

CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 52: Number 1

---

JANUARY 1988

---

The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church.....	John C. Wohlrabe, Jr. 1
The Smalcald Articles as a Systematic Theology: A Comparison with the Augsburg Confession.....	H.P. Hamann 29
Six Theses on Liturgy and Evangelism.....	John T. Pless 41
A Review Article: Dogmatik des Christlichen Glaubens.....	Lowell C. Green 53
Book Reviews.....	61
Indices to Volume 51 (1987)	
Author Index.....	63
Title Index.....	67
Scripture Index to the Homiletical Studies.....	69
Subject Index.....	71



CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
QUARTERLY

ISSN 0038-8610

CTQ

Issued Quarterly by the Faculty of  
Concordia Theological Seminary

The *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, a continuation of *The Springfielder*, is a theological journal of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, published for its ministerium by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

DAVID P. SCAER, *Editor*; DOUGLAS JUDISCH, *Assistant Editor*;  
WILLIAM C. WEINRICH, *Book Review Editor*; G. WALDEMAR,  
DEGNER, HEINO KADAI, ROBERT D. PREUS, *Associate*  
*Editors*.

*The Faculty*: JAMES BOLLHAGEN, HAROLD BULS, EUGENE  
BUNKOWSKE, STEPHEN CARTER, G. WALDEMAR  
DEGNER, WILLIAM G. HOUSER, DOUGLAS McC. L.  
JUDISCH, ARTHUR JUST, HEINO KADAI, EUGENE F. KLUG,  
GEORGE C. KRAUS, CAMERON A. MacKENZIE, WALTER  
A. MAIER, KURT E. MARQUART, NORBERT MUELLER,  
RICHARD MULLER, ROBERT D. PREUS, DANIEL G.  
REUNING, WILBERT H. ROSIN, JOHN SALESKA, DAVID P.  
SCAER, ALVIN J. SCHMIDT, RAYMOND F. SURBURG,  
JAMES W. VOELZ, WILLIAM C. WEINRICH, DEAN O.  
WENTHE, HAROLD H. ZIETLOW, MELVIN ZILZ.

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY is indexed in  
Religion Index One: Periodicals and abstracted in Old Testament  
Abstracts and New Testament Abstracts.

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY is published in  
January, April, July and October. All changes of address (including  
Missouri Synod clergymen), paid subscriptions and other business  
matters should be sent to Concordia Theological Quarterly, Concordia  
Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana  
46825.

Annual subscription rate: \$5.00

# The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church

John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.

Before delving into the nature of Walther's doctrine of the church itself, we should first attempt to characterize Americanization in American religious life, and this is not an easy task.<sup>1</sup> It involves separating specific religious beliefs from cultural influences within a religious group and then showing how cultural influences have affected or shaped the beliefs or practices of that group as they adapted to life in the United States. Simply defined, Americanization is the act of "being Americanized." To Americanize is "to make or become American in character, manners, methods, ideals, etc.; assimilate to United States customs, speech, etc."<sup>2</sup> Yet, for our purposes this definition is too broad or general in that it does not describe the nature of the phenomenon specifically with respect to American religious life. I believe that five different types of Americanization may be noted within denominations or faith groups in America or within American religious life as a whole. These categories are not firm. In other words, there is a certain amount of overlap. However, I found these categories helpful in trying to characterize the nature of Americanization in connection with this study.

The first, and most common, form of Americanization is that displayed in the case of an individual or group of people sharing the same religious and cultural background who came to the United States in order to take advantage of the freedom of religion afforded under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, or provided in certain colonies before the Revolutionary War. Included in this category would be the Saxon Lutherans who arrived in Missouri in 1839 and who are the primary focus of this study.<sup>3</sup>

A second type of Americanization is the adapting or changing of church doctrine or practice to conform to the American environment, because of influence or pressures from other American citizens outside of the specific faith group, or because of certain governmental laws or regulations.<sup>4</sup> Into this category might be placed the Halfway Covenant of New England Congregationalists,<sup>5</sup> the establishment of the Protestant Episcopal Church because of the Revolutionary War,<sup>6</sup> the two Great

Awakenings including the New Lights and the New Measures,<sup>7</sup> the "Americanism" Crisis in the Roman Catholic Church during the last two decades of the nineteenth century,<sup>8</sup> the rise of Reform Judaism in America,<sup>9</sup> and the transition to the English language from their native tongue on the part of numerous immigrant groups either by way of acculturation or because of antilanguage legislation.<sup>10</sup>

A third form of Americanization takes place within American religious life as a whole. It is the institutionalized civil religion identified by Robert Bellah.<sup>11</sup> Although growing out of a cultural background dominated by Protestantism and by the Enlightenment, this generic religion of the United States can be found in presidential addresses, in statements on U.S. currency, and in the viewpoint that God is on "our" side in times of war.

Still a fourth form of Americanization was noted by John Murray Cuddihy as a religion that strives to be civil and inoffensive. Whereas Bellah's civil religion is differentiated from the various denominations, Cuddihy's "religion that is civil" takes place within the various faith groups in America. It is a religion of tolerance.<sup>12</sup> Within Protestantism, this is specifically identified with Reinhold Niebuhr;<sup>13</sup> within Roman Catholicism it is noted in the work of John Courtney Murray, S.J.;<sup>14</sup> and within Judaism it is identified with Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg.<sup>15</sup> Although not observed by Cuddihy, one may also consider the work of Samuel Schmucker and his attempt at establishing an "American Lutheranism" in terms of this category.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, a fifth form of Americanization is the formation of indigenous American religious groups. This category would include the Disciples of Christ, the Mormons, the Adventists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Christian Scientists, Pentecostal groups, and many others.<sup>17</sup>

With these five categories of Americanization in mind, it will be noted that the development of Walther's doctrine of the church falls only within the first category. In the face of a crisis that confronted the Saxon immigrants of Missouri, a crisis which had actually been developing before they came to America, Walther took advantage of the freedom of religion afforded within the United States. His doctrine of the church was not drawn from his new American cultural environment, but from Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, Martin Luther, and other noted church



fathers. Of special importance is that here a distinction is to be made between the doctrine of the church and church polity or church government.

*Walther and the Saxon Immigration:  
The Doctrine of the Church Takes Shape*

During the early nineteenth century, German Lutherans who emigrated to the United States, with its pluralistic and voluntaristic religious culture, faced an ecclesiological dilemma. In the fatherland they were accustomed to the well established and regulated consistorial form of state church polity as set forth in the centuries old *Kirchenordnungen*.<sup>18</sup> The pastor was a representative of both the state and the church. He was placed in a congregation by the *collator*, a member of the landed aristocracy, or his appointed *consistorium*. Thus, the pastor was responsible first and foremost to the state and not to his own appointed congregation. The congregation had little, if any, voice in the call of its pastor.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the close association between church and state, and because the pastor was appointed by representatives of the state, more emphasis was placed on the ministry than on the church. Some German Lutheran theologians believed that society was divided into a threefold order (*Stände*): the governmental authorities, the public office of the ministry, and the family. The public office of the ministry, or the *Predigerstand*, was a divinely instituted order in society, separate from the order of the government and family. One entered the *Stand* of the ministry through the call to the office (*Amt*). However, this call was not possessed by the church. It came from God through the governing authorities.<sup>20</sup> This understanding not only combined church and state, but it also linked the doctrine of the church with church polity or government in the minds of many.

C.F.W. Walther's understanding of the doctrine of the church and of the separation of the doctrine of the church from church polity, which eventually became the position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, developed out of the experiences of a group of Saxon emigrants who followed a Dresden pastor named Martin Stephan to St. Louis and the wilderness of Perry County, Missouri.<sup>21</sup> In the fall of 1838 about 700 Lutherans from various parts of Saxony departed Bremerhaven in five small sailing vessels. The immigration included five pastors, ten theological candidates and four teachers, all closely attached to their leader. Among this

group were Pastor C.F.W. Walther and his older brother, Otto Herman. They were fleeing Germany because they believed that they were being persecuted by the governing authorities. Their leader, Martin Stephan, had been imprisoned twice and was under suspicion for late night church gatherings and for taking nocturnal walks with young ladies. Because Stephan's followers viewed this as persecution, they decided to leave Saxony. They saw in the United States a land where they could exercise their religion freely.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to their departure, extensive plans had been made and a *Gesellschaft* (emigration company) was formed.<sup>23</sup> It was determined that the ecclesiastical structure of the colony would be strictly hierarchical.<sup>24</sup> Plans for a semiautonomous theocratic community were laid out in a comprehensive set of emigration codes. Power was to be divided between the clergy and a privileged wealthy class of laymen, with the balance of power lying predominantly with the clergy. Within this ministerium, the final authority was to rest with "the primate" or "first divine," Martin Stephan.<sup>25</sup>

It was on board the sailing ship *Olbers*, on January 14, 1839, that Martin Stephan was officially declared "bishop" through the signing of a document called "Stephan's Investiture." The document, eventually signed by all the pastors and influential laymen, including Pastor C.F.W. Walther, not only made Stephan bishop, but also declared that they were transplanting the Lutheran Church from Germany to the United States.<sup>26</sup> On February 16, 1839, aboard the riverboat *Selma* between New Orleans and St. Louis, the "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan" was endorsed. This document gave the "bishop" control over both the ecclesiastical and temporal affairs of the immigrants.<sup>27</sup>

Only a few months after their arrival in Missouri, the Saxon immigrants deposed and excommunicated their "bishop" for apparent immorality.<sup>28</sup> What followed were confessions of guilt,<sup>29</sup> the resignation of some pastorates, including that of C.F.W. Walther,<sup>30</sup> and persistent questions on the part of the people: Had they been wrong in their allegiance to Stephan? Was the emigration a sinful act on their part? Were they a church? Did their pastors have valid calls? Did their clergy have the authority to function? Were the official acts performed by the clergy valid?<sup>31</sup>

A lawyer and influential layman among the Saxon immigrants, Carl Vehse, came forward with a set of six propositions that offered a solution to the problems which beset the colony. These

propositions were submitted to Pastor O.H. Walther on August 5, 1839. Here Vehse asserted the Lutheran doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. He argued that the office of the ministry is only a public service and, only when it is committed to an individual by a congregation, is it valid.<sup>32</sup> To this assertion the clergy responded by warning the members of the St. Louis congregation against those "who would unfairly abuse this declaration in order to discredit our office, maliciously sow the seeds of distrust against us, and bring about dissension and offense in the congregation."<sup>33</sup> Vehse and two other laymen responded, on September 19, 1839, with a formal, detailed protest that consisted of three chapters.<sup>34</sup> This protest maintained a firm juxtaposition of laity and clergy, strenuously asserted the rights of the congregation as opposed to those of the clergy, and assumed the supremacy of the congregation. Vehse and his two supporters also came to the conclusion that the emigration was wrong from the start and urged that everyone return to Germany.<sup>35</sup>

Most of the colonists were not prepared to accept the solution offered by Vehse, least of all the clergy.<sup>36</sup> The departure of Vehse on December 16, 1839, marked the end of the first major period of crisis which followed the expulsion of Stephan. However, Vehse's protests were soon replaced by those of Franz Adolph Marbach, Vehse's brother-in-law. There were others who shared Marbach's views. However, Marbach was the leading spokesman for the lay party in attempting to find a solution to the problems which plagued the colony. On March 3, 1841, Marbach issued a manifesto in which he maintained that the entire foundation on which their church polity had been erected was sinful and that the blessings of God could not be expected until they repented and returned to Germany.<sup>37</sup> Shortly after Marbach issued his manifesto, a conference was held in Dresden, Perry County, Missouri, including Pastors Loeber, Keyl, Gruber, and Buerger, Candidate Brohm, Magister Wege, and Marbach. Little was settled at this meeting and it appeared that the situation was deteriorating quickly. Carl S. Mundinger provided the following analysis:

Evidences of accelerated disintegration were piling up on all sides. At the end of March 1841 the whole colony was fast approaching a state of complete disintegration. The spirit and influence of the clerics seems to have reached its lowest mark. Something had to be done and that something had to be drastic and dramatic.<sup>38</sup>

A public debate was arranged for April 15 and 21, 1841, in Perry County, Missouri.<sup>39</sup> The site chosen for the disputation was the log cabin college which had been founded by the Saxons on December 9, 1839, in Altenburg. On the whole, the debate, chiefly between C.F.W. Walther and Franz Adolph Marbach, was a relatively calm theological discussion.<sup>40</sup> Marbach offered basically the same solution he had proposed in his manifesto. He saw the problem as simply a moral issue.<sup>41</sup>

In order to solve the problems of the colony, Walther tried to push personality and morals into the background and attack this issue from the viewpoint of sixteenth-century Lutheran theology. The questions for Walther were not ones of guilt and confession, but of the nature of the church.<sup>42</sup> Walther set forth a series of propositions that have become known as the *Altenburg Theses*. These theses set forth the understanding of the doctrine of the church that Walther would hold throughout the remainder of his life:

#### I.

The true church, in the most real and most perfect sense, is the totality (*Gesamtheit*) of all true believers, who from the beginning to the end of the world from among all peoples and tongues have been called and sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the Word. And since God alone knows these true believers (2 Tim. 2:19), the church is also called invisible. No one belongs to this true church who is not spiritually united with Christ, for it is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

#### II.

The name of the true church belongs also to all those visible companies of men among whom God's Word is purely taught and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. True, in this church there are godless men, hypocrites, and heretics, but they are not true members of it, nor do they constitute the church.

#### III.

The name "church," and, in a certain sense, the name "true church," belongs also to those visible companies of men who have united under the confession of a falsified faith and therefore have incurred the guilt of a partial departure from the truth, provided they possess so much of God's Word and the holy sacraments in purity that children of God may thereby

be born. When such companies are called true churches, it is not the intention to state that they are faithful, but only that they are real churches as opposed to all worldly organizations (*Gemeinschaften*).

#### IV.

The name "church" is not improperly applied to heterodox companies, but according to the manner of speech of the Word of God itself. It is also not immaterial that this high name is allowed to such communions, for out of this follows:

1. That members also of such companies may be saved; for without the church there is no salvation.

#### V.

2. The outward separation of a heterodox company from an orthodox church is not necessarily a separation from the universal Christian Church nor a relapse into heathenism and does not yet deprive that company of the name "church."

#### VI.

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

#### VII.

4. Even heterodox companies are not to be dissolved, but reformed.

#### VIII.

The orthodox church is chiefly to be judged by the common, orthodox, public confession to which its members acknowledge and confess themselves to be pledged.<sup>43</sup>

In his *Altenburg Theses*, Walther showed that the colonists were indeed members of the true church and that they could function as the church. He based his conclusions on the teaching of Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions (particularly Augustana VII), Martin Luther, and other prominent Lutheran theologians.<sup>44</sup> In the notes which Walther prepared for the debate, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Vehse.<sup>45</sup> However, Walther did not adopt the same line of argumentation which Vehse used. Vehse had advocated extreme congregationalism, had combined church polity with his understanding of the church, and had leveled his attack on the

members of the clergy. Walther started with the same premise as Vehse, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but his aim was constructive rather than destructive. Walter O. Forster gave the following analysis:

It was vital to remember, furthermore, that belonging to an organized church body did not constitute one a Christian, but that a body of Christians could organize at any time to constitute a church. "A church," the word which seemed to have become the shibboleth of the controversy—"a church" was still extant among them. If this were so, they must possess all the rights of such a body and could exercise all its functions; specifically, they could call pastors and teachers and provide for the administration of the sacraments and other rites normally connected with the existence of an organized congregation, of "a church." In practical application it meant the identification of the characteristics and powers of a congregation and "*the church*."<sup>46</sup>

Walther's doctrine of the church was distinctive in that it separated the understanding of the true nature of the church from church polity. Because of the freedom of religion afforded in the United States, Walther had the liberty to separate doctrine and polity. The occasion that precipitated this development was not so much the American environment, but rather a struggle amongst the Saxon immigrants themselves. It must also be remembered that these immigrants, and the church body they would help establish in 1847, remained a German enclave until after World War I.<sup>47</sup>

The *Altenburg Theses* were not the fullest expression of Walther's understanding of the doctrine of the church. This development would come later through another controversy that was already developing at this time. Yet the propositions established and accepted by all at Altenburg had a profound effect on the Saxon colony. Out of the confusion and chaos which had characterized the thinking and actions of the colonists, Walther had set forth an acceptable solution. Even Marbach became convinced that Walther was correct. After the Altenburg Debate, Walther emerged as the unquestioned spiritual and theological leader of the colony. From the disputation in 1841 until his death in 1887, C.F.W. Walther remained the outstanding theologian and leader of the Saxon colonists and of the Missouri Synod.<sup>48</sup>

A second struggle over the doctrine of the church began in 1841.

