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Due to the delay in printing and mailing this combined January/April 2010 issue, the July 2010 and October 2010 issues will probably also be combined and mailed later this year.

The Editors

A Look into Our Own Past

Most of the articles in this issue were originally papers delivered at this seminary's January 2009 symposia. They examine individuals who influenced in some manner the not-so-distant past of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The authors have done extensive research on their subjects. Some also actually knew the individuals of whom they wrote. They are sympathetic to what these individuals accomplished, but not without being critical. These are not biographical tributes, the kind often found in church ordination and funeral bulletins. Using the encomium approach, developed in the classical Greco-Roman world, would mean failure to come to terms with the theological clockwork that made these men tick. These articles, instead, are analytical, and so each pursues its task in its own way. Each tackles a complex person living in a different context. Hour-long lectures cannot offer an exhaustive treatment of an individual, but one does not have to drink the whole bottle to taste the wine. Since the personal history of several of the writers overlaps with that of their individual subjects, what they wrote also may tell us something about themselves. These essays will elicit either pleasant nostalgia or serious annoyance—reader response at its level best. The younger generation may have read something written by the individual subjects of these articles, or may at least be familiar with their names. Some of these individuals helped shape the recent past of our synod, so these articles can help us understand what we are today, and even provide perspective for our future. The last two articles fast-forward us to contemporary church history. Both are essays from the 2010 symposium, one on the future of the ELCA as a confessional church and the other on feminized God-talk. The seminary's annual biblical and confessional symposia reflect the institution's purpose in constantly engaging theology. This challenge will emerge again in the January 2011 confessional symposium dedicated to the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of C.F.W. Walther. As with all the annual symposia, unexpected outcomes can be expected.

The Editors

Walter A. Maier

Courtesy of Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO

CTQ 74 (2010): 5–22

Walter A. Maier as Evangelical Preacher[1]

Richard J. Shuta

Before the Church Growth Movement and non-denominational mega-churches, before the commercial internet, high-definition television, and the iPad, before there were prosperous religious book writers and televangelists, such as Pat Robertson, Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, and Joyce Meyer, a successful media entrepreneur appeared on the American scene. The surprise to many historians of American church history is that the man came from what many considered an isolated midwestern Lutheran denomination. His name was Walter Arthur Maier (1893–1950), or "WAM" as his friends called him. Historian Robert T. Handy once said that Maier is the "missing link" in twentieth-century church history between the famous evangelists Billy Sunday and William ("Billy") Graham.[2]

I. American Evangelicalism

Walter A. Maier's radio ministry began at a crucial time in both the political and religious arenas. Maier initiated an evangelism approach using the new medium of radio that gained ascendancy between the time of the Fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century and the new movement that eventually became known as Evangelicalism.[3]

Many young fundamentalists felt that the Fundamentalist movement was guilty of denominational separatism and an unhealthy anti-

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[1] This article draws on research that I did for my doctoral thesis at Drew University entitled "The Militant Evangelicalist of the Missouri Synod: Walter Arthur Maier and His Theological Orientation." This thesis is under "restricted status" and can only be released by its author. After Maier's death, his library and all his personal correspondence were sent to the Concordia Historical Institute where they remained undisturbed and not catalogued until my work. Since the writing of the thesis, Concordia Historical Institute has produced "A Guide and Inventory of the Papers of Walter A. Maier," prepared by Jamie Lambing, CHI, 1993.

[2] This was related in a personal conversation the author had with Handy.

[3] Evangelicalism should not be confused with Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was a militant attack on a theological liberalism—often called Modernism—that denied the inerrancy of Scripture and key doctrines of creedal Christianity, especially those connected to Jesus' unique nature and ministry. Modernism's public radio face was Harry Emerson Fosdick, a New York City preacher. Maier often alluded to Fosdick in his radio sermons.

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intellectualism. American Evangelicalism grew out of this concern. Historians of American Evangelicalism point out that it is a three-pronged movement: first, a set of theological convictions (such as the inerrancy of Scripture and the divinity of Christ), passionately held and militantly defended; second, an ethos that stresses a spiritually transformed life committed to social outreach; and third, media evangelism. David Dockery summarized Evangelicals as "those who believe the gospel is to be experienced personally, defined biblically, and communicated passionately."[4]

Twentieth-century Evangelicalism counts among its forerunners such optimistic, charismatic personalities as Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875), Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899), and Billy (William Ashley) Sunday (1863–1935).[5] These evangelists saw that mass-production techniques succeeded in business and that the same techniques could be used in evangelism.

American Evangelicals began using radio as an effective instrument for mass evangelism. By the early 1940s, Charles E. Fuller's "The Old Fashioned Revival Hour" had gained one of the largest radio audiences in the country. In 1943, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was founded as a loose affiliation of diverse evangelical denominations and individuals to promote evangelism. Then, in 1956, the magazine *Christianity Today* came into existence as the literary voice of American Evangelicalism. Though many books have been written on American Evangelicalism, most of them have not acknowledged the significant role that Walter A. Maier played in its development.

II. Historical Background on Walter A. Maier

Walter A. Maier was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 4, 1893. Maier attended Cotton Mather Public School in the Dorchester section of Boston. From age 13 to 19, he attended Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, New York, which at the time was a Lutheran high school and junior college. Unlike most of his classmates, Maier did not enter a seminary immediately upon graduation. He decided instead to pursue the A.B. degree from Boston University.

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[4] David D. Dockery, *Southern Baptists & American Evangelicals* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 48.

[5] Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Charles Finney on Theology and Worship," *CTQ* 62 (1998): 63–67; Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Faith in Contemporary Evangelicalism," *CTQ* 70 (2006): 323–340; Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "American Christianity and Its Jesuses," *CTQ* 71 (2007): 175–194.

In 1913 he entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to being an excellent student, Maier also exhibited an entrepreneurial spirit. He sold typewriters, books, and market produce. He also mimeographed and sold copies of the lectures of Professors Pieper and Dau. The St. Louis seminary professors delivered lectures in German, heavily sprinkled with Latin quotations. The students were expected to take down dutifully lectures as delivered.

From 1916 to 1920, and intermittently during the 1920s, Maier attended Harvard University, where he earned his doctorate. He honed his debating and communication skills while at Harvard and was awarded first prize in the "Billings Prize Contest" in oratory.

III. Maier as *The Walther League Messenger* Editor

Maier began his first position as a pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) on October 2, 1920, when he became the executive secretary of the Walther League, the official youth organization of the LCMS.[6] The League's rallies and camps created a cohesive and loyal group of young men and women with a new vision for the LCMS.

The Walther League Messenger, the League's magazine, was widely read, and its pages covered a variety of practical issues. Under Maier's editorship (1920–1945), the magazine reached a circulation of 75,000. In 1921, *The Walther League Messenger* listed seven purposes for the Walther League. One of them was "to make intelligent and energetic church workers." Another purpose was "to increase the love for our foreign mission work through the support of missionaries and native workers."[7]

During the 1920s, the masthead above the lead editorial in *The Walther League Messenger* included the phrase "For Church and Home." But in 1930 a new phrase appeared over the opening editorial: "Dedicated to the Defense of the Truth, the Propagation of the Faith and a Practical Interpretation of the Christian Religion."[8] These three foci reflected Maier's lifelong theological orientation, which emphasized militancy on behalf of world evangelization that was intended to produce concrete ethical and social results.

Early in this twenty-five year editorship of the *Messenger*, Maier both refuted and attacked an article in a newspaper that, among other things,

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[6] Jon Pahl, *Hopes and Dreams of All: The International Walther League and Lutheran Youth in American Culture, 1893–1993* (Chicago: Wheat Ridge Ministries, 1993).

[7] *The Walther League Messenger* 30 (1921): 102.

[8] *The Walther League Messenger* 38 (1930): 263.

thought "the Church of Christ is immoral because it is militant, that is, because it is a battling and struggling church." Maier contended that the church on this earth "will always be a fighting, a militant church."[9]

During the economic depression of the 1930s, Maier wrote several *Messenger* articles that gave readers not only good, concrete principles of management and rules for success, but also words of encouragement. He praised those leaders in business, medicine, and politics that used success for the cause of Christianity.[10] He was also critical of "the picture of Christianity as an agency that frowns upon any preeminence which its followers may receive."[11] Maier was acquainted with the Dale Carnegie seminars and the Carnegie book on how to influence people. But Maier warned against some of its principles that seemed to suggest "that the purpose of making friends is to get something out of them and to profit personally through friendship."[12]

Maier had a justly deserved reputation of being a highly ethical person. He himself once wrote that "success cannot be purchased at the price of dishonesty, either in spirit or in act, but that 100 percent plus application to the requirements of our present work in time, energy and devotion alone can produce that faithfulness which has the promise of reward."[13]

IV. Maier as Educator

In 1922, at the age of 29, Maier was called to teach Hebrew grammar and Old Testament exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He thereby became one of twelve professors for a student body of 366. Maier continued as professor there until 1944, when a synodical convention granted him a leave of absence. Maier had close colleagues among the seminary's younger faculty, such as John H.C. Fritz, a professor of practical theology, and William Arndt, a New Testament exegete. Maier's passion for evangelism and world missions led him to organize the Student's Missionary Society and serve as its faculty advisor.

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[9] Walter A. Maier, "The Four Follies of Dr. Frank Crane," *Walther League Messenger* 30 (1921): 10–11; 34.

[10] Walter A. Maier, "Professional Men Testify to Christ," *Walther League Messenger* 49 (1940): 10–11.

[11] Walter A. Maier, "Substitution for Sisyphus," *Walther League Messenger* 38 (1930): 193.

[12] Walter A. Maier, "How to Win Real Friends," *Walther League Messenger* 45 (1937): 342–343; 396.

[13] Maier, "Substitution for Sisyphus," 193.

V. The "Americanization" of the Missouri Synod

On the political and social scene, the United States was changing fast, and so was the synod that Maier publicly represented. From the end of the American Civil War to the end of World War I, the LCMS was noted for two things. The first was a theological conservatism that held its pastors to an unconditional subscription to all the confessional writings of the 1580 *Book of Concord*. The second characteristic, one that it held in common with other ethnic groups, was its isolation from American linguistic and social patterns.[14]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the LCMS was still largely theologically and culturally the synod of the previous century: strongly German, midwestern, and rural. However, the impact of World War I, centered in the heart of Lutheranism, along with decreased German immigration to the United States after the war, forced the LCMS into a greater use of the English language. Some LCMS officials debated whether the English language could be widely used by the synod without a corresponding dilution of its confessional Lutheranism.

The cultural-linguistic isolation of the LCMS began to change rapidly with a new group of young pastors, often connected with the Walther League, who were skilled in the use of the English language. Among this group was Walter A. Maier. Moreover, young friends of Maier also became leaders who creatively and vigorously supported the process.[15]

Another important agency for change in the LCMS was the Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL), organized in 1917.[16] It established the radio station KFUO, which began broadcasting on October 26, 1924. From its center on the campus of Concordia Seminary, it began broadcasting The Lutheran Hour radio program in 1930. This radio program contributed immensely to Maier's influence. But the LCMS did not seem to be growing in America like it should be.

VI. Slow Synodical Growth Calls for New Forms of Outreach

In the 1920s, the rate of growth in the LCMS slowed to fifteen percent. Although a public representative of the LCMS, Maier challenged it in a

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[14] Carl S. Meyer, editor, *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 344.

[15] Alan N. Graebner, "The Acculturation of an Immigrant Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1917–1929," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1965.

[16] Fred and Edith Pankow, *75 years of Blessings and the Best is Yet to Come!: A History of the International Lutheran Laymen's League,* ed. Gerald Perschbacher (St. Louis: International LLL, 1992).

Walther League Messenger article that asked, "Is there a 'Nod' in Synod?" He acknowledged that the Missouri Synod represented a "pure Lutheranism," but it needed more practical applications of its doctrine in such areas as church contributions. He wrote that the synod needed greater inspiration and information on practical Christian living. The synod's youth especially needed the biblical word taught to them in such a way "that is directly adapted to their needs."[17] Additionally, as the decade of the "Roaring Twenties" drew to a close, more and more pastors within the LCMS sought wider contact with the unchurched, English-speaking, urban populace, who needed to be reached with the pure gospel.

In the early 1930s, the LCMS began its first program of what we today would term "evangelism," even though this term was not yet used. It was obvious that evangelism was needed but "when the word evangelist was used in synodical publications it was always in the negative sense—to warn members about the dangers of the emotional approach of evangelists. All evangelism was seen as part of the sawdust trail of revivalism."[18] The synod-wide evangelism program was known as the "Call of the Hour." Materials for this campaign were printed in both German and English. Concordia Publishing House also began publishing the *Men and Missions* series at this time.

VII. The Tension between Content and Communication

By the 1940s, the LCMS recognized that its two strands of theological tradition, concern for correctness of belief and gospel outreach, seemed to be in conflict. Maier also faced the challenge of maintaining the Lutheran Hour message as truly Lutheran ("keeping it straight"), and integrating new communication methods, some of which had successfully been used by the entrepreneurial revivalist-evangelists Finney and Moody.

Other Lutherans had already seen the need. The New York-based American Lutheran Publicity Bureau began in 1913 and was well established to bring Old Lutheranism before the American public. It was not until 1948, however, that the LCMS established a department of public relations. Oswald C.J. Hoffman was its first director.

The concern for both purity of doctrine and the spreading the gospel constantly tugged within Maier as it did in the church body to which he belonged. "Old Lutherans" in the LCMS stressed the purity and fullness of

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[17] *Walther League Messenger* 31 (1923): 360-361.

