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The Law and the Lord's Supper

Since the law and gospel are so central to Lutheran theology, it should have been expected that their relationship to one another and their function in Christian life would eventually disrupt The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). While the dust from the 1970s has settled down on our side of the fence, this is still a live issue in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) which has not resolved the question of whether certain persons, because of different orientations, may be kept out of the ministry. The "gospel argument" as it started out in the LCMS is that biblical strictures were limited to Old and New Testament times and are not applicable today. Scott R. Murray's *Law, Life, and the Living God,* which lays out historical and theological issues on the third use of the law among twentieth-century American Lutheranism, was at the center of a past symposium. Murray puts his oar in the water again in the lead article of this issue.

The remaining articles address the Lord's Supper, each coming from a different angle. Peter J. Scaer finds in the miraculous feedings in Mark's Gospel allusions to the Lord's Supper as not only a well-ordered sacred banquet but also an occasion for discourse. With recent Lutheran rapprochements with the Episcopal Church in America and the Church of England, Lutherans remained haunted by how close their Reformation era forebearers were in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper during the Reformation era. Answering part of this question is Korey D. Maas's article on Robert Barnes. Who may be admitted to the Lord's Supper is a perennial issue in the LCMS. Joel D. Biermann, from our sister seminary, presents familiar arguments in a fresh manner in "Step Up to the Altar." The April 2008 visit of the pope to our country keeps alive the Reformation era discussion of how our church should relate to Rome. If a fence were drawn down the middle of world Christendom, Lutherans would be on the same side with Roman Catholics looking at the Reformed on the other side. Opportunity for further discussion has been made by the accession of Joseph Ratzinger as bishop of Rome. A world renowned theologian in his own right, Benedict XVI was friend to the late confessional scholar Hermann Sasse. Coming from Germany, he has an intimate knowledge of Luther that was lacking in his predecessors. Presenting an in-depth, insider's examination of the current pope's views on the Lord's Supper is Father James Massa. We call attention to the third section of his article, "Difficulties with Luther," especially footnote 18. These articles are sure to stimulate reflection on our own faithful confession and administration of this blessed sacrament.

David P. Scaer
Editor

CTQ 72 (2008): 99–118

The Third Use of the Law: The Author Responds to His Critics

Scott R. Murray

Charles Arand may have been right when, in his restrained Foreword to *Law, Life, and the Living God,* he suggested that the book "can serve as a starting point for a new consideration" of the third use of the law.[1] Arand's hope has begun to be realized.[2] In this paper, I am responding to the critical treatments of the book as a way of continuing the discussion. The book was reviewed in print by seven reviewers.[3] Several nonprint reviews also surfaced.[4] It is impossible to deal with all that has been written about the book. So I will not deal with complaints of a methodological sort, because they do not necessarily get to the root of the theological issues involved.[5] It is easy enough to complain that I should have produced some book other than the one that was written. I encourage those who think so to produce some other book themselves. The work was a sort of history of dogma on a very narrow topic in keeping with the normal parameters of an American dissertation.

I. Reactions of Readers

Here are some of those reactions to the work. For a number of readers the book was a revelation. It gave them a framework for understanding the

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[1] Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God: The Third Use of the Law in Modern American Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 10.

[2] Several of the papers at the 2005 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions, for which this response was originally written, engaged my book. Most of these were published in *CTQ* 69:3/4 (July/October 2005). This revised version of my response will engage various reactions to my book, including these articles.

[3] *Law, Life, and the Living God* was reviewed by: John T. Pless, *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (2003): 235–239; Larry M. Vogel, *Lutheran Forum* 37, no. 3 (2003): 62–64; Louis Smith, *Lutheran Forum* 37, no. 3 (2003): 64–67; Carl L. Beckwith, *Pro Ecclesia* 12 (2003): 366–368; Richard Neuhaus, *First Things* 128 (2002): 65; Thomas Manteufel, *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2003): 63–64; and David P. Scaer, *Logia* 11, no. 4 (2002): 51.

[4] These reviews were by Mark Mattes, *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 3, no. 9 (2003), http://www.elca.org/jle/article.asp?k=71, and Matthew Becker, *DayStar Network Web site*, http://day-star.net/documents/murray-review.htm (accessed September 9, 2004).

[5] Those issues were that the book did not lay a deep enough background, did not interpret enough sources within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), did not spend enough time on European sources, and did not provide any critical interpretation of exegetical material used to support dogmatic conclusions.

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1960s and 1970s in the Missouri Synod. One person said he knew there was something wrong in the 1960s and 1970s, but had been unsure what it was until he read the book. Larry Vogel expressed it well when he wrote, "I found it very helpful as an explanation of how we in the Lutheran churches in America got to the point where we are today with respect to the Law."[6]

Predictably, others took the book as a mean-spirited attack on their favorite professors. Some of these persons shared a personal commitment to gospel reductionism. This is the reaction of many graduates of Valparaiso University, who supported their favorite professors, claiming that they "just preached the gospel." On the other hand, Missouri Synod bronze agers could not see what was deficient with the bronze age which they take to be the golden age of Missouri Synod Lutheranism. So they were unable to see that perhaps the third use doctrine had been abused so that it became a basis for legalism in preaching and practice, even if that legalism was entirely unintentional. This issue does at least raise the question as to whether or not the third use of the law is not always a basis for this legalism, but more about that below.

For those who lived through the "walk out" from Concordia Seminary in 1974, the book provided an interpretive lens to the theology that contributed to this event. David Scaer took it as a way of looking at the theological issues of 1960s and 1970s. "As his yardstick [for understanding the theological issues of the 1960s and 1970s] Murray uses how the third use of the law was understood among American Lutherans from 1940 to 1998."[7] I did not intend the book to do that; I actually intended to ask what theological entailments might arise from the rejection of the third use. But perhaps Scaer is right and the book crystallized some of the catalytic issues that gave rise to the "walk out" and the theology that attended it.

Law, Life, and the Living God seems to have been launched on the crest of a wave of literature about justification and law and gospel that is now being published. Increased interest in these subjects arose primarily as a reaction to the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" and also because of the contemporary ecumenical crisis,[8] in which perennial theological issues have come to the fore once again. For example, while not

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[6] Vogel, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 64 (see n. 3 above).

[7] Scaer, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 51 (see n. 3 above).

[8] What are the ecumenical consequences of gospel reductionism? "This remains an ecumenical principle for the ELCA, which calls for church fellowship with any church having the gospel, for example, Episcopalians, Reformed, and Moravians." Scaer, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 51 (see n. 3 above).

directly dealing with the third use of the law, the spate of books being issued from Lutheran Quarterly Books, including books by Oswald Bayer[9] and Gerhard Forde,[10] have been a wonderful contribution to the discussion of law and gospel.[11] The Gerhard Forde festschrift, *By Faith Alone*,[12] demands inclusion in this list, as well as Reinhard Hütter's intriguing book, *Bound to Be Free*.[13] A number of Concordia Publishing House volumes have been issued as well. John Pless's accessible *Handling the Word of Truth*[14] is making a contribution in parish life where the proper division of law and gospel is of paramount importance.[15] Werner Elert's *Structure of Lutheranism* has also been re-issued.[16] The 2001 Symposium on Exegetical Theology gave considerable play to the issue of the law in Scripture, resulting in a significant volume entitled *The Law in Holy Scripture*[17] that brings us back to the grounding of this subject in the sacred text.

Some of this literature is also a response to the theological/moral meltdown in American Lutheranism.[18] My book has prompted people on

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[9] Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[10] Gerhard O. Forde, *A More Radical Gospel: Essays on Eschatology, Authority, Atonement, and Ecumenism*, ed. Mark C. Mattes and Steven D. Paulson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

[11] Timothy Wengert has also shed some light on the development of the third use in the theology of Melanchthon. See Wengert, *Law and Gospel: Philip Melanchthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over* Poenitentia (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), and Wengert, ed., *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

[12] *By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, ed. Joseph A. Burgess and Marc Kolden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

[13] Reinhard Hütter, *Bound to Be Free: Evangelical Catholic Engagements in Ecclesiology, Ethics, and Ecumenism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

[14] John T. Pless, *Handling the Word of Truth* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004).

[15] For a helpful and carefully argued contribution on the historical front, see the doctoral dissertation of Ken Schurb, *Philip Melanchthon, the Formula of Concord, and the Third Use of the Law* (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2001).

[16] Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism: The Theology and Philosophy of Lutheranism especially in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Walter A. Hansen (1962; repr., St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003).

[17] *The Law in Holy Scripture: Essays from the Concordia Theological Seminary Symposium on Exegetical Theology*, ed. Charles A. Gieschen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004).

[18] "A quarter-century ago William Lazareth wondered why there was such a stir among some Lutherans regarding the 'so-called third use' of the law. A half-dozen years ago, as the presenter for an English District regional pastors' conference, Lazareth

both sides of the old divide between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to ask: Is there a way to make common cause with friends who want moral standards to survive and want a law-free gospel to be proclaimed but are increasingly tired of the faddish dash into the latest culturally-normed political correctness? Is there a way that we can use and make sense of Article VI of the Formula of Concord for those beleaguered folks? While I take seriously the theological issues between us, I also appreciate the advice that we should "not shoot our allies."[19] Perhaps we share the fear of slowly being boiled in the same cultural water as the frogs in liberal American churches. Rightly or wrongly, many are asking themselves what moral domino falls next and what will the theological impact be upon the doctrine of justification?

Not every fear of moral inundation is irrational. Reinhard Hütter certainly sees antinomianism as an abiding problem, even a Protestant pathology, so deeply ingrained in the fiber of liberal Protestantism that it can no longer properly assess the depth of its critical rejection of the law.[20] Hütter charges modern Protestantism with what he identifies as "modernity's daydream of Promethean freedom," in which he describes modernity's flight into the heights of self-actualized freedom from the law and morality.[21] Hütter is contending that Protestantism has been completely absorbed into the concept of liberty and freedom as license and action unbounded by truth, just as Mark Mattes has contended.[22] Hütter also charges that Protestantism has taken up a fundamentally anti-Roman Catholic consideration of ethical norms "with the relentless polemic against Roman Catholic 'legalism.'"[23] His criticism should sting both in the ELCA and LCMS.

II. Clarifying Criticisms of the Third Use

Just why is the term the "third use of the law" so widely maligned? Why is it that the doctrine from the Formula of Concord can be so heartily rejected? Why is it that the question "do you still teach a third use of the

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expressed no small frustration with the ELCA's drift—some might say collapse—in the direction of sexual antinomianism." Vogel, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 62 (see n. 3 above).

[19] Vogel, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 64 (see n. 3 above).

[20] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 133.

[21] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 116–117.

[22] Mark C. Mattes, "Beyond the Impasse: Re-examining the Third Use of the Law," *CTQ* 69 (2005): 271–291.

[23] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 133.

law?" is the theological equivalent of "when did you stop beating your wife?" Why is it that opponents of the third use of the law put quotation marks around the term "third use" of the law? These quotation marks mean the same thing as the quotation marks around a sign at a Klu Klux Klan rally that reads, "Everyone Welcome." It is something nobody could believe. It is dismissively denominated the "so-called third use of the law." What are we afraid of, "third" or "use"?

Opponents of a denomination of the third use of the law presume that the formulators of Concord introduced at best a useless distinction and at worst a pernicious one by defining a third use of the law. Matthew Becker considered it Judaistic[24] and Gerhard Forde called it "the serpent's story."[25] I struggle with these accusations on several levels. First, on the level of logic, I have a hard time believing that the formulators introduced a distinction without a difference. Many who deny a third use of the law argue that the third use is merely first or second use for Christians. This makes the distinction provided by the Formula of Concord quite useless. Historically speaking, the formulators of Concord were masters of careful distinctions and would not have readily imposed a useless complication or meaningless distinction on a work intended to build doctrinal harmony among Lutherans. I doubt that they made this most fundamental logical and theological error in such a carefully crafted work. It would not be an impossible error, of course, but it is incumbent upon those who presume such an error to prove their case. In my opinion, that has not yet happened.

Second, most critics of the third use of the law in the Formula of Concord simply presume that it is anti-gospel and a re-imposition of the law into the article of justification, despite the specific statements of the Formula of Concord to the contrary. The third use of the law is condemned by those who presume that the third use is the law's backdoor into the gospel.[26] If the third use of the law brings the law back into the gospel,

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[24] Becker, review of *Law, Life and the Living God* (see n. 4 above).

[25] Forde, *A More Radical Gospel*, 145.

[26] A significant and related issue, but one beyond the scope of this paper, is in what way the law and its ability to point out human deficiencies also shows forth the glory of the rescue of God in the gospel. Many commentators are critical of Melanchthon for defining the gospel's work by the law. Yet we find precisely this kind of language in Luther himself. "Christ was not only found among sinners; but of His own free will and by the will of the Father He wanted to be an associate of sinners, having assumed the flesh and blood of those who were sinners and thieves and who were immersed in all sorts of sin. Therefore when the Law found Him among thieves, it condemned and executed Him as a thief. This knowledge of Christ and most delightful comfort, that

then it should be called the "serpent's story" and condemned with every breath in us as anti-gospel and opposed to Christ and the chief article of our faith.

Can the third use be used to "sneak the law in the back door" or tame down the law to a manageable size, what Gerhard Forde calls "covert antinomianism"? Certainly. The Missouri Synod's bronze age, contemporary "life-style" preaching, head-counting evangelism, or a book on the "three-part goal of the Gospel: obedience, outreach and living to the glory of God"[27] would give us plenty of support for this view. These actions, however, hardly invalidate the Formula's position. *Abusus non tollit usus*. The contention of the opponents of Article VI amounts to the presupposition that it overwhelmingly tends to re-impose the law upon the conscience and cannot be correctly understood, no matter what intention the original formulators might have had in mind in this article.

A great deal of the argument about the third use necessarily revolves around the differences between Melanchthon and Luther on the one hand, and Luther and the Formula of Concord on the other.[28] Why is the Formula of Concord taken for such an obvious betrayal of Luther's doctrine of justification, as a re-entry of the law into the gospel? Forde repeats the famous quote of Luther from his preface to Romans showing what Forde called Luther's (and Paul's!) changed tropology. By tropology Forde means an overarching theme or motif whereby mere ethics is superseded by the eschatological movement from life to death in baptism. In this tropology justification is the end of the law. Here is how Luther puts it: "Faith is a divine work in us that changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different

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Christ became a curse for us to set us free from the curse of the Law—of this the sophists deprive us. . . ." Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 26:278 *et passim*, hereafter *LW*. See also Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, trans. J. A. O. Preus, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 2:432.

[27] Philip M. Bickel and Robert L. Nordlie, *The Goal of the Gospel: God's Purpose in Saving You* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 95–118. See the scheme for preaching "God's commands as our guide for Christian living, showing us the obedience in mission commitment which our Savior seeks from us, so that God may be glorified." Bickel and Nordlie, *The Goal of the Gospel*, 112.

[28] See Smith, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 67 (see n. 3 above). For a helpful view of relationship between Luther and Melanchthon, see Schurb, "Philip Melanchthon, the Formula of Concord, and the Third Use of the Law."

men. . . ."[29] It is so obvious from the quotation that righteousness begins and ends with grace and that faith does good works without being told. Yet that same quotation is prominently featured in the Formula of Concord.[30] Could it really be that the formulators of Concord featured Luther's view that the gospel is the end of the law and that ethics could not proceed apart from faith, but then proceeded to betray that view with a simplistic re-injection of the law into Article VI of the Formula of Concord, without being aware that it represented such a betrayal and, indeed, an adoption of "the serpent's story"?[31] This presumes a degree of theological illiteracy on the part of the formulators.

It is not as though critics of the third use reject separate uses of the law. They will indeed champion the separate and distinct first and second uses of the law. Gerhard Forde represents most eloquently this point of view, which is now being carried on and ably developed by his students, such as Mark Mattes. "One who has been grasped by the eschatological vision looks on law differently from one who has not. But this is not to say that one sees a 'third' use. What one sees is precisely the difference between law and gospel so that law can be established in its *first* two uses this side of the eschaton."[32] For Forde there are distinguishable first and second uses of the law. But how are they distinguished? Is it merely the distinction between law and gospel, or something more?

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[29] "Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1[:12–13]. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them. Whoever does not do such works, however, is an unbeliever. He gropes and looks around for faith and good works, but knows neither what faith is nor what good works are. Yet he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works. Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. This knowledge of and confidence in God's grace makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all creatures. And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown him this grace. Thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire." *LW* 35:370–71.

[30] SD IV, 10.

[31] Forde, *A More Radical Gospel*, 145.

[32] Gerhard O. Forde, "Eleventh Locus: Christian Life," in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 2:450.

With this said, it does not solve the problem of what "use" means in the Formula of Concord. The term "use" is misleading to moderns. It smacks of ethical self-determination against which the Formula of Concord is battling.[33] So how does the Formula use the term? When talking about receiving the holy Sacrament, Luther calls it the "use" of the Sacrament,[34] as does the Augsburg Confession, where it can mean something like "purpose."[35] Here "use" means reception. Its function revolves around how it is received, not how it is preached or "used." It must be said that "use" does not indicate that there are various kinds of law, one used this way and another that, just as there are not different sacraments of the altar although there might be different uses for the Sacrament (even to life and to death).[36] Therefore, we do not "use" the law. It remains God's to use and ours to proclaim.[37] The uses of the law are a description of what the law actually does. So *Handling the Word of Truth* seeks to help the reader distinguish between two kinds of proclamation, law and gospel, and not different laws nor among different uses of the law.[38] For Melanchthon the characteristic distinguishing phrase is "the law and the promises."[39] He does not speak of distinguishing among the uses of the law.[40]

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[33] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 120–121.

[34] "This example of the disciples must stimulate us to hear, believe, and accept God's Word gladly, to receive absolution, and to make use of the Sacrament." *LW* 22: 229.

[35] *CA* XIII.

[36] "Desselbigen gleichen hab ich ja vleissig geschrieben widder die himmlischen Propheten, wie die Geschicht und Brauch des Leidens Christi nicht ein Ding sei, *factum et applicatio facti seu factum et usus facti*, Denn Christus Leiden ist wol nür ein mal am creutz geschehen; aber wem were das nütz, wo es nicht ausgeteilet, angelegt und ynn Brauch bracht wurde?" Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Schriften*], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 26:296. "I carefully wrote against the heavenly prophets [see *LW* 40:213.] that the fact of Christ's suffering and the use of it are not the same thing: *factum et applicatio facti, seu factum et usus facti*. The passion of Christ occurred but once on the cross. But whom would it benefit if it were not distributed, applied, and put to use?" *LW* 37:193. For Luther there is a clear distinction between the fact and the use of it.

[37] Gerhard Ebeling contends that the term *usus legis* in Melanchthon refers to the law's functions or effects. Gerhard Ebeling, "On the Doctrine of the *Triplex Usus Legis* in the Theology of the Reformation," in *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1963), 74–75.

[38] E.g., Pless, *Handling the Word of Truth*, 35–41.

[39] Ap IV, 183.

[40] So also in the Formula of Concord, the distinction is between law and gospel rather than among uses of the law. "It is also necessary to set forth distinctly [Latin, *distincte*; German, unterscheidlich] what the Gospel does, creates, and works in connection with the new obedience of believers and what function the law performs in

The threefold use in Melanchthon[41] arises from the question: "What is the *use* of the law, if the works of the law do not merit the remission of sins, or if we are not righteous by the law? At this point we need to understand that there is a triple use or three offices for the law."[42] The Lutheran basis for offices includes the concept that one may hold several offices at the same time (pastor, father, and husband). The offices of the law may have multiple functions: to keep outward discipline, to accuse, and to instruct at the same time. These functions are all in God's power to unfold when and where it pleases him.[43] For Melanchthon the law has a single use, the title of the locus on the three uses of the law is called *de usu legis*.[44] In the Chemnitz commentary on Melanchthon's *Loci* of 1543, the title of the section is also singular: *de usu et fine legis*.[45] Chemnitz speaks of a "triple use of the law," not three uses.[46] So the Latin text of Formula reads, *triplex esse legis divinae usum*.[47] Thus there is no thought of a third law or our using the law in a third way.

Louis Smith's review, while critical, was the most helpful.[48] In his review he suggested that I had missed some salient passages about the third use of the law in Forde's locus on "Justification and This World" in the Braaten and Jenson *Dogmatics*, when in reality these very passages had undergone a close and repeated reading in preparing to write the book. It would seem to me that Smith has read Forde too optimistically. "His

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this matter, as far as the good works of believers are concerned." SD VI, 10. When the Formula mentions a distinction about works it is a distinction between "two different kinds of people" (SD VI, 16), not a distinction among various kinds of law. These translations and the ones below are from *The Book of Concord*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959).

[41] Melanchthon himself only used the term a couple of times in his 1521 *Loci* and it was absent from the 1535 *Loci*. See Ebeling, "On the Doctrine of the *Triplex Usus Legis*," 62-64; Wengert, *Law and Gospel*; and Schurb, "Philip Melanchthon, the Formula of Concord, and the Third Use of the Law."

[42] Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, quoted in Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (Frankfurt and Wittenberg, 1690), 97. Preus translates "*officia*" as "duties" ("offices" is my translation) in his translation of Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1989), 2:437.

[43] The interpenetration of offices or vocations is a hallmark of Luther's teaching of vocations.

[44] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, quoted in Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1690), 97.

[45] Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1690), 98.

[46] For example, Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1690), 98–100; SD VI, 16. The term *usus legis* actually shows up as a theological category for the first time in Luther's commentary on Galatians.

[47] SD VI, 1.

[48] Smith, review of *Life, Law, and the Living God* (see n. 3 above). I grieve for the loss of his voice from the church militant.

Forde," as Smith called him (as opposed to my Forde), says, quite congenially, "From the eschatological perspective *the legitimate concerns badly expressed in the idea of a third use of the law* can be sorted out . . . one grasped by the eschatological vision will recognize the continuing need for the law."[49] How is this sorting out to take place according to Forde? That is the *crux*. He takes back with one hand what he appears to give with the other. For him there is a continued need for law for the Christian, but not a third use. Instead the third use "obscures the eschatological nature" of the event of conversion, assumes that humans are users of the law, entails a covert antinomianism, and proposes "an alteration in the view of law to fit the view of the Christian life as immanent moral progress" and "to accommodate sin."[50] If this is "sorting out" the third use of the law, then this would be "sorting out" by train wreck.

Part of the problem is that many people who want to reject the third use will only be rejecting the ghosts that the third use is supposed to be or to bring with it. Who would not reject a use of the law (no matter how it is numbered) that brings with it the seven devils Forde attributes to it? It is my opinion that this sort of rejection of a third use of the law is not yet a rejection of the Formula of Concord's third use of the law. This is what was helpful about Larry Vogel's article, "A Third Use."[51] Yes, but which one?

The third use is an employment of the law for *something*, not different kinds of law.[52] It is not a law that can save. It is not a different attempt at the law making sinners righteous before God. It seems that part of the reason that the third use is so widely maligned is that we moderns tend to read our definition of "use" into the term used by the Formula of Concord, again, as though use implies our ability to manipulate the law in a third way. The difference is not in the kind of words spoken as law words, but the impact and result that the law has.[53] It is absolutely correct, then, that the Spirit comes in the use of the word, its right and proper offices in the hands of God's Spirit, when and where it pleases him. Perhaps, by adjusting a postmodernist rhetorical term, this might be called—instead of reader response—"hearer response." Law itself as summarized by the Decalogue is concrete and unchanging; response to it is anything but concrete and unchanging. Unfortunately, "use" almost always commends

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[49] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:450 (emphasis added).

[50] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:450–451.

[51] Larry Vogel, "A Third Use of the Law: Is the Phrase Necessary?" *CTQ* 69 (2005): 191–220.

[52] SD VI, 1.

[53] See SD IV, 10.

to us "our use."[54] In retrospect, this is why the older translation of the Book of Concord might be preferable on the third use. Theodore Tappert translated the term "function," whereas Kolb-Wengert simply reverted back to "use."[55] The question must be whether this term is impaired by ethical hubris or postmodernist *autopoiesis* (self-determination/self-invention).

