primacy and Power of the Pope; he terms the Treatise "a short monograph on church law."[25]

A noted Latinist defines *jus* as "the foundation of *iustitia* and *iustum.*"[26] To provide a Lutheran twist, we might say that *jus* is the intrinsic righteousness of God by which he justifies the sinner and declares him *iustum.* Maurer took the concept that righteousness

is the intrinsic justice of God himself and developed this justice as a transcendent character (attribute) of God. From this, he moved on to discuss the understanding of *jus divinum* or "divine right" in the Confessions. In contrast to Rome, the Confessions related "divine right" only to the message of the gospel. Maurer describes the characterization of the divine will in Luther as follows: "Luther

Maurer warns against limiting the power of the keys to the local congregation, and insists that the keys are given to the church as a whole, and that the local or particular church exercises the keys only as a part of the universal church.

gave *jus divinum* [divine justice] a completely new content. It is God's unchangeable will, hidden to natural man, the inexhaustibly flowing Spirit-will, which itself is lively and constantly bestows life." Maurer writes that Melanchthon took over this concept of "divine right" in the Augustana and its Apology. There it is identical with the *mandatum Dei* (command of God) and the *ordinatio Dei* (ordinance of God). According to Maurer, God has revealed his Spirit-will in the Holy Scriptures, but this cannot be limited to the mere letter of the Scriptures.

> It testifies to us itself how this *jus divinum* holds natural creation under control, how it flows through history, and then, finally, in the word of Christ, proclaimed by men, it comes to completion. Church law is established and delimited through this divine justice, according to the Lutheran Confessions.[27]

Maurer notes that this character of divine justice (*jus divinum*) is most clearly perceived in the center of church activity, the power of the keys. Absolution is the "voice of God" and rests upon God's immediate mandate (AC xxv, 3 ff.). In it the proclamation of the word finds its climax; it opens the entry to the sacraments. Here the *potestas ecclesiastica* is summarized as a power that is identical with the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. It rests upon the divine mandate, and to that extent it is *jus divinum* (AC xxviii, 12). But this is a purely spiritual power; it has nothing to do with worldly power of punishment. Maurer shows how the Lutheran concept of the ban is differentiated from the mediaeval notion of a temporal punishment for spiritual offenses, a power that was administered by the temporal prince. Maurer's position is supported by Tr 60–61 and SA iii, ix, which teach that pastors have the power of excommunication "not by force but by the word" (*sine vi humana, sed verbo,* AC xxviii, 21). What is of "divine right" occurs without any outward force and must be distinguished from all temporal power or punishment; it occurs only by the word.[28] Compare Tr 31, which speaks of "the mandate of teaching the gospel, announcing the remission of sins, administering the sacraments, excommunicating the impious without temporal force."[29] In the major ban, the princes and bishops used force and even the death penalty in enforcing temporal or religious matters. Lutherans, unlike the Reformed, renounced such violence on the part of the church.

Maurer writes concerning the word as absolution as follows: "It points to Apology xii, 12: 'Absolution is truly of divine right (*juris divini*).'" And he finds this statement in Apology xi, 6: "*Jure divino* is whatever is necessary for salvation." Maurer concludes:

> Thereby a critical norm is established. Anything that is not necessary for salvation is not set up as *jure divino* in the church . . . . Anything that is not necessary for salvation cannot be of "divine right." With this fundamental statement, the Lutheran Confessions reforested all previous church law; they cut down, they uprooted all which was human invention and which had thereby competed with the saving will of the Creator.[30]

In speaking of the doctrine of the Word, the Reformed generally mean a sacred book, while Lutherans generally mean preaching. Maurer vigorously warns against overlooking the oral character of the word and falling into a false biblicism in which literalism replaces the dynamic character of law and gospel.

> The divine mandate to spread the word is never a word about the letter but is always that which is proclaimed by word of mouth; it is worked out here and now by the Spirit and it is the Spirit-activated word. . . . The divine justice is the justice of Christ, which was to become activated in the world by the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins and by faith.[31]

Returning to his concept of the *jus divinum* as the creative will of God, Maurer proceeds to apply this to the orders of creation. This divine right or divine law is not limited to the work of redemption, but it applies also in the world of nature. Maurer illustrates this by referring to marriage and the family. It says in Genesis 1, "Be fruitful and multiply." These words, which established marriage, also give the husband and wife the power to bring forth new life.

> Marriage is a mandate of God and an order of God, and thereby is established as a duty and a blessing for man. And together with marriage, all other orders of divine justice which are set up for the preservation of human life, together with "legitimate civil orders, are good works of God" (CA 16).[32]

Thus the works of creation as well as of redemption are by *jure divino.* In this respect, Maurer carries the concept of divine justice much further than Elert, who even differentiated the words of the apostles from the word of Christ. Nevertheless, Elert elsewhere emphasized the presence of God in the orders of creation just as strongly as did Maurer.

Maurer warns against limiting the power of the keys to the local congregation, and insists that the keys are given to the church as a whole, and that the local or particular church exercises the keys only as a part of the universal church. Nevertheless, he gives generous recognition to the prerogatives of the laity.

> Divine right, the divine spiritual will, binds the preacher and the hearer of the gospel together. It binds them, not in the sense that one is only active and the other only passive. Both are passive in hearing; whoever does not hear can neither believe nor proclaim. Both are active in proclamation; also when the hearing congregation tests or even rejects what it hears, it is making a proclamation. It proclaims also in the homes and the families, in the work place and in the fields. In this tense unity of minister and congregation and of congregation and minister there lies the root of all churchly order. This cannot and must not be reduced [demolished] by the congregationalistic principle, nor by the ministerial principle, nor in an artificial mixture of both principles. It must be built up from the divine right here, which binds minister and congregation in the same way. This means for the evangelical congregation that its principle of church law cannot be based upon the democratic order of the secular community. This means for the synod that it cannot represent the will of the total body like a democratic parliament. The churchly congregation is not a cooperative of people with equal rights in which the majority prevails, but it is rather the *congregatio fidelium* [congregation of the faithful] which gathers itself around word and sacrament, and which arranges its entire life together so that the word is preached, heard, and accepted in faith and love, and so that the world can receive a believable testimony.[33]

SOME CONCLUSIONS REGARDING CHURCH LAW IN AMERICA TODAY

What does this all mean for us in America today? Several conclusions may be drawn. We shall consider first of all church law as applying to the structure or constitution of the church.

We start with the observation that, according to Lutheran teaching, there is no specific form of church government or administration that is mandatory; the manner of governing the outward affairs of the church is guided by reason so long as it accords with the doctrine of the Scriptures. Second, the American concept of the separation of church and state is foreign to the thinking of the reformers, the Confessions, and the historical developments in Germany and Scandinavia. The separation of church and state is not the same as Luther's distinction between the two kingdoms; instead, it belongs to a later period of history, and not to any dogmatic considerations of the Lutheran reformers. Third, questions of church polity do not belong to the central teachings of the church, and, therefore, to allow differing views on church polity to become divisive of church fellowship is to depart from Lutheran tradition.

Now let us turn to church law as it applies to the life and work of the minister. The two largest and least-solved problems for our parish pastors are the danger of being discharged from office and their being financially dependent upon congregations. Maurer writes:

> As with a judge, there is due the pastor the right of not being dischargeable against his will, as well as the immunity of decisions from his theological and pastoral conscience, insofar as they are justified by the Scriptures or the Confessions. . . . Just as his tenure is secured and limited by his lifetime, just as he is bound to his congregation by the manner of installation into office, and how he still can be legally and financially independent of the congregation, these are questions that can be solved only by jurisprudence.[34]

Although we do not possess an original copy of the Augsburg Confession as submitted at Augsburg on June 25, 1530, we do possess the Confession in reasonably reliable copies of both the German text, which was publicly read, and in the Latin text, which was handed to Emperor Charles v at the Diet of Augsburg.

If Bornkamm is right, it appears as though the pastoral office has been completely dissolved into the world, and Luther becomes almost a spiritualist.

The original German edition of AC v, *Vom Predigtamt,* reads: "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das Predigtamt eingesetzt, Evangelium und Sakrament geben." In the Latin version this was somewhat weakened: "Ut hanc fidem consequamur, institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta." The German text may be translated as follows: "God instituted the office of preaching, he gave word and sacrament." The Latin version is much weaker, for it does not mention that the institution is divine. The Tappert translation further weakens the German version by transmuting "Office of Preaching" into "Office of the Ministry."

The Tappert edition further muffles the German confessors at Augsburg by including Heinrich Bornkamm's dubious footnote in the Göttingen edition, "Luther verstand das Predigtamt nicht klerikal," and instead of translating Bornkamm, "Luther did not understand the office of preaching in a clerical sense," Tappert changed "Luther" to "the reformers," and gave it as follows: "This title [The Ministry of the Church] would be misleading if it were not observed (as the text of the article makes clear) that the Reformers thought of the 'office of the ministry' in other than clerical terms."[35] Heinrich Bornkamm was a pupil of Karl Holl, a true "liberal" following in the footsteps of Kant and Ritschl, with their emphasis upon Idealism and the religion of conscience and the religion of culture. Thereby a distorted picture was given of the teachings of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, with a definite lack of understanding for Lutheran teachings on the instruments of grace.

If we further analyze Bornkamm's footnote, we find Bornkamm asserting that *Predigtamt* must not be understood in the sense of an office but considered instead under one of the so-called three orders or estates, namely, the political, the spiritual, and the domestic. This means that preaching might take place in the home (parents), in the church (pastors), or in the political arena (tem-

poral rulers). If Bornkamm is right, it appears as though the pastoral office has been completely dissolved into the world, and Luther becomes almost a spiritualist or a Quaker. Moreover, whatever is left of the ministry has become an "estate," that word which was much dreaded by anti-clericalists. Unfortunately, there are strong impulses among American Lutherans today to follow this caricature of Luther, to denounce the clerical office, and to dissolve the office of preaching into functions of people other than the ordained clergy; this impulse is very strong in the Wisconsin Synod (Wauwatosa theology). This tendency, whether we take it from Bornkamm or from the anticlerical forces in our churches today, is the direct opposite of what the Augsburg Confession was trying to say regarding the *Predigtamt*. This is clear because Article v says that the "Office of Preaching was instituted by God."

If God instituted the preaching office, then there should be clear statements from the Scriptures supporting that teaching. Our Lord did indeed institute the holy ministry when he commanded to preach the gospel in Matthew 28:18–20. This passage is being misused today by Church Growth people, who apply it to everybody in the congregation. The Council of Presidents of the Missouri Synod, in a letter of June 1998 that accompanied the book *Church and Ministry,* speaks of "Servants of the Church" who do such an evil thing as to insist "that the Great Commission was given only to ordained clergy, and not to the whole church." Where was the "church" when Christ spoke those words to the eleven disciples (Mt 28:20)? It did not yet exist, and would not exist until it was founded on Pentecost. Moreover, the Council of Presidents errs when it speaks of pastors as "called servants" of the church (read "congregation"). In the New Testament, the word δοῦλος occurs 115 times; eighty of these are in the apostolic epistles. There is only one case out of eighty where the apostles speak of the pastor as the servant of men. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul describes "ourselves as your servants for the sake of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor 4:5), and here the reference is ironical. Writing in the Zahn Commentary, Philipp Bachmann translates it thus: "ourselves as servants for you for Jesus' sake."[36] But in every other case, when the apostles call themselves "servants," it is always "servants of Christ" or "servants of the Lord." In fact, in 1 Corinthians 7:23, Paul warns: "Do not become servants of men." Pastors are to be servants of Christ, not servants of men.

The interpretation of the Great Commission by the LCMS district presidents, who claim that it applies to all the members of the church today, does not agree with Walther's interpretation in *Kirche und Amt*. Walther applied these words of Christ clearly and unequivocally to the preaching office:

> Thus the Lord spoke in Matthew 28:19–20: "Go forth and teach all nations and baptize them, etc., and teach them to observe all things that I have committed to you. And lo, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." Here it is clearly taught that the Office of Preaching of the apostles as commanded by Christ must continue until the end of the days; if this is to take place, the church must ever and again, until the end of days, set up the orderly and public Office of Preaching and manage the Means of Grace in her midst according to this order.[37]

In closing, let it be said that we must avoid a biblicistic hermeneutics of the sacred Scriptures. May God preserve the church from the tyranny of the exegetes! Nevertheless, we must insist that the Bible is the norm for interpreting the Lutheran Confessions; the Confessions are not to determine what the Bible is allowed to say. And the same thing applies to various other writers, including Walther, Loehe, and Grabau. In rejecting *sola scriptura,* the slogan of the Prussian Union, we nevertheless affirm with our fathers the principle that the sacred Scriptures are the sole judge, rule, and norm of all Christian doctrine. All that is taught in the church must conform to the teachings of this holy book. LOGIA

NOTES

1. Literature in English on church law is exceedingly sparse. One of the few such articles in English is by Siegfried Grundmann in *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church,* 1: 512–516; but his concepts are questionable. He simplistically equates "love" with the gospel, although love is also a requirement of the law. He is very positive toward Barth and Heckel. This article is not recommended for beginners.

2. The Roman jurist Domitius Ulpianus (ca. 170–228) called *jus* or righteousness the will to give to each person the things that are rightfully his. See Otto Friedrich's article "Kirchenrecht, C. Evangelische Kirche," in *Evanglisches Kirchenlexikon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1958), 2: 790.

3. Two theologians at Erlangen, Werner Elert and Wilhlem Maurer, devoted considerable attention to matters of church law, as we shall presently see. Their colleague in the Erlangen law Faculty, Hans Liermann, was an outstanding scholar in church law who stood firmly within the context of the sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

4. In the understanding of the Lutheran Confessions—notably, the Augustana and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope—it is necessary to distinguish between *jus divinum,* that which is ordained by God, referring to Word and sacrament, and *jus humanum,* that which is established by men in the church. We shall look into the Lutheran Confessions more during the course of this essay.

5. Wilhelm Maurer, *Die Kirche und ihr Recht*, ed. Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebass (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1976), 518–525. Maurer, as well as his Erlangen colleagues Werner Elert, the theologian, and Hans Liermann, the jurist, have published important statements on church law.

6. Thomas M. Winger, "The Office of the Holy Ministry according to the New Testament Mandate of Christ," *Logia* 7, no. 2 (Easter 1998): 38.