[18] Eldon Weisheit, *The Zeal of His House: Five Generations of Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod History, 1847–1972* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 96.

right doctrine and the need to avoid open, visible church fellowship with other religious groups unless strict theological criteria were met. Moreover, LCMS theologians condemned the "New Measures" style of preaching and evangelism introduced in the 1800s by revivalists such as Charles Finney.

> [Finney] believed so strongly in human free will, he believed the evangelist, if he followed the proper methods, could reap a harvest of converts. Therefore, he utilized the protracted meeting; the anxious bench for repentant sinners; the use of long, emotional prayers; and the use of organized choirs; all designed to break the stubborn will of the prospective convert. . . . He truly believed Christians who were entirely sanctified could bring about a thorough reform of American civilization so that the kingdom of God would come to America. Such optimism dovetailed perfectly with the individualism and self-sufficiency of the new nation.[19]

Additionally, some of his converts led key reform movements, especially those dedicated to the abolition of slavery. These revivalist preachers were making a large impact on unchurched Americans, and altered the direction of American Christianity as well.

VIII. Lutheran Hour Rallies

Like previous pioneers in mass evangelism such as Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday, Maier showed his organizational genius and advertising skills in carefully produced Lutheran Hour rallies, which accustomed Missouri Synod Lutherans to a worship style more characteristic of the new Evangelicalism. On September 27, 1936, a Lutheran Hour rally was held in Cleveland, Ohio, and three thousand friends of the Lutheran Hour were in attendance.

To aid in the success of such rallies, Maier produced the 41-page "Lutheran Hour Rallies Manual."[20] Like Finney, Maier recognized the importance of using mass children and adult choirs, as well as bands and orchestras. Maier noted that these ensembles were "in themselves very fine attractions and excite wide interest. Furthermore, they guaranteed a substantial body of attendance on the part of the participants, relatives and friends."[21] Maier wrote that the cooperation of local pastors was also

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[19] James P. Eckman, *Perspectives From Church History* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 1996), 81.

[20] Walter A. Maier, *Lutheran Hour Rallies: A Manual.* This manual does not have a date of publication or page numbers. Page numbers referenced below have been assigned by the author. This manual is in the author's private collection.

[21] Maier, *A Manual*, 23.

needed since their assistance could "do much to increase the size of the listening audience."[22] Despite the fear within the LCMS of any type of religious unionism, Maier recommended the following: "Under given circumstances, consideration may be given to the possibility of having men of other Lutheran Synods, or other organizations, enjoy representation on the committee."[23]

In the *Walther League Messenger* article entitled "It Pays to Advertise—If," Maier acknowledged the value of advertising for evangelism.[24] His enthusiastic supporters saw to it that publicity for Lutheran Hour Rallies featured Maier prominently. Often official souvenir programs were prepared for rallies, such as that in Chicago on October 3, 1943, in which 25,000 people were in attendance. The 36-page "Official Souvenir Program" booklet featured a page of pictures of the Maier family. It was a reflection of the celebrity status Maier had achieved among the Lutheran Hour listeners.

IX. Maier's Contacts with Influential Non-Lutheran Leaders

Maier's correspondence in the 1930s and 1940s reveals that he held a wide variety of contacts with conservative Christians in other denominations. William B. Eerdmans sought Maier's aid, articles, and cooperation for the publication of a new magazine that Eerdmans desired to establish, as he said, "for the purpose of spreading the great truths of historical Christianity in practically every phase of life and thought."[25] Maier wrote back, "I shall, of course, be ready to cooperate in the publication of the new magazine provided that none of the principles of biblical Christianity be set aside. Under your auspices and sponsorship, I feel that there is no danger of the slightest disparagement of revealed truth."[26]

At the same time that Maier established personal rapport with conservative reformed leaders, he maintained the friendship of the young LCMS liturgical scholar, Arthur Carl Piepkorn. In a series of letters to Piepkorn, Maier revealed his sensitivity and flexibility in the area of church ceremonies. He advised his former student to go a little slower in introducing new liturgical practices among his people. Maier wrote,

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[22] Maier, *A Manual*, 24.
[23] Maier, *A Manual*, 6.
[24] *Walther League Messenger* 37 (1929): 558.
[25] Letter, July 31, 1933, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.
[26] Letter, August 5, 1933, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

> I simply want to counsel you against any inordinate haste, because I know that the hammers of cavil will swing long and loud particularly against the career and work of any active Christian pastor who is engaged in unusual missionary opportunities and who refuses to adhere to the line of tradition for that line is the line of least resistance.[27]

X. The 1940s and Dissensions on Fellowship in the LCMS

Continuing its traditional stance toward fellowship with other Christians, *A Brief Statement* was adopted by the LCMS in 1932. It became a key document with which any church body desiring fellowship with the LCMS must be in complete agreement.

In 1943, however, the book *Toward Lutheran Union* appeared.[28] Lutheran chaplains serving the Armed Forces received it as a complimentary copy. The book was suspected by some of promoting a non-confessional unionism. The 1944 LCMS convention, held in Saginaw, Michigan, brought the controversy into the open. The tone and outcome of this convention disheartened some within the LCMS.

Following the convention, this "Eastern element," linked not by geography but by its outlook on fellowship, concluded that legalism was rampant within the LCMS and needed to be corrected. Finding its strongest leaders among those associated with *The American Lutheran,* this group sought the aid of the magazine's editorial board. William Arndt and W.G. Polack, both colleagues of Maier at Concordia Seminary, also joined the group who were opposed to what they considered to be Missouri's legalistic spirit.

A meeting was held in Chicago on September 6 and 7, 1945. This meeting drew forty-two clergymen and one layman. Among the pastors in attendance was the future Lutheran Hour speaker Oswald Hoffman. Walter A. Maier was not there. The conferees at Chicago then prepared a position paper that was mailed to all the LCMS clergymen. This document was entitled "A Statement," but became known as "The Statement of the Forty-Four" due to its forty-four signatories. Consisting of twelve positive theses, "A Statement" begins with nine theses that are accompanied by a negative statement starting with the words, "We, therefore, deplore."

The response to "A Statement" varied throughout the LCMS, but a vocal opposition to it centered in the Indiana, Central Illinois, and

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[27] Letter, October 30, 1933, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

[28] Theodore Graebner and Paul E. Kretzmann, *Toward Lutheran Union: A Scriptural and Historical Approach* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943).

Northern Illinois districts of the Missouri Synod. The LCMS administration, headed by John W. Behnken, its first American-born president, from 1935–1962, was largely hostile to it. The public outcome of the various meetings between representatives of the LCMS *Praesidium* and the initial signers of "A Statement" was that it was withdrawn "as a basis for discussion." The signers, however, never retracted its contents.

Despite the growing tension within the LCMS between those who wanted a greater contact with non-Missouri Synod Christians and those who did not, Maier remained popular with the hearers of his radio broadcasts. During Maier's sixteen and a half years as the Lutheran Hour speaker, he preached 509 sermons, many of which were reproduced in twenty sermon books from Concordia Publishing House. He also authored *For Better Not For Worse,* a popular book on marriage and the Christian home. *Time* called Maier the "Chrysostom of American Lutheranism."[29] He became the first Lutheran preacher in history to be heard around the world on a regular basis.[30] Part of this popularity was because Maier's sermons and *Messenger* articles exhibited a practical social consciousness that addressed the concerns of middle-class American families, a characteristic also of Evangelicalism.

XI. Maier's Ethical and Social Consciousness

Since the largest part of Maier's public career was in the America of the 1930s and 1940s, his writings and radio messages addressed such problems as civil unrest caused by social and economic ills. He confronted the problem of "Militarism" and its vengeful spirit arising out of the conflict of World War II. Additionally, Maier constantly spoke out against atheistic communism, so much so that eventually the editorial board of the *Walther League Messenger* sought his resignation, which he tendered, as he said in a letter to the board, because the publication no longer held to his emphases.[31]

Racism

Born and raised in cosmopolitan Boston, Maier learned to be sensitive to the ethnic variety within America. But his concern for a multi-racial America was based on his theological understanding of Jesus' ministry. He

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[29] "Religion: Lutherans," *Time,* October 18, 1943, 46, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,778024,00.html.

[30] Paul L. Maier, *A Man Spoke, a World Listened: The Story of Walter A. Maier* (New York: McGraw, 1963), 325.

[31] Letter to Henry W. Buck, May 25, 1945, Maier Collection, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

pointed out that a universal gospel is just that. The gospel crosses not only geographical and political obstacles, but also those of race and color.

Additionally, Maier had no love for Nazism or for the various forms of American racism. In his sermon "God will Provide," Maier scolded:

> The Nazi treatment of the Jew is repulsive, but how did we treat the American Indians. We fed them whiskey, cheated them, took their lands away and locked them on reservations! What have we done to the American Negro? Try to have a colored boy enrolled in some of our upper schools, and you will find part of the answer.[32]

In a 1947 sermon, "The Prayer God Answers," Maier linked his condemnation of racism to his proclamation of objective reconciliation in Christ:

> Jesus has sin-destroying mercy; He not only forgives your transgressions, forgets them, He actually wipes them out of existence. Jesus has completed redemption. His deliverance is not a possible blessing, which may be offered some time in the future, but a priceless reality, which is here for you now. Jesus—praise His saving name!—has all-inclusive deliverance, with no one excluded by class, color or condition.[33]

Militarism

Throughout his public ministry, Maier walked the narrow line between pacifism and militarism, because the latter, the philosophy that "might makes right," nurtured an ungodly spirit of revenge. In his sermon "Pray America Pray," Maier took aim at American manufacturers who enjoyed producing war material.[34] In his prayer at the November 5, 1942, session of the House of Representatives, Maier warned of the spirit of militarism that profited from human bloodshed.

With his realistic understanding of the power of sin in the world, Maier acknowledged that force must at times be used to counteract force. He pointed out, however, that force must never be at the expense of the forgiving spirit that the gospel implants in an evangelistic heart. He said:

> While we despise tyranny, dictatorships, oppression, militarism, aggression, totalitarianism in every form; while we must be ready to defend our nation with all our possessions, and, if need be, with life itself,

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[32] Walter A. Maier, *Peace through Christ* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1940), 193.

[33] Walter A. Maier, *One Thousand Radio Voices For Christ* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 188.

[34] Maier, *Peace through Christ*, 26.

> we cannot, would we be true to Christ, hate our fellow men, even though we must battle against them.[35]

Maier had continually sought a National Day of Repentance and Humiliation, similar to that which Abraham Lincoln instituted during the Civil War. Thinking of himself as a prophet to the nation, he noted the nation's sins of thanklessness, pride, and hypocrisy. He spoke out against the futility of trying to stockpile chemical and atomic weapons. In his 1948 sermon, "Christ's Peace For You," which was heard on Memorial Day and closed the fifteenth season of the Lutheran Hour, he invited and pleaded with his listeners to give their allegiance to the Prince of Peace.[36]

XII. Mixing Gospel Proclamation with Politics: His Response to Father Coughlin

Beginning in the late 1920s, Father Charles E. Coughlin had a Sunday afternoon radio broadcast from his parish, Shrine of the Little Flower, in Royal Oak, Michigan, a Detroit suburb. By 1945, he had a listening audience of 45 million. Twice he made the cover of *Newsweek*. Coughlin's broadcasts were a mixture of religious and political themes. He sometimes spoke of the perils of communism that he labeled the "red serpent," or he pleaded for the remonetization of silver. He also spoke scathingly of "unregulated capitalism."

For a time, Coughlin was considered to be so politically powerful that his phrase "Roosevelt or Ruin" was thought to have been partially responsible for gaining Franklin D. Roosevelt the presidency. Coughlin had his own political lobby of five million members, and he succeeded in flooding Congress with two hundred thousand telegrams as a result of one speech. Yet he eventually had the reputation of being anti-Semitic because of a pro-Nazi speech he broadcast in 1938. The National Association of Broadcasters eventually drafted a strict new code with him in mind. The code prohibited all "controversial speakers from buying air time on the radio unless they appeared on a panel and other views were also presented."

By 1942, Coughlin's own archbishop pressured him to stop broadcasting. Prior to that, however, Coughlin was a radio force in religious broadcasting worthy to be opposed both by articles in the *Walther League Messenger* and by allusions in Lutheran Hour radio sermons.

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[35] Walter A. Maier, *For Christ and Country* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), 128.

[36] Walter A. Maier, *Go Quickly And Tell* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 369–370.

Avoiding any direct reference to Coughlin, and thereby staying within the National Association of Broadcasters' code, Maier supplied his listeners with code words that the educated listener could easily decipher as a reference to Father Coughlin.

Maier felt that his militant attack on Coughlin was on behalf of the church's true mission, which, Maier said, "First and last centers on men's souls. Its ultimate objective lies not in this life, but in the next. It must never preach hatred, force, war, but always, love, mercy and peace."[37] In his October 16, 1949, sermon, "Is the United States a Christian Nation," Maier said:

> I concur in the opinion of President Ulysses S. Grant, who gave this pointed direction: "Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private school supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and the state forever separate."[38]

Though Maier condemned Father Coughlin for putting the pulpit into partisan politics, Maier warned *Walther League Messenger* readers not to neglect their civic duties. He criticized what he viewed as a lack of political activism on the part of his fellow Lutherans.[39]

Though attacking Father Coughlin for misusing the privilege of radio preaching, Maier also attacked anyone who attempted to remove Coughlin from the airwaves. Maier spoke out strongly on behalf of religious freedom, which he saw as connected with the policy of a strict separation of church and state. Maier held that religious freedom was guaranteed by the American constitution, and he defended that freedom even for those with whom he had sharp theological disagreement, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

XIII. Maier's Ecumenical Outreach

Throughout his career, Maier sought to use his Lutheran Hour sermons as an instrument for the repositioning of Lutheranism in the center of a revitalized conservative Christianity. Despite the fear that contact with heterodox Christians might result in the LCMS being guilty of unionism, Maier encouraged the LCMS pastors to accept speaking engagements before non-Lutheran groups that requested it.