As the discussion about the third use of the law advances, it would also be well for us to remember that the Formula of Concord has a quite different status in the ELCA than it does in the Missouri Synod. The Formula of Concord is not normative in the ELCA in the same way as it is in the Missouri Synod but is accepted in the ELCA "as further valid interpretation" of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. Greater leeway in the understanding of the Formula of Concord has typically been permitted in the ELCA and its predecessor bodies. So a flat denial of the validity of Article VI of the Formula of Concord is not inconsistent with the confessional commitments of ELCA Lutherans. Such a flat denial is much more incongruous for someone who makes the confessional commitments of a Missouri Synod Lutheran. Thus the meaning of confessional subscription, long a sticking point, continues to raise its head.

As I pointed out earlier, a great deal of the contemporary thought about the third use of the law depends on Luther and a particular interpretation of his life and work as well as the life and work of his successors. I appreciate that Mark Mattes has shared with me the view that Luther's Catechisms especially presume an "informative" use of the law, however that is interpreted. "It is also confessionally clear, in the Large and Small Catechisms, that as believers, we can look at the law as informative, and not solely accusing."[56]

Recent work in Luther scholarship is seeing a positive use for the law in Luther. Bernard Lohse, in a work published while my book was in the

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[54] "Thus Luther spoke of the 'proper uses' of the law. The concept of proper use is always crucial for Luther's theology, whether one is talking about either law or gospel. It is in the use that the Spirit dwells, not in the thing itself. It is commonly agreed that Luther spoke explicitly of only two uses of the law: the political use—perhaps we could call it the ethical use—and the theological use. Again, it is important to get the nuance here. Luther was talking about the way in which the Spirit uses the law. It was not, for him, an ethical theory, but analytical observation. It was simply a statement about the way the law actually works in our lives." Forde, *A More Radical Gospel*, 152.

[55] Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 563–568; Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 587–591.

[56] Mattes, "Beyond the Impasse," 277.

editorial process, says that for Luther the law could not be corralled into a pure first and second use schema.

> The law's significance could never be reduced to these two functions [i.e., the "first" and "second" uses]. There is certainly a "pedagogical use" construed as a positive use of the law or the commandments. Luther's numerous catechetical writings and statements document this.[57]

Although there are still open text critical debates on whether or not Luther used the term "third use of the law," let us presume that Luther did not. It is one thing to say that Luther did not have a third use of the law, or even that he did not use the term. It is another thing to say that because he did not, we should not. The Lutheran church is not Luther's church, but the church of the Lutheran Confessions. For example, sorting through Luther's views on the two governances or what is usually called the two kingdoms is not simple.[58] Sometimes Luther can be understood to mean that the kingdom of this world should be of no concern for Christian folk and at other times it should be a matter of intense concern for Christian folk. While this is only a small indication of the richness and complexity of Luther's opinions, it still should warn us that our theology is not Luther's, but our theology is the theology of the Lutheran Confessions. Because of our confessional commitments, the Missouri Synod presumes the superiority of the Confessions over Luther. There are indeed any number of statements made by Luther that we would decline to support or confess.[59] The fact that Luther may not have used the term "third use" does not commend to us a repudiation of a correct understanding of the concept or the term. Arguments from silence are ultimately not very convincing.

Louis Smith was absolutely correct in saying that it is not just a matter of semantics when the claim is made that the third use of the law is merely the first and second uses for Christians.[60] William Lazareth certainly concurs on this point:

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[57] Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 184.

[58] James M. Childs Jr., "Ethics and the Promise of God: Moral Authority and the Church's Witness," in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, ed. Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 99–100.

[59] Some of his statements about the Jews immediately come to mind.

[60] "For in Article VI, the law informs and directs while it accuses. The description it seems to me is accurate. But then the question must be raised: How is this different from saying that the law's first two uses remain in force for Christians? This is not just a matter of semantics." Smith, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 65 (see n. 3 above).

> At best, if consistently understood as the Pauline *nomos*, the Law's "third use" in Article VI can rightly refer only to the legitimate application of the first two uses to the *persisting sin* ("like a stubborn, recalcitrant donkey") of imperfect Christians, as well as elsewhere to non-Christians. However, that is not a new "third use" in kind, but solely a different area of the first two functions implementation.[61]

There is something instructive about the almost humorous muddling of the uses of the law, "the third use is the first use for Christians," or "the third use is the second use for Christians."[62] First, there is no consensus as to which the third use would be. Is it merely first use for Christians or is it second use for Christians? Like playing musical chairs, then can it also be said that the first use is the third use for unbelievers (and so on)? More seriously, this points out the likelihood that the distinction resides in the impact the one law makes, rather than the various manipulations to which the law might be susceptible. The fact that various "uses" of the law look and sound the same should be no surprise. The numbering of the law, even as first and second, never has been about differing content. The re-creation worked by Christ functions to change how sinners hear and respond to the law within the new creation.

Perhaps Piotr Malysz has put his finger on a large measure of the problem for those who struggle with the third use of the law when he points out that the third use of the law must "be something more than arbitrary legalism that comes after the Gospel and is then ineptly justified by an appeal to the mysteries of God's will."[63] If the law only brings wrath it appears as a raging and non-rational power, intended merely to burn down human pretensions to self-justification. The question can never be the meaning or justice of the law, only its terrifying result of bringing God's wrath into the world. Under this schema the law does indeed have the appearance of arbitrariness. It is not correct to presume for the second use of the law that sort of arbitrariness. There is, after all, only one and the same law. The law only appears arbitrary to us because of the fall. The fall means that the old Adam will always feel the lash on his back and taste the salty sweat of his brow. There was nothing arbitrary about the primal command not to eat of the tree in the garden, even if Adam and Eve did not understand why God gave it.[64] Where law only as an outbreak of

[61] William Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 243.

[62] Piotr Malysz, "The Third Use of the Law in Light of Creation and the Fall," in Gieschen, *The Law in Holy Scripture*, 236.

[63] Malysz, "The Third Use of the Law," 235.

[64] See Luther's discussion of this command in *LW* 1:153–154.

divine wrath can be countered, the chances for an informative function of the law become far better.

III. The Teaching of the Formula of Concord

A short summary of the Formula's actual teaching on the third use may be the best way to bring clarity to this issue. First let us consider what the Formula of Concord Article VI says to the Christian *qua* Christian (inner man), then the Christian *in concreto*, then how the law is in the hands of the Holy Spirit, and finally the limiting function of the third use in the Formula of Concord.

Christian qua *Christian*

The Christian *qua* Christian is how the individual stands before God on the basis of the article of justification. It describes the relationship of the justified person to the law of God. This relationship is the eschatological standpoint. There is in view here no law to tyrannize the life of the believer.[65] The law for Christ's sake is at its *finis* and *telos*.[66] The regenerate will produce the fruits of the Spirit, "spontaneously as if they knew of no command, threat, or reward."[67] They will not have need of the threatenings of the law. "The believer without any coercion and with a willing spirit, in so far as he is reborn, does what no threat of the law could ever have wrung from him."[68] All this is the life which is now possessed and fully enjoyed through faith, and the hope of the future consummation as part of that faith.[69] Here there are no half-measures and no mitigation of the gospel for the law's sake.

The Formula of Concord does make reference to the eschaton at the end of the article and in the context of speaking of the freedom of the

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[65] Believers "are freed through Christ from the curse and coercion of the law." Ep VI, 2.

[66] Thus Luther: "If a Christian is defined properly and accurately, therefore, he is a child of grace and of the forgiveness of sins. He has no Law at all, but he is above the Law, sin, death, and hell." *LW* 26: 59.

[67] Ep VI, 6.

[68] Ep VI, 7.

[69] The testimony of the Formula on this point is abundant: "Christians, having been genuinely converted to God and justified, have been freed and liberated from the curse of the law" (SD VI, 4); "The law cannot impose its curse upon those who through Christ have been reconciled with God" (SD VI, 5); The law may not "torture the regenerated with its coercion, for according to the inner man they delight in the law of God" (SD VI, 5); If believers were perfectly renewed "of themselves and altogether spontaneously, without any instruction, admonition, exhortation, or driving by the law they would do what they are obligated to do according to the will of God" (SD VI, 6).

Christian. "But just as they will see God face to face [in the eschaton], so through God's indwelling Spirit they will do his will spontaneously, without coercion, unhindered, perfectly, completely, and with sheer joy, and will rejoice therein forever."[70] Quite clearly the Formula says that the Christian as Christian does not use the law as a guide, indeed he does not have the law at all! However, Forde attributes precisely this to the third use: "The question is whether one can or should speak of a 'third' use of the law in addition to the political use (to restrain evil) and the theological use (to convict of sin): a use of the law by the reborn Christian *as* Christian in which law functions as a 'guide to the Christian life.'"[71] The Formula of Concord is perfectly clear that the law does not function as a "guide to the Christian life" for the Christian as Christian! The Formula's actual teaching explicitly condemns the very point Forde takes here as one of the faults of the third use. Instead, according to the Formula the Christian as Christian is entirely free from the need of guidance and always does spontaneously the will of God. Jonathan G. Lange has demonstrated that the Formula of Concord uses its terminology perfectly clearly and entirely consistently.

> The term "Christian" is used synonymously with the terms "true believers," "truly converted," "regenerated," and "justified by faith" (Ep VI, 2). . . . All of these terms are used interchangeably to speak of the Christian as he exists in this world, but never are they used in reference to the inner man. Later dogmaticians have labeled this concept by the phrase Christian *in concreto*.[72]

So while the Christian *qua* Christian is entirely free of the law, the Christian *in concreto* is the Christian as he actually exists in the world "caught between the times."

Christian in Concreto

There is something to be said for the eschatological perspective on the Christian *in concreto*. But that is not all that can be said. The Formula's concept of the Christian *in concreto* is a constant warning against spiritual pride.[73] We may not leap to the end while we live in the flesh. Forde points

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[70] SD VI, 25.

[71] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:449.

[72] Jonathan G. Lange, "Using the Third Use: Formula of Concord VI and the Preacher's Task," *Logia* 3, no. 1 (1994): 19.

[73] Luther's sermon from the *Church Postil* sets the Christian concretely in the real context of life between the times: "Here again is an admonition for Christians to follow up their faith by good works and a new life, for though they have forgiveness of sins through baptism, the old Adam still adheres to their flesh and makes himself felt in tendencies and desires to vices physical and mental. The result is that unless Christians offer resistance, they will lose their faith and the remission of sins and will in the end be

this out, but presumes that the third use implies a third way of using the law: "With the conscience claimed by the eschatological promise, the 'flesh' in *this* world 'for the time being' is to do the commandments of God not in some third way but as its entry into this world where the rest of humankind lives."[74] As has already been demonstrated, the Formula of Concord provides no such third way, rather it locates the difference in men, not in the law. In fact, the third use of the law is about the fleshly entry of the Christian into the world due to the need of his neighbor. This is no work of supererogation, but within the limits of God-given vocation; it is a working of natural law at its best. Here there are no superior or more glittering works, but instead those tied to vocation and unfolded by the Decalogue. The Formula of Concord closes the way to perfection through the law, even and especially after conversion: "But in this life Christians are not renewed perfectly and completely."[75] The Formula drives home this point:

> Old Adam still clings to their nature and to all its internal and external powers. Concerning this the apostle writes, "I know that nothing good dwells within me." And again, "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." Likewise, "I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin." Likewise, "The desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would."[76]

Here there are no pretensions to heroics or spiritual athleticism.[77] The Formula of Concord has both feet firmly planted in the reality that all have sinned, remain sinners, and stand under the same law of God.[78] It is hardly a tract for spiritual elitism.

The Formula's third use of the law does not represent a neutralization of the law in such a way that covert antinomianism is injected into the corpus of doctrine. Forde rightly states, "If one is seriously to maintain imputed righteousness as the eschatological power of new life out of

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worse than they were at first; for they will begin to despise and persecute the Word of God when corrected by it." Martin Luther, "Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity," in *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, trans. J. N. Lenker et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 4.II:304.

[74] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:454.

[75] SD VI, 7.

[76] SD VI, 7–8.

[77] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:450.

[78] "Yet it remains a Law for the wicked and unbelieving; it remains also for us who are weak, to the extent that we do not believe." *LW* 26:161–162.

death, one can speak neither of a temporal end to the law nor of its transformation into a third thing, or more or less neutral guide. The law is not to be changed; the *sinner* is to be changed."[79] The Formula says, "The distinction between works is due to the difference in the individuals who are concerned about living according to the law and the will of God."[80] The sinner is changed in that the attitude he has toward the law of God has changed. Now it not only threatens, accuses, and condemns, but it also instructs, not the Christian *qua* Christian, but the Christian *in concreto*.

Third Article Business

Both law and gospel belong to the Spirit: "As often, therefore, as Christians trip, they are rebuked through the Spirit of God out of the law. But the same Spirit raises them up again and comforts them with the preaching of the holy Gospel."[81] The Holy Spirit functions with law and gospel simultaneously: "In this way the Holy Spirit simultaneously performs both offices, 'he kills and brings to life, he brings down into Sheol, and raises up.'"[82]

The Formula of Concord expressly places both law and gospel in the hands of God the Holy Spirit, and never claims that the Christian "uses" it. Certainly the Christian exercises himself in the word of God (Ps 119:71; 1 Cor 9:27), in that he receives the word of God as God intends to use it in his life. But this is not "use" in the sense of its being a manipulation of the law of God. If Forde is asking this question of the Formula of Concord (i.e., does the Christian "now use the law in a third way?"), the answer is a resounding and crystal clear "no." If in fact the Formula of Concord is properly understood to be arguing that the law is the Holy Spirit's to use, then it is impossible to claim that the third use of the law means that "because one is a 'reborn Christian,' one may now use the law in a way different from others: not to convict of sin or to restrain evil but simply as a guide to what one should do as a Christian."[83] We should concur wholeheartedly with Forde, when he says, "If that is what is meant by the 'third use,' it is clear that anyone grasped by the eschatological perspective must resist it."[84] No such division is possible for the Christian while he bears flesh and blood. What Forde has rejected, therefore, is at best a

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[79] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:451 (emphasis original).
[80] SD VI, 16.
[81] SD VI, 14.
[82] SD VI, 12.
[83] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:449.
[84] Forde, "Christian Life," in *CD* 2:449.

prevalent caricature of the third use of the law, but it is by no means a rejection of the position of the Formula of Concord.

Limiting Function of the Law

The law functions in a unique way for Christians: "according to the inner man they delight in the law of God" (Ps 1:2).[85] Note that this could not be said to be the first function of the law which is coercive: "The kingdom of Christ consists in finding all our praise and boast in grace. Other works should be free, not to be urged, nor should we wish by them to become Christians, but condescend with them to our neighbor."[86] This cannot be said of the second function of the law, which produces contrition and sorrow.

The distinction of third use has more to do with the relationship that the person has with God than it does a characteristic of the law: "The distinction between works is due to the difference in the individuals who are concerned about living according to the law and the will of God."[87] "But when a person is born anew by the Spirit of God and is liberated from the law (that is, when he is free from this driver and is driven by the Spirit of Christ), he lives according to the immutable will of God as it is comprehended in the law and, in so far as he is born anew, he does everything from a free and merry spirit."[88] Louis Smith sifts out this question:

> So if Article VI merely maintains that the Law's civil and theological uses continue to apply to Christians because they are not yet perfect (the "actual" situation of Christians according to Murray, correctly following the Formula) what is gained by calling this a third use? Such language might even give the impression that the Christian life is somehow peculiar in its behavior, as Mennonites and other holders of sectarian ideals affirm.[89]

The Formula of Concord is not about peculiarity of behavior, but the peculiarity of God and his unique work to save in Christ. What is peculiar, then, is not our action but the calling of God. Our relationship with God's law changes because our relationship with God changes, and that is why the Formula of Concord describes the difference not as a matter of

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[85] SD VI, 5.

[86] Luther, "Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity," in *Complete Sermons*, 3.I:201.

[87] SD VI, 16.

[88] SD VI, 17.

[89] Smith, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 65 (see n. 3 above).

behavior, or of law, but of a difference in man.[90] So Luther can say, "We are not free from the Law (as I have said above) in a human way, by which the Law is destroyed and changed, but in a divine and theological way, by which we are changed and from enemies of the Law are made friends of the Law."[91] Perhaps this is why Smith suggests that an entirely new theological anthropology is being forced on us.

> A human being never exists apart from relationships, particularly not apart from a relationship with God, which is established by God speaking in the Law or Gospel. This is what requires a *simul* doctrine that is the beginning of a completely new theological anthropology.[92]

While I would question what a "new" theological anthropology might look like, maybe the Formula of Concord is much farther down the road to providing hints for a renewed anthropological viewpoint than we have to this point given it credit. Our relation to the law is changed because God's relation to us has changed in Christ.[93]

There is no church law to be distinguished from civil or domestic law. There is but one law. The law expects the same things from both believers and unbelievers: good citizenship, good parenting, and the like. Yet, there is some distinction between works of the law and fruit of the Spirit: "These works are, strictly speaking, not works of the law but works and fruits of the Spirit, or, as St. Paul calls them, the law of the mind and the law of Christ."[94] This difference is accountable only on the basis of the changed relationship between God and the individual through faith. Fruit of the Spirit would not be expected of unbelievers. Fruit of the Spirit might be considered to be theological virtues.[95]

IV. Conclusion

Theology must not deteriorate merely into a battle over words, although the sound form of words is an essential inheritance of the faith that was once confessed at the Lutheran Reformation in the confessional writings of our church. In my opinion, the term third use of the law is privileged vocabulary. It is the church's language. Could it be used as a slogan to cover-up legalism? Certainly, but all doctrinal formulae are

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[90] "The distinction between works is due to the difference in the individuals who are concerned about living according to the law and the will of God." SD VI, 16.

[91] *LW* 27:347.

[92] Smith, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 67 (see n. 3 above).

[93] The insights of the Finnish school of Luther scholarship may have some utility here in giving fruitful direction to this discussion.

[94] SD VI, 17.

[95] SD VI, 5; see also Ep VI, 7.

susceptible to such abuse. This does not invalidate their use. The *crux*, however, of the argument is what is the correct meaning of the third use? In the end, I still do not know what a repudiation of the third use of the law gets you, especially if everyone has mutually agreed not to shoot their allies.

Smith's insight that the old conflicts over Scripture and its use in the church drove a great deal of the debate about the law and gospel is still significant. Law and gospel was seen as an antidote to the destruction caused in the church by the historical-critical method.

> I would suggest that [law-gospel method] seemed to offer a remedy for the acids of historical criticism's erosion of the Bible's dogmatic authority in the church. The more I look at the origins of historical criticism in Rationalism and Pietism, the more it seems clear to me that from the outset the purpose of the method was to drive a wedge between Scripture and Church. And there can be little doubt that historical criticism has succeeded in undermining the authority of the Bible as God's Word.[96]

The so-called Fort Wayne theology has headed in the right direction by presuming that the Bible is nothing less than the church's book; that Scripture's locus of function and situation is the church. Higher criticism eviscerated the church by snatching Scripture from its proper locatedness within the church. But here the larger issues of the sacramental life of the church, especially the power of Baptism and the life-sustaining character of the Sacrament of the Altar, should also play into our reconsideration of theological anthropology. The key will always be careful catechesis, so that God's word might always give the gift of relation to him with his Son through the Holy Spirit.

I am convinced that we will find fruitful ground by researching how a theological anthropology based upon relationship might clarify the lines of thought in the Formula of Concord in such a way that the current misunderstandings of Article VI of the Formula might be resolved.

[96] Smith, review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 66 (see n. 3 above).

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The Lord's Supper as Symposium in the Gospel of Mark

Peter J. Scaer

Does it really matter which Gospel was written first? For what it is worth, the prevailing opinion, among liberals and conservatives alike, is that Mark was written first.[1] This is not without reason. The gospel is marked by a primitive, primal, even jarring nature. Mark portrays Jesus as the misunderstood Messiah. The religious establishment is convinced he is demon-possessed, his family thinks he is out of his mind, and the crowds never move much beyond open-mouthed amazement. Even his hand-picked disciples are riddled with ignorance and unbelief.[2] Jesus is powerful and mysterious. No wonder the Gospel of Mark is traditionally designated by the lion, majestic and somewhat frightening.[3] More than any other Gospel, I think Mark challenges our preconceived notions of Jesus. Here is Jesus raw and unvarnished by literary flourishes or sentimentality.

It is little wonder why the academy has found Mark so appealing. Higher critics happily sought refuge in a Gospel omitting "the legend" of Christ's birth, and "the myth" of his resurrection.[4] Rudolf Bultmann could find in Mark a stripped down Gospel, focusing on the kerygmatic quality he associated with Pauline preaching. Placing Mark first was part of a theological paradigm laid down by Wilhelm Bousset.[5] For him and several

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[1] See David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

[2] See, for instance, Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 40.

[3] See esp. Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 35–65.

[4] The dating and ordering of Mark are surely tied to form criticism and the idea that the "myths" and "legends" of Christ's life must have developed later; see Rudolph Bultmann, *A History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963). Richard Bauckham, though, notes this irony, "It is a curious fact that nearly all the contentions of the early form critics have by now been convincingly refuted, but the general picture of the process of oral transmission that the form critics pioneered still governs the way most New Testament scholars think." See Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 242.

[5] Bousset originally laid down his theory in 1913. For an English translation of his major book on Christology, see Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in*

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others, Christology worked in a kind of Darwinian way: As monkey became man, so did the recognition of Jesus as prophet evolve into the confession that Jesus was God, or so went the thinking.[6]

Even if the critics have enjoyed Mark for its omissions, at least they have read it. For the very same reasons scholars have embraced Mark, the early church neglected it. Pick up the Markan volume of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, and you are bound to notice how slim the book is.[7] The editors clearly had little with which to work. As Thomas Oden notes, "Whereas Matthew, Luke, and John have all benefitted from being the subject of several line-by-line patristic commentaries, there are not complete commentaries of Mark that have survived the patristic period."[8] In fact, the first commentary on Mark appeared in the sixth century, and the next one was not produced until the ninth.[9] From earliest times, Mark was considered, at best, a complementary abridgement of Matthew, poorly suited to the liturgical and catechetical needs of church. Furthermore, within the church Mark's reputation has suffered from invidious comparisons. Papias, quoting the Elder, (perhaps John) says that Mark was not an orderly presentation.[10] Mark certainly is not as orderly, as Matthew. Papias proceeds to offer this assessment of the second Gospel: "Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely."[11] So, from the Elder we have the assurance that the evangelist Mark did not sin in writing his Gospel and did not record any false statements. Hardly a ringing endorsement. Later, Mark was given the dubious moniker, "the

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Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus, trans. J. E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970).

[6] For the most recent dismantling of Bousset, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus Christ in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[7] Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, eds., *Mark*, Ancient Christian Commentary On Scripture, New Testament 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

[8] Oden and Hall, *Mark*, xxxi.

[9] For a brief discussion of the matter of Markan neglect, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 159–160.

[10] Papias's comments on Mark are preserved in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.39.15; see *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (1952–1957; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 2:172–173 (hereafter *NPNF*[2]).

[11] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.39.15, in *NPNF*[2] 2:173. For a provocative and insightful discussion of the Elder's understanding of Mark, see Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, 18–27.

stump-fingered" evangelist, perhaps because of short digits, or more likely, due to the truncated form of his Gospel.[12] As Augustine sees it, "For although he is at one with Matthew in the larger number of passages, he is nevertheless at one rather with Luke in some others."[13] In other words, what Mark wrote can be found elsewhere. Known as the interpreter of Peter, Mark's Gospel was assured an invitation into the canon; nevertheless, he was thought to bring little to the party.

So it would seem that this short Gospel has been given short shrift by academy and church alike. Treating Mark as a compilation of primitive, oral history, both scholars and churchmen have tended to neglect this Gospel's theological sophistication and ecclesial, sacramental character.[14] It is encouraging that some scholars are coming to see Mark as, in the words of Brevard Childs, "a highly theological composition."[15] Confirmation of this can be seen, for instance, in Joel Marcus's new Anchor Bible Commentary, which stresses Mark's sophisticated use of the Old Testament.[16]

So, we ask, "Is Mark really the first Gospel, with the most primitive theology?" To be sure, Mark omits a lengthy retelling of the resurrection, but he does so, it would seem, for theological reasons. His is, in good Lutheran fashion, a theology of the cross.[17] Is Mark, however, really an abridgement of Matthew? In places where Mark runs parallel with

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[12] For an interesting discussion of Mark's unfortunate nickname, see C. Clifton Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 115–118.

