LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

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Melanchthon

REFORMATION 1997 VOLUME VI, NUMBER 4

εἴ τις λαλεῖ,
ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. Logia 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.

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

Logia Forum and Correspondence Department: 2313 S. Hanna, Fort Wayne, IN 47591–3111. 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.

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

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

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The Cover Art features a medallion commemorating the 500th anniversary of the birth of the Lutheran reformer and author of the Augsburg Confession Philipp Melanchthon.

The designer, the Reverend Scott Blazek, has designed over 500 medals for various organizations. Blazek prepared obverse and reverse layout sketches and final drawings for this medallion and sculpted the clay and plaster models for the 2¾-inch dies used to strike the medallions. His monogram, an interlocking "SB" forming a cross in the center, appears at the base of his designs. Rev. Blazek currently serves as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Clovis, New Mexico.

This commemorative medal is available for sale through Concordia Historical Institute in both silver and bronze. (See advertisement on page 64.)

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
BAGD	Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
BSLK	*Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*
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
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLH	*The Lutheran Hymnal*
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
Triglotta	*Concordia Triglotta*
WA	*Luthers Werke,* Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]

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Philippism—Melanchthon and the Consequences

An Observation in the "Year of Melanchthon"

Jürgen Diestelmann

WHO WAS PHILIPP MELANCHTHON?

Philipp Melanchthon was born on February 16, 1497, in Bretten/Palatine, the son of the weaponsmith Georg Schwarzerd. This family name was hellenized into "Melanchthon" upon the suggestion of the humanistic scholar Reuchlin. Reuchlin, who exercised great influence over the young Melanchthon, was a distant relative of his.

After the study of philosophy at Heidelberg and Tübingen, where he came to earn his Master's Degree in 1514 (that is at age 17!), Melanchthon turned to the study of theology. In 1518 he was granted a position to teach Greek at Wittenberg and entered into a friendship with Luther, whose reformational ideas he came to defend emphatically. He additionally took over a professorship in theology in 1526 and organized the church and school visitations of 1527 in Saxony. In 1521 he published the *Loci communes rerum theologicarum,* which he continually released in newly revised editions. It was later to be designated as the "first protestant dogmatics." One is hard pressed to find any other exceptional publications that came from his pen.

The first decade of Melanchthon's activity in Wittenberg is closely tied to that of Luther. Having thus grown into the role of Luther's closest coworker, Melanchthon came to participate at the Diet of Speyer and the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, as he also later was repeatedly to be the representative of the Wittenberg reformation at religious colloquies and other pan-regional meetings. He was, in a manner of speaking, the mouthpiece of the Wittenberg reformation, especially when he came to publicly represent Luther's theological thought at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. He was the author of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology. A definitive separation from the Roman church was in no way in sight during this time, and certainly not intended. That is why the Augsburg Confession, which, as everyone knows, has come to count as the foundational confession of the Lutheran church, has the renewal of the entire church as its goal.

Because of his humanistic formation, Melanchthon had above all a great interest in the furthering of scholarship. That is why he, among others, comes to the fore especially in the reform and establishment of universities. One therefore has come to like referring to him as the *Praeceptor Germaniae* (the Master Teacher of Germany).

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AN OMINOUS DISSENT

Melanchthon's strength consisted of his special mastery in the formulating of doctrinal truths. The honors that he thereby earned for himself have remained of lasting significance for our Lutheran church. But his strength was simultaneously his weakness, because as a scholar he continually strove to redefine his thoughts in ever more precise and better terms. Yet often new or even different thoughts flowed into the formulations that arose in this way, echoing his own development. Consequently, he even undertook changes in the text of new editions of the Augsburg Confession, even though it had taken on the character of an official church document with legal significance in the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation in the meantime. This was to have grave consequences.

Gradually, substantially different emphases were placed by Melanchthon precisely with respect to the teaching on the Lord's Supper, which he had originally represented in uncritical agreement with Luther, and thereby increasingly distanced himself from Luther's position. But this was initially not readily apparent because his formulations were ambiguous. Later, however, this became a source of insatiable contention.

While Melanchthon in no way embraced the purely symbolic understanding of Zwingli's conception of the Lord's Supper, he did let himself be thoroughly impressed by the argumentation of the Swiss and upper-German reformers. Consequently, while collaborating on the (later to have failed) introduction of the Reformation into the Archbishopric of Cologne along with Bucer in 1543, he came to deliver a theological opinion in the dispute involving Pastor Simon Wolferinus of Eisleben, and took a position in direct opposition to the one which Luther presented at the same time.

Neither did Melanchthon therefore think anything of it to present, that is, to subscribe to a teaching concerning the Lord's Supper that practically denied the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the consecrated bread and wine, specifically in the context of a reformational order for Cologne, for which he bore partial responsibility. This was a well-known, highly sensitive point for Luther, since he had all his life passionately defended the sacramental presence of Christ in the bread and wine against the most diverse detractors. That is why Luther was extremely enraged when he came to see the text of this Cologne reformational order.

The inner distancing and discord of the two men, which otherwise was bound by a deep friendship, threatened to become an open quarrel during these years. Luther, as well as Melanchthon,

thought about leaving Wittenberg at times. But such a separation would not have only threatened the existence of the University of Wittenberg, but might have destroyed the entire work of the Reformation. That would not have been helpful to anyone. But in numerous letters, and especially in his *Brief Confession concerning the Lord's Supper* of 1544, Luther sought to preclude any suspicion that he had deviated from his original position on his teaching of the Lord's Supper with a clarity that left nothing open to question. Those people who were therefore designated as "Zwinglian" by him were clearly not direct students of Zwingli. Rather, Luther designated that position which Melanchthon and his followers embraced inclusively as "Zwinglianism." Their doctrinal position leaned toward that of Zwingli tangentially without being identical to it.

During his last years, these events, besides others, were to embitter the at this time already gravely ill Luther to the extreme.

THE CONSEQUENCES IN THE TIME AFTER LUTHER'S DEATH

But it was not only Luther himself who suffered because of these events. After his death the entire Lutheran church came to suffer, because the thus prevailing dissension now came to be evermore generally known. This also came to damage strongly the endeavors for an understanding with Rome. One gradually came to see through the ambiguous formulations of Melanchthon and discovered that more than differing formulations for the same articles were hidden within those changes that Melanchthon had undertaken at the time of the new editions of the Augsburg Confession.

It must have long become clear to him, as a critical thinker, that his own conception diverged from that Luther at this specific point.

Luther's well-known verdict concerning Melanchthon's position at the Diet of Augsburg and the Augsburg Confession stated that he could "not tread so softly or gently." At that time this statement referred only to the manner of expression and signified no difference in substance. After Luther's death it became evermore evident that Melanchthon—in the face of entrenched confessional and political fronts—was now prepared to accept compromises to which Luther would never have subjected himself, compromises of which Melanchthon was accused by Luther's disciples. This comes to be seen especially at, among others, the Colloquy at Worms in 1557 (see below).

Two parties thus emerged from within the Reformation which had been characterized by Wittenberg: on the one side stood the Lutherans. Within the polemics of the time these disciples of Martin Luther were called "Gnesio-Lutherans"; on the other side were those who had been molded by Philipp Melanchthon, thus called "Philippists." The latter group was especially large, not in the least due to the fact that Melanchthon, in his capacity as a professor at Wittenberg, was able to strongly influence the upcoming generation of theologians. He was able to do this perhaps more so than Luther, whose teaching activities were sharply curtailed by his severely compromised health. The most severe disputes flared up specifically with respect to the question of the Lord's Supper. Melanchthon nevertheless insisted that he represented Luther's doctrine, even though it must have long become clear to him, as a critical thinker, that his own conception diverged from that Luther at this specific point. Luther, by contrast, expressed himself decisively and unequivocally right up to his death—even in his last sermons held at Eisleben. Disregarding this, the rumor was later circulated (presumably by Melanchthon himself) that Luther had changed his mind shortly before his death.

Yet the Philippists also sought to give assurance that they held to the sacramental presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, even though they related these to the celebration of the Lord's Supper in general, not to the elements of the bread and wine consecrated by the words of Christ within it.

The severity of the antipathy between the Lutherans and Philippists, which kindled numerous and interminable disputes, can be delineated on the basis of the example of the Colloquy at Worms of 1557.

LUTHERANS OUTBID

Notable historians have described this colloquy as the last (unfortunately fruitless) attempt at arriving at an understanding between the party still faithful to the papacy and the reformational side among whom were those in the process of separating or already separated from it.

The "Religious Peace of Augsburg," which had passed into law some two years earlier, had been granted only to those of the so-called Augsburg Confessional Family [*Augsburger Confessionsverwandten*], that is, those who confessed themselves faithful to the Augsburg Confession. The so-called Baptists and sacramentarians, but also the Zwinglians and the at that time not altogether plentiful adherents of Calvin, thereby remained outside of the religious peace. Yet despite this clear demarcation, others who in this or that respect revealed digressions from the teachings of the Augsburg Confession attempted to identify themselves as belonging to the "Augsburg Confessional Family," and thereby gain legal and constitutional recognition within the empire. The alternatives were either to interpret the term "Augsburg Confessional Family" in a very broad manner, in the interest of the politically strongest possible alliance against the emperor and the pope, or to aspire to a doctrinally and confessionally united church fellowship in the way of the Augsburg Confession.

Prior to the beginning of the Colloquy at Worms in 1557, the Lutherans, not the least among them the superintendent of Brunswick, Joachim Mörlin, attempted to secure the rejection of those who did not find themselves in doctrinal agreement with the Augsburg Confession. There were not only the Zwinglians among these, but also the Anabaptists, as well as the followers of Osiander, Major, and Schwenckfeld.

But in the meantime Melanchthon had in some respects drawn closer to the upper German theologians such as Bucer and

even Calvin. He therefore objected to a condemnation of these doctrinal positions during a preliminary deliberation, on the grounds, among others, that so many cities, states, and lofty personages were inclined towards them. After some back-and-forth, the Lutheran theologians finally saw themselves compelled to condemn unilaterally the doctrinal positions that deviated from the Augsburg Confession as held by those mentioned above. In response Melanchthon and the remaining Protestant delegation summarily decided to exclude themselves from the sessions on the grounds that such a condemnation strengthens the papists, against whom all Protestant theologians should be unified. The Lutherans were characterized as "contentious and disturbers of the peace" to whom one should give no quarter. In a similar manner Melanchthon had disparaged Johann Hachenburg, pastor at Erfurt, who had brought attention to the Zwinglian heresy, as "the ass from Erfurt." After these events the Lutherans had no other option than to leave Worms, albeit not without first leaving behind a solemn protestation.

THE VICTORY OF CHURCH POLITICS OVER THEOLOGY

Both the Roman Catholic ("papist") and the Philippist side were able to look back upon the Colloquy at Worms as a victory: the Roman Catholic side could be satisfied that the rights that had been granted in the Religious Peace to the "Augsburg Confessional Family" could not be implemented. The Philippist side had secured a victory against the intent of the Lutherans insofar as it was now possible for the different Protestant directions to form a unanimous anti-Roman block. But both victories were Pyrrhic victories, since the confessional division of western Christianity was thereby definitively sealed.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PRESENT

On the occasion of the Melanchthon year one should draw lessons from such historical experiences for the present and the future of the church. In the present state of the Christian church, calls for the unity of the churches are raised in new ways. But the question remains as to the means by which the desired unity truly will be served: whether through church-political measures, by which uncomfortable theologians are marginalized (something which one can indeed observe again in the present!), which in the final analysis must lead to the entrenchment of the positions, not to their surmounting; or through tenacious, patient wrestling for the truth of the word of God, for apostolic truth, upon which Christ establishes his church—the entire *ecclesia catholica!*

Philip Melanchthon had to contend with the fact that he was reproached for his deviation from Luther until his death. In the writings of church history it is often emphasized that Melanchthon, who died April 19, 1560, was thus saved from the *rabies theologorum* (the wrath of the theologians). Most often it is the Lutherans who appear as those who one-sidedly and dogmatically plagued the *Praeceptor Germaniae,* as though they had not been dealing with fundamental conclusions reached in the wrestling for the truth of God's word.

The Lutherans, however, actually did not show the often alleged narrow-mindedness with respect to their steadfast perseverance in their belief in the real presence, but a tremendous ecumenical openness, one they perceived would be severed with the loss of the real presence. They indeed feared that with the loss of the real presence they would also lose the connection to the "entire Christian church on earth" [the *ecclesia catholica*], or, expressed in contemporary terms, "the catholic dimension." It was, after all, especially Luther's tenaciously-held belief in the real presence that was the common bond that united the Wittenberg Reformation with the whole of Christianity in opposition to the deviating Protestant doctrinal opinions.

> ***Philippism has remained a disastrous heritage for the Lutheran church to the present day, as the current views of the Lord's Supper in Protestantism show.***

For despite all dissociation from Rome, the Lutherans confessed the common bond to the whole catholic church in that they felt themselves closer to the papal church in the confession of the real presence than to Calvinism, for example. In this they followed Martin Luther himself, who had confessed: "before I would have nothing other than wine with the enthusiasts, I would rather keep nothing but the blood of Christ with the pope." In the same way the notable theologian and superintendent of Brunswick, Martin Chemnitz, later distanced himself passionately from those who denied the real presence in that he confessed the agreement of Lutheran doctrine with those churches that recognized and taught the true and substantial presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

By contrast Melanchthon repeatedly rejected Luther's teaching of the Lord's Supper, which was carried forth by the Gnesio-Lutherans, as papist. Even though he, too, suffered under the final separation from Rome, he himself contributed *de facto* to the breakdown of the consensus of the whole of the catholic tradition, which exists with respect to the belief in the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacramental bread and wine, and which now as then binds together the Oriental, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches with Lutheranism.

The condemnations that the Council of Trent pronounced under the banner of the Counter Reformation therefore are more properly addressed to the Philippist position than to that of the Lutherans. Martin Chemnitz made this clear in his magnum opus, the *Examen Concilii Tridenti.* It was also his authoritative contribution that later ensured that Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper remained preserved in the Formula of Concord, the last great Lutheran confessional writing to find official recognition in 1580.

Thus Philippism has remained a disastrous heritage for the Lutheran church to the present day, as the current views of the Lord's Supper in Protestantism show. Among them, as a rule, the church political aspiration of a formal pan-Protestant union carries more weight and stands in opposition to a wrestling for unity in doctrine on the basis of scripturally based teachings.

MELANCHTHON COMMEMORATION 1997

It is for this reason that, as a Lutheran, one comes to a commemoration of Melanchthon with ambivalent feelings. One certainly should not forget the honor due him as the *Praeceptor Germaniae* that he earned in his collaboration with Luther. But the consequences of Melanchthon's later stance can be no less overlooked.

In 1562 Joachim Mörlin, the predecessor of Martin Chemnitz in the office of superintendent of Brunswick, who himself had once studied at Wittenberg under Luther and Melanchthon, composed this verdict about the experiences that he had with Melanchthon after Luther's death with the following words:

Master Philipp has been my preceptor for such a long time because I think so highly of him on account of his glorious and lofty gifts and the superlative use that God has made of this man for many thousands in his church up to the time of Luther. Yet it would be an unwarranted expectation of me or of any good person by these good gentlemen that I should also praise and accept all that which he has done and written against God's word and his own teaching after the time of Luther simply because of his gifts or use, for this would be too crass and openly contrary to God's word. Galatians 1, "If an apostle or an angel from heaven would . . . . LOGIA

Melanchthon and His Influence on the Lutheran Church

Jobst Schöne

On Wednesday, August 25, 1518, about ten o'clock in the morning, a carriage arrived in Wittenberg from which a young, twenty-one-year-old scholar stepped out. The Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, had called him to his university to be a professor of Hebrew and Greek. His name: Philippus Melanchthon. His great-uncle, Johannes Reuchlin, a well-renowned humanist of that time, had recommended him to the Elector. As was a widespread custom among the educated of the day, Reuchlin had also dubbed the young scholar "Melanchthon," putting his family name, Schwarzerdt ("black soil"), into the Greek.

Four days later, on August 29, the new professor gave his famous inaugural address, *De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis* ("Concerning Correcting the Studies of the Young"). In this lecture he presented a program for reorganization of university education and gained the immediate applause of all his listeners. Among them was an Augustinian monk from the Wittenberg convent by the name of Martin Luther.

Years later, by which time the two had long ago become good friends, Luther commented in one of his table talks: "I believe the Apostle Paul must have been a poor, lean little man, just like Master Philippus." And only a year after Melanchthon's arrival in Wittenberg, on December 18, 1519, Luther wrote to his friend, Johann Lang in Erfurt, that he felt sorry that he was not able to send all of the brothers from the Wittenberg Convent to Melanchthon's six-in-the-morning lecture on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. "This little Greek exceeds me even in theology," Luther effused.

This "little Greek" of less than five feet in stature, this "poor, lean little man," turned out, indeed, to be a phenomenon. Born on February 16, 1497, in Bretten of Württemberg in Southern Germany, he was enrolled as a student at the University of Heidelberg at the age of twelve. By this time, he already spoke Latin fluently. Martin Bucer and Johannes Brenz, whom he would meet again later in life, were his fellow students. At the age of fourteen, he became a Bachelor and the following year was refused admittance to become a Master on the grounds that he was too young. This angered him, and so he left Heidelberg for Tübingen where he received a Master's in 1517, his final academic degree (he never earned a doctorate!). Of course, his studies focused on the Greek and Hebrew. In 1518, at the age of twenty-one, his textbook on Greek grammar went out of print. It was subsequently reprinted for nearly a century in some forty editions. But he was also engaged in philosophy, theology, law, and medicine. Thus Wittenberg received the addition to its faculty of a fully and completely educated humanist. His career would become meteoric.

Today Melanchthon's writings are collected in some eighty volumes. It is said that he wrote more than 10,000 letters during his lifetime; he would often get up at two o'clock in the morning. His classes were overcrowded, and he often had more students than Luther. He traveled extensively to more than two hundred locations in Germany; his name was well-known and was mentioned wherever theology was discussed. Nevertheless, his picture in history was overshadowed by an even greater man than he—Martin Luther, in whose shadow Melanchthon gladly stood from the very beginning. And yet, when he had to step out of this shadow after Luther's death, he developed a strange divergence and ambiguity, which has lead to completely differing opinions and judgments of Melanchthon ever since.

A TEACHER OF THEOLOGY

Melanchthon was, first of all, a humanist, which in that time meant something very different from what is understood by humanism today. Humanism then represented a scholarly method and school of thought that had spread over all of Europe during the Renaissance. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, many Greeks took refuge in the West, and they brought with them their language, culture, and heritage. Thus it became popular to study these Greek origins of Western culture—to go back *ad fontes* instead of reading mere commentaries on these original texts. But you had to know the languages in order to be able to read the literature.

Melanchthon never ceased being a humanist. It didn't take him long in Wittenberg, however, to make theology a major field of study along with the traditional humanist disciplines of language, philosophy, and pedagogics. In 1519, just one year after he had begun teaching in Wittenberg, he was made *Baccalaureus biblicus*—a teacher of theology impressed and motivated by Luther. He received his new academic degree by defending twenty theses in which he declared the Holy Scriptures to be of supreme authority, thereby limiting the authority of councils and declaring prevailing doctrinal opinions, such as the indelible character of the priest or transubstantiation, as not binding. No doubt, these were genuine issues of the Reformation, and thus in full accordance with Luther, Melanchthon wrote in his tenth thesis: "Omnis justitia nostra est gratuita Dei imputatio" ("All of our righteousness is graciously imputed by God").

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Melanchthon began his theological lecturing in the field of exegesis. He expounded St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Besides this, he began work on his dogmatics textbook, the *Loci communes,* first published in 1521 when he was twenty-four years old. It is reckoned as the very first compendium of Reformation dogmatics and, in Melanchthon's lifetime, was reprinted more than eighty times, constantly being revised, enlarged, and modified.

It was at this time, in 1521, when Melanchthon experienced for the first time what it meant to teach students and to give advice to the church *without* Luther. Luther had to go to the Diet of Worms, and afterwards he was held in protective custody at the Wartburg. Melanchthon was quite uncomfortable during this period, and it was he who finally induced Luther to return to Wittenberg and refute the Enthusiasts.

From this time forward, Melanchthon was included in the work of translating the Bible. Not only did he give expert advice and assistance in the languages, but he himself became more and more convinced that what Luther taught was in accordance with the Scriptures and was closer to them than his opponents. "I would prefer to die rather than to be separated from Luther," he wrote to his great-uncle Reuchlin in Ingolstadt. Reuchlin had wanted young Philipp to leave Wittenberg and teach in Ingolstadt instead, a university firmly in the hands of Luther's opponents. Thus, from this time on, Reuchlin declined to receive letters from Wittenberg.

Melanchthon, however, remained bound up with the humanistic tradition and, therefore, had only a limited understanding of Luther's anthropology, his concept of original sin, and the enslaved will of man. He tended to follow Erasmus, who highly esteemed the freedom of will, instead of following Luther, who taught the total corruption of the human will. During his later years this became quite obvious, but one observes it even early on with his Instruction for Visitors (*Unterricht für die Visitatoren*) of 1528, where he emphasized and appealed to the inborn moral and ethical knowledge of men. Here he valued much more highly than Luther man's ability to open himself up to God's will. He warned of too much preaching of grace. And he put a great deal of emphasis on repentance and the law, stressing particularly the aspect of fulfilling the law rather than the law's sharp contrast to the gospel, as Luther emphasized. And yet Melanchthon did not see himself in contradiction to Luther, but he obviously had a different accent.

LUTHER'S MAN AT AUGSBURG

From the time he was banned at the Diet of Worms in 1521, Luther was not allowed to attend any further Diets. Thus it was Melanchthon who traveled with the Elector to the Diet of Speyer in 1529. There he met Count Philipp of Hesse, who told of his plans for union with the Swiss Reformers. He also received mail from Johann Oekolampadius, a former fellow student at Tübingen, who had lived in Basel since 1523 and had ascended to become Melanchthon's counterpart with Zwingli. Here Melanchthon became familiar with the Zwinglian teaching on the Lord's Supper and was somewhat influenced by it. Along with some doubts as to whether Luther was correct in his doctrine, Melanchthon was also swayed by the hope for an alliance against Rome between the Lutherans, the Swiss theologians, and "those in between" in Upper Germany. He was, however, not yet willing or ready to give up Luther's teaching on the Eucharist. Instead, he formulated it in a classic, simple, and precise way in the Augsburg Confession of 1530. At the same time, however, he began to look for a formula of compromise that would be acceptable to all parties, for he seemed to have a feeling that Luther was going too far.

Melanchthon became familiar with the Zwinglian teaching on the Lord's Supper and was somewhat influenced by it.

Melanchthon placed much hope in the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 when Luther, Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, Brenz, and Osiander on the one side met with Zwingli, Oekolampadius, and Bucer on the other. They reached an agreement in fourteen out of fifteen points, but the fifteenth one was the crucial one on the Eucharist. Here they could not agree. Luther made a well-known statement, directed to Bucer: "You have a different spirit than we do." And he insisted on *Hoc est corpus meum* ("This is my body"), which he had written in chalk on the table. At the decisive moment, he pulled away the table cloth and pointed to the little word *est.* Zwingli declared that "God would never put anything before us that we cannot comprehend (with our reason)" (*Deus nobis non proponit imcomprehensibilia*), to which Luther vehemently replied that *all* of the great and wonderful works of God are incomprehensible to human reason.

Half a year later, in June 1530, Melanchthon again attended a diet, the famous Diet of Augsburg, at which the Augsburg Confession was publicly and officially read to the emperor and all the assembled rulers. Melanchthon was the main author of this document. This study is not the place to go into details about the preparatory work, Melanchthon's influence, its contents, and the like. But we should pay some attention to the fact that this confession was written with the intention to prove that the *doctrina evangelii,* the gospel teaching and doctrine of the Reformers, was in accord with the doctrine of the ancient church, the church catholic. The Augsburg Confession was not to be taken as a confession of a part of the church, a group inside or outside the church. Rather, it claimed to be a confession of catholic faith.

This was of crucial importance in terms of the legal status of the Lutherans. Whoever did not confess the catholic faith and departed from the catholic doctrine was regarded as a heretic and was, therefore, under legislation concerning heretics, which had existed since the fourth century, without any legal protection or right to exist. Therefore, the proof of catholicity that Melanchthon endeavored to give was of vital importance for the Church of the Lutheran Reformation. It was not, however, the only important factor in safeguarding the protection of imperial law to the Lutherans. For Melanchthon was also interested in

maintaining or restoring unity wherever possible and in preventing further separation and schism.

It speaks for itself that, in the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon deliberately avoided including an article on the pope. He kept silent about this difficult doctrinal question, and only seven years later did he deal with it in the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the pope of 1537, originally intended as a supplement to the Augsburg Confession. That same year, Melanchthon also tried to remove the Smalcald Articles from consideration. These Luther had written for a council that was supposed to have met in Mantua but didn't come together until Trent in 1545. Melanchthon was afraid of Luther's adamant condemnation of the pope, which might undermine his own efforts at coming to an agreement with the Roman Church. Thus Melanchthon hoped that the Smalcald Articles would not become an official document. In the end Melanchthon signed these articles, but with a remarkable reservation: "I approve the above articles as right and Christian. But regarding the pope, I hold that if he would allow the gospel, his superiority over the bishops, which he has otherwise, be conceded to him by human right also by us for the sake of the peace and general unity of those Christians who are also under him and may be under him hereafter."

Already at Augsburg, Melanchthon's friends had become somewhat suspicious of his readiness to give in with regard to ceremonies, church order, and the like. But he gave proof of his loyalty to the Lutheran doctrine in the Apology, in which he clearly rejected the opponents' position on the doctrine on justification. Personally, he was deeply disappointed that all of his efforts to come to an agreement had completely failed. Luther, who was not allowed to attend at Augsburg, had to send Melanchthon several letters of comfort and encouragement. On the way back to Wittenberg, he found Melanchthon restlessly writing the Apology, a voluminous work in the end. Luther took his pen away: "Sometimes you have to honor God not by writing, but by resting," he told him.

TROUBLE BEGINS WITH THE SUPPER

Melanchthon could not rest. In the years from 1530 to 1546, he was quite busy in negotiating with all parties to the right and to the left—with his work in Wittenberg and with establishing the Reformation in territories such as Saxony, Brandenburg, and others. His attempts to work in the Archdiocese of Cologne, however, met in failure. He received calls to serve in France and England, but they were declined—his Elector would not give him permission.

It is also during this period that we begin to see Melanchthon's defection from Luther's teaching gradually begin to burgeon. In 1536, for instance, Bucer came to Wittenberg to discuss the Lord's Supper with the Reformers, and he presented himself as ready to accept the Lutheran position. Melanchthon valued the subsequent agreement reached in the Wittenberg Concord as a great step forward in the direction he had wanted to follow for some time. Four years later, in 1540, he produced an altered version of the Augsburg Confession—altered, however, only in the Latin text. Melanchthon still considered the Augsburg Confession to be a private work belonging to him, and so he felt entitled to change it. If one examines this recension of the Augustana, one can find useful clarification in places, but there are also a number of alterations that effectively obscure the original meaning and give it a different sense.

The crucial article is Article X, where Melanchthon struck out the condemnation and rejection of contradictory doctrines and teachers, hoping to establish agreement with the theologians in Upper Germany, Alsace, and Switzerland. Here the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was watered down, and the new reading reflected the changes that had taken place in Melanchthon's understanding of the sacrament: "Concerning the Supper of the Lord, they [our churches] teach that with [*cum*] the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are offered to those who eat in the Lord's Supper."

Melanchthon still considered the Augsburg Confession to be a private work belonging to him, and so he felt entitled to change it.

The Latin word *cum* had been used in the Wittenberg Concord of 1536. It can mean the same as "in" or "under." It can also, however, be understood in a different way—as *simul cum,* or "simultaneously with," just as Calvin understood it. In 1530, Article X had the wording: *corpus et sanguis Christi vere adsint et distribuantur* ("the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed"). But in 1540 we read: "cum pane et vino vere exhibeantur corpus et sanguis Christi." *Exhibeantur* ("are offered") replaces the *adsint et distribuantur* ("present and distributed") of 1530. *Exhibeantur* comes from the Wittenberg Concord, where the corresponding passage reads: "with the wine and bread the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, offered, and received." And yet the words "truly and substantially present" are not to be found in the Variata edition of the Augsburg Confession of 1540. Likewise, in the 1540 version of AC V, Melanchthon expressed himself concerning the relationship between the means of grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit also with an ambiguous *simul* ("at the same time"). The understanding of the means of grace as "instruments," by which the Holy Spirit is given and effective, had changed, and now the Spirit was regarded as effective "at the same time" when we hear the gospel or receive the sacraments. No wonder that Calvin readily signed the Variata, and no wonder that it no longer represented the Lutheran position. Luther himself sensed this, and tensions arose between the two men. They almost broke with each other.

In the doctrine of justification, we can also observe a change in Melanchthon's understanding. He was no longer clear. Was it merely a "forensic" justification that we receive as a gift for Christ's sake, or was it an "effective" justification, making the sinner a different, righteous person so that sanctification, in the end, could almost be understood as another expression for justification, or at least portion of justification?

In the 1535 edition of the *Loci theologici,* Melanchthon formulated a synergistic doctrine with his three causes of conversion: the word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the human will, insofar as it did not reject the grace offered. New obedience, once described as a fruit of faith, is now seen as something alongside of or in addition to faith. Melanchthon could now even speak of faith itself as an *opus,* a "work," so that it was no longer totally gift but something that man had to contribute. Why?

He was by character and personality a fearful, timid, anxious man, fearing the downfall of Reformation due to the political power of its opponents.

Melanchthon was still depending on the freedom of human will according to his humanistic tradition. As long as he continued to do this, he would conceive of a doctrine in which man somehow contributed to his salvation. And yet Melanchthon was still cautious. He spoke of the unity with Christ through faith, by which unity we are renewed and enabled to fulfill the law. So it appeared as if everything depended on Christ, and yet somehow room was left for human cooperation. Hermann Sasse summarized the influence of humanism on Melanchthon:

> Melanchthon came to Wittenberg as a humanist and remained a humanist throughout his life . . . . This eminent humanistic scholar became a genuine Lutheran theologian under Luther's strong influence, as the first edition of his *Loci* shows. But he never ceased to be a humanist, and in the course of time the humanist tendencies of his theology came forth again. This did not matter as long as he remained faithful to Lutheran dogma. In every living Church there must be room for a variety of theological thinkers, provided they are in agreement as to the dogma of the Church. Thus a difference of interest in, or emphasis on, certain points of doctrine and even a difference of expression could well be tolerated. Luther always felt that he and his learned friend supplemented each other. As Melanchthon had learned from him, so he learned from Melanchthon. It has great significance for the Lutheran Church, that its confessions were not written by Luther alone. . . . This variety in expressions of one and the same truth gave the Lutheran Confessions a richness which the confessions of other churches do not possess. Nothing is more significant for the Lutheran Church's independence of human authority than the fact that Luther approved of the Augsburg Confession although he clearly stated that he would have written it in a totally different way. It is the doctrine of the Gospel that matters, and not human theology. The theological difference between Luther and Melanchthon was bound to develop into a crisis, as soon as the Gospel itself was at stake.