Maier was not content to lend support to unity among conservative Christians simply by writing letters or lending encouragement through

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[37] Walter A. Maier, *The Cross From Coast to Coast* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1938), 330.
[38] Unpublished Lutheran Hour Sermon, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.
[39] Walter A. Maier, "Hollow Liberty," *Walther League Messenger* 44 (1936), 649.

Lutheran Hour sermons. He also made personal appearances before non-Lutheran assemblies such as at the summer Bible conferences at Winona Lake, Indiana. These appearances, however, created quite a bit of negative reaction among some members of the LCMS. Because of it, Concordia Seminary's governing board required him to defend himself against the charge of having violated the LCMS stance against religious unionism. Moreover, the LCMS Board of Directors may have removed him from his position as Lutheran Hour speaker had not his unexpected death in 1950 come first.

XIV. Maier's Link to Billy Sunday and Billy Graham

Within his lifetime, this small-in-stature, blond, and blue-eyed radio-evangelist was known as a representative of an "athletic Christianity." *Colliers* described him as a "high-tension, athletic clergyman who looks more like a prosperous businessman than a preacher."[40] The magazine said, "Most ministers today would be afraid to 'burn 'em up' as Doctor Maier does, scolding and exhorting sinners to repentance, but his public seems to like it. Fan mail pours in from the religious and antireligious alike."[41] A featured article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, "The Man of the Lutheran Hour," described his appearance and sermon delivery as similar to that of fighter in a prize ring whose heart-to-heart direct delivery takes a hold on his audience.[42] Maier was also characterized as a friendly person who conveyed a "common man" image. He was known for his good hard handshakes, photographic memory, and tremendous capacity for work. People who met him did not soon forget him. Commenting on the upcoming March 11 Lutheran Hour rally in Chicago, the *Chicago Herald American* wrote, "In the keynote address Dr. Walter A. Maier, noted Lutheran hour radio speaker and widely known *as the modern Billy Sunday*, will sound a call to America for repentance."[43]

Maier often called the Lutheran Hour "our mission of the air," or "our radio crusade." As a radio evangelist, Maier sought to bring people, as he said, "all the way to Christ." He condemned the theological heresy known as universalism, the error that there is salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ.[44] Maier always spoke of Jesus' vicarious atonement as already accomplishing full salvation for all sinners when he died on the cross. Maier would quickly add, however, that an individual benefited

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[40] *Colliers*, May 6, 1944.
[41] *Colliers*, May 6, 1944.
[42] *Saturday Evening Post*, June 19, 1948.
[43] *Chicago Herald American*, March 10, 1945 (emphasis added).
[44] In, e.g., "You Can Abide Forever," *One Thousand Radio Voices For Christ*, 285.

personally by this salvation only "when" and "if" that sinner believed the gospel. Thus, Maier's sermons had a strong emphasis on what theologians call "subjective justification." This emphasis is one of the most controversial and dangerous parts of the Maier sermons, in light of Luther's *Bondage of the Will* and Lutheran opposition to synergism.

Maier's sermons had many indirect and direct invitations to listeners to "come to Christ," "accept Christ," and "decide for Christ." In his 1931 Maundy Thursday sermon entitled, "The Inevitable Question," Maier made the assertion that no one can get around making a decision for or against Christ. He said that the question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" must be answered personally, directly, unavoidably, by everyone who has ever met Christ through the Scriptures.[45] Explicit references to the necessity of the Holy Spirit's aid in "accepting Christ" became more frequent in Maier's sermons in the late 1940s.[46]

Invitation language is frequent in Maier's sermons. During the twelfth season of the Lutheran Hour, his sermon "Don't Gamble Your Soul Away!" consisted of two parts: "Don't Take the Fatal Chance of Rejecting Christ!" and "Be sure that you have accepted Christ!"[47] In the thirteenth season of broadcasting, in his 1946 sermon, "Marred Lives Remade in Christ," Maier closed with the "Invitation." Prior to the "Invitation," Maier told of a successful businessman who supposedly told his pastor, "You warmed my heart with a desire for what you preached; and then—you stopped without asking me to do something about it. In my business the important thing is to get them to sign on the dotted line." Because Maier did not want to be guilty of that omission, he said to his broadcast listeners:

> I beseech you to believe that I am speaking to every one of you still without the Savior when I plead: For God's sake, for Christ's sake, for your own soul's sake, for your family's and friends' sake, kneel down (don't be ashamed to fall on your knees now in front of your radio, before God!) and, looking toward Christ and His cross, cry out: "O Jesus, I am nothing but cheap, common, corrupt clay; yet Thou didst suffer and die to purify and refine me *by faith.* As I now confess Thee my own, washed and cleansed in Thy blood, let Thy Spirit take me, make me, shape me, so that my sin-marred life will be remade according to the perfect pattern of

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[45] Walter A. Maier, *The Lutheran Hour* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), 143, 144–146, 148.

[46] See Walter A. Maier, *Global Broadcasts of His Grace* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1949), 131–132.

[47] Walter A. Maier, *Rebuilding with Christ* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), 98–115.

> Thine own self, O Blessed Savior!"—That prayer will surely be answered.[48]

On December 25, 1949, in his last Lutheran Hour sermon, "Heaven's Love Lies in the Manger," Maier called listeners to participate in Jesus' complete atonement through faith. This is how he said it:

> The Lord of this heavenly love who lies as a Babe in Bethlehem's manger wants to grant you the divine promise of complete pardon as the Christmas gift of His grace, so that you need only believe the guarantee of your salvation, which the Son of God now offers every one of you.[49]

Maier's qualifying statement "you need only believe," while employed by him to guard against the error of universalism, focused the listeners' attention upon what was expected of them. But, according to confessional Lutheran theology, preachers are to place listeners' attention upon what God has already done for them. The grammar of the Maier sermons was full of imperatives and exhortations—grammatical forms that lend themselves to the area of ethics and sanctification. Objective justification, the center of gospel proclamation, typically uses the indicative form of verbs to stress the gift-nature of salvation.

In light of the past LCMS controversies regarding the doctrines of election and justification, one would have expected Maier to have exhibited a greater sensitivity to the importance of stressing objective justification. By doing so, he would have clearly separated himself from the theological errors of past revivalist preachers who were influenced by the free-will stress in Arminianism. It is one of the tragedies of Maier's sudden death that he had not produced at least a monograph detailing how he avoided the Arminianism implicit in the revivalists' "Gospel invitations." It may have been that he recognized that his skills lay more in theological projection rather than reflection, and that his strengths were in organization and practical exegesis rather than in systematic theology.

Surprisingly, by this time some in the LCMS leadership were no longer sensitive to the theological implications of such "accept Jesus" language and the theological synergism implicit in the use of such invitations. Evidence of a lack of such sensitivity and theological sophistication is recorded in the memorial address delivered by LCMS President John Behnken for the deceased Maier over the Lutheran Hour network on January 15, 1950. In his sermon, "Christ, Your Matchless Advocate,"

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[48] Walter A. Maier, *He Will Abundantly Pardon* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1948), 100–101 (emphasis added).

[49] Unpublished Lutheran Hour Sermons, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

Behnken asked his listeners, "Will you not accept Christ as your matchless Advocate?"[50] But Behnken's sermon made no mention of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, who gives such trust as a pure gift to the sinner. Behnken, though critical of Maier upon some issues, such as his contacts with Christian groups not in fellowship with the LCMS, nevertheless praised him for his faith and even attempted to imitate the style and content of Maier's sermons in this memorial sermon.

When Billy Sunday died, Maier commented on him in a December 1935 *Messenger* article: "The nation lost one of the best preachers. . . . His preaching and methods always offered a subject for acrid debate. Few men in the pulpit have been more systematically and perhaps more unjustly criticized than he."[51] Sunday and Maier had much in common, not only in physical stature and an "athletic" preaching style and genius for organizing crusades/rallies, but also in their ethical concerns and transparent patriotism. Sunday had often equated Christianity and Patriotism, and claimed that "hell and traitors are synonyms."[52] Lutheran Hour Rallies prominently displayed an American flag and a Christian flag side by side.

After a series of heart attacks, Maier died on January 11, 1950. As he had spoken well of Billy Sunday upon his death, Billy Graham would do the same for Maier. In January of 1950, while at a Boston hotel with his evangelism team, Graham heard of Maier's death. Graham and his evangelism team prayed that someone be raised to take Maier's place. In 1963, Graham wrote these words to Maier's widow: "Indeed, I loved your husband in Christ as few men. I can hear his voice ringing in my ears to this day. I have his books on my shelf and often read them and even yet will use material from them in my own sermons. What a giant in the faith he was!"[53]

Walter A. Maier was indeed the Missouri Synod's historical link with the characteristics of American Evangelicalism: militant, evangelistic, ecumenical, and socially conscious. He, like Billy Sunday and then Billy Graham, came with a new sophisticated style of outreach to the converted and unconverted. All of these evangelists promulgated their message through highly organized large rallies and modern media techniques that included sophisticated advertising.

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[50] Unpublished Lutheran Hour Sermon, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

[51] *Walther League Messenger* 44 (1936): 205.

[52] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 175.

[53] *Decision* (June, 1981).

Maier was among the young leadership that moved the LCMS into a fuller participation with other American conservative Christians and into mainstream American culture. His successes finally gave to the LCMS, originally an immigrant, German-focused church body, a seductive prominence and desire for acceptance in the world of theological scholarship and ecumenical outreach.[54]

Historian James P. Eckman has noted that whereas the Puritans of the seventeenth century, like Luther, focused on a God-centered theology that stressed man's inability to save himself, the early nineteenth century embraced a man-centered theology that emphasized the free will and ability of man in salvation. That emphasis continued into the twentieth century, with an added emphasis on method and technology.[55] Theology, whether it is confessional Lutheran or classical Calvinism, seemed to be less important to many of the twentieth century evangelists than it did to their predecessors. But such a lack of emphasis carries tremendous dangers. Certainly financial wisdom and various media tools can be valuable servants in evangelism. Nevertheless, to borrow the architect's axiom "form follows function," the assumptions and consequences arising from too much dependence upon modern media or business techniques (and their views on what constitutes "success") must be evaluated theologically. This requires leaders and preachers of the Missouri Synod to examine closely the dangers such methods present to a confessional Lutheran Church on the American landscape.

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[54] Crucial to his success was the loyal work of his assistants Eugene R. Bertermann (d. 1983) and Harriet Schwenk Kluver (d. 1988).

[55] Eckman, *Perspectives From Church History*, 84.

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Richard Caemmerer's Goal, Malady, Means: A Retrospective Glance

David R. Schmitt

2009 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Richard Caemmerer's homiletics text, *Preaching for the Church*.[1] It is time for a retrospective glance. Much has changed since Caemmerer first wrote this book: the field of homiletics, the place of Christianity in the American culture, and, I would argue, even the meaning of Caemmerer's homiletical methodology. It is this latter change that is the subject of this article. In homiletics, Richard Caemmerer gave the church goal, malady, means, and the church has changed it into something else. That change is going to be our main concern: the transformation of goal, malady, means from homiletical theology to law/gospel substitute. My argument is that goal, malady, means arose from Caemmerer's theology of preaching. It was his way of preserving the heart and fostering the art of Lutheran preaching in a time of great change. But its subsequent misuse has turned it into something that Caemmerer never intended: a law/gospel substitute that oversimplifies the integration of law/gospel proclamation in Lutheran preaching.

To be honest, this argument is not really my own. I am borrowing it from Caemmerer. You can hear it when he stops near the end of his career and evaluates his work. In 1965, Robert Bertram put together a festschrift for Caemmerer, who had been teaching at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for twenty-five years.[2] Caemmerer was asked to write an autobiographical reflection on his career. In this opening piece, Caemmerer offers the following critical reflection on his work: "Years of teaching helped to develop the triad of 'goal, malady, means' which seminarians distort into sermon outlines and alumni mention with a grin."[3] Years of teaching developed goal, malady, means, and year after year Caemmerer watched as seminarians distorted it. Notice how Caemmerer describes the distortion—into outlines. That is, they created a three-part sermon

[1] Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

[2] Richard R. Caemmerer, "Stance and Distance," in *The Lively Function of the Gospel*, ed. Robert W. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).

[3] Caemmerer, "Stance and Distance," 4.

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structure that starts with the law, proceeds to the gospel, and then closes with some form of application. It is this dynamic that I will examine: Caemmerer's teaching of goal, malady, means and its subsequent distortion in Lutheran preaching. First, we will examine how goal, malady, means arose from Caemmerer's teaching and embodied his theology. Second, we will consider how it has been distorted in contemporary Lutheran preaching as a law/gospel substitute.

I. Caemmerer's Homiletical Theology

To examine goal, malady, means as theology in Caemmerer's homiletics, it is helpful to begin with a larger view of his historical setting and then move in for a much closer examination of his work. If you place Caemmerer's work in the larger trajectory of homiletical theory, you will see that he taught at the very beginning of what became a revolution in homiletics. Simply put, homiletics was encountering several shifts: from an emphasis upon informative to performative preaching; from thematic, propositional sermons that focused on teaching to creative, inductive sermons that focused on experience; from sermons that focused on content being conveyed and minds being filled to sermons that focused on experiences being generated and lives being formed.