[13] Augustine, *De consensus evangelistarum* 4.10.11, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969–1976), 6:230.

[14] C. S. Mann made a breakthrough, positing Mark as a later Gospel, written to a church under persecution; see *Mark* (New York: Doubleday, 1986).

[15] Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1994), 82.

[16] Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, Anchor Bible 27 (New York: Doubleday, 2000). This is the replacement of the C. S. Mann volume in the Anchor Bible Series. See also Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

[17] See, for instance, Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), esp. 1022–1026.

Matthew and Luke, Mark is actually longer.[18] C. S. Mann noted that Mark bears the marks of a literary conflation.[19]

What, therefore, should we do with the fact that Mark seems to expand on the narratives of Matthew and Luke? Some attribute this to a kind of quirkiness, associated with orality.[20] Mark is then understood not so much as a theologian but as an engaging story-teller. As R. T. France, typical of many commentators, writes, "Much of the graphic detail in Mark's storytelling may derive simply from his imaginative skill as a raconteur."[21]

I. Mark as a Churchly and Sacramental Gospel

Still, should we simply attribute quirky Markan details to Peter's, or Mark's, ability as a story teller? In any number of ways, it seems, Mark is a theological advancement on Luke and Matthew. Time and again, the details Mark includes not only keep the audience interested but they communicate theologically and make full sense only when seen in the context of the church. His sacramental theology, I would argue, builds and advances that offered in Matthew. Baptism, for Mark, is front and center. John not only baptizes, but he preaches Baptism (Mark 1:4), and he summarizes Jesus' entire ministry by the fact that he will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:9). By driving out demons, Mark shows us how the devil is driven out in Baptism (Mark 1:21–28). As he tells the story of Jesus cleansing leprosy, Mark illustrates how Baptism cleanses us from our sin (Mark 1:40–45). In the healing of the paralytic, we learn how others, in faith, bring their loved ones to the baptismal font (Mark 2:1–12). In the healing of the deaf and mute man by the saliva of Jesus, we are reminded how the healing baptismal waters come from the body of Jesus himself (Mark 7:31–37). So also do we see how Baptism opens up our ears and loosens our tongues, in order that we can profess the faith rightly. In the transfiguration, we see how the cloak of Jesus, which—whiter than anyone can bleach it—becomes the baptismal cloak of our righteousness (Mark 9:2–16). Although more examples could be given, the point is clear: Mark's Gospel reflects and supports the baptismal life of the church in which it was written.

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18 As R. T. France, for instance, notes, "Typically, the Markan version of a miracle story may be twice as long as the equivalent pericope in Matthew." *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 17.

19 Mann, *Mark*, 66.

20 See Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 44–54.

21 France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 19.

II. The Feeding of the Five Thousand: The Mark of Sophistication

Mark also has a developed sense of the Lord's Supper, as well as its place within the church and the Christian life. A good example of this can be seen in Mark's telling of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30–44). Mark, as do the other evangelists, paints his picture of the feeding of the five thousand with Old Testament brush-strokes. The Lord who multiplies bread for the multitudes in the wilderness brings to mind Yahweh, the Lord who fed the children of Israel with manna in the desert. The feeding of the five thousand also recalls 2 Kings 4:42–44, where Elisha feeds one hundred men and has food left over.[22] The apostles bring to mind the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve baskets of leftovers underline this Israel-New Israel typology.

Scholars have long recognized that the Markan feeding of the five thousand is eucharistic in tone and content.[23] As do the other evangelists, Mark narrates the feeding of the five thousand with the four-fold liturgical action. We are told that after Jesus took the five loaves of bread (λαβών), he blessed it (εὐλόγησεν), broke it (κατέκλασεν), and gave it (ἐδίδου) to his disciples, so that they might, in turn, give the bread to the crowd (Mark 6:41). The telling of the story tightly corresponds, as Joel Marcus notes, to the "relatively fixed form of the eucharistic liturgy."[24] Mark also mentions the temporal setting of the meal, twice noting the lateness of the hour (Mark 6:35). Sanae Masuda notes that the word "hour" (ὥρα) is used elsewhere in the Gospel only to refer to Jesus' passion and parousia.[25] Thus, Mark may be further linking this evening meal in the desert to the Last Supper, which also took place at the onset of the evening (Mark 14:17). In Mark, the feeding of the five thousand, with all of its eucharistic coloring, becomes a type of dry-run for the Lord's Supper, an important miracle account from which the church was to understand the greater ongoing miracle of the Lord's Supper.

There are a number of Markan accents in the account of the feeding of the five thousand not found in the other Gospels. In the Markan feeding alone, Jesus looks at the crowd and sees that they are "as sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). The story brings to mind Psalm 23, and Jesus is pictured as the Shepherd of Israel. This intertextual relationship is

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[22] Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 415–416.

[23] For example, Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988), 84–85, and France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 262.

[24] Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 409.

[25] Sanae Masuda, "The Good News of the Miracle of the Bread: The Tradition and Its Markan Redaction," *New Testament Studies* 28 (1982): 193.

furthered in Mark's seemingly incidental addition to the story, namely that the crowds were positioned upon the "green grass" (Mark 6:39). Green grass in the desert? Origen looks at this odd detail and lamely comments that "all flesh is grass."[26] The unexpected green grass is meant to bring to mind again Psalm 23, where "the Lord makes me lie down in green pastures" (Ps 23:2). Thus, Mark enhances the Old Testament background of the feeding miracle and shows how this Davidic psalm finds its fulfillment in Jesus, the Shepherd King, who feeds and cares for his sheep.

Mark additionally enhances the intertexuality of this account with the Old Testament by noting that the five thousand were grouped in hundreds and fifties, recalling the military camps into which the Israelites were divided in the Exodus wilderness (Exod 18:21, 25; Deut 1:15). This detail and other allusions in Mark point to the new exodus in Christ.[27]

Yet there is more to this scene. It is only in Mark that Jesus commanded the crowd to sit πρασιαὶ πρασιαί (Mark 6:40). Most translators have done little with the phrase. Indeed, there seems to be a translators' bias against the second Gospel, evidenced by a tendency to take Mark's interesting, quirky, and provocative words and translate them in a generic way—as if Mark did not know what he was doing. The NIV, RSV, and Beck unimaginatively say that the crowd sat down in "groups" of hundreds and fifties. The term πρασιαί, far from being generic "groups," is actually "garden plots" or "garden beds."[28] Jesus had the crowds organized "garden plot by garden plot." From an Old Testament point of view, garden plots hearken back to Eden. Mark may be drawing upon a tradition similar to Sirach, where it is written, "I will water my plants and my flower bed I will drench; and suddenly this rivulet of mine became a river, then this stream of mine, a sea. Thus do I send my teachings forth shining like the dawn" (Sir 24:29-30). Thus, according to Sirach, the coming Messiah would reestablish paradise through his teaching. Even so, when Jesus sees that the people are like sheep without a shepherd, Mark tells us that Jesus "began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34). From a New Testament perspective, Mark may be thinking of garden plots as a picture of the church. Commenting on Mark's use of πρασιαὶ πρασιαί, Joel

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26 Origen *Commentary on Matthew II*, quoted in Oden and Hall, *Mark*, 90–91.

27 For the relationship between this account and the hope for a new Israel as expressed in the Qumran literature, see Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 419. For the new exodus theme in Mark, see Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000).

28 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), s.v. "πρᾶσι-ά."

Marcus writes, "When the God of the new exodus manifests himself, Mark implies, human disorder is transformed into organic paradisiacal order."[29] Though the church itself may be large (in this case five thousand men, plus women and children), it is actualized in smaller congregations of one hundreds or even fifty, each of which is a little garden plot, a little paradise, where Jesus the gardener speaks wisdom and cultivates his church.

There is one more intriguing detail from which few commentators have made much hay. Mark 6:39 states that Jesus instructs all the people "to recline" (ἀνακλῖναι). Again, the KJV, NIV, RSV, and ESV all say that Jesus ordered the people simply "to sit." Yet, there is a significant difference between "reclining" and "sitting." In the Greco-Roman world, people routinely frequented taverns and cookshops, called *popinae* or *cauponae*, where they would eat while standing, or sitting on stools or high benches. As Matthew Roller writes, "In *popinae* people come and go as they please, and pay for their food according to what they eat, as in a modern restaurant. There are no invited guests, for there is no host to invite them, hence no one to provide food, entertainment, and the like at his own expense."[30] The position of reclining implies something different. This is not the posture normally associated with utilitarian eating. Reclining is the posture appropriate for a banquet, a meal marked by leisure and conviviality. As the disciples suggested, the five thousand could very well have gone to neighboring towns to buy their own food (Mark 6:36). There is no indication that they were all that impoverished. This meal would be more than meeting their basic dietary needs; it would be a banquet in which there is a host, as well as invited guests, eating at no cost. So they recline.

III. The Meaning of Symposium

Mark 6:39 states that Jesus has them recline "symposia by symposia" (συμπόσια συμπόσια). This language is remarkable on at least a couple of levels. First, we note the obvious etymology of the word "symposia," which means "drinking together." As Liddell and Scott note, a "symposium" is, in its most basic sense, "a drinking party."[31] This is surely an odd way to describe a meal in which Jesus offers bread and fish, without mention of wine, or, in fact, any other libation. Perhaps it is not quite accurate after all to describe the Markan feeding of the five thousand

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[29] Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 419.

[30] Matthew B. Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: Bodies, Values, and Status* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 93.

[31] Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "συμποσί-α."

as a "dry run" for the eucharist. By using the term "symposia," Mark may be hinting at the fact that this meal of bread and fish anticipates a meal in which drinking, not just eating, will be constitutive.

There is also a second thing to think about. According to the second-century Clement of Alexandria, Mark wrote his Gospel, based upon Peter's preaching, in Rome.[32] Whether or not this Gospel was penned in Rome, commentators have often noted its distinctively Roman characteristics. As Raymond Brown notes, "The presence in Mark of Greek loanwords derived from Latin and of expressions reflecting Latin grammar, may suggest a locale where Latin was spoken."[33] Mark, for instance, uses the Latin equivalents for such words as legion, centurion, and denarius. Mark is writing for and in the Greco-Roman world. The distance of the Gospel from the Jewish worldview can be seen in the fact that Mark has to explain to his audience the ceremonial washing traditions of the Jews (Mark 7:3–4). Where Mark was written cannot be known. We can, however, say that the author and his audience were clearly living in a world shaped by Hellenistic culture. We might add that in the Gospel of Mark it is a centurion who first confesses Jesus as God's Son (Mark 15:39).

Given Mark's Greco-Roman elements, what might his reference to "symposia" mean? The symposium was, first and foremost, a Greco-Roman banquet, at which people would be gathered at a meal, and conversation would be enhanced by wine. Mention the word "symposium," and we are brought into the world of togas, banquets, and Greco-Roman philosophers; a world in which Socrates could be found, reclining at table with friends, talking about life in all of its dimensions.

The symposium served not only as a meal, but also a literary tradition. Famous literary symposia include works by Plato and Xenophon, as well as Plutarch's *Table Talk*.[34] A symposium was essentially a narrative that told the story of a dinner-party, at which there would be food, wine, and good conversation. As a literary device, the symposium was typically employed to demonstrate the wisdom of a particular philosopher and the movement that he led. What better way to demonstrate the wisdom of, say

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[32] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.14.6, in *NPNF*[2] 2:261.

[33] Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 161.

[34] For *Table Talk*, Books 1–6, see Plutarch, *Moralia VIII*, trans. Paul A. Clement, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959); for Books 7–9, see Plutarch, *Moralia IX*, trans. Edwin L. Minar, Jr., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961).

Socrates, than by showing how he interacted with others around the dinner table?

Typically, a literary symposium would feature, as E. Springs Steele notes, "a common cast of characters," including a "a host notable usually for wealth," as well as a chief guest whose "distinguishing characteristic" was his wisdom; "All other guests are typically cultivated and of high social standing."[35] The literary structure of the symposium was simple: an invitation to the meal, followed by a fait divers (i.e., something that happens at the meal), which results in a discussion.

Since the topics for discussion would arise from the meal setting itself, conversation would often revolve around such topics as food, wine, and table etiquette. Table talk typically led to a discussion of deeper subjects, including wisdom and ethics. In Plato's *Symposium*, for instance, there is a discussion as to who will have the honor of reclining next to Agathon, as well as who will be placed next to Socrates.[36] This leads to a discussion about honor and pride, and then, finally, to the nature of true love.[37] Similarly, in Plutarch's *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, a certain Alexidemus is insulted by his poor place at the table, at which point he is told that such objections are an insult to host and guests alike.[38] The talk then proceeds to such lofty themes as time, the universe, truth, light, death, and God.[39] Again, in *Table Talk* the participants argue that good order is necessary for pleasant dining.[40] So also do the guests discuss food and drink, and, most amusingly, why three or five drinks are better than four.[41] This is followed, somewhat incongruously, by a discussion of the evils of drunkenness, which then turns into a conversation on the deities and upon the divine, geometrical order of the universe.[42]

This Greco-Roman literary genre was appropriated by the Jewish authors in such works as *Letter of Aristeas*, which tells the story, in the form of a symposium, about the translation of the Septuagint. Typical of the symposium genre, there is a notable host, in this case King Ptolemy II

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[35] E. Springs Steele, "Luke 11:37–54—A Modified Hellenistic Symposium?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984): 381.

[36] Plato, *Symposium* 175C. See Plato, *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

[37] Plato, *Symposium* 177A.

[38] Plutarch, *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 149. See Plutarch, *Moralia II*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

[39] Plutarch, *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 152–153.

[40] Plutarch, *Table Talk* 1.2.617.

[41] Plutarch, *Table Talk* 3.9.257.

[42] Plutarch, *Table Talk* 8.2.718.

Philadelphus. The distinguished guests are the 70 translators of the Septuagint, each of whom receives a place of honor around the table. Then the discussion moves around the table as each of the 70 offers a bit of wisdom. Appropriately then, when asked how to conduct oneself at a banquet, one of the guests answered, "One ought invite lovers of learning and men capable of suggesting what may be useful to the realms and the lives of its subjects—much more harmonious and sweeter music you could not find."[43] The discussion then turns to such topics as truth, good leadership, and "To whom should favor be shown?"[44] Thus, the author of *Letter of Aristeas* was keen on demonstrating that the translators of the Septuagint were wise according to Greco-Roman standards, and that this translation should be taken seriously as divine literature that imparted wisdom.

The question at hand, I suppose, would be: was Mark thinking of any of this when he wrote his story of the feeding of the five thousand and described the people reclining "symposia by symposia"? Although the idea may appear strange at first blush, we should note Mark's place within the Greco-Roman world, the ubiquity of the symposium in the cultural and literary world of the time, the fact that the symposium genre was already being used by Jewish authors, and the fact that there is another evangelist who seems to be thinking in these Greco-Roman terms. So, we turn to Luke.

IV. Meals, Table Fellowship, and Symposia in Luke

As many commentators have observed, the theme of table fellowship permeates the Gospel of Luke. Arthur A. Just defines this table fellowship as "the gracious *presence* of Jesus at table, where he teaches about the kingdom of God and shares a *meal* in an atmosphere of acceptance, friendship, and peace. His usual table fellowship practice combined those three ingredients: his presence, his teaching, and his eating."[45] The meal scenes in Luke, according to Just, teach us about fellowship and forgiveness, as well as illuminate our understanding of Christ's ongoing presence in the church in the eucharistic meal. As Just puts it, "Jesus'

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[43] *Letter of Aristeas* 286–287, in *Aristeas to Philocrates: Letter of Aristeas*, ed. and trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Ktav, 1976), 213.

[44] *Letter of Aristeas* 228, in *Aristeas to Philocrates*, 189.

[45] Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 231.

continuing practice of teaching and eating with his disciples at table has given the church the pattern for its eucharistic worship."[46]

It should also be noted, however, that Luke's Gospel has a decidedly Greco-Roman flavor. Luke aimed to place Christianity onto the world stage and demonstrate how the Galilean movement would one day conquer Rome. The message of the new Israel would reach to the very ends of the earth. As Jesus stood among the Pharisees and Saducees, Paul would one day stand up among the Stoics and Epicureans (Acts 17:18). Jerusalem had lost its gravitational weight. Members of the new Israel would now have to think of themselves as citizens of the world. Accordingly, part of the early church catechesis included teaching what it meant for a Christian to be a citizen within the Greco-Roman world and its cultural values.

As such, it is interesting to note that the Lukan meal scenes bear striking resemblance to Greco-Roman precedents. Gregory Sterling, among others, has argued that the third evangelist presents four banquets in "terms reminiscent of symposia, Lk 5:29–39; 7:36–50; 11:37–54; 14:1–24."[47] Sterling notes:

> These four units in Luke all share the same structure: a setting at a banquet (5:29; 7:36; 11:37; 14:1), *fait divers* (5:29; 7:37–38; 11:38; 14:2–6), reaction (5:30; 7:39; 11:38; 14:2–6), Jesus' response (5:31–32; 7:40–48; 11:39–44; 14:7–14 [7–11, 12–14]), further question or statement (5:35; 7:49; 11:45; 14:15); and Jesus' response (5:34–39 [34–35, 36–39]; 7:50; 11:46–52; 14:16–24). The result is that Jesus becomes the best of all philosophers, imparting his wisdom at the banquet. . . . The parallels between the structure of a symposium and these banquets suggests that the author utilized a known Hellenistic form which the readers would find meaningful.[48]

It is interesting to look at the four meal scenes in Luke, his little symposia, and see what types of topics are addressed. In Luke 5:27–39, Levi the tax collector holds a banquet. This leads to a discussion as to who are worthy guests, in this case, tax collectors and sinners. Next, as is typical at a symposium, there is a discussion about eating and drinking, at which point Jesus describes his message in terms of "new wine" (Luke 5:37). In Luke 7:36–50, a Pharisee invites Jesus to recline at banquet. A woman proceeds to anoint Jesus' feet with her hair. This leads to a discussion of the nature of hospitality, which then turns into a discourse on love and

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[46] Just, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 241.

[47] Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 370.

[48] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 371.

forgiveness. In Luke 11:37–54, Jesus again reclines at table. Once more drawing upon the circumstances of the meal, Jesus launches into a discussion of the true nature of purity. He also talks about the ethics of doing justice for the sake of the poor, the societal sin of seeking the best seats in meetings, and the pride of desiring greetings in the marketplace. Over and against the so-called experts in the law, who take away the key of knowledge (Luke 11:52), Jesus shows himself to be the true wise man. Again, in Luke 14:1–24, Jesus takes the occasion of a feast to speak about the counter-cultural values of God. In a discourse, reminiscent of Plato and Plutarch, Jesus speaks about the place one should take at a table. Radically, Christ exhorts the guests not to take a seat of honor, but the lowest place (Luke 14:10). As the wise men discussed to whom favor should be shown in *Letter of Aristeas*, so also does Jesus. Except, he encourages his guests to host dinners in which they invite the lowly. He then goes on to compare the kingdom of God to a great banquet held by a certain man who, having his invitation rejected, sends his servant to invite "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" (Luke 14:21).

These four banquet scenes are striking in the ways that Jesus, the teacher of wisdom, speaks of things both earthly and heavenly. The topics which he discusses (i.e., old and new wine, whom to invite to banquet, proper hospitality, seating arrangement, as well as other things which happen during the meal) would have been very familiar to readers of Plato's and Plutarch's symposia. Yet, he uses these familiar subjects to introduce a new code of Christian ethics, which is based upon humility. Jesus claims a privileged place in society for those who cannot help themselves, namely the poor. Finally, he notes how these new values are based upon the heavenly reality, which is evidenced in himself. Thus, through his use of little symposia, Luke roots Christian ethics to Christology. By using the commonly known genre of the symposium, Luke begins to turn the world, with its values of honor and shame, "upside-down" (Acts 17:16).

Although Sterling does not discuss the matter, I think that Luke's account of the Lord's Supper also may be classified as a type of little symposium. It is worth noting that Luke, alone among the Synoptic Gospels, incorporates a significant amount of teaching material into his Lord's Supper account. Typical of symposia literature, Jesus comments on an event which has happened at the table: in this case, a dispute among the disciples as to who is the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus then proceeds to speak in very Greco-Roman terms about the nature of Christian greatness, and what it means to be a true benefactor: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority are called benefactors. It is not this way with you" (Luke 22:25). As Christ came to serve, so also should Christians serve others. Again, Christian ethics proceed from a discussion of Christology. And the Lord's Supper is the place where Christians, gathered around food and wine, discuss the things of God and shape their lives around the counter-cultural values of Christ, their teacher.

V. The Lord's Supper as Symposium

So it is, Luke seems to make use of the symposium tradition, and Mark appears to nod to the tradition as well. Mark links it to the feeding of the five thousand, and Luke uses it in the meals scenes. It is generally acknowledged that both the meal scenes in Luke and the feeding miracles in Mark point to the Lord's Supper. Thus, both Mark and Luke would have us see the Lord's Supper, at least in part, as a type of Christian symposium. What might be the implications of this, especially in terms of the shaping of Christian identity?

I suppose that seeing the Lord's Supper as a type of symposium would reinforce some things that we probably take for granted. For starters, the Lord's Supper is a type of meal at which people recline. That is to say, it is not fast food. It is more closely akin to a banquet, at which there is a host and there are guests. This is not a meal bought at a price, but one that is provided for by the host.

Besides eating and drinking, what happens at a symposium? Well, there is conversation and the sharing of wisdom. It is the kind of thing that goes on, I suppose, in almost any good Bible study. The primary teacher or wise man at the Christian symposium is Christ. Though we may learn from many, Christ remains the church's primary teacher. This function of teacher continues in apostolic ministers, who teach all that the Lord has commanded (Matt 28:20). Yet, all are invited to join in the conversation.

Thinking about the Lord's Supper, at least in part, as a symposium, may also shape the way we think about the worship service, the topics which our church addresses, and the symposia we attend.[49] First, concerning our symposium, I must admit that I enjoy the irony of speaking about symposia at a symposium. For us the symposium is not primarily an academic enterprise. Any discussion of the Bible finds its most natural setting not in the academy but in the church. The academy has increasingly claimed biblical literature for itself. So too, the church has often retreated, leaving weightier questions of the Bible to be answered by the so-called

[49] This study was first presented at the 2007 Symposium on Exegetical Theology in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

experts. True biblical scholarship, however, is the rightful task of the church. The seminary is not a foreign body or addition to the church, but a natural extension of the church, an ongoing symposium where the church intentionally gathers and speaks about the things of God. The seminary life, in its teaching and scholarship, is a natural outpouring of the eucharistic life of the church in the Divine Service.

The reverse is true also. As the symposia and the seminary are a natural extension of the church's eucharistic worship, so is each and every eucharistic gathering a little symposium. The Lord's Supper is the place to speak about distinct Christian values and what it means to live life as a Christian. Luke's Gospel, in particular, takes aim at widely held Greco-Roman values, and turns them upside-down in light of Christ. So also, the church today must help her members understand what it means to be a Christian in a world whose values are often inimical to the way of Christ.

What might be discussed at a little Christian symposium? Concerning discussion topics for a symposium, Plutarch writes,

> Then, too, there are, I think, topics of discussion that are suitable for a symposium. Some are supplied by history; others it is possible to take from current events; some contain many lessons bearing on philosophy, many on piety; some induce an emulous enthusiasm for courageous and great-hearted deeds, and some for charitable and human deeds.[50]

Certainly, we do not take marching orders from Plutarch. Still, the Lord's Supper, as the Christian symposium, is the place where we speak about the things of the world and put them into their proper perspective. This Sacrament is a place to speak of divine wisdom and Christian piety. It is a place to spur one another on to courage and good deeds; it is a place to promote charity and giving to the poor. The topics discussed are often those that simply come to mind or are based on things happening within the life of the church or the community at large. What are Christians to think about abortion, stem-cell research, cloning, homosexuality, marriage, family, and the host of other topics which are hot topics within our culture? The Lord's Supper, the Christian symposium, is the place to speak about these things. It is the place to discuss and show the relationship between our life, as we live it today, and the life of Christ.

