Concordia Theological Quarterly

CTQ

Vol. 63 No. 2
April 1999

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

Concordia Theological Quarterly, a continuation of *The Springfielder*, is a theological journal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, published for its ministerium by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Its website is at http://www.ctsfw.edu/ctq/index.html

Concordia Theological Quarterly is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals* and abstracted in *Old Testament Abstracts* and *New Testament Abstracts*.

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Concordia Theological Quarterly is published in January, April, July, and October. The annual subscription rate is $15.00 within the United States, $20.00 U.S. in Canada, and $30.00 U.S. elsewhere ($35.00 if dispatch by airmail is desired). All changes of address (including clergymen of the Missouri Synod), subscription payments, and other correspondence concerning business matters should be sent to *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825.

 • ISSN 0038-8610

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Volume 63:2 April 1999

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Professor Wilhelm Sihler: Founding Father of Lutheranism in America and First President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Lewis W. Spitz

Just as the Reformation movement was born in a university setting and was initially carried forward by the young university-bred humanists, so the founding of Lutheranism in the New World enjoyed the benefits of the learning on the university level of founding fathers who were highly educated, deeply religious, and faithful to the Lutheran Confessions. The Holy Scriptures admonish us to "remember the days of old." But even more poignant reminders come from some of the non-canonical books of the Old Testament apocrypha; books that Luther translated and included in his edition of the Holy Bible as "useful reading," though not inspired Scriptures. One passage in particular, familiar to Catholics, Anglicans, and Episcopalians, but somewhat less so to Lutherans, reads as follows:

> Let us now sing the praises of famous men, our ancestors in their generations. The Lord apportioned to them great glory, His majesty from the beginning. There were those who ruled in their kingdoms, and made a name for themselves by their valor; those who gave counsel because they were intelligent; those who spoke in prophetic oracles; those who led the people by their counsels and their knowledge of the people's lore; they were wise in their words of instruction; those who composed musical tunes, or put verses in writing; rich men endowed with resources, living peacefully in their homes all these were honored in their generations, and were the pride of their times. Some of them have left behind a name, so that others declare their praise. But of others there is no memory; they have perished as though they have never existed; they have

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> become as though they had never been born, they and their children after them. But these also were godly men, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten. Their offspring will continue forever, and their glory will never be blotted out. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name lives on generation after generation (Ecclesiasticus 44:1-10, 13-14).

Martin Luther recognized the majesty of these words in honor of the worthy dead in his translation of *Ecclesiasticus, Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, which there begins in the forty-fourth chapter on "the general praise of famous people" and applies especially to the great fathers of the church.

> *Lasset uns loben berühmten Leute, und unsere Väter nacheinander.*
>
> *Viel herrliche Dinge hat der Herr bei ihnen gethan von Anfang durch seine grosse Macht . . .*

These words apply very profoundly to the founding fathers of confessional Lutheranism in America, men such as Wilhelm Löhe, C.F.W. Walther, Friedrich Wyneken, August Crämer, and Wilhelm Sihler (November 12, 1801-October 27, 1885). He was a man with leadership qualities and extraordinary organizational ability. He became the first vice-president of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States; the first president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, which recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of its founding; the first president of the Central District of the Synod; and the president of the teachers' seminary that relocated from Milwaukee to Ft. Wayne in 1857.

For forty years he was the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ft. Wayne, which grew into a major congregation. He lies buried with his wife Susanna in Concordia Cemetery near the original site of the Seminary.

One might well approach the subject of a great man of the church with a simple encyclopedic account of his life and surrounding relevant events. A more suitable approach for a man of Sihler's stature and achievement would be to recount the

biographical data in simple form, then to add flesh to the biographical and statistical bones, and finally in conclusion to see whether, as Cicero observed in his day, a peaceful death provided the seal of approval on a good life. The *Nachruf* of those whom in death he left behind echoes from afar their sadness, but also their joy in the conclusion of a life well lived and a future for him with his Lord.[1]

Wilhelm Sihler was born near Breslau, Silesia, in 1801. He studied at the University of Berlin from 1826 to 1829. He was deeply influenced by the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher, a student of the idealist philosopher Immanuel Kant, and known as the "founder of modern theology." Schleiermacher opposed the skepticism that resulted from the philosophical destruction of *a priori* rationalistic constructions based upon the traditional, basically Aristotelian in origin, logic of major premise, minor premise, and the inevitable conclusion within a limited logical framework. Schleiermacher emphasized religious experience and the feeling of absolute dependence on the near totally Other, the ground of being, GOD. Sihler was deeply moved by this response to false rationalism and shattering religious skepticism, and moved ever more deeply into Schleiermacher's theocentric theology. Sihler had not as yet decided for himself who God is. Is the God a god of love, demanding or begging mankind to love and trust in Him, ready to forgive and to embrace fallen man?

At that moment this brilliant student came, of all things, under the influences of a professor and a pastor. Gottfried Scheibel was a professor at the University of Breslau, Silesia, a university

[1]*The American National Biography*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), which was recently published, carries an article on Wilhelm Sihler, one index of his importance for American history. Other publications of some value include Lewis W. Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds: A Biography of William Sihler* (St. Louis and London: Concordia Publishing House, 1968); E. G. Sihler, "Memories of Dr. William Sihler, (1801-1885)," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 5 (1932-33): 50-57; Wilhelm Sihler, *Lebenslauf von Wilhelm Sihler*, I (1879), II (1880); *Zum Ehrengedächnis des am 17. Oktober 1885 im Herrn Selig entschlafenen Dr. Wilhelm Sihler* (St. Louis: Luther Concordia Verlag, 1885); "Wilhelm Sihler," Erwin L. Lueker, editor, *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), 727.

that provided a forum for the union and interaction of German Renaissance humanism and evangelical theology.[2] Pastor and church superintendent, the Rev. Andreas Gottlob Rudelbach, made the crucial difference for the still young and confused Sihler. Pastor Rudelbach, educated in Copenhagen, was a conservative confessional Lutheran and had answers for Sihler's troubled questions. But Sihler still had a spiritual journey ahead of him. He visited three Bohemian Brethren settlements and was very deeply impressed with their hard work at menial tasks, their religious consecration, their personal faith in Christ, and their missionary zeal.

From 1838 to 1843 Sihler served as a domestic tutor in the Baltic states, for two years in the household of a retired officer in the Russian army, Major von Tunzelmann, on the island of Sarenna in the Baltic Sea near Estonia. The Major was a good Lutheran whom Sihler had met earlier in Dresden. In 1840 Sihler moved to Riga, the capital of Latvia, where he served as a tutor in the household of a merchant named Lösewitz. In that home of a Lutheran layman Sihler had an opportunity to study the Lutheran Confessions, especially the Formula of Concord. Sihler's deepening faith in Christ as sin-bearer, substitute, and savior gradually merged with his concern for the clear, correct expression and exposition of his Christian faith.

Just as the German state of Silesia was very significant for Renaissance humanism and the intellectual life of the Reformation, so East Prussia and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were important for a new pietistic and mystical revitalization of the Christian faith. Johann G. Hamann, the so-called "Magus of the North," proved to be an inspiration to many. Johann Herder, a Lutheran preacher, was one among these, and his views on intellectual life and human nature were very important for Sihler and Lutheran thinkers and

[2]Manfred Fleischer, *Späthumanismus in Schlesien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Munich: Delp'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1984); Lewis W. Spitz, *Luther and German Humanism* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 1996).

philosophers of history throughout Europe.[3] In such a vibrant intellectual, pious, and emotional environment, Sihler experienced an ever growing intensity of religious fervor. He developed a powerful desire to become a Christian minister, to preach the gospel, and to care for the spiritual needs of the people. He decided to serve in the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a pastor.

In the year 1843, while Sihler was visiting an evangelical Lutheran pastor in Riga, he was given a copy of Friedrich Wyneken's *Notruf*, a call for help for Lutheran ministers in the New World.[4] In the nineteenth century the church was unable to cope with the sheer numbers of immigrants who were spread over an entire continent.[5] Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872)—a Lutheran pastor in Neuendettelsau and an opponent of rationalism in theology, ethical laxity, and state control of the church—responded to Wyneken's cry for help for pastors in the New World by publishing his appeal for missionary preachers, which reached Sihler and many other confessional Lutherans.[6]

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[3]One may see the articles by Lewis W. Spitz, "Natural Law and the Theory of History in Herder," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 16 (October 1955): 453-475, and the relation of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) to the brilliant Lutheran philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716), "The Significance of Leibniz for Historiography," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13 (June 1952): 333-348.

[4]Friedrich Wyneken, "*Aufruf an die lutherische Kirche Deutschlands zur Unterstützung der Glaubensbrüder in Nordanerika.*" *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche* 5 (February 1843): 124-170; *The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America: Laid upon the Hearts of the Brethren in the Faith in the Home Country,* translated by S. Edgar Schmidt, edited by R.F. Rehmer (Ft. Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1982).

[5]Rudolph F. Rehmer, "The Origins of Lutheranism in the Ft. Wayne Area (1829-1847)," *Old Fort Wayne News* 30 (Spring 1967), chapter 3, "Wyneken's Activities in Germany and Their Influence on the Lutheran Churches of Allen, Adams and Surrounding Counties." One may also see Norman J. Threinen, "F.C.D. Wyneken: Motivator for the Mission," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60 (January-April 1996): 19-45.

[6]James L. Schaaf, "Father from Afar: Wilhelm Loehe and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60 (January-April 1996): 47-73. Löhe published an appeal for pastors to serve in America, *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und über Nord-Amerika* (1843). One may also see Marvin A. Huggins, "Home Missions in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: Strategies and Resources," *Concordia Historical Institute*

In the 1830s and 1840s a remarkable spiritual revival developed both in America and Europe, which caught up people like Sihler, who had been sated with rationalism and religious nothingness. Meanwhile, a religious revival movement developed in the United States. In 1835 Charles Finney published his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, the most powerful theoretical statement of revival theology and practice. In America the "Second Great Awakening" transformed American Christianity. One might say that a pre-established harmony between the religious upsurge in eastern Germany and the revival of religion in America seems to have developed which allowed Wilhelm Sihler to move easily from the one to the other. But he was a controlled university-educated intellectual not to be swept away into emotionalism but sturdied by the Confessions.

Pastor Wilhelm Löhe with assistance from Pastor Wucherer sent a group of eleven young, dedicated men to Ft. Wayne to an informal institute that soon developed into a seminary—now known as Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Adam Ernst and Georg Burger arrived as the first volunteers in Ohio in 1842. They were originally appointed to serve as teachers in Ohio, but they subsequently studied theology and became pastors in Ohio and Indiana. The Ft. Wayne Seminary educated and trained teachers and in one decade supplied fifteen teachers for the church. Many pastors in the nineteenth century also taught parochial school, often the only school in town.[7]

By the time the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States was founded in 1847, Pastor Löhe had sent twenty-three candidates to America. They were not university graduates, but pastors with enough learning and practical instruction to tend to the spiritual needs of the farmers, artisans, tradesmen, mechanics, and the common folk who have always

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Quarterly 69 (Summer 1996): 69-81 and Hans Kressel, *Wilhelm Löhe: Ein Lebensbild* (Erlangen und Rothenburg ob der Tauber: Martin Luther Verlag, 1954).

[7]Erich Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989).

made up the body of Lutheran congregations. Löhe not only continued to send support by way of money but, even more importantly, of books, in short supply in frontier America. During the Civil War the Ft. Wayne seminary was transferred and conducted jointly with the St. Louis seminary. In 1875 the Synod moved the "practical seminary" to property provided by Trinity Lutheran Church in Springfield, Illinois. In the course of time, however, the seminary, no longer "practical" but fully accredited, moved back to Ft. Wayne, its point of origin, where there was much local support.

With the encouragement of Löhe, Sihler emigrated to America in his forty-second year and lived another forty-two years in America. He was born in 1801, during the reign of King Frederick William III of Prussia, and died in 1885, during the presidency of Grover Cleveland. In June, 1844, he was ordained as a minister in the Evangelical Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States. He began to serve as a pastor in Pomeroy, Ohio in the spring of 1845, and in July of that year was called to the St. Paul congregation in Ft. Wayne, as Wyneken's successor. Sihler left the Ohio Synod and became, in 1847 at a conference in Chicago with Walther, Wyneken, and others, one of the founders of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Sihler served as president of the new Synod's Central District from 1854 to 1860. As pastor of St. Paul he helped to found and to support smaller congregations in the area. Sihler served as president at the seminary from 1846 to 1861, and as professor when needed for theological or church history courses. In contrast to the St. Louis seminary, which held up an ideal European pastorate with a working knowledge of the biblical and European theological languages, the "practical seminary" in Ft. Wayne educated pastors to serve the many thousands of recent immigrants across the Midwest and West.[8] When, largely

[8]The literature on the Lutheran church history in Europe and America is simply monumental. A few of the more recent books include: Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987); David P. Scaer, *Getting into the Story of Concord: A History of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977); Lewis W. Spitz and Wenzel Lohff, editors, *Discord, Dialogue and Concord:*

due to financial pressures, the teacher training school for parochial school teachers was moved from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Ft. Wayne, Sihler became president of the college. This teachers' college later moved to Addison, Illinois, and subsequently to River Forest, Illinois. Sihler was truly a skilled organizer, as well as an impressive preacher and mover.

Sihler was also a university man who understood that the pen is more powerful than the sword. His books were all pastoral in nature and directed toward practical problems for parish pastors and their parishioners. One was *A Conversation between Two Lutherans on Methodism,* which dealt with the success of the Wesleyan Methodists in winning over to their movement religiously and otherwise undereducated immigrants including many Germans.[9] Frontier conditions were primitive with life difficult and life expectancy short. Ft. Wayne itself was at that time a mere village of some fifteen hundred inhabitants. As William Warren Sweet and Avery Craven have noted, during the rugged early frontier days when people lived in dugouts or log cabins, the congregations begged the frontier preachers who thought they were being amusing and entertaining: "Preacher, don't make us laugh, help us to cry!" The

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Studies in the Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997); Wenzel Lohff and Lewis W. Spitz, editors, *Widespruch, Dialog und Einigung: Studien zue Konkoirdienformel der Lutherischen Reformation* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1997), which are original and independent essays and not, as some reviewers of the book have assumed, translations into German of the English essays. One may also see Robert E. Smith, "Laborers for the Harvest Field: The Practical Seminary," *Called to Serve* (Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Fall 1995): 16-17. We alumni of Lutheran parochial school education of half a century and more ago would find amusing in retrospect of the many carry-overs from German elementary parochial education. One may see, for example, the charming book by Katharina Chromik, *Lernen und Ev. Zielen in vier Jahrhunderten* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1987).

[9]Wilhelm Sihler, *Gespräche zwischen zwei Lutheranern über den Methodismus,* 4. Aufl. (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, 1878); *A Conversation between Two Lutherans on Methodism* (St. Louis: Printed at the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States, 1877).

Methodists knew how to move peoples' emotions, better than did the more staid and better educated Lutheran pastors.

Sihler published books useful for preachers such his *Sermons for Sunday and Festival-Gospel Days of the Church Year , Timely and Occasional Sermons,* and *Sermons on the the Sundays and Festivals of the Church Year.*[10] Under pressure from the family, fellow ministers, and parishioners he wrote up his own life story in a modest and winsome way, *Lebenslauf von Wilhelm Sihler.* His son, E. G. Sihler, became one of the leading classical scholars in America. At New York University, after an education at Johns Hopkins and Berlin, he authored many scholarly volumes. He enjoyed returning to Concordia College, Ft. Wayne, as an eminent guest lecturer in later years. He wrote that the Christian example of his parents was the most powerful *apologia pro fide Christiana* ever provided to him in life. Sihler's sons and daughters all lived splendid constructive lives in the new American world, for their Christian faith knew no political, linguistic, or ethnic boundaries. Their descendants were strong church people and citizens to the "third and fourth generation of them that love Him," to adduce a biblical phrase. In his simple, fairly brief, compact sermons, Sihler proclaimed that God is Lord of all!

As Sihler understood confessional Lutheranism it meant loyalty to and faith or trust in the biblical teachings as expressed in the three ecumenical creeds of the Christian church, and the acceptance and affirmation of the specifically evangelical Lutheran Confessions, the unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530, the Apology (defense) of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Small and the Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord of 1577. This body of confessional writings was incorporated into the Book of Concord (1580). The name Concordia, or harmony, which has been given to towns, churches, colleges and universities in the western world, is, of course, in commemoration of the doctrinal or confessional unity of the largest Protestant church body in Europe and America, when taken together.

[10]Rehmer, 27; Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds,* 45.

The emerging alliance of confessional Lutheran theologians and churchmen, which included a remarkable lay participation, marked a dramatic moment in American church history in the nineteenth century. The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther initiated the publication of *Der Lutheraner* on September 7, 1844. He chose as the motto for the new periodical *Verbum Dei Manet in Aeterum*, given the rubric, *Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr' Vergehen Nie und Nimmermehr* ("God's Word and Luther's Doctrine Pure Shall to Eternity Endure").