But after Luther's death in 1546, Melanchthon's deviations from the doctrine he himself had confessed at Marburg and Augsburg

> became so serious and . . . so dangerous to the Lutheran Church that the whole existence of Lutheranism was at stake (Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959], 311 ff).

THE FRUIT OF MELANCHTHONIANISM

This spirit of seeking agreement when and where confession was called for, of accepting, at least in part, the opponents' position and doctrine and making concessions even in essentials—this is what Melanchthonianism is all about. Melanchthon himself took this approach for several reasons. (1) He was by character and personality a fearful, timid, anxious man, fearing the downfall of Reformation due to the political power of its opponents. Thus he looked for escape, for allies, and for arrangements. (2) He came from humanism, which had taught him to rate human reason, capacities, and qualification much more highly than Luther ever did. This philosophical background constantly influenced his theology. (3) He was afraid of dividing the church, feeling responsible for the church universal, which he had hoped and intended to bring under the influence of the Reformation as a whole. Thus he always looked for ways to keep the church together and to heal the breaches that had occurred.

Melanchthonianism has accompanied the Lutheran Church ever since. When Luther died in 1546, Melanchthon was expected to take over the leadership, having become the number one man on the Wittenberg faculty. He was, therefore, regarded as the leading theologian and spokesmen of the Lutheran Church—a position that he had neither wanted nor expected and with which he felt very uncomfortable.

The Smalcald War of 1546–47, in which the Emperor and his allies fought against the Lutherans, ended in disaster for the latter. The papal party took the victory, and Melanchthon's sovereign, Moritz, switched over to the Emperor's side, ready to compromise. There is the long and painful story of the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims during which, under the cloak of some minor concessions, Roman doctrine and practice were widely reestablished. There is no need to recount it all in detail. Suffice it to say that Melanchthon, being part of this compromise, was roundly accused of having sold out the Lutheran position. Controversies subsequently arose concerning the necessity of good works, the free will's *facultas se applicandi ad gratiam* ("ability of adjusting itself to God's grace"—a definition of Erasmus, to which Melanchthon agreed), the Lord's Supper, and others. Such controversies characterize the final years of Melanchthon's life. He died on April 19, 1560, in Wittenberg, tired of all the fighting, and was buried in the castle church opposite Luther.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

So what was Melanchthon's influence on the Lutheran Church? First of all, we should honor him as a theologian who gave three outstanding confessional writings to the church: the Augsburg Confession, as the basic doctrinal document of the Lutheran Church, which made what the *doctrina evangelii* (the doctrine of

the gospel) is all about. This doctrine is clearly formulated in all twenty-eight articles of the Confession. It is an ecumenical confession, taken from the Scriptures and giving evidence that this faith has always been confessed throughout the centuries. Those who deny and reject it have departed from the Scriptures and from the church catholic. Next to the Augustana, Melanchthon wrote an Apology as its authentic interpretation, defending it against the Emperor's theologians and proving that the Scriptures teach exactly as the Church of the Augsburg Confession teaches. And finally, he supplemented the Augsburg Confession with the Treatise of 1537. Thus Melanchthon contributed substantially to the formation of the Lutheran Church's doctrine and preaching.

Second, Melanchthon forced Lutherans of his day to clarify their position on a number of doctrinal questions left open, unclear, or called into question after Luther's death. This resulted in the Formula of Concord of 1577, the final confessional writing of the Lutheran Church, which cannot be thought of without Melanchthon's influence.

Third, Melanchthon's famous dogmatics, the *Loci theologici* or *Loci communes,* became the compendium from which generations of Lutheran theologians learned their theology. Here they learned, above all else, that the Scriptures must set the agenda for theology. The main topics or *loci* ("sin," "law," "gospel," "justification," and so forth) were all taken from the Scriptures.

In the fourth place, Melanchthon was passionately concerned about the church catholic. His concept of the church always took into consideration not just part of the church, a particular denomination or sect or tradition or time or region. Rather, he always had the church universal in mind, beginning with the apostles onward. To go *ad fontes* meant to bring the church again into accordance with such apostolic teaching. He did not spiritualize this church universal, separating, as others did, the visible church from the invisible. Rather, he had in view the existing church on earth. Thus he suffered terribly from her division and worked constantly for her reunification.

Melanchthon's famous dogmatics, the Loci theologici or Loci communes, became the compendium from which generations of Lutheran theologians learned their theology.

In the fifth place—and now we must begin to view Melanchthon in a more critical way—he developed a rather dangerous definition describing the relationship between church and state: *magistratus custos utriusque tabulae* ("the government has to watch over both tables of the law"), he wrote in his *Loci.* This meant that, in addition to the Second Table of the Law, the government has the duty to care for the First Table as well—for faith in God, for divine service, for church attendance, and so on. According to this line of thinking, the government must not only protect the church and give her room for exercising her belief, but *magistratus in republica minister et executor est ecclesiae* ("the government is in society as the servant and executor of the church"). Most likely Melanchthon did not realize that these notions would help pave the way for establishing not only state churches but also, in the end, the rule of the state in the church and over the church.

In the sixth place, it seems that Melanchthon departed from Luther in the doctrines of anthropology, free will, good works, justification, and law and gospel. Of course, all of these topics are closely linked with one another. In order to promote church unity, when he watered down one doctrine of Luther, the others soon followed. In the end, he failed to achieve unity, he lost Luther's bold clarity, and he planted the seeds for tremendous conflict among the Lutherans of his day.

And finally, Melanchthon lost the Lutheran (and I would even say the biblical) doctrine of the Lord's Supper when he gave up his own teaching, which he had so precisely stated in the Augsburg Confession and Apology, and adjusted himself to the convictions of Bucer and Calvin. Again, he intended to promote unity, in this case among Lutherans and the Reformed, but he failed miserably. Thus the Lutheran Church in the second half of the sixteenth century would experience great difficulty in combating and overcoming Cryptocalvinism, which found its genesis in Melanchthon's teaching.

CONCLUSION

There is some truth to the notion today (though only some) that Melanchthon ought to be considered a pioneer of ecumenism. Recent celebrations of his 500th birthday in Germany have praised him as a forerunner of the Leuenberg Concord, that questionable document of so-called doctrinal agreement between the Reformed, Union, and Lutheran Churches. It claims that the rejections and condemnations of the sixteenth century are no longer applicable to the positions taken today. No one can know for sure how Melanchthon would have felt about this modern concord and its method, which are so open to radically different interpretations. But there can be little doubt that, in his day, Melanchthon became weak at a moment when faithfulness and steadfastness were needed. Should we blame him for his weakness? Perhaps we should rather be grateful the positive contributions he made in shaping the Lutheran Church, particularly in giving her such a marvelous confession as the *Confessio Augustana.*

When Melanchthon died in 1560, he left a little sheet of paper, which told about his own final hopes:

> You are delivered from sin, from sorrow and from the rage of the theologians. You come to the light and you will see God and his Son. You will know the wonderful mysteries that you were not able to understand in your life: why we have been created the way we are, and not different, and in which the union of the two natures of Christ does exist.

In spite of his errors, Melanchthon was a Christ-centered man, for again and again he emphasized the famous statement he first wrote in the *Loci* of 1521: "Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere" ("This is to know Christ: to know his benefits"). Melanchthon tried to help us know such benefits too. LOGIA

The Role of Philosophy in the Theology of Melanchthon

Is There a Need for Reappraisal?

James Heiser

Ubi regnat Lutheranismus, ibi interitus litterarum![1]

—*Erasmus*

Introduction: The Popular Perception of Melanchthon

It is ironic that Philipp Melanchthon, a man whom many Lutherans consider to have been irenic to a fault, has been the object of no small measure of controversy within the Lutheran church during the four and a half centuries since Martin Luther's death. The source of this controversy, of course, hardly needs to be mentioned. Melanchthon—the author of the Augsburg Confession, the primary statement of Lutheran doctrine ("the symbol of our time," FC SD Summary, 5)—is also widely considered the author of numerous errors that threatened the Lutheran Reformation in the period leading up to the Formula of Concord. Indeed, the virtual absence of any commemoration of the quincentennial of the birth of the *Praeceptor Germaniae*—a marked contrast to the *LutherJahr* celebrations of 1983—can almost certainly be attributed to the continuing confusion Lutheran theologians experience at the mention of Melanchthon. Certainly, there are few confessional Lutherans who would be willing to be called Melanchthonian.

Despite the continuing ambiguity regarding Melanchthon's legacy, however, the differences between the theological approaches of Luther and Melanchthon are often cast in terms of the former's reliance on Scripture alone, while the latter is alleged to have allowed philosophy or humanism to shape his theological conclusions. For example, one reads in F. Bente's *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord:*

> The truth is that Melanchthon never fully succeeded in freeing himself from his original humanistic tendencies, a fact which gave his mind a moralistic rather than a truly religious and scriptural bent. Even during the early years of the Reformation, when he was carried away with admiration for Luther and his work, the humanistic undercurrent did not disappear altogether. . . .
>
> Melanchthon lacked the simple faith in, and the firm adherence and implicit submission to, the Word of God which made Luther the undaunted and invincible hero of the Reformation. Standing four-square on the Bible and deriving from this source of divine power alone all his theological thoughts and convictions, Luther was a rock, firm and immovable. With him every theological question was decided and settled conclusively by quoting a clear passage from the Holy Scriptures, while Melanchthon, devoid of Luther's single-minded and whole-hearted devotion to the Word of God, endeavored to satisfy his reason as well.[2]

This assessment is by no means limited to Lutheran scholars. Gonzalez declares in his work *A History of Christian Thought:*

> Melanchthon joined the faculty at the University of Wittenberg in 1518, just as the Lutheran Reformation was beginning to take shape. His field of teaching was Greek and his scholarly interests were philological, but he soon fell under the spell of Luther and turned to biblical and theological studies.[3]

However:

> There is no doubt that Melanchthon's spirit was very different from Luther's, for the latter emphasized correct doctrine above unity, and the general tenor of Melanchthon's efforts was in the direction of emphasizing unity above total agreement in doctrine. Furthermore, Melanchthon introduced into Lutheran theology a humanistic spirit that was not Luther's.[4]

Other writers have been even more blunt: "Melanchthon, like the scholastics before him, necessarily held revelation not in a position superior to reason, but coordinate with reason."[5]

In essence, these writers (and many others) postulate that Philipp Melanchthon to some degree subordinated theology to philosophy, allowing reason to stand as a judge over revelation. Nevertheless, is this judgment of Melanchthon an accurate one? We must examine the writings of Melanchthon if we are to answer this question fairly. First, we will examine the rhetorical thrust of Melanchthon's methodology, and then we will briefly examine several of his writings. In conclusion, we will briefly reflect on the enduring influence of Melanchthon's methodology on sixteenth-century Lutheran theology.

The Subordination of Philosophy to Theology: The Role of Rhetoric in Melanchthon's Methodology

Several scholars have begun challenging some of the commonly held perceptions of Philipp Melanchthon.[6] One such author, Quirinus Breen, wrote a series of articles that call into question the common view that Melanchthon's methodology led to a "new scholas-

This essay was originally presented in February 1997 at the "Father, Teacher, Confessor" Symposium marking the 500th anniversary of the birth of Philipp Melanchthon. The author then served as director of the Johann Gerhard Institute.

ticism" and subordinated theology to philosophy.[7] Breen drew attention to the importance of Melanchthon's understanding of the terms *loci communes* and *loci,* and relates this usage to a difference between Aristotle's and Cicero's usage of this terminology:

> To Aristotle [*topoi* or *loci*] are merely points of view from which a probable proposition may be looked at. His aim is to make dialectics as responsible to truth as it is possible. He knew there had always been a relation of dialectics to rhetoric—that rhetoric dresses up dialectical propositions for purposes of persuasion. Thus he wanted to make rhetoric more responsible to the truth; but he was aware that through rhetoric exactitude or precision cannot be attained in knowledge. The basic difference in Cicero is that he does not believe in any but probable statements. Therefore with him dialectics is everything as a means of discovering knowledge. The chief tool of dialectic as a finder of knowledge is the topic or *locus.* The *loci* are now no longer mere points of view. They are *sedes argumentorum*, i.e., the veins within a subject matter in which we dig for knowledge of it. They are the pits from which we pull up learning. Bearing in mind that Cicero's *loci* discover for us the only kind of knowledge that exists, it is understandable that he magnified the *loci* far beyond the bounds set by Aristotle.[8]

Breen believed that the difference between the methodologies of the orthodox and the heterodox theologians could be framed in terms of the difference between Aristotle's and Cicero's *loci*:

> That which kept churchmen from falling into the New Academy was the belief that there are things that are certain, namely, the body of the received faith. After Anselm, largely speaking, those were considered heretics who dealt with the articles of faith by means of dialectics, that is, as probable propositions; while those were considered orthodox who held that the articles of faith are in part expressible in propositions necessarily true.[9]

Breen attempted to place Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* (1521) (hereafter, LC 1521) within the Ciceronian camp by drawing attention to his use of *hypotyposes* as a synonym for *loci,* a term that (Breen observed) Quintilian says means a "picturesque description [that] cannot be regarded as a statement of facts."[10] Breen therefore concluded: "I take it that Melanchthon intended the *loci communes* to be understood rhetorically."[11] Melanchthon's *Erotemata Dialectices* (1549 edition) was cited as further proof, as he there defines a "dialectical *locus*" as

> a *sedes argumenti*, or rather, an index pointing out where is the source whence the material is to be drawn by which a proposition in question is to be confirmed; so that, if you should seek confirmation of this proposition: Glory is to be sought, some source is to be pointed out whence the confirmation is to be drawn.[12]

"This," Breen declared, "is thoroughly Ciceronian."[13] All of this seems directed toward placing Melanchthon into the same category with the "Ciceronian" medieval heretics who questioned the articles of the faith. Nevertheless, Breen conceded a certain "Aristotelianism" to Melanchthon:

> Melanchthon in fact distinguishes between propositions that are probably true and those that are certainly true. This is certainly Aristotelian. . . . As long as there is a belief in Scripture as revelation, there will be a decent respect for Aristotle somewhere.[14]

In light of the above examination of the *Loci Communes*, however, Melanchthon is far from the near-skeptic Breen presented him to be. One might suspect that Breen's true objection to Melanchthon and his method was *not* a supposed skepticism.

For Melanchthon, philosophy, like any other field of human endeavor, ultimately functions in the service of biblical theology.

The nature of Breen's objection to Melanchthon is more clearly presented in his essay "The Two-Fold Truth Theory in Melanchthon."[15] Here Breen observed that for Melanchthon, philosophy, like any other field of human endeavor, ultimately functions in the service of biblical theology. Thus, "Never are we ushered into the realm of reason as a promised land in which the mind may find full play for its natural gifts. Melanchthon fears the apparent frivolity and irreverence that are sometimes the by-product of unfettered mental activity."[16] Breen objected to this reverence: "Yet this is a danger that must be risked."[17] He continued:

> The point is important, for Melanchthon's caveats spring from a suspicion that reason in full play might damage the faith. And this is of the essence of the two-fold truth theory. The classroom in philosophy at Wittenberg was not free. This is regrettable, for that lowered philosophy to a technique of propaganda. Be the cause never so good, philosophy will not serve as mere apologist. . . . To Melanchthon philosophy was a kind of automaton in the service of theology.[18]

This understanding of Melanchthon's approach to philosophy led Breen to conclude:

> Melanchthon's works on theology are fundamentally rhetorical, or homiletical. They are handbooks for preachers. Their rhetorical character fits their author. . . . His theological *loci* are intended to show the preacher the veins of Scripture which can be fruitfully worked for the rebuke of sinners and the consolation of believers. The *loci* are also shot through with warning, comfort, and practical admoni-

> tion; while later editions get more dialectical, he seldom misses an opportunity to give an [*sic*] homiletical turn to an argument.[19]

Breen rejected Melanchthon's rhetorical approach, and the reason is simple: he rejected Melanchthon's view of the authority of Scripture and attempted to reduce Melanchthon's delineation of the *loci* to nothing more than *opinion:*

> the question arises whether the theological *loci* or topics constitute a true body of theological knowledge or whether they are a body of Melanchthonian opinions. That is, who or what determines the *loci*? Who or what determines that Scripture alone, and not the living church also, provides the subject matter of theology? Or, who or what determines that the basic topics (*supremi loci*) pointed out by Luther—namely, law and gospel, sin and grace—are indeed more fundamental than St. Thomas' *locus* of God as Being, or than Calvin's of the glory of God? And who or what determines that natural reason does not play an indispensable role in theology? Surely, Melanchthon's theology is in the state of opinions largely.[20]

The answer to Breen's questions could readily be found in Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* (1555), where he states in the foreword: "I will also arrange the principle parts in this book according to the order of the articles in these [Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian] creeds, and explain them in this sequence insofar as God gives me grace."[21] Melanchthon, therefore, self-consciously aimed to create a work that was scriptural in content, and drew upon the creeds to show the connections between the various articles of the faith. Although one might possibly question Melanchthon's faithfulness regarding his exposition of certain articles, he most certainly *did not* consider himself or Luther the originator of the distinction between articles; rather, he saw himself as conforming to the catholic confession of the faith.

Nevertheless, despite Breen's disparaging view of Melanchthon, his insights into certain aspects of Melanchthon's rhetorical methodology disproves the common Protestant assumption that Melanchthon's humanism or his "Aristotelian argumentation" undermined biblical truth.[22] Breen's objection to Melanchthon is that Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* (and other writings) operates from the assumption that their presentations of biblical truth are accurate, and his argumentation therefore draws upon all areas of knowledge, including exegesis, history, philosophy, patristic study, natural science, to give the reader support in defending true doctrine. As Melanchthon declared,

> In theological matters we especially seek two different things: one, how we shall be consoled in regard to death and the judgment of God; the other, how we shall live chastely. One is the subject of true, evangelical, Christian preaching, to the world and to human reason unknown; that is what Luther teaches, and that is what engenders righteousness of the heart, in which good works then originate. The other is what Erasmus teaches us—good morals, the chaste life. It is also what the heathen philosophers knew about. What, however, has philosophy in common with Christ, blind reason with the revelation of God? Whoever follows this knows only sophistication; he does not know faith. If love does not proceed out of faith, then it is not genuine, only an external, Pharisaic hypocrisy . . . [23]

Breen's concern, however, was for a philosophy freed from the "shackles" of theology, or at least from a theology normed by the sacred Scriptures. In a sense, Breen was an advocate of the sort of philosophizing theology of which Melanchthon is accused. Far from seeing Melanchthon as a "fellow traveler," however, Breen perceived Melanchthon as a threat precisely because Melanchthon would have philosophy (and all of the rest of creation) brought into the service of theology.

Anti-Scholastic Humanism in the Early Melanchthon

Melanchthon profited greatly from the influence and support of his great uncle, the hebraist and humanist John Reuchlin. (Certainly the relationship between these men merits more discussion than can be allowed here.) Reuchlin arranged for a private tutor for Philip: his brother George, when Philipp was only seven years old; and thus he began a life of rigorous academic work.[24] Philipp was engaged in studying Greek by the age of twelve, and Reuchlin presented him with a Greek grammar and Greek-Latin lexicon during Philip's study of the language under private tutelage.[25]

Melanchthon entered the University of Heidelberg at age thirteen and received his Bachelor of Arts in June 1511. Although he soon applied for his Master's, Melanchthon was turned down because "he was still too young and of too childish an appearance."[26] Melanchthon entered the University of Tübingen in 1512 as a result, applying himself to such diverse topics as the classics, Hebrew, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine.[27] He was awarded the Master's degree in 1514 and became a private tutor at the university.[28]

Melanchthon would have philosophy (and all of the rest of creation) brought into the service of theology.

Melanchthon's various activities and accomplishments quickly earned him recognition within humanist circles. Erasmus declared of him in 1516:

> What promise does not this Philip Melanchthon, a youth, as yet, and almost a boy, give of himself! He is equally at home in both languages [Greek and Latin]. What acuteness of invention, what purity of diction, what memory for recondite matters, what extensive reading, what delicate grace and noble talents he displays![29]

Melanchthon was invited to the University of Ingolstadt, but turned down the invitation upon the advice of Reuchlin.[30]

Instead, Reuchlin recommended him for a position at the University of Wittenberg, declaring to Elector Frederick, "I know of no one among the Germans who excels [Melanchthon], except Erasmus of Rotterdam, and he is an Hollander."[31] Melanchthon was, of course, extended the invitation, and he arrived at Wittenberg on August 25, 1518.[32]

While Reuchlin contributed greatly to Melanchthon's humanist training, it should be recognized that the benefits of this relationship were by no means one-way: Reuchlin also gained from Melanchthon. And, contrary to Gonzalez's assertion that "[Melanchthon's] field of teaching was Greek and his scholarly interests were philological, but he soon fell under the spell of Luther and turned to biblical and theological studies,"[33] Melanchthon delved into Scripture and the church fathers as part of his studies during his years in Tübingen (fall 1512–summer 1518). Melanchthon also supported his great uncle in contending with the Dominicans, who "insisted on the burning of all Jewish books and documents."[34]

First as a humanist, and then as a reformer and humanist, Philipp Melanchthon was an unflinching enemy of the scholastic theologians.

The closeness of the familial bond was severed, however, when Reuchlin accepted a position at the University of Ingolstadt in 1519. Reuchlin urged Melanchthon to follow him to Ingolstadt, promising Melanchthon that Eck was willing to forgive him.[35] Melanchthon declined Reuchlin's request, responding, "I love my native land certainly, but I must consider what Christ has called me to do more than my own inclinations. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, I shall do my work here until the same Spirit calls me away. I ask not to live happily but righteously and Christlike."[36] In response, Reuchlin "requested Philipp never to write him again lest he be suspected of sympathy for a heretic!"[37] Furthermore, Reuchlin withdrew his promise of his library, willing it instead to the monks of Pforzheim.[38] It would be decades before Melanchthon's anger would entirely pass: "Melanchthon, in turn, ignored [Reuchlin's] death and did not relent until thirty years later . . . ."[39] Given the violence of Melanchthon's separation from the greatest humanist influence in his life, Manschreck writes with justification: "Nothing could more forcefully have indicated the commitment of Melanchthon to the evangelical reform movement, nor have demonstrated so effectively that humanism was not his final standard."[40]

First as a humanist, and then as a reformer and humanist, Philipp Melanchthon was an unflinching enemy of the scholastic theologians. This facet of Melanchthon's thought—particularly in its more humanist orientation—can readily be seen in his inaugural lecture at the University of Wittenberg, "On Correcting the Studies of Youth":

> German youth elsewhere, a few years ago, undertook an auspicious debut in the learned arena, and not a few have returned in mid-course with a virtually barbaric dismissiveness, saying that the revival of literary studies is more difficult than useful: Greek is seized upon by some with idle minds to be used for ostentatious display. Hebrew letters are of dubious value. Meanwhile literature perishes from lack of genuine cultivation, and philosophy is abandoned by those who turn to contentions about other things. When such a horde of illiterate people prepares to foregather, who fails to perceive that the champion they counter needs more than one ally? . . .
>
> I believe that it was about eight hundred years ago that the world was set into commotion by the Goths and Italy devastated by the Lombards, just as Roman literature was destroyed along with Rome herself, and at once the furor of war destroyed the libraries and killed the Muses with inactivity. . . . [A]t about that time Gregory whom they call the great and I call the leader of the parade and the torchbearer of the dying theology—otherwise a man of outstanding piety—was administrator over the Roman church, and held up the decline in that most unhappy century, as much as he could by teaching and writing.
>
> . . . some men, led either by lust for subtleties or love of dispute, fell to Aristotle, albeit mutilated and mangled and obscure even to some Greeks, to whom he seemed like Apollo himself, rendered into Latin that would try even the conjectures of the raving Sibyl. Yet here incautious men entered. Gradually the better disciplines were neglected, we left Greek learning behind, and everywhere bad things began to be taught as if they were good. From this proceeded Thomases, Scotuses, seraphic doctors, cherubic doctors, and the rest of their followers, more numerous than the offspring of Cadmus.[41]

Melanchthon, in describing the problem, began to propose a solution:

> It was not possible, when the Greeks were held in contempt, for a single philosopher to be of any use to humane studies; and concern for sacred things as well slowly died. This latter situation has crippled the true Christian rites and customs of the church; the former has crippled the study of literature. Perhaps a fairer destruction could have taken place in other circumstances. For they would have been able easily to establish the literature that had fallen into disuse, the rites of the pure Church, and with good literature—if any remained preserved—to correct the ruinous customs of the Church, to stir up the fallen spirits of men, and to strengthen them and set them in order.[42]

Central to Melanchthon's guide to reform was a restoration of the ancient letters:

> Greek literature is to be joined to Latin, that you may read philosophers, theologians, historians, orators, poets, to pursue, wherever you turn, the real thing and not the

shadow of things, as Ixion when he was to meet with Juno fell upon the cloud . . . . And when this journey, as it were, is prepared by compendia, you proceed, as Plato says, to philosophy. For I am clearly persuaded of the view, as one who likes things that are distinguished, that the mind must previously be exercised prudently and sufficiently by the humane disciplines (for such I call philosophy) in order to excel, whether it be in the sacred things or the marketplace. . . . But select the best things from the best sources, both those things that pertain to knowledge of nature and also to the forming of manners. Greek learning is especially necessary for this, for it embraces the universal knowledge of nature, so that you may speak fittingly and fluently about morals.[43]

Melanchthon's concerns in 1518 are substantially those of humanism. The decay of letters and piety are the primary focus for Melanchthon. The study of holy Scripture was a vital area of study (for instance, the lectures on Titus), but Melanchthon also emphasized the study of the ancient "Greek learning." In 1519, Melanchthon "congratulated students of theology . . . on the scholarship of that day, a day in which Erasmus, Reuchlin, Capito, Oecolampadius, and Carlstadt were luminaries."[44]

Melanchthon did not abandon his high estimation of the importance of the arts.

Indeed, "Melanchthon did not lose his humanism in the period between 1521 and 1527, as Melanchthon's Latin preface to the translation of Luther's *Weckruf* of 1524 makes evident."[45] This ongoing emphasis, however, was not something Luther simply tolerated. Rather, Luther wrote to Spalatin:

Melanchthon on the fourth day after his arrival, delivered a most learned and elegant address, to the great joy and admiration of all who heard him. Henceforth he no longer needs any recommendation from you. We soon learned to look away from his external appearance; we consider ourselves most fortunate to possess him, and are astonished at his extraordinary gifts. See to it that you commend him most earnestly to our prince. I have no desire whatever for any other teacher of Greek as long as we can retain him.[46]

"Paul and the Scholastics" (1520)

On January 25, 1520, the festival of the Conversion of Paul, Melanchthon further demonstrated his understanding of the radical distinction between biblical theology and scholastic theology in his oration for that day. Melanchthon's study of the Pauline epistles—again, work that he had begun at Tübingen—influenced him: "I am of the opinion that Christ, and therefore the sum of our salvation, cannot be known so accurately from the writings of anyone else, or from the commentaries of any other, as they can from those of Paul."[47] This point is eminently personal for Melanchthon: "As a boy I did some damage to my mind in preoccupation with the literature of the philosophers, which, I hope, the doctrine of Paul some day will repair."[48] The error of the scholastics stands in contrast to such a spirit of reverence toward the Pauline epistles:

With what great damage the schools of theology have neglected Paul up to now, I shudder to say. For after having condemned the doctrine of Paul, they embraced Aristotle, and scarcely is the name of Christ left. Certainly his grace is unknown, and it is from this alone that his divinity can properly be learned.[49]

Melanchthon did not abandon his high estimation of the importance of the arts, however: "Philosophy should be sought—and by this term all antiquity especially has been included—in order that from that source one may seek a form of the better life."[50] However,

By the consensus of all the wise, the very best kind of discipline has always been considered to be that most adapted to the improvement of character and the pursuits of life. In this connection I shall show just what we who have been washed in the blood of Christ actually owe to Paul. It is not right for Christians to seek a form or plan of life from philosophers but from the divine books."[51]

The authority of the Word of God must be upheld:

I propose principles for dispute in order to urge that no man should seek a judgment about sacred matters from any other source except holy Scripture. . . . I take the position that it does not matter if anyone does not believe anything except what Scripture teaches."[52]

But even in 1520, Melanchthon did not reject a proper role for philosophy, for "Melanchthon's chief contribution in philosophy, *Erotemata Dialectica*, was composed as early as 1520."[53]

Loci Communes (1521)

In light of the above discussion, it is not surprising that Melanchthon's approach in LC 1521 is self-consciously centered on the Scriptures. As Melanchthon declares in the dedication of LC 1521:

Moreover, because it concerns the whole argument, the principal topics of Christian discipline are indicated in order that youths may understand both what things are to be sought out in the Scriptures, as well as learn under what base hallucinations they labor everywhere in theological science, who have handed down to us the subtle pratings of Aristotle, instead of the doctrine of Christ.

I am indeed treating everything sparingly and briefly, due to the fact that I am discharging the duty of an Index rather than a commentary. Hence, I am only stating the nomencla-

ture of the topics, to which that person roaming through the Divine Scriptures may be directed. I do not wish to lead them away from scriptures to some obscure and intricate argument of my own; but if possible that I might incite them to the Scriptures.

Melanchthon subordinates philosophy and even the testimony of the fathers to the authority of Scripture.

For on the whole, I am not quite equal to the commentaries, not even to those of the Ancients. So far from that am I, that I would not by any longer writings of mine, restrain anyone from the study of the Canonical Scripture. On the contrary, I would desire nothing quite so much if it were possible, as that all Christians be thoroughly conversant with the divine letters alone, and be wholly transformed into their nature.[54]

Thus Melanchthon subordinates philosophy and even the testimony of the fathers to the authority of Scripture. Again, Melanchthon says of the fathers:

If you take away from Origen his absurd allegories and his forest of philosophical sentences, how little will be left! And yet, the Greeks with great unanimity follow him, as do certain of the Latin writers like Ambrosius and Jerome, men who seem to be pillars. And after these, almost every author, the more recent he is, the more adulterated.

. . . Finally, it cannot be but that human writings often entangle even the cautious reader.[55]

It is not that these other sources are worthless, but rather that they are flawed and derivative, and thus pale when compared with Scripture, which is flawless and the source of Christian doctrine.

Melanchthon clearly demonstrates his methodology in his first *locus,* "On the Powers of Man, Especially Free Will." First, Melanchthon sets aside argumentation from the church fathers:

Augustine and Bernard wrote on Free Will but the former, indeed, retracted his writings in many ways in the later works which he wrote against the Pelagians. Bernard is not like him. There are some works on this subject even among the Greek authors, but they are rare. Since I shall not follow human opinions, I shall set forth the subject with simplicity and clarity, a thing which authors both ancient and modern have almost obscured. And they have done so because they interpreted the Scripture in such a way as to wish to satisfy simultaneously the judgment of human reason.[56]

Philosophy is rejected as a source of truth regarding free will:

Within this topic, although Christian doctrine differs from philosophy and human reason, philosophy has gradually crept into Christianity, and the impious dogma of Free Will has been received and the beneficence of Christ has been obscured by that profane and animal wisdom of human reason. . . . That which is designated "reason" has been taken over from Platonism, and is especially pernicious. For just as in these latter times the church has embraced Aristotle in preference to Christ, so immediately after the inception of the church, Christian doctrine was weakened through the fusion [infusion?] of Platonic philosophy. And so it happens that besides the Canonical Scriptures, there are no genuine letters in the church. In general, whatever has been handed down by way of commentaries, smells of philosophy.[57]

The Augsburg Confession and Its Apology (1530–1531)

Consulting the Concordance to the Book of Concord, one finds that Melanchthon is responsible for all but six of the thirty-two references to "philosophy" and related terminology in the Book of Concord.[58] All three references in the Augsburg Confession occur in Article XX, concerning the distinction between civil/philosophical righteousness and Christian righteousness. Twenty-three of Melanchthon's references occur in the Apology: seven in Article II (Original Sin), ten in Article IV (Justification), two in Article XVIII (Free Will), one in Article XXI (Invocation of Saints), one in Article XIV (Ecclesiastical Orders), and two in Article XXVII (Monastic Vows).

