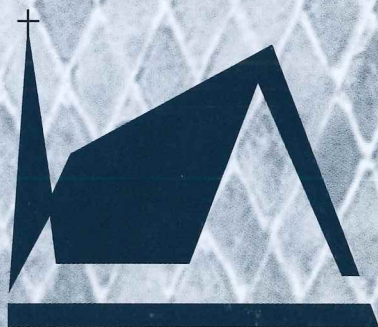


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## CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

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# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



Volume 65:4

October 2001

## *Table of Contents*

---

<b>Raymond F. Surburg (1909-2001)</b> .....	291
<b>The Theological Symposia of Concordia Theological Seminary</b> .....	293
<b>Chapel Sermon: September 11, 2001</b>	
Richard S. Radtke .....	297
<b>C. F. W. Walther's <i>Kirche und Amt</i> and the Church and Office Debate Between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in the Early Twentieth Century</b>	
Todd A. Peperkorn .....	299
<b>Evangelical and Catholic: A Slogan in Search of a Definition</b>	
David P. Scaer .....	323
<b>Toward an Assessment of <i>Called to Common Mission</i></b>	
Brian Lesemann and Erik Rottmann .....	345
<b>Theological Observer</b> .....	361
A Shot in the Arm for Confessional Studies	

<b>Book Reviews</b> .....	363
<i>Darwin's Black Box-the Biochemical Challenge to Evolution.</i>	
By Michael J. Behe. ....	James D. Heiser
<i>Those Terrible Middle Ages! Debunking the Myths.</i> By Régine Pernoud. Translated by Anne Englund Nash.	
.....	James G. Kroemer
<i>Discovering the Plain Truth: How the Worldwide Church of God Encountered the Gospel of Grace.</i> By Larry Nichols and George Mather. ....	
	James D. Heiser
<i>Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism.</i> Edited by Edith L. Blumhofer, Russel P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker. ....	
	Grant A. Knepper
<i>Heritage in Motion: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1962-1995.</i> Edited by August R. Suelflow. ....	
	Grant A. Knepper
<i>The "I" in the Storm: A Study of Romans 7.</i> By Michael Paul Middendorf. ....	
	A. Andrew Das
<i>Sin, Death, and the Devil.</i> Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson. ....	
	John T. Pless
<i>The Bible in English: John Wycliffe and William Tyndale.</i> By John D. Long. ....	
	Cameron A. MacKenzie
<i>Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching.</i> By Peter E. McCullough.	
.....	Cameron A. MacKenzie
<i>The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible.</i> By Paul D. Wegner.	
.....	Peter J. Scaer
<b>Indices for Volume 64</b> .....	375
<b>Indices for Volume 65</b> .....	378
<b>Books Received</b> .....	382





## †Raymond F. Surburg† (1909-2001)

The Rev. Dr. Raymond F. Surburg, professor emeritus of exegetical theology (Old Testament) at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, died Saturday, May 19, 2001 in Bloomington, Indiana. Dr. Surburg served the seminary full-time from 1960 until his retirement in 1979. He continued to teach at the seminary until 1993 when health concerns forced him from the classroom.

Raymond Frederick Surburg was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 3, 1909 to Frederick and Hulda (née Messerschmidt). He married Lillian Werbeck on July 3, 1933 (she passed away on November 22, 1998), and the couple was blessed with one son, Paul Raymond (born 1937).

Dr. Surburg pursued his academic studies in a vigorous manner. After graduating from Concordia High School in Milwaukee, he began studies at Concordia College in Milwaukee, receiving his diploma in 1929 with special emphasis on religion and languages. He immediately entered Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, from which he graduated in 1933. From 1933 to 1935 he attended Columbia University, New York and completed the A. M. degree in Aramaic and Syriac. From 1939 to 1942 he studied at American Theological Seminary, Wilmington, Delaware, which awarded him the Th. D. with a major in ancient church history and comparative religions, and a minor in biblical interpretation. In 1946 he received the Master of Religious Education (M. R. E.) from the Biblical Seminary of New York City. Dr. Surburg earned the Ph. D. from Fordham University in New York City in 1950. His thesis was titled, "An Evaluation of the Educational Philosophy of Hermann Harrell Horne."

In addition to his academic work, Dr. Surburg served the church faithfully. He was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry on February 23, 1936, after having received a call to Trinity Lutheran Church, Clifton, New Jersey. He served this congregation from 1936 to 1941. He later served Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, New York as pastor from 1941 to 1954. From 1950 to 1953 he directed the Brooklyn Bible Institute. In 1954, Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska

called him as assistant professor of religion, and in 1956 raised his rank to associate professor. From 1956 to 1960 he served as chairman of the Department of Religion and Social Sciences at Seward. In 1960 Dr. Surburg received a call to serve as assistant professor of biblical interpretation at Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. He advanced to the rank of associate professor in 1962 and professor in 1966. Dr. Surburg chaired the Department of Exegetical Theology at the seminary from 1968-1978.

Dr. Surburg was an especially prolific author and his bibliography shows the diverse interests of a scholar. He published a number of books, including *Readings in the Lutheran Philosophy of Education*, with L. G. Bickel (Lutheran Education Association, 1958), *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation*, edited by Paul Zimmerman (Concordia, 1959), *How Dependable is the Bible* (Holman-Lippencott, 1972), and *An Introduction to the Intertestamental Period* (Concordia, 1975). His numerous articles have appeared in many journals, including *Concordia Theological Monthly*, *The Springfielder*, *Lutheran Education*, *Advance*, *Christian News*, *The American Lutheran*, *Affirm*, *Bible Science Newsletter*, and *Concordia Theological Quarterly*. He was Book Review Editor of *The Springfielder* from 1965-1976 and of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* from 1977-1979. Characteristic of his writing in these and other periodicals was his deep concern for the centrality of the word of God for all theology. Dr. Surburg will always be remembered for his staunch faithfulness to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions during the LCMS crisis of the 1960s and 70s.

Dr. Surburg's dynamic and inquisitive mind will be missed at the seminary. He remained active in the life of the community as long as he possibly could. With his death the seminary loses a long-time friend and the church loses a faithful servant. Dr. Surburg himself: "There is an old Lutheran saying that we would quote in conclusion. In German it says: 'Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr Vergehet nun und nimmer mehr.' God's Word and Luther's teaching will not depart now or forevermore. Luther's teaching was based foursquare on the Bible, of which our fathers said: 'Verbum Dei manet in aeternum.' The Word of God remains into eternity. Let us hold and defend God's Word as taught by Martin Luther!" ("The Confessional Lutheran vs. the Modern Critical Lutheran Stance on the Nature of the Bible and Its Interpretation," address given at Columbus, Ohio, October 30, 1976; published in *Ohio Concerns* 1 [November and December 1976]).



# **17<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Exegetical Theology**

## **"The Heavenly Sanctuary and Worship"**

**Tuesday, January 22, 2002**

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome  
Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, President and Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 9:10 a.m. "Spent Symbol or Abiding Text? The Tabernacle as Threshold and Context for Authentic Worship"  
Dr. Dean O. Wenthe
- 10:00 a.m. Chapel
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. "Heaven on Earth: Temple, Worship, and Holy Presence in Luke-Acts"  
Dr. Arthur A. Just Jr., Professor of Exegetical Theology and Dean of the Chapel, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. "Access to the Heavenly Sanctuary in Hebrews"  
Dr. Harold W. Attridge, Lillian Claus Professor of New Testament, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut
- 2:00 p.m. "Vertical Typology and Christian Worship"  
Dr. Horace D. Hummel, Professor Emeritus of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri
- 3:00 p.m. Questions and Panel Discussion
- 3:30 p.m. Coffee Break
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- 4:20 p.m. Short Exegetical Paper Sectionals
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner

**Wednesday, January 23, 2002**

- 8:00 a.m. "The Word, Worship, and Wisdom in the Fourth Gospel"  
Dr. Peter J. Scaer, Assistant Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary

- 8:45 a.m. "Isaiah 6 and the Language of Worship"  
Dr. Douglas McC. L. Judisch, Professor of Exegetical  
Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 9:30 a.m. Questions and Discussion
- 10:00 a.m. Chapel
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. "Old Testament Paradigms for New Testament Worship"  
Dr. Walter A. Maier III, Associate Professor of Exegetical  
Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 11:40 a.m. Questions and Discussion
- 11:50 a.m. Lunch

## 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions: "Silver Anniversary Commemoration of the Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions"

**Wednesday, January 23, 2002**

*"Missouri Today"*

- 1:15 p.m. Welcome and Introduction to the "Silver Anniversary  
Commemoration of the Symposium on the Lutheran  
Confessions"
- 1:30 p.m. "A Quarter Century of Symposia: Taking Missouri's  
Pulse"  
The Rev. Lawrence R. Rast Jr., Assistant Professor of  
Historical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 2:45 p.m. "Missouri's Identity Crisis: Rootless in America"  
Dr. David P. Scaer, David P. Scaer Professor of Systematic  
and Biblical Theology and Chairman of the Department of  
Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 4:00 p.m. "Assessing the Preus Heritage in the Missouri Synod"  
The Rev. Klemet I. Preus, Pastor of Glory of Christ  
Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minnesota



- 5:15 p.m. Schola Cantorum: Kramer Chapel  
The Rev. Kantor Richard C. Resch, Associate Professor of  
Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Concordia Theological  
Seminary
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner
- 7:30 p.m. Reception: Upper Floor of Wyneken Hall

## Thursday, January 24, 2002

### *"Lutheran Theology and Church Tradition: Are They Compatible?"*

- 8:30 a.m. "The New English Translation of *The Book of Concord*  
(Augsburg/Fortress 2000): Locking the Barn Door After . . ."  
The Rev. Roland F. Ziegler, Assistant Professor of  
Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 10:00 a.m. Chapel
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. "Liturgy and Dogmatics: Reliving the Chicken and the  
Egg Controversy"  
Dr. Kurt E. Marquart, Associate Professor of Systematic  
Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:15 p.m. Organ Recital: Kevin Hildebrand, Kantor, Saint Luke  
Lutheran Church and School, Clinton Township,  
Michigan
- 2:00 p.m. "In Search of the Church: A Pilgrim's Report"  
Father Richard John Neuhaus, D. D., President, Religion  
and Public Life Research and Education Institute, New  
York, New York, and Editor of *First Things*
- 3:15 p.m. "Can the ELCA Represent Lutheranism: Flirting with  
Rome, Geneva, Canterbury, and Herrnhut"  
Dr. Louis A. Smith, Pastor Emeritus in the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America, Waynesboro, Virginia
- 4:15 p.m. Panel
- 5:00 p.m. Symposium Reception: Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell  
Avenue
- 6:15 p.m. Symposium Banquet: Memorial Coliseum

**Friday, January 25, 2002**

- 9:00 a.m. "Are Differences on Justification Obstacles to Ecumenical Alliances?" A Panel  
Dr. Kurt E. Marquart, Dr. Louis A. Smith, and Father Richard John Neuhaus
- 11:00 a.m. Itinerarium
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch

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# Chapel Sermon: September 11, 2001

*Luke 11:25-35*

**Richard S. Radtke**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The news this morning is very grim. A commercial airliner crashed into one of the buildings of the World Trade Center in New York City. A few minutes later, another airline crashed into the second World Trade Center building. Then another commercial aircraft crashed into the Pentagon in Washington D. C. Just a few minutes ago, we heard news that one of the World Trade Center buildings collapsed. There is a great deal of confusion and horror about all this. In the midst of this tragic news, we ask: How can this be? How can this happen in our own land—in America? Yet, this terrible tragedy shows the brokenness of this world, and how this world is truly a culture of death. This means that today we can see even more than ever the need for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why you are here—as professor, student, staff, or pastor. In his words of comfort before the service began, President Wente said that the work of this seminary will go on because of what has happened this morning. Nothing else can give us the true hope that we need other than the word of our Lord. And so, in my homily this morning, I will spend a few moments on today's Gospel, which is our calling to follow Jesus, and then apply our calling to this morning's tragic events.

The call to follow Jesus surpasses all else. But on our own, who could qualify? Not one of us here, or anywhere, for that matter. Because of our sin, we are all not only spiritually impoverished, but the Scriptures call us spiritually dead. The call to follow Jesus is serious and severe. We must renounce all to follow Him—and not depend on family, possessions, works, or self.

But the One who calls us is gracious. The One who is sinless became sin for us, and carried our sin in His flesh to the cross. In Jesus Christ we find our life and our hope. His gospel is our invitation. He invites us to come to Him and find rest for our souls. He invites us to come and follow Him.

The call to follow Jesus is especially meaningful for us today as we witness the horrifying events of this morning. We know that the evil one, satan, is working ever so hard to silence the word of God. He is working

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*The Rev. Richard S. Radtke is Pastor of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

evil in this world to confuse and mislead all people, even the people of God. He wants us to take our eyes off the gospel and the Lord Jesus. And so, we must trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord our God has promised in His word: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Our Lord Jesus invited us to come to Him with these words: "Come unto me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The Scriptures are filled with words of comfort that remind us of the presence and power of our Lord at all times, and especially when we face these difficult and perilous times.

Things will never be the same in the United States. More tragedies may yet happen this day. It will be "a day of infamy." I would urge all of us to pray for our nation, for President Bush, and for all our leaders, that God would give them strength and courage for today and for all the days to come.

In a few moments, we will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. We so need the strength that God gives in the true body and blood of His Son Jesus Christ. We so need the presence of our Lord among us as we struggle with questions about this national tragedy. Here at this altar we will be nourished, and we will receive the strength that only our Lord can give—strength for the moment and for the days that are ahead of us with all the uncertainties of these times. Therefore I commend you to our gracious and loving God, and I pray with you for His strength for our nation and all our leaders and for those who proclaim the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. May His peace be with you. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

# C. F. W. Walther's *Kirche und Amt* and the Church and Office Debate Between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in the Early Twentieth Century

Todd A. Peperkorn

From before the founding of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, the doctrines of church and office (ministry) were a source of controversy. *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, C. F. W. Walther's reply to the Second Synodical Report of the Buffalo Synod, and other writings by Grabau, was originally published in 1852 as a result of a request by the 1851 Synodical Convention.<sup>1</sup> This book was the first of a series of monographs, pamphlets, theses, and other documents to be approved by The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod either in Synodical Convention or at pastoral conferences. What is the actual status of these documents in the history of the Missouri Synod? Some were directed internally, and others were written primarily as a confession or polemic against positions held by other church bodies or individuals. Still others were intended to become the basis of theological discussions with the goal of union with other church bodies.

It is clear that the founders of the Missouri Synod did not see an internal conflict between a *quia* subscription to the Book of Concord and voting in Synodical Convention to adopt a particular theological statement in order (presumably) to explicate the Book of Concord and affirm the Synod's scriptural position. The Missouri Synod, however, has never made acceptance of all the synodical resolutions and doctrinal statements of the Synod a prerequisite for fellowship with other church bodies, nor has it required assent to particular documents in the ordination vow of her pastors. The question then remains: Was Walther's *Kirche und Amt* used and understood as a source and authority for doctrine? If so, what sort of authority does it hold? Is it on equal status

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt: Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechgläubiger Lehrer derselben* (Erlangen: C. A. Ph. Th. Bläsing, 1852). Hereafter referred to as *Kirche und Amt*.

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*The Rev. Todd A. Peperkorn is Pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin.*

with the Scriptures, with the Lutheran Confessions, with the "private writings" of the Lutheran fathers, or is it a fourth category of authority?

In many ways the most significant time period in Missouri's self-understanding comes in the period after Walther's death, or what has sometimes been called the "Middle Period" in the history of the Missouri Synod. In this period the Missouri Synod had to grapple with a vacuum in leadership with the death of Walther, the vast influx of Germans migrating to the United States, and the transition of Lutheran theology and practice into English. This is also the period when the use of *Kirche und Amt* became an issue within the Missouri Synod.

The thesis of this paper is that there was a shift in the use of *Kirche und Amt* in the first one hundred years of the history of the Missouri Synod. What began as an apologetic document designed to reestablish a relationship with the mother church in Germany became a polemic document that was used for internal theological debate. It was originally an expression of the united position of the pastors and congregations of the Missouri Synod. But by the time of the passing of the Brief Statement in 1932, *Kirche und Amt* was at the center of a major theological controversy between two of the theological giants of the early twentieth century: Francis Pieper (of the LCMS) and August Pieper (of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod [WELS]). It then set the stage for many of the theological differences between the LCMS and the WELS on the important doctrines of church and office.

### ***Kirche und Amt* From Francis Pieper to the Brief Statement**

In the nineteenth century little distinction was made between any of the works of Walther with regards to their authority. Because Walther himself was physically present at most of the meetings and colloquies, and continued to write on the topics at hand, there was no need to ask the question of the authoritative nature of *Kirche und Amt*. It was the unquestioned position of the Missouri Synod. As the twentieth century progressed, a shift in the use of *Kirche und Amt* occurred toward a specific authoritative source.

*Francis Pieper*

Upon the death of Walther in 1887, the mantle of leadership of the Missouri Synod fell upon Dr. Francis Pieper (1852-1931). He was known



for his faithfulness to the doctrine and the spirit of Walther.<sup>2</sup> Francis Pieper became the unquestioned leader of the Missouri Synod for a generation, and in many ways his understanding of Walther on church and office remains formative for the Missouri Synod to this day.<sup>3</sup>

In 1889, not long after Walther's death, Pieper wrote a series of articles in *Lehre und Wehre* on Walther as a theologian. In his section on church and office, Pieper discussed Walther's mediating position between the "Romanizing Lutherans" and Höfling. He also discussed *Kirche und Amt* at some length. Notably, Pieper claims that Walther never intended the *übertragen* "to become a shibboleth" (as Wohlrabe paraphrases), as long as the doctrine is preserved.<sup>4</sup>

Two editions of *Kirche und Amt* were published during Pieper's lifetime and under his guidance. In 1894 the Saxon Free Church published the fourth edition of *Kirche und Amt*, with Pieper himself writing the forward.<sup>5</sup> In this text, Pieper noted that because Walther had gone on to the church triumphant, it was left to him to write the new forward to the book. Pieper wrote that although the controversy over church and office was not handled in a scientific fashion, the theses contained in *Kirche und Amt* were timeless. He then provided a brief outline of what he considers

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<sup>2</sup>For biographical information on Francis Pieper see Theodore Graebner, *Dr. Francis Pieper: A Biographical Sketch* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931); Harold Romoser, *Dr. Francis Pieper, Messenger of Grace* (no place, no date); David P. Scaer, "Francis Pieper," in *Evangelical Theologians*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1993), 40-53; and David Scaer, "Francis Pieper: His Theology and Legacy Unmatched in Stature," in *The Pieper Lectures: The Office of the Ministry*, edited by Chris Boshoven (Saint Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 1997), 9-41.

<sup>3</sup>It is not our intention in this section to rehearse Pieper's understanding of church and office. See John C. Wohlrabe Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Until 1962" (Th. D. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, 1987), 148-159; and Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Franz Pieper on the Office of the Holy Ministry," in *The Pieper Lectures: The Office of the Ministry*, 145-179.

<sup>4</sup>Francis Pieper, "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe" (section dealing with Walther on church and office), *Lehre und Wehre* 35 (July-August 1899): 220-233. See also Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 148-149.

<sup>5</sup>C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt, Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechgläubiger Lehrer derselben*, fourth edition (Zwickau i. Sa.: Verlag des Schriftenvereins der sep. ev.-luth. Gemeinden in Sachsen, 1894.) As will be noted, there was also a 1911 Jubiläums-Ausgabe.

to be the kernel of the work. The two questions that were asked at the time were: 1) What is the church? and 2) Who has the original and immediate ground of all spiritual gifts and rights from Christ? Pieper then answered the questions by providing a brief recounting of Walther's theses, and pointing out that they were grounded in the Scriptures and attested to by the Confessions and private writings of the Lutheran Church.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1890s, Pieper produced two works that touch on the question of church and office. In 1893, the Lutheran Publication Society published *Distinctive Doctrines*, "A brief yet comprehensive statement of the distinctive doctrines and usages of the Church Bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in this country. . . ."<sup>7</sup> Pieper wrote the section for the Synodical Conference.<sup>8</sup> Three sections in his work cover topics related to *Kirche und Amt*: Of the Church (119-125), Orthodox and Heterodox Churches (125-130), and Of the Ministerial Office (130-136). Pieper did not cite *Kirche und Amt* or any other authority outside of the Scriptures themselves. In 1897, the year of the Missouri Synod Jubilee, Pieper published "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod."<sup>9</sup> His purpose was to demonstrate that the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod was that of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Two sections in this work relate to *Kirche und Amt*: Of the Church (18-21), and Of the Ministry (22-23). It was not a carbon copy of the article from 1893, but there was a great deal of similarity in language and thought. There was no citation of *Kirche und Amt* in his theses on

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<sup>6</sup>There was a second, unchanged edition that was also published by the Saxons in 1911 as a part of the sixtieth anniversary of the presentation of *Kirche und Amt*: C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt, Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechgläubiger Lehrer derselben*. Fourth edition. Jubiläums-Ausgabe. (Zwickau i. Sa.: Verlag des Schriftenvereins der sep. ev.-luth. Gemeinden in Sachsen, 1911).

<sup>7</sup>Lutheran Board of Publication, *Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the General Bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1893), iii.

<sup>8</sup>Franz Pieper, "The Synodical Conference," in *Distinctive Doctrines*, 199-266. The book was written in English, but no translator is listed for Pieper's article.

<sup>9</sup>Francis Pieper, *A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, translated by W. H. T. Dau (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897).

church and office, though clearly Pieper was well in line with the theological argument of *Kirche und Amt*.

In 1913 Pieper presented a paper at the Southern Illinois District convention entitled, "The Layman's Movement in Light of God's Word," a portion of which was later published in *Lehre und Wehre* as "The Divine Ordinance of the Public Preaching Office."<sup>10</sup> John Wohlrabe notes that the timing of this article is significant, in that his brother, August, had been writing against the traditional Missouri Synod understanding for several years.<sup>11</sup> The article does not seem polemical in nature, but it does present the traditional Missouri Synod position, and also cites *Kirche und Amt* by name several times, particularly Thesis VII on the *übertragungslehre*.

Pieper uses Walther in the section on the divine institution of the office.<sup>12</sup> He began by explaining the use of the term "public" ministry and cites *Kirche und Amt* Thesis VII on the ministry.<sup>13</sup> Not long after this, he also quoted Theses I-III on the Office from *Kirche und Amt*. Pieper was careful about whom he cited in this essay. He limited his quotations to the Scriptures, the Confessions, Luther, Chemnitz, Walther, and one reference to Günther's *Symbolik*.<sup>14</sup> He did not limit his citations to *Kirche und Amt*, however. He also quoted Walther's *Pastoraltheologie*, more often than *Kirche und Amt*, and cites *Kirche und Amt* in the same manner.<sup>15</sup> Pieper used other authors sparingly. He cited Luther and the Confessions primarily, and had select citations from Walther's *Kirche und Amt* and the *Pastoraltheologie*. He did not cite them as a specific authority, but neither did he make a point of the authority of the Confessions or Luther.