Both Wilhelm Sihler and the Rev. F. C. D. Wyneken (1810-1876) received copies of this first edition of *Der Lutheraner*, and they responded with excitement and great gratitude. Wyneken exclaimed; "Thank God there are still other Lutherans in America!"[11] Sihler, then in his first year in the New World, was a pastor in Pomeroy, Ohio. In his autobiography years later he wrote: "It was a great joy for me when the first edition of *Der Lutheraner* appeared in St. Louis . . . for such a periodical was badly needed by Lutherans (in America) who, for the most part, did not really know what it meant to be Lutheran Christians. Naturally I soon entered into extended correspondence with the editor."[12] When Sihler came to Ft. Wayne, July 15, 1845, to replace Wyneken, St. Paul was a congregation of merely sixty communicants. Two theological students, Jaebker and Frincke, lived in the parsonage with Sihler. Both of them became highly successful ministers respectively in Ohio and Maryland. In 1846, J. Adam Ernst and F. Lochner came as Löhe's latest missionaries. Sihler was now reaching out to other confessional Lutherans. To call these men conservative may well be a misnomer, for in striking ways to be a confessional Lutheran in the religious milieu of the nineteenth century meant to be not conservative, but radically different. In September, 1845, a number of Löhe missionaries met in Cleveland, Ohio, and

[11]Walter Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847-1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 52.

[12]*Lebenslauf*, 2:39-41; Rehmer (29-33) provides fascinating details of how delegates in those frontier days traveled by polling barges upstream, on horseback, by horse-drawn carriages, and wading through swamps on the way to Chicago, which was then a city of about 16,000 inhabitants and without a railroad.

resolved to leave the Ohio Synod and to unite with the Missouri Saxons. While a pastor in Pomeroy, Ohio, Sihler had already left the Ohio Synod. In May, 1846, Sihler met in St. Louis with the Missouri Saxons, Walther, G. H. Löber, E. G. W. Keyl, K. F. Grüber, O. Fürbringer, and G. Schieferdecker. In July a follow-up meeting was held in Ft. Wayne, where sixteen pastors from the Midwest attended, staying in Sihler's parsonage and in the homes of parishioners. They signed a slightly modified version of a constitution drafted in the St. Louis meeting.

Finally, April 24-27, 1847, the formation of the new synod was completed at the St. Paul congregation in Chicago, with the formulation of a Synodical Constitution subscribed to by signators from Missouri, Ohio, and other states. Significantly, the majority of participating congregations were from Indiana! Thus came into being the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. The trip from Ft. Wayne took five days for Sihler and six companions, riding horseback; two other ministers rode in a buggy. A lay delegate from St. Paul, a Mr. Voss, rode in a wagon with a small load of books. Along the way the entourage stayed overnight with settlers living in small huts. The weather was excellent and on Jubilate Sunday, the third Sunday after Easter, an opening worship was held in the morning with the Rev. G. H. Löber of the Saxon delegation preaching the sermon. He described the model of the early Christian church, which continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer (Acts 2:42).[13]

Sihler was elected first vice-president of the new Synod. He was very active in the decades following, challenging other Lutheran synods, such as the General Synod and the Ohio Synod, to more confessional positions. Some Lutheran leaders, however, such as Samuel S. Schmucker, referred to Sihler and his colleagues as "Symbolists" or "Old Lutherans" (*Alt Lutheraner*). To this Sihler replied with his customary dignity that there were no such things as "old-Lutherans," but merely confessional Lutherans and anti-confessional Lutherans. As

[13]*Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, volume 7, number 16, page 124.

Emerson once wrote: "We are reformers in the spring and summer; in autumn and winter we stand by the old, reformers in the morning, conservers at night." Sihler was a staunch conservative and confessionalist from midlife to the end of his life.

What sort of man was Wilhelm Sihler? He was a person of outsized proportions; in terms of intellect, education, character, religious experience, Christian faith, determination, and a goal orientation toward a New Jerusalem in the New World. A social reformer he was not. He believed that individuals reborn through the work in the heart of the Holy Spirit will find ways of holding society together and improving it, beginning with their own families and moving the common life politically and socially to a higher plane. Sihler's sermons were simple and forceful in speech, sharp, fearless, and well organized.

Sihler was the father of a large and quite wonderful family and was known for his hospitality and many friendships. When he came to Ft. Wayne he was a bachelor of forty-four years. His friend, the Rev. J. Adam Ernst, however, envisioned for him a better life with a wife and a real parsonage. Just as Luther in 1525 had married sixteen years younger than he, so Sihler took a much younger bride—twenty-eight years younger. Rev. Ernst told him of a young woman "fit to be a pastor's wife, of Christian mind, of good understanding, and a soft quiet spirit, very home-loving and used to work." After the St. Louis conference in 1846 Sihler traveled with Pastor Ernst to visit the home of the young girl of seventeen, Miss Susanna Kern. Susanna was in the field working when Ernst and Sihler arrived. Although, as Sihler later observed, "she would hardly have inspired an artist," he was favorably impressed by her disposition and bearing, and they married the following day.[14] The following years saw the arrival of nine children.[15]

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[14]Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds*, 848-85; Rehmer, 30-33. Rehmer relates that Sihler had met Susanna Kern before more than once, though without documentation, or eye witnesses.

[15]Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds*, 48-52, 175. Sihler's namesake, Wilhelm Sihler, died on January 6, 1986, at age 82, in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. Olga Buchheimer, nèe Sihler, widow of the Rev. Dr. Edward Buchheimer, died at

Sihler's bearing was always that of a Prussian army officer, a German academician, and a dignified pastor. His health was good, and he was active in congregational and synodical affairs until nearly the end of his life. Advanced in years, on June 5, 1885 he appeared before his St. Paul congregation to deliver a communion sermon. But he almost swooned and was taken to the parsonage where he was nursed during the following weeks. He constantly repeated the words of Scripture such as, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" and "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." On October 2 he felt that the end was near, and he asked for the sacrament. He spoke Christ's words from the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." In answer to Susanna's last question as to what she should tell the children, he answered, "That they abide in Christ." With these words ended the life of Wilhelm Sihler, a man who was a devout Christian, a dedicated minister, a "practical" doctor of philosophy, and a Prussian pioneer in America. He was true to Luther's admonition: *und tue was du schuldig bist zu tun in deinem Berufe* ("and do what you are obligated to do in your calling").

Sihler's funeral was quite splendid, as funerals go. Some sixty to seventy ministers walked in the procession, thousands of people followed on foot, with two hundred carriages coming after in the van. Though he left only three hundred dollars to his heirs and a library of theological and church history books (he had always given generously to poor students and good causes), he left to his family, church, and country a rich inheritance, a vibrant faith, great moral strength, and a model for a Christian life dedicated to the highest cause.

Sihler was criticized by some as being too severe in preaching the law to his congregation, but he was dealing with German farmers and rough day laborers. He had a sense of moral earnestness, penetrating judgment, and a rare independence of mind. He was not, unlike all too many preachers of our time, swayed by current fashions and trends, or by majority opinion.

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age 90 on December 9, 1989, a grand-daughter of Wilhelm Sihler, among other distinguished children and descendants.

The Rev. A. Biewend of Washington, D.C., the son of Sihler's former colleague at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, described Sihler as "earnest and forceful, Scriptural, quiet and patient, a clear and thorough thinker."[16]

His life bridged equally two continents, the old world and the new. He grew to manhood in aristocratic Prussia, but lived out his life in democratic America. He was baptized and confirmed in a state church and became one of the leaders in a free church with a congregational organization. He reached maturity hostile or indifferent to the claims of the Christian faith and carried out his last decades as a stalwart for conservative and confessional Lutheranism.

Sihler's assistant as a professor at the Seminary and his successor as the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ft. Wayne, the Rev. J. H. Jox, paid him this tribute: "He was a wonder of God's grace, a spiritual son of Paul and Luther, a learned man, a gifted, energetic preacher, diligent for truth and God's honor, a restless worker, earnest in prayer, a friend and helper of the needy, a loyal spouse and worthy father, a sinner living by grace, an upright soul, a rich blessing to the church."[17] Little more need be said about Dr. Wilhelm Sihler, a pioneer of culture and of the Christian religion in nineteenth-century America.

[16]J. H. Jox, "Zum Ehrendedächtniss des am 17. October 1885 selig heimgegangen Dr. W. Sihler, treuverdienten Pastor zu St. Paul in Ft. Wayne, Ind.," *Der Lutheraner* 41 (June 15, 1886): 92.

[17]Jox, "Zum Ehrendedächtniss."

Parting Company At Last: Lindbeck and McFague in Substantive Theological Dialogue

Terrence Reynolds

The on-going debate between "liberal" and "narrativist" theological strategies continues to generate a constellation of methodological and substantive questions. George Lindbeck's discussion of the "experiential-expressivist" and "cultural-linguistic" approaches to religion and their contrasting views of doctrine, in particular, has brought into bold relief what appear to be fundamental differences between "liberals" and "narrativists" on matters of meaning, truth, and justification in contemporary theology. David Tracy's response to Lindbeck, not surprisingly, focuses on the central issues at stake. For Tracy, Lindbeck's problems with the "liberal" tradition are "less methodological or formal than his paradigm analysis would suggest."[1] Instead, Lindbeck's concern is "substantive or material."[2] While I think Tracy is correct in identifying Lindbeck's methodological ties to liberal theology and in focusing on matters of substance, I think he mistakenly concludes that Lindbeck is committed to the position of Karl Barth. He argues that Lindbeck's substantive theological proposal is a "methodologically sophisticated version of Barthian confessionalism." "The hands may be the hands of Wittgenstein and Geertz," Tracy adds, "but the voice is the voice of Karl Barth."[3]

This article examines Tracy's assessment of Lindbeck and the contrasting liberal/narrativist traditions in light of the theological positions developed by Lindbeck and Sallie

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[1] David Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program for Theology: A Reflection," *The Thomist* 49 (1985): 467.

[2]Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program," 467.

[3]Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program," 465. As I will argue, I understand Lindbeck to be suggesting that his cultural-linguistic approach is consistent with Barth's position, but does not "entail" a Barthian confessionalism or even a commitment to narrative as a methodological requirement. Although substance powerfully influences method in this case, I think it important to make the distinction a clear one.

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McFague, and argues briefly that the two have far more in common methodologically than either of them appears to recognize.[4] It then considers in detail the nature and scope of the substantive differences that divide them. Fundamentally, they disagree over appropriate sources of authority in the making of truth claims; more specifically, they hold radically different positions on the adequacy of Scripture to provide an accurate narrative identification of God, and on the long-term performance of the tradition in promoting human flourishing. Their very dissimilar views on the value of Scripture in theological discourse subsequently give rise to further differences on issues such as the role of God's relationship to the world, the place of the church, and the scope of theological dialogue. My conclusion is that Lindbeck's theological voice is not the voice of Karl Barth rather, drawing on the thought of William James, that what drives their conflict is not principally methodology. Instead, what separates them at the core is their pragmatic assessment of the coherence and performative record of the received tradition. Once this is properly understood, the debate between "narrativists" and "liberals" can more fruitfully proceed.

[4]Although, to my knowledge, neither has critiqued the work of the other by name, Lindbeck and McFague appear to be methodologically at odds with one another. McFague argues that the narrativist attachment to the biblical stories isolates the Christian community, and further believes that the language of Scripture has proven itself a major contributor to conceptions of reality that have fostered patriarchy, hierarchy, dualism, militarism, and triumphalism. Unless the outmoded tradition is overthrown, McFague foresees continuing negative ecological, relational, and perhaps, even nuclear consequences. Refusing radically to adapt or reject this tradition, in her view, "ghettoizes" Christianity. Lindbeck argues that "liberal" re-shaping of the language of Scripture will serve ultimately to undermine the Christian community shaped by the biblical narrative and its claims to truth. Unlike McFague, Lindbeck likens the Christian story to a "masterpiece" for its ability effectively to interpret experienced reality and to foster human flourishing. As I will argue, their contrasting views on the narrative identification of God provided by Scripture and on its performance are at the center of their substantive theological differences.

Lindbeck and McFague in Methodological Agreement

There are many parallels between Lindbeck and McFague on meaning, truth, and justification in constructive theology.[5] They agree that all claims to truth are shaped by socio-historical perspective, and that there can be no meaningful discussion of direct, a-historical access to the "Real." Both readily acknowledge that web-of-belief related claims, or well-entrenched beliefs, are a necessary point of departure for all theological or ethical discussion. Further, each appears to endorse a type of coherence theory of truth,[6] in which conceptual and interpretive consistency along with pragmatic, performative criteria are requirements for any discussion of ontological truth.

Both Lindbeck and McFague readily agree that they have been shaped by the linguistic patterns and practices of the Christian faith. McFague enters the theological conversation with the very limited background conviction that God is on the side of all life and its fulfillment and that all persons are bearers of God's image.[7] Lindbeck retains the broader assumptions that

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[5]For a more thorough discussion of the methodological correspondence between Lindbeck and McFague, see my "Walking Apart, Together: Lindbeck and McFague on Theological Method," *Journal of Religion* 77 (January 1997): 44-67.

[6]For the purposes of this essay, I will stipulatively follow Ralph C. S. Walker's definition of coherence in *The Coherence Theory of Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 2: "The coherence theorist holds that for a proposition to be true is for it to cohere with a certain set of beliefs. It is not just that it is true if and only if it coheres with that system; it is that the coherence, and nothing else, is what its truth consists in. In particular, truth does not consist in the holding of some correspondence between the proposition and some reality which obtains independent of anything that may be believed about it."

[7]Sallie McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), x. McFague explains her Christian point of departure as follows: "I begin with the assumption that what we can say with any assurance about the character of Christian faith is very little. . . .Christian faith is. . . .most basically a claim that the universe is neither indifferent nor malevolent but that there is a power (and a personal power at that) which is on the side of life and its fulfillment. Moreover, the Christian believes that we have some clues for fleshing out this claim in the life, death, and appearances of Jesus of Nazareth."

the God of Scripture wills the best for persons, and that the entire biblical narrative serves as a necessary linguistic universe to convey that truth most effectively.[8] Further, both seem to agree that religious systems of interpretation are most "true" when they are internally consistent, effectively reflect human experience, generate in believers a pattern of living which promotes human well-being, and attract the admiration of others. A "true" religious language will perform well over time in all of these respects.

In spite of their historicist premises, both theologians permit the making of ontological truth claims. These claims are indirect and contingent, by necessity, as they are unavoidably tied to perspective and webs of belief. But they can be made, nonetheless, and assessed pragmatically, based on their shared assumption that the Divine intends the best for the creation. It follows that what appears to enhance the good is more prone to be true than that which impedes it. There is no way beyond history and perspective to check the direct correspondence of one's claims with the "Real," so moral fruits remain the principal avenue for justification, along with the experienced presence of the divine. I think that both Lindbeck and McFague rely here on a version of pragmatism that calls to mind the work of William James.

It is worthwhile to reflect briefly on James' understanding of the process by which religious claims are adopted and tested since it will play an important role in my later analysis of the substantive divergence of the two thinkers.[9] According to

[8]James Gustafson also focuses on this distinction in his *Ethics From a Theocentric Perspective*, volume 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). He explicitly moves away from the anthropocentrism associated with traditional concepts of flourishing, and opts instead, with McFague, for a notion of the Divine whose interest is in the well-being of *all* things. One may see pages 109-110.

[9]In referring to William James, I do not intend to infer that either Lindbeck or McFague is explicitly (or implicitly) endorsing his work. Nor do I mean to suggest that James offers a better model for interpreting their shared concern with "performance" than might other pragmatist philosophers. I merely want to focus on James's empiricist recognition of our epistemological limitations with respect to questions of ultimacy, and on his

James, there are occasions when matters of import cannot be resolved solely by objective means. At moments like these, James permits the use of the "passions" to move one's will to decide, and to act. But it is extremely important, lest James be misunderstood (as is commonplace), that he places very strict limits on when and how the passional nature may be employed, and does *not* endorse simply willing oneself to believe whatever one's heart desires.[10] Despite the suggestions of some critics, he decidedly does not encourage "wishful thinking."[11] Only when one is objectively uncertain and faces what James called a "genuine option" can the passions rightfully direct our wills and convictions.[12] Clearly, for James, the religious hypothesis that "perfection is eternal," along with the message of Christianity, satisfies the three requirements of a genuine option and can be passionately adopted and lived without compromising one's rational nature.

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endorsement of pragmatic warrants as an appropriate grounding for one's beliefs. In these limited respects, I think it fair to say that Lindbeck and McFague are Jamesian.

[10]For a subtle analysis of James on these matters, see Diane Yeager's "Passion and Suspicion: Affections in 'The Will to Believe,'" *The Journal of Religion* 69 (October 1989): 467-483.

[11]As an example of what I take to be an ill-conceived critique of James, see John Hick's *Faith and Knowledge* (Glasgow, Scotland: William Collins Sons, 1978), 35-44. Hick mistakenly characterizes James' position as follows (44): "But when we have spelled out James' conception of faith thus far, we cannot help asking whether it is much better — or indeed any better — than an impressive recommendation of 'wishful thinking.' Is he not saying that since the truth is unknown to us we may believe what we like and while we are about it we had better believe what we like most? This is certainly unjust to James' intention; but is it unjust to the logic of his argument? I do not see that it is."

[12]As James explains, a "genuine" option is one that must be living, forced, and momentous. By "living," James means that an option must be a "real possibility" to the one to whom it is proposed. By "forced" he means an option "with no possibility of not choosing," such as "either accept this truth or go without it." Finally, by "momentous" he means an option which offers one a chance at a unique and profoundly significant possibility. One may see William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 2-4.