In 1839, about the same time that the Saxons were settling in Missouri, a group of Prussians under the leadership of Pastor Johann Andreas August Grabau and a group of Silesians under the leadership of Pastor Lebercht Friedrich Ehregott Krause were immigrating to the United States in reaction to the Prussian Union. The Prussians settled in the area around Buffalo, New York; the Silesians chose the territory of Wisconsin near Milwaukee and Freistadt.<sup>49</sup> While the Silesians were settling in Wisconsin, Krause had to make a sudden return to Germany. With their pastor gone, a leading layman (who later became an ordained clergyman), Heinrich von Rohr, wrote to Grabau, *Senior Ministerii*, asking permission to elect a layman who would temporarily conduct services and administer the sacraments. Grabau gave a negative response in the form of his so-called *Hirtenbrief* (Pastoral Letter) of December 1, 1840. This letter was also sent to various other German Lutheran immigrants for their inspection and approval, including the Saxons of Missouri.<sup>50</sup>

In his *Hirtenbrief* Grabau rejected the request of the Silesian immigrants of Wisconsin, defending this position with his own analysis of Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession. Due to his fear of sectarians and vagabond preachers, which were common on the American frontier, Grabau put special emphasis on the word *rite* in the phrase *rite vocatus*. He also maintained that only an episcopal form of polity was proper for the church according to the old, accepted *Kirchenordnungen* of Germany. Although Grabau's letter dealt mainly with the doctrine of the ministry, he did assert that the one holy Christian Church, outside of which there is no salvation, is the visible church of the pure Word and Sacrament, the Lutheran Church.<sup>51</sup>

Because of the problems that arose after the expulsion of Martin Stephan, the Saxon Lutherans of Missouri did not respond to Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* until more than two years after it was written. On June 22, 1843, Pastors C.F.W. Walther, T.C.F. Gruber, G.H. Loeber, O. Fuerbringer, and G.A. Schieferdecker finally met in St. Louis and Loeber drafted a response to Grabau. Here Loeber stated:

Should we give a summary opinion of the contents of the *Hirtenbrief*, it appears to us in the first place that, in view of so much stress on the old church ordinance, the essentials are confused with the non-essentials, and the divine with the human, so that Christian freedom is curtailed. In the second

place, more is ascribed to the preaching office (pastoral office) than is proper, so that the spiritual priesthood of the congregation becomes neglected.<sup>52</sup>

Grabau replied to the Saxons of Missouri on July 12, 1844, taking issue with their position. To this the Saxons replied on January 15, 1845, and one of the most heated controversies in the history of American Lutheranism began.<sup>53</sup> Beginning at its founding convention in June 1845, and continuing in subsequent meetings, what became known as the Buffalo Synod condemned the Saxons of Missouri and then the Missouri Synod, which was formed in 1847, calling upon them to retract their congregational constitution, to desist from their "loose" doctrine of the call into the ministry and their disregard for the office of the ministry as a whole, and to repent of various other "errors."<sup>54</sup>

The first convention of the *Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten* was held in Chicago, April 25 to May 6, 1847. The Missouri Synod was a union of the Saxons of Missouri with the *Sendlinge* (sent ones) of Wilhelm Loehe, a pastor in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, who prepared men for the ministry and sent them to the scattered German Lutherans in the United States. The constitution was ratified on April 26, 1847. Twelve pastors and sixteen congregations became charter members. C.F.W. Walther was elected as the synod's first president (*Praeses Amt*).<sup>55</sup>

Wilhelm Loehe, who remained in Germany, was not happy with the constitution of the Missouri Synod. In his *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nordamerika* he wrote:

Finally we do not wish to keep you in ignorance concerning something which has cut us to the quick and which also is of importance for the seminary at Fort Wayne. We notice with growing concern (*mit herzlichem Bedauern*) that your synodical constitution, as it has now been adopted, does not follow the example of the first Christian congregations. We have good reason to fear that the strong admixture of democratic, independent, and congregational principles in your constitution will do greater damage than the interference of princes and governmental agencies in the church of our homeland.<sup>56</sup>

In the face of opposition from both Europe and the United States, the Missouri Synod attempted to deal with the situation at the synodical convention of 1850. The convention decided to have a book written and published which would represent the Missouri Synod's



position and serve as a defense against the Buffalo Synod's attacks. C.F.W. Walther was chosen to author the work. By 1851 Walther had prepared an outline for the book, which was then presented to the convention in the form of two sets of theses, one on the church and the other on the ministry. These were adopted by the synodical convention and the synod resolved to have the book published in Germany.<sup>57</sup> Expanding his understanding first set forth in the *Altenburg Theses*, Part One of *Kirche und Amt* again avoided any mention of church polity and dealt only with doctrine:

I. The church in the proper sense of the term is the congregation (*Gemeinde*) of saints, that is, the totality of all those who have been called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel out of the lost and condemned human race, truly believe in Christ, and are sanctified and incorporated into Christ through faith.

II. No godless person, no hypocrite, no unregenerate person, and no heretic belongs to the church in the proper sense of the term.

III. The church in the proper sense of the word is invisible.

IV. It is this true church of believers and saints to which Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And it is therefore the proper and only possessor and bearer of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly goods, rights, powers, offices, etc. which Christ has procured and which are found in His church.

V. Although the true church in the proper sense of the term is essentially invisible, its presence can nevertheless be definitely recognized, and its marks are indeed the pure preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution.

VI. In an improper sense Holy Scripture calls "church" (the universal [catholic] church) also the visible totality of all the called, that is, of all who confess and adhere to the proclaimed Word and use the holy sacraments, which consists of good and evil persons; so also it calls "churches" (particular churches) its several divisions, that is, the congregations that are found here and there, in which the Word of God is preached and the holy sacraments are administered. It does so because in these visible assemblies the invisible, true, and properly so-called church of believers, saints, and children of God lies hidden, and outside this assembly of the called no elect are to be looked for.

VII. As visible congregations which still essentially have the Word and the sacraments bear the name “church” according to God’s Word because of the true invisible church of true believers which is found in them, so also they possess the authority which Christ has given to His whole church, on account of the true invisible church which is hidden in them, even if there were only two or three (believers).

VIII. Although God gathers for Himself a holy church of elect persons also there where His Word is not taught in complete purity and the sacraments are not administered totally according to the institution of Jesus Christ, if God’s Word and the sacraments are not denied entirely, but both essentially remain; nevertheless, everyone is obligated by his salvation to flee false teachers, to avoid all heterodox congregations or sects, and to acknowledge and adhere to orthodox congregations and their orthodox pastors, wherever he finds such.

A. Also in heterodox and heretical churches there are children of God, and also there the true church is made manifest by the pure Word and sacraments which still remain there.

B. Everyone is obligated by his salvation to flee all false teachers and avoid fellowship with heterodox congregations or sects.

C. Every Christian is obligated by his salvation to acknowledge and adhere to orthodox congregations and their orthodox pastors, wherever he finds such.

IX. Absolutely necessary for the obtaining of salvation is only the fellowship in the invisible church, to which alone originally all the glorious promises regarding the church have been given.<sup>58</sup>

Walther’s doctrine of the church was indeed expressed in numerous other writings and in various sermons.<sup>59</sup> What becomes clear from both the *Altenburg Theses* and *Kirche und Amt*, however, is that Walther’s doctrine of the church was distinctly separated from any consideration of church polity. His doctrine of the church was a form of Americanization only in that Walther took advantage of the freedom to express his beliefs. Yet his doctrine of the church was not shaped by his American environment, nor was it influenced by other denominations in the United States. Walther’s proof for his understanding of the doctrine of the church was based on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and various church fathers.

---

*Walther and Church Polity*

The same freedom of religion in America which permitted Walther to establish a distinct doctrine of the church apart from church polity permitted Walther to establish a distinct church polity unique among American denominations until that time. John Drickamer characterized Walther's understanding of polity in this way:

Walther's views on church polity cannot be fitted into any common American version of ecclesiastical organization. He was not an Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Congregationalist. He strongly favored the synodical form of polity, which was significantly different from the other forms.<sup>60</sup>

In the negotiations which led to the organization of the Missouri Synod, Walther expressed his convictions regarding church polity in a letter to Pastor J.A. Ernst, a Loehe *Sendling*, dated August 21, 1845:

1. [I desire] that the Synod, in addition to the Word of God, pledge itself to all the Symbols of our church and, where possible, include also the Saxon Visitation Articles. However, I shall not insist upon the acceptance and binding nature of the latter.
2. I desire that all syncretistic actions of synodical members be effectively prohibited and banned by a special paragraph in the constitution.
3. [I desire] that the chief function of the Synod should be the maintenance and furtherance of Lutheran doctrine and the guarding of the unity and the purity of the same.
4. [I desire] that the Synod should not be so constructed as to serve as an empowered legislative body, but rather as an advisory body to which a congregation in need of advice may come and take refuge. The Synod ought to steer clear especially of usurping the congregation's prerogative of calling [a pastor].
5. I desire that the lay delegates who are members of Synod receive a seat and vote in the convention precisely as the clergymen. However, the chairman should be elected from among the clergy (cf. Acts 15:23).
6. Finally, I think that the right of appeal to the decision of Synod ought never to be denied any congregation.<sup>61</sup>

In a letter to another Loehe *Sendling*, Wilhelm Sihler, Walther elaborated further on his understanding of polity:

I must confess that I have a kind of horror of a real representative constitution. I do not find it in Holy Scripture. Now, it is true that we Christians may exercise our liberty as regards our constitution, but I cannot rid myself of this opinion: The more freedom a church government in a free state like ours affords, the more efficient it will be, provided that the Word is preached in all its power in the congregations. On the other hand, everything coercive that does not flow immediately from the Word easily causes opposition by refusal to comply and lays the foundation for frequent separations. Hitherto I have not viewed a synodical organization as a concentration of ecclesiastical power. I thought that it was only to exhibit the ecclesiastical union of the separate congregations, unite its resources and forces in a war upon the oncoming ruin in doctrine and life, and for carrying on operations for the common welfare of the church, for preserving and advancing unity in faith and love, for aiming by way of commendation for the greatest uniformity possible...I was not of the opinion that all matters pertaining to the internal administration of individual congregations should be subject to the disposing and judicial power of the synod.<sup>62</sup>

Although Walther believed that synodical polity was the best form of church government, he maintained that no true Lutheran would insist on one form of church polity as the only valid one.<sup>63</sup> Walther believed that it was the duty of Lutheran preachers to inform their congregations "that the choice of the polity of the church is an inalienable part of their Christian freedom..."<sup>64</sup>

In America Walther faced a situation in which many German Lutheran immigrants, who had experienced a consistorial form of church polity in their homeland, had a certain fear of joining a synod, as if it were a kind of consistory that would attempt to rule the congregation. Because of the situation that the Saxons of Missouri had faced with Martin Stephan, and because of the fear of consistorial domination, the synod was considered to be only an advisory body. A synodical resolution was binding in the congregation in a congregational matter only when the congregation accepted it. Yet a congregation, by joining the synod, did accept

the provisions of the synodical constitution. Furthermore, doctrine was not a matter that could be accepted or rejected. What was spelled out in God's Word was not optional for a congregation belonging to the Synod.<sup>65</sup>

As noted above, both J.A.A. Grabau and Wilhelm Loehe disagreed with Walther and the Missouri Synod over both the doctrine of the church and church polity. Loehe referred to the Missouri Synod's constitution as *Amerikanische Poebelherrshaft* ("American mob rule").<sup>66</sup> However, a major factor in the misunderstanding was that both Grabau and Loehe did not separate the doctrine of the church from church polity, whereas Walther did. For Walther, the doctrine of the church was non-negotiable, while church polity was a matter of Christian freedom. The freedom of religion provided in America allowed Walther to make this distinction.<sup>67</sup> Also, as noted above, Walther believed that because of the "free state" environment of the United States, a democratic church government was more efficient and therefore preferred, even though it is not described in Scripture.

*Walther's Doctrine of the Church  
and Other Categories of Americanization*

It has been maintained in this essay that Walther's doctrine of the church can be considered a form of Americanization only in so far as he took advantage of the freedom of religion afforded in the United States. This freedom also allowed him to make a distinction between the doctrine of the church and church polity.

Walther's doctrine of the church was not an adaptation which was formulated to conform to the American environment, nor was it influenced by American citizens outside of the Missouri Synod or by governmental laws or regulations. Rather, the expulsion of Stephan, the crisis that followed, and the freedom of a pluralistic society enabled and compelled Walther to establish his doctrine of the church on an authority other than the German *Kirchenordnungen*. He chose to base his understanding upon Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and various church fathers.

With respect to influence from those outside the Missouri Synod, Alan Graebner observed:

Since its founding in 1847, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has never been in the mainstream of American Protestantism. As an immigrant church, it was long insulated

by its use of German, but even the English-speaking Missouri Synod of the twentieth century has continued to chart its own way, largely independent of the rest of American Protestantism.<sup>68</sup>

That Walther was not easily influenced by governmental laws or regulations which he believed went against God's Word or his conscience can be seen in the situation surrounding the "Oath of Loyalty" demanded of all public officials and clergy after the Civil War. This oath required that no one should teach or speak in a public assembly who had ever supported the Confederacy.<sup>69</sup> Walther could not swear that he had never expressed sympathy with the Southerners without modification of the oath.<sup>70</sup> Eventually, Walther was allowed to take the oath with the addition of his own protest on the reverse side.<sup>71</sup>

Because civil religion has been a slow development within the United States, and because it was not readily identified in the nineteenth century,<sup>72</sup> it is difficult to say how Walther felt about such a concept. Walther did agree with and support the separation of church and state and believed that the mixture of the two, as it had occurred in Germany, caused numerous problems.<sup>73</sup> That Walther did not fall into the category of Americanization identified by John Murray Cuddihy (see above) can be observed by his indignation at Samuel Schmucker's attempt at rewriting the Augsburg Confession,<sup>74</sup> by his editorial comments in periodicals which he helped establish,<sup>75</sup> and by his firm conviction that only the Evangelical Lutheran Church taught the true doctrine from God's Word.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, the Missouri Synod does not fall into the category of being an indigenous American religious group. Nor can Walther's doctrine of the church be characterized as that of an exclusivistic American sect. Walther did believe that there was salvation outside of the Lutheran Church. He maintained that wherever God's Word is preached and His sacraments are administered rightly there will be found true believers (see the *Altenburg Theses* and *Kirche und Amt*). Yet Walther also strongly maintained that believers were to flee false teachers, and he held that church fellowship could be established only where there was complete agreement in doctrine and practice.<sup>77</sup>

*Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church  
Since His Death*

Other forms of Americanization within the Missouri Synod as a whole, and of Walther's doctrine of the church in particular, gained

momentum because of the First World War.<sup>78</sup> At its 1917 convention, the synod changed its name from "*Die Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten*" to "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States."<sup>79</sup> Already in 1914 a more progressive group of Missouri Synod members organized the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (ALPB) in order to promote Lutheranism in a positive way in the face of American anti-Germanism. In January of 1918 the bureau began publishing the *American Lutheran* under the editorial guidance of Pastor Paul Lindemann. This was the first major unofficial publication within the Missouri Synod.<sup>80</sup> During the Great Depression members of the editorial board for the *American Lutheran* were growing more and more discontented with the way the Missouri Synod was being run, particularly the linguistic and nationalistic ties to German immigrants. A "plan" was devised to bring about changes within the Missouri Synod.<sup>81</sup> In preparation for the Missouri Synod Convention of 1935 those involved in the "plan" engaged in political maneuvering and the incumbent president, Frederick Pfotenhauer, was unseated by the first American-born Missouri Synod president, John Behnken.<sup>82</sup> Then, in 1945, the members of the editorial board for the *American Lutheran* called a meeting of "like-minded individuals," who then drafted "A Statement" (the so-called Statement of the Forty-Four). This document called into question the Missouri Synod's traditional position on church fellowship.<sup>83</sup> In time, other long-held doctrines would be questioned as well, leading eventually to a major disruption at one of the synod's seminaries in 1974 and the departure of approximately 75,000 people from the synod to form a new Lutheran church body in 1976.<sup>84</sup>

Another factor in the further Americanization of Walther's doctrine of the church was the growth of the Missouri Synod and closer relations with the United States government through the military chaplaincy. Between 1932 and 1962, the Missouri Synod grew from 1,210,206 baptized congregational members and 3,133 pastors to 2,456,856 baptized congregational members and 6,192 pastors, an increase of approximately one hundred percent.<sup>85</sup> During that same period, the number of full-time synodical officials increased from eight to sixty, a growth of approximately six hundred and fifty percent.<sup>86</sup> In 1947 the synod changed its name once more,

adopting the title "church": The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.<sup>87</sup> By 1951 the synod had purchased its first permanent office building for full-time synodical staff.<sup>88</sup> Finally, between 1952 and 1962, the Missouri Synod's College of Presidents decided to redefine the synod's long-held definition of ordination, adopting the government's understanding in order to facilitate the placement of military chaplains and because of certain state regulations for performing marriages. The Missouri Synod had long maintained that ordination was the public ratification of the call into the pastoral ministry in a local congregation. The government viewed ordination as a church body's certification that an individual was qualified to function as a minister. The Missouri Synod, including Walther, had maintained that the pastoral office was established only within and by a local congregation of believers. The United States government viewed it as something established by a church body as a whole. At its 1962 convention the Missouri Synod endorsed the change made by the College of Presidents and, from that point on, one was ordained when he was certified by the synod, no matter where he was called (administrative position, teaching position, chaplaincy, or parish pastorate). Thus, the synod took on a churchly function that had been reserved for the local congregation since Walther's time.<sup>89</sup> Also, the synod had become more than an advisory body. Various forms of Americanization within the Missouri Synod have brought on a change of both Walther's understanding of the doctrine of the church and the polity which he helped establish in 1847.

