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Can the ELCA Represent Lutheranism? Flirting with Rome, Geneva, Canterbury and Herrnhut

Louis A. Smith

My assignment is a critique of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's (ELCA) ecumenical agreements, specifically the four alluded to in the title: *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (*JDDJ*) with the Roman Catholic Church; *A Formula of Agreement* (*FA*) with three American denominations of the Reformed tradition; *Called to Common Mission* (*CCM*) with the Episcopal Church in the USA; and *Following our Shepherd to Full Communion* (*FSFC*) with the Moravian Church in America. I take it as a given that all Christians long for the unity of Christ's church to become manifest, pray for that unity, and do whatever conscience allows to make that unity manifest, all the while knowing that such longing and prayer will surely be fulfilled at Christ's Second Coming; and knowing as well that their own efforts will be corrected where necessary and fulfilled where possible by the work of God. Criticism of any specific ecumenical proposal should never be taken as necessarily anti-ecumenical.

Allow me to begin with a disclaimer. I do not intend to bad-mouth the ELCA (not that there are not elements in the ELCA that virtually beg for it, but I shall strive to resist the temptation). First, to simply bad-mouth the ELCA would be to yield the ELCA to the pirates who have hijacked her institutions and deny her to those who have not bowed the knee to the Baals of this present age. For, in spite of everything, there are within the ELCA innumerable faithful pastors and laity who confess Christ and His gospel according to the catholic confessions of the Wittenberg Reformation.

Second, there is not much to be gained for folk in the LCMS by bad-mouthing the ELCA. At best, folks might be amused by the plight of brothers and sisters in the ELCA; at worst, it might produce an arrogance that is both dangerous and unwarranted. For as best as I can tell, being an outside observer, LCMS has her own problems and near heresies.[1]

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[1]Don't take that to be all bad! Let it feed your Lutheran pathology, and exult in the

The Rev. Dr. Louis A. Smith, of Waynesboro, Virginia, is Pastor Emeritus in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

But most important, there is the Eighth Commandment, which, as our catechism rightly understands and teaches, requires us to put the best possible construction on our neighbors' behavior. Please note, the best possible construction, not necessarily a good construction. Sometimes less bad is the best possible.

Now, because the four agreements are *fait accompli* , the question is not whether the ELCA can represent Lutheranism, but did, in these cases, the ELCA represent Lutheranism, to what degree, and where did it miss.

I

With that as background, let me begin the project with a reformulation. Rather than talk about Lutheranism, I propose that we speak about the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic. The real issue cannot be an "-ism" of any sort. Surely our Reformation forebears did not struggle and risk life and limb, family and reputation, peace and salvation, not to mention simple peace of mind, for some such abstraction. What they risked, they risked for the sake of Christ and His gospel, and those sixteenth-century confessions are the literary deposit of that risk. So I speak of what the Lutheran matter really is: "the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic." With that expression, I want to understand those sixteenth-century confessions in a two-fold way. On the one hand, these confessions exist to defend biblical, catholic truth against error. They are inherently polemical documents; and yes, that includes the catechisms. On the other hand, these confessions embody and express what the Lutheran confessors wanted to hold before the entire church. They are inherently ecumenical documents; and yes, that includes the Formula of Concord.

We might say that the sixteenth-century confessions are simultaneously a fence and a bridge. They can be so because they are focally concerned with the truth. They do not claim to be one opinion among several, one theological school among many. They claim to be catholic truth and they are certain enough of their position that they are willing to have their claim tested before God and the church by the word of God.

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fact that you must be doing something right or "Old Nick" wouldn't be spending so much time harassing you.

So let our precise question be, "Did, in the four cases referenced in the title, the ELCA represent the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic?"

II

In honor of the words of our Lord that the last shall be first, let us first consider the Moravian agreement, *Following our Shepherd to Full Communion* (*FSFC*).[2] The 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly acted on it following discussions that took place from 1992 through 1999.

The first thing that strikes a reader of *FSFC* is that the document is more about piety than about dogma. In this regard, it almost seems that the Moravians called the tune for this dance. For when one looks at Moravian self-presentation, piety takes precedence over doctrine. For instance, in a section of the Moravian Church website titled "What We Believe," the reader is told that "In place of formal dogma [Moravians] focus on the priority of personal commitment to Jesus as Savior and the relationship among members of the community."[3] Now who could possibly be opposed to personal commitment to Jesus? Certainly not I. But Lutherans, on the ground of their confession, ought to know that personal commitment to Jesus is fostered, not by focusing on personal commitment, but by focusing on Jesus. It is precisely sound doctrine that brings the One whom Martin Koehler once called "the Historic Biblical Christ" into focus. It is He who is the subject (in both senses of the word) of the church's proclamation, not our piety. I would argue that the Lutheran partners in this conversation let their Moravian counterparts down. They did not offer the full biblical Christ, nor did they ask the Moravians to offer Him in return. It is as if the true purpose of sound doctrine was either forgotten or not known.

Doctrine exists for the sake of proclamation. Sometimes people look at the dogma that the church has articulated as the speculative and theoretical product of people with too much time on their hands; interesting to the interested, but at best speed bumps, if not detours, on the road to the real business of our Christian living. Not so. The

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[2]Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, *Following our Shepherd to Full Communion* [online] available from <http://elca.org/ea/Relationships/moravian/fosi.html>.

[3]Moravian Church in America [online] available from: <http://www.moravian.org/>.

dogmatic tradition of the church was forged by those who were responsible for the cure of souls and who knew that if there were to be sound Christians, it would be the result of sound proclamation, and sound doctrine was the necessary guide and rule for sound proclamation. I do not find any such sense in *FSFC*.

Let me offer one example of what results from this lack of concern. *FSFC* says, "Our common grounding in the Reformation and the development of the Reformation through Pietism leads Moravians and Lutherans to express themselves clearly about the graciousness of God in justifying sinners and imparting to them the Spirit through Christ." Leaving aside the fact that this statement itself is hardly a model of clarity, ask how that statement squares with the following, once again from the Moravian website: "Living the Christian life depends not only on our own effort, but upon God the Father." Some might say that my antennae are too sensitive, but that sounds to me like the camel's nose of a doctrine of cooperation sneaking into the tent, so that rather than being that which God Himself works in us through His word, as in preaching and sacraments He continually kills and raises us, the Christian life becomes a cooperative effort.

But such cooperation always ends up with things being turned over to the Old Adam for one more of his do-it-yourself self-improvement projects, which either avoids the graciousness of God in justifying sinners for Christ's sake alone through faith alone, or it trades the graciousness of God in for a crushing burden. Perhaps the Moravians did not mean that, I do not know. Like most of the folk I know, I am a word reader, not a mind reader. But surely the lack of clarity allows for such notions and the Old Adam is always ready to take up such allowances. The Lutheran partner might have offered a genuine service had they pressed the case for doctrinal clarity in the service of sound proclamation instead of assuming a clarity that was not there.

Consider this: The Moravian "Ground of Unity," the closest thing that I can find to a Moravian confession of faith, specifically denies any doctrinal system, appealing instead to what I would call "raw" Scripture (for instance, Scripture considered apart from the hermeneutic of the Trinitarian Creed, the justifying of the ungodly for Christ's sake, and the proper distinction of law and gospel) and just so, Scripture apart from its dogmatic content. The "Ground of Unity," however, does go on to acknowledge "The ancient Christian Creeds and the fundamental creeds of the Reformation," seemingly getting back on track. But when we come to an enumeration of those fundamental creeds of the Reformation, we find included both the first twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, apparently with no sense that the Augustana and the Heidelberg Catechism are contradictory in their teaching concerning the Sacrament of the Altar. So much for clarity of expression.

All of this makes it somewhat difficult to discern just what the Moravian church really teaches these days. Nor does *FSFC* offer much evidence that clarification of the matter was pursued. Over and over, where doctrinal clarity ought to have been sought, theological affinity was assumed.

But there is a further impression created by the document. (To some degree, it can be said of all the documents.) It is what I have come to call an "of-course-ness with respect to the gospel." That is to say, when it comes to those holy mysteries that go together to make up the gospel—for example, things like incarnation, Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, baptism, absolution, the Supper—there is a sense of "Well, of course, we all believe that." Nobody ever seems stunned by the magnitude of these happenings. Nobody ever seems dumb struck at the announcement that all of this happened for you! Nobody appears to be flattened by the fact that all of this means life out of death for us! "Of course we all believe that. Now let us get on to the real business, our Christian living, our good works" (always, "of course," with the anti-Pelagian codicil that "of course" it is all by grace.)

But that does nothing except blunt the radicality of the gospel and play into the hand of the standard cop out on the part of Lutheran preachers. How often do we, who should know better, proclaim the gospel according to our confessional standards and then find ourselves, along with our hearers, at the point where the only possibility is to hang your heart on Jesus or be offended at Him; and having reached that point where someone might actually die and rise, we back off, inject some note of good works, right response, or choice into the scenario, thinking, I suppose, to give faith a nudge? But in reality, that merely dulls the knife and give the Old Adam a reprieve on his execution.

That is what happens in *Following our Shepherd to Full Communion*. Our following comes up short of the cross (in spite of the many Moravian hymns that sing of the blood of Jesus). Piety replaces the doctrine of the gospel (*doctrina evangelii*). The bottom line is this: Our personal commitment to Jesus is a poor substitute for His personal commitment to us. The gospel is not an exhortation to take Jesus as our personal savior. It is the stunning proclamation that in the gospel events, He has taken us as His personal sinners. It is that proclamation that pure doctrine is meant to serve. To represent the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic is to make that case. Did it happen here? I think not.

III

Working backwards, we come to the agreement with the Episcopal Church in the USA, *Called to Common Mission* (*CCM*).[4] This agreement was also passed in 1999, two years after a prior version, *The Concordat of Agreement*, narrowly missed adoption. It is the product of a much longer discussion than *FSFC*. Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue in the United States dates back to 1969 and had the benefit of LCMS participation right up to the end.

While hardly perfect, the early dialogues contained much promise. Joint statements were produced on the doctrine of justification, the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, and apostolicity and Scripture, with the LCMS participants offering a gentle and appreciative dissent only on the topic of Holy Scripture.

Perhaps most significantly, these early dialogues seemed to have made progress on the topic of episcopacy and episcopal ordination and did so by appealing to the statement of Roman Catholic participants in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues, who argued the possibility of recognizing a presbyterial succession of ministers and presbyterial ordinations. That this promise never went any farther, much less came to fulfillment, is an ecumenical sadness.

It is no secret that the ELCA has been in uproar over *CCM*; controversy pronounced enough to threaten a split in the ELCA. Nor is it a secret that the focal point of that uproar has been the so-called "historic episcopate" and its proposed introduction into the ELCA, an introduction that requires five changes in the ELCA constitution and liturgy plus two footnotes to the rite for installing a bishop. While this so-called "historic

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

episcopate" is not the only problem with *CCM*, it offers a useful entry into my critique.

Any honest person knows that the notion of the "historic episcopate" is fundamental to the Episcopal Church's doctrine of the ministry and, therefore, to its doctrine of the church. This was not totally clear in the earlier dialogues. The report of the second round of dialogues (1981), for example, identified "apostolicity" as faithfulness to the Apostles' teaching, normatively found in Holy Scripture, and held that the narrowing of apostolic succession in terms of an historic episcopate was something to be avoided. The third round of dialogues, the very one that produced the *Concordat* that eventuated in *CCM*, produced an earlier document, "Implications of the Gospel." This volume contained a seven-page section on polity, which has only one reference to the "historic episcopate," serving only to explain why Lutherans are suspicious of it; it "could be an unwarranted addition to the Gospel." While promising a further document that would deal specifically with the "historic episcopate" and the related topic of the ordering of ministries, the polity section of "Implications of the Gospel" wanted "to give an account of how the gospel defines and shapes the polity of the church; how, in fact, the polity of the church is an implication of the Gospel."

This surely should have been welcomed and pursued by Lutherans; especially when it is later specified that church polity reflects "the church's utter dependence on the one Gospel," since that is precisely how the Augsburg Confession (in articles V, VII and XIV) deals with the matter of ministry.

What finally became of this in first the *Concordat* and then *CCM*? In the Concordat we find the acceptance of the "historic episcopate," a commitment to episcopal ordination and the acceptance of a three-fold ordering of ministry as the future pattern of ministry for the churches involved. In *CCM* we find that the only modification of this is the hedging on the ordination of deacons, concerning which the ECUSA has essentially said, "well, okay for the moment, but we will need to talk more on this matter."

Why, then, was the good start never really pursued? I suggest that it was never capitalized on because, for all the work of the dialoguers, their position was out of plumb with Episcopal Church sentiments on this matter. The actual Episcopal Church still based its view on the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886-1888, which identified the "historic episcopate" as one of four necessary elements in an "irreducible basis" in any approach to ecumenical reunion. The 1982 Episcopal Church General Assembly reaffirmed this position. If one looks hard enough at the earlier dialogues, even there an "historic episcopate" was seen as a "pre-condition" for full communion.

How was it that this was optimistically overlooked in the dialogue? Let me suggest that the problem was methodological. The method of these dialogues is what I refer to as "consensus ecumenism." That is to say, it was a method that consciously strove to identify commonalties. All well and good, but what happens when the commonalties have been found and differences yet remain? The method hardly encourages taking them head on. Rather, they are to be managed. In this case, the dialogue thought that it had found help in the World Council of Churches statement "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry," the so-called "Lima Document." There they found the notion that episcopal succession was to be seen as "a sign though not a guarantee of the continuity and unity of the Church." This led the dialoguers to propose that we make a distinction between what is "necessary for salvation" and what is necessary as a sign, but not a guarantee of the unity of the church.

Note the shift in language: We began speaking about the church's polity as an implication of the gospel. On the way we shifted to talking about the "historic episcopate" as central to apostolic ministry and church reunion. Now we are talking about the continuity and unity of the church, and that as something quite distinct from salvation. But, unless salvation is some individualistic bliss rather than the restoration of life together in love under God, can salvation and the unity of the church be so easily separated? When the confessors at Augsburg located their *satis est* for the true unity of the church in the gospel and its sacraments, was that not an eschatological gesture as well as socio-ecclessial?

We need to be clear about what bishops can and cannot do. Since salvation and church are intrinsically connected, what is necessary for the one is necessary for the other. The burden of being necessary falls on the only thing that can bear the load; the gospel and its sacraments. They can bear the load because they are the presence of the crucified and risen Christ among us.

There is yet another reason why, after the dialogues, *Concordat*-*CCM* remained problematic. I would put it this way: rather than work through differences, the dialogues thought that they could transcend them with a new confession. If one looks at the first of the third dialogue's publications, "Implications of the Gospel," one will find a mini-systematic theology. As the document itself admits, "It addresses many topics in language somewhat unfamiliar to both traditions" (from the preface). There is, of course, a place in the life of the church for systematic theology, but that place is as commentary on dogma and not as a substitute for it. Here it does function as substitute when what the dialogue really needed was a dogmatic rapprochement.

Further, if one asks after the source of this systematic theology, the answer will be in the theology of the academy, not the life of the church. I have no idea if, nor do I make the accusation that, this was conscious on the part of the framers. But a reality of both the ELCA and the ECUSA is that the academy has become the locus of theological thinking. The certification of theologians in both of these bodies, in this regard, well defined as "mainline Protestant," comes not from the churches themselves, but from universities that have remote, tenuous, or no connections to the church. But the religious studies departments of the universities and their seminary counterparts (for there are such) have a hermeneutic of their own. It is a progressive hermeneutic that willy-nilly sees the new as the improved. Thus, "old" problems are seen to be transcended by "new" developments in historical or theological perspective. Therefore, we can adopt the new perspective and get beyond the problems of our forebears. However, the differences are generally not worked through, as in this case, but a new articulation is put in place which satisfies the dialoguers, yet works for neither church body.

The net effect in this case is that, rather than a truly ecumenical agreement, we end up with something that looks more like an agreement to disagree. For example, in March of 1999 the ELCA Conference of Bishops issued what has become known as "The Tucson Resolution." This resolution is a codicil claiming to put forward the correct interpretation of *CCM*. (This before the thing was even passed by the ELCA!) It was obviously an attempt at damage control, since opposition to *CCM* was barking loudly at the time. Among its "proper interpretations," we find that *CCM* does not commit the ELCA ever to adopt the threefold ministry; that, in special circumstances, other than bishops may ordain; that bishops may continue to license laymen to preside at the Supper; that parish pastors will continue to confirm; that the ELCA will continue to receive clergy from non-episcopal bodies without re-ordination; and (my personal favorite) that should such one be elected a bishop in the ELCA, he will be understood to be episcopally ordained.

No decent book-maker would have offered any odds on how that would fly with the ECUSA! So, when the Episcopal bishops offered their clarification of *CCM*, they let it be known that they would not recognize as interchangeable any future ELCA clergy who were not episcopally ordained, special circumstances or not; that those who were received not episcopally ordained would not be eligible for a common ministerial roster; that they would consider the threefold ministry as normative; and that any Supper presided over by laity would not be considered valid in their circles. Remember, this is an "agreement."

Finally, there is, with respect to this document, an issue that needs to be, but nowhere is, addressed. The two partners to this agreement are each in theological and moral chaos. At the very time that the ELCA was enacting this ecumenical venture, she was, among other things, promoting the "GLBT" (the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered) agenda, not only countenancing abortion but, through her ministerial health insurance plan, expressing the willingness to pay for them, and instituting a project on "Lutheran Identity," presumably so that we could find out who we are. One might be forgiven for thinking that the need for the last item would put all the others onto a far back burner.

At the same time, the ECUSA was opposing most of its own church communion, the worldwide Anglican Communion, on the gay-lesbian agenda; some of its congregations were importing missionary bishops with consecrations from elsewhere in the Anglican Communion to oppose their own unorthodox bishops; while orthodox bishops within the ECUSA were readying themselves for schism.

Given such chaos, how could either of these church bodies be counted on to hold to any agreement, except perhaps in the most superficial way? It would be no great surprise to find, a few years down the pike, these two churches agreeing that they both held an historic episcopate, while at the same time departing from the historic catholic moral consensus on marriage and tacitly sanctioning, if not manifestly pronouncing their blessing (for whatever that might be worth) on homosexual relationships rather than announcing God's Christ-won forgiveness of sins, homosexual or otherwise.

There is also an issue not contained in this document, but rather revealed in the procedure that adopted the document. It is, of course, the same procedure that was used to adopt all the documents, but here the flaw is most obviously manifest. It has to do with the way in which the ELCA was constituted from her beginning.

It has become clear that the ELCA was constituted on the basis of a pair of arcai that are contrary to the gospel. There is an operational arch of coercive power (temporal power, if you will) working on behalf of an ideological arch of inclusivity or diversity, the two terms being interchangeable with reference to the same phenomenon, namely, that all cultures, ethnic groups, and self-defined minorities (or oppressed groups as such) are to be given their own place and a share of the power in this church. The ideological inclusivity/diversity at the base of the ELCA is committed to not transcending those differences in a new "in Christ" unity; rather, it is committed to replicating the differences within the church.

The end result is that the church is reconceived as a collection of adversarial power blocs to be manipulated. The most notorious manifestation of this ideology is the quota system, which requires synod- and church-wide committees, boards, commissions, and assemblies to be constituted by so many persons of thus and such category. Wangle yourself into an ELCA synodical election some time and watch as people nominate and vote for one male clergy, one minority clergy, one layperson of color or primary language other than English, and one female layperson. If we happen to be electing voting members to the Churchwide Assembly, it all must be balanced so that the result is an Assembly that is 60 percent lay to 40 percent clergy. (If your mind is bent, like mine, it is a hoot!)

The results, however, are not very funny. One of those results is that a Churchwide Assembly, which will vote on matters of faith and morals, is made up of "voting members," 60 percent of whom have not been *rite vocatus* and therefore, according to AC XIV, are not authorized to teach publicly in the church. Also, those voting members will be further broken down into a number of special interest groups.

Is it any surprise that such a body would be subject to the manipulation of staff and officials and any others willing to connect their special pleading with power? Is it at all surprising to find doctrinal matters, as ecumenical agreements surely are, now decided by a majority vote, even if it is a two-thirds majority, through the exercise of temporal power? True, the church, living as she does in this world before the parousia, has a temporal dimension that may well be dealt with by temporal processes. But in matters of doctrine, the church must be able to say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us"—not a majority of us; not two-thirds of us; not 71 percent of us; not even 99.44 percent of us; but simply "us." Where that is not said, the minority, even if it is only .56 percent, will be coerced into going along.

In the time leading up to the adoption of *CCM* and in the two years following its adoption there was a good deal of talk about the "historic episcopate" being forced upon Lutherans. Based on FC X this was held to be against the Lutheran confession because it made an adiaphoron into a necessity. The supporters of *CCM* maintained that this argument was not valid because the "historic episcopate" was not forced on the ELCA; it was freely accepted by the Churchwide Assembly.