It is significant that James does not formally rule out the possibility of one choosing the option of atheism in the face of the objective uncertainty of the religious hypothesis. But in *The Sentiment of Rationality,* James indicates why he seems unable to imagine one holding to such a belief. According to James, our rational nature possesses an inherent "need" to have human expectancies fulfilled. At the practical level, this means that all overarching, philosophical systems seeking to win our approval must satisfy two practical requirements. The first is that it will not baffle or disappoint our dearest desire, namely, that uncertainty will be overcome. As rational beings we have a inherent desire that novelty and the unexpected be minimized. A framework conceptual system that fails in this regard will not be accorded widespread acceptance. Secondly, our rational nature desires that our active propensities be satisfied through a "system" that is emotionally pertinent, or that permits us to act on its behalf. As James puts it, a rationally satisfying system will be one in which "the inmost nature of reality is congenial to powers you possess."[13] With a rational nature so predisposed, it is little wonder that materialist philosophies that direct us to what James called "the eternal Void," "always fail of universal adoption."[14]

In short, in the absence of objective or experienced evidences to the contrary, or "defeaters," it is not only justified to act upon one's religious longings, but it may, indeed, be more in accord with our rationality to do so. Further, it is James' view "that truth exists, and that our minds can find it," but our grasp of the truth is always incomplete, and our opinions can "grow more true" as we examine and live them.[15] It is here again where performative criteria come into play, and James' pragmatism serves not only as a justification for believing, but as a basis upon which to assert the truth of one's claims. If one's system performs well as lived out and satisfies the requirements of our rational nature, then it would appear to qualify provisionally as a "true" interpretive schema, at least

[13]James, *Will to Believe,* 86.
[14]James, *Will to Believe,* 83.
[15]James, *Will to Believe,* 12, 14.

insofar as we can know the truth. The truth of the religious option can be assessed by the extent to which it fosters a way of life that coherently interprets the vast complexity of human experience and generated human flourishing.[16] The determination of the "success" of the religious option would apparently be an on-going process as it is with any hypothesis, and the system would, in theory, be ever open to adjustment as experience deemed necessary.[17]

McFague has implicitly adopted a theological realism in harmony with a pragmatism of this sort.[18] Lindbeck has done the same. In short, they essentially agree on the nature of meaning, truth, and justification in constructive theology, and support a version of theological realism grounded in pragmatic considerations.[19]

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[16]I should add that these criteria are more readily determined in the case of a scientific theory than in a moral or theological one. Diane Yeager, in her "Passion and Suspicion" states this difficulty as follows (478): "The 'evidence' of 'experience' is much more ambiguous in the testing of the religious hypothesis than in the testing of some specific hypothesis about the operations of material entities and physical forces. It is also vastly more difficult to figure out what counts decisively and what does not."

[17]This process calls to mind Jeffrey Stout's notion of "moral bricolage," in which one's well-entrenched beliefs remain in dialogue with unfolding experience and counter claims. Reminiscent of James' critique of the "absolutists" (*The Will to Believe*, 12), one can never know with certainty if one has arrived at the truth, or claim direct correspondence with the "Real." See Stout's "Lexicon" in *Ethics After Babel* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 294, in which he defines moral bricolage as follows: "The process in which one begins with bits and pieces of received linguistic material, arranges some of them into a structured whole, leaves others to the side, and ends up with a moral language one proposes to use."

[18]In a response to Rosemary Ruether, McFague makes her ties to pragmatism quite clear: "What this comes to, I believe, is the importance of pragmatic criteria as the basis for ontological claims. Pragmatic criteria are central to my position as they are to other forms of liberation theology. . . ." One may see McFague's "Response" to reviewers of *Models of God* in *Religion and Intellectual Life* (Spring 1988): 42. One may also see my "Two McFagues: Meaning, Truth, and Justification in *Models of God*," *Modern Theology* 11 (July 1995): 289-314.

[19]One may see Reynolds, "Walking Apart, Together." For the purposes of this paper, I define "realism" as any position that holds that religious or moral claims actually refer, directly or indirectly, to a transcendent reality.

Lindbeck and McFague in Substantive Disagreement

Where McFague and Lindbeck differ is not over these methodological premises, but over their understanding of the role of Scripture in constructive theology and ethics. Lindbeck is convinced that the meaning and truth of the Christian story are tied to the linguistic integrity of the biblical tradition and its narrative identification of God; its "semiotic universe" in all its complexity must serve as the interpretive paradigm for contemporary experience.[20] Theologians of the cultural-linguistic persuasion, he says, plot a very different course than their "liberal" counterparts:

> it is the religion instantiated in Scripture which *defines* being, truth, goodness, and beauty, and the nonscriptural exemplifications of these realities need to be *transformed* into figures (or types or antitypes) of the scriptural ones. Intratextual theology *redescribes* reality within the scriptural framework rather than translating Scripture into extrascriptural categories. It is the text, so to speak, which *absorbs* the world, rather than the world the text. . . .[21]

The Christian narrative retains authoritative status for Lindbeck for a number of reasons. First, the gospel stories mean what they say, and were intended to depict realistically the person of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world. As Garrett Green has correctly indicated, this is not to say that the

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A nonrealist would argue that religious or moral language cannot refer to a transcendent reality because such a reality does not exist, or because our epistemic distance from the "Real" renders meaningless any talk of truth or correspondence between it and human linguistic conceptions. I use these terms with some care, well aware of the nuances they entail.

[20]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 114, 116. In the "semiotic universe" of a religious system, understood cultural-linguistically, meaning "is constituted by the uses of a specific language rather than being distinguished from it. Thus the proper way to determine what 'God' signifies, for example, is by examining how the Word operates within a religion and thereby shapes reality and experience rather than by first establishing its propositional or experiential meaning and reinterpreting or reformulating its uses accordingly. It is in this sense that theological description in the cultural-linguistic mode is intrasystematic or intratextual."

[21]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 129, 118, 123, emphasis added.

gospel narratives are historically factual (as opposed to "fictional") accounts of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth.[22] But the stories do intend to refer literally to the uniqueness and unsurpassability of Jesus. In this sense, Lindbeck follows the narrativist course of Hans Frei, refusing to permit a "liberal" search for the "real" meaning of the narratives, in their "deeper" moral, ideal, mythical, or existential purpose. Liberalism mistakenly reshapes the narratives into an interpretive framework foreign to their original intention. This, in turn, undermines their purpose of identifying Jesus as a figure like no other, a figure intimately related to God the Father and to all humankind. Faith's commitment to the theological truth of the narrative claims about Jesus is most effectively preserved and transmitted through the tradition in its entirety.

It is also true for Lindbeck that the very survival of the community seems to be at stake in retaining the integrity of the narrative. It is imperative that believers practice their distinctive form of life or risk its dissolution, and the loss of its theological voice. If the "grammar" of the community is diluted or re-structured by the inclusion of alien linguistic patterns, the religious community faces a loss of self-identity and possible extinction. As Lindbeck explains: "the canonical texts are a condition, not only for the survival of a religion but for the very possibility of normative theological description."[23] Both the appropriate narrative identification of the Divine, and the proclaiming community itself are tied to the retention of the narrative texts of Scripture.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Lindbeck seems to suggest that the biblical narrative retains its determinative standing for believers because its interpretive success leaves them virtually no choice but to allow its vision to shape them. For those "steeped" in the canonical writings of a tradition, the

[22]Garrett Green, "'The Bible As. . . .': Fictional Narrative and Scriptural Truth," in *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*, edited by Garrett Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 79-81.

[23]Green, "The Bible," 116.

interpretive structure of the narratives offers an irreplaceably effective understanding of the world and of the believer's place within it.[24] Reminiscent of Wittgenstein, the suggestion here seems to be that the semiotic universe of the Bible creates a linguistic "form of life" so overarching and interpretively illuminating that it forms the believer's epistemic horizon. Believers experience their story as true, and are unwilling, therefore, to see the world otherwise. Lindbeck's description here calls to mind Clifford Geertz on religion; believers experience the worldview and ethos offered by the biblical narrative as interpretive "masterpieces" generating human flourishing and, in the absence of defeaters, worthy of retention. The narratives are not verifiably "true" to the public; rather, they are true to those who share the imaginative vision of faith fostered in the community of belief. But in a world epistemically unable to rise above the limitations of communal paradigms, this is all that one might reasonably expect.

Lindbeck's understanding of the biblical narrative clearly has theological affinities with neo-Barthianism, as Tracy suggests, but not of the sort Tracy suggests. Lindbeck openly indicates the extent of his indebtedness to Barth: "Barth's exegetical emphasis on narrative has been at second hand a chief source of my notion of intratextuality as an appropriate way of doing theology in a fashion consistent with a cultural-linguistic understanding of religion and a regulative view of doctrine."[25]

It is noteworthy that Lindbeck does not say here that the cultural-linguistic orientation *entails* a Barthian commitment to the scriptural narrative, only that it is "consistent" with it. Tracy's charge that Lindbeck adopts a cultural-linguistic approach in order to smuggle in a "Barthian confessionalism" seems overwrought since the method opens the door to a rather extraordinary variety of substantive possibilities. Lindbeck, for example, offers nothing comparable to a Barthian version of revelation; to do so would be methodologically

[24]Green, "The Bible,"117.

[25]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 135.

incongruous. Further, Lindbeck does not suggest that the biblical narrative runs counter to reason, or that it produces a form of life so unreasonable that conversation and translation are rendered impossible. Instead, he opens the tradition to pragmatic verification, claiming that reasonable persons have been drawn to the believing community's way of life because it is accessible to others at the level of practice. A "No" to all that reason understands is not required to speak the "Yes" of faith. Lindbeck here agrees with Hans Frei's appropriation of Barth insofar as each would insist that theological truth is intratextual rather than open to public accounting. But this is hardly a novel observation. To say that faith commitments exceed reason is not necessarily to say that they violate it. The criteria of faith's distinctive meaningfulness is found in the narrative, and not in some more generalized account of anthropology or experience. But for Lindbeck this fact only view undermines the pretensions of liberalism, not the proper role of reason itself.

If this is so, then McFague and Lindbeck can logically share a cultural-linguistic methodology and not share the same theological attachment to narrative, because it is not required by the method. They can agree on method but disagree thoroughly on what sources best depict the identity of God and work most effectively for the good of the creation. In short, Lindbeck is not wedded methodologically or substantively to "Barthian confessionalism," although he may adopt a view of narrative that Barth might generally support. McFague, in my view, could accept this distinction along with Lindbeck. If this is the case, it supports my contention that McFague and Lindbeck are at odds only substantively, but not methodologically.

Lindbeck's appreciation of Barth, Wittgenstein, and Geertz raise Tracy's fears of sectarianism, that the language of the believing community is incommensurable with the language of the surrounding culture. But, again, Tracy's concern is exaggerated, as evidenced by Lindbeck's reliance on pragmatism. Incommensurability can be understood in two senses. In the first, languages can be said to be incommensurate

when the one employs concepts that do not appear in, or that seem to be in disagreement with, the other. Here, some translation and even agreement across traditions remains possible if the languages in question share common background assumptions or structures of interpretation. In the second sense, incommensurability occurs when languages do not share basic standards of evidence or criteria of adjudication. As John P. Reeder, Jr. has suggested, if divergence on such fundamental criteria exists, then we face an intractable problem which renders translation impossible.[26] But if the distance between languages is of the first sort, translation and understanding are more readily achieved, at least in part. Pragmatists, including Lindbeck and McFague, have denied that any basic or foundational criteria exist, and so refuse to accept the second, deeper sense of incommensurability. Instead, they look for overlaps and convergences between traditions to make meaningful conversation possible.

It is true that Lindbeck, at times, appears to speak of both sorts of incommensurability. He describes the conceptual problem as follows: ". . . religions, like languages, can be understood only in their own terms, not by transposing them into an alien speech."[27] He also claims that religious language may, indeed, be impenetrable from without: ". . . each type of theology is embedded in a conceptual framework so comprehensive that it shapes its own criteria for accuracy."[28] In these passages, Lindbeck refers to both types of incommensurability, conceptual and justificatory, and perhaps provokes Tracy's concerns about sectarianism. Lindbeck anticipates the charge and responds to it:

> If there are no universal or foundational structures and standards of judgment by which one can decide between

[26]One may see John P. Reeder, Jr., "Foundations Without Foundationalism," in *Prospects for a Common Morality*, edited by Gene Outka and John P. Reeder Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 193. Reed provides an excellent discussion of the neopragmatic understanding of understanding across conceptual schemes.

[27]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 129.

[28]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 113.

> different religious and nonreligious options, the choice of any one of them becomes, it would seem, purely irrational, a matter of arbitrary whim or blind faith, and while this conclusion may fit much of the modern mood, it is antithetical to what most religions, whether interpreted in liberal, preliberal, or postliberal fashion, have affirmed.[29]

Understood in the light of his ties to pragmatism, however, Lindbeck offers a reasoned defense to the charge of irrationalism. He is well aware that the scriptural story is challenged by the ever-new situations to which it is addressed, and seeks to overcome the problem of sectarianism. He wishes to engages the biblical narrative in a Jamesian, pragmatic dialogue over its coherentist and performative merits and to avoid a thorough-going cultural and theological isolation. The fact of counter-interpretations and experiences that confront and challenge all religious ways of thinking must be faced:

> religious change or innovation must be understood . . . as resulting from the interactions of a cultural-linguistic system with changing situations. Religious traditions are . . . abandoned, or replaced because. . . a religious interpretive scheme (embodied, as it always is, in religious practice and belief) develops anomalies in its application in new contexts. This produces . . . negative effects, negative experiences, even by the religion's own norms. Prophetic figures apprehend often with dramatic vividness, how the inherited patterns of belief, practice, and ritual need to be (and can be) reminted.[30]

Along with McFague, the non-sectarian, pragmatic Lindbeck agrees in principle that the linguistic universe of the Bible is open to conversation. Although his presumption is that the scriptural narrative can absorb all of human experience, he

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[29]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 120.

[30]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 39. As I will indicate, it is precisely McFague's judgment that the Christian tradition has proven itself unable to relate effectively to "new contexts" that propels her metaphorical revisions. She points incessantly to the "negative effects, negative experiences" and "anomalies" that pervade the grammar of the Christian narrative.

seems to appreciate the ways in which the interpretive structure of religious belief remains in dialogue with other ways of construing reality. The dialogue, of course, has limits because the propositions of faith are beyond natural reason, but overlapping notions of human flourishing may fruitfully be shared. Such a dialogue is not truly Barthian in character.

What ultimately forces change upon a religious worldview is not its failure to "apologize" publicly for its interpretive structure, or its inability to demonstrate its ties to rational foundations, for such universal warrants are unavailable. Instead, Lindbeck reiterates that a religion proves or disproves itself via coherence and performance:

> the reasonableness of a religion is largely a function of its assimilative powers, of its ability to provide an intelligible interpretation in its own terms of the varied situations and realities its adherents encounter . . . confirmation or disconfirmation occurs through an accumulation of successes or failures in making practical and cognitively coherent sense of relevant data . . . . There is no way of testing the merits and demerits of a theological method apart from performance.[31]

For Lindbeck, it seems that Christianity has performed exceedingly well. In fact, to the extent that moral fruits are discernible through reason, the coherence and pragmatic success of Christianity can be argued publicly. As a result, wholesale revisions in the narrative are uncalled for. The tradition has faced the dual tests of coherence and pragmatism and passed them, proving itself capable of effectively shaping human lives. The incommensurable elements of Christianity arise only at the level of propositions of faith that exceed the grasp of natural reason. However, this is as true for McFague as it is for Lindbeck. If Lindbeck is guilty of confessionalism, irrationalism, or fideism, then so, to a lesser degree perhaps, is McFague.

[31]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 131, 134. Again, for McFague traditional Christianity has lost its capacity to assimilate the sensibilities of the modern age and has become linguistically illegitimate.

Lindbeck agrees that the tradition has been performatively blameworthy, but insists that its failures have been due to faithlessness, or a faulty application of the biblical narrative to life situations. The crusader who cleaves the skull of the "infidel" while shouting "Christ is Lord" serves as an example of a profound grammatical and moral misunderstanding.[32] Such blunders, however, do not undermine the linguistic universe of the Scripture or its narrative identification of God. Instead, they merely serve to affirm, albeit negatively, the truthful application of the same words and call believers to a life more harmonious with their convictions. Reading Lindbeck as a non-sectarian convinced of the interpretive success of the biblical narrative is the key to understanding his disagreement with McFague.

As I have suggested, Sallie McFague is also a theological realist guided by the cultural-linguistic view of religion and the principles of pragmatism. But she departs from Lindbeck over his appraisal of the coherence and performative success of the biblical story. Where Lindbeck argues on behalf of the semiotic universe of the tradition and for its identification of the God about whom it speaks, McFague vigorously insists upon its deconstruction. The rationale for this attack is multi-layered. Most importantly, McFague has come to reject the identification of God as it is reflected in the biblical narratives because of its dreadful performative record. The God of tradition no longer satisfies her as the true God because He has failed pragmatically.[33]

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[32]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 64.

[33]For example, McFague rejects the traditional account of creation as "dualistic," and hierarchical. She denies Lindbeck's notion of the church as an "alien" community as "exclusivistic" and separatist, and even regards the redemptive story of Scripture as beyond reclamation. As she puts it (*Models of God*, 54): "The mythology in which the cross and especially the resurrection have been interpreted is not only anachronistic but harmful, for the destabilizing, inclusive, nonhierarchical vision of salvation needed in a holistic, nuclear age is undermined by it. . . .we not only accept a salvation we do not need but weaken if not destroy our ability to understand and accept the salvation we do need."