### *Concluding Comments*

Walther's doctrine of the church<sup>90</sup> grew directly out of his experiences: the Saxon immigration, the colonist's experiences with their leader Martin Stephan, the Altenburg Debate, and the controversies with J.A.A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod and J.K.W. Loehe in Germany.<sup>90</sup> Yet his doctrine of the church was based on his understanding of Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and distinguished church fathers. The freedom of religion provided in America allowed Walther to distinguish the doctrine of the church from church polity.

Since Walther's death, his doctrine of the church and his understanding of church polity have been further Americanized. Perhaps this development is unavoidable. Perhaps it is something



that demands further study and consideration. Yet Walther remained true to his principles on both the doctrine of the church and on church polity, and they did contribute greatly to the Missouri Synod's vitality and growth.<sup>91</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Paul W. Spaude wrote a book entitled *The Lutheran Church under American Influence*. Yet Spaude did not deal with Walther or the Missouri Synod specifically. Nor did he make any attempt to characterize or identify specific forms of Americanization. Of special interest to this study is his chapter on "Influence of American Democracy." Here he wrote: "Consciously and unconsciously, American Lutheranism reflected the spirit prevalent in all phases of the political life of the nation: sectionalism, cooperationism, unionism, and isolationism. The Lutheran Church with its ideals of democracy found a fertile soil and enjoyed a phenomenal growth in American democracy." Paul W. Spaude, *The Lutheran Church under American Influence* (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1943), p. 45. This statement is true to a point, particularly when speaking of American Lutheranism as a whole. However, with respect to Walther and the Missouri Synod, other important factors must be considered.
2. *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968), s.v. "Americanize."
3. Also included in this group would be the Puritans who arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in November of 1620 (cf. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972], p. 135); two shiploads of Roman Catholic colonists who arrived in Maryland in March of 1634 (Ibid., p. 109); the fifteen Jewish families who came to Newport, Rhode Island, in 1658 (Ibid., p. 572); the numerous German sects who fled to William Penn's colony built on Quaker principles (Ibid., pp. 111, 230-244); and many others.
4. This change, of course, would include acculturation and assimilation, but would not be limited to these sociological phenomena. Acculturation takes place "when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups." (Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1964], p. 61). "Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups and, by sharing their experience

- and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life." (Ibid., p. 62.)
5. Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, second edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), pp. 39-40.
  6. Ahlstrom, p. 369.
  7. Hudson, pp. 67-82, 134-144.
  8. Ahlstrom, pp. 825-841. Gerald P. Fogarty, *The Vatican and the Americanist Crisis: Denis J. O'Connell, American Agent in Rome, 1885-1903*, vol. 36, *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae* (Rome: Universita Gregoriana Editrice, 1974). Thomas T. McAvoy, *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History, 1895-1900* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1957).
  9. Ahlstrom, pp. 578-582. Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 43-59.
  10. With regard to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, consider Alan Niehaus Graebner, "The Acculturation of an Immigration Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod 1917-1929," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1965. Neil M. Johnson, "The Patriotism and Anti-Prussianism of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod 1914-1918," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (hereafter cited *CHIQ*) 39 (October 1966): 99-118; Robert N. Manley, "Language, Loyalty and Liberty: The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Lutheran Churches, 1917-1918," *CHIQ* 37 (April 1964):1-16; Frederick Nohl, "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Reacts to United States Anti-Germanism During World War I," *CHIQ* 35 (July 1962):49-66.
  11. Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 (Winter 1967), reprinted in George C. Bedell, Leo Sandon, Jr., and Charles T. Wellborn, *Religion in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 23-32. See also, Robert N. Bellah, "American Civil Religion in the 1970's," in *A Creative Recovery of American Tradition: Some Cultural and Counter-Cultural Issues*, ed. W. Taylor Stevenson, *Anglican Theological Review* (July 1973).
  12. John Murray Cuddihy, *No Offense: Civil Religion and Protestant Taste* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 1-3.
  13. Ibid., pp. 38-47.
  14. Ibid., pp. 64-100.
  15. Ibid., pp. 102-155.
  16. Cf. Benjamin A. Johnson, "Samuel Simon Schmucker and the Ecumenical Age," in *The Maturing of American Lutheranism*, ed. Herbert T. Neve and Benjamin A. Johnson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), and Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).

- 
17. Bedell, Sandon, and Wellborn, pp. 188-203. Ahlstrom, pp. 472-509.
  18. Karl Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C.F.W. Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry," *Studies in Church and Ministry* (ed. Erwin L. Lueker), vol. 3 (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1967), p. 18. In Germany, there was almost an endless variety of *Kirchenordnungen*. There were rules for government, worship, liturgy, discipline, marital relations, education, eleemosynary work, and property rights of the church. Emil Sehling, *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen der 16. Jahrhunderts*, 5 vols. (Leipzig: Verlag von O.R. Reisland, 1902). It is interesting to note that, when Nikolaus Herman had written a *Kirchenordnung* for Dessau, Martin Luther advised him not to publish it for fear that it might assume the character of a legal instrument. (*Ibid.*, 1:1.)
  19. Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 26, 29-31.
  20. F.J. Stahl, *Die Kirchenverfassung nach Lehre und Recht der Protestanten* (Erlangen: Verlag von Theodor Blaesing, 1840), pp. 58-61, 95-112, 125-144. Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekennntnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1952), pp. 101-102. James H. Pragmann, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), pp. 129-132.
  21. A detailed analysis of the Stephanite Emigration from Saxony to the United States is set forth in Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri, 1839-1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953).
  22. Forster, pp. 171-201. Christian Hochstetter, *Die Geschichte der Evangelische-lutherischen Missouri Synode in Nord-Amerika und ihrer Lehrkaempfe* (Dresden: Verlag von Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), pp. 1-18.
  23. These plans began already in 1834, but were formalized between December 1837 and October 1838. Forster, pp. 113-170.
  24. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.
  25. Prior to the journey to America Stephan had not assumed the title "bishop." *Ibid.*, p. 135. However, by September 1838 members of the *Gesellschaft* were making direct references to Stephan as the "bishop." *Ibid.*, p. 172.
  26. Stephan's Investiture, MS., Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, (hereafter cited CHI), translated by Forster, pp. 288-290.
  27. "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan," *Selma*, February 16, 1839, MS., CHI, translated by Forster, pp. 293-296.
  28. "Sentence of Deposition Pronounced upon Stephan," MS., CHI, translated by Forster, p. 418.

- 
29. These confessions were called *Reinigung durch ein Bekenntnis*. Munding, pp. 88-102. Forster, pp. 511-516.
  30. Munding, pp. 94-96. Forster, pp. 512-513. Hochstetter, p. 29.
  31. William J. Schmelder, "Walther at Altenburg," *CHIQ* 34 (October 1961): 66.
  32. Carl E. Vehse, *Die Stephan'sche Auswanderung nach Amerika. Mit Actenstuecken* (Dresden: P.H. Sillig, 1840), pp. 103-105. Munding, pp. 95-96.
  33. Forster, p. 463.
  34. "I. Evidence concerning the rights of the congregation in relation to the clergy in religious and ecclesiastical matters; II. Evidence against the wrong Stephanite system, in which the rights of the congregation are not respected, but suppressed; III. Evidence from Luther and [a statement of] our private opinion on the justifiability of the emigration." Forster, p. 464. Vehse, pp. 56-60. Munding, p. 97.
  35. Vehse, pp. 54-141. Vehse himself returned as soon as he was able to raise the necessary finances. However, most of the other Saxon immigrants were unable to return because Stephan had depleted their financial resources. Forster, p. 471. Munding, p. 109.
  36. Forster, p. 470.
  37. Munding, pp. 110-111.
  38. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
  39. Walter Baepler stated that Pastor Buerger arranged for the debate. (Walter Baepler, *A Century of Grace* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947], p. 47). Yet, W.G. Polack believed that Walther, Keyl, and Loeber set up the meeting. (W.G. Polack, *The Story of C.F.W. Walther* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935], p. 47.) Munding held that Walther's involvement in arranging for the debate cannot be determined (p. 112).
  40. Forster, p. 523.
  41. Munding, pp. 115-117.
  42. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
  43. The German original is found in J.F. Koesterling, *Auswanderung der saechsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1839, ihre Niederlassung in Perry-Co., Mo., und damit zusammenhaengende interessante Nachrichten* (St. Louis: A. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), pp. 51-52. Translations may be found in Forster, pp. 523-525; Polack, pp. 49-50; and Louis Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, and Paul E. Kretzmann, eds., *The Concordia Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 15.
  44. This approach toward presenting a doctrinal position would be characteristic of Walther's theological method. It was first of all centered in the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. Erwin L. Lueker, "Church and Ministry in the Thought and Policies of Lutherans in America," *CHIQ* 42 (August, 1969): 104. His understanding of the church had a soteriological context in the doctrine of the priesthood of

all believers. From the vantage point of the believer's relationship to God through Jesus Christ, Walther would move on to other points or theses that had scriptural and confessional support and which were the logical consequence of the previous theses.

45. Koesterling, pp. 42-52.
46. Forster, p. 522. Walther's *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* was an expansion of the Altenburg Theses. Mundinger, p. 123.
47. Graebner, pp. 1-4.
48. William Schmelder, "The Altenburg Debate," unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 1960, p. 99.
49. There had been some contact between the Saxons and the Prussian-Silesians while both groups were still in Germany. Roy Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 2-3.
50. Roy Suelflow, p. 4. *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840. Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. Der Oeffentlichkeit uebergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundsaeetze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche* (New York: H. Ludwig and Co., 1849). This is apparently the only edition of the *Hirtenbrief* extant today. It was an edition published by the Saxons, together with other documents of the controversy that ensued, as part of a polemic against Grabau's position. Copies are available at the Concordia Historical Institute.
51. *Hirtenbrief*, pp. 11-15. Roy Suelflow, p. 6. Polack, pp. 93-95.
52. *Hirtenbrief*, pp. 21-22.
53. For more detail see Roy Suelflow, *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 12-14.
54. Buffalo Synod, 1845 *Proceedings*, pp. 4-5. Roy Suelflow, *CHIQ* 27 (July 1954): 61-62.
55. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, *Erster Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten vom Jahre 1847*, Zweite Auflage (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876). Loehe was invited to come to the United States twice, but never came.
56. Wilhelm Loehe, *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nordamerika*, 6 (September 8, 1847):44. Loehe called the government organization of the Missouri Synod's constitution "Amerikanische Poebelherrschaft." He feared that the tactics used in political elections would soon be applied in the selection of pastors if laymen were given the right of suffrage in the calling of a pastor. Mundinger, p. 200. In *Der Lutheraner* 8 (1852):97, Walther said that he was genuinely sorry that Loehe harbored the erroneous notion that "sie [the Missouri Synod] dem hier grassirenden Freiheitsschwindel gewichen sie und, die gottliche Wuerde des heiligen

Predigtamtes und den Segen eines gemeinsamen geordneten Kirchenregiments aufopfernd, falsch demokratischen Grundsätzen sich hingegeben habe.”

57. LCMS, *1851 Proceedings*, second edition, pp. 169-173. This book was published as *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1852). Translations may be found in *Walther on the Church*, translated by John M. Drickamer, in *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther*, 6 volumes, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981); and C.F.W. Walther, *Walther and the Church*, ed. Wm. Dallmann, W.H.T. Dau, and Th. Engelder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938). In “Vorwort des Redakteurs,” *Der Lutheraner* 9 (August 31, 1852): 1-3, Walther expressed himself concerning the historical background of his theses. Walther stated that the battle which he and his synod were now waging against Grabau was not easy. He then went on to give several reasons. First, Grabau sought to discredit the person of his opponents and misrepresented their teachings. Second, Walther believed that he was dealing with doctrinal points which called for an earnest and spiritual understanding that many of his day lacked. They saw it only as an idle squabbling and wrangling about insignificant matters. Third, Grabau’s erroneous views had crept into the Lutheran Church a long time ago and would be difficult to change. Fourth, Grabau’s views concerning church and ministry agree much more with what appeals to human reason than does the true scriptural doctrine.
58. C.F.W. Walther, *Walther on the Church*, translated by John M. Drickamer, in *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther*, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), pp. 17-72. Each thesis was given three forms of support. First came “Proof from God’s Word”; second, “Testimonies of the Church in Its Official Confessions”; and third, “Testimonies of the Church in the Private Writings of Its Teachers” (Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, and others). William Schmelder noted: “There are one hundred eighty-five quotations from ancient church fathers and Lutheran theologians to demonstrate the correctness of the nine theses on the church. There are forty-six quotations from Luther, thirty-two from Gerhard, sixteen from Augustine, and from one to eight from the other thirty-six authorities cited. Some of the quotations from Luther and Gerhard are several pages in length. It would seem a safe assumption that Walther was greatly dependent on these two representatives of Lutheran theology for his ecclesiology.” Schmelder, “Walther at Altenburg,” p. 80.
59. For a very thorough analysis of Walther’s doctrine of the church, see John M. Drickamer, “The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Dr. C.F.W. Walther,” unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1978.

- 
60. Drickamer, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Dr. C.F.W. Walther," p. 386.
  61. C.F.W. Walther, *Walthers Briefe*, ed. L. Fuerbringer, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), p. 16. Cf. August R. Suelflow, "Walther and Church Polity," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 32 (October 1961): 633-634.
  62. Quoted from *Theological Monthly* 2 (May 1922): 129. August Suelflow, "Walther and Church Polity," pp. 634-635.
  63. [C.F.W.] W[alther], "Freikirche," *Lehre und Wehre* 22 (September 1876): 285.
  64. C.F.W. Walther, *Lutherische Brosamen* (St. Louis: M.C. Barthel, 1876), p. 525.
  65. Drickamer, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Dr. C.F.W. Walther," pp. 347-348. August Suelflow, "Walther and Church Polity," pp. 636-641.
  66. Mundinger, p. 200.
  67. It should be noted that Walther and the Missouri synod were not the first to establish a synodical form of polity. Several other American Lutheran church bodies, mainly in the East, had already developed this form of church government. What made the Missouri Synod's polity unique was that the synod was purely advisory in congregational matters. Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism* (Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1956), pp. 57-74.
  68. Graebner, p. 1.
  69. William Hyde and Howard Conard, eds., *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, vol. 3 (St. Louis: The Southern History Company, 1899), p. 1655.
  70. C.F.W. Walther, *Briefe von C.F.W. Walther*, ed. L. Fuerbringer, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), p. 235.
  71. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
  72. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," pp. 23-32.
  73. C.F.W. Walther, "Synodalrede," *Verhandlungen der achten Jahresversammlung des Westlichen Districts der deutschen evang.-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten im Jahre 1862* (St. Louis: Synodal-Druckerei von A. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1862), pp. 6-11.
  74. C.F.W. Walther, "Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1856." *Lehre und Wehre* 2 (January 1856): 3. Erwin Lueker, "Walther and the Free Lutheran Conferences of 1856-1859," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 15 (August 1944): 529-563.
  75. See C.F.W. Walther, "Vorbemerkungen ueber Ursache, Zweck und Inhalt des Blates," *Der Lutheraner* 1 (September 7, 1844):1; translated by Alex W.C. Guebert, "Walther's Editorial in the First Issue of *Der Lutheraner*," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 32 (October 1961): 656-657.

76. See C.F.W. Walther, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the True Visible Church of God on Earth," in *Walther on the Church*, pp. 156-192; and "The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God, an Irrefutable Proof That Its Doctrine Alone is True," in *Convention Essays*, translated by August R. Suelflow, in *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther*, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981).
77. Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, p. 145. Walther was equally unhappy about the external divisions of Christendom. For a thorough analysis of Walther's position on church fellowship, see Drickamer, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Dr. C.F.W. Walther," pp. 358-379.
78. Alan Graebner, "The Acculturation of an Immigration Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod 1917-1929." Neil M. Johnson, "The Patriotism and Anti-Prussianism of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod 1914-1918," pp. 99-118. Frederick Nohl, "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Reacts to United States Anti-Germanism During World War I," pp. 49-66.
79. LCMS, *Proceedings of the Thirtieth Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. Assembled at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as the Fifteenth Delegate Synod, June 20-29, 1917* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), p. 43.
80. Erwin L. Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), pp. 28-29. See also John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., "The Missouri Synod's Unity Attempts During the Pfotenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935," unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1982, pp. 56-57, 92-93, 157-158.
81. "Plan for the American Lutheran Covering the Issues from October 1934 to May or June 1935. For the Information of the Board of Directors. Not for Publication." Lawrence B. Meyer Papers, Box 1, File 1, C.H.I. See Wohlrabe, "The Missouri Synod's Unity Attempts During the Pfotenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935," pp. 157-166.
82. John W. Behnken, "First Draft" of *This I Recall*, in the possession of William J. Schmelder. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This information never made it into the final publication. See also Wohlrabe, "The Missouri Synod's Unity Attempts During the Pfotenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935," pp. 166-176.
83. Jack Treon Robinson. "The Spirit of Triumphalism in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1972, pp. 132-252. Thomas Coates, "'A Statement'—Some Reminiscences," *CHIQ* 43 (November 1970): 159-163. Herbert Lindemann, "Personal Reflections on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Publication of 'A Statement,'" *Ibid.*, pp. 164-166. Harold H. Engelbrecht, "Concerning 'A Statement,'" *Ibid.*, pp. 167-170. Walter E. Bauer, "To Recall as Well as I Can," *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173. Bernard H. Hemmeter, "Reflections on the Missouri Synod," *Ibid.*, pp.



