

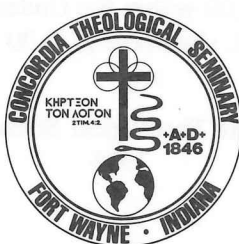
CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

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The Divine Call in *Die Rechte Gestalt* of C.F.W. Walther

Norman E. Nagel

On May 15, 1862, Dr. C. F. W. Walther presented to the pastors of the Western District, gathered at Crete in Illinois, what he modestly called "some materials for discussion" (*eine Unterlage für Discussionen*). Its weight is indicated by Dr. Walther when he says in the foreword that it is intended as "the practical application" of his book published ten years earlier, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, which in translation has been entitled more simply *Church and Ministry*.¹ In Walther's day titles were intended to tell first of all what was, in fact, contained in the book. In this case, therefore, his title read as follows:

Die rechte Gestalt
einer
vom Staate unabhängigen
Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ortsgemeinde.
Eine
Sammlung von Zeugnissen aus den Bekenntnisschriften der
evang.-luth. Kirche und aus den Privatschriften
rechtgläubiger Lehrer derselben.
Dargestellt
und
auf Beschlus der ev.-luth. Pastoralconferenz zu St. Louis, Mo.,
der Oeffentlichkeit übergeben
von
C. F. W. Walther

The second unaltered edition was printed in St. Louis by August Wiebusch and Son in 1864. A translation by J. T. Mueller was entitled *The Form of a Christian Congregation*.² A more ample paraphrase of the title would run as follows: Where there is an Evangelical Lutheran congregation located at some particular place in America, what would be the best arrangements for carrying on as such, now that this congregation is no longer given any answer to this question from the state, as was the case in Saxony; what help is given us by the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and by the private writings of its orthodox teachers?

At Crete Dr. Walther's way of drawing the pastors into thinking through everything together meant that they did not proceed all the

way through his material. The pastors, however, of the St. Louis Pastoral Conference prevailed on Dr. Walther to publish it all. There was a need to work all the way through the whole question of *Kirche und Amt* to the application of what Dr. Walther had written ten years earlier. He and these pastors were immigrants. Things on which they had relied, which they had taken for granted in the country which they had left behind, were no longer there in this new land in which freedom could mean that anyone, or any group, could largely do "what was right in his own eyes."

Stephan had proven himself something of a Carlstadt. Dr. Luther left the security of the Wartburg to preach the *Invocavit* Sermons and so save the Reformation for the gospel. He restored communion under one kind; changes were a blessing only as they came as gifts of the gospel and not in the demanding coercive ways of the law. Walther did not seek to restore the Saxon church law (*Kirchenrecht*), nor did he attack it, nor did he doubt his ordination conducted in accordance with it. When he speaks of *Die rechte Gestalt*, if the reference were to *Recht*, we should be expecting law; but, as it is, we may hope to find here a proper distinction. How we translate the title may indicate whether it has told us what is in the book or whether we are insisting on what we want to find in the book or, even worse, we are making it say what we want it to say whether Dr. Walther is saying it or not. The English translation simply excises *rechte* from the title. The generations of pastors schooled by Dr. Walther might be expected at this point to cry out *vestigia terrent*. Also omitted is the critical setting. To abstract Walther from his specific setting is to lose what is best and most profound from him as a doctor of the church. The benefit of such abstraction is that it can give one a Walther more pliable to one's purpose. Walther cannot be much more specific than *Ortsgemeinde* and an Evangelical Lutheran one in particular (he does not say *Ortskirche*). How would things go on in a local congregation so that it would be recognizably Evangelical Lutheran? Such is the idea of *Gestalt*, which is not a term drawn from *Kirchenrecht*, and similarly then *rechte*. *Die rechte Gestalt* was written ten years after *Kirche und Amt* as Walther's exposition of it, and so our reading of *Kirche und Amt* may be tested by Walther's exposition of it in 1862.

Dr. Walther has thus stated in his title the specific and critical setting, and there he also draws out the resources laid out earlier in *Kirche und Amt*. How should we carry on in a land where the safeguards and sanctions involved in dependence on the state are simply no longer there? Some extraordinary things did happen. What is to stop pastors or some majority of the laity from doing whatever they please? What, if anything, can then be called divine, and on what grounds? For Dr. Walther these were not speculative questions, but concerns which arose when Saxony was left behind. Events put forcefully before him questions regarding the tyranny of the clergy and the tyranny of the laity. Before arrival in New Orleans Stephan had a document signed acknowledging the arrangements that were to serve his tyranny in both ecclesiastical and civil affairs. It was signed by the pastors, the candidates, and elected representative laymen; there was another such signing upon arrival in St. Louis in 1839.³ The hearers and readers still included people of the first generation, the generation which emigrated, when Dr. Walther wrote *Die rechte Gestalt*.

In 1862 Dr. Walther claimed to be presenting "a church organization . . . in existence here for twenty-four years."⁴ If one subtracts twenty-four from 1862, one would reach 1838. If the Altenburg Debates marked the end of Stephanism and the shaping of the church (*Kirchengestaltung*) represented in *Die rechte Gestalt*, the date would be 1841.⁵ Pushing back the date three years is a trifle in contrast with the claim that what is presented in *Die rechte Gestalt* is in accordance with the classical dogmaticians, the confessions, and the Scriptures. The Bible is quoted as the primary grounding of what is said, although not mentioned in the title. Then the confessions are quoted and then the orthodox dogmaticians in a clearly descending order of cogency. If the Scriptures do not give us something to go by, do the confessions? If the confessions do not speak to the question, does Luther? If Luther fails us, what help is there from the classical dogmaticians, some of whom are less reliable than others, as when they put forth what has not been given them by the confessions—that is, by the Scriptures—or when they obscure what they have received, the worst way of doing which would be for Dr. Walther a blurring of law and gospel, as he indicates in his *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* of

1878? The classical dogmaticians are cleared of the suspicion of speaking differently of the local congregation because they were not independent of the state.

Dr. Walther undertakes to present how things may be done best in a congregation independent of the state. He does not countenance congregations which might claim to be and remain independent, completely by themselves. The way of congregationalism would lose not only the classical dogmaticians but also the confessions and the Scriptures. We confront the connection between congregation (*Gemeinde*) and church (*Kirche*). In naming the relevant doctrines Dr. Walther follows this sequence: church, office, ecclesiastical government.⁶ When the church can carry on its being church without the old dependence on the state, will the absence of the old dependence be filled from the left hand or the right hand? Where there is no dependence on the state, is there a need of ecclesiastical law and, if so, what should it be and could any of it claim to be divine—"according to the gospel (or, as they say, by divine right)"?⁷

Negatively, then, Walther is safeguarding the church against the dangers of independence from the state (Stephanism, Grabauism, congregationalism). Positively he undertakes to confess how far Scripture takes us in what it gives us to confess, presumably as taught by the classical dogmaticians in addition to Luther. He lists forty-five, among them the Reformed theologian Johann Ludwig Hartman, to whom he is indebted for the distinction between abstract and concrete which appeared in Thesis 2 of *The Voice of Our Church*. *Die rechte Gestalt* he intends as the practical application of the doctrine in *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*.⁸ What help his practical applications may afford us may emerge as we follow Dr. Walther along through a specific piece of this work.

Such, then, is something of the context within which we may now pursue what is "the practical application" of the doctrine of the divine call, and so we proceed to Chapter III. B. Part Two (62-97): "Concerning the Exercise of the Duty of a Congregation to See to It That the Word of God Dwells Richly and Prevails in Its Midst."⁹ In our concentrating on just this passage we face a danger which is the opposite of those generalizations made by selecting the pieces which make up a desired Walther who is always and everywhere the

same and without weakness or error. Such a burden hinders the good that he may do as a doctor of the church. By concentrating on this passage we may gather the specific data which Dr. Walther began to put to the Pastoral Conference of the Western District on May 15, 1862. This passage is only a small slice, but it is a small slice of data examined in its setting. In studies of Luther nowadays there is little respect for anything which floats free of *Textarbeit*, which offers a defence against reading him backwards; something of the sort is here attempted for Dr. Walther.

What comes first is often of first importance, especially if it is something that is simply there as a given. In this section, then, before all else (*vor allem*) a congregation sees to it that it has and maintains in its midst the public office of preaching. Titus 1:5 is the first passage quoted as necessitating the existence of "the public office of preaching" (the *Predigtamt* of Augustana 5). Then Ephesians 4 (11 and 14) is cited. Then comes a note that it does not lie within the arbitrary decision (*Willkür*) of a congregation (*Gemeinde*) to have or not to have the *Predigtamt*. Preachers and ministers exist by divine mandate as confessed in the confessions of our church (Apology 13:12), and we cannot speak of the church without preachers of the gospel and servants of the sacraments, as is also confessed in the Wittenberg Reformation Articles of 1545. In the *Hauspostille* Dr. Luther reproaches those who would dispense with parsons and preachers (*Pfarrer und Prediger*),¹⁰ supposing what they do in their houses to suffice. The preacher is called and ordained by God, who makes use of the preacher's mouth for the preaching of His words "for you."¹¹ The office, then, is public and mandated. It confesses the *externum verbum*, clearly located *extra nos*, and leaves no doubt that the words convey the gifts which they declare. Gifts come from the outside and in the way which the Lord has mandated.

Not only is it clear who calls and ordains the preacher when things are done according to the Lord's mandate, but also why he is put into the office. "There we should find Him and nowhere else," in accord with Augustana 28:10. The office is what matters, and not whether big Paul or little Ananias is the preacher. "The point of this story is that we hold high the *Predigtamt*. Here what stands

unmistakably clear is that Paul, the big doctor, is brought to understanding things by the little doctor, Ananias."

In the light of the foregoing it is clear that the Lord is doing what is done with the *Predigtamt*, irrespective of how we may regard men in the office as big or little. Paragraph 21 next states how the Lord makes use of the congregation in its election and call of a preacher. (The English translation has instead "pastor.") What is done is to be done *ordentlich* (Augustana 14). Here is practical application. Of first importance is God's word: only what is done according to it can be divine. That the doing may be such a doing, God is invoked. The people come together without reservation to receive something from the Lord. They acknowledge that they are not isolated, just to themselves, by inviting one or several who are already in the pastoral office, experienced servants of the church, who serve them with counsel and preside at the deliberations on the call. Titus 1:5 is quoted again, as are Acts 1:15-26, 6:1-6, and 14:23. Every member of the congregation who has the right to vote may propose a candidate. Those proposed are considered in the light of 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 2 Timothy 2:15, 24-26. The one who receives all the votes or at least an absolute majority is to be recognized and accepted as called by God through the congregation. Accordingly a document of call is drawn up and read to the congregation by the *Vorstand* (possibly clergy conducting the meeting) or by those elected to do so.¹² Those involved sign the document. (Such delegation, of which there was much where there was dependence on the state, may here point the way to the Board of Assignments, the Board of Missions, or the Board of Regents of a seminary.) The document is then to be sent to the one elected (where the English translation has "the person called"). First Corinthians 16:3 is cited. The document is to commit the man elected to the Scriptures as God's word, to the public confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and to the faithful performance of everything which belongs to the holy office of preaching (*das heilige Predigtamt*). The following passages are cited: Colossians 4:17; Acts 15:23; 26:22; 20:20-21, 26-27; 2 Timothy 1:13-14, 8; 4:2, 5; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

In the call-document (*die Vocationsurkunde*) the congregation commits itself to acknowledge the man called as its shepherd, teacher, and guardian, to receive from him as God's word the words of divine preaching, to heed him, love him, deal peaceably with him, honor him, and see that provision is made for him. Luke 10:16 (the text most quoted in the confessions regarding the office of the holy ministry) is cited as well as the following: 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2:13; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:13-14; Galatians 6:6.

If the man elected accepts the call, he is to be presented to the orthodox ministers of the church already in the office. They are to examine him if he has not previously been so examined. There follows a public ordination, as apostolically ordered, wherein he is declared to be the one properly called, has the obligations of the office laid on him, and is declared placed in the office ("durch öffentliche Ordination [Sperrdruck] nach apostolischer Ordnung als einen rechtmässigen Berufenen erklären, verpflichten und bestätigen"). First Timothy 4:14 is cited. Otherwise there is an installation, in accord with Acts 13:2-3.

We have observed installation, ordination, examination, call, calling election, and nomination. Only ordination is emphasized with *Sperrdruck*. Thus, all accords well with the Tractate (13-15), which is next quoted in Note 1. We do things according to Canon 4 of the Council of Nicaea.¹³ Here is the defence against congregations acting independently of clergy and church. The anchor is "God's mandate and the usage of the apostles" ("nach Gottes Befehl und der Apostel Gebrauch," Tractatus 14). Walther comments that for the election to be a proper election (*Gültigkeit der Wahl*) such regular involvement of clergy is not absolutely necessary, if it is simply impossible to draw in some who are already in the office.¹⁴ Luther is quoted to the effect that a bishop should place no one in the office without the election, will, and call of the congregation. If there is no bishop, however, then there should be no doubt of the congregation's call; it may not be left to perish without the *Predigamt*.¹⁵ When the electing congregation already has one or more pastors, these men will necessarily participate in the call; for calling is to be done by the whole congregation, which would not be

the case if the pastors were excluded. Here is defence against any tyranny by laymen. It is because of the pastoral office that the clergy most particularly are to participate. As Luther says, no one may be chosen over the objection of these pastors. Neither of the two parts which make up the congregation, pastors or people, may be put under the tyranny of the other.¹⁶

Note 2 suggests that problems regarding who had the control of church property led to reductions in the rights of voting members to vote themselves as opposed to delegation. References are made to various situations in Germany. There we may recall that Walther as a candidate was presented for ordination by the patron of Bräunsdorf, the Count Detlev von Einsiedel, an authoritarian Herrnhuter.¹⁷ If a patron is acting representatively for the whole congregation, he does not infringe the principle that the right to elect belongs to the whole congregation and so naturally is to be done by those who represent it. (Perhaps here *Gemeinde* should be translated "parish" since Luther is quoted as denying the right of the people of the parish to claim control of parish property [*Güter der Pfarre*] which falls under the control of the patron.) In America, where the congregation is independent of the state, those representing it could be those who vote. In the old country the participation of a parish might shrink regrettably to the right of refusal, the *votum negativum*, when it could show just grounds for it. "Our German Lutheran Church has always taught that the right to elect is a right of the congregation, and an election without the consent of the congregation has no validity." Walther adduces several examples to the contrary, to be sure—not contrary, however, if there is evidently delegation to representatives to do the electing. One of Walther's Lutheran authorities, Lassenius, tells of some places where there is no delegation to vote in the election, others where only the top people (*die Vornehmsten*) vote,¹⁸ others where only the rulers (*Obrigkeit allein*) vote, and yet others where only the preachers vote; but in all cases the one called acknowledges himself to be called by the whole congregation. Here we may see election and call as distinguishable and yet not disconnected.

Differently situated than "our German Lutheran Church" were the Lutheran congregations in Holland, which together had both

consistory and synod. In Saxony the king was Roman Catholic and ecclesiastical affairs were in the care of a consistory; a wise king left them alone, as did the Roman Catholic king of Bavaria, but not the Calvinist king of Prussia. The consistory conducted things according to ecclesiastical law (*Kirchenrecht*), the law that was brought to bear on Stephan. From America Walther warned against synods. Walther quotes Löscher's account of a Lutheran congregation (not a parish as in Saxony) in Amsterdam. There the established church was Reformed; its consistory ruled that the poor were not to be allowed to vote in ecclesiastical elections. In the Lutheran congregation there was no such limitation, and there was an outcry against this ruling. The congregation appealed to the synod, which gave them no help. The Lutheran consistory then appealed to the mayor, who was Reformed. He ruled that only those who paid twenty Dutch gulden every year had the right to vote. The congregation took this decision as a contemptible infringement on its rights, but could do nothing but appeal to fellow-Lutherans (*Glaubensgenossen*). Finally, in 1689, it followed the custom of appealing to a Lutheran theological faculty—actually to three of them, namely, those of Greifswald, Gieszen, and Tübingen. All these supported the stand taken by the congregation and urged that the injustice involved not be allowed to cause a split. When the mayor of Amsterdam heard of the appeal to the theological faculties, he pronounced such an act to be punishable. He reduced the required payment from twenty gulden to ten; but, for the rest, the Lutherans could decide as they pleased. Money is what matters—at least at that time in Holland. In 1691 the congregation published a protest against the tyranny of the civil authorities, even when its own consistory had surrendered to the encroachments of the civil power of another religion. Arminian caeseropapism is no better than the pope's. With its protest the congregation published the opinions of the several theological faculties.

With wise and gentle pastoral care Walther lays before his readers—as firstly before the pastors of the Western District—a whole range of things to think through. This approach could help more than reviewing their own still recent traumatic history. Walther does not ask whether it was because of money or because of women that Stephan was driven from Wittenberg; Stephan is not

charged with false doctrine. Of all the various ways which Lutherans have of electing ministers, Walther does not identify one as divine, but rather seeks what is best now that people are here in America, one that we may call *Die rechte Gestalt*, one in which there is no tyranny of the pastor over the people or of the people over the pastor. Thus he helps his readers recognize that they are part of a larger history, with all its resources, rather than imagining that they are alone, all there is to the church, or the first to face such problems.

So far, then, we have found something confessed as "divine," that is, done by God (in accord with Ephesians 4:11-14) and by God's mandate (Article XIII:12 of the Apology), confessing with the Wittenberg Articles that what is done by this mandate is done by God. What is given and done by God may not be set aside. Reading Scripture at home cannot displace the public ministry into which God has put the preacher, whose mouth He uses to deliver the gifts which His words carry, "to preach and tell it to you." With the words "to you" we confess not only that God does something, but that He does something in the way of the gospel—involving gifts, an *externum verbum*, something *extra nos*—specifically delivered, without doubt, "to you." These evangelical criteria are vital in the assessment of what may be called "divine"; that God does something and that what He says is true does not yet make it the gospel.