When Melanchthon makes reference in these confessional writings to 'philosophy', it is almost always, if not exclusively, to show the great limitations of philosophical/civil righteousness in comparison to Christian righteousness. In Apology II, 43, for example, we read:

But, in the schools, they transferred hither from philosophy, notions entirely different, that, because of emotions, we are neither good nor evil, we are neither praised nor blamed. Likewise, that nothing is sin, unless it be voluntary. These notions were expressed among philosophers, with respect to civil righteousness, and not with respect to God's judgment.

Again, in Article IV, 12–13:

Let the discreet reader think only of this: If this be Christian righteousness, what difference is there between philosophy and the doctrine of Christ? If we merit remission of sins by these elicit acts, what does Christ furnish? If we can be justified by reason and the works of reason, wherefore is there need of Christ or regeneration? And from these opinions, the matter has now come to such a pass, that many ridicule us, because we teach that another righteousness than philosophic, must be sought after.

It is very significant that roughly a third of the references to philosophy come in Apology IV, the most extended examination of justification in the Book of Concord. Furthermore, all but one of these references is negative—Melanchthon is concerned here

that no one mistake an outward, pharisaical, or philosophical righteousness for Christian righteousness. Melanchthon was quite aware of the threat such a works righteousness could pose to the Christian understanding of Justification.

Loci Communes (1543)

The third revision of the *Loci Communes* (1543) is worthy of examination on several counts: it most certainly represents the "mature" Melanchthon; it is the form of the *Loci Communes* most often criticized for doctrinal reasons;[59] it is readily available to modern readers; and Melanchthon's preface contains a discussion of the differences between philosophy and theology.[60]

Melanchthon begins his preface with this observation:

> Human beings are so created by God that they understand numbers and order, and in the learning process they are much aided by both numbers and order. Thus, in teaching a subject, the order of the various parts must be demonstrated with singular care, and we must indicate the beginning, the progress, and the goal. In philosophy they call this process the "method." In those subjects which are taught using demonstration, this procedure has been accepted, but not in the teaching of the Church. For the demonstrative method proceeds from those things which are subject to the senses and from the first understandings or the "principles." At this point, in the teaching of the Church we seek only the order but not the demonstrative method. For the teaching of the Church is not derived or drawn from demonstrations, but from those statements which God has given to the human race in sure and clear testimonies through which in His great kindness He has revealed Himself and His will.[61]

Observe that Melanchthon notes that in most fields of knowledge, the method involves both order and demonstration. Theology is different: in theology, the Triune God is known by revelation, not our observation and demonstration. Melanchthon continues:

> In philosophy we seek the things which are certain and distinguish them from the things which are uncertain. And the causes of certainty are universal experience, the principles, and demonstrations. But in the teaching of the church the cause of certainty is the revelation of God.[62]

Furthermore:

> Even if philosophy teaches that there must be doubt about those things which are not perceptible to the senses and are not principles and are not corroborated by demonstration . . . yet we know that the doctrine given to the Church by God is certain and immovable even if it is not subject to the senses, is not innate in us, as principles are, and is not discovered by demonstrations. But the cause of this certainty is the revelation of God, who is truthful.
>
> Therefore we should never permit this philosophic doubt in regard to the teaching which has been given by God to His Church. For because of the corruption in nature, great confusion and doubt concerning God still cling to our mind. We must fight against this and oppose it with the thoughts which have been given us by God. We should not cultivate or praise this kind of doubting. But rather, faith is the sure assent, that is, the certainty by which the mind is convinced by divine testimonies and firmly grasps the divine voice about "things which are not seen," as the Epistle to the Hebrews, 11:1, says.[63]

This Deutsch-Mark was produced in Germany for the 500th anniversary of the birth of Philipp Schwartzerd (Melanchthon) (1497–1560). Based on a portrait (1526) by Albrecht Dürer. Photograph provided by Scott Blazek.

Nevertheless, *order* is found in theology. Indeed, Melanchthon insists that the teachings of Scripture are offered in the best order *in the canon itself.*[64] This does not mean, however, that there is no need for an orderly exposition of Scripture; Melanchthon firmly upholds the office of the ministry as "guardian" of the "prophetic and apostolic books."[65] The pastor must not only uphold the faith but refute all false opinions (see Titus 1:10–11). The man holding the office is the recipient of a tradition:

> But those who zealously read the prophetic and apostolic writings and the creeds, and seek the thinking of the purer Church, will easily judge by which human writings they can be aided and can understand what value they will gain from correct explanations of pious men and careful writings and testimonies drawn from pure fountains.[66]

Melanchthon's appeal for a return *ad fontes* is an appeal to return to the Scriptures, but it is not an appeal to individualism; the pastor who returns to the teaching of Holy Scripture does so as an inheritor of the tradition of the church. This is an understanding of the office that defends against scholasticism, rationalistic philosophizing, and an individualistic approach to the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20). Whatever Melanchthon's errors in *practice*, the principle undergirding the *Loci Communes* is correct—philosophy is the servant of theology, not its master. Robert Preus's observation regarding the 1559 edition of the *Loci* might apply here as well:

Melanchthon's Loci Communes reflects its author's understanding of the subordination of all fields of study to the revelation of Scripture.

> [It] has many faults and aberrations in doctrine, notably its synergism, but contrary to much popular opinion, there is no indication that philosophizing is the cause of these faults. The preface . . . spells out the purpose of the book and the method to be used in a concise and highly creditable fashion. The limitations and different method of philosophy are clearly defined. Therefore we cannot blame the aberrations in the body of the book to the presuppositions Melanchthon states or to the method he sets up for himself in this preface.[67]

As Breen observed above, Melanchthon's *Loci* had a homiletical emphasis. This homiletical emphasis, combined with a firm understanding of the limits of philosophical knowledge, can clearly be seen, for example, in Locus XVIII, "Calamities, the Cross, and True Consolations." This extensive locus repeatedly emphasizes the inability of philosophy to explain human suffering, and especially to understand the cross. For example:

> In regard to the voluntary action, the philosophers to some extent see the cause, but they do not see the primary cause for the accidental evils of men. The Church in its teaching—as it has been handed down from the very beginning by the voice of God and propagated by the patriarchs, the prophets, Christ, and the apostles—makes proclamation regarding the source of accidental evils. Thus we must note this distinction between human philosophy and the heavenly doctrine on this point. Not only is the source indicated clearly, but also the true and reliable comforts and remedies are offered to us.
>
> The principle cause of death and the many other calamities of the human race, the godly and the ungodly, is the first stubborn disobedience of our first parents, and this stigma has been passed down to their posterity.[68]

Furthermore, having a right understanding of suffering in general (and the cross in particular) is a pastoral necessity, for

> The miseries of the Church prompt many people to have strong doubt whether God is concerned about any part of the human race, or whether there is indeed a Church of God at all, or whether they alone are the people of God, who hold to the prophetic and apostolic doctrine, or whether God hears this group in their troubles.[69]

A lengthy treatment follows, setting forth the reasons for such suffering and the different kinds of suffering, always focusing on the consolation we need in trials—"For these have been given to us in order that we may ponder them and that they may urge us to the knowledge of God and bring us His aid."[70]

In conclusion, therefore, regardless of what may be argued concerning the supposedly scholastic nature of later orthodox Lutheran dogmatics, it should be conceded that Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* reflects its author's understanding of the subordination of all fields of study to the revelation of Scripture. In this respect, Melanchthon's writings, generally, are a good example of the virtues of humanist studies in the service of biblical theology.

The Significance of Melanchthon's Methodology

Martin Luther's Understanding of Melanchthon's Role in the Reformation.

Although it is certainly true that Luther occasionally criticized his younger colleague's love of philosophy,[71] nevertheless his general assessment of Melanchthon's theology is quite positive. Certainly many Lutherans are familiar with Luther's assessment of the LC 1521, that it "deserves not only to be immortalized but even canonized."[72] Luther's continued support for Melanchthon, however, is not as well known. Luther observed in the winter of 1542–1543:

> If anyone wishes to become a theologian, he has a great advantage, first of all, in having the Bible. This is now so

clear that he can read it without any trouble. Afterward he should read Philip's *Loci Communes*. This he should read diligently and well, until he has its contents fixed in his head. If he has these two he is a theologian, and neither the devil nor a heretic can shake him. The whole of theology is open to him, and afterward he can read whatever he wishes for edification. . . .

Luther gave full support to Melanchthon's humanist reform of education.

There's no book under the sun in which the whole of theology is so compactly presented as in the *Loci Communes*. If you read all the fathers and sententiaries you have nothing. No better book has been written after the Holy Scriptures than Philip's. He expresses himself more concisely that I do when he argues and instructs. I'm garrulous and more rhetorical.[73]

And these words simply echo Luther's sentiments of 1529:

I prefer the books of Master Philip to my own and I would rather see them used, whether they be written in Latin or in German, than my own. I am here in order to do battle with the sectarians and the devil; this is why my books are very aggressive and argumentative. I must uproot stumps and tree-trunks; cut down thorns and thickets, and fill in water-pools. I am the rough woodsman who must build a road and keep it open. But Master Philip moves about quietly and in an orderly fashion; he builds and plants, sows and waters according to the great gifts which God has given him so amply.[74]

Furthermore, Melanchthon's pivotal role in the reform of education in Germany is undeniable.

Nearly all of the Protestant Latin schools and *gymnasia* of the sixteenth century . . . were founded according to the directions given by Melanchthon. We still have correspondence between him and fifty-six cities asking counsel and assistance in founding and conducting Latin schools and gymnasia.[75]

Again:

On the university level Melanchthon's influence was even more far-reaching, for his advice was constantly sought after, and it was through the universities that teachers were trained for the various levels of instruction. In 1533 and again in 1545 he reorganized the University of Wittenberg, which because of its strategic place in the reformation became a model for other institutions of higher learning. He also reorganized Tübingen, Leipsig, Heidelberg, Jena, and Konigsberg. His manuals on Latin, Greek, theology, logic, rhetoric, physics, astronomy, and ethics were used as textbooks almost everywhere, even in many of the Roman Catholic schools.[76]

Luther gave full support to Melanchthon's humanist reform of education, writing in 1523, "I am firmly persuaded that there can be no true theology without literary learning . . . . Indeed, I recognize that the word of God never was made fully known except where God first prepared the way by causing languages and letters to rise and prosper as if they were precursory John-the-Baptists . . . I certainly wish that many poets and rhetors may arise, for as far as I can see there is no better means by which men can apprehend religion [*sacra*] and practice it rightly."[77] Luther understood the historical significance of his colaborer both as a theologian and as an educator:

Luther seems often to have pondered the roles which individual persons have to play in the events of the times. He had an acute sense of the capabilities of his contemporaries and of the motives of their actions. His judgment of persons was almost always to the point, despite his tendency to bestow exaggerated praise upon his friends and to belabor his enemies with an uncouth, unrestrained disrespect. We are told that once he did not rise after dinner but remained seated and fell into thought and then wrote on the table: "Res et verba Melanchthon; verba sine re Erasmus; res sine verbis Lutherus; nec res nec verba Carlostadius."[78]

Martin Chemnitz's "Melanchthonian" Approach to Theology

Martin Chemnitz, too, found great value in the methodology of his mentor:

The criticisms of Melanchthon for his use of philosophy, to the extent that they have any validity, pertain to his use of a philosophically-oriented methodology that he used for the sake of order and logical sequence of ideas—a practice that Chemnitz and other orthodox Lutheran theologians followed.[79]

Chemnitz (who based his *Loci Theologici* on the 1548 edition of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*) offers a pointed defense of Melanchthon's locus methodology in a preface to his *Loci Theologici*, "On the Use and Value of Theological Topics."[80] Chemnitz argues that the use of theological topics (or loci) can be traced as early as Genesis 3:15.[81] The scriptural practice was carried over into the

primitive church . . . who, both for the sake of teaching and for the sake of learning, felt that it was necessary to summarize the doctrine contained in the writings of the prophets and apostles.

Most important among these writings is the creed which is properly called the Apostolic Creed.[82]

Cyprian, Dionysius of Corinth (ca. 180 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine are all upheld as fathers writing works that set forth a summary of the faith. It was only later that "affairs in the church took a turn for the worse (which happened in the western church after the death of Augustine and among the Greeks after the death of Cyril) and the form of doctrine was changed."[83] In John of Damascus one can see how "the form of the doctrine degenerated from its ancient purity and simplicity."[84] Such degeneration can also be seen in Lombard and others.[85]

Chemnitz saw Luther and Melanchthon as God's chosen instruments for the church returning *ad fontes*. It was Melanchthon, Chemnitz explained, who ordered Luther's "disconnected"[86] treatments of articles of the faith—

> The *Loci Communes* were written so that by using the proper method the individual articles of doctrine were treated and explained.
>
> . . . it is obvious that if there is to be some definitive form of the doctrine and if a modicum of consensus is to be preserved in teaching and learning, then the church cannot do without writing of this kind."[87]

One might conclude with Preus that

> Historians and theologians have tried to build a wall between Luther and Melanchthon on this matter of methodology, which Chemnitz and Luther do not seem to think existed.
>
> . . . Luther, Melanchthon, and Chemnitz all looked with favor on the so-called Melanchthonian method (on which Melanchthon certainly had no copyrighted monopoly) and . . . in the eyes of the Romanists Melanchthon and Luther were on exactly the same side. . . . It would seem from the above that there really was no argument over method, but the argument centers in the injection of Aristotelian philosophy into the method, as was the case with Aquinas; but Chemnitz and Luther cannot be accused of injecting Aristotelian philosophy into their theology, despite their approval of the Melanchthonian method.[88]

The "Melanchthonian" Gnesio-Lutherans.

It has been observed, "The message of the Reformation lived in the form given it by Melanchthon. Melanchthon did this so successfully that even those who later opposed him, men like Flacius, were thoroughly Melanchthon."[89] (Such a statement, of course, must be taken in terms of Melanchthonian *methodology*.) Although the topic is worthy of further treatment than will be given here, we would be remiss if we did not include some observations regarding Melanchthon's influence on the so-called Gnesio-Lutherans.[90] Posing the question, Did their [the Gnesio-Lutherans'] differences with Melanchthon over critical issues of doctrinal interpretations and ecclesiastical practice also divide them from their preceptor's legacy of humanist learning? Kolb declares:

> If we define that legacy as the use of tools of rhetoric [n.b.] and dialectic as Melanchthon refined them for the pursuit of learning within and outside the discipline of theology, it did not. If we define that legacy as a love of learning in the various fields of Melanchthon's diverse interests, including literature, history, the natural sciences, and music, it did not. If we define that legacy as the pursuit of creative and imaginative literary endeavors, it did not. Nearly all the prominent Gnesio-Lutherans sought truth in all fields of human learning with his methods readily at hand. Most continued to pursue at least informal study among a wide range of subjects in which their mentor had cultivated their interest.[91]

Kolb observes that both Tilemann Hesshus (1527–1588) and Johannes Wigand (1523–1587) saw in Colossians 2:8 not a criticism of philosophy in general, but only the abuse of philosophy. Hesshus saw philosophy as "a good gift of God" and Wigand "praised its legitimate use in the disciplines of grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, physics, astronomy, geography, arithmetic, and music."[92] Wigand's *On Philosophy and Theology* (1563) "carefully showed how philosophy should function as theology's handmaiden; the former is a necessary part of understanding and expounding the Scriptures and refuting heretics."[93] Actually, the *Magdeburg Centuries*, perhaps the best-known work of the Gnesio-Lutheran party, is a prime example of the Melanchthonian methodology, relying on the *locus* methodology and emphasizing a return to original sources, including the church fathers.[94]

Conclusion: A Need for Reappraisal

In light of the above, some modification is called for in the church's estimation of Melanchthon. Melanchthon, like all other Christians, was not perfect; but do his errors justify jettisoning all of the good God worked in the church through this reformer? Indeed, Melanchthon's (and Luther's) recognition of the need for pastors to be well-rounded scholars is an insight that needs to be revived today. As one writer has observed:

> The catholic faith, it seems to me, and the interest of all Christians, and of all our civilization, will be better served today by a reputation for intellectual power and moral worth than by mere numbers. Any folly or fallacy can attract numbers. But in the long run, intelligence will tell, even in a university.[95]

Or a seminary. LOGIA

NOTES

1. Clyde Manschreck, "The Bible in Melanchthon's Philosophy of Education," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 23, no. 3 (July 1955): 203.

2. F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 105.

3. Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought,* 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 3: 104.

4. Ibid., 110.

5. Jonathan Selden, "Aquinas, Luther, Melanchthon, and Biblical Apologetics," *Grace Theological Journal* 5, no. 2 (1984): 195.

6. See, for example, Lowell Green's "The Three Causes of Conversion in Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and the Formula of Concord," in *Lutherjahrbuch* 47 (1980): 89–114, for a re-examination of Melanchthon's "synergism," and *Melanchthon in English—New Translations into English with a Registry of Previous Translations* (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982) for a further explanation of Melanchthon's infamous letter to Christoph Karlowitz.

7. E.g., "The method of these [seventeenth century] Lutherans had become more and more that of the revived Aristotelian scholasticism of J. Zabarella of Padua in Italy (1532–1580). In this Melanchthon had already made the beginning by employing the syllogistic method of leading to conclusions. He was followed especially by J. Wigand [!] and soon also by J. Gerhard, N. Hunnius (in his Latin work), Huelsemann, Calovius and Quenstedt. . . . . It is this whole observation which has resulted in the judgment of present-day historians that Melanchthon, who has always received either praise or criticism for his irenic attitude in the divisive problems during the Reformation age, was at the same time responsible for the introduction of the scholastic method during the age of Lutheran orthodoxy." J. L. Neve with O. W. Heick, *A History of Christian Thought,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), 1: 325.

8. Quirinus Breen, "The Terms 'Loci Communes' and 'Loci' in Melanchthon," *Church History* 16, no. 4 (Dec. 1947): 201.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 203.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 205.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 206.

15. Quirinius Breen, "The Two-Fold Truth Theory in Melanchthon," *Review of Religion* 9 (Jan. 1945).

16. Ibid., 131.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 132.

19. Breen, "Terms," 207. The author refers the reader to the preface of the *Loci Communes* (1543) for an examination of the relationship between the Scriptures, the creeds, and the tradition of the early church.

20. Breen, "Terms," 208.

21. *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine*, ed. Clyde Manschreck (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1. Although the present writer has not located a similar statement in the LC 1543, nevertheless, much of the basic outline of these two works is the same, leading one to conclude that Melanchthon had such a creedal structure in mind when he produced that edition.

22. For example, "Melanchthon even came to use rational proofs for the existence of God in his commentary on Romans and later editions of the *Loci Communes.* These proofs were structured just as those used by Aquinas and the Scholastics, whom he had once condemned. Melanchthon employed such concepts as the orderliness of nature, the rational nature of man, the necessity of a single first cause, and the teleological goal of a final cause, asserting that each of these necessitates the existence of God, therefore God exists. . . . Because he elevated the role of natural reason, Melanchthon, like the scholastics before him, necessarily held revelation not in a position superior to reason but coordinate with reason." Selden, 195.

23. 1522, *Corpus Reformatorum,* vol. 20, col. 700, in Manschreck, "The Bible in Melanchthon's Philosophy of Education," 204. Robert Preus observed: "Two complementary emphases emerge rather persistently in Melanchthon's discussions of theology: first, that all theology is based upon Scripture, and second, that philosophy and reason have no place as a source of theology." Robert Preus, "Melanchthon the Theologian," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 21, no. 8 (Aug. 1960): 470.

24. Joseph Stump, *Life of Philip Melanchthon* (Reading, PA, and New York: Pilger Publishing House, 1897), 14.

25. Ibid., 17. For more on John Reuchlin and his relationship to the Reformation, see Lewis W. Spitz, "Reuchlin's Philosophy: Pythagoras and Cabala for Christ," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 47, no. 1 (1956): 1–19.

26. Stump, 19.

27. Ibid., 19.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 20. Indeed, Erasmus remarked even as late as May 1521: "Who, indeed, would not be distressed in spirit if Philip Melanchthon, a youth provided with so many exceptional gifts, was deprived of the public good will of the learned by this storm?" *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Desiderius Erasmus, Selected Writing*s, ed. and trans. John C. Olin (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, 1965), 162.

30. Stump, 21.

31. Ibid., 23.

32. Ibid., 25.

33. Gonzalez, 104.

34. Stump, 20.

35. Clyde Manschreck, *Melanchthon, the Quiet Reformer* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 53.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Lewis W. Spitz, *Reuchlin's Philosophy: Pythagoras and Cabala for Christ*, 16, note 59.

40. Manschreck, *Quiet Reformer,* 53.

41. *A Melanchthon Reader*, trans. Ralph Keen (New York: Peter Lang), 47–49.

42. Ibid., 50.

43. Ibid., 54.

44. Carl S. Meyer, "Melanchthon as Educator and Humanist," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 31, no. 9 (Sept. 1960): 536.

45. Meyer, 537.

46. Stump, 28.

47. "Paul and the Scholastics," in *Melanchthon: Selected Writings,* trans. Charles Leander Hill (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962), 33.

48. Ibid., 38.

49. Ibid., 41.

50. Ibid., 33–34.

51. Ibid., 34.

52. Ibid., 52.

53. Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 1: 77. Furthermore, "This first Protestant textbook in philosophy became immensely popular. The *prima forma* (1520) was revised into a second form in 1528 and finally a third form in 1547. The first form went through nine editions, the second form nine editions, and the third form ten editions. The last edition of the final form was in 1580." Preus, 236.

54. *The Loci Communes of Philip Melanchthon*, trans. Charles Leander Hill (Boston: Meador Publishing, 1944), 64.

55. Ibid., 65.

56. Ibid., 69–70.

57. Ibid., 70–71.

58. Other terms include *philosopher, philosophers, philosophical,* and *philosophize.*

59. E.g., Bente, 129: "In conversion and salvation God certainly must do and does His share, but man must beware lest he fail to do what is required of him. This is also the impression received from Melanchthon's statements in the third elaboration of his *Loci,* 1543. . . . The boldest synergistic statements are found in the *Loci* of 1548." However, "It is noteworthy that Chemnitz utilized the 1548 form of the third edition, called by Bente after an earlier writer 'the worst of all.' Yet when Chemnitz commented upon the controverted passages, he was able to find an acceptable meaning

in them." Lowell C. Green, "The Three Causes of Conversion in Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and the 'Formula of Concord,'" *Lutherjahrbuch* 47 (1980): 99.

60. The 1521 and 1555 forms are also available in English.

61. Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* (1543), trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 16.

62. Ibid. Again, note Melanchthon's stress on certainty in opposition to Breen's accusations.

63. Ibid. In light of this, Bente's assessment of Melanchthon is shameful: "The spirit of Melanchthon was the spirit of religious indifference and of unionism, which, though thoroughly eliminated by the Formula of Concord, was from time to time revived within the Lutheran Church by such men as Calixtus, Spener, Zinzendorf, Neander, and in our own country, by S. S. Schmucker." Bente, 106.

64. "The prophetic and apostolic books themselves have been written in the best possible order, and they set forth the articles of faith in the best possible order." *Loci Communes* (1543), 16.

65. Ibid.: "But godly interpreters repeat with good faith the material received from God in the prophetic and apostolic account. And because uneducated people do not always understand the kind of language employed, they do not immediately perceive the order of things and need to be instructed by the voice of the interpreter concerning the kind of language and the order of the material. Because of this need, many corruptions have arisen and will continue to arise. Pious pastors and teachers can therefore be witnesses to the correct meaning which has been accepted with definite authority, and they also can refute false interpretations. For these reasons God in His richness has preserved the ministry of the gospel and restored learning in the churches and schools, so that we are the guardians of the prophetic and apostolic books and witnesses to the correct interpretation of them and are able to refute all opinions which are in conflict with the doctrine handed down through the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, lest the light of the Gospel be extinguished and, as it says in Eph. 4:14, lest the church be tossed about and destroyed by the winds, the truth lost, and various errors creep in, as often happens."

66. Ibid., 17.

67. Preus, 81.

68. *Loci Communes* (1543), 185. Also: "Philosophy errs in both points, for it does not see the principal reasons for human miseries, nor can it give us an effective remedy. It explains things in terms of matter, and thinks that man is in no way different from vegetables or violets or roses. Hence it does not understand what a great fall has occurred in the nature of men. Thus it quite properly criticizes the erring and depraved desires of men, but it does not understand the root problem, nor does it condemn our ignorance and our contempt for God." Again: "Even though philosophy seeks in the abilities and the wills of men the immediate causes for human calamities, yet other principles have been revealed in the Church of God, namely, sin in man's nature, and the raging of the devil, who, in order to pour contempt on God, is particularly violent in his attacks against the church." 194.

69. Ibid., 186.

70. Ibid., 189.

71. E.g., Chancellor Brück's words from 1536, "Martin said that he (Melanchthon) was a learned man whom he esteemed highly, but that his reason occasionally caused him trouble; he would have to be on his guard lest he end up at the same point where Erasmus came out. If it should ever happen that they would have to write against one another and dispute with one another, a great *scandalon* would certainly arise." Quoted in Wilhelm Pauck, "Luther and Melanchthon," in *Luther and Melanchthon in the History and Theology of the Reformation*, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 14.

72. AE, 33: 16.

73. AE, 54: 440.

74. From Luther's Preface to the German translation of Melanchthon's annotations on Colossians, quoted in Pauck, 25.

75. J. W. Richard, *Philip Melanchthon* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 134.

76. Manschreck, "The Bible in Melanchthon's Philosophy of Education," 202. See Richard L. Harrison Jr., "Melanchthon's Role in the Reformation of the University of Tübingen," *Church History* 47, no. 3 (Sept. 1978): 270–278 for more information of Melanchthon's endeavors there.

77. Pauck, 18. Pauck offers three reasons for Luther's support of Melanchthon's endeavors: "partly because he admired his intellectual power, partly because he hated Roman Catholic scholastic philosophy, and partly because he was persuaded that nobody was able to understand the Bible without some training in languages and without a general knowledge." 19.

78. Pauck, 26.

79. J. A. O. Preus, *The Second Martin* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 254.

80. Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, 2 vols., trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 1: 37–43.

81. Ibid., 37: "At the very beginning, when the Son of God announced to our first parents the mystery of the promise of the Gospel which had been hidden from eternity in the bosom of the Father, He gave a brief summary of the doctrine of the Gospel in Gen. 3:15, 'I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; and He will crush your head and you will bruise His heal." Chemnitz proceeds to discuss Enoch, the patriarchs, Moses, John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles.

82. Ibid., 38.

83. Ibid., 39.

84. Ibid.

85. "The *Sentence* writers and scholastic doctors who followed Lombard departed so far from the fountains that their little rivulets or ruts only poured filth and garbage into the church. They set up their body of doctrine not on the basis of Scripture or the fathers but on the basis of the received and long-standing errors and abuses of their own times and on the basis of the writings of the philosophers, so that they changed the language of the church and the form of doctrine into a universal thing, and faith became captive to reason, as their writings clearly testify." Chemnitz, 40.

86. See also Luther's words from the preface of his Latin works, 1545: "For a long time I strenuously resisted those who wanted my books, or more correctly my confused lucubrations, published. I did not want the labors of the ancients to be buried by my new works and the reader kept from reading them. Then, too, by God's grace a great many systematic books now exist, among which the *Loci communes* of Philip excel, with which a theologian and a bishop can be beautifully and abundantly prepared to be mighty in preaching the doctrine of piety, especially since the Holy Bible itself can now be had in nearly every language." AE 34: 327.

87. Chemnitz, 40.

88. Preus, *The Second Martin*, 255–256.

89. Erwin L. Lueker, "Luther and Melanchthon," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 31, no. 8 (Aug. 1960): 477.

90. Much of the following discussion is drawn from Robert Kolb's "Philipp's Foes, but Followers Nonetheless—Late Humanism among the Gnesio-Lutherans," *The Harvest of Humanism in Central Europe*, ed. Manfred R. Fleischer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 159–176. The reader is referred to this work for a more extensive introduction to this intriguing topic.

91. Ibid., 159–160.

92. Ibid., 160–161.

93. Ibid., 161.

94. Ibid., 163.

95. Russell Kirk, "An Outsider Looks at the Catholic College," *The Intemperate Professor and Other Cultural Splenetics* (Peru, IL: Sherwood Sugden & Company, 1988), 41.

Melanchthon's Scottish Friend

Alexander Alane (1500–1565)

Bruce W. Adams

In this year when Lutherans are commemorating the birth of Philip Melanchthon in 1497, it would seem expedient to recall his Scottish friend and fellow theologian, Alexander Alane. So highly did Melanchthon hold in esteem his Scottish associate that he called him "my very dear brother." Melanchthon remained a devoted friend of Alane, whom he nicknamed Alesius, and was responsible for directing his appointment to Leipzig University where Alane served with distinction. They remained unremitting correspondents spanning many years. Alane outlived Melanchthon by five years.

ALESIUS—EXPONENT OF SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY

On the occasion of his appointment as Rector of the University of Leipzig in 1555, Alesius alluded to his birth and parentage:

> On the 23d of April, the day sacred to St. George, on which I believe I was born fifty-five years ago, I Alexander Alesius, a Scot by race, a native of Edinburgh of official-class ancestry . . . unwearied [*invietus*] have undertaken the office of Rector of the University of renowned city of Leipzig.[1]

Although a pilgrim for Christ, Alesius always retained a love for his homeland. At the age of twelve, he was enrolled among the first students of St. Leonard's College attached to the University of St. Andrews. The college, opened in 1512, belonged to the Augustinian Order. Gotthelf Wiedermann assesses that "Alesius was trained in the late nominalist tradition of scholastic theology as represented by John Major."[2] Major's talented student had earned a B.A. in 1515, joined the Priory, and after graduating with his M.A. transferred to the theological faculty as a novice. By 1528 he had become both a canon and an ordained priest, espousing scholastic theology within the Augustinian order. At this point in time, Alesius displayed a determination to refute Luther's teachings. He even designated Luther as an archheretic during a public discussion.

Then a dramatic change occurred. Canon Alane was chosen to challenge the Lutheran confessor Abbot Patrick Hamilton, whose defense of Luther was deplored by the unscrupulous Primate and Archbishop James Beaton of St. Andrews. During the disputation, rather than revising the scriptural convictions of Hamilton, Alesius was silenced and sensed "the morning star was rising in his heart." What had started as a confrontation for Canon Alane concluded in a capitulation to the biblical stance of Abbot Hamilton. The cruel martyrdom in 1528 of Patrick Hamilton impacted the convictions and memory of the Augustinian canon. In the year 1554 he recalled: "With what words shall I describe both your consistency in the confession of truth and your fortitude in bearing all adversities on truth's account?"[3] Such was a sad chapter in the history of the Scottish church!