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<sup>10</sup>Francis Pieper, "Die göttliche Ordnung des öffentlichen Predigtamts," *Lehre und Wehre* 60 (April 1914): 145-159. A translation may be found in Francis Pieper, *What is Christianity? And Other Essays*, translated by John Theodore Mueller (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), 100-114. Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," summarizes this article, 150-153.

<sup>11</sup>Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 150.

<sup>12</sup>See Rast, "Franz Pieper," 161-169, for a more extended summary of Pieper's argument.

<sup>13</sup>Pieper, *What is Christianity?* 109.

<sup>14</sup>Pieper, *What is Christianity?* 107.

<sup>15</sup>Pieper, *What is Christianity?* 122, 123, 134-135, 200.

Next we come to Pieper's *magnum opus*, the *Christliche Dogmatik*.<sup>16</sup> We can divide our examination of the *Christliche Dogmatik* into church and office. Pieper's section on the church contains numerous references to Walther, as would be expected.<sup>17</sup> Pieper used four Walther documents in this section: *Kirche und Amt* (twice), *Pastoraltheologie* (five times), *Die rechte Gestalt* (once), and he made mention of a pamphlet by Walther entitled "Of the Duty of Christians to Join an Orthodox Congregation."<sup>18</sup>

There are two notable cases where Pieper used Walther. The first is in reference to the divine institution of the local congregation. Pieper argued that any union of congregations into larger bodies, such as conferences, synods, confederations, and others, was not ordained by God, and therefore not "church" in the proper sense. He uses *Kirche und Amt* and the *Pastorale* as supporting evidence.<sup>19</sup> Of interest here is that this is precisely what Pieper's brother, August, argued to the contrary some years before, and criticized *Kirche und Amt* in the process.<sup>20</sup>

The second point emerges in the section on "Children of God in Heterodox Churches."<sup>21</sup> Pieper here argued the corollary to the invisible nature of the church, that is, that there can be Christians in heterodox churches. He argued using the following authorities in order: 1) The Scriptures: John 4:22, Luke 17:16 and following, Luke 10:33; 2) Martin Luther; 3) "Our older Lutheran dogmaticians"; and 4) The Fathers of the Missouri Synod (the footnote cites *Kirche und Amt*, 95-113).

<sup>16</sup>Francis Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, volume 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920). The English translation cited below will be used for this section.

<sup>17</sup>Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, edited by Walther W. F. Albrecht, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3:397-435.

<sup>18</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:421, 424. It is also interesting to note that he does *not* use Walther in the section on the visible/invisible distinction, 408-410. *Dogmatics*, 3:418, 421, 430, 434 (twice). In the last two cases Pieper uses Walther's *Pastorale* to argue that the pastor should be made the chairman of the congregation. *Dogmatics*, 3:420. *Dogmatics*, 3:421.

<sup>19</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:421.

<sup>20</sup>This somewhat evasive approach would later become the norm in synodical theological discussions (for example, the "Statement of the 44"). Rather than address himself to the Wisconsin Synod error on ecclesiology, Pieper here simply stated the truth with no reference to the error that a sister synod was espousing.

<sup>21</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:423-425.

This last section is worth reproducing here:

The Fathers of the Missouri Synod declare it a calumny when the Lutheran Church is accused of identifying the church of God with the Lutheran Church. They taught: If a person sincerely clings to the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith, if he believes that God is gracious to him because of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, he is a member of the Christian church, no matter in which ecclesiastical camp he may be. By denying this truth one would overthrow the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith, the article of justification. Walther: According to Rom. 3:28 and Acts 4:12 'the . . .'<sup>22</sup>

It appears here that Pieper used a four-fold layer of authority. Beginning with the Scriptures, he moved through Luther, the older dogmaticians, and then the "Fathers of the Missouri Synod." On the one hand, this could be an argument for the authoritative character of *Kirche und Amt* for Pieper. He was certainly citing it as such. On the other hand, Pieper did *not* quote the Confessions, and he certainly would not be arguing against their status as *norma normata*.

Pieper's most complete work on the office may also be found in his *Christliche Dogmatik*.<sup>23</sup> In general, Pieper followed the theological argument of Walther, although he is ambiguous on the nature of the divine call of auxiliary offices.<sup>24</sup> He cites two of Walther's works extensively: *Kirche und Amt* (six times),<sup>25</sup> and the *Pastoraltheologie* (five times).<sup>26</sup> There were also a scattering of citations from *Lehre und Wehre* and *Der Lutheraner* articles by Walther, Ottomar Fuerbringer, and others. It does appear that Pieper was using Walther as an authority, especially since virtually the only other "contemporary" writers that Pieper cited were opponents, such as Höfling on the one hand, and Münchmeyer, Löhe, and Kliefoth on the other.

In an article on the confessionalism of the early twentieth-century Missourians, Charles Arand argued that because the second generation

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<sup>22</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:424. The quotation continues with an extended citation of *Kirche und Amt*.

<sup>23</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatik*, 3:501-527. Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:439-462.

<sup>24</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:462.

<sup>25</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:444, 449, 453, 457, 458, 462.

<sup>26</sup>Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 3:450, 451, 454, 455, 459.

of the Missouri Synod (Pieper, A. L. Graebner, and Bente in particular) emphasized the biblical character of the Confessions, they tended to "de-emphasize the historical dimensions of the symbols."<sup>27</sup> Arand summarizes their position as follows: "Neither the historical setting of the Confessions nor the historical changes which have taken place in science, history or psychology over the last four centuries must be allowed to restrict, limit, or condition the doctrinal content of the Confessions."<sup>28</sup>

In a way, this demonstrates Pieper's use of Walther as well. He did not spend any time in his *Dogmatik* dwelling on the unique background of the Saxons, the challenges facing them as they attempted to understand their role as a church apart from the state, the Grabau/Walther controversy, and others. Rather, Pieper presented the Missouri positions on church and office as truth, apart from their historical circumstances. Pieper placed them only in the context of the nineteenth-century German controversies over church and office. However, he did not deal with Grabau at all, and Löhe is only referred to in the context of the German situation.

To summarize, Pieper used Walther on a regular basis, and as a type of fourth level of authority after Scriptures, Confessions, and the orthodox fathers (particularly Luther). Pieper used Walther's *Pastoraltheologie* every bit as much as he uses *Kirche und Amt*, as well as several of Walther's other writings, for example *Die rechte Gestalt*. It is, therefore, difficult to determine whether Pieper placed any particular authority in *Kirche und Amt*.

### The Wauwatosa Theology within the Wisconsin Synod

At the same time that Francis Pieper was active and writing, a controversy was brewing between the Missouri Synod and The Wisconsin Synod, and *Kirche und Amt* was at the center of it. The first twentieth-century issue involving *Kirche und Amt* centered around an Intersynodical disciplinary issue with the Wisconsin Synod, and the

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<sup>27</sup>Charles Arand, "Missouri Synod Confessionalism in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 70 (Winter 1997): 196.

<sup>28</sup>Arand, "Missouri Synod Confessionalism," 196.



formation of what would later be known as "The Wauwatosa Theology."<sup>29</sup>

In 1899, a Mr. Schlueter of Trinity congregation (Missouri Synod) in Cincinnati, Ohio, was excommunicated because he intended to send his son to a public school instead of the parish school. The Central District of the Missouri Synod did not approve of this action, and suspended the congregation, along with its pastors, A. and E. von Schlichten. In 1904, Trinity and its pastors applied for membership in the Wisconsin Synod. The Wisconsin Synod replied that they would not consider the request because of the outstanding controversy over their suspension by the Central District. In the midst of great controversy, Trinity continued to apply for membership to Wisconsin. At the same time, several Wisconsin Synod pastors were engaging in fellowship with this former Missouri parish, in spite of warnings by district officials and the faculty of the Wauwatosa Seminary (Wisconsin Synod). In 1911, Trinity deposed the pastors and the council which supported them, and returned to the Missouri Synod.<sup>30</sup>

In the years that followed there was some discussion in the Wisconsin Synod concerning the matter, particularly among three members of the Wauwatosa Seminary, J. P. Koehler, August Pieper, and John Schaller. By 1911 the three had worked out their differences, and, as Koehler would later write, "... stood shoulder to shoulder."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>What follows is a brief recounting of the formation of the Wauwatosa position on church and office. To see this history within the broader scope of the doctrine of the ministry, see Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 114-122. For the Wisconsin Synod interpretation of the same see J. P. Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, edited by Leigh D. Jordahl (Saint Cloud, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1970), 230-239. It is also worth noting that this theological controversy has not been well recognized in the history books. For instance, in 1958 David Schmiel wrote an S. T. M. thesis on the relationship between Missouri and Wisconsin up to 1925. Although this controversy was in full swing with the series of articles published by August Pieper (as we shall see in this section), Schmiel made no mention whatsoever that there were theological concerns over the nature of church and office between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod. David Schmiel, "The History of the Relationship of the Wisconsin Synod to the Missouri Synod Until 1925," S. T. M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, 1958.

<sup>30</sup>Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 114-116.

<sup>31</sup>Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 234.

It was August Pieper (1857-1947) who began to write concerning church and office in 1911, with a series of articles in The Wisconsin Synod's *Theologische Quartalschrift*.<sup>32</sup> Pieper argued that the synod had the right to excommunicate, since any gathering of believers constituted a church. Not long after, at a pastors' conference in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, Prof. Augustus Ernst (1841-1924), President of Northwestern College, rebutted August Pieper's theses.<sup>33</sup> Prof. Ernst argued that the synod is not a church in the proper sense, and therefore cannot excommunicate. He used citations from the Scriptures, Confessions, Luther, Hönecke, and Walther.

In 1912 August Pieper, in conjunction with Koehler and Schaller, wrote an article in the *Quartalschrift* that addressed the heart of the problem.<sup>34</sup> In "Zur Verständigung in der gegenwärtigen Diskussion über Kirche und Amt," Pieper offered a critique of Walther's *Kirche und Amt*. Pieper argued that Walther's method of quoting from the Confessions and church fathers led him to misunderstand both church and office. He also claimed that there were times when Walther himself misunderstood the Scriptures, Confessions, and the fathers of the church. What becomes clear from this article is that August Pieper did not see *Kirche und Amt* as the public doctrine of the Missouri Synod, but as the premiere writing of Walther. This is an important distinction because it demonstrates a shift in thought from within the Synodical Conference by none other than Francis Pieper's brother.

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<sup>32</sup>August Pieper, "Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 8 (January and April 1911): 30-44, 98-123. August Pieper, "Die Suspension noch einmal," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 8 (July 1911): 131-164. Pieper argues (contra the Cincinnati case) that a proper suspension issued by a synod is, in effect, an excommunication. This was against the Wisconsin Synod pastors who had continued to maintain fellowship with Trinity congregation in Cincinnati, even after suspension by the Central District of the Missouri Synod. Pieper here argues that the church referred to in Matthew 18:17 was not simply a local congregation, but any gathering of believers.

<sup>33</sup>Augustus Ernst, "Sätze ueber Synods, Kirchenzucht und Synodalzucht, gedruckt auf Beschluss der allgemeinen Pastoralkonferenz der Synode von Wisconsin und den Gliedern derselben vorgelegt von August F. Ernst." The theses are reproduced in Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 237.

<sup>34</sup>August Pieper, "Zur Verstaendigung in der gegenwaertigen Diskussion ueber Kirche und Amt," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 9 (July 1912): 182-208.

Thus the position of the Wauwatosa faculty may be summarized as follows: 1) any gathering of Christians (particularly in the form of a synod) constituted the church, and therefore could exercise the Office of the Keys; and 2) that the Scriptures instituted a gospel ministry, but not a particular form (for example, pastor, teacher, seminary professor). The Wauwatosa faculty fully understood that they were breaking new ground with these two doctrines, but they believed them to be scriptural and confessional.<sup>35</sup>

After the 1914 meeting of the Synodical Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a special meeting was held between the Wauwatosa men and Professors Francis Pieper, George Metzger, and Ludwig Fuerbringer.<sup>36</sup> According to Koehler, this was an informal discussion, no resolution was reached, and the matter was apparently dropped for a time, at least in terms of formal discussions between the faculties. August Pieper and the others continued to publish their views in the *Quartalschrift*. This view would eventually become the established position of the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>37</sup>

The Saint Louis faculty, under Francis Pieper, attacked the Wauwatosa position, although not in public.<sup>38</sup> On December 20 and 21, 1916 there was a joint meeting of the Wauwatosa and Saint Louis seminaries in

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<sup>35</sup>Edward C. Fredrich recounts in his history of the Wisconsin Synod that August Pieper in his classrooms referred to his teaching on the office as *meine Amtslehre* (my teaching of the ministry). The three Wauwatosa men also understood that they were setting aside both "traditional thinking and dogmatic formulations." Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 110. It is worth noting that all three of the Wauwatosa men (A. Pieper, Koehler, and Schaller) were students of Walther.

<sup>36</sup>Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 238.

<sup>37</sup>See "Thiensville and the Doctrine of the Church and Ministry," Theodore Graebner Papers, Box 71, Thiensville 1930-1932 File, Concordia Historical Institute.

<sup>38</sup>Pieper, for instance wrote an article in 1914 entitled, "Die göttliche Ordnung des öffentlichen Predigtamts," *Lehre und Wehre* 60 (April 1914): 145-159. Pieper here makes extensive use and defense of *Kirche und Amt*, but does not mention or attack the position of the Wauwatosa men by name. The Saint Louis faculty also wrote to the Wauwatosa faculty in August of 1916 regarding some of their concerns, and made particular note that the two faculties had "mutually given assent" to Walther's theses. For a translation of this and other related correspondence, see "Basic Documents in the Church and Ministry Discussions," *The Faithful Word* 7 (February 1970): 23-31.

Chicago, and four theses were passed.<sup>39</sup> These theses attempted to reach consensus between the Saint Louis and Wauwatosa faculties, even though the Wauwatosa faculty had publicly attacked the theological position of the Missouri Synod, and Walther's *Kirche und Amt* in particular.

Thesis Three of the Saint Louis/Wauwatosa 1916 document is especially significant. A comparison of Thesis Three below in the German with the German of Thesis VII of Walther's *Kirche und Amt* reveals striking differences.

**Walther's Thesis VII on the  
Ministry from *Kirche und Amt*<sup>40</sup>**

Das heilige Predigtamt ist die von Gott durch die Gemeinde als Inhaberin des Priestertums und aller kirchengewalt übertragene Gewalt, die Rechte des geistlichen Priestertums in öffentlichen Amte von Gemeinschaftswegen auszuüben.

**Thesis III from the Saint  
Louis/Wauwatosa Theses of 1916<sup>41</sup>**

Das Pfarramt ist der von der Gemeinde dazu tüchtigen Personen übertragene Dienst, die Rechte des geistlichen Priestertums aller Christen von gemeinschaftswegen auszuüben.

Notice the similarity of language, but that the language is used quite differently. For example, both theses use *übertragene*. In *Kirche und Amt*, it is *von Gott*, in the other, it is *von der Gemeinde*. Furthermore, the 1916 theses are ambiguous in defining the divine origin of the *Amt*, because thesis IV is unclear on what is exactly meant by *Amt*. In the first sentence, the *Amt* is called a *göttlicher Ordnung* (divine order), but the *äussere Form* (external form) and *Einrichtung* (arrangement) of this *Amt* is left to the discretion of the congregation. At the very best, the 1916 theses leave the concrete nature of the *Amt* in a dubious state. Is there one office, or many? Why use *Amt* in Thesis IV, and not *Predigtamt*? For the Wauwatosa men, the one *Amt* was the gospel ministry, in the abstract, which can find its concrete form in various ways. This much is virtually

<sup>39</sup>"Theses Adopted by Representatives of Concordia Seminary and Wauwatosa at Chicago, Dec. 20, 21, 1916," Theodore Graebner Papers, Box 71, File 2, Concordia Historical Institute. See Appendix III for the original and a translation of the theses. Another translation of the Saint Louis/Wauwatosa theses may be found in "Basic Documents in the Church and Ministry Discussions," *The Faithful Word* 7 (February 1970): 27-28.

<sup>40</sup>Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, 1852, XV.

<sup>41</sup>"Theses Adopted by Representatives of Concordia Seminary and Wauwatosa at Chicago, Dec. 20, 21, 1916."

stated in Thesis IV. It is clear that the authors were familiar with *Kirche und Amt*, and that similar phraseology and terminology was used in the 1916 theses, particularly in theses I and IV. However, the Wauwatosa men were on public record as disagreeing with *Kirche und Amt*, and were under no pretension to attempt to conform to it. This is reflected especially in Thesis IV.

The mystery is how the Saint Louis faculty agreed to these theses in the first place. There did not appear to be any concession on the part of the Wauwatosa men at all. There is no record of who attended this meeting in Chicago, but it is difficult to imagine that such a meeting would have happened without the approval and presence of Francis Pieper. August Pieper would later recount that at the passing of these theses, the discussions were concluded even though unanimity had not been reached.<sup>42</sup> The apparent agreement, however, did not last long. The next year Prof. J. P. Koehler of the Wauwatosa faculty published his *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*.<sup>43</sup> In connection with the church and office controversy in Germany during the nineteenth century, Koehler wrote: "Only Höfling and a few colleagues held entirely clearly and correctly according to Scripture."<sup>44</sup> Thus the Saint Louis/Wauwatosa Theses of 1916 were ambiguous enough to allow widely divergent views on church and office.

It is also important to note that this does not mean the Wauwatosa men were critical of Walther at every turn. In 1923 the *Theologische Quartalschrift* contained a series of articles by August Pieper in celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Missouri Synod and the fiftieth anniversary of the Synodical Conference.<sup>45</sup> In this series, August Pieper

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<sup>42</sup>August Pieper, "Concerning the Doctrine of the Church and of Its Ministry, With Special Reference to the Synod and Its Discipline," translated by H. J. Vogel, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 59 (April 1962): 86. The original is August Pieper, "Zur Lehre von der Kirche und ihrem Amt, mit besonderer Anwendung auf die Synode und ihre Zucht," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 26 (October 1929): 202-249.

<sup>43</sup>J. P. Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1917).

<sup>44</sup>Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 659. The translation is from "Basic Documents in the Church and Ministry Discussions - II," *The Faithful Word* 7 (May 1970): 14.

<sup>45</sup>August Pieper, "Jubiläumsnachgedanken," parts 1-4, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 20 (January 1923): 1-18; (April 1923): 88-112; (July 1923): 161-177; (October 1923): 254-270.

provides his interpretation of the relationship between Missouri and Wisconsin, focusing in particular on Walther and his impact on theological education within Wisconsin. Pieper's perspective could be described as that of a loyal critic. He clearly counted Walther among the theological giants, even going so far as to compare him to Luther.<sup>46</sup> He also praised Walther's genius for correcting the former Stephanites on the doctrine of the church, and that it was through *Kirche und Amt* and *Die rechte Gestalt* that Walther laid the "broad and solid foundation" for the Missouri Synod and its affiliates.<sup>47</sup> Walther's weakness, however, was that his almost exclusively dogmatic approach to theology created in Missouri a desire to establish doctrine by citing the older theologians (repristination), rather than going to the ground of the Scriptures.<sup>48</sup> Pieper also reiterated his earlier criticisms of *Kirche und Amt*, by arguing that Walther's use of *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt* could easily give the impression that Walther thought only the congregational parish pastor had a divinely instituted call.<sup>49</sup> He also brought up the argument again that Walther was not attempting to establish that only the local congregation was church. This is significant, because it demonstrates that the 1916 theses had not resolved anything. August Pieper was still publicly critical of Walther and *Kirche und Amt*.

After 1916 the matter seemed to die down in the public (or semi-public) arena until the Intersynodical Committee. No further agreement was

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A translation of the portions relevant to our discussion may be found in "Anniversary Reflections," translated by R. E. Wehrwein, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 84 (Winter 1987): 12-28; and "Anniversary Reflections II," translated by R. E. Wehrwein, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 84 (Spring 1987): 96-119.

<sup>46</sup>A. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 16. Later on in reference to his ability to teach and inspire students, Pieper wrote (27): "Three years in Saint Louis were enough to make one a Waltherian in doctrine and love."

<sup>47</sup>A. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 17. Pieper also pointed out that the doctrines of church and ministry were never central in Walther's thought. His "chief touchstone" of theology was always the doctrine of justification (19). See also "Theological Reflections II," 101.

<sup>48</sup>A. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 20 and following. Pieper is particularly critical of Walther's insistence on teaching dogmatics in Latin. Pieper wrote (20): "It was noticeable that in doing this [teaching in Latin] even Walther was walking on stilts, and most of his students did not fully understand him. For all of them the daily three to five hour 'Baier grind,' [Baier oxen] as they in typical student fashion called it, spoiled their joy in God's precious Word."

<sup>49</sup>Pieper, "Theological Reflections II," 108.



made until the *Thiensville Theses*, which were signed by both faculties on April 16, 1932.<sup>50</sup> Both sides believed that the theses supported their position. This, however, was not the end of the controversy. The 1932 convention of the Missouri Synod passed a resolution for the president of the Synod to appoint a Committee on Organic Union. This committee would examine the feasibility of uniting all of the Lutheran synods of the Synodical Conference into one united synod.<sup>51</sup> It was not long after this that August Pieper once again published an article in the July, 1932 issue of the *Theological Quartalschrift*, where he once again defended his position on church and office, and essentially nullified the *Thiensville Theses*.<sup>52</sup> After a long series of negotiations, there was still no evidence that August Pieper or the other Wauwatosa men ever recanted their position or subscribed to the *Thiensville Theses*.<sup>53</sup>

The significance of this episode cannot be overestimated. How is it that August Pieper could make a major attack on Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, and there could never be a public rebuking on the part of the Missouri Synod against the Wisconsin Synod? This issue would come up again in the Intersynodical Theses, but there too, there was never any resolution to the matter. The Missouri Synod never made the Wisconsin Synod's positions on church and office a fellowship issue.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>*Proceedings of the Forty-Second Convention of the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference Assembled at Concordia College Saint Paul, MN, August 12-15, 1932* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 142-143. Theodore Graebner reported on the meeting in an article entitled, "Agreement with Thiensville Faculty," *The Lutheran Witness* 51 (June 21, 1932): 224. One may also see Theodore Graebner Papers, Box 71, Concordia Historical Institute. Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," also addresses these theses at some length, 198-200.