The election and calling of pastors are to be done according to God's word and with everyone involved calling upon God. Does this invocation make the election and calling divine? Such a claim can hardly be made of the nominations which any voting member may make. The final outcome is something weightier. The election is finalized with the reading of the call-document, which is not signed by everyone but only by the *Vorstand*. (Gerhard speaks of a *Vorsteher* and the New Testament of *proestōtes* [1 Timothy 5:17]; in Spener and America these are laymen and elders).¹⁹ Is the call-document itself divine? Does it only become divine if this call is accepted? The traditional view in the Missouri Synod saw the call as divine and, therefore, undecidable, unless there were unassailable factors to the contrary. This view was taken to be Walther's own. For this understanding we have not yet come upon the evidence in

the document before us. We have, so far, nominations (the list), voting by those who represent the congregation, the calling, and the call. What Walther identifies as divine is the final vote which identifies the man to be "regarded and accepted as the one called by God through the congregation." To refuse such a divine call would, indeed, then be refusing God—saying, in effect, "this divine call is not divine." In the first generations of the Missouri Synod, a candidate who refused his first call did not receive another one. Nowadays such a candidate may count on some uncle or district president to be arranging a more desirable one. Locating divinity in the vote has not held. Was that view misguided, or have we become unfaithful?

Walther does not, in fact, equate election and call, although his translator does, changing what Walther said to fit a view found in the third generation of the Missouri Synod. Walther, representing the first generation, or here at least the first twenty-four years, wrote in this way: "in the case that the one elected accepts the call." Where the German has "nimmt der Erwählte den Beruf an," the English translations have this clause: "If the person called [*sic*] accepts the vocation." "Vocation" is the word ordinarily used in speaking of the doctrine of the calling of every Christian. Tappert, too, can be spotted slipping into "calling" where the confessions are speaking of the holy ministry and the "call" unique to it. This approach leaves ordination hanging loose—with election and call then carrying all the weight. With Luther, by way of contrast, the call and ordination run together—and never the one without the other, except in mortal emergency.²⁰ The one without the other opens the way to the tyranny of the one or the other.

"In the case that the one elected accepts the call," the laying on of hands follows (Acts 6:6). Before this action, however, there should be an examination, if one has not already been administered. In Acts 6:6 the apostles did two things: prayer and the laying on of hands. What this apostolic public ordination does is, according to Walther, to declare (*erklären*) the one being ordained to have been properly called, using the word *rechtmässig* (according to the *Recht*, the law). (This term is not used in this context in the confessions. Tractate 65 has *rata*, meaning "sure, authorized, put in effect":

"Manifestum est ordinationem a pastore in sua ecclesia factam jure divino ratam esse.") The man who has been properly called is then given that for which he is being ordained, using *verpflichten* (which has sadly become in the English translation talk of the duties of the office). The third and final verb is *bestätigen*. When what needs to be done has been done, the gift given with the laying on of hands has been given, as attested by 1 Timothy 4:14. (The English translation inserts "so Luther.") The full sentence in the English translation runs as follows: "Then shall they [the orthodox pastors] declare [excised is "als einen rechtmässigen Berufenen"], obligate, and confirm him by public ordination according to apostolic order."

The note which follows this sentence cites from the Tractate (13-15) the quotation of the Council of Nicaea. The English translation states: "We should observe this diligently according to the command of God and the custom [*Gebrauch*] of the apostles." Apostolic *Gebrauch* is weaker than apostolic *Ordnung*, but it is first done "nach dem Befehl Gottes" (according to God's mandate, His command). What is according to God's mandate is beyond doubt divine, as is also an apostolic *Ordnung* in the apostolic church. Such is not so clearly the case with an apostolic *Gebrauch* (usage or custom). For Walther what is done with the hands falls into this third class; there can be an ordination ("einen rechtmässigen Berufenen erklären, verpflichten und bestätigen") without the laying of the hands on the head. In Scripture and the confessions the laying on of hands is synonymous with ordination, as is also recognized in the passage before us, where 1 Timothy 4:14 is quoted as the basis for what Walther says of ordination. While being in class three (as something we are told the apostles did) does not necessarily make ordination divine, being in class two (as something the apostles charged to be done) clearly does so, and being in class one (as something done according to the Lord's mandate) removes all doubt.

The snipping out of "als einen rechtmässigen Berufenen" in the English translation in fact undermines what in Walther's situation, in the writing being discussed, was most vital to maintain. The most vital thing for Walther is the integrity of the call connected with the election which precedes it and the ordination which follows it. In

churches dependent upon the state the presentation and even the election could be done by the patron or a town council. Defense for this procedure could be offered on the grounds that those who were doing the presentation or election were acting representatively for the whole *Gemeinde* (parish or congregation). What they did was not by itself clearly divine. They did not ordain. That was done only by the clergy acting in the name of God and according to His mandate. They did not ordain or install. They put forward the one to be ordained or, if already ordained, to be installed. And they could not put forward one who had not passed through an examination by those churchly authorities entrusted with this duty (mostly theological faculties). Walther insists on this usage. If the one properly called has not yet been through an examination, then the clergy doing the ordination should first administer one.

In a country where, as in the United States, churches were independent, they could be free of the burdens of that dependence. How best to go forward in this situation is the question which Walther addresses in *Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ortsgemeinde. Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evang.-luth. Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechtgläubigen Lehrer derselben*, which one cannot claim to "translate" with *The Form of a Christian Congregation*. In the passage before us Walther does not deal with what makes a congregation recognizably Christian, or indeed a congregation. He speaks of an *Ortsgemeinde*, which in America is not one arranged within some civil structure (in the absence of *cuius regio, eius religio*). In the United States the place of a congregation makes no civic difference. There are no parishes (*Gemeinden*) as in Saxony, Prussia, or Bavaria, with all the differences thereby entailed in congregational arrangements (*Gestalt*, as variously discussed by Walther, Grabau and Kavel, and Löhe). Walther does not declare churchless anybody in congregations dependent on the state. He does not cast doubt on any pastor presented, elected, called, and ordained in places where congregations were dependent on the state. Those ordained authors whom he quotes as theological authorities were all implicated in some dependence on the state. This involvement did not render doubtful what was divine in their calls and ordinations. Walther does not question the divinity of these.

Dr. Walther was addressing a pastoral conference in St. Louis in 1862, and in Missouri the danger was no longer dependence on the state—something with which orthodox Lutherans had lived for three centuries. What dangers and opportunities arise when there is no longer any dependence on the state? Ecclesiastical authorities, in the setting of dependence on the state in Saxony, had attempted to keep Stephan and Walther in line. Stephan could never have done all the things he did in Perry County, had he remained in his parish in Saxony. Without the safeguards provided indirectly by the dependence of a parish on the state, Walther saw the danger in the United States of democratic notions taking over and ending with rule by some unchurchly majority, party, or mob.

How this danger was faced by Chemnitz, who had trouble enough with dependence on the state, appears in Note 3. He draws on Acts 1 and 6 (dependence on the state not being a factor in apostolic times). The apostles did not take action by themselves, but called the congregation together. They then instructed the people from Scripture as to who was eligible to be elected and how the choice was to be made, with the apostles themselves in charge of the election. This arrangement was a safeguard against the mob, the majority, or the people acting out of order or blindly (not seeing and recognizing what needed to be seen and recognized). After the apostles had laid out the doctrine and the rules, they conducted the election. The man elected was then presented to the apostles, by whose judgment his election was then confirmed as lawful (*rechtmässig*), and the apostles did so by laying their hands upon him with prayer. Sometimes the apostles presented a man and the congregation confirmed their choice, whereupon he was ordained by the clergy. The election was put into effect and confirmed by ordination. Thus, Chemnitz answers his question of how the election and calling may be called divine by saying that God Himself through these instrumentalities elects, calls, and sends workers into His harvest.²¹ According to Gerhard, the regular procedure is that the clergy (the *presbyterium*, on the basis of 1 Timothy 4:14) are responsible for the examination, the ordination, and the installation. There may be variability in the way in which the election is conducted; but in any case, as witnessed by Scripture, pastors are chosen with the agreement of the congregation, on which no pastor

may be imposed against its will. The delegation of its right to call does not mean its loss; this right always remains with the whole church (*der ganzen Kirche*, which the English translation renders "congregation").

Walther is running here with Chemnitz, as is evidenced by the terminology. For Chemnitz there are hands laid on heads with prayer at ordination and also hands raised as in voting (2 Corinthians 8:19). The action taken would not be altered if people voted with pieces of paper, nor would an ordination if the man whom the Lord ordaining—giving to the congregation as its pastor—was unmistakably indicated in some way other than by hands laid on his head. What the Lord does is sure by way of mandate; how the thing is done (laying hands on a man's head) is not stated by way of mandate. Hence Walther speaks of the application of hands as *adiaphorous*. We have never done otherwise; but if someone were to say that we had to lay hands on a man's head to have an ordination, then such a legalistic demand would have to be rejected, as is done by calling it an *adiaphoron*. (The use of "*adiaphoron*" never means that everyone may do as he pleases—something which someone may be more apt to think if he has no dependence on the state. Americanization can but does not have to mean "delutheranization."²² Walther did not millennialize America as was fashionable among nineteenth-century Romantics and Pietists.) The dangers of individualism and the tyranny of blind majorities have to be guarded against more carefully where there is no dependence on the state. The ultimate defence against tyranny, whether by clergy or by laity, by political machinations lining up votes or by apathy, is given by the Lord, through His words, with prayer which calls on Him to do what He has mandated and promised and which commits us to what He achieves with His mandates and promises. Freedom from doubt is given us with what the Lord has given us—what is, and is called, divine. Such freedom inheres in the gospel. Anything doubtful is not of the gospel.

In the pages of *Die rechte Gestalt* already discussed Walther has laid out the safeguards which protect the church against independentism, congregationalism; and their attendant tyrannies. With Note 4 he moves to the safeguards against clerical tyranny and clerics who

step outside of the pastoral office. Here the chief bulwark of the congregation is the pledging of ministers to the symbolical books of the church (where *Kirche* is used and not *Gemeinde*). "All false teachers claim that they want to teach according to Holy Scripture." (Walther is thereby rejecting the attitude expressed in tags of this kind: "Don't bother me with the confessions; show me from Scripture.") As it has always been, from the time of the ancient orthodox church, no one is to be received as a minister who has not previously promised to teach according to the confession of the church. If there is departure from the examination, then there is departure from the election, call, and ordination, which follow from it. The church deals with the man who departs from these on the basis of the confessions to which he was pledged. He has departed from and broken his pledge (*Treubruch*) and so is to be disciplined and can be deposed. What was divine in his election, call, and ordination has not become less divine, but he has departed from it and so may make no claim upon it. The warning example is Andrew Osiander, who asserted that binding a minister to the church's confessions is a tyranny over a man's conscience. Melancthon's response was that the pledge to which Osiander was referring was laid down "by the faculty, namely, by Luther, Jonas, and the pastor of this congregation, Dr. Pomeranus." Melancthon pointed to the Council of Nicaea: "Nor was anyone admitted to the gospel-ministry without a preceding examination and express profession in which those called to teach declared that they were dedicated to the unadulterated doctrine of the gospel and promised not to cast it aside." Gerhard, likewise, said that the oath of the clergy to be true to the confessions serves God's honor and the unity of the faith and of the church.

Note 5 erects another safeguard against the clerical tyranny involved in the notion that ordination can stand by itself. The clergy do the ordination; the ordination confirms and puts into effect the foregoing call. The clergy cannot ordain unless there is a foregoing call. Where there is no foregoing call, there can be no ordination. Tractate 70 is quoted:

From of old [*olim*] the people elected the pastors and bishops. Thereupon the bishop, either of that church or of

a neighboring church, came there and confirmed the one elected with the laying on of hands, and the ordination was not something other [*nec aliud*] than such confirmation [*comprobatio, Bestätigung*].

When both election and ordination take place, and not the one without the other, the goal is accomplished.

All is as it should be, says Luther, when bishop and church each play their part together. What the bishop does when he ordains with the laying on of hands—which bless, confirm, and give testimony—may be compared to a notary or to a parson who blesses the bride and bridegroom and so puts their marriage into effect and confirms what they have previously undertaken. The parson himself may be angel or devil, but his wickedness does not render doubtful what his office does.²³ Balduin is quoted as saying that, while the office of the word has a sure mandate and institution (John 20), the same cannot be said of ordination, which in the orthodox church, he says, has always been numbered among the adiaphora. Friedrich Balduin was a professor of theology in the University of Wittenberg (not in Jena) between 1604 and 1627. Aegidius Hunnius, a professor in Wittenberg and superintendent (dying in 1603), speaks of the potential case in which ordination is impossible because no bishop or presbyter can be found to perform it. In such a case of necessity the one whom the church names and elects is a true pastor of the church with everything that goes with the pastoral office. Such a one Chemnitz would have ordained when ordination becomes possible, so that to him too the gift of God may be given.²⁴ The laying on of hands is done with prayer which is produced by the mandate and divine promise and which, therefore, cannot be in vain (*irrita*, the antonym of *rata*). Walther adds this comment: "Finally what makes the ordination necessary and useful is, of course, true also of the installation of a minister who is already ordained."

A little earlier, at the beginning of the same section, Chemnitz says regarding ordination itself (*de re ipsa*) that the church has the Lord's institution and mandate to call and constitute ministers. The promise is added that God approbates the ministry of those who are constituted by the Holy Spirit. Chemnitz is running here with

Article 13 (11, 12) of the Apology, whereby the *ordo* or *Predigtamt* as mandated may without objection be called a "sacrament":

The church has the mandate of having to constitute ministers. For this our thanks should overflow, since we know that God puts this ministry in effect and is present in the ministry. [Habet enim ecclesia mandatum de constituendis ministris, quod gratissimum esse nobis debet, quod scimus Deum approbare ministerium illud et adesse in ministerio.]²⁵

There is no doubt at all here of what may be called divine. Walther does not quote this sentence from the Apology, nor does he cite Chemnitz as quoting it. He passes over Chemnitz and reaches on instead to Balduin, who undertook to draw the doctrine of the office of the holy ministry from 1 Timothy alone.²⁶

Why does Walther select what he does from the *De Sacramento Ordinis* of Chemnitz? The answer, we may suppose, lies in his view of the danger against which the church most needed to be defended at the time of his composition of *Die rechte Gestalt*. He lays out defenses, certainly, against congregational independentism. The old safeguards, which went with dependence on the state, were no longer there. There was, to be sure, a danger of democratic theory taking charge—and so the tyranny of laymen acting by themselves with the clergy excluded. Yet the greater danger in the experience of Walther and his synod was the tyranny of clergy—Stephan and, later on, the smell of Stephan in Grabau. One expression of tyranny by clergymen is to ordain whomever they please without the basis for ordination in election by the congregation (that is, representative laymen and the clergy acting together). The election and call are confirmed and put into effect by ordination. A call is without doubt divine, but it is not divine all by itself. Nor is ordination divine all by itself. There can be no ordination without the preceding call; no call is operative until put into effect by ordination. Thus, Walther erects safeguards against both tyranny of laity and tyranny of clergy. Walther leans more heavily, however, against clerical tyranny—so heavily, indeed, as to speak of ordination in a way which falls short of the confessions. There the unshakable grounding is the divine mandate and institution, with the divine promises ringing in to describe it by way of the gospel and not merely as legitimate

(*rechtmässig*). Only the Lord can vouch for what is divine; there is nothing different in this regard in the United States than in Saxony.

In the United States the old arrangements (*Gestalt*) for a congregation placed in some dependence on the state were simply no longer there. A congregation could do as it pleased, and clergy could too. Warning examples could be found in Stephan and Grabau, as could also be found in the exclusion of clergy from congregational meetings to make arrangements for the congregation in this new world. Some people went back to Saxony; such freedom can be frightening. Walther's most profound contribution to the church occurs in the *Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, and it is in the light of this contribution that what he says in *Die rechte Gestalt* about the divine call can best be evaluated. What is received as a gift from the Lord which He mandates to give is, without doubt, in the realm of the gospel. Anything left in doubt is not of the gospel. One cannot give oneself a gift.

Clearly for Walther no man can make himself a pastor or impose himself as such upon a congregation. A defence against such action is found in the passive voice of the verbs used in connection with the call. The enquiry might be summed up in this way: When are the passive verbs divine passives; when is the Lord the one who does the things denoted and does them by way of the gospel? A man is elected or presented; only one who has been examined may be elected or, if there has been no examination yet, then it is to be conducted, at the latest, by the clergy who do the ordination. Unless there is an examination, there is no ordination. The examination we may hesitate to call divine, as also the presentation, the nomination, and the election. At Pheasant Run in 1992, at a joint meeting of the two theological faculties of the synod and the Council of Presidents, the president of one synodical district was overheard to say to his friend, "I'll see to it that your boy gets a good call." The pastoral call seems to be the nub of the problem—specifically if and when it may be called divine. We were alerted above to something questionable when the English translation of *Die rechte Gestalt* had "called" where Walther had "elected." What was most suspicious—because it was of most concern to Walther—was the translation's omission of "als einen rechtmässigen Berufenen," which

a man is declared to be at his ordination. The apostles acted in this way in Acts 6 as Chemnitz was careful to point out, in accordance with Augustana 14. What Walther joined together his translator has put asunder by equating election and call and by so setting this call apart by itself that ordination is rendered dispensable.

How a man ends up ordained is what concerns Walther. Things can longer go on just as in the old days in Saxony with dependence of the church on the state. What replaces the old ways—and what is Walther's weightiest contribution in the document before us—is the role of the voting members acting together with their pastors as representatives of the whole congregation. When they elect a man, is this election the same as the call? Walther speaks of election and call as the one leading to the other, with the latter happening only on the basis of the former. The English translation equates the two. After election and the call—when the call has been accepted—comes ordination, where the call is validated, and on that basis the one declared properly called is given to do what the office is there to do; he is confirmed and inaugurated in the action of which such terms as *Bestätigung*, *comprobatio*, *rectum facere*, and *rata* are used. The work is completed. When it is completed according to the Lord's words and mandate, it is beyond doubt divine. When we started at the beginning with the first things being done, which led on to the other things, we were uncertain as to when one of those things could be called divine. When all the things were done which make a pastor, no uncertainty remained. What was done was done by the Lord—clearly so when done according to His words and mandate. If we then move back from the point of completion, that which was the basis for the *comprobatio*, if clearly done according to the Lord's words and mandate, may also be called divine. Hence the divine call is the call that emerges as the final result of the election and is recognized at the ordination. Can the election then be called divine as well? If we refuse to ignore the chicaneries that may be observed going on in some such processes, we may well hesitate to call the election divine. Yet there are those who would maintain that also the voting here of the congregational assembly must be regarded as divine. Some, indeed, regard an election as being as actionable as a civil contract: "We vote him in; we vote him out." In such a case there would be no remaining safeguard against those whom

Chemnitz calls a crowd and people out of order. The trouble starts when the election, contrary to Walther in *Die rechte Gestalt*, is sliced out of its coherence and as an isolated item is pronounced divine. Such a "divine call" is not something which can be declined without rebelling against God. When such a call is declined, we then hear accusations of "hypocrisy about the divine call": "The fact is his wife would have felt lonely there; so spare us the specious parsonical pieties." There is clerical hypocrisy enough, but we need to diagnose it more clearly so that we may repent of the actual hypocrisy that it is.