For his increasing empathy towards Lutheran reform of the church, Alane was incarcerated in a "most foule hole" by his prior. He would have died had he not been rescued by some fellow canons who arranged his escape to Dundee in 1530/1531, and from thence by ship to Malmö in Scania. In Malmö a community of Scottish merchants were privileged to enjoy the ministrations of another Scottish reformer, John Gau by name, formerly a scholar of St. Andrews. Gau was responsible for a renowned Lutheran work, "The Richt Vay to the Kingdome of Heuine," in the Scottish dialect. The same Scottish merchants welcomed Alesius into their midst.

Traveling to Brussels and then on to Cologne, he was favorably received by Archbishop Hermann von Wied, who had befriended the call for reformation. From Cologne Alesius left for Wittenberg, where he registered in the University on October 29, 1532, resuming a study of theology, Hebrew, and Greek under Luther and Melanchthon. While residing in Wittenberg he subscribed to the Augsburg Confession.

ALESIUS—EXPONENT OF THE WORD

Though he was now an exile from his native land, events in Scotland continued to be matters of grave concern. A senseless edict by the Scottish bishops banning the New Testament in English prompted Alesius to compose two vigorous tracts addressed to King James v challenging the decree. Alesius argued that the suppression of the reading of the Scriptures in the church catholic can only lead to the ruin and extinction of religion, for true religion cannot exist unless souls are well established by the heavenly testimonies. He urged the king to make possible the propagation of the knowledge of Christ. Christ's glory, he insisted, is impaired when people are held off from the gospel. The appeal of Alane was not in vain, for in 1543 the Scottish Parliament lifted the ban on the reading and translation of the Scriptures, the Act itself referring to Alesius's epistle.

In 1535, Alesius was elected by the Wittenberg theologians as their emissary to England. Immediately he endeared himself to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury and Bishop Hugh

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Latimer of Worcester. Even Henry VIII recognized him as "the king's scholar." The execution of Queen Anne Boleyn in 1536 greatly distressed the Scottish theologian as in his eyes her public influence bespoke the "true religion in England." Alesius participated in a convocation of clergy, excelling in oratory and theological skills. He was invited to lecture on the Hebrew Psalter in Queen's College, Cambridge. Whilst resident in England, Alexander Alane married Catherine de Magne, a marriage blessed with three children. His knowledge of Scripture and the church fathers, and his debating expertise, combined to make Alesius an outstanding exponent of the Word. Due to the mutability of Henry VIII, Alesius and his wife hurriedly left England for Europe upon the urgent advice of Thomas Cranmer.

ALESIUS — EXPONENT OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

Upon his return to Germany in 1539, at the same time as other distinguished fellow exiles John McAlpine and John Fyffe, he was appointed Professor of Divinity in the University of Frankfurt on the Oder, where he delivered a famous address, "On the Restoration of Schools." Being of a temperate disposition, he resigned due to a quarrel within the university. Melanchthon encouraged his acceptance of the professorship in the University of Leipzig. His scholarship and grasp of Lutheran theology met with the admiration of Camerarios, who occupied the chair of classical languages at Leipzig, as well as that of his close friend Melanchthon, who addressed Alesius as "Doctor in theology in the distinguished University, and my very dear brother." His lectures and books were written and presented in Latin. Prominent among his prolific writings were such subjects as the Holy Trinity, justification by faith (against Osiander), the Gospel of St. John, the Epistles to St. Timothy, the Psalms, and his debatable insistence upon good works as important for salvation. A contributing factor was his overreaction to those who concluded that justification by faith alone was a passport for antinomianism. Alesius contributed to diets of churchmen and princes in Regensberg and Dresden. Questing for the healing of Christ's church, he sought to mediate between Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Calvinists, at times becoming suspect of compromising the faith.

His marriage to Catherine proved to be exemplary and joyous although clouded by the death of their son. For twenty-three years he served as professor at Leipzig, until his death on St. Patrick's day, March 17, 1565. His later writings express his piety, faith, and love for God's revealed truth:

> It is no new doctrine that we bring, but the most ancient, nay rather the eternal truth, for it proclaims that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners, and that we are saved by faith in Him. Of Him even Moses wrote, and to Him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. This is the old doctrine that runs through all the ages.[4]

The titles of the works of Alesius extend to six pages in Mitchell's articulate study of the Scottish Reformation. His copious writings deserve the attention and further investigation by confessional Lutheran scholars.

It is apparent that Alesius recognized the teachings and worship of the Lutheran Church to be an expression of the faith of the ancient apostolic and catholic church (see Ap XXIV).

In praise of two Lutheran exiles, John Knox wrote: "Alesius was appointed to the University of Lipsia (Leipzig) and so was Master John Fyffe: where, for their honest behaviour and great erudition, they were holden in admiration by all the godly."[5]

Of Alexander Alane, John T. McNeill testified: "Alesius is an international figure of some significance."[6] The time would seem opportune to rediscover this contender for the faith. LOGIA

NOTES

1. J. T. McNeill, "Alexander Alesius, Scottish Lutheran (1500–1565)," *AFR* 55 (1964): 162.
2. *Dictionary of Scottish History and Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1993), 8.
3. McNeill, 165.
4. A. K. Mitchell, *The Scottish Reformation,* ed. William Blackwood (1900), 277, 278.
5. John Knox, *The Reformation in Scotland* (First Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 14.
6. McNeill, 191.

Formula of Concord X

A Revised, Enlarged, and Slightly Amended Edition

David P. Scaer

The Melanchthon Anniversary Year

February 16, 1997, marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Philip Melanchthon. Author of three of the Lutheran Confessions, Luther's co-reformer lies buried next to him in the Castle Church in Wittenberg. The Eleventh Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in 1988 studied two aspects of his theology and not unexpectedly arrived at no unanimous verdict on whether the second reformer was more villain than hero.[1] Roman Catholics and Reformed found various aspects of his theology at times attractive, but he belongs to Lutheranism and is arguably its most ecumenical sixteenth-century figure.

Article x on the Lord's Supper in the first edition (1530) of the Augsburg Confession was accepted by the papal party, a point that Melanchthon seemingly welcomed in the Apology (1530–1531). He allows for transubstantiation by quoting Vulgarius: "the bread is not merely a figure but truly changed into the flesh of Christ" (Ap x, 2; Tappert, 179). While allowing that the pope could be the Anti-Christ in the Treatise of 1537 (Tr, 39–42; Tappert, 327–328), his signature to the Smalcald Articles of 1536 (Tappert, 316–317) kept the door ajar for papal self-reevaluation, an opportunity consistently ignored by occupants of Peter's chair.

Melanchthon's 1540 edition of the Augsburg Confession, known as the *Variata,* took the same conciliatory attitude toward the Reformed that the first edition previously had taken toward Rome. By saying that Christ's body and blood are shown (*exhibeantur*) to those who eat in the Lord's Supper, he avoided saying that unbelieving participants (*manducation malorum*) received Christ's body with their mouths (*manducatio oralis*). To this day Lutherans repudiate Melanchthon's "revised standard version" by putting U.A.C., "Unaltered Augsburg Confession," on their church cornerstones. The *Invariata* was as much a mark of confessional faithfulness as it repudiated Melanchthon's accommodation to the Reformed. In quoting his confessions against him, the Formula of Concord delivered the unkindest cut of all.

Things Indifferent: The Adiaphora

With Charles v's armies occupying Lutheran Saxony after Luther's death in 1546, Melanchthon assisted in preparing the Interims of 1548, two agreements with the papal party which required the reintroduction of customs that were neither good nor bad (FC Ep x, 2. Latin: *adiaphora; res media et indifferentes.* German: *Mitteldinge.* Tappert, 492–493).[2] These lacked specific biblical mandates, but Christians were at liberty to practice them—for example, fasting and giving of alms. The Latin *indifferentes* and the German *Mitteldinge* need no translation. Melanchthon had shown in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology that the Lutherans shared basic practices with Roman Catholics. Private confession and absolution was seen as a sacrament, but the Interim required it before receiving the Lord's Supper. The Treatise (§64) recognized that ordination historically was a bishop's prerogative, but this was by human arrangement.

An Apologia for the "Apologist"

Melanchthon's position supporting conformance in indifferent matters is defensible. Should confession to a priest be desirable and even ideal, objections to requiring it are less compelling. If ordination by a priest is not inferior to one by a bishop, little reason exists for not accepting and even preferring the latter and more traditional.[3] As Matthew C. Harrison points out, Melanchthon "expressly refused as contrary to the article on justification, prayers to the saints, private masses and masses for the dead, and *canon missae.*"[4] His was not so much capitulation as striking a *via media* in the face of an overwhelming force.

To his lasting honor, Melanchthon authored the Augsburg Confession, which is basic to Lutheran teaching. His Apology is the most closely argued and theologically profound of our confessions. Those embroiled in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) debate on whether its candidates for the ministry should be ordained by Episcopal bishops, or those in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) who struggle to find clarity on who is really a minister, need look no further than Melanchthon's Treatise. There the pope is one bishop among other bishops, and bishops and priests differ only in function.

Melanchthon's orderliness assures a clarity often not found in Luther. For doctrinal inconsistency, he became an unnamed defendant in the Apology articles on the Free Will (iv), the Lord's Supper (vii), and Church Rites or Adiaphora (x). Our dilemma is that confessional subscription calls us to embrace his theology with the same zeal with which we reject some of his later positions.[5]

In Search of a Theme

Any of Melanchthon's three confessions and aberrations addressed in the Apology might provide a focus for his anniversary year. Proposed alliances between Reformed bodies and the

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ELCA in North America, and between Anglicans and Lutherans in northern Europe, call for careful review of articles on the Lord's Supper. Any Lutheran discussion with the Anglicans and Roman Catholics is compelled to grapple with the teaching on justification, which, to Melanchthon's eternal credit, he called the main doctrine in the controversy with Rome (Ap IV, 2 [Latin]; 3 [German]). With this the Anglicans have already expressed discomfort. Justification still has not reached resolution in the ELCA rapprochement with Rome. Apology II, which repudiates the free will as an efficient cause of salvation, provides a basis for evaluating the practice of making decisions for Christ as proof of salvation. Smoke in the LCMS, however, points to liturgical flames. The *Reporter* featured an article with the self-explanatory headline "Worship Wars."[6] Adiaphora is the issue.

Adiaphora in Our Situation

Defensible is the proposition that the 1970s debate over biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and historicity remains the defining moment for the LCMS. Assumed similarities with conservative Protestants on these issues provided an entrance, or at least an opportunity, for neo-evangelical practices to enter LCMS liturgical life. Assimilating these practices became possible when distinguishing differences were blurred. Practices do not come devoid of ideas.

> ***This interpretation of adiaphora becomes the wild card in the deck allowing its players to trump every trick.***

While inspiration and inerrancy is affirmed by both the Missourian and the neo-evangelical, for each the Bible functions differently. Each looks for and sees something different in the Bible. Scriptures for the Reformed provide divine knowledge for spiritual growth. The Bible is fundamentally a rule book that reveals a pattern for life. This corresponds to their emphasis on sanctification and their understanding of the third use of the law as reimposition of laws in the Christian life. Law follows gospel. For Luther, "The Bible contains only one truth, but it is the decisive one: 'that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for the sake of our sins, and was resurrected for the sake of our righteousness.'"[7] Justification of the sinner on account of Christ is the chief article. Christ is the Bible's content.[8] Law is God's *opus alienum.*

Through seventeenth-century Pietism, the Reformed practice of the Bible as a source book for personal edification found a permanent place among some Lutherans. An equal and higher value was placed on private or informal Bible reading than on what the Augsburg Confession and the Apology called the Mass, which was the center of Lutheran liturgical life.[9] Individual piety replaced corporate hearing of the gospel and reception of the sacrament as the ultimate communion with God on earth. This change of focus may account for the warm welcome given to neo-evangelical practices by some Lutherans three centuries later and the excessive individualism experienced and disliked by the Reformed themselves.

Lutheran proponents of Sunday morning novelties rest their case on Augsburg Confession VII, which does not require uniformity in church ceremonies. This view rests on the false assumption that liturgies are the "ceremonies" and congregations are the "churches" referred to in the confessional articles dealing with adiaphora.[10] Catholic liturgies in regular use in Lutheran church services are neither the "ceremonies" of Augsburg Confession VII nor the adiaphora of FC X. In the Formula, ceremonies that accompanied the liturgy could be those practiced by papists, with the proviso that they were neither mandated nor required for salvation. At stake was the Lutheran understanding of justification without works. An action allowed in one situation may be a denial of Christian truth in another. *Article X raises certain rituals to the same level of confession occupied by the formal written documents themselves.*

Amending Article X

Richard John Neuhaus belled the cat in calling the LCMS decision to allow lay ministers to celebrate communion the "Wichita Amendment to the Augsburg Confession XIV." While the amendment was rescinded by having the laymen ordained, a truly confessional spirit requires that a church transcend the original historical moment, recognize the confessional principle, and respond with the appropriate action.

It has been publicly conceded that liturgical uniformity in the LCMS has eroded in the last few years. A former worship commission executive predicts changes will soon be commonplace.[11] Innovative liturgies and practices are defended on the basis of the Bible and the argument that our confessions offer no specific proscriptions against liturgical change.[12] This interpretation of adiaphora becomes the wild card in the deck allowing its players to trump every trick. Questions of acceptable practice are swiftly swept off the table and consigned to the limbo of adiaphora where anything goes. Like a bad penny, it stays in circulation. Through the eye of this needle, a steady stream of previously unknown practices are funneled into the church.

Pure Doctrine and Liturgy

The theme "Things Indifferent: Limits of Formula of Concord Article X—New and Old Liturgical and Doctrinal Controversies," connects church liturgy, that is, what she does at worship, with her formal declarations of faith (confessions), that is, what she believes. This title does not intend to suggest that liturgy and doctrine are two different, or at best parallel, realities, which from time to time must be brought into synchronization with each other. If all matters liturgical are indifferent (adiaphora) and doctrines are matters of divine determination, then we are really dealing with two different realities with no essential relationship. Each congregation could then devise its own worship services, provided that what the LCMS determined to be pure doctrine was not contradicted. Theoretically

six thousand LCMS congregations could worship on a given Sunday with six thousand liturgies whose resemblance to each other would be only coincidental. This is effectively what we have now that the LCMS Commission on Worship has provided us with the "essentials" of what makes a service Lutheran.[13] From a practical point of view, the laity would no longer have a way of recognizing a Lutheran congregation. Such liturgical diversity would have theological ramifications in contradicting and even denying the church's catholicity. It would be difficult to confess, "Credo in *unam* sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam." The church's historical moorings to God's actions with Israel and the incarnation would be severed.[14]

Dividing the Indivisible

Protestations not withstanding, what the church believes is recognized by what she does on Sunday mornings. Removal of the creed from liturgy in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment was more than a change in form, a mere practical matter, but signaled that Lutheran theologians had no use for the confessional understanding of the Trinity, baptism, and other foundational articles of belief. Newly introduced rationalistic forms proclaimed the absence of Christian substance. Though these theologians had bound themselves by oath to the Lutheran Confessions, they proclaimed by how they worshiped that they had in fact disregarded them.

Form and Substance: A Theological Argument

Article x was not a response to a specific doctrinal aberration, as were the Formula's other articles, but *a confession that what the church does as church—how she conducts herself on Sunday—is as important as any formal confession she adopts.* This is the controverted issue.[15] Francis Pieper, the LCMS's premier theologian, recognized the interconnection of Christian doctrines. An aberration in one place anticipates problems elsewhere. Church history demonstrates that the same principle applies to both confession and liturgy, and liturgy is the immediately available confession.

Liturgical deviations are bellwethers of future doctrinal changes. Pietism, by placing a higher value on *collegia pietatis*—what we call cell groups—than on the traditional worship, signaled the blossoming individualism of the Enlightenment. Here we see the strange linking of Pietism and the Enlightenment: the absolute sovereignty of the individual over the community of faith. In America this principle reigns supreme and is readily apparent in the LCMS, where individual congregations now stress their individual freedom from the synod with the support of a position expressed as early as 1934.[16] In calling for a complete overhaul of all liturgical rites, the Enlightenment announced its disregard for the supernatural and began to annul the church's Catholic character.[17] A liturgy in which the sacramental bread was not identified with Christ's body signaled the collapse of Lutheranism in Prussia. So today also a Sunday liturgy without communion speaks volumes.

Churches without established, unnegotiable confessions do not have to face the dilemma of coordinating confession and liturgy that confessional churches do. Without firm creedal attachments, such non-confessional churches can hardly demand liturgical uniformity. But of course, they do. Baptist insistence on immersion proves that even the confessionally blasé can be downright liturgically legalistic. A crucifix in such churches would be tantamount to announcing papal primacy. Appropriate iconoclastic responses would promptly follow. Liturgy is not only a practical matter of who does what and how he does it, but a confessional matter of what the church believes. In her liturgy the church actually presents the confession that defines and identifies her.

Rites—call them liturgies—are never randomly chosen, but flow from the character of the organization.

When the gathered assembly sings or says her liturgy, those who are assembled recognize themselves and are recognized by each other no longer as individual Christians but as church in a particular historical context. In hearing of the Word and receiving the Sacraments, the church takes on that incarnational form that her Lord gives her. These forms identify her as the bride of Christ and confirm her as his body. The church is present apart from her worship, but only there can her presence be recognized with certainty. Only here we know that a particular assembly is truly church and not another kind of human association. Lutherans have always said that word and sacraments create and sustain the church and are her identifying characteristics, or "marks." Without these she is not church and not recognizable as church.

Form and Substance: A Philosophical Argument

Liturgy or rites are not exclusive church possessions. In addressing the question of ritual, we are also speaking of principles that have a wide application and not one that refers only to the church. No secular or religious association is completely devoid of rites or liturgy. Basic military training is but one example. Book-of-the-month clubs are another.

Rites—call them liturgies—are never randomly chosen, but flow from the character of the organization. Rites inform us about the nature of an organization and how its members relate to one another. The rites of societies are their marks. The inauguration of the American president is noticeably less elaborate than the British coronation. Each rite carries its own message. One cannot be substituted for the other without indicating a significant change. A MacDonald's franchise would immediately be taken away if its proprietor offered its products in the Burger King wrappings.

Readjustment in church ceremony alerts us to a change in doctrinal substance. Liturgy is not an "accident" to doctrinal "substance" (to borrow language from the philosophical distinction between a thing and its accidents), but belongs to the *thing* itself. In our context, FC x requires more than joining in

the historical condemnation of those who submitted to the Roman Catholic Interim, but forces us to ask whether we can adopt forms and practices that are common to and identify other denominational groups, such as Baptists, Methodists, and the Assemblies of God, and still remain Lutheran. *Church practice or lack of it already makes a confession to the world, which our formal confessions are never able to do so immediately and effectively.* A church without the creed in its liturgy and a baptismal font and an altar in its edifice has already delivered its confession to all those who are present. Adherence to formal confessions do not change this.

Article X in Reverse

If the Formula had been written after 1613 when Johann Sigismund, the Elector of Brandenburg, publicly took Communion according to the Reformed rite, FC x would certainly have taken on an entirely different hew.[18] Mary Jane Haemig observes:

> The Calvinist court sought to convert the common people by reforming popular piety. Central to these efforts was the reform of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but the court also tried to reform the baptismal rite, change the place of art and music, and reform the church calendar.[19]

In protest the people rioted in the streets. Lutheran substance could not exist "in, with, and under" Calvinist forms. Adjust the forms and the substance is changed. *To them form mattered.* Forms that indicated capitulation to Rome were now confessional marks.

Haemig concludes:

> Brandenburg [circa 1539] first retained many of the Roman ceremonies in order to demonstrate its continuity with the Roman church, then it retained the same ceremonies as a mark of Lutheranism, against the attacks of Calvinism. During the Second Reformation [1619] the Calvinist ruler tried to get rid of such ceremonies but ran into heavy resistance from Lutherans who regarded the liturgy as the mark of true Lutheranism.[20]

FC x addressed "a specific situation of confession" and was not a call to be perpetually anti-Roman Catholic in liturgical matters.[21] Rather, it places the burden on the church to refrain from biblically unmandated practices that give the impression she is surrendering her confession.[22] At the same time the church must maintain practices that reflect her confession. In fifteenth-century Saxony, Lutherans were forced to act like Roman Catholics and in seventeenth-century Brandenburg like Calvinists. In each case, they applied the same principle and resisted. In each case, the Fourth Commandment requiring obedience to civil authority had no authority for the church.

The United States: Catholic-Controlled Saxony or Reformed-Controlled Brandenburg?

Unlike Europeans, Lutherans in America are not subject to governmental interference in matters of doctrine and liturgy, but culture exerts a subtle—some would say *profound!*—control. This often unrecognized pressure does not evoke the resistance that overt government intervention does. If Latin-language-speaking countries have a predominantly Catholic culture, the American and British English-speaking countries are mainly influenced by evangelical Protestantism of the Arminian type.[23] Even American Roman Catholicism drinks these waters. What would a Roman Catholic Mass be without "Amazing Grace"?[24]

FC x addressed "a specific situation of confession" and was not a call to be perpetually anti-Roman Catholic in liturgical matters.

Neo-evangelicalism comes as close as possible to being an official religion in the United States. Billy Graham is the official court preacher. More people probably know and definitely understand the words of "How Great Thou Art" than "The Star Spangled Banner." Our prototype is Reformed-dominated Brandenburg-Prussia rather than Catholic-controlled Saxony.

Maintaining (Reclaiming) Heritage

Pietism and the Enlightenment have made locating an unbroken doctrinal and liturgical succession from classical Lutheranism to the present LCMS impossible. If ours is a *Repristinationstheologie,* then our liturgy has also been repristinated. LCMS confessional Lutheran theology was literally resurrected out of a German Protestant tradition whose most positive feature was Pietism.[25] No pure "apostolic tradition" in theology or liturgy exists for us. It is not surprising that our fathers' first attention was to theology and that only in this century have we looked for our liturgical foundations. The 1941 *Lutheran Hymnal* with the service for the Holy Communion was a monumental achievement in reasserting the ordinary of the Mass. Since we are still more likely to see things in a Protestant context, it may be difficult to imagine that the Reformation did not mean that the Lutherans stopped being Catholic and doing Catholic things. The Augsburg Confession is adamant about this:

> We are unjustly accused of having abolished the Mass. Without boasting, it is manifest that the Mass is celebrated among us with greater devotion and more earnestness than among our opponents (AC XXIV, 1; Tappert, 56).

The Apology is hardly less reserved: "We keep traditional forms, such as the order of the lessons, prayers, vestments, etc." (Ap XXIV, 1; Tappert, 249). *Lutherans were claiming to be more Catholic than the papists.*

About twenty years later both sides in the adiaphoristic controversy kept a liturgy in place whose parts were found in the Roman Mass.[26] Liturgy for Luther, Melanchthon, and Chem-

nitz was not a matter of creative construction or selection among several options, but liturgy rather belonged to their church. Churches were not voluntarily formed assemblies forging liturgies for themselves. Such was the legacy of the Enlightenment and Schleiermacher in Europe, as well as Charles Finney and revivalism in America. The latters' doctrine of the church differed essentially from Luther's.

For Luther, church and liturgy were inherited, gifts of divine grace. Synods or territorial churches, and not individual congregations, had liturgical responsibilities.[27] "Creating liturgies" is as much an oxymoron as "covenanting together" to form a church or even a synod. In being catholic in their liturgy, Luther and especially the Lutherans in Brandenburg were not Romanists or submitting to the pope, but maintaining their faith, which they confessed and inherited from Rome (Conclusion to first part of AC; Tappert, 47). Without this claim they were a sect.[28]

Any thought of a liturgy adjusted to culture would have been strange to the reformers. An American liturgy is as repulsive as an Asian or German one. Freedom in adiaphora was never understood as self-emancipation from Rome, that final step which a recalcitrant Luther could never take. Martin Chemnitz, a chief architect of the Formula, enforced liturgical uniformity in the churches of Braunschweig, for which he was superintendent. *Article x was not a liturgical declaration of independence*, but unfortunately it has become so in American Lutheranism. The Lutheran claim that the Mass was celebrated with more solemnity than their opponents is not made inoperative by FC x but affirmed thereby.[29]

Article X: Church Practice *Does* Matter

Even though the Formula has twelve articles, the tenth is the last of the articles in both the Formula and the Book of Concord to address church practice.[30] Each article of faith is played out in practice, which practice must correspond to what is believed. Practical matters, the adiaphora, are not devoid of theological consequences. Where practice is not seen as a matter of theological concern, church life is trivialized. Just as the last two of the Ten Commandments, which forbid coveting and so internalize God's law by applying it to the heart, inform the first eight, so FC x informs and shapes all other Lutheran articles of faith. Article x is, however, not the first confessional article to be concerned about the theological import of church practice.

At first, around 1520, Reformation Lutherans sought a precision in doctrine that they could not immediately demand of church practice. No such leeway was allowed ten years later in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology. Denying the cup to the laity, mandatory celibacy for the priests, and monastic vows were proscribed as wrong. Practices mattered. Article Ten of the Formula took another tack by placing the burden on the church to recognize those practices which are not offensive in themselves, but which become so because of specific situations.

The freedom and demand to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable practices brought the early Christians to the brink of division in observing Jewish ritual. Paul, who had opposed Peter for eating with Jews and not Gentiles, returned to Jerusalem and performed rituals required of practicing Jews.

Scriptures, Confessions, and Liturgy

Subjecting ancient church liturgies to doctrinal, that is, confessional, review is not without problems, though it is synodically required. It may not take into account Scripture's origin in and for the early church's liturgical life. The Scriptures are as sacramental in their purpose as they are christological. Since the beginning, church liturgies have preserved the Scriptures and made them accessible to the people as no other medium has, including sermons. Pictures of Luther detaching the Scripture from church imprisonment with a chain cutter to give them to the people may be misleading. Scriptures are themselves confessions and are preserved in the liturgy as confessions of what the people believe.

Since people confess only what they have first heard, Scripture, liturgy, and confession constitute one reality in which each constantly informs the other. This process of mutual reciprocation is curtailed when the Scriptures are no longer recognized as the normative word of God, or when the church's formal confession is shelved as an historic relic, or when her liturgy is replaced by contemporary creations adjusted to fit the perceived desires and needs of the audience. Current examples of each aberration are commonly known.

> ***"Where orthodoxy is labeled adiaphora, orthodoxy will sooner or later be proscribed."***

Without both formal confession and liturgy, the church becomes no more than a community association with self-defined and continually redefined religious purposes. Such purposes are now called "mission statements." The church becomes a *Volkskirche* in the worst sense of that word, an association so defined by like-minded individuals. She forfeits her claim to catholicity and eventually her claim to being church. The Lutheran definition of the church as created and recognized by the word and sacraments requires that she must be believed to be a divine creation. The church must be believed to be Christ's body on earth, called, gathered, and enlightened by God, not chartered, constituted, and incorporated by the voters' assembly. Her liturgy and confession, as aspects of a common faith, are defined by her Lord and are not adiaphora (Rom 10:9).

Where the faith is preserved in formal confessions but not in the liturgical life of the church, those confessions are disregarded and her faith is already dead. For reasons of church practice, the LCMS has traditionally often refused fellowship to other Lutheran churches. To paraphrase James, faith without corresponding liturgical practice is dead. Doctrinal review for liturgies at best assures the absence of error without assuring its catholicity and the presence of truth. The process itself may assume, and so concede already, that each community is permitted *de novo* to create liturgy. Questionable is whether any liturgies copyrighted by Maranatha are really *creationes ex nihilo*.

Adiaphora: Optional Orthodoxy

The editor of *First Things* calls the proposition "Where orthodoxy is optional, orthodoxy will sooner or later be proscribed" the "Neuhaus law."[31] He might have said, "Where orthodoxy is labeled adiaphora, orthodoxy will sooner or later be proscribed." If the Episcopal-ELCA alliance succeeds, it may do so only because Lutherans are willing to concede that justification as the chief doctrine is optional, namely, an adiaphoron.

In the 1970s the LCMS was brought to the brink of corporate destruction because one group, who descriptively called themselves "gospel reductionists," made the law and the gospel the only doctrines and regarded other doctrines and biblical history as optional, namely, adiaphora, or better, *res indifferentes*. Today more and more Lutherans see the historical liturgy as optional, that is, *res indifferens*. It may be hard to imagine a day when the traditional liturgy has no place in the church beyond being an historical oddity.

It is hardly likely that the horrors of the 1817 Prussian Union, where pastors were removed from churches, imprisoned, and evicted from their parsonages will be repeated. This might be an example of an amendment to the Neuhaus law: "Where traditional liturgy is optional, traditional liturgy will sooner or later be proscribed." When the Reformed Prussian authorities required a Calvinistic-friendly liturgy of Lutherans, they were giving more than lip service to the proposition that "by what the church does when she assembles, she is confessing what she believes to believers and unbelievers alike." On that account church practice is never incidental, that is, adiaphoron, a matter of congregational and personal choice, but it is a matter of inheritance and gift.

Our current definition of adiaphora has become so broad that anything beyond the doctrine of "justification by faith" could be considered adiaphoron. In seeking to resolve current differences, we must agree that the ordinary of the Mass, the historical service, was not understood by the confessors to be an adiaphoron.[32] LOGIA

NOTES

1. On January 22, 1988, Michael Rogness offered "Was Melanchthon a Philippist on the Doctrine of Conversion?" and Lowell Green lectured under the title of "When Did Melanchthon Become a Philippist on the Lord's Supper?"

2. Charles v's Augsburg Interim (May 15, 1548) was opposed by both the ruling class and the people and was replaced by the more conciliatory Leipzig Interim (December 22, 1548).

3. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) faces this question in acquiescing to the ordination of its future pastors by Episcopal/Anglican bishops. If episcopal ordination is required for church unity, is such an ordination an adiaphoron anymore?

4. Matthew Harrison, "Martin Chemnitz and the Origin, Content, and Meaning of FC x," unpublished essay (August 1994), 7. Available from its author.

5. Bente judges him to be the culprit, a verdict not beyond challenge. See Bente's "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," *Concordia Triglotta* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 95–102.

6. Sean Parker, "Worship Wars," *Reporter* 22, no. 11 (November 1996): 8–9, 12.

7. Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 171.

8. Daniel Preus writes, "Like Luther, Robert Preus believed that to speak of justification was to speak of Christ, and to speak of Christ was to speak of justification" ("Solus Christus," *Logia* 5, no. 3 [Trinity 1996]: 21).

9. Philip Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. and trans. T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 87–89.

10. Eugene Klug observes that the ceremonies that Roman Catholics required of Lutherans were "Baptism (sprinkling with salt and exorcism), confirmation by bishops, extreme unction, Corpus Christi processions, and fasting rules" (*Getting into the Formula of Concord* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977], 62).

11. "Worship Notes," *Reporter* 23, no. 1 (November 1996): 12.