Hogan and Reid, in their book *Connecting with the Congregation*, offer a helpful analysis of this historical change in homiletical theory. For them, traditional preaching lies at one end of the spectrum. Traditional preaching focuses upon the logical development and communication of information about the faith. Its goal was to offer "an explanation of Christian belief" for the hearers to which they would agree. Its customary form involved "thematic presentations [in] which the speaker argues 'points.'"[4] This is the preaching that is manifest in Caemmerer's discussion of outlines in sermon preparation and the examples that he offers. Caemmerer was firmly situated in this preaching tradition. At the other end of the spectrum lies the "thoroughly postmodern approach to preaching," in which preaching is not offering an explanation of belief but rather soliciting from those gathered their own formation of belief in response to the public performance of biblical texts. Here, there is no customary form for the sermon, as that would be imposing upon the gathered community ways of believing that are not necessarily organic to their context. Instead, the preacher generally facilitates communal involvement with the texts of Scripture. So, you might have a much more conversational and free-

[4] Lucy Lind Hogan and Robert Reid, *Connecting with the Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 122.

flowing form, dialogical (and I truly mean dialogical—with input from the congregation through small-group work, open discussion, and text-messaging displayed on a screen).[5] In between these approaches lies the shift toward a more experiential form of preaching that we will be examining in our discussion of Caemmerer. This is the movement that Hogan and Reid define as kerygmatic preaching. Here, the emphasis is less upon the theological truth to be explained in the sermon and more upon the theological encounter of God with the hearers through the sermon. The word of God is understood primarily as an event that happens in the lives of the hearers through the proclamation of the sermon. Truth remains important for the preacher, but the goal of the sermon is to facilitate an experience of that truth through the proclamation of God's saving word.[6]

As we look at this larger spectrum, we notice that Caemmerer taught at the very beginning of this major shift in preaching: the shift from traditional to kerygmatic, from informative to performative, from preaching as teaching to preaching as an event. Homiletical theorists often point to the work of H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching*, published in 1958, as the very beginning of this shift.[7] Although it was published only a year before Caemmerer's *Preaching for the Church*, Caemmerer was aware of this work and the change it foretold in preaching. In his listing of resources for further reading at the end of *Preaching for the Church*, Caemmerer writes: "Tremendously useful is *Design for Preaching*, in which H. Grady Davis, in a highly original and painstaking fashion, offers guidance to the process of developing a textual idea in appropriate forms of thought and language; nothing in the literature of preaching is comparable to this book."[8] Caemmerer had encountered Davis's work and recognized it as something completely new. The homiletical field suddenly had much broader horizons. At the close of his autobiographical piece, Caemmerer notes that "the time is suddenly too short. In the homiletical field, the New Hermeneutics and logical analysis submit challenges which require intense concentration."[9] This vision did not cause Caemmerer to

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[5] Hogan and Reid, *Connecting*, 129–131.

[6] Hogan and Reid, *Connecting*, 124–126.

[7] Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958) and Fred Craddock's *As One without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching* (Oklahoma: Phillips University Press, 1971) are commonly cited as the works that enabled a revolution in preaching. On the citation of Davis, see, for example, Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 69–72 and Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 117.

[8] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 301.

[9] Caemmerer, "Stance and Distance," 6.

abandon the rational outline of traditional preaching—indeed, he still taught that and offered it as an example in his work—but it did cause him to recognize a broadening of the field of preaching, to see the possibilities that were being considered, and to prepare his students to remain faithful even as they walked into and explored that broader terrain.

Theoretically, we can place Caemmerer in this larger trajectory of homiletical theory. He taught at a moment of movement, a time when the sermon transformed from a propositional lecture to a kerygmatic event. Caemmerer himself, however, did not have the advantage of this history. He did not know of these larger trends that were just beginning to take shape, and he was not intentionally seeking to create them. Instead, Caemmerer was responding to the past. If we narrow our focus and look more closely at Caemmerer's work, we will see that he was responding to the problems of propositional preaching by drawing upon his studies in the theology of God's word.

Caemmerer wrote two preaching texts: *Preaching to the Church*,[10] in 1952, and *Preaching for the Church*,[11] in 1959. During these seven years, goal, malady, means took shape. It appears in his first text under the rubric, "the problem, the goal, and the Gospel means."[12] Only in the later text does Caemmerer explicitly call it "goal, malady, means."[13] Part of the impetus for this development was a danger Caemmerer noticed within propositional preaching. It was dull, deadly dull. As he writes in his first preaching text, "many outlines of sermons seem uninteresting and drab."[14] Later, in his second text, he warns the preacher that "the materials from the text must be used not simply to inform people but to persuade them."[15] For Caemmerer, the preacher who has studied the text and arrived at a good sense of its meaning "runs the danger of converting his materials into a Biblical lecture. His calling is to persuade people, to change them in the direction which God has in view for them."[16] This emphasis upon persuasion arises not from rhetorical theory but from biblical theology. It is centered for Caemmerer not in the idea that the sermon should be a persuasive address, with the preacher standing like an orator before the

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[10] Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching to the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Company, 1952).

[11] Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

[12] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1952), 16.

[13] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 87–90.

[14] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1952), 35.

[15] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 87.

[16] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 87.

people using the available means of persuasion to turn them toward his ends, but in the idea that the sermon is the living word of God, proclaimed among people, and by its very nature that word is persuasive, being used by the Spirit to change the hearts of the people. The preacher, then, is a servant of that word, standing before people, speaking the life-giving breath of God. This proclamation is more than a lecture, more than a teaching; it is an event that gives life to God's people.

Caemmerer's homiletical texts are bracketed by writings in which he studied this theology of the word of God. In fact, in his foreword to *Preaching for the Church,* Caemmerer tells the readers that his work is built upon these reflections:

> this book attempts to relate the many facets of Christian preaching, its preparation and delivery, to a covering theological principle, namely that *preaching is God's Word in Christ to people.* This principle is in the forefront of contemporary Christian thought because of fresh interest in Biblical studies, concern for the theology of the church, and new insight into the meaning of the Word of God.[17]

It is this insight into the meaning of the word of God that I would like to highlight. In May 1947, before Caemmerer published his homelitics texts, he wrote an article entitled "The Melanchthonian Blight." In this article, he argued that the vitality of the proclamation of the gospel had been lost by an intellectualizing of the faith.[18] In 1951, Caemmerer offered "A Concordance Study of the Concept 'Word of God,'" in which he called for a rediscovery of the idea that the word of God always entails both a communication from God and an activity of God, being both word and deed at the same time, an active communication, a forceful revelation.[19] In 1963, after Caemmerer had published his homiletics texts, he contributed an essay on "The Ministry of the Word" to *Theology in the Life of the Church.* Here, he notes that "the Word of God is simultaneously the speech or

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[17] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), xi (emphasis original). Caemmerer makes a similar assertion at the end of this preaching text as he offers notes on sources for further reading: "the current revival in the theology of preaching is due to Biblical studies in general and the investigation of the meaning of the Word of God and the church in particular," 297.

[18] Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Melanchthonian Blight," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 18.5 (1947): 321–338. For an examination of Caemmerer's development of this biblical theology, see Robert R. Schultz, "Pastoral Theology," in *The Lively Function of the Gospel,* 9–22, esp. 13–16.

[19] Richard R. Caemmerer, "A Concordance Study of the Concept 'Word of God,'" *Concordia Theological Monthly* 21.3 (1951): 171–172.

communication of God, and the acts of God."[20] Regardless of what else was being said about the word of God during these years, Caemmerer remained consistent in this teaching: the word of God is both a word and an act. It is this theological understanding that both grounds his work in preaching and accounts for his contribution of goal, malady, means.

Caemmerer sought to bridge the divide between speech and act, between words about God and the working of God, through the rubric of goal, malady, means. Listen to how he introduces this rubric in his textbook:

> In answer to these handicaps of aimlessness and staleness of preaching, let us confront the great aim and purpose of Christian preaching. It is not, strictly speaking, to inform but to empower toward goals and ends. Preaching imparts information and teaching, certainly. But its fact and teaching is a means toward further ends.[21]

These ends, as he notes, are the ends that "God Himself has in mind for [the people]."[22] It is this joining of teaching and kerygma, proposition and power, that Caemmerer sought to accomplish by teaching students goal, malady, means. Caemmerer did not want to lose hold of the propositional content of the sermon, the communication of truths about God and his work in the world. Neither, however, did he want to dissociate such teachings from the power of God for salvation, the fact that the word of God is not just words about God, a teaching for God's people, but the word of God, God's word, alive, active, condemning and redeeming people, forgiving and forming them through the public proclamation of the sermon. Caemmerer sought to ground the intellectual nature of the traditional form of preaching in the activity of the gospel so that the gospel worked with (rather than against) doctrinal preaching. For Caemmerer, goal, malady, means created a dynamic interaction of God's word with God's people so that doctrine comes to life as God brings life, eternal life, in Jesus Christ and forms his people through repentance and forgiveness for faith and life in his kingdom.

Perhaps an example of how this worked might help. At the end of his homiletics text, Caemmerer provides a sample sermon study that takes his students from the reading of a text to the completion of the sermon. The text is First Timothy 1:12–17, personal words of encouragement from the apostle Paul to his servant Timothy, who was caring for the church in

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[20] Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Ministry of the Word," in *Theology in the Life of the Church*, ed. Robert W. Bertram (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 217–218.

[21] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 16.

[22] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 16.

Ephesus. The congregational situation was one in which the church was going through a pastoral vacancy and had asked Caemmerer to preach, and the time of year was September, a time when he notes that the yearly activities of the congregation were beginning to start up again. Caemmerer sought to offer an encouraging word to this congregation in the midst of a pastoral vacancy, calling on them to rely upon the very same strength that Paul calls on Timothy to rely upon in his service in Ephesus. The theme of the sermon was "God's Mercy Is Our Only Help for Our Task."[23] Caemmerer, working with the traditional form of preaching, used a synthetic outline to divide this theme into parts.[24] Using the logic of definition, Caemmerer clarified three tasks given by God to the church:

I. Keeping the Faith
II. Worshipping God
III. Serving One Another[25]

The sermon thus reveals to the hearers how God's mercy is their only help for keeping the faith, worshipping God, and serving one another.

God's word, however, is more than a teaching. It is an event in the lives of the hearers. While the logical teaching is revealed in the outline, the power of the teaching lies in the proper distinction between law and gospel that occurs in each section of development. For Caemmerer, goal, malady, means is the method whereby one develops this teaching for proclamation. In each of the major parts, Caemmerer uses a law/gospel dialectic in his proclamation, sometimes several times within one part. For each part, Caemmerer proclaims the law to reveal the malady that prevents people from faithfully participating in these tasks. Then, for each part, he proclaims the gospel, forgiving such sin, and freeing and forming God's people for service. Here, one sees how Caemmerer integrates goal, malady, means into the doctrinal teaching of the sermon. The outline of the sermon forms the doctrinal teaching, relying upon logic to communicate the central thought. The body of the sermon proclaims law and gospel, using goal, malady, means as a way of proclaiming the power of God's word to bring life to God's people. The law is not proclaimed only in one portion of the sermon, preparing the hearers for another section of gospel proclamation later on. Instead, law and gospel work together, with one another, throughout the sermon to bring life to this doctrinal teaching so that one has God's teaching joined to, indeed anchored in, God's Christocentric action for the hearers. In fact, as Caemmerer is debating

[23] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 322.
[24] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 95.
[25] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 317–320.

various outlines for this sermon in his text, he notes that he chooses one that provides for "more ample Gospel affirmation."[26] The gospel is not heard only once in the sermon, near the end, after the preacher has offered a long sustained section of law proclamation. Instead, the preacher proclaims law and gospel repeatedly throughout the sermon, even as he communicates this teaching of the faith.

This careful integration allowed Caemmerer to do two things: to preserve the heart and foster the art of Lutheran preaching. Because the preacher was cognizant of the goal, malady, and means for every sermon, the preacher would always be near the heart of preaching. In 1952, Caemmerer served as a reader of William Backus's master's thesis, *An Analysis of Missouri Synod Sermons Based on the Content of the New Testament Kerygma.* In this thesis, Backus examined two hundred Lutheran sermons, chosen by a random sampling method, and discovered that the majority of those sermons were unclear in the proclamation of the gospel and many of them had no gospel at all. Caemmerer later noted: "There are men, good Christian men, Christian preachers, who celebrate the sacraments, confirm well-indoctrinated confirmation classes, preach nice 25-, 30-, sometimes 35-minute sermons, but they do not speak the Gospel."[27] In light of this analysis of the way in which teaching had obscured the gospel in preaching, Caemmerer offered goal, malady, means as a necessary step in the sermon writing process. It anchored the preacher in the proclamation of law and gospel for the forgiveness of sins, which is at the heart of every sermon.

Yet, even as Caemmerer preserved the heart of preaching, he also sought to foster the art of preaching. One can see this concern for the art of preaching in Caemmerer's placement of the step of goal, malady, means in the sermon preparation process. In his model of sermon preparation, Caemmerer followed the five canons of classical rhetoric. He moved from invention to arrangement to style to memory and then to delivery. The only difference, however, is that Caemmerer inserts the step of goal, malady, means into this process. He placed goal, malady, means as a separate step between the rhetorical canons of invention and arrangement. After the preacher has studied the text and the preaching context and arrived at a clear statement of the central thought, Caemmerer asks the preacher to consider goal, malady, means. It is done before the preacher considers how he will outline the sermon, structuring its sequence of ideas

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[26] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 315.

[27] Quoted in Paul W.F. Harms, "The Gospel as Preaching," in *The Lively Function of the Gospel*, 40.

and experiences for the sake of the hearers. The placement of this step is intentional. It preserves the freedom of the preacher to engage in the art of biblical interpretation, and it preserves the freedom of the preacher to engage in the art of arrangement, choosing a form for faithful proclamation. Yet, even as it preserves these freedoms, it also focuses the preacher on the sermon as more than a lecture, as an event of proclamation.