- 174-177. L.H. Deffner, " 'A Statement' Was a Turning Point," *Ibid.*, p. 178. E.W.A. Koehler, "An Agreement," *Ibid.*, pp. 184-187. A.T. Kretzmann, "The Statement of the 44, 1945-1979," *CHIQ* 55 (Summer 1982): 69-81. *Speaking the Truth in Love: Essays Related to A Statement, Chicago, Nineteen Forty-Five* (Chicago: The Willow Press, no date). Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 422-424.
84. Board of Control, Concordia Seminary, *Exodus from Concordia* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publicity Office, 1977). Frederick Danker, *No Room in the Brotherhood: the Preus-Otten Purge of Missouri* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1977). Tom Baker, *Watershed at the Rivergate* (Sturgis, Michigan: Private Printing, 1973). Kurt Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977). James E. Adams, *Preus of Missouri and the Great Lutheran Civil War* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977). Laurie Ann Schultz Hayes, "The Rhetoric of Controversy in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with Particular Emphasis on the Years 1969-1976," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1980.
  85. LCMS, *1932 Statistical Year-Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), p. 138. *1962 Statistical Year-Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), pp. 240-283.
  86. August Suelflow, *Synodical Survey Commission Research Reports, 1959-1962*, vol. 1, p. 101. C.H.I.
  87. LCMS, *Proceedings of the Fortieth Regular Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. Assembled at Cleveland, Ohio, as the Twenty-Fifth Delegate Synod, June 20-29, 1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 442-443.
  88. John Behnken, *This I Recall* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 49-50.
  89. For a complete analysis of this transition see John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," unpublished Th.D dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, pp. 339-378.
  90. John M. Drickamer, "Translator's Preface," *Walther on the Church*, p. 8.
  91. *Ibid.*

The Rev. John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., Th.D., originally delivered this essay to a "Convocation on Religious Influences on the German Immigrant Community" held at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota, on May 2, 1987.



# The Smalcald Articles as a Systematic Theology: A Comparison with the Augsburg Confession

H.P. Hamann

For Lutherans *quod non est biblicum non est theologicum*. According to the clear and sharply phrased sentence of the Formula of Concord: "We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachings alike must be appraised and judged." Theology, then, is an account of the teaching or doctrine or sum of the Scripture presented in intelligible terms for contemporary man, where the word "contemporary" means man of any time or place existing at the same time as the one giving an account of what the Bible says. So the theology of the Smalcald Articles and of the Augsburg Confession is the account by men of the first half of the sixteenth century to men living at that time. The nature of these two writings as confessions *in conspectu diei ultimae* does not concern us in this essay—at least, not until the appendix.

The idea "systematic theology," in my judgment, can be taken appropriately in one of two ways. It can mean, first of all, a theology conceived from one dominating point of view, in which all the main sections, and even subordinate ones as well, can be seen as parts of one central theme. This I call a synthetic way of proceeding, because of its close parallel to sermons constructed in this way. Pieper, by the way, uses the terms "synthetic" and "analytic" as applied to the method of presenting the Christian faith or Christian theology quite differently. As examples of this kind of system we might mention Schleiermacher, whose presentation is a development of the theme of "Self-Consciousness," F.A. Philippi and his central theme of fellowship, and Emil Brunner and Helmut Thielicke, who operate with the basic theme of revelation. The Reformed Cocceius worked with the idea of covenant. Other systems develop the whole of theology from the Three Articles of the Creed, or from Christology, or from the theme of the Kingdom of God.

As I see it, the most popular way is to proceed analytically, even today, and to work with the time-honoured *loci*, in the manner of

Karl Barth and Paul Tillich. Horst Georg Poehlmann also uses the local method in his very handy *Abriss der Dogmatik*. It might seem that the local method of proceeding is non-systematic by the very method adopted. However, that is not the case, if there is a consistent theology clearly discernible running throughout the various *loci* taken up for treatment. This consistency would be demonstrated especially in the way a central concern—in fact, *the* central concern of the writer, the thing which means more to him than anything else—shows up, no matter what topic (*locus*) one is dealing with at any particular moment.

In what category of systematic theology do the two Lutheran confessional writings that concern us at the moment fit? Obviously, neither fits the first category. Luther's words at the beginning of each of the three parts of the Smalcald Articles show that he is following a purely formal scheme in the division of material. Here are his guidelines:

1. "The first part of the Articles treats the sublime articles of the divine majesty." At the conclusion of the four articles in this first part he writes: "These articles are not matters of dispute or contention, for both parties confess them. Therefore, it is not necessary to treat them at greater length."
2. "The second part treats of the articles which pertain to the office and work of Jesus Christ, or to our redemption." At the close of the first article in this part, Luther writes: "On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world."
3. "The following articles treat matters which we may discuss with learned and sensible men, or even among ourselves."

It is strange, after reading the last statement, to find almost at the end of the treatment of the fifteen matters of the third part also this statement: "These are the articles on which I must stand and on which I will stand until my death. I do not know how I can change or concede anything in them. If anybody wishes to make some concession, let him do so at the peril of his own conscience." So, finally, the whole of the Smalcald Articles is something on which no concession can be made. To sum up, it is quite clear that we do not have a systematic theology of the first category in the Smalcald Articles. We have a series of articles bound together by the thought of what is agreed on by both parties, the evangelicals and the Roman

Catholics, by what cannot be yielded in negotiations, and by what may be amicably discussed. This is the ostensible division, but really, as we have seen, nothing can be conceded by Luther, and others are warned against conceding anything. so we have the formal list of agreements and disagreements, but finally the total list is non-negotiable. All this is purely formal, and there is no systematic development of a theme.

The same situation holds in respect of the Augsburg Confession. There we have twenty-one articles of faith, where it is claimed that agreement exists between those confessing and the Roman Church, followed by seven articles in which various matters regarded as abuses are discussed, abuses which have crept into the church over the years, abuses which are contrary to God's will. This is plainly the *loci* method of arrangement, and only rarely are there explicit indications of the relation between the various articles. So what remains is to examine the two confessions to find out whether some consistently applied principle underlies the various articles in the Smalcald Articles and in the Augsburg Confession, and to determine whether we have the same basic principle or differing principles in these confessions.

### I. *The Smalcald Articles*

It is hard to miss the underlying principle or matter of concern in these articles. It appears repeatedly, running like a recurring refrain throughout. We start with Article I of the Second Part ("Christ and Faith"). This is described as "the first and chief article," and it puts together the following elements: the atoning death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:25; John 1:29; Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23-25); the uselessness of works, law, or merit for the appropriation of this act of God in Christ; and faith in Jesus Christ as the sole means of such appropriation, so that "a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law." Of this doctrine, that man is justified alone on account of the atoning, vicarious death of Christ (*propter Christum*), through faith as the means of reception of the gift of salvation (*per fidem*) completely apart from works, law, merits of any kind, Luther goes on to declare: "Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed (Acts 4:12; Isa. 53:5)." Article after article is determined by this central concern. In Part Two, the Roman Mass is rejected as "running into direct and violent conflict with this fundamental article. . . for it is held that this sacrifice or work of the mass delivers men from their sins, both here in this life and yonder in purgatory,

although in reality this can and must be done by the Lamb of God alone, as has been indicated above" (Part Two, II, 1; a judgment repeated in respect of the mass also in Part Two, II, 5). The same judgment is made in respect of a number of teachings and practices seen as brought about by the mass, like purgatory (II, II, 12), pilgrimages (II, II, 19—at least implicitly here), relics (II, II, 23—also implicitly), indulgences (II, II, 24) and the invocation of saints (II, II, 25). It must be regarded as something of a slip on Luther's part that in his summary of Article II of the Second Part, dealing with the mass, he does not assert what has been repeated again and again, and that he introduces another thought, important in itself but not the one that should have been mentioned in this context: "In short, we. . . must condemn the mass. . . in order that we may retain the holy sacrament in its purity and certainty according to the institution of Christ and may use and receive it in faith."

The refrain recurs further in the other articles of Part Two—in his comments on chapters and monasteries (II, III, 2) and the papacy (II, IV, 4) by implication: "This is nothing less than to say, 'Although you believe in Christ, and in Him have everything that is needful for salvation, this is nothing and all in vain unless you consider me your god and are obedient and subject to me.' " The same application is to be found in the declaration that the pope is the Antichrist and where a somewhat lengthy description is given of his activities (II, IV, 9-14), especially the statement: "However, the pope will not permit such faith but asserts that one must be obedient to him in order to be saved. This we are unwilling to do even if we have to die for it in God's name." The summary of the articles of the Second Part repeats the refrain by implication also (II, IV, 15).

We would not expect the refrain to appear so often in the Third Part, but it appears here as well. One of the longest articles in the Smalcald Articles is that entitled "Repentance." The constitutive factors of the chief article of the faith are obviously central to what Luther will say on this head, and the negative of this must also show up in the section entitled "The False Repentance of the Papists," as in the sentence: "There was no mention here of Christ or of faith. Rather, men hoped by their own works to overcome and blot out their sins before God" (III, III, 14). We may compare with this the following passage: "This is the repentance which John preaches, which Christ subsequently preaches in the Gospel, and which we also preach. With this repentance we overthrow the pope and everything that is built on our good works" (III, III, 39). There are

other passages like this, but quoting them is hardly of any consequence, since the article as a whole, with the positive presentation of the repentance of the evangelicals and the negative presentation of that of the papists, is one long, continued exposition of the chief article. In addition to the section just mentioned, the refrain appears also in the section dealing with monastic vows: "Since monastic vows are in direct conflict with the first chief article, they must be absolutely set aside" (III, XIV, 1).

It is to be noted that Part I of the Smalcald Articles takes an independent position in relation to the rest—a fact to some extent that is in opposition to the contention that there is a systematic theology observable in the Smalcald Articles. In Part I the Trinity is briefly and strongly stated, the divine-human person of the Son who became flesh likewise, but there is really no attempt to bring together in a systematic view Part I with the subsequent material of the Smalcald Articles. Part II, of course, begins with the office and work of Christ, whose person and incarnation were taken up in Part I, but the formal division Luther had in mind (articles in agreement and disagreement between himself and Rome) controlled completely his thinking at the beginning of the writing, and the unifying power of "the first and chief article" did not make itself felt till after that article had been expounded.

The situation is different in the Augsburg Confession. This confession, while starting in much the same way with articles on God and the Son of God—the second article, on original sin, indicates a clear difference from the Smalcald Articles—links the work and office of Christ and His continuing work through the Holy Spirit more closely to the sublime articles concerning God than do the Smalcald Articles. Thus, in the article on the Son of God we have attached to the "crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus" these words: ". . .in order to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins and to propitiate God's wrath" (German) or ". . .that He might reconcile the Father to us and be a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men" (Latin). Christ's work through the Spirit is described in the one case (German) as ". . .He sits on the right hand of God. . .that through the Holy Spirit He may sanctify, purify, strengthen, and comfort all who believe in Him" and in the other case (Latin) as ". . .to sit on the right hand of the Father. . .and sanctify those who believe in Him by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and quicken them and defend them. . ." ("misso in corda eorum spiritu sancto"). This

difference between the beginnings of the Augsburg Confession and the Smalcald Articles may fittingly lead us to see whether there is also an underlying principle in the Augsburg Confession.

## II. *The Augsburg Confession*

To demonstrate such a unity is a trifle more difficult in the case of the Augsburg Confession than in the Smalcald Articles. There is no such prominent paragraph as that standing at the beginning of Part Two of the Smalcald Articles. However, a clue does exist, and that is to be found in the word that connects Article V with Article IV and also Article VI with Article IV. Article IV, on justification, runs in the translation of the Latin text: "our churches also teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works but are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith when they believe that they are received into favour and that their sins are forgiven on account of Christ, who by His death made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight (Rom. 3, 4)." Now, Article V begins: "Ut hanc fidem consequamur. . ."; and Article VI begins: "Item docent quod illa fides debeat bonos fructus parere. . ." No other articles of the Augsburg Confession are tied together in this way. The hint is given, then, to look for recurrences of the close connection between justification, the ministry of the Gospel, and the new obedience or statements about good works. If there is a repeated reference to this nexus of ideas, we have a right to say that such a nexus forms the underlying unity in the separate twenty-one (twenty-eight) articles—that in the doctrine of justification we have the systematic principle of the theology of the Augsburg Confession.

Other hints of connections between the articles of the Augsburg Confession are suggested. It is asserted, for instance, that, as Article V develops Article IV, so Article V is more precisely defined by Articles VII-XIV. The term *ministerium* is picked up in Articles VII, VIII, and XIV (in VII and XIV the word is picked up only in the verbal form *administrare*), while Articles IV-XIII further develop the phrase "Gospel and sacraments." So the ecclesiological reference of Article IV is to be seen. This may well be true, but I am not so sure that we do not have here the modern systematizing of Gerhard Müller and Vinzens Pfnür at work rather than that of Melancthon.

A search of the Augsburg Confession for an underlying principle, now, does produce two clear facts: (1) that there is repeated insistence on the teaching of justification for Christ's sake, through faith alone, and (2) that no other such repetition of ideas can be found. As for



the first assertion, we have already shown how the fourth article determines both Article V and Article VI. The faith through which God's grace and forgiveness come to the sinner makes necessary God's institution of the ministry—that is, the provision of the means of grace, the Gospel and the sacraments. That same faith naturally leads to good works; it must produce good fruits. The sixth article goes on to state again the teaching of Article IV, lest the insistence on good works just stated be misunderstood as reinstating good works as a cause of salvation or of God's grace: "We must do so because it is God's will and not because we rely on such works to merit justification before God, for forgiveness of sins and justification are apprehended by faith. . ." (Latin).

The next article in which the underlying principle comes through clearly is Article XII ("Repentance"): "Properly speaking, repentance consists of these two parts: one is contrition. . .and the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, believes that sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terror. Then good works, which are the fruits of faith, are bound to follow. The sacraments (Article XIII) are said "especially to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, intended to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them" (Latin). In Article XV ("Ecclesiastical Rites") the warning is erected: "Men are admonished not to burden consciences with such things, as if observances of this kind were necessary for salvation. . .human traditions which are instituted to propitiate God, merit grace, and make satisfaction for sins are opposed to the Gospel and the teaching about faith. Wherefore vows and traditions about foods and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel." We have a hint of the big truth in Article XVIII ("Free Will") in this phrase: "However, it [man's will] does not have the power, without the Holy Spirit, to attain the righteousness of God. . .but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word." Obviously, Article XX ("Faith and Good Works") is an important one in this context. It is the most fully treated article in the Augsburg Confession and deals at length with the teaching mentioned briefly in Articles IV, V, and VI. To quote the various pertinent statements would be both wearisome and unnecessary. However, one sentence is absolutely necessary, for it is a deliberate statement about the heart of the Christian faith, one on all fours with the big statement of Luther in the Smalcald Articles: "Inasmuch, then, as the teaching

about faith, which ought to be the chief teaching in the church [Latin; German: "which is the chief article in the Christian life"], has been so long neglected. . . , our teachers have instructed our churches concerning faith as follows." Then follows a setting forth of the doctrine of justification at some length and of its relation to good works. In connection with the final article of the basic twenty-one of the confession ("The Cult of Saints"), the point is made that, while it is good to imitate the faith and good works of the saints, it is wrong to pray to them or to seek their help, "for the only mediator, propitiation, high priest, and intercessor whom the Scriptures set before us is Christ."