12. "Can girls be acolytes?" is the topic of the "Q & A" column in the *Lutheran Witness* 115, no. 11 (November 1996): 25. Reasons for a negative answer cannot be that the Bible prohibits girl acolytes or that the LCMS has a position forbidding it. Answering this question may be more difficult than suggested by the article. Lighting candles can be done by anyone, even a church sexton who might happen to be a Baptist. Another factor comes into play if the acolyte functions within the eucharistic celebration. A non-Lutheran could not ordinarily take this role. Historically the position of acolyte was considered one of several preliminary ranks before becoming a deacon and a priest. The Reformation had no use for these distinctions, but in the past many Lutheran pastors have been not alone in seeing acolytes as a way of recognizing future candidates for the ministry and preparing them to conduct the church service. With this understanding of acolytes, it is understandable that some pastors might find girl acolytes inappropriate. If lighting the candles is seen as a janitorial-type function, then prohibitions against having girls do this are without merit. It cannot be overlooked that until recently the present Roman pontiff opposed the practice presumably because the innovation was demanded by feminists whose ultimate goal is the ordination of women. If this were the case, then he acted in accordance with the Lutheran understanding of adiaphora. He acquiesced when the American bishops authorized it for their dioceses and put him in a position where he could not have done otherwise. Here he was a Philippist. Looking for specific biblical prohibitions or mandates in resolving matters of church practice has echoes of the Lutheran controversy over adiaphora.

13. "Worship Notes," 9. It is noteworthy that a reading of the Word of God, without specification of the Gospel, is listed as an essential ingredient. Lost is the connection between the words of Jesus and his Sacrament in which he is corporally present. Historic liturgies know of no substitution for the Gospel.

14. Introits and graduals are composed of Old Testament psalms, and the Sanctus is taken from Isaiah 6. The established early church custom of two readings from the Old Testament has found its way back into the liturgy with at least one reading. See John Kleinig, "Worship in the Old Testament," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (forthcoming issue).

15. See for example "Worship Wars," 8–9, 12, with subheading "Traditional worship vs. contemporary. What's right? And is anyone wrong?" One happy exception is Leonard Klein, "What Is to Be Done," *Lutheran Forum* 29, no. 2 (Pentecost/May 1995): 6–8.

16. Theodore Graebner, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong*, 6th ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 1. Each congregation had the right to determine how it should worship, a right now exercised with vengeance.

17. Carl Schalk, *Handbook of Church Music* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 64.

18. It was the beginning of an attempt that came to final resolution in 1830 with the amalgamation of Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussia, the infamous Prussian Union against which our fathers protested.

19. Mary Jane Haemig, review of Bodo Nishan, "Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg," *Lutheran Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 211–12. [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994].

20. Haemig, 212.

21. Harrison, 8–9.

22. It is amazing that in the American situation, where the Baptists insist on immersion, the Wisconsin Synod (WELS) without discussion calls this form of baptism an adiaphoron. See John F. Brug, *Church Fellowship* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996), 35–36.

23. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

24. Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience 1830–1900* (Notre Dame and London: Notre Dame Press, 1978).

25. See Michael Henrichs, "Liturgical Uniformity in Missouri," *LOGIA* 5, NO. 2 (Eastertide 1996): 15–24.

26. Harrison writes, "So for instance the Leipsic [*sic*] Interim imposes an order for mass which contained the basic ancient liturgical profession and portions of the liturgy, the Lutherans hardly felt compelled to abandon this progression themselves" (9).

27. Harrison, 11–12.

28. James Nuechterlein leads the way in repudiating Rome's claim to catholic exclusivity, a position taken by his editorial colleague Richard John Neuhaus. See Nuechterlein, "In Defense of Sectarian Catholicity," *First Things*, no. 69 (January 1997): 12–13.

29. Klein writes, "Liturgy *per se* is not an adiaphoron, a collection of rites and ceremonies that embellish word and sacrament but are somehow indifferent to saving faith. Word and sacrament necessitate a liturgical *ordo*. So the Augsburg Confession affirms that we celebrate the mass faithfully every Sunday and Holy Day and at other times when there are communicants. The mass, not something else" (6).

30. FC XI distinguishes the Lutheran doctrine of election or predestination from that of John Calvin, but in the sixteenth century it was not a problem among Lutherans. From the title of FC XII, "Other Factions and Sects Which Never Accepted the Augsburg Confession," it is evident that internal problems among Lutherans are not being addressed.

31. Richard John Neuhaus, "The Unhappy Fate of Optional Orthodoxy," *First Things*, no. 69 (January 1997): 56–60.

32. Certain references were provided by my colleagues Lawrence Rast and Arthur Just.

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Bishops for the Church

Apostolic Origins and Lutheran Affirmation

Allen C. Hoger

Is there a Lutheran doctrine of the church? Such a simple question demands that we Lutherans, whatever our own opinions or positions, turn to *Concordia* and return either with a negative answer or with passages to prove a positive one. Or, perhaps, Lutherans have more than one doctrine of the church. When AC viii, 1 defines the church as "the congregation of saints and true believers,"[1] the doctrine of the church is being stated in terms of *who*. When in the previous article the church is defined in terms of these same people "among whom the gospel is preached purely and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel"[2] (German Text AC vii, 1), the focus shifts from defining the church according to *who* to defining it according to *what*.

Surely these are the great questions to be answered by the doctrine of the church: who comprises it in terms of faith and holiness, and what it is in terms of essential functions. In fact, it may be argued that beyond answering these questions the Lutheran Confessions make no attempt to offer any "doctrine of the church," since she may be set up or operated according to this system or that, so long as the gospel is preached and its sacraments administered to those who truly believe. After all, the ministry of doing these things, according to Tr, 25–26, is the "rock" to which Christ refers (Matthew 16) and upon which the church is built.

But if the gospel and the sacraments are *enough* (*genug, satis,* AC vii) to make us the one, holy, Christian, and apostolic church, how do we make lesser choices beneath this great mandate for how to "set things up"? Beyond answering the question of who the church is and what it is, do the Lutheran Confessions provide any suggestions, guidelines, or preferences of their own?

One example of those decisions that Lutherans have always had to make is how to treat the matter of bishops in the church—a question on which North American Lutheranism in particular has always been divided. At present, its various synods, as a rule, eschew the very option of having bishops so-called—the great exception being the largest American synod of all, the ELCA. The rest of us are accustomed to defending on three grounds our avoidance of an episcopal system. First, we maintain that since there is only one divinely instituted office of the holy ministry, all pastors thus being the true bishops (*episkopoi*) of the church; therefore even to posit a distinct office of bishop is problematic. Our second position, less formally stated for the record but probably more responsible for present polity, is that an episcopal system puts the church in the hands of the clergy, thus eliminating democratic process and making the church vulnerable to black-shirted tyranny. Our third objection is that with bishops comes diocesan regulation, which destroys congregational autonomy, commonly held in our circles to be the keystone of the truest church architecture. Armed with this triad of arguments, many of us view any possible desire for bishops with suspicion, if not with scorn.

More balanced, however, were the views of Philip Melanchthon, whose 500th birth anniversary coincides with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's 150th. When we turn to the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, and Melanchthon's treatise on the papacy, we find definite symptoms of what some would call *episcopitis.* This essay is offered in the belief that the juxtaposition of these two anniversaries suggests, among other things, a fresh examination of episcopacy by the American churches.

THE LUTHERAN DENUNCIATION OF BISHOPS

In various passages the Augsburg Confession sharply criticizes the bishops of its day. First, it charges that "some have improperly confused the power of bishops with the temporal sword" and insists that bishops have the power from God only to preach the gospel, use the keys, and distribute the sacraments (AC xxviii, 1, 5, 12). "In cases where bishops possess temporal authority and the sword, they possess it not as bishops by divine right, but by human, imperial right" (AC xxviii, 19).

But the real problem according to Melanchthon is not just that the bishops are claiming secular authority and involving themselves in such matters as land transactions: it is that in church matters they impose laws, ceremonies, and traditions on Christians that are "contrary to the Gospel" (AC xxviii, 34–52). Negatively, "they neglect the state of the churches, and they do not see to it that there is proper preaching and administration of the sacraments in the churches" (Ap xxviii, 3). Positively, they have "introduced new forms of worship and burdened consciences" (AC xxviii, 2); they "either force our priests to forsake and condemn the sort of doctrine we confess, or else, in their unheard of cruelty, they kill the unfortunate and innocent men." They have even stolen from pastors "the common jurisdiction of excommunicating those who are guilty of manifest crimes" (Tr, 74).

Under such bad conditions, Melanchthon must at one point negate the patristic axiom and say (Ap xiv, 4) that where such bishops are, there is not the church: "The church is present among those who rightly teach the Word of God and rightly administer the sacraments. It is not present among those who seek to destroy the Word of God with their edicts." The bishops' errors prevent "our priests from acknowledging such bishops" (Ap xiv, 2).

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But is not the office of bishop essential to the church? No, for if bishops have no divine claim to secular authority, then whatever authority they do possess from God also "belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops" (Tr, 61). In other words, because episcopal authority is purely that of preaching and applying God's Word, then the pastors themselves are the true bishops of the churches. Any distinction between bishops and pastors is a human arrangement.

The fact that the oYce of bishop is of human origin, and is at the time being abused, in no way makes it evil or even undesirable.

This is more than a matter of naming or counting levels of clergy. There is only one office because one power alone, one *exousia,* builds the church of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Confessions speak less about the structure and names of church offices, and more about the single ministry of the gospel for the promotion of faith. Nowhere is this subservience of form to function made more clear than in Melanchthon's sentence in AC V, 1: "In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted." Noteworthy is the exact wording of the German: *hat Gott das Predigamt eingesetzt* ("God has instituted the preaching office"). The office holds divine power and is of divine origin. "All this is to be done not by human power but by God's Word alone" (AC XXVIII, 21). It is the efficacy of the word and the sacraments that makes servants of the Word (*ministri verbi Dei*) the "leaders of God's church" (*Vorsteher der Gemeine Gottes*, FC SD X, 10).

Because pastors occupy this divine, authoritative office, an ordination done by a pastor in his own church is "valid by divine right," and "when the bishops are heretics or refuse to administer ordination," churches "retain the right to ordain for themselves" (Tr, 72). "For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers" (Tr, 67). Melanchthon even looks back on an early time in the church (Tr, 70) when "the people elected pastors and bishops," and when ordination merely confirmed this election. In explaining what Christ meant by "on this rock I will build my church," (Tr, 25–28), Melanchthon states that it means "on this ministry," and his list of titles in connection with the ministry includes "apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers" (following Ephesians 4), but omits intentionally bishops and the papacy.

THE LUTHERAN DESIRE FOR BISHOPS

At this point it might seem that Melanchthon has no use for bishops, and that we may cease to consider the question. For him, however, the fact that the office of bishop is of human origin, and is at the time being abused, in no way makes it evil or even undesirable. For they too have a "definite command, a definite Word of God" (Ap XXVIII, 14), to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, and excommunicate. Under normal circumstances, therefore, "on this account parish ministers and churches are bound to be obedient to the bishops according to the saying of Christ in Lk 10:16, 'He who hears you hears me'" (AC XXVIII, 22). Here he clearly acknowledges the practical value—and even cites a biblical basis—of having evangelical bishops who exercise authority over pastors and congregations.

But outside of preaching and administering the sacraments—which all pastors are authorized to do—how may bishops exercise their authority in the church in other ways? Recognizing that "there is dispute" over the right of bishops to institute ceremonies and regulations, Melanchthon takes a twofold position. On the one hand, "bishops do not have power [*Macht*, *potestatem*] to institute or establish anything contrary to the gospel" (AC XXVIII, 34). But so long as they do not oppose the gospel, "bishops or pastors may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order, but not as a means of obtaining God's grace" (AC XXVIII, 53). Under the condition of gospel freedom, and for the promotion of true faith, "it is legitimate for them to create traditions" (Ap XXVIII, 15).

Readers of the Augsburg Confession may notice how, when it treats this question, the bishop/pastor distinction remains fluid. For example, the German text of AC XXVIII, 22 states that under the right conditions "pastors and churches" (*Pfarrleut und Kirchen*) are obliged to obey "the bishops" (*den Bischofen*), while the Latin says simply that "churches" (*ecclesiae*) are to obey. Similarly, the German of AC XXVIII, 30 speaks of "bishops" (*Bischofe*) introducing ceremonies and regulations, while the same sentence in Latin reads "bishops or pastors" (*episcopi seu pastores*). In the Latin text, in other words, pastors and bishops are located more explicitly on the same plane. In AC XXVIII, 53, on the other hand, the German and Latin agree: "bishops or pastors."

But notwithstanding this verbal flexibility and the inherent equality of pastors and bishops, Melanchthon later writes (Ap XIV, 1) that he and his colleagues not only allow for the existence of bishops but possess a "deep desire to maintain the church polity and various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, although these were created by human authority." His caution is due solely to the fact that the bishops of his day are condemning "the sort of doctrine we have confessed." The Lutherans possess a "willingness to keep the ecclesiastical and canonical polity, provided the bishops stop raging against our churches" (Ap XIV, 5). Six years after this position is articulated by Melanchthon, Luther himself still writes (SA II, IV, 9) that it is ideal, and was the model in place before the papacy, for all bishops to "govern and maintain" the church jointly and equally under Christ as the one head.

For what purpose might we seek to appoint bishops for the church? Luther's willingness to grant them the authority to ordain is "for the sake of love and unity" (SA III, X, 1), thus echoing Melanchthon's desire for "good order."

We should observe those ecclesiastical rites which can be observed without sin and which are conducive to tranquillity and good order in the church. The Holy Fathers did not institute any traditions for the purpose of meriting the forgiveness of sins or

righteousness. They instituted them for the sake of good order and tranquillity in the church (Ap xv, 1, 13).

In other words, bishops cannot offer anything to a congregation greater than what a pastor brings in the gospel and the sacraments. But since he oversees numerous congregations, he is in a position to foster regional peace and order.

So, the Lutheran Confessions sharply criticize bishops who arrogate to themselves secular authority over the churches and obstruct the cause of the gospel. The Confessions even affirm the right and necessity of the church, under such circumstances, to defy them. The church may function perfectly well without bishops, for the distinction between them and pastors is of human design. Nevertheless, the Confessions also endorse and desire the traditional structure of orthodox, evangelical bishops ordaining pastors and overseeing them and their congregations. Such a system is to Melanchthon, and to those for whom he writes, one deserving respect—indeed, an old and excellent way for the church to be kept in good order.

Actually, the Lutheran position on episcopacy articulated by Melanchthon in *Concordia* is already found treated jointly by Luther and him in the *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors,* which was drawn up by Melanchthon in 1527, given a preface by Luther, and then published early in 1528. It was to be revised again as late as 1538, and given yet another preface by Luther as late as 1545. The history of this document clearly attests to the fact that even prior to the Augsburg Confession and as long as Luther was alive, there endured a deep concern for the supervision of pastors and their congregations. While the confessors were speaking to Rome in terms of what they considered to be the ideal church structure, they were also working to design and implement their own system of visitation and oversight.

That Luther and Melanchthon understood this system to be true episcopacy is indisputable from the text of Luther's Preface to the *Instructions*:

> What a divinely wholesome thing it would be if pastors and Christian congregations might be visited by understanding and competent persons . . . . For it was in this kind of activity that the bishops and archbishops had their origin—each one was obligated to a greater or lesser extent to visit and examine. For, actually, bishop means supervisor or visitor, and archbishop a supervisor or visitor of bishops, to see to it that each parish pastor visits and watches his people in regard to teaching and life . . . . Who can describe how useful and necessary this office is in the Christian church? . . .
>
> Now that the Gospel through the unspeakable grace and mercy of God has again come to us or in fact has appeared for the first time, and we have seen how grievously the Christian church has been confused, scattered, and torn, we would like to have seen the true episcopal office and practice of visitation re-established because of the pressing need.

Here we have proof of the confessors' intention that, regardless of how the dialogue with Rome would end, the churches of the Augsburg Confession would be guided and helped by an episcopal system requiring on-site examination by true bishops.

Two things are most striking about their desires. The first is the clarity with which this kind of system is extolled both in *Concordia* and in the *Instructions for the Visitors,* as well as the energy with which Luther, Melanchthon, and Elector John of Saxony seek to execute their plan. The second is the fact that nowhere do they describe the need for anything higher than such parish visitors. They are firm on the need for regional supervision and ignorant of a need for anything beyond it.

Now the reason for this twofold position would seem quite clear: The ministry of the gospel and the sacraments always takes place locally. And since the means of grace that both preserve the saints and build the church only get worked in this place or that, in this earthly parish or that, the confessors seek only to hold those churches and pastors within a network of supervision and support. Any higher or broader level of administration becomes further removed from the reality of how the Spirit works among people in the churches of God. Noteworthy is Luther's lament about the prevailing Medieval practice: the bishops have become bureaucrats who put actual supervision in the hands of assistants, who in turn leave the real work of visitation to underlings of their own choosing.

Bishops cannot oVer anything to a congregation greater than what a pastor brings in the gospel and the sacraments.

Were Melanchthon and Luther hopelessly attached to Medieval polity? Or is it possible that this official Lutheran position, this desire for a system both episcopal and evangelical, is "a correct exposition of the Word of God" after all? To answer that question, we turn above all to the New Testament, but also to Christian writers of the second century, who lived and worked before "bishop" became the title for a regional supervisor of clergy and their parishes. And we shall only approach the question of bishops after facing first the question of authority.

The Evangelical Definition of Authority

In the Gospels, references to Christ's authority often denote his power to make something happen, as in the case of the Capernaum paralytic (Mk 2:10). In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus does not claim authority; people can tell that he possesses the power of God in word (Mt 7:29). In the case of the centurion's servant (Mt 8:8–9), word and deed are inseparable, and both mighty. To be sure, the authority of Christ is not so compelling that it is never challenged or denied (Mk 2:7; 3:22; 11:28); the reality of what he is doing still demands faith that God has sent and endowed him (Jn 12:44).

Already during his earthly ministry, our Lord bestows this effective *exousia* on his Apostles: they can now preach, heal, and exorcise (Mt 10:1). According to Matthew (28:18–21), after his resurrection Christ no sooner claims "all authority" for himself than he commissions them to baptize and to teach—

both authoritative actions. In the other Gospels' post-resurrection accounts of this ordaining (Lk 24:46–49 and Jn 20:21–23), the authority of the apostles depends upon the gift of the Spirit's power.

We then see fully in Acts that it is the Lord's own power to save, and his own demand that people believe in him, that are made manifest in the work of the apostles (3:6, 12, 16). The signs of power documented in the Gospels are worked again by the Twelve (2:22, 43), and yet the same denial of his authority happens to them (4:1–22). According to Paul's letters, his work too is accompanied by powerful signs of his authority (1 Th 1:5; 2 Cor 12:12), but fiercely opposed by unbelieving Jews (Acts 13:45; 14:2; 17:5–9). "Apostolic authority" is Christ himself continuing to contend against demonic powers in the world.

The Gospels distinguish this divine authority . . . also from the self-serving power that sinners typically seek.

Several passages explicitly differentiate this authority of Christ, the divine power to save, from secular authority. A "separation of powers" is at work in the case of "taxes to Caesar" (Lk 20:21–25) and in the trial of Jesus before Pilate (Jn 18:33–37; see AC XXVIII, 15). It also receives treatment in the New Testament epistles (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–14). But the Gospels distinguish this divine authority not only from secular authority that is good and right, but also from the self-serving power that sinners typically seek. Jesus tells his disciples:

> You know how the rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and how their great people use authority over them. It shall not be this way among you; instead, whoever among you desires to be great shall be your servant, and whoever among you desires to be first shall be your slave. (Mt 20:27).

If Jesus meant for no positions of authority to be there within the church, we would have to admit that he and the apostles proceeded to break this rule. But as Foerster says in *TDNT* [3: 1098], the use in this passage of intensified verbs and of the phrase *great ones* is highly significant and most likely "means the exercise of dominion over someone, i.e., to one's own advantage." This perversion is precisely what Ap XXVIII, 3 laments: "Our opponents valiantly defend their own position and wealth. Meanwhile, they neglect the state of the churches."

The New Testament epistles clearly understand that Christ's warning against abusive lording does not preclude the salutary exercise of authority, for they state:

> Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you (Heb 13:17).
>
> Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you (1 Th 5:12).
>
> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1 Pt 5:2–3).

Apostolic Authority in the Early Church

It is through the work of the apostles that the first church, the Jerusalem congregation, is born. The first two chapters of Acts confirm beautifully the sequence of the Augsburg Confession in Articles V–VII: first, the apostolic ministry imparts God's grace through the word (Acts 2:14–36; AC V); second, people are brought to the new obedience of faith (Acts 2:37–41; AC VI); third, the community of faith, the church, comes into being (Acts 2:42–47; AC VII). Thus, the apostles do not arise out of the church but are sent directly by the Lord to become its foundation (Mt 16:18; Eph 2:20). For they possess from God an *exousia* that is mighty and effective. With it they evangelize, baptize, and teach.

Now, according to Acts, *presbyters* appear and work alongside the apostles in the Jerusalem congregation (11:30; 15:2,4,6). That these men should appear with no further notice can be explained by the existence of presbyters (elders) among the Jews as a leadership title; that Israel should be governed by elders is a notion originating in the wilderness tradition of Exodus and extending to the age of synagogues. It may well be that these Jerusalem presbyters were appointed by the apostles, especially since later in Acts Paul and Barnabas in their journeys appoint presbyters "in each church" (14:23).

The apostles, therefore, assume not just the ministry of the Word but the duty of appointing other ministers of the Word. As such a man, Paul summons the Ephesian presbyters (20:17) and exhorts them to guide and protect the church, telling these *presbyteroi* that the Holy Spirit has made them *episkopoi* over the church (20:28). What is intriguing about this activity of Paul is that *episkopos,* the term later translated "bishop," refers to the local church leaders, whereas Paul himself functions as their bishop (as we think of one today), an overseer of the *episkopoi.*

In his letters as well, Paul both urges Christians to submit to their local leaders (1 Th 5:12–13) and exercises his own authority over them from afar (1 Cor 5:3–12; Gal 1:8–9). He appeals to universal custom among the churches (1 Cor 11; 14:34–35), some of which are of his own making (1 Cor 7:17). In other words, he writes with authority over churches that he has founded (and some that he has not, as in the case of Rome; see Rom 14:1–6) and that now have local leaders of their own.

This exercise of apostolic authority over more than one church is even more fully exemplified by Ephesians and 1 Peter, letters addressed not to one congregation but as encyclicals (see the text-critical studies on the address of Ephesians). Here both authors exercise their office by instructing in the faith recent converts who belong to various local congregations. Similar to these cases is the authority with which the exiled John communicates his Revelation to the seven churches of Asia.

All of this New Testament evidence suggests that there never was a time when churches knew of no regional supervision, for clearly the apostles of Christ served as bishops over them. What is most impressive about this evidence is the way the apostles simply persuade with the power of God's Word. Just as Peter writes "To the presbyters among you, I appeal as a fellow presbyter" (1 Pet 5:1), so also in Paul the oft-repeated verb is not "command" or "direct" but "appeal." Their only power is God's word. Nevertheless, there is no question of their authority to advise and admonish; they are convinced that they still possess a duty and an office to teach, exhort, and warn in the name of Christ, just as it was their office to ordain pastors in the churches to which they write.

Post-Apostolic Episcopacy

In the Pastoral Epistles Paul writes that he has already directed Titus (1:5) to "appoint presbyters in every town," just as Paul did in Acts 14, thus granting to him a kind of regional authority over the churches. Since this assignment for Titus precedes a list of qualifications (Ti 1:6–9), it is reasonable to suppose that Timothy also receives a similar list (1 Tim 3:1–13) because he too bears the same authority. The whole tone of the directives for church leaders in the Pastorals suggests a system that was still under development in Paul's earlier epistles. (Evidence that it was already developing, however, may be seen in the opening address of Philippians to the *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* of the congregation). At any rate, by the time the New Testament epistles are written, titles for church leaders have emerged and become somewhat fixed, and the charge to go about ordaining them in various places has passed from an apostle (Paul) to the "disciple of an apostle."

Not too many years after the Pastorals were written, the author of 1 Clement affirms that, just as "the apostles were from Christ" (xlii.2), so they went out and established *episkopoi* and *diakonoi*. He also says (xliv.1) that the apostles realized "through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of *episkopos*." Therefore, he urges those causing congregational division in Corinth to "submit to the presbyters" (lvii.1), just as Paul once urged the Thessalonians to follow their leaders. The Corinthian Christians, in other words, must submit to their local bishop.

But Clement also writes urging the church in Corinth to "accept our advice" (lviii.2); he warns them not to disobey "the things spoken by him [Christ] through us" (lix.1); and he announces (lxii.3), "We have sent faithful and prudent men . . . who shall be witnesses between you and us." Here the author, speaking out of his own congregational ministry, takes it upon himself to oversee and admonish through an epistle a distant congregation for which he is concerned, in the same way as did the apostles. The continued regional supervision of churches carried out by the apostles, in other words, is attested by Clement, who acts like a bishop even though for him the title *episkopos* still refers to a local church leader, a pastor.

According to Eusebius (E.H. xxiii), Dionysius, bishop of Corinth around 170, not only promoted the reading of 1 Clement in churches but wrote "catholic epistles" of his own, which Eusebius considers the bishop's greatest gift to Christendom. He also records (E.H. v.19) that Serapion, Bishop of Antioch who died around 211, in order to combat heresy, wrote a letter that was signed by "several bishops." But long before these men, Ignatius of Antioch (d. ca. 107) most emulated the apostles by writing letters to the churches on his way to martyrdom. In true form as a local bishop himself and a servant of God's Word, nowhere does Ignatius lay claim to a higher office over the local *episkopoi* and their churches. In fact, his letters are famous for his repeated urging that all Christians submit to their local bishops. In no other early Christian writer is it so abundantly clear that *episkopos* became in all places the common title for a local pastor.

But in so commanding churches to obey their bishops and presbyters, Ignatius himself exercises the authority of his office, the authority of the gospel, over a whole set of churches. He teaches them true doctrine, reminds them of the way to live, and urges them toward sacramental unity. Then, in his letter to Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius aims his instruction at the bishop himself, writing one of the early church's most poignant statements on pastoral care. Also noteworthy near the end of this letter (vii.2) are his recommendation that Polycarp arrange for a council (*symboulion*) in Syria, and his request (viii.1) that Polycarp finish for him the task of writing letters to "the churches."

New Testament evidence suggests that there never was a time when churches knew of no regional supervision.

Later, when the Smyrna church publishes an account of Polycarp's death, it addresses it to "all those of the holy catholic church who sojourn in every place." The second century, therefore, is imbued with an ethos in which teachers of the church seek to guide and admonish a network of congregations with their evangelical counsel, thus imitating the use of letters by the apostles themselves. Long before *episkopos* loses its local meaning in the church, a kind of episcopal system is in place—not one in which such leaders try to impose new measures on bishops and congregations, but one in which the latter look for and appreciate evangelical guidance, and in which the writers rely solely on the power of the Christian message and uphold the divine authority of the local bishops.

The Purpose of Episcopacy: Church Unity

In Acts 20:28–30, Paul orders the Ephesian elders to supervise the church in the face of "savage wolves" who will "arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them." In Philippians, the one Pauline letter addressed specifically to "bishops and deacons," he laments rivalry in the church (1:15), exhorts the congregation to "contend together as a single person" (1:27), reminds them of their unity in Christ (2:1), warns them to "beware of dogs," (3:2), and urges Euodia and Syntyche to reach agreement (4:2). In 1 Timothy, where much is made of the *episkopos*, we find this warning (2:5):

> Teach and encourage these things. If someone teaches otherwise, not adhering to the sound sayings of our Lord Jesus

> Christ and the pious teaching, that person has become blind. He understands nothing but is diseased with speculation and verbal battles, out of which develop envy, division, blasphemies, wicked suspicions, and persistent frictions.

In all of these texts, God's obvious intent behind his gift of *episkopoi* to the church is his desire to keep the people united in the truth. Local bishops serve the cause of Christian unity by contending for the pure doctrine of Christ and combating falsehood.

This New Testament connection between *episkope* and unity gets amplified in 1 Clement, where the greatest threat to the church is perceived to be "sedition" (see also chapters 1, 14, 43–46, 51–58). Clement compares the episcopal-diaconal ordering of the church, which he views as established by God himself through Christ and the apostles (1 Cl 42), to the way the solar system runs harmoniously, and to how armies function (1 Cl 20, 37). When the authority of the episcopal office is challenged by scoundrels (1 Cl 3), the prime movers are pride and envy (1 Cl 4, 14). Matters have grown so bad at the time of writing that finally (1 Cl 44) Clement issues a new beatitude: "Blessed are those presbyters who finished their course before now, and have obtained a fruitful and perfect release in the ripeness of completed work."

True bishops call churches, instead, in their local diversity back to those things that make us one.

It is in Ignatius, however, that the presence of a local episcopate is held highest as the key to keeping the church united in the truth. Under the bishop and presbyters, a church remains like a harp with all strings in tune, or like a well-trained choir (Eph. 4). With the bishops corresponding to God, the presbyters to the apostles, and with deacons serving in their place, the unified church becomes a "pattern and lesson" of our immortality (Mag. 6; see also Smyr. 8). It is by submission to this leadership that the church remains firm in the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles (Mag. 13). All things are to be done in the congregation under the bishop (Tral. 2). Schismatics are "evil plants" that do not inherit heaven (Phil. 3), while eucharistic unity exists under the church's leaders (Phil. 4; Eph. 5). Ignatius exhorts Polycarp to make unity his greatest concern in leading the church (Pol. 1).

But if congregational unity is fostered by the letters of Ignatius, so is inter-congregational unity. Paul writes 1 Corinthians in order to see the congregation united in Christ (1 Cor 1:10). Ignatius addresses the Magnesians to promote their unity (Mag. 13). But in both cases, the writing of several letters sent in different directions, and the preservation and shared use of these letters, also fosters the unity of the churches one with another. And this unity is effected, not by their imposing rules of uniformity, but by their emphasizing the true gospel. Like the apostolic epistles, albeit less profoundly or extensively, the letters of Ignatius (Eph. 18, 20; Tral. 9; Phil. 9; Smyr. 3) devote themselves to rehearsing the fundamental doctrines of the faith.

St. Irenaeus, *episkopos* of Lyons in the second century, is famous for his statement (*Adv. Haer.* 2–5) on the continuity of the Apostolic tradition down through time, the personal transmission of the faith from Christ and the apostles to the bishops who followed them (especially in the case of Rome). Equal to this declaration, however, is his most eloquent statement (*Adv. Haer.* x) on how the Apostolic tradition is also one across space:

> Even though the Church is scattered in the whole world, once she received this faith, she has carefully preserved it, as if living in one house. She believes these same things, as if she had only one heart and soul. She preaches them harmoniously, teaches them, and hands them down, as if she had only one mouth. For the languages of the world are many, but the meaning of the Tradition is one and the same. Churches established in Germany don't believe differently or hand down another tradition, and neither do the Iberians, those among the Celts, those in Egypt, or those in Libya. But just as the sun is one and the same in the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shines everywhere.

These words were not penned in an ecclesiastical vacuum but against the outbreak of regional heresies of the Gnostic variety. Irenaeus argued that the churches needed to stay united, not only to their apostolic ancestors, but to their sisters in other lands. This was largely achieved by the epistolary efforts of men who, without the title that would only be applied later, served as bishops over many churches.