You can overhear Caemmerer's concern to balance the heart and the art of preaching in his discussion of arrangement. As he instructs the students to form an outline for the sermon, he poses the question of the role of goal, malady, means in the outlining process:

> Isn't it true that the accent on persuasion, developed in the preceding chapter, will suggest the major division for every text: I. Goal, II. Malady, III. Means? No; check (a) in the preceding paragraph makes that division possible only where the text discusses all three. Even then it may not be preferable, for that division tends to slot all of the affirmation of the Gospel into one section. When the preacher can confront the hearers with Law and Gospel repeatedly in the same sermon without muddling his plan, then he is on the track of a good outline.[28]

So, for example, in his sample sermon, Caemmerer repeatedly proclaims law and gospel as he forms his hearers in three aspects of congregational life. In this emphasis upon the frequent interplay of law and gospel in the sermon, Caemmerer echoes Walther and his discussion of law/gospel dynamics in preaching.

Consider Walther's third evening lecture in *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*. Here, he offers his students a practical example of how law and gospel are proclaimed in the sermon. Walther writes:

> Every sermon must contain both doctrines. When either is missing, the other is wrong. For any sermon is wrong that does not present all that is necessary to a person's salvation. You must not think that you have rightly divided the Word of Truth if you preach the Law in one part of your sermon and the Gospel in the other. No; a topographical division of this kind is worthless. Both doctrines may be contained in one sentence.[29]

Walther's reference to law and gospel being contained in one sentence is instructive. Rather than have a sermon divided into one section law and then another section gospel, Walther envisions a frequent interplay

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[28] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 96.

[29] C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, trans. W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), 25.

between the two in sermonic development. The sermon proclaims the teachings of the faith and, in that proclamation, uses the frequent interplay between law and gospel to drive the teachings home to the hearers. It is this frequent interplay between law and gospel that Walther focused on in preaching, closing his work with the admonition: "Do not hold forth with the Law too long; let the Gospel follow promptly. When the Law has made the iron to glow, apply the Gospel immediately to shape it into a proper form; if the iron is allowed to cool, nothing can be done with it."[30] In fact, it is this quality of Luther's preaching in which Walther delights. Walther does not praise Luther's sermons because he preached one part law and then another part gospel; no, Walther praises Luther's sermons for the way in which Luther used the frequent interplay between law and gospel as he developed a text or proclaimed a teaching:

> Luther's sermons are full of thunder and lightning, but these are speedily followed by the soft blowing of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel. . . . At all times, Luther preaches the Law and the Gospel alongside of each other in such a manner that the Law is given an illumination by the Gospel which makes the former more terrible, while the sweetness and the rich comfort of the Gospel is greatly increased by the Law.[31]

For Caemmerer, as for Walther, the frequent interplay of law and gospel, seen in the sermons of Luther, was what was desired in preaching.[32] For this reason, Caemmerer separated goal, malady, means from the canon of arrangement and bemoaned those students who distorted goal, malady, means into sermon outlines. Caemmerer sought to preserve the freedom of arrangement so that preachers would not be constrained to make every sermon sound the same, moving from one part law to one part gospel every Sunday. Instead, every sermon would be different, arising from the student's exegesis and artful arrangement of a theme. However, every sermon would also rely upon the power of God's word, properly divided to bring and form new life in the hearers.

In summary, goal, malady, means expressed the theology of Caemmerer's homiletics. It arose from two areas: first, from his concerns about propositional preaching, particularly the loss of the gospel and the reduction of preaching to merely teaching God's word; and, second, from his study of the theology of God's word, particularly his renewed

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[30] Walther, *Law and Gospel*, 412.

[31] Walther, *Law and Gospel*, 54.

[32] Interestingly, as Caemmerer cites sources for his understanding of the theology of the Word of God in *Preaching for the Church*, he points primarily to Walther and Luther. Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 297.

appreciation of the performative force of God's word. Caemmerer offered this homiletical theology to the church at a time of great change. As Caemmerer looked around him, he saw changes in the field of homiletics. At the end of his textbook, he wrote of a "current revival in the theology of preaching . . . due to Biblical studies in general and the investigation of the meaning of the Word of God and the church in particular."[33] As Caemmerer saw the nature of preaching changing, he did not so much change with it as he clarified what was essential for preachers. His vision broadened in terms of what preaching could be, but his foundation deepened in terms of what preaching must be. Goal, malady, means focused the attention of preachers on what was essential for preaching: the proclamation of law and gospel for the forgiveness of sins. The way in which Caemmerer used goal, malady, means, however, sought to preserve the freedom of preachers to develop the art of preaching, to enter into the future changes in preaching certain of what lies at the heart of preaching even as they delighted in the art.

II. Goal, Malady, Means as Law/Gospel Substitute in Contemporary Preaching

Ironically, in contemporary preaching, goal, malady, means has become the opposite of what Caemmerer intended it to be. Instead of freeing preachers, it has constrained them. Instead of encouraging development in the art of preaching, it has discouraged it. Instead of grounding preachers in the one thing essential so that they can faithfully explore the broader homiletical horizons without leaving home, it has limited homiletical vision to only one thing, law and gospel, so that some preachers oversimplify the integration of law/gospel into the art of preaching and others neglect it altogether, leaving goal, malady, means behind, as they venture out into homiletical territory far from home.[34] In essence, goal, malady, means has become a law/gospel substitute, revered by some, dismissed by others, and yet in both cases only a poor shadow of the challenging and difficult art of integrating law/gospel dynamics into weekly preaching that Caemmerer desired it to be.

I would like to use Caemmerer's placement of the step of goal, malady, means in the sermon writing process as an example to illustrate the misinterpretation of his work. As you will remember, Caemmerer offered

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[33] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1959), 297.

[34] For a discussion of this law/gospel obsession and negligence by contemporary preachers, see David R. Schmitt, "Law and Gospel in Sermon and Service," in *Liturgical Preaching*, ed. Paul J. Grime and Dean W. Nadasdy (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 25-49.

goal, malady, means as a step separate from the rhetorical canon of invention on the one side and the rhetorical canon of arrangement on the other. The oversimplification of Cammerer's homiletical theology has led to using goal, malady, means as a substitute for the difficult work of invention and arrangement in sermon preparation.

In terms of invention, goal, malady, means has been used to put constraints upon textual interpretation. In his first homiletics text, as Caemmerer was working out his vision of goal, malady, means, he placed it within the process of textual interpretation. In fact, one could argue that it began to constrain the art of biblical interpretation, tempting the student no longer to listen to the word of God but to evaluate it on the basis of how well it supplied the preacher with these three components for the sermon. Caemmerer himself goes so far as to note that "the perfect text will include all three of these factors."[35] In his second homiletics text, however, Caemmerer separated goal, malady, means from textual interpretation. The preacher was to work through the text, practicing the art of biblical interpretation, and then consider the integration of goal, malady, means into the sermon as he proclaimed this text to the people. This encouraged preachers to develop the art of biblical interpretation rather than simply and simplistically looking at a text to find law and gospel content so that they could write a sermon. Goal, malady, means is law/gospel substitute when it becomes the preacher's pragmatic approach to a text. Rather than consider the text's content (its theology and meaning), rather than consider the text's rhetoric (its form and its function), rather than consider the text's contexts (historical and canonical), the preacher takes any text—oracle or narrative, proverb or parable, prayer or paraenesis—and reduces its study to simply finding a goal, a malady, and a means. Such pragmatic textual analysis has actually produced sermons that simply lift one word from a text (e.g., blameless, or righteous, or holy) and create a sermon by placing that word in this law/gospel machine. Richard Lischer has helpfully labeled such pragmatism as a confusion of law and gospel. He calls it the "mechanical application of Law and Gospel," where preachers "lay the same stencil over every text, asking where is the law and gospel? rather than What is God saying to his people?"[36]

Not only does goal, malady, means constrain the art of textual interpretation, becoming a poor substitute for the much more difficult work of exegesis and integrating one's recognition of the law/gospel

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[35] Caemmerer, *Preaching* (1952), 16.

[36] Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1992), 43.

dynamic into one's interpretation of a text, it also can constrain the art of arrangement. In this case, goal, malady, means becomes the outline of every sermon. David Smith tells the story of an encounter he once had in a doctoral seminar on preaching. The students were conversing about preaching in various denominations. One Roman Catholic nun noted how in Lutheran preaching "the first part of the sermon makes you feel real bad and the second part of the sermon makes you feel real good."[37] Goal, malady, means, for her as a hearer, had become the outline of the sermon. No matter what the text or the occasion, the preacher would begin by talking about sin, then move to proclaiming forgiveness, and then, if he was daring, end by glancing at an exhortation toward holy living. In the American culture, this kind of preaching can easily be misunderstood. Our world is saturated with advertising, in which everything from deodorant to medication for incontinence relies upon the psychological marketing ploy of making you feel bad so that you want the product that makes you feel good. In such a culture, Jesus could easily become the church's product and the sermon his advertising pitch, manipulating hearers into wanting some of that forgiveness to make life in this world more livable. Now do not misunderstand me: the movement from law to gospel can be a very powerful and effective sermonic form. Homileticians have articulated it in various ways, such as Eugene Lowry in *The Homiletical Plot*[38] and, most recently, Paul Scott Wilson in *The Four Pages of the Sermon*.[39] It can be a powerful and effective form. What I am concerned about is Caemmerer's fear that it becomes the only sermon form, one not intentionally chosen by the preacher as part of the art of arrangement but one used by the preacher without discernment because he believes that is the only way to preach.

To put it simply, when goal, malady, means becomes a law/gospel substitute rather than opening the text and the teaching of the sermon for the hearers, it becomes the text and the teaching for them. Regardless of what the text is, Sunday after Sunday the hearers hear the same sermon: they are sinners and Jesus died for them. Regardless of what teachings are present in the text or accented by the liturgical context of that Sunday, the hearers hear the same teaching: the doctrine of justification. Every text becomes an example of how we sin and God forgives us, and every sermon becomes a teaching of justification. Rather than have evangelical

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[37] David Smith encountered this caricature of Lutheran preaching while pursuing doctoral work at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in 1996.

[38] Eugene Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980).

[39] Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999).

proclamation integrated into the larger discourses of a sermon, its textual exposition, theological confession, and hearer interpretation, it becomes the only discourse of the sermon, revealing our sin and proclaiming our salvation as one teaches the doctrine of justification.

What frightens me about this development is the context in which it is occurring. Changes in our culture as we enter into post-Christian America, changes in our ecclesial practices as some congregations move toward new-member classes lasting as short as a weekend, and changes in our personal lives as some members no longer attend Bible Class or read their Bible during the week, leave us with hearers who are growing more and more biblically illiterate. They are losing a sense of the overarching meta-narrative of the Scriptures, the story of God creating, redeeming, and ultimately coming to restore the world. The Scriptures are encountered in bits and pieces, a sermon from a passage from Hosea one Sunday and then from Paul's epistle to the Romans the next. Each time these passages from the Scriptures are encountered, the hearers hear only one part of the story: sin and forgiveness. They see sin and grace at work in the text and, by analogy, hear about sin and grace at work in their lives, yet all the while miss the larger story unfolding in the Scriptures, the eternal fellowship of the triune God and this God's mission in creating, redeeming, and recreating the world to live in fellowship with God. The Scriptures become a collection of stories of various people who have sinned and been forgiven rather than a coherent revelation of the story of God. We see and identify with individual stories but miss out on the larger story of God. God suddenly becomes a supporting actor in our stories, helping us with forgiveness, rather than one who brings us into his story, taking us as individuals and forming us into a people, his people who have a purpose and live by his proclamation in his world. Suddenly, preachers are taking God and making him relevant, fitting him into our small human stories, having him meet our fragile needs, rather than proclaiming how God makes us relevant, taking us into his kingdom and giving our lives purpose in his world that lies beyond our fallen imagination and is yet to be revealed.

Not only do we preach to a people who live under the threat of growing biblical illiteracy, but we preach also to a people who seek to remain faithful in a culture of religious pluralism. Our culture tends to separate religion and spirituality.[40] Religion is the formal organization of dogmatic statements about faith and rules for its practice. Spirituality is the

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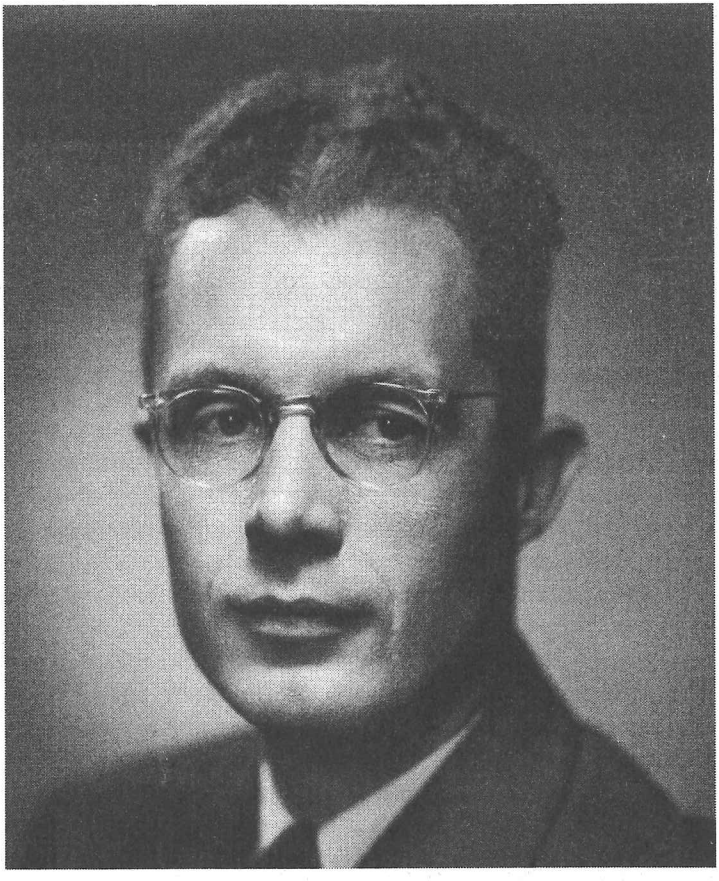
[40] Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 7.

personal appropriation from these systems of whatever the individual deems helpful for his or her personal spiritual formation. Such a culture produces practitioners of a private spirituality who often come to the church as they would to a religious supply store, looking for items they might use, as one person told me, in a "journey to resurrectedness." Such practical spirituality reduces Christianity to one among many systems of thought, one among many frameworks for the practice of belief. Hearers begin to pick and choose among beliefs in these various religious systems and try out different practices to see what happens to their faith. In such an environment, people can begin to think of themselves as Christian because they believe that they are sinners and Jesus died for them, and yet dislocate that event of personal salvation from the larger story of God as depicted in the Scriptures and from the larger body of teachings confessed in the rule of faith. Although they hold on to the teaching of justification, they also embrace other teachings from other religious traditions, incorporating Native American spirituality and Eastern meditative traditions into their personal practice of the Christian faith. To such a people, we would not want to dissociate the teaching of justification from the whole counsel of God or reduce the Scriptures to simply a collection of stories of various people who sin and are forgiven. Rather, we would want to preach and teach in such a way as to lead them from that moment of justification into the larger story of God and into the fuller Christian witness of God's ways in and for his world.