<sup>51</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Regular Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), 164-166.

<sup>52</sup>August Pieper, "Unser kirchlicher Tiefstand und seine wahre Heilung," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 29 (July 1932): 161-169. For a summary of the dealings connected with this see Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 145-151.

<sup>53</sup>In a letter to Rev. Im. F. Albrecht, Theodore Graebner recounts, "In reply we have from him [A. Pieper] a letter which seems to eliminate every hope of an understanding. To me and the other members of our faculty this comes as a shock to which we can adjust ourselves only with difficulty." Graebner then wrote that if they are to present a "Yes or No" question to the Thiensville faculty, he would be afraid of the response. Graebner to Im. F. Albrecht, March 11, 1933, Theodore Graebner Papers, Box 71, Concordia Historical Institute.

<sup>54</sup>It is also worth noting that during this time there were at least two serious

*The Intersynodical Movement and the Brief Statement*

Simultaneously, a movement was underway to affect closer relations among the various Midwest church bodies.<sup>55</sup> In 1917, committees from the Missouri, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Ohio Synods were elected or appointed to begin formal doctrinal discussions. In 1924 the Buffalo Synod joined the discussions. The intent behind these discussions was to come to doctrinal agreement so that church unity could be established. Many of the early negotiations (as would be expected) centered around the doctrines of conversion and election. Not until 1924 did the doctrines of church and office come under discussion.

In the summer of 1924 (July 15 in Chicago and July 29-30 in Dubuque), the Intersynodical Committee met and completed the "final copy" of the Intersynodical (Chicago) Theses. Two members of the Missouri committee, Theodore Graebner and William Arndt, were not able to attend the final meeting. Missouri was then represented by one man, Pastor J. G. F. Kleinhans, who signed for the whole committee. When they received their copies, Graebner and Arndt were unable to sign the document because it had been rewritten with the Wisconsin Synod position on church and office in mind. The revised edition made no distinction between the office of pastor and other forms that Missouri had traditionally called auxiliary offices (teacher, professor, synodical official).

According to Wohlrabe, this sparked a series of letters between Graebner and Pfotenhauer on how to proceed.<sup>56</sup> Pfotenhauer instructed Graebner to withdraw his signature until they were satisfied. In the fall of 1924, when the Intersynodical Conference met again in Chicago, the Wisconsin and Missouri members of the Conference arrived a day ahead of time to discuss their differences.<sup>57</sup> At this meeting some compromise

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attempts at a merger between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods, but for various reasons these failed.

<sup>55</sup>Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 143-147. For a general history of the Intersynodical (Chicago) Theses see Charles F. Bunzel, "The Missouri Synod and the Chicago Intersynodical Theses," (S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, 1964).

<sup>56</sup>Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 144.

<sup>57</sup>"Notice to all Intersynodical Committee members from Secretary A. C. Haase," October 13, 1924, Theodore Graebner papers, Box 113, File 3, Concordia Historical Institute. See also Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 145.

was reached, but there were still questions. When the Intersynodical (Chicago) Theses were finished in the spring of 1925, Article VI, "The Pastoral Office," read as follows:

18. As distinct from the universal priesthood, the pastoral office, as regards its essence and purpose, consists in this, that a person qualified for this office and duly called to the same edifies, teaches, and governs a certain congregation in Christ's stead by means of God's Word, and administers the Sacraments in its midst.

19. This office is of divine institution, and its functions, aforementioned, are precisely defined in God's Word. Accordingly it is the right and duty of every Christian congregation to establish this office, and this is done by means of calling a pastor. Such action is a function of the universal priesthood.

20. The calling of a pastor is a right of that congregation in which the minister is to discharge the duties of the office, and by such calling Christ appoints His ministers for the congregation. Ordination is not a divine, but an ecclesiastical ordinance for the public solemn confirmation of the pastor's call.<sup>58</sup>

The Intersynodical Theses went before the Missouri Synod convention in 1926, and the Examining Committee requested that the following be added to Thesis 18: "and in this manner publicly exercises, in the name of the congregation, the office belonging to it."<sup>59</sup> This same committee then elected Theodore Engelder of the Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, to the Intersynodical Committee.

The final form was adopted in Saint Paul, Minnesota, on August 2, 1928 by the representatives of the Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, and

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<sup>58</sup>Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 367.

<sup>59</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Regular Convention* (1926), 139. It is also worthy of note that Theodore Graebner resigned from the Intersynodical Committee right before the 1926 convention because of the attitude of "senior members of the faculty" toward the theses. See "Intersynodical Matter, Memorandum - June 15, 1926," Theodore Graebner papers, Box 111, File 4, Concordia Historical Institute. See also John Wohlrabe, "The Missouri Synod's Unity Attempts During the Pfotenhauer Presidency, 1911 - 1935" (S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1982), 126.

Buffalo synods, and was entitled, "Chicago Theses Concerning Conversion, Predestination, and Other Doctrines."<sup>60</sup>

At the 1929 Synodical Convention, the Examining Committee reported that they believed the Intersynodical Theses to be unclear or even in error. Specifically, the Examining Committee objected to the following regarding church and office: 1) in the article on the church, there was no clear confession that the church is invisible; 2) there was no confession of the doctrine of conveyance (*Übertragungslehre*); 3) there was no confession that every congregation has the sole authority to call a pastor, apart from the clergy of the body to which it belongs.<sup>61</sup>

The Examining Committee therefore considered it a "hopeless undertaking" to make the theses unobjectionable in terms of their theological content, and that furthermore the Synod should discontinue such intersynodical conferences. The Synod then rejected the Intersynodical Theses.<sup>62</sup>

The significance of Synod rejecting the Intersynodical Theses lies in the disagreement over the Wauwatosa Theology on church and office. There is no evidence that the Missouri Synod disagreed with the Iowa and Buffalo Synods within the Chicago Theses.<sup>63</sup> There is, however, evidence

<sup>60</sup>A. C. Haase, secretary, "Schlussbericht des Intersynodalkomitees," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 25 (October 1928): 266-288. The English version is in *Theologische Quartalschrift* 26 (October 1929): 250-273. The English version may also be found in *Doctrinal Declarations: A Collection of Official Statements on the Doctrinal Position of Various Lutheran Synods in America* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936), 24-59.

<sup>61</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Regular Convention* (1929), 111. All three of these objections could be tied to theses from *Kirche und Amt*, if not explicitly, certainly implicitly. It would be a worthy study to examine any of the minutes extant from the Intersynodical Conference to determine whether they were examining specific texts in their theological discussions or not. Certainly Graebner and Arndt of the Intersynodical Committee were familiar with Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, but it would be difficult to prove that they were actually using it in the discussions. These objections were not from the Intersynodical Committee, but the Examining Committee appointed by the Synod.

<sup>62</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Regular Convention* (1929), 112-113.

<sup>63</sup>Charles F. Bunzel pointed out in his S.T.M. thesis, "The Missouri Synod and the Chicago (Intersynodical) Theses," (45-47) that by accepting the *Toledo Theses* the Ohio Synod had accepted the Iowa Synod position, which held that the means of grace were a part of the essence of the church. The Iowa Synod also held that both

of disagreement with the Wisconsin Synod, with which the Missouri Synod was already in fellowship. This was the second time that the disagreement over the Wauwatosa Theology on church and office had been sidestepped. This is of particular significance, because the Wauwatosa Theology began in earnest with a critique of *Kirche und Amt*. There were never any public statements written attacking the Wauwatosa Theology, and so it did not become an "issue" on a fellowship level.<sup>64</sup>

There are several possible interpretations to this event. First, it is possible that there were pastors and professors in the Missouri Synod who were espousing the Wauwatosa theology, and that it would be too painful to address in a forthright manner. Second, that the relationship between August and Francis Pieper made it difficult or impossible for serious charges of false doctrine to be made. Third, that unity was more important than real or perceived theological differences. Finally, it is possible that *Kirche und Amt* was not understood to be the final viewpoint of the Missouri Synod on the doctrines of church and office, and that there was some flexibility in understanding, as long as they were not espousing hierarchical designs on church or office.

At this same 1929 convention, the Missouri Synod resolved to elect a committee to present the doctrine of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions in the most succinct matter possible, and to begin with the *status controversiae*.<sup>65</sup> The President of Synod was also to appoint the committee. This was done, and the 1932 convention proceedings report that the committee consisted of: Dr. Francis Pieper, Prof. W. Wegner, Rev.

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Christians and clergy necessarily constituted the church. Because, however, the Iowa Synod held that the doctrines of Church and Ministry were open questions, they were not willing to make them issues of debate.

<sup>64</sup>This entire episode with the Wisconsin Synod is often ignored when discussing the history of the Intersynodical Movement. For example, C. S. Meyer, in his "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement'" (*Concordia Theological Monthly* 32 [September 1961]) does not even mention the ongoing controversy between the Missouri and Wisconsin synods regarding church and office (see particularly pages 535-538). Neither does Meyer mention it in *Moving Frontiers* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 416-418. Neither did Bunzel, in his thesis, mention any of the controversy between the Missouri and Wisconsin synods on church and office.

<sup>65</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Regular Convention* (1929), 113. This approach was the exact opposite of the Intersynodical Committee, which had attempted to avoid the *status controversiae*.

E. A. Mayer, Rev. L. A. Heerboth, and Dr. Theodore Engelder.<sup>66</sup> These theses were to serve as the basis for future intersynodical discussions.

This committee drew up a series of theses, which came to be known as the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod. The document was a revision of several works published by Francis Pieper, beginning as early as 1893.<sup>67</sup> Published in German in the May 1931 issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, in English in the June 1931 issue, and distributed in pamphlet form throughout the Synod, the Brief Statement focused particularly on the *status controversiae* with the other Lutheran church bodies in the United States.<sup>68</sup> In 1932, the synodical convention, at the recommendation of President Pfotenhauer, adopted them "as a brief Scriptural statement of the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod."<sup>69</sup>

The Brief Statement shows the influence of *Kirche und Amt*. The section on the church reflects the view of *Kirche und Amt* by underscoring the invisible nature of the church, that the church consists only of believers, that the church exists also in heterodox communions, and the Christians are the "Original and True Possessors of All Christian Rights and Privileges."<sup>70</sup>

The paragraphs on the ministry also reflect the view of *Kirche und Amt*. Three points in particular have antecedents in *Kirche und Amt*: 1) an underscore of the divine institution of the office; 2) a rejection of any kind of "hierarchical" understanding of the office; and 3) ordination as a "commendable ecclesiastical ordinance." It is also of note that the pastoral office is not called the highest office in the church, nor is their any specific mention of the *Übertragungslehre*.<sup>71</sup> The lack of the

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<sup>66</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Regular Convention* (1932), 154.

<sup>67</sup>For a comparative study of the five different editions of the Brief Statement, see Meyer, "A Historical Background," 538-542.

<sup>68</sup>"Thesen zur kurzen Darlegung der Lehrstellung der Missourisynode," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 2 (May 1931): 321-335; "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 2 (June 1931): 401-416.

<sup>69</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Regular Convention* (1932), 154-155.

<sup>70</sup>"Brief Statement," 408-410.

<sup>71</sup>"Brief Statement," 410-411.



*Übertragungslehre* is particularly unusual, given the fact that this was one of the reasons the Intersynodical Theses were rejected in 1929.<sup>72</sup>

There is also a great deal of emphasis placed upon who must make provision that the word of God is publicly preached and the sacraments administered according to their institution (Paragraph 31). The local, Christian congregation must make this provision. Furthermore, a congregation is local or public in nature, not private, nor within the circle of the family, neither is it in "common intercourse" with fellow Christians. While this is not an emphasis in *Kirche und Amt*, it is present. It is possible, however, that the reason for the highlighting of the divine institution of the local congregation actually stemmed from the ongoing dispute with the Wisconsin Synod over the nature of the church.<sup>73</sup>

There are several elements of the Brief Statement, however, that could very well be described as specifically written *contra* the Wisconsin Synod position. Because of the emphasis on a "certain locality," Paragraph 31 would be difficult for the Wisconsin Synod to accept.<sup>74</sup> There is some evidence that the Wisconsin Synod later acknowledged the Brief Statement, but it never formally accepted it as a confession of faith.<sup>75</sup>

In summary, John Wohlrabe is correct when he argues that the Brief Statement does not attempt to present an "exhaustive treatment of any one doctrine." It did not contradict *Kirche und Amt*, but it was an attempt to reflect the position of the Missouri Synod that had been established in 1851.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Regular Convention* (1929), 111.

<sup>73</sup>For example, Paragraph 27 from the "Brief Statement" (409), highlights that the Scriptures speak of two meanings for *ekklesia*: the believers of all times and places, and the local congregation. This is, however, very similar to the argument which Pieper made in the 1893 version (*Distinctive Doctrines*, 124-125).

<sup>74</sup>"Brief Statement," 410.

<sup>75</sup>Later during the controversy regarding the *Common Confession*, the Wisconsin Synod's Standing Committee on Church Union urged that "... the Synodical Conference in convention assembled to request the Missouri Synod to repeal the *Common Confession* and to return to the clarity and decisiveness in setting forth the Scriptural and historical doctrinal position of the Synodical Conference for which the *Brief Statement* sets an excellent precedent." *Proceedings of the Forty-Second Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (1953), 157.

<sup>76</sup>Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis," 158-159.

### Conclusion

How do pastors, theologians, synodical conventions, and others use *Kirche und Amt* today? Have we, intentionally or unintentionally, set up a third category of confessional subscription? Was this the intent of the 1851 Synodical Convention? The issues raised in this article get at the very core of the nature of confessional identity. Are we a church body defined by a list of documents that make up the public doctrine of the Missouri Synod, or do we identify ourselves as a church body that adheres to the Book of Concord, but is ambiguous when it addresses contemporary theological thought and practice? Are these the only two options before us? Laurie Hayes has argued that because of the Missouri Synod's dependence on controversy, it has never seriously engaged the actual opponents. She writes:

The synod has tantalized its opponents by dogmatically denouncing their error, but then has done little else except to engage in confessing and upholding its own position. In not destroying, suppressing, or converting its opponents, the synod has allowed its opponents to retaliate.

Furthermore, in seemingly being bothered more by heresy than by heretics, the synod has encouraged its opposition not only to retaliate, but to escalate. The synod's concern for orthodoxy has been an intellectual, abstract, and impersonal concern. There is little indication that the synod's members have been interested in empathizing with the momentary human circumstances or needs of its opponents. Individuals have been responded to only insofar as they are personifications of error.<sup>77</sup>

It is easy to see why Hayes could interpret the history of the Missouri Synod in this fashion. If one reads the actual doctrinal statements of the Missouri Synod (for example, *Kirche und Amt*, the *Thirteen Theses on*

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<sup>77</sup>Laurie Ann Schultz Hayes, "The Rhetoric of Controversy in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod with Particular Emphasis on the Years 1969-1976," (Ph. D. dissertation, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980), 195. Hayes cites an example of this in W. H. T. Dau's preface to Walther's church and ministry treatise. Dau states that "a sublime objectiveness, a heavenly disregard of what is merely human also in a Christian combatant, is the true glory of Christian warfare" (Dau, in Dallmann, and others, *Walther and the Church* [1938; reprint, Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1980] 51-52).

*Predestination*, the Brief Statement, and others), one will find almost no references to individuals, only doctrines.

Hayes furthermore argues that with regard to controversy, ultimately the Missouri Synod has always been its own audience.<sup>78</sup> If the Hayes thesis is true, then the role of doctrinal treatises and statements has always been internal, not apologetic or a *confession* to the world and the church catholic (for example, the *Augustana*). The problem then becomes a matter of redefinition. Hayes continues:

For to the extent that the synod is a completely rhetorical world – to the extent that beyond the level of the congregation the synod's members are linked not by geography or collective action but by a series of documents held in common – every time a “new” statement is generated, the synod is identified by new (albeit additional) words. Even the most carefully prepared translations from German to English are changes. This “neo-orthodoxy” carries a divisive potential not merely because increased precision can dislodge those adherents who disagree with the elaboration or those who would prefer that the “alteration” inherent in the elaboration not take place, but it is also divisive because even though the “new” statement might be a statement of consensus, it is also a statement that contains new meanings, new emotions, and new motives, each of which might also be subject to differing interpretations at a future date. In effect the synod has the potential for littering its rhetorical world with undetonated mines. This thesis has demonstrated that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has historically understood extra confessional documents passed in convention by the Synod to have *some* binding character upon the clergy and congregations of Synod. What exactly this binding character would entail is not so easy to determine.<sup>79</sup>

Beginning with the controversy over church and office with the Wisconsin Synod in the beginning of the twentieth century, *Kirche und Amt* began to be used in new ways. We do not find Francis Pieper citing *Kirche und Amt* as an authority to the exclusion of other Walther writings, but it did gain some prominence in Pieper's writings. At this point,

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<sup>78</sup>Hayes, “The Rhetoric of Controversy,” 200.

<sup>79</sup>Hayes, “The Rhetoric of Controversy,” 208-209.

*Kirche und Amt* began to adopt a quasi-confessional characteristic, which was not how *Kirche und Amt* was commonly used in the first seventy-five years of the history of the Missouri Synod. Even at this point, however, the distinction between *Kirche und Amt* and the other writings of Walther was that of first among equals. This position was solidified by the publication of *Walther and the Church* in 1938. By 1938, it was a polemical document, and with *Kirche und Amt* spoke the "the entire God-blest Missouri Synod."<sup>80</sup>

One can also see in this history a shift on the part of the Missouri Synod to move toward attacking opponents by citing an extremism. Walther is specific in *Kirche und Amt* on the title page that the book is written against the attacks of Grabau. However, Walther's original intention was not polemical but apologetic and irenic. With the advent of the Wauwatosa Theology and the controversy between the Pieper brothers, however, it became *passé* to speak out publicly against one another. August Pieper attacks *Kirche und Amt* and Walther (who was long dead), but his brother Francis Pieper did not attack August in public. Behind-the-scenes attempts were made on the part of the Saint Louis faculty to come to a resolution with Wauwatosa, but was unsuccessful. Francis Pieper attacked the position of the Wauwatosa faculty, but did not do so by name. This desire for keeping the unity within the Synodical Conference drove the controversy over church and office underground. Perhaps this controversy with the Wisconsin Synod forced *Kirche und Amt* to be used in a polemical fashion that Walther never intended.

As we struggle with our own confessional identity today, it is critical to understand that documents such as *Kirche und Amt* did not emerge in a vacuum, and that the history of the documents themselves are often more complex than the original formulation of the documents. Without the Wauwatosa Theology and the behind-the-scenes debate between Francis and August Pieper, *Kirche und Amt* would not have the prominence in our synodical history and polity that it enjoys today.

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<sup>80</sup>Dau, "Church and Ministry—Our Church's Defence," in Dallmann, and others, *Walther and the Church*, 51.

# Evangelical and Catholic – A Slogan in Search of a Definition

David P. Scaer

## Where We Are or Where Are We?

For years the quintessential expression of evangelical and catholic was Saint Mary's Church–Episcopal in New York City. In the *Saturday Times*, Saint Mary's advertised itself as having evangelical preaching and catholic liturgy, which is about as good a definition anyone can come up with—a church with a recognizably traditional liturgy and a sermon of no more than twenty minutes. Just how many churches fit this definition? I cannot attest that Saint Mary's lived up to its evangelical notice, but claims to catholicity were obvious. The gloomy nave convinced doubters of the creation account that at least Genesis 1:2 might be true: "and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Divine light eradicated the primordial abyss. Saint Mary's had to be content with a few rays of sunlight, which struggled through small roof windows into incense-generated smog. Some speculated the church was a gas warfare training center. Among the ecclesial savants, Saint Mary's was tenderly known as "old smokey's." If incense was the mark of catholicity, Saint Mary's was without peer.

Evangelical and catholic is a positive designation, though one definition does not fit all. In general it expresses a longing for church harmony and is often employed for ecumenical purposes. Evangelical suggests reform and catholic suggests a degree of uniformity and hence, stability. The Reformation becomes a normal event within catholic development. Revival of the term is traced to Mercersburg Seminary in Pennsylvania, whose theologians realized Reformed sacramentology was no sacramentology at all and wanted to set matters right by doing something liturgical.<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Sweden took catholicity as a reference to visible Christendom and exploited the ecumenical

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "The Influence of John Williamson Nevin on American Lutheranism to 1849," (M. Div. thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1990).

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potential, something Anglicans had done, but excluded Lutherans. Soederblom reciprocated. He corrected this deficit by ignoring the Anglicans. Orthodox Catholicity emphasizes correct teaching; Roman Catholicity, absolutist government; and Evangelical Catholicity, the gospel.<sup>2</sup> Söderblom and, recently, George Lindbeck place the Reformed within the evangelical catholic definition.<sup>3</sup> Catholicity is the totality of Christendom, in which Luther's and Ignatius Loyola's reforms become movements.<sup>4</sup> This view "that one church has more than one historical manifestation" is also held by James Nuechterlein and, previously, by Richard John Neuhaus.<sup>5</sup>

### Evangelical-Catholic: Does It Ever Matter?

The churchgoing public is hardly concerned with being evangelical and catholic. To them these terms, if they have any real meaning at all, may appear more to contradict, rather than complement, each other. Evangelical needs defining. Protestant is recognizable. Both were Reformation terms for Lutherans. Protestant meant they professed something and not that they were against Rome.<sup>6</sup> Today the term means non-Catholics and, embarrassingly, includes Unitarians. Catholics knew precisely who they were. Protestants, without real sacraments and priests, were not seen as church. On November 21, 1964 things changed.<sup>7</sup> Even before evangelical and catholic became popular, cross-pollination spread so widely, the poor bees may not even have known the species from which they collected theological nectar. Hybrids are fascinating,

<sup>2</sup>"Evangelical Catholicity," *Lutheran Church Review* 43 (January 1924) 1-10.

<sup>3</sup>Interview: George Lindbeck: Evangelical, Catholic Theologian," *Lutheran Forum* 31 (Pentecost/Summer 1997): 55-56: "The fact is you can accept the case that a high-Calvinist sacramentalism need not be, in some ecclesial context is not, contradictory to Lutheran realism, or, as far as it goes, Roman Catholic transubstantialist realism."

<sup>4</sup>Martin J. Heineken, "A Lutheran Expression of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church," *Lutheran Forum* 31 (Easter/Spring 1997): 23-25.

<sup>5</sup>"In Defense of Sectarian Catholicity," *First Things* 69 (January 1997): 12-13.

<sup>6</sup>Preface to Augsburg Confession: "We have at various times made our protestations and appeals concerning these most weighty matters, and have done so in legal form and procedure," in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 27.