McFague, therefore, subjects the tradition to broader criteria of justification, relying on warrants outside the narrative itself to support her critique of the propositions of faith. As the well-entrenched beliefs of her faith have become more minimal, her openness to a rational accounting of her metaphors has grown. She adopts this strategy because her own understanding of the God of Christianity has been shaped by feminist, humanistic, and ecological sensitivities, which she believes are overlooked by the tradition. The received language of the tradition, in her view, has become incoherent. It has outgrown its relevance and proven itself detrimental to human flourishing as understood by sources outside of and subjugated by the narrative tradition. Its failures cannot be attributed simply to individual mistakes and misuses of language. On the contrary, the narrative of Scripture is fundamentally flawed. The biblical narrative, she insists, is "patriarchal . . . imperialistic, triumphalist . . . oppressive," "idolatrous and irrelevant."[34] As a result, its language harms those shaped by it, and "may also work against the continuation of life on our planet."[35]

For McFague, a theological unwillingness radically to revise or reject the metaphors of Scripture binds us to harmful relational patterns with one another and with the earth. The metaphors and models handed on to us by the tradition are "hurtful," "outmoded," "anachronistic," "names from a bygone time." Refusing to drop these incoherent metaphors and seek a "truer" religious framework "ghettoizes" Christianity and leaves it speaking a divisive theological language no longer "*commensurate with our times.*"[36] The looming threat of the nuclear age makes it imperative that changes be undertaken at once.

The performative breakdown of the biblical narrative requires that it be recast in a fashion which enhances the good of humankind. As expected, improved performance, along with coherence, will serve as long-term justification for the

[34]McFague, *Models of God*, ix.
[35]McFague, *Models of God*, ix.
[36]McFague, *Models of God*, 3.

workability of the proposed metaphorical innovations: "we will consider the implications of these models for the conduct of human existence: the demand for justice for all; participation in healing the divisions among beings; and the offer of companionship to others, especially the outsider."[37]

In her constructive effort to create a more humane and ecologically sensitive theology, McFague looks to many sources beyond the biblical narrative. Her assumption is that any language that endorses "hierarchical, dualistic, external, unchanging, atomistic, anthropocentric, and deterministic ways of understanding these relationships is not appropriate *for our time*."[38] She acknowledges that Christian theologians are "constrained by the constant of the tradition," and "constrained to return to the paradigmatic story of Jesus for illumination and validation," but she clearly means less by this "constraint" than does Lindbeck.[39] For she proceeds to engage in a wholesale, "liberal" rejection of the language of the tradition, replacing it with her new and more promising metaphors. To accomplish this task, she incorporates the "grammar" of contemporary holistic, evolutionary and ecological sensibilities, insights from other religious traditions, the experience of the disenfranchised and alienated, and her own interpretive insights as a woman.

Her openness to reconstruct the metaphors of Christianity derives from her view that "Scripture and the classics of the theological tradition, are 'sedimentations' of interpreted experience."[40] The relationship between Scripture, tradition, and experience, therefore, is more fluid than is usually appreciated, because Scripture and tradition themselves are products of experience. Echoing James, she argues that since all

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[37]McFague, *Models of God*, xiii. McFague adds "it is the same kind of claim as that presented by the models of God as lord, king, and patriarch, with the world as His realm. . . . The question we must ask is not whether one is true and the other false, but which one is a better portrait of Christian faith *for our day*."

[38]McFague, *Models of God*, 13.

[39]McFague, *Models of God*, 41, 49.

[40]McFague, *Models of God*, 42.

experience is interpreted, we are always involved in a "hermeneutical spiral from which there is no clear entrance or exit."[41] The result is that Scripture is rightly understood as a "classic" or "prototype," which serves "as a model of how theology should be done," but its authority should not exceed these narrow parameters.[42] McFague refuses to follow Lindbeck and grant to the biblical narrative a more privileged place in the interplay of Scripture, tradition, and experience. Where Lindbeck would insist that the identity of the Christian faith is irrevocably tied to the seamless tradition, McFague rejects that view and seeks to identify God differently. "Unfortunately, others have ascribed to Scripture a loftier, and unjustified, status: it has too often been seen as the authoritative text, the only norm for subsequent theology. As such the language (metaphors, models, and concepts) of two thousand years ago has become sacralized and made normative."[43]

For McFague the language of two thousand years ago simply cannot be absolutized and expected coherently to express the contemporary experience of God's transformative, salvific love. The biblical narrative reflects the experience of the distant past in wooden metaphors that speak of "dying and rising gods, personal guilt and sacrificial atonement, eternal life and so forth."[44] These models, whatever their value may once have been, have simply lost their resonance in the late twentieth century and speak inadequately to the contemporary "evolutionary and ecological vision of interdependence with human beings possessing the ability to end life."[45]

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[41]McFague, *Models of God*, 42.

[42]McFague, *Models of God*, 43.

[43]McFague, *Models of God*, 43. McFague adds, "not only has Christian faith been interpreted for most of its history in anachronistic, irrelevant ways, but it has also become a 'book religion'. . . .although it is evident in the book Christianity worships that it is the transformative power of God's love, not a text, that is the focus of Christian faith."

[44]McFague, *Models of God*, 45.

[45]McFague, *Models of God*, 45.

In short, McFague grants that Scripture is one resource for theological construction, perhaps even the preeminent source. She grants Scripture a privileged status, but also speaks of other biblically and non-biblically shaped experiences as additional sources for theological insight. Her notion of the "sedimentation" of experience suggests a nuanced understanding of the development of narratives in critical interplay with their forebears and contemporary alternatives. For Lindbeck, the biblical narrative as shaped in the tradition is the resource without which Christian communal and theological identity is lost. He tends, more so than McFague, to close off the narrative tradition to contemporary experience. Those elements of the tradition to which reason has access are open to discussion, but those elements tied to the well-entrenched beliefs of the faith are not. In fairness to Lindbeck, however, this is also the case for McFague.

One could certainly argue that this approach creates some difficulties for Lindbeck, not the least of which is his reliance on what appears to be an "experiential-expressivist" tie to the formation of the narratives of Scripture he upholds. Certainly the biblical narratives to which he clings are themselves a product of experience, shaped by the tradition to which the gospel was initially directed. This "tradition" itself developed as some narratives of believing experience came to be normative at the expense of others. Further, one assumes that Lindbeck would not deny that Scripture is made up of several "narratives"—of Jesus, John, or Paul for example—and that no account of their experience or subsequent experience can occur independent of tradition. If this is so, McFague would ask, why would Lindbeck reify the experience shaped by the dominant or transmitted "tradition" in the Bible at the expense of non-biblically based experience or of subjugated traditions within the community of faith itself? If all experience is given form by cultural-linguistic traditions, then why privilege the orthodox tradition over against the others? Lindbeck's answer would be that the tradition truthfully identifies God through its narratives as born out by its coherence and stellar performance,

an answer which McFague could debate, but not reject methodologically.[46]

Simply put, for Lindbeck the Christian narrative is sufficiently inclusive and malleable to make sense of the changing world to which it is currently addressed, and can help produce the sort of future he and McFague envision. It has been and remains coherent and effective; its failures in the past have been due to faulty application. Hence, the tradition continues to make justifiable ontological truth claims about the nature and purpose of the divine. For McFague the tradition has shown proven itself outworn and pragmatically anemic, unable to bring out the best in women, in relationships, in care for the environment, and in prospects for the future. Whatever its value may have been in the past, it is now time to drop its central metaphors in order to restore coherence and improve on the tradition's performance. It seems that the experiences of both theologians in the "semiotic universe" of the biblical narrative have been very different, but neither doubts that the linguistic patterns at work in the tradition have formed their perspectives. McFague, one might say, wishes to overhaul the raft as she stands on its edge, while Lindbeck calls only for very minimal repairs. Failures at both the levels of coherence and performance have made such changes necessary.

In short, McFague thinks that the traditional biblical narrative divides the creation, person from person, human from non-human, and persons from the divine, signaling a mistaken account of the pervasive, all-encompassing "reunification of the beloved world with its lover, God."[47] Guilty of an incompatibility with contemporary extra-biblical

[46]One may see Stephen Sell, "Hermeneutics in Theology and the Theology of Hermeneutics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 61 (Winter 1993): 683 and following. Sell claims that Lindbeck grants tradition an excessive voice in the interplay between tradition and experience. "Liberals,"one may argue, are too prone to err in the opposite direction. My point is that this is not a methodological approach as such, but a strategy necessitated by variant readings of the performance of the biblical narratives over time.

[47]McFague, *Models of God*, 135.

beliefs and a demonstrable performative failure, the incoherent metaphors of the tradition cry out for theological rejection.

Conclusions

Unless one characterizes Lindbeck's work as theologically sectarian, fideistic, or irrational,[48] which, in my view, would entail leveling the same accusations at McFague, can one argue that his theological realism corresponds methodologically to McFague's? Their constructive differences are not tied to method. Instead, Lindbeck's "conservatism" or "Biblicism" derives from his conviction that the stories of Scripture remain pragmatically alive and relevant to the contemporary mind and situation; further, they truly identify the God about whom they speak. In addition, they continue to generate human flourishing when practiced faithfully. Lindbeck clearly assumes a unity, a coherence, and a verifiable pragmatic success in the narrative tradition that McFague denies. According to Lindbeck, the biblical narrative can effectively "absorb" the world because it possesses a truth which the world lacks.

McFague's "liberalism" proceeds from her rejection of these conclusions, and her subsequent desire to jettison the tradition. The narrative is senseless to the critical, contemporary mind, and performs poorly. Its depiction of God is conceptually

[48]These concerns have been raised by a variety of thinkers, including McFague. James Gustafson, for example, lists Lindbeck among the theologians guilty of offering a "sectarian temptation" and argues forcefully against succumbing to it. See Gustafson's, "The Sectarian Temptation: Reflections on Theology, the Church, and the University," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society* 40 (1985): 83-94. As Gustafson writes, echoing McFague (93): "In Christian sectarian form God becomes a Christian God for Christian people: to put it most pejoratively, God is assumed to be a tribal God of a minority of the earth's population. Or, if God is not a tribal God there is only one community in the world that has access to knowledge of God because God has revealed himself only in the life of that community. Or still another possible assumption, and worse from my perspective than the other two, Christian theology and ethics really are not concerned so much about God as they are about maintaining fidelity to the biblical narratives about Jesus, or about maintaining the 'biblical view' as a historical vocation that demands fidelity without further external justification, or idolatrously maintaining a historic social identity."

inadequate and demonstrably false. McFague believes narrativists are blind to its failures, and unable to acknowledge the damage wrought by its interpretation of reality. Lindbeck sees McFague trading Christian distinctiveness for fleeting "relevance," opting for a theological *esperanto* of dubious current value, and certainly of no lasting worth. As the penetrating voice of the Christian narrative vanishes from the scene, society will lose the clarion call to an interpretive "masterpiece" for living, and the Christian community itself will be threatened with extinction.

With such dissimilar ways of comprehending the world and of construing the faith/reason dialectic, it is not at all surprising that the two thinkers diverge so thoroughly in their substantive proposals. But unless Lindbeck has opted for a sectarian withdrawal from theological dialogue, which he has not, then he and McFague along with others who similarly disagree can at least continue to converse. Their clash is not irreconcilable at the level of method, "experiential-expressivist" vs. "narrativist." Rather, it is a clash over conflicting narratives and their ability to identify accurately the Divine and its purposes, and over pragmatic assessments of the received tradition. Can such a conversation prove fruitful? That, of course, remains to be seen, particularly in the realm of conflicting theological proposals. But at least a conversation would seem possible, if not ruled out for the wrong reasons.[49]

[49]My thanks are extended to John P. Reeder Jr. of Brown University, and to John Haught of Georgetown University, whose careful reading of an earlier draft of this essay helped clarify the argument considerably. Their gracious and discerning attention to my work is deeply appreciated.

Official and Nonofficial Piety and Ritual in Early Lutheranism

A. G. Roeber

In recent years, both secular historians and historical theologians have turned their attention to the complex question: How and to what extent were the confessional principles of the Lutheran Church received and understood by both lay and clerical adherents? This essay is intended to serve both pastors and lay readers who may not have time and opportunity to keep abreast of the literature which has sought to probe this question. The issue of "official" and "nonofficial" understandings of a faith is, of course, one of more than historical or antiquarian interest.[1]

In the context of Lutheran theology today, if confessional and liturgical renewal is to flourish, an informed perspective on the complex relationship between written confession and the public ritual of worship, and what a broader segment of a population makes of these markers of the faith seems particularly urgent. Both anthropologists and historians have noted that those responsible for articulating doctrine or maintaining discipline in the faith may well find that "lesser participants in what are intended to be rites of power exert themselves through consent, resistance, and misinterpretation; they appropriate rituals and make them their own."[2]

Few observers of American Lutheran churches today should fail to see that the crisis of Lutheran confessionalism stems from

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[1]For a useful overview of the interplay between "official" and "nonofficial" religious views in early modern Europe, see Robert W. Scribner, "Elements of Popular Belief" (1: 231-262) and Heinz Schilling, "Confessional Europe" (2:641-681), in Thomas A. Brady Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, editors, *Handbook of European History, 1400-1600*, 2 volumes (Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill, 1994; Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1995).

[2]Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: an Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 3. Karant-Nunn here summarizes the perspective of Catherine Bell's *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York and Oxford, 1992).

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precisely this disjuncture—that is, misinterpretation or highly selective appropriation by a largely uninformed participant group of what they *think* "Lutheranism" is all about. A good deal of the selective appropriation has tended to evolve from difficulties with the pastoral office and how those called to it were perceived. This essay argues that a critical component of this disjunction actually occurred prior to the emergence of the culprits conventionally named in surveys of doctrine or historical theology, the unhappy twins of Enlightenment Rationalism and Pietism. Historians of the late sixteenth century now suggest that the Lutheran clergy had already come to be identified in the minds of many ordinary people with a process of "social discipline." That is, the pastors' rightful concern for order, discipline, and serious recollection that should surround the sacraments of absolution and the Lord's Supper unfortunately became inevitably mixed with the clergy's role as public servants of princes who were seeking a more ordered society, and more economically productive subjects. By the end of the sixteenth century, one can dimly discern a serious consequence of this development. While the evidence is uneven and highly region-specific, a certain distance separates even literate popular expressions of piety and ritual observance from the desired connection that should have bound everyday life and households to the public piety and ritual of the liturgy presided over by the holders of the pastoral office.

Rather than attempt to trace the story of piety and ritual from the Reformation to the first arrival of Danish Lutherans on the shores of North America in 1619, this essay confines itself to events within the German-speaking populations of the Holy Roman Empire. We will not attempt to assess the profound impact of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) upon this critical question, for that seminal event leads to a consideration of the history of Pietism and early Enlightenment thought as well. Last, due to space limitations, we cannot consider the complete array of ritual events surrouding birth, marriage, death, elections of officials, and the like. Rather, the focus here is restricted to piety and ritual as it affected and was refracted through the pastoral office and the connection to—or

disaffection from—absolution and the Lord's Supper as identifying marks of specifically Lutheran confessional piety.

I.

Piety and ritual practice in Lutheranism should flow from the confessional focus of these churches within the western, catholic tradition. The question Jesus put to His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" produced the confession of faith by St. Peter, which Jesus revealed as the free gift of the Holy Spirit, the faith that saves. The ministry built upon that confession of faith becomes the rock upon which the church is built.

Martin Luther quickly realized, however, that while the task of those called to the pastoral office was to preach the Word that announced that message of salvation by faith alone, immediate attention had to be paid to the hearers and how they made sense of this "good news." Lutheran laity over many generations have come to know "the gospel in a nutshell," (John 3:16) as one of the simplest summaries of where their faith should be grounded. Lutherans have relied on this passage to state that something about the very nature of an otherwise hidden and mysterious God can be known. The unbounded love of God the Father for a fallen humanity and creation—hence the key characteristic of His fundamental nature—are revealed in the mystery and scandal of the cross and resurrection of His Son Jesus, the Christ. Those who believe this remain sinners, even after hearing the gospel, having been baptized, and continuing a life-long journey of "repentance," the theme Luther announced at the beginning of the Ninety-Five Theses. But the believers are also, simultaneously, saved.

How ordinary people received these subtle theological dynamisms of "Law and Gospel;" "*simul justus et peccator*" and the odd-sounding "*three solas*"—grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone—concerned Luther and the other reformers from the very outset. They bound these insights together by

insisting that "Christ alone" summed up what all believers should understand as the center of the confessing church.[3]

Probing this issue of reception and response among men and women in a variety of conditions and occupations is more difficult than one might suspect. Part of that difficulty surrounds the personality of the Reformer himself. In popular reception and understanding of piety and ritual, the generation of "Lutherans" who lived in the last half of the sixteenth century began to develop a spiritual literature that focused on aspects of Luther's own life. Not surprisingly, much of that devotion centered around his domestic life and the stories collected by the students and guests in his house which came to be known as the *Table Talk*. That such veneration also included the belief in Luther as a saint, with stories of weeping images of the Reformer, and miraculous preservations of Luther's portraits from fire, warfare, and attempts at destruction may surprise some. Yet, herein lay a confirmation of Lutheran confessional belief: all baptized Christians are called by God to priestly dignity by virtue of Baptism in that state and occupation in life in which they find themselves. Yet, the confessional reforms constituted course correction, not radical break with the ancient and medieval church.[4] While these later devotional materials and beliefs are important to understanding the trajectory of piety and ritual, initial Lutheran piety and practice emphasized other forms.[5]

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[3]For an excellent presentation of this point, see James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 347-361. One may also see Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970).

[4]On the veneration of Luther's image and accounts of miraculous events surrounding it, one may see "Incombustible Luther: The Image of the Reformer in Early Modern Germany," Chapter 15 of Robert W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London and Ronceverte, West Virginia: Hambledon Press, 1987), 323-353.

[5]For an overview of differing historians' interpretations of Luther from the sixteenth century to the present, see Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986). Similarly, for the North American context, see Hartmut Lehmann, *Martin Luther in the American Imagination* (München: W. Fink, 1988).