When the declining of a "divine call" thus isolated evokes suspicion of hypocrisy, we need to repent not so much the hypocrisy as the isolating of something which then has to bear the whole weight of being called divine—which it cannot, of course, manage. Walther helps us when he speaks of the call within the coherence of those things which are to be done in making a pastor. From the point of all of them having been done, the application of "divine" washes back over the things which were the basis of what followed, until they begin to blur together. The process does not work the other way around. The call recognized at a man's ordination—and because of which the ordination proceeds—may without doubt then be called divine. Doubt enters only if one thinks of separate pieces. Did the call become divine when it was accepted? Was it divine if the man was not ordained? To such isolated questions we have never answered "yes." Even the early Luther can be helpful as Walther quotes him. Dr. Luther compared ordination to marriage. Until the marriage there was to be no connubial activity. Where pastoral activity goes on without ordination, there talk of a "divine call" rings hollow and prompts derision.

Paragraph 22 of the *Die rechte Gestalt* takes up the liturgical life of the congregation "in order that the word of God may dwell richly in a congregation." Sundays and the festivals of the church year are observed, not as sabbaths, but in Christian liberty to receive the great things which God has in store for us ("nicht gesetzliche, aber eifrige Haltung," according to Augustana 28 and 15). Note 3 further commends *Christenlehre*. The plea in the introduction to the Small Catechism is quoted. Those who are parsons or preachers are

heartily to embrace their office (*Amt*) and so teach the catechism. Those who refuse this teaching are not to be admitted to the sacrament, nor act as sponsors, nor have any part in Christian freedom. Paragraph 23 has the preacher baptizing, confirming, absolving, and celebrating the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The pastor first hears the confession of those who come. He marries the betrothed. In sickness, death, and other tribulations and trials the people are to be instructed and comforted by their pastor from God's word, and finally he gives them Christian burial. Note 1 admonishes against delaying baptism. Note 2 quotes Chemnitz on confirmation. Note 3 says that in a truly Christian congregation there is announcement and confession before the sacrament according to Augustana 25 and Apology 15. Note 4 has more on confession,²⁷ Note 5 on the Lord's holy supper, Note 6 on marriage, Note 7 on pastoral care of the sick and dying, and Note 8 on burials. There is no dearth of practical application.

Paragraph 24 urges schools with teachers faithful to Scripture and the confessions and overseen by the clergy (*Predigtamt*). Lengthy quotations from Luther follow in support of these points. Walther interrupts Luther in his *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* of 1524 to make this remarkable observation:²⁸ "Here in America the congregations are, in this regard, in the place of the Lutheran government" ("an der Stelle der lutherischen Obrigkeit"). Note 2 then can say that the office of school-teacher is a churchly office which may not be infringed, just as that of parson and preacher may not be infringed by those who go about as if they were a parson or a preacher. There is a lengthy quotation from Luther's *Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers* of 1532.²⁹ No divine call exists with them.

Sometimes Walther gives us more help than we need, and sometimes he does not give us all the help we need. He faced the dangers and opportunities which he recognized in his day. While our situation may differ, we may learn much from him, especially in what our Lord has given us to guide us.³⁰ For even when Dr. Walther does not give us all the help we may need, he still leaves us pointed to the resources from which solid answers may yet come—in descending order with the lower subject to the higher—

Scripture, the confessions, and the teachers of the church. As always, so also with the "divine call," we are bound to go astray if we do not begin with the sure facts of what our Lord does according to His words and mandate. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

If this essay proves of any use to the church at all, it may at least serve as a lure to others. It is, in any case, the expression of a longing for the critical edition of Walther's works which we so urgently need and which would be a defence against treating him as a waxen nose: "I have a Walther to put an end to your Walther." It is best if we first ponder Dr. Walther's own words, when and where and to whom and against whom and from whom he said them. Then he may be free to be more of a gift and blessing as a doctor of the church and less of a stick. We today, of course, are also struggling with issues relating to the divine call.³¹ We all need one another's help—and Dr. Walther's too. And the only thing that is surely better than one straight slice of Walther is another. It is better to start at the beginning.

Endnotes

1. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987 [translating the third edition (of 1875) of *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*]).
2. C. F. W. Walther, *The Form of a Christian Congregation*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963). This translation was reprinted in the *Concordia Heritage Series* and bound with *The True Visible Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987) and is hereafter cited as *Form*.
3. W. O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 288-303. L. S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod: The Genesis of Decentralized Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 85-86. "Ernst Moritz Buerger and C. F. W. Walther lost their congregations and had to resign." Mundinger, 94.

4. *Gestalt*, iv. *Form*, viii.
5. Forster, 525. Munding, 113-123. *Moving Frontiers*, ed. C. S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 140-141. The school-teacher, J. F. F. Winter, reported that there was doubt regarding "the ministerial call, vocation, and office, and the Lord's Supper" and again "the Scriptural doctrine of the church, the ministerial call and office." One may ask whether these stand as separate items, or only as they cohere together, or as all are made subject to one of them, as to a principle.
6. *Gestalt*, iv: "Kirche, Amt. Kirchenregiment." One may compare AC 14: "Vom Kirchenregiment, De Ordine Ecclesiastico" (BKS, 69, note 1; LW, 39, 233); AC 15: "Von Kirchenordnungen, De Ritibus Ecclesiasticis"; AC 16: "Von Weltlichem Regiment, De Rebus Civilibus," as distinct from AC 14. *Form*, vii: "church," "the ministry," "church government." Walther's sequence would seem to suggest that, if one can be sure of the church, then on that basis one can be sure of a number of other things. That sequence, however, is not the whole story. Can *Kirchenregiment* manage without taking into itself *weltliches Regiment* such as princes in Saxony and democratic principles in Perry County? Walther "feared the consequences of lay rule." Munding, 99. One may compare K. E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* (Fort Wayne: IFLCR, 1990), 212. For the connection between ecclesiastical affairs and civil affairs in the Franconian settlements in Michigan, one may see *Moving Frontiers*, 106-115.
7. AC 28:21. The ministry of the word and sacraments is to forgive sins, to reject doctrine which is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the fellowship of the church ungodly persons whose wickedness is known, doing all these things without human power, simply by the word. The confessions speak of the clergy *iuxta evangelium*. Apology 28:12. One may compare note 15.
8. *Gestalt*, iv. *Form*, vii.
9. *Form*, 62-97. *Gestalt*, 67-107. "Von der Ausübung der Pflicht einer Gemeinde, Sorge zu tragen, dasz das Wort Gottes reichlich unter ihr wohne und im Schwange gehe." What matters is that the words of the Lord are there as mandated by the Lord. The

phrase "im Schwange gehe" confesses the vitality of the words of the Lord—going in full swing, "simply by the word."

10. Not all preachers were parsons. At St. Mary's Church Bugenhagen was *Pfarrer* and Luther a *Prediger*. In America there were no parishes (*Pfarren*) as in Saxony. While Walther does not separate them, since both are in one office, he prefers the sequence of "preacher" and "parson." *Stimme*, xv: "Vom Heiligen Predigtamt oder Pfarramt." In *Gestalt* he usually speaks of "preachers" alone following the German of AC 5; "parsons" appear only in quotations whose setting has some civic dependence.
11. *Gestalt*, 68. "Oder wo sie es schon daheime lesen, so ist es doch nicht so fruchtbar, noch so kräftig, als kräftig das Wort ist durch die öffentliche Predigt und den Mund des Predigers, den Gott dazu berufen und geordnet hat, dasz er dir's predigen und sagen soll." SL, 13, 2654. "Or if they do read it at home, it is not so fruitful or powerful as the word publicly preached through the mouth of the preacher whom God has called and ordained that he should preach and speak it to you." SC 6, 6. LW, 37, 68; *dir da*. The formula of absolution in the *Agende* of 1856 (64) has "kraft meines Amtes, als ein berufener und verordneter Diener des Worts, verkündige ich euch Allen die Gnade Gottes und vergebe euch an Statt und auf Befehl meines Herrn Jesu Christi alle euere Sünde, in Namen Gottes . . ." SC 5, 28. AC 8:2: "Et sacramenta et verbum propter ordinationem et mandatum Christi sunt efficacia, etiamsi per malos exhibeantur." This assertion cannot be made apart from Christ's *ordinatio et mandatum*. AC 8:2; SD 7:77; LW, 38, 186, 200. *Gestalt*, 101-102; *Form*, 91-92. Walther warns against conventicles and quotes Luther. "It does not help their case [*das sie fürgeben*] to say that all Christians are priests. It is true that all Christians are priests, but not all are pastors [*Pfarrer*]. For to be a pastor one must not only be a Christian and priest but also have an office and a field of work committed to him [*ampt und ein befohlen kirchspiel*]." LW, 13, 65; WA, 31(1), 211, 16-19; SL, 5, 722.
12. *Stimme* (243) speaks of *Kirchendiener Vorsteher*. The English translation (217) has "leaders." Laymen as elders is another story. One may compare Spener.

13. *A New Eusebius*, ed. J. Stevenson and W. Trend (London: SPCK, 1987), 339.
14. This "drawing in" (*zuziehen*) echoes Tractate 72: "adhibitis suis pastoribus," "by having their pastors do it." This phrase was excised in Tappert's translation. One may compare E. Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 249, note 1. It is also missing in the *Concordia Triglotta*, which follows the edition of J. T. Müller, and would not have been in the text which Walther had. In Löhe we find "Zuziehung der Gemeinde," as quoted by Gerhard Müller, "Das neulutherische Amtsverständnis in reformatorischer Sicht," *Kerygma und Dogma*, 17 (1971), 53.
15. LW, 39, 312. In an emergency the congregation may have to act without the bishop, or the bishop without the congregation. An emergency is a matter of life or death. "Since a Christian congregation neither should nor could exist without God's word, it clearly follows from the foregoing that it nevertheless must have teachers and preachers who administer the word." LW, 39, 309. "Das eyn Christliche versamlung odder gemeyne recht und macht habe, alle lere tzu urteylen und lerer zu beruffen, eyn und abzusetzen, Grund und ursach aus der schriftt." WA, 11, 408-416. This assertion was made in the extraordinary circumstances of 1523 in Leisnig. One clergyman had the support of the traditional ecclesiastical patron, and the other clergyman had that of the majority of the townspeople. There is no question of ordination. W. Stein, *Das kirchliche Amt bei Luther* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974), 173. The feudal landlord and a representative of the town council went to Luther, whose response we have in this document. The problems of property in Leisnig may be those to which Walther refers in Note 2. Brecht tells us more than Walther could have known in *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521-1532* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 69-72. Mismanagement of the common chest happened also in Perry County, but Pastor Walther does not drag his people through that story again. LW, 41, 12: "Churches die without shepherd, sermon, and sacrament."
16. Walther quotes from Walch(1), XXI, 449: "Darnach erfordert dein Amt [ET, "your business"] dasz du aufsehest, damit die Gemeinde oder Kirche dir wider deinen Willen keinen andern

eindringe. Denn was wäre eben so wol tyrranisch gehandelt, wider den Pfarherrn als so ein Pfarherr einen wollte eindringen wider den Willen der Gemeinde und [ET, "or"] Kirche." WA, *Briefwechsel*, IX, 501, 7: "Deinde tui officii est, ut non sine tuo consensu Ecclesia seu plebs tibi invito obtrudant aliquem, curare. Nam hoc est minus tyrranicum in pastorem ipsum quam si invito Ecclesia aliquem obtrudat." Neither *Amt* nor *officium* appear in the English translation. One may compare *Concordia Journal*, 17 (October, 1991), 379-380. We may observe a process of "deamtification" signalled already by *Kirche und Amt* not being translated *Church and Office*. The word "office" is more resistant than "ministry" to being pulled away from its institution by God which is confessed in Augustana 5, while "ministry," robbed of its definite article, has suffered abstraction and has been made into something which we define and is, then, no longer the mandated gift and institution of the Lord. The one who carried Luther's letter to Sebastian Steude, Pfarrer in Joachimstal, was Wolfgang Calixtus, who had been wrongfully ousted by the people. Luther invoked the *regula euangelii* (501, 14). The letter is numbered 3659 and dated St. Bartholomew's Day (August 24), 1541. WA, *Revisionsnachtragsband*, XIII, 298. One may compare Brecht, 3, 272-279.

17. Forster, 56-57.
18. One may compare the *potiores* in Bohemia to whom reference is made in *Concerning Ministers of the Church Having to Be Instituted*. LW, 40, 40.
19. "Über das Vorsteheramt," in *Quellen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung selbständiger evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchen in Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1987), 89. On elders at Old Trinity Church, one may see Munding, 126-128. One may also see P. Harris, "Angels Unaware," *Logia*, 3 (Epiphany 1994), 38-39. Not clear enough here is the fact that "power" and *Gewalt* are from *potestas*, which is from *exousia*, which is an evangelical word in the words of institution of the office of the holy ministry in Matthew 28:16-20. One may see Walther's *Church and Ministry*, 177; *Kirche und Amt*, 193. Tractate 31; AC 28:21, 5. In paragraph 27 Walther speaks of "solche Aeltesten oder Vorsteher unter sich aufzurichten, die nicht im Wort und in der Lehre arbeiten." *Gestalt*, 111; *Form*, 101.

20. Stein, 204. Stein knows the indispensable languages and has no partisan Lutheran interest. "Ordination musz als Beauftragung verstanden werden . . . Um dies zu verdeutlichen, beschreibt Luther die Ordination als ritus vocandi oder ritus eligendi. [AC 14.] Berufen, Befehlen, Erwählen, Einsetzen sind nicht synonyme Termini technici für Ordinieren, sondern Beshreibungen, die das rechte Ordinationsverständnis—nach der Autorität der Schrift und dem Beispiel der Apostel . . . einprägen sollen," 175. One term may stand synecdochically for the whole, or they may run together, each with its *proprium* and without one robbing from another. Also helpful is W. Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 339-351. Elert has *recte* (353); AC 14 has *rite*. AC 28:8: "damach der Beruf ist, iuxta vocationem." Here "call" does what was done by the *missio canonica*, which designated what aspect of the ministry, into which a man was placed, was to be his specific task: "to many or one on one," to preach not to baptize (1 Corinthians 1:17). Here "call" applies to the ordained (those who have been given the *potestas ordinis* and the *potestas jurisdictionis* of Apology 28:13) and cannot be synecdoche, as is the *rite vocatus* of AC 14. One may see Tractate 67. Tappert muddles things with his "calling." *Martin Luther, Studienausgabe*, 2, 350, note 440.
21. "Ita Titus in Creta praefectus fuit gubernandae et moderandae electioni presbyterorum, ut rite illa fieret, utque ordinatione approbaret et confirmaret electionem rite factam." One may compare AC 14. *Approbare* was also used of a testament, for which reason we speak of a will being in probate. Only after ordination's approbation and confirmation were the election and call in effect. "Er [Titus] die richtig geschehene Wahl durch Ordination bekräftigte und bestätigte." *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, ed. E. Preuss (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1861), 485b; *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. F. Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2, 708. *Gestalt*, 77. *Form*, 70: "the election properly accomplished might be confirmed and ratified by ordination." Here Titus has disappeared as the doer of the ordination. On *bestätigen* one may see the *Luther-Bibel* on Genesis 23:17 and Deuteronomy 25:6. WAB, 8, 99, and 637; also SL, 17, 114; and the Synodical Constitution of 1854,

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- Chapter IV. A.9, *Moving Frontiers*, 151. Grimm has "als lehen übergeben."
22. J. C. Wohlrabe, "The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 52 (January 1988), 1-27. Of special significance is note 89.
 23. SL, 17, 114. The devil does not do anything, but the office; he has merely managed to have himself ordained: "wenn's der Teufel gethan hätte im Amt."
 24. Second Timothy 1:6. Preuss, 479. Kramer, 2, 693.
 25. Apology 13:12. Preuss, 478b. Kramer, 2, 691. God approbates and so also does Titus when he ordains.
 26. *Brevis Institutio Ministrorum Verbi Divini* (Wittenberg, 1623). Elert, 353, note 5.
 27. Confession is simply assumed to be in use. *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode, 1872), 155. One may see W. Polack, "Our First Synodical Constitution," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 16 (1943), 1-18; *Erster Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Evangelischen Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten vom Jahre 1847*, Zweite Auflage (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), 7; *Zweiter Synodal-Bericht* (1848), 43-44; and *Vierter Synodal-Bericht* (1850), 141-142. Here Heinrich Müller's *Geistliche Erquickungstunden* is recommended; also Pietistic is his *Der Himmlische Liebeskuss*. *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. E. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), 560. Elert, 46. This Müller is listed among the forty-five Lutheran authors quoted by Walther. One may see G. Krispin's enormously insightful doctoral dissertation of 1992, "*Propter Absolutionem*: Holy Absolution in the Theology of Martin Luther and Philipp Jacob Spener: A Comparative Study." One may see also the following: *Synodal-Handbuch* (1873), 92. "Absolution: A Sermon on John 20:19-31 O[Quasimodogeniti] Preached by the Rev. Prof. C. F. W. Walther and Translated for the *Lutheran Standard* by A. C." (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Bookstore, 1874). E. Kinder, "Beichte und Absolution nach der Lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 77 (1952), 549. P. H. D. Lang, "Private Confession and Absolution in the

Lutheran Church: A Doctrinal, Historical, and Critical Study," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 56 (1992), 241-262. As it goes with holy absolution, so it goes with the doctrine of the office of the holy ministry, so it goes with the divine call, and so it goes with where and to whom the Lord is surely giving out His forgiveness. SC 5, 27. "Do you also believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?" BKS, 519, 16. Tappert snips out "my," 351. Walther and other pastors in his generation had a *Beichtvater*; Pastor Büniger was Walther's.