<sup>7</sup>*Unitatis redintegratio* 3. "For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church."



but not always productive. A church with 'union' in its name is destined to oblivion and a 'united' church is united in everything except what it believes.

The nineteenth-century Oxford Movement gave the Anglican Communion a purpose for its existence as a bridge between Catholic and Protestant (evangelical) poles, but in recent years structural engineers looked for alternative routes. Now enter the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1997 as the usurper. In adopting *An Agreement* with the Reformed on the Lord's Supper and a *Declaration* with the Roman Catholics on justification, it grasped for its destiny as ecumenical catalyst. Like the noble colossus of Rhodes, she straddles the Alps with one foot planted in Geneva and other in Rome. Or in Isaianic terms — cages are unlocked and sheep and lions peacefully graze together in time for the third millennium. After making peace with Zwingli's and Leo's descendants, the ELCA proceeded ungraciously to reject the *Concordat* with the Episcopalians, which offered the treasure of unbroken succession to less-than-fully credentialed Lutherans. Never mind that the ELCA could have gotten it from Swedish Lutherans<sup>8</sup> or that Rome, in the midst of Anglican's heart, rejects her hands and doctrines on the engraved walls of Westminster Cathedral in London. In becoming the missing link in ecclesial evolution, the ELCA did some non-evangelical and non-catholic things.<sup>9</sup> The *Declaration* with Rome allows the non-evangelical doctrine that justification happens within the believer and not completely in Christ and so she forfeited her right as a Reformation church. By signing onto the *Agreement* with the Reformed, the ELCA rejected that the eucharistic bread was Christ's own body as the only option, a most un-catholic thing to do. Wearing a chasuble is hardly corrective.

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<sup>8</sup> "Flawed Judgment: Ready for Episcopacy," *Forum Letter* 26 (November 1997): 1-3.

<sup>9</sup> Neuhaus speaks of the ELCA's "gyrations on declaring full communion with the Reformed, turning down the concordat with the Episcopalians, and approving the joint statement with Catholics on justification." *First Things* 77 (November 1997): 82. Also see his "Here I Stand. And Here, and Here: The ELCA in Assembly," *First Things* 78 (December 1997): 71-74.

### Evangelicals (Lutherans) and Catholics as Evangelical and Catholic

Lutheran claims to evangelical are found in church names: 'Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.' Trinity Catholic Lutheran Church does not exist. Lutherans went one step further. The Reformed say "one holy, catholic and apostolic church." Lutherans are content with the "Christian church," except on Trinity Sunday when the Athanasian Creed requires "This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved." A moment of confusion. Lutherans are Protestants, not Catholics. Catholics use "evangelical" of vows and works of clerics. For most, these are black and white terms. (In the midst of a storm, a Lutheran pastor found the perfect moment to convert the flight attendant. When asked about her religion, she replied Catholic. Then the pastor asked what kind of Catholic, she replied ordinary Catholic. At a loss for words, he was content that in case they did not reach the ground in the accustomed way, she was among the saved.) East was east and west was west and never the twain shall meet, but the ecclesial geography operates with different compasses.

Rome has become evangelical in more than one way. Vernacular masses and preaching are in. Latin requires permission. The sacrament is often distributed in both kinds. On Christmas Eve 1997 the Pope preached on the Son's eternal generation from the Father, the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation and the Atonement—a sermon magnificent in its irrelevancy. Not preaching in these terms, however, hinders justification from coming to its fullest expression among believers.<sup>10</sup> Evangelical things happen in Rome but now often to the extreme.<sup>11</sup> White walls take the place of statues. During prayers parishioners lift hands. Priests are "Father Joe." Evangelical-styled hymns are common. (A Roman Catholic

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<sup>10</sup>See Avery Dulles, "Evangelizing Theology," *First Things* 61 (March 1996): 27-33: "Faith, in other words, saves by reason of its object" (30) sounds Lutheran.

<sup>11</sup>C. F. W. Walther cites Luther in claiming that Rome is still church. It has baptism, the gospel text in the vernacular, public and private confession and absolution, the Sacrament of the Altar, call or ordination, and finally, in its services, the Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and many fine hymns and songs. One may see C. F. W. Walther, "The True Visible Church: an essay for the convention of the General Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States for its sessions at St. Louis, Mo., October 31, 1866." Translated by John Theodore Mueller. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 24-25.

friend left a church where a scrub board set in a wash tub with holy water blocked the entrance to the nave.)

### Being Lutheran in an Evangelical World

As the first defenders of the Bible against the demythologizing of Bultmann, conservative Presbyterians and Baptists made claim to being the evangelical party. Bultmann's existential interpretation of justification as the only doctrine disrupted the LCMS in the 1970s and surfaced as foundational in the ELCA-Reformed *Agreement*.<sup>12</sup> LCMS soldiers entered "The Battle for the Bible" when a full-scale war broke out on our turf. For the first time among mainline denominations, laurels went to the conservative (evangelical) and not the liberal party. Yet Lutherans were never fully accepted by the new Evangelicals. Lutheran baptismal theology—the necessity of baptism, infant baptism, and the doctrine of baptismal regeneration—directly contradicts the essential Evangelical doctrine of personal faith (decision for Christ). In an ideal LCMS world an inspired Bible and Christ's sacramental presence are complementary, but in the new Evangelical world, the LCMS was irresponsibly adolescent. Our definitions on the Incarnation, baptism, eucharist, universal justification, and faith are unacceptable. Further proof that Lutherans were latent Catholics were candles, altars, vestments, and, heaven forbid, crucifixes and kneeling (genuflecting). Only the Pope was missing. New Evangelicals revere Luther the Reformer, but assign him the authority of a deistic god or an English sovereign. Citing anything besides his *Bondage of the Will* is off limits.<sup>13</sup> The Catholic Luther must remain *absconditus*. Only Calvin and Wesley's heirs are true Evangelicals.

Lutherans embarrassed over Evangelical concerns began to act and look like them: *Evangelical Form and Lutheran Substance*.<sup>14</sup> *Adiaphora*

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<sup>12</sup>In its section "A Fundamental Doctrinal Consensus," Augsburg Confession VII is used to demonstrate that only agreement on the gospel is necessary for church unity. This position was held by the Saint Louis faculty. See Edward H. Schroeder, "Law-Gospel Reductionism," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 48 (April 1972): 232-247. For the *Agreement* this article is the only remnant of the Reformation confessions in force.

<sup>13</sup>Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, translated by Henry Cole, M. A. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1931).

<sup>14</sup>David Luecke, *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance: Facing America's Mission Challenge* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988).

becomes an excuse to avoid catholic things. After all, only faith is necessary, a proposition strangely resembling Bultmann's minimal definition of the gospel. Liturgies are difficult. Rousing hymns are better. A church eucharist has no more value than a prayer circle. Home Bible study is more effective than sermons. Chasubles are gaudy and offensive, but not doctoral gowns with multi-colored stripes. Stages with guitars, ensembles, and pianos stand where altars once stood. Pulpits are imperious obstacles to talk-show-style sermons. Evangelical intrusion into Lutheran fibre called for a reaction. Page fifteen in *The Lutheran Hymnal* with Introits, Kyrie, Gloria, Proper Prefaces, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei took on a previously unrecognized beauty.<sup>15</sup> The prettiest girl in town was the one next door.<sup>16</sup>

### **"Evangelicals and Catholics Together": The Quest for Truth Makes Strange Bedfellows**

Prominent Evangelicals overcame anti-Roman scruples by joining with an equally significant group of Roman Catholics in identifying a common faith.<sup>17</sup> In "The Gift of Salvation" they tackled the thornier issue of justification by faith.<sup>18</sup> (In the current climate where a Canadian church president sees the ordination of homosexuals to be of no greater import than the deity of Christ and his Virgin Birth, such statements look good.) "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" sets out much larger parameters in defining the Christian faith than had the ELCA, which made a minimal definition of gospel the basis of unity with the Reformed. "The Gift of Salvation" is forthright about differences and offers what sounds like a Lutheran statement: "In justification, God, on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone, declares us to be no longer his rebellious enemies but his forgiven friends, and by virtue of his declaration it is so."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>(Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).

<sup>16</sup>Repristination is never perfect. By printing service forms, tradition minded Lutherans became environmentally insensitive by deforestation of the nation's natural resources. The upside was providing employment for lumberjacks and paper mill supervisors.

<sup>17</sup>Charles W. Colson, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," *First Things* 43 (May 1994): 13-22.

<sup>18</sup>*First Things* 79 (January 1998): 20-23.

<sup>19</sup>"The Gift of Salvation," 22.

This brings us to the current activity in Northfield, Minnesota at the Catholic and Evangelical Center. Its *Pro Ecclesia* announces itself as "A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology" and fulfills this task by publishing Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed theologians, a paradigm strikingly similar to S  derblom's definition of catholicity. Its leaders are ELCA theologians who were once thought (thought themselves) to be incurably liberal. However, now they foster a conservative agenda. Advisory council members are "committed to the authority of Holy Scripture, ecumenical dogmatic teaching and the structural continuity of the church."<sup>20</sup> Structural continuity of the church seems to include unbroken episcopal succession. Definition of "ecumenical dogmatic teaching" is less obvious and does not take into account when it may be at odds with "the one apostolic faith and its classic traditions." Where the ELCA fits within an evangelical catholic definition is problematic for some. Apart from the *Agreement* with the Reformed, which no longer requires identifying the eucharistic bread with Christ's body as the only option, they ordain women, a total disregard for Saint Paul (evangelical principle) and an offense against the community of believers that knows nothing of this practice (catholic principle).<sup>21</sup> In addition, the ELCA funds abortions and has an alliance with the United Church of Christ, which has no creeds and ordains homosexuals.

### Evangelical and Catholic: A Confessional Attempt at Wording and Definition

The evangelical principle subjects doctrine and practice to the gospel (Scriptures as the message of salvation); the catholic principle sees the church as a continuous historical community with codified doctrine (creeds and confessions). It anchors the church in the historical moment of the cross and sending of the apostles and sees the church as more than a succession of Sunday morning verbal explosions and sacramental apparitions. It is the first line of defense against aberrant innovations, hidden under the cloak of the *adiaphora*, for which gospel freedom is often claimed.

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<sup>20</sup>Available on: <<http://www.e-ccet.org/pe.htm>>.

<sup>21</sup>So also Leonard Klein. Cited by Neuhaus, "Here I Stand," *First Things* 78 (November 1997): 71-74.

Appropriate for initiating the Twenty-Second Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions is submitting "evangelical catholic" to the word study tradition of LCMS exegesis. In calculating word use in the *Book of Concord*, the computer declares "evangelical" the winner over "catholic" twenty-four to fourteen. Before the champagne is opened or Gatorade is poured over worship coaches, the count fails to reach ELCA standards requiring a two-thirds vote to depose doctrine. *Vox populi vox Dei* is the *norma normata*.<sup>22</sup> Twenty-four to fourteen has the marks of a Chicago election day and requires a recount. Ten uses apply to the Roman Catholic evangelical counsels that celibacy and monastic life grant special merit. Evangelical once refers to the fanatics who float their absurdities under the banner of evangelical. (Modernity of confessional expression is overwhelming.) Editorial comment to the Apology reduces the number to twelve—a statistical tie. One of the fourteen catholic references is editorial. Catholic is prefaced by Roman, a non-confessional usage used to deny Rome exclusive catholicity.<sup>23</sup> Three references are favorable: (1) the creeds are catholic; (2) the church is catholic; and (3) the Lutheran position is that of the catholic church, a point which Melancthon makes in the Augsburg Confession (1530) and the Apology (1530). By the time of the Formula of Concord (1577), catholic has fallen into disfavor. The *Concordia Triglotta* is subtitled *The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. In its preface, Lutheran doctrine is evangelical. Of course, our exercise is a little disingenuous. Evangelical is the code word for the Reformation theme of gospel as the message of salvation, declaring sinners free from sin on account of Christ, which, like all doctrines, is biblically demonstrable. Gospel is used 317 times! Evangelical is not at issue for Lutherans; Catholic is.

Before the Diet of Augsburg (May 1530) differences with Rome were irreparable, but Lutherans were not ready to concede they had established a new church. They were church and the only church was as much catholic as it was holy and apostolic. Melancthon in the Augsburg Confession, the Apology and Treatise, demonstrates the catholicity of the Lutheran positions by arguing from ancient church testimonies. Catholic

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<sup>22</sup>Leonard Klein in *Forum Letter* 26 (October 1997) 1-2 calls into question the ELCA doctrinal process. "'Leonard,' a Roman Catholic priest asked me, 'what are the theological requirements for being a delegate?'" The answer might provide some embarrassment.

<sup>23</sup>Again see "In Defense of Sectarian Catholicity," *First Things* 69.

is not synonymous with Rome, but Rome gives historic expression to the church catholic. So he concludes the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession: "As can be seen, there is nothing here that departs from the Scriptures or the catholic church or the church of Rome, in so far as the ancient church is known to us from its writers."<sup>24</sup> Rome had preserved that catholicity Lutherans claim as their own; however, Rome is not indispensable for maintaining catholicity. "... nothing has been received among us, in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Scripture or to the church catholic. For it is manifest that we have guarded diligently against the introduction into our churches of any new and ungodly doctrines."<sup>25</sup> This is repeated in the introduction to the abuse articles:

Inasmuch as our churches dissent from the church catholic in no article of faith but only omit some few abuses which are new and have been adopted by the fault of the times although contrary to the intent of the canons we pray that Your Imperial Majesty will graciously hear both what has been changed and what our reasons for such changes are in order that the people may not be compelled to observe these abuses against their conscience.<sup>26</sup>

Saint Ambrose is cited in favor of the Lutheran position on justification, "The same is also taught by the Fathers of the ancient church, for Ambrose says, 'It is ordained of God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, not through works but through faith alone, and he shall receive forgiveness of sins by grace.'"<sup>27</sup> Melancthon does not construct doctrine out of Bible passages as autonomous sources (evangelical principle), but throughout the Augsburg Confession assumes the catholic doctrine and hence unity with Rome. Gospel is preaching salvation whereby justification takes place through faith. Some Roman practices contradict the gospel and so hinder justification.<sup>28</sup> Celibacy, reception of the

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<sup>24</sup>See John R. Hannah, "The Ordination of Women and Lutheran Destiny," *Lutheran Forum* 31 (Christmas-Winter 1997): 42: "Rome is the source of our tradition and the sole object of our Confession at Augsburg." It might be added that in Article Ten the Lutherans separated themselves from the Reformed in the matter of the Lord's Supper.

<sup>25</sup>Conclusion to the Augsburg Confession, Tappert, 95.

<sup>26</sup>Tappert, 48-49.

<sup>27</sup>Augsburg Confession VI, Tappert, 32.

<sup>28</sup>So in *Augsburg Confession* XV: "They are also admonished that human traditions which are instituted to propitiate God, merit grace, and make satisfaction for sins are



sacrament under one kind, monastic vows, and temporal authority of bishops are contrary not only to the gospel but Rome's own canons, to which the Lutherans have remained true.<sup>29</sup> Rome's expressions of catholicity (as Lutheran ones) are subject to both evangelical (justification) and catholic (church precedent) correction.

The catholic principle is at the heart of a confessional theology: doctrine is a given and not created *ex nihilo*. (If Rome is faulted for not applying evangelical critique, Lutherans often draw from their own experiences and neither listen to earlier Lutheran and ancient fathers, nor seek support from the Scriptures themselves. *Sola Scriptura* sounds a cracked bell.) Doctrine is presented rather than constructed. So in Augsburg Confession I, the Lutherans do not provide a biblical discourse on the Holy Trinity, but simply refer to the Council of Nicea.<sup>30</sup> Application of evangelical or catholic principles depends on circumstances. The Roman *Confutation's* challenge to the Augsburg Confession's claims to catholicity did not intimidate Melancthon into abandoning a near total dependency on the catholic principle in the articles on God, Christ, baptism, the Lord's Supper, Christ's return to judgment, and the cause of sin. However, he does turn decisively to the evangelical principle of biblical critique in the controverted articles, for example, original sin, justification, and the Roman primacy (Treatise). In contrast to Melancthon it may be opined that Luther operated from the evangelical principle alone, *sola Scriptura*, however, this is not so. In defending infant baptism against the Anabaptists, who were more dangerous for him than Rome, he avoided detailed exegesis, as required in confronting modern Baptists, but pointed instead to the church's existence—a most brilliant catholic argument.<sup>31</sup> After Trent (1545-1563)

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opposed to the Gospel and the teaching about faith. Wherefore vows and traditions about foods and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel," Tappert, 36-37.

<sup>29</sup>Augsburg Confession XXII: "This custom [Sacrament under one kind] has been adopted not only in defiance of the Scriptures but also in contradiction to ancient canons and the example of the church," Tappert, 50.

<sup>30</sup>Tappert, 27.

<sup>31</sup>*Large Catechism* IV, "Infant Baptism": "Now, if God did not accept the baptism of infants, he would not have given any of them the Holy Spirit nor any part of him; in short, all this time down to the present day no man on earth could have been a Christian. Since God has confirmed baptism through the gift of His Holy Spirit, as we have perceived in some of the fathers, such as Saint Bernard, Gerson, John Hus, and

the evangelical principle characterizes Lutheran theology, but this is only an appearance. The great Lutheran dogmatists, Martin Chemnitz and Johann Gerhard, were as versed as their opponents in the early fathers, especially Roman ones, and often defended their views from these sources alone.

Requiring examination is the Lutheran claim "that nothing has been received among us, in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Scripture or to the church catholic."<sup>32</sup> The church is a norm of doctrine and more striking is the introduction to the abuse articles where the church, without reference to the Scriptures, is listed as norm: "Inasmuch as our churches dissent from the church catholic in no article of faith."<sup>33</sup> The church as holy, catholic, and apostolic is certainly the depository of the truth, but churches and the catholic church in these references are to the historic, continuous communities of believers, whose doctrines and practices are accessible through the writings of Cyril, Leo, Augustine, Gerson, and others. Melancthon challenges Rome's exclusivity, but not its claim to catholicity. So in the Apology X, the Lutheran eucharistic position is aligned with Rome's, but defended by citing the canon of the Greek Mass.<sup>34</sup> Like the Son of God, the church takes form in particular historical realities.<sup>35</sup> Incarnation and ecclesiology participate in the same

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others, and since the holy Christian church will abide until the end of the world, our adversaries must acknowledge that infant baptism is pleasing to God. For he can never be in conflict with himself, support lies and wickedness, or give his grace and Spirit for such ends. This is the best and strongest proof for the simple and unlearned. For no one can take from us or overthrow this article, 'I believe one Holy Christian church, the communion of saints,' etc," Tappert, 442-443.

<sup>32</sup>Conclusion to the Augsburg Confession: "in doctrina et ceremoniis, quia manifestum est, apud nos nihil receptum contra scripturam aut ecclesiam catholicam," Tappert, 95.

<sup>33</sup>"Cum ecclesiae apud nos de nullo articulo fidei dissentiant ab ecclesia catholica," Tappert, 48.

<sup>34</sup>Apology X: "We know that not only the Roman Church affirms the bodily presence of Christ, but that the Greek Church has taken and still takes this position. Evidence for this is their canon of the Mass, in which the priest clearly prays that the bread may be changed and become the very body of Christ," Tappert, 179.

<sup>35</sup>Apology VII and VIII: "We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic, as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this church actually exists, made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the sacraments. This church is properly called 'the pillar of truth' (1 Tim. 3:15), for it retains the pure Gospel and what Paul

earthly substances.<sup>36</sup> Her universality (catholicity) is not destroyed by a particular history (apostolicity). Just as the Son of God has His history in the one man Jesus Christ, so the church expresses itself in particular historical communities where the divine truth is manifested and preserved.<sup>37</sup> These historic communities are normative for doctrine and practice. The Augsburg Confession sees Rome in this role and the Formula of Concord (Epitome 1.3) gives Luther and the earlier Lutheran Confessions the same honor. An Evangelical critique of the church's manifestations in history requires self-examination (evangelical principle), often with positive results: the New Testament Epistles, the fathers' writings, the creeds, and the Reformation. Evangelical critique is not an external intrusion, but is intrinsic to the church's catholicity.<sup>38</sup>

Catholic principle has the first word and the evangelical principle the last. So Augsburg Confession XXVIII:28: "Augustine also says in reply to the letters of Petilian that not even catholic bishops are to be obeyed if they should happen to err or hold anything contrary to the canonical Scriptures of God," a statement with the ring of evangelical triumph. Catholic bishops with positions contrary to the Scriptures are not to be obeyed. Obviously, episcopal infallibility is not a Reformation possibility, but neither is Melancthon adopting a radical *sola Scriptura* principle, which claims infallibility for its biblical interpretations. The Reformation fanatics had claimed a biblical manifesto for their abuses and so paraded their programs as evangelical.<sup>39</sup> In resolving the tension

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calls the 'foundation' (1 Cor. 3:12), that is, the true knowledge of Christ and faith. Of course, there are also many weak people in it who build on this foundation perishing structures of stubble, that is, unprofitable opinions," Tappert, 171-172.

<sup>36</sup>Johann Gerhard grounds the ministry in the Incarnation and correlates them. See John A. Stoudt, "The Office of the Ministry as *Dispensator Sacramentorum*," *Lutheran Forum* 31 (Christmas/Winter 1997): 50-54.

<sup>37</sup>Augsburg Confession VII: "Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly," Tappert, 32.

<sup>38</sup>The Episcopal Synod of America, which sees itself as "the evangelical-catholic underground," equates traditional, orthodox, catholic, and scriptural with each other. William Murchison, "Episcopalians: The Leftward Center," *First Things* 77 (November 1997): 16-17.

<sup>39</sup>Formula of Concord XII, Tappert 632-636. This type of thinking, claiming a direct access to the Scriptures apart from the church as an historic community, found its way into Lutheranism through Pietism and remains characteristic of modern Protestantism

in favor of the Scriptures over the catholic bishops, Melancthon employs the catholic principle. Augustine's allowance for disobeying the bishops in some matters provides the precedent for the reformers. Disobeying bishops is not biblically proven, but based on a particular church history. Lutherans were doing the catholic thing. Scripture as the judge of doctrine (evangelical principle) is a catholic principle. Note should be taken that the Lutherans did not put practices, that is, ceremonies and liturgy, into the category of *adiaphora*. Not only what a church confesses, but what it does in its ceremonies (liturgy) is received from the catholic church and subject to critique of that standard.<sup>40</sup> Freedom can no more be claimed for practice than for doctrine.<sup>41</sup>

### Towards a Harmony

Where the Scriptures are regarded as products of a divine inspiration that isolates them from the Christian community or when a community introduces teachings and practices contrary to the gospel, tension is inevitable—the Reformation. Scriptures originate from within and for the historic community of the church. Their historical quality no more detracts from their inspiration than Christ's humanity detracts from his divinity. Scriptures reflect what the church already believes and do not bring new and strange doctrines (catholic principle). Innovations are suspiciously gnostic. Scriptures are not superimposed on the church as alien documents from the outside and church *imprimatur* does not contribute to their authority. Rome's claim to exclusive catholicity did not force the Lutherans to abandon their own claims. Pietism began to undo the Reformation evangelical-catholic harmony by placing individual biblical interpretation on the same level as the church's. Then the Enlightenment took the Scriptures deeper into "Babylonian Exile" by

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in both its liberal and evangelical (pietistic) forms. Such individualism has been recognized as gnostic.