Within American Lutheranism today, as we substitute for "Celts," "Egypt," and "Germany" such phrases as "Hispanic," "larger churches," "rural ministry," "campus ministry," and "Generation X," we must realize that such social distinctions have the power either to distract us from, or to make us appreciate and apply even more, the common gospel that defines the holy ministry, builds churches, and unites them all. True bishops, by supervising the ways in which pastors and congregations respond to local conditions, help to ensure that the church does not fall prey to heresies, segregations, collapse, or other forces of disintegration along ethnic or social-economic lines. True bishops do not repeatedly serve up calls for "programs," either from themselves or from "higher-ups," in order to reinvent the church or redefine the holy ministry. They call churches, instead, in their local diversity back to those things that make us one and have served the church well around the world and down through the centuries.

To what extent one synod or another has men functioning as bishops in this way is open for discussion. What we call them is not the essential question. Miters and crosiers are purely optional. How such men are elected is open to debate. Yet that we should desire regional episcopacy along apostolic lines is, I believe, beyond dispute. It is also a matter of record in the Lutheran Confessions, thanks to God and the writings of Philip Melanchthon. LOGIA

NOTES

1. "die Versammlung aller Gläubigen und Heiligen" ("congregatio sanctorum et vere credentium").
2. "bei welchen das Evangelium rein gepredigt und die heiligen Sacrament lauts des Evangelii gereicht werden."

Reviews

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

Martin Luther

Cosmos in the Chaos: Philip Schaff's Interpretation of Nineteenth-Century American Religion. By Stephen R. Graham. Foreword by Martin E. Marty. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. 266 pages. Paper.

"Church history is the field on which are to be decided the weightiest denominational controversies, the most momentous theological and religious questions" (108). Stephen Graham's fine examination of Philip Schaff's ideas and attitudes about American religion shows that the above statement characterizes Schaff's life's work well. Schaff was first of all a creative *church* historian. True, he is probably best known for his work in collecting, editing, and publishing the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers. But of greater importance, though less well known, is the manner in which Philip Schaff was confronted by, resisted, and finally overcome by American religious culture.

Graham's purpose is to describe this process. The book is an extended treatment, first presented as a dissertation to the University of Chicago, of some of the more significant themes in Schaff's understanding of the nature and function of Church History. Graham divides the book into seven chapters. The first three chapters each treat a separate issue raised by Schaff in his ordination sermon. Delivered in early 1844, the sermon identifies sectarianism, Romanism, and rationalism as the three primary "threats" to the realization of Christian unity in America. Chapter 4 addresses Schaff's contention that the separation of church and state provides the distinctive character of American Christianity, while the fifth recounts his grappling with the peculiarly American notion of voluntary societies. Graham closes the book with chapters on Schaff's thoughts on American nationality and his dream of a united church, an idealized evangelical catholic Christianity.

Though it is not a biography, a clear picture of the man Philip Schaff emerges in Graham's narrative. If an interpretive framework surfaces from the text that helps us to understand Philip Schaff, it is his commitment to the idea of doctrinal development. Schaff, influenced by Hegel, believed that God was helping the ideal church—the one true church—be realized. A "mediating theologian," Schaff, following principles learned from his teacher J. A. W. Neander, sought to harmonize a churchly, sacramental, and historical understanding of Christianity in the American setting characterized by revivalism, ahistoricism, and sectarianism. First, in a culture that despised dignity in worship, he was inclined toward a "high" liturgy. Second, he vigorously sought out and examined the earliest expressions of orthodox Christianity, though nineteenth-century Americans were pronouncedly suspicious of "tradition." But above all he focused on ecclesiology, the "church question," as he called it, in the face of a religious culture that stressed individual conversions and autonomy. This historical perspective and his view of the church as an organism led Schaff to an optimistic assessment of the prospects for church union, even in the midst of a sometimes hostile culture.

But who influenced whom in this context? Did Philip Schaff's mediating theology and historical consciousness shape the church in America towards future reunion? Or did America, slowly and over time, shape Schaff, and bring him more fully into its orbit? Whether it is Graham's purpose or not (and I believe it is), his text supports the latter conclusion. Most chapters in the volume follow a similar pattern. They open with a discussion of a point drawn from Schaff's early writings, which exaggerate and negatively overstate the American religious character (due in large part to Schaff's ignorance of the actual American setting). Graham then proceeds to show how Schaff tempered this initial criticism and finally came to make peace with the religious culture of his time. He shows how Schaff progressively came to appreciate American Christianity as *a,* if not *the,* proper expression of orthodox Christianity for the modern age.

The reader will quickly note that Graham views this transition toward acceptance of pluralism favorably (no surprise from a graduate of the University of Chicago, a school founded on the pluralist principle). Others, however, myself included, will not be so quick to sing the praises of him whose confessionalism died. Graham's assertions are open to other interpretations. For example, Graham paints Schaff's move in 1870 from the German Reformed Seminary at Mercersburg/Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to Union Theological Seminary in New York as a positive move forward. I disagree. It was at this point that Schaff's truly creative period ended and he became a prophet of pluralism. Where his Mercersburg colleague John Nevin strove to realize a truly catholic Christianity based on the historic church (especially Cyprian), Schaff looked forward to a new, and one must assume "better," development—displaying in the process the quintessential American attitudes of the superiority of the future, the necessity of "progress," and an unbridled optimism

over the capacity of humankind to determine its future. The theological and practical results of this shift were both dramatic and, in my opinion, devastating.

Slowly but surely Schaff's liturgical sensibilities waned and he tempered his practice, going so far as to approve of D. L. Moody's revivals (154–155)! His understanding of the church broadened and weakened. And, most tragically, his gifts as a creative historian languished as he degenerated into a collector of the work of others. Graham's interpretation of Philip Schaff tends toward the heroic. The message for the confessional Lutheran, however, is strikingly clear. As Schaff's four deliciously equivocal mottoes indicate, to lose one's firm confession is to lose all (233).

1. Christ is all things in all things.
2. I am a Christian and nothing Christian is foreign to me.
3. My given name is "Christian," my surname is "Reformed."
4. In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity.

In many ways Schaff's best work remains little known in the twentieth century, while his colleague at Mercersburg, John Williamson Nevin, continues to elicit vigorous theological inquiry and has proven to be a rich source for continual study (two recently published books on Nevin are *Reformed Confessionalism in Nineteenth-Century America: Essays on the Thought of John Williamson Nevin,* edited by Arie J. Griffioen and Sam Hamstra Jr., and *John Williamson Nevin: American Theologian,* by Richard Wentz). In contrast, Schaff has become the gentle prophet of a weak ecumenical pluralism that, if driven to its end, sees all religions as basically valid (a position underscored by Schaff's support first of the Evangelical Alliance, and then, shortly before his death, as an organizer of the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893).

What emerges from this volume for the Lutheran interpreter? Is it merely a case of "see, this is where the Reformed always end up"? I do not think it is quite so simple. What appears is the tragic story of a confessionally informed clergyman gradually being drawn into the vortex of American religious culture with deleterious results. It serves as a warning to those who underestimate the all-pervasive influence of the American mindset, particularly in religious matters.

Yet it is not my intent merely to present a negative picture of the book. Graham's volume is a fine piece of historiography, well researched, written, and argued. While I do have some serious criticisms of several points of interpretation, that should strike no one as surprising: conflicting interpretations of historical evidence are what keep historians employed! The despairing tone of this review is not due at all to Graham's work, but to "what might have been" (certainly a very ahistorical attitude). One wonders what Nevin and Schaff at Mercersburg might have achieved if they had remained colleagues and stuck to their original confessional Reformed path. Or better yet, what might have been had they done the sensible thing and become Lutherans!

The implications of Schaff's transition should look frighteningly familiar to American Lutherans—it seems to mirror their own experience! Like Schaff, American Lutherans seem bent on casting off their confessional heritage and acclimating or assimilating themselves to or *into* American religious culture. Examples abound. One need only consider the latest issue of *Forward!*, published by a rump group of ahistorical Missouri Synod members, who argue for a more inclusive, watered-down Missouri that denies its theology and tradition and has as one of its mottoes the fourth mentioned above—but most share a basic presupposition with Schaff (and Graham, apparently) on the value of denominational diversity. Most often pluralism has its fruit in doctrinal indifference (at best) or outright rejection of doctrine and confession (at worst). The 1990s see the pluralists in our midst singing their siren song at every opportunity. It is not enough that Lutherans are bombarded from all possible secular media with the message that doctrinal certainty implies exclusivism (both of which are labeled evil); they hear it too from their districts, bishops, mission executives, and, yes, their pastors. At the very least Graham's treatment of Schaff can show us one result of doctrinal indifferentism couched in a nebulous "love for Jesus" that stresses the individual at the expense of the church catholic. At its best, it can help Lutheranism to avoid Philip Schaff's mistakes. As Robert Preus has so poignantly said: "Stubbornness, pious Christian stubbornness, is required in everyone—church, pastor, people—who confesses Christ and His doctrine. We must be proud, Luther says, 'proud in God.' We must refuse to yield the least little bit in doctrinal matters"("Luther: Word, Doctrine, and Confession," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60 [July 1996]: 216). Would that Schaff had retained this principle. May we learn from his mistakes.

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Annotations on First Corinthians. By Philipp Melanchthon. Introduced, translated, and edited by John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. Volume 2 in the series *Reformation Texts with Translation (1350–1650)*, Kenneth Hagen, General Editor. From the series *Biblical Studies*, Franz Posset, Editor. Marquette University Press: Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1995.

The publishers are to be commended and thanked for making available this contribution to the growing number of Philipp Melanchthon's writings for those whose grasp of the Praeceptor's elegant Latin is minimal as well as for those who just prefer not to make the effort in working through his sometimes classically complex sentence structure. The series *Reformation Texts with Translation (1350–1560)* contains what the publishers refer to as "brief theological and religious works from the fourteenth through the seventeenth century" that, generally, are being translated into English for the first time. The series seeks to provide "students" with primary sources. At the same time, by providing the original text on the left page with the accompanying translation on the right side, it gives researchers an opportunity to work with the author's original text.

With the appearance of this volume, the prospective student of Philipp Melanchthon has available not only the confessional doc-

uments that he authored, but also a number of early and later works from his career. *Annotations on First Corinthians* joins such works as *Romans, Colossians* from among Melanchthon's voluminous exegetical studies. We understand that one of his works on the Gospel of John is in process of translation. In addition to the 1521 *Loci Communes,* two other editions of his *Loci* along with a selection of shorter writings now give the English-speaking and reading public an opportunity to study firsthand what Melanchthon really thought and wrote, rather than being dependent upon the variegated interpretations to which the *Praeceptor Ecclesiae* has all too often been a victim.

The *Annotations on First Corinthians* come from a time near the origin of Melanchthon's first edition of the *Loci communes* (1521) and share with the *Loci* his adamant rejection of philosophical speculation. Melanchthon draws a sharp line of demarcation and distinction between *philosophy* and the *Gospel:*

> because philosophy attributes everything to our own power and works, the Gospel takes away everything and teaches that there is no other justification except by believing in Christ (39).

The "sophists" who, according to Melanchthon, divide terms into a great number of "modalities" come in for a verbal thrashing with a strong warning about their exegetical (and theological) practice of saying about a term: "it is taken literally, it is taken not literally, it is taken in the broad or stricter sense" (129). The *Loci*'s reference to the "sacramental sign" in place of what Melanchthon called the "traditional" term *sacrament* is continued here (119). Later on, however, Melanchthon came to use the term *sacrament* in discussing baptism—"a sacramental sign of repentance"—and the Eucharist—"a sign of revivification"(121), modifying the "sacramental sign" terminology.

Melanchthon's talent for producing pithy and memorable phraseology shines brightly when, for instance, he remarks that "the longer God is sought after by that judgment [wisdom] the less he is found" (41), and "when we seem to know God most precisely, there we wander farthest from him" (43). Although Melanchthon had a healthy respect for the "early and purer Church," he exercised his own independent and often critical judgment upon individual fathers of the church. Thus he remarked that Jerome's discussions of marriage and celibacy were "more superstitious than devout" (93). In his comments on Paul's words about speaking in tongues (Chapter 14) Melanchthon takes umbrage at what he considered his own era's neglect of prophecy, that is, "the explanation of Scripture," for the sake of "prattling over obscure and stupid questions." The Corinthian zeal for tongues "was praiseworthy, but useless without prophecy" (157). Prophecy is defined as the interpretation or explanation (application?) of Scripture.

Melanchthon's concerns for the pastoral and the *Seelsorger* aspect of the theological endeavor come through quite elegantly in his comments on 1 Corinthians 4:14, "I do not write this to make you ashamed . . . ," when he remarks, "Let those who hear confessions and direct consciences follow his example."

In this exegetical study of 1 Corinthians, Melanchthon pursued an "annotations" approach as distinct from his "commentary" style of writing. In another and later exegetical study of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, published by Paul Eber in 1561 after Melanchthon's death, he pursued the commentary methodology. (This version is printed in the Corpus Reformatorum, volume 15, pages 1053–1192.) As Father Connelly notes, in the *Annotations* Melanchthon totally ignored Chapter 16. In the *Commentary* of 1551, however, he devoted considerable space to this chapter, including a section in which he addressed the affinity of the Syriac and Chaldean languages to Hebrew. In his *Annotations* Melanchthon tends to follow a "headline" with a brief exposition. In one of his works on Romans, he declined to take up a specific question, remarking that he was not writing a commentary. The *Annotations* are occasionally staccato, with "headline" being formulated in his own words as, for instance, "Passages on trials" and "On the role of litigants." At other times, the "headline" may be a quotation from the text of the epistle (usually the Vulgate).

In a very brief introduction, entitled "The Argument of the Epistle," Melanchthon not only outlines the essential difference between 1 Corinthians and Romans, but also signals his hermeneutical approach and an interpretive posture when he notes that in this epistle "that topic which is of first rank," namely, the doctrine of justification by faith, "or the difference between the wisdom of the flesh and the wisdom of Spirit," is "rather neglected," and follows that notation by using Romans to supply that neglected doctrine.

Melanchthon's rhetorical construal of the hermeneutical principles demonstrates also here in 1 Corinthians his understanding of the apostle Paul as a rhetorician, noting his use of irony (69), his argument from difference (89), his use of the figures of speech (97), and the significance of Paul's grammatical construction and the word order in sentence structure.

We must express some disappointment that *iustitia* or *iusticia* is consistently translated with "justice" rather than the to-be-expected "righteousness." Similarly, *iniusticia* is translated with "injustice." Only when translations of Scripture are quoted is *iustitia* rendered with "righteousness." The rendering of *iusticia carnis* as "fleshly justice" is inadequate to express the distinction that Melanchthon makes between the righteousness that originates with man—outside the Gospel—and the one that comes from God in Christ Jesus.

In the technical aspects of proofreading, footnoting, and binding, the volume leaves much to be desired. For example, the Latin text reads *Ratris* instead of *Patris* (30); *nichil* in place of *nihil* (104); *idest* for *id est* (28). The footnotes are, at best, difficult to follow, with fourteen of them numbered "1" and eight of them numbered "13." Opening quotation marks without closing quotation marks (79) and vice versa (71) along with an inadequate binding bespeak the need for improvement.

In spite of the criticisms, it should be noted that this is a readable translation of Melanchthon's *Annotations* that follows the text faithfully, even if occasionally a bit pedantically. Melanchthon speaks English, particularly in his exegetical studies, with a considerable degree of difficulty because of his persistent usage of rhetorical and dialectical terminology, to say nothing of his dependence upon the theological formulations of the past. Lack of familiarity with that terminology should not, however, discourage anyone

from spending the time to work through this brief exposition of 1 Corinthians. Father Connelly has rendered a valuable service to those who are presently interested in the theology of the Praeceptor, as well as those who will be encouraged to become interested in his exegetical studies when those reformational, grammatical, and theological insights are made available in other than the original Latin text.

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Heaven on Earth: A Lutheran-Orthodox Odyssey. By Robert Tobias. Delhi, NY: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 1996. xi + 128 pages. Paperback.

"We did not know if we were in heaven or on earth," said the representatives of the Russian king. According to legend, an ancient Russian king sent visitors to the major religious centers of his day to find a church for his nation. The representatives who visited the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople (the Hagia Sophia) were so awed by the worship of the Orthodox church that they were moved to indicate that this was indeed what Russia needed, and hence, ever since, Russia has been predominately Russian Orthodox. So goes the legend. And like many reflections on Orthodoxy, legend and pious romanticizing of Orthodoxy often conflict with reality. That is the challenge of a book like the one Tobias has prepared.

Robert Tobias traces his own journey through Orthodoxy in this interesting little book. In it he provides an "anecdotal account" of his "experiences with Orthodox fellow Christians, mostly in East Europe but also in North America." The book is intended for students, lay persons, and pastors. Tobias is professor emeritus at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He served as Assistant Director of the Department of International Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches with special responsibilities for Eastern Europe and the Orthodox Churches. Beginning in 1983 he served as cochairman of the second round of the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialog in North America and co-authored the two volume report of that dialogue.

Orthodoxy has always held a special fascination for Lutherans. At the time of the Reformation there were efforts to reach out to the Orthodox. The three Answers sent from Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople to the Lutheran theologians of Tübingen have even found their way into the official confessional documents of the Orthodox Church, even though they are by no means formal creedal statements. This exchange of correspondence occurred from 1573–1581. The correspondence was on the basis of the Augsburg Confession, which was translated into Greek. Contact with the Orthodox was initiated in 1559 by none other than Philip Melanchthon, who is said to have sent a personal letter to the Orthodox Patriarch, Joseph II. From there followed the official exchange of correspondence that was eventually written in both Latin and Greek and gathered together under the title of *Acta et Scripta Theologorum Wirtembergensium et Patriarchae Constantinopolitani D. Hieremiae.* This collection of documents has been translated into English and is presently available in the volume titled *Augustine and Constantinople: The Correspondence between the Tübingen Theologians and Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople on the Augsburg Confession,* translated with notes by George Mastrantonis (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982).

There was a sincere effort made to establish unity between the two churches, but ultimately it failed. The Lutherans were attracted to the Orthodox church because it held to many ancient Christian doctrines, while it seemingly rejected many of the additions of the Medieval Roman church that the Lutherans were protesting. As a point of information, the Orthodox Patriarch's Answers is considered by Orthodox scholars to be the last presentation of Byzantine dogma before the scholastic method took hold among the Orthodox. The concluding thought offered in the modern English edition of the exchange is interesting: "It appears that the Orthodox underestimated the importance of Scripture and that the Lutherans underestimated Sacred Tradition" (17). The same could be said today.

If the reader is looking for an in-depth analysis of Orthodox doctrine and history, this is not the book for him. On the other hand, if the reader is interested in a delightful personal account of one man's nearly lifetime contact with Orthodoxy, this is the perfect choice. Tobias recounts impressions of his journey into Orthodoxy, both its theology and its ethnic traditions. It is a very sympathetic account, offering constant challenge to Western culture. For instance, recounting the custom in 1946 of families in Sofia, Bulgaria, taking an evening stroll from 5:30–8:00 each evening, Tobias records the answer to his request for an explanation of why all these people seemed to be so quiet and well-behaved, and lacked a sense of rush and urgency that he knew from Chicago. The answer: "Maybe it's because we're already where we're going." Tobias wonders aloud, "Was that an answer, or a riddle for deeper reflection?" (9). This is typical of the book, which seeks to balance Tobias's experiences in America with his encounters with Eastern Europe and Orthodoxy. Some may find this approach to be winsome, but this reader found it a bit tiresome. The book is a running apologia for Orthodoxy with constant slaps at Western Culture. Surely there is much to be concerned about in Western Culture, but it gets wearisome to have that culture held up to severe criticism and the culture of Eastern Europe and Orthodoxy placed on an unrealistic pedestal for constant praise.

Sweeping generalizations, with a nearly breathless enthusiasm for Orthodoxy, abound throughout the book. Here is but one example:

> Orthodox theologizing intends to let the Spirit flow freely, in participation, in knowing, in celebrating, and announcing, and that leave an openness both for deeper participation and for ever more lively and fresh interpretation (112).

That may all be well and good, but it might have made for a more realistic account had Tobias spent some time documenting the horrendous works-righteousness of Orthodoxy, or discussing how the many pious accretions in Orthodoxy have clouded a clear presentation of the Gospel. But as is typical of

persons who have contact with Orthodoxy more on "official" levels, or only in print, the theory of Orthodoxy is always much better than the actual working out of day-to-day Orthodox piety and practice. It would have made for a better-balanced approach if a realistic picture of Orthodoxy had been provided. Unfortunately, even confessional Lutherans are tempted to overlook the serious false doctrines and practices of Orthodoxy as they are swept up by the majesty and beauty of Orthodoxy's liturgical practices and customs. When faced with problems in their own church, they are tempted to look toward Orthodoxy as a solution because they are impressed by what they perceive to be a rich historical embrace of the church catholic. We suspect that the grass is always greener on the other side of every ecclesiastical fence. That is this reviewer's major criticism of the book.

Now for the good points. The book is well-written and holds the reader's interest. Tobias does a nice job of explaining Orthodox practices, from the Orthodox point of view. A case in point: icons.

> Functionally, icons do through our seeing what Scripture (the Word) does through our hearing. St. John Chrysostom reminds us that it is not an either/or matter; the Word is both visible and audible (31).

Lutherans would do well to recall that their heritage includes a rich use of liturgical art. Tobias notes,

> When my family and I returned to America after some years of work and worship in European churches, we felt upon re-entering American Protestant churches (Lutherans less than others) as if we were entering empty, sterilized, bare, depersonalized halls (32).

As we take a look at newer Lutheran churches being built, we can't help but wonder if we are not robbing ourselves of the riches of liturgical and ecclesiastical art in order to appeal to those Americans who are accustomed to "sterilized, bare, depersonalized halls." Compare, for instance, the beautiful art in Lutheran churches such as St. Paul Lutheran Church and Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, or the beautiful historic churches elsewhere in the Missouri Synod, to the "sterilized, depersonalized hall" that one finds in a typical "megachurch" today. It is difficult, if not impossible, to know that you are in a Lutheran church, as opposed to the non-denominational church down the street. That is truly sad.

Tobias's chapter on "Liturgy and the Clock" is very nicely done. He begins by recounting attending a funeral for Orthodox Patriarch Gavrilo in Belgrade in 1950 during which thousands of people stood outside in the rain—for four hours! The service lasted just that long, and the worshippers stood the entire time. From there he provides reflections on how Orthodox customs may help us to view time in something other than precise, punctual units, but in light of eternity. It might be a bit overstated, but it is worth thinking about. How many Lutheran congregations do whatever it takes to fit their service within a precise sixty minutes? How often have worshippers experienced a pastor announcing that portions of the communion liturgy will be skipped so that the service will end within an hour? If we feel that the Orthodox customs might be strange, imagine how they might feel about chopping apart the communion liturgy? Since when does the Lord's Supper have to be a convenient, "in-and-out" proposition?

The chapter on Scripture and Tradition begins with a rather romanticized notion of reading the Bible in a language that the listener cannot understand. Tobias attempts to convince the reader that even if the Scripture is being read in a totally unintelligible language, "in a much deeper sense" it is a "conversing across the centuries." This is romantic nonsense. The Sacred Scriptures themselves make it clear that intelligible language is the only suitable forum for the communication of the Word of God. Tobias tries to build a discussion of the place of tradition on the foundation of a defense of reading Scripture in an unknown language. It is not a good effort, especially since he ends up nearly apologizing for the Lutheran emphasis on Scripture by saying that with Lutheranism's

> history and concern about the necessity of objective norms for determining truth, church order, and personal conduct, it is perhaps not surprising that this struggle over authority would be at the start of nearly all of our contemporary Lutheran dialogues with Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Orthodox.

He offers a nice explanation of the Orthodox view of tradition, a view that might be helpful for Lutherans who sometimes wonder if perhaps in our emphasis on *sola Scriptura* we sometimes nearly go out of our way to separate ourselves from the historical continuity we enjoy with the church throughout the ages, a continuity that is recalled each time we gather with "angels and archangels and all the company of heaven" in praising our Lord who gives himself to us in his holy supper. The low level of awareness of the importance of continuity with the church catholic throughout the ages is appalling at times in Lutheran churches. We would do well to heed Tobias's cautions. There is ultimately no way, however, that a Lutheran Christian can ever accept traditions that are outside of the Scriptures and put them on the same level as Scripture. Examples of these are the various Marian traditions that are received among the Orthodox and in Rome, such as the legend of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven.

As this reviewer worked through Tobias's book, he continually was reminded of his own personal experiences with Orthodoxy: as a boy with Greek Orthodox friends in the Lutheran grade school, mystified by the weekly Greek lessons they took faithfully from their parish priest, but always enjoying their warm hospitality in their homes or at their annual Greek festival, or in the warmth of a cozy diner near our church, owned by the Greek Orthodox family in our school. And then later, as a teenager, standing in awe as the sights and sounds of Greek Orthodox liturgy filled eyes and ears, but even then sadly noting the near-idolatrous veneration of painted icons. Then, as a young man, visiting a good friend's Greek Orthodox church with my wife, able to follow the liturgy after pre-seminary Greek classes were taken, moved by the priest's translation of

his sermon into English for the sake of the obviously non-Greek persons in the crowd, a somewhat large Irishman and his obviously non-Greek wife. That Sunday happened to be the anniversary of the Nicene Creed, and the priest's message, in English, delivered while looking directly at us, reminded us all that we share a common confession of the Most Holy and Blessed Trinity and worship the same Lord and Savior of us all, Jesus Christ. Then, later in the service, a feeling of confusion as we observed the eucharist being received only by infants and very young children. Later, asking our gracious host why this was so, her response was, "Oh, because none of the rest of us were worthy to take communion that Sunday."

Reading Tobias's book brought back many fond memories of personal contacts with Orthodoxy, but also the same sense of sad separation from it. While we share so much in common, there are profound differences between us that cannot be explained away by different culture or other such relatively trivial reasons. Differences between Lutheranism and Orthodoxy will take years of continuing dialogue to resolve, if that will ever be possible. Until that day when there is indeed, by God's grace, agreement with the Orthodox in the gospel and all of its articles, we will remain separate from one another. We will, however, continue to rejoice in what we do share in common, and that is much more than one might think at first. Tobias's book helps the reader to sort out for himself what it is that we have in common and what there is that so clearly divides us. That is the useful purpose of this little book, which even contains a discussion guide to help the reader along.

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The Diary of a Missionary. By Ernst H. Wendland. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996. 319 pages. Paper.

Frustration. Fulfillment. Those two words seem to capture the essence of the journey on which Wendland asks us to accompany him through the first decade of his missionary work in Africa. Homely, newsy, intimate, and humorous, his *Diary* takes us outside to the sometimes frustrating mission field where cultures clash and governments drag their bureaucratic feet, at times to the point of blocking the best efforts of God's messengers. Then he brings us inside to the occasionally oppressive and obsessive thoughts and moods that are of a piece with contrapuntal feelings of joy when those same efforts result in souls won to Christ.

Although his admitted perspective is that of memoir and reminiscence, and we would agree that this effort is by no means a definitive work on missiology, there is much in it to commend itself both to those contemplating entrance into the field of foreign missions, and to the greater majority of us who appreciate something more than straightforward reporting of facts and figures. Occasional bits of wry humor stud the narrative, as when early on Wendland notes that, failing to find a city of Benton Harbor health commission seal for documents required by the Northern Rhodesian government, he followed the mayor's suggestion, used the water commissioner's seal, and found that his "entrance application was approved in record time" (10).

Wendland gets to the nitty-gritty of everyday life in a foreign mission field. It is that feature which, as he himself notes, suggests making this brief volume required reading for those either who are contemplating entering the field, or who are early in the answer to the call. He writes with easily apprehended emotion about sending his children one by one back to the States for their continuing education, the isolation that frequently brings with it bouts of near or actual depression, the furlough roller-coaster that often makes the return to the field more of a vacation than the vacation itself, and the overload that can beset the missionary when the field is short-handed as coworkers take their furloughs, accept calls back to the homeland, or find health a culpable cause for leaving the field.

He offers insight and opinion from his experiential vantage point that mission boards and their executives would do well to note. Early contacts with the Bleckmar mission team suggested that WELS had a great deal yet to learn in developing national ministries in target fields. He questions present policies that seem to place fiscal considerations at a greater priority than doors of opportunity being opened. He encourages those considering calls to foreign missions to view acceptance as a life-long commitment to ministry in that field. And both by precept and example, Wendland demonstrates the power and importance of the printed word in carrying out effective and efficient mission work.

This very readable and enjoyable excursion uses the format of diary entries for month and year, followed by expansion, introspection, and retrospection—a neat device enabling us to experience, albeit secondhand, the mind and heart of the missionary as well as his hands and feet. This is recommended reading for all those interested in a deeper understanding of life in the foreign mission field, and ought-to-be-required reading for men and their wives and families contemplating or entering upon work in the field.

William E. Staab
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Sharpening the Sword. By Stephen D. Hower. St. Louis: CPH, 1996. 390 pages. Hardcover.

This book seeks to provide "inspiration and motivation" by recounting the lives of fifty "famous men and women" as examples of courageous leadership. Each short biographical sketch is intended to "provide insight into a godly character trait substantiated in Scripture and useful for Christian study."

What author Stephen Hower gives with his right hand, however, he takes back with his left. On one hand, the examples are "famous men and women"; on the other hand, "not all the character sketches are about well-known Christians." Indeed, while Carol Hower may be popular in the author's household, it

strikes this reviewer as hubris to number her with Martin Luther and C. F. W. Walther. "Some of the men and women, it might be argued, were not even Christians," Hower states in the forward. The facts hardly can be argued with regard to Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, or Samuel Clemens. These men by their own admission were not Christians. They may be admired by Christians for whatever virtues they had, but those can hardly be called Christian virtues.

The Augsburg Confession states: "Saints should be kept in remembrance so that our faith may be strengthened when we see what grace they received and how they were sustained by faith" (AC XXI, 1). Hower will not be so limited. There are for him "God's natural principles at work" in the lives of such worldly successful men as Lee Iacoca, Sam Walton, Garth Brooks, and Henry Ford.

Not that Hower knows much about the lives he is sketching. His sole cited source for the chapter on Martin Luther is the children's biography *Martin Luther, Hero of Faith* (CPH, 1963). Given the wealth of material published on Luther, Hower's poverty is startling. He appears blissfully ignorant of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lincoln* by David Herbert Donald, or any other scholarly work on Lincoln. To be sure, any serious discussion of America's most revered president would not fit neatly into the hagiography that Hower intends. Ulysses S. Grant's *Memoirs is* by some accounts the finest presidential autobiography written. Hower's sources for Grant include a publication of the National Geographic Society and *The Encyclopedia Americana.*

Using popular biographies, coffee table pictorials, and *The Encyclopedia Americana* allows Hower the freedom to say whatever he wishes about his subjects without being troubled by the vagaries of events and personality. Lewis and Clark are examples of "A Spirit of Adventure" untroubled by Lewis's later suicide (see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West,* Simon and Schuster). Lincoln once said, "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me." Such dark fatalism, however, does not lend itself to Hower's cheery hero worship.

There is no theology to recommend in this work. Hower misconstrues the very purpose of Scripture. For him Scripture is not to teach Christ and faith but is to be reduced to principles of conduct. Those principles are of his own making. Only eisegesis can make Matthew 18: 1–3 support Dale Carnegie's principles of conflict resolution. It is the worst kind of scandal to join Hebrews 11:13–16 to Walt Disney's Jiminy Cricket.