28. LW, 45, 339-378.
29. LW, 40, 383-392.
30. Walther was not beset by corporation-mindedness, marketing principles, and management-theory. Dependence on the state still persists, as appears from the strange things which have been done and said for the sake of the Internal Revenue Service. One may see J. Conroe, "A Historical Survey of the Office of the Keys as Confessed in the Missouri Synod's 'Explanation of the Fifth Chief Part of Luther's Small Catechism' from 1912 to 1986," *Concordia Student Journal*, 16 (1993), 27-29. When Dr. Walther was discussing schools, he spoke of the congregation as the Lutheran government. This approach left us with such questions as these: When is a congregation government, and when is it church? Can it be church without being government? These questions arise when the safeguards and sanctions involved in dependence on the state have been left behind in Saxony. Walther's answer in 1862 was *Die rechte Gestalt*, and the way in which it is translated shows whether it has been read. The best answer may be recognized by means of *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*.
31. *Convention Proceedings*, 1992 (Pittsburgh), 115-116. Nowadays we go in for emanations and perceptions; they are more adjustable.

Modern *Fanatici* and the Lutheran Confessions

Carter Lindberg

The author has been asked to answer in this essay this question: "Is the judgment of the Lutheran Confessions on *fanatici* still useful?" The answer, of course, is an unqualified "yes." Who, after all, is in favor of fanatics? Not many people are when the question is phrased in this way. If the root meaning, however, of "fanatic" is considered, we find, in actuality, widespread contemporary support of *fanatici* as meant in the confessions. The adjective *fanaticus*, according to *Cassell's New Latin Dictionary*, means "inspired by a deity, enthusiastic." The word "enthusiastic," of course, comes from *en* and *theos*, meaning "God-withinism."¹ Enthusiasm in this sense is as socially and theologically popular—and dangerous—today as it was during the Reformation.

I. Contemporary Fanaticism

In this perspective the condemnations of fanaticism in the confessions are not merely still useful; they are, in fact, essential to the Lutheran confession of the gospel. The confessions as the distillation of the Reformation proclamation of justification by faith alone totally oppose the perennial human efforts to shift the locus of salvation from *extra nos* to *in nos*. Such efforts are called perennial because enthusiasm did not end with the condemnations of Novatians, Donatists, Pelagians, Montanists, and *Schwärmer*. Enthusiasm lives on in contemporary charismatic movements, church-growth and renewal movements, and all their secular New Age counterparts obsessed with introspection, self-analysis, and self-improvement. In a sense, enthusiasm is the hallmark of contemporary theology, which begins with the self and views, in the words of George Lindbeck, "the public or outer features of religion as expressive and evocative expressions (i.e., nondiscursive symbols) of internal experience."² This "experiential-expressivism," as Lindbeck calls it, "is so pervasive in contemporary theology and at the same time so variegated that it is hard to decide on any one author to serve as an instance."³

From a historical perspective the phenomenon of enthusiasm includes many strange bedfellows in its protean bed. A random list could include Thomas Müntzer, Philip Spener, Friedrich Schleier-

macher, and Donald McGavran. What they have in common is the tendency to use experience as the yardstick for revelation, and thus to make revelation contingent on results whether viewed qualitatively or quantitatively. The presence of the Holy Spirit is indicated by more intense piety, growing churches, and total quality in ministry.⁴

The present fascination with inner experience, with spirituality, is quite ecumenical; "it afflicts Christians of every denomination. Our culture has told us that introspection is the proper *modus operandi* in life. As a result contemporary spirituality has turned increasingly to navel-gazing and has made us unable to get outside ourselves."⁵ "As moderns under the influence of Pietism and the Enlightenment, we think in terms of subjectivity, of our own life of faith, of our intentions and motives, of our inner urges and their forms. 'Sanctification' in this way of thinking is primarily a matter of personal, individual form, and way of life."⁶ "Modern Protestantism and psychologism have denaturalized and moralized conscience so that it has nothing to do with the external world."⁷ This condition is not just the effect of Pietism, Enlightenment, and Freudianism; it is original sin: we all are born enthusiasts. As Luther states in the Smalcald Articles, the devil "made enthusiasts of Adam and Eve. He led them from the external word of God to spiritualizing and to their own imaginations." "In short, enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendents from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy. Accordingly, we should and must continually maintain that God will not deal with us except through His external word and sacrament."⁸

The Reformers' condemnations of the fanatics are directed at the whole human enterprise of self-sanctification, self-transcendence, and self-chosen religiosity manifest in our tendency to think in terms of law, virtue, and moral progress. Our modern world, to be sure, has put its own spin on the ruses of the old Adam. The special revelations of the Zwickau prophets of today require dialing a 900 number at so many dollars a minute to come by astrological signs and psychic readings. Regardless, however, of such technological updates, the medieval quest for the certainty of salvation is no less lively today than on the eve of the Reformation. The piety of

achievement that so oppressed the young Luther continues to be the hallmark of our society. The present political mantra of personal responsibility echoes the medieval monastic cloaking of self-interest in high-sounding phrases. We have perhaps lost the sophistication of medieval scholastics but we continue to think, as Luther put it, "*ad modum Aristotelis* (after the fashion of Aristotle), where the gaining of righteousness means acquiring virtue and removing sin."⁹ Our focus has shifted from the economy of salvation to the salvation of the economy, from fasting to dieting, from pilgrimage to jogging, from cathedrals of worship to cathedrals of capitalism; but we are no less a performance-oriented, score-keeping people than our medieval forebears. We are, consequently, no less insecure and anxious. *Lex semper accusat*: "the law always accuses and terrifies consciences."¹⁰

The condemnations of fanaticism in the Lutheran Confessions are neither mere historical remnants of Luther's battles with Karlstadt and company nor mere theological dressing for Luther's theology of the word. Melancthon warned that, when sound doctrine is crushed, "fanatical spirits will arise whom our opponents will be unable to restrain. They will trouble the church with their godless teachings and overthrow the whole organization of the church, which we are very anxious to maintain."¹¹ The condemnations of fanaticism reflect the proclamation of justification by faith and hence relate to every one of its theological *loci*.

II. Justification by Faith Alone

In a recent essay Martin Brecht draws this conclusion: "The essential common ground [of the theology of the Reformation] exists in the doctrine of justification by faith alone and in the anthropology of the justified sinner connected to it. Where this central doctrine is not shared, as for example by the many representatives of spiritualism, one cannot speak of Reformation theology."¹² From the beginning this article of justification has been understood to be non-negotiable.¹³ Everything else, including the papacy in theory, was open for discussion.¹⁴

Luther was quite self-conscious that this point was what distinguished his reform-movement from the renewal-movements ranging

from Wyclif and Hus to the Anabaptists. Their concern was for moral renewal, for sanctification, whereas his concern was for that article on which the church stands or falls, justification by faith alone. In other words, *the* issue was doctrine:

Doctrine and life are to be distinguished. Life is as bad among us as among the papists. Hence we do not fight and damn them because of their bad lives. Wyclif and Hus, who fought over the moral quality of life, failed to understand this. I do not consider myself to be pious. But when it comes to whether one teaches correctly about the word of God, here I take my stand and fight. That is my calling. To contest doctrine has never happened until now. Others have fought over life; but to take on doctrine—that is to grab the goose by the neck! . . . When the word of God remains pure, even if the quality of life fails us, life is placed in a position to become what it ought to be. That is why everything hinges on the purity of the Word. I have succeeded only if I have taught correctly.¹⁵

Luther never tired of emphasizing that doctrine stands above life. Doctrine "directs us and shows us the way to heaven . . . We can be saved without love . . . but not without pure doctrine and faith." To Luther doctrine and life could by no means be placed on the same level. If doctrine gives way to love, then the gospel may be denied. That is why the devil "attacks us so cleverly with this specious argument about not offending against love and the harmony among the churches."¹⁶

Luther's emphasis may be misunderstood, especially in American culture, which so prizes religious toleration, on the one hand, and moral activism, on the other. It must be said, therefore, that Luther distinguished doctrine and life precisely for the sake of life. Without such a distinction the twin consequences are cheap grace and works-righteousness.¹⁷ The function of doctrine is the proclaiming of the forgiveness of sins as unconditional promise.

The Lutheran Confessions reiterate¹⁸ Luther's emphasis that "the article of justification is the master and the prince, the lord, ruler, and judge over all doctrine; it preserves and rules all teaching of the

church and puts right our conscience before God. Without this article the world is naught but death and darkness."¹⁹ The article of justification is "not just one doctrine among others, but . . . 'the article on which the church stands and falls' (*articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*) . . . the *sine qua non* of Christian unity."²⁰ The case may be stated in this way:

The gospel tolerates no conditions. It is itself unconditional promise. And when it is rightly spoken, it takes the conditions we put on our life as the very occasions of its promise. This is the first and fundamental Lutheran proposal of dogma. When it is practiced consistently, the Lutheran Reformation has succeeded, whatever else may happen. When it is not practiced, other departures from medieval Christianity represent only sloth and lack of seriousness.²¹

Luther's point is that justification by faith alone throws the burden of proof for human righteousness before God (*coram Deo*) back upon God. This "Copernican revolution" in theology and piety condemns the human quest for security and efforts to control life. For Luther everything was already said and done in justification by faith alone. "Whenever Luther nevertheless speaks of 'sanctification' he discusses nothing else than justification."²² To do otherwise would erode the certainty of faith.

III. The Certainty of Faith

Medieval theology in its various forms of scholasticism, mysticism, and pastoral care was a coherent effort to create security in an insecure, crisis-laden time. Underlying this effort was Aristotelian philosophy and logic. This logic posited that like is known by like. In church-growth parlance this idea is the "homogeneous unit principle."²³ In order to know God and be salvifically known by God, it is necessary to achieve likeness (*similitudo*) to God or to make God "like" us in the double sense of appreciating our achievements and *similitudo* to us. The difficulty, however, is precisely in the assumption of continuity between the old and the new, between the sinner and the righteous person before God.²⁴ Such continuity, which marks all theologies of progress and development, throws the

person back upon his own resources.

Insecurity and uncertainty about salvation resulted from making salvation contingent upon an inner change in the person. But justification contingent upon an inner change in the sinner, no matter how stimulated by the grace of God, is bad news. The good news, Luther discovered, is that justification occurs outside us (*extra nos*). Justification by faith alone means that it is not the sinner who is changed but rather the sinner's situation before God.²⁵ "In short, the term 'to be justified' means that a man is considered righteous."²⁶ Luther states:

God does not want to redeem us through our own, but through external, righteousness and wisdom; not through one that comes from us and grows in us, but through one that comes from outside; not through one that originates here on earth, but through one that comes from heaven. Therefore, we must be taught a righteousness that comes from the outside and is foreign.²⁷

This truth is succinctly expressed in Luther's marginal gloss on Romans 2:13: "'To be righteous before God' is the same as 'to be justified in the presence of God.' A man is not considered righteous by God because he is righteous; but because he is considered righteous by God, therefore he is righteous. . . ."²⁸

In other words, only when the burden of proof for justification rests on God is it possible to have any certainty of salvation. Our righteousness before God is not contingent upon our theological expertise, our ethical rigorism, or our religious experience, but rather solely upon God's action in Jesus Christ. There are no human prerequisites to righteousness before God except, of course, sin; and that condition we all easily fulfill.²⁹ To the person terrified by sin and plagued by doubts; Luther says:

You are not to be conscious of having righteousness; you are to believe it. And unless you believe that you are righteous, you insult and blaspheme Christ, who has cleansed you by the washing of water with the Word (Ephesians 5:26) and who in His death on the cross condemned and killed sin and death, so that through Him you

might obtain eternal righteousness and life. You cannot deny this, unless you want to be obviously wicked, blasphemous, and contemptuous of God, of all the divine promises, of Christ, and of all His benefits. Then you cannot deny either that you are righteous.³⁰

When we examine our lives, we can only be plagued by insecurity and uncertainty; but, if we look to God in Christ, we have certainty of salvation. This truth was the reason why Luther emphasized doctrine over life. When life is placed over doctrine, the ultimate result is what Luther called the "monster of uncertainty":

[It] is obvious that the enemies of Christ teach what is uncertain, because they command consciences to be in doubt . . . Let us thank God, therefore, that we have been delivered from this monster of uncertainty The gospel commands us to look, not at our own good deeds or perfection but at God Himself as He promises, and at Christ Himself, the Mediator. . . . And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive.³¹

Introspection and activity as means to justification and sanctification lead only to the twin possibilities of pride and despair. Hope cannot come from within us but only from outside us, *extra nos*, in the certainty that God does not lie. Paradoxically, the precondition for certainty of salvation is real sin. "God offers His grace to real sinners. He will not be turned aside by the unpromising character of the objects of his generosity."³²

This truth is vividly expressed by Luther's discussion of the rights of inheritance and the certainty which a will provides the heir. Luther saw in Hebrews 9:17 the new testament—*id est*, the new will—in Christ already given us as "the forgiveness of sins and eternal life."³³ The following quotation sums up Luther's conviction that justification by faith alone is an event *extra nos* which changes our situation before God:

Everything depends, therefore, as I have said, upon the words of this sacrament. These are the words of Christ. . . . Let someone else pray, fast, go to confession, prepare himself for mass and the sacrament as he chooses. You do the same, but remember that this is all foolishness and self-deception if you do not set before you the words of the testament and arouse yourself to believe and desire them. You would have to spend a long time polishing your shoes, preening and primping to attain an inheritance, if you had no letter and seal with which you could prove your right to it. But if you have a letter and seal, and believe, desire, and seek it, it must be given to you, even though you were scaly, scabby, and most filthy.³⁴

It is no accident that Luther speaks so forcefully of the *extra nos* of justification in relation to the sacrament because the sacraments are an "irreducibly external word. . . . They will not let the word be swallowed up in our internality. They remain always external, from without. They guarantee the character of the word as a word from outside us, from out there in the world of things and bodies."³⁵

Luther's "most pregnant descriptions"³⁶ of the *extra nos* are found in his vehement battles with the enthusiasts over the sacraments:

Now when God sends forth His holy gospel He deals with us in a twofold manner, first outwardly, then inwardly. Outwardly He deals with us through the oral word of the gospel and through material signs, that is, baptism and the sacrament of the altar. Inwardly He deals with us through the Holy Spirit, faith, and other gifts. But whatever their measure or order, the outward factors should and must precede. The inward experience follows and is effected by the outward. God has determined to give the inward to no one except through the outward. For He wants to give no one the Spirit or faith outside of the outward word and sign instituted by Him, as He says in Luke 16[:29], "Let them hear Moses and the prophets."³⁷

The enthusiasts, in contrast, tear away "all the means by which the Spirit might come to you. Instead of the outward order of God in

the material sign or baptism and the oral proclamation of the word of God he [the fanatic] wants to teach you, not how the Spirit comes to you, but how you come to the Spirit. They would have you learn how to journey on the clouds and ride on the wind. They do not tell you how or when, whither or what, but you are to experience what they do."³⁸

If we lose the "for us" of the proclamation, Christ remains for us only a person on the gallows. "Even if Christ were given for us and crucified a thousand times, it would all be in vain if the word of God were absent and were not distributed and given to me with the bidding, 'this is for you, take what is yours.'"³⁹ The distribution and appropriation of the promise of the cross is the work of the Holy Spirit. He "leads us into His holy community, placing us upon the bosom of the church, where He preaches to us and brings us to Christ. . . . Therefore to sanctify is nothing else than to bring us to the Lord Christ to receive this blessing, which we could not obtain by ourselves."⁴⁰

IV. The Corollaries of Justification by Faith Alone

The old wineskins could not contain the new wine of the gospel. Justification by faith alone radically altered every aspect of late medieval theology. The unconditional promise of the gospel shattered all continuity and created things out of nothing. Grasped by justification by faith alone, Luther rewrote every aspect of theology. His theological anthropology radicalized the human predicament before God. The old Augustinian understanding of sin as a turning away from God toward lesser goods (*curvatus ad terram*) was displaced by knowing sin as that egocentricity which feeds upon itself (*incurvatus in se*). The old Augustinian theology of progress or growth in righteousness (*partim justus, partim peccator*) was displaced by an understanding of the pilgrim as wholly righteous and wholly sinner at the same time (*simul justus et peccator*). The medieval (and modern) notions of correlating human progress with the will of God were rejected as theologies of glory in opposition to the theology of the cross.

Justification by faith alone does not make the Christian intrinsically righteous. The Christian "should not be so smug, as though he

were pure of all sins. . . . He is righteous and holy by an alien or foreign holiness." Sin is forgiven, but it still remains.⁴¹ The forgiven sinner is simultaneously righteous and sinner. Sin here is basically unbelief and being curved in upon the self; it is the desire to be God and the concomitant refusal to let God be God.⁴² Sin, therefore, is so radical that only God's gracious imputation of Christ's righteousness can overcome it. The sinner's acceptance of God's judgment enables him to live as righteous already in spite of sin.