<sup>40</sup>Augsburg Confession XXVI: "We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church," Tappert, 69.

<sup>41</sup>One may see David P. Scaer, "Formula of Concord X," *Logia* 4 (Reformation 1997): 27-33 for a fuller discussion of this matter. "Our current definition of *adiaphora* has become so broad that anything beyond 'justification by faith' could be considered *adiaphoron*. In seeking to resolve current differences, we must agree that the ordinary of the Mass, the historical service, was not understood by the confessors to be an *adiaphoron*" (32).

giving hermeneutical rights to the universities, where attempts to bring ancient opinion into the biblical task are still viewed as annoyingly immature. In freeing itself from catholic principle, Pietism and the Rationalistic Enlightenment gave radical expression to the *sola Scriptura* principle in a way that contradicted Reformation theological method. Recently some scholars have challenged the discontinuity between the apostolic and post-apostolic periods, but have largely been ignored.<sup>42</sup> Exegetical approaches separating the Scriptures from church interpretation are *ipso facto* operating without the catholic principle. Paradoxically those with a high view of inspiration proceed in the same way.

### The Ordination of Women: Failure of Evangelical Principle (Also for Rome)<sup>43</sup>

Women's ordination now provides a test case for evangelical catholicity. New Evangelical and most LCMS circles settle the issue most often by biblical citation. Saint Paul says "Don't do it." This extreme expression of the evangelical principle sees no need for finding a foundation for the prohibition in other doctrines (God [Father-Son], the creation of Eve from Adam, the Incarnation, and Jesus' selecting the twelve male apostles). In spite of the correctness of its conclusion, it fails to take advantage of the Lutheran view that doctrine is a unified totality. It also, embarrassingly, puts the law after the gospel, a point not left unexploited by proponents of the practice. The "don't do it" group is less likely to make use of church example (catholic principle), even though the Confessions approach doctrine in this way. Without the catholic principle as part of the equation, the correctness of women's ordination is left to the whims of the exegetes, who can express loyalty to their church's position on the prohibition and simultaneously disqualify one passage after another from the discussion. Officials who oppose the

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<sup>42</sup>Helmut Koester completely ignores the work the late Belgian priest, Edouard Massaux, who worked with early church references to the New Testament. Arthur J. Bellinzoni, "Preface to the English Edition," Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus*, translated by Norman J. Belyal and Suzanne Hecht, 3 volumes (Macon, Georgia: Mercer, 1990), vi-x. William R. Farmer, Harold Riley, and Bernard Orchard also see keys to biblical interpretation in the fathers.

<sup>43</sup>See Conclusion to the Augsburg Confession, Tappert 94-96.

prohibition because of current church policy have already conceded that women's ordination is no more than a problem of interpretation. Without evangelical principle bound to catholic precedent, biblical prohibitions of ordaining women lose force.<sup>44</sup> Self-styled evangelical catholics who endorse women pastors are nagged by church precedent.<sup>45</sup> This issue is not the only test case. The ELCA *Agreement* recognized that the Reformed symbolic views on the eucharist are as biblically defensible as Lutheran ones; however, if the commentators find support for both views, some identify the Lutheran position as the orthodox one [read: historic or catholic].<sup>46</sup> The nearly 500-year history of Lutheran Church opposition to the Reformed position, which belongs to our historic expression of catholicity, is left out of the debate and nothing was included of the pre-Reformation catholic history, incorporated into the Confessions themselves. Unless the LCMS can find room for the catholic argument, she stands in real danger of following the lead of evangelical churches in concluding that the biblical arguments against women's ordination are inconclusive.<sup>47</sup>

### Catholic Biblical Principle as Biblical Principle

#### *Resurrecting Vincens of Lerinum (Lerins)*

Lutherans are uncomfortable with the rule of Vincens of Lerinum, *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est* ["what is believed everywhere, in all times, by everyone"] as a principle of doing theology.<sup>48</sup> Historical romanticism tends to overlook diversities to

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<sup>44</sup>Hannah, "Ordination of Women," 40: "Relevant Bible passages were seriously engaged by all, including the LC-MS representatives. The prevailing Scriptures proved to be neutral."

<sup>45</sup>In place of historic precedence as setting the catholic agenda, Hannah mentions that the LCMS is one of the few Lutheran churches that does not ordain women (40).

<sup>46</sup>A *Formula Agreement*: "each of the churches grounds its life in authentic New Testament traditions of Christ;" One may see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew*. The International Critical Commentary, 3 volumes (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 3:471: "The orthodox identification of the elements with the body and blood of Jesus Christ has made much of *estin*: [Greek] it is a word of identification. But others have found here only a figurative representation: the bread symbolizes Jesus or what will happen to him."

<sup>47</sup>The Oberursel faculty of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) of Germany has already reached this conclusion.

<sup>48</sup>Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 volumes (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1950),

achieve a holistic totality. However, Melanchthon moves along Lerentian lines in the Augsburg Confession. The rule sets up categories, which, like all categories, are not intended to cover each example. Categories exist for the sake of recognition. Without categories, the wheel is always being reinvented. New Evangelicals are forever inventing *Ersatz* formulae. New wheels hardly make it out of the garage without going flat. The Lerintian hypothesis is supported by the existence of creeds, recognizably similar eastern and western liturgies, and early church opponents who could distinguish between authentic Christianity and fraudulent gnostic novelties. More telling is the Apology's claim that the Reformation liturgies not only continued the catholic ones, but improved on Rome.<sup>49</sup> Liturgies were not fabricated *ex nihilo*. Germans and other Europeans did not go to bed as Catholics and wake up as Lutherans. Andreas Carlstadt did the evangelical thing and Luther returned from exile, threw him out of Wittenberg, and preached in the garb of a monk to make the point that the church would remain catholic. If the Lerintian rule is inexact, its negative is not: the church is not allowed to do what "has been accepted nowhere, at no time, and by nobody."<sup>50</sup>

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3:205.

<sup>49</sup>Apology XV, Tappert, 220. "Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are. Apology XXIV, Tappert, 250: "There is nothing contrary to the church catholic in our having only the public or common Mass. Even today, Greek parishes have no private Masses but only one public Mass, and this only on Sundays and festivals. The monasteries have public, though daily, Mass."

<sup>50</sup>Pieper is right (1:203): "That the voice of the Church and the voice of the Holy Scriptures are not two different voices, but one and the same voice, Luther showed conclusively when Erasmus offered his understanding to the Church, even if he did not understand the Scripture." Looking at the other side of the coin provides an equally important principle: exegetical conclusions requiring innovations in doctrine and practice cannot contradict church precedence. Consider S. M. Hutchen's letter to the editor of *First Things* (April 1997): 6: "Although the Lerentian canon — 'what has been believed everywhere, in all times, but all Christians' — is an intuitive and imprecise rule of catholic faith and unity, it is very hard to understand how someone who regards himself as catholic in an historically meaningful sense would insist upon the orthodoxy of a practice [the 'ordination' of women] that has been accepted nowhere, at no time, and by nobody."



*Saint Paul as Vincens of Lerinum: in omnibus ecclesiis sanctorum*

Saint Paul's stance on women preaching is a test case in how he does theology. Of course, for support he calls upon the evangelical principle: written and oral sources including himself. In 1 Timothy 2:13-14 he refers to Genesis 2 and 3, even naming Adam and Eve and citing the creation and fall. In 1 Corinthians he claims his view is that of Torah's (14:34), a reference to Genesis or maybe the entire Old Testament. He claims the Lord's command, which suggests that Christ had made a specific command (Matthew 28:20). Then he calls on his own apostolic authority with the threat of excommunication for those who do not conform (37-38). By putting his oral word in written form, it becomes a scripture for the Corinthians. What concerns us here, however, is Saint Paul's use of the catholic principle. His comparison of the man and woman's relationship to that of Christ's with the church may be a dogmatic conclusion (Ephesians 5:24-25; 1 Corinthians 11:13), drawn from Jesus' own preaching, but 1 Corinthians 11:2 can only mean that Saint Paul is not depending on his own experiences or logical conclusions, but is drawing on the common faith of the church. This is not an isolated case. Women are not to preach because all the other churches do not know of such a practice (1 Corinthians 14:33). Marriage regulations for the Corinthians are binding in all of Saint Paul's churches (7:17). Decorum is the same in all the churches (11:16). Not only must private (marriage) and public behavior (preaching) conform to the catholic principle, that is, what the other churches are doing, but so must the doctrine, what the other churches are teaching. Saint Paul does not invent the formula for eucharistic celebration (11:2, 23) or the creedal foundation of the church and gospel (15:3), but he gives to the Corinthians what he has received from the Jerusalem church. Even the practice of collections are standardized. They are to follow the example of the Galatians for giving on Sundays (1 Corinthians 16:1). The catholic principle is biblical: *et sic in omnibus ecclesiis doceo* (7:11).

### Bishops and Catholicity

Reformation hope for episcopal reform rarely materialized. Lutherans recognized ordination as the bishops' right to distinguish them from presbyters (elders or priests).<sup>51</sup> Rome's refusal to ordain Lutheran pastors

<sup>51</sup>Treatise 62. "And Jerome observes: 'One man was chosen over the rest to prevent

led to "The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops" paragraph in the Treatise, an appendix of sorts to the Augsburg Confession, which had skirted the issue. Episcopal ordination was not as necessary as providing churches with pastors. Luther and Johann Bugenhagen ordained students before they assumed their posts throughout Europe. Certain aspects of the office were retained by the Reformation superintendents or assigned to princes and town councils. Ironically, Lutherans who had objected that bishops had become princes gave episcopal responsibility to princes with disastrous results, for example, the Prussian Union. It is quite arguable that the Lutherans have never freed themselves from this dilemma. North American Lutherans did not know of bishops until the ELCA used the title for regional presidents, though real episcopal authority was diluted by the ELCA's giving quotas confessional standing in choosing its bureaucracy. Anglican consecration of future ELCA bishops, promised in the *Concordat*, was intended to fill in the gaps. In the midst of religious turmoil, authentically consecrated bishops appear as panacea. So Carl Braaten, "The Church must have not only normative sources written down on paper but all authoritative officeholders ordained to teach the whole church."<sup>52</sup> Right! Confessions lose their authority where no qualified person enforces them.<sup>53</sup> Part of the bishop's rite of ordination includes responsibility for a candidate's preparation and certification that he (not *she*!) shares the church's faith, but this assumes that the church has a recognizable faith (confession). On this account, vows to the Scriptures, creeds, and confessions are as essential to ordination as they are to baptism. They assure the people that the ordained will preserve the church's faith (catholic principle) and protect them against doctrinal innovations. Ordination by one presbyter in the role of bishop symbolizes the unity of faith (catholicity), since he represents the

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schism, lest several persons, by gathering separate followings around themselves, rend the church of Christ. For in Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist to the time of Bishops Heracles and Dionysius, the presbyters always chose one of their number, set him in a higher place, and called him bishop. Moreover, in the same way in which an army might select a commander for itself, the deacons may choose from their number one who is known to be active and name him archdeacon. For, apart from Ordination, what does a bishop do that a presbyter does not do?"

<sup>52</sup>Quoted in Leonard R. Klein, "Catholicity and Protestant Survival," *First Things* 71 (March 1997): 50.

<sup>53</sup>In church conventions supervision is partially exercised by the laity. See note 19 above.

Ministerium in himself.<sup>54</sup> Whether or not bishops are in place in a particular church, the function of regional supervision belongs to the church's catholicity.<sup>55</sup> Church officials with the title of bishops do not guarantee that the required regional supervision is being carried out or the church's catholicity will be maintained. The Treatise does not challenge the office of bishop, but those who have deprived the churches of the office's functions. Problematic for the ELCA bishops is that the *Agreement* with the Reformed deprives them of doctrinal standards to carry out supervision. If churches with confessions, but without regional supervision [bishops], are criticized for having laws with no enforcement officers, churches with bishops, but without confessions [Anglicans and now the ELCA], can be criticized for having enforcement officers without laws. For example, an ELCA layman can hardly ask his bishop to intervene where the pastor permits use of the Reformed liturgy for communion. Bishops cannot symbolize the unity of catholic faith when it is no longer present. Without "normative sources written down on paper," to borrow Braaten's phrase, bishops are figure heads or easily evolve into tyrants. The reverse is equally problematic. A layman in a confessional church, but without regional supervision, finds himself in the same dilemma. Catholicity is only an unenforceable abstraction and, hence, not fully catholic.

### *Confessio Catholica*: Unexpected, Irrefutable, and Joyfully Welcomed Support

Johann Gerhard, the greatest of the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians, published *Confessio Catholica* for the expressed purpose of showing that Reformation teaching was found in all ages of the church. Lutheran churches were catholic. Rome had no monopoly. In demonstrating "Roma enim Ecclesia particularis est, Catholic vero universalis," Gerhard proceeds from the catholic principle alone using

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<sup>54</sup>Augsburg Confession XXVIII, Tappert, 84: "According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest."

<sup>55</sup>For a full discussion see Allen C. Hoyer, "Bishops for the Church: Apostolic Origins and Lutheran Affirmations," *Logia* 6 (Reformation 1997): 35-40. "New Testament evidence suggests that there never was a time when churches knew of no regional supervision."

only Roman Catholic sources.<sup>56</sup> The full title speaks volumes: *Confessionis Catholicae, in qua Ecclesiae Augustanae Confessionis addicti profundius, ex Romano-Catholicorum Scriptorum suffragiis confirmantur*.<sup>57</sup> He cites Pope Gregory's answer to a question from Saint Augustine to show that Rome is not equivalent with Catholic: "However it is my opinion, that you can find the church in Rome or Gaul or in any place." Gerhard simply follows in the steps of Melancthon, Luther, and Chemnitz—and more so. His massive two-volume work went through several editions. A telling section is his citing the Roman fathers to demonstrate Rome's fallibility.

### Where is Evangelical Catholicity?

["Lord, Where Shall We Go?"]

We have already set forth a definition of evangelical and catholic as sides of one reality, a modalism in doctrine and practice, where one informs, reflects on, and, where necessary, corrects the other. Rome's aberrations were innovations that had the support of neither Scriptures, nor tradition, including the ancient canons. Rome had introduced innovations that could not pass the evangelical catholic norm to which the Lutherans had submitted themselves. The Lutheran confessors and fathers were the true catholics.<sup>58</sup>

Where is Evangelical Catholicity found now? Finding the answer to this question has led migrations of clergy and people. Some Anglo-Catholics and Lutherans have left for Rome and Byzantium.<sup>59</sup> Autonomous dioceses are being established within the established Anglican communion. The few defections from the ELCA to Rome and to the LCMS reflect a growing belief that women's ordination, *Agreement* with the Reformed on the Lord's Supper, and the refusal to insist on

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<sup>56</sup>Particular church for Rome means dioceses which are in communion with Rome and whose ministers are in the apostolic succession. Catholicity is derived from connection with the Roman church (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 833).

<sup>57</sup>Concordia Theological Seminary's rare book collection contains the 1634 and 1662 Jena editions. Another edition is known to have appeared in 1690. The two volumes of the 1634 edition contain a total of 2251 pages. Rome's fallibility is discussed in volume one, pages 209-306.

<sup>58</sup>See David S. Yeago, "The Catholic Luther," *First Things* 61 (March 1996): 37-41.

<sup>59</sup>Richard John Neuhaus, "The Unhappy Fate of Optional Orthodoxy," *First Things* 69 (January 1997): 59-60. This article was at the heart of the debate over whether Rome was the only catholic expression (57-60).

creedal uniformity *inter alia* are robbing that church of its ability to express the catholicity by which the church is unified in doctrine and practice. But for some, the LCMS is too conservative, too confessional, too anti-ecumenical, and hence, separatist and not an attractive alternative. So Neuhaus *et alii*.<sup>60</sup> Others see an increasing exclusivity in the use of evangelical principle (fundamentalism). Deviations from traditional (catholic) liturgies give further credence to this impression, as false as it may be. Still others see in the current definitions of the ministry an allowance for the ordination of women, so that at least it is no longer seen as divisive of fellowship.<sup>61</sup>

Rome's catholicity is open to challenge. Some priests deny the Virgin Birth, bringing them in line with classical Protestant liberalism. "Liturgical anarchists" have come alive and flap their fins in Saint Peter's nets.<sup>62</sup> Anecdotal evidences are confirmed by open resistance to the Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter (May 1994) opposing the ordination of women. Roman Catholic theologians voted 216 to 22 for a report demanding further discussion on the issue. Matters appear more serious, when it is considered that the call for the reevaluation was made after the doctrine was declared infallible by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (November 1995), led by Cardinal Ratzinger. The same source reported that "the American theologians cited biblical scholarship to say

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<sup>60</sup>Neuhaus, "Here I Stand," 74.

<sup>61</sup>Commenting on the position of Johann Gerhard, John Stoudt writes (51): "Furthermore, our Lord himself has bound the administration of the sacraments to the office of the Ministry. As Gerhard insists a number of times, it is in their very institution that Christ has joined these two. The church simply has no authority ever to remove the distribution of the sacraments from the ordained Ministry, or to place such distribution into the hands of those who are not rightly called and ordained. Any attempt to separate the sacraments from the office entrusted with their administration does violence to the dominical institution of both and disregards the Christological nexus." See Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, edited by Edward Preuss (Berlin: Gustaf Schlawitz, 1866), 18:28: "In regard to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, it is clear from the *sedes* of their institution that Christ committed the administration of these Sacraments to the apostles and their successors." Gerhard cites Luther for support. In case of impending death a lay person can baptize, but not administer the Lord's Supper (18:28-29). So also Stoudt. One may also see David P. Scaer, "Johann Gerhard's Doctrine of the Sacraments," in Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark, editors, *Protestant Scholasticism* (Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1999).

<sup>62</sup>The title given a letter submitted by Gil Costello in *First Things* 79 (January 1998) 7-8.

that Christ chose only men as Apostles because they have a 'symbolic role as patriarchs' in Israel at the time, not because he intended them to be prototypes for a single-sex priesthood."<sup>63</sup> Even Roman scholars do theology without catholic precedent and hence with the predictable results that current cultural standards become normative for the church. Wherever the catholic principle is no longer factored into doctrine and practice, aberrant innovations are likely to arise. Without the catholic principles, churches insisting on contradictory opinions have no other choice but to canonize their own particular set of scholars. Sectarian exegetical interpretation, for the moment, replaces ancient practice.

The task was "Evangelical and Catholic: A Slogan in Search of a Definition," not where to find it. Some, with Saint Peter, have asked or are still asking, "Lord, where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."<sup>64</sup>

*in omnibus ecclesiis sanctorum*

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<sup>63</sup>Hugo Gurdon, "Catholic Leaders Urge Open Mind on Female Priests," *Daily Telegraph* (Britain), 9 June, 1997.

<sup>64</sup>Certain sources were provided by Professors Lawrence R. Rast and John R. Stephenson and Mr. Christopher Esget, the department's graduate assistant. Also offering assistance was seminarist Ralph Tausz.

# Toward an Assessment of *Called to Common Mission*

Brian Lesemann and Erik Rottmann

August 1999 occasioned the first half of a two-part approval process that culminated decades of ecumenical dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church in the USA (ECUSA). At its Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA adopted<sup>1</sup> *Called to Common Mission* in the manner prescribed:

The Episcopal Church agrees that in its General Convention, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees that in its Churchwide Assembly, there shall be one vote to accept or reject, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, the full set of agreements to follow. If they are adopted by both churches, each church agrees to make those legislative, canonical, constitutional, and liturgical changes that are needed and appropriate for the full communion between the churches.

The Episcopal Church did the same in July 2000, the two church bodies marking the occasion with an exchange of chalices.<sup>2</sup> This joint subscription to *Called to Common Mission* (CCM) marks the achievement of "full communion (*communio in sacris*/altar and pulpit fellowship),"<sup>3</sup> defined as "a relation between distinct churches in which each recognizes the other as a catholic and apostolic church holding the Christian faith."

CCM is one of several ecumenical measures recently taken by the ELCA. Others include *A Formula of Agreement* with three Reformed churches,<sup>4</sup> *Following Our Shepherd* with the Moravian Church in America,

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<sup>1</sup>A sixty-six percent vote was needed. CCM received sixty-nine percent, 716 votes to 317. "A Lutheran-Episcopal Pact," *Christian Century* 116 (August 25-September 1, 1999) 797.

<sup>2</sup>Episcopal News Service [online] [cited July 20, 2000]. Available from: <<http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/ens/GC2000-069.html>>.

<sup>3</sup>Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, *Called to Common Mission* [online] [August 19, 1999] available from <<http://www.elca.org/ea/proposal/text.html>>.

<sup>4</sup>These are the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.

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and (as a member of the Lutheran World Federation) *Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification* with the Roman Catholic Church. Among these, CCM and its international stepsister, the *Porvoo Declaration* with its accompanying *Common Statement*, are perhaps the most palatable for those Lutherans who claim unconditional subscription not only to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism (the Lutheran witnesses named by CCM), but also to the entire Book of Concord of 1580. Still, the proposal is not without language, or lack thereof, that such Lutherans would find both insufficient and inappropriately compromising.

CCM is the first revision of the recent *Concordat of Agreement* (1991), the proposal for full communion that resulted from the third round of Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues (LED). The *Concordat* was submitted to its sponsoring church bodies, but narrowly vetoed by the ELCA in 1997 over objections concerning the historic episcopate.<sup>5</sup> CCM is the attempt to satisfy those objections without stepping on Episcopalian claims to apostolic succession.