7. Maurer, *Die Kirche und ihr Recht*, 25.

8. Thus, in the question whether women may become pastors, the conservatives who invoke *sola scriptura* have rejected the Confessions and God's revelation in history from consideration, if the Scriptures indeed be *sola*. The liberals, who perhaps endorse *sola scriptura* according to their interpretations, have rejected the teachings of Paul regarding the subordination of women as his primitive notions about society which are not binding for today. It doesn't much matter what the theologians think, because when the whole matter is voted upon, in the methods of the American democratic system, lay voters controlled by lobbyists might approve the ordination of women. At any rate, this is really what took place in The American Lutheran Church when I was a member of it in the 1960s.

9. The extended title suggests that its author wanted the whole book to be regarded as binding on other Christians. See Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt. Eine Sammlung von Zeugnisse über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechtgläubiger Lehrer derselben.* Von der deutschen evangel.=luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten als ein Zeugnis

ihres Glaubens, zur Abwehr der Angriffe des Herrn P. Grabau in Buffalo, N.Y. vorgelegt durch C. F. W. Walther, weiland Professor der Theologie an dem Konkordia-Kollegium zu St. Louis und Pfarrer der evang.-luth. Gemeinde daselbst. Vierte Auflage. Zwickau i.S., 1894. Verlag des Schriftenvereins der sep. evang.-luth. Gemeinden in Sachsen. In Kommission bei der A. Deichert'schen Verlagsbuchh. Nachf. (Georg Böhme) in Leipzig.

10. See the article in *Christian News* 38, no. 26 (June 29, 1998): 6.

11. CTCR study document, *Inter-Christian Relationships*, 1991, 28.

12. 1995 *Handbook of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, 11.

13. See Lowell C. Green, "The Statement on Communion Practices: A Critical Appraisal," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (April 1977): 58–69.

14. A convenient catalog of the twelve members of the Celestial Hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius is given in a hymn by the Anglican writer John Riley, "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones" (*TLH* #475; *LW* #308). We find the members of the Celestial Hierarchy in this familiar hymn as follows:

> Seraphim, cherubim, thrones;
> dominions, princedoms, powers;
> virtues, archangels, angel choirs.

The hymn goes on with a supplication to the Virgin Mary, "Thou Bearer of the Eternal Word," the patriarchs and prophets, the Twelve Apostles, the martyrs strong, and all saints triumphant.

15. John Calvin, *Institutes* 4: iii, 8; in Library of Christian Classics, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 21: 1061.

16. Emil Sehling, "Kirchenrecht," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3d ed. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1901), 10: 466; hereafter referred to as *RE*.

17. Ibid., 10: 467.

18. Ibid., 10: 468, 470, 469.

19. Werner Elert, *Der christliche Glaube* (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1956), 413 ff., esp. 416.

20. Ibid., 416, 417.

21. Ibid., 416.

22. Werner Elert, "Lutherische Grundsätze für die Kirchenverfassung," paper read at Berlin in 1935, given in *Ein Lehrer der Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1967), 115, 119.

23. Ibid., 120.

24. Wilhelm Maurer, "Geistliche Leitung der Kirche," in *Die Kirche und ihr Recht: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum evangelischen Kirchenrecht*, ed. Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebass (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr), 103, 104.

25. Ibid., 11.

26. See the article on *jus* in *A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1960), edited by the Roman Catholic scholar Roy J. Deferrari.

27. Maurer, 13, 14.

28. Ibid., 102.

29. The Latin text: "mandatum docendi evangelii, annuntiandi remissionem peccatorum, administrandi sacramenta, excommunicandi impios sine vi corporali." BSLK, 480; Tappert, 325. Note Luther's description of the spiritual ban ("der kleine oder geistliche Bann") in SA III, IX; BSLK, 456 and note 7, a reference to WA, 47: 282, 23–24 and 284, 22–26, besides TR 5, No. 5477, contrasted with the temporal or major ban of the Emperor, having to do with temporal matters.

30. Maurer, 14, 15.

31. Ibid., 15–16.

32. Ibid., 13, 16.

33. Ibid., 17.

34. Ibid., 34.

35. Tappert, 31, n. 4.

36. "Uns aber als Diener für euch um Jesu willen." Philipp Bachmann, *Der zweite Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1909), 190. This is volume 8 of the *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, edited by Theodor Zahn, the greatest Lutheran commentary of the twentieth century.

37. Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, under Thesis 3; 211–212.

Rast, Vehse, and Walther

David P. Scaer

Lutherans in America have adopted a number of different arrangements to order their church affairs. Congregations of the old Synodical Conference have been traditionally governed by voters' assemblies chaired by elected laymen. The late Robert D. Preus referred to the Norwegian Synod, where pastors and not laymen chaired these assemblies, a custom probably in vogue also in the old ULCA. Voters' assemblies are of recent origin in Lutheran history. Lutherans have operated without voters' assemblies and do not make this an issue. As the name suggests, the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the first Lutheran Synod in America, was a synod of pastors; only later was an equal number of laymen added to the mix. Where pastors exercise authority, the system is called "conciliarist." When bishops have the final word, it is called "episcopal," and "presbyterian" where authority is shared between pastors and laity. Most churches have a blend of these procedures. This is even true of the monarchical Roman Catholic Church, in which a parish's financial affairs are often in the hands of a lay council chaired by the pastor. The laity in the Episcopal Church have a vote in parish and diocesan conventions, and district presidents in the congregationally organized LCMS have episcopal authority in supervising pastors and congregations.

At one time, membership in LCMS voters' assemblies was limited to males twenty-one and older. When the Constitution of the United States was amended to give eighteen-year-olds the right to vote, most LCMS congregations followed suit. Perhaps a lower percentage of eighteen-, nineteen-, and twenty-year-olds participates in LCMS voters' assemblies than participates in national and state elections. This age group has demonstrated good sense in their lack of interest in participating in the political process, and so the decision to lower the voting age has affected the government as little as it has the governing of our congregations. The constitutional amendment giving them the right to vote was no more than a compensation prize for their having to fight in Vietnam and not a result of their burning desire to get out and vote on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Young adults have other things on their minds—and well they should. At eighteen hardly any of them are married and fully employed, and most of them are struggling to find funds to pay for the next four or more years of education. Responsibility begins later in life than it did a century ago. Only after more than half a century had passed did the LCMS allow for its congregations to align its practice with the constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote, an issue that still stirs a little dust, but not much.

On the surface it appears that the governing policy of LCMS congregations eventually reflects and flows with the political currents. A *prima facie* case can be made that throughout church history the church's governing procedures follow, or at least resemble, civil government. This is demonstrably the case with the ordination of women pastors that was allowed and then mandated by the socialist-leaning governments of Scandinavia. Dutch Lutherans took over Calvin's presbyterian system in use in Holland in which clerical preaching elders and lay ruling elders had equal standing. This balancing of pastor and lay authority was introduced into Muhlenberg's congregations in Philadelphia. LCMS synodical and district conventions operate in the same way, though the reason for this may be different.

Today many congregations have to work at encouraging their members to participate in voters' assemblies. Decreasing participation in voters' assemblies is matched by the waning participation in state and national elections. Only 11 percent of the party faithful participated in the Iowa Republican and Democratic caucuses on January 25, 2000. Such indifference in civil and church elections may suggest that the people are satisfied with the ways things are running; at least, that's what George Will suggests. He also points out that Hitler came to power in Germany with about 98 percent of the vote. Those who do not feel qualified to vote or who have no burning desire to do so should not do it. Increased congregational participation in voters' assemblies is no promise of church bliss. Prominent in recent LCMS history were the decisions of over three hundred voters' assemblies to leave the LCMS for the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, which soon was absorbed into the ELCA and is now aligned with the Reformed. In many, if not most, of the congregations leaving the LCMS, marginal members exercised their options to vote and made the difference. The pastors literally got out the vote! Luther said that popes and church councils err. So do voters' assemblies.

A not uncommon assertion for a Reformation Day sermon is that Luther was responsible for a number of things like universal education and literacy, nationalism, a unified German nation, democracy, American independence from England, and

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so on—Luther the great benefactor. These benefits are said to be results of his doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. If people are going to keep their pastors in check, they should at least know how to read their Bibles. We are all equal, so we all have an equal say in how things are done. Good Lutherans are good Americans. Or is it the other way around? It doesn't matter. Reformation Day is a good opportunity to claim the market on patriotism and democracy. Maybe someone who ordinarily would not have become a Lutheran will become one, because, after all, it is the American thing to do. It is also the rational thing to do. The Rationalists of the Enlightenment saw Luther as one of their own. He was also made a party to Pietism by prominent leaders in the establishing of the LCMS. Picturing Luther as the great democratizer is historical revisionism: the great Reformer sided with the princes in putting down the Peasants' Revolt in 1525, only eight years after he nailed the Ninety-Five Theses to the church door. Still, seeing Luther as the font of democracy makes for good press.

Increased congregational participation in voters' assemblies is no promise of church bliss.

So the first step is to make Luther responsible for American democracy, as we have shown. But there is a second step, which is bit more dicey. The LCMS's founding father, C. F. W. Walther, is obviously not responsible for American democracy, but did he conform his doctrine on the church and ministry to it? On this the feathers fly. One side says that Walther americanized the doctrine of the church, and the other side, that he was only putting Luther's doctrine of universal priesthood of all believers into practice, something that the Reformer wanted but was unable to do because of his circumstances. According to this second option, similarities between democracy and the practice of the universal priesthood were coincidental and not necessarily related. In favor of the first view of an Americanized LCMS are the parallels between laity voting in congregational meetings and citizens voting in state and national elections. Surely without a constitutional amendment giving eighteen-year-olds the right to vote, LCMS congregations would not have adjusted their constitutions. Universal priesthood parallels, or at least translates into, universal suffrage. But there is one objection to this argument. How likely is it that Lutheran Saxons, recently arrived in the hinterlands of Missouri, have adopted a form of government with ancient roots in England but not even extant in Germany? Not likely. In Germany kings and princes were still calling the shots and had required Lutherans to worship with the Reformed. That should settle the matter. The quasi-official LCMS position has traditionally been that our polity has its roots in Luther's doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers, and not because some Saxon immigrants took over American constitutional processes as soon as they arrived in this country. Case closed.

Not so fast. Enter Larry Rast with an article in the October 1999 issue of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly*.[1] Rast rehearses much of the LCMS history that all of us should know, but fewer and fewer probably do. The Saxon Lutherans, from whom the LCMS sprang, were led by Martin Stephan. Before they disembarked in their new homeland, the pastors who accompanied them recognized Stephen as bishop with authority over all things spiritual and temporal. The pope used to claim a double crown for himself. From Rast's evidence, it seems that Stephan was already a bishop in his own eyes and the pastors were the first to recognize it. There was an act of recognition, but no consecration. After landing in the New World things changed. Allegations made by several women led to his being forced out of the Lutheran church-colony, which, without their leader, was now threatened by internal disintegration. Carl Vehse, the prominent layman, took a commanding role in attempting to move from the newly adopted and soon discredited, episcopal form of church government to a democratic one: one man, one vote. In the end, Walther saved the day by discovering that the real power lay with the people and not a bishop or the clergy, but the people transferred their authority to the pastor with a divine, non-retractable call. Since nearly all of our readers have the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* at their disposal, there is no need to go over the historical particulars offered by Rast, who provides references for those requiring more study.

For the LCMS, the Saxon emigration combines the Israelites passing through the Red Sea and Mayflower motif of the pilgrims settling in Plymouth, Massachusetts: they miraculously flee the tyranny of a German state church, only to find other problems on the opposite shore with an equally tyrannical bishop from which they are also then delivered. As an historian Rast re-evaluates the evidence and puts another twist on LCMS *Heilsgeschichte.* This brief historical moment could be ignored, but the LCMS's ecclesiology is rooted in the rapidly occurring events of a few months. The church-ministry debate out of which Walther forged his doctrine was only a moment in time in comparison with the centuries-long debate that gave us our Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Christology. Humanly speaking, were it not for Walther's incontestable genius in devising principles to keep this small band of Germans from disbanding, the restoration of confessional Lutheranism would have faltered. Here is a condensation of the historical data offered by Rast.

The Saxons left Germany in November 1838. Two months later on board the ship, Stephan accepted an overture from the pastors to become their bishop. This is what Rast calls the "conciliarist" view, in that this action was taken by the pastors and not the laity. On May 30, 1839, just six months after leaving their homeland, and after about four months in Missouri, Stephan was removed from office by the same pastors and exiled to the east side of the Mississippi. Nature abhors a vacuum, and into the void Vehse forced his concept of a democratically controlled church. Not considered were the other options of an episcopally controlled church, which Stephan had made distasteful, or the "conciliarist" one, which the pastors exercised in removing the bishop. Carl Vehse had been state archivist in Saxony, and by anyone's stan-

dards was well educated and especially versed in and influenced by the revolutionary thought emerging from the Enlightenment in England and France, ignited by the French Revolution and spread in Germany by Napoleon's conquests. Vehse fancied himself a theologian and set down six propositions, among which was "the supremacy of the spiritual priesthood over the preaching office and 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.'" Along with two other laymen he wrote a book that "argued that Scripture and the Confessions demand a congregational form of government." Among its tenets were that "'congregations, as congregations, are in honor to be preferred before the clergy'," and "'the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers must be maintained as a bulwark against reassertion of papal authority.'" Vehse listed his authorities as Luther and the Pietist Jakob Spener. Rast remarks, "The language of 'bulwark' brings to mind the American system of checks and balances." To this we add our own observation that the American Declaration of Independence was a rebuke of the tyrannical rule of a king, and the Constitution sees ultimate power in the citizens: "We the People . . . , in order to form a more perfect union . . ." In Vehse's view, and in the American one, the people are the solution.[2]

Though one group of LCMS historical authorities denies any American influence in this part of LCMS history, Rast shows that its leaders were well read on the democratic procedures of the country to which they were going. Vehse deliberately inflamed the passions of the people against their pastors and, according to Rast, offered a program that Nathan Hatch found to be typical of democratizing principles of American Protestantism: "refusal to defer to seminary-trained pastors; empowerment of the laity; and offering enthusiastically a vision of what the people could accomplish themselves." For Vehse, the laity possessed the keys of the kingdom immediately and the pastor only indirectly. He allowed for uneducated clergy in emergencies. In other words, Vehse's program was no different from what has always been common among American Protestants, and what is increasingly more common among some Lutherans. Vehse's authorities for advancing what he considered a Lutheran ecclesiology were Luther, the proto-Pietist Johann Arndt, and the arch-Pietist Jakob Spener, "whom he praises as a 'leader of those last, truly zealous messengers of the Gospel, the Pietists.'" It should be remembered that the universal-priesthood-of-believers doctrine was a favorite among the Pietists, for whom the ordinary worship of preaching and the sacraments was best supplemented by private devotions. Vehse called his opponents "the 'proud clerics' of the orthodox party." Though "Vehse" is hardly a household word, that spirit is alive and well in some quarters.[3]

Scandinavian immigrant Lutherans held to the same views as Vehse. But that is traceable, not to him, but to their experience in their home countries where bishops and clergy were civil servants accountable to the king. Most ELCA objection to fellowship with the Episcopal Church was centered in the upper Midwest where this heritage of distrust lingers.