By letting God be God the sinner is allowed to be what he was intended to be—human.⁴³ The sinner is not called to deny his humanity and seek "likeness" (*similitudo*) with God. The situation is, rather, that the forgiveness of sin occurs in the midst of human life. The Christian stands thus before God:

[He] is at the same time both a sinner and a righteous man; a sinner in fact, but a righteous man by the sure imputation and promise of God that he will continue to deliver him from sin until he has completely cured him. And thus he is entirely healthy in hope, but in fact he is still a sinner . . .⁴⁴

In the light of this brief excursus into the motif of *simul justus et peccator* we may turn to an equally brief summary of the content of the law as understood in Luther and Lutheran theology. The traditional way of speaking of the law in Lutheran theology is in terms of its uses. The civil use of the law is to build up society through the encouragement of good and the discouragement of evil. The content of this use of the law is known through reason, which comes to the conclusion that life is better when we act toward others as we should wish them to act toward us. In this sense Luther remarks that the Ten Commandments are the Jewish version of Saxon Common Law—in short, a kind of human survival kit. By no means, however, does this civil use of the law instituted by God to promote the public peace make one righteous before God.⁴⁵

The second use of the law is the theological use.⁴⁶ Here the law reveals and multiplies sin: "the true function and the chief and proper use of the Law is to reveal to man his sin, blindness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate and contempt of God, death, hell,

judgment and the well-deserved wrath of God. . . . For if someone is not a murderer, adulterer, or thief, and abstains from external sins, . . . he develops the presumption of righteousness and relies on his good works. God cannot soften and humble this man or make him acknowledge his misery and damnation any other way than by the Law."⁴⁷

The theological use of the law poses the question for which the gospel of justification by faith alone is the only proper answer. Without the question the answer appears to be a trivial *non sequitur*. Without the answer the question creates presumption or despair. The dialectic of law and gospel runs through Lutheran theology because it is the only form in which the gospel can be rightly proclaimed. The distinguishing of law and gospel is no theoretical abstraction but rather the dynamic proclamation of the gospel by which the presumptuous are terrified and the terrified comforted.

V. Sanctification

A perennial response to Luther's radical theology of justification is that it cuts the nerve of human responsibility and leads to quietism. Even those who appreciate Luther's theology of justification have raised this issue. In the eighteenth century John Wesley stated: "Who has written more ably than Martin Luther on justification by faith alone? And who was more ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification, or more confused in his conception of it?"⁴⁸ By the beginning of our century the social-ethical side of this critique was advanced by Ernst Troeltsch. Troeltsch portrayed Luther as a conservative ethicist who separated private and public morality to the detriment of the latter.⁴⁹ Troeltsch's well-known arguments that Luther decreed "an inward morality for the individual and an external 'official' morality" indifferent to social structures and institutions were uncritically taken up by Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr, in fact, intensified Troeltsch's critique: "In confronting the problems of realizing justice in the collective life of man, the Lutheran Reformation was even more explicitly defeatist." Niebuhr went on to claim that evidently for Luther "no obligation rests upon the Christian to change social structures so that they might conform more perfectly to the requirements of brotherhood."⁵⁰ The judgments

by Troeltsch and Niebuhr have become the received tradition for many contemporary theologians who claim that the "Lutheran theology of the 'calling,' combined with the notion of natural 'orders,' produced a thoroughly reactionary social ethic, which never advanced beyond the ideal of charity."⁵¹

In actuality, quite to the contrary, it was precisely Luther's theology which enabled him to speak in detail about the shape of the Christian life and to develop a radical ethic that clearly went "beyond charity." Without losing sight of Luther's emphasis on God's imputation of forgiveness which stands against all fantasies of intrinsic personal and social progress in holiness, we may also recall his emphasis on the new life. We may, for instance, recall Luther's exposition of baptism in the Large Catechism: "In Baptism we are given the grace, Spirit, and power to suppress the old man so that the new may come forth and grow strong."⁵² He also emphasized the new life in the Spirit in his lectures on Psalm 51: "When by mercy we are free of guilt, then we still need the gift of the Holy Spirit to clean out the remnants of sin in us, or at least to help us lest we succumb to sin and to the lusts of the flesh."⁵³ "It is well known that the new obedience in the justified brings with it the daily growth of the heart in the Spirit who sanctifies us, namely, that after the battle against the remnants of false opinions about God and against doubt the Spirit goes on to govern the actions of the body so that lust is cast out and the mind becomes accustomed to patience and other moral virtues."⁵⁴

The crucial point to remember, as Gerhard Forde succinctly reminds us, is that the "Christian life is not an exodus from vice *to* virtue, but *from* virtue, to the grace of Christ."⁵⁵ When sanctification is linked to ethical progress the consequences are either personal and social constipation, on the one hand, or personal and social triumphalism, on the other. Both options share a theology of glory. The striving for personal perfection may constrain our contributions to others because everything we do will be posited on its expected outcome. Our lives and those of our neighbors then become contingent on their results. The striving for perfection, as Karl Holl remarked, "gives birth to the calculating frame of mind" characteristic of both the Puritan and capitalist spirit.⁵⁶ This is the context for

Luther's advice to Melanchthon: "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe even more boldly and rejoice in Christ, who is victor over sin, death, and the world."⁵⁷

The crucial question for Luther was always this: "what makes a Christian?" In his "Letter to the Christians at Strassburg in Opposition to the Fanatic Spirit," Luther wrote: "My sincere counsel and warning is that you be circumspect and hold to the single question, what makes a person a Christian? Do not on any account allow any other question or other art to enjoy equal importance. When anyone proposes anything ask him at once, 'Friend, will this make one a Christian or not?'"⁵⁸ The only correct answer is the divine promise. "When you look to what you have done you have already lost the name of Christian. It is indeed true that one should do good works, help others, advise, and give, but no one is called a Christian for that and is not a Christian for that."⁵⁹ "The quest to be a virtuous or pious person is not a Christian quest."⁶⁰

The option of triumphalism equates one's own vision of holy living with the divine mandate and thus all too easily falls prey to the temptations of force and tyranny. The historical examples of Thomas Müntzer and the Anabaptist kingdom of the city of Münster are vivid reminders of how easily human beings can be sacrificed for causes. Closer to home we have the murders of persons associated with women's health clinics and the terrorist bombing of federal buildings.

True Christendom does not wield the cross but rather lives under it. It lives not from an imposed and imposing human self-transcendence in the striving for sanctification but remains a community of sinners under the constant sanctifying work of God. Its holiness remains passive; it does not transform itself into an autonomous active holiness. The church is thus holy only in the eschatological movement from faith to appearance; it is, like each individual Christian, *simul iusta et peccatrix*, a holy church of sinners.⁶¹

This truth does not vitiate social good works but empowers them. When "Luther speaks of 'sanctification' he is emphasizing in particular the institutional aspect of justification." The "institutions" (*Ständen*) which Luther has in mind are the church, household

(economy), and government or political community. These are God's means for sanctifying human beings in their everyday life.⁶² Through these means we serve our neighbors and contribute to the common good.

VI. Political Community: The Example of Social Welfare

Especially instructive, in the light of the perennial modern charges that Luther had no social ethics, is his contribution to early modern social welfare, which received legislative form in the Lutheran church orders. Late medieval poor-relief was marked by struggles between the urban laity and the clergy over the administration of its funds, properties, and institutions. Luther's theology provided a new framework of articulation and legitimation in which to rationalize and secularize early modern social welfare.⁶³ His theology undercut the medieval sanctification of poverty and provided a theological rationale for social welfare that was translated into legislation. Luther "created, as it were, a *discursive field* in which to bring together in imaginative ways the practical realities of institutional life on the one hand and the ideas evident in Scripture on the other."⁶⁴

Medieval poor-relief was perceived under the much overworked rubric from Ecclesiasticus 3:30 that "almsgiving atones for sin." Bishops and theologians quoted approvingly the old rationale that "God could have made all persons rich but He willed that there be poor in the world so that the rich would have an opportunity to atone for their sins."⁶⁵ Medieval preachers did not hesitate to refer to this relationship as a commercial transaction, with the poor carrying the riches of the wealthy on their backs to heaven.⁶⁶ The ancient tradition of the poor as intercessors with God was supplemented by a theology that presented the poor as objects for good works and thereby a means to salvation.

Practical efforts to reform poor-relief were frustrated by a theology which legitimated begging and valued almsgiving and by a church whose own mendicant monks compounded the social problems of poverty. In religious terms, on the one hand, begging continued to be valued as a vocation; the poor had an important soteriological function as intercessors for almsgivers. In economic

terms, at the same time, the poor were a cheap labor-pool for an expanding profit-economy.

Luther undercut this medieval religious ideology of poverty by his doctrine of justification by grace alone apart from human works. Since righteousness before God is by grace alone, and since salvation is the source of life rather than the goal of life, poverty and the plight of the poor cannot be rationalized as a peculiar form of blessedness. There is no salvific value in being poor or in giving alms. This new theology de-sanctified the medieval approach to the poor which had both obscured the social and economic problems of poverty and obstructed the development of social welfare. In other words, the "role of a clear discursive field such as that enunciated by the reformers was to alter the framework in which specific conflicts and grievances were expressed."⁶⁷ Luther had no intention, certainly, of initiating the modern world or of setting in motion a social revolution. The modern world, indeed, was already under way when Luther entered public life. Luther's theological contribution, however, removed the obstacles which still prevented the complete breakthrough of the modern period.⁶⁸

Luther understood the preaching office to be responsible both for the liberation of consciences and for raising and commenting upon issues of worldly government such as poor-relief. The preacher is "to unmask *hidden* [e.g., systemic] injustice, thus saving the souls of duped Christians and opening the eyes of the secular authorities for their mandate to establish *civil* justice."⁶⁹ Furthermore, not only was the preacher obligated to social-ethical instruction and action, but so too was the Christian community (*Gemeinde*). Its activity in worship was the source and resource for service to the neighbor.⁷⁰ By 1519 Luther had amplified this connection between theology, worship, and social ethics in a number of tracts and sermons. In his *Short Sermon on Usury* he contrasted God's command to serve the neighbor with the self-chosen "worship" which concentrated on building churches and endowing masses to the detriment of the needy.⁷¹ In his treatise *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods*, written in German and addressed to the laity because Luther was concerned that the people understand his sacramentally rooted ethics,⁷² he specifically relates

reform of the mass to social ethics:

The *significance* or effect of this sacrament is fellowship of all the saints. . . . Hence it is that Christ and all saints are one spiritual body, just as the inhabitants of a city are one community and body, each citizen being a member of the other and of the entire city. . . . Here we see that whoever injures one citizen injures an entire city and all its citizens; whoever benefits one [citizen] deserves favor and thanks from all the others. . . . This is obvious: if anyone's foot hurts him, yes, even the little toe, the eye at once looks at it, the fingers grasp it, the face puckers, the whole body bends over to it, and all are concerned with this small member; again, once it is cared for all the other members are benefited. This comparison must be noted well if one wishes to understand this sacrament, for Scripture uses it for the sake of the unlearned.⁷³

The right use of the sacrament builds up community. "As love and support are given you, you in turn must render love and support to Christ in His needy ones." From Luther's perspective the late medieval church had broken this connection between worship and welfare to the detriment of each. "So we at present see to our sorrow that many masses are held and yet the Christian fellowship which should be preached, practiced, and kept before us by Christ's example has virtually perished."⁷⁴

Luther's *Address to the Christian Nobility* of 1520 presents an explicit and forceful expression of Luther's new conception of social welfare and poor-relief based upon his doctrine of justification. Here he urged that every city and place should take care of its poor, and that all begging be forbidden. He conceived of securing a minimal existence for those unable to work but also stressed that those who were able had a responsibility to work.⁷⁵

VII. The Liturgy after the Liturgy

The first effort to institutionalize welfare in Wittenberg, known as the *Beutelordnung*, was passed by the town council with Luther's assistance sometime in late 1520 or early 1521.⁷⁶ The next major

step was the council's Wittenberg Order of January 1522.⁷⁷ The focus of this legislation was the reform of worship and welfare. A common chest was established for poor-relief, low interest loans for workers and artisans, and education and training for children of the poor. Funding was provided from the endowments of the discontinued religious institutions and properties of the church. If this funding proved insufficient, article eleven provided for a sort of graduated tax on the clergy and citizens "for the maintenance of the multitude of the poor." Begging, including that of monks and mendicants, was abolished. Artisans and craftsmen unable to repay loans would be excused from repayment for God's sake. Daughters of the poor would be provided with appropriate dowries and given in marriage.

The next major legislative expression of the relationship of the reform of worship and the institutionalization of welfare was the Leisnig Order of 1523 developed with Luther's assistance. Luther expressed his great joy and pleasure over this ordinance, which he hoped would "both honor God and present a good example of Christian faith and love to many people."⁷⁸ In his preface to the Leisnig Order, Luther explicitly tied worship and welfare together. "Now there is no greater service of God [*gottis dienst*, i.e., worship] than Christian love which helps and serves the needy, as Christ Himself will judge and testify at the Last Day, Matthew 25 [:31-46]."⁷⁹ The term *Gottesdienst* links service to God and to the neighbor with worship.

In terms of direct relief to the poor, the order regulated disbursements of loans and gifts to newcomers to help them get settled, to the house-poor to help them get established in a trade or occupation, and to orphans, dependents, the infirm, and the aged for daily support. The order concluded on behalf of all the inhabitants that all its articles and provisions should "at all times be applied, used, and administered faithfully and without fraud by the parish here in Leisnig for no other purpose than the honor of God, the love of our fellow Christians, and hence for the common good. . . ."⁸⁰

In a remarkably short period of time these reforms of worship and welfare became models for similar efforts throughout the empire. It was from this conviction of the Reformation that the widely effective

church orders penned by Bugenhagen and others flowed. The reform of worship included the renewal of community life. Justification and sanctification were inseparable.

VIII. Conclusions

The condemnations of fanatics and fanaticism remain important warnings against the temptation of Christians to try to conform to ways of the world, to become absorbed in spiritual growth and progress to the detriment of ourselves and our neighbors. In sanctification, as opposed to supplying some additive to justification, we rather realize that we may "let God be God" and thus be free to become human.⁸¹ The "spiritual" person, Luther argued in his "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," "is occupied with the most external kind of works, as Christ was when He washed the disciples' feet [John 13:1-14], and Peter when he steered his boat and fished. . . . The 'spirit' is the man who lives and works, inwardly and outwardly, in the service of the Spirit and of the future life. Without such a grasp of these words, you will never understand this letter of St. Paul, nor any other book of Holy Scripture. Therefore beware of all teachers who use these words in a different sense, no matter who they are, even Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and others like them or even above them."⁸²

Endnotes

1. Gerhard Forde, *Theology Is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 160.
2. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 21. Lindbeck continues: "For nearly two hundred years this tradition has provided intellectually brilliant and empirically impressive accounts of the religious life that have been compatible with—indeed, often at the heart of—the romantic, idealistic, and phenomenological-existentialist streams of thought that have dominated the humanistic side of Western culture ever since Kant's Copernican 'turn to the subject.'"
3. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 31.

4. The latter development is the application of the recent business development, "total quality management," which strives to achieve increased business quality and thereby one hundred percent customer satisfaction. The Community Church of Joy (ELCA) in Glendale, Arizona, is the leader in this development. One may see Walt Kallestad and Steve Schey, *Total Quality Ministry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1994).
5. Carl Maxcy, "Catholic Spirituality, Catholic Ethics, and Martin Luther," *Ecumenical Trends*, 10:4 (1981), 55-57, here 57.
6. Oswald Bayer, *Aus Glauben Leben: Über Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, second revised edition (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1990), 65.
7. Forde, "Christian Life," 418.
8. Smalcald Articles, III, Article 8, *The Book of Concord*, ed. and trans. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 312:5; 313:9-10.
9. Gerhard Forde, "Christian Life," in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Christian Dogmatics*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2:390-469, here 408.
10. Apology, IV: "Justification." Tappert, 112:38.
11. Apology XXI; Tappert, 235:43.
12. Martin Brecht, "Theologie oder Theologien der Reformation?" in Hans Guggisberg and Gottfried Krodel, eds., *Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa: Interpretationen und Debatten* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1993), 99-117, here 116. In his lectures on Psalm 51 Luther says: "The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner. Whatever is asked or discussed in theology outside this subject is error and poison." LW, 12:311; WA, 40, II:328, 1ff.
13. One may compare, for example, Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 149.
14. "I am willing to kiss your feet, pope, and to acknowledge you as the supreme pontiff, if you adore my Christ and grant that we have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life through His death

- and resurrection and not through the observance of your traditions." *Lectures on Galatians*, 1525. WA, 40:356; LW, 26:224.
15. WA, TR, 1, 295, cited by Steven Ozment, "Humanism, Scholasticism, and the Intellectual Origins of the Reformation," in F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, eds., *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 133-149, 148; and by Eberhard Jüngel, "Gottes Umstrittene Gerechtigkeit: Eine reformatorische Besinnung zum Paulinischen Begriff 'dikaïosune theou,'" in his *Unterwegs zur Sache* (Munich: Kaiser, 1972), 60-79, 62. One may see also LW, 6:228-232.
 16. *Lectures on Galatians*, 1535. WA, 40, II:51-52; LW, 27:41-42.
 17. One may compare Gerhard Ebeling's excellent chapter, "Faith and Love," in his *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), especially 172-173, and Jüngel, "Gottes umstrittene Gerechtigkeit," 62-66.
 18. One may compare the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 4: "Justification," and the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article 3: "Righteousness," in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 107, 540; Robert Jenson, "On Recognizing the Augsburg Confession," in Joseph A. Burgess, ed., *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 151-166; John F. Johnson, "Justification According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord," in H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *Justification by Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1985), 185-199.
 19. Luther's preface to the "Disputation of Palladius," 1537. WA, 39, I:205, 2 (comparing WA, 25:330, 8-18), cited by André Birmelé, *Le Salut en Jésus Christ dans les Dialogues Oecuméniques* (Paris: Cerf, 1986), 47. On this and the following pages Birmelé discusses the centrality of justification to the Lutheran Confessions. One may also compare Gerhard Müller, *Die Rechtfertigungslehre. Geschichte und Probleme* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1977).
 20. Eric W. Gritsch, "The Origins of the Lutheran Teaching on Justification," in Anderson, Murphy, and Burgess, *Justification by Faith*, 162-171, 163, and note 3 on 351. One may also

compare Gerhard Müller and Vinzenz Pfnür, "Justification—Faith—Works," in George W. Forell and James F. McCue, eds., *Confessing One Faith: A Joint Commentary on the Augsburg Confession by Lutheran and Catholic Theologians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1982), 117-146, 118. This position is so widely held that it is not necessary to provide extensive references at this point. It is the *leitmotif* of the Lutheran contributions to the volume mentioned above as well as of the recent major analysis of ecumenical dialogues by Birmelé, *Salut*. On the famous phrase itself, one may compare Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei. A History of the Doctrine of Justification*, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 193, note 3. McGrath mentions not only its rootage in Luther (e.g., WA, 40, III:352, 3) but also its seventeenth-century Reformed use.

21. Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 44. One may also compare Gerhard Forde, "Radical Lutheranism," *Lutheran Quarterly*, 1:1 (1987), 5-18.
22. Bayer, *Aus Glauben Leben*, 65.
23. Just as God likes those who act His way, so "men [sic!] like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers." Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 223. For a satire on the church-growth movement, one may see Tom Raabe, *The Ultimate Church: An Irreverent Look at Church Growth, Megachurches, and Ecclesiastical "Show-Biz"* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991).
24. "The doctrine of justification by faith alone implies that human reality is not a substance given prior to all community. Rather, humanity happens in the event of communication, in the speaking and hearing of the word. . . . What I am is not defined in advance by some set of timelessly possessed attributes; it is being defined in the history of address and response in and by which you and I live together." Gritsch and Jenson, *Lutheranism*, 68. The incompatibility of justification by faith alone and any process of becoming righteous is discussed by Gerhard Forde in his essay, "Forensic Justification and Law in Lutheran Theology," in Anderson, Murphy, and Burgess, *Justification by Faith*,

278-303.

25. For a concise discussion of this point one may compare Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther*, 154-158.
26. *Disputation Concerning Justification*, 1536. LW, 34:167; WA, 39, I:98, 13-14.
27. *Lectures on Romans*, 1516. LW, 25:136; WA, 56:158, 10.
28. LW, 25:19; WA, 56:22, 24.
29. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, 10: "Real sinners are people who are not merely sinners in fact (everyone, after all, is a sinner in that sense), but who confess that they are sinners. Luther found this notion liberating. Real sinners conform their judgments of themselves to the judgment of God over them and by doing so justify God. That is, they acknowledge that God is in the right when He condemns them as sinners and offers them a pardon which they cannot merit. The problem with human righteousness is not merely that it is flawed or insufficient (though it is both). The problem with human righteousness is that it is irrelevant. God does not ask for human virtue as a precondition for justification, not even in the sense of a perfect act of contrition. He asks for human sin."
30. *Lectures on Galatians*, 1535. LW, 27:26-27; WA, 40, II:32-33.
31. LW, 26:386-387; WA, 40, I:589. In the essay "Justification, Faith, Works" by Müller and Pfnür cited earlier, it is argued that this question of certainty of salvation was one of the major issues in the late Middle Ages but that it is "a presupposition which no longer exists today" (119). In actuality, however, it is precisely the question of certainty of salvation that is behind so much of contemporary media-evangelism and charismatic movements as the author has discussed at length in *The Third Reformation? Charismatic Movements and the Lutheran Tradition* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983) and "Justice and Injustice in Luther's Judgment of 'Holiness Movements,'" in Peter Manns and Harding Meyer with C. Lindberg and Harry McSorley, eds., *Luther's Ecumenical Significance* (New York and Philadelphia: Paulist Press and Fortress Press, 1984), 161-181.
32. David Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation* (Durham: Duke

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- University Press, 1980), 88. Forde, "Forensic Justification," 281: "We can be candidates for such righteousness only if we are complete sinners."
33. One may compare Kenneth Hagen, *A Theology of Testament in the Young Luther: The Lectures on Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 82.
 34. *A Treatise on the New Testament*, 1520. LW, 35:88; WA, 6: 361, 3-7. One may compare also *Lectures on Galatians*, 1519. LW, 27:268.
 35. Forde, *Theology Is for Proclamation*, 160. Forde continues: "Sacraments save because they save the Word from disappearing into the inner life. They save because they prevent us from understanding grace as some kind of hidden agenda, a behind-the-scenes spiritualism that we are supposed somehow to master or learn the secret of. Sacraments save, that is, because they protect us from the wiles of the devil, the master of turning even the Word of promise into temptation—'Has God said . . .?'"
 36. Albrecht Peters, *Kommentar zu Luthers Katechismen*, volume 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1991), 197. Peters lists the pertinent writings and sermons.
 37. *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, 1525. LW, 40:146.
 38. *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, 1525. LW, 40:147. This theme is repeated in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession (Tappert, 212-213:13), the Smalcald Articles, III, 8 (Tappert 312:3), the Formula of Concord, Epitome, II (Tappert, 470: 3; 471:13), and the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, II (Tappert, 520:4; 536: 80).
 39. *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, 1525. LW, 40:213. See Peters, *Kommentar*, 2:197-198, and the Large Catechism, Tappert, 416:44; 418:55.
 40. The Large Catechism: The Third Article. Tappert, 415:36-37; 415:39. See Peters, *Kommentar* 2:211-212.
 41. *Commentary on Psalm 51*, 1538. LW, 12:328; WA, 40, II:352, 33-34.
 42. *Lectures on Romans*, 1516. LW, 25:291; WA, 56:304, 25ff. The human inability to let God be God is noted in Thesis 17 of the

- Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* of 1517: "Man is by nature unable to want God to be God. Indeed, he himself wants to be God, and does not want God to be God." LW, 31:10; WA, 1: 225.
43. *Commentary on Psalm 51*. LW, 12:342-343; WA, 40, II:373, 25-35.
44. *Lectures on Romans*. LW, 25, 260; WA, 56, 272, 16-20. One may also compare WA, 57, 165, 12-13; 2, 497, 13.
45. *Lectures on Galatians*, 1535. LW, 26, 274-275; WA, 40, I, 429-430; LW, 26:309; WA, 40, I, 479-481.
46. There has been much more debate on using the law as a guide to Christian living, on which one may see Forde, "Forensic Justification," 302, and "Christian Life," 449-452.
47. *Lectures on Galatians*, 1535. LW, 26:310; WA, 40, I:481-482. The Lutheran Confessions frequently present the law in this sense, as that which always accuses. One may compare the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 4:38; the Smalcald Articles, III, 2:1-5; and the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, 5:12, in Tappert, 112, 303, 560.
48. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 7 (London, 1872), 204.
49. One may see Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 472, 508, 510-511.
50. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 2:192-193.
51. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Peter Crofts Hodgson, "The Church, Classism, and Ecclesial Community," in Rebecca S. Chopp and Mark Lewis Taylor, eds., *Reconstructing Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 303-325, here 314. One may also see Max Stackhouse, *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights: A Study in Three Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 54-55, 173.
52. Tappert, 445-446.
53. *Psalm 51*. LW, 12:329.
54. *Psalm 51*. LW, 12:381.

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55. Forde, "Christian Life," 408.
 56. Karl Holl, *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation* (New York: Living Age Books, 1959), 183-184.
 57. WA, *Briefwechsel*, 2:372, 83ff.
 58. LW, 40:67.
 59. WA, 10, I, 2:431, 6ff., cited by Forde, "Christian Life," 438.
 60. Forde, "Christian Life," 438.
 61. Peters, *Kommentar*, 227. One may also see Forde, "Christian Life," 435: "We cannot understand what Luther means by growth and progress in sanctification unless all ordinary human perceptions of progress are reversed, are stood on their heads. The progress Luther has in mind is not our movement toward the goal but the goal's movement in on us. Imputed righteousness is *eschatological* in character; a battle is joined in which the *totus iustus* moves against the *totus peccator*. The 'progress' is the coming of the kingdom of God among us. That is why complete sanctification is always the same as justification and cannot be something more added to it or separated from it. Complete sanctification is not the goal but the source of all good works."
 62. Bayer, *Aus Glauben Leben*, 65-69.
 63. For much of what follows see the author's *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), and Emily Albu Hanawalt and Carter Lindberg, eds., *Through the Eye of a Needle: Judeo-Christian Roots of Social Welfare* (Kirksville, Missouri: The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1994).
 64. Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse. Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 134.
 65. One may compare Michel Mollat, *Les Pauvres au Moyen Age* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 61. This theme is articulated, for example, by the fourth-century North African bishop, Optatus, the seventh-century French bishop, Eligius (PL 87:533), and the thirteenth-century pope, Innocent III, who clearly stated that almsgiving removes the stain of sin, justifies, and saves (PL, 217:747-750).

66. This idea had already been stated centuries earlier by the theologian of the medieval church, Augustine. "If our possessions are to be carried away, let us transfer them to a place where we shall not lose them. The poor to whom we give alms! With regard to us, what else are they but porters through whom we transfer our goods from earth to heaven? Give away your treasure. Give it to a porter. He will bear to heaven what you give him on earth." *The Fathers of the Christian Church* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1963), volume 11, 268.
67. Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse*, 138.
68. Karlheinz Blaschke, "Reformation und Modernisierung," in Hans Guggisberg and Gottfried Krodel, eds., *Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa*, 511-520, here 520.
69. Heiko A. Oberman, "Teufelsdreck: Eschatology and Scatology in the 'Old' Luther," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19:3 (1988), 435-450, here 444.
70. Junghans, "Sozialethisches Denken und Handeln bei Martin Luther," *Evangelische Monatschrift Standpunkt*, 70:3 (1989), 70. One may also compare Igor Kiss, "Luthers Bemühungen um eine sozial gerechtere Welt," *Zeichen der Zeit* (1985), 59-65.
71. WA, 6:3-8; one may compare 7:15-20. This sermon was greatly expanded into *The Long Sermon on Usury* in 1520 (WA, 6:36-60), which in turn was appended to the treatise of 1524 on trade, which is known as *Trade and Usury* (WA, 15:279-313, 321-322; LW, 45:233-310).
72. The subtitle is "Für die Leyen," WA, 2:739. The tract is found in WA, 2: 738-758; LW, 35:47-73. (Although the term "confraternity" is frequently used for these associations, Luther uses the German equivalent, "Bruderschaft.") One may see Gerhard Müller, "Zu Luthers Sozialethik," in Helmut Hesse and Gerhard Müller, eds., *Über Martin Luthers "Von Kauffshandlung und Wucher"* (Frankfurt am Main and Düsseldorf: Verlag Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1987), 59-79, 62-63, and Hans-Jürgen Prien, *Luthers Wirtschaftsethik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1992). Luther's concern to provide theological and ethical guidance for the laity is evident throughout his catechisms. One may compare his exposition of the seventh commandment in the Large Catechism.

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73. LW, 35:50-52. For Luther the sacrament applies not only to one's personal affliction but also to the affliction of all the needy everywhere. One may compare Ursula Stock, *Die Bedeutung der Sakramente in Luthers Sermonen von 1519* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 248-249.
 74. LW, 35:53-56. The medieval Franciscan desire for poverty was related to its usefulness for salvation and thus had little to do with the involuntary poverty of the needy. One may see Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence*, 148-149.
 75. LW, 44:189-191.
 76. For the text of this "Common Purse" and relevant literature, one may see Ernst Koch, "Zusatz zur Wittenberg Beutelordnung. 1520 oder 1521," WA, 59:62-65.
 77. Hans Lietzmann, ed., *Die Wittenberger und Leisniger Kastenordnung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1935); an English translation is found in the author's *Beyond Charity*, 200-202.
 78. WA, *Briefwechsel*, 3:23. By early summer Luther responded in print to the request for biblical warrants for Leisnig's plans in the following writings: *Ordinance of a Common Chest: Preface: Suggestions on How to Deal with Ecclesiastical Property, That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture*, and *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*. LW, 45:161-176; LW, 39:303-314; LW, 53:7-14.
 79. LW, 45:172. One may see Junghans, "Sozialethisches Denken," 70, and WA, 12:13, 26-27.
 80. LW, 45:194.
 81. LW, 12:343.
 82. LW, 35:372.

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The Opinion of the Department of Systematic Theology on "Meta-Church"

The source-book for the term and concept of "meta-church" is Carl F. George's *Prepare Your Church for the Future*, which was published by Fleming H. Revell in 1991.¹ The analysis here of "meta-church" is based entirely on this original text and not on any later derivatives.

A. The Self-Understanding of "Meta-Church"

"Meta-Church" must be understood as part and parcel of the McGavran-Wagner "Church Growth Movement." C. Peter Wagner's foreword states that George's book "may well be the most significant step forward in church growth theory and practice since Donald McGavran wrote the basic textbook, *Understanding Church Growth*, in 1970" (George, 9). What is meant by the term meta-church? George explains: "This new label allows for greater numbers, but its deepest focus is on change: pastors changing their minds about how ministry is to be done, and churches changing their organizational form in order to be free from size constraints" (George, 51).

The most important change advocated by the theology of meta-church is that it "highlights the lay-led small group as the essential growth center. It is so important that everything else is to be considered secondary to its promotion and preservation" (George, 41). This change in turn rests on certain very definite concepts of what ministry is and ought to be. Ministry is understood fundamentally as meeting the needs of people. The assumption is criticized "that a pastor or skilled lay leader can provide adequate care for a group of 50-100. In reality, he or she [!] cannot" (George, 67). "Another harmful side effect" (of the traditional approach) "involves gift suppression." No matter how hard a person may try to involve others, "this basic concept remains: 'My full pitcher is pouring into your empty pitcher.' In terms of spiritual gifts, one person 'gives,' and the primary assignment of the other people, gifted though they may be, is to take" (George, 67-68).

The two poles of the organization of meta-church are "cell groups" of about ten participants and the "praise celebration of worship. . . . In fact, the bigger, the better! It is like a professional football game" (George, 60). In between there could be "sub-congregations" or "congregations" ("bigger than a cell but smaller than a celebration" [George, 61]). Unlike the conventional view,

which makes "cells" elective and "congregations" foundational, the theory of meta-church regards cell groups as foundational and "sub-congregations" as elective. While cells are foundational, "certain other adventures in faith do not occur easily among ten people. When believers come together in a huge crowd, for example, an extra festival-like dimension of excitement attaches itself to the singing of praise or the preaching of Scripture. Also a sense of significance emerges in the consciousness of the group, an apprehension that God is accomplishing something big enough to be worthy of their involvement and investment" (George, 61). Again, "church leaders wrongly assume that the same festival effect is possible in a congregation of 50-100 as in a crowd of hundreds or thousands" (George, 64). The "festival effect" of large crowds goes with "celebration."

The foundational units or cells are lay-led: "*Laypeople Do the Pastoring*. The leader of each nurturing group functions as a lay pastor to that ten-or-so-person flock . . . *Pastoring Supersedes Teaching* . . . The teaching gift cannot be valued above the pastoring function" (George, 97-99). The main leader's function is "vision casting," which "places the locus of ministry where it belongs: in the hands of lay pastors. It commissions and stimulates these leaders" (George, 139). Chapter 11, entitled "See Yourself as Manager and Communicator," likewise states (George, 183-185):

The Meta-Church rests on a bottom-up vision of ministry . . . The cell is truly the basic building block of the spiritual community . . . Similarly, in a Meta-Church, the CEO's greatest resource is the broadcast of vision at worship services, at staff meetings, and at VHS [Vision, Huddle, Skill] gatherings. The CEO will be concerned that the church's goal imaging is strategic, enabling, empowering, implementable, and sensible.

Traditional titles like bishops, pastors, elders, and deacons are deliberately avoided, in part because of this question: "don't certain texts (1 Timothy 2, 3; Titus 1-2; 1 Corinthians 12-14; and so on) imply age- and gender-based qualifications?" (George, 129). Instead, the theory of meta-church proposes an algebra of D, C, L, X, and the like, mainly indicating the numbers of people involved (500,

100, 50, and 10 respectively).

There is, finally, a deliberate anti-doctrinal bias in the theology of meta-church (George, 154-155):

Churches [of the future] will be known primarily as caring places rather than as teaching associations. These churches of the future realize that God measures His people more by their obedience than by their knowledge of Bible facts. Therefore, they've shifted their priorities from teaching to caring, from understanding to application.

B. Theological Analysis

Crucial, central, and constitutive for the entire life and existence of the church are the purely preached gospel and the rightly administered sacraments (Articles VII-VIII of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology to the Augsburg Confession). Dr. Martin Luther declares: "The whole life and substance of the church is in the word of God" ("tota vita et substantia ecclesiae est in verbo Dei").² For this life the right distinction between law and gospel is indispensable (Article V of the Formula of Concord). Preaching and sacraments, moreover, are not abstract functions, but concrete gospel-treasures for which the Lord has given His church a special stewardship (1 Corinthians 4:1), that is, a divinely instituted public ministry or office of the gospel (Articles V, XIV, and XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession), distinct from the self-offering spiritual priesthood which all Christians possess by virtue of baptism and faith (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2-3).

It is clear that the implications of this understanding of the church and her ministry clash profoundly with the prescriptions of "meta-church" and their underlying assumptions. If the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments are all-decisive and constitutive, then individual care-giving in small groups is not. In the New Testament the care for bodily needs is important, to be sure, but auxiliary and derivative (as in Acts 6), not primary or foundational. To exalt "care" at the expense of doctrine is to confuse law and gospel fundamentally.

The theology of meta-church, furthermore, recognizes no divinely

established ministry of the gospel, nor any means of grace, for that matter: "One of the strengths of Meta-Church theory is its biblical conviction that the Holy Spirit officially commissions *every* believer into a ministry of caring for one another" (George, 129). "In response [to 'the story of their religious experience'], the community extends tokens of acceptance (applause, friendship, membership, baptism, and so on), resulting in a sense of belonging for the newcomers" (George, 72).

For the same reasons, likewise, the whole understanding of the church at worship differs sharply in the theology of meta-church and in the theology of the Lutheran church. For Lutherans, God's self-giving in gospel and sacraments is primary and of the very essence of divine worship (Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology to the Augsburg Confession). In the theory of meta-church "celebration" depends basically on the cumulative "festival effect" of large numbers—a notion quite void of theological content. This primacy of sociology over theology has disastrous implications for the secularization of public worship, quite contrary to the apostolic exhortation to *transformation* away from rather than *conformity* to this world (Romans 12:2). The central place which in the Lutheran confession belongs to the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments is in the theory of meta-church assigned to so-called "spiritual gifts," as popularized by C. Peter Wagner. The thoroughly fallacious and untenable nature of this scheme is made very clear in the exegetical and theological analyses of the report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations entitled *Spiritual Gifts*.³

C. Conclusions

The theory of meta-church—taking its cue from "the Body Life movement of the 1970s" (George, 44)—sees the essence of the church and of its growth in the "care-giving" small groups or cells described above: "Only on the cell level can people's deeply felt care needs be met" (George, 60). In terms of the confession of Holy Scripture in the Book of Concord, the concept of meta-church is not a theologically neutral methodology, but a defective doctrine of the church and her ministry tinged with synergism and Pentecostalism—with negative consequences for the understanding of mission,

evangelism, and worship. The notion of a "CEO" intrudes worldly power into the church and puts in the place of the gospel-office gently tending the flock of the Good Shepherd, with His word and sacraments, something law-driven and law-driving.