### **The Essentials of the One Catholic and Apostolic Faith**

The major concern of the document is the doctrine and practice of the ministry, which are treated separately with special regard toward apostolic succession and the historic episcopate. The bulk of introductory theological content in CCM is summarized in the first of two paragraphs under the heading, "Agreement in the Doctrine of the Faith." The assertions made in these paragraphs are very concisely written, covering a huge body of theology with relatively few words. This reflects not only many years of dialogue, but also the resultant degree of assumed theological commonality that by now is a foregone conclusion. Clearly, CCM does not wish to rehash the old issues of previous dialogues, but

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<sup>5</sup>[C. Richard Peterson, "Lutheran, Episcopalians, and the Priesthood of All Believers," *Lutheran Forum* 32 (Summer, 1998): 22.] "... the *Concordat of Agreement* for full communion . . . failed the required two-thirds majority by only six votes. One reason given by opponents was the repeated assertion that the *Concordat* was inconsistent with the Lutheran concept of the priesthood of all believers, and thus a deterrent to a strong laity. The episcopate was often described as a fundamentally flawed form of hierarchy which inevitably leads to a distorted polity inappropriate to the Christian Church, rather than an ancient church tradition which had severe pre-reformation abuses."

intends instead to speak directly to the concerns raised in response to the *Concordat*.

Here the two church bodies "recognize in each other the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith." These "essentials," while not listed, are "witnessed in the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Small Catechism and The Book of Common Prayer of 1979 (including 'Ordination Rites' and 'An Outline of the Faith')." The documents of previous dialogues, including *Implications of the Gospel, Toward Full Communion* and *Concordat of Agreement*, are listed as further summaries of the essentials of the faith.

But what exactly is meant by "the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith"? The answer to this will involve a brief overview of the history of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues. It will be shown that agreement on what are the essentials of the faith in the modern ecumenical sense entails not so much the precise articulation of theological *loci*, but the search for a new, generic language that is inclusive of both positions.

The purpose of LED I (1969-1972) was to test the waters and determine what barriers might stand between the two traditions. The central question was this: "Are we able mutually to affirm the presence of the gospel and apostolicity in our respective communions sufficiently to agree that the renewal of the church is more likely to come in communion with one another than out of communion with one another?"<sup>6</sup> The Lutherans were reminded that the matter of sufficiency is a concept originating with their confession. Augsburg Confession VII was cited: "It is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in the conformity with the pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word."<sup>7</sup> In other words, agreement on the Gospel (narrowly defined) does not necessitate agreement in all other articles. "We do not pretend to have examined every area of the faith and practice of the other communion, but we do know each other sufficiently to know that the gospel is being proclaimed, shared, and believed in the congregations of each Communion."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>*Lutheran - Episcopal Dialogue: A Progress Report* (Cincinnati: Forward Publications, 1972), 31.

<sup>7</sup>*Lutheran - Episcopal Dialogue*, 11.

<sup>8</sup>*Lutheran - Episcopal Dialogue*, 32.

The delegates to LED I soon realized that their intended objective would be easily met and exceeded "because of the great degree of unity of which we have become aware." While these were not described as "essentials," areas of common doctrine included: 1) recognition that the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments occupy a position of authority and primacy (though both claim to have been influenced by the historical-critical approach); 2) agreement that eucharistic practice is to be found more in the "shape" of eucharistic liturgies than in fixed texts; 3) affirmation of the mystery of new birth in Christ by water and the Spirit, along with the necessity of instruction in the faith; and 4) apostolicity belongs to the reality of the one holy catholic church, though apostolicity is "manifested in various ways in all areas of the church's life, and is guarded especially by common confession and through that function of the church designated as *episcopate* (oversight)."<sup>9</sup> These similarities, along with the perceived urgency for unity "in the face of massive cultural upheaval," led to the further realization that complete union was both imperative and unavoidable.

In LED II (1976-1980) the theme of sufficiency more fully developed. AC VII was understood to validate inter-communion despite "areas of unexplored pluralism," and the language of "essentials" was introduced:

To some Lutherans it may seem strange that limited agreement on controverted dogmatic loci should be thought adequate for some degree of ecclesial relationship . . . . Confessional peculiarities are not blended but reconciled as legitimate pluralism. In such a pattern joint statements would represent an essential core of dogmatic agreement within a wider pluralism.<sup>10</sup>

While a clear indication of what the essentials of the faith are is not given, LED II defined the word "essential" to mean "a pattern of joint statements." Such issues as justification, apostolicity, the eucharist, and the authority of Scripture were addressed, but not because these were initially recognized as the "essential core." Rather, these discussion topics were chosen because they were points of divergence. The resulting joint statements made concerning these *loci* established them as the "essential core," and they were constructed in such a way as to identify common denominators between the two groups. "They [the respective statements]

<sup>9</sup>Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue, 21.

<sup>10</sup>Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue II: Report and Recommendations (Cincinnati: Forward Publications, 1981), 19-20.

do not say all that the participants (particularly one side) would want to say about the doctrinal *locus* in question. But they would include certain fundamental affirmations."<sup>11</sup>

In *Implications of the Gospel*, the Final Report of LED III (1983-1988), a noticeable change of language occurs. Entirely new words and phrases emerge, such as "the eschatological grounding of the Gospel," "the breaking in of the end-time reign of God," or "the authenticity of the church's gospel."<sup>12</sup> In addition to a new vocabulary, distinction is drawn between the descriptive and prescriptive functions of doctrinal formulations: "Doctrines means all teaching that is authentically Christian. Doctrinal formulations can function either descriptively ('This is what Christians, in fact, teach') or prescriptively ('This is what Christians ought to teach')."<sup>13</sup> Unity is to be found in words that are not distinctive to one theological tradition or the other, expressed in descriptive formulations. Prescription causes dissension. "Prescriptive doctrine has been experienced as oppressive, obscurantist, stagnating, inhibiting. It has been the occasion for purges, trials, executions, and wars."<sup>14</sup>

*Toward Full Communion*, the history book of the LED through 1991, addresses "theological consensus on the Gospel," holding that there is in fact, only one essential for ecumenical agreement: the gospel.<sup>15</sup> This not only echoes the entire history of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues, but it also neatly reflects the doctrinal consensus of the international

<sup>11</sup>Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue II, 19.

<sup>12</sup>Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue III: *Implications of the Gospel* (Cincinnati: Forward Publications, 1988), 16, 34, 53.

<sup>13</sup>Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue III, 52. An example of a descriptive statement would be, "The ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament is a gift of God and therefore a divine institution." A prescriptive, "divisive" statement would be as follows: Women, by virtue of their gender, are not eligible for the office of the holy ministry.

<sup>14</sup>Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue III, 52. The resultant effect of this "realization" is that the ELCA apologizes for all the trouble the Lutherans have caused over the ages by their adherence to good teaching and sound doctrine. "It means, finally, that together church and 'synagogue' witness to humanity's flawed and broken capacity to be the bearer of the messianic vision and that we view our present ecclesiastical existence with appropriate modesty, humility, and repentance. Recognition of the brokenness with which church and synagogue bear witness to the dawning and vision of the messianic age places limitations upon the claims which the church can make about the continuity and fullness of its institutions." *Lutheran – Episcopal Dialogue III*, 37.

<sup>15</sup>"*Toward Full Communion*" and "Concordat of Agreement": *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue, Series III*, edited by William A Norgren and William G. Rusch (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), 24.

Lutheran-Anglican *Niagara Report* (1989). Endorsed by both *Toward Full Communion* and CCM, the *Niagara Report* likewise reduces the gospel (narrowly defined) to be the one and only essential, exclusive of other articles: "The Christian faith is that God has made peace through Jesus 'by the blood of his cross' (Colossians 1:20) so establishing the one valid center for the unity of the whole human family."<sup>16</sup>

One unique contribution *Toward Full Communion* makes is summarized in this observation concerning existence of a New Testament canon:

The very existence of a *canon* of the New Testament, with its exclusions as well as its inclusions, testifies to the church's need for and commitment to a standard for orthodoxy in distinction from and in rejection of heresy. The inclusion of four different Gospels in the canon of the New Testament, as well as the inclusion of occasional writings by various authors, testifies to the fact that consensus on the gospel does not require uniformity of expression.<sup>17</sup>

Thus it is held that the various books of the New Testament are not fully unified in their theologies. Their common link is "peace through Jesus," the various implications of which work themselves out in different ways (recall the "essential core of dogmatic agreement within a wider pluralism" of LED II) that may or may not be compatible in all aspects.

This overview of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues notes the methodology of modern ecumenical discussion: unity is first assumed and then a basis for it is sought. Dialogue hopes to express that which may be held in common, not to facilitate the reconciliation of actual differences. The common denominator in all of the dialogues is a narrow gospel, one that insists, "considerable freedom should be allowed within the church in matters which are not an explicit part of the Gospel."<sup>18</sup> "The essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith" are not those things that must be held in common ("prescriptive" doctrinal formulations) but

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<sup>16</sup>Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee, *The Niagara Report: Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopacy, Niagara Falls, September 1987* (London: Church House Publishing, 1988), 37.

<sup>17</sup>ELCA, *Called to Common Mission* [online].

<sup>18</sup>LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Gospel and Scripture: The Interrelationship of the Material and Formal Principals in Lutheran Theology* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 4. The report immediately goes on to state, "This view is sometimes criticized as 'minimalistic' or 'Gospel reductionism.'"

rather those things that can be expressed in a way that is mutually palatable ("descriptive" doctrinal formulations).

Accordingly, inter-communion takes place with the intent of "renewing" the church. The church is said to have been renewed when the essentials of the Christian faith are finally identified. Church unity and divergent theology co-exist because "consensus on the gospel does not require uniformity of expression."

This methodology overlooks the precision of Formula of Concord X, which states: "as long as they are otherwise agreed in doctrine and in all its articles and are also agreed concerning the right use of the holy sacraments."<sup>19</sup> Nor does it reflect Luther's approach to the task of composing the "essentials" of the faith in the *Smalcald Articles*:

I was therefore instructed to draft and assemble articles of our faith to serve as a basis for possible deliberations and to indicate, on the one hand, what and in how far we were willing and able to yield to the papists and, on the other hand, what we intended to hold fast to and persevere in.<sup>20</sup>

Luther's articles include not only the inviolable "sublime articles of divine majesty" and those "which pertain to the office and work of Jesus Christ, or our redemption,"<sup>21</sup> but also "matters which we may discuss with learned and sensible men."<sup>22</sup> That which is essential faith, however, is confessed at the onset of ecumenical discussion, rather than allowed to float to the surface over the course of time.

### The Devolution of Doctrinal Authority

With the evolution of a generic and inclusive theological language to which both parties can give their assent, the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue

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<sup>19</sup>*The Book of Concord*, edited by Theodore Tappert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1959), 616, 6. This criticism has also been made of the Porvoo document. See the Missouri Synod's recent "The Porvoo Statement and Declaration" in *Confessional Lutheran Perspective* (Saint Louis: Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1999), 11. This document, authored by the Department of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, was previously published in the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61 (January/April 1997): 35-52.

<sup>20</sup>Tappert, 288, 1.

<sup>21</sup>Tappert, 291, Introduction to Part I.

<sup>22</sup>Tappert, 292, Introduction to Part II.

also maps the devolution of doctrinal authority. LED I provided the following summary and comparison:<sup>23</sup>

The characteristic confessional basis of Lutherans embraces

1. The Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,
2. The symbols of the Lutheran Church:
  - a. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds
  - b. The Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the same
  - c. The Smalkald Articles
  - d. The Large and Small Catechisms
  - e. The Formula of Concord

There are varying degrees of official adherence to these symbolic documents.

The documents to which Anglicans, although less confessionally oriented than Lutherans, characteristically appeal include

1. The Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,
2. The testimony of the Fathers and the definitions of the Councils of the early Church
3. The Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds; (note that while the Athanasian Creed has never been made formally authoritative for the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, there is no doubt that its Trinitarian affirmations are part of the faith of the Church),
4. *The Book of Common Prayer*
5. The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion (the ambiguous authority of the Articles was reviewed by Lambeth 1968; while not judged a complete confessional statement, the Articles have been retained by most provinces as an important historical document which most significantly bears clear witness to the primacy of Scripture and the centrality of the Gospel), and
6. For contemporary guidance in matters of faith, morals, and order, the Resolutions of successive Lambeth Conferences which, while not legally binding, have significant moral weight.

Yet even in LED I, authoritative documents were held in suspicion. Not only did both traditions acknowledge the importance of the historical-critical approach to the New Testament, but the report also expressed

<sup>23</sup>*Progress Report*, 15-16.



distrust for "inherited documents," finding them insufficient to answer the question of unity.

The appeal to authority is significantly reduced in later Dialogues, finally being minimal in CCM. The confessional documents invoked are "the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Small Catechism and The Book of Common Prayer of 1979 (including 'Ordination Rites' and 'An Outline of the Faith')." <sup>24</sup> Noticeably absent are those documents that make "prescriptive" statements concerning the Christian faith, including the Athanasian Creed's "whosoever shall be saved," the "I do not know how I can change or concede any of them" of the Smalcald Articles, and the rejections and condemnations of the Formula of Concord. Such a reduction of authority was a necessary step on the part of the Lutherans, precisely because of these exclusionary formulations. Similar compromise was not needed from the Episcopalians, because their historic documents already allowed for a great variance in theology. <sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Both the Apology and the Tractate are cited in CCM, but not as a basis for its theology. Rather, they are simply used as evidence of the recognition that "a distinction between episcopal and pastoral ministries within the one office of Word and Sacrament is neither commanded nor forbidden by divine law." The reader is tempted to conclude that citations from distinctive confessional documents are important to CCM only insofar as they reflect the presupposed goals of ecumenical dialogue.

<sup>25</sup>This fueled Hermann Sasse's lament over the Lutheran Church. "Sasse to Bachmann (1955)," translated by Ronald Feuerhahn, *Lutheran Quarterly* 13, (Summer 1999): 214: "It is lamentable how today in world Lutheranism the doctrinal substance perishes. We follow the Anglicans and the Reformed. These churches indeed have no more mission vigor because they have, at least in our continent, no more doctrine. I see that at the university. The Anglicans have 'claims,' but nothing else. The difference between the Evangelicals and the Anglo-catholics [two groups within the Anglican Church] is dogmatically insurmountable, which is bridged only through the alleged apostolic succession, which the Evangelicals do not believe." Sasse then footnotes these comments with the observation that unity for the Anglicans is not even achieved through the liturgy, as commonly assumed, because the Anglo-catholics use the Roman missal in English rather than the *The Book of Common Prayer*. Compare the following comments by Anglican Canon Charles Smyth of Westminster: [Quoted in *Confessional Lutheran Perspective*, 12] "You can afford variety in the pulpit so long as you have uniformity at the altar . . . the Church of England embraces many shades of theological opinion, but desiderates liturgical uniformity."

### The Language of Authenticity

CCM incorporates the concept of "authentic" identification in its doctrinal assumptions as part of its new theological language. Citing the Lutheran-Anglican consensus reached by the *Niagara Report*, CCM endorses its statement concerning the Trinity: "That is, we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true Man, and that God is authentically identified as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."<sup>26</sup>

This concept of the authenticity arises out of the modern notion that certain *loci* such as the Trinity are as much products of the early church as they are the witness of the New Testament. The Braaten-Jenson *Christian Dogmatics*, for example, asserts that

The trinitarian name did not fall from heaven. It was made by believers for the God with whom we have found ourselves involved... 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit' came together also simply as a name for the one therein apprehended, and apparently did so before all analysis of its suitability.<sup>27</sup>

Since Trinitarian theology is the product of the Christian community, rather than the authoritative word "from heaven," there is no dogmatic necessity for insisting that it be the only valid expression of who God is. This is the inconsistency of *Christian Dogmatics*, which maintains that, even though "Christianity has every reason to eliminate" expressions of male sexism, "Trinitarian Father-language cannot, however, be one such."<sup>28</sup> Again,

From time to time, various concerns lead to proposed replacements of the trinitarian name, for example, "In the name of God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier" or "In the name of God the Ground and God the Logos and God the Spirit." All such parodies disrupt the faith's self-identity at the level of its primal and least-reflected historicity.<sup>29</sup>

Even though CCM still maintains traditional Trinitarian terminology, the introduction of the concept of authenticity marks a move toward the

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<sup>26</sup>The *Niagara Report* (37) also recognizes that both the Lutherans and the Anglicans celebrate "authentic sacraments."

<sup>27</sup>Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, editors, *Christian Dogmatics*, volume 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 93.

<sup>28</sup>*Christian Dogmatics*, 1:93-94.

<sup>29</sup>*Christian Dogmatics*, 1:96.

further feminization of theology in these church bodies (already evidenced by the mutually held practice of women's ordination). There was a time when a genuine Swiss Army knife was every Boy Scout's prized possession. Now that the market has been flooded with so many imitations, the real thing appears overpriced and of comparatively little value. A knife is a knife. In the same way, describing God as "authentically identified" in Trinitarian terms allows for the introduction of other, equally usable designations, even if they lack the distinction of antiquity or scriptural support. This is precisely the goal of theological feminism, which hopes to achieve "a thoroughgoing revision of traditional Christian doctrines and symbols."<sup>30</sup> God is God, whether described in traditional, authentic terms or in some new way such as Letty Russell's programmatic "Creator, Liberator, Comforter."<sup>31</sup> Such a re-naming of the Trinity may in fact be on the horizon for both of these church bodies, despite much protest to the contrary.

### The Lord's Supper

CCM likewise cites the *Niagara Report* concerning the Lord's Supper: "We believe that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, distributed, and received under the forms of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. We also believe that the grace of divine forgiveness offered in the sacrament is received with the thankful offering of ourselves for God's service."<sup>32</sup> This extremely general wording effectively negates the

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<sup>30</sup>Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 231.

<sup>31</sup>[Letty Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 102-103]: "In the light of the necessity of making clear that the Tradition is for *all* and not for just one half of humanity, it is perhaps wise to revise our language in speaking of God. For instance, it is possible to speak of God the Creator without using male pronouns, as an indication that God transcends all biological and cultural distinctions of sex. This sometimes makes a sentence more difficult, but it allows our language of God to be heard more clearly by *both* men and women. In the same way we can emphasize the role of Christ the Liberator and Redeemer as one that represents God's freedom to be present with all humanity (*Emmanuel*). In order to make clear the fact that the metaphors for the Godhead include those which are both masculine and feminine, it is perhaps also helpful at this moment in history to speak of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Reconciler, with a feminine pronoun."

<sup>32</sup>This is the same position held by the *Porvoo Statement and Declaration*, which likewise cites the *Niagara Report*. The present critique concerning the matter of sacramental presence echoes the same already expressed in *Confessional Perspective*, 16-

traditional Lutheran teaching concerning impious reception (*manducatio indignorum*), which is clearly expressed in the Smalcald Articles: Of the Sacrament of the Altar we hold that bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and are given and received not only by the godly, but also by wicked [*boesen, impiis*] Christians.<sup>33</sup>

### Agreement in Ministry

Recall that all of the foregoing is introductory material in CCM, holding the rank of assumed theology and bygone debate. The real matter of disagreement that led up to CCM was the question of episcopacy and with it, apostolic succession. In light of what has already been discussed, the remainder of CCM may appear to be the proverbial rearrangement of deckchairs on a sinking ship. To the contrary, the matters of episcopacy and apostolic succession are valuable discussions, instructive even for those who are unwilling to compromise the prescriptive elements of their confession in the forgone areas. The outward form of the church—whether it be episcopal or congregational in structure, whether its bishops serve for a set term or for life, whether its pastors are ordained by bishops or by fellow clergy—these things may all be regarded as *adiaphora*, to be determined and mutually agreed upon in whatever way the church sees fit.

The *Concordat of Agreement* raised concerns long before it was defeated in the ELCA's Churchwide Assembly in 1997. Seminary professor Paul Berge, who served as a member of the LED, described the *Concordat* as "bad horse trading. In terms of church structure and theology, Lutherans will become Episcopalians, and Episcopalians will remain Episcopalians."<sup>34</sup> Leonard Klein, former editor of *Lutheran Forum*, described as "unequal" the essential acceptance of Anglican orders by the Lutherans, on the one hand, and the failure overtly to ask the Anglicans

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<sup>33</sup>Tappert, 311, 1. Compare Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, VII, citing Luther (575, 33): "I reckon them all as belonging together (that is, as Sacramentarians and enthusiasts), for that is what they are who will not believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is his true, natural body, which the godless or Judas receive orally as well as St. Peter and all the saints. Whoever, I say, will not believe this, will please let me alone and expect no fellowship from me. This is final."

<sup>34</sup>Douglas LeBlanc, "Back to the Drawing Board for Ecumenism?" *Christianity Today* 41 (April 7, 1997): 55.

to affirm the Augsburg Confession as a catholic teaching on the other.<sup>35</sup> Despite assurances that the Lutherans were not obliged to the Episcopalian threefold structure for ministry, it was hard for opponents to swallow the November 1996 revision of the *Concordat*, which declared, "We agree that the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament."<sup>36</sup>

CCM takes into careful consideration objections such as these and reflects a willingness to make the changes necessary to achieve its eventual goal. Where the *Concordat* stipulated that each body invite "on an invariable basis at least three bishops of the other church" to all ordinations or installations of their respective bishops, CCM changes "invariability" to "regularity" and contents itself with "one or more bishops."<sup>37</sup> Rather than claiming the threefold model of ministry as its future pattern for both churches, CCM allows that "the ordination of deacons, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers" by the ELCA not be required. The *Concordat's* language concerning the ordination of ELCA bishops "for life service" is dropped. Further, it is clearly stated, "the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is free to maintain that this same episcopate . . . is nonetheless not necessary for the relationship of full communion."<sup>38</sup>

One cannot help but be impressed with the *Concordat* and CCM. A truly laudable effort to concede as much as possible is evident. The Episcopalians make the surprising pledge "to begin the process for enacting a temporary suspension, in this case only, of the 17<sup>th</sup> century restriction" insisting that all bishops, priests, and deacons be ordained by the laying on of hands by bishops.<sup>39</sup> After the revision, the Lutherans still allow for the requirement that bishops be present at all ordinations, giving up their former freedom of allowing the bishops to delegate the

<sup>35</sup>Leonard Klein, "The Concordat—Not Now," *Lutheran Forum* 25 (May 1991): 7.

<sup>36</sup>"Concordat of Agreement," *Lutheran-Episcopal, Lutheran-Reformed, and Lutheran-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Proposals* (Chicago: ELCA, 1996), 9-10.

<sup>37</sup>"Concordat of Agreement," 9.

<sup>38</sup>It is noted that the "Concordat" (10) also allowed for termination of the position: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees that all its bishops will be understood as ordained, like other pastors, for life service of the gospel in the pastoral ministry of the historic episcopate, even though tenure in the office of the churchwide bishop and synodical bishops may be terminated by retirement, resignation, or conclusion of term however constitutionally ordered."