The biblical-sounding title of this book is never explained. There is no need. This book is written for those who have little understanding of history and less of Scripture. It is ill-conceived in its purpose and fraudulent in its execution. It is to be feared that *Sharpening the Sword* is portentous and that in the 150th year of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, its once-proud publishing house will print anything for cold cash. If so, this will mean that the mission of the church has been sacrificed to the market. Lord have mercy on us all.

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The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan Horse in America. By Alvin J. Schmidt. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997. 211 pages. Hardcover. $39.95.

Dr. John Warwick Montgomery dedicated a book entitled *How Do We Know There Is a God? And Other Questions Inappropriate in Polite Society* to Alvin Schmidt "who, like Socrates, loves awkward questions." Schmidt's whole academic life has revolved around awkward questions inappropriate in polite society, the latest of which is the issue of multiculturalism.

Schmidt defines multiculturalism "as a leftist political ideology that sees all cultures, their mores and institutions, as essentially equal" (3). He writes:

> Multiculturalism's values clarification, or multi-morality, is both wrong and dangerous. It preaches that the Ten Commandments are at best only one system of morality and that ultimately any behavior is acceptable, as long as it has some group or subcultural support. Thus no group's or culture's behavior may be criticized, much less penalized. The end result of such a system is moral anarchy (187).

The author notes, however, that multiculturalism must not be confused with multicultural education. "If multiculturalism merely taught individuals about the contributions other cultures have made to American culture, there would be no problem" (10). But Schmidt goes on to point out that multiculturalists ignore the negative aspects of other cultures and report only those customs that make minority cultures look good. The inhumane cultural practices of the Indians, cannibalism and human sacrifices, are ignored by the multiculturalists. "All cultures, subcultures, and even countercultural groups are looked upon as essentially equal" (26). There is one exception, however. "The Euro-American culture with its Judeo-Christian underpinnings is not only criticized but often condemned, being accused of racism, sexism, and classism by the multiculturalists" (3).

Schmidt leaves no stone unturned as he compiles an immense amount of information on the deceit, dishonesty, and fraud being promoted and practiced under the name of multiculturalism. He warns American students of this Trojan horse that would destroy traditional American institutions and values.

The book cites numerous illustrations that show how multiculturalism is a modern Trojan horse and that Americans neither see nor understand the danger it hides. Chapter 2 alerts the reader to the many false portraits of multiculturalism that have been put before the public to gain acceptance. Chapter 3 focuses on the Marxist and neo-Marxist assumptions that are operative in multiculturalism. Chapter 4 attempts to disprove the claims of multiculturalists that all cultures are of equal value. Chapter 5 shows how multiculturalists damn facts of history. Chapter 6 shows that the concept of diversity is not diversity at all, but a form of reverse bigotry. Chapter 7 focuses on the apostles of multiculturalism who are seriously engaged in changing the nation's mode of thought and speech by forcing individuals to conform to "politically correct" ideology. Chapter 8 shows the havoc multiculturalism has created in countries like Canada. Chapter 9 points out how multiculturalism's premises of moral

and cultural relativity even threaten the traditional nuclear family by rejecting the Judeo-Christian code of sexual morality that has been the foundation of the traditional family for thousands of years. Chapter 10 shows how multiculturalism would purge Christian symbols from all public properties. Chapter 11 shows how many liberal educational administrators, unwary business executives, zealous governmental bureaucrats, and unsuspecting church leaders have aided multiculturalism. The final chapter urges Americans to fight for their country's soul.

Many multiculturalists seem to be plagued by the white man's guilt. But Schmidt shows how multiculturalism, rather then ending prejudice and bigotry, has created new forms of it. Multiculturalists would do well to remember a remark by the great Vince Lombardi. When asked one day how many blacks were on the great Packer teams of the '60s, Lombardi replied, "None. Here we only have Packers."

Schmidt points out how even the Christian churches are climbing on the bandwagon of multiculturalism. He writes,

> [T]his is not surprising for the liberal churches, but what is surprising is that even conservative churches, out of ignorance and credulity, are also climbing on the bandwagon of multiculturalism. The LCMS president has written, "We are truly being called to be a multicultural church body and all that implies" (172).

It might also be pointed out that even the Wisconsin Synod is now on this multicultural vogue. Recently they have introduced an educational program entitled "Preparing for Ministry: The WELS Muticultural Preseminary Program." In view of what Schmidt writes and documents on mulitculturalism, someone, uninformed about the theology of the Wisconsin Synod, could wonder whether this synod is now opening its ministry to pantheistic beliefs, Marxism, homosexuals and lesbians, and even offering courses in "queer theory."

We are sure that the leaders in both the WELS and LCMS do not know what multiculturalism is and does. They are using the term only in the sense of wanting to teach the gospel to other cultures. A better term to use would be cross-cultural education.

Multiculturalism must be looked upon as a negative term for orthodox Lutherans. By way of example, take the term "neo-orthodoxy." This can be viewed as a good term and understood as trying to teach the doctrines of the "Age of Orthodoxy" (sixteenth and seventeenth century) to our age. But this is not the way the term is used today! And no orthodox Lutheran church would ever dream of using the term "neo-orthodoxy" to describe any of its ministerial educational programs.

Schmidt writes:

> Multiculturalists favor "multi" cultural practices only so long as they are not Western or Euro-American. The "big tent" that multiculturalists talk about evidently has no room for norms or values that have a biblical basis. The behavior of zealous multiculturalists frequently resembles that of a political purge as they seek to eradicate the natural/moral law that underlies Euro-American (Western) morality. They also do their utmost to bar or expunge from the public square all biblical symbols, especially those identified with Christianity. They are even beginning to harass Christians (141).

A conservative church body that understands and knows what multiculturalism is all about would never think of having a program called "multicultural." We would encourage church leaders to get a copy of this book, read and study it. Ignorance, now, can be no excuse!

The book can well be looked upon as a commentary of Psalm 11:

> I have taken refuge in the LORD.
> How can you say to me:
> "Flee to your mountain like a bird?
> Wicked people bend their bows.
> They set their arrows against the strings
> to shoot in the dark at people whose motives are decent.
> When the foundations of life are undermined,
> what can a righteous person do?"
>
> The LORD is in his holy temple.
> The LORD's throne is in heaven.
> His eyes see.
> They examine Adam's descendants.
> The LORD tests righteous people,
> but he hates wicked people and the ones who love violence.
> He rains down fire and burning sulfur upon wicked people.
> He makes them drink from a cup filled with scorching wind.
>
> The LORD is righteous.
> He loves a righteous way of life.
> Decent people will see his face.

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Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. xxxiv + 409 pages.

In both its breadth and its depth of coverage, *Exploring the Gospel of John* qualifies nicely as a volume worthy of its honoree. Twenty essays from a multinational assembly of seasoned scholars touch on practically the entire expanse of what is happening in the study of St. John's Gospel today.

An introductory essay by Robert Kysar treats "The Contribution of D. Moody Smith to Johannine Scholarship." Part 1 of the volume treats the history and character of the Johannine community and includes essays by Marianne Meye Thompson ("The Historical Jesus and the Johannine Christ"), W. D. Davies ("Reflections on Aspects of the Jewish Background of the Gospel of John"), James H. Charlesworth ("The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel according to John"), Peder Borgen

("The Gospel of John and Hellenism: Some Observations"), and J. Louis Martyn ("A Gentile Mission That Replaced an Earlier Jewish Mission?"). Part 2 deals with the traditions of the Fourth Gospel and includes essays by Johannes Beutler, S.J. ("The Use of 'Scripture' in the Gospel of John"), C. K. Barrett ("The Parallels between Acts and John"), and Fernando Segovia ("The Tradition History of the Fourth Gospel"). Part 3 considers the literary aspects of John's Gospel and includes essays by R. Alan Culpepper ("Reading Johannine Irony"), Eduard Schweizer ("What about the Johannine 'Parables'?), C. Clifton Black ("'The Words That You Gave to Me I Have Given to Them': The Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric"), and Beverly Roberts Gaventa ("The Archive of Excess: John 21 and the Problem of Narrative Closure"). Part 4 considers the theology of the Fourth Gospel and includes essays by Paul W. Meyer ("'The Father': The Presentation of God in the Fourth Gospel"), Leander E. Keck ("Derivation as Destiny: 'Of-ness' in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology"), Stephen S. Smalley ("'The Paraclete': Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse"), and James D. G. Dunn ("John and the Synoptics as a Theological Question"). Part 5 treats the appropriation of the proclamation of the Gospel of John and includes essays by Wayne A. Meeks ("The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist"), Hans Weder *("Dens Incarnatus:* On the Hermeneutics of Christology in the Johannine Writings"), and John Painter ("Inclined to God: The Quest for Eternal Life—Bultmanian Hermeneutics and the Theology of the Fourth Gospel").

Included also are a list of congratulators whose doctoral dissertations were directed by Smith at Duke University, a *Cursus Vitae,* and a selected bibliography of Smith's published works (from 1963–1995). Indices of scripture and other ancient sources, of ancient terms (Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, and Latin), and of modern authors are also provided. This is a "must-see" collection of essays for anyone who is interested in the contemporary study of St. John's Gospel.

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St. Louis, Missouri

Bible in the Pulpit. By Pastor William P. Grunow. Mukilteo, WA: WinePress Publishing, 1997. $24.99.

That books dealing with preaching should appear constantly is to be expected, since the proclamation of the gospel is basic to any definition of Christianity. A pious desire to further biblical preaching need not involve the reinvention of the liturgical wheel, however. This book seeks the former by suggesting the latter.

Basic to Pastor Grunow's approach is a reworking of the church year. Gone is the Epiphany season, replaced by a four- to seven-week "Royal" season and a two-week "Vineyard" season. The season of Pentecost is likewise truncated to make room for a thirteen-week "Covenant" season and a "Victory" season of variable length with which to close the church year. In view of this massive reordering, Pastor Grunow's own words concerning change are interesting: "Ad hoc tampering with the calendar for the observance of special days is an ancient and endless temptation. In the heat of enthusiasm for a cause, the permanent insertion of a certain observance may seem justified. From the objective viewpoint, it is more likely to lead to atomization than to a balanced wholeness" (24). It would seem that the author has fallen victim to his own warning.

For any given Sunday approximately twenty pericopes are listed. One is immediately struck by the grand "leveling" effect of these selections. Absent is any indication that the Gospels are the word of God in a sense in which the Epistles and Old Testament can never be. That the Gospels contain the very words of Jesus and thus demand pre-eminence is nowhere suggested. Under Grunow's approach every portion of the Bible is on the same level: equally accessible, equally applicable. But the church has always recognized the Gospel as setting the tone for any particular Sunday and thus becoming *the* word of God that is to be preached at the Divine Service.

One looks in vain for the ancient feasts of saints and apostles. There is, however, provision for "Decision Sunday," "Scripture Sunday," "Sensible Sunday," "Ceremony Sunday," and more. Should one ponder such choices, let one consider the author's description of the ancient designation *Septuagesima*: "There is plenty of room for such nomenclature in the dustbin of religious history" (97). Some might consider such a statement rather arrogant. Some might be right.

As problematic as what is contained in this volume is what is ignored. The reader will search in vain for any mention of the Sacrament of the Altar. The author states:

> this volume expedites the transition down to the altar, where God's people express their response to His Word. At the altar they are helped to offer petitions and praises with sacrifices of love and devotion.

"Down" to the altar? "Express their responses?" Is not the altar the seat of God's presence among His people? Is not the Eucharist the goal and culmination of our preaching? After all, in preaching we come no closer to our Lord than the spoken word while in the Sacrament he becomes part of us and we a part of him. Reformed theology, which envisions only a memorial meal, may exist very nicely apart from the Lord's Supper, but not so Lutheranism. In the words of Luther, "this sacrament is the gospel." Hermann Sasse makes the same point perhaps even more pointedly when he refers to the Lord's Supper as "the heartbeat of the church."

Pastor Grunow undertakes a laudable goal—to improve the preaching of his fellow pastors. Goal and reality, however, do not meet. This volume will not lead one to a higher level of word and sacrament ministry within the congregation. Rather, it is an attempt at worship innovation that, by cutting the ties to ancient usages, floats dangerously close to the sparse atmosphere of enthusiasm.

Dean M. Bell
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Evolution is not Scientific: Thirty-Two Reasons Why. By Albert Sippert. North Mankato, Minnesota: Sippert Publishing Company.

In the not-so-distant future you and I will be attending the funeral of the evolutionary theory. It has already fallen into disregard as wilder and wilder theories are organized to fill in the gaps that evolution leaves after more and more information is unearthed. But while you and I throw the last shovel full of dirt upon its grave, people like Pastor Sippert of the Church of the Lutheran Confession will be already digging the grave of the next intellectual innovation that stands in opposition to the truth. They will be far ahead of us, even as Satan himself is ahead of us.

For the most part there is a spirit of timidity among the saints as they seek to deal with the issues the evolutionist raises, not only in the class room but in society as a whole. But you will find no such spirit in this book. Emboldened by a considerable amount of data and scientific research, Rev. Albert Sippert takes the stage in the open debate with the evolutionist theory. It is a heartening book!

In true wisdom Sippert looks past the surface arguments to the presuppositions behind them. He does a good job of ferreting out the spirit as well as the letter. Replete with lengthy quotes from the mouths of his opposition, Sipper keeps his finger on the scientific issues at heart. And, speaking in the language of the "average person," Pastor Sippert brings his points home with steady and solid presentation that most with a cursory knowledge of creation can well understand.

One point Pastor Sippert comes to again and again is the absolute denial the evolutionary community is in over the scientific contribution the Christian revelation brings to this discussion. When the Christian revelation answers a legitimate question of creation, the evolutionist can conjure up the craziest, wildest theory to avoid the parallel with the Christian response, and yet will ridicule the Christian response as superstitious and spurious.

For example, the question is raised about the massive amounts of water that cover the earth. Sippert quotes, as he often likes to do, the *Minneapolis Tribune*. The following is under his discussion on the events of the tremendous flood found in the Biblical record in the days of Noah.

> Scientists [rather, evolutionists] from the University of Iowa have proposed a startling new theory of how water accumulates on the earth and other planets. They believe that small icy comets, never before detected, are hurling into the earth's atmosphere at the rate of twenty comets a minute, releasing water in hundred-ton quantities that over billions of years provided enough water to create the oceans.

Sippert wryly comments: "It is odd how evolutionists will concoct one theory after another, even if they are not rational and so long as they do not agree with the Bible."

Illustrations such as these are legion in his book. They add a touch of humor to the work. Perhaps its even therapeutic to have a good laugh at what is sometimes touted as fact.

Pastor Sippert is not ashamed to state that the Christian revelation is a matter of Christian faith. It gives rational answers to many questions about our world, but does not answer them all. His point is truly to show evolution as a religion, even as Christianity is one itself. Thus he is of the unique view that creationism and evolution should not be taught side by side, but that neither should be considered for scientific study.

The title of this book is a bit laborious and so also the reading at points. Some points are made with great repetition and the piling up of words. But by the same token no stone is left unturned. From separation of church and state to aliens in outer space, from the ancient Egyptians to the landing on the moon, and from Isaac Asimov to talk show interviews, he covers it all. It is a marvelous work. It will serve the church well, as well as those simply interested in the pursuit of truth.

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Briefly Noted

The Beauty and the Bands. Edited by John R. Fehrmann, Daniel Preus, and Bruce Lukas. Crestwood, MO: Luther Academy, 1995.

The Beauty and the Bands is a collection of essays on the proper distinction of the law from the gospel. Included in this volume are essays given at the 1995 *Congress on the Lutheran Confessions* by Michael Horton ("Calvin and the Law-Gospel Hermeneutic"), Robert Kolb ("Law and Gospel in the Lutheran Confessions"), Robert Preus ("Law and Gospel in the Early Lutheran Dogmatics"), Wilhelm Peterson ("Effective Law and Gospel Preaching"), Ulrich Asendorf ("Old and New Antinomianism"), Jonathan Grothe ("Law and Gospel and Life in the Argument of Romans"), Arnold Koelpin ("Law and Gospel in Counseling"), Ronald Feuerhahn ("Hermann Sasse on Law and Gospel"), and Kurt Marquart ("Law/Gospel and Church Growth"). A sample citation from Grothe's essay should whet your appetite to read this book: "Law kills. Gospel makes alive. The alive-making Gospel happens on Calvary, in Baptism, and on the Last Day. And in between 'Baptism into Church' and 'resurrection to life everlasting' there is in the creed only one thing: forgiveness of sins. No 'good works,' no 'Christian ethics.' The silence screams. For the *opinio legis* ever whispers: 'Yes, but . . . how you behave is what's really important! After all, where is the evidence of the Gospel's power in your life? But my true life is Christ's and it is now hid in God. The marks of the Gospel power in me are Baptism and the forgiveness of sins, which give comfort and hope in my struggle. The power in what God gives is *eis soterian,* unto salvation" (145–146).

A Cup of Cold Water: A Look at Biblical Charity. Edited by Robert Rosin and Charles Arand. St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publications, 1996.

Both the Old and New Testaments contain many passages that direct believers to express charity toward the neighbor in need. Over the centuries the church has attempted to live out these scriptural mandates in concrete ways. The Biblical Charity Continuing Education program, administered by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, engaged theologians to prepare this volume of essays to assist pastors and congregations in thinking through the issues involved in teaching and practicing biblical charity, sometimes referred to as "social or human care ministry." Chapters include "Models for Biblical Charity" (Michael Totten), "An Old Testament Foundation for New Testament Charity" (Andrew Bartelt), "Biblical Charity: What Does It Entail and How Does It Relate to the Gospel: A New Testament Perspective" (James Voelz), "Charity in the Early Church" (Quentin Wesselschmidt), "Bringing Forth Fruits: Luther on Social Welfare" (Robert Rosin), "Considering Biblical Charity within a Creedal Framework" (Charles Arand), "Educating for Charity" (John Oberdeck), and "Biblical Charity and the Liturgical Life of the Church" (Timothy Quill).

The essays in *A Cup of Cold Water: A Look at Biblical Charity* provide clear biblical, confessional/catechetical, and liturgical rationale for the practice of charity within the context of an evangelical understanding of the Christian's vocation in the world.

Luther Digest 1997. Edited by Kenneth Hagen. Crestwood, MO: Luther Academy, 1997.

This is the fifth volume in "an annual abridgment of Luther studies." Abridgments in *Luther Digest 1997* are grouped under five major headings: *Sacra Scriptura*, The Pastoral Luther, Luther and Special Issues, Luther and the Past, and *Theosis* Revisited.

JTP

Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

Twentieth-Century Indulgences

Indulgence is no substitute for forgiveness. That the two are not synonymous was becoming apparent by 1517. While it had not become altogether clear in his expression at that early date, Luther complained about sins being "indulged" rather than being borne. He came later to make even more explicit the distinction between indulgence and forgiveness.

By the time of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, a clarification about indulgences was made, "But that eternal punishments are not remitted except on account of the compensation rendered by certain traditions or by purgatory, Scripture does not teach. Indulgences were formerly remission of these public observances, so that men should not be excessively burdened. But if, by human authority, satisfactions and punishments can be remitted, this compensation, therefore, is not necessary by divine Law; for a divine Law is not annulled by human authority. Furthermore, since the custom has now of itself become obsolete, and the bishops have passed by it in silence, there is no necessity for these remissions. And yet the name *indulgences* remained. And just as satisfactions were understood not with reference to the compensation of punishment, so indulgences were incorrectly understood to free souls from purgatory" (Ap VI, 78).

Unsatisfactory, perhaps—but indulgences have not altogether disappeared nearly five hundred years later. Shades of Johann Tetzel echoing his jingles still cause coins to ring in coffers with the promise of indulgence. People who imagine their sins are not so weighty as to condemn them are prone to believe the preachments of those who claim to relieve them from a temporal purgatory, albeit in this life. They resonate with those who create services weekly for them whenever they prefer to indulge themselves rather than to seek forgiveness. There are so many consumers with cash gifts in hand to pay for these twentieth-century indulgences that the Sistine chapel could be recreated and furnished several times over.

In the matter of indulgences, the Reformation presses on. It will continue to do so as long as the sinful nature, turned inward on itself, seeks indulgence rather than forgiveness.

JAB

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Ecumenical Council for Practical Christianity

A sermon by Hermann Sasse originally printed in Law and Gospel *(December 1936), translated by David Scaer.*

The question of the law and the gospel was one of those important issues which disrupted the unity of the western church in the sixteenth century. Luther had again and again claimed that the inability to distinguish the law from the gospel was at that time the real and most serious problem of the Roman Church and its theology. How the law and the gospel were to be divided was not only decisive in bringing about the eventual separation of the Church of the Reformation from the papacy, but more significantly, how this question was to be resolved has, since the Reformation, prevented Protestant churches from attaining organizational unity among themselves.

Certainly the important differences on social ethics as they surfaced at the World Conference of Churches in Stockholm cannot be merely be understood as theoretical differences among scholars on how the Reformation period should be interpreted. With so many different interpretations afloat of what is meant by the word *gospel,* it becomes clear that the old controversy on how the law and gospel should be defined is still an unresolved problem.

No real progress has been made since the 1500s. Matters at the Stockholm conference came to a head in responses made by two clerics to two sermons which had been preached there.

An American theologian did not mince words in saying in public that the sermon delivered by Bishop Ihmels was the most unchristian one he had ever heard. A German theologian responded in like kind to a sermon delivered by Bishop of Winchester. Lurking behind this locking of horns was the old controversy of what is meant by the law and the gospel. Any attempted consensus in resolving the conflict would not only have to serve as a formal basis for a working unity among the churches, but would have to affect the public posture of the churches individually. A formal doctrinal agreement among the churches would require an agreement in church practice.

From the very beginning I want to be up front in what my intentions are. The following propositions make no claim to lay down that kind of a basis for the consensus which is needed to resolve this problem. It does not lay down the foundation for unity. Quite to the contrary, I am calling for an examination of what issues are really at stake. By focusing on foundational questions, I propose to set forth a basis of examining the old question of the relationship between the law and the gospel in proper perspective. My purpose will be achieved if this whole matter is publicly discussed and leads to a productive exchange of ideas.

Since the time when the church entered the stream of history, it has appeared to the world as a complicated enigma, a riddle without a solution. Here are some of the questions. What is the distinct character of the church of Jesus Christ? What place does it occupy in history? How can the church's claims be rationalized and what are proper responses to them? At what point can the question of what the church is be broached? Government officials in every country and state where the church is found have to face the question of what the church is. We are not the first ones to asks these questions. Since the time of Justin and Clement, of Celsus and Porphyrus, philosophers have had to face them. Various modern scholarly disciplines, including historical research, psychology, sociology, and the scientific study of religion [*Religionswissenschaft*], have examined the phenomena associated with the church in an attempt to provide a definition.

So far no government has found an answer to the question of what the church is, and it seems unlikely that any scientific discipline will have more success. "Their conclusions in defining the church conflict with each other." What is the reason for their failing to come up with an answer? The answer obviously lies in the simple fact that there are no real analogous organizations which can serve as a standard or norm by which the church can be compared. Since comparisons are necessary in making definitions, it is impossible to define the church. The discipline of comparative religions, as the name indicates, compares the church with other religions. Its claims for revelation can be placed alongside the beliefs and teachings of the other great world religions. The methods used in the history of religions and sociology can be used in placing the earliest forms of Christianity alongside Hellenistic gnostic cults.

This can be expanded to make other comparisons. A catholic church in its development can be compared with the "people" of Islam. The same can be done between the social culture of the Christian history of religion [*Sozialbildungen der christlichen Religionsgeschichte*] with the corresponding Asiatic world religions which appeared at that time. Recognizable parallels are easy to come by. It takes a bit of daring to take standards of the school of the history of religions, which are so obviously human conceptions, and then to use them in examining the phenomena associated with the church.

At first glance such a scholarly approach holds out the promise of providing a definition of the church and what its essence is. This approach promises to deliver more than it actually does and soon proves to be deceptive. While for some phenomena connected with Christianity, some parallels can be found, for others there is neither an explanation nor a comparison. In what is beyond explanation, where there are no parallels in the history of religion (comparative religions) or in how religious associations are structured, the mystery of the church's essence is hidden. One way out of the dilemma of explaining why the unique phenomena of the church are beyond explanation is to take refuge in the Latin axiom "*Individuum est ineffabile* ("What is distinctive or unique is beyond definition").

Unique individuality is not uncommon to history. This still leaves the problem by finding an answer for an historical definition, since the unique individuality of something living—like the church—cannot be so easily explained. Florenski once said that the inability to come to a definition of what the church is demonstrates its living character. Looking for the answer of what makes the church the church simply goes beyond the limits of the scientific study of the history of religions and examining the structure of other human organizations. It must be conceded from the start that if the church is constituted by what its members believe, its rituals, and its organizational structure, then the church should be studied along with other religious organizations who also have statements of what they believe and rituals.

This approach leads to only one conclusion: the church's essence is then not really distinctive. In this case the Christian church is only a peculiar or idiosyncratic historical phenomenon, as defined by the history of religions. But another such phenomenon resembling the church simply does not exist. The church has no parallels. There are no Jewish, Parsees (followers of Soroaster), Manichean, Mohammedan, or Buddhist churches. There is no church of Mithra. For the church is the body of Christ. She is not only called, but really is the body of Christ; she is the people of God in the same way that she is temple of the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as the body of Mohammed or of Buddha, or a body of Serpis or Mithra. Only under the presupposition that Jesus Christ is really the Son of God, who for the sake of us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was really made man, can the church be the church. The church is church only because what the ancient creed says about the person of Jesus Christ, his birth, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension, is really true. If all these things were not true, or to drag up an old saying, these things are no more or less significant than any other good story.

In this case the church, as we understand it, simply does not exist. The church has no other response for explaining the rea-

son for the world's failure to understand what she really is than by pointing out that the world does not believe in Christ. What the church believes about herself is dependent on what she believes about Jesus. If non-Christians know nothing of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, how could they possibly recognize his actual and personal presence in the world through the church? Does the church have a way of proclaiming the mystery of her existence in the world other than by proclaiming the presence of her exalted Lord? What the church is can only be done by confessing Christ. Woe to the church that seeks a way other than confessing Christ to gain the world's attention.

The New Segregation

Didn't our parents raised us to understand that all races are equal? Those delegates who hold this conviction voted against the resolution at the 1995 Synodical Convention to restructure the Commission for Black Ministry into a separate standing Board for Black Ministry (which has an altogether different agenda from the Board for Colored Missions once known in our church).

This resolution for the empowerment of a board was defeated in the first round, but was brought up a second time with the appeal and intimation that some injustice had been committed—in particular, that Robert Clancy had not had the chance to speak in favor of the resolution. In the discussion that ensued, the concern was raised time and again that we did not want the synod splintered into so many special interest groups, each with its own sectarian style of worship, separate hymnal, and distinct beliefs. We would rather see commissions and groups working together so that we could come to a common agreement, united in heart, mind, and voice. Nevertheless, a second vote overturned the first, and now the trouble that we feared is coming to pass.

There is a Black Lutheranism being promoted in the LCMS that does as much injustice to African Americans as it does to Lutheranism. Proponents of this movement in St. Louis, Fort Wayne, and elsewhere are promoting a hymnal, a style of worship, and revivals that only further divide us, obscuring law and gospel.

Can there really be such a thing as "Black Lutheranism"? The Christianity that many enslaved African nobles came to know here in the land of their abuse was that of the Methodists and Baptists. Mixed with the views of the holiness movements that had their roots in these reformed theologies, these persecuted people from another continent became enslaved twice over. Not only were they stolen from their homeland and cruelly subjugated to harsh treatment; they were also exposed to the kind of religion that does a greater violence to one's soul, enslaving it under the obedience of the law.

There were, however, committed confessional African American Lutherans like Rosa J. Young. In her autobiography, *Light in the Dark Belt,* she wrote about difficult times for the school she had begun and the help she found: "In the fall of 1914, when the time came to open our school, things looked very dark. Business was dull, and World War I had broken out. The enrollment in the school fell, and we were obliged to dismiss one of our teachers. The people had very little cash. We were obliged to accept farm products in payment of tuition. These I had hauled to Camden and sold for what I could get in order to secure money with which to pay our teachers in part. We fell so far behind in paying salaries that our music teacher was compelled to resign at Christmas."

Rosa had been turned down time and again for assistance. Things looked very bleak. She thought she would have to close the school, but wanted to give it one more try: "That night when I returned home, I prayed and prayed and prayed. Then I decided that I would write one more letter and if no relief came then, I would close the school. Now that letter was to go to Dr. Booker T. Washington, our great leader. I wrote Dr. Washington that I felt that he had as much as he could look after in the operation of the Tuskegee Institute; all, therefore, that I asked of him was to give me the names of some individual or association in the North that he thought would help me keep my school alive. The next day I mailed my letter, and then I prayed and waited for an answer.

"At last, one day a letter came from Tuskegee Institute signed by Booker T. Washington himself. In this letter he told me he was unable to help me in the least; but he would advise me to write to the Board of Colored Missions of the Lutheran Church. He said they were doing more for the colored race than any other denomination he knew of. He liked them because of the religious training which they were giving the colored people. He gave me the address of Rev. Christopher F. Drewes."

Rosa expressed her love for Lutheran hymnody and Luther's Catechism. She abandoned the kind of worship for which black boards and convocations are now clamoring, even when it meant that she had a hard time getting something to eat or finding a place to sleep. Rosa was ostracized for being Lutheran, but she never tried to make Lutheran revivals so that African Americans would feel more comfortable with worship. What would she have said to promoting a Black Lutheran hymnal and a non-geographical black district that took on the forms and styles of those who persecuted her?

What a disservice "Black" Lutheranism renders the gospel! It promotes a rift between the members of our synod, instigating devilish tricks of setting one race against another with innuendoes and inflammatory language, parading words like "power" and "rights." Spin doctors twist the historical liturgy into a semblance of white Aryan oppression, rather than consider its true roots, parts of which actually have their origin in North Africa. It is a fallacy of the worst order to advance the idea that a particular race has a monolithic view or style of worship and that certain styles of worship are oppressive on the basis of their ethnic origin.

Those who tout the Black hymnal and a Black non-geographical district are not speaking gospel words that build people together, live in forgiveness, and soothe the troubled soul. Rather, they are the words of exclusivistic separatism. Are we not indeed seeing the political advancement of a "Black Lutheranism" that is simply a repackaging of the kind of self-actualization theological aggrandizement of feminism, libera-

tionism, secularism, and evangelicalism? May the Lord deliver and preserve us from that yoke of bondage that exalts oneself in worship rather than being served freely by Christ in the Divine Service and his gifts.

JAB

Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education

About four years ago, Zion Lutheran School became Zion Lutheran Academy. Initially, the idea was implemented by emphasizing discipline and the wearing of uniforms, but it has become something much more than that. Taking a cue from Dorothy Sayers's *The Lost Tools of Learning,* and having been introduced to Douglas Wilson's *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* and Gene Veith's articles on the Trivium, we began to rediscover a classical Lutheran education that has more to do with renaissance than reform.

Working in conjunction with Dr. Veith of Concordia University, Mequon, Wisconsin, we are forming a new organization that eventually will feature a quarterly newsletter and summer workshops. If you are interested in such an organization, please write us at CCLE, Zion Lutheran Academy, 2313 S. Hanna St., Fort Wayne, IN 46803.