The supporters, however, miss the point; perhaps because the critics were not clear enough, whether in their own mind or in their articulation. It was not the ECUSA that forced the "historic episcopate" on the ELCA. But within the ELCA herself, a little over two-thirds of a Churchwide Assembly "forced" the "historic episcopate" on the rest of the church. This forcing is not necessarily to be attributed to the malevolence of the winners. It is, rather, to be laid at the feet of a process that creates winners and losers, as temporal authority always does (and which is okay in temporal matters). But in matters spiritual—doctrine, morals, and ecumenical agreements—where Christians say "We believe, teach, and confess . . ," believing, teaching, and confessing must come from consciences that live in that paradoxical state of having been set free by the word of God and just so are bound to the word of God. The arcai that underlie the ELCA and her processes seem to have no room for such consciences, and a by-law amendment allowing for undefined special exceptions to be ordained outside of a now normative "historic episcopate" (an amendment adopted by the self-same process) is no answer. It only coerces more consciences. The cure may not be worse than the disease but it is just as malignant.

So then, in *CCM*, was the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic upheld? Consider the following: an agreement that can be interpreted differently by the parties involved; a pair of church bodies in doctrinal and moral chaos; consciences coerced. How does that old saying go? *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*?

IV

The *Formula of Agreement*, adopted in 1997, also has its fair share of problems.[5] I will deal with only one: the doctrine, or perhaps more accurately the lack of a doctrine, of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. I do, however have to say a word about *FA*'s methodology. The methodology is the same "consensus ecumenism" that we found in *CCM*, and it is based on the same radical relocation of the locus of theology. Theology has moved from the church to the academy. No longer is theology the church's reflection on the proclamation of the biblical gospel she has heard for the sake of the proclamation of the biblical gospel that she must now speak. Now theology will much more resemble a social science, reflection on human religious experience.

In such a framework, no experience is held to be complete in itself and therefore differences are bound to occur. The religious world of the academy is akin to the story of the four blind men and the elephant, when one blind man grasps the tail, the second a leg, the third the trunk, and the fourth bumps into the side; and each presumes to explain the whole elephant on the basis of his limited experience. But we, blessed with sight, know that their different descriptions need one another in order to be complete. So it is with the variety of religious expressions. Each one is partial, awaiting us modern seers to integrate it into the whole picture.

It is this sense of incompleteness that *FA* picks up on. A key concept—"pivotal" according to the document—is called "mutual affirmation and admonition." Hailed by its proponents as a "breakthrough concept," "mutual affirmation and admonition" is used as a way to reconcile the heretofore unreconcilable.

However, this "breakthrough" comes with a price tag, and this price is not right. It is the confusion between dogma and theology. The two are obviously related, but they are not identical. Dogma is church assertion of the truth of the various facets of the one divine revelation. Dogma always has a certain confessional quality to it. It listens to revelation and

[5]Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, *A Formula of Agreement* [online] [August, 1999] available from <http://elca.org/ea/Relationships/reformed/formula.html>.

speaks the same, "confesses" (ὁμολογέω), what it has heard. Theology is reflection on that dogmatic truth and hopefully it serves the clarity of dogma, so that dogma can properly function as the critic of proclamation.

But in *FA* there is no dogma, only "diverse witnesses to the Gospel," which are held to be complementary to each other; and all are "needed for a full and adequate witness to the gospel" and as a "corrective reminder that every theological [note well] approach is a partial and incomplete witness to the Gospel." Blind man mind your elephant!

God's revelation of Himself in the gospel, however, is not passive, like the elephant. It shatters, not merely darkness, but sin-bred blindness so that those who are confronted by it may, in the light of that revelation, say "I was blind, but now I see!" Revelation is the issue at this point, not various theological opinions about things.

This confusion between dogma and theology is admitted into the *FA* conversation and legitimized by the use of the term "mode." The source of these mutually affirming and correcting theological opinions is attributed to different "modes" of doing theology. Different modes yield different emphases, which can then be held to be complementary, mutually enriching, and even necessary.

Now in fact, neither *FA* itself nor its background documents ever clearly define what the term "mode" really means in this context. I strongly suspect that it has its roots in the modern theological enterprise where it is possible to run across, "process theology," "existentialist theology," "neo-orthodox theology," "philosophical theology," "feminist theology," "liberation theology," not to mention a host of other modern ideologies that have wormed their way into the church and clothed their mischief in religious garb. To retroject this onto the disputes of the Reformation era is to produce an anachronism. For if there is one thing that the various Reformers had in common, despite all their other differences, it is this: their "mode" of doing theology was thoroughly exegetical. When, to take the present case as example, Luther and the Swiss argued about the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, the argument was manifestly over the meaning of biblical texts. The "mode" on all sides was biblical exposition.

Now when *FA*'s "mode" of doing theology is applied to the dogma of the Lord's Supper, what happens? First of all, we encounter a significant shift in terminology. The earliest Lutheran-Reformed dialogues had said that the "how" of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament was a mystery, not a matter for speculation. Note what the mystery and the "how" have reference to: the body and blood of Christ present in the sacrament.

Compare this, however, with a statement from the major preparatory document to *FA*, "A Common Calling."[6] There we read, "One could say that the dispute [the Lutheran-Reformed dispute over the real presence] was not so much about the reality of God's presence in the Supper as about the mode of this presence and the proper way of expressing it in theological terms."

I think not. The reformers themselves were clear that the dispute was precisely not about the divine presence, but about the presence of the human nature of Christ, His body and blood.

In "A Common Calling" we are told that at Marburg, 1529, the Lutherans and the Swiss/South German representatives agreed on fourteen central doctrinal points and mostly agreed on the Lord's Supper. The statement is accurate enough, at least arithmetically, but it misses the critical point. The one point of difference was understood by the Lutherans to outweigh the rest. Why? Because the one point of difference revealed just how far apart the two sides were on the matter of the gospel.

We need to be as clear as possible on this point. The issue of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar concerns nothing less than the incarnation and the movement of the gospel. When, at Marburg, in response to Luther's insistence on the words of institution, Oecolampadias called Luther to turn away from the humanity of Christ and lift his eyes to the divinity, Luther's rejoinder was that the only God he knew was the incarnate God. He wanted to know no other, since only the incarnate God could save. The movement of the gospel is downward and God is the mover. God meets us, in the flesh and blood of Jesus; in the suffering, dying, rising flesh and blood of Jesus. He meets us there even after His resurrection and precisely where He has promised this flesh and blood meeting, in the Sacrament of the Altar.

[6]Keith F. Nickle and Timothy F. Lull, editors, *A Common Calling : the Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today*, the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations, 1988-1992 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

Lutherans owe it to the whole church to confess that publicly and not to try to figure out an acceptable language that will allow the offense of Christ's crucified-for-us flesh and blood to be overcome by a linguistic trick.

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

The devil, so they say, is in the details. However, when it comes to *JDDJ*, the devil is in the codicil.[7] There was, as everyone interested in such matters knows, a great hoopla surrounding the signing of this document by the representatives of the Vatican and Lutheran World Federation (LWF). It was a celebration enhanced by symbols designed to warm the cockles of Lutheran hearts: the place of the signing, Augsburg; the date, October 31. That is the story that made the newspapers and the religious magazines, but the real story lies elsewhere.

Of all the ecumenical dialogues of the past half-century, there can be little doubt that the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues have been the most theologically fruitful. The collected volumes of those dialogues in the United States alone would make a fine reading list for seminarians and would lend themselves to the teaching of a thoroughly confessional theology, greatly clarified for being set against a clear theological opponent. It is to the credit of those dialogues that, in spite of every consensus reached, they never proposed that the Reformation divide had been bridged. Nor was there an ecclesial dog and pony show to rave about the achievements. *JDDJ*, therefore, marks a departure from previous joint Lutheran-Catholic statements.

The core of what is put forward as "The Common Understanding" is that "By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works." And further, "Faith is itself God's gift through the Holy Spirit Who works through word and sacrament in the community of believers and who, at the same time, leads believers into the renewal of life which God will bring to completion in eternal life."

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[7]Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* [online] [October 31, 1999] available from http://elca.org/ea/Ecumenical/romancatholic/jddj/declaration.html>.

It is acknowledged that "the message of Justification directs us in a special way to the heart of the Gospel" and maintains that "the doctrine of Justification is more than one part of Christian doctrine" and stands in an essential relationship to all truths of faith, being "an indispensable criterion" for all church teaching and practice. This is, so it seems to me, a somewhat feeble attempt to deal with what has been called the "hermeneutical role" of the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone, for Christ's sake alone.

There is a similarly feeble effort to deal with the Lutheran teaching of *simul iustus et peccator* ("at the same time justified and sinner"); that the Christian is "at the same time righteous and sinful." It is feeble, because it treats the matter as if it were the result of some analysis of the relatively good or bad life of believers, which still requires struggle against sin and a "continual call to conversion and penance." There is, to be sure, truth in that, but it is not the truth of the *simul.*

It is also said, rightly, that good works are the fruit of justification. Although we are given a somewhat odd twist, being told: "Since Christians struggle against sin their entire lives, this consequence (i.e. the fruit of 'good works') is also for them an obligation that they must fulfill. Thus, both Jesus and the apostolic Scriptures admonish Christians to bring forth the 'works of love.'" I find this language to be just about as great a confusion of law and gospel as possible. The confusion can be identified by calling up a simple picture: a farmer stands in front of a barren pear tree shouting "Pears! Pears!" at the top of his lungs. It is, of course, sad that the tree bears no fruit, but as Jesus once made clear in a parable, the sadness can only be resolved by the diligent work of the farmer restoring the tree to life, not asking the tree to improve itself. Likewise, when works of love are missing, the solution is not a dose of morality, but a load of God's life-giving manure, called the gospel! While we await its effects, we can let the law, full-fanged, govern temporal life and produce what neighborly good it can from the sinners it terrorizes.

Because of the consensus that I have briefly described, it is said that the anathemas of Trent do not apply to Lutheran teaching as here presented.

In considering this agreement, there are really four documents that need to be addressed: *JDDJ* itself; "The Official Common Statement" that was released jointly by the Vatican and the LWF at the time of the signing; the Roman Catholic "Annex" to the document, which offers Rome's official take on the degree of agreement; and a list of Catholic "clarifications," which raises specific points that Rome finds problematic or objectionable.

"The Official Common Statement" does not describe this as a full agreement, but rather as "a consensus in basic truths." So the claim is apparently modest enough, but the fact that we are pointed towards "truths" rather than truth is a significant detail; significant enough to call even the modest claim into question. For the truth of the doctrine is precisely its function as the *Haupt Artikel.* This really is the Reformation issue: How is church teaching, preaching, liturgical practice, and so forth, to be done so that they are the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus? The Reformation answer is by subjecting them to the test of justification by grace, *per fidem, propter Christum* ("through faith, for Christ's sake"). Is Christ the subject, not merely the topic? Is He preached without the clutter of "ifs," "buts," and "maybes"? Is the hearer put in the place where the only possible response is faith or offense? Is Christ turned into a prop for our own religious or moral agenda? Instead of being called to stand still and watch the work of the Lord, are we cajoled, nudged, or salved into doing something, availing ourselves of something called grace or . . . well whatever?

It is common to render the German phrase *Haupt Artikel* as "Chief Article," but I would like to suggest that we see it as the "hub article," as in the hub of the wheel. If the hub is in place, there may well be other problems with the wheel that need adjusting, but the wheel will roll, however uneven it may be. Without the hub, the wheel will not roll at all and polishing the spokes or retreading the tire is just plain useless. This is not made clear in *JDDJ*. What is more, even the hint that it might be so—calling it an indispensable criterion—is rejected by Rome. For in the Roman Catholic "Clarifications," it is said quite explicitly that the Lutheran notion that justification is an indispensable criterion for the life and practice of the church, is not satisfactory to Rome. Rather, "for the Catholic Church the message of justification . . . has to be organically integrated into the fundamental criteria of the 'regula fidei.'" In this regard, it must be said that Rome is more honest about the state of affairs than *JDDJ* itself. In the same spirit of honesty I would ask whether it is not the case that to disagree on the function of the doctrine as criterion is not, in fact, to disagree on the doctrine itself. For in a very real sense the Reformation proposal is not the doctrine as such but precisely its function as the "Chief Article."

This lack of agreement also appears in the very first point in the "Catholic Clarifications," namely, the explicit rejection of the Lutheran *simul iustus et peccator* ("at the same time justified and sinner"). The "Clarifications" point to a section of *JDDJ* titled "The Justified as sinner" and say "The title is already a cause of perplexity." Then it continues, "The formulation 'at the same time righteous and sinner . . .' is not acceptable." The reason it is not acceptable is that it is not compatible with the renewal and sanctification of the interior man of which the Council of Trent speaks. Therefore, in what can only be seen as a refreshing and even bracing honesty, the clarification says that the Anathema of Trent at this point still holds.

Again, however, is it not the case that to deny the *simul* is to deny the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by grace, *per fidem, propter Christum*? For the Lutheran, *simul* is not the result of an analysis of moral behavior, religious piety, or any combination thereof. The *simul* announces the situation of the one who hears of their free justification for Christ's sake. The very declaration of their justification is what reveals them to be the ungodly whom Christ justifies. Christ's righteousness is always and ever the sinner's only righteousness before God. It is not merely a loan until we can establish our own, as transformationist versions of Christianity, the Medieval scholastics to Wesley, would have it. Christ's righteousness is not just to make up for what I happen to lack. His righteousness is all that I have, and this, it would seem, Rome does not find acceptable.

For that reason, I do not find it comforting at all to hear Rome say that the teachings of the Lutheran Church "as presented in this document do not fall under the condemnations of the Council of Trent." Please note, this does not say that the Tridentine anathemas do not still stand. They clearly do, but it is said that they do not apply to what is here offered as Lutheran doctrine. I think that we ought to look at just what it is that Trent anathematizes. Listen to just three of the Tridentine anathemas.

> If anyone says that a man is justified either solely by the imputation of Christ's righteousness or solely by the remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and charity which is poured out into their hearts by the Holy Spirit and stays with them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God; let him be anathema. [Please, count me in.]

> If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this trust alone by which we are justified; let him be anathema. [Please, count me in.]
>
> If anyone says that the received righteousness is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works but that the works are only the fruit and signs of the justification obtained, not also a cause of its increase; let him be anathema.[8] [Again, please count me in.]

Please count me in, because what is here condemned is the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic. By my ordination vow, not to mention my soul's delight, I am obligated to believe, teach, and confess that faith and not to try to construct theologoumena that will allow me to wriggle out from under a condemnation that condemns Christ to a vain death and feeble resurrection.

I am willing to stand under Trent's anathema, because I do not see how I can otherwise stand with the crucified Christ. It is reported that Katie Luther's dying words were, "I will cling to Christ like a burr to a top-coat." I want to so cling. When sin and death are too strong for me, when the burr loses it adhesive capacity, as it surely will, God forgive me, then I pray that Christ will continue to cling to me, otherwise I will fall under God's anathema and that is surely to be feared more than Rome's.

Was the Lutheran confession of the biblical faith of the church catholic represented in *JDDJ*? I cannot say so. It would seem, rather, that it was, at best, hinted at—hints that Rome's official responders sniffed out and to which they said a clear "no." What puzzles me is why the LWF did not take this opportunity to confess. For surely, when the anathema was invoked, as it was in the Catholic "Clarifications," it was confession, and not hinting, that was and is called for.

Can the ELCA Represent the Lutheran Confession of the Biblical Faith of the Church Catholic?

Admittedly, the outlook is bleak, but not because all resource is lacking. If we were to look at just the currently available resources, the answer

[8]Canons 11, 12, and 24, found in Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part 1, translated by Fred Kramer (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 460-461.

would be "yes." The possibility would, of course, be enhanced with several changes. For instance, we would have to recognize that the ecumenism of "consensus" has gone about as far as it can go. We have determined the commonalties and identified the disjunctions. The wrestling match on those points needs to be undertaken. I think that there is a reluctance to enter that match because after the epoch of "consensus ecumenism," we are afraid that to disagree is to quarrel. But, as G. K. Chesterton once said, "we quarrel because we have forgotten how to argue." We could learn to argue again; to test differences against commonly agreed upon standards and call one another to scratch on that basis.

We would also have to recognize the need to relocate our own theological enterprise back into the church; and that means a conscious move away from the academy; not scholarship, mind you, but the academy. It is something of a tragedy that none of the ELCA's predecessor bodies ever had a graduate school to train theological scholars. Our theologians have had to go elsewhere for training. That has had some positive result to be sure, but it has also meant that the hermeneutical framework for our theologians has become other than the confessing community. The outcome of this was not clearly seen while the American university system was living on Christian moral and intellectual capital. As that capital has been eaten up and not renewed, the hermeneutical framework has become increasingly hostile to Christian faith in general; a hostility that is magnified when it comes to our confession. A graduate school devoted to confessionally oriented theological scholarship to renew our theological resources would go a long way towards helping the ELCA to represent our confession.

Nevertheless, with the current edition of the ELCA, the question is not resource, but will. It is not at all clear that synodical or church-wide leadership wants to do the job. It is this lack of will that makes the outlook bleak.

Bleakness aside, I would like to yield the penultimate word on the matter to Katherine Hepburn in the role of Eleanor of Aquitane in the "The Lion in Winter." There she says, as only Kate can, "In a world where carpenters rise from the dead, anything is possible." Indeed, even a faithful ELCA. Why not? Pirates have been thrown overboard before. Moribund institutions have been touched by the surprising liveliness of the gospel and faithful voices have out-sung the cacophony. In fact, there is even more to be said. Kate's word is only penultimate and while she had it quite right, she didn't have it completely right. For there is, after all, one thing that is not possible in a world where carpenters rise from the dead.

It is not possible that God's word will return to Him empty. That is not possible precisely because this One carpenter has risen from the dead. His triumph is assured. He will justify the ungodly. His "alien" righteousness can cover even the ELCA's shame. Why even the LCMS can bask in His righteousness rather than its own!

Who knows, we may yet, this side of the parousia, find ourselves in one another's arms within the arms of God. From there we may together offer the rest of the church and the world the one true treasure, the gospel of Jesus, shorn of all the "ifs," "buts," and "maybes" that the Old Adam uses to keep it at arms length.

Even in the present darkness it is worth the struggle to bring the ELCA to her senses. It would be worth the struggle even were we to fail. But since the victory is Christ's, well, it will be a real hoot, will it not?

Taking Missouri's Pulse: A Quarter Century of Symposia

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

The Death of Missouri?

During the heady days of 1974, as the Synod's Saint Louis seminary first faltered and then, almost miraculously, survived through the generous efforts of the rest of the church, including its sister seminary in Springfield, the reality of a split within the Missouri Synod seemed inevitable.

Two competing understandings of what Lutheranism is squared off and joined the battle. Among the leaders of the more progressive party was John Tietjen, president of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis. Among the leaders of the traditional Missourians were the Preus brothers, Jacob and Robert, president of Synod and Saint Louis seminary professor, respectively. As the issue moved toward a confrontation, Tietjen claimed that President Preus's vision was fundamentally flawed and that his Fact Finding Committee's report betrayed Lutheranism. He wrote: "A theology whose basic thrust is unLutheran underlies the Report of the president's Committee and served as the yardstick for measuring the confessional position of the faculty, resulting in a basic distortion and misrepresentation of faculty views."[1] At issue were two radically different understandings of what Lutheranism is and should be. One, the version of the Preuses, saw Lutheranism primarily as *freedom to confess*—a faithful "speaking together" with the church of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. It is a confession bound in the speaking together of the church catholic in its ecumenical creeds, which are normed, fundamentally, by the Scriptures themselves as the rule and norm of all theology and practice. The other, that of Tietjen, saw Lutheranism as *freedom for change*—a contextual confession that is bound always to historical circumstances and thus constantly shifts, develops, and accommodates

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[1]John H. Tietjen, *Fact Finding or Fault Finding?: an analysis of President J. A. O. Preus' investigation of Concordia Seminary* (no place: no publisher, 1972), 34.

The Rev. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Associate Editor of the **Concordia Theological Quarterly.**

itself to the prevailing conditions as the "world sets the agenda for the church."

After his removal, an embittered Tietjen unloaded himself of any ongoing relationship to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and called for the creation of a new church that was radically progressive:

> We are free to find new forms and methods to bring God's Gospel to the world. God has set us free from the law, including any system of rules, no matter how serviceable it may have been, which seeks to muzzle the free proclamation of the grace of God...
>
> Shall we stand in God's way by trying to hold on to the past? Shall we interfere with God's work by seeking to preserve the institutions and organizations he has already consigned to destruction? . . . The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is dead. Let the dead bury their own dead. The organization that has given us life and nurtured us is no more. Its structures are hopelessly corrupt. Its leadership is morally bankrupt. Let the dead bury their own dead.[2]

Shortly before Tietjen delivered his remarks, Robert David Preus was elected president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. In little more than a year, the Synod in convention closed the Senior College and moved Concordia Theological Seminary from Springfield, Illinois to Fort Wayne, Indiana, its ancestral home. With that election and move, what was already a vibrant and dynamic enterprise took on an even more vital role in the life of the Synod. What one professor has called the "days of dead orthodoxy" were about to begin and the Missouri Synod, nor any of us here, would ever be the same. One of the key elements in those lively times was the development of the Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions.

Tietjen looked at Missouri and saw a corpse. The Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions, however, examined the body more carefully and found a pulse. It has been taking that pulse ever since.

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[2]John H. Tietjen, "The Pangs of Death," text of Sermon at ELIM Assembly Eucharist, August 26, 1974, O'Hare Inn, Des Plaines, Illinois, 6-7. In the archives of Concordia Theological Seminary.