It is often said that Lutheran pastors speak too often of the things of God, and not enough about life as it is lived day by day. Maybe our critics have a point. Yet, to speak about Christ is to speak about the Christian life. Christians gather around food and wine to speak about things earthly and

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[50] Plutarch, *Table Talk* 1.1.614, in Plutarch, *Moralia VIII*, 15.

things divine. There Christians drink the new wine which is better than the old, and they learn to live a life defined by the humility and service of Christ. Thus, the Lord's Supper, the place where Christ's body and blood is received, is also a little symposium, where Christian identity is shaped through teaching and the imparting of wisdom from the one who is Wisdom. It is the banquet where one dines with Christ, who is the host and teacher. Perhaps, we suffer because our teaching, as done in the Bible study, is seen as somehow separate from the church service proper. The seminary likewise is seen as something other than the church. There is an unnatural disconnect between teaching and preaching. So also is there a disconnect between doctrine, narrowly defined, and the life that we live from day to day. Yet, eucharistic worship is precisely the place where not only our hearts, but also our minds, are formed into the image of Christ. It is the place where the Christian life is given form and content.

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Revisiting Robert Barnes on the Eucharist

Korey D. Maas

Only slightly less significant than the doctrine of justification, yet often even more contentious than that fundamental article, the doctrine of the Eucharist was central to the controversies of the sixteenth-century reformations. As such, eucharistic theology has come to be considered one of the identifying marks of Europe's diverse reformations as well as its various reformers. This was certainly the case in England, where Peter Marshall rightly notes that, by the end of the reign of Henry VIII, eucharistic theology "had become, on all sides, the single most important marker of religious difference."[1] This fact was also noted more than a generation ago by Basil Hall, whose survey of "the early rise and gradual decline of Lutheranism in England" put forth the suggestion that sacramental doctrine was "the chief hindrance to the advance of Lutheranism in England."[2] Though perhaps there is some truth to Hall's claim within the parameters of England's "long reformation,"[3] more recent scholarship has demonstrated that those individuals most influential in inaugurating and establishing the reformation under Henry VIII—Vicegerent in Spirituals Thomas Cromwell and Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer—held in the 1530s what might confidently be labeled "Lutheran" views of the Sacrament.[4] It is therefore somewhat ironic that the eucharistic theology of the less prominent reformer Robert Barnes

[1] Peter Marshall, "Identifying Religion in Henry VIII's England," in *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England*, ed. Peter Marshall (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 9.

[2] Basil Hall, "The Early Rise and Gradual Decline of Lutheranism in England" in *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent, c. 1500–1750*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 109.

[3] See, e.g., Alec Ryrie, "The Strange Death of Lutheran England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2002): 64–92.

[4] See, e.g., Peter N. Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 3–37; Rory McEntegert, "England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531–1547: Faction, Foreign Policy and the English Reformation" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 1992), 293–297, 348; and Ryrie, "Strange Death," 69–73.

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(1495–1540), the man so often championed as a rare sixteenth-century "English Lutheran,"[5] remains less clearly understood.

I. The Current Debate on Barnes

To be sure, even if there were no evidence to illuminate Barnes' eucharistic theology, there would remain good reason to associate him with broadly Lutheran views. As an Augustinian friar in Cambridge, Barnes was a known associate of more than one distributor of illicit "Lutheran" literature. He was himself arrested in February 1526 for an offensive sermon preached late in the previous year, a sermon later determined to be, at least in part, cribbed from one of Luther's printed homilies.[6] When he escaped captivity in 1528 he fled immediately to the continent, and by the summer of 1530 was lodging with the Wittenberg pastor Johann Bugenhagen. For the next several years Barnes was frequently in and out of Wittenberg, even matriculating at the university in 1533. It was also in Wittenberg that Barnes wrote and published two extant Latin works—one including a preface by Bugenhagen, the other a preface by Luther himself.

Such mutual indications of approval between Barnes and the Wittenbergers partially explain the now frequent descriptions of Barnes as "Luther's English connection" or, with allusions to the eventual manner of his death, a "Lutheran martyr."[7] But beyond the biographical details there are clear doctrinal affinities as well, and arguments for Barnes' status as a Lutheran frequently—and relatively safely—revolve especially around his doctrine of justification. With regard to his eucharistic theology, however, twentieth-century scholars frequently described him in mutually exclusive terms: as a Zwinglian,[8] as "the orthodox Lutheran,"[9] and even as one whose theology reveals "an unblushing avowal of belief in

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[5] Hence, for example, the recent inclusion of his name among the "saints" commemorated in the *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), xiii.

[6] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe* [hereafter *A&M*], 8 vols., ed. J. Pratt (London: Religious Tract Society, 1877), 5:415.

[7] See, most obviously, James Edward McGoldrick, *Luther's English Connection: The Reformation Thought of Robert Barnes and William Tyndale* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1979), and Neelak S. Tjernagel, *Lutheran Martyr* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1982).

[8] James Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1908–1913), 1:530 n. 1.

[9] H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 65. Porter introduces particular confusion by calling Barnes "the orthodox Lutheran," while on the same page stating that the sacramentarians John Frith and John Lambert "were of the school of Robert Barnes."

transubstantiation."[10] Such confusion among modern commentators is partially understandable, as it is evident that even Barnes' sixteenth-century contemporaries were less than consistent in describing his theology. Thomas More, for instance, early on charged him with being "of zwynglius secte agaynste the sacrament of the auter, bylevynge that it is nothynge but bare brede."[11] The young Henrician martyr Richard Mekins claimed to believe on the basis of Barnes' teaching that the bread remained present in the Sacrament even with Christ's body. The martyrologist John Foxe, on whose *Acts and Monuments* depends much of the information pertaining to Barnes' life, perhaps indicates that Barnes never ceased to confess transubstantiation.[12]

In the context of this confusion, and especially in response to William Clebsch's assertion that such inconsistent interpretations were largely the result of an inconsistency on the part of Barnes himself,[13] Carl Trueman attempted in a 1995 essay to demonstrate that Robert Barnes remained throughout his career a proponent of a distinctly Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament.[14] While that essay succeeded in casting serious doubt on the methodology by which Clebsch concluded Barnes had eventually abandoned a confession of Christ's corporal presence, it in fact offered surprisingly little evidence to establish that the converse was true. Nor did it address the possibility to which Foxe seems to have alluded, and which Norman Fisher explicitly asserted: that Barnes maintained a belief in the corporal presence of Christ because he never ceased to confess the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation.

In light of the above, it seems not wholly unreasonable to suggest that the question of Robert Barnes' doctrine of the Eucharist has not been decisively answered. The present essay is therefore intended to address this question anew, reviewing the evidence regularly adduced in earlier examinations of Barnes' thought, but also drawing on evidence previously ignored. An investigation not only of Barnes' own words, but also of important yet often overlooked circumstantial evidence, will, it is

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10 N. H. Fisher, "The Contribution of Robert Barnes to the English Reformation" (master's thesis, University of Birmingham, 1950), 327.

11 Thomas More, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* [hereafter *CWM*], ed. Clarence H. Miller, et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963–), 8/1:302.

12 On Foxe and Mekins, see nn. 63, 65, and 66 below.

13 William A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants, 1520–1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 68–69.

14 Carl Trueman "'The Saxons be sore on the affirmative': Robert Barnes on the Lord's Supper," in *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church*, ed. W. P. Stephens (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 290–307.

suggested, satisfactorily demonstrate that Barnes is indeed best viewed as a consistent proponent of a Lutheran theology of the Sacrament. By way of introducing such an argument, some historical and theological context may prove helpful.

II. The Influence of Luther

Not only inaugurating the eucharistic controversies of sixteenth-century England, but, arguably, the controversies of the English Reformation as a whole, was the 1520 publication of Martin Luther's *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.[15] Almost immediately after its publication on the continent, this treatise was being read across the channel in London's Steelyard and in the University of Cambridge. It was also, perhaps more surprisingly, being read in the King's court. More surprising still, it was Henry VIII whose name was attached to the first English refutation of Luther's treatise, aptly titled *An Assertion of the Seven Sacraments*.[16] While both Luther's and Henry's tomes addressed each of the medieval sacraments in turn, by far the greatest number of pages in both works was given over to the Sacrament of the Altar. It was under this *locus* that Luther had outlined his condemnation of the Roman theology which, he claimed, held the Mass in a threefold captivity.

Most significant for the investigation below is Luther's approach to what he described as the second captivity in which the Mass was held: that pertaining to the doctrine of transubstantiation. While fully aware of Rome's insistence on this doctrine, Luther judged error on this point "less grievous [than communion in one kind] as far as the conscience is concerned."[17] Though he will complain that transubstantiation was only dogmatized after "the pseudo philosophy of Aristotle began to make its inroads into the church," and though he will profess a preference for Pierre D'Ailly's theory that the bread and wine can remain even with the presence of Christ's body and blood, he clearly states that he "will permit every man to hold either of these opinions, as he chooses."[18] Unconcerned

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[15] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: American Edition* [hereafter *LW*], 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 36:11–126, and Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Schriften* [hereafter WA], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 6:497–573.

[16] *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (Rome, 1521; facsimile: Ridgewood, NJ, 1966). This 1521 Roman edition reprints the *editio princeps* (London, 1521), prefacing it with a papal letter to Henry.

[17] *LW* 36:28 (WA 6:508, 1–2).

[18] *LW* 36:31, 30 (WA 6:509, 29–30; 508, 27).

with defining the mode of presence or the manner in which it occurs, Luther's confession is summed up with a rhetorical question: "Why do we not put aside such curiosity and cling simply to the words of Christ, willing to remain in ignorance of what takes place here and content that the real body of Christ is present by virtue of the words?"[19]

King Henry, who had read the *Babylonian Captivity* early in 1521, was not slow to respond to Luther's attack. His *Assertio*, an orderly presentation and rejection of Luther's own assertions, defended the received doctrine of transubstantiation as the only orthodox interpretation of Christ's sacramental presence; it was to be believed, he insisted, "because the church has believed this from the beginning."[20] By simply but forcefully reiterating received dogma the King presented himself as both a capable and faithful defender of Roman theology.[21] In return he was rewarded by the papacy with an honorary title that explicitly declared as much: "Defender of the Faith."

Henry's defense of the Mass against Luther in the sixteenth century differed very little from the English defense mounted against the Lollards in the previous century. Heirs and proponents of the posthumously condemned Oxford theologian John Wyclif, the Lollards were deemed heretical especially for denying the bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament. The Twelve Conclusions of 1395, a concise statement of the Lollard position, rejected any corporal presence of Christ as a "pretended miracle," which leads men into idolatry "because they think that the Body of Christ which is never away from heaven could by power of the priest's word be enclosed essentially in a little bread."[22] It was this denial of the bodily presence, further promoted in popular works such as *Wyclif's Wicket*, that was to become "one of the most generally and strongly held convictions of the English Lollards."[23] The focus of the *Wicket* is succinctly noted in the tract's subtitle: "A verye brefe diffinition of these wordes. *Hoc*

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[19] *LW* 36:33 (WA 6:510, 32–34).

[20] See, e.g., *Assertio*, sig. e3r-v.

[21] For the debate about whether Henry himself in fact authored the *Assertio*, and for commentary on the work's international importance, see Richard Rex, "The English Campaign Against Luther in the 1520s," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 39 (1989), 85–106.

[22] *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, ed. H. Gee and W. J. Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1896), 127.

[23] David Loades, "Martin Luther and the Early Stages of the English Reformation," in *Politics, Censorship and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (London: Pinter, 1991), 155.

est corpus meum."[24] The anonymous author rejects any belief that "that thynge that is not God to daye shalbe God to morowe,"[25] and therefore concludes that the words of consecration cannot be understood literally; instead, "the breade is the fygure or mynde of Christes bodye in earth."[26]

While English Lollardy survived past the fifteenth century, the eucharistic views characteristic of the movement fell increasingly under the label of Sacramentarianism in the sixteenth century. Developed on the continent by Swiss theologians such as Ulrich Zwingli and Johannes Oecolampadius, this theology was also offered to an English speaking audience in the works of William Tyndale, George Joye, and others. A representative presentation of English Sacramentarian thought is found in the anonymous 1533 publication, *The Supper of the Lord,* variously attributed to both Tyndale and Joye.[27] As had the Lollards, the author of *The Supper* concludes that any reference to Christ's corporal presence, whether in Scripture or in the Mass, can only be understood "in an allegorical sense."[28] Therefore, when turning to the words of institution, he argues that "*est* is taken for *significat.*"[29] In stark contrast to a bodily presence, *The Supper* maintains a "bodily absence."[30] The assertions, whether Roman or German, "that so great a body should be contained in so little a place, and that one body should be at once in so many places" are simply dismissed as absurdities.[31]

By December of 1525, when Robert Barnes first revealed publicly his reformist leanings in a Cambridge sermon, and even more so by the summer of 1530 when he published the initial outline of his own theology, each of the eucharistic theologies outlined above was well known in England. The long held and often violently defended position of England's church and King would certainly have been an alluring option for any Englishman who sought royal favor or ecclesiastical promotion—or perhaps even for any who sought to meet an end other than martyrdom. Alternatively, the Sacramentarian theology of the Swiss proved for many

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[24] *Wycklyffes Wycket* (Nuremberg, 1546; reprinted: Oxford, 1828), sig. A3r.

[25] *Wycklyffes Wycket*, sig. B1r.

[26] *Wycklyffes Wycket*, sig. B5v.

[27] For the authorship debate, see W. D. J. Cargill Thompson, "Who Wrote 'The Supper of the Lord'?" *Harvard Theological Review* 53 (1960): 77–91, and J. F. Mozley, "The Supper of the Lord, 1533," *Moreana* 3/9 (1966): 11–16.

[28] *The Supper of the Lord*, in *Tyndale's Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, etc.*, ed. H. Walter (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1850), 228.

[29] *The Supper*, 248–249.

[30] *The Supper*, 253.

[31] *The Supper*, 261.

to be an equally attractive option on account of its close resemblance to native Lollard opinions.[32] Is there, then, any good evidence to support the assertion that Barnes eschewed both of these options and instead consistently held to a Lutheran "middle way" with regard to the Eucharist?

III. The Eucharist in the Writings of Barnes

In the early 1530s, when the English Reformation debates were well under way, Robert Barnes wrote to the conservative polemicist and lay-theologian Thomas More, promising that he would soon publish a treatise setting forth his own theology of the Eucharist.[33] Unfortunately, this was a promise that went unfulfilled. The Sacrament is not, however, a subject which goes unmentioned in Barnes' extant works. The first of these, his *Sentenciae ex Doctoribus Collectae*, was published in 1530 by the Wittenberg printer Joseph Klug.[34] Under the pseudonym Antonius Anglus, Barnes collected and compiled patristic opinions on a variety of *loci*, with brief marginal annotations reflecting his own thoughts. In the following year, while the Wittenberg pastor Johann Bugenhagen saw two German editions of the *Sentenciae* through the press, *A Supplicatyon Made by Robert Barnes* was published in Antwerp for an English reading audience.[35] A significantly revised edition of this *Supplicatyon* was published three years later by the London printer John Bydell.[36] It has largely been on account of the revisions made in 1534 that Barnes' eucharistic theology has become a matter of some contention. Questions are raised not only on the basis of

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[32] On this point, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Can the English Think for Themselves? The Roots of English Protestantism," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 30, no. 1 (2001): 17–20.

[33] *CWM* 7:255–256.

[34] Robert Barnes [pseud., Antonius Anglus], *Sentenicae ex doctoribus collectae* (Wittenberg, 1530).

[35] *A Supplicatyon Made by Robert Barnes* (n.p., n.d. [Antwerp, 1531]). Though the first edition of the *Supplicatyon* lacks any indication of where, when, or by whom it was printed, the date is certainly before November 1531, by which time Thomas Cromwell had received copies in England. See *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* [hereafter *LP*], ed. J. S. Brewer and J. Gairdner (London: Public Record Office, 1936), 5:533. Regarding location, I follow the majority opinion in favoring the Antwerp printer Simon Cock. See W. D. J. Cargill Thompson, "The Sixteenth-Century Editions of *A Supplication unto King Henry the Eighth* by Robert Barnes, D.D.," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 3 (London, 1963), 134 and n. 5; J. F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (London: Macmillan, 1937), 201 n.; and Charles S. Anderson, "The Person and Position of Dr. Robert Barnes, 1495–1540" (ThD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1962), 146–147.

[36] *A Supplicacion unto the Most Gracyous Prynce H. the VIII* (London, 1534).

dissimilarities between the two editions of his English work, however, but also due to differences between this work and his earlier *Sentenciae*. In that 1530 work, Barnes had arranged his patristic citations under nineteen *loci*, three of which pertain to the Eucharist. He addressed reception in both kinds, Christ's presence in the Sacrament, and the historical origins of the Roman Mass.[37] The 1531 edition of the *Supplicatyon* includes only the first of these articles. The *Supplicacion* of 1534 omits even this. As previously noted, some have argued that these changes reflect a modification of Barnes' own views.[38] Others contend that such alterations are more a matter of Barnes' cautious politics than an indication of fundamental changes in his theology.[39] A fresh examination of the evidence is therefore in order.

In Barnes' fullest treatment of the Eucharist, found in his *Sentenciae*, there can be little doubt that he holds to a belief in Christ's true, corporal presence in the Sacrament.[40] This is made clear not only in the patristic citations he chose to include, but also in the brief commentary that accompanies them. Even while denouncing the Roman theology of the Mass, he does not hesitate to refer to the Sacrament of Christ's body, noting that "the words by which the body is made were given by the Lord himself."[41] Justifying such language are the catechetical questions and answers of Athanasius in the fourth century:

> What in fact is the bread? It is the body of Christ. What is given to those who partake? Without a doubt, the body of Christ.[42]

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[37] This last point is also addressed throughout Barnes' final publication, the *Vitae Romanorum Pontificum* (Wittenberg, 1536), where it becomes something of a leitmotif in his history of the papacy.

[38] See especially Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 68-69, and Hall, "Lutheranism in England," 110.

[39] See Trueman, "Robert Barnes on the Lord's Supper," 296, 300-301. See also Rainer Pineas, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 121.

[40] The choice of the adjectival "true" is simply governed by Barnes' own use of the term in the title of article seventeen in his *Sentenciae*: "In Sacramento altaris est verum corpus Christi." It should not, *a priori*, be construed as something other than what may be called a "real" presence. In an otherwise outstanding work, Peter Brooks misleadingly implies a clear sixteenth-century distinction between a real (corporal) presence and a true (spiritual) presence. See Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist*, 38–71; for a corrective analysis, see Dairmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 181–183, 392.

[41] Barnes, *Sentenciae*, sig. K5r.

[42] Barnes, *Sentenciae*, sig. K4r.

Against opinions that the bread merely represents the Lord's body, or that this is simply a "spiritual" body, the graphic language of the Byzantine father Theophylactus is brought forward:

> He certainly did not say, this is a figure, but this is my body. Although it seems to us bread, it is in fact transformed by an ineffable operation. Because we are weak and loathe to eat raw flesh, especially human flesh, it therefore appears to be bread; but it is flesh.[43]

By way of explanation, Christology is introduced with Augustine's opinion that just as "of the virgin the body of Christ was made true flesh by the Holy Spirit, so also by the same is the body of Christ mystically consecrated from the substance of bread and wine."[44] Not only does Barnes thus compare Christ's incarnate body with that of the consecration; he goes on to equate them. He calls upon the testimony of Augustine and Ambrose in support of the contention that the body on the altar is that born of the virgin, which suffered, died, rose, and ascended.[45]

While Barnes' quotations and commentary point unequivocally to a belief in a corporal presence, they nowhere give any indication of his thoughts regarding the status of the bread after consecration. A belief in transubstantiation, therefore, cannot be excluded on the basis of the text alone. Circumstances related to the production of the *Sentenciae*, however, mitigate against associating it too closely with any position other than the Lutheran. Bugenhagen notes in his glowing preface to the *Sentenciae* that Barnes was at work on the book while living under his roof.[46] That it was written in Wittenberg, published there, and promoted by the town pastor strongly suggests that the Lutherans understood it to be in harmony with their own position. Especially in 1530, only a few months after the presentation of the Augsburg Confession and only one year after the Marburg Colloquy, the Wittenbergers would not have been reading sacramental theology uncritically.

Although Barnes did not take up Christ's sacramental presence under a separate heading in his *Supplicatyon* of the next year, his references to the Eucharist in other articles reveal no hints of a changed opinion. He constantly speaks of the "blessyd boddy" and "holy bloude" of Christ;[47] when mentioning the cup, he variously refers to Christ's "blessyd bloud,"

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[43] Barnes, *Sentenciae*, sig. I7r.
[44] Barnes, *Sentenciae*, sig. I6r.
[45] Barnes, *Sentenciae*, sig. I8r.
[46] Barnes, *Sentenciae*, sig. A2v.
[47] Barnes, *Supplicatyon* (1530), fol. 128v.

"glorious bloud," and "swet bloude."[48] He is willing to grant the logic of the scholastic argument that Christ's body contains within it his blood; yet he insists that Christ's mandate "is not to reseve the bloude in the boddy wonly / but to reseve the bloude (after his institucion) by it selfe out of the cuppe."[49] In some respects, it seems that Barnes actually makes his position of 1530 more explicit. Whereas he had previously quoted Athanasius' opinion that all who partake of the bread receive Christ's body, he now even more specifically allows for a *manducatio impiorum*. Criticizing Rome's explanation that withholding the cup prevents Christ's blood from being spilled, he argues that there are far greater dangers in offering Christ's body to unbelievers.[50] Such a position not only distances Barnes from those who hold a symbolic view of the elements; it also distinguishes him from those who argue that Christ is present spiritually and only on account of the communicant's faith.

As noted above, the 1534 *Supplicacion* contains no article on eucharistic doctrine or practice. The suggestion that this omission indicates a revision of Barnes' theology has also been noted. Against this argument from silence, however, stands evidence found in the correspondence of his contemporaries. Letters related to the arrest and trial of John Frith shed light on Barnes' thought between 1531 and 1534. Thomas More, who had previously charged Barnes with sharing the Sacramentarian heresy of Frith, tentatively admits that he may have been mistaken. His comments on a letter received from Barnes in 1532 deserve to be quoted at length.

> And also frere Barns, albe it that as ye wote well he is in many other thinges a brother of thys yonge mannes secte / yet in thys heresye he sore abhorreth hys heresye / or ellys he lyeth hym selfe. For at hys laste beynge here, he wrote a letter to me of hys own hand / wherin he wryteth that I lay that heresye wrongfully to his charge / and therin he taketh wytnesse of god and his conscyence / and sheweth hym self so sore greved therwyth, that any man shold so repute hym by my wrytyng, that he sayth he wyll in my reproche make a boke agaynst me, wherin he wyll professe and proteste hys fayth concernyng thys blessed sacrament. By whych boke it shall he saith appere, that I have sayd untrewly of hym, and that he abhorreth thys abomynable heresy.[51]

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[48] Barnes, *Supplicatyon* (1530), fol. 130r.

[49] Barnes, *Supplicatyon* (1530), fol. 127v.

[50] Barnes, *Supplicatyon* (1530), fol. 132r; and see 1 Corinthians 11:27–30, which Barnes apparently has in mind.

[51] *CWM* 7:255–256.

The divergence between Barnes and Frith on this point was also apparent to William Tyndale, who clearly understood how such differences could be exploited by polemicists such as More. He wrote to Frith:

> Of the presence of Christ's body in the Sacrament meddle as little as you can, that there appear no division among us. Barnes will be hot against you. The Saxons be sore on the affirmative.[52]

Tyndale's note of a doctrinal difference between Frith and Barnes is unquestionably enlightening. Equally illuminating is his explicit association of the latter with the theology of the Saxons. In the light of Barnes' matriculation at the University of Wittenberg in 1533, he is undoubtedly correct in alluding to Barnes' Lutheranism.