In the articles relating to abuses, the central concern appears regularly except in those entitled "Both Kinds" and "The Marriage of Priests," where one would hardly expect to find such a reference in any case. So in Article XXIV ("The Mass") it is claimed that the confessing churches admonish the people "concerning the value and use of the sacrament and the great consolation it offers to anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe in God and ask for and expect whatever is good from God." In opposition to the developments of the mass common at the time, the Augsburg Confession says: "Concerning these opinions our teachers have warned that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of Christ's passion, for the passion of Christ was an oblation and satisfaction not only for original sin but also for other sins. . . The Scriptures also teach that we are justified before God through faith in Christ. Now, if the mass takes away the sins of the living and the dead by a performance of the outward act (*ex opere operato*), justification comes from the work of the mass and not from faith." In Article XXV ("Confession") we have: "Our people are taught to esteem absolution highly because it is the voice of God. . . and people are reminded of the great consolation it brings to terrified consciences, are told that God requires faith to believe such absolution as God's own voice from heaven, and are assured that such faith truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins." In Article XXVI ("The Distinction of Foods") reference is made to the common teaching that the distinction of foods and similar human traditions "are works which are profitable to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins," of which teaching it is held that "from this opinion concerning traditions much harm has resulted in the church." Then follows a particularly strong assertion of the central truth of the faith: ". . . it [the opinion concerning traditions] has obscured the doctrine concerning grace and the righteousness of faith, which is the chief

part of the Gospel and ought above all else be in the church, and be prominent in it, so that the merit of Christ may be well known and that faith which believes that sins are forgiven for Christ's sake may be exalted far above works and above all other acts of worship." The Augsburg Confession continues on in the same strain at this place for a number of sentences (XXVI:4-7). The article on monastic vows (XXVII) contains in a lengthy section determined by the central concern (XXVII: 36:43) also this sentence: "Every service of God that is instituted and chosen by men to merit justification and grace without the command of God is wicked. . . Paul also teaches everywhere that righteousness is not to be sought for in observances and services devised by men but that it comes through faith in those who believe that they are received by God into favour for Christ's sake." Finally, in the article relating to ecclesiastical power (XXVIII), there is repeated reference to the same central concern (XVIII:5, 36, 50-52, 62). I refer only to sections 50-52: "Inasmuch as ordinances which have been instituted as necessary or instituted with the intention of meriting justification are in conflict with the Gospel, it follows that it is not lawful for bishops to institute such services. . . It is necessary to preserve the doctrine of Christian liberty. . . It is necessary to preserve the chief article of the Gospel, namely, that we obtain grace through faith in Christ and not through certain observances or acts of worship instituted by men."

This review of the Augsburg Confession has shown that Article IV is the chief, the central, the unifying article of the Augsburg Confession and the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. It is this article, too, which provides the norm for determining what are abuses in the church. The fact needs emphasis that it is really only the teaching concerning justification which is repeatedly referred to as a touchstone and criterion of what is valid and what ought to be taught in the church. There is appeal to no other criterion. It is this teaching which alone is systematically made use of throughout the Augsburg Confession. Naturally, there are references to the Scriptures and to the authority of the biblical writers, especially St. Paul, but these references are never appeals to a mere formal authority. The Scriptures are appealed to because of the Gospel they proclaim as the Word of God, because of Christ and His salvation which they teach. Thus, in the doctrine of justification we have the unifying systematic of the Augsburg Confession.

The result of our study may be summarized quite briefly. Both the Smalcald Articles and the Augsburg Confession are systematic

theologies in the same sense—they are determined in all their assertions by one fundamental view of the Christian faith, consistently applied. What is asserted of the Christian faith is what can be shown to be consistent with the central concern. No other principle can be shown to be made use of in this way. And in both confessions it is the same fundamental view of the Christian faith which is so treated, the doctrine of justification by faith.

### III. *Appendix*

I am concerned in this addition with the present situation in the church generally, and in the conservative Lutheran church particularly. As for the church in general, we have in what has been distilled from the Augsburg Confession and the Smalcald Articles the Lutheran non-negotiables. There is absolutely no difference between the two writings in this regard. The only difference in them is a difference in tone. If one wants to put forward an irenic document in the interests of church unity, one would hardly choose the Smalcald Articles. But the use of the Augsburg Confession as such a document would not change a thing in the long run. The perceptive Roman Catholic will see behind the form of Luther's remarks, behind the sharp, bitter, angry, and sometimes insulting language, what Luther is really concerned about, as he will also not be misled by the irenic language of Melanchthon. There is one unmistakable toughness of basic outlook. There can be no surrendering anything of this central teaching, for it is the very heart of the revelation of our God through His Son, as it is the only doctrine which can give comfort to the conscience and freedom to face life with all its rigors and freedom to love our fellowman with all his sins and ugliness.

And there is an important lesson (directive) for the conservative Lutheran church to be drawn from these two confessions and their systematic—any rejection of false teaching or of false directions taken by the church must be such as directly relates to this central doctrine of the Gospel. Luther and Melanchthon fought against the mass, the cult of the saints, false repentance, various ecclesiastical rites and practices, and monastic vows from this central concern. So we must today take up any front we need to take up from the same central concern, not from any other principle. There is an undoubted temptation to face wrong developments in the conservative Lutheran church by direct argumentation from Scripture as a formal authority. Such and such is wrong because it is contrary to such and such a

---

passage or such and such passages. In a way it is easy to proceed in this way, but it is also a legalistic way, for it deals with Scripture as though it were a codex of laws. But the formal principle of the Reformation—not to be attacked in any way—apart from its material principle is really nothing at all. Let the sects enjoy such a Bible. I should willingly turn from the Sacred Scriptures, eviscerated of Augsburg IV, to the classical writers of Greece—to Plato, Sophocles, Thucydides—or to the great literatures of Rome, England, and Germany, and so on. A false doctrine is not something that is contrary to some biblical passage, but something that is contrary to what Scripture itself points to as its center. “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to Me” (John 5:39). So we conservative Lutherans reject the struggle for a more just society as the programme of the church not because it is something wrong in itself, but because that is not the task given to the church; because if the church turns to that as its task, it is only doing what any man of goodwill can and will do, and then there is nobody left to sound the trumpet call of Augsburg Confession IV in the world. And our opposition to charismatics and those infected with Pentecostalism arises because human works traceable to the Spirit of God are set up as a basis of human faith and confidence in the place of our Lord Jesus Christ. But to bear witness to Christ is the sole work of the Spirit—“for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak. . . He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:13,14). And we shall not try to oppose the charismatics on the basis of formal argumentation from a biblical passage or a series of biblical passages.

Another example concerns the understanding of the first chapters of Genesis. Clearly, the Gospel is directly and inseparably linked with much that these chapters have to say. The Gospel is directly tied up with the teaching that God is the Creator of all that exists, that without Him was not anything made that was made, so that any other explanation to the origin of the universe (e.g., evolution) has to be rejected. It is directly tied up with the teaching that God as the good God did not create man as a sinful creature, so that there was a *status integritatis* and original sin is a corruption of human nature, not essentially part of human nature itself. The Gospel is directly tied up with the teaching that there was a real fall from the original sinless state of created mankind. So also the Gospel is tied up with the teaching that God was from the beginning concerned

about the redemption of fallen man. But there is no connection between the Gospel and the mode or length of time of creation. One hundred and forty-four hours of sixty minutes each are as irrelevant as lengthy periods of time, and just as irrelevant are the world-view of the first book of the Bible and that which is generally accepted now. It is an attack on the Gospel to make differences of exegesis on these matters disruptive of church fellowship.

It may be good to note here that the principle with which we have been concerned, that of justification by faith, has also a role to play in the positive teaching of the Christian faith—namely, only what is in keeping with that central truth can be sent forth as Christian doctrine or dogma. It should be clearly noted that I am not saying that the Christian doctrine can be derived from this center, only that there can be no Christian doctrine which is incompatible with this center. The sacraments, to take the most important example, are not derived—cannot, in fact, be derived—from the central principle. They rest solely on the dominical mandate, and that we have in Sacred Scripture. But they can also be shown not only to be compatible with the central teaching of justification by faith, but to be that central teaching itself in another form.

Thus, the doctrine of justification by faith is the criterion of all that is taught or that has the right to be taught as the very truth of God. What is derived from the Sacred Scriptures and is not in opposition to itself it permits; what is contrary to itself it rejects. This is the big lesson for the confessional Lutheran church that is plainly derived from its own confessional writings. And where we have that principle in operation—clearly, plainly, unmistakably so—there we have a systematic theology, no matter what method of procedure the theologian adopts.

# Six Theses on Liturgy and Evangelism

John T. Pless

If it is true that “what happens or does not happen in the pulpit and at the altar determines whether a church is still the church of the pure Gospel,”<sup>1</sup> then it is essential to give careful and devout attention to the relationship between the liturgy and evangelism. We approach the topic by way of six theses.

*I. The proper relationship of liturgy to evangelism is established by the fact that the doctrine of justification is the chief article (der Hauptartikel) upon which both rest.*

At the heart of the evangelical Lutheran understanding of the liturgy is the Gospel. Liturgical forms are not to be evaluated by merely aesthetic principles or historical precedent. Likewise, liturgical practices are not to be judged by pragmatic standards (e.g., “Did the people like it?”) Rather, the Lutheran Confessions understand the key criterion for judging particular liturgical forms to be a doctrinal standard: How does the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly fare in the liturgy?

It has been in vogue in some circles recently to be highly critical of Luther’s liturgical revisions, especially his insistence that the *verba testamenti* not be embedded within a eucharistic prayer. The charge is often made that Luther was unaware of the grand and glorious history of such a prayer and thus lacking proper historical awareness he performed, rather blindly, liturgical surgery on the mass, leaving it deformed and barren.

I would suggest that the opposite is true. Luther was a liturgical surgeon, but he was a skilled surgeon using the double-edged scalpel of Law and Gospel. He did not dismember the patient; rather, he administered the evangelical remedy of justification by grace through faith. Neither did he abandon the patient to die as an aged servant that had outlived his usefulness. Luther did not create a Wittenberg Mass in opposition to the Roman Mass. The Roman Mass, that is, the liturgy of Western Christendom, was filtered through the chief article (justification) and thus purified of the virus of works-righteousness. Cleansed by the Word of God and invigorated with the Gospel, this liturgy was resurrected as a newborn servant of Word and Sacrament.

For Luther and the Confessions, the distinction between *beneficium* and *sacrificium* is crucial for, when this distinction



is blurred, the gift character of the Gospel itself is lost. A theology of worship shaped by the doctrine of justification exalts and magnifies God as the actor and donor in the liturgy; the worshiper is the recipient. This emphasis is a constant refrain in Article IV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

It is strange that our opponents make so little of faith when they see it praised everywhere as the foremost kind of worship, as in Psalm 50:15: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify me." This is how God wants to be known and worshiped, that we accept his blessings and receive them because of his mercy rather than our own merits [Apol. IV:59; Tappert, p. 115].

The woman came, believing that she should seek the forgiveness of sins from Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to him. By looking for the forgiveness of sins from him, she truly acknowledged him as the Messiah. Truly to believe means to think of Christ in this way, and in this way to worship and take hold of him [Apol. IV: 154; Tappert, p. 128].

Thus the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God. We cannot offer anything to God unless we have been first reconciled and reborn. The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness [Apol. IV:310; Tappert, p. 155].

Faith comes by hearing the Word of the Lord (Romans 10:17) and not by the ritual action of the worshiping congregation or the persuasive techniques of the evangelist. Both liturgy and evangelism fail when severed from the article upon which the church itself stands or falls, the doctrine of justification.

II. *Catechesis is the necessary link between evangelization and liturgy. The apostolic work of evangelization is grounded in and sustained by the Divine Service and thus leads the catechumen into the Divine Service.*

Those brought to faith through Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost were baptized. Joined to the Body of Christ, they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The Divine Service is the liturgy of the baptized. In the liturgy, the baptized are served with God's Word and the body and blood of Christ and are sent back



into the world to render priestly service to the neighbor.

In his treatise of 1533, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," Luther comments on the true mass:

For, God be praised, in our churches we can show a Christian a true Christian mass according to the ordinance and the institution of Christ, as well as according to the true intention of Christ and the church. There our pastor, bishop, or minister in the pastoral office, rightly and honorably and publicly called, having been previously consecrated, anointed, and born in baptism as a priest of Christ, without regard to the private chrism, goes before the altar. Publicly and plainly he sings what Christ has ordained and instituted in the Lord's Supper. He takes bread and wine, gives thanks, distributes and gives them to the rest of us who are there and want to receive them, on the strength of the words of Christ: "This is my body, this is my blood. Do this," etc. Particularly we who want to receive the sacrament kneel beside, behind, and around him, man, woman, young, old, master, servant, wife, maid, parents, and children, even as God brings us together there, all of us true, holy priests, sanctified by Christ's blood, anointed by the Holy Spirit, and consecrated in baptism. On the basis of this our inborn, hereditary priestly honor and attire we are present, have, as Revelation 4:4 pictures it, our golden crowns on our heads, harps and golden censers in our hands; and we let our pastor say what Christ has ordained, not for himself as though it were for his person, but he is the mouth for all of us and we all speak with him from the heart and in faith, directed to the Lamb of God who is present for us and among us, and who according to his ordinance nourishes us with his body and blood. This is our mass, and it is the true mass which is not lacking among us.<sup>2</sup>

The evangelical mass is for the priests of God. The service is a divine transaction between the Lord Christ and those whom He has made His holy people by the washing of the water with the Word.

Luther's comments in "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests" are entirely consistent with his exposition of the First Commandment in the Large Catechism. In the Large Catechism, Luther draws the distinction between true worship and false worship, faith and idolatry. The unbeliever cannot worship God because his faith is misdirected. Luther asserts (LC I: 2-3; Tappert, p. 365):

As I have often said, the trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true God. On the other hand, if your trust is false and wrong, then you have not the true God.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the early church, the church of the second century, made a sharp distinction between those who could attend the Divine Service and those who could not attend. Werner Elert writes:

Admission was not just for anybody. . . The gathering for worship in the early church was not a public but a closed assembly, while the celebration of the Eucharist was reserved for the saints with utmost strictness.<sup>3</sup>

As the Divine Service has to do with “the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1), it will not be readily understandable to the unbeliever. Indeed, the unbeliever cannot understand it. The solution is not to do away with “the mysteries of God” by transforming the Divine Service into a recruitment rally. Rather, the unbeliever is to be brought into the congregation through the washing of regeneration. In Matthew 28:19-20 teaching is connected with baptism. Disciples are made by baptism and teaching. I find it interesting that Robert Webber, a professor at Wheaton College, has suggested that the church reclaim the catechumenate.<sup>4</sup>

The catechism is the key to understanding the liturgy. That is to say, the liturgy is to be taught not simply as a collection of inherited forms, but as the rhythm of God’s speaking and doing and our listening and receiving. The very structure of the evangelical Lutheran liturgy is geared toward repentance and faith.

In the preface to the Small Catechism, Luther urges pastors to “take the upmost care to avoid changes or variations in the text and wording of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the sacraments, etc. On the contrary. . . adopt one form and adhere to it. . . for the young and inexperienced people must be instructed on the basis of a fixed text” (SC Preface:7; Tappert, p. 338). I would suggest that what Luther says regarding the texts of the catechism applies to the text of the liturgy as well. Even a quick reading of Luther’s “Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors” (1528) will reveal how closely the catechism and liturgy are joined together in evangelical pastoral practice.

III. *The question of the liturgy’s form is never merely an issue*

*of adiaphora since the Word of God and sacraments are ultimately at stake.*

A variety of liturgical forms may legitimately exist in the Church of the Augsburg Confession. Article VII of the Augustana states (VII: 3; Tappert, p. 32):

It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places.

Likewise, Article X of the Formula of Concord maintains (FC-SD X:3; Tappert, p. 616):

...churches will not condemn each other because of a difference in ceremonies, when in Christian liberty one uses fewer or more of them, as long as they are otherwise agreed in doctrine and all its articles and they are agreed concerning the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known axiom, "Disagreement in fasting should not destroy agreement in faith."

It would be a grave misreading of the confessional teaching regarding adiaphora to infer from Article X that everything liturgical is a matter of indifference as long as the Word of God and sacraments are somehow retained. This point needs especially strong emphasis in our present context as this article is sometimes used by Lutherans as a defense for adopting the popular worship forms and evangelistic programs of their Free Church and Reformed neighbors.

Even though ceremonies may differ from place to place and from one historical period to another, they may never be ignored. Werner Elert writes:

No matter how strongly he [Luther] emphasizes Christian freedom in connection with the form of this rite [the Sacrament of the Altar], no matter how much he deviates from the form handed down at the end of the Middle Ages, no matter how earnestly he warns against the belief that external customs could commend us to God, still there are certain ceremonial elements that he, too, regarded as indispensable.<sup>5</sup>

Since there is no such thing as an "informal service," that is, a service without form, the question of the form of the liturgy can be ignored only to the detriment of the pure proclamation of the Gospel and the right administration of the blessed sacraments.

The Lutheran reformers recognized this truth and thus retained the ancient liturgy once it had been purified of superstition. Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession maintains that Lutherans keep the mass, making “no conspicuous changes” in the public ceremonies of the mass except that German hymns have been added. Article XV of the Apology is equally explicit and especially clear in focusing on the relationship of liturgical ceremonies to the doctrine of justification (Apol. XV:38; Tappert, p.38):

We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquility, and we interpret them in an evangelical way, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify. Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are.

The polemic of the confessors is not against the ancient liturgical forms but against the opinion that these forms merit the forgiveness of sins. It is the doctrine of justification that is the measuring rod for liturgical forms.