Organizing the Symposium

The idea of a symposium was first considered in the 1976-1977 academic year, the first year that the seminary was on the old Senior College campus. On April 21-22, 1977, Dean of Chapel Daniel Reuning and Dr. David Scaer arranged the first liturgical symposium, titled "The ILCW as Factor in Lutheranism," which Dr. Scaer stated "was successful in that a lively discussion ensued." Further, he noted, "The symposium was intended to draw upon scholars throughout Lutheranism and would not be limited to Missouri Synod clergy and laity. The university concept meant the exchange of ideas and opinions." A second liturgical symposium was held the following year. However, when it was poorly attended, it was cancelled. Possible reasons for the failure? It was scheduled for the week just before Palm Sunday, and the appearance of a new event just two months before.[3]

That new event was, of course, the First Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions. Scaer describes the development of the new symposium this way: "The impetus for the confessional symposium was the wide success that similar ventures had in other Lutheran churches.... Basic to the liturgical and confessional symposiums was and is the idea that pastors and laity are interested in confronting theological issues and they are willing to test them out with persons who may not necessarily agree with them."[4]

As the time for the first Confessions symposium approached, Dr. Preus took the lead in publicizing the upcoming event, both publicly and privately. In one letter he stressed the importance of the participation of the laity in the symposium, stating, "These symposiums will be targeted for the laity as we believe that the real future of the church rests with them."[5] When the confessions congress had passed he described it as "The high point of our extra-curricular activities" of 1978. "Some of the finest and conservative confessional scholars of the world were with us. ... A very spirited discussion followed the delivery of every paper, and it was decided to hold another larger Congress in the coming year and

[3]David P. Scaer, "The Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions," unpublished report, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1978.

[4]Scaer, "Annual Symposium," 2.

[5]Robert D. Preus to Charels DeVries, September 27, 1977, in CTS archives, Symposium, 1978 file.

begin a permanent Center for Confessional Studies here at our seminary."[6]

The first symposium featured a wide range of speakers, many of whom were notable scholars in their field. Whatever the attendance may have been, the lineup of presenters ensured that this would be an historic occasion: Robert Preus addressed "The Need for Confessional Reapplication in the Contemporary Church"; George Fry surveyed "Protestant and Catholic Confessional Statements in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century"; Kurt Marquart, somewhat recently arrived from Australia, spoke on "The Two Kingdoms Today"; Eugene Klug addressed the "Confessional Emphasis on Law and Gospel for Our Day"; Jobst Schöne's topic was "Confessional Lutheranism: Churchly or Sectarian Movement?"; Tom Hardt of Sweden discussed "Contemporary Denials of the Lord's Supper"; Henry Hamann addressed "The Lutheran Confessions as a Distinctive Contribution to World Christianity"; Apologist John Warwick Montgomery presented "Confessions and Apologetics as the Church's Mission"; at the banquet Samuel Nafzger considered the "Future of Confessional Lutheranism in the World"; Norman Nagel addressed "Lutheran Ecumenical Practices"; and Lewis Spitz spoke on the topic "Discord, Dialogue and Concord—The Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord." All in all, it was an impressive lineup featuring international speakers.

In his summation of the first symposium, President Preus addressed the issue of whether there was the possibility of the production of new confessions of faith and whether confessional Lutherans should work to make this a reality. Preus maintained that there was a great need for a new confession touching such upon several contemporary theological issues, such as the relationship between the church and the world, and apologetics. He was pessimistic, however, whether statements on these subjects could be constructed today which would gain wide Lutheran approval throughout the world.[7]

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[6]Robert D. Preus, "The President's Message: 'The State of the Seminary,'" *Newsletter: Concordia Theological Seminary* (Winter 1978): 1. Preus concludes the article (7): Yes, it has been a busy year thus far and we do not anticipate any letup. But it is the finest year I have ever spent at a seminary. Faculty and student spirits are the hightest ever. God has blessed us with a large excellent student body. For all of this we are indeed grateful."

[7]From an untitled and unsigned summary of the Robert D. Preus's concluding

Dr. Preus's summation led at least one participant to correspond that he "was really thrilled over your speech at the end stating the time had come for a new confession."[8] Preus responded: "I got the impression at our Convocation however, that many of the people were interested and even somewhat optimistic about the possibilility of writing a confession for world Lutheranism." However, he noted, "this, of course, would have to be confined to those who really believe the present confessions we have, and that would be a mere fraction of the Lutherans all over the world. But it would certainly tend to unite those who still want to be faithful."[9]

Symposium participants were given the opportunity to assess the event at the close. They were queried on the theme, number of presentations, and timing of the symposium. Overall, the respondents were very pleased with the event, both in terms of the agenda and the accomodations available.[10] Additionally, many offered suggestions on future topics and strategies for the symposium. A selection from the list is striking in its contemporary application: 1) inerrancy, authority, unionism, close communion; 2) conversations with representatives of other confessional traditions (Westminster Presbyterians, for example), and even "offering two sides on an issue"; 3) the Lutheran Confessions and the church, altar and pulpit fellowship, unionism, ecumenism, Lutheran missiology; and 4) discipline for clergy.

For the Second Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in 1979 essayists received assignments relating to Luther's Catechisms, spanning their relationships to the early church and their pastoral character. A news release described the event this way:

> The primary objective was to draw attention to, reexamine, and pay tribute to the documents that have served us so well over the centuries. Only the Scripture has had more significance for teaching and maintaining the heritage of the Lutheran Church. . . . The final

remarks at the 1978 Symposium. It may be found in the seminary archives in the symposium section.

[8]The Rev. Richard Bolling to Robert D. Preus, January 9, 1978, in CTS archives, Symposium, 1978 file.

[9]Robert D. Preus to Richard Bolling, January 25, 1978, in CTS archives, Symposium, 1978 file.

[10]At that time, four or five dormitories were available for symposium attendees, though some stayed in hotels.

> conclusion of the Congress was that not only are the Catechisms still relevant for today, but that no other comparable exposition of Christian doctrine is available for the layman, making their use a necessity. They have been an incalculable benefit to the stability and unity within the church.[11]

In a significant move, the essays were collected and published as a stand alone volume.[12]

But how would things continue and who would be responsible for overseeing the symposium? Dr. Preus helped organize The International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies, whose purpose was to conduct "seminars, convocations, and forums for Confessional studies within the Lutheran Church." It sought: 1) To provide evangelical direction for Lutheran pastors and laypeople; 2) To demonstrate the validity and relevance of Scriptural and Confessional truths for the modern age; 3) To encourage a strong Confessional stance on the part of all Lutherans; 4) To maintain a true and firm Biblical and Confessional base for the Gospel ministry within the Lutheran churches; 5) To develop a united front for all Lutherans to be guided honestly by Confessional theology; 6) To provide guidance for resolving critical problems of theology and missions; and 7) To involve Lutherans in effective and constructive decision-making processes."[13]

Event or Institution?

In the early days there was hope that the symposium would be an ongoing seminary program, but its future was uncertain. One way to ensure the future was to attract the best possible speakers. Robert Preus's remarks in 1978 certainly show this concern. In 1979, David Scaer wrote to President J. A. O. Preus of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod inviting him to speak at the banquet on the theme of "Chemnitz and the Book of Concord."[14] On receiving Dr. Preus' positive response, Dr. Scaer

[11]News Release, CTS, January 16, 1979, in CTS archives, Symposium, 1979 file.

[12]David P. Scaer and Robert D. Preus, editors, *Luther's Catechisms — 450 Years: Essays Commemorating the Small and Large Catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1979).

[13]Stated on the inside cover of the brochure for the Third Annual Congress on the Lutheran Confessions, CTS Archives, Symposia, 1980.

[14]David P. Scaer to J. A. O. Preus, April 17, 1979. Preus responded postively on April 23, 1979. CTS Archives, Symposia, 1980.

wrote about how pleased he was that the President would attend and speak and noted, "we have been hoping to establish a tradition here at the seminary with these annual symposiums. Your participation will help us in reaching this goal."[15]

The strategy seems to have worked. By 1981 David Scaer claimed that

> the symposium has become part of the seminary tradition. . . . The faculty itself provides a ready source of participating lecturers. Seminary students have an opportunity to see their instructors openly discussing their ideas with others outside the seminary community. Pastors, especially alumni, appreciate refreshing their theological skills . . . . Lay persons, especially benefactors of the seminary, have a first hand experience in hearing seminary professors present their views.[16]

By 1989 Scaer believed the importance of the symposium had extended well beyond the geographical boundaries of Fort Wayne and now was entitled to be called an institution of the Missouri Synod.

With traditions come expectations, and with expectations come rules. The question of who was actually responsible for the organization of the symposium emerged. Yet even with the center in place, local arrangements had to be made, and the relationship of the faculty to the event had to be defined. Almost by default, much of the responsibility fell to the Department of Systematic Theology. In its department meeting of January 15, 1979 the department announced that it "expresses its willingness to sponsor the confessional conference next January and it invites the historical department to share in sponsoring it."[17] At further meetings during the year it acted to "request the faculty to appoint the department members to serve as the continuation committee for the Symposium in the Lutheran Confessions"[18] and suggested that "the president, chairman, secretary and a member of the Historical

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[15]David P. Scaer to J. A. O. Preus, May 2, 1979. CTS Archives, Symposium, 1980.

[16]Suggestions for the Conference on the Lutheran Confessions, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1981.

[17]Faculty Journal, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1978-79, 80.

[18]Department of Systematic Theology, February 26, 1979, Faculty Journal, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1978-79, 119.

Theological Department serve as the committee of implementation for the January 1980 confessional symposium."[19]

Minutes of the Faculty Study Meeting of March 26, 1979 state that "a resolution was introduced which essentially asked the Faculty to designate the Systematics Department as the Standing Committee for the Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions. Action on this was postponed until the next business meeting."[20] But, as sometimes happens, the faculty did not take it up at its next meeting. Finally, around 1981, a document appears to have gained general assent. The initial version of the piece simply stated, "The Symposium is sponsored by the Systematic Theology Dept." A later addition to the document refined the process: "The Symposium is sponsored by the faculty and delegated to the Systematic Theology Dept. for planning."[21] It appears that arrangement has remained in place ever since.

Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery

The Annual Symposium on Exegetical Theology

As the Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions grew, the question of the role of other departments began to emerge. Was this a Systematics event alone, or should the other departments have a say in how things operate? One of the brilliant points of the Confessions symposium in its early form was how it served to integrate the discreet departments. In his book *Theologia,* Edward Farley has shown how the division of theology into four distinct departments stemmed largely from the influence of the Enlightenment. Theological education became a matter of first learning theory (Dogma, Exegesis, History) and then applying it (Practical)—a concept foreign to the Lutheran Confessors. For confessional Lutherans, theology is holistic—a *habitus,* as Dr. Preus noted so well—in which doctrine and practice are intimately related.[22] The early symposia picked up this point, and addressed a spectrum of topics. Hence, in 1982, the theme was hermeneutics, and featured Erling Teigen

[19]Department of Systematic Theology, March 19. 1979, Faculty Journal, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1978-79, 132.

[20]Faculty Journal, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1978-1979, 136.

[21]Faculty Journal, Fort Wayne, 1978-1979, 136.

[22]Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism,* Volume 1, *A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970-1972).

on "The Clarity of Scripture and Hermeneutical Principles in the Lutheran Confessions," Seth Erlandsson on "Faith in the Old and New Testaments: Harmony or Disagreement," Douglas Judisch on "The View of Prophecy and Fulfillment in the Lutheran Confessions," Carl Braaten on "Confessional Lutheran Hermeneutics vs. Contemporary Hermeneutics," Horace Hummel on "Are Law and Gospel a Valid Hermeneutical Principle?" and Walter Kaiser on "Evangelical Hermeneutics: Restatement, Advance, or Retreat from the Reformation?" Here was a varied and engaging lineup of speakers whose specialties cut across disciplinary lines.

To get to the point another way, the Department of Historical Theology is often asked, "Why don't you have a symposium?" The answer is simple. In, with, and under the Confessions there is room for distinctive emphases in exegetical, historical, pastoral, and systematic theology, just as the confessional documents themselves have. Hence, there is no need for an independent historical symposium.

The exegetes and, more recently, the pastoral theologians have thought otherwise and the result has been a fragmentation of the Symposia. How did this come about? One writer has noted "The Symposium on Exegetical Theology began rather spontaneously in January of 1985 as an appendix . . . to the well-established Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions. . . . Dr. James Voelz . . . and Dr. David Scaer . . . are to be remembered as especially vocal in urging the sponsorship of this symposium upon the department of exegetical theology." [23] The new event began to take shape, as exegetical department chairman Dr. Waldemar Degner described, "The first overture toward an annual symposium in biblical studies is within reach. A day will be added to the annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in order to present a group of essays on related exegetical topics. This extension to accommodate exegetical papers will begin in January '86, D.v."[24]

The Symposium on Exegetical Theology quickly became an event in its own right. As the previous writer continued, "Interest in the conference

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[23]Douglas McC. L. Judisch, "The Symposium on Exegetical Theology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 55 (January 1991): 48-49.

[24]Waldemar Degner, "Report of the Exegetical Theology Department, 1984-85 Academic Year," in Fall Faculty Forum Book (Concordia Theological Seminary, 1985), 24.

both inside and, more importantly, outside the seminary quickly became apparent. As the attendance increased, so did the number of offerings, including papers by scholars of note from other institutions (whether orthodox or heterodox by Lutheran standards)."[25] Dr. Degner was not at all ashamed to speak of the roots of the Exegetical effort. "Riding on the reputation of the Systematic Department sponsored symposium, the Exegetical Department put on a one-day program with four lectures, three by our faculty. With success smiling on them the department plans another lively agenda for January 20 and 21, 1987. The theme of the convivium will be: Prophecy and Fulfillment."[26]

The theme of prophecy and fulfillment—a seemingly perennial one at Fort Wayne—proved to be a dicey one.[27] As Dr. Degner himself noted, "Among the challenges that face the department faculty is the primary task of converting conflict into creative tension. Yes, we have some differences of opinion regarding hermeneutical principles, interpretation of prophecy, and certain exegetical methodologies. By open and free discussion, however, the variety of viewpoints is an opportunity for each faculty member to grow in his understanding and tolerance."[28]

As time moved on, however, the Exegetical symposium became more and more independent of the Confessions symposium. In 1990, Dr. Judisch noted that "Last year (1990) the symposium had attained

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[25]Judisch, "The Symposium on Exegetical Theology," 48-49.

[26]Waldemar Degner, "Report of the Exegetical Theology Department, Academic Year 1985-86," in Fall Faculty Forum Book (Concordia Theological Seminary, 1986), 20.

[27]Dr. Scaer suggested a protocol for gaining departmental approval and Dr. Preus expanded on it: "I believe that, as in the case of the Symposium on the Confessions, the easiest way to finalize these things would be for Drs. Scaer, Degner and myself to come up with a very concrete proposal in line with the memo and have it accepted by the Exegetical Department. I think this would be perhaps better than to have the Exegetical Department as such do the planning. I do believe, however, that the Exegetical Department should have the right to make strong suggestions pro or con to anything that we bring in." Robert D. Preus to David P. Scaer, Waldemar Degner, Ronald Nelson, and Douglas Christian, February 18, 1986, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1987. The memo that Preus refers to is from David Scaer to Degner, Preus, Christian, and Nelson, February 12, 1978, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1987.

[28]Waldemar Degner, "Report of the Exegetical Theology Department, Academic Year 1986-87," in Fall Faculty Forum Book (Concordia Theological Seminary, 1987), 24.

sufficient maturity to cut its maternal apron strings."[29] Indeed it had, and it continues to do so till the present. The 2002 Symposium is another landmark, for it marked the first time the iconography on the front of the symposia program reflected the Exegetical Department's theme and not the Confessional symposium theme.

Similarly, the offerings of the Exegetical symposium have been steadily expanding. From four papers in 1986, the 2002 Exegetical Symposium boasted seven papers, along with a number of shorter exegetical seminar papers. The length of the symposium has extended significantly. The 1986 Symposium began at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon and ran through 11:20 the next morning. The 2002 Symposium opened at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning and ran through 11:50 a.m. Wednesday. The Exegetical symposium has indeed gained its independence.

Liturgical Theology and The Good Shepherd Institute

The annual Good Shepherd Institute of Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music for the Church was inaugurated November 5-7, 2000, with the theme of "Christ's Gifts for Healing the Soul: Toward a Lutheran Identity in the New Millennium." In addition to twelve distinguished presenters, both local and visiting, the first Institute offered an all Bach organ recital and a banquet, "with lute music as Luther would have played it."[30]

The 215 attendees of the first Institute must have been impressed with the rich worship opportunities and presentations, because they came back for the 2001 event, "The Theology and Music of the Divine Service," with a few friends—the attendance increased to 240. The 2002 Institute is themed "Psalms in the Life of the Church."

Dr. Arthur Just and Rev. Richard Resch, co-directors of the Institute, have many other plans for the Good Shepherd Institute, besides hosting an annual "symposium." In time, they hope that the Institute will serve the church by providing various kinds of assistance, including, in part, educational materials, kantor training, and guidance with acoustical and architectural decisions. The Institute will "encompass the whole realm of how Lutheran theology lives and breathes in a faithful practice."[31]

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[29]Judisch, "The Symposium on Exegetical Theology," 48-49.
[30]Taken from the Good Shepherd Institute 2000 brochure.
[31]Richard C. Resch, "The Gift of the Church's Song: Sacred Music as Healing and Comfort" in *Christ's Gifts for Healing the Soul: Toward a Lutheran Identity in the New*

The Saint Louis Symposium

The advent of a similarly organized symposium at the Saint Louis seminary illustrates that Tietjen was also wrong about the viability of that institution. While of a very different character from the Fort Wayne Symposia, Saint Louis's symposium now is into its second decade and shows signs of having become an institution unto itself. For that we commend our colleagues and wish their endeavors well. Their symposium shows that the pulse of Missouri can be taken at more than one point in the body.

Challenges

Choosing the Theme

The symposium has been a living and breathing reality that has developed over time, but with changes come challenges. The Symposia have not been immune.

One challenge is the choice of themes—who chooses the theme for discussion? A note in David Scaer's handwriting seems to provide the beginnings of an outline for the years 1988 to 1990. He simply writes: "Inter Lutheran Confessions; Confessions as Guide to Pastoral Ministry; Church." The themes as developed actually were: "The Tension Between Philippism and Lutheranism: A Problem of the Contemporary Scene"; "The Church Communicating Its Confession"; and "Missouri and the Separated Brethren."

The manner in which a theme is chosen is somewhat mysterious, something like trying to explain the Trinity. At times Dr. Scaer has been brutally honest about the nature of choosing the theme. For example, in 1989 he stated "for several years the word 'communication' has been in the air and thus we hit upon the theme 'The Church Communicating Its Confession.' I think we did this more out [of] desperation than for any specific reason."[32]

The themes of the Symposia over the years, however, reveal the rich and varied interests of pastors and laity in the Missouri Synod. They

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Millennium (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2001), 87.

[32]David P. Scaer, untitled remarks for the introduction of the 1989 Symposium, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1989.

show an interest in the lively discussion of theology that was so well captured by Robert Preus: "I love to talk about God." But what also emerges in this picture is something of a trend over time. Simply put, the tendency of the early symposia was to celebrate an anniversary of an historical document. From the Augsburg Confession to the Wittenberg Concord—or more recently the 1500th Anniversary of the Council of Chalcedon—rarely were opportunities missed to recognize significant anniversaries in the life of the church. Indeed, where these significant events have been ignored in the rest of the Lutheran world as dead and unimportant history, the Annual Symposia have taken the pulse of historic Lutheranism and kept these events alive.

More recently, however, the themes have moved away from observance of anniversaries (though some still do that) to being more topical in nature. Whatever the case may be, the Symposia have continued to fulfill the vision of their founders. It recalls to mind one of David Scaer's statements from the symposium banquet of 1990: "The winter symposium of Concordia Theological Seminary is a barter house for the exchange of philosophical and theological views. Here are the porches of the Jerusalem temple where political careers have been bought and sold. Self-appointed reformers have entered these sacred precincts to over turn [*sic*] the tables where the changers of theological views have sat selling their wares and the pigeons have been sent fluttering."[33]

Choosing the Best Speakers

One of the keys to the success of the symposia, and an enormous challenge as well, is related to the speakers themselves. Put simply: how does one keep the scholarly level high, while making the ideas and vocabulary accessible to everyone? As one laymen put it, "In my estimation, and in the estimation of others with whom I discussed the matter, there were two areas in the essays, in which the laymen, and even some of the Pastors present, were not considered, as follows: 1) the learned Doctors who read their essays used words peculiar to theology, to which the layman would not, in the normal course of his education be exposed. In other words, the learned Doctors of theology on the rostrum addressed themselves to the learned Doctors of theology in the audience. 2) The essay as read contained many phrases in Latin and German which,

[33]David P. Scaer, "Banquet Address: Thirteenth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions," January 24, 1990, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1990, 4.

with few exceptions, were not translated into English following such use."[34]

Participants have also suggested that actual sections of the Confessions be studied ("open our books!") and for microphones to be set up for auditors to ask questions. Finally, one critic suggested that organizers "not look for the 'Big names' only—there are several knowledgeable men and also somewhat better speakers than several we had—3 of the papers were [delivered] in so boring a manner it was difficult to listen."[35] Other participants responded personally to Dr. Preus. One layman in particular suggested "no foreign speakers."[36]

Other speakers have been drawn to the campus for the most unusual of reasons. For example, Dr. Paul Maier of Kalamazoo, Michigan accepted the invitation to speak in 1980 only after learning that the Fort Wayne skyline had forever been changed by the construction of the Scaer mansion in Pine Valley. Maier responded to Scaer's invitation by saying: "You are *most* persuasive! My acceptance is prompted—not by any great presumptions regarding my expertise in the Reformation Era, but by my endless curiosity as to the sort of Tudor mansion you finally put up down there! How's that for scholarly motivation? Count me in!"[37]

At other times, however, getting the speakers here has posed a problem. As the Exegetical symposium struggled to get off the ground, internal department tensions threatened to derail the entire enterprise. Prophecy and fulfillment—a perennial issue in exegesis—challenged the developing symposium. At one point Dr. Degner wrote "Horace Hummel [n.n.] called today. He begged off from giving a paper at our

[34]S. F. Lange to David P. Scaer, February 14, 1980, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1980. Scaer responded on March 10, 1980, "Please be assured that your comments and suggestions concerning this matter will be taken under consideration."