In addition to these comments on Barnes' thought in the years leading up to the 1534 *Supplicacion*, there are also important clues to be found in the events following its publication. In the following year Barnes was engaged as an English ambassador to the Germans, with the purpose of discussing a political and theological alliance between the two states. Of the documents emerging from the discussions of the next few years, Barnes was involved in the drafting of three which clearly align him with a Lutheran position. The first of these, the Christmas Articles of 1535, does not deal specifically with individual doctrines. The articles do, however, simply ask for King Henry's acceptance and promotion of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology. Barnes' signature is included among those subscribing this request.[53] While the Christmas Articles did not address specific doctrinal *loci*, these were soon taken up in the Wittenberg Articles of 1536. Although the debates leading up to their drafting resulted in no consensus on the subjects of utraquism or private Masses, Barnes and his English companions did confess with the Germans that:

> We firmly believe and teach that in the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, Christ's body and blood are truly, substantially and really present under the species of bread and wine, and that under the same species they are truly and bodily presented and distributed to all those who receive the sacrament.[54]

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[52] *LP* 6:403.

[53] See *Corpus Reformatorum, Philippi Melanthonis Opera*, ed. C. G. Bretschneider (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1836), 2:1032–1036.

[54] *Documents of the English Reformation*, ed. G. Bray (Cambridge: James Clark and Co., 1994), 137.

The same would be confessed again in the Thirteen Articles of 1538.[55] Especially significant is that in this last round of discussions, which took place in England and included several traditionalist English bishops, Barnes was assigned by the King to argue on the German side of the debate. This implicit acknowledgement that Barnes' theology did not accord with Rome's is especially revealing in the light of another royal decision of the same year, one which again makes plain that his theology did not differ from Rome's to the point of Sacramentarianism.

In October 1538 Thomas Cranmer was appointed head of a commission for the suppression of English Sacramentarianism. Also appointed to the commission was Robert Barnes, who, before the next month had passed, would set in motion events leading to the condemnation and subsequent death of John Lambert.[56] Lambert, who had previously spent time with Tyndale and Frith in Antwerp, returned to England as a proponent of their eucharistic theology. His views became the center of public controversy in 1538 when he challenged the sacramental preaching of John Taylor, rector of St. Peter's Cornhill. When Taylor turned to Barnes for support, he was encouraged to bring the matter before Cranmer. With Barnes' awareness of the King's intent and Cranmer's theology, it cannot be doubted that he was in disagreement with Lambert, who denied "the very body of God to be in the said Sacrament in corporal substance, but only to be there spiritually."[57] Much more likely, Barnes was of the same mind as Cranmer, to whom he referred the case. Some hint of Cranmer's position on the Sacrament at this time is evident in a letter of August 1538. He wrote to Thomas Cromwell, commenting on the trial of Adam Damplip, whose confession of the Eucharist had also been questioned. He reports that Damplip did not deny the bodily presence of Christ; he did, however, deny transubstantiation. Cranmer confesses that "therein I think he taught but the truth."[58] A generation later John Foxe drew what seems the logical conclusion in his

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[55] *Documents of the English Reformation*, 192: "Concerning the Eucharist, we continue to believe and teach that in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the body and blood of Christ are truly, substantially, and really present under the forms of bread and wine. And that under these forms they are truly and really offered and administered to those who received the sacrament, whether they be good or evil."

[56] For the commission, see *LP* 13/2:498. For the Lambert affair, *A&M* 5:227–250. For Barnes' role in the examination of English Sacramentarians even as early as 1535, see *LP* 8:771.

[57] *LP* 13/2:851.

[58] *LP* 13/2:97. On the weight of this phrase, see MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 182.

summary of the Damplip affair; he referred to Cranmer as "then yet but a Lutheran" in sacramental theology.[59]

Ten years after his first published confession of the Eucharist, Barnes would reaffirm his belief in Christ's bodily presence one last time. Having failed to negotiate a binding settlement with the Germans, Barnes seemed to have outlived his usefulness to the King. A prolonged and public dispute with the conservative bishop Stephen Gardiner over the doctrine of justification was enough to seal his fate. Arrested and condemned by Act of Attainder, he met his death at the stake on 30 July 1540. There he made his last profession of faith. A witness recorded his confession of the Sacrament:

> After this there was one that asked him, what he said of the sacrament of the altar. Then said he to Mr. Pope, which was there present: "Mr. Pope, ye know, and Mr. Riche, if ye be alive, that there was one accused before my lord chancellor for denying of the sacrament; and for fault of a better, I was assigned to the examination of him in the gallery. And after long reasoning and disputation I declared and said, that the sacrament being rightly used and according to scripture doth, after the word spoken by the priest, change the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Were not these my words?" said he. "Yea," said Mr. Pope. "Then bear me witness," said he, "that I err not in the sacrament."[60]

That Barnes here mentions the substance of bread and wine being *changed into* the body and blood of Christ has been read by some as a clear confession of transubstantiation. This is indeed what the words seem to suggest, and it would not be impossible for an early English evangelical to maintain such a belief; this opinion, for example, is often ascribed to Barnes' own Cambridge mentor Thomas Bilney.[61] There are also indications that those who read and reprinted this confession were uncomfortable with the overtones in the language. Luther's fond remembrance of Barnes was prefaced to a German translation of the martyr's last confession that considerably modified its content. In Luther's translation Barnes was only allowed to confess that "the true body of Christ, which was conceived and born of the virgin Mary, exists [in the

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[59] *A&M* 5:501.

[60] *Remains of Myles Coverdale*, ed. G. Pearson (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846), 417.

[61] See *A&M* 4:649 for Foxe's attribution of this belief to Bilney. In this attribution, he is followed by A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 79, and Harold S. Darby, "Thomas Bilney," *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 167 (1942): 74. For an alternative interpretation of the evidence, however, cf. Korey D. Maas, "Thomas Bilney: 'simple good soul'?" *The Tyndale Society Journal* 27 (July 2004): 15–16.

Sacrament] in a miraculous manner."[62] John Foxe, in his account of Barnes' trial and execution, also records his last words. Unlike Luther, however, he does not modify Barnes' confession of the Sacrament; he simply omits it altogether.

It is not unreasonable to think Foxe suppressed this portion of Barnes' testimony in order to avoid the embarrassing language of transubstantiation.[63] Though that interpretation is not unreasonable, an equally likely explanation might be forwarded on the basis of the context in which Barnes' words are found. It is noteworthy that his involvement with commissions for the suppression of Sacramentarianism is nowhere mentioned in the martyrologist's life of Barnes. Yet Barnes himself alludes to this in his confession of the Sacrament. This may have been reason enough for Foxe to omit it, especially as it occurs at the point of Barnes' own death. Foxe's keen sense of divine providence may have persuaded him to avoid the obvious irony of the judge having become the judged. Reference to his role as an examiner may even explain Barnes' own choice of words. Interestingly, he makes no mention of the Sacrament until asked by a bystander. Then, rather than simply offering his confession, he requests confirmation of words spoken in the course of a previous examination. Having been commissioned by the crown, and being well aware of the King's own views on the matter in question, it would not be surprising if Barnes had at that time phrased his opinion so as not to offend royal ears. Indicative of his desire to avoid conflict in the matter is his contemporary Richard Hilles' indication that Barnes had spoken against the 1539 Act of Six Articles—which forbade upon pain of death any denial of transubstantiation—though he did so only in private.[64]

Hilles, who himself disagreed with Barnes on the Sacrament, also provides enlightening commentary on another episode relative to Barnes' eucharistic theology. In 1541, shortly after a second commission for enforcing the Act of Six Articles went into effect, the young Richard Mekins was brought to trial. Hilles describes Mekins' heresy as consisting of "Lutheran opinions," saying that he did not reject Christ's corporal presence, but merely denied that the accident of the bread remained

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[62] *Bekanntnus dess Glaubens die Doctor Robertus Barus* (Wittenberg, 1540), sig. A3r.

[63] That Foxe believed Barnes to confess transubstantiation may be evident in his comment on the trial of Richard Mekins. Commenting on Mekins' testimony that he learned his doctrine of a non-transubstantiationary corporal presence from Barnes, Foxe says Barnes held no such view. He does not, however, describe what he understood Barnes' view to be. *A&M* 5:442 n. 3.

[64] *LP* 16:578.

without its substance.[65] Mekins claimed to have learned these "Lutheran opinions" from Robert Barnes.[66]

IV. Conclusion

Upon a review of the evidence, it is not surprising that there should be some confusion regarding Barnes' theology of the Sacrament. Even the anonymous sixteenth-century polemicist whose broadside rejoiced at Barnes' downfall could only say, "But what he thought (the Sacrament was) I wyll not judge."[67] Some conclusions, however, can be made. Between 1530 and 1540, Barnes consistently maintained a belief in the true, corporal presence of Christ in the Sacrament. He was decidedly anti-Sacramentarian, but, as Henry and his conservative English bishops seemed to understand, he was never wholly in agreement with Rome. There is perhaps some merit to the description of his theology "not as Lutheran, but as anti-papal, although there is not sufficient evidence to enable us to determine exactly how he conceived of the mode of the eucharistic presence."[68] Contrasting Rome's insistence on transubstantiation with Luther's constant refusal to define a mode or method of presence, however, it might be proposed that Barnes' very ambiguity argues for an interpretation that places him within Luther's theological sphere. This last point should not be pressed too far; but, when weighed together with the extant literary and circumstantial evidence, the reading of Robert Barnes as one who consistently held "Lutheran opinions" remains by far the most satisfying among the available alternatives.[69]

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[65] *LP* 16:1204.

[66] *A&M* 5:442.

[67] *This Lytle Treatyse Declareth the Study of Barnes* (London, 1540).

[68] C. W. Dugmore, *The Mass and the English Reformers* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 96. McGoldrick, *Luther's English Connection*, 165, agrees that "it is difficult to tell the exact sense in which he believed Christ was present." Dugmore's refusal to call Barnes a Lutheran, however, is based primarily on Barnes' claim that he will cite only mutually accepted sources so as not to be dismissed out of hand as a Lutheran. Dugmore's reading quite misses the point. This phrase refers not to Barnes' theological conclusions, but to his methodological presuppositions. It is a plea for an objective reading. As such, it should probably be understood as an implicit admission by Barnes that he was indeed a Lutheran. See Dugmore, *Mass and the English Reformers*, 95, and cf. *Sentenciae*, sig. K6v.

[69] It also makes unnecessary any explanation of why Barnes should be out of step with his closest associates both on the continent and in England: the Wittenberg theologians and the circle of Cranmer and Cromwell.

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Step Up to the Altar: Thinking about the Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper

Joel D. Biermann

One of the singular delights of studying theology is the depth and breadth of the subject. Name a subject, that is, a *locus*—any will do—and the possibilities of exploration and discussion are endless. This is the case because theology is not (as we well know, but seem sometimes to forget) a series of discrete articles strung together by convention or long tradition. Augustine did not write theology, neither did Melanchthon or Pieper; each merely explicated and articulated what was already there. Theology is in fact, nothing more than God's reality, his truth. It is a simple unity, and one pulls it loose into component parts only at the risk of sacrificing the whole truth. So, it matters little which door one chooses to enter into the exploration; sooner or later every topic comes into focus and every *locus* is relevant. All this serves, I suppose, both as warning and justification for what follows. While it might seem that I have lost my way, or wandered into avenues irrelevant for the present discussion, hopefully the connections will eventually be evident and convincing to all. The avenue by which we are to embark on this theological contemplation is the Lord's Supper, specifically the "theology and practice" of the same. The topic is a welcome one, and the invitation has satisfied my growing desire to lend some thoughts to the lively debate that continues to thrive in our midst.[1]

I. Who Should be Communing at Our Altar?

It would seem that there is little to debate about our theology and practice. Everything is laid out beautifully in the Small Catechism[2]:

> What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and drink.

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[1] This article was originally a paper given at the Minnesota South District Theological Conference on September 29, 2007. My thanks to Charles Arand for his helpful criticism of an earlier draft of this essay.

[2] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 362. All translations from *The Book of Concord* below are from this edition.

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> How can bodily eating and drinking do such a great thing? Answer: Eating and drinking certainly do not do it, but rather the words that are recorded: "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words when accompanied by the physical eating and drinking, are the essential thing in the sacrament, and whoever believes these very words has what they declare and state, namely, "forgiveness of sins."
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> Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily? Answer: Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

That is it. Everything we need is right there. Luther gives us what we need to know about the Sacrament. *Satis est.* It is enough. Or is it? Well, that depends. Did Luther provide the sufficient and complete answer for the Christian contemplating her right reception of Holy Communion? Absolutely. It is an issue of faith; simple trust in the promise of Christ and thirst for forgiveness makes one a worthy recipient. Period. Luther accomplished his purpose: he provided instruction for the simple believer. But, do Luther's beautifully wrought words provide the sufficient and complete answer for the congregation or the pastor seeking understanding about who should commune at the altar entrusted to them? Certainly not. That is another question altogether. In the first instance the question being addressed is, "Am I worthy to be at the altar receiving the Sacrament?" The second situation, however, asks a different question entirely: "Who should be communing at our altar?" Luther's explanation in the Small Catechism provides part—but not all—of the answer to that question.

To reach a faithful and responsible answer to the second question requires a careful consideration of a few more areas of theology. It is not merely a matter of prompting people honestly to ascertain their state of repentance and their understanding of the miracle of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. Actually, it would be cause for some hope if all of our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations consistently made a serious effort to do this much. Still, if that is as far as we go in our practice of the Lord's Supper, then we are guilty of misrepresenting the full significance of the Sacrament's communion, guilty of misleading people into an incorrect understanding of unity in confession, and guilty of failing to exercise the role of "steward of the mysteries of God"(1 Cor 4:1). No, to be a faithful steward of the profound mystery that is the Sacrament of the Altar, one must take into account more than the sacramental understanding of those at the rail. The "real presence" litmus test is inadequate. To put it bluntly: Not every communicant worthy by the standards of the Small Catechism is necessarily a Christian brother who should be communing at your altar.

This way of framing the question, it should be evident, is in full agreement with the position developed in the 1999 document from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), *Admission to the Lord's Supper: Basics of Biblical and Confessional Teaching*.[3] Recognizing the ready availability of this important document, and heartily commending its study and the avid appropriation of its argument and conclusions, the present study will endeavor to avoid redundancy by considering at least two attendant areas of theological interest not exhaustively treated in this CTCR document: first, a failure to appreciate the responsibility of oversight, and, second, a misapplication of "law and gospel." These topics, which will comprise the bulk of this study, are not chosen randomly or arbitrarily, but grow out of a need to address questions that continue to swarm around the communion practices of individual congregations in the LCMS.

These areas of further exploration both grow directly out of a common concern: The fact that, in spite of the oft-repeated LCMS position embracing and encouraging the practice of closed communion, surveys as well as anecdotal evidence indicate that a substantial number of LCMS congregations disagree. While it may be that there are only a handful of pastors and congregations that are willing openly and vocally to question the LCMS position on closed communion, the number of congregations and pastors that are actually practicing what may be best described as "functionally open communion" is quite significant. Clearly, a definition of functionally open communion is in order. A church's communion practice is functionally open when the determination of who is an appropriate recipient (and not merely a "worthy" recipient) is left exclusively in the hands of the individual contemplating eating and drinking, and when the church's concern is limited to an individual's worthiness without further consideration of that person's confession.[4] In other words, professed agreement with the idea of closed communion is irrelevant, if actual practice leaves it up to individuals to determine whether they should commune.

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[3] A Report of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Admission to the Lord's Supper: Basics of Biblical and Confessional Teaching* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2000), http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CTCR/admisup.pdf.

[4] This distinction is helpfully explained and applied in *Admission to the Lord's Supper*, 41–48.

II. The Pastor as Steward of the Mysteries of God

The simple solution to the problem of functionally open communion is to reassert and reaffirm the role of the congregation and especially its pastor in overseeing the celebration of the Sacrament. This means that one of the primary contributing forces behind many congregations' practice of functionally open communion is in reality a denigration of the Office of the Pastoral Ministry—often perpetrated by the pastors themselves. The pertinent *sedes doctrinae* are 1 Corinthians 4:1: "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," and Acts 20:28: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with his own blood." As one would expect, the Lutheran Confessions reinforce the role of pastor as God's chosen means of administering the sacraments. Article V of the Augsburg Confession actually binds the article of justification to the Office of Preaching: "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments" (*CA* V, 1). Furthermore, Article XVIII makes it clear that, while there is much bishops should not do (running a government or leading an army, for instance), it is their responsibility to administer God's grace: "Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments" (*CA* XVIII, 5–6).

As bishop or overseer of the church in a given place, it is the responsibility of the pastor to provide for his flock and insure that the gospel and sacraments are being delivered rightly. As with the faithful prophets of Israel, the pastor does not operate on his own initiative or even according to his own preferences or ideas. He is God's spokesman and must take the task of administration and oversight seriously. When he delivers the host to a communicant, he should be quite confident that the one receiving this gift of the gospel is receiving it rightly: in faith and in the confession of the truth. He cannot freely pass out the goods without a thought to those who are receiving as if their actual presence proves the legitimacy of their reception. Contrary to much popular thought, the Sacrament is not just between Jesus and the individual. The pastor is not an insensible spiritual vending machine without responsibility for those who are receiving. The Sacrament is Christ's presence, his gift to the church; and the church celebrates this gift in the unity of their confession. It is the celebration of that gathering of people. The pastor oversees this celebration and takes care that it is being shared by those who belong to that unity. This is his task. This is what it means to be pastor. To do less is to shirk the responsibility of the office. To push onto the visitor the decision about whether to commune is to abdicate his pastoral responsibility.

To refine a point in this argument, I am saying that reliance on an announcement in the bulletin that the Sacrament is for those who are baptized, repentant, and "believe in the real presence" is completely inadequate. Such a practice clearly amounts to nothing but functionally open communion. The practice of relying on bulletin announcements places the decision entirely in the hands of the individual. This practice makes it obvious to the church visitor that it is his choice whether to commune—which of course, is precisely the way that just about everybody wants it to be. In a society that celebrates the individual, dismisses the role of community, and operates with an entitlement mentality, giving the decision to the individual is reasonable and easy. It is a common thought: "Let each person decide. It is between the visitor and God, I'm just delivering the gospel, just passing out hosts." Wrong. The pastor is the steward. It is his responsibility to invite people to the rail, to exclude those who should not commune, and yes, even to refuse to commune those who may present themselves at the altar inappropriately. This is neither easy nor fun. Practicing oversight and administering the Sacrament can be altogether uncomfortable and demanding. The pastor would do well, then, to recall those prophets of old who frequently found themselves carrying out distasteful and unpopular tasks not by their choosing or according to their preferences, but at the behest of the Lord whose call they had been compelled to answer. So it is with the Lord's servants in the twenty-first century, or so it should be.

To accomplish such a shift in the practice of the Lord's Supper will require a corresponding shift in the way that pastors and people view the office. Yes, pastors are there to proclaim the gospel, to dispense the forgiveness of sins, and to comfort souls. But, it is patently obvious in Scripture and Confessions that they are also "there" to use the keys: to convict sinners, exclude the unrepentant, and oversee the right practice of the sacraments. Functionally open communion amounts to pastoral neglect. The corrective is not pastors as dictators, but pastors as responsible stewards diligently administering God's means of grace so that the broken are healed and the unrepentant are admonished. As stewards, they will also see that the Lord's Supper, the meal that feeds and binds the church to Christ and to one another in the unity of their confession, is celebrated by those for whom it is intended: the members of the church in that place. Those who are not part of that particular community of faith, but who are present at the celebration of the Sacrament should learn to see their participation as privilege and not as right or entitlement. They should assume that this celebration does not include them unless they are specifically invited to join—hence the time-honored, but now typically disregarded, practice of conversing with the pastor before the celebration. To make the point sharper yet, assuming such a conversation occurs, it is imperative that the pastor does not perpetuate the erroneous notion that if the visitor "believes in Jesus and the real presence," then she is welcome. There is much more to it than that, and the pastor needs to communicate this fact by his conversation and his decision . . . and it is *his* decision. He has been entrusted with this responsibility by his Lord and the priesthood in that place. He is accountable for his practice in administering the Sacarament.

While such sacristy conversations are rarely fit settings for detailed discussions about the doctrine of the church, sacraments, and fellowship, it is a place to establish a relationship with visitors who are inquiring about their participation in the Sacrament. Those who are not in fellowship with the congregation should be told that the congregation eagerly desires their participation and would be delighted to welcome them when it is clear that there is unity in confession. Clearly, such a response will demand additional conversation, but if the proper tone is set, this need not be automatically negative and offensive. Admittedly, individuals steeped in American, democratic culture will frequently struggle with such an "exclusionary" position. The best pastoral practice is certainly demanded in such situations. It bears remembering that the church is, by Christ's own definition, exclusionary. While all are indeed welcome and urged to come to worship, only those in Christ are part of the community.

III. Denying the Sacrament to Christian Visitors

Before embarking on the next major area of discussion, the misuse of the law and gospel paradigm, a quick word needs to be said about the church's squeamishness about actually telling a real person that he is not at present welcome at the communion rail. It seems that the driving force for most twenty-first century American Christians—including those in LCMS pews—is the need to be nice. So, most LCMS people who take 1 Corinthians 11 seriously recognize the need to keep people who do not "discern Christ's body" away from the rail. These nice Lutherans see the need to reserve the Sacrament for those who are worthy in the Small Catechism sense of worthiness. It is done for the sake of the uninformed or unbelieving visitor. Letting an unbeliever commune to his own condemnation is definitely not being nice.

These same people for the same reason, however, may chafe at the thought of denying the Sacrament to a Christian visitor who believes in the "real presence," but just happens to be a Methodist or a member of the ELCA. Telling such nice people "no" to the Sacrament is not nice and therefore deemed unnecessary or even unchristian. The steward of God's mysteries needs to educate his people about the importance of the Sacrament on many planes and particularly needs to emphasize the corporate and confessional aspects of the Sacrament that are present along with the individual's communion with Christ. Ultimately, the goal is to adjust the church's culture so that nice people are able to recognize that a person should not expect to commune at any and every altar at which he happens to be present. Guests do no impose on their hosts or simply anticipate being treated like those who are part of the community where they are present. Oddly, people seem quite capable of accepting this fact in many areas. Guests at country clubs, business events, and military ceremonies recognize and accept that some aspects of these occasions are only for those who are part of that community. This distinction is understood even within the life of the church. For instance, a visitor present at a baptismal service certainly would not think it appropriate to bring his own child immediately to the font so that he could also participate in the activities of the community, nor would the pastor or those sitting near the guest, encourage him to do so. By necessity, such a process of reeducation will progress slowly and sensitively, but where faithful stewards are heeding their Lord's call, it should begin.

A pastor acting as a steward of the mysteries of God is a *sine qua non* for an acceptable practice of the Sacrament. Both pastors and people, however, too often diminish and trivialize such stewardship to counting cups or hosts to insure that there will be no embarrassing shortages during the distribution. On the other hand, stewardship may be equated with finding creative ways to "speed up" the sacramental liturgy and distribution so that it can be done more efficiently and within the confines of the sacred 60-minute-rule; this is deemed necessary to satisfy the needs of the hypothetical visitor who is, it sometimes seems, the unwitting and unappreciative center of the entire worship event. Stewardship that is marked by a serious effort to elevate the Sacrament's significance and to guard its distribution only to those who are part of the community of the faith in that place is difficult. But the difficulty is not merely the hard reality of strained relationships or the threat of being thought a bully or close-minded and intolerant. No, what makes such faithful stewardship extremely difficult, if not altogether rare, is that in addition to personal preferences, relationship demands, and social pressure, theology is involved. The reasoning and arguing of many who resist or completely reject the practice of closed communion is based on more than feelings or fear; it is an issue of theology. In fact, some would insist that good Lutheran theology actually demands the practice of open communion. The argument is that Christ's gospel is available to all and the steward's job is to deliver it to all. Certainly, such reasoning should apply to the Lord's Supper. Thus, we arrive at what I believe to be the very heart of the issue that provokes such passionate and acrimonious debate about appropriate communion practices in our churches. The central problem plaguing unity in understanding and practice of the Lord's Supper is a misunderstanding and misuse of the law and gospel paradigm.