For this reason, I would argue, there is still some wisdom for us in Caemmerer's homiletical theology. While the art of biblical interpretation has changed since Caemmerer first wrote *Preaching for the Church*, and the art of arrangement has flourished as homiletics underwent radical changes in the art of preaching, Caemmerer's goal, malady, means can still offer guidance for the preacher. When not reduced to an overly simplistic way of reading a text for preaching, and when not reified into the only way of outlining a sermon, Caemmerer's work can still form the heart and foster the art of Lutheran preaching. Through goal, malady, means, Caemmerer sought to form preachers who engaged in a careful study of the Scriptures and a creative exploration of sermon arrangement so that the texts of the Scriptures would be preached and the whole counsel of God would be proclaimed, and yet this would not occur without the centrality of God's gracious work in the dynamics of the sermon.[41] By anchoring the sermon

[41] This combination of doctrine and evangelical proclamation is not new to Caemmerer but articulated by Walther in Thesis 2 of his *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, 30.

in God's gracious work in Christ, Caemmerer sought to open the sermon to various texts and teachings, so that Sunday after Sunday, hearers would be brought through that one work of God into the whole counsel of God, awakening them to their place and their purpose in God's mission. In this way, teachings such as the omnipotence of God, the efficacy of prayer, the resurrection of the dead, the creation of the world, the institution of marriage, and the cross-bearing of discipleship are not set aside for the sake of goal, malady, means but are brought to life through goal, malady, means, and God's word on Sunday morning remains both a teaching and an event, giving and shaping life in his kingdom in this world.



Richard R. Caemmerer

Courtesy of Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO

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Berthold von Schenk: Out of Step or Before His Times?

Paul Robert Sauer

In the movie *Valkyrie*, actor Tom Cruise plays Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, a leader of the German resistance. His full name is Claus Philipp Maria Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. He was a cousin of Berthold von Schenk, or according to his full name, Berthold Friedrich Ernst Freiherr Schenk zu Schwinsberg. Both Berthold and Claus are descended from the same landed German nobility.

Mention of this common ancestry is how Berthold, or "Sammy," as he was known to friends and colleagues, begins his autobiography, not out of a sense of arrogance, although von Schenk was never accused of being humble, but out of a sense of who he was: a noble man with a noble cause, who knew what was right and acted decisively on it, even in the face of opposition in whatever form it took. It is a testament to his charisma, his nobility; nearly everyone who came into contact with him has a von Schenk story to tell. For example, Alberta, a young schoolgirl, who was singled out by name for not paying attention during a feast day Eucharist service at the school, to this day can remember the message of the remainder of the sermon.

Another example is when a young Presbyterian named Frank Hordich went into von Schenk's office during Christmas of 1942 to ask when he could marry a young parishioner of his named Elsa. Von Schenk pulled out his calendar and told him, "January 30 is open. Tell Elsa you will be married then, and that it will be a Eucharist service." They were married on that day, and Frank and Elsa remained faithful members not only of Our Saviour but of the congregation's leadership until their respective passings in recent years.

A third example concerns Sal, the barber who set up shop across the street, who remembers von Schenk's outrage when the community association shut down the kiosk of a blind man named Michael who worked across the street from the school. Von Schenk took it upon himself to set up a new kiosk which was connected to the school's heat and electricity. When the community board tried to shut down the kiosk for violating city zoning laws by being too close to the school, von Schenk's

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response was to tell the local board to let him know when they were coming so that he could be there with as many reporters as possible to raise a big stink about the city's eviction of a blind man. Every year until Michael died, the church would get a threatening letter from the city. Every year von Schenk called their bluff. Even more amazing, Michael was robbed only once in all his years of working the kiosk near Our Saviour. People knew better than to mess with Berthold von Schenk.

I. Some Parish Experiences

Von Schenk took equally bold positions within the local church. When the fellow Lutheran parishes of the Bronx balked at starting a parochial school during World War II, von Schenk raised the money himself by issuing bonds to parishioners and neighbors. When building materials were in short supply and the church was having difficulty getting permits to build during the war, he miraculously had a chance encounter with the brother-in-law of FDR, who saw to it that Our Saviour received the permits they needed and even pitched in some left-over building materials from the newly constructed VA hospital. The school was the only non-war-related building constructed in New York during World War II. Mayor LaGuardia was so impressed by the school and von Schenk that LaGuardia later appointed von Schenk to serve on the New York City School Board—an unthinkable proposition today. Even more unthinkable, this pastor of a parochial school was made chairman of the board after a year. He served a total of seventeen years on the board.

Parochial school was a key component to von Schenk's sacramental parish renewal. The school he founded at Our Saviour was based on the parish liturgical life with the Eucharist regularly celebrated within the school. The first class of the school, which met in the church basement, quickly outgrew it. Robert Christian wrote that so great was the priority of the school that in December of 1950, in order to make way for school classrooms, Our Saviour—the high church—moved down to the basement of the school building, since by law classrooms could no longer be below ground.[1] To this day the church remains "underground."

Von Schenk was notorious for being difficult to work with. In the parish, a typical von Schenk church council meeting would involve him sitting quietly throughout the whole meeting until it waned on into the late hours of the evening. As the weary council members would prepare to bring their meeting to a close and go home to loved ones, von Schenk

[1] All quotations from Robert Christian come from e-mails to the author dated 1/9/09 and 1/17/09.

would throw down a bill on the table: "The water heater at the parsonage broke last week. The church has spent $200 to replace it. You need to find that $200." Too tired to argue, and too possessed of respect for von Schenk, the council would assent to his request.

Von Schenk took an equally forceful and prescient position on racial integration. A church council member of Our Saviour recalls von Schenk talking very early on about how important it was that the school offer scholarships to people of color, and very early on Our Saviour did. The Piepkorn papers reveal that he had done the same thing in providing scholarships for black students to attend a sports camp on campus while he was at the seminary. It should not be all that surprising that theologians who possessed a deep understanding about full eucharistic participation in the body of Christ would press for full inclusion of all races in the church—a full functioning of the body of Christ.

Von Schenk's prescient understanding bore much fruit. Our Saviour racially integrated at a very early date and, even in the midst of the racial tensions of the 1970s, never experienced the kind of crisis that the surrounding community did as The Bronx burned. Black students who enrolled at Our Saviour would later go on to positions of prominence, including Cassandra Hayes, who would be the first black woman to be named Ms. Teen New York in 1980. Today, the parish serves over twenty different nationalities, and the school serves a population that is ninety-nine percent non-white.

Robert Christian, who came to Our Saviour in 1950 as a young teacher fresh out of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest (now Concordia University Chicago), recalls that when he asked the placement director if there was anything special he needed to know about going to Our Saviour, he was told, "We've been sending teachers there and no one can get along with the pastor." After seventeen years at Our Saviour, Robert Christian would go on to Hong Kong International School (HKIS) with the skills that he had learned from von Schenk and turn it into one of the most successful of the Missouri Synod's international school ministries. He was soon followed as headmaster at HKIS by Our Saviour teachers Dave Rittmann and later Jim Handrich.

Von Schenk held called teachers in the highest regard. Robert Christian relates: "The first week in town Dr. von Schenk took me to a pastor's retreat with the sharing of the Eucharist. He also told me that my installation, with the laying on of hands, was 'ordination' into the ministry of the church, a huge understanding for me of my ministry." At least early on, called teachers were recognized as deacons of the church.

> In fact, some of us wore clerical collars while serving. I had my own cassock and surplice, and one year, possibly several, some of us wore cassock and surplice and a deacon's stole as we participated in the processional at the huge outdoor Reformation service at Concordia College, Bronxville. I recall, too, that this raised a few eyebrows among some of the pastoral clergy, but to a great degree many people expected different things to happen at Our Saviour.

Later, as the number of called teachers increased, "Teacher" became the preferred title with pastor or reverend reserved for the pastoral clergy. The practice, however, of called teachers serving as assisting ministers, and reading the Gospel (the deacon's role in the church service), remains to this day at Our Saviour.

Von Schenk's self-confidence allowed him to surround himself with excellent men. His first headmaster of the school at Our Saviour was a towering athletic man named Otto Prokopy, who was part of a prominent Missouri Synod family in the Atlantic District. Prokopy, like Robert Christian, had a multiplicity of tasks, including playing the organ. Robert Christian remembers:

> I still have my original call document, approved by OS January 18, 1949. In addition to being a teacher in the school, I would be asked to: Teach music in the school and church, do choir work, etc. I soon found out that the "etc" which bore the imprint of Berthold von Schenk turned out to include doing the youth work in the parish, directing the girls' choir, playing the organ, heading up the Sunday School, coaching church sports teams, etc. I also regularly served as a deacon in the worship services.

Prokopy had come to Our Saviour from St. Stephen's Lutheran School, where in 1909 he taught a young O.P. Kretzman and his brother.

Prior to his own arrival at Our Saviour, in 1936, von Schenk had tried to issue a call to Arthur Carl Piepkorn to serve as an associate at the church he was serving in Hoboken, New Jersey. Piepkorn would provide pastoral coverage while von Schenk was in Europe, and the hope was that they would be able to figure out the finances to keep both of them when von Schenk returned. Instead, Piepkorn ended up working with Walter A. Maier at the Lutheran Layman's League. But Piepkorn's letter to his fiancée Miriam provided some insight into the type of ministry von Schenk was engaged in, even in his early days:

> The church is very high and (*entre nous*) almost crazy, but the sacramental life, seems to be genuine, and it's a center for quite a bit of mission work, including a very active Italian mission. There are some thirty or forty

nationalities represented in the Sunday school, including the Scandinavian and Chinese.[2]

One who did accept the call to serve with von Schenk was Glenn Stone, a graduate of Augustana Seminary, who taught religion on the faculty of Our Saviour along with von Schenk. Stone would serve as the longtime editor of *Una Sancta* magazine before becoming the editor of *Lutheran Forum* and then of the predecessor to the ELCA's version of the *Lutheran Witness, The Lutheran.* Countless other pastors who served in various capacities at Our Saviour over the years were all trained, as with the teachers, and then were sent out to serve as leaders in churches and schools around the world. That alone is a powerful testament to the legacy of Berthold von Schenk.

II. Von Schenk's Catholicity in Worship

I will leave behind the historical remembrances in the hope that they have given at least a little insight into who von Schenk was, so that you can understand why his theology often took the form that it did. He was a man who was out of step for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod of his time because he was a man from a different time—a time when there was an interest in the catholicity of the church. The issues that concerned him most are the issues that still affect Lutheranism today. His voice is a welcome mediating position within the often polarizing political world of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod today.

In a 1958 article in *Una Sancta,* von Schenk outlined the problem that his participation in liturgical renewal was hoped to address. It could have been written today:

> The liturgical revival in American Lutheranism had its beginning because of a great need. There was, and still is, the tragic state of the worship life of the Church and the neglect over many years of the sacramental life, which has produced a spiritual vacuum. There is a sad disorder in devotional life. Added to this is the confusion over the answer to such questions as, What is the Church? And What is the office of the holy ministry? The fact is that Lutheranism, to a large extent, neglected its religious apparatus.[3]

It was for this reason that von Schenk founded the Society of St. James and began publishing the journal *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana,* to provide an avenue for information on liturgical renewal, resources for carrying out the

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[2] "Oct. 5, 1936 Piepkorn Letter to Miriam" in the Piepkorn Papers, *ELCA* Archives.

[3] Berthold von Schenk, "The Liturgical Revival in the Lutheran Church of America," *Una Sancta* (Advent 1958), 10.

renewal, and a yearly liturgical conference to bring together folks with similar interests and goals.