Although discerning "early" from "later" Lutheran piety and ritual is not simple, we should distinguish the emphases of the period 1520 to about 1545 from the later sixteenth century up to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. From the War of the Schmalkaldic League, therefore, to the cataclysmic event that devastated Europe and the German lands in particular, a rather different set of themes, emphases, and perceptions characterized "later" Lutheran rituals and piety from "earlier" expressions.

II.

Early Lutheran piety, allowing always for considerable regional and local variation, tended to emphasize continuity with the rituals and practices of the past, albeit stripped of accretions the Reformers believed had compromised or obscured the central theology of the cross. Piety and ritual for the first generation remained firmly fixed on the public preaching of the word, absolution, and the reception of the Lord's Supper within the believing community. The confessional standpoint of this early Lutheran theology identified the true church as that believing community where "the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel," to use the formula later adopted in the Augsburg Confession.[6] Here was the proper context from whence all genuine piety flowed. Proper catechesis of the entire household within this context produced the work Luther believed to be the most important of all his voluminous writings, the Small Catechism of 1529.[7]

Luther had already identified the proper context for growth in piety by emphasizing the regularity of ritual in his sermon for the early Mass for Christmas Day in 1522:

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[6]Quotations from the Lutheran Symbolical Books are from: *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), Augsburg Confession, Article VII, 32.

[7]The actual title was *Enchiridion: The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther for Ordinary Pastors and Preachers*; the "handbook" or "manual" includes the prayers Luther himself said he used as a daily spiritual regimen; see his preface to the Large Catechism, 359.

> He who wants to find Christ, must first find the church. How would one know Christ and faith in Him if one did not know where they are who believe in Him? He who would know something concerning Christ, must neither trust in himself nor build his bridge into heaven by means of his own reason, but he should go to the church; he should attend it and ask his questions there.
>
> The church is not wood and stone but the assembly of people who believe in Christ. With this church one should be connected and see how the people believe, live, and teach. They certainly have Christ in their midst, for outside the Christian church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation.[8]

How Lutherans believed, taught, and acted in worship depended in a critical fashion upon those called to the preaching office of the church. The structure of the Augsburg Confession made this clear. After setting out the articles on the nature of God, original sin, and Christ the Word of God, the confessors wrote the article on which the church stands or falls, on justification. Immediately thereafter what one might properly describe as the "linkage" article appears, entitled the "Office of the Ministry" as instituted by God in order to provide the gospel and the sacraments, the means of saving grace.[9] Piety, therefore, depended upon the quality of the "teaching shepherd" in each parish. Early descriptions of Lutheran pastors–indeed well into the eighteenth century–continue to use interchangeably the words "the Pastor" and "the Priest." Lutherans regularly described the teaching and shepherding stewards of word and sacrament as "priests" and addressed them as either "Father" or *Pfarrer* in many parts of German-speaking Europe well into the eighteenth century.

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[8]"Sermon on the Gospel for the Early Christmas Service, Luke 2:15-20," in *Luther's Works, Sermons II*, Helmut T. Lehmann and Hans J. Hillerbrand, editors, volume 52 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 39-40. References to this series will be abbreviated *LW*.

[9]Augsburg Confession V, 31.

The link between piety in everyday life to word and sacrament, however, depended upon a renewed and greatly expanded role for fathers of households. Luther's 1524 essay to the town councillors of Germany that they take care to erect and staff Christian schools reflected both the Reformation's origins in the universities, and the Reformers' determination to restore to the baptized heads of households their responsibility and calling to be expositors of a biblical spiritual life.[10] This insistence explains early Lutheranism's enthusiastic reception among the small town and urban burghers from Uppsala in Sweden to Ljubljana in Slovenia; from Strassburg in the west of the Holy Roman Empire to Königsberg in East Prussia.[11] The emphasis on proper catechesis presupposed a deep linkage between what was taught in the home, what was learned in the schools, to that which what was first properly heard and received in word and sacrament in the churches. Luther's description of the catechism as the "layman's Bible" illustrated the conviction that this collection of questions and answers, properly used, would bring ordinary literate persons to review repeatedly the proper focus and purpose of the history of God's acts revealed in Scripture, properly proclaimed and sacramentally received.

At the center of everything, Luther insisted, must be the cross; all piety and ritual, including principles of hearing, reading and interpreting Scripture, preaching, and liturgy depended on asking whether the passage, the sermon, the service, the popular devotion held up the crucified one, or as he put it, "advanced Christ" (*Was Christum treibet*). Luther's stubborn defense of the doctrine that Christ was truly present in the Lord's Supper definitively shaped public ritual and piety; the Sacrament of the

[10]"To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," *LW*, 45: 347-78.

[11]For insights on the European borderlands of Lutheran theology and spirituality, one may see Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio, the Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva: Droz, 1977), and Trygve R. Skarsten, "The Reception of the Augsburg Confession in Scandinavia," and David P. Daniel, "The Influence of the Augsburg Confession in South-East Central Europe," both in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 87-114.

Altar *is* the gospel, its frequent reception a key component of the piety he hoped for in a renewed church.[12]

Historians of the Lutheran attempt at renewal have, however, until very recently, neglected this insight and the importance of studying ritual practice. Instead, the history of catechetics, visitations, and education have in the hands of some, revealed a ponderous didacticism. Popular resistance to obligatory catechetics remained; stubborn refusal to give up old peasant magic practices and beliefs in wise men and women healers continued to be lamented by Lutheran pastors and princes. Yet concentrating solely upon these indices of piety (or its absence) misses the import of Luther's Christmas sermon in 1522. How the church believed, and taught, and lived had to be heard not merely in the pastoral sermon. Rather, the entire community's response was also critical. Even before early Lutherans learned to understand the faith from a new catechism, they rushed to embrace what encapsulated in more vibrant form what the Reformer only later put down in the questions and answers of the Catechism: his hymnody.

By listening to what ordinary people said and sang in the church, Luther knew, one received back some indication of what was confessed, taught, and believed. If, as one scholar has said, the Lutheran confessional symbols are the dialogue of the church, answering back in faithful language the primary speech of God revealed in His word, then the hymns of the church in the mouths of believers spoke back confessional belief from the realm of deeply personal piety. Luther's own experience of the church at prayer in the monastic Hours now received renewed expression in congregational hymnody. Not without reason have some of the most insightful commentators noted that Lutheran piety is centered on the Pauline teaching that faith comes from hearing (*fides ex auditu*).[13]

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[12]"Preface to the Epistles of Saint James and Saint Jude," *LW* 35: 396.

[13]For the classic exposition of this insight, see Ernst Bizer, *Fides ex auditu: eine Untersuchung über die Enteckung der Gerechtigkeit Gottes durch Martin Luther* (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Verhandlung der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1958).

Within a few months of the Christmas Mass Sermon, Luther began working on his first vernacular hymns for inclusion in the Latin Mass. By 1524 the first collection of hymns appeared, the *Etlich christlich lieder,* containing eight texts that relied on earlier broadsheet versions. This concern to provide participants in liturgy with oral expressions of faith reflected Luther's wish that the church building be known as a *Mundhaus*—literally a house of the mouth where the gospel was proclaimed, commented upon, sung in praises, and received orally in the Lord's Supper.[14]

Luther's so-called "Catechism Chorales" were composed in such a way that they illustrated the "Chief Six Parts" of the Small Catechism—the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Baptism, the Lord's Prayer, confession and absolution, and the Lord's Supper. Although Johann Sebastian Bach probably first identified these compositions with the various divisions of the catechism at a much later date, their early composition testifies to the Reformer's concerns that day-to-day piety and ritual be re-channeled from "private" devotions said during the Mass (as had been true before the Reformation). Partly because of his own love of music, but in part because of his own obligation as professor of Scripture, Luther's life-long concentration on the Book of Psalms led him to urge that communal singing be encouraged as the key link between private piety and the public liturgy of the church.

By 1575, more than 200 hymn collections gave expression to the tradition of congregational singing which became one of the most enduring characteristics of Lutheran worship. Nor were the songs meant to be sung only within the liturgy. Rather, the hymns were issued both in broadside or in small collected and bound sheets and later actual bound books for use in the home. Of all these collections, the 1545 collection, Valentin Babst's *Geistliche Lieder* earned a special pride of place since Luther wrote the preface to it before his death a year later. Moreover, within a relatively short time, as Lutheran pastors married, the

[14]For citations and a fuller reflection on this key aspect of Lutheran piety, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 60-66.

parsonage became the focus of music, where both the pastor's wife and children as well as other members of the congregation both practiced and sang for recreation, following the example of the Reformer and his own family.[15]

The early popular reception of hymnody seems to have been matched by a selective buying and (we assume) reading or listening to, Luther's pastoral works. Despite Luther's reputation as a polemicist, scholars now believe from the evidence on printing and sales that it was through his sermons and pastoral advice that he "got through" to a vast audience spread throughout most of northern, central, and southeastern Europe.[16] The temptation—seldom resisted by later commentators—to concentrate on the "written" dimensions of piety never overcame Luther and the first generation of reformers. It is no accident that, just as he turned his attention to song, Luther also drastically modified his early attack on what was *seen* as proper expressions or foci of piety and ritual.

Nothing eventually set Lutheran houses of worship apart from Reformed or Free church Protestantism so much as the retention of statuary, paintings, and liturgical aids to devotion. Luther's return from the Wartburg to condemn the destruction of artwork in Wittenberg's churches is well-known. The endorsement of the Reformation by Lucas Cranach and the other composers of altarpieces graphically pointed the devout to the blood of the crucified Christ being caught in chalices; in

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[15]For more details and citation of the literature, one may see Carl F. Schalk, *God's Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in America* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 21-29; Oskar Söhngen, "Die Musik im evangelischen Pfarrhaus," in *Das evangelische Pfarrhaus: eine Kultur-und Sozialgeschichte*, edited by Martin Greiffenhagen (Stuttgart: Kreuz, 1984), 295-310. I am deeply in debt to Christopher Brown for suggestions and help on this key—and neglected—dimension of Lutheran piety. His work promises to revitalize our understanding of how central the restoration of congregational singing was to the Lutheran theological reforms (Christopher Brown, "Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Reformation of the German People," dissertation in progress, Harvard University).

[16]Mark U. Edwards Jr., "First Impressions in the Strasbourg Press," in Andrew C. Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Germania Illustrata: Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Struass* (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992), 75-98.

neighboring panels, chalices are distributed to the faithful kneeling for the Lord's Supper received under both forms—the pictorial preaching of the gospel completely consonant with Lutheran confessional theology.[17]

The manner in which liturgical art was "received" and expropriated by Lutheran believers in the sixteenth century remains difficult to assess. Luther's own retention of artwork stemmed not from his own limited appreciation of it or conviction that it was necessary. Rather, he refused to countenance its destruction by radicals who insisted that God's law demanded it. His own emphasis remained on what was heard; to a degree, this monastic aesthetic was transferred to ordinary Lutheran believers, but it appears, only in part. Beyond the graphic representation of the central doctrine of the cross as the means of redemption and race, the role of the saints and martyrs received considerable attention from Luther and the reformers. Precisely because the Reformers insisted that they did not break with apostolic tradition in their reforms, they had to find a suitable way both to honor the memory of the saints and apostles and to eradicate the popular cult of worship and folk-magic which had grown up around the members of the Church Triumphant.

The saints and martyrs were not removed from Lutheran piety. Veneration of relics, pilgrimages, and praying to the saints were not considered appropriate because of such practices obscured the central mediating role of Christ. But early Lutherans did continue a cult of the saints and martyrs in a different understanding. The first hint of this reformed piety and its ritual expression occurs in Luther's first hymn: a commemoration of two Augustinian friars burned at the stake for preaching the evangelical message of church reform.[18]

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[17]On Cranach, Elder and Younger, one may see Max J. Friedlander and Jakob Rosenberg, *The Paintings of Lucas Cranach* (New York: Tabard Press, 1978); Werner Schade, *Die Malerfamilie Cranach* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1974).

[18]Robert Kolb, *For all the Saints: Changing Perceptions of Martyrdom and Sainthood in the Lutheran Reformation* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987); on Luther's hymn composed after the death of the two friars in

This commemorative hymn illustrates the general thrust of how Lutheran piety handled the medieval cult of the saints. It reminds us again of the auricular emphasis of Lutheran piety and ritual. Lutheran piety re-historicized the saints as real persons, and this transformation of the martyrs and saints within Lutheranism won broad acceptance. In part, this was due to Luther's insistence on the dignity of the calling all Christians received in baptism, and from Lutheran theologians' refusal to concentrate on the heroic deeds of clerics and those in religious communities. This renewed cultus meshed with the rising tide of artisan and peasant resentment against novel tax schemes and abolition of ancient privileges on the part of the nobility, both lay and clerical. Initially, therefore, Lutheran piety seemed capable of maintaining continuity with the medieval past replete with saints and martyrs, but holding up these people as witnesses who had made a bold confession of the gospel. Properly understood in this light, the saints could still be honored and pointed to in the public prayer of the church. People were to venerate their memory, though not them, and see through them to the real focus, the crucified and risen Christ.[19]

Yet we cannot accept uncritically the notion that there was only one, or an undifferentiated "reception" of Lutheran teaching and encouragement of a renewed piety. Rather, in the lay propaganda pamphlets, in the calendars, the broadsides, anniversary festivals of the Reformation, and other indices of what people bought and read and celebrated, one sees important variations. Within the first decade of the Reformation's course, and prior to the actual presentation of the Augsburg Confession in 1530, the explosion of printing and the different ways diverse social and economic groups seized the Reformation's message complicates considerably the task of assessing what people felt, believed, understood, and

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July, 1523, see 20-21.

[19]One may see Günther Lottes, "Popular culture and the Early Modern State in 16th Century Germany," in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin and New York: Mouton, 1984), 147-188.

appropriated within the broad parameters of Lutheran piety and ritual practice.[20]

In assessing the pamphlets, broadsides, and other forms of popular reading materials, for example, one scholar identifies urban leaders as those who tended to favor personal correspondence, avoided open conflicts, and may well have been among those most inclined to purchase Luther's pastoral sermons. Artisans, on the other hand, snatched up poetry and dialogues as well as the perennial popular songs. It was these latter town and urban artisans and teachers in the schools who perhaps gravitated initially to the fundamental message of Lutheran piety: all vocations in life are sacred and inherently dignified, not just those called to the nobility or clerical estates.

Yet even with such important distinctions, we may be looking more at propaganda techniques and rhetoric than penetrating to the heart of that piety we assume is reflected in such texts. With the outbreak of the Peasants' War in 1525 and Luther's denunciation of the peasants, the relationship of Lutheran theology and piety to the broadest forms of popular belief was permanently damaged. As the Reformation moved toward a theological statement of its program for reforming the entire western church, Luther systematized, via the catechism, the essential points of his hoped-form reforms. He intended this manual of devotion to penetrate household, parish church, the minds and hearts; the catechism was not meant simply to be "taught" but prayed.

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[20]The following paragraphs summarize Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519-1530* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996); Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1:303-450. For an introduction to the vast literature on the Peasant Revolt of 1525 and the various interpretations of the event in relation to Luther and the Lutheran Reformation, see Peter Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Tom Scott, "The Peasants' War: A Historiographical Review," *The Historical Journal* 22 (1979): 693-720.

But did Luther's insights really come to be internalized by ordinary believers? In his classic study *Luther's House of Learning*, historian Gerald Strauss pronounces the didactic work of the Reformation largely to have failed. The persistence of folk magic beliefs, Strauss and others have argued, showed that while the Roman church quickly adjusted itself to find room for various forms of Christianized folk beliefs and visual rituals, the Lutheran reformers refused to do so. They settled instead for the dubious mechanism of the classroom and catechism for inculcating, rather than giving expression to, popular spiritual beliefs and needs.

Not everyone agrees, of course. Perhaps Strauss forgot that the catechism was sung and prayed, not merely recited. It is nearly impossible to untangle the personal perspective of historians and the times that shaped their assessments from this fundamental question about the popular piety of Lutherans. Lewis Spitz, Steven Ozment, James Kittelson, and Scott Hendrix have all raised doubts about Strauss's argument. But the controversy reveals something quite important: German-speaking society in particular was badly fragmented and full of hostile camps long before the Reformation occurred. That widely diverse forms of piety and arguments about its inculcation and practice should have come to be reflected in diverse ways ought not surprise us.[21]

III.

The emergence of a distinctly "Lutheran" piety and ritual practices that gave it expression cannot be dated precisely. Still, in the decades following the public reading of the Augsburg Confession, but particularly by the late 1540s, some hints appeared as to what that piety and the mechanisms for its nurture looked like.

First, the appearance of the first distinctly "Lutheran" calendars emerged by the 1540s, including both those that

[21]For a summary of the literature and these disputes, see "Gerald Strauss, Historian," by the editors of *Germania Illustrata*, xi-xxiii; see also Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, 190-201.

concentrated on salvation history as well as a chronicle of both biblical events and recent threats to the gospel. Since the medieval rhythm of the year turned with the agricultural seasons, the popularity of the Lutheran calendars among town and urban consumers reflected the biblical themes there that matched the complex financial and market arrangements of the Burghers. Agricultural markets themselves still counted for a great deal, and by 1575 Andreas Johndorf's popular *Historical Calendar* managed to pay some attention to the traditional saints' days associated with a major turning point in the year—St. John's Day at Midsummer for instance—with the newer emphasis on the confessing bravery of saints, both ancient and contemporary.