Rast endorses most of Carl Mundinger's thesis that Walther took over into his own position Vehse's views that the church as the universal priesthood possessed the keys, but safeguarded the ministry with the transfer theory of the ministry, *Uebertragungslehre,* the divinity of the call, the authority of the word of God, and permanent tenure of the pastor. By this view, congregations had ultimate power, but transferred it to the pastor who under ordinary circumstances had a permanent claim to exercise it. Walther's position was a theological construct suited for a church moving in the direction of anarchy. Problematic for Rast is that "a good deal of Missouri Synod historigraphy (one might say 'all') has argued that the polity developed by our forebears directly from Scripture and the Confessions without any intermediary." It wasn't. Court historians, in defining Walther's position, have overlooked the historical cauldron in which he developed his position. "The result is an uncritical linking of polity and ecclesiology." Walther constructed a polity that addressed the democratic fever that had overcome the Saxon Lutheran colony in Missouri and threatened to destroy it. This polity should not be confused with a doctrine, even though this is exactly what has happened. Walther's construct worked then, because he safeguarded the office of the ministers who were regarded until the middle of this century with great respect. But in an age of individualism this construct has begun to disintegrate and often led to disastrous results, which have allowed congregations to become sovereign in their dealings with their pastors and the synod. Congregations who have transferred their authority to the pastor in the call are retracting that authority, something which was foreign to Walther. In these situations pastors are left at the mercy of the majority in voters' assemblies. For such congregations, the synod becomes no more than an advisory body, and they are no longer bound to its decisions in doctrine and practice, including such ordinary matters as hymnals. Today, liturgical anarchy has replaced a day not that long ago when quite literally all LCMS congregations followed the same order of services. Views of congregational autonomy not only have specific political roots, but they are grounded on an individualism in which "everyone [is] a minister."[4]

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Rast is as much a historian as he is a realist. In an American environment, reestablishing an episcopal form of church government is as impossible as it is unnecessary. Democracy is a fact of life—even among the tradition-bound Eastern Orthodox churches where voters' assemblies make decisions about church property. Even in the Roman Church, the laity participate in parish and diocesan councils and university boards. Pastors of all denominations in the American situation

have to live within democratic heritage of the Enlightenment in church management. But it is an entirely other thing to adjust our history to give the impression that Walther and his successors ever believed that the church *as* church (*una sancta)* was established by God as a democratic institution like the United States. To insist that one form of church polity is divinely bestowed is sectarian.

Characteristic of congregationalism is that each congregation determines what the truth will be for it. We should be very careful that Lutheran procedures do not become an acculturation to the Pietistic-Enlightenment heritage common to American churches. Where the final decision is left in the hands of the congregation—and this is what the sovereignty of the congregation means—the pastor has little choice but to become a demagogue who must continually massage his congregation in order to survive. Then the preaching of law is compromised and addressing specific sins is rendered impossible. The people may not like it—and hence not like him. Examples include Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus himself. Christ's doctrine is too sacred to be left to the politically persuasive talents of the preacher.

For the record, Bishop Stephan was deposed not by any congregation or the voters' assembly or other assembly of the people, but by courageous pastors. "What we have here is a Lutheran form of conciliarism!"[5] Resorting to the idea of the universal priesthood as a basis of church authority came later. Tensions between congregations and their pastors and between congregations and the synod are on the increase. In some cases, Stephan's spirit is still with us, or it may be that some pastors are simply insensitive to congregational traditions that are special and should be preserved or adjusted only with patient sensitivity. In other cases, congregations are championing Vehse's view that pastors must be subservient to the congregations. Unless this problem is addressed without compromise, many more congregations will face internal strife, which hinders the gospel cause. Rast has provided the first step in historically analyzing the roots of the problem. A full-blown critical-historical study is needed. Again, it is a matter of courage, as with the first pastors who confronted Stephan. LOGIA

NOTES

1. Larry Rast, "Demagoguery or Democracy? The Saxon Emigration and American Culture," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (October1999): 247–268.
2. Ibid., 260–261.
3. Ibid., 262–264.
4. Ibid., 265–267.
5. Ibid., 259

Reviews

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

Review Essay

Through the Church the Song Goes On: Preparing a Lutheran Hymnal for the Twenty-first Century. Edited by Paul Grime, D. Richard Stuckwisch, and Jon D. Vieker. The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999.

Through the Church the Song Goes On is an effort by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Commission on Worship to foster theological discussion on some of the critical matters in developing a new hymnal for the LCMS and probably also for some congregations of the Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC). It is evident that two major goals of the Commission for the new book are theological faithfulness and wide adoption within the LCMS. Many see a potential for the next hymnal to be a partial return to the glory days of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941), which was used almost everywhere in the Missouri Synod as well as in the majority of parishes of the other synods belonging to the old Synodical Conference.

This collection of essays covers several hot issues regarding liturgy among Lutherans: lectionaries, eucharistic prayers, music, variety, the role of assisting ministers, and private absolution are among the issues under consideration. Simply publishing such a volume in preparation for a new hymnal is commendable. It is a hopeful sign that the task is being undertaken with utmost reverence.

Lectionaries

Ever since the adoption of the ILCW's three-year series of readings, the LCMS has been divided in its use of lectionaries, even aside from the novelties implemented by individual pastors. Three proposals are offered in the essays of *Through the Church the Song Goes On.* Lee Maxwell argues strongly in favor of a return to a slightly modified form of the historic lectionary. A very important pastoral and evangelistic argument in favor of the historic lectionary is the catechetical value of repetition, an element expounded lucidly by Maxwell. Roger Pittelko defends the use of a three-year series. D. Richard Stuckwisch offers a third proposal of "doing our own thing" in the form of a synthesis between the historic lectionary and the three-year format.

The mantra of those who argue in favor of keeping the three-year lectionary is "More is better." While broader exposure to Scripture can certainly be good, it is not the only consideration. Overall, the argument for a form of the historic one-year series merits the most attention. It is the lectionary Luther preached on and the one mentioned in the Lutheran Confessions. The goal of a lectionary is not simply to make one a master of various facts, but to teach the faith soundly so that it is rooted strongly within individual Christians and congregations. Besides the novel origins of the three-year series, the historical critical methodology used in pericope selection is evident and has been indicated by several scholars. Yet, however much one argues in favor of one lectionary over another, the merit of the LCMS's being entirely served by the same lectionary is an important element for consideration. Furthermore, whatever lectionaries are provided should be supported fully by Concordia Publishing House with companion publications.

Absent in the discussion of lectionaries is mention of what translation of the Scriptures we will use—not only in the lectionary book, but also in catechetical and devotional materials, new editions of the *Self-Study Bible,* bulletin inserts, and so forth. This is a weighty question indeed, since so many LCMS and LCC congregations use the propers published by CPH. Even though "faith comes by hearing," we are not likely to see too many congregations curtail the habit of using printed inserts of the pericopes. Will we persist in using the strongly Reformed New International Version, or will we choose something else? Many are proposing the adoption of the New King James Version as the best of the existing versions, a version based on the *textus receptus.* At the present time, this seems to be the best choice of popularly used versions in the vernacular. Rumor has it, however, that a "conservative" revision of the old Revised Standard Version is in the works. But even if such a translation is produced, it is doubtful whether we will have sufficient time to review it. The New King James Version may, by default, be the preferred and most logical choice.

Eucharistic Prayers and the *Verba Testamenti*

Once again, eucharistic prayers and their relationship to the Lord's words of institution is confronted as the divine service orders are revised. There is still much division on this subject. A good deal of this centers around the question, What would Luther do? The three essayists take varying positions on this issue. William E. Thompson takes the view that any prayers of thanksgiving should be distinct from the Words of Institution, whereas Bruce Keseman and William Weedon take the view that

the dominical words may be blended into such prayers. It is notable, however, that as in favor of the eucharistic prayer (incorporating the *verba)* as Keseman is, he still suggests that now is not the time for such a move. Weedon, on the other hand, suggests that now is the time, implying that the eucharistic prayers of the Swedish Lutheran tradition and the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (SELK) provide an apt model for the LCMS project.

As much as Luther's *Formula Missae* and *Deutsche Messe* come into play in the typical Lutheran arguments about eucharistic prayer, they are not normative. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that perhaps some of our divergence on this matter does in fact come from Luther's orders. As Weedon demonstrates, the *Formula Missae* proceeds directly from the Preface into the institution narrative while the *Deutsche Messe* distinguishes the narrative from any prayer (58–61). Consequently, the answer for what we should do may not necessarily lie in the question of what Luther would do or has done.

What guidance do the Lutheran Confessions give us on this matter? They cite the eastern church (or at least the eastern patristic heritage) to the effect that the mass or liturgy is a "public ministry." The liturgy as "divine service" is something that Lutherans hold in common with the Christians of the East (Ap xxiv), although there is not total parity. It is not surprising then that a considerable though not total measure of commonality between the two churches should exist. The Formula of Concord summons a quotation of St. John Chrysostom as a patristic witness to the Lutheran understanding of the consecration. Chrysostom says, as quoted in FC SD vii:

> Christ Himself prepares this table and blesses it; for no man makes the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ, but Christ Himself who was crucified for us. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God's power and grace, by the word, where He speaks: "This is My body," the elements present are consecrated in the Supper. And just as the declaration, Gen. 1, 28: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," was spoken only once, but is ever efficacious in nature, so that it is fruitful and multiplies, so also this declaration was spoken once, but even to this day and to His advent it is efficacious, and works so that in the Supper of the Church His true body and blood are present.

Hence it is said in FC SD vii, 79 that the words of institution are to be spoken or sung before the congregation "distinctly and clearly." The Confessions state that the dominical words are by no means to be omitted: no *verba,* no sacrament. But what of the outward form of thanksgiving and the Lord's words? As much as the confessions cite the eastern liturgies against Rome to substantiate a canon that does not use propitiatory sacrifice language, they neither adopt nor suggest an eastern order for Lutheran use. Even though St. John Chrysostom is cited concerning dominical words and their power, the Eastern Orthodox still teach, contrary to scriptural and confessional teaching, that the *epiklesis,* or calling down of the Holy Spirit in a prayer, is the effective means of the corporeal presence. Lutheranism, along with the western catholic tradition, has never approved such a view, but has always confessed that the words of institution are the Lord's means of giving his body and blood to us. Nevertheless, we do not fall into precisionism concerning the moment of the beginning of the presence. Neither do we deny that the words are the means through which the Lord blesses the bread and wine. The body and blood of Christ are there consecrated, distributed, and received, as the Confessions state.

The institution narrative indicates that the thanksgiving prayer of Jesus had been completed by the time the Lord spoke concerning the bread and wine. In the narrative, the dominical words "This is my body . . . this is my blood" are spoken to the twelve, in the presence of the Father, after the thanksgiving. In the divine service also, the words are from Christ to us with respect to the bread and wine. In typical eucharistic prayers, on the other hand, the words of institution are spoken to the Father, in the presence of the congregation. Note here the reversal of the narrative's direction and emphasis. Does not the mainstream (Saxon) Lutheran tradition (as well as Loehe's *Agenda*) reflect the form and direction of the institution narrative more faithfully? This is not the case with the Great Thanksgiving of *LBW* (1978), to name but one example.

The testamentary promise of the gospel is distributed to us in the divine words of the supper, which are fulfilled in the body of Jesus given and the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of sins. This last will and testament of Christ is the chief divine service. In the celebration of this sacrament, adoration of the corporeally present Christ is due (FC SD vii, 126). But within the context of the communion, there remains the fundamental distinction between what God is doing for us men and for our salvation and our response of thanksgiving to the generosity of such a God. As much as prayer can be a confession and realization of the dependency of mankind upon God, it still remains a response instilled by Spirit-wrought faith, something attributable to the work of sanctification. However much, at times, the distinction between prayer and proclamation may be blurred (such as in the Psalms, introits, or the invocation), there must remain a distinction between what God does and what we do, lest we be consumed in a monism rather than a union. For a true communion or union there must be in origination two different parties. And so in the holy communion the body and blood of Christ unites us with our Savior and God, but our distinctiveness is not dissolved. There is a dialogue of prayer, of liturgical conversation, not a talking over one another. It happens in the way of versicle and response. When the Lord speaks we are in the posture of listening. Therefore when the Lord speaks, "Let all mortal flesh keep silence." Chemnitz wrote:

> And surely this blessing or consecration is not to be divided between the Word of God and words handed down by men. For it is not just any word, but the Word of God which is necessary for a sacrament. And to the Word of God, seeing it has been tried with fire, nothing is to be added (Prov. 30:6). And especially, nothing is to be added to the testament of the Son of God (Gal. 3:15-27). In short, Christ has commanded us to do in the action of the sacrament what He Himself did. He did not, however, perform a mute

> action, but spoke. And what He said is reported to us in Scripture, as much as the Holy Spirit judged to be necessary for us (*Examination of the Council of Trent* 2: 226).

Recent liturgical discoveries have brought forth ancient eucharistic prayers that do not include the institution narrative within the prayer but that assume its place distinct from the prayer. Addai and Mari is but one such example. With regard to the antiquity and historicity of the typical Lutheran form, Roman Catholic liturgical scholar David N. Power opines:

> Some have offered historical reconstructions which allow for the existence of prayers that do not include the narrative. While the argument used to be largely over Addai and Mari, it has broadened to include the presence in the Egyptian and Antiochene traditions of much shorter thanksgiving prayers, which do not have this component. . . . It is also possible that this type of prayer could give validity to the Lutheran practice of separating the narrative from the prayer, as Martin Luther did. This allows for a mode of joining proclamation with memorial thanksgiving in the celebration of the Lord's Supper different to that which occurs when the attempt is to include the proclamation in the prayer ("The Eucharistic Prayer: Another Look" in *New Eucharistic Prayers: An Ecumenical Study of Their Development and Structure,* ed. Frank C. Senn [New York: Paulist Press, 1987], 241, 242).