[35]Summary of responses in 1978 Symposium file in the CTS archives.

[36]Fred Zehnder to Robert D. Preus, January 1978, in CTS archives, Symposium, 1978 file.

[37]Paul Maier to David Scaer, no date, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1980. Later, in 1985, Dr. Maier was asked to speak at the banquet. He responded, somewhat incredulously, "Do you *really* want me back as banquet speaker for the Symposium? Well, if you can put up with the likes of me again, fine." (Paul Maier to Douglas Christian, October 21, 1985, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1986.) He came, and from all indications, gave a very fine speech at the banquet. Christian later thanked Dr. Maier for his "lively presentation at our banquet." Douglas M. Christian to Paul L. Maier, February 3, 1986, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1986.

January Exeg. Symposium. There's something deeper than any of us surmise, I fear."[38] At another point, the aged Walter Roehrs stated, "I am responding at once to allow time to select a substitute, for at my age (I shall turn 85 before this month is out) I consider it the better part of valor not to engage in the vigors of the kind of forum that you project."[39]

Exceptions aside, one of the remarkable things about the Symposia has been their consistent ability to attract the highest level of speakers—not just to a confessional Lutheran seminary of modest size, but to Fort Wayne, Indiana in the midst of winter! Recalling the list of the lecturers from the first symposium, one is struck by the high quality of the speakers involved. How is it that the symposium has succeeded in this regard?

One element is the tenacious character of the people doing the inviting. Within the files of the Department of Systematic Theology are innumerable queries and responses seeking the finest confessional scholars in the world, as well as a variety of experts in their fields. What the files show is how much work goes into the task of organizing a symposium. Favorable responses often have a "Yes!" hand-written on them. The responses do offer a window into the minds of those asked to present. For example, note how very much the following captures the personality of Norman Nagel. "How very generous of you to invite me, and I shall be happy to have a go."[40] The same holds true for the late Henry Hamann.

> I can accept your invitation for the Symposium in January. The topic you have asked me to write on is the one very congenial to me, as I think you know. The only thing I shall have to be on guard against is plagiarism from myself. If I merely copied what I have already written and gave the result a different title I would not be earning my honorarium. But I can't change the basic position. However, I shall make the supporting material and examples completely contemporary.[41]

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[38]G. Waldemar Degner to Dean Wenthe and Doug Christian, October 8, 1986, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1987.

[39]Walter R. Roehrs to David P. Scaer, August 12, 1986, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1987.

[40]Norman Nagel to David P. Scaer, April 2, 1987, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1988.

[41]Henry Hamann to David P. Scaer, June 23, 1988, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1989.

A sad note attaches to this little memo, however. Dr. Hamann, though successful in writing the paper, was not able to deliver it. He was taken ill in the Autumn of 1989 and passed away shortly before the symposium. Yet, noted Dr. Scaer, "I have an idea that when we hear Dr. Hamann's paper read, we will be listening to the last will and testament of [a] man to his church, a man who knew that his days on earth were numbered.... In a sense he will be communicating to us a message from the altar of the Lamb of God in heaven where the souls of the faithful departed are safely preserved waitning [*sic*] to receive their final reward on the day of judgment."[42]

What was true of Dr. Hamann was also true of the President who did so much to organize the symposium in the first place, Dr. Robert Preus. The Rev. Klemet Preus spoke on the Preus legacy in Missouri at the 2002 Symposium, but briefly at this point, two fairly recent events should be noted. The first was in 1993 when, after being introduced, Dr. Preus received welcome and thanks from the attendees of the symposium that went on for an extended period of time. The second was in 1996, when Daniel and Rolf Preus read their father's last paper on justification and Rome. Even as he spoke his last words to us through his sons, he revisited a theme so many of us were blessed to have learned so clearly from him: "The article of justification serves not only to assess doctrine and practice in the church. It is the focal point and backbone, as it were, of the entire corpus doctrinae. And it is the basis of the Christian religion and life, for it is the very essence of the Gospel itself."[43]

On the Field of Controversy

An intention of the symposium from early on was to arrange for presentations by speakers from outside the Missouri Synod and even the Lutheran tradition. This has, at times, caused consternation, while at others the symposium has been criticized for being "monolithic" in the view that it presents.

When the agenda for 1984's Symposium, with Father Richard John Neuhaus's name there appearing (his topic was "The Place of the Pope in Modern Protestant and Roman Catholic Ecclesiology"), was published,

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[42]David P. Scaer, remarks at introduction of the Symposium for 1989, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1989.

[43]Robert Preus, *Justification and Rome*, edited by Daniel and Rolf Preus (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 16.

a letter critical of his inclusion arrived at the seminary. It read, in part: ". . . I am quite puzzled. . . . even disturbed. . . . by the presence of Richard Neuhaus on the program and agenda. Is this the same Richard Neuhaus who has held less than a conservative stance in the past several years? Is this the same Neuhaus who has publically [*sic*] been less than supportive of our Synodical posture?"[44] In answering the query, David Scaer articulated clearly the intent of the Symposia.

> The general purpose of the symposiums is to understand the Lutheran Confessions both in their historical setting and in the contemporary situation. Thus the first day is an attempt to see certain issues from the perspectives of the early church and the Church of Rome; the second day concentrates on our own in house issues, e.g., a LCMS vice-president, a WELS professor, and expert on LCMS church history are on the program; the third day looks at the formation of the "New Lutheran Church."
>
> The symposiums serve as a reinforcement of our confessional position by studying the documents themselves and seeing them in their contemporary situation. In the past this has been done by those who are not only not members of the LCMS, but who have offered critique. Our confessions came into existence by listening to and answering our critics. Some times they might have a valid word to offer. Some times they do not. The symposium offers and opportunity to hear them on their own terms and for us to respond.[45]

Others have been extremely critical of the "one-sideness" of the event. One critic's remarks remain posted on a website almost a year after they were made. He states:

> On the other hand, the Symposia would better serve the church if it were more even-handed, choosing speakers with alternate points of view, rather than those who would offer presentations in order to promote the party line. . . . The opportunity to respond would have been right and appropriate. It's what happens, however, when left unchecked by the church, an event like this is interested only in

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[44]R. R. Krueger to The Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions, November 28, 1984, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1984.

[45]David P. Scaer to R. R. Krueger, December 7, 1984, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1984.

> presenting a monolithic point of view. It feeds upon itself and appeals to an almost cult-like following who are known adoringly to subscribe to that monolithic point of view (grown now to over 650 in attendance).
>
> The way to remedy the narrowness of this event, would be for more evangelically minded folks to attend future Symposia in Ft. Wayne. I trust it remains an event for the whole church. Let the church in its many shapes, colors and sizes show up next year, prepared to challenge, push, prod and engage next year's Symposia.[46]

Still others have taken the opportunity to offer thanks and critique. In 1988, after offering "congratulations on another excellent Confessions Congress," and commenting on the "timeliness of the topics" (church growth and spiritual gifts), one pastor noted:

> Imagine a congress wherein Dr. Nafzger, a Wisconsin Synod theologian, and an E.L.C.A. theologian all presented papers on the question of fellowship and the confessions. One might even throw in a presentation by Kurt Marquart just to keep things lively. At any rate, I believe the emphasis given to levels of fellowship demands a forum of thought accessible to the average pastor—and the Confessions Congress seems to fit the bill.[47]

It certainly has fulfilled that purpose.

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[46]Steven Krueger, "Fort Wayne's 2001 Symposia: A DayStar's Assessment," January 26, 2001, cited from http://www.day-star.net/ezine/symposia_01-01-26.htm. Visited on 1/21/2002.

[47]Timothy D. Knapp to David P. Scaer, January 26, 1988, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1988. He continues: "Acknowledging the charge that advocates of church growth espouse an approach of bringing about the Kingdom of God through the use of secular means, could not that charge also be levied against those who use the secular means of political organizations and voting blocks to turn Synod around in the 70's? The temptation is always great to use *whatever* means are available to win a desperate fight. I fear there are those in Synod who place greater faith in political machinations than in the Lord of the church. I too often am one of them." Other pastors also appreciated the Symposium's timely topics, noting "I thought this year's symposium was the best ever. The topics and speakers were well chosen, I thought. I'm especially encouraged to hear some good confessional reponses to the abysmal methods and practices of Church Growth..." Burnell F. Eckardt, Jr. to David P. Scaer, February 3, 1988, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1988.

Whether or not You Like the Weather

Not the least of these challenges—though apparently not in 2002—is the weather. Simply put, the timing of the event is dicey to say the least—Fort Wayne in January. Picking up on this, Dr. Wilbert Rosin wrote in 1982 that "The continued high level of attendance and participation through the years even in the very worst of weather provides proof positive of the vitality and intensity of Lutherans' interest in their confessions and Lutheran convictions that their confessions are important for the total church, and also for the unchurched."[48]

Other challenges included how best to publicize the event and who would ultimately be in charge of the works. Suffice it to say that the conversation continues!

Growing Numbers

Dr. Scaer has said on any number of occasions something to the effect that for the first symposium they went out to the seminary entrance and flagged down cars to come in so there would not be so many empty seats.[49] In fact, he has been known to claim that at the 1978 Symposium "the empty seats outnumbered the full ones by about 10 to one."[50] While attendance was initially light, the symposium has been a growing event over the last twenty-five years.

By 1985 total registrations numbered 242 with 269 at the banquet. Strangely, however, daily attendance at the sessions was estimated at 450 on Wednesday, 350 on Thursday, and 450 again on Friday. Perhaps those are somewhat inflated figures—doing attendance Church Growth style—but still they show a discrepancy between those who actually registered and those who simply came along for the ride. A memo from 1989 reported: "Sorry to see that we lost money this year. Lower registration was the main factor (281 vs 319), but our expenses were also

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[48]Wilbert Rosin, "The Fifth Symposium on the Confessions: Its Thrust and Significance," unpublished paper, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1981.

[49]David P. Scaer, "Banquet Address: Thirteenth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions," January 24, 1990, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1990, 4.

[50]David P. Scaer, unititled remarks for the introduction of the 1989 Symposium, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1989.

much higher with the result that we spemt [*sic*] more money for fewer people which is not a prescription for net profit."[51]

Plans for the 1986 Symposium added a new twist. As we have already seen, a distinct exegetical symposium was added to the program that year. In its first year it had thirty-one registrants. The Confessions symposium had 253, with 265 at the banquet.

By 1987 registrations for the Exegetical symposium had climbed to eighty-seven, though of these only twelve were specifically for that particular symposium. Of the 160 total registrations, seventy-five were for both events, and eighty-five were for the Confessions symposium only. So, by 1987, almost half of the participants were experimenting with exegesis, but staying for the Confessions. All of that being said, that is not a bad number for the second year of the event.

The next year there were only ten registrations for the Exegetical symposium only, and in 1989 there were only eleven. However, a trend emerged in regard to the Confessions symposium as well. In 1988 there were ninety-five registrations for the Confessions Congress alone, while in 1989, there were only sixty-one. However, overall attendance was growing.

Numbers, as we know, do not prove anything of themselves. "We're not in the counting business" is a recently heard statement. However, what the attendance at the symposium does show is a dedicated group of laity and pastors who love the Lutheran Confessions and the Lutheran Church. That the number of this group has consistently increased over the last several years, during the presidency of Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, is cause for thanks.

Speaking of Dr. Wenthe, one wonders whether the Symposia provided a platform for his rise to fame. In 1988, then Prof. Dean O. Wenthe received an invitation to address the topic of "The Universal Priesthood of All Believers." Wenthe responded to David Scaer as follows: "Dave, I'll be happy to give the Benedictine position on the above! Blessings!"[52]

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[51]R. R. Roberts to David P. Scaer, February 24, 1989, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1989.

[52]Hand-written response of Dean O. Wenthe to David P. Scaer on a letter of March 25, 1987, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1988.

A Fort Wayne Homecoming

Few graduates of the institution will forget the first time they returned to the campus and were greeted by Dean Daniel Reuning with a hearty "Welcome home!" An emerging purpose of the Symposia over the years was its restorative character. A bond of collegiality drew graduates home to their seminary, and offered the opportunity for new friendships to be formed. One pastor captured the sense of it beautifully:

> I wanted to express my deepest appreciation for your work on the Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions which I attended for the first time last week. It was a much needed inspiration and time of renewal for a young but pre-maturely tired young pastor in the trenches of parish ministry. It sent me the message that there is a small but very dedicated group of fellow confessional pastors, professors and laymen and women who are committed to defending the Lutheran Confessional heritage against all the forces of Satan that are trying to discredit them. Even I was surprised that deeply theological discussions such as these would have such a profound effect upon me. They renewed my love for the ministry, the love of the Scriptures and enlivened me for my work of bringing Christ's love to my fellow men and women. I believe this event was even more effective in this for me than would be the Great Commision Convocation with its "church growth guilt trips."[53]

Over the years there have been different extra-curricular events that have, more or less, spontaneously generated themselves. From the early "Smokeouts" at Robert Schaibley's home (when the garage door opened, smoke literally poured out), to dinners at Mad Anthony's, to lunches, to gatherings at local hotels, eateries, and faculty homes. For years and years the gigantic, chaotic, and utterly delightful party at the Scaer's following the Thursday night banquet provided an intimate(!) setting for the brethren to encourage one another and cement bonds that held the colloquium tightly over the ensuing year. Taken as a whole, these events underscore the nature of the community that is Concordia Theological Seminary, while both solidifying the bonds of the already existing community and simultaneously extending its boundaries.

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[53]Robert L. Eggers, Jr. to David P. Scaer, January 23, 1989, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1989.

Resuscitating Missouri

"Let the dead bury their own dead," stated Tietjen. He misdiagnosed the case of the Missouri Synod. While it suffered a dramatic schism in the controversy over the Scriptures and the investigation of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, the body he pronounced lifeless has continued to live and breath and have its being in Christ—albeit not without significant challenges.

Why the continued life and why the continued challenges? In part, the life stems from an ongoing confessional revival that may, in future years if God is merciful, come to rival that of the mid-nineteenth century confessionalists like Charles Porterfield Krauth and the General Council. The confessional revival of the present has arisen from an engaged and critical posture to the books that form and shape the life of Lutheranism.

Writing in 1982, Dr. Wilbert Rosin captured this sense very well. He stated the following in his introduction to the symposium that year.

> The question for the present day is to what extent the Lutheran Confessions are an adequate statement in terms of completeness and to what extent they are adequate in terms of expression of essential truths, given the changes in theological discourse and philosophical language. That is where this week's convocation comes to the heart of the matter, insofar as a British author (Davies) has said that the problem of authority is the Achilles heel of Protestantism, and insofar as their hermeneutical problem or interpretation of Christian truth is a central problem, perhaps the central problem, in contemporary theological discourse. That means that this fifth convocation which is addressing such questions as prophecy, fulfillment, and interpretation of prophecy, and understanding of the fulfillment, questions of hermeneutics with respect to particular passages, or the relation of portions of Scripture to confessional statements, or confessional statements to the total message of Scripture—that is why this convocation is one of particular significance.[54]

The Missouri Synod of 2002 is both similar and different to the Synod of 1978. Similar in that the official doctrinal position of the church has not

[54]Wilbert Rosin, "The Fifth Annual Symposium on the Confessions: Its Thrust and Significance," unpublished paper, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1982, 4.

changed substantially from that of twenty-five years ago. Different, however, in terms of an ongoing disjuncture between doctrine and practice and an increasing radicalism at the local congregational level that has resulted in an "everyone does what is right in his own eyes" experience. How healthy is the doctrinal heart that gives Missouri life? On paper, it remains very strong; but without exercise, or with faulty exercises, the heart grows weak and is damaged. The practical compromises of our doctrinal position—indiscriminate communion practices, unionistic and syncretistic activities, and others—are like eating lard. The veins eventually clog and the heart will stop. The Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions has offered a high fiber, low cholesterol diet and a program of vigorous exercise for Missouri's theological heart, and has helped that heart remain strong. Further, like a caring physician, it has taken the pulse of Missouri and made a prognosis—at times positive and at other times negative. That is exactly what a physician should do: tell the ill patient the source of his ailment, and affirm the healthy patient. The argument is often which comes first, the chicken or the egg, doctrine or practice. The simple fact is, without a strong doctrinal heart, there will be no practice to speak of. At the same time, without faithful practice, one's doctrinal heart becomes weak. The two must hang together, or they will hang separately.

For many years the symposium has tried to keep this balance in place. To a great extent I believe it has succeeded. Let us hope that twenty-five years from now we will be able to reflect on the ongoing, vibrant, pulsating life of confessional Lutheranism in the United States. If these Symposia will be a part of that ongoing life, that would be delightful, too—we might even see the days of dead orthodoxy again. As David Scaer has put it:

> The confessional symposium has become for me one of the proofs for the existence of God. Like the four seasons and the rising and the setting of the sun, the symposium just happens to take place and no one knows exactly that [*sic*] it happens. It just happens. Even if we don't know how a symposium like this happens, we know why it happens. It happens because people want to do something irrelevant like talk theology. The hearers at this symposium are not so much interested in how something is being done, but rather in what is being done. This symposium has been dedicated not to how the church proclaims her message (this is not a communications convocation), but rather this symposium is dedicated to what the

> message of the church's proclamation should be. It's a matter of substance over method. The medium, no matter how glitzy, is not the message.... This symposium demonstrates that there is nothing more relevant than such irrelevancy of theology. . . . So we have come here not to show how relevant we can be and discuss pop theology, but to turn back the clocks and submit ourselves to the judgments of the past and to submit pasts to the judgments of the present. If nothing can be more irrelevant than a person trying to be relevant, then we have proven that nothing succeeds like irrelevancy and whoever wants to be practical had better first be theological.... For the church the message must be forward into the past.[55]

May this "irrelevancy" continue for many years to come!

[55]David P. Scaer, "Banquet Address: Thirteenth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions," January 24, 1990, CTS Archives, Symposium, 1990, 1,3,18.

The New Translation of the Book of Concord: Closing the barn door after . . . .

Roland F. Ziegler

Introduction

The last year of the second millennium saw the publication of a new translation of the Book of Concord into the English language.[1] Unlike new translations of the Bible into English, or new revisions of older revised versions, which no longer cause the stir and evoke the interest of the Revised Version of the New Testament in 1881 (printed as a supplement of a national newspaper), a new translation of the Book of Concord demands our attention for two reasons. The first reason is the comparative rareness of such an occasion; second, very likely this new translation will become the standard for coming decades. Because every Lutheran pastor pledges his allegiance to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and because the knowledge of the languages in which these confessions were originally written, that is Latin and German, has continually decreased among American Lutheran clergy, the question of the accuracy of such a translation should be of high interest to any Lutheran pastor.[2] This paper is not going to give a detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the new edition compared to Tappert or the Triglotta. The main part of this essay deals with the question: What is the actual relevance of the Book of Concord, which we now possess in a new edition, in Lutheranism? Or, to say it differently, does anybody really care? Some would argue that Christianity has passed the confessionalistic age and proceeded into a new age, an age where the old debates are of only historical interest. An example of this perspective might be the ELCA's ecumenical agreements of the last several years.[3] This paper, in large part, investigates the understanding of the Book of Concord which is manifested in these endeavors. In a last

[1]Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, editors, *The Book of Concord: The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Hereafter abbreviated as Kolb and Wengert.

[2]Due to this lack of familiarity, many rely solely on translations, thereby being in a similar position regarding the confessions as their less educated colleagues of various denominations with their lack of Hebrew and Greek are in respect to Holy Writ.

[3]Louis A. Smith, "Can the ELCA Represent Lutheranism? Flirting with Rome, Geneva, Canterbury, and Herrnhut," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 65 (2002): 99-120.

The Rev. Roland F. Ziegler is Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

part, we will consider some questions about the relevance of the Book of Concord in churches that understand themselves as confessional and orthodox.

The Text of the Book of Concord

The Lutheran Confessions are in the plural; the Book of Concord is in the singular.[4] The Lutheran Confessions are a collection of creedal statements, each of which has a textual history of its own. The Book of Concord is a collection of these documents, whose text is quite definite, although there are textual debates.