*IV. The attacks on the liturgy spawned by Pietism, Rationalism, and American Evangelicalism are not so much a rejection of an inherited, ordered form of worship as they are a denial of the efficacy of the Word and Sacrament.*

To create and sustain saving faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided His church with the Gospel and the sacraments (see AC V). The liturgy is derived from and exists to serve this external word. Our Lord says that His words are “spirit and life” in John 6. The Word of God, says Isaiah, will not return empty but will accomplish the purpose for which God sent it (see Isaiah 55:11). Through the Word of God and the sacraments “as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given to create faith, where and when it pleases God” (AC V:2; Tappert, p. 31). Apart from the external word, there is no faith (SA III: VIII: 3; Tappert, p. 312):

In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Holy Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before. Thus we shall be protected from the enthusiasts—that is, from the spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word and

therefore judge, interpret, and twist the Scriptures according to their pleasure.

Luther goes on just a few lines later to conclude that this enthusiasm is the work of "the old devil and the old serpent who made enthusiasts of Adam and Eve. He led them away from the external Word of God to spiritualizing and their own imaginations, and he did this through other external words" (SA III: VIII: 5; Tappert, p. 312).

Enthusiasm, sometimes in rather subtle forms, has always crouched near the door of Lutheranism, seeking to replace reliance on the external words of the Gospel and sacraments with a trust in the religious ego. Such enthusiasm has appeared in a number of fashions, both pietistic and rationalistic. Such enthusiasm has always launched an attack on the liturgy, often in the name of greater evangelistic effectiveness. Such was the case in American Lutheranism over a century ago. Samuel S. Schmucker (1799-1873) of the old General Synod, along with his colleagues Benjamin Kurtz and Samuel Sprecher, were dedicated to adapting Lutheranism to the cultural context of North America. In 1855 Schmucker and his friends issued the "Definite Platform," which advocated the acceptance of an edited version of the Augsburg Confession which came to be known as the "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession." The introduction to the "Definite Platform" stated that the Augustana contained five errors: (1) the approval of the ceremonies of the Mass; (2) the approval of private confession and absolution; (3) the denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath; (4) the affirmation of baptismal regeneration; and (5) the affirmation of the body and blood of our Lord in the Holy Supper.<sup>6</sup>

A changed theology resulted in a changed liturgical life. The liturgical piety shaped by the sixteenth-century church orders, the great chorales of the Reformation and Lutheran orthodoxy, and the catechism were exchanged for the excitement induced by revivalistic songs, personal testimonies, and especially the "anxious bench." Kurtz writes:

If the great object of the anxious bench can be accomplished in some other, less obnoxious, but equally efficient way—be it so. But we greatly doubt this. We consider it necessary in many cases, and we believe that there are circumstances when no measures equally good can be substituted. Hence we are free to go after this method with all our heart. . . . The

Catechism, as highly as we prize it, can never supersede the anxious bench, but only, when faithfully used, renders it more necessary.<sup>7</sup>

Schmucker and his associates did not see themselves as opponents of Lutheranism. Schmucker was steadfast in his opposition to the rationalistic president of the Lutheran Ministerium of New York, Frederick Quitman. Schmucker confessed the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. He was serious in his commitment to evangelism and mission. Intrigued by the revivalistic success stories of his Free Church and Reformed contemporaries, Schmucker sought to import their methods into Lutheranism. Much more was lost than the liturgy!

The revivalism of the last century has its heir in present day forms of church growth and evangelism which focus on "technique" and "methodology" rather than on the power of the Gospel which God Himself has packaged in His Word and sacraments. Man with his "decision for Christ," his "felt needs," his thoughts, emotions, and experiences is the focal point. God's Word, baptism, absolution, the body and blood of Christ become incidental and perhaps even a stumbling block to an effective evangelism program.

The real point of conflict, it seems to me, is not merely over whether we shall retain the historic Lutheran formularies, vestments, and the like, but rather the place of the Word of God and sacraments themselves. In his classic study of the liturgy in the Lutheran churches of Germany, Paul Graff has documented the fact that, where the liturgy is laid aside, the pure preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments is ultimately the victim. Whether we like it or not, the form of the liturgy will shape its content. Reformed or Free Church "styles" of worship are simply incapable of communicating the pure preaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments.

*V. The Old Adam is never quite so energetic and destructive as he is in evangelism and worship. Israel's worship in the desert was both creative and culturally relevant, but it was judged by the Lord God as idolatry.*

Idolatry and synergism are actually two sides of the same coin. Both displace the Lord Christ and His Word. As his exposition of the First Commandment in the Large Catechism aptly demonstrates, Luther's chief criticism of the Roman Mass was that it was idolatrous. Self-chosen forms of worship are set in the place of the Word of

God and the sacraments. In evangelism and worship God is the actor. It is the Word of the Lord that brings men and women to faith, not the power or personality of the evangelist. Likewise, in worship God is at work to serve His people with His Word and sacraments. Evangelical worship is *Gottesdienst* (subjective genitive), Divine Service. When the Old Adam takes charge of evangelism, synergism results as sinners are led to believe that they can participate in obtaining salvation by "making a decision for Christ." When the Old Adam takes charge of worship, the words, thoughts, or emotions of man replace or supplement the Word of God and sacraments. Worship then becomes either a pious sacrifice that man renders to God to secure some benefit or else a means of catering to or entertaining the Old Adam. In his commentary of 1535 on Galatians Luther comments:

Whoever falls from the doctrine of justification is ignorant of God and is an idolator. Therefore it is all the same whether he returns to the Law or to the worship of idols; it is all the same whether he is called a monk or a Turk or a Jew or an Anabaptist.<sup>8</sup>

One has only to recall that well-attended "worship experience" created by the children of Israel in the Sinai desert. Moses was delayed in coming down from the mountain. In true worship, God gathers His people by His Name and Word. In the false worship that took place in the desert, "the people gathered themselves together" (Ex. 32:1) and made a god to their own liking. It was creative and culturally relevant. They made for themselves a golden calf like the idols of their pagan counterparts. They sat down to eat and drink. It was exciting and meaningful. "They rose up to play" (Ex. 32:6). Or as Luther said of the fanatics of the sixteenth century, they "made Christ's Supper into a parish fair."<sup>9</sup>

VI. *Far from being unnecessary baggage, the liturgy serves the evangel of our salvation by keeping the worship of the congregation securely anchored in the "pattern of sound words" so that the faith-creating Gospel may be heard in all of its divine fullness.*

As God is not a God of chaos and confusion (see 1 Corinthians 14:33), so His Divine Service to the congregation is both ordered and orderly. The liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church reflects this orderliness as it serves the Word of God and sacraments which give and bestow the gracious gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. The liturgy provides the congregation with an orderly way of listening

to God speak, of receiving the body and blood of Christ, and responding to Him in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, using words which God Himself has given us in His inspired Scriptures. The orderliness is reflected in the various parts of the liturgy drawn from the Scriptures: the Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Old Testament Reading, Epistle, Gospel, Offertory, Sanctus, Verba, Agnus Dei, Nunc Dimittis, and Benediction. All of these are taken from Scripture. Such orderliness is also found in the church year with its pericopal system.

Luther was well aware of the importance of such an ordered liturgy. Certainly liturgical forms do not commend sinners to God. Nevertheless, Luther was very conservative in his reform of the liturgy. One has only to recall his reaction to Karlstadt's legalistic and hasty liturgical reforms at Wittenberg in 1521-1522.

Finally, at the urging of his friend, Pastor Nicholas Hausmann, pastor at Zwickau, Luther prepared "An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg" in 1523. This document is descriptive of the Evangelical Mass in Latin. Luther is very cautious:

Nor did I make any innovations. For I have been hesitant and fearful, partly because of the weak of faith who cannot suddenly exchange an old and accustomed order of worship for a new and unusual one, and more so because of the fickle and fastidious spirits who rush in like unclean swine without faith or reason, and who delight only in novelty and tire of it quickly, when it has worn off. Such people are a nuisance even in ordinary affairs, but in spiritual matters they are absolutely unbearable.<sup>10</sup>

In 1526 Luther prepared the *Deutsche Messe*. A number of German liturgies had been produced prior to this time by various Lutheran clerics. The multiplicity of orders threatened to produce liturgical chaos and confusion in Germany. With some hesitation, Luther finally prepared a German order in 1526. In the preface to the liturgy of 1526 Luther writes:

As far as possible we should all observe the same rites and ceremonies, just as all Christians have the same baptism and the same sacrament [of the altar] and no one has received a special one from God.<sup>11</sup>

Luther did not see the German Mass as a replacement for the Latin Mass of 1523. The German Mass was something of an



“emergency measure” for the training of the young and unlearned. The German Mass does not abolish the liturgy, but simply casts the various parts of the liturgy in hymnic form. It seems that, after 1528 (the year of the Saxon visitations), Luther became even more guarded in his advice regarding the production of new liturgical forms. The majority of his efforts are devoted to urging pastors to teach the people how to use the liturgy, especially the Lord’s Supper. The Service of Word and Sacrament remains intact. Luther did not create additional liturgies. Luther was not in disagreement with Article XXIV of the Apology (XXIV:1-2; Tappert, p. 249):

We must repeat the prefatory statement that we do not abolish the mass but religiously keep and defend it. In our churches mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals, when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved. We keep traditional liturgical forms, such as the order of the lessons, prayers, vestments, etc.

### *Conclusion*

While Christians certainly have the freedom to create new liturgical forms, this freedom must be exercised with the greatest degree of care. Consensus in the pure preaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments and not uniformity in liturgical practices is the basis for the unity of the church (AC VII). However, this truth does not mean that “anything goes” in matters of worship. Lutherans must remain evangelical catholics in worship and mission. The words of Wilhelm Loehe, perhaps the greatest missiologist of nineteenth-century confessional Lutheranism, stand as a challenge for us in our own day:

We must beware of misusing our liturgical freedom to produce new liturgies. One should rather use the old forms and learn to understand and have a feeling for them before one feels oneself competent to create something new and better. He who has not tested the old cannot create something new. It is a shame when everybody presumes to form his own opinions about hymns and the liturgy without having thoroughly looked into the matter. Let a man first learn in silence and not act as though it were a matter of course that he understands everything. Once a man has first learned from the old he can profitably use the developments of recent times (in language and methods of speech) for the benefit of the liturgy.<sup>12</sup>

*Endnotes*

1. W. Nagel, "Justification and the Discipline of Liturgics," *Lutheran Quarterly*, 7 (February, 1956), p. 43.
2. *Luther's Works*, 38, pp. 208-209.
3. Werner Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*, trans. by Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 75-76.
4. See Robert Webber's *Celebrating our Faith: Evangelism Through Worship* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986). Webber is now a member of the Episcopal Church.
5. Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. by Walter Hanson (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 325.
6. E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 224.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.
8. *Luther's Works*, 26, pp. 395-396.
9. *Luther's Works*, 37, p. 141.
10. *Luther's Works*, 53, p. 19.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
12. Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. by James Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 178.

The Rev. John T. Pless is pastor of the University Lutheran Chapel in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## A Review Article

DOGMATIK DES CHRISTLICHEN GLAUBENS. By Gerhard Ebeling. J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tuebingen, 1982.  
Three Volumes. 1508 plus lxiv pages.

Lowell C. Green

The appearance of a new system of dogmatics is exciting news, especially when it comes from the hand of Gerhard Ebeling, one of the most talented Lutheran scholars of our time. The theological biography of Ebeling seems to fall into three periods: his early period, when he won the reputation of a brilliant Luther scholar with his standard work on Luther's theology, *Luthers evangelische Evangelienauslegung*; a middle period, when his writings seemed to have a liberal outlook; and this, his mature period, in which he returns to a more traditional position. This work grew out of lectures delivered at the University of Zurich between 1976 and 1978, with the first published edition appearing in 1979; the reviewer received the second edition, of 1982. Ebeling does not claim to be writing a confessional Lutheran dogmatics; nevertheless, throughout, when he speaks of the "evangelical" position, he seems generally to take a position basically in accord with the Lutheran *Book of Concord*. However, the specifically Lutheran focus that I would like to see is sometimes missing; this might be due to the fact that the original lectures were delivered in a Reformed institution.

The scope of this new "Dogmatics of the Christian Faith" can best be shown by giving a table of contents. Volume I begins with an introduction (pp. 1-7) and discussion of prolegomena (pp. 11-76). The remainder of this volume is devoted to "Faith in God, the Creator of the World" (pp. 79-414). Volume II treats "Faith in God, the Reconciler of the World" (pp. 3-547). After a discussion of the relationship of pneumatology and eschatology, and its consequences for the disposition of things (III, 3-60), Ebeling treats soteriology (pp. 61-384) and then takes up "Last Things" (pp. 385-528). He concludes with the doctrine of the Trinity (pp. 529-546). The work ends with an index of Scripture references and an index of topics. It would be impossible to write a comprehensive review of these three volumes. Instead, the reviewer will present some aspects which particularly interested him.

One of the admirable things about Ebeling's work is that he, like no previous writer, has presented the genetic Lutheran concepts of

God hidden and revealed (*Deus absconditus seu revelatus*) and the distinction of Law and Gospel throughout, and not merely in the prolegomena. He is very much on the mark when he gives a thorough discussion of Law and Gospel immediately after justification and, again, when he includes the tension between the hiddenness and the revelation of God in his discussion of judgment and of the conflict in history between the dominion of God and those opposed to His reign (III, 477ff., and especially pp. 488-491). In this respect, he very much follows Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* and *Lectures on Genesis*.

Prolegomena are often regarded as the most important part of a dogmatics; after the principles have been laid down, the rest is thought to be a matter of drawing the specific from the general. Carl Stange devoted a whole volume to prolegomena and then was content to leave the remainder of his dogmatics unwritten. Not so Ebeling. He remarks: "I shall absolve the prolegomena in the shortest way possible in favor of the subject matter of dogmatics itself" (I,7). Thus he restricts his prolegomena to 65 pages.

Ebeling is not a scissors-and-paste theologian, nor does he engage in the common vice of the modern scholastics who merely react to previous writers with nothing significantly new. In fact, he announces from the start that he will minimize such discussions. Instead, Ebeling writes a "Systematic Theology" that is creative, not in the sense that he is forcing the various doctrines into a pre-conceived mold, but in the sense that he proceeds to present the *loci* from an inner unity. In the reviewer's opinion, this is the nature of a true dogmatics. Ebeling writes in a crystal-clear German; his frequent use of English derivatives will likely make him more readable for Americans than other writers. However, he is not without the clichés ("Christ event," etc.) which sometimes make continental theologians seem tedious.

In Part One he develops "Faith in God, the Creator of the World" (I, 79-414), where he presents, in turn, faith, God, the world, and man. Everything that is discussed in dogmatics has to do with expressions of faith (I,79). Without specific reference to the scholastic splintering of faith or to Schleiermacher's generalization of *faith* as a feeling of dependence, Ebeling shows how the word has been robbed of its specifically Christian content and made a religiously neutral word (I,84f.), while he goes back to Paul and Luther for content. He builds upon Luther's characterization of faith in the interpretation of the First Commandment in the Large Catechism, faith as clinging to God (I,87).

Ebeling is critical of the "proofs for the existence of God" ("a God who was proved would be a self-contradiction," I,215). He takes a moderate position in dealing with the traditional "attributes of God." As we know, these stem from natural theology and the three "ways" of Pseudo-Dionysius (*via causalis seu eminentiae seu negativa*). In the reviewer's thinking, this natural theology does not deserve the respect it has customarily received, and the value of these rationally constructed "attributes of God" is not very great. Already in 1924 Pieper had noted the fatal weakness of dwelling on the attributes when he wrote that all the attributes belonged to the Law and "could only fill our hearts with terror" if God had not also revealed His "free grace toward all sinful mankind for the sake of Christ's vicarious atonement" (*Christian Dogmatics*, I,437), a brilliant observation which leads one to wonder why dogmaticians who are concerned with the Law-Gospel distinction continue to devote so much attention to the "attributes of God." Ebeling senses the weaknesses of assigning such attributes to God and, somewhat in the manner of Schleiermacher, attempts to find meaning through a practical application. He does this by relating the attributes to prayer. Here, like Pieper (above), he comes close to a Law-Gospel dialectic. He presents this outline:

1. The appropriate address to God of *holiness*.
  - a. The hiddenness of God.
  - b. The nearness of God.
2. The appropriate praise of God of *doxa*.
  - a. The eternity of God.
  - b. The creative power of God.
3. The appropriate trust in God of *love*.
  - a. The grace of God.
  - b. The truth of God.

The piety of Ebeling comes out in this beautiful elaboration, which I shall give in his own words: "Wer betet, glaubt an die Macht der Liebe Gottes. Das wird gerade dann um so deutlicher, wenn sich das Gebet als ein Schreien aus der Tiefe oder als ein Stammeln dessen vernehmen laesst, der nicht weiss, wie er beten soll, sondern sich darauf verlaesst, dass der Geist ihn mit unaussprechlichem Seufzen vertritt, das Gott besser vesteht als der Beter [Romans 8:26f.]" (I, 244).