Not only this, but St. Gregory the Great writes in Epistle XII to John, Bishop of Syracuse, a passage also cited by Chemnitz in his *Examen* and by Friedrich Lochner in *Der Hauptgottesdienst*:

> [I]t was the custom of the apostles to consecrate the host oblation to that same prayer only. And it seemed to me very unsuitable that we should say over the oblation a prayer which a scholastic had composed, and should not say the very prayer which our Redeemer composed over His body and blood (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 8: 9).

Citing Gregory the Great, Chemnitz asserts more than once that the apostles celebrated the Lord's Supper with the Lord's Prayer and the Words of Institution alone. This practice is not surprising, especially considering the analysis of Josef Jungmann, who concludes that the purpose and function of the Our Father in the mass is eucharistic (*The Mass of the Roman Rite,* 2: 278, 279). Hence it can be demonstrated that in the history of the liturgy, a form like that used in *LW* (1982) or *Hymnal Supplement 98* has ancient testimony and is not novel or deficient by any means. Philip Pfatteicher admits that the mainstream Lutheran form is more readily recognizable as being in agreement with the theology of the Formula of Concord, Article VII, though he himself is a proponent of eucharistic prayers that blend in the institution narrative (*Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1990], 169). Given all this, the forms found in the divine service orders of *LW* as well as *Hymnal Supplement 98* clearly exhibit evangelical catholicity. Despite the claim of some that eucharistic prayers not blending in the *verba* may not adequately guard us from omitting mandatory thanksgiving, the fact of the matter is that those who choose to write their own "worship experiences" will do so regardless of the form given in a hymnal. Those who do their own thing already will not be changed much by what is in the next hymnal.

In addition to the three essays on eucharistic prayer, a document reprinted from the Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church of Australia provides amply convincing arguments that the celebration of the Lord's Supper does require that thanksgiving be given according to the command "This do." Many "conservative" Lutherans are apt to omit any pre-consecratory thanksgiving when assembling a "worship service" based, purportedly, on the German Chorale Mass or *LW*'s Divine Service III. The tendency in this case is to proceed directly to the dominical words, stumbling into the New Testament Holy of Holies. This omission of thanksgiving clearly needs to end.

Hymnal or No Hymnal?

What is the future of hymnals? Robert Zagore and Larry Peters confront the issues involved with producing any hymnal for a Lutheran church body at this point in history. With word processors and an abundance of all kinds of materials enabling pastors and so-called ministers of music to display their creativity and personality these days, one might question the wisdom of anyone's even mentioning publishing another hymnal.

But there have always been three foundational books for Lutheran piety: the Bible, the Catechism (or Book of Concord), and the hymnal. In our age of virtual reality (that is, of being docetically corporeal), the use of these real books grounds us in the incarnational realities of the divine word. For the Lutheran church, these three books can never be taken for granted. Hymnals are, as Zagore observes, "a church body's most public summary and application of theology" (76). And yet the liturgy is not primarily a written object, but a spoken and heard event (Rom 10:17). The church, according to Luther, is a mouth-house, not a quill-house. The hymnal, including the liturgy, serves the purpose of speaking and hearing and serves to internalize what is spoken and heard. As with catechesis, so it should be, at least to a certain extent, with the liturgy and hymns of the church: pick one form and stick to it. Symmetry between the various rites and the commonly used versicles and their responses ought to be highly encouraged. These things should be familiar and easily memorized.

In tension with the conservative nature of the church, the church exists within a living and breathing liturgical tradition. Zagore notes that when we speak of the *historic* liturgy, we are not speaking of an order that is locked in the past or is completely static. The historic liturgy is not merely the order of Holy Communion found on page 15 of *The Lutheran Hymnal* published by Concordia Publishing House in 1941. (It certainly is not the order on page 5 of *TLH,* which one hopes will be abolished.) The historic western liturgy is both traditional and contemporary. It is evangelical (purely gospel-centered) and catholic (confessing the faith according to the whole). Therefore it is meaningful, relevant, mission-focused, and creative through the divine mysteries.

Yes, the traditional liturgy is even an asset to missions and evangelism. If this were not the case, how would we have come to have a historic, traditional liturgy in the first place? Given the corporate nature of the church, when the liturgy is modified it is done with the consent of the church in a particular jurisdiction or territory, not every congregation for itself.

Zagore makes an important point that, "While the historic liturgy is orthodox, meaningful, and inviting, hymnals often are not" (81). The format of a hymnal is of very practical importance. As said before, when it comes to the divine service, the written is to serve the spoken and heard. Despite the many good points of *LW,* one of its primary failures was its format. As much as one may want to downplay the negative aspects of pragmatism in our culture, if an orthodox hymnal is not used, it is as good as no hymnal at all. Hymnals may have a future in Lutheranism if we are wise in the way we print and assemble them. With this said, it is to be hoped that there is still some room for quality liturgical art in our hymnals and companion volumes.

Liturgy, music, and culture are also confronted in this volume. Daniel Zager's essay is entitled "Holy Ground and Counter-cultural Music." Music is indeed a critical issue. Much of the Church Growth Movement's methodology focuses on faddish styles of music that are used to attract certain groups of people. The rapid growth of the multi-million-dollar contemporary Christian music industry has also added much to the debate. But does what is broadly called "Christian music" or even "contemporary Christian music" qualify as liturgical music, that is, music suited for the unique vocation of the divine service?

The view of the liturgy that posits that it is the work of the people might suggest that whatever the people enjoy and find uplifting is suitable for a "worship service." On the other hand, does such music reflect the nature of worship, or rather of divine service, which is *coram Deo*? Does it reflect in Spirit and truth the theanthropic (incarnational or "Boolean") character of the holy liturgy? Zager points out that in many congregations a virtual buffet (my words) of worship styles are offered: traditional, contemporary, blended, and perhaps others. In many ways, music style is simply offered as a bait-and-switch tactic to get bodies through the doors, bodies of those who do not understand the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:6–16). But does this tactic get them into the kingdom of heaven? The assumption, whether explicitly stated or not, is that there is somehow an improvement on the means of the Spirit.

Experimentation with musical styles in contemporary worship circles most often begins with a musical style that proposes to fit the text to the music, rather than setting the music to the needs or character of the text and the nature of the liturgical assembly in the eucharistic context. Music in the divine service is put into the service of what is holy and eternal. The danger is that this leads to a form of Pietism that would have us trust in our wobbly and unpredictable religious feelings rather than in the authoritative and sturdy promises of the Lord. Here the call is to follow St. Augustine's wisdom and to cling to the certain and depart from the uncertain (*tene certum, dimitte incertum*). To trust in things that cannot hold the weight of faith, which properly should lean upon Christ Jesus, is building upon sand.

Liturgical Song

Kent Tibben discusses "The People's Song: What Distinguishes a Hymn from a Liturgical Song?" He distinguishes three kinds of churchly song: hymnody, liturgical song, and liturgical chant. One critical element of liturgical song Tibben discusses is repetition and learning and how this relates to the form of a liturgical song or hymn. Hymns, and liturgical songs to a certain extent, tend toward the paraphrastic. Liturgical chants are best suited for repeating of texts with little or no modification for singing. This is significant. Despite the pedigree of a chorale mass, it may tend toward paraphrased liturgical texts, which, in turn, are often more shallow. This is not to say that they need be, however.

Liturgy and Culture

Naomichi Masaki deals with the relationship between liturgy and culture. In his words, "liturgy has a culture of its own." Nothing comes into the liturgy as it is found in the world. Anything that comes into the liturgy is sanctified and transformed through the Word of God. What all cultures outside the divine service have in common is anti-sacramentality or anti-incarnationality. The disposition within all of us, and therefore all culture, is to move toward the abstract, the speculative, and finally enthusiasm, which Luther calls the "source, power, and strength of all heresy." Masaki suggests that a standard translatable text of the liturgy be used universally at home and abroad (not only the holy communion, but also lectionary, hymns, and all that goes along with good liturgical practice). The liturgy is catholic and therefore elementary for missions. It is that into which newborn believers are incorporated and through which they live.

The Call for Variety

A typical attack against traditional liturgy is that it lacks variety. This tactic sets up a straw man. The historic divine service actually has much variety. Kevin J. Hildebrand demonstrates clearly that the catholic liturgical practice of Lutheranism has much in the way of variety. He also argues that a fixation on some kinds of variety is detrimental to the mission of the church. Much of what is offered as variety for the sake of mission is nothing more than an appeal to the desires of the sinful nature, which then short-circuits contrition and faith in absolution.

Very often, as Hildebrand notes, the attempt is to liven things up. Admittedly, some pastors do lead the liturgy as they would read a list of names from a telephone directory. But the effectiveness of the Word of God is not improved by how we inflect it or by our intonation while speaking. Even among so-called conservative Lutherans, a wide-ranging group to be sure, there is much latitude evident. If one were to pick at random among the various Sunday services of the Missouri Synod, it might be much akin to playing a game of liturgical Russian roulette. Hildebrand points out that much of what passes for appealing to youth in the shallowness of contemporary worship is antithetical to sound catechesis of youth. Once again, this is evangelism at the expense of the gospel. We keep forgetting that the church is not a building.

The propers of the church's calendar, the implementation of the liturgical choir, ceremony to accent high feasts, proper use of

the historic vestments, various musical settings of uniform liturgical texts (including the much-neglected psalter), and the use of the minor festivals of the calendar are all historic resources already present in the heritage of the Lutheran church that incorporate variety. Yet for most pastors these things need to be deliberately learned or relearned. As some have suggested, we need to go back to liturgical boot camp. We have been raised in the aftermath of the Enlightenment and Pietism. We are on the long road to liturgical and sacramental recovery. As we instruct our members in their liturgical heritage we may be apt to say, "It is new to you now, but not new to Lutherans or historic Christianity."

Hildebrand makes clear that there is need for more deliberate instruction on Lutheran liturgy at all levels. The number of liturgy classes currently required by our seminaries is minimal. It is especially meager given the centrality of liturgy in congregational life, the individual Christian life, and pastoral care. Notable is the lack of musical education and training among clergy, especially given its importance in centuries long past. Perhaps a mandatory year of choir would be helpful for seminarians in the LCMS.

Assisting Ministers

Mark Waldron and Thomas M. Winger consider the rubrics of "assisting minister" in *LW* and *LBW*. We have seen much change in this area, especially since Rome's Second Vatican Council. This influence of Vatican II is reflected also in such things as changing the standard response to the salutation from "and with your spirit" to "and also with you" and the response to the *Pax Domini* from "Amen" to the new response to the salutation. All these things are symptomatic of the liturgical theology that espouses liturgy as the work of the people rather than as the public ministry, as in Ap XXIV, or divine service. So often in the attempt to avoid clericalism we end up with exactly what we were trying to avoid. Nowadays nearly everything that is done in the church is called ministry, so that what the pastor (or minister) does becomes the measure of everything. Is this not clericalism? To appreciate a thing as a gospel gift, we receive it uniquely, for what it is, not in comparison to anything else. Why not simply name the thing that is being done, rather than calling everything ministry?

Mark Waldron discusses the question of women serving as assistants in the liturgy, particularly their reading the scriptures publicly. On the basis of the "priesthood of all believers," he argues that the royal priesthood should take a leadership "role" (a term notably borrowed from sociology and the theatre) in the divine service. Yet the only time 1 Peter 2:9 is mentioned in the Lutheran confessions, it is simply there to demonstrate that the royal priesthood has the privilege and responsibility to see to it that the office of the holy ministry is filled in its midst (perhaps demonstrating that women may indeed vote, if a congregation votes). Waldron does concede, however, that this priesthood of the baptized does not imply that everyone is a pastor (compare AC XIV).

The royal priesthood is primarily exercised when the church praises the Lord to the world outside. The members of the royal priesthood of the baptized work primarily between the world and God. The sacrifice of praise is offered to God in earshot of the world. In the liturgy the congregation offers a hearty "Amen" to indicate that the gifts of God are received. As Winger observes, pastors ought not steal the Amen from the people. The sacrifice of responding to the grace of God in our various vocations in life is something that belongs to all believers.

On the other hand, 1 Timothy 4:13 seems to indicate that Paul believed that the public reading of Scripture belongs to the pastoral office. Although one certainly recognizes the unique incarnational characteristics of the four Gospels, which, among Lutherans are typically reserved to be read by the pastor, clearly Paul is not speaking of them here. Generally, in the divine service the public reading of Scripture is given to those charged with being the stewards of the mysteries. Does not Paul also indicate that the men specifically should pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands (1 Tim 2:8)? Even if we concede that for the sake of good order and decorum laymen (male) might assist in certain liturgical activities, such as reading the Old Testament and Epistle or in assisting with the blessed cup, does it therefore follow that all laymen may do this, or that women may do this? It would seem, in the case of reading the Scriptures and assisting in the sacrament, that these assisting laymen are extensions of what the pastoral office does, a proverbial "third arm" for the sake of order, rather than fulfillers of a duty that is incumbent upon the royal priesthood in a public liturgical context. The royal priesthood is accorded the honor of sitting at table and being at the receiving end of the Lord's gracious service (Lk 22:27).

Winger demonstrates that the "role" of assisting minister was born in murky ILCW waters. The true and highest worship of God is faith, not the laity's doing something in the chancel. The church consists of those who speak and those who hear: undershepherds and sheep. The oft-seen modern language of "presiding minister" may have a mere button-pushing tenor. Could this be the liturgical equivalent of CEO/corporation thinking in the church? Still, Winger points out that "the rationale behind the use of assisting ministers is that we understand that each order (German: *Stand*) in the church has its office (*Amt*) to perform" (172). The assertion is that diaconal ministry is being restored in the form of the assisting minister. Nevertheless, as Winger observes, what a deacon has been in church history is not always clear.

Translation of Liturgical Texts

The remaining miscellanea of essays cover the translation of liturgical texts, private confession and holy absolution, confirmation, and "Boolean Worship." Robert A. D. Clancy deals with the use or non-use of ecumenical translations of liturgical texts. Although there may be some benefits to the use of common texts, he concludes, "Accuracy of translation and fidelity to both the original texts and our confession of the faith must remain primary," while also suggesting we might take ecumenical texts into consideration when rites are revised.