The first question is, whether the *Marriage Booklet* and the *Baptism Booklet* are part of the Book of Concord or not.[5] This question is rooted in the differences between the Lutherans of northern and southern Germany. Whereas the Saxons viewed Luther's order for baptism and marriage as integral parts of his catechism (which they historically were) and therefore as a part of the Book of Concord, there were reservations on the side of the southern Lutherans. Andreae saw them as a part of church order, not as part of doctrine. Reservations on the part of the southern Lutherans probably centered in the concern over the normative liturgical character of the orders—would those churches that had developed rites for baptism and marriage different from Luther's orders be forced to change?[6] Of the three authentic copies of the German text posited in the archives in Dresden, two do not have it. The compromise worked out by Chemnitz was to leave an empty page as a mark, so that one could either include it or leave it out. That, at the very least, shows that both liturgical formulae are not an integral part of the Book of Concord, but rather something like a particular confession of some Lutheran churches, for example, the Visitation articles or the *Confessio Virtembergica* (which also had confessional rank in Württemberg). Nevertheless, the Göttingen Edition of the Confessions includes these writings, putting them after the small catechism.[7] The standard edition of the German and Latin text of the Book of Concord before the Göttingen

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[4]One may see Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 29 (1958): 1-24, especially 8-14.

[5]One may see Heinrich Heppe, *Geschichte der lutherischen Concordienformel und Concordie*, 2 Band (Marburg: Elwert'sche Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1859), 235-242.

[6]One may see *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, fifth edition. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), XLIII. Hereafter abbreviated as *BSLK*.

[7]*BSLK*, 528-541.

edition, edited by J. T. Müller, had put them as an appendix after the Catalogue of Testimonies.[8] They are missing in Henkel's edition.[9] The booklets were also omitted from the edition by Henry E. Jacobs first printed in 1882.[10] The *Concordia Triglotta,* whose text follows the editions of Dresden 1580 and Leipzig 1584, does not include them.[11] Tappert's edition does not contain them.[12] Thus, the inclusion of these orders in the Kolb and Wengert comes to the American Lutheran Church as a novelty.[13] The claim that the version of the Small Catechism included in the very first edition of the (German) Book of Concord contained the orders for baptism and wedding made in the Introduction of the Kolb and Wengert edition is therefore only part of the truth.[14]

The character of the Catalogue of Testimonies and the Saxon Visitation articles was never debated. The latter were published in 1592, and therefore were never part of the Book of Concord. They had only local significance in Saxony as part of the confessional standard until 1836.[15] The Visitation articles were included in an edition of the Book of Concord for the first time in 1702.[16] Their inclusion in the *Concordia Triglotta* is understandable from the Saxon background of the Missouri Synod, which led to their inclusion in the constitution of Trinity Lutheran in Saint Louis.[17] Müller includes them as an appendix,[18] Tappert and Kolb and

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[8]*Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche deutsch und lateinisch,* besordgt von J. T. Müller, mit einer neuen historischen Einleitung von Th. Kolde, tenth edition (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1907), 761-778. Hereafter abbreviated as Müller.

[9]*The Christian Book of Concord or Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Newmarket: Solomon D. Henkel and Brothers, 1851). Hereafter abbreviated Henkel.

[10]*The Book of Concord, or, The Symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* with historical introduction, notes, appendices and indices by Henry E. Jacobs, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: G. W. Frederick, 1882).

[11]*Concordia Triglotta: the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

[12]Theodore G. Tappert, translator and editor, in collaboration with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, Arthur C. Piepkorn, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia : Muhlenberg Press, 1959).

[13]Kolb and Wengert, 367-375.

[14]Kolb and Wengert, ix.

[15]Müller, LXXXII.

[16]Müller, LXXXII.

[17]Piepkorn (14) refers to "Gemeinde-Ordnung für die deutsche evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinde ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession in St. Louis, Mo., 1843" § 3, in *Der Lutheraner* VI (March 5, 1850): 105.

[18]Müller, 779-784. Henkel does the same, 685-689.

Wengert omit them. The Catalogue of Testimonies was included in the Book of Concord, but even the headline "Appendix" was deleted after Elector Ludwig of the Palatinate had objected, to avoid any notion that this was a part of the Book of Concord.[19] It is included in Müller, Göttingen, Henkel, and the *Concordia Triglotta*. Of the five printings of the Jacobs, only the most recent one includes the Catalogue, but it is in the historical introduction volume.[20] Kolb and Wengert also puts it into its companion volume, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*.[21] In sum, editions of the Book of Concord have been eclectic in their inclusion of the *Baptism Booklet, Marriage Booklet,* Saxon Visitation articles, and the Catalogue of Testamonies.

The major difference between Tappert and Kolb and Wengert is the different textual basis for the translation of the Apology. All previous editions of the Book of Concord used the first edition of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology for the Latin text, which was published at the end of April or the beginning of May 1531 (the so-called quarto edition).[22] The Kolb and Wengert edition made a radical departure by following the text of the octave edition, which was published at the beginning of September 1531. Looking at this particular innovation, the question of what the authentic text of the Book of Concord is takes on some urgency. It seems to be simple: The authentic text of the Book of Concord is the text of the German edition (Dresden, 1580) and the Latin edition (Leipzig, 1584). But these texts are not the *Urtext* of modern editions of the Book of Concord. The problem started with the text of the Augsburg Confession. In preparation for the publishing of the Book of Concord, Elector August of Saxony had asked for a copy of the original German from the arch-chancellery in Mainz. The copy thus obtained and used was, unfortunately, not from the original, read June 25, 1530.[23] Its text is very good, but probably goes back to an earlier draft of the Augsburg Confession. The original is lost; only copies have come to us,

[19]*BSLK*, 1101. Quoted is the article Theodor Pressel, "Churfürst Ludwig von der Pfalz und die Konkordienformel," *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie* 37 (1867): 3-112, 268-318, 443-605.

[20]*The Book of Concord, or, The Symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* with historical introduction, notes, appendices and indices by Henry E. Jacobs, 2 volumes (Decatur, Illinois: Johann Gerhard Institute, 1996).

[21]Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, editors, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 220-244.

[22]*BSLK*, XX, XXIII.

[23]*BSLK*, XIX.

from which a text that comes closest to the one read before Charles V can be reconstructed. We have here also a dilemma between the *intention* of the editors of the Book of Concord, namely to present the actual text presented at the diet of Augsburg, and what they—unknowingly—*did*, printing a text that was not what they wanted. What, then, does the modern editor of the Book of Concord do? Does he follow the text of the editors or their intentions? Müller was deeply dissatisfied with the *textus receptus* of the Augsburg Confession, but did refrain from any change in his edition, since he did not feel entitled as an individual to make changes in a churchly received text.[24] This kind of restraint was given up in the critical edition published in the year of the four hundredth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, where a reconstructed text was given and the different readings of the Book of Concord 1580 were put in the critical apparatus. Similarly, the Latin text of the Augsburg Confession is not that of the Book of Concord Leipzig 1584, which used the first edition 1531, but a collation of a manuscript going back to the original in the imperial archives of Brussels. This manuscript was, in all likelihood, brought to Spain and there destroyed, on the command of Philip II of Spain.

The Apology is not the only text affected by this change in approach. Also, the text of the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, and the Catechisms are given in the Göttingen Edition according to the oldest manuscripts, not according to the text in the first editions of the Book of Concord.

Strange consequences result from Kolb and Wengert's quest for the oldest, authentic text. For example, the filioque is put into brackets—since it is not an original part of the Nicene Creed.[25] This also shows very clearly what the problem is: these texts are not only historical documents to be reconstructed according to the rules of textual criticism—they are also binding statements of faith. Confessional subscription was to the Book of Concord, not to a hypothetical or not so hypothetical first form of one of the statements. Of course, the majority

[24]"Die Ergebnisse seines Studiums hat der Herausgeber in den historischen Einleitungen entwickelt; hier, wo es sich um die Darlegung der Grundsätze handelt, welche ihn bei seiner Arbeit leiteten, bemerkt derselbe, daß er sich, bei aller Geneigtheit, der Kritik ihre Ansprüche zuzugestehen, doch als Einyelner nicht für befugt erachten durfte, an dem *kirchlich recipirten* Texte Aenderungen nach seiner, wenn auch gewißenhaften, doch immer nur subjectiven Ueberzeugung vorzunehmen." Müller, VI and following.

[25]Kolb and Wengert, 23.

of variant readings have no doctrinal significance. In the case of the Augsburg Confession, one can make a case that the reconstructed text follows the intention of the editors of the Book of Concord. But to bracket the filioque devalues it and is simply misleading. Further, it is the expression of a historization of the Book of Concord. The Nicene Creed was never accepted in the Lutheran Church without the filioque. Yes, historically speaking, the fathers of the sixteenth century were wrong in believing that it was an original part of the Nicene Creed. We cannot, however, correct this historical error in an edition of the Book of Concord. Here following the intentions comes to an end. It is not legitimate to argue that since the fathers wanted to confess the faith of Nicaea, we correct their wrong text and thereby change our theology. Now, I do not think that this is the intention of the editors. My point is to show that a purely historical reconstruction of the text of the Book of Concord misses its character as authority and norm in the church. Unlike the biblical writings, we have, so to speak, the autographa, the first editions.

Let us return to the question of the change in the text of the Apology. The first edition of the Latin text, which is the original, was published in spring 1531, the so-called quarto-edition. In the fall of 1531, a reworked edition was published in octavo, which, in the following decades, became the most influential text of the Apology. Justus Jonas used both the quarto and octave editions to produce his very free German translation in the autumn of 1531. It is rather a paraphrase than a translation. This version was included in the German edition of the Book of Concord. For the Latin, it was decided to go back to the first edition.

Kolb and Wengert, in changing the textual basis of the Apology, follow the results of Christian Peters, who claims that the first edition was just a stage on the way to the definite text, which was reached with the octavo edition.[26] Of course, one may choose this way of reconstruction. Yet the question remains: does one then have a right to put "Book of Concord"

[26]Christian Peters, *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae. Untersuchungen zur Textgeschichte einer lutherischen Bekenntnisschrift* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1997). One may see also Christian Peters, "'Er hats immer wollen besser machen [. . .].' Melanchthons fortgesetzte Arbeit am Text der lateinischen Apologie auf und nach dem Augsburger Reichstag von 1530," in H. Immenkötter and G. Wenz, editors, *Im schatten der Confessio Augustana. Die Religionsverhandlungen des Augeburger Reichstages 1530 im historischen Kontext* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1997), 98-126. A short summary is given in Gunther Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, volume 2 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1998), 38 and following.

on the title page of a book that includes such a text (something the Göttingen edition avoided anyway)? I do not think that it is justifiable to change the textual basis of a document with such ecclesial weight and legal status as the Book of Concord has without consulting the churches in any way. It was the actual text of the edition of 1580 and not some reconstructed first or final stage that was subscribed by princes and pastors, and that was also the purpose of having original copies deposited in the archives.

Having said that, I still would like to say that in many respects the Kolb and Wengert edition is an improvement compared to the Tappert edition.[27]

The Relevance and Authority of the Book of Concord in the latest Ecumenical Dialogues

It is one thing to have a new edition of the Book of Concord with all the latest scholarship. It is quite another to ask whether this document is relevant for the life of the church today. Any actual relevance for Lutheran pastors in their teaching and preaching is difficult to assess. Perhaps a graduate student could make a field study with a questionnaire, asking Lutheran pastors if they read the Confessions after their time at the seminary and if they look at them for formation and guidance.

Ecumenical documents adopted by Lutheran churches are more accessible. In how far are the Lutheran position and statements of agreement in ecumenical dialogues in harmony with the Lutheran Confessions and how far do we recognize here a further development of Lutheran theology (to use a neutral term)? Especially since the agreements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with the Roman Catholic Church; *A Formula of Agreement* with the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the Reformed Church in America; and "Called to Common Mission" with the Episcopal Church) the question of identity in change is legitimate, and not only from a Missouri Synod perspective. How is the authority of the Book of Concord maintained in these dialogues, and how was it possible to overcome contrary and exclusive

[27]For example, the false translation of AC V, where *Predigtamt* was rendered with *office of the ministry*, is given up and the footnotes are greatly increased. However, the translation was not improved by efforts to use inclusive language.

statements that made church fellowship impossible in the past? For the sake of brevity, we will restrict ourselves here to the Lutheran-Reformed dialogues, more specifically, to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

The Consensus between Lutherans and Reformed in A Formula of Agreement

A Formula of Agreement, which was adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August 1997, is the fulfillment and culmination of a long process.[28] The *Formula* is the result of the "Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations," which published *A Common Calling*.[29] *A Common Calling* rests on the results of the previous Lutheran-Reformed dialogues, starting in 1962.[30] The *Formula* itself says that it has to be understood in that context, but not only the North American context is important here.[31] In the central part of the *Formula*, where a consensus formulation regarding the presence of Christ is given, the *Leuenberg Concord* is quoted as an adequate formulation. This puts the *Formula* in the history of European, and especially German, Lutheran-Reformed dialogues, which led from Halle 1937 through Arnoldshain 1957 to Leuenberg 1974. The *Leuenberg Concord* says:

> In the Lord's Supper the risen Christ imparts himself in body and blood, given up for all, through his word of promise with bread and wine. He thereby grants us forgiveness of sins and sets us free for a new life of faith. He enables us to experience anew that we are members of his body. He strengthens us for service to all people.[32]

The *Leuenberg Concord* is, in the decisive point, identical in matter and almost in wording with the Arnholdshain Theses:

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[28]*A Formula of Agreement* is quoted according to the text on this website, http://www.elca.org/ea/Relationsships/formula.html.

[29]Keith F. Nickle and Timothy F. Lull, editors, *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today*, the Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations, 1988-1992 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

[30]Paul C. Empie and James I. McCord, editors, *Marburg Revisited: A Reexamination of Lutheran and Reformed Traditions* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966); James E. Andrews and Joseph A. Burgess, editors, *The Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue Series III 1981-1983, An Invitation to Action: A Study of Ministry, Sacraments, and Recognition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

[31]*A Formula of Agreement*, Preface.

[32]*A Formula of Agreement*, "The Presence of Christ," 10.

> The words which our Lord Jesus Christ speaks when he offers the bread and the cup tell us what he himself gives to all who come to the supper: he, the crucified and risen Lord, permits himself to be taken in his body and blood given and shed for all, through his word of promise, with the bread and wine, and grants us participation, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, in the victory of his lordship, so that we, believing in his promise, may receive forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.[33]

A basic shift in theological thinking made these theses possible. Instead of the historic, confessional approach, which thinks in *substances*, a relational and personalistic ontology formed the basic matrix of the understanding of the Lord's Supper. Communion is not about isolated substances, not about the body and blood of Christ, but about an encounter with Christ Himself, which is the primary focus. The historic position, with its fixation on Christ's body and blood threatens to overcome what is believed to be the true nature of the Christian faith, namely, a personal relationship or encounter with the risen Christ. Body and blood are not seen as substances, but as a qualification of Christ: We encounter the entire Christ in the Lord's Supper, not solely His divine nature.

This encounter with Christ is primarily through the word. Gospel and the Lord's Supper are not qualitatively different; they give the same, only in different ways. The relationship between body and blood and bread and wine is subordinated to the giving through the word. The *Leuenberg Concord* used the term "with" to describe the relationship between Christ's somatic reality and the earthly elements. This term bears some historical ballast, because Melanchthon used it in the *Confessio Augustana Variata* to indicate some kind of connection between Christ giving Himself in body and blood with the bread and wine, though it does not in any way specify it. In the identification of bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, the *praedicatio identica* is not confessed. There is nothing in this agreement about the three passwords of a true Lutheran understanding, in harmony with the Book of Concord: *Manducatio oralis, manducatio impiorum, unio sacramentalis*. At the most, one might interpret this Leuenbergian formulation as a late fruit of the theology of

[33]Gottfried Niemeier, editor, *Lehrgespräch über das Heilige Abendmahl. Stimmen und Studien zu den Arnholdhainer Thesen der Kommission für das Abendmahlsgespräch der EKD* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), 333.

Melanchthon, who had changed his position in the 1530s, moving from a connection of Christ's body and blood with the elements to a bodily presence of Christ in the act of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. I am aware that one cannot identify the two positions, since Melanchthon was not a personalist. There is, however, a similarity in approach, in so far as the focus is directed away from the elements and their relation to body and blood.

This shift in Melanchthon's position made some of his students—they might be called here the left-wing Melanchthonians—susceptible to Calvinistic teachings, which led to their subversive work at Wittenberg and to the crypto-Calvinistic controversy. Ultimately, this controversy was formative in article VII of the Formula of Concord. A resuscitation of formulations of the late Melanchthon would effectively be a step back behind the Formula of Concord. Such a step would therefore be against the Formula of Concord.

The personalistic approach of the *Leuenberg Concord* is not altogether new. A summary of the thinking of Christoph Pezel on the question of the presence of Christ in his *True and Honest Vindication of the Preachers in Bremen* (1582) illustrates this.[34] Pezel was a Melanchthonian professor at Wittenberg, who was deposed when the "crypto-Calvinists" were overthrown. He later lived in Nassau and finally in Bremen, where his transition from Melanchthonianism to Calvinism took place. In his *True and Honest Vindication* he defended Bremen as a church that truly upheld the Augsburg Confession against the charges of heresy leveled against the city by the Lutheran archbishop of Bremen. It became, at the same time, a theological discussion regarding the Formula of Concord.

Basing his remarks on 1 Corinthians 10:16, Pezel reduced the question to "Is Christ present to men for a saving communion." Pezel eliminates the question of the presence of Christ's humanity from the beginning—it is not a meaningful question in his mind. Further, Pezel rejected a bodily presence that is at the same time hidden under the bread of the Lord's

[34]Christoph Pezel, *True and Honest Vindication of the Preachers in Bremen regarding the articles and points attributed to them, in which they are partly through inexplicable adscription, partly through distorting misinterpretation, are accused of several alleged errors and sectarian opinions, and are slandered among persons of high and low standing. As there are: I. Regarding the Person of Christ. II. Regarding Holy Baptism. III. Regarding Holy Communion. IIII. Regarding divine Election. V. Regarding Ceremonies* (in German) (no place, no publisher: Bremen, Wessel u. Glochstein), Anno M.D. LXXI.

Supper, as the Formula of Concord and his opponents taught, stating that this position lacked scriptural evidence and examples of practice in the early church. Instead, Pezel argued, the only adequate explanation of Christ's promised presence is that by which the person of Christ communicates Himself to the believer according to its humanity in the *unio sacramentalis* with the elements.[35]

The way to the *Leuenburg Concord's* compromise was open in the sixteenth century, as Pezel's example shows. However, this way was rejected by the theologians and churches of the Book of Concord, because they deemed it absolutely necessary to say that the bread is the body and the wine is the blood. They rejected such an agreement because they were convinced that such teaching was not in harmony with Scripture.

All of which leads to a rather astounding and bewildering observation: Though the Lutherans (and, of course, also the Reformed) believed what they believed because they were thoroughly convinced that this was the teaching of Scripture, there is not one essay that exegetically investigates the witness of the New Testament about the Lord's Supper in all the official dialogues between Lutherans and Reformed. Considering the fact that the Confessions bind us first to Scripture, to which these ecumenical statements also pay homage, this shows a serious lack of confessional spirit on the side of the Lutheran participants. What is emphasized on the other hand, is the christological foundation of the Lord's Supper, namely the connection of the *genus maiestaticum* and Christ's bodily presence in the Lord's Supper. That is, of course, true, but the documents almost evoke the impression that this christological dogma was the foundation of the Lord's Supper, an opinion that is rightfully rejected by Pieper as a Reformed calumny. Luther and the Lutherans believed in the real presence of Christ's body and blood not because they derived it from their Christology, but because the text of the words of institution say just that. The Lutheran doctrine rests on clear passages of Scripture, it is not a conclusion from Christology. Here the Lutheran position is simply misrepresented, and it seems as if this is due to an interest that wants to avoid discussing the question of what the New Testament actually says. In the European dialogues at least there were intensive exegetical

[35]Irene Dingel, *Concordia controversa: Die öffentliche Diskussion um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahhunderts, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte*, volume 63 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 672 and following.

discussions, and they were more honest, in so far as they led to the conclusion, that the classical Lutheran position is no longer tenable because of the new exegetical insights made possible by the historical-critical approach to Scripture.

Another point that was only casually discussed is the question of the words of institution as words of consecration. The Arnoldshain Theses and Leuenberg exclude such an understanding, which is an explicit teaching of the Formula of Concord (FC SD VII, 73-84). The only point where this topic was brought up was in the first round of dialogue, *Marburg Revisited*, where the Lutheran (!) participant, Martin Heinecken, said: "It is virtue of Christ's promise in the words of institution that he is present without making these words into a formula of consecration."[36] That may explain why the question about the words of institution having a function other than proclamation was not discussed at all (it might have led to an investigation of the difference between the sermon and the Lord's Supper). Instead, the consensus was that word and sacrament give the same. The Confessions say that they have the same effect, bestowing forgiveness of sins, but of course, there is a proprium of the Lord's Supper, that it gives the body and blood of Christ in a way the word does not.[37]

In conclusion, the Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as it is presented in *A Formula of Agreement* is, at best, deficient. What is declared to be an expression of the pure gospel and the right administration of the sacraments (which also includes the right teaching about the nature and benefit of the sacraments) differs from the teaching of the Book of Concord. Especially the definitions of the Formula of Concord, which have their origin in a fight against a calvinizing Melanchthonianism that tried to loose the connection between the body and blood of Christ and the elements in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, are not carried through.