IV. The Misuse of the Law and Gospel Paradigm

Lutherans who have been steeped in a heavy atmosphere of "grace alone" and "the gospel must predominate" have been conditioned to be wary of anything that smells or even remotely feels like law. If it is law, it has to be bad. Obviously, establishing and adhering to criteria about who may and who may not attend the Lord's Supper has more than a little whiff of the law about it. The aversion to such legalistic ideas is compounded in the case of the Lord's Supper by the fact that the Sacrament is a God-given means of grace. It is pure gospel: the delivery of Christ's blood-bought forgiveness for unworthy, undeserving, and unassuming sinners who come to the rail with empty hands and broken hearts. To befoul the sacred gospel with the filthy law is unconscionable. So, it is that those who advocate a more open practice of the Lord's Supper are often perceived as those who take the high road and who more fully understand and value the reality of the gospel. Of course, by implication, those who insist on a closed communion practice are therefore either still benighted or more horribly simply arrogant Pharisees who love tradition and "doctrine" more than people and the gospel. Consequently, if one is going to make a case for closed communion as the right practice of faithful stewards who love their Lord, their flock, and the lost, then one must address this apparent conflict between law and gospel.

Clearly, we have now broached an area of theology more critical, more sweeping, and more fundamental than even the doctrine of the Office of the Ministry. A thorough treatment of the problem of the polarization of law and gospel and the often-devastating consequences of such a polarization for God's people lies well beyond the confines of this study. Still, since this topic is essential to a right understanding of our practice of the Lord's Supper, a brief introduction is in order. The crucial contribution to this discussion came in 1993 when David Yeago, an ELCA theologian, published his seminal article, "Gnosticism, Antinomianism, and Reformation Theology."[5] In this essay, Yeago argued convincingly that today's Protestant church is perilously infected with insidious forms of the 'isms' identified in his title. Their pervasive yet often unrecognized presence within Protestantism he traces to a misconstrual of the polarity between law and gospel. Yeago argues that when law and gospel are set against one another, the gospel inevitably gains its definition in antithesis to the law itself. The gospel becomes our liberator not from our failure to keep the law and the consequent just wrath of God; rather it becomes our liberator from the law per se. Hence, any word that comes to a Christian as command, direction, or guidance, is ruled out by the liberating gospel. "If the law/gospel distinction is a final antithesis," Yeago argues, "then *any* call for one ordering of life rather than another, will by definition be the law from which the gospel frees us."[6]

In this theological climate, antinomianism thrives. "Indeed," Yeago charges, "much twentieth century Protestant theology has been antinomian all along; the practical antinomianism now regnant in many churches is simply a long-standing theoretical antinomianism achieving the courage of its convictions."[7] Yeago's accusation of gnosticism derives from the same thesis of a misconstrual of the law and gospel dichotomy, but that discussion must be deferred. Yeago has no patience for the practices in ordinary church life which derive from the antinomian and gnostic theology rampant among Lutherans. He laments the "contemporary tender-minded rhetoric about all those 'hurting people' who need more than anything else to be liberated from all order and absolved of all expectations by the redemptive 'inclusivity' of the antinomian church."[8] Yeago also denounces the effects on worship, education, and ethics as congregations increasingly jettison extensive catechesis and ritual/liturgical observances in favor of formats deemed less "demanding," more contemporary, and presumably more "meaningful." Yeago's incisive analysis has been reaffirmed by a number

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[5] David S. Yeago, "Gnosticism, Antinomianism, and Reformation Theology: Reflections on the Costs of a Construal," *Pro Ecclesia* 2, no. 1 (1993): 37–49.

[6] Yeago, "Gnosticism, Antinomianism, and Reformation Theology," 42 (emphasis in original). Once freed from the law, it should be noted, people are at liberty to choose whatever pleases them and to take their cues about acceptable behavior from the culture or from whatever other source is convenient or comfortable.

[7] Yeago, "Gnosticism, Antinomianism, and Reformation Theology," 42.

[8] Yeago, "Gnosticism, Antinomianism, and Reformation Theology," 42.

of other theologians including Robert Benne,[9] Reinhard Hütter,[10] and Gilbert Meilaender.[11] The lesson is clear and disconcerting: law and gospel cannot be made the final paradigm on which to hang all theological reflection and practice.

Scholars have offered various solutions to the problem of the misuse of the distinction of law and gospel and its misconstrual as a polarity. I will present what is, I am fully persuaded, the best way to solve the dilemma, the way followed by the Reformers: the understanding of the two kinds of righteousness. Essentially, the two kinds of righteousness is the recognition that individuals live in two distinct realms: one before God and the other before the world. Before God, human beings are always totally dependent and passive, simply receiving the grace that God delivers in Christ through the means. Before God, the Christian is unconcerned about his own works, recognizing that only Christ's work matters. In the realm of this world, however, Christian people live as responsible creatures obligated to fulfill certain tasks for the sake of the neighbor who depends on that faithful service. In this realm, the Christian is active and is quite concerned about the quality and quantity of his works.[12] The significance of shifting from a paradigm of law and gospel to one based on the two kinds of righteousness is profound, especially for the way that one thinks about the Christian's life of obedience and the place and necessity of good works.

It is essential to recognize that a congregation's practice of the Lord's Supper is shaped by both kinds of righteousness. Certainly, the reception of the Sacrament is God's delivery of the gospel par excellence. This is passive righteousness before God in all of its glorious, inexplicable grace. However, the Christian's righteousness before the world, that is before other men, also comes into play. Here, it is important to remember that the congregation and its pastor are held responsible for the right practice of the Lords' Supper; for the sake of their fellow creatures, they must take care that the Sacrament is being properly celebrated and received. Thus,

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9 Robert Benne, "Lutheran Ethics," in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, ed. Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 11–30, esp. 27–28.

10 Reinhard Hütter, "The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics," in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, ed. Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 31–69, esp. 42–43.

11 Gilbert Meilander, "Reclaiming the Quest for Holiness," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13 (1999): 483-492, esp. 488.

12 For more on the two kinds of righteousness one may begin by consulting Charles P. Arand and Joel Biermann. "Why the Two Kinds of Righteousness?" *Concordia Journal* 33 (2007): 116–135.

the congregation that correctly understands the Lord's Supper as God's gift and as its celebration of unity with God and with one another will establish guidelines and directions for the right celebration that will uphold and teach the truth about the Sacrament. In other words, a conscientious and serious practice of closed communion is not antithetical to the gospel, but actually necessary and supportive of the gospel and its gracious delivery.

A pastor acting as steward of God's mysteries is acting for the sake of the gospel, his flock, and the worship visitor when he practices closed communion. All will benefit when God's will for the Sacrament is followed. Of course, this truth is more than a little counter-intuitive. While not everyone may cheerfully recognize or appreciate the value of such a faithful and careful communion practice, God's revealed will is always to be followed, even when the immediate results appear less than encouraging or satisfactory. The situation is not so different than that of pastoral ministry to a cohabitating couple. One could argue that the gospel must predominate, and that any attempt to apply the corrective of the law will only result in alienation and estrangement of the couple. Thus, the "gospel-oriented" pastor would overlook the breach of God's law (i.e., God's will!) and proceed with some more "loving" plan of action. Such behavior, of course, would amount to nothing but bare-faced antinomianism, with all of its sometimes distant—but always disastrous—consequences. When God's will is thwarted, God's creation always suffers. Gospel motives do not redeem a sinful choice. Moreover, one cannot help wondering whether fear is not as great a motivator in such situations as one's professed love for the gospel. The same question applies with equal force to the present discussion about right communion practice. It is perhaps more than a little convenient that acting in the name of the gospel also happens to be the easy route of least resistance and least offense. Claiming the gospel as a cloak for cowardice and laziness is still, in the end, just run of the mill antinomianism and disobedience.

V. The Abuse of Pastoral Discretion

Finally, a few brief words must be addressed to the problems of autonomy and the abuse of pastoral discretion. While congregational autonomy may be ensconced in the documents and the hearts of the LCMS, it has deleterious effects in the life of Christ's church when claimed as a right. Both pastors and congregations need to recognize and cherish the interdependence and unity that exits between them and all other pastors and congregations. A congregation is never acting on its own. Whatever it does or fails to do has an impact on every other gathering of Christ's church—even if that impact is not directly or immediately experienced by any of those involved. No man and no congregation has the right to "do his own thing" regardless of other pastors and congregations. We are bound to one another and must not ignore one another in our desire to walk faithfully in the ways of our Lord. If nothing else, circuits and districts serve as stubborn reminders of our mutuality and responsibility for one another. There is no place for the Lone Ranger, and there is no place for shunning or disdaining the brother or brothers who appear to be out of step in our walking together as a synod.

Pastoral discretion, then, is to be upheld and guarded as in the best practice of pastoral care. It is not, however, to be abused as an excuse for inaction or reluctance to deal forthrightly with a potentially difficult situation. Neither is a claim of "pastoral discretion" an acceptable justification for blatant and persistent disregard for the express position of the LCMS and its agreed practice. A congregation with functionally open communion is not exercising pastoral discretion. That congregation is being inconsiderate of her sister congregations, disloyal to the will of the synod, and—above all—disobedient to the will of God. Cases of pastoral discretion should be rare and the cause of much careful thought and conversation among brother pastors. Recourse to pastoral discretion should never become the norm for a congregation's communion practice. On the other hand, it is also vital to reiterate that cases of pastoral discretion do exist. When a pastor makes a decision which is clearly an exception to the normal practice of closed communion, he should expect and welcome the questions and concern of his brother pastors, but he should also expect their trust and willingness to cast his actions in the best possible light. We must be willing to allow one another freely to practice the stewardship of our shared Office of the Holy Ministry without fear of needless criticism or reprisal. Obviously, such mutual trust is cultivated when all involved act with a spirit of cooperation and an awareness of our mutual interdependence and shared life in Christ.

VI. Conclusion

The nature of this topic is that much needs to be considered and said, and much is at stake. The theology and practice of Holy Communion is a topic laden with serious doctrinal questions and concerns, but that does not make it impractical or irrelevant to the life of the church; that much is hopefully clear by now. Indeed, if this study has succeeded in some small way in persuading even one reader of the serious importance of right doctrine for right practice, then its purpose has been accomplished. The church's doctrine has everything to do with the church's vitality and the church's faithfulness. We dare not forget this truth in our consideration of the theology and practice of the Lord's Supper.

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The Gift We Cannot Give Ourselves: The Eucharist in the Theology of Pope Benedict XVI

James Massa

I. Introduction

Last summer, Pope Benedict XVI fulfilled one of his promises to Catholic traditionalists by widening the use of the so-called Latin Mass. In a Motu Proprio (a form of papal teaching that is issued solely in the pope's own name) entitled "Summorum Pontificum,"[1] the pope relaxed restrictions on the celebration of the Eucharist according to the 1962 Roman Missal, which had been the last revision of the Catholic Rite issued by Pius V in the immediate aftermath of the Council of Trent. Since 1970, the vast majority of the world's billion plus Roman Catholics encounter a reformed version of the Roman Catholic Mass that is nearly always celebrated in the vernacular. Benedict XVI, in declaring the 1962 Missal—now called the Missal of Blessed (Pope) John XXIII—an "extraordinary form," has by no means given up on the ongoing reform of the new liturgy. In fact, it is the pope's expectation that the use of the two forms of the Roman Rite will be mutually enriching. On the one hand, the old can take from the new a more varied lectionary of Sunday and weekday readings, along with new feast days and prayers that reflect contemporary sensibilities. On the other hand, the new can learn from the old the sacred quality and reverence that attended the best of the pre-Vatican II liturgies, not to mention the music of Gregorian chant.

Reactions to the Motu Proprio of July 7, 2007, reflected a broad spectrum of opinion. Traditionalists within the Roman Catholic Church, who had long been celebrating the "old Mass" because Pope John Paul II had given limited permission for its use in the 1988 *Indult Ecclesia Dei*, were naturally elated. Hopes were also affirmed for restored full communion with the followers of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who broke ties with the Roman Catholic Church over Vatican II's liturgical reform as well as its teachings on religious freedom and ecumenism. Criticism of the pope's

[1] Pope Benedict XVI, "Summorum Pontificum," July 7, 2007, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070707_lettera-vescovi_en.html.

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initiative, however, could be heard among bishops and scholars who had long defended the reformed Rite of the Eucharist. James Carroll, writing in *The Boston Globe*, called it a "fundamentalist strike back" against the pillars of modernity.[2] *The Tablet of London* considered it "troubling" and fundamentally "at odds with the teachings of the Council."[3] Roman Catholic bishops in France were most upset by the new instruction, as were Jewish leaders who worry that the older form of intercessions for the Good Friday service of 1962 expressly targets Jews for conversion. In that same series of intercessory prayers, Orthodox and Protestant Christians are referred to as "schismatics" and "heretics" respectively, as prayer is invoked so that "God may save them from their errors and be pleased to recall them to our Holy Mother the Catholic and Apostolic Church."

It is clear to anyone who has followed official Vatican commentary on the Motu Proprio, as well as to anyone familiar with the theological writings of Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), that the intercessory prayers of the 1962 Good Friday service are in need of revision because they do not reflect the teachings of the Second Vatican Council,[4] much less the progress that has been made in doctrinal reconciliation between the Roman Catholic Church and her partners in the communities of the Reformation. As someone who has responded to a pastoral need in his own local church, the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, I have the dubious distinction of being a full time ecumenist who regularly celebrates the Latin Mass according to the 1962 Missal. I was asked to do so by my bishop, who was responding to requests for the older form by a rather small group of traditionalists. It is clear to me, in my paradoxical role as ecumenist and pastor to traditionalists, that both forms of the Catholic Mass need to evolve further and in a manner that coheres with the deepest eucharistic structures of Roman Catholic identity. Perhaps through a process of

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[2] James Carroll, "Pope Benedict's Mistake," *Boston Globe*, July 16, 2007, http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2007/07/16/pope_benedicts_mistake.

[3] Mark Francis, "Beyond Language," *The Tablet: The International Catholic Weekly*, July 14, 2007, 6–7.

[4] See "Vatican II, *Nostra aetate*, 28 October, 1965 (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (New York: The Costello Publishing Company, 1975), par. 4, 740–742. On February 5, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI published a revised form of the Prayer for the Jews which omits language from the various editions of the 1962 Missal that has long been associated with negative images of Jews. See http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2008_02_01_archive.html (Tuesday, February 05, 2008). The action taken by the pope indicates that the 1962 Missal is open to revision, so that the Roman Catholic liturgy remains coherent with its present articulation of doctrine.

mutual correction, and by drawing on the rich resources of music and devotion found in the other Christian confessions, the Roman Catholic Eucharist will become an even more effective instrument for deepening the faith of Roman Catholics who, like other Christians, always stand in need of worship that is both intelligible and imbued with the sacred.

As a celebrant of the Latin Mass of 1962, I am constantly struck by the appropriateness of a particular rubric that has received repeated scholarly attention by the present pope. Writing in the mid-1970s, while still a German professor at the University of Regensburg, Ratzinger expressed regret over the loss in the new liturgy of the eastward-facing position of the celebrant during the Eucharistic Prayer. The so-called *ad orientem* posture of worship, he contended, had from ancient times contained a cosmological and eschatological significance that should not be abandoned. By praying in the direction of the rising sun, we join with all of creation in giving praise and thanks to the Creator who makes the sun shine "on the good and the bad" (Matt 5:45), and who also raised his Son from the dead as the first fruits of the new creation (1 Cor 15:20). As far back as the apostolic age, Christians believed that Christ would return "from the east" (Matt 24:27), so they constructed places of worship to accommodate an eastward facing position of prayer for both minister and worshipping assembly. To speak of the presiding minister as having his "back to the congregation"—a common description of the older posture—misses the essential point of the symbol. Together, leader and assembly are looking to the future, to the new creation of which the Eucharist affords believers an anticipatory participation. In Ratzinger's view, we go out to meet the Lord who is the One to come.[5]

As a celebrant of the old liturgy, I experience acutely the power of this eschatological tension, so much so that it makes the rubric of "facing the people" seem to me like a plausible, but ultimately indefensible accommodation to modern sensibility. Of course, in western ecclesiastical architecture altars have not been positioned for centuries to allow for the ministers to face the geographical east. Yet the practice of having a still common orientation toward an altar with a prominent cross placed on it or over it—comparable to the ones engraved over the eastern doors of ancient churches—has been a legitimate embodiment of the same principle.[6] The

[5] Joseph Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 139–145, and Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 69, 74–84.

[6] In ancient churches, it should be noted, crosses were often engraved or painted over the eastward door of the building.

point is to take the focus off the minister and put it where it belongs: on the Lord who comes to us through the invocation of the Holy Spirit, whose power transforms bread into the Lord's body and makes of us, the gathered community, the true body of Christ for the life of the world.

All of this is not to deny the need for moments in the liturgy when leader and congregation face each other. The benefit of the *versus populum* innovation in the post-Vatican II Mass—and in the eucharistic services of many other Christian communions—corresponds to the dialogical character of the liturgy of the word. In the portion of the celebration in which the Scriptures are read and the preacher opens up the texts for the congregation, a face to face posture expresses the basic intentions of hearing and responding to God's word. Yet when it comes to the prayer of the church addressed to the Father, in the Son, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, it is time to open up the "circle" and look beyond ourselves to the gift that only the Triune God can bestow. What all Christians need, in Ratzinger's view, is a liturgical education that counters whatever smacks of an autonomous, complacent community. Our dialogue is not fundamentally with ourselves; rather are we "engaged on a common journey toward the returning Lord"[7] who forms us into a fellowship of faith by first gathering us into his own communion with the Father.

The image of minister and congregation facing east, in the direction of the returning Lord, helps to frame the more general topic on which I have been asked to speak at this conference. The Eucharist in the thought of the present pope can be understood advantageously in an eschatological perspective. In fact, when viewed in this way, the doctrine and celebration of the Eucharist puts flesh on the conviction that Roman Catholics profess to hold as they join with their Lutheran brothers and sisters in saying that salvation is "by grace alone"; or in other words, it is the gift that we cannot give ourselves. The core statement of *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* in 1999 invites a testing as to whether its common, core conviction, found in paragraph 15, is lived out in the worship of our respective communities. "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."[8] For the current Bishop of Rome, the Eucharist

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[7] Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 143.

[8] The Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html.

is the one necessary gift that only God can provide; and it is also a gift that transforms us into givers of the same healing love that we have received.

This rather long prelude to my topic offers assurance that the ancient maxim, *lex orandi, lex credendi*—"we pray as we believe"—is very much alive among some of your brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic community. But now it is time to turn to the crucial question that is appropriately raised within the broader discussion of Christ's atoning death.[9] What does the worshipping assembly do when it celebrates the Eucharist? Are we justified in calling the eucharistic action of minister and congregation a "sacrifice" on biblical grounds? Ratzinger argues that we are, but only by means of a renewed understanding of sacrifice that departs from ordinary usage and that takes cognizance of how the term develops within the entire canon of Scripture. After covering this ground, I will point to the essential problem that Ratzinger identifies in Luther's judgment about the Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass as sacrifice. From Ratzinger's standpoint, not everything Luther was opposing in Roman Catholic theological arguments of the period can be defended. Yet the core Roman Catholic position on the unity of the Eucharist and the cross was something that the great German Reformer was unable to affirm on account of his view of history. In the final section, I will try to show how an understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice as "assimilative" opens out to Roman Catholic practices such as adoration of the Lord's presence in the eucharistic species. The fruits of such devotion are to be found, for Ratzinger, precisely in those works of love and justice to which the justified believer is directed.

II. Sharing in Christ's Sacrifice

Ordinarily the notion of sacrifice is associated with destruction. In the cultic practices of many religions something is destroyed, usually an animal or some form of organic matter, in order to be handed over to the deity for the purpose of acquiring a favor or of offering thanks for blessings already bestowed. This is not the case for the worship "in accord with reason" (λογικὴν λατρεία) that belongs to the essence of Christianity (Rom 12:1). Sacrifice, in union with the eternal *Logos* Jesus Christ, means not destruction but offering to God one's inmost being. For Ratzinger we are asking Christ to "logify" us—to draw us into his worship of the Father "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). In fidelity to biblical thought, it means "emerging from the state of separation, of apparent autonomy, of existing

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[9] This study was originally presented at the 2008 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in Fort Wayne which focused on the Atonement.

only for oneself and in oneself. It means losing oneself as the only possible way of finding oneself (Mark 8:35; Matt 10:39)."[10]

In the Old Testament we find precisely this movement of interiorization in the understanding of sacrifice. Whereas Israel receives from God a sacrificial cult that enables the people to abide in the covenant, as time progresses the prophets increasingly point out the ineffectualness of offerings made from hearts that have become impure. "Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for mine is the world and all that fills it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer praise as your sacrifice to God; fulfill your vows to the Most High. Then call on me in time of distress; I will rescue you, and you shall honor me" (Ps 50:12–14). What God wants is love, not sacrifices, the prophet Hosea tells the people (Hos 6:6). Through the purifying experience of the exile, Israel learns to live without the temple sacrifices (Dan 3:37–41) and comes to realize that God is honored not by the destruction of things "but in the transformation of man; in the fact that he becomes himself conformed to God. [The human being] becomes conformed to God when he [or she] becomes love."[11]

Jesus inherits the cult of Israel, in all of its variegated forms, and transposes it in the key of his own salvific mission. On the eve of his passion, together with his disciples Jesus celebrates the Passover which is completely permeated with sacrificial meaning. His "last supper" would have included the typical elements of the Jewish feast: the *haggada*, the narrative commemoration of Israel's Exodus from slavery, as well as the words of praise and thanksgiving from the Psalms, culminating in the *berakah*—in Greek εὐλογία or εὐχαριστία. For the Jewish disciples, these standard features build a bridge from past to present, reminding them that their redeemer lives even into the present. Yet because the people still suffer from oppression and sin, the redemption is not complete. Remembrance opens out to hope and supplication. Jesus seeks to communicate at the Last Supper that God is about to restore hope and set in motion a new form of remembrance that will show forth the divine power over sin and death.

Jesus' celebration of Passover is also unique because of the absence of an essential element in the Jewish meal: the lamb. Ratzinger hears the echo

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[10] Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 27–28; see also Joseph Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 96.

[11] Joseph Ratzinger, "Love, the Heart of Sacrifice," in *Looking Again at the Question of the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger: Proceedings of the July 2001 Fontgombault Liturgical Conference*, ed. Alcuin Reid OSB (Farnborough, Hampshire, UK: Saint Michael's Abbey Press, 2003), 25.

of Abraham's assurance to Isaac as an interpretive key for the passion narratives. "God himself will provide the lamb" (Gen 22:8) becomes the divine promise that awaits fulfillment throughout the Old Testament up until the moment of Jesus' live-giving service. According to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus sheds his blood at the very moment when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the temple for the evening Passover supper (John 19:14, 34). For the fourth evangelist, Jesus dies on the day before Easter and not—as it would appear according to the accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke—on the day after the Passover celebration (two full days before Easter; cf. Matt 26:17, Mark 14:12, and Luke 22:7). Despite this apparent discrepancy, Christ in John's Gospel is every bit the true Passover lamb whose redemptive death has consequences for the whole world (John 1:29).