Holy Absolution

Brent W. Kuhlman deals with the gift of holy absolution. One of the gifts to us in *LW* is the inclusion of a rite of private confession and holy absolution to which we can actually direct our people and say, "There it is." And yet in our age of counseling as the sum of pastoral care, what would seem more irrelevant than private confession and holy absolution? This, no doubt, may be

due to the fact that few pastors actually use it for their own personal benefit. Furthermore, in the midst of ecclesiastical politics, alleged "role conflict" for ecclesiastical supervisors and confusion over the seal of the confessional, who will be the pastor's pastor? The logical choice according to church polity might even warn pastors under him against making confession to him. It would seem that a pastor must seek out a competent brother pastor in a parish as his confessor.

When someone is troubled by his sin and has difficulty in believing that he is forgiven, there is the unique opportunity for private confession and holy absolution. Only that penitent is there with the father confessor. The penitent is the only one speaking and confessing those particular sins, and so the absolution is there applied particularly to that penitent. There is no doubt that the penitent, the only one there who confessed, is now the one to whom absolution is given. The laying on of hands in the pronouncement of absolution helps to indicate that this is "for you." The office of the ministry is exercised for the benefit of faith and the forgiveness of sins. But that office is also charged with binding the sins of "manifest and impenitent sinners." As Wilhlem Loehe has pointed out, without the binding key being exercised, absolution becomes superfluous, and vice versa.

The institution of the office of the keys in John 20 might even be taken to suggest individual absolution as the norm. Absolution is the voice of Christ, not merely the pastor's or the church's wish or opinion. It is distinguished from the declaration of grace. Christ absolves through the mouth of the pastor, here on earth, where we sinners are with our sin. The word comes into our ears and goes to our very center to set us free and cleanse us so that we will not die but live, like King David. In a breath, our relationship with God is made favorable again as we receive the benefits of the cross (compare the hymn "In You Is Gladness"). Absolution is there so that we receive, and are not merely assured of, the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, it is not so strange that in the Smalcald Articles Luther should produce his strongest comments against enthusiasm under the discussion of confession. It is also not strange that the Augustana attacks enthusiasm in the article on the holy office. This is significant. Forgiveness comes through the external word of the gospel, not through the air after a prayer, not in a feeling of assurance or a shiver up the spine. Rather, the external word of the gospel does, gives, and accomplishes that of which it speaks—in the words of Martin Franzmann, "Thy strong word bespeaks us righteous" (*LW*, # 328).

Confession is therefore retained for the sake of the absolution. In fact, the confessions say, it would be *impious* for it to fall into disuse. Ironic it is, then, that it was those called *Pietists* who allowed (or caused) it to fall into disuse, as they excommunicated it from Lutheranism. But by the grace of God, not by our efforts, it is being returned to some parts of Lutheranism. We are now confronted with the opportunity to catechize and benefit by this gift and to further examine the rite we may use.

Luther admitted that his rite of confession was primarily offered as a model for didactic purposes. One of the benefits of what Luther offered was its simplicity. Yet one may, especially with a new user of this rite, need more support structure to learn to confess and receive absolution. Perhaps the triune invocation would be appropriate to begin the rite, as it ties in so well with part IV of baptism in the Small Catechism, and since the rite of private confession and holy absolution is a way of abiding in this one baptism for the remission of sins. Perhaps also, additional supporting materials and rubrics may be helpful for a deliberate recovery of this gift among us in the usual way Lutherans have practiced it. This gift needs to be clearly distinguished from counseling or pastoral conversations for various reasons (see Walter Koehler's discussion of this in *Counseling and Confession*). This also helps a pastor properly understand his vocation as distinct from those properly trained and certified as professional counselors.

Confirmation & Catechesis

Kent Burreson discusses the mixed history and theology of Lutherans on the matter of confirmation and its relationship to the life of a Christian. To many, the rite of confirmation (in contrast to catechesis) has become a quasi-sacrament overshadowing the significance of first communion. This confusion is easily demonstrated by asking, "Who is doing the confirming?" Burreson aptly dubs confirmation among Lutherans "a rite in search of a meaning" (203). A. C. Repp's book *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church* surveys the reasons for much of this. As Burreson observes, the purpose of confirmation is to serve the larger sacramental life of the church.

Baptism is always connected with teaching. The order may vary, but the two cannot be separated. Catechesis flows into or from baptism. This is why many pastors are beginning to present newly baptized children with a copy of the Small Catchism to encourage home catechesis from the outset. In the Lutheran church, the rite of confirmation is catechetically focused. Nevertheless, we have acquired the bad habit of referring to the intensive instruction period of our children as "confirmation class." The goal of the class is not confirmation. This language fosters the ubiquitous graduation-from-church mentality. Clearly, as Burreson asserts, catechesis is a lifelong process.

We have inherited many things from medieval practice as well as from the earlier baptismal practice of chrismation. In recent years also all sorts of novelties have developed: confirmation stoles and so forth. Properly, the rite of confirmation cannot be understood as a thing unto itself. It only exists in relation to baptism, catechesis, the Lord's Supper, and the larger scope of Christian life in the church.

But might we consider also having earlier confirmation and first communion for those who are ready? Historically, among Lutherans, the answer is yes. The artificially chosen ages of about twelve to fourteen come to us, again, from the Pietists. Although we do not have infant communion, certainly first communion and confirmation at a somewhat younger age are possible and beneficial. Pragmatically speaking, this would separate confirmation from the common change of schools that happens for many who have "middle schools" in their communities, thus reducing the intensity of some of the "graduation" thinking. This adjustment of practice may well bring us to conclude once again that catechesis is primarily conducted in the realm of the spoken and heard, and not primarily in the written and read (Rom 10:17).

Conclusion

If the present volume is any measure of how things are going in the development of the next LCMS hymnal, the people involved are making a good start. A challenge will be to encourage Concordia Publishing House to incorporate the next LCMS hymnal into its larger scope of publishing, especially with regard to catechisms, catechetical materials, Sunday School curriculum, study Bibles, music, and devotional materials. We need to realize that Lutherans should not attempt to compete with the generic Protestant publishers. Our goal should be to offer solidly Lutheran publications. The fad of the Church Growth Movement's methodology will pass away in the increasing hostility of our culture against historic Christianity. It will be blown away like chaff in the wind.

We hope that as the next LCMS hymnal is prepared, other related issues will be addressed. Such issues might be the translation of the Scriptures used for the lectionary, the catechumenate, rubrics, recovering historic eucharistic vestments, closed communion, liturgical art, funerals, and weddings. The question of why we switched from Sundays after Trinity to Sundays after Pentecost could also be addressed.

One can only say, "Encore!" to the efforts of the LCMS Commission on Worship for publishing *Through the Church the Song Goes On.* I would like to see another volume discussing some of the topics suggested above. In the meantime, I can only commend the present volume for thorough study and thoughtful response.

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Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture. By John Carroll. Fontana Press, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers. 240 pages. Paper.

John Carroll is an eminent thinker on the Australian scene. He is a reader in sociology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, and has authored a number of publications.

For Lutheran Christians living within western society it is increasingly apparent that our prevailing culture is not merely non-Christian, but is becoming militantly anti-Christian. The worth of this book lies in its scholarly diagnosis of causes generating in what Carroll describes as "the period of wrecking." The author unfolds with skillful historical analysis how and why the forces of anti-western cultural traditions have evolved into a monstrous reality. It is a reminder of St. Paul's words about those who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom 1:18).

The first words of Carroll's opening paragraph set in motion the theme of the book: "We live amidst the ruins of the great, five-hundred-year epoch of Humanism. Around us is that 'colossal wreck.' Our culture is a flat expanse of rubble." As the early detector of this, Luther takes front stage: "It took Luther to smell a rat" in his rejection of free will. Perceptive of the motives behind the humanist artists, playwrights, and philosophers of the Renaissance, Carroll possesses the rare gift of clinching with brevity their thought-forms and flaws. In fact, humanism had to undermine the "'I am that I am' if it was going to establish its rock. It had to replace it with 'I am' where the 'I' is the individual man." Upon reflection, this proved to be "the central task of the Renaissance." The humanist credo, "We can what we will," was challenged by Luther in his *Enslaved Will.* He saw the cracks in the humanist edifice.

What is so helpful for the reader is Carroll's acute ability to trace the unfolding metropolis of humanism from Renaissance times through to the late twentieth century, expressed by artists, bards, philosophers, popes and even theologians. For example, he exemplifies Holbein's 1522 painting "Christ Entombed" as the dead Christ. Then, as now, humanism must endeavor to kill off Christ. In Chapter 4, "The Great Counter Renaissance of Luther and Calvin," Carroll articulates the vital place of Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* (1525) in reply to the humanist Erasmus. The reformer understood Satan's guile in the battle against free will and reason's attempt to subdue "Faith-alone." A criticism one may make of the author is his tendency to conflate Luther with Protestantism and Calvin.

Readers of artistic temperament and interest will find absorbing chapter 5, "The Battle of the Artists: 1630–1670." But a serious omission is any reference to Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach the Elder, as well as the Cranach school.

Returning to philosophy, Carroll designates Karl Marx as having achieved the demolition of the old cultures and the precursor of dynamic nihilism. As for Freidrich Nietzschke, his whole contempt of Christianity and Luther is neatly summarized—"It is Me versus Christ, the humanist I as God or nothing." The specter of Charles Darwin that still beclouds the twentieth century prompts this severe critique: "Modern art, literature, and philosophy that portray life as a dismal wasteland, as a sort of living death, is a direct amplification of Darwin." With the end of the Enlightenment, the demons have turned upon Western culture with malicious intent. From 1789 to the present time, rancor and contempt have become marks of our era. Carroll discerns that humanism has turned nasty. Critical as it may be of the end result, the book is also positive. The solution of the West is to quit its humanist past. "Decisive for recovery will be a second Reformation," according to John Carroll. This reviewer would add, "and a Restored Reformation, beginning in the church."

This is a book that will inform and even grip the reader who is eager to read our times. Perhaps it will encourage Lutherans to study *De Servo Arbitrio* with renewed zest.

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Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World. By Robert E. Webber. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999.

Imagine reading a book about the beauty and significance of the early church, her view of Christ, liturgy, spirituality, and mission. Now imagine doing all of this without a theology of the Real Presence. Welcome to the world of Robert Webber.

Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World, by Robert E. Webber, is a book with so much potential it is incredible. Webber seems to have a firm grasp of the philosophical underpinnings of postmodernism, and how these continue to impact the realm of the spiritual today. In each section of the book he does a nice job tracing how we have ended up where we are today. He begins with the early church and works all the way through from the Enlightenment to the postmodern present. This is perhaps the most helpful part of the book.

The problem lies in what he considers the solution. Webber's view of Christianity is one where lip service is given to the early church, but what he really ends up with is a romantic attachment to worship as experience, where the people of God reenact the great acts of salvation (Vatican II?). In one place he holds up the beauty of the historic liturgy, and in another he will suggest new and creative approaches to worship that resonate with the hyper-spirituality of the culture (106).

Webber wants a church where the center is Christ, not a book. He wants a church where worship is dynamic and deeply spiritual, not academic or emotionalistic. He wants a church where there is a real spirituality, not a fake "always look on the bright side of life" world (to quote Monty Python). He wants a church where mission and education flow out of the center of the church's life and are not separate acts meant to lure people in.

Dr. Webber has many fine points to make. It is unfortunate that he could not shed his Trinity/Wheaton glasses in order to see that the center of the church's life is Christ as he gathers his faithful together. Worship (and therefore, the church) is not "the rehearsal of the Christ event through which one's experience with God is established, maintained, and repaired" (106). Jesus Christ is not an event to be reenacted. He is a living Lord who feeds and nourishes his living church through word and sign.

If you are looking for a book that diagnoses the problems of postmodernism and offers suggestions on how the Christian Church may use this to preach the gospel, this book may be for you. The Christianity that Webber espouses, however, is not the Christianity of the apostles and prophets. It is the "new and improved" Christianity of the Reformed. I would suggest that Dr. Webber try confessional Lutheranism for the real thing.

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The Doctrine of Faith unto Salvation: Based on Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians of Which the First Chapter Is Simply Presented. With added prayers. By Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg. Translated from the Finnish by Rev. Erick E. Erickson. Thunder Bay, Ontario: Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Inc., 1998.

This book shows the beneficial influence of Luther's theology on a man caught in a milieu of Pietism. The writer called Luther "our doctrinal father," and he consciously echoed Luther in explicating a *sedes doctrinae* of the doctrine of election from Ephesians chapter 1. By following Luther, the writer kept the

gospel in focus. He concentrated on what God does for sinners, not on what sinners should do for God.

This book is not a new one, except in its English translation. It was originally written in 1843 in Finnish by Pastor Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg. It is now regarded as a classic devotional commentary by Finnish confessional Lutherans, and this recent English translation is published by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

Hedberg was a contemporary of C. F. W. Walther. Both were born in 1811. And in some ways Hedberg's experiences paralleled Walther's. Both received theological training in European universities in the early 1800s. At that time Pietism and rationalism were competing to pull Christians, especially young pastors, off the way of orthodoxy and into the ditch of error on one side or the other. But Walther and Hedberg both resisted the tug-of-war between Pietism and rationalism, and both found truth and stability in the theology of Martin Luther.

Hedberg's style reflects the tug of Pietism upon him. His style is highly personal and emotional. Hedberg wrote about feelings and about intense, inward experiences as a Christian. But in the end, he was not swept away by emotionalism and subjectivism. His theology remained grounded upon the objective justification accomplished by God through Christ at the cross.

In another parallel to Walther, Hedberg deals with the doctrine of election. Walther, of course, dealt with the doctrine of election a great deal because of the Election Controversy that raged in American Lutheranism in the 1870s, 1880s, and beyond. In this book, Hedberg explicates Ephesians 1, which teaches the doctrine of election beautifully and comfortingly to Christians. Both men remained faithful to the doctrine of Scripture that God predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will and to the praise of his glorious grace (Eph 1:5–6).

Like Walther, although less explicitly and less systematically, Hedberg rejected the *intuitu fidei* form of the doctrine of election. He did not teach that God elected people unto salvation on the basis of foreseeing that they would choose to come to faith in Christ. Rather, Hedberg remained faithful to the scriptural and confessional form of the doctrine of election, and he ascribed election entirely to God's grace in Christ alone without any foreseen worthiness in the sinner. Hedberg wrote:

> before the world had been created, God had already chosen us to be His own. . . . From this, even a blind person can see and any fool can understand that God, in choosing us, looked solely and uniquely upon Christ who already then at His Father's side, in eternity, had been determined to be the Saviour of the world, and God did not look upon any person's merit, worthiness, and holiness, for the world was not yet in existence, and people were nowhere to be found (24).