Moreover, if the *Leuenberg Concord* denotes the binding teaching of the churches, then different accents or aspects of the Lutheran or Reformed

[36]Martin J. Heinecken, "Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church" in Empie and McCord, *Marburg Revisited*, 81-103.

[37]Apology XIII, 5: "Idem effectus est verbi et ritus, sicut praeclare dictum est ab Augustino sacramentum esse verbum visibile, quia ritus oculis accipitur et est quasi pictura verbi, idem significans, quod verbum. Quare idem est utriusque effectus." (*BSLK*, 292 and following)

tradition might be added. Sasse's statement on this point in his last comment on the *Leuenberg Concord* is correct:

> The acceptance of the Concord implies, as declared by informed places [Stellen] of the Lutherans and Reformed (e.g. Niesel) Churches, a change in the Catechisms. Neither Luther's nor the Heidelberg Catechism can retain the dogmatic rank that they used to have in church law, despite their historical importance.[38]

The Condemnations: Their Scope and Their Enduring Significance

A stumbling block on the way to a renewed relationship between Lutherans and Reformed are the condemnations in the Confessions. Whereas the Reformed do not have any condemnations of the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper in their confessions, there are specific rejections of various Reformed positions in the Book of Concord. The first is the famous "*improbant secus docentes*," "They disagree with those who teach otherwise," or, according to the German, "The contrary doctrine is therefore rejected," in article X of the Augsburg Confession. *A Common Calling* comments on it: "Only one [condemnation in the Augsburg Confession] is aimed directly at an identifiable Reformed position, in this case Zwingli's (as well as Karlstadt's and Schwenckfeld's) supposed teaching on the Supper, without mention of names."[39] Indeed, names are never mentioned in the Lutheran Confesssions, since personal condemnations were avoided on principle. As *A Common Calling* accurately states elsewhere, only teachings, not persons or even whole churches, are rejected and condemned in the Book of Concord. The question is, therefore, what positions are excluded. The strategy of *A Common Calling* is a revisionist writing of history to prove that the Reformed doctrine never was condemned. On its way to relativize the condemnations regarding the "sacramentarian" camp—to use the term

[38]"Die Annahme der Konkordie bedeutet, wie von sachkundigen Stellen der Lutherischen und Reformierten (z. B. Niesel) Kirche erklärt worden ist, eine Abänderung der Katechismen. Weder der Luther'sche noch der Heidelberger Katechismus könnten, bei aller Wertung ihrer historischen Bedeutung, die dogmatische Geltung behalten, die sie bisher kirchenrechtlich gehabt haben." Hermann Sasse, *Corpus Christi. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Abendmahlskonkordie*, (Erlangen: Verlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, 1981), 146.

[39]*A Common Calling*, 37. The enumeration of names is somehow arbitrary. Certainly AC X does not only target Zwingli, although he was the most prominent and posthumously famous theologian, but included in the number of Sacramentarians against which this article is directed were also Oekolampad, Bucer and others.

of the time of the Reformation—doubt is first cast on the scope of AC X. The "supposed teaching" of Zwingli and others is rejected. Now, historically, it is no doubt that AC X aimed at Zwingli and the Upper Germans. The efforts of Landgrave Philip of Hesse to prevent this very condemnation from being included in the Augsburg Confession, directed by his interest in a pan-Protestant alliance as a counterweight to the political power of the emperor and the Roman-Catholic powers in the Holy Roman Empire, demonstrates this. Also, the reaction of Zwingli and the Upper Germans, who tried to mediate between Zwingli and Luther, proves the point. Zwingli handed in his own confession, the *Fidei Ratio*, and the Upper Germans drafted their *Confessio Tetrapolitana*, after the Lutherans rejected their subscription to the Augsburg Confession, because their doctrine of the Lord's Supper was un-Lutheran. Historically, there can be no doubt whatsoever what doctrine was rejected in AC X: It was Zwingli's, Karlstadt's, Schwenkfeld's, and Bucer's doctrine.

What about Calvin, who came later? Was his teaching addressed by AC X? *A Common Calling* says no: "The condemnation in CA 10 may [*sic!*] have excluded Zwingli but did not address the nuanced position of Calvin and of many early Calvinist confessions, as the Formula of Concord, art. VII, assumed."[40] Of course Calvin's position was not in Melanchthon's view when he wrote the Augsburg Confession, but does the condemnation not also fit Calvin's teaching? Exactly because there are no personal condemnations, the question remains: AC X may and must be applied to Calvin as one of those who has a teaching contrary to that of AC X. After all, the fathers of Nicaea did not have to deal with modern Unitarians, but the creed itself makes it more than clear that Unitarians are outside of the community that confesses the Nicene Creed.

The question of the Formula of Concord VII is this: Are those who claim that a Calvinistic teaching is not excluded by the Augsburg Confession right or not? This was the claim of the so-called Crypto-calvinists and also of Reformed churches in Germany, who, also for political reasons, claimed to be part of the church of the Augsburg Confession. The Formula of Concord emphatically denies their claim and first states that the unaltered Augsburg Confession is the normative text. Second, it states that Luther's writings are the context in which it has to be understood, thereby tacitly excluding the option that Melanchthon's

[40]*A Common Calling*, 39

theology is the hermeneutical context of the Augustana.[41] The Formula of Concord thereby rejected an understanding that it was a legitimate Lutheran way to proceed from the Augsburg Variata to a late Melanchthonian understanding of the real presence towards a Calvinistic position—a way that quite a few disciples of Melanchthon and entire churches went. This phenomenon of the *second reformation* was an existential threat to the Lutheran church, since the Reformed claimed that they were fulfilling the Reformation, and not establishing a new church. The Formula rejected the argument that one could draw a continuous line from the Augsburg Confession to the Reformed. Therefore a statement like this is only partly true: "The Formula of Concord addressed internal issues debated within the Lutheran movement, not the external relations of Lutheran churches with others."[42] Very true, but the question was whether the Reformed position was a position *in* the Lutheran church. By excluding all Reformed positions from the Lutheran church, there is, at least, implicitly a definition of the relationship to the Reformed churches: They are outside the church of the Augsburg Confession, therefore, Lutherans and Reformed do not share fundamental, doctrinal consensus on the pure preaching of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments.

That the Formula of Concord not only influenced, but determined, the future relationship between Lutherans and Reformed is shown by the reception it received in Reformed circles. The Frankfurt Convent (September 27-28, 1578), a European gathering of the Reformed churches, dealt with the appropriate reaction to the Formula of Concord.[43] Delegates from Germany, England, Poland, Hungary, and Switzerland met to discuss an answer to the Book of Concord and resolved to write a confession against the Formula of Concord and to show in it Reformed agreement with the Augsburg Confession. This project failed but for the publication of a *Harmonia confessionum*, edited by Jean-François Salvard, Lambertus Danaeus, and Theodore Beza. The question of the condemnations was discussed in detail. Hubert Languet was commissioned to write a response to the condemnations. In his *Admonitio* he demanded the retraction of the condemnations. This shows that the Reformed churches realized that the Formula of Concord was also directed against them. This is also proven by the *Admonitio Christiana*, the

[41]FC, SD *Binding Summary 9* (Kolb and Wengert, 528).
[42]*A Common Calling, 38.*
[43]One may see also Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, 115-129.

official answer of the Reformed churches of the princely Palatinate, which was already thoroughly Reformed, unlike the electoral Palatinate, which was just then in its last Lutheran phase. Written by Zacharias Ursinus, it is a classic polemical writing against the Formula of Concord. Its publication alone shows that the Reformed were aware that the condemnations were not solely directed to theologians in the Lutheran Church, but also that the Reformed doctrine was rejected.

In a summary, *A Common Calling* was only possible by a redefinition of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper on the Lutheran side, which is, in essence, a toning down of the statements of the Book of Concord. A hierarchy of norms was established, where the Trinity comes first, then follows Christ, the living gospel, the Scriptures, the historic creeds, and then the Augsburg Confession, and the other parts of the Book of Concord as "other valid interpretations of the faith of the Church," a different understanding of doctrine is established.[44] The Book of Concord is not, as it claims for itself, an exposition of the one true faith in a specific historical setting, its content true doctrine (not a human interpretation), divine and unchangeable. But it is, instead, merely a collection of "interpretations" of the Christian faith of varying authority (the ecumenical creeds have more authority than the Augsburg Confession, and others). These interpretations have to be checked and reinterpreted in different historical settings, and because of their historical limitations, cannot be binding for all times. The Book of Concord becomes then a witness, with which we dialogue, and which is valuable because it witnesses to the gospel, but as a human witness one cannot say: *Haec dixit dominus* ("Thus saith the Lord"). This is obviously much closer to the "pious relativism," as Barth has put it, of the Reformed view of confessions, than the classical Lutheran view.

The Confessions in the LCMS

This summary may not be surprising to many. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was not a part of *A Common Calling*, although she participated in the foregoing Lutheran-Reformed dialogues. Dissenting statements and abstentions in votes showed the increasing cleave between the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches on the one hand, and the LCMS on the other. Nevertheless, in the first round of

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[44]*A Common Calling*, 33.

dialogue, whose results were published in *Marburg Revisited,* LCMS participants Martin Franzmann and Herbert Bouman did not object to the following statement: "As a result of our studies and discussions we see no insuperable obstacles to pulpit and altar fellowship and, therefore, we recommend to our parent bodies that they encourage their constitutent churches to enter into discussions looking forward to intercommunion and the fuller recognition of one's another ministry."[45]

The resolution passed at the last convention of the LCMS, which declares that she no longer regards the ELCA to be an orthodox church demonstrates the growing chasm between the two largest Lutheran bodies in the United States. A characteristic feature of orthodoxy is to teach the faith once delivered to the saints, as it is taught and confessed by the church, which includes the Book of Concord. But what about the LCMS? Do we have the right to be self-congratulatory? To ask the question is, of course, to negate it. By saying that I do not want to deprecate in any way all the faithful Christians, congregations, and pastors who sincerely uphold the confessions in the LCMS. The LCMS has been a beacon of Lutheran orthodoxy, and it is the largest church left in which heresy has not been declared to be official doctrine or expression of a healthy pluralism. But, coming from somebody from the outside, these remarks might be allowed. There are also problems in the LCMS, and they did not originate in the sixties nor were they caused by the baby boomers. Hermann Sasse observed in 1951 in his article "Confession and Scripture in the Missouri Synod": "The Lutheran Confessions no longer play the role in the life and in the theological thinking of the Missouri Synod, in fact, of all of American Lutheranism by far which they played during the 19th century."[46]

Sasse criticizes a mindset that takes the confessions for granted, that no longer seeks to demonstrate their biblical foundation, that no longer applies the Confessions to the current theological questions, but rather produces new theological documents, like the *Brief Statement,* which then—for all practical purposes—take the place of the Confessions. He points to the strange lack of confessional reflection in liturgical matters, so that, for example, in the case of the debate on the introduction of an

[45]Empie and McCord, *Marburg Revisited,* 191.

[46]Hermann Sasse, "Confession and Scripture in the Missouri-Synod" in Herman Sasse, *Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays,* edited by Jeffrey J. Kloha and Ronald R. Feuerhahn (Saint Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1995), 205.

epiclesis, the theology of consecration in the Formula of Concord VII is not considered.

Sasse sees another area of conspicuous absence of the Confessions in the debate between the Statementarians and those represented by the *Confessional Lutheran.* In *A Statement* there is no reference to the Confessions, instead of that there is mentioned "the great Lutheran principle of the inerrancy, certainty, and all sufficiency of Holy Writ" and a general appeal to every article of the "historic Lutheran position."[47] The great deficiency Sasse sees in *A Statement* is that the question of church fellowship is not discussed as a dogmatic issue:

> By moving the whole problem into the area of ethics and pastoral theological casuistry (how does the individual pastor, or the individual Christian, or the individual congregation act in a given case on the basis of Scripture?), the "ecumenical" Missourians overlook the fact that the problem is dogmatic and theological, and therefore cannot be solved with the means of pastoral care alone.[48]

There *The Confessional Lutheran* was right, when they saw that a supposed ethical reform had become a dogmatic one. The problem is on both sides that in a time of crisis and change, when traditional concepts are challenged, there is no further and new examination, which leads either to a new proof or a revision, but there is either an agenda shaped by politics (pan-Lutheran union), or ethics (less judgmental and more loving), or a mere repetition of traditional statements, without being able to show their confessional and biblical foundation.

Reading this assessment of Missouri after more than fifty years, one cannot miss the parallels to the present situation. The discussion on worship is, if anything, much more heated than in 1951. Those who favor a diversity in worship and "new" forms of worship (that are rather modern forms of camp revivals) invoke AC VII and FC X. However, they adopt a proof-texting method that avoids the theological issue—do these forms really serve the pure preaching and proper administration of the sacraments or do they carry a theology in themselves that is alien to Lutheran theology?

The question of church fellowship has troubled Missouri Synod since the middle part of the twentieth century. The present controversy

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[47]Sasse, "Confession and Scripture," 205.
[48]Sasse, "Confession and Scripture," 213.

highlights the perpetual struggle to find an adequate understanding of what the condemnations in our confessions mean, and that these condemnations are not a sad sign of the lack of Christian love of the people in the fourth, fifth, or sixteenth centuries. Such condemnations are a characteristic feature of the church of all times, because a church that no longer condemns false teachings and has communion in sacred things with heretics, is thereby betraying her Lord. The spirit of our time and others, which is permeated by a totally relativistic mindset, is inherently inimical to confessional Christianity in any form. To uphold the Confessions not only on paper, but to allow them to form the life of the church means, for example, to practice closed communion. One of the great challenges is to teach this practice today in congregations, so that they understand that this is not expression of a loveless, judgmental, and/or sectarian mindset (the LCMS as a kind of very exclusive country club), but an integral part of the institution of Christ, and that open communion is not a sign of love, but rather of doctrinal and pastoral indifference. Sasse once remarked that every church that gave up closed communion consequently lost the doctrine of the real presence. That is only logical, because, after all, it is up to you, what you think, and to which church you belong. It does not matter in the end, because what is important is your personal relationship to Jesus, abstracted from any ecclesiological context, void of doctrinal content.

A third area of theological debate where Missouri's confessional stand is challenged today is the question of the office of the ministry. The ongoing saga of the Wichita amendment to Augsburg Confession XIV shows a church that is, to say the least, deeply confused about the doctrine of the call.[49] What makes a pastor a pastor? Obviously not the

[49]At the Synodical convention in Wichita 1989, in Resolution 3-05B, the Missouri Synod invested the "Certified Professional Church Workers, Lay" with the duties to preach the word, administer the sacraments, and administer the keys *without* a regular call. The reasoning was, that AC XIV does not apply to exceptional situations (Convention Proceedings, 57th Regular convention The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Wichita, Kansas, July 7-14, 1989, 111-116). In 1995 the convention adopted Resolution 3-07A, which urged all lay ministers to seek ordination, failing which their service should be terminated (Convention Proceedings, 59th Regular convention The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Saint Louis, Missouri, July 15-21, 1995, 120-121). In 2001, Resolution 3-08B reaffirmed the Wichita Resolution, thereby effectively abolishing the Resolution of 1995 (Convention Proceedings, 60th Regular convention The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Saint Louis, Missouri, July 14-20, 1989, 138-139).

call or appointment to preach the word and administer the sacrament, because then there would be no layministers and licensed deacons in Missouri. The distinction between the priesthood of all believers and the divinely established ministry is blurred, and the traditional polity of the Missouri Synod is not to blame for that. The problem, again, lies in a general lack of formation through the Confessions. In this confessional vacuum, egalitarian ideas rooted in American evangelicalism stream in. Another variety of the destruction of the ministry is a mixing of the two kingdoms, so that suddenly democracy becomes a theological value.

Where Sasse worried that the *Brief Statement* would overshadow the Confessions, today the issue is, what governs the theological debate of the LCMS: CTCR documents and Handbook regulations or Scripture and Confessions? Certainly, such an opposition might seem to be a caricature and misleading. And, although I sadly miss in our church calendar December 10, the anniversary of the burning of the canon law by Luther in front of the Elster gate in Wittenberg, I by no means want to condemn all and any form of church law. In this world we must have it. Nevertheless, when theological issues are no longer decided by Scripture and its correct exposition, the Confessions, but by other documents, however good and orthodox they might be in themselves, then the question of the reality of confessional subscription must be posed. There is always the danger that a church becomes a self-referential system; unfortunately, Christ would then be outside of this system.

Conclusion

The new translation of the Book of Concord is a good occasion for a renewed and thorough study of this book to which we all pledged our allegiance. The Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions, over the twenty-five years of its existence, continues to do its share to stimulate and foster the study and application of the Confessions in the life of the church today. I want to mention, at least, the book by George Kraus, late professor of this seminary, *The Pastor at Prayer*, which, to my knowledge, is the only devotional book that includes a schedule for the reading of the Lutheran confessions.[50] A critical look at our ecclesial

[50]George Kraus, *The Pastor at Prayer* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983). It was reprinted by Concordia Theological Seminary Press and is available from the Concordia Theological Seminary Bookstore. Henry E. Jacobs did something similar in arranging readings from the Book of Concord for Sundays and festivals according to the church year (Jacobs, editor, *The Book of Concord*, vol. 2. [Philadelphia:

environment must not lead us into despair or into self-righteousness, if we remember the words spoken to Peter after his confession: The gates of Hell shall not prevail.

Sasse saw something lacking in Missouri's orthodoxy:

> The great rediscovery of the Confession of the church which was the most joyous experience of the German Lutherans in the years between the two world wars was not shared by our American brethren in the faith. For this reason even where, as is the case in Missouri, the unshakable authority of the Confession is held in complete earnest, there is nevertheless lacking in the affirmation of the Confession the great joy which should accompany genuine confessional loyalty. To confess, ἐξομολογήσεται, *confiteri* always includes praise to God. Therefore Luther rightly counted the "*Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur* ..." among the Confessions.
>
> Are we mistaken if we miss this joy with our brethren in the Missouri Synod when they speak of the Confession? Are we mistaken in believing that their understanding of the doctrine is wholly orthodox, but only in the sense of correct doctrine, while real orthodoxy includes a joyous praise to God? In the case of the old Missouri of Walther it is still plainly noticeable that here even as in the classical time of Orthodoxy dogma and liturgy belong together—how greatly St. Louis formerly influenced liturgy in America! If it were still so today would not then orthodox Lutheranism in particular have something of importance to say to the liturgical movement in America?[51]

Orthodoxy is both: the right doctrine *and* the right praise of God. The Confessions' aim is to lead us so that we may join into the confession of the church catholic and thereby praise God with our confession and learn to praise Him properly in worship, first and foremost by receiving Christ's gift. All polemics have just this goal: To fight the deadly cacophony of heterodoxy in Christianity, so that there might be the harmonious preaching of the gospel among us.

G. W. Frederick, 1893], 423-425).

[51]Sasse, "Confession and Scripture," 207-208.

Theological Observer

Body, Soul, and Spirit

Francis Pieper, in his *Christian Dogmatics* (1:476-477), devotes only about one full page to a discussion of man's constitutional nature as body and soul. Historically, Christians have generally agreed that a human being consists of a body and a soul, hardly a point of contention deserving extensive discussion. However, when human beings are regarded as little more than animals with a highly-developed reason, the issue of the soul's existence takes on much more importance.

Belief in the soul's existence is not uniquely Christian. Egyptians believed that the soul lived on after death and built pyramids to provide an exit for kings. Plato and other Greek philosophers held that the body was expendable in the afterlife, but they did believe that the soul survived. Philip Melanchthon and Jonathan Edwards wrote philosophical essays demonstrating its existence. Widespread belief in the soul's existence after death might provide a reason to place this tenet in the category of natural revelation. However, the Christian doctrine of the body and soul is derived from the Bible. We live on after death. Saints in heaven and earth comprise one redeemed community. Those who die in Christ are "the company of heaven" of the proper preface of the Holy Communion liturgy. There is rational life between death and resurrection.

In the 1950s a controversy over the soul broke out at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis and the LCMS passed the appropriate resolutions affirming its existence. A professor may have misread Oscar Cullmann's monograph, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Body?* He held that the resurrection of the dead was more prominent in the New Testament than the soul's existence after death. This was not an either or question, even if the title gave this impression. At the death of parent or a spouse, the survival of her/his soul is of immediate importance to the survivors. The body's resurrection is uniquely Christian. When the controversy was swirling around in the LCMS, a debate about prayers for the souls of the dead arose on the same campus. Lutherans have prayers for bodies in their committal rites, but not for their souls, whose fate is already determined. One controversy canceled out the other. Prayers for souls of the dead had no purpose, if they did not exist. Controversies over biblical inspiration and inerrancy overshadowed ones about the soul. Today no one in the LCMS questions the soul's survival after death or suggests prayers for the dead. Paul taught that the dead are with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:14) and the Athanasian Creed says that, "For that just as the reasonable soul and flesh are one, so God and man are one Christ."

Contemporary denial of the soul may be laid at the feet of Charles Darwin whose theory of evolution held that human beings were only highly advanced animals. Hence, an animal's life has the same intrinsic worth of a human being. Such a philosophy allows for abortion. At the other end of the spectrum is the reincarnation belief of Hinduism in which one soul goes from body to body and even into those of animals. A swatted fly could be an acquaintance who, after death, was relegated to a lower level on the food chain. Again, we come to the same conclusion by a different route that man and animals are intrinsically the same.