It is true, of course, that beyond the divinely given arrangements for the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the holy sacraments (Articles V and VII of the Augustana), the church may in Christian liberty make use of all sorts of organizational forms, including small groups. The theology of meta-church, however, is not simply about small groups. It is, rather, a theology which confounds law and gospel and sees small groups as essential and decisive. The theory of meta-church, moreover, specifically warns people against combining its structure of small groups with traditional positions: "Otherwise, as soon as an organizational system correlates titles (pastor, elder, and deacon) with cell-group leadership, a lot of God-given talent will go unused" (George, 132). From such a vastly different system of belief one cannot simply "adapt" organizational details for Lutheran use without inviting theological havoc.

Good, well-instructed lay leaders are, of course, extremely important for the life of a Christian congregation. Practical arrangements here should arise, however, from sound theology, as found, for instance, in *The Form of a Christian Congregation* by Dr. C. F. W. Walther. This work, incidentally, reflects a sober realism about the unhappy experience of the church with the "small groups" or *ecclesiolae* of pietism.⁴

Endnotes

1. Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell [A Division of Baker Book House], 1991).
2. "Ad Librum Eximii Magistri Nostri Magistri Ambrosii Catharini Defensoris Silvestri Prieratis Acerrimi, Responsio Martini Lutheri. 1521," in *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, volume 7 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1897), 721:12.

3. *Spiritual Gifts: A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1995).
4. C. F. W. Walther, *The Form of a Christian Congregation*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 91.

[Post-Scriptum: In the course of its most recent convention the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod requested the assistance of the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in the following terms: "to evaluate the metachurch concept and to provide guidance to the synod and its districts regarding its use" (Resolution 2-03). In recent decades the faculty here has had the standard procedure of referring theological questions of a major kind to one of its departments to provide a specific response with minimal delay. On 9 January 1995, therefore, the faculty asked its department of systematic theology to provide the assistance desired in this case as speedily yet precisely as possible. The department cited thereupon submitted the matters concerned to a careful study during the course of the following four months before adopting an opinion agreeable to all of its members in a meeting of 9 May 1995. The departmental action was then reported in remarks from the chair in a meeting of the faculty as a whole on 22 May 1995 and again in a memorandum dispatched to all members of the faculty by its secretary (whose initials are attached to this note); and no additional action by the faculty as a whole was proposed by the department of systematic theology or by any others in the meeting mentioned or subsequently. The secretary of the faculty, in consequence, has now informed the Northern Illinois District through its secretary of the various steps which have been taken to produce the evaluation requested as expeditiously as possible and has communicated, as well, the hope of the faculty to have rendered the assistance needed in this particular case and the continual readiness of the faculty to be of any such service to the church in the future. The secretary of the department of systematics, simultaneously, has conveyed to the district in the same way the evaluation which is, then, the unanimous opinion specifically of the department of systematic theology of the Concordia Theological Seminary. D.McC.L.J.]

Homiletical Studies

ISAIAH 66:18

Many of the readers of this journal are currently preparing sermons on the sequence of pericopes which *Lutheran Worship* denominates as Series C, in which verses 18-23 of Isaiah 66 comprise the reading from the Old Testament which is appointed to the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The undersigned in no way wishes to encourage the use in the main service of the week of the three-year series provided in *Lutheran Worship* or any other modern sequence of gospels and epistles in such a context. He would, on the contrary, continue to urge, on various grounds, fidelity to the pericopal tradition inherited from the ancient church by the church of the reformation and modified only slightly by the Blessed Reformer of the Church (as preserved in *The Lutheran Hymnal*), if one is speaking specifically of the gospels and epistles to be read in the main (eucharistic) service of the week. No comparable series of readings, on the other hand, from the Old Testament was either handed down from the ancient church or bestowed on us by the Blessed Reformer; nor, indeed, is there such a program of readings from the New Testament to be used in all the possible additional offices of any given week. In such cases, therefore, even such a traditionalist as the undersigned is able, with consistency, to make use of any pericope drawn from the region of Holy Scripture desired.

In terms of the traditional ecclesiastical year, to be sure, Isaiah 66:18-23 would seem to resonate most closely to the theme of the Twelfth Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity (corresponding to the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost), which (in this writer's view) is faithful witness to Jesus Christ. The evangelistic impetus, nevertheless, of the verses at hand relates with equal necessity, logically speaking (as an essential corollary to the general principle), to the theme (in this writer's view) of the Thirteenth Sunday of the Triune Season, namely, true love of others. The epistolary passage which *Lutheran Worship* appoints in Series C to the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Hebrews 12:18-24) is, in fact, a useful one in understanding the ordinary significance of "Jerusalem" and its synonyms in such messianic prophecies as Isaiah 66:18-23. If, on the other hand, the prophecy is to be interpreted rightly, more caution must be exercised in relating it to the passage from the gospels listed in the same place (Luke 13:22-30), since verses 25-28 of Luke, unlike the particular verses of Isaiah studied here, speak specifically of eschatological condemnation, which, however, is certainly the final result of rejecting the salvation now being extended to everyone on earth through the gospel of Jesus Christ (in line with verses 22-24 and 29-30 of Luke 13).

Canto 7 of Isaiah (which embraces the chapters which we now

enumerate as 58 through 66), argues that the Lord is the only reasonable object of faith because, in addition to all the points previously presented, He gives a blessed future to His people in time and eternity. This future of bliss was to come, predicted Isaiah, in the messianic age (1.) through the repentance of Israel (chapters 58-60), (2.) through the word of the Messiah Himself (chapters 61:1-63:6), and (3.), again (in chiasmic fashion), through the repentance of Israel (chapters 63:7-66:24). The final three chapters of Isaiah speak of this Jewish repentance in terms (a.) of its necessity by reason of Israel's sinfulness (chapters 63:7-64:12), (b.) of its only alternative as being condemnation (chapter 65), and (c.), finally, of its circumstances (chapter 66 itself). The final chapter of Isaiah, then, predicts at least seven centuries beforehand the starkly contrasting circumstances which would attend the giving of a blessed future to the people of God through the repentance of ancient Israel. The three main sections of the chapter successively describe these circumstances as (1.) the rejection of Israel as a nation in a politico-racial sense (verses 1-4), (2.) the consolation of Israel, at the same time, in the sense of a repenting and believing minority (verses 5-11), and (3.) the evangelization of all peoples throughout the world (verses 12-24). The second section is divided from the first by the imperative clause *shim' u dbhar-yhwh* (verse 5: "Hear the word of the LORD"), while the third section begins, like the first, with *ko 'amar yhwh* (verses 1 and 12: "thus has the LORD said").

In this last and longest section Isaiah carries through the triadic schema at work here in this whole unit of his book to distinguish three more specific subsections which follow one on the other in terms of chronological reference. The first of these subsections (verses 12-17) connects the third section of Isaiah 66 logically with the previous two by locating the initiation of the evangelization of the world specifically in the spiritual minority of Israel which God would firstly create and nourish through the gospel (verses 12-14c) and then separate from the unrepenting majority of Israel by destroying the nation as such (verses 14d-17). These are predictions which have now been completely fulfilled in the course of the first century A.D. by such events as the foundation of the church of the New Testament in the midst of the Jews (including, above all, the sainted apostles of our Lord and His Blessed Virgin-Mother) and the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Rome. The final subdivision of the section, on the other hand, consists in but one verse (24), following the final *'amar yhwh* ("the LORD has said") which ends verse 23. This last subsection possesses, however, an importance quite disproportionate to its length by virtue of its closure of both chapter and book. The conclusion

to Isaiah brings us, clearly, all the way up to the end of the age of evangelism, which is to say to the general resurrection of both believers and unbelievers and the final separation of the believers from the unrepenting "violators" (*happosh'im*) who are doomed to eternal damnation.

The verses, then, which come in between 17 and 24 relate to the centuries and possibly (if the Lord tarry much longer) the millennia which intervene between the foundation of the church of the New Testament and the concluding day of history, which is to say the ongoing era of the New Testament in which we even now are living. Verses 18-23, in other words, speak of the evangelization of all the earth which began with the first coming of Messiah, is still in progress now, and will continue until His second coming. These verses, indeed, are speaking, in consequence, of an evangelization in which we too are to be engaged. In preaching on these verses, then, one could, by way of law, remind the congregation and oneself of the sacred duty and privilege of all believers to share (in various ways) the gospel of Christ Jesus with those who are not yet His. One would then proclaim again that very same gospel which has already gathered all who are now His to the Lord from out of all the peoples of this world. The preacher would wish, however, in such a sermon to make special use of the particular concepts and terms which are employed by Isaiah in the verses at hand. The general thesis of the six penultimate verses of Isaiah is enunciated concisely in verse 18, namely, the gathering of people to the Lord from all nations and languages in the days of the Messiah to come. We may assume, indeed, that it is specifically God the Son who is speaking in all six of the verses before us. He is the Lord who is cited four times (by means of the tetragrammaton which is reserved to the One True God), and to Him are all the pronouns and suffixes of the first person in these verses to be referred. For the general axiom of the synodical fathers remains worthy of all acceptance—that, whenever God speaks in Holy Scripture, the speaker is to be identified more specifically as God the Son unless the context or analogy of faith indicates that the passage is an instance of God the Father or (more rarely) the Holy Spirit bearing witness to the Son. Such an assumption is, among various considerations, already the necessary consequence of the continuing role of the Second Person of the Godhead as the one who ordinarily serves as the spokesman of the Holy Three when the Creator would address His creatures (as the undersigned has argued elsewhere).

Verse 18 is certainly the most difficult of the six verses syntactically by virtue of the first four words which involve an instance of *casus pendens*,

an uncommon usage of the common root *bw'*, and two intervening unattached nouns. Many and varied, in consequence, have been the interpretations of the verse from ancient times on, nor have modern scholars scrupled to simplify matters by altering the text. A. E. Cowley, for example, calls Isaiah 66:18, whatever else it may be, "certainly corrupt" (GKC, 506, section 167:3[c]). The editors, likewise, of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* propose the deletion of the first two nouns *ma'asēhem ūmachshbħōthēhem* ("their works and their thoughts") and the emendation of *bā'āh* to *bā'* (BHS, 779). There are, however, no variations in the manuscripts of the original text to allow such simplifications of Isaiah 66:18. In actuality, while admittedly unusual, the syntax and diction of the verse are not only explicable, but also clearly of exegetical significance, precisely by reason of being out of the ordinary (although, unfortunately, even those commentators who see the rarities here as understandable still say nothing of Isaiah's special rationale in using them).

The first problem in verse 18 pertains to the relationship between the first and fourth words of the original text, *w'ānōkhī* ("I" preceded by a conjunction) and *bā'āh* ("coming"). The initial pronoun, technically speaking, is an example of *casus pendens* or nominative absolute, which Bruce Waltke and Michael O'Connor define as "a grammatical element isolated outside a clause, usually at the start of the clause" (WO, 692a). The emphatic position of the pronoun (the singular of the first person) at the beginning of the sentence stresses the definitive role of the Messiah Himself (since He is the one speaking) as the empowering force which is ultimately behind the process of evangelization described in verses 18 and following. The conjunction attached to a pronoun at the beginning of a clause is most often adversative, and it is certainly so in this case. The initial *w'ānōkhī*, then, requires a translation of this kind: "But as for Me." The idea is that the Messiah will in no way be deterred from His goal of a worldwide people by the rebellion of the majority of Israel and His necessary destruction, in consequence, of Israel *qua* nation (verses 14d-17). The destruction, indeed, of Israel which was required by the terms of the Mosaic Covenant would, in fact, so far from hindering, actually serve the plan of God to spread the benefits of His new testament to the men of all nations (in the fashion described in Romans 9-11 and elsewhere). The Authorized Version, therefore, and its various revisions (RSV, NASB, NKJV) fall short of the requirements of both common usage and context when they translate the conjunction as "for," and the New International Version strays further afield when it begins verse 18

with "and."

The connection, moreover, which many versions, both ancient and modern, forge between *w'ānōkhī* and *bā'āh* is quite impossible grammatically. The Revised Standard Version translates "I am coming" and the NIV "I am about to come." The RSV at least provides some idea of the original text in a footnote, whereas the NIV contents itself with this allegation: "The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain." Already in ancient times, indeed, the Septuagint, Syriac Version, and Vulgate had translated in something of this fashion, and the paraphrase in the Targum had run along the same lines (more defensibly by virtue of its paraphrastic purpose). In actuality, however, the form *bā'āh* is feminine in gender and is also clearly separated from *w'ānōkhī* by the phrase *ma'asēhem ūmachshbhbōthēhem* ("their works and their thoughts") to ensure that *bā'āh* should not be directly predicated of *w'ānōkhī*. There is, in fact, no feminine subject available to *bā'āh*, so that the feminine verb is clearly used here (as it frequently is) as tantamount to the neuter which Hebrew lacks and, more specifically, in an impersonal sense. The form *stricte dictu* (speaking only of the consonants and vowels in the massoretic text) could be construed as a perfect of the third person. In such a case, clearly, *bā'āh* would represent the variety of emphatic future which is called the "prophetic perfect" (*perfectum propheticum*). The basic idea of the prophetic perfect is to emphasize the definite future occurrence of something which God has already determined to do; the thing is as good as done. The translation, therefore, would be in this instance "it shall come about" (as opposed to the simple indicative "will"). Such was presumably the thinking behind the wording of the Authorized Version at this juncture, "it shall come," which the New King James Version modifies to "it shall be."

The massorettes, however, have placed the tone on the ultima rather than the penultimate syllable of *bā'āh*, making the form *milra'* rather than *mil'ēl*. They thereby identify the aspect as participial rather than perfective, and there is no good reason to call the traditional accentuation into question. Although, now, the participle may be used to indicate imminence (to say that something is about to happen), the basic idea of the participle is continuation of action, and here certainly there is no idea of a prophecy to be fulfilled in the immediate future. The point of using the participle is rather to stress the continuous and ineluctable approach, however long the intervening time might prove to be, of the gathering of which verse 18 speaks (the incorporation of people of all nationalities into the church of the New Testament which would, in fact, commence no

sooner than seven hundred years following the inclusion of this prophecy in the Book of Isaiah). In the end, therefore, the participle in verse 18 implies virtually as much as would a prophetic perfect the inevitable realization of the purposes of God, especially when it is amplified by the prophetic perfects which follow it in verses 19 and 20. A close paraphrase would be "the time is coming" (as the word is, in fact, rendered by the New American Standard Bible), since the impersonal use of *bā'āh* in all probability arises from the very common use of various forms of *bw'* with such temporal nouns as *yōm* ("day") and *'ēth* ("time") to prophesy future developments (BDB, 97b-99b; KBR, I, 112b-114b; TWOT, I, 93b-95b; TDOT, II, 38-49). Isaiah 39:6, for instance, employs the phrase "days are coming" which subsequently increases in frequency; and in Jeremiah 51:33 *bā'āh*, accented as the feminine perfect of *bw'*, is predicated of *'ēth*: "yet a little while and the time of her harvest shall come." The impersonal use of *bw'* (without such nouns) is rare, to be sure, but can be found elsewhere in the TaNaK. In Isaiah 27:6, for example, the plural participle *habbā'īm* occurs adverbially to mean "in the times to come" (although the AV and its revisions unfortunately obscure the meaning of the word). Ezekiel, indeed, uses *bā'āh* itself in 39:8, "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," is the oracle of my Lord, the LORD, "that is the day of which I have spoken." The parallelism in the latter verse between *bā'āh* (again accented as a participle) and the feminine perfect of *hyh* provides, significantly, the same complementary relationship between the continuity of the participle and the definiteness of the prophetic perfect which we have already seen operative in verses 18-20 of Isaiah 66.

The question remains, however, as to why the Messiah should make His promise through Isaiah in this unusual way, saying "as for Me, the time is coming to gather" rather than simply stating "as for Me, I am coming to gather." Both He Himself, certainly, and the prophets in speaking of Him predicate forms of *bw'* of Him directly in so many passages that "the Coming One" became in time an alternative title of the Messiah (Psalm 118:26; Matthew 11:3; Luke 7:19-20). The impersonal use of *bw'* in this case, however, is explained by the following three verses. The conjunction, indeed, beginning verse 19 is clearly intended to begin a more specific explanation of that which is stated in quite general terms in verse 18 (so that the strong *waw* should be translated "and so" rather than being reduced to a mere "and," as in the AV, RSV, and NASB, or being omitted altogether, as in the NIV and NKJV). Verses 19 and 20 enunciate explicitly (as verse 21 also implies) that the Messiah would evangelize the

whole earth not directly, in His own visible and audible person, but rather indirectly, through the testimony of mortal messengers. The process of evangelism which, of course, the Messiah initiates and empowers is, nevertheless, predicated of others in the third person plural. The messengers employed are subsequently identified as the Messiah's church in general (verses 19-20) and, in particular, His public ministers (verse 21); but the point is here simply that the Messiah uses the impersonal form *bā'āh* to incorporate them as His chosen instruments in His evangelization of the world.