By following Luther, Hedberg remained a theologian of *sola gratia,* salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ. He opposed "unbelieving Pietists" (100), who put confidence in their own efforts and preparations for salvation (30). He wrote, "the wisdom of the Gospel is wholly contained in the doctrine that the grace of God in Christ is the only foundation of salvation and there is no other" (48).

Hedberg said that wiseacres accuse Luther of having been an anesthetizer of awakened souls (42). But Luther brought again to light the long-hidden doctrine of the unmerited grace of God and of the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ (42).

C. F. W. Walther said that he was content to be a student of Luther. Hedberg was too. And this book shows that a bent toward emotionalism does not necessarily lead to doctrinal error. The best safeguard is careful attention to the doctrine of Luther.

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Who Do You Say That I Am? Christology and the Church. Edited by Donald Armstrong. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999. 143 pages. Hardcover. $20.00.

Jesus asked his disciples the question posed in this title. Though not addressed to moderns, the question has recently received a cacophony of answers from radical scholars who have recast Jesus as everything from a peasant cynic to a divorced husband. In these pages, the Anglican Institute in Colorado Springs, Colorado, offers far more historically orthodox replies from six Episcopal scholars who held forth at its conference in Paris during the fall of 1998.

Christopher D. Hancock, Vicar in Cambridge, England, examines the christological problem from the varying vantage points of the scholar, the skeptic, the historian, the church, and the believer. Well does he write, "Whether it be in the liberalism of Bultmann . . . or the reductionism of Bishop Spong, classical Christian teaching today on the incarnation, virgin birth, miraculous ministry, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ has been subjected to substantial reconstruction or wholesale rejection" (19).

Richard Reid, of Virginia Theological Seminary, justifiably argues that any genuine Christology must be rooted in the content, context, and continuity of the biblical record. N. T. Wright, the prominent Jesus scholar who was then Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, points up the urgency of getting Christology correct through a deeper understanding of God in Jewish and Christian theology.

Oxford's Alister E. McGrath traces the authority of historical tradition in Christology from the Book of Acts through the church fathers and apologists, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment to the present day. He concludes, "We need to allow ourselves to be challenged, nourished, and excited by the insights of the past," (89) to which this historian would add a ready "Amen!"

Alan R. Crippen II, of the Witherspoon Fellowship in Washington, D.C., fires some impressive salvos at John Shelby Spong—a fusillade not heard often or loudly enough in Anglican

circles. He shows how we must confront pagan cultures, whether ancient or (especially) modern, with the biblical Christ.

Finally, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George L. Carey, points out how common caricatures of the church today should be overcome with a model of the church "as the sacrament of Christ, of his incarnate nature, and of his act of gratuitous love for the world in his cross and resurrection" (141).

A review of an anthology like this is necessarily somewhat desultory and choppy, but the actual reading of these pages is not. Editor Donald Armstrong, rector of the Anglican Institute, has successfully pieced together the six presentations on what can only be *the* central theme of Christianity. In view of the notorious doctrinal latitude of Anglicanism among some of its prominent voices, it was refreshing to read articles on Christology that were surprisingly correct, orthodox, and historically based.

Paul L. Maier
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The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible. Paul D. Wegner. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999. 462 pages. Hardcover

This attractively packaged work is intended for undergraduate students and laymen, and has the look of an introductory college textbook. It surveys the production, transmission, and translation of the biblical text from its origins to late-twentieth-century English translations. It is lavishly illustrated with charts, maps, tables, woodcuts, and photographs. Notes and bibliographies are numerous and extensive.

The author's theological positions regarding such subjects as the inspiration, meaning, and purpose of the Bible are reported in the same matter-of-fact style as are historical and archeological matters of fact. There is much that the conservative Lutheran will find commendable in the theological stance presented, but also much that one might expect from an author associated with Moody Bible Institute. Under the heading "Purpose of the Bible" he writes that restoration through Christ "is the central theme of the whole Bible" (21). But in his discussion of what unites the Old and New Testaments, covenant theology takes over: "The Abrahamic covenant is the overarching plan that unites God's dealings with his people and bridges the Old and New Testaments" (30).

The work is comprehensive, covering such topics as paleography, writing materials, canon, textual criticism, and manuscripts. Though not set up as articles arranged alphabetically by topic, the treatment of subjects is encyclopedic: clear, concise, and well illustrated. A large portion of the work (271 ff.) deals with the development of English versions of the Bible. There is considerable discussion and evaluation of individual translations. One might have wished for a fuller treatment of the current discussion of competing translation theories. The discussion here is limited to a two-paragraph mention of literal and dynamic equivalence translation approaches.

This work will not replace such works as those by Metzger and Worthwein. But it does not set out to, and it does have its place. It is a quick, one-volume reference that can be helpful when one needs to check his facts or refresh his memory. Its extensive notes and bibliographies also provide a good, up-to-date starting point for further research of topics related to biblical studies.

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Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

Bach Evangelism

Uwe Siemon-Netto, "The Gospel According to J. S. Bach," Civilization: The Magazine of the Library of Congress *(Feb/Mar 2000); pages 45-49.*

Christianity has never had a very strong presence in Japan. In fact, with industrialization, Japan has become one of the most secular nations on earth. But right now, thousands of Japanese are hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ in a new, or should I say old, way—and they're embracing it.

The evangelist responsible for leading this spiritual awakening might surprise you. He's none other than Johann Sebastian Bach. That's right. The German composer who died 250 years ago is bringing Christianity to Japan through the beauty of his music. Now there are reports of thousands of Japanese, inspired by his cantatas, converting to Christianity. It's a testament to the power of art steeped in a biblical worldview.

Christianity has never been widely embraced by Japanese culture. When European traders and missionaries came to the island nation in the seventeenth century, they met with mixed success: commerce thrived, but the gospel languished. But Japan eagerly embraced the music of Western culture. Shinichi Suzuki even developed a method to learn to play classical instruments that became famous worldwide. But now, through a resurgence in Bach's popularity, that music is providing a foothold for evangelism that trade and traditional approaches never have.

Bach's popularity is so great that the classes at the Felix Mendelssohn Academy in Bach's hometown of Leipzig, Germany, are filled with Japanese students. These students are learning about more than the music of the great composer—they learn about the spirit that moved him to write: that is, Bach's love of God.

Writing on this resurgence of Bach's music for *Civilization,* the magazine of the Library of Congress, Uwe Siemon-Netto reports that his Japanese interpreter asked to start the day with one of Bach's cantatas. She selected one whose lyrics declare that God's name is Love. "This has taught me what these two words mean to Christians . . . and I like it very much," she said.

As Siemon-Netto points out, Bach's music was once celebrated as the "fifth gospel"—praise that has never been more aptly said of Bach's work than it is in Japan today.

What began as an interest in the brilliance of the music has led to an understanding of the richness of God's grace. Masaaki Suzuki, founder of a school for Bach's music in Japan, says that "Bach is teaching us the Christian concept of hope." And Yoshikazu Tokuzen, of Japan's National Christian Council, calls Bach nothing less than "a vehicle of the Holy Spirit." And the revival his music is causing indeed confirms that.

At the end of every one of his works, Bach inscribed the initials SDG—shorthand for Soli Deo Gloria, "to God alone be the glory." Little could he have imagined what purposes God would have for his work, even hundreds of years after his death.

And Bach could hardly have imagined that his music would contribute to the evangelization of Japan.

Bach's legacy is a sterling illustration of C. S. Lewis's maxim that the world does not need more Christian writers—it needs more good writers, and composers, who are Christians. And when we produce art that is really good, art that reflects a biblical worldview, its richness will endure through the ages—Soli Deo Gloria.

Luther's Chorale Settings on CD

Bach scholar-conductor Helmuth Rilling has recorded various settings of Luther's chorales on a two-CD set from Hänssler Classics. *Die Schönsten Choräle von Martin Luther* includes one CD of Bach's settings of Luther's chorales, drawn entirely from Bach's cantatas. Included are *Ein feste Burg, Erhalt uns, Herr, Christ lag in*

Todesbanden, Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam, Ach Gott, von himmel, Es danke, Gott, Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, and *Das hat er alles uns getan.*

The second CD explores other composers' settings of Luther's chorales during the period of orthodoxy between Luther and Bach (d. 1750), plus one setting by Mendelssohn (1809–1847), who was responsible for reviving Bach's sung confession in the 1820s after decades of absence. Titles include *Aus Tiefer, Wir glauben, Nun bitten wir, Christum wir sollen,* and *Von Himmel hoch.* Composers include Johann Crüger, Georg Philipp Telemann, Samuel Scheidt, Dietrich Buxtehude, Melchior Franck, Johann Walter, Michael Praetorius, Lukas Osiander, Hans Leo Haßler, and Johann Schelle.

Artists under Rilling's direction include the Gächinger Kantorei, Frankfurter Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, and the Indiana University Chamber Singers. He captures the spirit and essence of Luther's chorales in a professional performance. The ensembles are an appropriate size for early music, producing an instrumental texture and choral tone that is faithful to the composers of the representative eras. Everything is sung in German, of course, and these are not congregational settings of Luther's hymns. They are later settings intended for the trained choir. Nevertheless, this CD is an absolute must for those wishing to explore Luther's musical heritage in the Age of Orthodoxy.

Die Schönsten Choräle von Martin Luther is available from CBD for $29.95 by calling 978-977-5000 and requesting CD #8101, or by visiting the Tower Records website at www.towerrecords.com and purchasing CD #98.101 for $21.98.

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Bach's Liturgical Piety

The following is from the concluding remarks of Günther Stiller's Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig *(Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis, 1984), pages 253-256. Some extra paragraph breaks have been added and endnotes have been elided for* Logia *Forum.*

We will without hesitation be able to establish the fact that in his use of the hymn Bach himself was definitely interested "in confronting his hearer with the living Word of God." The very fact that Bach so frequently specified the penetrating sound of the trumpet for the firmus indicates that he was really concerned about making the proclamation expressed in the composition as audible and clear as possible. In the cantus firmus of the duet of Cantata BWV 10 this is achieved by means of a trumpet and two oboes in unison. Since the same cantus firmus also occurs as an instrumental strain in the movement *Suscepit Israel* in Bach's *Magnificat,* Dürr rightly, especially in view of the history of this movement, points to the necessity to "deromanticize" the interpretation of this movement. It seems to him that "instead of the conventional romantic rendition with murmuring oboes in the background rather the impression of radiating exaltation, of the upward look (without doubt inspired by the text *suscepit,* for which Luther has *hilft auf*) would have to be substituted."

Actually we will do justice to the work of Bach and to his interpretation only if we carefully study the theological meaning of the hymn Bach uses at any given point and so ascertain the purpose of his proclamation and then take the knowledge we have gained into consideration in our performance techniques. At any rate, for Bach in his entire liturgical work the life-giving and life-preserving Word of God was at stake, the *viva vox evangelii* that was to be heard in the sermon as well as in sermon music and in the church hymn. Bach's liturgical cantatas "do not want to be works of music or art in their own right; they want to advance the work of Luther, the preaching of the Word and always only the Word, with their own materials." But as "the tonal language of Luther's church is the evangelical chorale," because Luther "is the creator of this precious treasure of our church," so also for Johann Sebastian Bach the hymn of his church became "the preeminent medium for interpreting the Word."

The high respect he had for this inherited treasure of faith bequeathed by the fathers is apparent in this, that for him above all the church hymn that had proved itself liturgically is in its basic statement unassailable. In dealing with his proposed texts, he is well aware of "the differentiation between religious poetry in general and hymn writing authorized as it were through hymnbook publication," insofar as he "very rarely makes changes in a text from a hymnbook but otherwise exercises his blue pencil copiously."

This respect for the liturgical heritage of the fathers again shows Bach's firm roots in the Lutheran tradition and his loyalty to the church that had from the beginning sung the good news of the Gospel into the hearts of its congregations precisely through the evangelical hymn and had through it captured people's hearts. Because Bach was acquainted with this available power of the evangelical hymn through personal experience from his early youth, the more he was influenced by the unconditional resolve to proclaim the Gospel, the more strongly his method of composing had to lead to the evangelical hymn and remain fixed on it, and "no one else in the centuries since Luther's day made this task his own as well as Johann Sebastian Bach."

Once we have seen how deeply Johann Sebastian Bach's music and musical thought was rooted in the Lutheran theology and piety in which he was reared and grew up, the question about Bach's relationship to the worship of his time practically provides its own answer, for the Lutheran piety was primarily a liturgical piety. As even from a purely theoretical view "worship plainly appears as the basic theme of all theology" for Lutheran orthodoxy, and "'worship' embraced the totality of the Christian life and did not mean only the liturgical area," and Lutheran orthodoxy in practice, too, "displayed great faithfulness in understanding, retaining, and celebrating the divine service as 'the real spiritual occurrence,'" so there was no other way but that for Johann Sebastian Bach, a person firmly rooted in this theology and church from an early age and also professing his loyalty to it, "worship and the praise of God incorporated in it should become the basis of all of his creative work."

Neither were things different in Koethen. When Bach here, too, remained loyal to the Lutheran Church, he confessed his loyalty to the Lutheran service, and so his creative work in this place also has to be looked on as worship in the wider sense of the

word. It is true, it must have bothered him that he could contribute only very little to the actual worship service of his Lutheran Church in this place, and so his going to Leipzig in 1723 can only be characterized as a logical decision. Gurlitt has hit it exactly right when he writes concerning this decision of Bach's:

> This fateful decision, to place his daily labors definitely and entirely into the service of the church of the Word and to devote himself to the proclamation of the Word, is one that Bach arrived at in a most notable manner. He was not moved by considerations of what would serve some immediate "practical" purpose, nor by cool, rational deliberations, nor by some willful impulse, nor, for that matter, by purely personal motives of any kind. Instead, he was prompted entirely by reasons of conscience. His attitude represented a victory that he had won by habitual faithfulness on the one hand and by indifference on the other, an attitude giving heed only to the genuineness of the assigned task and of the required confession.