Genesis, from which the Christian doctrine of man is first derived, gives man and woman a higher place in creation. It exists for their benefit and they have dominion over it (1:26-27). God breathes into man and he becomes a living soul (2:7). Human beings are related to God in a way other creatures are not.

If man has a body and soul (dichotomy), is there any possibility that he has a spirit as a third part (trichotomy)? Pieper favors the traditional view of body and soul, but he notes some theologians, including some of the older ones, teach trichotomy. He references the Baier-Walther *Compendium*[1] and notes that trichotomists rely chiefly on the words of Mary in the Magnificat that her soul magnifies the Lord and her spirit rejoices in God her Savior (Luke 1:46-47). Pieper argues that this is a Hebrew parallelism in which the second line repeats the thought of the first but with different words (1:476). Just as spirit and soul refer to man's spiritual or rational nature, so Lord and God refer to one Deity. If spirit and soul refer to two separate parts in human beings, as the trichotomists hold, then Lord and God would have to refer to two deities, a position that no Christian can hold. Remove the parallelism and that is the necessary result. One cannot have it both ways.

Dichotomy is the favored view of Lutheran, conservative Protestant, and Roman Catholic theologians. Genesis speaks only of the creation of man's body from the ground, into which God breathes his soul. No third "thing" is given to Adam. Ecclesiastes says that a man's body returns to the ground and his spirit returns to God who gave it (12:7). No mention is made of the fate of a third thing. These traditional arguments for dichotomy are convincing. However, while one may dismiss trichotomy as mere speculation, this teaching can have dangerous outcomes. Baier-Walther notes that Manicheans and such Reformation era enthusiasts as the Schwenckfelders held to the body-soul-spirit view (1:92).

Without a credible discussion of trichotomy in contemporary dogmatics, it is hard to engage the issue. A rare, lengthy presentation of trichotomy is provided in the April 2002 issue of *Affirmation & Critique*, a biannual theological journal published by Carol Streams Ministries in Anaheim, California, in an article by Witness Lee entitled "Faith, Regeneration and the New Creation." This may not be the traditional view of trichotomy, if there indeed can be one, but it is thorough. Lee holds man is created with a body and a soul and also a spirit,

[1]Johann Wilhelm Baier, *Joh. Guilielmi Baieri Compendium theologiae positivae: adjectis notis amplioribus, quibus doctrina orthodoxa ad [paideian] academicam explicatur atque ex Scriptura S. eique innixi rationibus theologicis confirmatur/denuo edendum curavit Carol. Ferd. Guil. Walther* (Sancti Ludovici: ex officina Synodi Missouriensis Lutheranae [Luth. Concordia-Verlag], 1879), 1:91-92.

which stands in need of regeneration. Even Adam's sinless spirit needed regeneration. With only a body and soul, he had "only the created life" and he was "without an active spirit." His created imperfection needed to be completed. Completion would come when his spirit would be made alive by the Holy Spirit. Only then would he become a perfect human being. Then in this regeneration, God and man would be mingled in what Lee calls "a marvelous mystery." This spirit life is also called "the new creation" and "the new spirit." Since regeneration takes places in the spirit and not in the body and soul, it is the primary doctrine and creation, justification, and resurrection are secondary. As soon as a Christian receives "the new spirit," he no longer "need(s) outward rules and teachings." Regeneration in the spirit, the third part to which the Holy Spirit is joined, is as irreversible as physical birth. God dwells permanently in the regenerated spirit. Since "the seed of God" is now in the spirit, moral perfection becomes attainable.

Lee's view that Adam, in his created state, needed regeneration is, for most of us, a novel view, but this is not the end of it. Like Adam, Christ was born with a body and soul and at his resurrection, he was born again (regenerated), so he also could be body-soul-spirit. This view resembles, but is not identical to, Apollinarianism, which held that man was body-soul-spirit and, in the case of Christ, the spirit was replaced by his divine logos. This view also resembles ancient Gnosticism, which saw a divine spark in the "enlightened." Since Christ experiences a kind of moral advancement in his resurrection by a regeneration, Lee's view might fit under Adoptionism. Another novel and unexplained element in Lee's position is that faith is said to be Christ himself. This might follow from defining regeneration in the spirit by the Holy Spirit as the indwelling of God. Trichotomy should not take up much of our time, but when a rare view is so thoroughly presented, it is hard to ignore it.

David P. Scaer

Proof Text or No Text?

"Proof texting" is one of those unexamined theological taboos that invites universal disapproval. Our disdain for "proof texting" is on par with our views about spousal abuse, as in, "When did you stop beating your wife?" Who could support such a thing? "Proof texting? Not me. I'm strictly against it!" However, if we examine "proof texting," which part are we against? Are we against having "proof" for our theological position, or are we opposed to being bound to the "text"?

In her recent *Authority Vested,* Mary Todd expresses a similar disdain for proof texts: "In its dependence on repetition of selective ('proof') texts to support its proscriptions on women's service, Missouri further aligns itself to a fundamentalist use of scripture. Such citation of authoritative texts thereby becomes a means of ending discussion, because of the authority inherent in the phrase, 'Thus says the Lord...,' which inhibits alternative viewpoints" (271). Missouri is once again being her worst, fundamentalistic self by thwarting everyone's desire for self-expression with selective proof texts.

Todd is unhappy about the use of Scripture texts speaking of women's role in the church to provide scriptural basis on women's role in the church. What are the alternatives? Is the theologian to use texts that have nothing to do with the controverted issues? Perhaps texts speaking of the meaning of baptism should be used to silence those speaking of women's role in the church, as is actually done in some circles.

One wonders what the alternatives are to either proof or texts. Maybe an arithmetical methodology would help. For example, we could count up the texts speaking of women. If Scripture required female silence in the church, say, only four times, we might be able to ignore these injunctions. However, what would happen if we could find seven or ten or twelve texts, would they then no longer be proof texts? Why would they be weighty enough to respond to this issue? What kind of texts would they be then—critical mass texts? Too-many-to-ignore texts? *Schriftganze*? Or just texts we only happen to like better? The Apostles' Creed would need some serious emendation if this theological method would be perpetrated on it. The *descensus* has only one of those pesky "proof texts," far too few by just about any standard.

The classic defense of using texts that treat the actual topics under discussion is in Martin Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*. "Just as all the dogmas of the church and the individual articles of faith have their own foundation in certain passages of Scripture where they are clearly treated and explained, so also the true and genuine meaning of the doctrines themselves should rightly be sought and developed accurately on the basis of these passages."[1]

The breezy appeal to "an interpretation which rests on the total testimony rather than on isolated texts" (Theodore Tappert, cited in Todd, 271), just will not do. Remember that cheery evangelism bromide: "Evangelism is everybody's job"? Well, if it's everybody's job, it really is nobody's. If all texts are the basis for our theology, then no texts are the basis for our theology, and therein lies the rub. At bottom the attack on "proof texts" is about the authority of the texts themselves.

One cannot dismiss texts merely because they are called "proof texts." They should be rejected if they do not treat of the issue under discussion. However, this requires proof rather than the intellectually bankrupt complaint that they are "proof texts." Proof texts are a problem when they do not prove the point at issue. Let us engage them on their own merits, rather than just derisively dismissing them. A proof from the word of God should hardly be dismissed.

[1]Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, translated by J. A. O. Preus (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 31.

Certainly, texts should not be ripped out of *the* text (what hermeneuticians usually call context). If they are violently extracted from the text, they only prove the ignorance of those who use them. The texts of Scripture will hang together, or they will hang separately.

The dislike for "proof" is characteristic of postmodern theology, in which all theology is just a subcategory of politics, radical or otherwise. If we just campaign long enough for our particular theology *du jour*, we might get our own way.

But when God speaks he might be inhibiting "alternative viewpoints." What are alternative viewpoints here? Is this alternative, as in "alternative lifestyles?" So maybe God should just sit down and be quiet while we determine what He ought to believe. Could we picture Moses campaigning with God about Torah, "Hey, God! Don't squelch alternative viewpoints!"? Finally, there is only faith and unfaith. There is no middling ground *coram Deo*, where the theologian must always stand. One can only listen to or ignore the word of the eternal God.

Proof texts better stand, because a poor sinner like me puts his trust in them. God speaks. The text conveys the gifts. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst" (1 Timothy 1:15). When will I stop proof texting? When I stop being a sinner and when God stops speaking.

Scott R. Murray
Memorial Lutheran Church
Houston, Texas

The New Fundamentalism

" A theologian of the cross calls a thing what it is."
(Thesis 21 of the Heidelberg Disputation)

In a remarkable irony, critics of a literal interpretation of Scripture have become perpetrators of a new fundamentalism. That new fundamentalism approaches the Lutheran Confessions with a hermeneutic that goes like this: as long as the Confessions do not explicitly mention a subject the church is welcome to teach whatever it wants about that subject. This hermeneutic was used in the 1960s and 1970s, when it was contended that the Confessions did not expressly call Scripture the word of God. If that was true (and it was not), the church was free to teach what it wanted about the divine character of Scripture. Now, this new fundamentalism would say that since the Lutheran Confessions do not forbid female ordination in explicit terms, the church is free to teach whatever it wants in the matter.

Those who reject the church's practice of closed communion use the same argumentation. Since the Lutheran Confessions do not mention closed communion in express terms, therefore, the stewards of the mysteries are free to give the sacrament to any person they want.

This interpretative method is a-historical, completely ignoring the historical situation in which the Lutheran Confessions came to life. That the Lutheran Confessions do not directly teach closed communion is a witness to the fact that closed communion was no issue within any of the confessional communities in the sixteenth century. The actual practice of the Reformation era churches indicates that closed communion was a given. Perhaps it does not matter what the practice of communion fellowship along confessional-doctrinal lines is actually called. It maybe a purely prudential issue. The fact is that the Lutheran confessional witness presupposes those church and communion fellowship boundaries. The simplest way to denominate this has been "closed communion."

The church teaches the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, although, as our fundamentalist friends on the other side of the fence are always glad to point out, the word "Trinity" is never found in the Bible. The church confesses the *homoousion* because it reflected the teaching of Scripture itself on the incarnation. Both the terms are so deeply imbedded in the church's teaching as to become matters of confession (FC X). They both carry the freight often conveyed by "theological shorthand."

Perhaps the carping and quibbling about the terms should lead us to conclude that the term "closed communion" should become a matter of confession. However, this should be no issue. It would be no issue as long as the proponents of a communion fellowship that ignores confessional boundaries would recognize that their practice is at variance from the historic Lutheran practice as derived from the Lutheran confessional witness. It matters not a wit that the Lutheran Confessions do not use the term "closed communion," unless we would prefer to be "new fundamentalists." Now wouldn't that be ironic?

Scott Murray
Memorial Lutheran Church
Houston, Texas

Book Reviews

***Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?* By Jonathan Wells. Washington, District of Columbia: Regnery Publishing, 2000. 338 Pages. $28.00.**

It is common knowledge that most biology textbooks present the theory of evolution as a well-established fact. This places the Christian student in a difficult position. He is torn between evolution, presented as pure science, and the Scriptures, which speak of creation by a good and gracious God. In recent years, a significant number of well-written books have documented strong evidence of design in nature that clearly points to a creator. *Icons of Evolution* uses a complementary approach as the author analyzes the commonly offered proofs of evolutionary theory.

Jonathan Wells serves a most useful purpose in that he not only critically analyzes the alleged proofs of Darwinism, but he also reveals the enormous bias in favor of evolution that exists in America, a bias solidly in favor of the theory and against anyone rash enough to point out its considerable shortcomings. The author is well qualified to evaluate the alleged evidence for Darwinism. He holds a Ph.D. in molecular biology from the University of California at Berkely. He also earned a Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale. His book, however, does not enter into religious topics.

The "icons" of evolution that Wells examines are the classical "proofs" of evolution commonly found in biology textbooks. Some of the icons analyzed are the following:

1) The 1953 Miller-Urey experiment attempting to demonstrate how lightning acting upon the gases in a primitive atmosphere might have produced the building blocks of living cells.

2) The hypothetical evolutionary tree of life constructed from fossil and molecular evidence.

3) Haeckel's pictures of young embryos supposedly proving that amphibians, reptiles, birds, and humans descended from a fish-like animal.

4) Archaeopteryx, a fossil bird claimed to be the missing link between reptiles and modern birds.

Ten in all, the icons of evolution are the most popular proofs advanced to support Darwin's theory.

Well's thesis is that all of these famous icons "in some way or another misrepresent the truth." He goes on to state that "Some of these icons present assumptions or hypotheses as though they were observed facts. . . . Others conceal raging controversies among biologists that have far-reaching implications for evolutionary theory. Worst of all, some are directly contrary to well-established scientific evidence" (7).

In pointing out the weaknesses of these evolutionary icons, Wells writes in language that the non-scientist can readily understand. However, he undergirds his arguments with hundreds of well-documented sources. One by one, he shows the weakness of proof for evolution based on these famous icons of evolution. The following are samples of his conclusions:

1) It is generally admitted today that the Miller-Urey experiment did not really simulate the earth's primitive atmosphere and failed to demonstrate how life's chemical building blocks originated.
2) The actual fossil evidence does not support Darwin's expectation that it would reveal a "Tree of Life" with complex life forms springing from simpler ones. Instead, fossils from the Cambrian period (supposedly 500-600 million years old) do the opposite. Wells writes, "Instead of starting with one or a few species that diverged gradually over millions of years into families, then orders, then classes, then phyla, the Cambrian starts with many fully formed phyla and classes of animals. In other words, the highest levels of the biological hierarchy appeared right at the start" (35).
3) Haeckel's drawing of vertebrate embryos: Biologists now admit, as does the well-known evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould, that Haeckel's drawings are "characterized by inaccuracies and outright falsification" (92). Nevertheless, some versions of these fakes are still to be found in almost every modern textbook dealing with evolution.

In similar fashion, Wells tells the whole truth about each of the ten icons of evolution. Finally, he comes to the most interesting and important—human fossils. Again, there is no evidence that man arose from a more primitive form of creature. The author introduces an evaluation of the situation by Henry Gee, chief science writer for the highly-respected journal *Nature*. Gee regards each primate fossil as "an isolated point, with no knowable connection with any other given fossil, and all float around in a sea of gaps . . . to take a line of fossils and claim they represent a lineage is not a scientific hypothesis that can be tested, but an assertion that carries the same validity as a bedtime story—amusing, perhaps even instructive, but not scientific" (220).

Among the many other outstanding aspects of this critique is this striking note, "The truth is that a surprising number of biologists quietly doubt or reject some of the grander claims of Darwin's evolution. But—at least in America—they must keep their mouths shut or risk condemnation, marginalization, and eventual expulsion from the scientific community" (239).

One final observation: It is important to realize that change in life forms does not equate with evolution. Change or modification does occur due to mutations. Wells writes, "No rational person denies the reality of change or modification. . . . The question is whether modification accounts for the origin of new species—in fact, of every species" (5). This is exactly in line with the Scriptural doctrine of creation, which does not rule out change within the created "Kind" (Hebrew "Min").

This is a book that should be read by all pastors and brought to the attention of our young people in high school, college, and university. It provides a welcome and authoritative antidote to evolutionistic propaganda.

Paul A. Zimmerman
Traverse City, Michigan

***The Task of Theology Today*. Edited by Victor Pfitzner and Hilary Regan. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998. 224 Pages. Paper.**

The Task of Theology Today is a collection of essays delivered at an initial colloquium in Brisbane, Australia to explore the last frontier of ecumenical theology, namely the doctrine of God. Editors Pfitzner and Regan inform the reader that the overall theme for the lectures was the role of doctrine and dogma in dialogue. However, the most significant issue was, as pointed out by Pfitzner and Regan, the insistence that the dialogue must include both the non-Christian and Christian. Therefore, belief in God was no longer a barrier to ecumenism. Still, in an apparent contradiction, the Australian Theological Forum, organizers of this event, affirmed a belief in the Trinitarian formulas found in the Nicene Creed.

While space does not permit an in-depth treatment of all eight lectures, the work as a whole deals with two major themes. The first theme is for an ever-changing definition of dogma that would be vital for today. Colin E. Gunton argues that while "dogma" is vital to the church, theologians must deal with dogma's inherent position between limitation and freedom without identifying it with either. Carl E. Braaten maintains that the difficulty with dogma comes from a radical pluralism where experience is the source and criterion for theology. Braaten's remedy is to bridge the gap between exegetical theology and dogma by making the former the basis for the latter. Primate Harkianakis of the Orthodox Church of Australia defines the word "dogma" in a three-fold sense, namely "Will of God," teachings of synods of the church, and experience.

The second main theme seeks to identify a true ecumenical philosophy. The role played by such philosophers as Locke, Rousseau, and Kierkegaard is basic to understanding the current attack upon, and ultimate death of, systematic theology. Philosophies and certain dogmas are compared and contrasted. An example of this is Susan Patterson's view that Postmodernism is the possible ally of the dogma of creation. Another example of the interaction of philosophy and dogma is Denis Minns' claim that the theologian of today must be like Justin Martyr, defending dogma, while at the same time understanding its limitation. Such a limitation, for example, would call for the theologian to understand the dogma of the virgin birth in its context as part of Irenaeus' defense against

Gnosticism. Apart from that context, argues Minns, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is not fundamental to his divinity.

The Task of Theology Today initiates an ecumenical effort to bring together theologians and philosophers that seeks to allow each group speak to each other and not around each other. The colloquium from which the book is derived revealed a consensus on the negative, but a lack of any affirmative. Tersely stated, this book does not provide unifying answers to ecumenical pursuits, but rather suggests philosophical questions theologians should pursue. However, such a statement contradicts Luther when he said, "The most important art of a future theologian is to distinguish very carefully between the wisdom of reason and that of the knowledge of God's Word. People who confuse these two things are mixing heaven and earth" (SL 22, 1840, 218).

Howard Whitecotton III
Saint Mark Lutheran Church
Pendleton, Indiana

***Reading the Gospel*. By John S. Dunne. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.**

The title of Dunne's book creates great anticipation for preachers and teachers of the Christian faith. His literate and personal introduction hints at something profound. The number, breadth, and variety of sources are astounding: the Koran, Tolkein, de Chardin, and still more. He even references composer John Cage, who surprised music lovers in 1952 by sitting at the piano and playing nothing for four minutes and thirty-three seconds! Unfortunately, just as many music lovers left Cage's silent performance bewildered and disappointed, readers of Dunne's book will be disappointed because of its silence about the gospel.

Dunne seeks to make a profound point about the gospel. He wants to introduce readers to the art of *lectio divina*, "divine reading," letting the words speak to the heart" (vii). He journeys through world literature, relates examples of personal insight, and challenges the reader to hear the echoes of spiritual discovery. He attempts to invoke a fresh experience of the mystical love of God proclaimed in the Gospel according to Saint John. However, the book focuses all too little on the gospel itself. The ears strain to hear the voice of Jesus among the numerous quotations. They experience virtual silence.

Readers who desire a taste of *lectio divina* from a learned practitioner will probably enjoy Dunne's book. Preachers and teachers who seek support for their calling should buy a good cup of coffee, find a silent corner, and just read the gospel.

Edward Engelbrecht
Washington, Missouri

Mark. **By R. T. France. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002. 719 Pages.**

R. T. France's *Mark* does not fit the stereotype of the modern biblical commentary. "I have tried to write the sort of commentary I like to use," France explains. The author has purposefully written a commentary on the Gospel of Mark, rather than "a commentary on commentaries on Mark" (1). He further adds, "I have commented on matters which I regard as needing or deserving comment, and not necessarily on those which have been the traditional concerns of other commentators" (1). To be sure, such an approach has certain appeal. A biblical commentary can become so shaped by scholarly conversation that the voice of the commentator is muted, and the actual text under consideration becomes secondary. France wants the reader to approach the text without distractions. France also takes the same type of focused approach when considering the text of Mark as it relates to Matthew and Luke. Rather than ask how Mark either influences or is influenced by the other Gospels in each pericope, France attempts to treat the text of Mark as it stands. He finds justification for this procedure in the work of J. A. T. Robinson, who held that the Gospels are the products of a complex oral and literary transmission within the church, and therefore cannot be so neatly categorized according to schemes of literary dependence.

That said, readers do want to know where a particular commentator stands within the scholarly tradition. For most, a commentary should serve not only as conduit for one person's particular wisdom, but also as a reference guide and map, which orientates the reader to the biblical book as well as to various lines of interpretation. Given France's fresh approach, the success of his commentary depends greatly upon whether the reader finds France's own interests and insights particularly compelling. Furthermore, one wishes that France would address issues in Mark, especially as they relate to the other Gospels. Sometimes, the question of literary dependence begs to be answered. Why, for instance, does Mark feel content to begin his Gospel without a story of Jesus' birth, and why does he end with such a truncated story of resurrection? Does Mark omit the Sermon on the Mount because he considers such material unimportant, because he did not know it, or because it had already been told and did not fit his theological agenda? France has little to say on such matters.

France, interestingly, outlines Mark as a drama in three acts. Following the Prologue, in which Mark introduces Jesus (1:14-8:21), the book is divided as follows: Act One: Galilee (1:14-8:21); Act Two: On the Way to Jerusalem (8:22-10:52); and Act 3: Jerusalem (11:1-16:8). Whether or not one finds France's outline compelling, it does capture the dramatic nature of the second Gospel, with its sometimes abrupt transitions, and stunning end.