<sup>39</sup>"Concordat of Agreement," 10.

task. Further, the recognition of deacons in the Episcopal Church as "fully authentic ministers in their respective orders" perhaps marks at least a step toward a future Lutheran acceptance of the threefold model of ministry.

### Evaluation

Full communion between the two churches began as soon as the Episcopal Church adopted CCM, even though a few details still need to be worked out. The document declares,

For both churches, the relationship of full communion begins when both churches adopt this *Concordat*. For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the characteristics of the goal of full communion defined in its 1991 policy statement, *Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* will be realized at this time. For the Episcopal Church, full communion, although begun at the same time, will not be fully realized until both churches determine that in the context of a common life and mission there is a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate. For both churches, life in full communion entails more than legislative decisions and shared ministries. The people of both churches have to receive and share this relationship as they grow together in full communion.<sup>40</sup>

What, in the end, can be said about the value of *Called to Common Mission* and the fellowship relationship it represents? As indicated above, there are serious theological flaws assumed by the agreement that have prevented the Missouri Synod from being a signatory, though its representatives had been full participants in all three Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues (see Appendix). But these flaws do not render the document entirely unusable by Missouri. For a church accused of a "one-dimensional approach to ecumenism," *Called to Common Mission* gives pause to consider exactly what may be compromised in the name of unity.<sup>41</sup> The declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Ingria at its 1998 convention (despite its membership in the Lutheran World Federation) already indicates a certain Missourian willingness along these lines. The question of what may be tolerated, however, is different from the question of what may be compromised.

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<sup>40</sup>ELCA, *Called to Common Mission* [online].

<sup>41</sup>Larry Vogel, "The 1998 LC-MS Convention," *Lutheran Forum* 32 (Fall 1998): 15.

Could Missouri ever adopt, for example, an episcopal hierarchy in order to accommodate another church body—other things being equal?

Missourian objections aside, it is noteworthy how much the ELCA and the Episcopal churches have in common. Both have embraced the higher-critical approach to biblical interpretation. Both have accommodated further liberalizing trends such as women's ordination and both have addressed, in varying degrees, the toleration or even promotion of homosexuality. Both have clergy in positions all across the theological spectrum, from the most conservative to the most liberal. It is no secret that both the ELCA and the Episcopal Church (like the Missouri Synod and every other church body in the world) suffer from internal difficulties. While there may be any number of agreements and disagreements as to what exactly are the problems, Leonard Klein (among others) observed, "Both parties to this *Concordat* are in serious trouble as to the catholic faith itself. Each church body needs a serious dose of reconfessionalization."<sup>42</sup> Will this realization of full communion come as an antidote to these difficulties, or will it only delay "honest confrontation with the cancer within"?<sup>43</sup> Only time will tell.

### Appendix:

#### Statement of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Participants<sup>44</sup>

Representatives of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have been full participants in all three rounds of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue. The LCMS representatives to these discussions have welcomed with appreciation this opportunity to engage in inter-confessional dialogue with brothers and sisters in Christ. The Synod's participation in such discussions reflects its longstanding commitment to the biblical mandate that Christians seek to manifest externally the unity already given to them in the body of Christ and to do so on the basis of agreement in the confession of the gospel "In all its articles" (FC SD X, 31).

The Representatives of the LCMS have recognized that due to agreements reached among the other representatives of the dialogue, and in particular, the Lutheran/Episcopal Interim sharing of the Eucharist

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<sup>42</sup>Klein, "Concordat—Not Now," 7.

<sup>43</sup>Klein, "Concordat—Not Now," 7.

<sup>44</sup>This statement is published, among other places, in "Toward Full Communion" and "Concordat of Agreement," 115-116.



Agreement adopted by the non-LCMS participant churches in 1982, the aim of the third round of dialogue has shifted to focus on the achieving of full communion (altar and pulpit fellowship) between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In response to a specific invitation, the LCMS has continued to send representatives as full participants in LED III, even while it has not been a part of the 1982 Agreement, nor the efforts to reach full communion. Although Missouri Synod participation has been limited by these circumstances the LCMS representatives wish to express their gratitude to all the members of the dialogue for welcoming LCMS participation in this phase of dialogue. The LCMS participants remain committed to the value of the discussions themselves as vehicles to achieve greater understanding of and agreement in "the truth as it is taught in the Scriptures and confessed in the Lutheran symbols" ("Guidelines for Participation in Ecumenical Dialogs," prepared by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1975).

We, The LCMS representatives of LED III, ask our gracious God to bless the efforts of our friends and colleagues on the dialogue to achieve a common witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We express our best wishes to all present and past members of the dialogue and thank God for the friendships we have come to enjoy and the commonalties we share. And, we look forward to future opportunities to address together differences in doctrine and practice which continue to divide the church.

The Rev. Carl Bornmann

The Rev. Dr. Norman E. Nagel

The Rev. Jerald C. Joersz

# Theological Observer

## A Shot in the Arm for Confessional Studies

LCMS seminary students receive a thorough study in the Lutheran Confessions. However in light of their later pastoral responsibilities, the Confessions may later prove not to be all that helpful. Apart from use of Luther's *Small Catechism* and groups of pastors who have devoted themselves to studying the confessions, most copies of the Book of Concord remain untouched on study shelves. Perhaps the prime reason for this inattention to the Lutheran Confessions is that they are presented in isolation from the situations in which they arose. Some time ago one instructor was known to have cut up the Lutheran Confessions into separate passages that were rearranged into dogmatical categories, a still popular way of studying the Bible. Such an ahistorical approach brings out their doctrinal content, but makes it difficult to understand why they wrote what they did. Historical criticism in the study of church documents is not without merit. Lutheran pastors are bound to preach and teach according to the Book of Concord, but this commitment would be enhanced if we knew more about the world in which they were written.

An answer to confessional doldrums has been provided in the recent publication of *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Fortress Press, 2001). Editors Robert Kolb of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, and James A. Nestingen of Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, have provided an invaluable service in assembling some documents that were later incorporated into the Lutheran Confessions and other documents that were written in refuting them. Fourteen documents have been translated from either Latin or German and assembled in *Sources and Contexts*. Our Augsburg Confession was not spun out of thin air at the Imperial Diet in June 1530, but was largely a reconstruction of the Schwabach, Marburg, and Torgau articles. Unless a student owned a copy of *Bekennnisschriften* (now about \$100), was familiar with arrangement of the footnotes, and could read the German and Latin, he had no access to these documents. These Reformation-era documents are now placed at our finger tips in a very readable form. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession was a response to the Confutation of the Augsburg Confession and really cannot be understood without it. Now we have the Confutation in English translation. For years, students have been taught that the Leipzig and Augsburg Interims forced unacceptable practices upon Lutherans, but now we can see for ourselves what these documents required.

Certain portions do not seem all that burdensome, but for our forefathers it was a matter of being forced to do what now others once did and can still do out of Christian freedom. Among the other collected documents are John Eck's 404 Articles presented at the Augsburg Confession, the Catalog of Testimonies, and Luther's Torgau Sermon, in which he describes Christ's descent into hell. Just out of curiosity, I found myself reading through the volume. Confirmed was the stereotype of Reformation figures like Eck, but now, at least, the stereotype could be reclassified as informed opinion and not sectarian bias. Along with the new translation of the Book of Concord (Augsburg Fortress 2000), confessional studies have received a real shot in the arm. Here's hoping it bears some fruit. Along with Kolb, other LCMS contributors include Charles Arand, Robert Rosin, and the late LCMS president, J. A. O. Preus.

David P. Scaer

## Book Reviews

***Darwin's Black Box—the Biochemical Challenge to Evolution.* By Michael J. Behe. New York: Touchstone (Simon & Schuster), 1998. 307 Pages.**

In recent years, several authors have reexamined the theory of evolution. For example, Philip Johnson's books (*Darwin on Trial*, *Reason in the Balance*, and *Defeating Darwinism*) offer many insights into the irrationality of evolutionary theory. However, while Johnson and other authors conclusively demonstrate the philosophical incoherence of evolution, what has been lacking are more works which attack evolution on the basis of science, demonstrating that the theory disagrees with both the evidence and sound reasoning.

Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* is a crucial contribution to the scientific refutation of the theory of evolution. Although a Roman Catholic, Behe does not bring his religious views into his argumentation. (In fact, one is surprised to find that a reference to "Calvinism" in the first chapter is not connected to the sixteenth century theologian, but to the pseudo-science of characters in the "Calvin and Hobbes" comic strip.) Behe's position is not that of a "young Earth" creationist; the author does not dispute the common scientific view of the age of the Earth. Instead, Behe forms his argument entirely from Darwinism's inability to cope with the complexity of life on the molecular level: "The scientific disciplines that were part of the evolutionary synthesis are all nonmolecular. Yet for the Darwinian theory of evolution to be true, it has to account for the molecular structure of life. It is the purpose of this book to show that it does not" (25).

The central point of Behe's argument is evolution's inability to explain the development of complex systems on the cellular level. "An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursors to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution. Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on" (39). Much of Behe's book is devoted to examining several irreducibly complex biological systems (the bacterial flagellum, blood coagulation, the synthesis and distribution of proteins within the cell, and the immune system) and repeatedly pointing out that evolutionary theory has proven itself utterly incapable of explaining the development of such systems. Although much of the scientific detail is beyond the comprehension of most readers, Behe's ability to construct analogies between the processes he describes and the everyday experiences of the average reader keep his book accessible to a non-technical audience.

The concluding chapters of *Darwin's Black Box* examine the institutional and intellectual pressures that uphold evolutionary theory in the face of

overwhelming evidence of intelligent design. In Behe's words, "The dilemma is that while one side of the elephant is labeled intelligent design, the other side might be labeled God" (233). Although the reader may not agree with all of the author's conclusions, and much of the science is quite challenging, this book is too valuable to ignore.

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*Those Terrible Middle Ages! Debunking the Myths.* By Régine Pernoud. Translated by Anne Englund Nash. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000, 179 Pages. Paper. \$12.95. Originally published as *Pour en fanir avec le Moyen Age* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1977)

In her tenure as an archivist at the French National Archive, Régine Pernoud heard many misconceptions concerning the Middle Ages. It was an age of slaughter, massacres, violence, ignorance, mindlessness, and general underdevelopment. One schoolchild told her that people began to think only after the Middle Ages. A fiction writer of note stated that the medieval church did not even acknowledge that women had souls. It is myths like these that Pernoud attempts to debunk in a book first published in French in 1977.

What are the Middle Ages? Pernoud says it is the period when classical antiquity was considered a treasure to be exploited, not a model to be imitated, as was done in the sixteenth century Renaissance. It was a time when art always expressed the sacred, when the book (codex) replaced the scroll (*volumen*), when slavery disappeared, and when some women in the church enjoyed extraordinary opportunity and power. The Middle Ages produced magnificent cathedrals, courtly lyrics, literary novels, mystery plays, and intense musical activity that included the naming of the notes on the scale based on an eighth century hymn honoring John the Baptist.

Medieval feudalism is often characterized by moderns as an oppressive system that favored the lords at the expense of the peasants. Pernoud carefully explains how feudalism was instead a system based on personal agreements that enabled rural society to survive and even flourish in the wake of the collapse of the Roman Empire. The castle was the mother of this society and gave birth to a code of honor and chivalry. The monastery also played an important role serving as a place of learning in the rural setting. Gradually the rural areas lost their importance as the more important monastic orders, schools, and centers of government gravitated to the cities.

The Inquisition is another medieval institution that provokes modern revulsion. While not defending the Inquisition, Pernoud does point out that the link between the profane and the sacred was so close in the Middle Ages that doctrinal deviations took on extreme importance in everyday life. For example, the

heretical Cathars' denial of the validity of oaths threatened the integrity of the feudal system, which was based on oaths. The Inquisition, therefore, was the defensive reaction of a society for which, rightly or wrongly, the preservation of the faith seemed as important as physical health in our age.

Pernoud answers some of the criticisms that have been directed at the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. She calls foolish the idea of a monolithic medieval church wielding power in the person of the pope. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the popes lived for 122 years outside of Rome as outlaws and exiles. What kind of power did the pontiff have if he was chased out of the city by Roman factions and revolts? Pernoud writes that those who do nothing but condemn the medieval church forget certain facts: the twelfth century desire of the church to understand non-Christian beliefs as evidenced by sponsoring translations of the Talmud and Koran; an active thirteenth century Christian community thriving in China under the Archbishop of Peking; and the church actively caring for the poor and sick free of charge.

This interesting book on the Middle Ages may not be enough to arouse the interest of Lutherans who tend to jump from the Early Church to the Reformation era. However, Pernoud makes three important points which Lutherans should note. First, she condemns historical illiteracy. Her many examples of historical inaccuracies leading to faulty and foolish arguments should spur one to continual historical study and research. Second, she cautions against using history as a vehicle to promote pet ideas. She quotes one rather careless historian who said, "You must understand, when I do history, it is not to know if some particular fact is accurate or not; I am looking for what can promote my ideas" (139). Pernoud argues that the study of history ceases to exist if it is not a search for the truth founded on authentic documents. Third, she reminds us that history does not furnish any solutions, but it permits—and it alone permits—us to pose the problems correctly. "And everyone knows that a problem correctly posed is already half solved" (172). This sage advice from a respected historian like Pernoud is reason enough for the busy pastor to continue his study of history, even medieval history.

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*Discovering the Plain Truth: How the Worldwide Church of God Encountered the Gospel of Grace.* By Larry Nichols and George Mather. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 141 Pages.

In a century marked by growing indifference to doctrinal integrity and fidelity to Holy Scripture, recent developments within the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) stand out in striking contrast. Since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong in 1986, the WCG leadership's efforts to turn away from the heterodox teachings of its founder have attracted considerable attention (and even some suspicion)

within the Christian community. The WCG was widely recognized as a cult because of its wide array of false (even bizarre) teachings. Anti-Trinitarian theology, a denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and a denial of the unending punishment of the damned are among the many false teachings that separated the WCG from the church.

In *Discovering the Plain Truth*, authors Nichols and Mather provide the reader with a concise summary of the history of the WCG, as well as an evaluation of the changes that have occurred within the church's doctrine. (An appendix details doctrinal changes on roughly two dozen topics ranging from the WCG's views on the Trinity to Anglo-Israelism.) The writers' experience as authors (they have co-authored two other books, *The Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult and Masonic Lodge*) and as pastors in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod lends a great deal of credibility to their work. The authors' gifts also include a very accessible style of writing; the book commends itself to both pastors and laymen.

The title makes the conclusions of the authors readily apparent; Nichols compares the current state of the WCG to that of the church re-emerging in the former Soviet Union: "I realized that the WCG was under its own Babylonian captivity for an almost equal number of decades. It is truly remarkable to see the grace of God emerging in the lives of many people who endured many years in the shackles of legalism" (84). Nevertheless, despite the authors' positive assessment of much within the reformed WCG, they still note areas that still need to be brought in line with the norm of sacred Scripture (for example, "soul sleep," the teaching that the souls of the deceased remain in a state of unconsciousness until the resurrection). Nichols and Mather are to be commended for providing the church with such a concise and well-informed assessment of the Worldwide Church of God.

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***Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism.* Edited by Edith L. Blumhofer, Russel P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker. Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.**

This book is a collection of essays that serve as "case studies that suggest how religious movements come to be defined in the popular imagination and how these definitions come to be deconstructed." The book opens with an introductory essay on Pentecostalism's biblical antecedents and closes with an historiographical essay on the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

The real meat of the book takes place in the intervening essays that document two major phases of Pentecostal and Charismatic encounters with Protestantism. The first set of essays deals with the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement and its clashes with mainline Protestantism. These initial conflicts were generally



separatist, as the Pentecostal movement was met with skepticism and resistance. At this time, many who followed the Pentecostal movement either left or were driven out of their church bodies. This section concludes with a treatment of the systematization of Pentecostal theology by second generation Pentecostals.

The second set of essays chronicles a shift in the conflicts. The tension in these essays moves from conflict between different church bodies to conflict within church bodies. In the early twentieth century, mainline Protestants who were within the Pentecostal camp had generally separated themselves from those who did not agree with them. Later in the century, Protestants with Pentecostal sympathies, referred to now as Charismatics, chose to stay within their church bodies and fight for official recognition of their views. Particularly interesting here is Albert Schenkel's essay about how polity effected this conflict within both the American and Southern Baptist denominations. The American Baptist conflict took place mostly at the national level, while the Southern Baptist conflict took place within local associations of pastors. In the end, neither denomination was able to fight off the movements from within and "the structures of the ABC and SBC were flexible enough to retain large numbers of charismatic believers. Baptist wineskins did not altogether fail the charismatic vintage." In fact, as the all the essays in this section show, none of the denominations involved were able to fight off the influence of the Charismatics from within.

The significance of this book for Lutherans lies not so much in what the book has to say about Pentecostals and Charismatics, but in the change in the nature of the conflict that the book outlines. Many of the challenges facing the LCMS in our time come from within. Our theology, our polity, our very identity as Lutherans are being challenged by voices on the inside. The conflicts in our own synod are taking place at both the national and local levels. We find ourselves in a situation very similar to many of the church bodies discussed in the book. What remains to be seen is how much more new vintage our Lutheran wineskins handle before they cease to be Lutheran.

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***Heritage in Motion: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1962-1995.* Edited by August R. Suelflow. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998.**

This book is a sequel to *Moving Frontiers* (Carl S. Meyer, editor [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964]) and, like its predecessor, is essentially a collection of documents. As with most sequels, however, *Heritage in Motion* does not live up to the standard set by the original. While *Moving Frontiers* at least recognized its limitations as a collection of documents and saw itself as a supplementary resource in the study of American Lutheran history, *Heritage in Motion* makes larger claims for itself.

The book not only claims to be history in the sense that it provides historical background or context to the documents, "this volume presents . . . all the excitement and the trauma present at the time when these documents and statements were written," it also claims to be a primary source "from which a more detailed history can be produced." *Heritage in Motion* fails to support either claim.

The introductions to the documents themselves are weak and in no way accomplish what they claim. This fact alone is illustrative of a larger problem the LCMS has in its approach to history. History is more than just document collections and actually doing history involves more than just reading official documents. This book ignores the personalities and agendas that lie behind the documents and, in doing so, fails to tell the story of the past few decades of LCMS history adequately. The history of the LCMS simply cannot be told from a collection of documents. Documents provide an important source but they are not the only source from which history is constructed.

*Heritage in Motion* also fails as a primary source from which a history can be written because it puts a layer of meaning between the would-be historian and the documents. Instead of presenting the documents in a chronological format and letting them speak for themselves, the book is arranged in a topical format. The arrangement of documents under topic headings makes it difficult to use as a primary source. The documents are also presented in an edited format, further limiting their ability to speak for themselves. Edited documents arranged in a topical format might better be considered a secondary source. In the end, the book may tell us more about the editors than it does about LCMS history.

Not only does the book fail to live up to its claims, it is also not an easy book to use. Finding an individual document in the book is difficult unless one knows the name of the document itself. There is no general index, nor any other tools available that would at least help the book function as a supplementary text. CPH would have been better served in staying with the format of *Moving Frontiers*.

Despite the publishing of this book, the history of the LCMS in large part remains unknown, and because we do not know who we were, we will continue to have problems deciding who we are.

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***The "I" in the Storm: A Study of Romans 7.* By Michael Paul Middendorf. Saint Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 1997. 303 pages.**

Since Krister Stendahl's "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," Lutheran voices have grown increasingly quiet in the contemporary discussion of Romans 7. Michael Middendorf's book, a revision of his Th. D. dissertation at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, breaks the silence

and challenges the scholarly abandonment of the traditional reading of a key Pauline text: Romans 7.

The trajectory of Roman 7's interpretation took a new turn after the 1929 publication of Werner Kümmel's dissertation. Kümmel criticized the older view that Romans 7:14-25 is describing the plight of Paul as a Christian who struggles with meeting the demands of the law. On the contrary, nothing indicated to Kümmel a specifically Christian individual in the chapter, nor could the "I" refer to Paul. The chapter is couched in a very general discussion of the law itself, and ancient readers would have recognized the rhetorical "I." Apart from evangelical circles, few today adhere to the traditional reading of Romans 7. Modern scholars such as Stendahl assume the results of Kümmel's exegesis. Middendorf, for his part, is not content to parrot the classic arguments for the traditional reading. Middendorf has carefully reviewed the scholarly literature on Romans 7 and created a roadmap for his readers through the maze of new interpretations, although an author index would have been helpful. While his own approach is deeply indebted to the work of James D. G. Dunn, Middendorf advances the position and provides a critique of opposing schools of interpretation.

Chapter One surveys the various interpretations of Romans 7 in vogue. Verses 7-11 may be referring to Paul himself, Adam, Israel, and/or a transpersonal "I." Conclusions regarding the identity of the "I" in verses 7-11, because of the connection between the paragraphs, will determine the identity of the "I" in verses 14-25. Nevertheless, verses 14-25 could be describing a pre-conversion or non-Christian experience, verses 14-25 could be describing post-conversion Christian experience, and/or the verses could be transpersonal. Chapter Two offers a semantic reading of Romans 7 and its context as a foundation for the ensuing chapters. Middendorf concludes in Chapter Three that the most likely referent of the "I" in Romans 7 is Paul himself and not Adam, Israel, or a rhetorical entity. Middendorf justifiably criticizes Kümmel's generic "I" (with Michael Winger and others). Chapter Four explores whether Romans 7 describes Christian or non-Christian existence. Middendorf concludes in favor of the former. Chapter Five explores how the "I" statements function pragmatically in Paul.

*The "I" in the Storm* not only guides readers through the modern debates on Romans 7, but offers credible reasons for the older understanding. The author points the way forward toward a satisfactory solution.

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*Sin, Death, and the Devil.* Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. Paper. 132 Pages.

This volume brings together papers originally presented at a conference under the sponsorship of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, presided over by the editors, Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson. The unholy trinity of sin, death, and the devil—God's enemies and tyrants who enslave and taunt humanity—is the organizing theme as their authors attempt to speak to topics that have been ignored, de-mythologized, or reduced to therapeutic categories in recent theological discourse. Robert Jenson's introductory essay masterfully sets the stage for what is to follow as he describes the pretense of culture that is finally nihilistic, in spite of efforts both banal and bizarre to mask the emptiness.

In an essay entitled "Sin Sick," Duke ethicist Stanley Hauerwas explores the exchange of the language of sin for that of sickness in our culture in general, but most particularly in the church. In our culture, the new cathedrals are the hospitals. In theological education, Clinical Pastoral Education has become more important than Christology. This exchange not only corrupts the practices of the church, it also gives medicine a meaning and an identity that it cannot finally bear.