In Leipzig Bach set foot on ground on which the realization of what he had fifteen years earlier on leaving Muehlhausen called his "final purpose" seemed a splendid possibility. Because the Lutheran service still made great demands on the musicians of that time, Bach was able with undivided attention and with his entire artistic creativity to devote himself to the worship service of his church. In view of the very manner in which Bach in his first Leipzig years threw himself into the round of liturgical tasks and duties—just think of his presenting six two-section cantatas in the first quarter year or two cantatas in a single service—there can be no doubt about the sincerity of his serious intent. Thus we may consider Bach's clearly stated purpose of 1708 and 1730 to achieve a "regulated" or "well-ordered church music" the very aim of his life and calling, just as we may view the whole path of his life and calling only as a path that was indeed beset by detours but in the last analysis proceeded with the goal in mind of always aiming at the liturgical office and task in the Lutheran Church.

This conclusion can in no way be altered by the variety of controversies in which Bach was involved during his time of office in Leipzig; on the contrary, in the final analysis they are to be understood in the light of his struggle toward the "final purpose" of his creative work. Mahrenholz has aptly described this situation: "Whenever we examine the questionable cases, we find that in the final analysis almost always the possibility of achieving the final purpose of a regulated church music was at stake. For whether the controversy had to do with university services, the reception of new dormitory students, the choice of the choir prefect, the school discipline, or other contested cases in which the irascible and sensitive St. Thomas cantor often gives the impression of a quarrelsome person constantly thinking of his own civic reputation, always not the church music as such but a regulated, ordered, liturgically organized church music conducted according to a plan is at stake. Bach was contending . . . not for the musical products of his creative efforts but for the final purpose of his creative efforts." Bach very obviously was of the opinion that in the Leipzig of his time it was still worthwhile to carry on the fight "so that both for his own church music and that of other masters a place corresponding to the beginning made by the Lutheran Reformation might remain guaranteed in a well-ordered worship service."

With this interest of Bach's in the worship of his church, proved by his struggle and contention for proper church music, his way of creating, to be understood from the viewpoint of his liturgical commission, was in perfect harmony. There can be no doubt that a true interest of the heart for the liturgical office and task and an accompanying positive attitude toward and a genuine commitment to Lutheran worship is revealed in Bach's compositional technique, which had a high regard for the proper interpretation of Scripture, and in his effort to dedicate his best compositions to the worship service of the church as well as to make the church hymn the center of his liturgical work and so to provide the most intimate union with the stock and store of hymns that had proved themselves liturgically. From the liturgical service Johann Sebastian Bach had received his commission to compose cantatas regularly, and his creating and composing always drew him back to that liturgical service.

And finally, on the basis of the fact that Johann Sebastian Bach felt a real inner attachment to the liturgical service of his time, we may on the one hand arrive at the conclusion that the liturgical life at the time of orthodoxy enjoyed a high vitality—for which artist would offer his creative talent to a liturgy that is moribund and destined to end in meaninglessness? On the other hand we may characterize Bach's cantatas as genuine liturgical works, for here the presupposition described by Söhngen is present: "Only when music combines with faith and beauty with truth does it receive the full authority to serve in the sanctuary."

Hymns and Hocus-Pocus

From the American edition of Luther's Works, *volume 53, pages 326-328. "Hocus-pocus," by the way, comes from a garbled understanding of what the celebrant said in Latin for the words of institution: "Hoc est corpus meum . . ." which must have seemed like magic to the uncatechized.*

Accordingly, we have removed from our churches and completely abolished the popish abominations, such as vigils, masses for the dead, processions, purgatory, and all other hocus-pocus on behalf of the dead. And we do not want our churches to be houses of wailing and places of mourning any longer, but *Koemeteria* as the old fathers were wont to call them, i.e., dormitories and resting places.

Nor do we sing any dirges or doleful songs over our dead and at the grave, but comforting hymns of the forgiveness of sins, of rest, sleep, life, and of the resurrection of departed Christians so that our faith may be strengthened and the people be moved to true devotion.

For it is meet and right that we should conduct these funerals with proper decorum in order to honor and praise that joyous article of our faith, namely, the resurrection of the dead, and in order to defy Death, that terrible foe who so shamefully and in so many horrible ways goes on to devour us.

Thus the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and others, conducted their burials with much splendor and left explicit directions concerning them. Later the kings of Judah made a great show and pomp over the dead with costly incense and all sorts of rare and precious spices, all of which was done to spite the stinking and shameful Death and to praise and confess the resurrection of the dead and thus to comfort the sad and the weak in faith.

Here also belong the traditional Christian burial rites, such as that the bodies are carried in state, beautifully decked, and sung over, and that tombstones adorn their graves. All this is done so that the article of the resurrection may be firmly implanted in us. For it is our lasting, blessed, and eternal comfort and joy against death, hell, devil, and every woe.

This is also why we have collected the fine music and songs which under the papacy were used at vigils, masses for the dead, and burials. Some fine examples of these we have printed in this booklet and we, or whoever is more gifted than we, will select more of them in the future. But we have adapted other texts to the music so that it may adorn our article of the resurrection, instead of purgatory with its torment and satisfaction which lets their dead neither sleep nor rest. The melodies and notes are precious. It would be a pity to let them perish. But the texts and words are non-Christian and absurd. They deserve to perish.

It is the same in other matters where they outdo us by far. They have the most beautiful services, gorgeous cathedrals, and splendid cloisters. But the preaching and teaching that goes on inside is a blasphemy and for the most part serves not God but the devil. For he is the prince and god of this world and must therefore have of everything the most elegant, precious, and beautiful.

They also possess superb gold and silver monstrances and pictures, adorned with precious stones and jewels. But inside are dead bones, as likely as not from the flaying ground. Likewise they own exquisite vestments, chasubles, palliums, copes, caps, and mitres. But who is under these or clothed in them? Lazy bellies, evil wolves, and godless swine who persecute and profane the Word of God.

And indeed , they also possess a lot of splendid, beautiful songs and music, especially in the cathedral and parish churches. But these are used to adorn all sorts of impure and idolatrous texts. Therefore, we have unclothed these idolatrous, lifeless, and foolish texts, and divested them of their beautiful music. We have put this music on the living and holy Word of God in order to sing, praise, and honor it. We want the beautiful art of music to be properly used to serve her dear Creator and his Christians. He is thereby praised and honored and we are made better and stronger in faith when his holy Word is impressed on our hearts by sweet music. God the Father with Son and Holy Spirit grant us this. Amen.

But we do not bold that the notes need to be sung the same in all the churches. Let every church follow the music according to their own book and custom. For I myself do not like to hear the notes in a responsory or other song changed from what I was accustomed to in my youth. We are concerned with changing the text, not the music.

Oedipus for Lutherans

In the fifth century B.C., Sophocles wrote a tragedy surrounding a character named Oedipus. His father and mother were warned by the oracle of Apollo at Delphi that their newborn son was destined someday to murder his father and marry his mother—particularly egregious offenses in the minds of the early Greeks (but Greek Christians at Corinth would later be castigated by the apostle Paul for tolerating a man who had his father's wife, a sexual immorality that was unmentionable among pagans, 1 Cor 5:1; Lev 18:8).

The prophecy came true. When all was revealed, his mother hanged herself, and Oedipus, coming upon her, took the golden brooches from her dress and used them to pierce his eyes so that he would no longer have to look upon his shame. "All human filthiness in one crime compounded! Unspeakable acts. . . . Hide me at once, for God's love, hide me away; Away! Kill me! Drown me in the depths of the sea!" What tragedy that Oedipus knew nothing of the drowning of holy baptism.

Freud's psycho-sexual complexes aside, Oedipus shows human nature confronted with its sin. Our Lord's words in Matthew 5:21–27 expose our sins so that we will sense our guilt every bit as much as Oedipus did.

> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Dear God! I am a murderer!
>
> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Woe is me, I am an adulterer!

The Lord, however, would not have us pierce our eyes so that we no longer have to look at our sin. Instead, he was pierced for our transgressions so that he would no longer have to look at our sin. If this were not true, we would do better not only to pluck out our eyes but also to pull out our tongues, cut off hands and feet, and lobotomize our brains. But after all that, there isn't much left with which to enjoy life.

Oedipus confessed his sins, but there was no confessor there to absolve him in the name of a Savior. In a subsequent work by Sophocles, Oedipus is depicted as one who continues to be proud, impetuous, and hot-tempered. "He accepts his punishment because he has no choice, but now insists on his personal innocence and attributes the ultimate responsibility for his crimes to destiny, in whose hands he was a helpless agent" (from *Cliff Notes* by Robert J. Milch of Brooklyn College).

Where our Lord's gifts of the sacraments have been marginalized, that is, where other things such as "the sovereignty of God" and "obedience to the gospel" have become predominant, there is the greater danger of falling into the same deterministic, fatalistic response to sin. Sovereignty and obedience are fine for those whose righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees. But the bigger they are, the harder they fall. Sovereignty and obedience hold little comfort for poor, miserable sinners.

Lutherans, however, are not left with looking at their sins when they daily recall their baptism, make use of private confession and absolution, and weekly receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. We know the gravity of sin, and our Lord Jesus, who keeps our eyes fixed on Him.

JAB

The Cipher of His Name

Holy Cross Day falls on September 14 each year, the propers for which may be found on pages 112-113 of Lutheran Worship. *Our academy uses Holy Cross Day as an occasion to teach children to cross themselves. Interestingly, the children of our inner-city parish were following the pastor intently as he made the sign of the cross at the end of Matins each day. They were making it right back at him, which is also a pleasant thought. From this point it was not difficult at all to teach them to turn it around upon themselves, recalling the sign made upon them at holy baptism marking them as ones redeemed by Christ the crucified.*

The following sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Norman Nagel on Holy Cross Day, 1999, at the Chapel of Saints Timothy and Titus, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So then, it's Holy Cross Day every day, if the Small Catechism is anything to go by. And if not, why not? Well, there's pious Helena, Constantine's mother, and her finding the true cross, and then all the chips, and Elector Frederick the not-yet-so Wise, tickled pink to have a chip for his big All Saints Day bash in 1517. We had a Reformation to get rid of all of that. And so also all superstitious making the sign of the cross. Waving your hand around, what good can that do? Frightfully external and physical, and certainly not very spiritual, and quite dead if severed off by itself. How spiritual, and how physical, was your getting up this morning? Couldn't check in with the Lord until you've collected your spiritual capacities. So when did you have enough of them lined up?

What part of you do you do your praying with? Hands, knees, mouth, brain? You can pray without hands, without knees, without mouth, but not without your brain. That has to be working, and concentrated. If you start to think of something else then it doesn't count at all. Remember the Apollinarians who thought your thinker was the bit most apt to be connected with God.

You will have observed that this is all talking about myself, and no prayer ever starts there. Prayer is calling upon the name of the Lord. If he hadn't given you his name to call upon, then your praying would be all talk about yourself and to a god appropriate to your wishes, a god who can last only as long as he keeps delivering on your wishes, and so only as long as you keep him going. From such praying, which can be awesomely religious, you have been set free.

He put his name on you with the water of your baptism, and if as an infant, how many of your spiritual capacities did you then have on alert? Name and water that's baptism, but the name is there as it is spoken, and it is only spoken if there is a mouth there to speak it, and a hand there to do the watering along with the name. All very physical, words and water, and as the Large Catechism confesses, we see a man speaking and doing. But what he is speaking and doing is in the Lord's name, and what is in the Lord's name is the Lord's own speaking and doing by the mouth and hands he has put there as his instruments for his use in his speaking and his doing, and of that there is no doubt when the speaking and doing, the wording and the watering are spoken and done as mandated by the Lord.

Most of us can't remember our baptism, yet as baptized the Lord has made us his own, brought us to life, and not just back then. The life he thus has given is given to the whole of you with never a place or a time where this does not hold—each day, lived one at a time. So "daily," says the Small Catechism, our baptism is to have its repenting, forgiving, and enlivening way with us. And so the Small Catechism bids us begin each day as those whom the Lord has baptized, for us then to live each day in the confidence and with the resources given us by baptism. It's hazardous to attempt to live any day as if you were not baptized. What the Lord does is for sure—about the only thing that is. When he baptized you he did it in a way that left no doubt that it was he who was doing the baptism, and that you are the one he baptized.

Now, it is a bit difficult to get all that running through your brain first thing in the morning. If your brain is still checking in, your hand may do it with its calling on the name of the Lord, which may pull the mouth into its saying it, all of which is evoked by his having given you his name, which is never a dead thing brought to life by us, but wherever it is, it is doing itself, doing himself, whose name it is and whose name he is the doer of. "Dear Lord, please be doing your name with me today."

And in that prayer the whole of you, none of you left out of where his name is, where he is doing his name, and where that is, is located by the sign of the holy cross, which is the cipher of his name.

Some early accounts of baptism suggest the attempt to inscribe the whole name of God on the person being baptized. Space available would suggest some abbreviation. Just *Jesus* would say it, or if not his whole name, then his mark, which says his name, *Savior*. The Lord God for this child, his name, such a God he is, is confessed with the cross, and for whom he is such a God is confessed by the making of the sign of the holy cross upon yourself, you a one upon whom he put his name with the water of your baptism, all summed up and remembered in making the sign of the holy cross.

The Small Catechism puts first things first, after that, something more. But all three steps don't *have* to be all at once. Space available is hinted at. Best you get all three, even if not all at once, to get you going into the day, baptized by him and with him doing his name on all of you, all through the day. When you begin to think of yourself, or your day, in pieces, and some piece wants to go its own way (Satan's strategy is one little isolated piece at a time), then making of the sign of the holy cross and the name can help clear away what's getting in our Lord's way, blocking out his name.

"From this preserve us, dear Father in heaven." Let's pray some Catechism and let's kneel.

Careless Baptism

This adaptation comes from the American Edition of Luther's Works, *volume 53, pages 101-10.*

I daily see the carelessness and disrespect—not to say frivolity—with which the high, holy, and comforting sacrament of Baptism is being administered to little children . . . .

In all Christian earnestness, I would ask all those who administer Baptism, who hold the children, or witness it, to take this wonderful work to heart in all seriousness. For here, in the words of these prayers, you hear how meekly and earnestly the Christian Church concerns itself about the little child and how it confesses before God in plain undoubting words that he is possessed by the devil and is a child of sin and wrath, and prays very diligently for aid and grace through Baptism that he may become a child of God.