Is it possible that both John and the Synoptic Gospels could be historically correct? Raztinger believes that contemporary exegesis of the passion narrative allows for an explanation that only serves to reinforce the conviction that Jesus' Passover makes of him the true lamb of the new memorial in the shedding of his blood. The hypothesis that Ratzinger deems credible, which is based on readings of the Qumran scrolls, is that John's historical claim is entirely correct: Jesus truly shed his blood on the eve of Easter at the time of the immolation of the lambs. However, the Synoptics also contain a reliable witness: Jesus did indeed celebrate a Passover meal with his disciples, but not according to the calendar of the temple and the Jewish majority. Instead he celebrated according to the calendar of the Essene community of Qumran, at least one day earlier. Why would such a novelty be significant? Because the Essenes, having rejected the temple cult, would not have celebrated with a lamb. Neither would Jesus have done so, if he wanted to underscore the fact that he himself is the true lamb of the new redemption. Therefore, Ratzinger argues, "he anticipated his death in a manner consistent with his words: 'No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord' (*Jn* 10: 18). At the time when he offered his Body and his Blood to the disciples, he was truly fulfilling this affirmation. He himself offered his own life" in what would have otherwise been an irrational act of destruction.[12] Jesus himself, and certainly not his executioners, is the priest

[12] Pope Benedict XVI, "Homily for the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper," April 5, 2007, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070405_coena-domini_en.html (accessed January 14, 2008).

who offers this sacrifice. "Only in this way did the ancient Passover acquire its true meaning."[13]

What does all of this imply for the present Bishop of Rome? There exists a unity between the Last Supper and the cross that is implicit in the renewed sacrificial meaning that Jesus gives to the former. The old lamb, just like the old temple (John 2:19), has given way to the new worship that flows from the cross of Christ. From his pierced side flows the cleansing water of Baptism and the nourishing blood of the Eucharist (John 19:34). Supper and cross interpret one another, so do bread and wine on the one side, and flesh and blood on the other. The two together, moreover, refer to the resurrection when the flesh of Christ acquires a new spiritual accessibility as living nourishment on which eternal life itself depends: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). An extraordinary transposition has happened in Ratzinger's mind:

> The [Jewish] paschal *haggada*, the commemoration of God's saving action, has become a memorial of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ—a memorial that does not simply recall the past but attracts us within the presence of Christ's love. Thus, the *berakah*, Israel's prayer of blessing and thanksgiving, has become our Eucharistic celebration in which the Lord blesses our gifts—the bread and wine—to give himself in them.[14]

What then is the celebration of the Eucharist? Is it a remembrance of Jesus' meals with sinners by which the participants experience God's forgiveness? There is undoubtedly an element of those encounters recorded in the Gospels (e.g., Matt 9:9–13) taken up into the Christian Eucharist. But to put the emphasis here, or to conceive of the Eucharist's basic structure as primarily that of a meal, misses the point for Ratzinger. The Passover is the form in which the essential eucharistic reality—Christ's involvement of us in his self-offering—is imparted to the believing community. "Do this in memory of me" pertains not to the Passover as such, but to the sacrificial offering it embodies. Jews sometimes offered up animals or simple bread as a thank-sacrifice to God (a *todah*, Hebrew תּוֹדָה) for deliverance from some evil (Pss 69; 51; 40:1–12; 22). Some scholars, Ratzinger among them, think that the Eucharist may have functioned at the Last Supper as Jesus' own *todah* for God's new deliverance of him from the chains of death.[15] Eventually that *todah* is joined to the agape meals of the early church. Yet Paul's admonition against unworthy celebrations of

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[13] Pope Benedict XVI, "Homily for the Holy Thursday Mass."

[14] Pope Benedict XVI, "Homily for the Holy Thursday Mass."

[15] Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 51–60.

the meal component (1 Cor 11:17–22) expresses a deepening of awareness that led finally to the Christian thanksgiving being combined with the service of the word found in the synagogue. Thus, the two outstanding Jewish contexts of liturgical prayer, temple and synagogue, sacrifice and word, are subsumed by the Christian community in its worship in the light of the risen Lord.

Christ makes of himself the lamb of sacrifice for the new covenant in his blood. Yet, in the Christian liturgy, we encounter him not simply as the Lamb slaughtered, for sacrifice has ceased to mean destruction. Rather, Jesus is the Lamb "once slain who dies no more" (Rev 1:18). John of Patmos' vision of the heavenly liturgy suggests that it is because supper, cross, and resurrection form an indivisible unity that we, the partakers of the lamb's self-offering, are able to approach the heavenly feast. In Ratzinger's rendering of eucharistic worship, our communion is with the victorious Christ who has already drawn all of history to himself. He comes from the future to meet us, in order to lift us up into his eternal self-giving in love to the Father (Heb 12:18–24). His sacrifice becomes ours.

III. Difficulties with Luther

All that I have discussed regarding Benedict XVI's ideas about eucharistic sacrifice may sound somewhat bold in the setting of esteemed Lutheran pastors. Did not Luther call the doctrine "the greatest and most appalling horror" and a "damnable impiety?" Yet I wonder whether Joseph Ratzinger, who has long been engaged with Luthern theology, as with Luther's own writings, might in some sense be the best ally on the Chair of Peter that Lutherans have ever had. As a commentator on the final session of Vatican II, Ratzinger criticized the lack of christological focus in the deliberations around the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*, 1965). He made the curious statement that the document suffered from having too much Teilhard—as in Teilhard de Chardin, whose cosmological optimism Ratzinger found to be unbiblical—and not enough Luther.[16]

On the matter of the Mass as a sacrifice, Ratzinger sees Luther's fundamental problem to be one of historicity. For the German Reformer, the "once and for all" (ἐφάπαξ in Heb 10:10) event of the cross belongs essentially to the past. It is a deed definitively accomplished. The Eucharist

[16] Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 1966), 152–162. See also Joseph Ratzinger, "Part I, Chapter I," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 5:138–145.

might recall and transmit the fruits of Christ's sacrifice, but the latter is unrepeatable. Yet one must ask: Has not the cross, not to mention the supper, been taken up into the resurrection? What does it mean to "rise from the dead"? Have not the limitations of normal corporeal and temporal existence been overcome through entree into the new creation? "To have risen from the dead," the pope argues, "means to be communicable; it signifies being the one who is open, who gives himself."[17] When Paul speaks of broken bread and a shared cup as a "participation" in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16), he can only have in mind resurrected flesh. It is this same life-giving flesh that nourishes us with eternal life and, yet, nonetheless gave scandal to the crowds in Capernaum (John 6:35–66). The resurrection qualifies the believer's relationship to the past events of Jesus' life and death. Within the limited framework of his conception of historical time, Luther could not help but draw the conclusion that any so-called "re-presentation" of the sacrifice of Golgotha was at best an act of presumption, and at worst idolatry.[18]

Yet the Council of Trent in defending the doctrine of the Mass as a "true and proper sacrifice" means something different from what some of Trent's defenders might have implied in their polemically framed arguments. "If anyone says that by the sacrifice of the Mass blasphemy is committed against the most holy sacrifice of Christ enacted on the cross, or that it devalues that sacrifice: let him be anathema."[19] It is unfortunate that both post-Reformation and post-Tridentine theology generally lacked the tools for explaining how the Eucharist could be both a sacrament and a sacrifice, in such a manner that these two terms are brought into relationship with one another. An important historical sidebar to this point is that Trent did not take up the doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice until eleven years after it had treated the issue of sacramental presence (1551 and 1562, respectively), which was the more urgent task on account of Luther's condemnation of Transubstantiation. A more biblically grounded theology, which we find in Augustine and the early fathers, would

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17 Joseph Ratzinger, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 81.

18 It is questionable whether Ratzinger has a sufficiently comprehensive grasp of Luther's evolving understanding of the Eucharist. For a trenchant analysis of this topic, see Robert C. Crocken, *Luther's First Front: The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990).

19 Council of Trent, Session 22, Canon IV on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 1:735.

maintain that the Eucharist makes present sacramentally the once and for all sacrifice of Christ. By the same token, our worship enables us to encounter the true presence of him who gives himself sacrificially to us.

Aided by historical critical research, scholars today have a deeper understanding of what commemoration means in the biblical context. To "remember" what Jesus did at the Last Supper (1 Cor 11:24–25 and Luke 22:19) implies remembering that is more than a mere recalling of what Christ did in the past. In the rich biblical sense, liturgical commemoration of some foundational event affords the worshipers a share in its saving effects. Such participation has a significance beyond the subjective intentions of those who take part in them.[20] To perform the eucharistic action in Christ's memory is first and foremost to allow him to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. He is the true performer in the liturgy. Ministers of worship can never be more than instruments of his work. Our remembering is itself his grace which allows us to be drawn in the present moment into his saving action.

In surveying some of the key ecumenical documents of the last forty years—including Lutheran-Catholic agreements—I cannot help but marvel at how the issue of eucharistic sacrifice has moved to the margins of our dialogues. Is that because the matter has been settled and is therefore no longer church-dividing? For example, the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the United States twenty years ago affirmed the consensus between the two communions that the eucharistic memorial "does not merely 'remind' us of the sacrifice of Christ; it makes this sacrifice truly present."[21] The 1982 Lima Paper of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches also seemed to suggest a remarkable convergence: "The Eucharist is a memorial of the crucified and risen Christ, i.e., the living and effective sign of his sacrifice, accomplished once and for all on the cross and still operative on behalf of all humankind. The biblical idea of memorial as applied to the Eucharist refers to this present efficacy of God's work when it is celebrated by God's people in a

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[20] Avery Dulles, "The Eucharist and the Mystery of the Trinity," in *Rediscovering the Eucharist: Ecumenical Conversations*, ed. Roch A. Keretszty (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 178.

[21] Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the United States, "Agreed Statement on the Eucharist," 1998, par. 10, in *Growing Consensus: Church Dialogues in the United States, 1962–1991, Ecumenical Documents* V, ed. Joseph A. Burgess and Jeffrey Gros (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 343–347.

liturgy."[22] The document went on to call the Eucharist "the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us."[23]

It would be a distortion to say that this ecumenical convergence, to the extent that it is a true one, shows that the Roman Catholic side won the post-Reformation debate over eucharistic sacrifice. Luther and the heirs of the Reformation frequently opposed theories of eucharistic sacrifice held by Roman Catholic theologians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that were harmful to faith and practice. As a careful student of history, Ratzinger acknowledges the purifying influence that Protestant critiques have had on the development of Roman Catholic doctrine. Luther had every reason to denounce the theories of Duns Scotus and Gabriel Biel (1420–1495) that provided legitimacy to the frenetic multiplication of Masses. While Christ's sacrifice has infinite value because he is without sin, Biel reasoned in his *Exposition of the Sacred Canon of the Mass*, the Church's sacrifice has only finite value on account of the imperfect agent making the offering.[24] As the Church acquires new merits on the basis of its members' good works, new Masses should be offered in order to apply additional benefits to the living and the dead. In addition to misconstruing the true subject of the eucharistic celebration—which can only be Christ—this kind of reasoning in Roman Catholic theology not surprisingly opened the door to many abuses.[25]

At the end of the day, it must be said that Christians have nothing to give to God except Christ, and all that Christ enables us to do once we are united to him in faith and worship. The Eucharist can become the gift of the church only because it is Christ who associates himself with us as members of his ecclesial body. To offer ourselves, as Paul exhorts us to do, as a "'rational' and living sacrifice [λογικὴν λατρείαν], holy and pleasing to God" (Rom 12:1), we must have communion with both head and members of the church, which Augustine defines as the "whole Christ" (*totus Christus*). "This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, being many, are one body

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[22] Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* [Lima Paper, No. 111], (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), "Eucharist" no. 5.

[23] Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, "Eucharist" no. 8. The Holy See later noted that this corresponds to Roman Catholic doctrine; see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry: An Appraisal," *Origins* 17 (November 19, 1987): 409.

[24] Gabriel Biel, *Canonis misse exposito*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman and William J. Courtenay, 4 vols. (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1963–1967), 1:31–33.

[25] Roch Kereszty, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eucharistic Theology from a Historical, Biblical, and Systematic Perspective* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 137–139 and 155–157.

in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God."[26]

IV. Adoring the Presence

Ratzinger once described his theological career as a lifelong conversation with Augustine. In many of his essays and talks, he returns to the same passage about conversion in Augustine's *Confessions* that has eucharistic overtones. At a time prior to his own conversion, Augustine had a sort of vision that he could not make sense of on the basis of his Neo-Platonic philosophy. The future bishop of Hippo hears the voice of Christ speaking to him through the Scriptures: "I am the food of strong men; grow, and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you convert me, like the food of your flesh, into you, but you shall be converted into me."[27] Ratzinger draws out the implications of this insight for understanding the Eucharist:

> In the normal process of eating, the human is the stronger being. He takes things in, and they are assimilated into him, so that they become part of his own substance. They are transformed within him and go to build up his bodily life. But in the mutual relation with Christ it is the other way around; he is the heart, the truly existent being. When we truly communicate, this means that we are taken out of ourselves, that we are assimilated into him, that we become one with him and, through him, with the fellowship of our brethren.[28]

The passage from Augustine's *Confessions* provides a basis in which Ratzinger understands the rationale for eucharistic worship, even when it takes place outside the church's liturgy. While he has sometimes offered critiques of various theories of eucharistic presence that depart from Roman Catholic orthodoxy, including the Lutheran view of a "dual presence" as well as contemporary Roman Catholic proposals like "transignification,"[29] Ratzinger's principal concern is to demonstrate that through the Sacrament we enter into Jesus' act of self-giving.

Objections to certain Roman Catholic devotions like eucharistic adoration, usually celebrated with a large host placed in a monstrance for veneration outside of Mass, are heard often enough within the Roman Catholic community. After all, it is argued, the Lord said: "Take and eat,"

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[26] Augustine, *City of God* 10.6, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120110.htm. (accessed January 14, 2008).

[27] Augustine, *Confessions* 7.10.16, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/110107.htm (accessed January 14, 2008).

[28] Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, 78.

[29] Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, 88.

not "Take and look at me." The Council of Trent acknowledges that the ultimate purpose of the Eucharist is its physical consummation by the believers. "But let us just recall," Ratzinger cautions, "what does that mean, to receive the Lord? That is never just a physical, bodily act, as when I eat a slice of bread. So it can therefore never be something that happens just in a moment. To receive Christ means: to move toward him, to adore him. For that reason, the reception can stretch out beyond the time of the eucharistic celebration; indeed, it has to do so."[30]

The transformation that the Eucharist must effect is a profound sacramental union that can best be described in terms of the "two in one flesh" metaphor of the creation story. Man and woman become one, even if they remain two distinct persons, in their self-donation to one another. Christ has given himself to us in his Passover, and we believers return to him the gift of ourselves in our eucharistic worship. The apostle Paul draws on the marriage metaphor in explaining the union of Christ and believer that begins in Baptism: "He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit [that is, shares a single new existence in the Holy Spirit] with him (*1 Cor* 6:17)."[31] Ratzinger asserts in his first encyclical (*Deus caritas est*), "More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos* [in the Eucharist], we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving."[32] The marriage imagery is employed for the sake of a sacramental mysticism. The agape-love of the Christ's self-gift on the cross and in the Eucharist perfects the eros-love of human beings within the marriage covenant.[33]

Union with Christ necessarily implies union with all those to whom he gives himself in word and sacrament. "I cannot possess Christ just for myself," Benedict XVI insists. "I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or will become his own."[34] Ratzinger's eucharistic theology opens out to a social ethic in which the Christ of the Passion, who washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1–10), becomes the model for compassionate service on behalf of justice and peace. No opposition between worship and ethics can be tolerated. Eucharistic communion entails both the experience of being loved and the compulsion to love generously in turn. "A Eucharist which does not pass over into the

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[30] Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, 89.

[31] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 11, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html.

[32] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 13.

[33] Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 133.

[34] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 14.

concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented," Ratzinger argues.[35] Conversely, "only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me."[36]

This intrinsic bond between worship and ethics finds apt expression in the lives of virtuous Christians. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, now called "Blessed" among Roman Catholics, renewed her capacity to express love for the poorest of the poor through her encounters with the Eucharist. By the same token, the pope notes, "this encounter [with the sacrament] acquired its realism and depth in [Blessed Teresa's] service to others."[37] Love grows through love, in Benedict's understanding, as the Christian is configured more and more to the eucharistic Lord who pours out his life in service to all. In the case of St. Polycarp, the configuration takes on a peculiar literalness in the ancient account of the second century bishop's martyrdom. As he is burned at the stake onlookers describe the odor emitted from his flesh to be that of baked bread, and the flames enveloping his body as having the shape of stalks of wheat. Ignatius of Antioch likewise looked upon his future martyrdom as an expression of eucharistic sacrifice.[38] The ancient martyrs in Abitina, North Africa, also intimate that both the Lord's Day and Lord's Supper are together a matter of inner necessity for them. Replying to their Roman judges, the martyrs confess their inability to live without either the Eucharist or the Day of Resurrection to which it is consecrated. The point is that the Christian "who offers his life in martyrdom enters into full communion with the Pasch of Jesus Christ and thus becomes Eucharist with him."[39]

What is the effect of living Sunday's Eucharist for Ratzinger? It is never merely an increase in benefits for the individual believer. In the broader catholic tradition, the *res tantum* or "principal effect" of the Sacrament is our incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, the church. For the present pope as for many Eastern and Western ecclesiologists today, the Eucharist "makes" the church just as surely as the church "makes" the Eucharist. It is the essential constitution of the new

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[35] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 14.

[36] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 18.

[37] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 18.

[38] See references to the two church fathers in Benedict's general audience address on Wednesday, March 28, 2007, at St. Peter's Square, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20070328_en.html.

[39] Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 85, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html#The_Eucharist,_a_mystery_to_be_proclaimed; Raztinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 112.

people of God, as Ratzinger has sought to demonstrate in his interpretations of the core ecclesial doctrine of Vatican II.[40]

> The Eucharist is never an event involving just two, a dialogue between Christ and me. Eucharistic communion is aimed at a complete reshaping of my own life. It breaks up man's entire self and creates a new "we." Communion with Christ is necessarily also communication with all who belong to him: therein I myself become a part of the new bread that he is creating by resubstantiation of the whole of earthly reality.[41]

The worship of the eucharistic Christ engenders the life of Christians, as well as their mission in the world. Adoration leads to reconciliation among human beings, in other words, to the tasks of building a more just and peaceful society. Worship also leads to reconciliation between humanity and the world of nature which has been harmed by the ego-centric decisions of individuals and whole societies. In fact, the transubstantiated bread points to the new creation that is the goal of the present universe, in which all of created reality will become at the eschaton and an effective sign of the glorified Christ. As stewards of the mysteries of worship, the faithful Christian cannot help but be stewards of God's creation as it extends to other living things and to the planet as a whole.[42]

V. Conclusion

The Eucharist has been at the center of Joseph Ratzinger's career for more than a half century. He treated the topic extensively as a theologian, especially as it relates to ecclesiology and the reform of liturgy. He assumed the papal office in a year that was dedicated to the Eucharist by his predecessor, and in the following fall he presided over an Extraordinary Synod that was commissioned to explore the theological and pastoral dimensions of eucharistic celebration. Each day, like most priests of the Roman Catholic Church, Benedict offers the Eucharistic sacrifice in union with the entire people of God, those living and those who have made the final journey to the Father's house.

In the present pope's vision of Christian faith and life, the Eucharist sums up everything. It draws to itself all that God has sought to give humanity in the gift of his only Son. Heaven meets earth in this glorious Sacrament. The future of hope becomes a present reality for Benedict XVI. "From now on," he says, "the Parousia is accomplished in the Liturgy, but

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[40] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II" in *Church Ecumenism and Politics: New Essays in Ecclesiology* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 2–18.

[41] Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 78.

[42] Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 92.

that is so precisely because it teaches us to cry: 'Come, Lord Jesus,' while reaching out towards the Lord who is coming. It always brings us to hear His reply yet again and to experience its truth: 'Yes, I am coming soon.' (Rev. 22:17, 20)."[43] Within such a noble and challenging perspective, it seems natural for us in our worship to "face east," if not with our bodies, then certainly with our hearts.

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[43] Reid, *Looking Again at the Question of the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger*, 31.

Theological Observer

Jaroslav Pelikan (1923–2006)

A few years before his death on May 13, 2006, Jaroslav Pelikan left the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and, along with his wife, was chrismated in the Orthodox Church. Eastern Orthodox churches have been known to administer baptism to those baptized in Protestant churches; the parish worshiping at Saint Vladimir's in Crestwood, New York, where Pelikan joined, at least recognized the legitimacy of his baptism administered by a Lutheran pastor (in his case, his father). Chrismation, the rite of anointing with oil, follows baptism and is administered by a priest. It corresponds, but not exactly, to the Roman confirmation which is administered in adolescence by a bishop. In the early church, it was administered to those who had been baptized in erring or heterodox churches and were entering the fellowship of an orthodox church (lower case).

All this might not mean too much except that Jaroslav Pelikan had been baptized by his father in a congregation of the Slovak Synod which, for all practical purposes—even when it was separate synod—was part of the Missouri Synod. It maintains its autonomy as a separate district and is know as the SELC, which stands for the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. In some minds, it still stands for the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church. The name "Pelikan," along with "Daniel," was virtually interchangeable with the Slovak Synod. His maternal uncle was Theodore Daniel, a president or vice-president of the Synodical Conference in its dying days. Other family members were pastors; one family member was a layman who served in the leadership of the Missouri Synod.

Even if Pelikan by blood and environment belonged to the Slovak Synod, he was a *Wunderkind* that the Missouri Synod claimed for itself. Much about him belongs to legendary narrative, but this literary genre closely corresponds to reality. On weekends during St. Louis student seminary days, he took the train to Chicago and served as a vicar for his father. Stories floated around that at the right price he would put together a Bachelor of Divinity thesis for a less committed and gifted student. At age twenty-four, he graduated from the St. Louis seminary, received an M.A. from Washington University (which is virtually adjacent to the seminary campus), and also received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. What else would anyone do with his spare time on weekends in Chicago? His teaching career took him from the St. Louis seminary back to the University of Chicago and finally to Yale University where he was the Sterling Professor of Church History. He had more than his fair share of honorary degrees. Some years back it was rumored that he was being considered for the Yale presidency. This did not happen. All this information about a deceased scholar would not matter except that his name appears as the general editor of the fifty-five volumes in the American Edition of *Luther's Works,* published by Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, a joint project of Lutheran denominations that have since gone their separate ways. Through this project, Pelikan's name has found its way onto the shelves and computers of Lutheran pastors across the world. Here comes the hard part. He died in the Orthodox Church. As with others, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had followed a path he could not take, but there is more to it than this. Robert Louis Wilken, another Missouri expatriate and a classmate, in his "Tribute to Jaroslav Pelikan" (*Pro Ecclesia* 16 [2007]: 123–125), provides us with a clue: "Pelikan had the linguistic gifts, the scholarly discipline, and imagination to display the entire sweep of the tradition on the basis of his own reading of the primary sources" (124). The Lutheran heritage was too limited. It took him back only five centuries. Pelikan's world included the ancient church.

My contact with Pelikan was tangential. As a college student at Concordia Bronxville, I heard him preach at Christ Lutheran Church in Yonkers, New York, where Richard Koenig served as pastor. He preached on Matthew 11:4–6, Jesus' answer to John the Baptist on whether he was the Christ. In the order in which the messianic signs were given, the poor hearing the gospel ranked above the miracles, even the raising of the dead. To this date, I have not come across one sermon on this text which proceeds in this way. Pelikan was right. The preaching of the gospel has the ultimate significance. His *From Luther to Kierkegaard* brought suspicions that he was a Barthian, as did his *Luther the Expositor,* which was attached to the tail end of the American Edition of *Luther's Works* where it had no place being. In terms of the 1950s, his concern was right, but his opponents—in affirming Scripture as the word of God—may not have developed the implications that the word of God applied to the gospel and Christ himself as a constellation.

Pelikan's biographer will have to sift through this, but a person who dies in a church of the Eastern Orthodox communion probably does not depart this world as a Barthian. Disturbances in the 1970s led him to leave the Missouri Synod, but he did not join the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches which had been formed to support the St. Louis faculty majority. He left without the fanfare of media coverage. Pelikan phoned Missouri Synod president J. A. O. Preus II that he was joining a Lutheran Church in America congregation. He remained a member of that congregation in Hamden, Connecticut, until a few years before his death. Pastors with less than thirty years of service in the ministry may not be aware of Pelikan's place in the Missouri Synod's blood stream and annals. For those who knew him, or of him, how was it that a Luther scholar could be laid to rest "in the Liturgy of the Orthodox Church" (Wilken, 125)? Is the important theological question how one dies or how one is buried? Here is the answer: "When I [Wilken] visited him in March (2006) he [Pelikan] told me that he was listening mostly to the B Minor Mass. Though he loved Bach's cantata and the St. Matthew Passion, as he awaited death he was drawn to the Latin Mass in Bach's glorious setting. For here there are no narrative recitative, no interpretative arias, only words of supplication, praise, gratitude, confession, and hope, and the quiet confidence—evident already in the opening strains of the *Kyrie eleison*—that one's voice, when joined with that of the church, is heard" (Wilken, 125). Sounds like he died a Lutheran . . . "quiet confidence" says it all.