Von Schenk's interest in liturgical renewal began innocently enough:

> The primary reason that I introduced ceremonies, liturgical vestments, and so forth, was not because I thought they were intrinsically important – their introduction had the purpose of bringing color and beauty into the lives of people who lived in the ugly environment of the slums. Why should the Church not be concerned about beauty? Most of my members belonged to the disinherited class; there was no beauty in their environment. By nature I am not a ceremonialist and ritualist, yet there must be form. It was natural that I should give thought to the form of the liturgy. I had to give my people beauty of form and worship, but sadly, this was misjudged by others.[4]

Von Schenk's concern for beauty required a commitment to excellence in matters of worship. His wife Cornelia (Nelly) was noted for having a beautiful operatic voice, which she frequently employed in the liturgical service of the church. On Christmas Eve, von Schenk would routinely invite Shakespearean actor Maurice Barret to perform a reading of the Christmas Gospel. In an article titled "Blueprint for a Catholic Parish" he wrote:

> Church leaders have often faced the problem of making worship attractive to people. This was the problem of the author of Hebrews. . . . It was the task of the author of Hebrews to encourage church attendance. . . . There were signs of spiritual decay and a lack of heroic courage to confess the faith. It was high time that they should realize the importance of the church service and their altar. Therefore the author told them that their congregation had a part in the heavenly worship.[5]

The solution to church growth, for von Schenk, involved educating Christians about their worship:

> It is not only important to get people to come to church, but they must know why they should come to the church services. The answer, "To hear the word of God," will certainly not be adequate enough to ring true. If they do not know what the service really means, their attendance has little validity.[6]

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[4] Berthold von Schenk, *Lively Stone: The Autobiography of Berthold von Schenk* (New York: ALPB Books, 2006), 47.

[5] Berthold von Schenk, "Blueprint for a Catholic Parish," *Una Sancta* (Visitation 1958), 5.

[6] Von Schenk, "Blueprint," 10.

Misunderstanding would follow von Schenk's participation in liturgical renewal throughout his life. In describing the purpose of *Una Sancta* in 1955, he wrote:

> Much misunderstanding has arisen through the actions of some persons who identify themselves with the liturgical movement and then give the impression that this revival is centered upon externals. In fact, the liturgical revival is not primarily interested in forms and ceremonies as such, but rather about the theology of true worship. Truly liturgical men are as much opposed to the so-called "ecclesiastical dressmakers" who insist on performing rites and ceremonies ad infinitum without a realization of the theology behind such ceremonies, as they are to the rationalists who believe that Christian faith is solely an intellectual experience. To the "dressmakers" in the Church, the chancel becomes a kind of Mars Hill instead of a Holy of Holies, and worship and belief are two unrelated departments.[7]

Frustrated with the direction that the Society of St. James was headed, von Schenk resigned from it and later noted that "it had served a good purpose but managed to get a bad name. It was like a bad dog—the only cure is to shoot him."[8] Unfortunately, von Schenk would throughout his life have positions of the wider liturgical renewal movement unfairly attributed to him, which would serve to diminish recognition of his own theology and contribution to liturgical renewal.

For von Schenk, liturgical renewal was to be at its core sacramental. He was a leading proponent for reinstitution of the Rite of First Communion, weekly communion, and communion at the feast day services of the church. In his 1957 article for *Una Sancta,* he argued for the separation of First Communion from Confirmation by agreeing with Adolf Stoecker, who, in words that anyone who has tried to teach confirmation to junior high students can appreciate, wrote: "Confirmation is an extended suicide attempt of the Evangelical Churches."[9]

In the place of this failing approach, von Schenk began his catechetical instruction with Baptism, designing the Lively Stones Confirmation curriculum, and later a Lively Stones First Communion curriculum, to help the child understand who he already is through Baptism.

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[7] Berthold von Schenk, "*Una Sancta*—The Burden and the Obligation," *Una Sancta* (Lententide 1955), 5.

[8] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 50.

[9] Berthold von Schenk, "Confirmation and First Communion," *Una Sancta* (Pentecost 1957), 3.

> The insistence that a child must be instructed and confirmed before it can receive Holy Communion is a denial of the doctrine of free grace and therefore the material principle of Lutheranism, Justification by Faith. It has the odor of semi-pelagianism. Luther calls infant baptism God's most wonderful sermon on grace. Why then deny this grace to the child in Holy Communion. Only he is worthy who believes the words, "given and shed for the remission of sins," not he who has finished a course of instruction.
>
> How can man make himself worthy? How old must a child be to believe that God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son? How old must a child be to realize that Jesus is present in the bread and wine, and how old must a child be to believe that Christ died, shed His Blood, and gave his Body for the remission of sins? And also how old must a child be to know that it is wrong to lie, to steal, or to commit other sins?[10]

The age for von Schenk turned out to be age eight. It should be noted that the Rite of First Communion began with private confession and absolution at the altar rail before the service.

In 1959 von Schenk wrote an article in *Una Sancta* entitled "Christmas Echoes," in which he took LCMS president John Behnken to task for writing in an article on the Liturgical Controversy that "the liturgy is an adiaphoron."[11] Von Schenk responded:

> An adiaphoron is something one can do or not do—it makes little difference. Every catechumen in the Lutheran Church knows that the Liturgy is the work of the saints in obedience to the Lord's Command, "Do this in remembrance of me." Every Lutheran knows that in the Liturgy Christ is in reality present and that the Liturgy is the reliving of the life of Christ in the Church Year. He also knows that the source of Christian life, and the life of the congregation is in the Liturgy. He knows that the Lutheran Church in its Confessions "maintained the mass," even "with all its ceremonies." They also know that this is the Communion of Saints, the Church. How sad churchmen must be when in an official publication of the Church the Liturgy is called an "adiaphoron."[12]

The article would offer criticism of churches which hold Christmas Eve services without the Eucharist. Even then von Schenk called the Eucharist the solution for "re-Christianizing Christmas" in the face of growing secularization.

> Now the neglect of the Holy Mystery at Christmas time is not something which one can be indifferent. It indicates a serious problem, a lack of understanding of the Incarnation. "The Word was made flesh." . . . It is

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[10] Von Schenk, "Confirmation," 4.

[11] Berthold von Schenk, "Christmas Echoes," *Una Sancta* (Holy Week 1959), 7.

[12] Von Schenk, "Christmas Echoes," 7.

> true that the Incarnation happened once, but it is also true that the Incarnation continues. The presence of this great act of salvation is in God's Mysteries, the Word and Sacraments."[13]

For von Schenk, both the marriage rite and funerals were to be Divine Services of Holy Communion. To teach his congregation, he created a little publication called "Holy Communion on the Day of Marriage," which contained the Rite of Marriage and a brief introduction on how marriage is a model of Christ and the church. The introduction concludes:

> Husband and wife are united in Christ. That is most perfect when they both receive Holy Communion. If they continue to receive Christ in the Holy Communion faithfully and regularly their earthly fellowship and life will become impenetrated with heavenly love and life, such as exists between Christ and the Church.[14]

For funerals, the Eucharist was essential because it was where the grieving would go to meet their loved ones: Christians do not go to cemetery grave stones to meet their deceased loved ones. They meet them at the altar of the Lord.

Von Schenk had little patience for the objections of those who raised the pragmatic problems—what to do with the large presence of non-Lutherans, the practicality of communing large numbers of people on Christmas Eve, and the like. Theology took precedence over externals. Von Schenk used Acts 2:42 as a model for what the church does in worship: "teaching of the Apostles, breaking of bread, and fellowship," and the Confessions themselves which knew of no other service for the church than the Mass. Under von Schenk, and yet today, Our Saviour never has a service of the church without Eucharist, and it was and is the pastor's responsibility to lead this.

In his "Blueprint of the Catholic Parish," von Schenk wrote:

> Only if the pastor offers the full service of Word and Sacrament can he honestly insist that people come to the service and not forsake the assembling of themselves together. Church members who have this concept of the church do not have to be coerced into church attendance, nor will they get the idea that church attendance is a good deed which merits the reward of God. How incongruous it is, therefore, for a religious denomination to claim purity of doctrine and yet pass by the sacramental life.[15]

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[13] Von Schenk, "Echoes," 6.

[14] Berthold von Schenk, *Holy Communion on the Day of Marriage.*

[15] Von Schenk, "Blueprint," 9.

To this he adds the warning: "Of course, the pastor should have the security of knowing what he is talking about."[16]

III. Comments on The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

It was this frustration with the official church regarding the reintroduction of the sacramental life of the church that would lead von Schenk to offer some of his more colorful criticisms of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its leaders:

> It is amazing that a church body like the Missouri Synod which prides itself on purity of doctrine has bastardized its official service. . . . The church which neglects her liturgy of Word and Sacrament is just as bad as the Western Church during the godless, superstitious Gothic period. . . . It is almost impossible to try to understand the attitude of Missouri which claims to be so concerned about the pure Gospel and yet tenaciously holds to a Biblicism which neglects the clear teachings and instruction Christ gave to his Church. To substitute ritualism for the spirit of the liturgy is a deadly sin; this, along with moralism and creedalism, is more dangerous than the sale of indulgences.[17]

This helps to provide context for von Schenk's criticism of Luther's debate with Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy in his autobiography.[18] It was not as if in this one case von Schenk denied the importance of the real presence; he did after all write a book on the subject called *The Presence*.[19] It was because the result of Luther's position led to a rationalization of the Mysteries of God which stripped them of their very life. The doctrine was protected, but the soul was lost. For von Schenk, the cure was worse than the disease, and the disease had taken root in Missouri:

> It took me a long time to define my attitude toward traditional Missourianism, or Waltherianism. After I had my "spiritual measles" and

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[16] Von Schenk, "Blueprint," 9.

[17] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 132.

[18] "The most stupid thing which Luther let himself in for was the Colloquy in Marburg with Ulrich Zwingli. How much time and thought has been wasted by insisting on absolute truth in dogmas! Luther fell into that trap in his controversy with Zwingli and split the Reformation. Zwingli had a much deeper understanding of the liturgy than we give him credit for, and his liturgy is far superior to that of Luther. The argument of *dies bedeutet und dies ist* (this represents and this is) was sheer nonsense. In scientific language *bedeutet* and *ist* are the same thing. Luther was fighting windmills, and his position, 'Ihr habt einen anderen Geist als wir,' was a tragic statement." *Lively Stone*, 126.

[19] Berthold von Schenk, *The Presence: An Approach to the Holy Communion* (New York: E. Kaufmann Inc., 1945). A reprinted edition of *The Presence* will be available from ALPB Books in the spring of 2010.

> came to the realization of the significance of *mysterion*, I finally found peace theologically. At the same time, however, I came to realize why the Missouri theologians have so opposed liturgical theology. Many Missourians were quite angry with me when I tried to tell them that Missouri Theology is most rationalistic. I found their doctrine-righteousness just as obnoxious as works-righteousness, perhaps more so.[20]

Von Schenk saw the common Missouri Synod assumption—if pure doctrine is defended and promoted then God will bless the church for what it was—a faulty theology of glory. The incessant quest for pure doctrine at the expense of everything else, including the mystery of God, was not the solution to Missouri's woes. It was part of the problem. Von Schenk had no problem, then, criticizing Pieper's showpiece dogmatics, or taking other prominent Missouri theologians to task. This is not to say that von Schenk did not have an understanding of the importance of doctrine in the life of the church. He simply rejected the idea that it was the central focus or reason the church existed, or even that pure doctrine was a mark of the church. He states:

> The marks of the church are 1. Baptism into Christ—his life, death and resurrection; 2. The meeting of those who have been baptized into Christ; 3. The preaching of the Gospel that God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself; and 4. The gathering of God's people at his table. Furthermore, the mark of the church is the ordained pastor, presbyter, or bishop. The definition of the Church was stated by the post-Apostolic Fathers: "The Church is the Eucharistic Community, under the direction of the bishop (pastor), to manifest the total presence of Christ." Walther neglected the true marks of the Church and substituted creedalism, moralism, and ritualism.[21]

> Missouri has taken the easy way out—its first commandment is "Thou shalt not think." Missouri's sin has been that it has substituted "pure dogmas" for faith, and substitutes have been the sin of organized Christianity down through the centuries. Dogmaticians like Walther have been the blight of the Missouri Synod. Walther's twenty-five theses are a good example: more theological nonsense, they became a "Bible" in the Missouri Synod, and Synod will never recover from this tragedy. Walther, who can be called "The father of the Missouri Synod," did not recognize the Holy Spirit as the prime renewer and theologian of the Church. Walther was as much an anti-Holy Spirit as the Council of Trent which produced the Roman Church. Waltherian theology took the Synod out of history, as did the Council of Trent the Roman Church. Missouri and

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[20] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 94.
[21] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 96.

> Rome are first cousins—two church bodies without a history, for history is concerned not solely with the past but also with a vision of the future. The council of Vatican II recognized this and at least tacitly confessed it. The Missouri Synod has not been willing to make a similar confession.[22]

If his assessment of Walther and the Missouri Synod seems particularly harsh, remember that von Schenk stressed how the Spirit worked through Word *and Sacrament.* Walther and others had done the theologically unthinkable in allowing the separation of the Sacrament from the service of the Word, elevating one at the expense of the other. Walther had, in essence, truncated the source of God's Spirit and life for the church.

Von Schenk does, however, have some positive comments about the Missouri Synod:

> I could give the toast, "My Mother the Missouri Synod— Long may she live; damn the old bitch!" She deserves this toast and yet even a bitch can give birth to something. There are those who be named, "The son of bitch of the Missouri Synod." All religious church bodies have earned the title "bitch" but Missouri is still the least offensive. Even though some must accept that their mother is a bitch, they know that they can't make her grave. I guess there is an instinct in all of us—I love the old bitch Missouri and owe her much.[23]

> If one would compare it with the school system, Missouri makes a good elementary and prep school, but it can't be an ideal university. Where there is no freedom and catholic spirit there can be no inner growth. One should never build a fence around the Holy Spirit for He is the Spirit of freedom, but this is what so many theologians have done in the Missouri Synod.[24]

As von Schenk neared the end of his life in 1972, he set about to writing an autobiography, which would remain at Concordia Historical Institute until Pastors C. George Fry and Joel Kurz would edit it for publication as *Lively Stone* in 2006. Although he was aloof from the politics of the Missouri Synod, von Schenk's remarks about the ongoing controversies that had erupted in the synod reveal where his sympathies lay:

> Think of the current tragic situation in the Missouri Synod. A new president is elected and all he could produce was a translation of Martin

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[22] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone,* 98.