Remember, then, that it is no joke to take sides against the devil and not only to drive him away from the little child, but to burden the child with such a mighty and lifelong enemy. Remember too that it is very necessary to aid the poor child with all your heart and strong faith, earnestly to intercede for him that God, in accordance with this prayer, would not only free him from the power of the devil, but also strengthen him, so that he may nobly resist the devil in life and death. And I suspect that people turn out so badly after Baptism because our concern for them has been so cold and careless; we, at their Baptism, interceded for them without zeal.

Remember too that in Baptism the external things are the least important, such as blowing under the eyes, signing with the Cross, putting salt into the mouth, spittle and clay into the ears, anointing, signing the crown of the head with chrism, putting on the christening robe, placing a burning candle in the hand, and whatever else has been added to extol Baptism. Baptism can be performed without all of these, and they do not frighten the devil. He sneers at greater things than these!

See to it, then, that you are present in true faith, listen to God's Word, and earnestly join in prayer. For when the pastor says, "Let us pray," he is urging you to join with him in prayer. And all sponsors and the others present should repeat with him the words of his prayer in their hearts to God. For this reason the pastor should say these prayers very clearly and slowly, so that the sponsors may hear and comprehend them and pray with him with one accord in their hearts, earnestly carrying the need of the little child before God, setting themselves against the devil with all their strength on behalf of the child, and showing that they realize this is no joke, especially not to the devil!

For this reason only faithful pastors should baptize and faithful Christians should serve as sponsors, who can be expected to treat Baptism with seriousness and true faith, lest the holy sacrament be made a mockery for the devil and an insult to God, who through it showers us with the abundant and infinite riches of His grace. He Himself calls it a new birth by which we are being freed from all the tyranny of the devil, loosed from sin, death, and hell, and become children of life, heirs of all the gifts of God, God's own children, and brethren of Christ. Let us not be indolent and indifferent, for Baptism is our only comfort and admits us to every blessing of God and to the communion of all the saints. To this may God help us. Amen.

Praise Songs and the Te Deum

If the task were given me to write a praise song, it wouldn't occur to me to write the Te Deum.?? I would probably praise God for all things bright and beautiful, a glorious Christ and a brilliant cross. I would muster all the poetic energy I could (which isn't much) together with such flowery language as I know (which is usually too much), and end up with something quite comparable to *The Other Songbook*. But not the Te Deum—and probably not a Magnificat or Benedictus either.

How was it that our forebears came up with such words? At our little academy, we sing Matins nearly every morning, including the Te Deum (which is no tedium, as you shall see). It seemed to me that all we are doing in this canticle is recounting the Lord's work. (That's a lot like Psalms 104, 105, 106, and 107 . . . a couple of these lo-o-o-o-o-o-ng psalms even made it into *Lutheran Worship*). My sinful flesh is too often so bold as to feel something like this: "God has done so much over the centuries for my salvation, but I don't feel like listening to all of it." My sinful flesh is like that. When I realize this in Christ, I don't mind crucifying the flesh with a couple extra stanzas—if they can be found—so that my impetuous and ungrateful nature might be put to death.

And then there are also profound ironies in the Te Deum, the likes of which I doubt would ever have occurred to me. I wondered, for example, why the nameless author of this canticle would match up adjectives with the nouns as was done: *goodly fellowship* of the prophets, *glorious company* of the apostles, *noble army* of martyrs, and *holy church* throughout all the world. It struck me, knowing a little bit about the prophets, that their fellowship seemed anything but goodly. Most of the prophets led rather lonely, miserable lives out in the wilderness somewhere. The apostles' company hardly seems glorious, to hear Paul talk about it: shipwrecked, on frequent journeys; in danger from rivers, robbers, his own people, Gentiles; danger in the city, in the wilderness, at sea; danger from false brethren; sleepless nights without food in cold and exposure; anxiety for all the churches (2 Cor 11:25–28). And who would want an army of martyrs, folks who allow themselves to be bloodied, mauled, and killed without putting up much of a fight? Who would call such an army "noble"? As for "holy" church throughout all the world, many people have no problem seeing congregations as more hypocritical—or hypercritical—than holy. They are, after all, filled with sinners.

But that's the irony of it all. Under the Theology of the Cross there is no fellowship better than that of the prophets who pronounced the threats and promises of God so that sinners might turn from their sin and live, no company more glorious than

that of the apostles who confessed Christ, no army more noble than those martyrs who were more than conquerors in Christ, and no church more holy than those congregations gathered around the forgiveness, life, and salvation in Gospel purely preached and the sacraments rightly administered.

I cannot compose such phrases as are found in the Te Deum, but I can sing them with all the heavenly host. Te Deum laudamus.

JAB

Protestantizing the Liturgy

From pages 334-339 of Werner Elert's The Structure of Lutheranism *(St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), translated by Walter A. Hansen from the original,* Morphologie des Luthertums.

A great church style can flourish only in the soil of a common appreciation of what is fitting for a great church. According to the persuasion of the evangelicals, it was the sense of the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession—the article on ceremonies—that the latter cannot rest on the former. And in Lutheranism it was actually based on the fact that the "doctrine of the Gospel" (*doctrina evangelii*) was a common possession. Therefore there was an evangelical basis for community of style. This basis could express itself in a style-forming manner provided that ideal community of possession (*die ideelle Gemeinsamkeit*) was felt in the longitudinal axis of history.

On this the distinctive mark of the Swedish church in the matter of worship is based. This church successfully resisted the radical changes which the "ultrareformational Germans," especially Georg Normann, the "learned and upright" Pomeranian, attempted to bring about there. Up to the present time it has retained the forms of the traditional church customs that were cleansed exclusively according to dogmatical viewpoints.

In Germany, on the other hand, there arose a disruption and an impoverishment which kept increasing until well into the eighteenth century. Paul Graff has described this in detail. The number of services decreased steadily. For the most part independent liturgical celebrations, matins, and vespers, disappeared. There is a belief that within the services the church is obligated to increase the "Protestantizing" of the liturgy. The alb, which is certainly not many-colored, must yield sole dominion to the puritanical darkness of the everlastingly black clerical robe. Even the beauty of the green branches at the festival of Pentecost is forbidden—in Gotha because it leads to sleeping in church, in Bayreuth and in Reuss Younger Line because it leads to violation of the forest laws (Graff, p. 105). The ruler of the land, not what the church wants in the matter of form, is the master of style.

The pattern had a downward effect. The time came when the nobility no longer wanted to partake of the Lord's Supper together with the commoners; when, like the rulers of the land, it withdrew to the "authentically Protestant" boxes in the church; when the servile breed of parsons in the state church granted it private baptisms, private marriages, and "entombments" (*Beisetzungen*) instead of public funerals. Pietism demands that in this way religious life be made private for the "believers." But assaults were made on the only institution for which the church had created the form in which the individual could find expression—on private confession. To take the place of this, Zinzendorf then created his own style for worship, his pretty things (*Niedlichkeiten*) and his societies for the promotion of Christian intimacy (*Schaetzelgesellschaften*). That was the end in this field. Not until the nineteenth century was there a reawakening of early Lutheranism's sense of the forms appropriate to the church. This reawakening took place when the writings of Rudelbach, Löhe, Kliefoth, and others showed that there was a renewed understanding of the impact of the Gospel (*evangelischer Ansatz*).

Lutheranism's contacts with the Reformed Church hastened the dissolution of the liturgical sense and its impregnation with motifs characteristic of the Enlightenment. The Swiss-Reformed influence is clearest in Württemberg, where, at the instigation of Schnepf and Blarer, the altar service disappeared completely. The Slovak Lutheran Church has retained the rich liturgy of the age of the Reformation up to the present time; but the Hungarian Lutheran Church, which has many contacts with the Reformed Church, is liturgically impoverished. Frederick William I, as the Reformed "chief bishop" (*summus episcopus*), compelled the Lutheran Church of his land to do away with all the church vestments, altar decorations, and liturgical singing that remained. He found pastors to his liking. "Here I have got rid of everything immediately," wrote Pastor Grenzel at Nienburg. "I have also cut up my clerical robe and have had a coat made out of it."

Frederick William also found men who resisted. The Reformed Church enriched divine service only to the extent of providing hymn boards. But the Enlightenment and its disintegrating influence began as early as the age of orthodoxy. Not as though in the seventeenth century the one-sided emphasis on preaching had not in itself already destroyed the sense of form. The most eminent preachers of the seventeenth century still follow unconsciously the organic desire for form which comes about as the result of the ministerial office. Others, however, make use of baroque rhetoric; they speak like schoolmasters or public prosecutors. In the eighteenth century the content of preaching aims more and more at the utilitarianism of later rationalism. To the same degree preaching almost achieves autocratic rule. Divine service itself is subordinated to the one-sided viewpoint of benefit (*Nutzen*). For all practical purposes the old contrast between the clergy and the laity returns in a most terrifying form. Divine service means being preached to by morning preachers, afternoon preachers, main preachers, court preachers, university preachers, and prison preachers.

But had not the reformers themselves and the first Lutheran church rituals spoken about the "benefit" of divine service? Yet there could be no talk of a formative or even of a determining effect of this motive. Once Luther himself had made the complaint that Bugenhagen's sermons were too long. To him something essentially different was the important thing in divine ser-

vice. The contemplative element—which in Luther's case cannot be thought out of existence—is opposed to a onesided definiteness of purpose. It has practically nothing to do with the "contemplative way" (*via contemplativa*), which he challenges.

This "contemplative way" is a form of the ethos or of ethical inaction. To Luther, therefore, it is impossible of realization. Even though the later "sacred meditations" (*meditationes sacrae*) may have been dependent on Roman Catholic patterns so far as content is concerned, still one cannot deny Luther the psychological form of meditation. This finds expression in the confession that Christ is present in Holy Communion. Under the impression of the Word Luther says of the perceptibility of His nearness in the heart: "But your heart feels Him well, that He is certainly present, by the experience of faith" (WA 19, 489, 15). Luther needs no proof that this feeling of the heart should not be confused with faith itself. Not only Luther the monk but also Luther the preacher at a congregation exhorts to "remembrance" of the Passion of Christ and instructs his hearers to be absorbed in every detail of Christ's Passion. Even in the *Magnificat* (1521) he declares "that the greater the devotion is, the fewer words it uses" (WA 7, 521, 21). In connection with the doctrine of the "mystical union" (*unio mystica*) it has been shown that his attack on Areopagitic mysticism is not in conflict with this.

To some extent—in the writings of Johann Arndt and Johann Gerhard—the contemplative element subsequently took on forms that run counter to the idea of a congregation. To some extent—for even though preachers like Scriver cast it in a subjectivistic form, still this cannot do away with the fact that his preaching has the character of genuine preaching to a congregation. Or would Luther not have been able to join in the singing of Paul Gerhardt's Passion hymns, which have obvious contemplative characteristics? And should these hymns have induced Jacob Andreae to retract to some extent his proud statement that "if the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul themselves were to rise from the dead and see and hear our Christian congregation and what is done there, they would certainly conclude and acknowledge that our assembly is a Christian congregation"?

But the contemplative element is not a separate part of divine service, something that at times can be lacking. No, it is an essential feature; it specifically distinguishes the proclamation of the Word in worship from the indoctrination imparted in religious instruction. It makes demands of form on the way worship is constituted and on the way it is put into practice—demands that find expression in its solemnity and in its emotional content. These are demands of style and tact. They can be fulfilled only when the value of the act to be formed is contained in the act itself, therefore when the meaning of divine service is not determined by a purpose based on heterogeneous laws. Not until this is the case can one understand the strong emphasis on the musical aspect of Lutheran divine service. Music is always "purposeless." The high opinion Luther had of it can certainly not be traced to a pedagogical purpose. But with music he opened up a path which led to the heights attained by Bach.

A similar situation obtains with regard to architecture in the domain of Lutheranism. To be sure, the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden and the *Michaeliskirche* in Hamburg are "churches for preaching" (*Predigtkirchen*). But only puritanical fanaticism can overlook, or find fault with, the artistic expression of form which is discernible in the vaulted space as well as in the baroque details. These spaces generate a solemnity which reflects their purpose. And this corresponded to what the Reformer had in mind. "Today we have in the churches an altar because of the communion of the Eucharist; we have platforms or pulpits for the purpose of teaching the people. This has been done, not only for the sake of necessity but also for the sake of solemnity." (*Hodie in templis habemus altare propter communionem Eucharistiae, habemus suggesta seu cathedras ad docendum populum. Haec non necessitatis tantum causa, sed etiam solemnitatis facta sunt.*, WA 422 72, 12.)

Measured by the other standards of expediency, praise of God itself, which was mentioned as the "purpose" of worship, is purposeless. Nothing is to be accomplished by it either before God or among men. The teleology of Lutheran divine service, like that in the primitive church, is eschatological in nature. With respect to worship the aforementioned representation of Christ has found its completed form in the church year. "The church year," says Ludwig Jacobskötter, "is our dome that has been resolved from visible space and built into the movement of invisible time."

In adhering voluntarily to this way of expressing the fact that faith and the story of salvation are contemporaneous a way of expression that came into being in the early church—Lutheranism retained something that is genuinely catholic. But the church year is constantly neutralized by flowing into the idea of the end of all things, which to us neither is nor can be contemporaneous. "It ends with what all time ends, with death; but because it is the church year, it does not end as time and every year end; it comes to an end when it sees fulfillment, the new heaven and the new earth, where there will be no more death. The towers of the dome become the pinnacles of the eternal city" (Jacobskötter, *Zivilization und Kirche*, p. 258). The Christ who is to come, the Christ who means the end of all things, is the cancellation of time just as His presence in Holy Communion is the cancellation of space. Therefore the establishment of His presence in divine service always means only the Crucified One, because He is the One who rose from the dead and was exalted—exalted, not into the "definite place" (*locum definitivum*) of the confessions of the Reformed Church but outside space and time. The purer the form in which the establishment of Christ's presence takes place, the more the encumbrance of time becomes submerged.

To be sure, here, too, there is only an approximation. But perhaps nowhere do we come so close to the spaceless form which at the same time guards against "aloneness of the spirit" (*Beisich-selbstsein des Geistes*) as we do in music. Therefore music has for us primarily the characteristic of what is "beautiful and glorious"—the characteristic of which the Pomeranian book of forms of the year 1569 speaks: "Such assemblies in the house of the Lord of those who believe in Christ are very pleasant, beautiful, and glorious; they should be held in the highest honor, love, and esteem. Then we Christians see in them an image of the everlasting, glorious assembly of all the elect, who will appear on the Last Day before the Son of Man, our Lord Jesus" (Sehling, *KO* IV, 434).