The second big problem in verse 18, in the opinion of the commentators, lies in the phrase which intervenes between *w'ānōkhī* and *bā'āh*, namely, *ma'asēhem ūmachshbhōthēhem*. The semantic significance of the two nouns is clear to everyone: "their works and their thoughts." It is the syntactic relation of the phrase to the verse in general which is regarded as so problematic. Some identify the verse, by virtue of the phrase in question, as being an example of anacoluthon, "the change from a construction which has been already begun to one of a different kind" which Cowley connects especially "with long parentheses, either because the speaker has either lost sight of the beginning of his sentence, or for the sake of clearness purposely makes a new beginning" (GKC, 505; section 167:2[b]). In this verse, of course, it is scarcely conceivable that the Messiah should have lost sight of the beginning of His sentence, nor would the parenthesis formed by two words be very long in any case. Franz Delitzsch, who calls the first three words of verse 18 "a harsh ellipsis," identifies the supposed ellipsis as an example of aposiopesis, which Cowley defines as "the concealment or suppression of entire sentences or clauses, which are of themselves necessary to complete the sense, and therefore must be supplied from the context" (GKC, 505; section 167:1[a]). Delitzsch ends up by this route expounding the clause thus: "and I, their works and their thoughts (I shall know how to punish)" (II, 508). Already in ancient times the Targum and the Syriac Version, as well as some forms of the Septuagint (as witnessed by Codex Sinaiticus and others), had charted a similar path which has subsequently been followed by the Authorized Version and all its revisions (RSV, NASB, and NKJV) with the insertion of "know": "I know their works and their thoughts." Although E. J. Young evinces the same thinking with his paraphrase, "inasmuch as I know their works and their thoughts" (III, 531), there is, in fact, no need of any additional verb. Even less acceptable is H. C. Leupold's way of treating the phrase, in effect, as a second *casus pendens*, so as to connect the two nouns with *bā'āh* despite the lack of

agreement in both gender and number: "their deeds and their thoughts have come to my attention" (II, 376). A second nominative absolute, moreover, would be needlessly confusing here; nor is there any parallel to such a use of *bā'āh* elsewhere (as there is to the way in which it has been explained above). August Pieper comes close the mark when he identifies the phrase as "an adverbial accusative describing a condition or circumstance," but he still misses the target when he specifies the precise nature of the adverbial relation as one of means (697). He understands the Lord as saying here that the gentiles would see His glory by His "rebuke" of the thoughts and works of the apostate majority of Israel, "through His terrible judgment upon the rebellious members of His own chosen people" (*ibid.*). The same idea is reflected in the rendition of the NIV: "because of their actions and their imaginations."

As appears also from the "imaginations" of the NIV, the common assumption of modern exegesis is the necessary sinfulness of the "works" and "thoughts" in question, which the moderns then generally proceed to equate with the rebellious thoughts and deeds of Israel in particular. Both of these words are elsewhere, however, ascribed to God as well as men, and there is no necessity to invest either of them with any pejorative connotation in verse 18 (BDB, 795b-796a; 364a-b). Nor is there any need to refer the pronominal suffixes on the two nouns (translated as "their") back to the Jewish apostates of verses 14-17. Here in verses 18-21, in fact, none of the plurals of the third person (whether of suffixes, verbs, or nouns) are restricted to the "sons of Israel" except in the analogy of 20b, which assumes, indeed, that the preceding and ensuing cases are inclusive of people of all nationalities. Equally comprehensive is the scope of *zar'akhem* in verse 22 and of *khol-bāsār* in verse 23. Once the aforesaid untextual assumptions have been cleared away, one can find his way through verse 18 much more easily. The two initial nouns can be construed, quite simply, as adverbial accusatives of specification (in this writer's terminology), to circumscribe the particular sphere of reference in which the action described in the following clause is to take place. The most appropriate option here of the various words and phrases which Cowley suggests as common equivalents in English of the adverbial accusative in Hebrew would be "with regard to" the thing denoted (GKC, 372-376; section 118; especially 374; section 118:5[m]). Waltke and O'Connor (more explicitly than Cowley) use the phrase "accusative of state" to mean a substantive (or adjective or participle) which "specifies a feature of the verb's subject or object at the time of the verbal action" (while noting the usual indefiniteness of such accusatives [WO, 169-173;

section 10.2.2; especially 171; section 10.2.2d)). An example of a similar accusative with a pronominal suffix can be found in 1 Kings 15:23, where Asa in old age "became sick with regard to his feet," which, translated more idiomatically, becomes "was diseased in his feet" (KJV). The point, now, in Isaiah 66 relates to the kind of gathering which is there assured as something yet coming. It was not, then, in regard to geographical location that the Lord would gather people together of "all nations and tongues," as the chiliasts so often suppose when such language is used in the prophets. Men would, to the contrary, be gathered to the Lord in regard to their actions and, above all, their thoughts. The placing of *machshbhothēhem* after *ma'asēhem* creates a sense of climax as one moves back of human actions to the thoughts which produce them, in this case back of the Christian life of sanctification to the faith in Jesus Christ through which He justifies individual people.

No basis remains, in consequence, to the conclusion so common in modern times that verse 18 is speaking of the revelation of the "glory" of God in His condemnation of Israel or of the world in general, whether in historical terms or eschatological. The phraseology utilized here, in fact, whereby people "come" and so "see" the "glory" of the Lord, is used elsewhere by Isaiah of coming to faith in the Messiah, nor do any of his prophecies of the Messiah in particular make a connection directly between *kābhōdh* and condemnation. Such a connection is, of course, legitimate and is explicitly made elsewhere in Holy Scripture, but the *usus loquendi* of Isaiah in particular, embracing so many instances of *kābhōdh* as it does, is due its own special consideration. Isaiah contains, in fact, more instances of *kābhōdh* than any other sacred book except the Psalter; and the section of Isaiah where the instances are most numerous is the final canto formed, as we have seen, by chapters 58-66. It seems, indeed, that Isaiah 66 in particular contains more instances of *kābhōdh* than any other chapter in Holy Scripture, three of the five times occurring here in verses 18 and 19 (Mandelkern, I, 528d-529d). Already, however, in the first edition of his book and in the first lustrum of his career Isaiah had consoled the penitents in Judah with a promise of Messiah commencing thus: "In that day shall the Branch of the LORD be for beauty and for glory" (4:2). The word *kābhōdh* recurs, indeed, only three verses on: "over all the glory will be a canopy" (verse 5). Three decades later, midway through his book and career, in the prophecy to which the Coming One Himself appealed as proof of His arrival (Matthew 11:3-5; Luke 7:20-22) people rejoice (35:2) and are given strength and confidence (verses 3-4) on this ground: "they will see the glory of the LORD, the

majesty of our God" (verse 2). Seeing the glory of the Lord is in this case clearly the same as the saving faith in the messianic ransom which is described in verse 10.

The noun *kābhōdh* recurs a full dozen times in the final canto of Isaiah in one form or another but is always connected with the salvation to be won by the Messiah (58:8; 59:19; 60:1, 2, 13; 61:6; 62:2; 66: 11, 12, 18, 19 [twice]). Even 59:19, "from the west will they fear the name of the LORD and His glory from the rising of the sun," must, in accord with the general use of *yr'* in such predications, be taken as a prophecy of international faith in the Messiah to come. Of special significance is Isaiah 60:1-2 since a form of *r'h* is, as here in 66:18, connected with "the glory of the LORD"; and the *kābhōdh-yhwh* is clearly there the saving work of the Messiah which is "seen" by faith in the message which those who are already believers share with those who were previously living in the darkness of unbelief. The following verse provides confirmation: "Nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." It is worth recalling that the noun *kābhōdh* has a much more comprehensive significance than the English "glory." The verbal root *kbd* signifies "be heavy, weighty"—originally in a physical sense and, ordinarily in classical Hebrew, in some mental sphere of meaning (BDB, 457a-458a; KB, 418b-419b). As with *kābhōdh* in particular, so in the use of its lexical family as a whole, Isaiah again comes in second only to the Psalter—and a very close second, with sixty-three instances as opposed to sixty-four (TWOT, I, 426a). The non-physical denotations of *kbd* would include the idea, associated especially with the niphal and piel, of "being weighty in the sense of being noteworthy or impressive," instances of which are commonly translated as "be honorable" and "give honor," "be glorious" and "glorify" (TWOT, I, 426b). Cognates include the adjective *kābhēdh* with a basic meaning of "heavy" and two nouns, one masculine (occurring four times) and one feminine (a *hapax legomenon*), which are used of "heaviness" in a physical sense (BDB, 458a; 458b; 458b; KB, 419b-420a; 420a), none of these words having any connotation of "honor" or "glory" at all.

Although, now, Francis Brown lists no passage in which a physical sense of "heaviness" is to be imputed to *kābhōdh*, Ludwig Koehler with good reason so regards Isaiah 22:24, although, of course, the usage occurs in the course of an allegory (BDB, 458b-459b; KB, 420b-422a). The basic significance, however, of *kābhōdh* in the TaNaK is "weightiness" in a mental sense, pertaining to the impression which someone or something imposes on others or, at any rate, ought to impose. Should we attempt to

find one single word in English which would correspond to *kābhōdh*, the closest in meaning would perhaps be "impressiveness," although such a choice obviously lacks the dramatic color of *kābhōdh* or its traditional translation as "glory." Thus, as Gerhard von Rad observes, "If in relation to man *kābhōdh* denotes that which makes him impressive and demands recognition, whether in terms of material possessions or striking *gravitas*, in relation to God it implies that which makes God impressive to man, the force of self-manifestation" (TDNT, II, 238 [238-242]). To speak more precisely, in fact, the phrase *kābhōdh-yhwh* and its equivalents (such as the *kbhōdhī* here) comes to have as its *usus loquendi* the external manifestation of the attributes of the One True God, which are all, of course, truly glorious beyond compare. The divine nature embraces, nevertheless, attributes which fall outside the semantic field which is ordinarily marked off by the word "glory" in English. For the attributes of God include, of course, not only "majesty" and "magnificence" and "effulgence of heavenly . . . splendour" and "exaltation" (COD, 522a-b), nor only, indeed, changeless eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, justice, and holiness, but also benevolence, faithfulness, mercy, and, yes, grace and love (Exodus 34:6-7; 1 John 4:8). In the New Testament, too, the significance of *kābhōdh* has completely replaced the original conception of *doxa* which is witnessed in the classics (TWOT, I, 427b). As Gerhard Kittel observes (although failing to capture the quintessence of *doxa*), "the word is used" in the New Testament "in a sense for which there is no Greek analogy whatever" (TDNT, II, 237 [232-237, 242-255]).

Since, in line with the remarks above on the role of the Son as spokesman of the Triune God, the attributes of God are manifested fully in Jesus Christ alone, the special association in the New Testament between *doxa* and the Word become flesh comes as no surprise. Thus, of Him does the Apostle John testify: "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14, as elaborated by 17-18). The concepts, indeed, of glory and glorification are connected, not only with His miracles and state of exaltation, but also with His humiliation and passion (e.g., John 13:31 and 17:1). Such a usage is feasible and, indeed, reasonable by virtue of the supreme manifestation in the vicarious satisfaction of the divine attributes of holy justice, on the one hand, and gracious love, on the other. Such a realization, however, of the inextricable connection between the "glory" of God and the Messiah begins not in the New Testament but already in the Old Testament in two related ways. The theophanies, in the first

place, in which the Messiah appeared before His incarnation to the people of the Old Testament, are sometimes called the *kābhōdh-yhwh* or some variation thereon (e.g., Ezekiel 1:28 and 10:4). Even more importantly, however, the prophecies of the Messiah to come as the Word made flesh often, as here in Isaiah 66, denominate Him or His work or His word as, in the fullest sense possible, "the glory of the Lord."

The foregoing exegetical considerations result in the following rendition of verse 18 of Isaiah 66: "But as for Me, the time is coming, with regard to their works and their thoughts, to gather all of the nations and tongues, and so shall they come and so shall they see My glory." The "tongues" which translate the absolute plural of *lāshōn* denominate the various linguistic groups which are sometimes coterminous with the "nations" of the world, but may as easily constitute subdivisions or connections of such nationalities (BDB, 546a-b [section 2]). The use of such terminology implies, for one thing, that the "nations" here are not to be restricted to the gentiles, but are to be understood as including the Jews as well. For, even so, all of the languages of the world (which is the idea conveyed by the article prefixed to "tongues") include the Hebrew and Aramaic—as well as the Hellenistic Greek—in which the Messiah Himself would address the Jewish disciples who composed the nucleus of the church of the New Testament. The general thesis of the six penultimate verses of Isaiah is, then, as said above, stated concisely in verse 18, namely, the gathering of people to the Lord from all nations and languages in the days of the Messiah to come. Verse 19 reiterates this thesis in more elaborate terms which explicate, as intimated before, the more general phraseology of verse 18. Each of the following verses extrapolate some particular corollary from the general principle: spiritual purity (verse 20), special service (verse 21), eternal life (verse 22), and corporate worship (verse 23). The constraints of space, however, preclude the discussion of these verses from these pages at this time; a full exposition, therefore, although already complete, will have to be postponed to the future or published elsewhere.

Douglas McC. L. Judisch

Book Reviews

ISAIAH 1-39. INTERPRETATION: A BIBLE COMMENTARY FOR TEACHING AND PREACHING. By Christopher R. Seitz. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1993.

The recent commentary by Christopher R. Seitz on the first thirty-nine chapters of the Book of Isaiah illustrates both the promise and the ultimate disappointment of the most current trend in critical scholarship. From the outset Seitz promises the reader "an interpretation geared to the present form of the text or the final shape of a biblical book" (xi). This approach, commonly known as canonical criticism, appears to offer the hope that critical scholars and conservative scholars may at last share some common ground. Conservative scholarship certainly welcomes the commitment to interpret the text as it stands rather than the all-too-lamentable—not to mention dubious—practice of basing one's interpretation of the work of a biblical writer on an hypothetical reconstruction of the text, a practice which has characterized critical scholarship for more than a century now.

One does not have to read far, however, before encountering the limitations of this approach. Seitz himself anticipates the first problem: Why is a commentary which claims to deal with the final form of the text only treating the first thirty-nine chapters? Seitz offers the answer that the prophets in general, and Isaiah in particular, resist a focus on the final form of the text because of their "seemingly random movement from this oracle to that" (xi). If this response is true, does it not undercut the author's intention of presenting the reader with an interpretation which focuses on the coherence of the larger structure?

Seitz attempts to resolve the tension between the oracular nature of the text and the concern for greater coherence by positing a process in which the prophetic oracles were re-applied and re-interpreted by subsequent generations. This process creates a bridge between the historical context of the original presentation of the word of God (the oracles themselves) and their re-presentation as word of God to subsequent generations (the canonical presentation of the oracles). This approach yields a *process* of inspiration that encompasses the afterlife of the texts as much as their origin. This process is "based on the conviction that the prophetic word had a vitality and relevance that outlived its own originating circumstances" (20). Real theological understanding of the text, for Seitz, requires understanding this process.

In the extensive treatment of the oracle on Immanuel in Isaiah 7 and the discussion of the identity of Immanuel, we can see how Seitz understands the movement from the historical to the theological in the canonical process. After examining the various possibilities for the identity of Immanuel (which for him do not include the possibility of a rectilinear

prophecy applying directly and solely to Jesus Christ), Seitz concludes that, despite the chronological problems, Hezekiah was the person originally called Immanuel. He draws this conclusion primarily from the characteristics attributed to Immanuel and the contrast between Ahaz and Hezekiah in chapters 7-8 and 36-39. He buttresses it with the fact that it was said of Hezekiah that "God was with him" (2 Kings 18:7). The movement from an oracle intended to address the specific situation of Ahaz to a broader statement of royal theology with eschatological (and for Christians messianic and christological) implications is an outgrowth of the canonical arrangement of the material, particularly the juxtaposition of the oracle on Immanuel with the references to Immanuel in chapter 8 (8, 10) and the royal oracles of 9:2-7 and 11:1-9, which also reflect elements of the royal theology of Psalm 2.

In the end Seitz' commentary reveals the large gap that still remains between critical scholarship and conservative scholarship. Even when canonical criticism promises to focus on the final form of the text, it is clear that it begins with presuppositions about the pre-history of the text and that the real focus is not on the text itself, but upon the process by which the final form of the text emerges and the impact that process has on the text itself. We can salute Seitz and other canonical critics for taking a step forward, but we must recognize that it is a small step.

With the foregoing reservations understood, Seitz' commentary on Isaiah 1-39 still makes a worthwhile contribution to the literature on Isaiah. While it is not likely to be useful to the average parish pastor, it will find a welcome place on the bookshelf of those who have a particular interest in Isaiah or who wish to examine closely the workings of this current trend in critical scholarship.

David L. Adams
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BRUISED AND BROKEN: UNDERSTANDING AND HEALING PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS. By Frank Minirth, Paul Meier, and Donald Ratcliff. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992.

Frank Minirth and Paul Meier, well-known Christian psychiatrists, have teamed with a professor of psychology, Donald Ratcliff, to write what seems like a somewhat simplistic textbook of psychopathology. In the preface Ratcliff states that the book is primarily written for the layman with questions about issues of mental health and Christian counseling. He expresses at the same time, hope that the volume will be useful to pastors.

The book does contain much information within its twelve chapters. The "bruised" persons discussed suffer from depression, anxiety, and other personality disorders. The term "broken" refers to persons suffering with psychotic disorders or some organic brain syndromes. The "bruised" can usually be helped significantly. The "broken" can be helped less predictably.

The volume certainly does cover many mental health disorders and describes the treatments that Christian pastoral counselors or psychiatrists and psychologists employ. For this reason the book could find a place as a work of reference in the congregational library. In this reviewer's estimation, however, the volume is too general to serve well in a counseling course in a seminary or college. Better texts for such purposes and works of reference for the pastor have already been written. Indeed, several such books have been written by the authors of the book being reviewed.

Theologically speaking, Lutheran readers will find themselves at odds with the book when it states that Christian faith is an act of the free will. This reviewer was disappointed by the lack of more in-depth explanations of the neuro-chemical causes of some mental illness. He was even more surprised that several newer medications for the treatment of anxiety, in common use long before the book's publication, are not even mentioned. Parish pastors could possibly, then, find some space for this book in their congregational libraries, but they should save the space in the pastoral counseling section of their personal libraries for texts of greater scope and depth.

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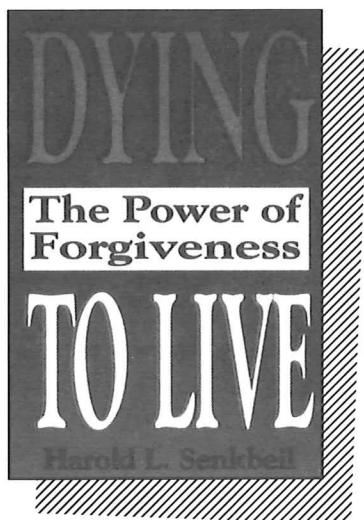
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