It would seem that a genuinely Lutheran doctrine of God should avoid natural theology; instead, it should go out from the premise that God remains unknown and impenetrable aside from his self-

revelation in Jesus Christ. Thereby, Luther's distinction of God hidden and revealed, or of Law and Gospel, might become central rather than peripheral to the entire system. (See the reviewer's sketch, "Toward a New Lutheran Dogmatics," CTQ 50:2 [April 1986]: 109-117.) Ebeling's dogmatics seems to come closer to this goal than any previous. His Christology is a key part of the total endeavor.

He begins Christology by discussing the relation of the Second Article of the Creed to the First. "In a certain way, in the Christ event, the truth of the creative working of God becomes also an event. And in this way the creation occurrence becomes a revelation occurrence, in the strict sense, for the first time. Out of this emerges that which is unique in the Second Article, over against the First, in regard to what is common to both. The togetherness of God, world, and man, which in the first part of the dogmatics was only taken up in outline form, first comes to its full truth in the appearance of Jesus Christ and is experienced as an event in faith. What previously could only be said rather unclearly about God, the world, and man, now receives its first precise definition in the concentration upon Jesus Christ" (II, 7).

Luther's well-known position rejected a "theology from above" (based upon Neo-Platonic speculation) in favor of a "theology from below," God revealed in the Child of Bethlehem and the Man of Calvary. This establishes the centrality of Christology. However, this does not necessarily mean that Christology itself must start "from below." Ebeling discusses very clearly the question of Christology from above or from below, points out and warns against problems in either position, and incorporates both approaches into his own discussion (II, 36-39). Proceeding from Luther's hymn, "Nun Freut Euch, Lieben Christen Gemein," which has God's Son descending to earth and then returning after completing the work of salvation, he comments: "The real wonder reported here is not the divine nature of Christ but His human nature. That He is God's Son is the point of departure. That He has become man is what goes beyond our understanding" (p. 36).

It has been lamented that, at the time when Neo-Pentecostalism was becoming a problem, the esteemed Dr. Pieper left the Missouri Synod a dogmatics lacking a *locus* concerning the Holy Ghost. There is no such oversight in Ebeling, who devotes over 100 pages to the person and work of the Spirit (III, 61-170). He vigorously distances pneumatology from enthusiasm (Neo-Pentecostalism!) by attaching it to the confession of Christ as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:1-3) and

to the *theologia crucis* (III,102-103). He emphasizes Luther's exposition of the Third Article (III,191) and finds a direct line to the doctrine of justification. He speaks of "reference to the Spirit for the sake of faith" and "reference to faith for the sake of the Spirit" (III,192f.). "The righteousness of faith is the source of the Spirit. The fellowship of faith is the form of history in which the Holy Ghost continues to work. Through these clarifications those enthusiastic flights and spiritualistic evaporations which think to separate the Holy Ghost from the material things of earth and the historical ties of life on earth are warded off" (III,192).

The section on justification is substantial (III,194-248) and is followed by "God's Word as Law and Gospel" (pp. 249-295) and the sacraments (pp. 296-330). Unlike several recent writers, who have called the doctrine of justification inconceivable to the modern mind, Ebeling recognizes the unacceptability of this doctrine, but refuses to treat it as something expendable. Instead, justification is only "the tip of the iceberg." It is biblical teaching as a whole that is unacceptable to natural man: "God, sin, salvation—these central points of view, which sharpen biblically the question of the righteous man—are individually and together no less strange to modern man" (III,205). Christ is the righteous man (*der rechte Mensch*). "The announcement of justification out of faith alone is valid for the sake of Him who, as the righteous man, is believed in. Not although, but because, Jesus is believed in as true God, is He believed in as true man, as He who is the new, the righteous man, in contrast to the old, corrupted man. This announcement applies as a promise to him who, as the old man, is called in order that he might become the new, righteous man. Thereby, the announcement of justification is directed exclusively at Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, at all people without exception" (p. 209). Although Ebeling as a Lutheran clearly upholds the universalism of grace, he does not fall into the recent false universalism which denies the judgment of the wicked at the end of time, but clearly teaches the judgment of the world (III,468). As he proceeds on justification, he develops further the aspects of *solus Christus*, *sola gratia*, *solo verbo*, and *sola fide* (III,219-225).

Finally, let us examine Ebeling's sacramental theology. The sacraments immediately follow a lengthy discussion on the Word and the distinction of Law and Gospel, and he uses this distinction in his presentation on the relationship between the Word and the sacraments (or, better, preaching and sacraments, p. 296). The

sacraments have a verbal essence, but presuppose the priority of the proclaimed Word; nevertheless, preaching has action character (*Handlungscharakter*) as well. Although Ebeling does not grind a confessional ax, he rejects Reformed thinking and stands decisively on the Lutheran side when he denies that the faith of the recipient in any way makes a sacrament; "for a right evangelical understanding of the sacrament, that stands completely outside of consideration" (III,312). He comes out for the Real Presence (III,313, 326, *passim*) and refutes Zwingli (III,306), but the Lutheran position is not handled as thoroughly as the reviewer would like. Nevertheless, Ebeling is thoroughly honest in acknowledging that the differences among the confessions are very real and are actually divisive. "Indifference over against the doctrine of the sacraments is no sign of reverence before the sacraments" (III, 301). In practical matters, he questions whether the recent tendency toward "generous communion fellowship" or the laxity shown in experimentation with novelties (e.g., communion of children) is a sign of strong faith or theological clarity. He opposes self-communion by the pastor and prefers that the pastor abstain or else receive the sacrament from a layman (III, 322).

Ebeling does not share the views of the "Liturgical Movement" of Lietzmann, Casel, Brilioth, Dix, and Reed (pagan roots of the sacraments; emphasis upon sacrifice); he rejects the notion that the Supper is the center of the Divine Service (III, 296) and cites the Word as that center, according to the Confessions (III,310). He makes minimal reference to the "History of Religions School of Theology," which connected Christian sacraments with the pagan mysteries of Greece, a position which passed from Lietzmann into current liturgics (the sacrament as an ordinary meal); Ebeling himself notes that Hellenistic terminology was not applied to the sacraments until the second century, when it was reluctantly taken over (p. 303); without labored attempts to discount a close connection between pagan mysteries and Christian sacraments on historical grounds, he chooses to show the differences by means of the Law-Gospel dialectic (III,298).

There has been a growing tendency in the Missouri Synod to utilize the concept of *typology*, making the Passover a *type* of the Lord's Supper, and even suggesting that a congregation "celebrate" the Supper by preceding it with a Passover. Ebeling's refutation is not based upon the Reformed roots of this approach, but rather upon the distinction of Law and Gospel. He is willing to grant that baptism might have grown out of circumcision or that the Supper might have



---

grown out of the Passover. "But such an understanding, in spite of formally common points between the sacraments and religious rites, proves itself a misunderstanding and a misuse, so far as one sees the sacrament explained as Gospel in the relation of Word and faith...That which is handed out is nothing other than that which the Word is and is able to bestow in its highest potency: promise" (III,300). Perhaps there is no debasement of sacrament when he says that preaching has "sacramental character" (p. 297), but he might be misunderstood when he adds to the above: "Thus the sacraments are rites, but not such as establish salvation; but rather in a certain sense they place one in salvation, in that they remind him, and seal it, that the believer has his being in Christ" (p. 300). It seems that he is trying to say that there is only one gift, Christ, whether received through preaching or the sacraments. And the Word as Law and Gospel is that wholly other thing that cannot be grasped aside from the revelation of God in Christ. Otherwise, God remains the Hidden One.

It is unfortunate that insufficient attention has been accorded Ebeling's dogmatics in North America. It should be studied carefully by all who regard themselves as the practitioners of systematic theology.

The Rev. Lowell C. Green, D. Theol., is pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Buffalo, New York.



# Book Reviews

**TELEVISION AND RELIGION: THE SHAPING OF FAITH, VALUES, AND CULTURE.** By William F. Fore. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987.

Dr. William F. Fore, ordained United Methodist, is assistant general secretary for communications of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. In the preface of this book he provides an effective summary of each chapter (pp. 12-13):

"Chapter 1 describes what we already know about television and its power, and why religion is concerned about TV's cultural role. Chapter 2 enlarges the perspective to show that TV is actually an expression of the new technological era, and describes the church's inadequate response thus far to the challenges of the technological era.

"Chapter 3 sets forth a Christian theological framework from which to analyze the world of television, and Chapter 4 then examines television—its myths, stories, values, and assumptions, in comparison with this Christian worldview. Chapters 5 and 6 describe in detail the best known of the church responses to the challenge of television—the electronic church—in both its positive and negative aspects. Chapter 7 suggests specific strategies for action in the mainline churches.

"Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11 consider the three ethical and public policy issues which must command our attention as we consider ways to respond to the challenges posed by television: violence and sexual violence; censorship and media regulation; and the global implications of our American media policies...

"Finally, Chapter 12 looks at some 'signs of hope,' specific ways individuals and groups can work in production and distribution, the influencing of public policy, and media education."

The last point is precisely the weakness of this book: it gets to "signs of hope" only in the last chapter, and then there is not enough time left to give us more details about specific directives concerning how we can resolve the problems of media hopelessness covered in the first eleven chapters.

A short section of Chapter 12, called "The Vision," concludes the book with some helpful, hopeful, general suggestions. Concerned citizens can "...create local television councils and community action to get stations to accept their public accountability; introduce media education courses in the schools; use community organizations to develop programs relating to community issues in the 'narrowcast' media of cable TV, videocassettes, low-power TV, public broadcasting facilities, and commercial side-band channels; utilize stockholder action and, under certain circumstances, boycott" (pp. 200-201).

Since the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's use of media is lumped

with the history of the "electronic church," which Fore discounts as "evangelical" and "fundamentalistic," it might evaluate whether it can benefit from Fore's critique. It will find it difficult to abandon its Word of God (Law-Gospel) theology of communication in favor of the "social gospel" political activism of Fore's basic religious viewpoint.

Harold H. Zietlow

AGING, A TIME FOR NEW LEARNING. By David J. Maitland. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987. Paperback, 133 pages.

One is quickly disabused of the expectation that here is a manual that will provide new insights and better methodologies in educational programs for the elderly in the congregation. For those not previously initiated this volume will introduce you to "imaging," i.e., a guided journey made possible by enabling a person to get in touch with the inner self. The author strives to demonstrate how past recollections and hoped-for futures can be reconciled in an individual life reflected in a person's self-understanding that will enable that person to live more completely and fully in the present. This in part is what the psalmist means, according to Maitland, when he requests that God would teach us to number our days (Psalm 90). In short, there is something in experience which is instructive. In this reviewer's mind—and he may be accused of oversimplification—the text may well be considered a commentary on Erik Erickson's seventh stage (of eight) of human development, "Stagnation or Generativity." In this polarity the aging person either stagnates, simply waits to die, or uses the time as an investment to build up a heritage to be passed on to future generations. Those acquainted with Abraham Maslow's ideas on "self-actualization" might also resonate sympathetically with Maitland's material. The wise heart, according to Maitland, is one which is secure in the realization that historically, currently, and perpetually, it dwells in God (p. 133).

Norbert H. Mueller

# Indices to Volume 51 (1987)

## AUTHOR INDEX

- Aho, Edmond.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:112-114, 114-115.
- Aho, Gerhard.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:121-123, 146-148.
- Bahn, David L.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:165-167, 167-168.
- Bollhagen, James.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:156-157, 157-158.
- Briel, Steven.  
The Pastor and the Septuagint.  
4:261-274.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:168-170, 170-172.
- Carter, Stephen J.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:149-150, 151-152.
- Cloeter, Paul E.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:130-131, 131-132.
- Degner, Waldemar.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:178-180, 180-182.
- The Editors.  
Announcement: The Eleventh Annual Symposium on the  
Lutheran Confessions.  
2-3:81-82.
- Gibbs, Jeffrey A.  
Parables of Atonement and Assurance: Matthew 13:44-46.  
1:19-43.
- Hagen, Kenneth.  
The Historical Context of the Smalcald Articles.  
4:245-253.

Judisch, Douglas McC.L.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:152-154, 154-156.

Just, Arthur, Jr.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:175-176, 176-178.

Knapp, Timothy D.  
The Scriptural Principles of Fellowship.  
1:45-51.

Kraus, George.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:145-146, 148-149.

MacKenzie, Cameron.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:132-134, 134-135.

Messmann, Warren E.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:115-116, 116-118.

Mitchell, Lawrence.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:158-160, 160-162.

Mueller, Norbert H.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:173-174, 174-175.

Perryman, Dennis S.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:185-186.

Pless, John T.  
Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross.  
2-3:83-101.

Preus, Klemet.  
Contemporary Christian Music: An Evaluation.  
1:1-18.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:187-188, 188-190.

Scaer, David P.  
Carl Braaten's Sixth Locus: The Person of Jesus Christ.  
4:275-278.

- 
- A Lutheran Response to Evangelicalism: Ordination of Women.  
2-3:103-105.  
Professor Gerhard Aho, Ph.D.  
4:243-244.  
A Review Article: The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels.  
4:255-259.
- Schlie, David.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:142-143, 143-145.
- Schurb, Ken.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:118-189, 120-121.
- Seybold, David E.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:135-137, 137-138.
- Shaw, Jonathan E.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:182-184.
- Shields, Randall W.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:107-108, 108-109.
- Strasen, Luther G.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:123-124, 124-126.
- Strelow, Lloyd.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:184-185.
- Surburg, Raymond F.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:126-128, 128-129.
- Teigen, Bjarne Wollan.  
Taking up Zwingli on the Consecration.  
4:279-280.
- Thompson, William G.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:162-163, 163-165.
- Weidler, Ron.  
Homiletical Studies.  
2-3:138-140, 140-141.

Wenthe, Dean.

Homiletical Studies.

2-3:110-111, 111-112.

---



## TITLE INDEX

- Announcement: The Eleventh Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions.  
2-3:81-82.
- Book Reviews.  
1:53-68.  
2-3:191-236.  
4:281-317.
- Carl Braaten's Sixth Locus: The Person of Jesus Christ.  
D. Scaer.  
4:275-278.
- Contemporary Christian Music: An Evaluation.  
K. Preus.  
1:1-18.
- The Historical Context of the Smalcald Articles.  
K. Hagen.  
4:245-253.
- Homiletical Studies (November 29, 1987—November 20, 1988).  
Series B Old Testament Lessons.  
2-3:107-190.
- Indices to Volume 50 (1986).  
1:69-77.
- A Lutheran Response to Evangelicalism: Ordination of Women.  
D. Scaer.  
2-3:103-105.
- Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross.  
J. Pless.  
2-3:83-101.
- Parables of Atonement and Assurance: Matthew 13:44-46.  
J. Gibbs.  
1:19-43.
- The Pastor and the Septuagint.  
S. Briel.  
4:261-274.
- Professor Gerhard Aho, Ph.D.  
D. Scaer.  
4:243-244.
- A Review Article: The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels.  
D. Scaer.  
4:255-259.

The Scriptural Principles of Fellowship.

T. Knapp.

1:45-51.

Taking up Zwingli on the Consecration.

B. Teigen.

4:279-280.

---

## SCRIPTURE INDEX TO THE HOMILETICAL STUDIES

Genesis 2:18-24. Waldemar Degner. 2-3:178-180.  
Genesis 3:9-15. Stephen J. Carter. 2-3:151-152.  
Genesis 22:1-14. Raymond F. Surburg. 2-3:126-128.

Exodus 16:2-15. William G. Thompson. 2-3:163-165.  
Exodus 20:1-17. Paul E. Cloeter. 2-3:130-131.  
Exodus 24:3-11. William G. Thompson. 2-3:162-163.

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29. Arthur Just, Jr. 2-3:176-178.  
Numbers 21:4-9. Paul E. Cloeter. 2-3:131-132.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8. Steven C. Briel. 2-3:170-172.  
Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Stephen J. Carter. 2-3:149-150.  
Deuteronomy 6:4-9. George Kraus. 2-3:148-149.  
Deuteronomy 18:15-20. Gerhard Aho. 2-3:121-123.

Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18. Steven C. Briel. 2-3:168-170.

1 Samuel 3:1-10. Ken Schurb. 2-3:118-119.

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16. Dean Wenthe. 2-3:111-112.

1 Kings 19:4-8. David L. Bahn. 2-3:165-167.

2 Kings 2:1-12c. Luther G. Strasen. 2-3:124-126.

Job 7:1-7. Luther G. Strasen. 2-3:123-124.  
Job 38:1-11. Douglas McC. L. Judisch. 2-3:154-156.

Proverbs 9:1-6. David L. Bahn. 2-3:167-168.