In the formal expressions of worship, too, the church orders of the period between 1536 and 1560 began to depart from the early practices of the Reformation. Public confession and absolution, unheard of in the pre-Reformation church, was introduced in Württemberg, Plauen, Mecklenburg, and Waldeck during this period, and the use of auricular confession also seems to have declined in some regions. Undoubtedly, part of this development reflected the insistence of the reformers that except in cases where the conscience was severely troubled, the approach to the Lord's Supper was deemed the sufficient sacramental means of forgiveness. As the Council of Trent met during this very period (1545-1563) and introduced more rigorous demands for auricular confession prior to obligatory communion at least once a year, expressions of piety in the two churches took on increasingly confessional and polemical meanings. Within this context of "confessionalization"—an admission that a general reform of the entire and still potentially unified western church was now impossible—forms of piety were also forced into new ritual postures and expressions.[22]

[22]One may see Paul Graff, *Geschichte und Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in den evangelischen Kirchen Deutschlands,* two volumes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937 and 1939), 1:300-382; for a survey of the now-vast literature on "confessionalization" and its implications, see for example Richard van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag in der frühen Neuzeit: Religion, Magie, Aufklärung 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (München: C. H. Beck, 1994), 108-121; on auricular confession specifically in Lutheran and

Lutheran pastors were now offered a critically edited version of the traditional lives of the saints. Various works, including those of Hermann Bonnus and Georg Spalatin, appeared in Latin between the 1540s and the last decades of the century. These revised versions of the saints' lives again underscored not miraculous events, but God's love for the church manifested in raising up witnesses to the gospel in times of persecution and suffering. Although these works cannot be counted as "popular" markers of piety, since the Lutheran clergy bought them, they found their way indirectly via the sermon into the awareness of Lutheran parish listeners.

Besides what was seen and heard in the forms of hymnody, painting, calendars, broadsides and inexpensive print forms, however, one of the most powerful expressions of Lutheran piety and world-view crystallized as the conflict between the Lutheran Reformation and Rome spilled over into military conflict. The woodcuts of the period after hopes for conciliation were dashed reflected this disappointment, and hardened the popular expression of Lutheran piety and self-consciousness against Roman pious practices. Oddly enough, the vituperative and shocking quality of the popular woodcuts that focused on the evil of the papacy did not encompass the totality of Lutheran piety and identity. While one might have expected prayerbooks, hymnody, and tales of martyrs to the gospel to reflect exactly these graphic representations, such was not the case. Instead, the later sixteenth-century collections of martyrology, lives of the saints, and hymnody concentrate far less on an anti-Roman defense of the true gospel than on the cultivation of devout personal living and preparation for a holy death.[23]

Almost simultaneously, the cult of Luther as the patron saint of the Reformation received its first formulation by about 1556. Even before his death, Luther was venerated by admirers, of course. But a decade later, Luther could no longer be regarded as a contemporary prophet, but as having joined the ranks of the

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Catholic areas, see Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, 91-137.

[23]See "Demons, Defecation and Monsters: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation," Chapter 13 in Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements*, 277-299.

confessing fathers throughout the ages. With the first edition of his works that appeared in 1555 came also new histories, such as Johann Mathesisus's life of Luther which incorporated the major events of Luther's career into salvation history. Luther is both the German prophet and the faithful shepherd of souls. Not incidentally, these portrayals were fashioned just shortly before the first appearance of the *Table Talk* in 1566, where the chronology and strict standards of recording were sacrificed to the compiler Johann Aurifaber's (Goldschmidt) principles of selection to provide for the "spiritual hunger and thirst" of readers according to topics including worship, marriage, sickness and death, schooling—in short, the needs to apply piety to everyday life shorn of medieval peasant rituals deemed superstitious and non-evangelical.[24]

The emergence of Luther as not only prophet and pastor, but father of the domestic household, now emerged almost simultaneously and reenforced the initial enthusiasm of ordinary persons for the Reformation's emphasis on the sacredness of everyday life. Moreover, the role given to fathers, mothers, and children also received renewed treatment in the prayerbooks, tracts, and devotionals of the late sixteenth century. Simultaneously, the reverence for Luther as a saint and the tales of miraculous deliverances of his portrait, including tales of pictures that sweat tears in times of famine or threat of warfare, increased dramatically.[25]

The gradual definition of Lutheran orthodoxy, culminating in 1580 with the publication of the Book of Concord, can only be connected to popular piety with difficulty, at least in terms of direct influence. Rather, it might be more accurate to say that the theological expressions of doctrine among the signatories reflected only in part the actual practice of piety among ordinary Lutherans. Lutheran doctrinal formulation emerged

[24]Kolb, *For All the Saints*, chapter four, "Saint Martin of Wittenberg: Luther in the View of His Students," 103-138; see the introduction to *Table Talk*, *LW* 54: ix-xxvi.

[25]The following paragraphs depend upon Paul Althaus, *Forschungen zur evangelischen Gebetsliteratur* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1927/ Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 48-142.

somewhat as Luther thought it should in his 1522 Christmas Sermon. The ancient formula attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine, *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* ("let the rule of prayer set the rule of belief") lay behind Luther's own sermon. After half a century, a rule of prayer had emerged that revealed the character of much that reflected a genuine Lutheran piety. At the same time, we must remember that outside the bounds of the Holy Roman Empire, the warfare and theological disputation of the late sixteenth century did not touch these borderlands where the Augsburg Confession had won acceptance in the churches. Thus, in Scandinavia or the Baltic area, expressions of piety and mechanisms for its ritual nurture developed rather differently. The disputations and denunciations of theologians across confessional lines left many ordinary believers thirsting for other forms of spiritual comfort and nurture which now took a somewhat novel form.

Lutherans within the Empire maintained a virtual monopoly on the production of popular religious music and texts–up to 75 per cent of all books printed up to 1600. (The hymns sung in congregations, in combination with more elaborate manuals of piety centered on the household, gave to Lutheran piety its middling quality—what later generations would term either in derision or admiration, "bourgeois" or *bürgerlich*). Yet the content of the hymns also shifted gradually. The hymn collections from the later sixteenth century reveal a more individualistic content, and more hymns concentrating on the cross, on human suffering in times of pestilence, warfare, and poverty. The early emphasis in Lutheran hymnody and catechesis subtly changed with the emergence of a new printed form of piety that supplemented, and perhaps one could even say in some areas of Europe, supplanted, the earlier simple collections of hymns and the catechism: the prayerbook.[26]

If one considers the rise of the prayerbook and its character, this index of piety reveals starkly the different character of Lutheran piety in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

[26]Patrice Veit, "Das Gesangbuch in der Praxis Pietatis der Lutheraner," *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte* 197 (1992): 435-454; Brown, "Singing the Gospel."

centuries. To read these prayerbooks is to be struck by a paradoxical sense of what is *not* the focus of Lutheran piety. One does not see an emphasis on the "family," or "household" for example, the direction earlier Lutheran piety's focus on everyday life seemed to be moving toward. The context that produced the prayerbook may have dictated this paradox. The prayerbook is a product of "Lutheran Orthodoxy." The refinement of doctrine and the intense and acrimonious battles between Lutheran and other theologians may have contributed to a decline in expressions of piety that reflected a confident communal identity.

Instead, the content of the prayers is very individualistic, and the prayerbooks themselves the compositions of pastors and theologians. Lay writers are conspicuously absent from these devotional manuals. The topical arrangement of prayers highlights the importance of humility as the key to all other Christian virtues; prayers in times of fear and distress—to be saved from the Turk, the Pope, plague, warfare, and famine—give an apocalyptic flavor to these manuals. Declension of the holiness of calling in everyday life also emerges as a theme in these prayer collections, but more in terms of lament than in providing spiritual guidance for remedying the defects. The emphasis on humility is profoundly Augustinian and Pauline, and the concern for the everyday as the place where God, temptation, and the life of faith are to be found still link these prayerbooks, albeit not profoundly, to the earlier forms of Lutheran piety.

Oddly enough, although the prayers refer to the sinfulness and lack of piety in households, these manuals do not talk of "family" per se, but rather the individual states of life of those who composed a household. Thus, there are prayers for women in childbirth, for heads of households, for a sick child, but not prayers that reveal a collective identity, that is "we, the members of this family or household." The prayerbooks do not provide much practical spiritual advice beyond prayer for dealing with concrete, individualized dilemmas or problems. On the other hand, they reveal a shrewd insight into individual human psychology and provide theologically solid prayers on

the occasion of spiritual drought, anxiety, doubt, and temptation. In this, the Lutheran prayerbooks share a close affinity with some Roman Catholic manuals of piety from the same era. Although the *Andacht* tradition of meditative piety is well represented in these manuals, a specifically sacramental piety focused on the reception of the Lord's Supper is not a primary characteristic of the Lutheran prayerbooks. Martin Chemnitz, whose death in 1586 places him as a contemporary of the later prayerbook authors, labored vigorously to defend and advance not simply the proper doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but the disciplined observation of proper ritual surrounding its celebration. The omission of sacramental piety in the prayerbooks seems, given his life and work, even more striking.[27]

The emergence of this form of individualized piety attached to deep themes of German mysticism crossed confessional lines and reached back into pre-Reformation spirituality. The emphasis on doing penance and forming one's life increasingly after the model of the Crucified had roots that wound around mystics like Johannes Tauler, included Thomas à Kempis, and stood at the beginning of all Lutheran Bibles in Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. Few prayerbooks drew more successfully on both old and contemporary themes than did that composed by the Wittenberg theologian Johann Habermann, whose *Christian Prayers for all Needs and Conditions of Christendom* became a classic, still reprinted centuries later. But Lutherans

[27]Bernrad Vogler, "Die Gebetbücher in der lutherischen Orthodoxie (1550-1700)," *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte* 197 (1992): 424-434; on Chemnitz, one may see for example Bjarne W. Teigen, *The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Brewster, Massachusetts: Trinity Lutheran Press; Distributed by Confessional Lutheran Research Center, 1986), 68-140; and especially at 184: "The break between the 16th century and the 17th century on the doctrine of the consecration is decisive. . . . A survey of the present standard conservative books of Lutheran dogmatics (Baier-Walther, Schmid, Hoenecke, Pieper) demonstrates how complete this triumph is." For a useful reminder of Chemnitz's insistence on discipline and careful attention to ritual, see Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, translated by Luther Poellet (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981); one may recall that this volume was written for the examination of pastors in Braunschweig.

shared the need for meditations, emphasis on mystical union with God, and individualized help for moral living with Roman Catholics, Calvinists, and radicals who were their contemporaries.[28]

Historians probing social discipline now believe that among Roman Catholics, a highly individualized approach to confession and absolution emerged similar to the stricter demands evident among Lutheran authorities. Yet, perhaps in sharp contrast, more frequent confession seems to have led to more frequent communion among pious Roman Catholics; similar demands appear to have been resisted or avoided more cleverly among Lutheran counterparts. Among the latter, for instance, public confession and absolution had tended to displace private confession in Plauen and Württemberg already in the 1530s; by the 1550s in Mecklenberg and Waldeck; the use of the confessional persisted longer in Brandenburg-Prussia and Saxony.[29] Controversy surrounds the significance of mysticism and its impacts upon these patterns and the roles played by

[28]Martin Brecht, "Das Aufkommen der neuen Frömmigkeitsbewegung in Deutschland: Voraussetzungen und Wurzeln, Symptome einer Krise," in *Geschichte des Pietismus: Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, edited by Brecht and others, (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 1:113-130; for a less rigorous but useful introduction in English, see Andrew Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); more impressive is the essay "*Simul Gemitus et Raptus*: Luther and Mysticism," in Heiko A. Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), 126-154.

[29]One may see, for example W. David Myers, *'Poor, Sinning Folk': Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 161-81; Graff, *Geschichte und Auflösung*, 1: 382 does not offer an explanation for the gradual cessation; the social discipline historians suggest that abolition may have been due to passive resistance by the population; in Württemberg, the investigatory court, or *Kirchenconvent* was absorbed in a public "criminalization" of sins that in other areas were dealt with pastorally in private confession and absolution. On the village use of the courts in Württemberg, one may see A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 75-88.

mothers and fathers in the household.[30] Certainly Lutheran piety placed a great emphasis on the role of fathers in properly catechizing entire households. By household, sixteenth century writers meant "the entire house" including servants, day-laborers, extended family, and anyone for whom the head of the house was deemed responsible. Yet, scholars still wonder whether the long-term effects of catechizing children to internalize individual responsibility for faith did not also lead them to challenge authority, whether in household, church, or state—including the necessity of individual confession, absolution, and frequent reception of the Lord's Supper. While mothers and single women in particular were quickly reprimanded in Lutheran piety if they diverged from the social norms Western Europeans had inherited from their medieval ancestors, mothers and women in general did play a significant role in the spread and inculcation of Lutheran piety. Whether that piety was connected to the sacraments of the Lutheran Church, however, still remains unclear.

Despite their acceptance of conventional social roles they firmly believed were biblically based, Magdalena and Balthasar Paumgartner of Nuremberg were partners in business, faith, and devoted marriage. Their surviving correspondence reminds us that middling believers had absorbed the central teaching of Lutheran theology about the sanctity of everyday life; that God ordained all for better or ill; that one could not bargain with God; that submission to His will left not only great freedom to order one's life, but a profound obligation to do so according to the teachings of the gospel. These revealing letters deserve careful meditation, for they shatter easy and carelessly invoked categories of "patriarchy" and assumptions of authoritarianism in both church and household. As Ozment notes, "if there is a mistake worse than believing that the present and the past are the same, it is thinking they are completely different."[31]

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[30]The following summarizes Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 132-177.

[31]Steven Ozment, *Magdalena and Balthasar: an Intimate Portrait of Life in 16th-Century Europe revealed in the Letters of a Nuremberg Husband and Wife* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 136-160; quotation at 161. For the grimmer

The first church orders of Lutheran cities include provisions that women should be catechized and that they had a legitimate role to play in teaching other women and children. Lutheranism maintained Luther's insistence on the education of young women at the start of the Reformation, although it suffered eclipse. The story of Lutheran women's piety and its profound impact upon sons who entered the pastoral office, hearing the chorales from their mothers' lips and learning prayers and catechism from both parents, perhaps watching them in the reception of the Lord's Supper, has never really been told adequately. The complex relationship of Lutheran women to the liturgical piety of the church and their own devotional practices in household and village also still remains a field of research only just now beginning to be tilled. Yet recovery of indices that document the persistence of household rituals tying the Reformation generation to those that followed is particularly difficult. Although, for example, the illustrations in Lutheran Bibles still included crucifixion scenes, inventories of estate do not exist for the entire cross-section of village populations that enable one to ascertain whether (for instance) a crucifix would have been found in moderately well-off Lutheran households by the early seventeenth century. Likewise, whether households actually followed Luther's suggested ritual of making the sign of the cross at the beginning and ending of daily prayers remains nearly impossible to document; whether fathers or mothers were actually those "in charge" of such ritual practices also remains an unanswered question.

IV.

It would be comforting to end this survey of early Lutheran piety on a positive note. The history of this theme, however, leads in a more solemn direction. The age of Lutheran orthodoxy, the social discipline role into which Lutheran pastors were cast, the impact of the first prayerbooks and the more

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fate of an obstreperous, but very resourceful Lutheran woman, see Steven Ozment, *The Bürgermeister's Daughter: Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

individualist themes of late sixteenth-century hymnody were soon overshadowed by the most convulsive event to shake Europe to its foundations after the Black Death and before the outbreak of World War I. The Thirty Years War' yawns like a great gulf separating the world the Reformers had shaped from what emerged after 1648. Out of the maelstrom of horror that halved the population of German-speaking Europe would come profound expressions of piety, and some of the most fundamental challenges to older forms of Lutheran confessional piety and ritual imaginable.

The poetry and confessional witness of Paulus Gerhardt on the one hand, and the challenge of Lutheran Pietism, on the other, bracket these transformations. The gradual "privatization" of piety that marked pietist impulses in Scandinavia, the German-speaking lands and beyond, including North America, however, had already surfaced in the late sixteenth-century prayerbooks and other indices we have examined. Still, those tendencies were balanced by resurgent orthodox eucharistic and liturgical piety centers like Leipzig and Hamburg. Both tendencies in piety bequeathed multiple Lutheran traditions to the post-1648 world. The sanctity of the baptismal calling to holiness in everyday life survived all these upheavals. Yet the trajectory of popular piety and ritual practice leaves some essential questions unclear. Some historians have argued that the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries represented the high-point of the Christian states' attempts at imposing social regulation and control over sometimes resistant and skeptical populations. What long-term effects did this success have in alienating ordinary believers' spiritual needs and expressions of piety from a clergy whose role as enforcers of social order made "official" piety in public liturgy alien or threatening? While it has long been conventional to suppose that a devolution from solid liturgical and confessional practice can be located in the age of "Pietism" and "Rationalism", the problem clearly surfaced much earlier.[32]

[32]One may see Heinz Schilling, "History of Crime or 'History of Sin'—Some Reflections on the Social History of Early Modern Church Discipline," in *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe: Essays for Sir Geoffrey*

Surely, if a major desire of Luther and the reformers was to encourage more frequent reception of the Lord's Supper, attention must also be paid to whether the manuals of devotion of the late sixteenth century still reflected this insistence. Neither their content, nor the documentation of frequency of reception on the part of parishioners in various parts of Europe allow us to conclude that close ties bound this central public act of Lutheran piety and ritual practice to "private" devotionalism. The tendency, in other words, to settle for various forms of individualized piety had already become noticeable long before the onset of Pietism's emphasis on "personal conversion" and observably changed "behavior."