What France misses in his outline, it seems, is the sacramental drama that is played out within the narrative, namely, that Jesus' life begins with baptism and ends with the Supper. France introduces Jesus' baptism under the non-descriptive heading "The Prologue." Again, tellingly, the Last Supper is subsumed under the more generic heading "Last Hours with the Disciples (14:12-42)." France does a good job of explaining some of the Old Testament background for baptism and the Lord's Supper, but never asks how their prominent place within the early church might have affected the way in which Mark shaped his gospel narrative, or, on the other hand, how Mark's Gospel might have helped reinforce the church's understanding of the sacraments.

Too often France fails to address the deeper meaning of Mark's text, and scarcely considers the churchly significance of the Gospel. As noted above, Mark begins with a concentrated baptismal emphasis, which surely would have been of great interest to his baptized readers. Jesus is preceded by John, whose ministry is distinctively baptismal (1:4, 5, 8). Mark explicitly states that John preached "a baptism of repentance" (1:4). France, however, dismisses the text's clear reference to John's baptismal preaching, "It is clear from all the accounts we have of John both in the NT and in Josephus that his focus was rather on repentance in the face of the threat of divine judgment, and his object was not simply to get people baptized, but to call together the repentant and restored people of God for the imminent eschatological crisis" (65). It may be clear to France, drawing from other documents, that John did not have baptism as the object of his teaching. However, if he were simply commenting on the text of Mark, as he proposed, he could not come to the conclusion that he does.

In sum, there is much to appreciate about France's commentary, which is refreshing in approach and conservative in theology. This commentator will surely consult it in the future. Still, one waits for a commentary that is both conservative and churchly.

Finally, a minor note. France has chosen not to offer an English translation of Mark. While one admires his desire to focus on the Greek text, this reader would have liked a translation, at least for the sake of convenience.

Peter J. Scaer

***Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England.* Edited by John Shinners and William J. Dohar. Volume 4 in *Notre Dame Texts in Medieval Culture.* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998. 331 pages.**

Why would anyone other than an historian want to know what was happening once upon a time in the parishes of medieval England? This book provides the answer. It contains a wealth of insight into an era too often depicted as dark, a darkness that stems largely from our ignorance of them. This book sheds not a little light on that darkness, into the shadows of everyday life in some of the parishes of the Western church before the Reformation. This research benefits more than medieval scholars and students, for, like all compelling historical accounts, it draws the reader out of his own age and into another, thereby freeing us from the prejudices and misconceptions embedded in our own.

What is especially compelling and striking about this book is that it is not written by historians, only translated and compiled by them. John Shinners and William J. Dohar, both professors at the University of Notre Dame, have not written a history of medieval England. Rather, they have left the interpretation of raw data for the reader, themselves performing only the editorial duty of selection. This duty they have exercised in a most helpful way, in that they have provided ample categorization for the snippets they have uncovered, under chapter headings of "Portraits of the Pastor," "Education," "Ordination and Administration to a Cure," "The Clerical Community," "The Curate's Spiritual Duties," "Management of the Cure," and finally "Life and Manners." Within these chapters one finds only brief translations of various parts of documents, letters, and manuals. Here we find the most intriguing of entries: conciliar excerpts forbidding priests to watch mimes, entertainers, and actors (21); written permission granted for a man to proceed to the orders of deacon and priest, notwithstanding the cutting off of his ring finger by a sword (63); an exposition of the ten commandments not unlike Luther's own, in a thirteenth-century manual of confession (170-174); a selection of fourteenth-century sermons (202-211); the actual written confession of a fifteenth-century priest recanting various "heretical" teachings into which he had fallen (278-280).

There is a certain amusement of the quaint provided by this kind of book, but it is only incidental. By providing a reading of this history as primary material—actual excerpts of historical pieces, which are in some cases rather detailed and private in nature—this book tends, more importantly, to plant the reader directly into the same realm as the first readers of the material, whoever they may have been. One thereby gains the opportunity to get one of the best benefits gleaned from the discipline of historical study, to wit, a certain detachment from one's own biases and the influences latent in one's own culture. After all, freedom to agree or disagree with other theological minds is not truly freedom if it is born only of ignorance. Consideration of the raw data on its own terms is the best defense against the entrenchment of folly.

Burnell Eckardt
Saint Paul Lutheran Church
Kewanee, Illinois

***The Imaginative World of the Reformation.* By Peter Matheson. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2001.**

This is a different kind of book about the Reformation and one that most readers of this journal are going to find disconcerting, because it is an attempt to explain the significance of the Reformation to modern secularists, for whom the religious issues of the sixteenth century are meaningless. Instead of examining changes in doctrine or ecclesiastical structure, the author explores changes in metaphors used by preachers and teachers, images employed in literature and art, ways of talking and writing about God. The result is interesting, sometimes insightful, but ultimately unsatisfactory for those of us who still think that religion is about truth.

The author (principal of the Theological Hall of the Uniting Church and fellow in history at the University of Melbourne, Australia) argues that the Reformation amounted to a revolution in the mental constructs by which people organize their world and understand their place within it. Therefore, he presents various "images" from art, literature, song, and rhetoric that he thinks are especially important for understanding the power and impact of the Reformation in its various manifestations.

For example, in his discussion of the Scriptures, Matheson is less concerned with what was said about them or the doctrines derived from them than he is with describing how they were appropriated. He talks about a "situational reading" of the text and a "recovery of the earthy humanity" of the Bible and argues that in the sixteenth century, the Reformers and their followers saw real people being described and addressed by the sacred text. They did not treat it as a book of doctrine or the account of a long-gone past, but as the living word of God that spoke to *them* concretely, "It was by . . . primal, powerful and overwhelmingly biblical images that the Reformation found a purchase on people's minds and hearts. . . . The marginalised [*sic*] of the sixteenth century woke to find themselves central to the message of the prophets, the apostles and Jesus" (47).

Therefore, in his discussion of Christ, Matheson is not interested in Luther's and Zwingli's differences regarding the communication of attributes, but explores instead the "master-images" that reflected sixteenth-century realities. For Count Albrecht of Mansfeld, Christ was "supreme emperor;" for Lazarus Spengler, He was the crucified Savior whom we follow in adversity; and for the peasant and artisan, the human Jesus is one with us in poverty, temptations, and suffering. In a sense, therefore, different groups had different "Christs" and the success of any one image depended on the experiences of those to whom it was presented.

The focus of Matheson's study is the "popular Reformation," how ordinary people experienced the Reformation, not the teachings or reforms of the leaders like Luther or Calvin. In successive chapters, the author deals with the social character of reforming ideals (visions of new and more Christian societies), with the destructive elements of reform (harsh polemic, religious wars and persecutions, apocalypticism), with changes in social relationships (marriage and family), and with spirituality (worship, piety, and life-style). In each case, he employs "images" to argue his case that the Reformation was "an event in the imagination, a shift in the basic paradigms through which people perceived their world" (119).

Clearly, Matheson's sympathies are with the "radical" reformers on account of their willingness to challenge the social hierarchy. He even has kind words for those who took over the city of Münster and tried to create a model community, polygamy and all! In the spirit of *our* times, Matheson maintains that "historians . . . have a duty to honour the memory of the dreamers, to note that the dreams of some become the nightmares of others, and to take care that we do not perpetuate injustice by adopting uncritically the terminology of the oppressor" (100). I would argue instead that historians have a duty *not* to impose the values of our benighted era on those whom they are studying, but to try and understand them on their own terms.

Nonetheless, the book is interesting and quite readable. The author uses copious illustrations from the period to make his case, so at a certain level, he is convincing. However, not only images but *ideas* have consequences, and it is not adequate to reduce the Reformation to the former. "Modern" audiences, too, need to understand that even if they are not interested in how to get ready for eternity, people in other places or times were. The Reformation was first and foremost about answering this and other "religious" questions and not just a dramatic change in the way people explained the world. Matheson's book supplements older explanations of the Reformation, but cannot replace them.

Cameron MacKenzie

Scripture and Tradition: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IX. **Edited by Harold C. Skillrud, J. Francis Stafford, and Daniel F. Martensen. Augsburg, Minneapolis: 1995. 62 pages.**

This ninth joint statement of the Lutheran and Roman-Catholic dialogue in the United States (since 1965) takes up the central topic of theology, which "has always been a component of this dialogue" (20). The partners in dialogue present their results in five steps or chapters.

The first step is defining what both churches mean when they say: "word of God." Both can identify the word of God in a threefold manner: Jesus Christ Himself is the eternal Word of God. The word of God is also God's message to mankind, proclaimed as judgment and mercy throughout history. Then there is the written word of God in Holy Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit, centering in Christ.

The "Evolution of the Problem" of how Scripture and tradition relate is exposed in the second chapter. One refers to the elementary sense of *paradosis/traditio* as "the act of transmitting the divine message from person to person" (25), which in early Christianity took place through the Old Testament, the community's memory of Jesus, the writings of the New Testament, baptism and the eucharist, teachings, disciplines and creedal formulations, ecclesiastical structures and offices, and artistic expressions and liturgical practices. Traditions in the following history "extended the original meaning of Scripture" (26), so the problem of authority and degrees of authority arose—an urgent problem in the Middle Ages. The relationship between Scripture and tradition then became very critical when Luther stressed the *sola Scriptura*. However, since the Reformation also put a strong emphasis on the *viva vox evangelli,* there was something that can be called a "traditioning activity" in analogy to what Roman Catholics understand as *actus tradendi,* "the handing on of the Word in a given context" (27). Luther's concept of the twofold clarity of Scripture and of Scripture being its own interpreter does not, however, mean a rejection of tradition per se, but "rather that Scripture establishes itself as the final arbiter in matters of faith and life, particularly in cases of dispute" (29). The concept of *sola Scriptura* does not exclude the exegetical and confessing activity of the church, but it points to the ultimate judge of all the church's activities. The Confessions' authority, after all, is not original, but derivative.

In the wake of the Council of Trent a majority of Roman Catholic interpreters advocated two sources of faith, Scripture and tradition. The Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum* then opened the door for a "convergence between Catholic and Lutheran understandings" (32; one may compare 38) by presenting "Scripture, tradition, and Teaching office" as "distinct but interrelated elements that contribute to the communication of God's saving grace in Christ" (33).

On this basis the "Theological Considerations" in chapter 3 claim that there is a possibility of convergence because both sides share a positive understanding of the term "tradition" as involving "a process in a community; in this case, it refers to the Word of God precisely as it is handed on in the church: *verbum Dei traditum*" (36). Problems remain, however, since the Vatican Council left "unresolved questions about the necessity of criticism of tradition and the teaching office, and about the critical principle to be followed in conflict" (40).

The ground for further convergence is laid in chapter 4: "The Living Word in the Community of Faith." The partners in dialogue refer to the fact that both churches do accept interpretations of the biblical dogma that go "beyond the express statement of Scripture" (44), like the doctrine of the Trinity or of Mary being the *theotokos.* When Roman Catholics, however, formulate the doctrine of Mary's assumption they do not only refer to Scripture, but also to the *sensus fidelium,* the consensus of the teaching office and of the faithful, which is "considered by Catholics to be a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit, who leads the whole church into the truth of revelation" (46).

Finally "Conclusions" are formulated in chapter 5, stating the "large measure of agreement" and the "remaining differences of doctrine or emphasis" (49). Differences remain on the *sola Scriptura,* on the question of an infallible teaching office, and on the respective understandings of the development of doctrine.

Nevertheless, the conclusion ends hopefully by stressing once more the Lutheran "dynamic understanding of the Word of God that approximates what Catholics often understand as tradition in the active sense: the Spirit-assisted 'handing on' of God's revelation in Christ," by furthermore stressing the fact that Catholics do not any longer speak of tradition as a separate source of doctrine, "but see it together with Scripture, as the Word of God for the life of the church" (50), and by finally stressing "the joint affirmation of the one faith in Christ alone that is communicated fundamentally and abidingly in Holy Scripture" (51).

The main reason why we cannot be as optimistic as the partners in dialogue is that, from a Lutheran point of view, Scripture in dogmatic terms cannot be submitted to any notion or idea of "tradition." There is, indeed, a living and very positive relationship between Scripture and the church, with her tradition. But one has the impression that, even when exposing the historic positions, the partners in dialogue already apply their understanding, which is not in compliance with the Lutheran Reformation. Of course, Christ, through His Spirit, is at work in the church, in the formulation of the creeds, in the liturgy, and in theology. Scripture, however, in this setting or context in the post-apostolic age, represents the authority of Jesus Christ Himself, of the Triune God over against His church. This means that in the process of the tradition or *paradosis* of the word of God through Scripture, the church, its preaching, teaching and confessing, is first of all passive, receiving, and not active or even creative. Interestingly enough, the supporters of the ordination of women in Lutheran churches are arguing exactly like the Roman Catholics: If consensus is achieved between the church leaders and the faithful this can be considered as a work of the Holy Spirit, since we all have the Holy Spirit and the Spirit is working also in church history and, of course, in present church life, leading the church into the truth of revelation.

The Lutheran emphasis on the *viva vox*, however, has always meant the public doctrine has to flow from and be judged by Scripture. The Spirit's working and proclamation of the word of God cannot be identified with the living community of Christians as such and as a whole. There has been false teaching, false preaching, false confessing in the history of the church—even from its beginnings. If Scripture is only part of the church's tradition one indeed needs an infallible teaching office in order to ascertain what is God's will for His church.

The problem can also be located in the fact that the present statement talks about the material sufficiency of Scripture only (37). But the sufficiency of Scripture does also include its efficacy, which means that, theologically speaking, it is Christ through the Scriptures Who creates faith and the church, Who continues to proclaim the law and the gospel. It is not the tradition of the church or the living community that is in charge of keeping the word of God alive. But the word of God in Scripture keeps the church, the tradition, the faith, and the believer alive. The *sola Scriptura* principle is nothing else than the confession that Christ is the ruling subject, the head of the church. A church, however, that cannot discern the word of Christ from its own word any longer has become what the Lutheran confession calls "antichristian." Even though the partners in dialogue see the problem of ambiguity in public opinion, (47) and therefore make a difference between public opinion in the church and the "sense of the faithful," one cannot see how this dilemma can be avoided when the church in this joint statement is seen as the active subject rather than the receiving object of the traditioning process of the word through Scripture.

But perhaps the mistake lies even at another point. After all in the "Theological Considerations" and in the "Conclusion" there is no mention of the eschatological "context" or setting in which Luther and the Reformation wanted to rely on Christ alone—and therefore on Scripture alone. The aim of the Reformation was to consent with Christ, with His eternal judgment, and not in the first place with this or that Christian tradition. Consensus with the Christ and the Spirit of Holy Scripture was of highest importance for the Reformation, which even made a clear dissensus within the visible church necessary for Christ's sake and for the sake of the believers' and the church's salvation. The understandable aim of reaching visible Christian unity should never obscure this.

Armin Wenz
Pastor of Holy Spirit (SELK)
Görlitz, Germany

***On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518.* By Gerhard Forde. William B. Eerdmanns, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, 1997. 121 Pages. $20.00**

In his preface, the author (professor of systematic theology at Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota) gives three reasons for writing this book. First, he sees an urgent need for it because "there is increasing talk about the theology of the cross but little specific knowledge of what exactly it is" (viii). Second, he wants to refute the sentimentalism that very often determines the present discussion on the theology of the cross in our "age that is so concerned about victimization" (viii). Finally, Forde sees Luther's theology of the cross as providing "the theological courage and conceptual framework to hold the language in place" (x); this takes a close look at an urgent need, since the present sentimentalisms in theology have caused "a serious erosion . . . in the language of theology today" (ix); it has become "therapeutic rather than evangelical" (x).

Before getting into the text of the Heidelberg Disputation, Forde introduces the subject to the reader in four steps ("Introductory Matters"), which can also be read as a summary of what follows later. What does it mean, when Luther says "Crux sola est nostra theologia"? Forde gets to the point right away: "The cross is in the first instance God's attack on human sin" (1). The cross culminates in the dying of Jesus for God's sinful world, but at the same time, the cross is the "character" of how God is dealing with human beings. He makes an end to each and every sort of human glory or even the striving for glory when it comes to the relation between mankind and God. The theology of the cross, therefore, is an offensive, polemical theology that attacks what man considers to be his best in religious terms. The cross shows what true theology is about: it is not about ideas of men, but about God's deeds, God's killing and God's making alive.

To talk about the theology of the cross—or better, to be, act, and talk as a theologian of the cross—means to refute the theology of glory, which is omnipresent in the hearts of mankind. Forde locates this fight on two levels. First, there is the level of the "narratives," of the Glory Story and the Cross Story. Whereas man wants to be in control on his (gnostic) way back to God in the Glory Story, the Cross Story makes man the object that needs to be drawn into the event. The Cross Story leads us back to God when it—presented to us in the whole biblical story of the Old and New Testament—becomes our story.

This is the presupposition for the fight on the second level, the level of "Being a Theologian." The difference between the theologian of glory and the theologian of the cross as exposed by Luther is the following: The theologian of glory is very optimistic about his abilities. He realizes that he needs the help of God's grace (thus he seems to integrate the cross), but just for filling the gaps of his own efforts by his will or his good works. Nevertheless, he looks tolerant and sensitive, for he seems to combine the human thirst for glory with God's gracious help. The theologian of the cross, on the other side, surrenders before God and allows himself to be drawn into the biblical story. He stays in front of the reality of the cross, he suffers passively God's killing and God's making alive, but he does not try to get behind this reality like the theologian of glory. He knows that only in the cross can God be found, not in a reality behind it, construed by the human mind.

Therefore, the theologian of the cross is a very intolerant being: His whole effort is to refute the theology of glory, to rule out all loopholes that root in the hallmark of glory: that divine grace is nothing but a supplement of human will and power. The theologian of the cross has learned that the only cure for man's deadly desire for glory is not satisfying it, but extinguishing it. The truth that it is not only mortal for mankind to follow the path of glory, but also no longer necessary, is revealed to us in the resurrection of Christ, which cannot be separated from the cross. Dying and being made alive with Christ makes a theologian of the cross—the only way that the trap of superficial optimism and despair on the road of glory can be overcome.

Forde finishes his "Introductory Matters" by giving some historical information on the Heidelberg Disputation and by sketching the outline. He also stresses that he does not want to present a comprehensive commentary, but just reflections on the text.

He then considers Luther's text thesis by thesis in four major parts. Each thesis is quoted, sometimes with the author's own English translation when he is not satisfied with the translation in the American Edition of *Luther's Works.* He follows Luther as he refutes the theology of glory in each and every respect by examining the legalistic (Good Works, chapter I: Theses 1-12) and the voluntaristic (The Problem of the Will, chapter II: Theses 13-18) paths to "glory." These paths are doomed to fail because they misunderstand and misuse God's law as way of salvation and they underestimate the thoroughness of man's sin and the thoroughness of man's dependency on his creator even before the fall. The focus of these two parts is to extinguish any false optimism, to reveal mankind's trapped situation under the law. Forde very often uses the "story" of alcohol addicts as an analogy. The law forces us to bottom out, it causes us to surrender, to despair of our own abilities, to admit that we are lost sinners. In other words: the law reveals to us that we can find life only when God comes to intervene and help us totally from without.

Chapter III "The Great Divide" deals with the famous theses 19-24, where Luther explicitly confronts the way of the cross with the way of glory, thus also showing how the way of the cross arrives at a true and biblical understanding of God's law, making an end to its abuse in the hand of glory-obsessed man. Forde here clearly marks that the legalistic way to glory finally ends up watering down the law, making it less demanding. The theologian of the cross, however, is no antinomian: he has understood the role of the law in God's story: *lex semper accusat*—the law destroys everything that is not in Christ. So the theologian of the cross does not cancel the law or take away its terror, but in the law he meets the force that compels him to surrender before God, to flee to God's grace in Christ.

The discovery of the theology of the cross is the discovery of justification by faith. "God's Work in us: The Righteousness of Faith" therefore is the title under which Forde contemplates Theses 25-28. The theologian of the cross sees God as He is God, as his savior. The theologian of the cross is the one who receives God's works—his alien work in the law, and his proper work: forgiveness of sins through the gospel of Christ. Good works will flow from faith —works, however, that the believer will always understand as God's good works, which Christ, living in him, accomplishes. Thus, God brings life out of death; he even can make theologians of glory into theologians of the cross—nothing less than a *creatio ex nihilo.*

This is a praiseworthy little book. It is written in a very contemplative, even *seelsorglich* style. There is a constant dialogue going on between the theologian of the cross and the theologian of glory. This dialogue takes place on several different levels, which the author refers to: Between Luther and his theological opponents; between the author (Forde) and mainstream theology (ecologists, feminists, and others) of the late twentieth century, even between the author and his students, the pastor and his people. But, the most important dialogue is going on inside the author, the reader, the theologian: the dialogue between the theologian of glory in us and the theologian of the cross in us, which is a constant struggle.

Therefore this book should have a place in every pastor's library (and more so on his desk). It will be of help for sermon preparation because it gives very fitting comments on many important questions that arise in the parish. Forde also very nicely shows how the theology of the cross is not only the key to scripture in theory, but it indeed helps to understand many of the so-called difficult scripture passages and reveals that their "difficulty" rather often has its origin in the sentimentalized theologian of glory. Because Forde does not only refer to many typical "Christian" questions, but does so in a very pleasant style and easy-to-read language, his book can also be recommended to lay persons.

Armin Wenz
Pastor of Holy Spirit (SELK)
Görlitz, Germany

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