We hope to draw together a meeting of the minds in everything from Latin and literature to classical music and the Catechism. The following four pillars listed below provide an idea of the direction in which we are moving:

A Liberal Arts Education. The term "liberal" comes from the Latin word *libera,* meaning "freedom." For ancient Greeks and Romans, a liberal education was necessary for a human being to be free. Vocational training was reserved for slaves, no matter what race or nationality they came from. We are devoted to instructing free citizens who require an education that enlarges the mind, cultivates civic virtue, and develops the full human potential. We emphasize the humanities with a strong music program and encourage it through theater and concert hall family excursions.

A Classical Renaissance Education. Educational reformers talk about going back to "basics"—but what does this mean? In practice today, "critical thinking" often means nothing more than applied skepticism, tearing down traditional values and authority without proper attention to formal logic or common sense. It is not enough for children to read well; they must also be well-read. We introduce children to the world's great literature, instruct them in Latin, with the intent that they discover how best to think and speak creatively. We retain phonics for the early grades through curricula like *The Writing Road to Reading,* and emphasize the understanding of sentence structure from the earliest ages with *The Shurley Method* instead of relying on whole language techniques.

A Traditional Lutheran Education. The six chief parts of the Christian faith—The Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and Holy Communion—are taught from Holy Scripture, which is the sum and substance of our hymns, liturgy, and Luther's catechisms. We see the Bible as not only the rule and norm for all belief and life, but also as the Word that actually gives us life by the working of the Holy Spirit, who comes through the gift of holy baptism.

A Technological Education. Technology changes so quickly and can seem overwhelming. Christian children today need to know how to use computers in a way that integrates the three previous pillars. Computers are used to teach keyboarding skills, accelerated reading, internet research, and multimedia projects. As Neil Postman aptly demonstrates in his book *Technopoly,* one does not learn what it means to be human nor grasp the significant questions of the ages merely by learning to manipulate a computer.

If you are interested in the investigation and development of such an education for your Lutheran grade school in association with other like-minded pastors, teachers, and parents, be sure to write us. We'll keep you informed!

Reconciling the Reconcilers

"In the eleventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance."

So says Dr. Walther in his fifteenth thesis in *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel.* To do such a thing turns the hearer back upon his own devices—his own repentance (or what he imagines to be repentance)—and leaves him in such a state that he is either forever attempting to fulfill what he understands to be his role in achieving the gospel, or deludes himself into thinking that he is repentant enough before God, or despairs of the whole matter and abandons himself to a life of unrepentant sinfulness.

I greatly fear that in the Missouri Synod's Synodical Dispute Resolution, which was adopted at the Pittsburgh Convention in 1992, the gospel was turned into a "preaching of repentance."

In the Synodical Dispute Resolution, the process of adjudication formerly used in the synod and her districts is replaced by something new—the office of "Reconciler." The synodical or district reconcilers function as the gate-keepers to the Dispute Resolution Panel, which itself is composed of "Reconcilers." In essence, the "Reconcilers," either individually or corporately, as the Dispute Resolution Panel have the binding power to decide disputes in synod without further appeal.

Clearly, the "Reconcilers" operate within the realm of the law, which is to say, the realm of repentance and condemnation. So why are they called "Reconcilers"?

The term "Reconciler" seems to have been taken from 2 Corinthians 5, where variants of "reconcile" are used no fewer than five times. Indeed, in the Preamble to the Synodical Dispute Resolution, the last bit of 2 Corinthians 5:18 is cited: "ministry of reconciliation." The issue is this: Is the Synodical Dispute Resolution, with its Dispute Resolution Panel and office of Reconciler, related (other than tangentially) to the biblical teaching of reconciliation?

What does the word "reconciliation" as we find it in Scripture mean? The natural starting place in this discussion is the passage mentioned in the Synodical Dispute Resolution. In 2 Corinthians 5:18 (and throughout this chapter) we find variants of the Greek

καταλλάσσω. What does καταλλάσσω mean? To reconcile, surely, but with a profound sense of *exchanging.* The Greek will not bear the English sense of reconciliation, which may mean making compromise with, or even acquiescing to the position of the other party in dispute. But it is precisely this sense of the word that must be employed when one has the power to make binding decisions, as the Dispute Resolution Panel has.

What is the essence, then, of καταλλάσσω as we find it in the New Testament? It is this: that God reconciles himself with us with an exchange—that is, by means of placing Jesus in our place, and putting us in the place of his beloved Son. Jesus reconciles us by dying on the cross. We are put in his place as the sons of God. Reconciliation in the sense Scripture gives it to us (and which the synod cites in the Preamble of the Synodical Dispute Resolution) is the great exchange—nothing less than the gospel itself!

The "ministry of reconciliation" Paul describes in 2 Corinthians has nothing at all to do with church discipline, but with our joyful privilege of spreading the good news! Indeed, it is this "ministry of reconciliation" that is the "great commission" of the priesthood of all believers (far more so than the Wesleyan misappropriation of Matthew 28:18–20)! That we should likewise be reconciled toward one another has nothing to do with church discipline. To the contrary, to be reconciled toward one another is nothing less than to see in each other one for whom Christ died and for whose sake must be dearly loved—even as we are called by the word and empowered through it by the Holy Spirit to love Jesus Himself.

This sense of καταλλάσσω becomes even clearer when we understand that this is how the Hebrew root *kpr* is translated in the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament. And what does *kpr* mean? "To cover." It is the idea that the blood of the sacrifice covers us before God so that he will no longer see our sin. The sacrificed one (ultimately, the sacrifice of Jesus) is exchanged in innocence for us who are in sin; the innocent one bears the weight of death so that the sinner might live.

Reconciliation is pure gospel and cannot bear within it any shadow of the law. To say otherwise is to attempt to turn the gospel into a preaching of repentance.

James Dale Wilson

Theology, Psychology, and Philosophy

It is not sufficient, in many cases, for the Christian merely to take the opposite position of his detractors. This is apparent in the following reading from What, Then, Is Man? A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry *(St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958). This excerpt is taken from pages 155–157.*

Many Lutheran students find themselves in great conflict when they study psychology and sociology at secular universities, because they perceive (as do most of the professors) the doctrine of scientific determinism as there taught to be incompatible with any meaningful kind of moral accountability. Most secular psychologists see the belief in some kind of "choice," involving radical unpredictability, as a part of Christian teaching which is fundamental to it and which they repudiate in one of the three forms of determinism described in Chapter III.

The article "II: Of Free Will" in the Formula of Concord lists as the first of the contrary false doctrines under this heading "The delirium of philosophers who are called Stoics, as also of the Manicheans, who taught that everything that happens must so happen, and cannot happen otherwise, and that everything that man does, even in outward things, he does by compulsion, and that he is coerced to evil works and deeds, as inchastity, robbery, murder, theft, and the like" (*Triglotta*, p. 789).

Does this confessional statement deal with "scientific determinism"? The first half, referring to the idea that "everything that happens must so happen," would be acceptable to most contemporary scientific determinists; the second half, which the confession seems to treat as merely another way of saying the same thing, or at least a consequence of it, speaks of men being "coerced," a way of speaking which many contemporary determinists would reject *even though holding the first.*

This is not the place to develop the intricacies involved, since we are here only giving an illustration. The point is that such concepts as *determination*, *predictability*, *necessity*, *coercion*, *possibility*, *choice*, and *freedom* are all extremely complex ideas; their interrelations are still in need of logical clarification, quite apart from the theological mysteries which touch upon them.

It is surely rash, if not absurd, to identify Luther's *De servo arbitrio* [On the Bondage of the Will] or St. Paul's doctrine of election with contemporary scientific determinism! Yet, if "free will" is taken to be the contradictory of "determinism," the Scriptural and confessional denial of free will would automatically be an assertion of determinism. This in itself suffices to show that the problem is not a simple one and that one cannot begin by equating all concepts designated by the term "free will" in different writings.

There are mysteries of the faith which seem (to the rare psychologist who hears of them) to present scientific difficulties. One such is the doctrine of election, particularly as combined with the Lutheran denial of reprobation. We teach that those who are converted are moved by the Holy Spirit, and that the selection of some, the elect, to be so moved is not based upon any characteristic which they possess prior to conversion. The consistent denial of synergism by orthodox Lutherans suggests to the philosophical-minded psychologist that no advancement of his science could, in principle, ever enable him to predict who would be converted by even the most exhaustive scientific knowledge of the preconversion history of an individual. At the same time he is told that God rejects no one and that those who are lost are lost by their own fault.

Finally, we inform him that while conversion occurs only by the action of the Holy Spirit and is not correlated with any merits or dispositions previously existent in the person; and while even the person's "passive co-operation" is not exercised; nevertheless we deny the Calvinist fourth point and we say that grace is resistible. He hears from us that no one can come to

faith in Christ unless drawn, that who will be effectively called is known to God in eternity ("before the foundation of the world"), and yet that God's call to repentance is truly universal and that God wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

We point out that all of these doctrines are the plain and explicit teaching of Scripture and that the theological problem they pose is a mystery. To the psychologist, accustomed to thinking in terms of explicitly stated laws, this "mystery" appears as a flat contradiction. Within the closed system of determinism, it may be. Scientific humanists do not find mysteries to their taste, and when a theologian deals with one of these problems by expounding Scripture and resting at that point, the insistent secular psychologist reacts to the resolution as being essentially obscurantist. It is likely that no amount of semantic clarification or mutual education will fully dispose of conflicts of this type, because methodological premises differ.

The Christian rests (sometimes uneasily if he is a philosopher!) when the plain teaching of Scripture has been elucidated; short of a flat logical contradiction, clearly discernible by juxtaposing two propositions of assured meaning, he will accept a puzzle, a paradox, or a mystery as "not having been revealed and not necessary for our salvation." The whole epistemological tradition of science, and of the science-centered man generally, finds such a stopping place intolerable.

He Gave Gifts to Men

Ephesians 4:1–16 had its way with the Rev. Dr. Norman Nagel, by means of which Christ was preached on Thursday of Pentecost 10, 1997, in the chapel of Sts. Timothy and Titus on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. (*That was a long sentence, but the specific locatedness needed to be identified since it had a bearing on its gospel-giftedness. "If no place, then no gift."*)

Many Ephesians were living post-cosmos. For them there were nothing but random bits and pieces jerking around, and similarly within themselves, if there was something they could call themselves, and in the midst of all this helpless, and sometimes quite desperate.

Of what possible use was an apostle, a traveling teacher—and there were plenty of them peddling their nostrums, some very high-sounding ones to lift you up into the light, out of ______: dark, meaningless necessity. More than utterly useless than any of these was an apostle sitting in prison. He could do nothing except write a letter, send some words to the saints, the Christ-Jesus believers in Ephesus.

High-sounding talk is only worth anything if tied in with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins. Can't get much more located specific than that blood, and what it won for us and the words which carry that to us. The first part of the letter is loaded with Christ: "in him," "through him," and "to him," to pull everything together in him.

Chapter 4 begins the second part of the letter, really getting down to earth. Their being chosen before the foundation of the world and joined in together with what the whole show is about, plays out in their down-to-earth, everyday lives, no longer jangling isolated bit and pieces, but joined together, yet not as swallowed up, but now each one precious—each one precious with the gift of how Christ joins them, in each one unique, Christ-gifted. His way with each of us is unique. Love never repeats itself.

The apostle rings in Psalm 68 with the kicker, "He gave gifts to men." Where does he do that? Can we determine the place? If no place, then no gift. Gifts to us happen at a place and at a time. For a gift to be given there needs to be not only a time and a place, but a gift, and there is a gift when there is someone who gives the gift, and someone to whom the gift is given—these three.

We have just heard that it is the Lord who gave gifts to men. Now we are told of his giving the gift of those whom he sends, puts there, for his giving out of his gifts: specifically apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. All doing the same thing and yet each with a title which indicates some specificity in the Lord's use of them for giving out his gifts. The apostle goes on to tell of three such uses the Lord has with these gifts for the giving out of his gifts. There are more than three, and you may find a good summary in AC V, XIV, and XXVIII. Why these three? First answer: Because these are the three which the Ephesian saints, Christ-Jesus believers, needed especially to hear about.

Part One delivered a load of Christ Jesus, Part Two that working-out ground level—Christ Jesus who gathers things together, things in heaven and things on earth, things in each person, things in them togethered in Christ. How that has run off the tracks is shown by the admonition to "all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love."

"Run off the tracks" is not the apostle's way of saying it. He speaks of body. There are things in the saints which are not as they should be: broken, twisted, dislocated. What a doctor does with bones, setting them right, is the first good thing they need to know as gift intended by the Lord, which he gives by way of his gifts to them: the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

They are there for the work of the ministry, not for their own sake, as is implied in the word for "work," which here and in some other places is used in a way that makes it clear that the Lord is the one doing the work, which he does through those whom he has put there for his doing it. This we confess when we confess the Holy Ministry as *instrumentum secundum,* there for the sake of the means of grace, *instrumenta prima.*

The third good thing the Lord achieves through his gifts to the church, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, is the edifying, the fitting of them together into a building. Not jangling bits and pieces, but parts together in a building, or put more livingly together, in a body. Not just any old body, but Christ's. We do not assemble the parts to make a body and then put a head on it and say, "That's Christ's body." What can be rejoiced in, as in no other body, is that it is

Christ's body. It is the body it is because it is his body. Whether we speak of the saints, the Christ-Jesus believers, or those saints whom he has given to the saints for the surely located giving out of his gifts, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, we can only speak in the way we are taught in the apostle's letter to the Ephesians: "in him," "through him," "to him." Then there are no more jangling bits and pieces just floating around, bumping into each other, power games, bigger and smaller, me against you, us against them:

> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth unto the edifying of itself in love.

Amen.

Dreaming of the Middle Ages

In his work Travels in Hyperreality, *Umberto Eco opines that we are living in a period of renewed interest in the Middle Ages, "with a curious oscillation between fantastic neomedievalism and responsible philological examination." In the Middle Ages, both Americans and Europeans note their inheritance of the Western legacy with all its problems that emerged during this time: modern languages, merchant cities, capitalistic economy (along with banks, checks, and prime rate).*

"Looking at the Middle Ages means looking at our infancy, in the same way that a doctor, to understand our present state of health, asks about our childhood." Looking thus, Eco identifies Ten Little Middle Ages. Condensed from pages 68–72.

1. The Middle Ages as a *pretext*. This is the Middle Ages of opera or of Torquato Tasso. There is no real interest in the historical background; the Middle Ages are taken as a sort of mythological stage on which to place contemporary characters.
2. The Middle Ages as the site of an *ironical revisitation*, in order to speculate about our infancy, of course, but also about the illusion of our senility. Cervantes, Rabelais and Ariosto depict the Middle Ages in a way comparable to Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns or Monty Python movies, Hollywood heroic fantasy or parody which does not believe in the period which it portrays.
3. The Middle Ages as a *barbaric age*, a land of elementary and outlaw feelings. To the likes of Wagner, these ages are Dark *par excellence*, the dramatic sunset of reason and the celebration of a virile, brute force—the glories of a new Aryanism.
4. The Middle Ages of *Romanticism* with stormy castles and ghosts, even in transforming space-operas, putting computers in the dungeon to transform it into a starship.
5. The Middle Ages of *philosophia perennis* or of neo-Thomism, which loom not only behind Maritain and the pastoral, dogmatic views of Pius XII or John Paul II but can also be perceived behind many kinds of formal and logical thinking in contemporary secular philosophers. The perennial vigor of the Middle Ages is not derived necessarily from religious assumptions, and there is a lot of hidden medievalism in some speculative and systematic approaches of our time, such as structuralism.
6. The Middle Ages of *national identities*, celebration of past grandeur to be opposed to the miseries of national enslavement and foreign domination.
7. The Middle Ages of *Decadentism*. Decadent neo-medievalism was at first an invention of intellectuals but then organically inserted into the project of nationalistic restoration in architecture and the visual arts.
8. The Middle Ages of *philological reconstruction*. This philological attitude can be applied either to great historical events or to the imperceptibility of underlying social and technological structures and to the forms of everyday life.
9. The Middle Ages of *Tradition* swarming with Knights Templars, Rosicrucians, Masonic initiates, ready to hail every neo-fascist Will to Power and Conan the Barbarian. Note Eco's fiction *Foucault's Pendulum*.
10. The Middle Ages of the *expectation of the Millennium*. These Middle Ages, which have haunted every sect fired by enthusiasm, still accompany us and will continue to do so, until midnight of the Day After. Source of many insanities, they remain, however, as a permanent warning. Sometimes it is not so medieval to think that perhaps the end is coming and the Antichrist, in plainclothes, is knocking at the door.

"So, before rejoicing or grieving over a return of the Middle Ages, we have the moral and cultural duty of spelling out what kind of Middle Ages we are talking about. To say openly which of the above ten types we are referring to means to say who we are and what we dream of, if we are simply practicing a more or less honest form of divertissement, if we are wondering about our basic problems or if we are supporting, perhaps without realizing it, some new reactionary plot."

Men without Chests

I suspect that debunking rank sentimentalism is a favorite pastime for many of our readers, as it is for your Forum editor. C. S. Lewis, however, has a few words of caution for us. He makes his case against a "Gaius" and "Titius," bestowed pseudonyms for authors of a critical text on literature, The Green Book. *What follows comes from "Men without Chests" in the Touchstone edition of* The Abolition of Man (*New York: Touchstone, 1996*), *pages 35–37.*

Without the aid of trained emotions, the intellect is powerless against the animal organism. I had sooner play cards against a man who was quite skeptical about ethics, but bred to believe that "a gentleman does not cheat," than against an irreproachable moral philosopher who had been brought up among sharpers.

In battle, it is not syllogisms that will keep the reluctant nerves and muscles to their post in the third hour of the bom-

bardment. The crudest sentimentalism about a flag or a country or a regiment will be of more use. We were told it all long ago by Plato. As the king governs by his executive, so Reason in man must rule the mere appetites by means of the "spirited element." The head rules the belly through the chest—the seat, as Alanus tells us, of Magnanimity, of emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments.

The Chest—Magnanimity—Sentiment—these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal.

The operation of *The Green Book* and its kind is to produce what may be called Men without Chests. It is an outrage that they should be commonly spoken of as Intellectuals. This gives them the chance to say that he who attacks them attacks Intelligence. It is not so. They are not distinguished from other men by any unusual skill in finding truth nor any virginal ardour to pursue her. Indeed it would be strange if they were: a persevering devotion to truth, a nice sense of intellectual honour, cannot be long maintained without the aid of a sentiment which Gaius and Titius could debunk as easily as any other. It is not excess of thought but defect of fertile and generous emotion that marks them out. Their heads are no bigger than the ordinary: it is the atrophy of the chest beneath that makes them seem so.

And all the time—such is the tragi-comedy of our situation—we continue to clamour for those very qualities we are rendering impossible. You can hardly open a periodical without coming across the statement that what our civilization needs is more "drive," or dynamism, or self-sacrifice, or "creativity." In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.

Ontotheology and the Theology of the Cross

My dear friend George Strieter, proprietor of Ballast Press, gifts me with some rather engaging books, a habit he has been perpetuating for a few years now. Most recently has come Brian D. Ingraffia's Postmodern Theory and Biblical Theology (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995*)*. The book argues against the version of Christianity fabricated by Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, and separates biblical theology from Greek and Modern metaphysics, leading us to the theology of the cross. Below are his concluding paragraphs, from page 241.*

In my introduction I defined ontotheology as theology based upon human imaginings about God. Thus ontotheology is the result of our attempt to formulate an understanding of god rather than the result of God's revelation toward us. But, as Paul told the philosophers at Athens, "we should not think that the divine being is . . . an image made by man's design or skill" (Acts 17:29).

Atheism, the denial of god, is built upon the same presupposition as ontotheology, that we are able of ourselves to know about God, even if we only know that he is nothing but an illusion. But Christian theology which remains faithful to biblical revelation "completely reverses the direction of that theology: it is not the ascent of man to God but the revelation of God in his self-emptying in the crucified Christ" which is the "essence of Christianity." We *should,* therefore, vanquish god's shadow, the shadow of god created by human reason and imagination, that we might seek the revelation of the living God in the cross of Christ.

W. W. J. D.

Another religious fad is finding its way around the wrists of Americans. Sometimes of woven material, sometimes of inscribed metal, "W.W.J.D." bracelets have become the phylacteries of choice as the twentieth century comes to a close.

You probably won't have to ask what it means. The bearers of these bands are only too happy to offer the information before you inquire: "W.W.J.D." stands for "What would Jesus do?" One gentleman held his up under my nose and explained that he had purchased one for each of his grandchildren with the advice that when they are in doubt as to what decision to make, ask the question "What would Jesus do?" With a wink, a nod, and a little click of the tongue, the man gestured to me as if that were the trick to solving whatever temptation or moral conundrum he or his succeeding generations might encounter.

If the incipient legalism is not initially apparent, the logical absurdity ought to be. However well-intentioned, however pious and "Christian" this appears to be, the underlying result is to transform Jesus from being a Savior into being a model.

Now, someone might retort, "Are we not supposed to imitate Christ?" (See, for example, 1 Cor 11:1). Several presuppositions must be handled before venturing an answer to that question. First of all, if an imitation is actually possible, one must know precisely what is to be imitated and have a clear picture of it. It would be absurd to imagine that we are to imitate Christ in terms of the way we dress or wear our hair. What *is* it, then, that is to be imitated? The general drift is that we are to imitate Christ's demeanor and character, but how is *that* to be done?

We simply have no record in the Scriptures of Jesus confronting the many varied life situations that we encounter each day. One must then conclude that there must be some kind of implied function of brain or spirit that is able to figure out what Jesus would do in these situations, some applied dynamic that would tell us what Jesus would do if he had just rear-ended the BMW in front of him at a stop light because he wasn't looking where he was going, some uncanny sense that knows what Jesus would do if a child had just scribbled on the wall with a crayon for the fifth time today. Is that possible?

Who wouldn't happily sport one of these bracelets if it actually gave the power and wisdom to know and do what Jesus would do in every aspect of life with all kinds of people encoun-

tered? If it really did work, one wonders whether W.W.J.D. might not also find itself adorning other body parts besides the wrist (and if those body parts should offend against what Jesus would do, cut them off, bracelet and all [Matthew 5:30]).

Manufacturers and distributors of these amulets would probably not go so far as to claim that their product could actually *cause* wisdom, knowledge, and righteous obedience to spring forth. What they *are* implying, however, is that wearers have the power within themselves to live the way that the law commands if only they are reminded to do it. That attitude, our confessions warn, will produce either rank hypocrites or terrified consciences—not forgiven, sanctified children of God ("Others become blind and presumptuous, imagining that they can and do keep the law by their own powers. . . . Hypocrites and false saints are produced in this way" [SA III, II, 3]).

Still, there might be one way to redeem these bracelets short of cutting them off and burning them or grinding them into dust, throwing them into some bottled water and make the wearers drink it (Exodus 32:20): the palimpsest method. (A palimpsest is usually a manuscript, typically of papyrus or parchment, that has been written on more than once, with the earlier writing incompletely erased and often legible.) Efface the second "W" with an "H." Thereby the wearer might be reminded "What HAS Jesus done?" and be redirected towards recalling our Lord's obedience, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension—and all this brought to us by what he *has done* for us in holy baptism, holy absolution, holy communion. Such blessed gifts would certainly be worth talking about, comforting repentant sinners with the knowledge of what Jesus has done for them.

JAB

Preaching Sanctification

Congregations the world round are subjected to much preaching that would attempt to bring about a change of life. In this article from Concordia Pulpit Resources, *volume 4, part 4, pages 2–4, David Scaer offers some helpful direction.*

One of the first issues that arises in any discussion of preaching is the selection of texts. Preaching sanctification does not require restricting ourselves to certain texts while ignoring others. Since we quote proof texts in catechetical instruction, it is natural to assume that we should do the same in preaching on specific topics, including sanctification. However, a search for sanctification proof texts rests on two false assumptions: first, that we have an exhaustive knowledge about specific passages (while overlooking others); and, second, that each pericope has only one central thought and, hence, one purpose.

Looking for proof texts in this way likely reinforces preconceived ideas. The cart is put before the horse. We start with our conclusions and then look for passages to demonstrate them. This limits any fresh discovery.

More seriously, looking for a text to use is preaching sanctification tends to divorce the sermon from proclaiming Christ. The message becomes something other than the Gospel. A sanctification sermon not set in the Gospel becomes little more than either a moral lecture or a threat of divine judgment.

Every aspect of the Christian life must be organically related to Christ. Outward behavior can be coerced by the Law, but sanctification can never be. Christ is the purpose and goal of all our proclamation, including sanctification sermons. We cannot simply preach Law, say something about Christ, and call this sanctification preaching. Sanctification and Christology are cut from the same cloth. On the other hand, a sermon that offers a valid dogmatic Christology, but without involving the deepest parts of the hearer's existence and behavior, is little more than an academic lecture.

Preaching sanctification does *not* mean explaining the necessary doctrinal relationships between Christ, faith, and good works—as valuable as this may be. Doing so may prevent the hearer from making moral claims for himself; it certainly would not further the preacher's goal of involving the listener in Christ's life, enabling him to do the kinds of things our Lord did.

The listener could conclude from such a sermon that his motives in doing good works are impure, and subsequently find himself condemned. This is a preaching of the Law, unintended. If, on the other hand, he is knowingly pleased that his works come from faith, he has fallen into a more subtle and damaging works-righteousness.

Sanctification is preached when Christ is proclaimed so that the hearer is taken up into Christ's life and death, and the good works performed by Christ are now done *in, with, and through* the believer—even without necessarily being conscious of them. Of course, every sermon wants to do exactly this. Since sanctification flows from that nexus where Christ and the believer are joined by faith, the Gospel must predominate.

The Return of the Moderates

"Lutherans Alive!" is an association of "moderate" churchpeople of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Their newsletter *FORWARD* has returned with a new format and new strategy. Issue 1997, no. 1 includes three articles with arguments for the "moderate" view in all things churchly. Twenty years ago the LCMS saw the departure of self-proclaimed "moderates" in the formation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). Are the members of "Lutherans Alive!" reviving the rhetoric of the Seminex radicals?

The argument for a "moderate" position is deficient in three ways. First, it argues that both liberal and conservative positions are held by "extremists." I am sure that such an argument would bring the wrath of both Democrats and Republicans. No enduring American politician would consider himself to be an extremist, because an extremist is someone who believes that "the end justifies the means." It is very uncharitable for "Lutherans Alive!" to imply that all those who do not concur with their position are "extremists."

Second, the "moderate" argument fails to acknowledge that, by secular standards, all the members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are—choose your epithet—fundamentalists, right-wingers, hide-bound traditionalists, or simply cultural museum pieces. On the other hand, our society has become so tolerant of pagan excesses that accommodation with "liberals" means to give up any semblance of Christian life or thought. This is the dilemma that faces most mainline Christian churches today.

Third, the "moderate" argument reveals more about its advocates than about those whom it intends to convert. Sadly, the supporters of "Lutherans Alive!" appear to view the church primarily through political spectacles. Their rhetoric reveals their own personal strategy for attaining political power and office in the church. They think that by appealing to both sides they will gain the most votes. This is known as "duplicity," a common vice of politicians.

If the supporters of "Lutherans Alive!" wish to make a positive contribution to the LCMS, they should abandon their strategy of "moderation." Instead they should argue each issue of concern on its own merits, right or left, but not with a view calculated to win votes. Those of us here at *Logia* believe that fair and free debate without acrimony, based on the common standards of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, will always benefit the whole church. We hope that "Lutherans Alive!" will also seek the common good through the uncalculating pursuit of divine truth.

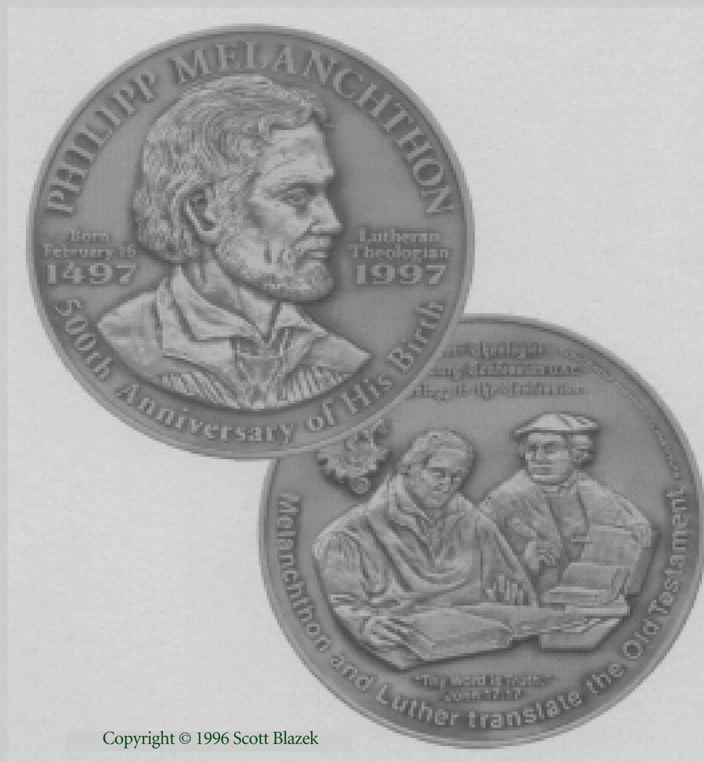
Martin R. Noland
Oak Park, Illinois

A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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

ISSUE	THEME	DEADLINE
Holy Trinity 1998	Lutheran Missions [note change]	February 15, 1998
Reformation 1998	Bondage of the Will	April 1, 1998
Epiphany 1999	Ethics and Theology	August 1, 1998
Eastertide 1999	Confessional Subscription & Doctrinal Statements	October 1, 1998

Send all submissions to the appropriate editors and addresses as listed on the inside back cover. Please include IBM or Macintosh diskette with manuscript whenever possible. (Specify word processing program and version used.) Please write for style sheet.



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New Commemorative Medallion

Marks 500th Anniversary of Melanchthon's Birth

When one considers the reformers of the church in the sixteenth century it is quite natural to think first of Dr. Martin Luther. But we also know that there were others who were great men in their own right—and one of these colleagues to Dr. Luther was Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560).

It was Melanchthon who worked closest with Dr. Luther. He wrote the Augsburg Confession, authored the first Lutheran dogmatics, and assisted in the translation of the Scripture into German. A scholar of the Greek language and professor at the University of Wittenberg, he was a scholar and a gentleman in an age when the two seldom came together.

In honor of the 500th anniversary of his birth, Concordia Historical Institute presents the Philipp Melanch-thon medallion, available in both silver and bronze. Each comes with a presentation stand for displaying this special collectable item in your home or office.

The medallion is designed by Rev. Scott Blazek, an LCMS pastor whose years of experience in design include the CHI medallion commemorating the 450th anniversary of Luther's death.

The Melanchthon medallion's obverse design depicts an original rendition of the Reformer, inspired from the studious reflection of his many portraits. The reverse design is a composition of Melanchthon and Luther, working on the translation of the Old Testament. Behind Melanchthon's right shoulder appears a "coat of arms" or emblem associated with him. Above, three titles recount important works Melanchthon contributed to the Reformation.

Concordia Historical Institute is offering the Melanchthon medallion at a cost of $100 for the silver and $35 for the bronze, including a presentation stand. The coin is 2¾ inches in diameter. Shipping and handling is $4 for up to three medallions and $1 to ship each additional medallion. Please write: Concordia Historical Institute, 801 DeMun Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105.

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