What long-term memories were wrought, and how later generations of Lutherans drew from these events as the churches struggled to recover after 1648 remains a topic in urgent need of reexamination. The stale, and conventional apposition of "pietism" against "dead orthodoxy" fundamentally misrepresents the deeper crisis surrounding popular piety's relationship to both pastoral office and public worship. While historians, theologians and pastors should properly and profitably reassess those seventeenth and eighteenth-century issues, it seems prudential in the critical task of renewing contemporary confessional Lutheranism to include the 'long view' of tensions that beset "official" and "nonofficial" piety and ritual in the Lutheran theological tradition.

Elton on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday, edited by E. I. Kouri and Tom Scott (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 289-310.

Theological Observer

The Historicity of Jonah

A recent issue of the *Lutheran Standard*, the official periodical of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, makes an assertion which, considering the source, is, in itself, common enough in modern liberalism: "Jonah is not history ..." ("Since You Asked," by Norma and Burton Everist, *Lutheran Standard*, September 1998, page 21). A layman or laywoman, in a query addressed to the *Lutheran Standard*, begins with these reasonable observations: "While teaching Sunday school I was surprised to read that Jonah was thought to be a parable. I see nothing in the text that suggests it couldn't be historical." The concerned correspondent then poses the obvious question: "How is it a parable?"

A. A Critical View of Jonah

In the response to this query the denial of the historicity of the Book of Jonah is, in itself, scarcely surprising. Both of the Everists, after all, are shown in a photograph above the column wearing clerical collars. The "Rev. Norma Cook Everist" is identified as a professor of church and ministry in Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque (Iowa), while the "Rev. Burton L. Everist is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church" in East Dubuque (Illinois). The responders, clearly, with the ELCA in general and all its periodicals, are working on the basis of a biblical criticism which, by definition, assumes the fallibility of Holy Scripture. This approach has been, of course, the road by which the ELCA arrived at the ordination of women to the pastoral office, which has become so common in the denomination that the majority of its laity have now accepted the practice (comparing the materials on the "order of creation" in *Book One of Genesis* [CTS, 1998] and the appendix ["The Ordination of Women"] in *Feminism and the Bible*, which is expected within the coming month).

The strange thing about the response is, in fact, the lack of any candid application of higher criticism to the Book of Jonah. It would at least show more intellectual integrity to acknowledge that the book was presumably propounded as history and was certainly so accepted by the ancient Jews. An impartial critic, after all, has no problem in granting an original understanding and, indeed, original intention which differs from his own view of reality. He will then, of course, proceed to state that the author of the Book of Jonah, writing in post-exilic times, has given expression to legendary tales of a pre-exilic prophet which, however, are largely erroneous. There could, to be sure, be some kernel of truth, such as a change from chauvinism to universalism in the preaching of the historical Jonah. The story, however, a critic would say, has clearly been subjected to manifold elaborations, including miracles

by land and by sea, in the course of its transmission through generation on generation in the oral tradition of Israel.

The critic may still, of course, approve the theme of a historical theologian even when his historical data has been tried and found wanting. Thus, many critics would, as do also the Everists, second the theme of Jonah as they see it (correctly to some degree), in contrasting divine love with self-centered chauvinism: "Nineveh is like the heathen nations Israel does not want God to love. God persists when Jonah — and we — are reluctant. The message is: 'Go speak to those you don't know and may not even like.' God's righteousness and mercy includes them too." The assertion here that Nineveh is "like" the nations which Israel wishes to deprive of divine love, as opposed to being in actuality the capital of such a nation, presumably rests on the critical assumption of a post-exilic date of the Book of Jonah. The "like" implies, in other words, the destruction of Nineveh long before the composition of the supposed memoirs of a pre-exilic prophet. In the formulation, moreover, of the "message" of Jonah, the assumption of unfamiliarity with those whom we dislike owes more to the naivete of the formulators than to the Book of Jonah. The prophet, in fact, already knew the Assyrians all too well before the beginning of the events recounted in his book. Contrary to the wishful thinking of modern liberals, an increase in the knowledge of others is no guarantee of a decrease in hating them. More knowledge of others may just as easily exacerbate the hatred. The accuracy, moreover, of the final sentence quoted above depends on the significance of the term "righteousness" therein (especially since even the more conservative predecessors of the ELCA rejected the doctrine of objective justification advocated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States). The theme of Jonah, then, could be simplified as being the inclusion of the Gentiles too within the love of God (as the undersigned has stated in his *Prophetic Books of the Pre-Exilic Era*). The applications to Christians today would, indeed, include the responsibility of bearing witness also to those of differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds even when we dislike them.

To return, however, to the historicity of Jonah, the dismissal in itself, as previously stated, of the factual reliability of the book comes as no surprise. For the denial itself is completely consistent with the critical theology of the *Lutheran Standard* and the ELCA as a whole. The odd thing is the rationalization whereby the Book of Jonah is implicitly characterized as a parable. The *Lutheran Standard*, to be sure, never actually answers the original question, as quoted above, relating to the

Book of Jonah: "How is it a parable?" Several points, however, are introduced to make its portrayal as parable seem less extraordinary.

(1.) The *Lutheran Standard* mentions, in the first place, the variety of literary genres in the Bible: "Scripture comes to us in many forms, including poetry, history, prophecy, laws, allegories, and parables." This observation is true enough, but it is essential to add that history and law are much more basic genres in the biblical repertory than allegories and parables. No passage, indeed, may properly be regarded as allegory or parable without good reason. Such a *modus operandi* is simply a corollary of the basic semantic principle of biblical exegesis, that the one intended sense (*sensus literalis unus*) of any word of Holy Scripture, in any one place and grammatical relation, must be equated with the common meaning (*sensus literae*) of the word unless the context or the analogy of faith requires the acceptance of a different meaning.

(2.) The Everists, to be sure, ascribe an anomalous nature to the Book of Jonah: "Jonah is in a collection of prophetic books. But it is unlike the others, which describe the message that the prophets proclaimed in extensive detail. The message of Jonah is in the story about Jonah." We may observe, however, that the only reason behind Jonah's place among the twelve minor prophets is its brevity. When we think more broadly of the whole category of the *Nᵉbhî'îm*, or Prophets, as the second category of the tripartite Hebrew canon, Jonah is by no means unique. For there are, in the first place, the Former Prophets, which comprise the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The Latter Prophets, too, comprehend sizable sections of historical narrative in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Even, indeed, outside the *Nᵉbhî'îm*, or Prophets in the technical sense, every book also of the Pentateuch and the Writings (including Daniel and such historical books as Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther) received a place in the TaNaK purely on the basis of its authorship by Moses, the Prophet Primarius of Israel, or by one of the prophets who succeeded him.

(3.) The Everists, thirdly, treat "Jonah" as the figure of a people rather than as an individual man: "'Jonah' means dove — a pet name for Israel." Now the word *yônâh* occurs thirty-two times in the Old Testament — twenty-one times in the singular absolute, once in the singular construct, thrice with the first singular suffix (*yônâthî*), seven times in the plural absolute, and once in the plural construct (Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, page 401b). In half (sixteen) of these cases the reference is to a dove pure and simple, either an individual (Genesis 8: 8-12) or any of the species, namely in Leviticus (12:6; 1:14; 5:7; 5:11; 12:8; 14:22; 14:30; 15:14; and 15:29), Numbers (6:10),

and 2 Kings (6:25). In the superscription, moreover, to Psalm 56 the only use of the singular construct occurs in the name of the melody to which the psalm was to be sung. The remaining instances of *yōnāh* eventuate in similes and metaphors of various kinds. The wings of doves give birth to the analogies found in Psalms 55 (7 MT, 6 EV) and 68 (14 MT, 13 EV), Isaiah 60:8, Hosea 11:11, Jeremiah 48:28 (referring to fleeing Moabites), and Ezekiel 7:16. The mournful sound of doves gives rise to the similes employed in Nahum 2:8 and Isaiah 38:14 and 59:11. The eyes of doves produces the metaphors found in chapters 1:15 and 4:1 in the Song of Songs. Hosea 7:11, to be sure, compares Ephraim to a dove but, more specifically, to "a silly dove" by reason of letting itself to be snared (*ibid.*). There appears, in fact, to be nowhere outside the Song of Songs that the word *yōnāh* is used as a term of affection. For only there does the Beloved One call His Bride "My Dove" in chapters 2:14, 5:2, and 6:9 (the only three occurrences of *yōnāthī* in the Bible). The use of *yōnāthī*, however, in the lyric poetry of the Canticle provides no grounds on which the *yōnāh* of the Book of Jonah can be interpreted as a "pet name" of Israel. The words, quite to the contrary, which begin the Book of Jonah identify its author in a manner analogous to the initial verse of all the other Latter Prophets. The formula *d*ᵉ*bhar-YHWH 'el-Yōnāh* ("the word of the LORD to Jonah") is especially similar to the superscriptions of the books of Hosea, Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah among the minor prophets and Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the major prophets. The inaugural clause, indeed, specifies the Jonah of the book as "the son of Amittai" (Jonah 1:1). There is, therefore, no doubt of his identification with a historical figure of special prominence in Israel in the reign of King Jeroboam II. For, according to 2 Kings 14, Jeroboam "restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath-Hepher" (verse 25).

(4.) Of most significance, however, is the comparison which the *Lutheran Standard* draws between the Book of Jonah and the story of Nathan in 2 Samuel 12: "Jonah is not history but is like the story Nathan told David about the wealthy man who takes his neighbor's only sheep (2 Samuel 12: 1-15). Here is an allegorical parable catching David in his sin of adultery and murder. But by itself it would appear to be factual."

(a.) The description, in the first place, of the story in 2 Samuel 12 as "an allegorical parable" is somewhat mystifying. For the phrase would seem to be either (i.) a tautology or (ii.) a self-contradiction. The choice would depend upon whether one had in mind the use of "parable"

customary in the study of literature in general or the more specific usage usually employed in the realm of biblical exegesis.

(i.) For, on the one hand, some literary scholars use the term "parable" to designate a species within the more general category of allegory. In this schema parables are defined as "briefer, less systematic allegories" which are exemplified by the "parable of the cave" in *The Republic* of Plato (Lillian Herlands Hornstein, G. D. Percy, Calvin S. Brown, et alii, eds., *The Reader's Companion to World Literature* [New York: The New American Library, 1956], pages 15-16). In such a scheme, however, the story of Nathan would correctly be called a "parable" pure and simple (without the tautological modification of "allegorical").

(ii.) Exegetes of the Bible, on the other hand, ordinarily distinguish between parables and allegories as differing species of figurative discourse. The parable, in this schema, is said to "constitute a type of figurative speech involving a comparison which is distinguishable from the simple metaphor on the one hand and allegory on the other ..." (Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976], page 119). Thus, allegory is often described as an extended metaphor and parable as an extended simile (E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968 (originally published in 1898)], pages 748-749). Exegetes have come to restrict the application of "parable" to "an illustration by which one set of circumstances is likened to another" explicitly (Bullinger, page 751). More specifically, indeed, "the images employed are drawn from nature and everyday life" (Soulen, page 119). In the parable the "events must be possible" in ordinary terms, "or likely to have happened" (Bullinger, page 752). Thus, unless otherwise defined, a parable, in biblical exegesis, is an express comparison in which some more profound truth is depicted in terms of ordinary life known to the audience.

In a parable, then, the likeness concerned is explicitly stated (using particles or words equivalent to "like" or "as" in English), while in an allegory the likeness is stated by substitution or implication. In this schema, then, the story of Nathan would be an allegory, rather than a parable. Still, however, there remain many points of similarity between the specific allegory found in 2 Samuel 12 and all of the parables which are recounted in Holy Scripture, whether in the Old Testament or, much more frequently, in the New Testament and especially in the public ministry of Jesus Christ Himself (in accordance with previous prophecy). It may, therefore, prove instructive to examine the similarity which the *Lutheran Standard* asserts between the story of Nathan and the

Book of Jonah and then cites as a reason to call the story of Jonah a parable.

A prime example of actual parable in the Old Testament is found in verses 15-20 of Job 6 (as is indicated in *The Poetical Books of the Bible*, third edition [CTS, 1998], page 190). There the patriarch compares the three friends who were visiting him (Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite) with the waters of a wady in the Arabian Desert (verse 15, translating anew):

My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,
As a stream of brooks that pass away.

Job thus states his comparison explicitly both by means of the *khᵉmō* which precedes *nachāl* ("a brook") and by means of the *ka* (*kaph* pointed with *pathach*) which is prefixed to *ʾᵃphīq-nᵉchālīm* ("a stream of brooks").

(b.) There is, in fact, very little similarity between the Book of Jonah and the story of Nathan in 2 Samuel 12. More specifically, indeed, there is no such likeness at all which relates to the distinctive nature of either parables or allegories. The differences, on the contrary, which separate Jonah from both parable and the story of Nathan are many and various:

(i.) The story of Nathan comprises three and a half verses. A parable, too, as already noted, is by nature quite brief and simple (Hornstein, Percy, and Brown, pages 15-16). Thus, the parable in Job 6 consumes but six verses *in toto* (verses 15-20). The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, includes a full forty-eight verses.

(ii.) The story of Nathan consists solely in narrative. The parable in Job 6 is the same, since, by virtue again of its brevity and pointedness, a parable allows little if any addition to the main simile. The most elaboration to be found in a parable is a brief quotation here and there. The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, incorporates, not only a considerable quantity of dialogue (in chapters 1, 3, and 4), but also a governmental decree (3: 7-9) and, above all, a complete psalm (2: 3-10 MT [2-9 EV]).

(iii.) The story of Nathan makes no mention of God, nor does the parable in Job. Such absence of divine reference is, indeed, characteristic of the parable, since its purpose, again, is the depiction of more profound truths in more earthly terms. The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, refers to the One True God from beginning to end and frequently by means of the Divine Name, which is to say YHWH. The tetragrammeton is, of course, traditionally rendered "the LORD" (written with four capital letters) in English versions of the Bible. The book, indeed, not also quotes Jonah and others addressing the One True God

at length, but also quotes God Himself speaking directly and extensively to the Prophet Jonah.

(iv.) The story of Nathan is explicitly introduced as spoken by Nathan to David in the specific setting of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah: "And the LORD sent Nathan unto David; and He came unto him and said unto him ..." (2 Samuel 12:1a). The rationale, too, of the story is expressly stated in the immediately preceding context of the Book of Samuel: "the thing that David had done displeased the LORD" (2 Samuel 11:27b). Job 6, likewise, clearly introduces the parable of verses 15-20 as spoken by the patriarch Job (6:1) in the setting of Job's first response to Eliphaz the Temanite (chapters 6-7) within the first cycle of speeches (chapters 4-14) in the course of his dialogue with the three friends who, according to Job 2:11, had come to visit him in his affliction (*The Poetical Books of the Bible*, pages 58-59). The same specificity in terms of literary and historical contexts obtains in the case of all the other parables in the Bible, including all the parables of our Lord. There is, on the other hand, no introduction of the narrative of Jonah in any preceding context or any otherwise specified setting.

(v.) The story of Nathan contains no name of any kind, but only such generic designations as "two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor" (2 Samuel 12:1). Nor does verse 4 specify the traveler's name who came to visit the rich man. The parable in Job 6 likewise speaks of seasonal streams in general, and our Lord names no names in any of His stories which are rightly considered parables. The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, is replete with names of individual people and places, including the names of the prophet Jonah and his father Amittai and the Divine Name already mentioned (*passim*). The references to Nineveh are legion, including mention of the specific king then ruling there (3: 6-7). The references to Joppa and Tarshish are cited below.

(vi.) The story of Nathan begins with a construct chain of two nouns, *shᵉnēy-ʾᵃnāshīm*, which is, literally, "a twosome of men" (2 Samuel 12:1). All the parables in the Bible, including the one in Job 6, begin, by definition, with the word or particle meaning "like" or "as" in the Hebrew or Greek of the original texts. The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, commences, rather unusually, with a verb and, indeed, with a strong *waw* and breviate form, which others may call a *waw*-consecutive with (shortened or apocopated) imperfect, *wayᵉhīy dᵉbar-YHWH ʾel-Yōnāh*, which is, literally, "and there came to be the word of the LORD to Jonah" (Jonah 1:1). A historical narrative can, to be sure, begin as easily as a figurative discourse with a noun, but the specific initiation of Jonah is scarcely appropriate to a parable.

The initial clause of Jonah exemplifies, in the first place, a special subgroup of the many sentences in the Hebrew Bible in which a circumstantial clause precedes the main clause. To use the terminology of Waltke and O'Connor, a "circumstantial clause introduced by *wyhy* may be followed by a *wayyqtl* form" (Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990], page 553). T. O. Lambdin, although employing differing terminology, still describes the basic usage clearly (Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971], page 123):

> Within a narrative sequence temporal modifiers are very frequently placed before the clause they modify and are introduced by *waw-onversive* + a form of the verb *hāyâh*. In the past tense narrative this is uniformly . . . *wayhī* . . . and in the future (or habitual/durative) narrative it is . . . *wᵉhāyâh*. The temporal clause is then followed by the expected sequential form of the main narrative.

Instances of this phenomenon appear in the midst of historical books in such passages as Genesis 22:20, Judges 17:1, and 1 Samuel 9:1 (Waltke and O'Connor, pages 553-554).

More remarkable, however, is the occurrence of this construction at the very beginning of the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel (1 and 2 Samuel), Ezekiel, Ruth, Esther, and Nehemiah. These cases, to be sure, involving *wayᵉhī* may be distinguished to some degree, as they are by Waltke and O'Connor, from those in which strong *waw* with verbs other than *hyh* begins the books of Leviticus and Numbers (Waltke and O'Connor, page 554; although introducing here the terms "strong *waw*" and "weak *waw*" advocated in *Classical Hebrew and the English Language*, fourth edition [CTS, 1998], pages 75-83). Such a distinction, indeed, applies as much or more to the weak *waw* which inaugurates the books of Exodus, Kings, and Ezra. For, admittedly, the circumstantial clause beginning with *wayhī* or *wayᵉhī* constitutes a distinct idiom which possesses more independence than the others beginning with *waw*. At the same time, however, we can by no means simply lay aside the very essence of *waw* as a conjunction.

Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, therefore, quite rightly emphasizes the basic conception which underlies all these cases of biblical books beginning with *waw* of any kind: "The fact that whole books begin with the imperfect *consecutive* ..., and others with *waw copulative* ..., is taken as a sign of their close connection with the historical books now or originally preceding them" (Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, Emil Friedrich

Kautzsch, and A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, second edition [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, with additions and corrections], page 133, footnote 1, where "books" is capitalized). C. F. Keil, in turn, correctly applies this principle to the Book of Jonah in particular when he describes *wayᵉhāy* as "the standing formula with which historical events were linked on to one another, inasmuch as every occurrence follows another in chronological sequence; so that the *Vav* (and) simply attaches to a series of events, which are assumed as well known ...." (Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, translated by James Martin, in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, (reprinted) 1975]), X:I, page 389). The initiation, then, of a book with *wayᵉhāy* is a mark of historical intention. The only cases of its use among the so-called Latter Prophets are in Ezekiel and Jonah; and Ezekiel, like Jonah, begins with historical narrative. The Prophet Jonah, then, is following the example of his prophetic predecessors who wrote Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel in employing this grammatical usage to indicate his historical intention. Jonah was, in turn, followed in the use of the same introduction by his prophetic successors who wrote the books of Ezekiel, Esther, and Nehemiah.

(vii.) The story of Nathan recounts developments which could easily take place in ordinary life. The parable in Job 6 speaks of the wadies of the desert in which the waters come and go every year. For it is, again, the goal of the parable to express more profound truths in terms of ordinary life known to the audience. The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, records very singular events which include, indeed, miracles unique even to Holy Scripture. Modernists have, after all, particularly used the quantity of miracle in the book as being indicative of its legendary rather than historical character. Eiselen, for example, cites a specific number of offending wonders: "Here are twelve miracles in a book of forty-eight verses" (*The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, pages 454-455). Thus, it is the very things which motivate the modernists to deny the historical reliability of the book which also make it quite impossible to call it parabolic.

(viii.) The meaning of the story of Nathan is immediately and dramatically clarified at some length in the succeeding context of 2 Samuel 12 (verses 7-9, AV):

[7.] Then Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, 'I anointed thee king over Israel and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul. [8.] And I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto

thee such and such things. [9.] Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword and hast taken his wife to be thy wife and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.'"

The Lord reiterates the case against David in the following verse: "thou hast despised Me and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife" (verse 10). It is, therefore, misleading of the Everists to say of the parable of Nathan that "by itself it would appear to be factual." For the parable was never intended to be spoken without the explanation which immediately followed.

Job likewise applies the parable in Job 6 to his three visitors in the words both preceding and following. For he begins with the basic accusation: "my brethren have dealt deceitfully" (verse 15). He then amplifies the accusation in the verses which follow the parable, beginning with the explanatory conjunction (*kî*, verse 21, revising the Authorized Version):

For now ye live not,
Ye see calamity and are afraid.

The Book of Jonah, on the other hand, receives no preceding or succeeding application by way of parabolic clarification. Its usage, instead, in subsequent scriptures consistently assumes its historicity.

B. A Biblical View of Jonah

The actual case, in fact, is quite the contrary of the depiction of Jonah in the *Lutheran Standard*. The prophet's narrative is, in actuality, fully historical both in its intention and in its execution. The historicity of the Book of Jonah clearly follows from the ensuing points:

(1.) The narrative itself, firstly, provides no evidence of any non-historical intention. The teacher who "was surprised to read that Jonah was a parable" stated the actual case quite correctly: "I see nothing in the text that suggests it couldn't be historical." For the burden of proof, in any objective exegesis, clearly rests with those who wish to dispute the historical intention of a narrative rather than with those who are assuming it.

(2.) The book contains, secondly, a variety of historical and geographical references. The Prophet Jonah himself, as previously noted, is identified more specifically in 2 Kings 14:23, and he records the actions of the specific king who was then reigning in Nineveh in a

reduced and harassed Assyria (3: 6-9). The geographical references include, not only Nineveh itself (*passim*), but also the cities of Joppa in Palestine (1:3) and Tarshish in Spain (1:3 and 4:2).

The Book of Jonah presumably came into existence sometime between 783 and 745 B.C., a temporary period of Assyrian troubles which would have made Nineveh more susceptible of repentance; its composition, more specifically, probably took place late in 763 B.C. or shortly thereafter. For 783 B.C. saw the death of Adad-Nirari III (whose mother Sammuramat ruled as regent from 810 to 805 B.C. and was likely the original of the legendary Semiramis), during whose reign there was an approach to monotheism, albeit still paganism. In 745 B.C., on the other hand, a general seized the throne who proclaimed himself Tiglath-Pileser III and founded the Sargonid dynasty. With his accession Assyria firmly retrenched itself in its old evil ways. Between, however, 783 and 745 B.C. intervened a period of weak kings, internal dissension, and external pressure, especially by the Urartu to the north. The prospects of Assyria appeared ominous, and the sense of crisis in the populace reached a melting point in the reign of Assurdan III (771-754 B.C.). A plague in 765 B.C. and a total eclipse of the sun on June 15 in the year 763 reduced the populace to a state of consternation which would have provided a climax to the preparation of Nineveh, in this period, to respond rightly to the preaching of Jonah; another plague struck the country in 759 B.C. The eclipse of 763 was evidently widely regarded as "a sign of celestial wrath. Assur, the home of Assyria's most ancient traditions, revolted and was joined by other cities.... For six years civil war raged, while pestilence devastated the land" (H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, pages 461-462). Jonah by no means employs, as the critics assume the designation "the king of Nineveh" as the formal title of the monarch of Assyria (3:6), but as a reflection of the reality of his reduced domain in this period of royal impotence.

(3.) The ancient Jews, thirdly, uniformly understood the narrative as historical (Tobit 14:4 and Josephus, *Antiquities*, IX: 10: 2), as did the church of the New Testament during the course of nineteen centuries. Thus, Tobit gives this final charge to Tobias: "My son, take your sons; behold, I have grown old and am about to depart this life. Go to Media, my son, for I fully believe what Jonah the prophet said about Nineveh, that it will be overthrown" (verse 4a, *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament: Revised Standard Version*). The reference is clearly to the preaching of the Prophet Jonah in verse 4 of Jonah 3: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (4b). This prophecy goes unfulfilled, of course, in the Book of Jonah itself by virtue of the repentance of Nineveh at the time, but the author of the Book of Tobit represents his hero as assuming that

the subsequent apostasy of Nineveh would ultimately bring the threatened destruction on the city.

(4.) The testimony, above all, of Jesus Christ is clearly expressed and should be decisive for anyone who believes in His divinity and, consequently, His infallibility even according to His assumed human nature. The Gospel of Matthew affords two separate instances of His witness to the historicity of Jonah (in chapters 12 [verses 39-41] and 16:4), and the Gospel of Luke provides a parallel (11: 29-32). Moderates may wish to vitiate the evidence by arguing that Christ could be using fictional characters and events as illustrations just as easily in the verses cited as when He Himself is telling parables, or when we ourselves use illustrations drawn from modern novels or even cartoons. The specific nature, however, of the references which our Lord makes to the Book of Jonah make such a scenario quite impossible.

(a.) In all these passages, in the first place, the word *sēmeion* ("sign") occurs. In Matthew 16 Jesus states the case without elaboration: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there will be no sign given unto it except the sign of Jonah the prophet" (verse 4, revising the Authorized Version in this quotation and all those which follow in the interests of consistency). In Luke 11 He defines "the sign of Jonah the prophet" as the sign which Jonah constituted as a prophet. The genitives, in other words, in the phrase *to sēmeion Iōnā tou prophētou* are genitives of apposition: "This is an evil generation. It seeketh a sign, and there will be no sign given unto it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be unto this generation" (verses 29-30). The *usus loquendi*, however, of *sēmeion* is an entity or action of an historical nature, even if not (as is often the case) miraculous (Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, fourth edition [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952], pages 755-756). Objective exegesis requires us to remain with the common meaning of a word unless the context or analogy of faith compels us to accept a different meaning.

(b.) In Matthew 12, secondly, our Lord assumes the participation of the Ninevites to whom Jonah preached in the resurrection of the dead connected with His second coming: "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah" (verse 41). Luke 11:32 records the same logion in precisely the same words. Jesus, then, and His evangelists regard the Ninevites who repented in chapters 3 and 4 of the Book of Jonah as being equally as real as the Jews whom He is then addressing and, indeed, as real as the final judgment. Although, to be

sure, the majority of Nineveh soon returned its old ways, there were Ninevites who remained faithful to the True God unto death; and these historical penitents we ourselves, if we continue in repentance, shall see by the grace of God in the kingdom of glory.

(c.) In Matthew 12, again, our Lord makes the experience of Jonah a sign of His own burial before His resurrection: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there will be no sign given unto it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (verses 39-40). In verse 40 Jesus is drawing His words from the Book of Jonah itself. Jonah 2:1 in the Massoretic Text describes first the preparation of a "great fish" (*dāg gādhōl*) and then Jonah's sojourn "in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (1:17 in the English Version).

Our Lord, then, treats the events recorded in chapters 1 and 2 of the Book of Jonah as being equally as historical as His own death and resurrection. He asserts, in effect, "As surely as Jonah spent three days in the fish before returning to preach repentance, so surely shall I spend three days in the grave before returning to preach repentance." Modern scholars may decry as simplistic the question often posed by pious laymen, "If I cannot believe that Jonah was swallowed by a fish, how can I believe that Christ arose from the dead?" The fact is, however, that Christ Himself ties the two events together so inextricably in terms of historicity that the question seems quite reasonable.

(d.) In the end, fourthly, our Lord compares His very existence to the existence of Jonah. For in both Matthew 12 and Luke 11 He concludes His logion on Jonah in precisely the same words: *kai idou pleion Iōnā hōde*, "and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (verses 41 and 32 respectively). Jesus is saying nothing if He is claiming to be greater than someone who never existed, and He is saying very little if He is claiming to be greater than someone who merely said the words quoted in verse 25 of 2 Kings 14. The premise of Christ is clearly that Jonah was, indeed, a very notable prophet by virtue of the experiences which He has just mentioned, which is to say the miraculous preservation of Jonah in a fish and the repentance of Nineveh in response to his preaching (Matthew 12 [39-40] and Luke 11 [29-30]).

It is this specific Jonah, as described in the Book of Jonah, than whom the Divine Prophet is still greater. In the end, therefore, our Lord ties together His very existence so inextricably with the depiction of Jonah in the prophet's own book that, logically speaking, one can only deny the historicity of the Book of Jonah by also denying the historicity of

Christ. Or, at the least, one is required by the logic of the case to deny the identity of the historical Jesus as the Self-Existing One who was and is and is to be.

Douglas McC.L. Judisch

Two Significant Archival Collections

It is with great joy, particularly in light of the first article in this issue, that we note the recent announcement by Concordia Historical Institute that the papers of two of the most important pastors and theologians of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod have been arranged and described. Of further note is that both served as president of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne.

The Wilhelm Sihler Collection consists chiefly of materials created and collected by Sihler and especially features his correspondence and sermons. The correspondence is filed in chronological order. Further, it has, for the most part, been transcribed into a typewritten format, which aids the researcher in reading them with ease. The letters remain in their original German. The sermons are arranged according to the books of the Bible (he seems to have preached on more than two-thirds of the books of Scripture), though occasional sermons are included at the end of this section.

Under the heading "Various Writings" are a number of folders containing manuscripts Sihler labeled "Gedankenspäne und Gedankenkeime" (shavings of thoughts and seeds of thoughts). Most of these manuscripts have been transcribed. Finally, there is a handwritten diary of Wilhelm Sihler and a number of photos.

The Robert D. Preus Papers have also been completed and are now available for research. This is a rich and varied collection, which is organized under five headings or series: Profile, Research, Correspondence, Seminary, Removal from Office. Each of the series has its own subseries. While a complete listing and details are available at CHI's website, an outline here may serve to encourage researchers to further in-depth study: 1) Profile: Subject Files, Clippings, Audio/Video, Student Days and Sermons; 2) Research: Subject Files, Writings by Preus, and Writings by Others; 3) Corresondence: General and Secretary; 4) Seminary: Teaching, St. Louis, and Fort Wayne; 5) Removal from Office: Indiana District Commission on Adjudication, Documents/Writings, and Biography.

The opening of these materials for examination and research truly reflects the character of Robert Preus. As president of Concordia

Theological Seminary he was always prepared to greet students and to discuss theology with them. As a first-year seminarian the undersigned responded with some incredulity at Dr. Preus's invitation to "visit me in my office whenever the door is open and we'll talk about theology." Skepticism quickly turned to conviction as Dr. Preus fulfilled his promise. Now, as was the case in his personal career, his papers beckon with the same proposal: come and read and talk about theology. The Preus papers will allow this great teacher to continue to guide confessional Lutheranism into the future.

Both of the collections, along with many others, are available for research at the Institute. A number of finding aids, including those for the collections featured in this piece, may be consulted on the CHI web site at http://chi.lcms.org.

In many ways CHI remains something of an undiscovered jewel in our Synod. It is officially the Department of Archives and History for the Synod. More than a mere storehouse, however, CHI strives to present the living history of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod—the stories and activities, as well as the theological matter of our church. We commend CHI for its ongoing work in preserving and making accessible our heritage as members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and look forward to the completion of other collections in the near future.

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

Books Received

Barker, Margaret. *The Risen Lord: The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith.* Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996. xvii + 166 Pages. Paper. $20.00.

Barnard, Leslie W. *Thomas Secker: An Eighteenth Century Primate.* Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild, 1998. 234 Pages. Cloth.

Baum, Gregory. *The Church for Others: Protestant Theology in Communist East Germany.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, England: William B. Eerdmans, 1996. xvii + 156 Pages. Paper, $15.00.

Braaten, Carl E.; and Jenson, Robert W., editors. *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998. ix + 182 Pages. Paper. $21.00

Bray, Gerald, editor. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Volume VI, Romans.* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1998. xxvii + 404 Pages. Cloth.

Charlesworth, James H., editor. *Caves of Enlightenment: Proceedings of the American Schools of Oriental Research Dead Sea Scrolls Symposium (1947-1997).* North Richland Hills, Texas: Bibal Press, 1998. xviii + 139 Pages. Paper. $14.95.

Dahan, Gilbert. *The Christian Polemic Against the Jews in the Middle Ages.* Translated by Jody Gladding. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998. xii + 130 Pages. Paper. $8.00.

Eckardt, Burnell F., Jr. *Every Day Will I Bless Thee: Meditations for the Daily Office.* Sussex, Wisconsin: Concordia Catechetical Academy, 1998. xiv + 514 Pages. Cloth.

Ellison, Robert H. *The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain.* London: Associated University Presses, 1998. 178 Pages. Cloth. $34.50.

Floysvik, Ingvar. *When God Becomes My Enemy: The Theology of the Complaint Psalms.* St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Academic Press, 1997. 206 Pages.

France, R.T. *Matthew: Evangelist & Teacher.* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1989. 345 Pages. Paper.

Harris, W. Hall III. *The Descent of Christ: Ephesians 4:7-11 and Traditional Hebrew Imagery.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1998. xvii + 221 Pages. Paper. $19.99.

Henry, Carl F. H. *God, Revelation and Authority.* 6 volumes. 2nd edition. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1999. Paper.

Horvath, S.J., Tibor. *Jesus Christ as Ultimate Reality and Meaning: A Contribution to the Hermeneutics of Councillar Theology.* URAM Monographs, volume 2. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1994. 60 Pages. Paper.

Loughlin, Gerard. *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. xv + 266 Pages. Cloth.

McDowell, Josh; and Hostetler, Bob. *The New Tolerance.* Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1998. ix +233 Pages. Paper.

McIntosch, Mark, A. *Christology from Within: Spirituality and the Incarnation in Hans Urs von Balthasar.* Studies in Spirituality and Theology, volume 3. Notre Dame, Indiana/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996. xi + 200 Pages. Cloth. $29.00.

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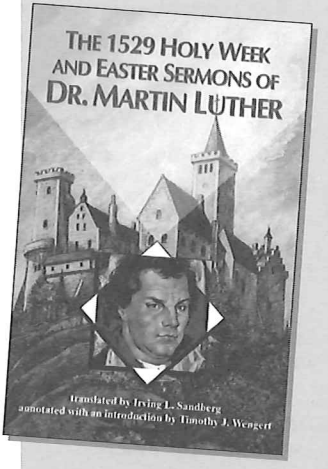

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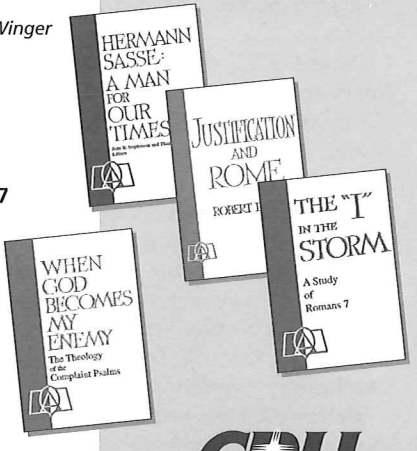

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