Gary Anderson, who teaches Old Testament at Harvard, revisits Genesis 3 in light of the recent critiques of this doctrine by the likes of Matthew Fox. Drawing on Barth, Anderson argues that the doctrine of original sin is necessary if the fullness of the narrative of divine redemption is to be maintained.

In his introduction, Jenson asserts that "the sacraments overcome the tyrants" (6). While Hauerwas sees baptism as the proper context for the practice of medicine (20-21), two of the essays are explicit in their focus on the sacraments. "The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Union" by A. N. Williams sees the Lord's Supper not primarily as the means of forgiveness, but as participation in the life of the Trinity and so as the sacrament of sanctification. Williams finds support for his thesis in both Aquinas and Calvin. Gilbert Meilaender's essay, "I Renounce the Devil and All His Ways" answers the Catechism's question, "What does baptism give or profit?" with a reading of I John 2:15-16 informed by Augustine's categories of temptation.

Carl Braaten reflects on the demise of the devil in liberal Protestantism in his contribution, "Powers in Conflict: Christ and the Devil." Braaten notes that when the existence of the devil is dismissed, it is not long until God is displaced as well. "The first thing we learn is that the decision for or against the existence of the Devil is a decision for or against the integrity of Christianity as such. We simply cannot subtract the Devil, along with demons, angels, principalities, powers, and elemental spirits, without doing violence to the shape of the Christian faith, as transmitted by Scripture and tradition, our

primary sources. No room is allowed for these spiritual realities in a strictly materialistic or naturalistic worldview, nor for any other secrets of the Christian mystery, for that matter" (97).

Richard John Neuhaus reflects on *Evangelium Vitae*, not so much as a statement of moral truth, but as the gospel itself. A concluding essay by Orthodox ethicist Vigen Guroian uses the liturgical theology of his church to articulate the victory of Christ's resurrection in a dying world.

John T. Pless

***The Bible in English: John Wycliffe and William Tyndale.* By John D. Long. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1998. xvi + 179 pages. Paper.**

This is an instructive book, but not one that I recommend, for it illustrates the difficulties in writing at a popular level about a subject with which one is not very familiar. The author, professor emeritus of the business school at Indiana University and a Bible-believing Christian, has set out to write a partial history of the English Bible "that could be easily digested by readers who were not professional Bible historians and who might not have the inclination to tackle the huge mass of literature awaiting the serious reader" (x). This is a worthwhile objective—Wycliffe and Tyndale are certainly important figures in that history—and Prof. Long's writing is clear and well organized. So what's the problem?

Just this. Not being familiar with current research and the latest findings, the author has presented an account of his subject that is marked by inaccuracies and dubious interpretations. The section on John Wycliffe is worse than that regarding Tyndale, but even the latter has serious problems.

First of all, the author's unfamiliarity with his subject manifests itself in his sources. For example, regarding Wycliffe, the Lollards, and their Bible, the most prominent historian today is Anne Hudson, whose extensive publications include the indispensable and magisterial *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History*. Unfortunately, Long's annotated bibliography fails to list any of Hudson's publications.

This is probably the most egregious omission but there are a host of others besides, and they have consequences for the content of the book, both errors of fact, for example, identifying Thomas Netter as a sixteenth-century opponent of reform (46; he wrote in the fourteenth century) and of interpretation, for example, describing Wycliffe as "repudiating" scholasticism (57) when he was one of the preeminent scholastic theologians of his day.

On the other hand, Long's section on Tyndale indicates dependence on Tyndale's best biographers in the twentieth century, J. F. Mozley and David Daniell, and consequently, this section is better than the one on Wycliffe.

Nevertheless, there are some curious omissions and interpretations here too. The most notable is the author's failure to recognize Luther's extensive influence on Tyndale's New Testament, including prefaces, notes, and even the arrangement of the books. Long simply does not know enough about his topic.

Although certainly well intentioned, Prof. Long is not the right man to write church history for non-professionals. Much better in this regard is the quarterly magazine, *Christian History*, with easy-to-read articles, either by scholars in the field or journalists familiar with the scholarship. So instead of *The Bible in English*, I suggest interested readers acquire back issues of *Christian History* 3 (Summer 1984) on John Wycliffe and 16 (Fall 1987) on William Tyndale. The articles are brief, the presentation is colorful, and the content is accurate—exactly what one wants in popular church history.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

*Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching.* By Peter E. McCullough. Cambridge: University Press, 1998.

It is hard to imagine what our world would be like without modern means of communication; but it is not hard to imagine that in such a world, sermons and other forms of spoken communication would be much more important than they are now. So it is no surprise to discover that historians like Peter McCullough, Fellow of Lincoln College (Oxford), are studying the practice of preaching in the early modern period for what it can tell us about the impact of religion and religious leaders upon culture and society at that time. McCullough, in particular, has produced a very interesting study of preaching at royal chapels during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I of England and assesses the influence of "court pulpits and chapels . . . on court culture and national politics"—clearly important topics for the period between the Reformation and the English Civil War.

Beginning with a chapter on the architectural settings for court preaching, McCullough proceeds to examine the men and their message—at least its political content—before Elizabeth, James I, and members of James's family (Queen Anne and two sons, Henry and Charles). McCullough's research has uncovered some significant details, for example, the elevated seating of the monarch that placed the ruler at eye level with (or above) the preacher in his elevated pulpit, the relative paucity of sermons during Elizabeth's reign (Lent was the only season of the year during which there were weekly events) as compared to James (who insisted on sermons at least twice every week), and the concern of Lancelot Andrewes (perhaps the most celebrated preacher in England during the first decades of the seventeenth century) regarding a piety that so emphasized sermons that it neglected liturgical prayer. In expressing this concern in sermons before James I, Andrewes was taking direct aim at the monarch, who could arrive at any time during morning prayer. At this point,

the preacher was expected to preach, and when the sermon was over the king would leave, no matter how much of the service remained!

This is an excellent book but it is not for everybody. For one thing, it presumes a high level of acquaintance with the political and religious history of the period. Secondly, its focus is exclusively on the significance of court preaching for culture and politics—not religion per se. For example, McCullough gives a lot of information regarding the concerns of preachers in the 1620's about James's foreign policy, but nothing about the doctrinal content of their sermons. Since the sermons were sermons, it would be valuable to know what vision of the Christian religion was being presented to these monarchs and their households, but that is not McCullough's purpose.

Nevertheless, for those who have a special interest in the period and the topic, *Sermons at Court* is an excellent work that provides new information and insight regarding preaching before the kings and queens of England.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

*The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible.* By Paul D. Wegner. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999. 462 pages. \$29.99.

During my time in the parish, two questions came up repeatedly. First, "Why do Lutherans baptize babies?" This provided a wonderful opportunity to speak of grace, faith, Christ's love for children, and so many other things dear to our hearts. The second question, or set of questions, was nearly as persistent, but much more tedious to answer. "From where does the Bible come? And, how do we know what the original text is? Isn't it simply the product of revisions and editing over the years?" Sometimes, these questions were asked by curious Christians. Just as frequently, such questions were cynical attempts to disregard God's word by relegating its origins to an unknown and unknowable past.

To answer such questions for Christians and cynics alike, comes Paul Wegner, Professor at Moody Bible Institute. Happily, Wegner's *Journey from Texts to Translations* removes much of the unnecessary mystery surrounding the Bible's origins and transmission. Wegner helpfully describes how and why the Bible came to be written, how it was preserved and passed down through history, and finally, how it came to be translated into English. His general description of the Bible's contents, complete with graphs and charts, is helpful, especially for the beginning student or inquirer. Likewise, his discussion on the process of canonization and his brief history and description of textual criticism offers a good summary of the discipline without overwhelming the reader.

Naturally, this book bears not only the scholarship, but also the confession of its author. Positively, we commend Wegner's unequivocal confession that the



Bible is the inerrant word of God. However, he too often fails to see that the Bible is the book of the church, written from the heart of the church, and for the sake of the church. An inside-cover blurb features a quote from Abraham Lincoln, a great man, but hardly a great man of the church. More substantively, in a chapter titled "Why So Many Translations?," Wegner is nearly uncritical concerning the proliferation of Bible versions. He does not ask what translation would be good for the church, nor does he express appreciation for the catechetical, liturgical, and ecumenical advantages of sharing a common translation. Instead, he sees the choice of Bible translation as an individual enterprise, writing, "Choosing a Bible is an important decision, as its message is intended to affect the life of the reader" (399). He then proceeds to offer suggestions as to what Bible might be preferable, based on whether a person is younger or older, whether he has "fine literary tastes," or is an unchurched person (402). Some Bibles, Wegner suggests, are better as study Bibles, others for memorizing, while still others are preferable for Roman Catholics, and still another for Jews (The Tanakh—is he suggesting that the Jews do not need the New Testament?) The general thrust of the argument is that you should choose the Bible just right for you as an individual. Sadly, such an approach only takes us closer to the confusion of Babel, leading ultimately to disunity within the body of the church.

Other Reformed tendencies make this a book to be used with care and discernment. For instance, Wegner over-emphasizes Covenantal Theology as the key to understanding scripture. Again, his remarks on typology are at home in the Reformed tradition, but less so in ours. Wegner especially warns against those who see "the blood of Christ in every mention of blood, or baptism in every reference to water" (71). Tellingly, he does not offer a counter-warning against those who confine baptism to a few proof texts and thereby dismiss the sacrament's fundamental place in scripture and the life of the church. Again I wonder, if the Old Testament sacrificial blood does not point us to the blood of the new covenant, shed on the cross and offered in communion, what does it signify? Again in typical Reformed tradition, Wegner states that a proper understanding of types "should be limited only to those types that are stated to be such in the New Testament" (71). Why this should be so, he does not say. What would be the danger in seeing the sacrifice of Isaac as a type of God's own offering of His Son? The New Testament typological exegesis might better serve as a model for our own, rather than as a rule against seeing Christ woven everywhere into the very fabric of Old Testament redemption history.

Having issued such cautions, Wegner's book may still well serve as a handy reference tool, at least until a more churchly book on the subject is written.

Peter J. Scaer

# Indices to Volume 64 (2000)

## ARTICLES

Bygstad, Jan, <i>The Confessional Movements in the Scandinavian Countries</i> .....	3:163-181
Fenton, John W., <i>Wilhelm Löhe's Hauptgottesdienst (1844) as Critique of Luther's Deutsche Messe</i> .....	2:127-148
Green, Lowell C., <i>A Review Article: Law and Gospel: Philip Melancthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over "Poenitentia"</i> .....	1:61-68
Lindberg, Carter, <i>Eschatology and Fanaticism in the Reformation Era: Luther and the Anabaptists</i> .....	4:259-278
Mannermaa, Tuomo, <i>The Doctrine of Justification and Christology: Chapter A, Section One of The Christ Present in Faith</i> , translated by Thomas F. Obersat .....	3:206-239
Marquart, Kurt E., <i>Luther and Theosis</i> .....	3:182-205
Nichols, Larry, <i>Sectarian Apocalypticism in Mainline Christianity</i> .....	4:319-335
Rast, Lawrence R. Jr., <i>Friedrich August Crämer: Faithful Servant in Christ's Church</i> .....	1:39-60
Rast, Lawrence R. Jr., <i>Missed Opportunity, A (TO)</i> .....	2:154-156
Rast, Lawrence R. Jr., <i>Pietism and Mission: Lutheran Millennialism in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries</i> .....	4:295-318
Scaer, David P., <i>Death and Resurrection as Apocalyptic Event</i> .....	4:279-294
Scaer, David P., <i>Ecclesiastical Geometry (TO)</i> .....	1:71-73
Scaer, David P., <i>On the Morning After (TO)</i> .....	1:69-71
Scaer, David P., <i>Out of the Mouths of Babes – Almost (TO)</i> .....	4:336-338
Scaer, David P., <i>Rediscovering the Treatise As Ecumenical Response (TO)</i> .....	4:338-344
Scaer, David P., <i>Reformed Exegesis and Lutheran Sacraments: Worlds in Conflict</i> .....	1:3-20
Vieker, Jon D., <i>Unity and Diversity in Irenaeus as Paradigm for Contemporary Lutheran Ceremonial Consensus</i> .....	2:83-104
Weinrich, William C., <i>Patristic Exegesis as Ecclesial and Sacramental</i> .....	1:21-38

Wohlrabe, John C. Jr., *Needed: A Paradigm Shift in Missouri's Mission Outlook*  
(TO) ..... 2:149-154

Zager, Daniel, *Cultures, Chorales, and Catechesis* ..... 2:105-126

BOOK REVIEWS

Berthrong, John H., *The Divine Deli: Religious Identity in the North American Cultural Mosaic* ..... Grant Knepper 2:159-160

Callahan, Allen Dwight, *Embassy of Onesimus: The Letter of Paul to Philemon*  
..... John G. Nordling 3:249-252

Dahan, Gilbert, *The Christian Polemic Against the Jews in the Middle Ages*  
..... Karl Fabrizio 1:79

Dungan, David Laird, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*  
..... David P. Scaer 3:245-247

Ehrman, Bart D., *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*  
..... David P. Scaer 2:157-158

Fackre, Gabriel and Michael Root, *Affirmations and Admonitions: Lutheran Decisions and Dialogue with Reformed, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic Churches* ..... Larry M. Vogel 3:241-245

Fitzmier, John R., *New England's Moral Legislator: Timothy Dwight, 1752-1817*  
..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 4:345-346

Fløysvik, Ingvar, *When God Becomes My Enemy* .... Chad L. Bird 4:346-347

Greidanus, Sidney, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* ..... Carl C. Fickenscher II 4:351-352

Leaver, Robin and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, editors, *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning* ..... Richard C. Resch 3:247-248

Newman, William M. and Peter L. Halverson, *Atlas of American Religion: The Denominational Era, 1776-1990* ..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 2:160

Nicholas of Lyra, *The Postilla of Nicholas of Lyra on the Song of Songs*  
..... Karl F. Fabrizio 3:240

Schwarz, Hans, *Christology* ..... Matthew Rueger 3:248-249

Sernett, Milton, editor, *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, second edition ..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 3:240-241

(TO) indicates a "Theological Observer" article.

- 
- Siemon-Netto, Uwe, *The Fabricated Luther: The Rise and Fall of the Shirer Myth*  
..... Lowell C. Green 4:347-351
- Stephenson, John R. and Thomas M. Winger, editors, *Hermann Sasse: A Man  
for Our Times?* ..... Matthew Harrison 1:76-79
- Turretin, Francis, *Whether It Can Be Proven the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist:  
Francis Turretin's Seventh Disputation*  
..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 1:74-76
- Weigel, Valentin, *Der güldene Griff: Kontoverse um den, Gülden den Griff vom  
judicio im Menschen* ..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 2:158-159

# Indices to Volume 65 (2001)

## ARTICLES

Barry, Alvin L., <i>Doctrine and Evangelism</i> .....	1:3-13
Editors, Raymond F. Surburg (1909-2001) .....	4:291-292
Editors, <i>Theological Symposia of Concordia Theological Seminary, The</i> (January, 2001) .....	4:293-298
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, <i>Letter on Pastoral Assistance, A</i> .....	2:161-166
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, <i>Overture of the Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Convention, An</i> .....	2:167-168
Gard, Daniel L., <i>On Language and Morology: A Plea for the Language of the Church</i> (TO) .....	2:169-174
Hartenstein, Karl, <i>The Augsburg Confession and its Missiological Significance</i> .....	1:31-46
Huhtinen, Pekka, <i>Luther and World Missions: A Review</i> .....	1:15-29
Kelly, Robert A., <i>Successful of Justified? The North American Doctrine of Salvation by Works</i> .....	3:224-245
Klug, Eugene F. A., <i>The Lutheran Confessions: Luther's Role</i> .....	3:246-254
Lesemann, Brian and Erik Rottmann, <i>Toward an Assessment of Called to Common Mission</i> .....	4:345-361
Marquart, Kurt, <i>Ex Oriente Lux—Light From the East</i> (TO) .....	2:174-177
Martens, Gottfried, <i>Agreement and Disagreement on Justification by Faith Alone</i> .....	3:195-223
McDaniel, Michael C. D., <i>ELCA Journeys: Personal Reflections on the Last Forty Years</i> .....	2:99-109
Murray, Scott R., <i>Law and Gospel and the Doctrine of God: Missouri in the 1960s and 1970s</i> .....	2:127-156
Peperkorn, Todd A., <i>C. F. W. Walther's "Kirche und Amt" and the Church and Office Debate Between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in the Early Twentieth Century</i> .....	4:299-322
Radtke, Richard S., <i>Chapel Sermon: September 11, 2001</i> .....	4:297-298

(TO) indicates a "Theological Observer" article.

Scaer, David P., <i>Dominus Iesus and Why I Like It</i> (TO) .....	1:77-79
Scaer, David P., <i>Evangelical and Catholic: A Slogan in Search of a Definition</i> .....	4:323-344
Scaer, David P., <i>Homo Factus Est as the Revelation of God</i> .....	2:111-126
Scaer, David P., <i>Shot in the Arm for Confessional Studies, A</i> (TO) .....	4:362-363
Steinbronn, Anthony, <i>An Evangelical Critique of Modern Western Culture: Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On</i> .....	3:255-280
Weber, David K., <i>Account-ability</i> .....	1:47-65
Wenthe, Dean O., <i>Redeeming Time: Deuteronomy 8:11-18</i> .....	2:157-159

## BOOK REVIEWS

Andersen, Francis I. and David Noel Freedman, <i>Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary</i> .....	Andrew E. Steinmann 3:284-285
Behe, Michael J., <i>Darwin's Black Box – the Biochemical Challenge to Evolution</i> .....	James D. Heiser 4:364-365
Bender, Peter C., <i>Lutheran Catechesis – Catechumen Edition: A Guide to Catechesis for the Lutheran Catechumen and Family</i> .....	John T. Pless 3:282-283
Black, Kathy, <i>Culturally-Conscious Worship</i> .....	William P. McDonald 2:187-188
Blumhofer, Edith L., Russel P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker, editors, <i>Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism.</i> .....	Grant A. Knepper 4:367-368
Braaten, Carl E., and Robert W. Jenson, editors, <i>Sin, Death, and the Devil</i> .....	John T. Pless 4:371-372
Breck, John, <i>The Sacred Gift of Life: Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics</i> .....	John T. Pless 3:283-284
de Lubac, Henri, <i>Medieval Exegesis. Volume 1: The Four Senses of Scripture</i> .....	Cameron A. MacKenzie 2:185-187
Dhouda, <i>Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for Her Son.</i> Translated by Carol Neel .....	Karl F. Fabrizio 1:91-92
Easterbrook, Gregg, <i>Beside Still Waters: Searching for Meaning in an Age of Doubt</i> .....	Larry M. Vogel 1:89-91

- Fahlbusch, Erwin, and others, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity Volume 1 (A-D)* ..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 2:179-180
- Freedman, David Noel, *Psalms 119: The Exaltation of Torah* ..... Chad L. Bird 2:190-191
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* ..... Chad L. Bird 1:86-87
- Kirk, J. Andrew, *What is Mission? Theological Exploration* ..... Klaus Detlev Schulz 1:80-81
- Landes, Richard A., editor, *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements* ..... Lawrence R. Rast Jr. 2:181-182
- Linzey, Sharon, and Ken Kaisch, *God in Russia: The Challenge of Freedom* ..... Timothy C. J. Quill 2:182-185
- Long, John D., *The Bible in English: John Wycliffe and William Tyndale* ..... Cameron A. MacKenzie 4:372-373
- Martinson, Paul Varo, editor, *Mission at the Dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Vision for the Church* ..... Douglas L. Rutt 1:87-88
- McCullough, Peter E., *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* ..... Cameron A. MacKenzie 4:373-374
- Middendorf, Michael Paul, *The "I" in the Storm: A Study of Romans 7* ..... A. Andrew Das 4:369-370
- Muller, Richard A. and John L. Thompson, editors, *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday* ..... Cameron A. MacKenzie 2:180-181
- Nichols, Larry, and George Mather, *Discovering the Plain Truth: How the Worldwide Church of God Encountered the Gospel of Grace* ..... James D. Heiser 4:366-367
- Pernoud, Régine, *Those Terrible Middle Ages! Debunking the Myths* ..... James G. Kroemer 4:365-366
- Pippert, Rebecca Manley, *Out of the Saltshaker & into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition ..... Timothy Pauls 1:83-84
- Pollard, Nick, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult: How to Interest People Who Aren't Interested* ..... Ken Schurb 1:84-86
- Steinmann, Andrew E., *The Oracles of God: The Old Testament Canon* ..... Chad L. Bird 2:188-189



- Suelflow, August R., editor, *Heritage in Motion: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod 1962-1995*  
 ..... Grant A. Knepper 4:368-369
- Torrance, Thomas F., *Preaching Christ Today: The Gospel and Scientific Thinking*  
 ..... Carl C. Fichenscher II 1:81-82
- Webber, Robert E., *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* ..... John Paul Salay 1:82-83
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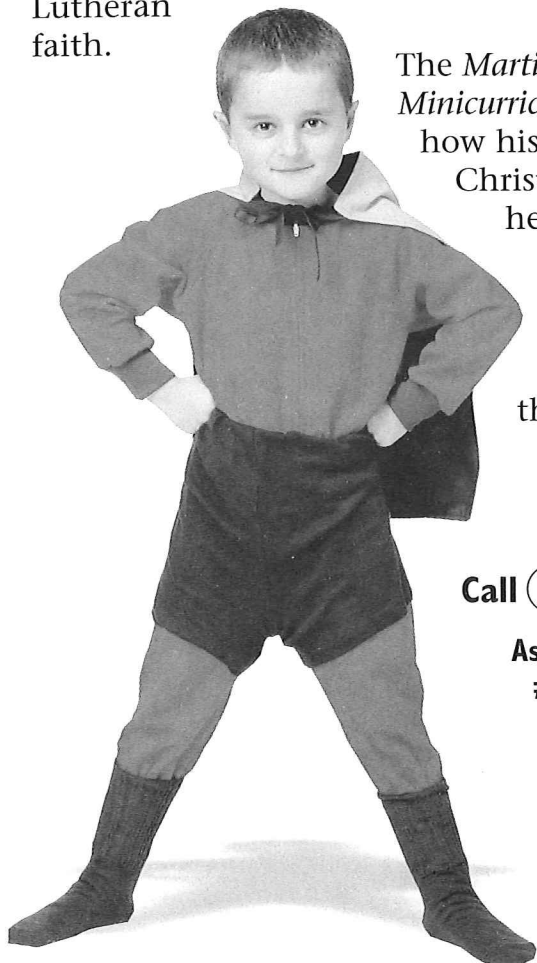
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