Isaiah 25:6-9. David E. Seybold. 2-3:135-137.  
Isaiah 35:4-7a. Norbert H. Mueller. 2-3:173-174.  
Isaiah 40:1-8. Randall W. Shields. 2-3:108-109.  
Isaiah 42:1-7. Warren E. Messmann. 2-3:116-118.  
Isaiah 45:22-25. Edmond E. Aho. 2-3:114-115.  
Isaiah 50:4-10. Norbert H. Mueller. 2-3:174-175.  
Isaiah 51:4-6. Klemet Preus. 2-3:188-190.  
Isaiah 53:10-12. Jonathan E. Shaw. 2-3:182-184.  
Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11. Dean Wenthe. 2-3:110-111.  
Isaiah 61:10-62:3. Warren E. Messmann. 2-3:115-116.  
Isaiah 62:10-12. Edmond E. Aho. 2-3:112-114.  
Isaiah 63:16b-17; 64:1-8. Randall W. Shields. 2-3:107-108.

Jeremiah 11:18-20. Arthur Just, Jr. 2-3:175-176.

Jeremiah 23:1-6. Lawrence Mitchell. 2-3:160-162.

Jeremiah 31:7-9. Lloyd Strelow. 2-3:184-185.

Jeremiah 31:31-37. Cameron MacKenzie. 2-3:132-134.

Lamentations 3:22-23. James Bollhagen. 2-3:156-157.

Ezekiel 2:1-5. James Bollhagen. 2-3:157-158.

Ezekiel 17:22-23. Douglas McC. L. Judisch. 2-3:152-154.

Ezekiel 37:1-14. Gerhard Aho. 2-3:146-148.

Daniel 7:9-10. Klemet Preus. 2-3:187-188.

Daniel 12:1-13. Dennis S. Perryman. 2-3:185-186.

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15. Waldemar Degner. 2-3:180-182.

Amos 7:10-15. Lawrence Mitchell. 2-3:158-160.

Jonah 3:1-5. Ken Schurb. 2-3:120-121.

Zechariah 9:9-10. Cameron MacKenzie. 2-3:134-135.

Acts 1:15-26. George Kraus. 2-3:145-146.

Acts 3:13-15, 17-26. David E. Seybold. 2-3:137-138.

Acts 4:8-12. Ron Weidler. 2-3:138-140.

Acts 4:23-33. Ron Weidler. 2-3:140-141.

Acts 8:26-40. David Schlie. 2-3:142-143.

Acts 11:19-30. David Schlie. 2-3:143-145.

## SUBJECT INDEX

### AHO, GERHARD

Professor Gerhard Aho, Ph.D.. D. Scaer. 4:243-244.

### BRAATEN, CARL

Carl Braaten's Sixth Locus: The Person of Jesus Christ. D. Scaer. 4:275-278.

### CHRISTIAN MUSIC

Contemporary Christian Music: An Evaluation. Klemet Preus. 1:1-18.

### CHRISTOLOGY

Carl Braaten's Sixth Locus: The Person of Jesus Christ. D. Scaer. 4:275-278.

### CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The Scriptural Principles of Fellowship. T. Knapp. 1:45-51.

### EVANGELICALISM

A Lutheran Response to Evangelicalism: Ordination of Women. D. Scaer. 2-3:103-105.

### HOMILETICS

Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross. J. Pless. 2-3:83-101.

### LORD'S SUPPER

Taking up Zwingli on the Consecration. B. Teigen. 4:279-280.

### LUTHER, MARTIN

Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross. J. Pless. 2-3:83-101.

Taking up Zwingli on the Consecration. B. Teigen. 4:279-280.

### LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

The Historical Context of the Smalcald Articles. K. Hagen. 4:245-253.

### PARABLES

Parables of Atonement and Assurance: Matthew 13:44-46. J. Gibbs. 1:19-43.

### REFORMATION HISTORY

The Historical Context of the Smalcald Articles. K. Hagen. 4:245-253.

### SEPTUAGINT

The Pastor and the Septuagint. S. Briel. 4:261-274.

### SYMPOSIUM ON THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

The Eleventh Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions. 2-3:81-82.

### SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

A Review Article: The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels. D. Scaer. 4:255-259.

**THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS**

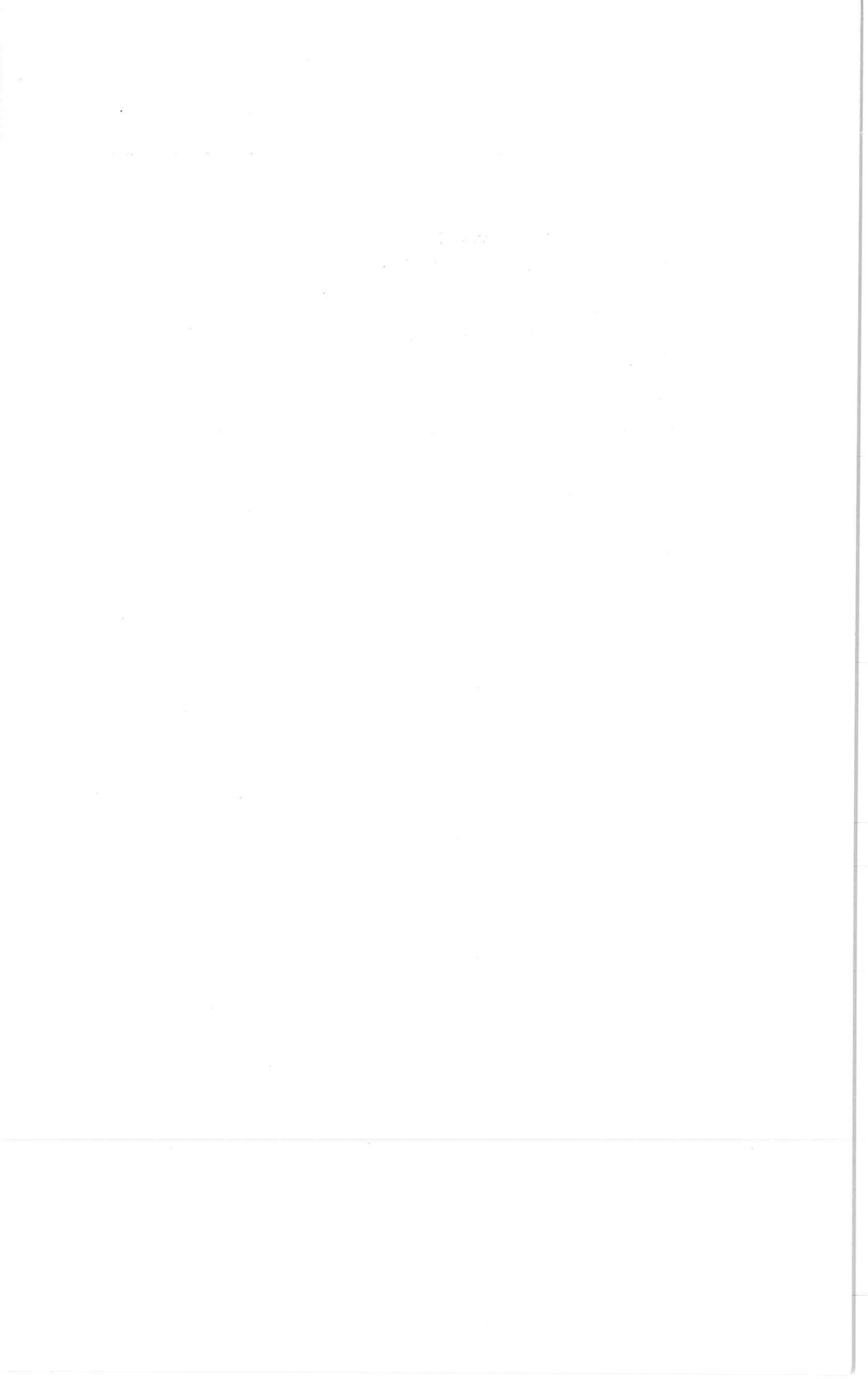
Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross. J. Pless. 2-3:83-101.

**WOMEN'S ORDINATION**

A Lutheran Response to Evangelicalism: Ordination of Women.  
D. Scaer. 2-3:103-105.

**ZWINGLI, ULRICH**

Taking up Zwingli on the Consecration. B. Teigen. 4:279-280.



# EERDMANS

## THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA Fully Revised Volume IV: Q-Z Geoffrey W. Bromiley, General Editor

"The new ISBE maintains the same level of scholarship that marked its predecessors, along with a responsible and reverent evangelical tone."

—*Christianity Today*

Cloth, \$39.95  
Complete Set of  
Four Volumes, \$159.95

## SERMON GUIDES FOR PREACHING IN EASTER, ASCENSION, AND PENTECOST

Edited by C. W. Burger,  
B. A. Muller,  
and D. J. Smit

This volume is the first of a series of sermon guides designed to help preachers produce sermons on a variety of texts, most of which are drawn from the Common Lectionary.  
Paper, \$12.95

## THE PARABLES OF GRACE

Robert Farrar Capon

Capon deals with the series of parables from the Gospels which he refers to as the Parables of Grace, the generally short stories occurring between the feeding of the five thousand and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.  
Cloth, \$14.95

## GRACE AND LAW St. Paul, Kant, and the Hebrew Prophets

Heins W. Cassirer  
In this book, Cassirer contrasts the view of the law in the teaching of Paul and also the Old Testament prophets with that of Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason*. Paper, \$12.95

## JESUS AND THE ETHICS OF THE KINGDOM

Bruce Chilton and  
J. I. H. McDonald

In an attempt to reconcile Jesus' moral teaching with his eschatology, the authors offer results from a fresh investigation of the Gospel parables about the Kingdom.  
Paper, \$8.95

## 1 and 2 CHRONICLES The Forms of the Old Testament Literature Volume XI

Simon J. De Vries

In his introduction De Vries sketches the canonical setting of the books of Chronicles and describes its genealogical and narrative history. He then offers an analysis of the structure, genre, setting, and intention of each section of the biblical text.  
Paper, \$24.95

## OPPOSITE PARTNERS Religion and Liberal Culture in the United States

Robert Booth Fowler

Fowler provides a theoretical exploration of the nature of the symbiotic relationship between religion and American politics, and an analysis of the role religion plays in American culture.  
Paper, \$12.95

## THE STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE IN THE KINGDOM OF DEATH

Douglas John Hall

Hall, well-known author on the subject of stewardship, here offers a book with the gripping message that to be a steward in the world today is a more critical task than at any time in the church's past.  
Paper, \$8.95

## THE BOOK OF JOB New International Commentary on the Old Testament

John E. Hartley

"A thorough and scholarly commentary which cuts through the thickets of scholarly debate to present a knowledgeable and highly readable treatment of this fascinating book."

—J. D. W. Watts

Cloth, \$26.95

## INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

Edited by

Frederick Carlson  
Holmgren and George  
A. F. Knight

## Revelation of God The Song of Songs and Jonah

George A. F. Knight and  
Friedemann Golka  
Paper, \$7.95

## Rebuilding with Hope

Haggai and Zechariah  
Carroll Stuhlmueller  
Paper, \$8.95

## TRUTH AND COMMUNITY Diversity and Its Limits in the Ecumenical Movement

Michael Kinnamon

"Here is a provocative look at one of the most pressing issues in ecumenism at the moment by a person who knows the movement from the inside."

—E. Glenn Hinson

Paper, \$9.95

## THE ECLIPSE OF CHRIST IN ESCHATOLOGY Towards a Christ- Centered Approach

Adrio Konig

Believing that the end times are not in the future, but they began with the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, Konig addresses such themes as the signs of the times, the future of Israel, Antichrist, and the millennium.  
Paper, \$16.95

# SPRING/SUMMER 1988



# ACADEMIC BOOKS

## PEACE AND REVOLUTION The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism *Gunter Lewy*

"This is a careful account of what has happened to American pacifism in recent decades, essentially a story of how a movement devoted to peace and non-violence was hijacked to support sundry revolutionary projects and oppressive regimes of the Left."

—*Peter L. Berger*

Paper, \$19.95

## CALLED ME BLESSED The Emerging Christian Woman *Faith Martin*

Martin provides an enlightening overview of women's role in Old Testament and New Testament times as she examines scriptural passages about women.

Paper, \$8.95

## TWIN POWERS Politics and the Sacred *Thomas Molnar*

Internationally known philosopher and author, Thomas Molnar, writes about the changing relationship between power and the sacred as the essential political problematic of our time.

Paper, \$8.95

## THE CROSS OF JESUS *Leon Morris*

In this book, Leon Morris moves beyond traditional theories of the atonement and treats those aspects of the cross which have not received the attention they deserve and which speak more effectively to our age than to others.

Paper, \$7.95

## THE ENCOUNTER SERIES

*Richard John Neuhaus, General Editor*

### Volume 7 Believable Futures of American Protestantism Paper, \$7.95

### Volume 8 The Preferential Option for the Poor Paper, \$7.95

## CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE IN THE MODERN WORLD Theology from an Evangelical Point of View

*Edited by Mark A. Noll and David F. Wells*

With contributions from some of the most respected scholars in the evangelical world today, this book speaks both to the disciplines of theology and the ongoing dialogue between Christianity and modern thought.

Paper, \$11.95

## THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

### Volume 2: The Study and Use of the Bible

*John Rogerson, Barnabas Lindars, and Christopher Rowland*

An excellent introduction to the area of biblical criticism, this volume is devoted to the history of the study and use of the Bible in the Christian church throughout the centuries. Paper, \$14.95

## APOLOGIA Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education *Max L. Stackhouse*

"This is by any standard a very important book for all concerned with theological education and for all concerned with the articulation of the gospel for our time. It is a powerful plea for a normative, as distinct from a merely descriptive, approach to theological teaching."

—*Leslie Newbigin*  
Paper, \$14.95

## THEOLOGY AND VIOLENCE The South African Debate

*Edited by Charles Villa-Vicencio*

"Charles Villa-Vicencio addresses the issue of violence in the only way it can be honestly confronted, that is, from the perspective of the victim in the human struggle for life. The judgment of the Gospel echoes throughout these pages."

—*Edward M. Huenemann*

Paper, \$12.95

## PARTNERS IN PEACE AND EDUCATION

*Edited by Ronald C. White and Eugene J. Fisher*

Roman Catholics and those in the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition dialog about the relationship of church and state, with the focus on two specific areas: the church and nuclear warfare, and the church and education.

Paper, \$9.95

Prices subject to change without notice.

For more information on these and other recent titles, write for a copy of our latest catalog. Examination copies of most publications are available to qualified professors.

At your bookstore, or write:



**WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.**

235 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E.  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. 49503

Eerdmans  
Ad 825J



# Introducing a refreshing idea in Bible study especially for Lutherans...

## CONCORDIA SELF-STUDY BIBLE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

This much-awaited study Bible — with interpretive notes and study helps edited from the Lutheran perspective — can be recommended with full assurance of a **theologically sound, distinctively Lutheran** attitude and approach.

And, this refreshing new idea in Bible study combines all the richness of our Lutheran heritage with the popular, easy-reading New International Version.

It helps lead you to a clear understanding of the Bible message — with excellent helps for both personal and group Bible study:

- Interpretive notes conveniently placed on the same page as the text form a running commentary and explain the meaning of Bible passages from a Lutheran perspective.

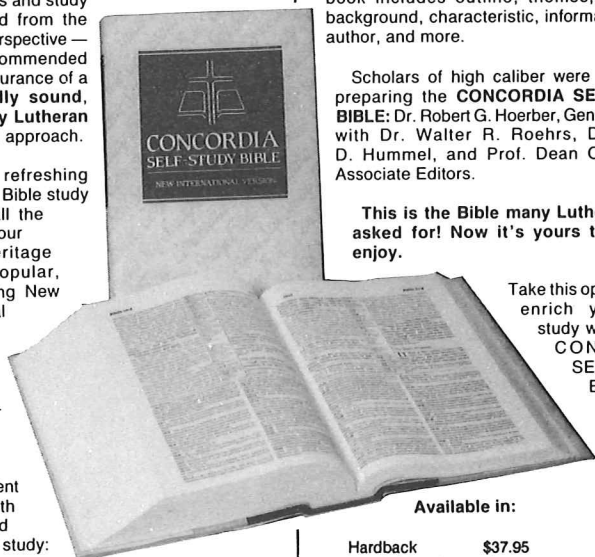
- A treasury of study aids! 82,000 cross references, 35,000 word concordance, full-color maps, charts, and time-lines.

- A comprehensive introduction for each book includes outline, themes, historical background, characteristic, information about author, and more.

Scholars of high caliber were involved in preparing the **CONCORDIA SELF-STUDY BIBLE**: Dr. Robert G. Hoerber, General Editor; with Dr. Walter R. Roehrs, Dr. Horace D. Hummel, and Prof. Dean O. Wenthe, Associate Editors.

**This is the Bible many Lutherans have asked for! Now it's yours to use and enjoy.**

Take this opportunity to enrich your Bible study with the new **CONCORDIA SELF-STUDY BIBLE!**



### Available in:

Hardback	\$37.95
Bonded Leather	\$59.95
Genuine Leather	\$84.95

Leather editions available in black, brown, and burgundy. Thumb indexed leather editions also available.

To order, contact your favorite Christian bookstore.

Or call TOLL FREE  
**1-800-325-3040.**  
In Missouri  
**1-800-392-9031.**

**CONCORDIA**  
PUBLISHING HOUSE  
355B SOUTH JEFFERSON AVENUE  
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63118