David P. Scaer

Musings on the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)

I had not been to a meeting of the SBL since 1988 in Chicago. An old friend (now deceased) and author of an Anchor Bible Commentary on Mark, C. S. Mann, called this annual gathering either a circus or a carnival (I do not remember which, though both labels fit). Things have not changed, yet there still are some delectable items on the scholarly menu. For years I was tangentially associated with William R. Farmer's Gospel group which bucked the still trendy Markan priority by advocating a return to Matthean priority. After Farmer's death, the group faded from sight, but then came an invitation to meet with the group's survivors at San Diego in 2007. At the center of the group is David L. Dungan, whose *A History of the Synoptic Problem* is as compelling as it is good reading. Regretfully the 1999 Doubleday publication is out of print and the holders of the copyright are holding it captive. New Testament scholarship has too much resting on Mark being first to give rein to the old church tradition about the order of the Gospels.

My experience then moved from the nostalgic to the novel. Meeting simultaneously with the SBL at the San Diego convention center, the American Academy of Religion (AAR) had seminars on Buddhism, Sikhism, Queer Theory, Lesbianism, Global Warming, and a dialog between Evangelicals and Mormons. The speaker for the early Sunday morning breakfast for Lutheran professors sponsored by Fortress Press was John Dominic Crossan, a Roman Catholic scholar who sees Jesus as a wandering peasant. Less esoteric were the Yoga, Ecology, Chinese Philosophy, and Hindu study groups. Many presenters at SBL or AAR may be the college religion teachers of your parishioners' offspring. Ben Witherington of Asbury Seminary surgically removed with grammatical aplomb any arguments from the Pastoral Epistles disallowing women preachers. Paul's use of the present tense in disallowing women to teach is place-specific, that is, he intended it only for that church. In any event, teaching has nothing to do with an authoritative communication of doctrine. At that time and place Paul was opposed to women teaching anything. Get it?

Among the items attracting me to the San Diego gathering were several presentations by Bishop N. T. Wright of Durham, England. On Sunday morning he preached to an overflowing audience at a service sponsored by the

Institute for Biblical Studies, a group of Evangelical scholars. His afternoon lecture, "God in Public? The Bible and Politics in Tomorrow's World," developed the theme introduced in the morning sermon, so there was nothing new. Evangelicals, like their historical Reformed forefathers, see religion as a force shaping society. Disagreement with him on this or that issue does not detract from the force of his presentation and commitment to traditional Christianity. Wright is among several English university scholars who are insisting on the historical character of Christianity using critical arguments. The afternoon lecture was sponsored by SBL and again part of an overflowing audience was left sitting on the floor or standing outside the door.

A two-and-a-half-hour session was set aside Saturday for four 20 minute critiques of *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimonies* by Richard Bauckham. Like the biblical Daniel, his response indicated that he had survived the wolves. Rather than discrediting critical scholarship, scholars like Bauckham, Wright, and Larry Hurtado (who was also there) have used critical methods to demonstrate the probability of the biblical accounts, including the resurrection. Amazingly these scholars have sprung up in the secular environment of the United Kingdom where the established church has lost its grasp on the public mind. While elements in the LCMS were overtaken from the 1950s through the mid-1970s by Bultmann's demythologizing, which has long been off the scholarly radar screen, some Evangelical scholars have embraced historical study of the Scriptures to go on the offensive. Without surrendering their commitment to biblical authority, they have built their arguments for Christianity on critical methods. Weakly attended sideshows on obscure topics abound at these kinds of gatherings, but the Evangelicals have proven themselves the one force with which to be reckoned. They had the crowds and the SBL will most likely continue to give them center stage to guarantee the popularity of its annual meetings. Lutherans had a consultation, but in comparison with the Evangelicals it was only a splash.

One of the more entertaining sessions I attended was entitled, "Books on the *Gospel of Judas*: An Evening with the Authors." No less than thirteen authors were featured! A University of Washington professor sat next to the podium with watch in hand to enforce a five minute limit for each author's comments. Even though a long, narrow and inadequate room may have hindered give-and-take, and we had to cope with the noise from the freight train that passed nearby during the session, this was the best show of the weekend. Present were world class luminaries. Gerd Lüdemann, a professor at Göttingen and member of the Lutheran Church—widely known for his denial of the resurrection of Jesus—denied that Judas betrayed Jesus. For him "hand over" does not mean "betray." Bart Ehrmann defended the view that orthodox Christianity was the result of a political victory over Gnosticism. He has authored the Oxford University Press textbook *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to Early Christian Writings* that is used in many colleges. Elaine Pagels of Princeton and Karen King of Harvard argued that the *Gospel of Judas* was a needed feminist response against the blood and guts of the canonical Gospels. A young female German scholar was given the privilege of showing her recently published reconstruction of the *Gospel of Judas*. The original manuscript is not complete, so she and her fellow researchers filled in the blanks with possible reconstructions. April DeConick of Rice University offered a blistering critique of the first English translation and sensationalized interpretation done by the National Geographic team as well as the shrouded and unscholarly manner in which they released their findings. This team that did the initial translation and interpretation of the *Gospel of Judas* had agreed in writing not to share their findings in advance with other scholars. So much for making sure you have it correct before it is in print!

During the discussion it came to light that publishing linked to the *Gospel of Judas* involves big bucks, even in excess of a million dollars. Apparently the love of learning is not the only motivation for some scholars to toss their hat into the Judas ring. James Robinson noted that he alone has received $100,000 for his book on the *Gospel of Judas*. He proceeded to chide himself for writing a book about a manuscript that he had not yet personally examined. Shortly thereafter, Bishop Wright quipped that if discussion should not be allowed over the *Gospel of Judas* before the actual manuscript is examined, what does this say for "Q" scholarship and publications over the past fifty years? A roar went up from the crowd, who knew well that "Q" exists only in the minds of scholars.

The large space set aside for booksellers was a pure delight. Along with the book buying, scholars were meeting with editors to publish their manuscripts. There was the temptation to buy from avowed atheist publishers, but why support unbelief? Next year in Boston the SBL will meet just before Thanksgiving, while the AAR is headed for Chicago a few weeks earlier. It probably will be less fun without them, but with 2008 presidential elections over they will have to talk about somebody else besides Bush. With fewer attendees, Boston may offer more compact arrangements than the sprawl of the San Diego convention, which almost resulted in missing the Judas show.

After such a smorgasbord of opinion, it is hard to say where theology is going. Perhaps it is better not to know but to pick and choose from the Evangelical crumbs. Both LCMS seminary faculties were well represented. Among old time acquaintances were Horace Hummel, Norman Habel, Edgar Krentz, John Huber, Mike Horton, Hans Schwartz, and Carl Braaten.

David P. Scaer

Is Christianity Today Looking for Liturgy?

In a previous Theological Observer, I commented on the contemporary worship phenomenon, saying that "it is not nearly so settled as some might be led to believe" [*CTQ* 71 (2007): 370]. As if my comment needed corroboration, the folks at *Christianity Today* kindly obliged in their February 2008 issue with a cover story titled: "The Future Lies in the Past." The author, Chris Armstrong, describes himself as a born-again Christian, nurtured in a charismatic church in Canada, who felt, nevertheless, that something was missing.

Armstrong's article provides a brief overview of this "movement within a movement." Those who are familiar with American Evangelicalism are aware of its leading role in the Church Growth Movement and its immense influence on church life throughout North America, blurred denominational lines and all. It is less well known that among these same Christians there has been—now for three decades—considerable movement in a very different direction. More than a decade ago (October 1997), *Christianity Today* published another significant article titled: "Missing God at Church? Why So Many Are Rediscovering Worship in Other Traditions." Before that, Thomas Howard laid out his reasons for leaving Evangelicalism in *Evangelical Is Not Enough* (Nelson, 1984). Indeed, this soul-searching among Evangelicals goes all the way back to Robert Webber's *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* (Zondervan, 1978), the first of Webber's dozens of books and articles on this topic.

The author of the most recent contribution cited above acknowledges that this search by Evangelicals for more substance has led in any number of directions. For example, at one evangelical college large numbers of students are drawn to the liturgical style of the Episcopal Church, "despite the misgivings many share about the theological directions of that denomination." Similarly, others have over the past decades been drawn both to Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox Church, with some prominent Evangelicals actually jumping ship and converting.

What I find surprising in this entire discussion is that Lutherans seem to be nowhere on the radar screen. Despite the rich liturgical heritage that has been has handed down among us since the time of the Reformation, most Evangelicals seem to be unaware of the treasures that the Lutheran Church has to offer to those who are yearning for a fuller expression of the faith. Perhaps it is the case that we Lutherans have simply not trumpeted our theological and liturgical sensibilities much beyond our own circles. We all know of the prominent role played by Episcopalians in our nation's history. For example, a dozen of our presidents have had some sort of affiliation with this church body. The sheer size of the Roman Catholic Church ensures that it will not be overlooked. As for Lutherans, it's understandable that we might be missed.

Could it be that we have not been noticed because we are unsure ourselves about the place of our liturgical heritage in today's church as well as the church of tomorrow? This is certainly not the first time that Lutherans have questioned the validity and importance of liturgy and the church's song. Centuries ago Pietism and the Enlightenment delivered a one-two punch that stripped faithful Lutherans of the rich heritage that their forefathers had handed down to them. While a renewed interest in that heritage has emerged during the last one hundred and fifty years (beginning with C. F. W. Walther and Wilhelm Loehe in the nineteenth century), new challenges continue to surface. Instead of embracing our treasures of liturgy and song, there has been a tendency in recent decades to abandon this birthright in favor of other models of worship that are considered more effective and responsive to the perceived needs of the congregation.

Rather than arguing *against* contemporary worship, however, I would like to make the case *for* the church's liturgical heritage. Of course, that's a tall order that requires far more space than is permitted here. For now, this one point will have to suffice—namely, that before we throw out the proverbial baby with the bathwater, we take a moment to consider why other church bodies, traditionally not of a liturgical bent, have become so interested in the heritage that we take for granted. Could it be that they are on to something that has been right under our noses all along?

Paul J. Grime

Season of Creation

Those looking for variety in the traditional church calendar may be attracted by a season of creation as a way to "celebrate Earth as a sacred planet filled with God's vibrant presence." Its goal is for Christians to "go forth on a mission to be partners with Christ in the healing of the planet." A three-year series is proposed for the eight Sundays beginning with the first Sunday in September, each with its own name: Creation Day; Forest Sunday; Land Sunday; Outback Sunday for Australians and Wilderness Sunday for others; Social Justice Sunday; Blessing of the Animals, also known as St. Francis of Assisi Day; and River Sunday. An introductory brochure lays out the reasons for this novel and, depending on one's perspective, necessary innovation: "There is a growing concern in Christian communities about the ecological crisis and the way human beings have been treating God's earth. Planet earth is in peril. All creation is suffering." Referring to the earth as God's possession reflects Genesis 1:1 and the Psalms, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness therefore." Paul said the creation's suffering in bondage would be relieved with the appearance of believers as the sons of God (Rom 8:18–25). Our planet has been in a downward spiral since Genesis 3 and as custodians over creation Christians will work with others to keep things in good order, or at least to prevent an even more rapid deterioration, but some factors are beyond human control. Readings from Matthew, Mark, and Luke fit the standardized three-year series. Appropriate liturgies and accompanying Bible studies are also available (see www.seasonofcreation.com). In America the contact person is David Rhoads (drhoads@lstc.edu), a professor at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago.

David P. Scaer

Book Reviews

***Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy.* By Donald X. Burt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 251 pages. Paperback. $25.00.**

Burt's book is an essay in organizing Augustinian materials around contemporary topics in ethics and social and political philosophy, a companion to his earlier *Augustine's World: An Introduction to His Speculative Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996). The issues addressed include the nature of ethics, friendship, the family, and a range of questions involving the state, including law, violence, war, and the relation of church and state. In dealing with these broader subjects, however, Burt is not afraid to make occasional application of Augustine's thought to specific contemporary issues such as capital punishment and abortion.

The book is not an introduction to Augustine's thought in its *historical* context. References to Hobbes, Locke, and Nietzsche are more frequent, for example, than those to Cicero or Ambrose. That is quite consonant with the declared intentions of the author (himself a philosopher), but it does make this book a rather particular sort of introduction to Augustine's thought.

The contemporary theological context in which Burt's contemporary application of Augustine takes place is that of post-Vatican II Roman Catholic theology. Sometimes, as in his discussion of the salvation of those who have no explicit knowledge of Christ (52–53, 203–204), Burt is scrupulous (though not uncritical) in acknowledging Augustine's distance from contemporary Roman teaching. At other points, however, as in his discussion of Augustine's teaching on the subordination of wives to their husbands, his attempt to vindicate Augustine in contemporary terms leads him onto shaky ground. Burt identifies Augustine's position as based on a "culturally-influenced conviction" (106). Augustine was quite capable of making an acute discrimination between what is natural and what is merely cultural or conventional, but, in fact, he did not see such a distinction here.

Indeed, Burt's reader must, in general, be unusually careful and attentive in order to distinguish Augustine's *ipsissima vox* from Burt's elaboration and application, and the notes are not always an adequate help in this regard. For example, Burt discusses "Authority in a Society of Friends" on pages 68–73 with only one rather peripheral citation of Augustine. Burt is more careful in identifying his debts to and disagreements with other contemporary scholars, and his participation in these debates (e.g., over whether Augustine holds that the state is natural—as Burt argues—or is the result of sin) can be read with profit, though again the reader who wonders how Augustine's thought compares with that of Ambrose will find no help here.

The primary interest of Burt's book (as also many of its limitations) arises from its attempt to bring Augustine's thought into contemporary philosophical context. R. A. Markus' *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge UP, 1970), though not without a contemporary eye of its own, gives a clearer sense of Augustine's originality in relation to antique and patristic thought. For the neophyte who simply seeks a trusty *vademecum* in his first time through the main features of Augustine's "practical philosophy," the well-worn standby, H. A. Deane's *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (Columbia UP, 1963), may still be the better guide.

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***Deuteronomic Theology and the Significance of Torah: A Reappraisal.* By Peter T. Vogt. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. 242 pages. Hardcover. $37.50.**

One of the few areas of consensus in modern Deuteronomic scholarship is the contention that the book is a program for reform that is nothing short of revolutionary. The consensus of recent scholarship—led in large part by Moshe Weinfeld—understands Deuteronomy to be a radical shift from the theology presented in Genesis through Numbers. This view maintains that the Deuteronomistic movement sought to correct outdated views of God such as his descent upon a mountain (Exod 19:18, 20), his appearance to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel (Exod 24:9–11), and his need for a tabernacle (Exod 25:1–40:38). Deuteronomy, say most scholars, seeks to repudiate these anthropomorphic ideas and those like them. It does this, for example, by indicating that Yahweh is not seen but heard (e.g., Deut 4:33; 5:24–26). If earlier Pentateuchal texts proclaim "the *glory* of Yahweh," Deuteronomy's repeated refrain of Yahweh, "the place where I cause my *name* to dwell," combats the belief that Yahweh actually dwelt upon the earth. Another outdated view that Deuteronomy 12 seeks to correct by promoting one central place for worship is in Exodus 20:24–25, which is understood as calling for the building of altars in multiple locations. In these ways, many maintain, Deuteronomy demythologizes, centralizes, and secularizes earlier Israelite politics, theology, worship, and morality. Vogt's view is to embrace Deuteronomy's countercultural message. His claim, however, is that at the center of the book is the sovereignty of Yahweh—and not the Israelite monarchy—and this is manifested through Yahweh's *Torah*.

In the introductory chapter, the structure and theology of Deuteronomy is examined. Chapter 1 then looks at some of the ways in which the theology of Deuteronomy has been understood, namely, in terms of centralization, secularization, and demythologization. Chapters 2–5 evaluate key texts that are used to support these ideas. They are, among others, Deuteronomy 4–6, 12, and 16–19.

One of the main problems, Vogt argues, is that Weinfeld builds much of his interpretation of Deuteronomy based upon his views of Exodus through Numbers, but these views are inaccurate. Vogt marshals the scholarship of Jacob Milgrom to maintain that since Weinfeld holds to wrong beliefs concerning Israel's earlier sources then his entire edifice of Deuteronomic centralization, secularization, and demythologization falls like a house of cards.

In another place, Vogt indicates that the books of Psalms and Chronicles contain both the terms "Yahweh's *glory*" and "Yahweh's *name*" with no difficulty. There is therefore no need to set up a chasm between these two concepts as they appear in the Pentateuch; earlier Pentateuchal texts announcing Yahweh's glory do not need a Deuteronomic revolution. Vogt then forcefully argues that Deuteronomy 12 stresses the sovereignty of Yahweh in determining where he will be worshiped, rather than restricting the number of permitted worship sites. He believes the text argues for a central, but not sole, sanctuary. Moreover, rather than repudiating the "crude concept" of Yahweh's real presence, Deuteronomy 4:39 describes Yahweh's presence as being *both* in heaven and with Israel.

Readers of this journal will find much in Vogt's work that is theologically faithful and exegetically stimulating. He consistently argues for a holistic understanding and synchronic reading of the Pentateuch, while maintaining that Yahweh's real presence is in both heaven and on earth through his appointed means. It is unfortunate and contradictory, however, that Vogt believes *Torah* obedience was the means for Israel to actualize Yahweh's presence. Another shortcoming is that nowhere in his book does Vogt argue for Mosaic dating or authorship. Nor does he discuss the fact that Deuteronomy is structured upon second millennium Hittite treaties; this means it cannot be a document written to validate the Josianic reformation.

These reservations aside, this volume offers a refreshing examination of Deuteronomy that respectfully but forthrightly challenges prevailing opinions. Vogt's study is a must read for all who seek to understand the profound theology of this book.

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***The Third Greatest Miracle of Christianity: The Appearance of Jesus to Paul (The Conversion of the Apostle St. Paul).* By William J. Hausmann. Overland, MO: Toelion Productions, n.d. 208 pages. Paperback. $12.00.**

The author, a retired parish pastor with a Ph.D. from Drew University, has devoted his retirement years to bringing together his lifetime interest in the life and writings of the apostle whom the author argues was the major figure in the apostolic church. After explaining why the conversion of Paul ranks only after Jesus' resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Hausmann divides his study into twelve chapters with each devoted to an aspect of the apostle's life. Chapter two, the longest chapter, lays out theories for the conversion episode and answers questions of Paul's character. Several chapters present how Paul was accepted and rejected in the early church and how the apostle's theology was in agreement with that of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. Hausmann presents his case against the backdrop of contemporary scholarly views that are often at odds with the traditional appreciation of the apostle. Pastors will find here materials for their own reflection and for edification of their members in private study or for congregational seminars.

David P. Scaer

***The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says.* By April D. DeConick. London and New York: Continuum, 2007. 224 pages. Hardcover. $19.95.**

***The Gospel of Judas: Rewriting Early Christianity.* By Simon Gathercole. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 208 pages. Hardcover. $39.95.**

The public unveiling of the *Gospel of Judas*, whose text is now known from a recently restored manuscript dating from AD 220–340 that contains the only extant copy of this gnostic Gospel, was quite the media event. For prime impact, it took place through a National Geographic TV special that was broadcast on April 9, 2006, the first day of Holy Week. "The Judas Gospel" by Andrew Cockburn was the lead article in the May 2006 issue of *National Geographic Magazine* (78–95). The National Geographic sponsored translation with interpretation was released in conjunction the TV special: Rudolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer, and Gregor Wurst, with additional commentary by Bart Ehrman, *The Gospel of Judas* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2006). This book was later followed by the critical edition of the Coptic text of what remains of Codex Tchacos: Rudolphe Kasser, Gregor Wurst, Marvin Meyer, and Fançois Gaudard, *The Gospel of Judas, Critical Edition, Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2007). At least eight other publications from other publishers came off the press in 2006 and 2007, whose authors were all featured in a meeting of scholars that I attended last November (see David

Scaer's "Musings on the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature" on pages 182–184 above). Scholars agree that this Gospel was written by Sethian Gnostics who were attacking apostolic Christians for their reliance on the apostles for their teaching, especially teaching about the atoning death of Jesus which the author(s) of this Gospel found reprehensible. Two of the books featured in this session are reviewed here, both being of significant help in understanding the history and contents of the *Gospel of Judas*.

April DeConick, more than any of the other authors featured on the panel at SBL, criticized the National Geographic team for rushing to publication without following the scholarly convention of consulting with the wider community of Gnosticism scholars on translation and interpretation questions. DeConick, the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of Biblical Studies at Rice University, has distinguished herself over the past decade as one of the foremost interpreters of the *Gospel of Thomas* and various gnostic writings of the second and third century. Even though her book is a non-technical introduction to the *Gospel of Judas*, she writes as a specialist whose research is grounded in years of studying similar Coptic texts. Readers will notice that DeConick's writing reflects her appropriation of the Bauer hypothesis (i.e., the understanding that there was a wide diversity of "Christianities" from the earliest decades that considered themselves orthodox, but "apostolic Christianity" later won out and suppressed other expressions of Christianity).

DeConick wrote *The Thirteenth Apostle* to clear up flaws she noticed in the interpretation that the *Gospel of Judas* initially was given through the media splash, especially the positive characterization of Judas. Her research led to the conclusion that this portrayal grew from the errant choices that the National Geographic team made in translating the Coptic text. She states, "What I found were a series of translation choices made by the National Geographic team that permitted a Judas to emerge in the English translation who was different from the Judas in the Coptic original" (4). After going through a comparison of several specific translation choices where her translation differs substantively from the National Geographic translation, she concludes that this Gospel does *not* portray Judas as a hero or a Gnostic; contrary to the conclusion promoted by the initial work of the National Geographic team in its media splash, he is a demon more evil than the portrayals in other early Christian literature. DeConick's intimate knowledge of Gnosticism is apparent in both her introduction to gnostic literature and her interpretation of the *Gospel of Judas*.

If DeConick writes about Gnosticism as an "insider" who regularly breathes its air, then Simon Gathercole's *The Gospel of Judas* can be characterized as a balanced discussion by an "outsider" who wants to help readers understand the relationship of this document to what is traditionally understood as "early Christianity." Gathercole, a young New Testament scholar who teaches at the University of Cambridge, has already distinguished himself in Pauline and Gospel studies but is a relative newcomer to Gnosticism. After an introductory chapter on the intriguing history of Codex Tchacos (discovered prior to 1978), he traces our understanding of Judas (the person) from the canonical Gospels through apocryphal literature to gnostic literature. Although Gathercole does not address translation questions such as those raised by DeConick, his running commentary on the translated text of the *Gospel of Judas* is helpful to the novice who is puzzled by what Jesus teaches here (gnostic doctrine) and the way Jesus criticizes the apostles (representative of apostolic Christianity).

Gathercole certainly affirms the diversity that existed in early Christianity and sees the important window that the *Gospel of Judas* provides to this situation, yet he challenges the Bauer hypothesis, especially as promulgated by Elaine Pagels and Bart Ehrman in their attempts to put all the various "Gospels" into one big melting pot of different perspectives on Jesus. His synthetic chapter on the theology of this Gospel in light of the theology of the New Testament distills important differences on teaching as basic as Jesus' death. He states: "The Jesus of the *Gospel of Judas* is not a person who shares in the world's suffering, but one who in splendid isolation is detached from it. In the New Testament, by contrast, Jesus' suffering and death are central themes, highlighted again and again in its different constituent books . . . . [I]t is the solution to human sin and divine judgment" (168–169).

In the end, the *Gospel of Judas* tells us nothing about the historical Jesus or the historical Judas, contains no "gospel" due to its complete distaste for the atonement, but is very important for our understanding of Sethian Gnostics and the debate that raged between them and apostolic Christians in the second and third centuries. DeConick's book is an invaluable guide to those who want to understand the controversy with the translation and interpretation done by the National Geographic team. Pastors with congregation members who are puzzled by the general relationship of the *Gospel of Judas* to early Christianity can direct people to Gathercole's book as a balanced guide to both this document and its place in history.

Charles A. Gieschen

***The Spirit of the Reformation: A Guidebook for Restoring and Reforming the Lord's Supper in Worship*. By Frank G. Ciampa. [Longwood, FL]: Xulon Press, 2007. 124 pages. Paperback. $13.99.**

The Spirit of the Reformation is an easy-to-read introduction to the Lord's Supper providing biblical and historical background along with practical suggestions. Pastors looking for a resource to provoke discussion among their members will have one here. His earthy style will appeal.

David P. Scaer