[23] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone,* 101. [*Although we do not agree with the specific language used by von Schenk here, we are respecting the author's choice to include it as a historically accurate way of capturing von Schenk's attitude. The Editors*]

[24] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone,* 102.

> Chemnitz. While Rome is burning, the president translates Chemnitz—a museum theologian. . . . But the greatest tragedy was the election of Dr. Preus, for under his rule the Missouri Synod has become a Protestant sect, a chop-suey of Pietism and doctrine-righteousness. . . . I consider President Preus an antichrist and heresy-hunter; I know his name in the future will be uttered only in contempt. Synod will very likely not survive him![25]

The feeling was apparently mutual. Preus had previously declared that "there were two cancers in the Missouri Synod: von Schenk and Scharlemann."[26]

IV. A Parish Pastor among the Laity

More than all of these things, however, von Schenk was a pastor dearly loved by his parishioners. Though demanding of those with whom he worked, he was generous of himself and his time to a fault. Every Sunday involved a spaghetti dinner at the parsonage where all kinds of "strays" from church and school would gather together for a meal. Robert Christian remembers that when he first came to Our Saviour in 1950, his starting salary was only $2200 for the whole year. Von Schenk surprised him by arranging for him to fly home to Chicago to see his parents and his fiancée Arleen, who was teaching in Iowa. The flight, of course, was on December 25, "not before Christmas Eve as the December 24 Christ-Mass was imperative." He still has the ticket stub made out to the "Rev. Robert Christian."

At his retirement in 1961, the congregation gave von Schenk as a farewell gift a trip to the Middle East. He continued to split time between Our Saviour and the congregation that he had founded near the family farm in upstate New York until his death in 1974. In his later years, he began to suffer from dementia. A number of parishioners can remember the final sermon he preached at Our Saviour, where about halfway through his sermon he lost his place and began preaching the whole thing from the beginning. Mercifully, his son James, who had succeeded him at Our Saviour, went up into the pulpit and led his father down by the arm.

As a parish pastor, von Schenk got to put his theology into practice, which provided a helpful counterbalance to the often abstract world of academia. His theological work reached its apex in the "Kingdom Plan" that he developed. The Kingdom Plan was based on this simple rule: every parish must be the church. Word and Sacrament were to be the content of

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[25] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 103–104.
[26] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 103–104.

every official meeting of the congregation. In short, the plan was based on this simple formula:

> God would bless the congregation if the members worshipped faithfully by listening to the Word and receiving the Sacrament every Sunday. He would bless the congregation if the members adopted tithing as a way of life and brought their offering. God would bless the congregation if they prayed daily for the parish and members, and if the members of the congregation evangelized, God would also bless them.[27]

Herb Kern, von Schenk's first vicar, remembers that over the course of his vicarage year he knocked on over two thousand doors in The Bronx as a part of the Kingdom Plan's evangelistic outreach. As von Schenk stated:

> A new understanding has been given to witnessing and evangelization. The source of witnessing is the Liturgy. The royal priesthood which has learned the virtues of Jesus in the Liturgy (which is a reliving of His life) now shows forth these virtues to the world. They are now the "sent ones," who must continue to live the Liturgy, the life of Christ, in their daily tasks whatever they may be.[28]

Central to the Kingdom Plan was an understanding of offering and Eucharist as sacrifice which did not typically find a receptive audience in the Missouri Synod.

> I used the ancient Offertory Prayer of Hippolytus: "Here we offer ourselves, both in body and soul, for Thou hast redeemed us with Thy precious blood." We emphasized tithing and that the tithe should not be understood as the offering. The collection (or offering), the confession of sins, the Creed, and offertory prayer bring us to the highpoint of the liturgy and together, compose the Offering in the liturgy. The offering in the liturgy has a much deeper meaning than the simple giving of the tithe, and sadly is much neglected.[29]

In his "Blueprint for a Catholic Parish," von Schenk describes the Offering as the climax of the Liturgy:

> The Offering of bread and wine was the symbol of the common life, reduced to its simplest expression. . . . Here we have the key to the kingdom, for this was the genius of the offering in the Old Testament—the burnt offering, the meal and oil offering, and even the peace offering—in which the offerer identified himself with the sacrifice on the altar. It was a giving of the common life at its best. If the member of the congregation understands the true meaning of the Offering the need of

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[27] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 65.

[28] Von Schenk, "Liturgical Revival," 13.

[29] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 65.

> the giver to give and his self-identification with the greatest Sacrifice ever brought, which is shown forth at the Eucharist, he will indeed fill the water pots to overflowing with what he has. He knows that here he cannot give a token gift, or participate in a mere collection when the plate is passed. It must always be an offering, and there can only be an offering in the true sense at the Eucharist.[30]

Von Schenk was accused of Romanizing tendencies. Of the sacrificial language in the Offering of the Mass, he concedes:

> I fully realize that this statement may be misunderstood. . . . We cannot repeat the sacrifice which Jesus offered on Calvary, but in the Communion we plead this sacrifice. . . . There is no new immolation of the Body of Christ, but a re-presentation of that immolation once for all accomplished at Calvary, a showing—*kataggelia* or *anamneesis*, a proclamation or memorial of the Lord's death until he comes. . . . At the mass we offer our possessions, our prayers, the bread and wine, and ourselves. Thus we identify ourselves at the Eucharist with the Sacrifice of Christ.[31]

Central to this understanding of eucharistic offering was First Peter 2:5-6: "Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Here von Schenk found clarity in the midst of controversies that continue to rage in the Missouri Synod about the role of laity. Concerning laity, he states:

> The Reformation rediscovered the royal priesthood, but it was lost. It has degenerated often into that incongruity, the layman, who tells his pastor off, or even into church boards, vestries and voters. The continuation of the Old Testament priesthood, fulfilled by the great High Priest, is in the royal priesthood, and its participation in the Liturgy. Without the Mass there can be no priesthood functioning in this sense. For this reason the sacrificial thought was basic in the early liturgies. The church of the Middle Ages created a new kind of priesthood, utterly foreign to the spirit of the early church. The Reformation Church quickly followed this error and created a hierarchy of theologians (for it was much more important to have a system of doctrines than to maintain the full Lutheran Mass).[32]
>
> Their most important function is to offer spiritual sacrifices. This can be done particularly in the Liturgy of Word and Sacrament. This coming together of the saints, "about the Holy" is the center of the life of the

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[30] Von Schenk, "Blueprint," 11.
[31] Von Schenk, *The Presence*, 17.
[32] Von Schenk, "Blueprint," 11.

> church. This is the Communion of Saints, and in a special sense, the Church, those who are called out of their daily life to perform a public function.[33]

The role of the pastor, then, is to help the baptized fulfill their baptismal callings as priests. Von Schenk wrote:

> Some people have developed rather strange ideas about the work of a pastor who tries to apply the spirit of the liturgy consistently. They vision him as one who steeps himself in "Liturgical lore" and thus becomes an expert on what is "right and proper," including colors, vestments, paraments, ceremonial. In reality, those who have the spirit of the liturgy have a far different orientation. They have been taken up in the agonizing struggle of the church to be what it is. They are vitally concerned about Christian education, for they realize that children must be trained, not only in a set of doctrines to be accepted with the mind, but more particularly must they be trained to be royal priests with mind and body and heart and soul. . . . The truly liturgical pastor carries on not a one-sided ministry, but one that is catholic and inclusive, both in terms of people and of emphasis, because he recognizes that the Church is the Body of Christ, and not all members have the same function.[34]

In his understanding of the relationship between clergy and laity, von Schenk was a man before his time, who is still relevant to the issues faced not only in wider Christendom but in von Schenk's own Missouri-Synod.

V. The Ongoing Relevance of von Schenk

It might be helpful to describe areas where I think von Schenk is still relevant for the Lutheran Church today. First, his liturgical approach, which is grounded in the Eucharist, provides a middle way between those who are liturgical dressmakers and those who believe liturgy is an adiaphoron. More importantly, it provides an opportunity for pastors to make the liturgy relevant (in the best sense of the word) in the lives of their parishioners. Second, von Schenk was post-dogmatic long before there was an "emergent church." But the great paradox is that his post-dogmatism is grounded in catholicity, and thus provides an opportunity for the Missouri Synod to move beyond a rigid dogmatism without giving up its catholicity. Third, although possessed of political views, von Schenk understood that the life of the congregation is where real renewal takes place. It did not matter to him who was in charge of the synod. His charge was to incorporate his people into the sacramental life of the church. There,

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[33] Berthold von Schenk, *Lively Stones Confirmation Curriculum* (New York: Our Saviour School Press), Introduction, 6.

[34] Von Schenk, "Burden and Obligation," 7–8.

and only there, real denominational change can take place. Fourth, he had a clear understanding of offices and roles within the church. He was not afraid to empower those around him to do their God-given tasks. It did not diminish his standing as a pastor to have laity who were priests; in fact, it gave him his identity. It did not diminish his authority to have called teachers take on appropriate ministerial (i.e., diaconal) roles. In fact, it provided great service to his ministry. Last, he provides a helpful counterbalance to the Missouri Synod's seemingly endless slide into Evangelical Protestantism:

> The plan is simple: If a congregation continues in the teaching and witness of the Apostles, the simple preaching of Christ crucified and risen from the dead; in the prayers and praises of the Liturgy; in the breaking of bread and in this fellowship, great gifts are bestowed. These gifts according to St. Paul, flow out of the meeting in Jesus' Name (1 Cor. 12). The greatest of all gifts, love, has its fountainhead in the Body of Christ. St. Paul sums this all up in Romans 12:6-8 "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." This is the catholic parish, for it is centered in the person of Jesus Christ—through the font, the altar and the pulpit.[35]

Von Schenk is rarely pictured in photographs without his characteristic pipe. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that von Schenk would have been hauled off to prison for attempting something like this in smoke-free New York City today. In later years, the story is told that von Schenk used to stay in the sacristy smoking his pipe for the first part of the service, allowing the deacon to lead up until the sermon. When it came time for the sermon he would emerge from the sacristy and into the pulpit through a great cloud of smoke!

Of course, times change, and Our Saviour is now a smoke-free campus by New York State law. Times change, but the sacramental worship and its underlying principles of Eucharist and Offering as providing an identity for the church as the body of Christ remain. What changes, however, is the culturally contextual implementation.

Today Our Saviour Lutheran School serves a population that is ninety-five percent non-Lutheran. Two-thirds of our students come to Our Saviour unbaptized, with over half of them not having a church home. In that context, chapel services with the Eucharist would be out of place. But

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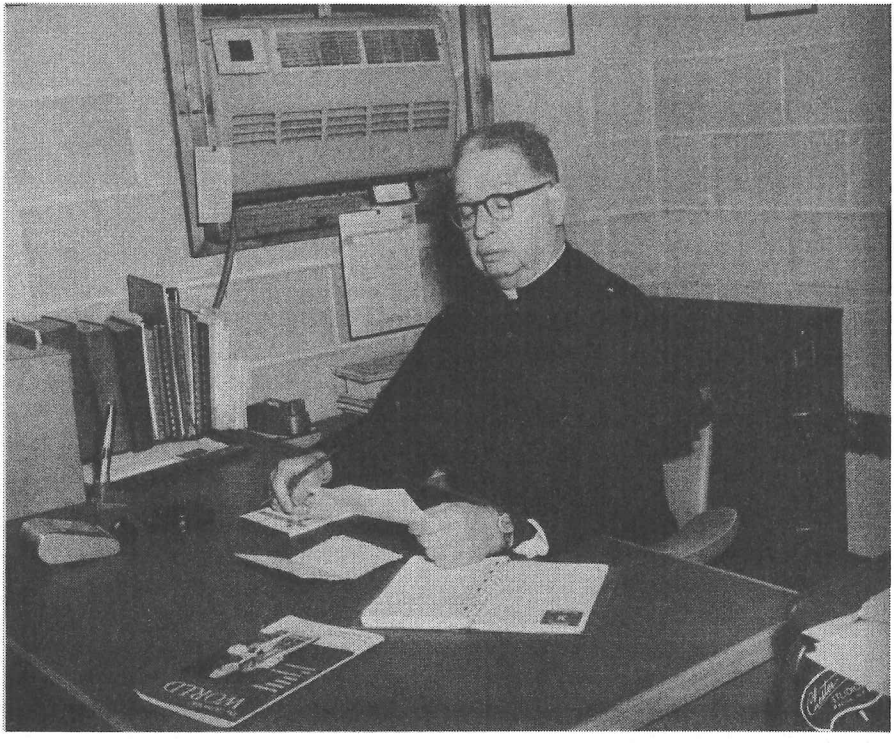
[35] Von Schenk, "Blueprint," 12–13.

the principles which led von Schenk to hold the Eucharist in the service remain. The focus of my preaching and catechetical efforts is baptismal: to help the child to know who he is through Baptism—a priest before God with priestly privileges and responsibilities. The challenge with von Schenk, as with all great theologians, is to avoid the dreamy world of repristination, in which if you just do things exactly as he did them you will get the same results. Von Schenk himself, I believe, would call such an approach foolhardy. Instead, I believe, he would take a puff from his pipe and amidst the heavenly smoke call us to embrace the Mystery of God in the Mysteries that the Body of Christ may be the Body of Christ, and the priests of God—his lively stones who have allowed themselves to be built into a spiritual house—may offer their spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.



Berthold von Schenk

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J.A.O. Preus: Theologian, Churchman, or Both?

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

I. Introduction: The Death of "Old Missouri"?

By the 1960s, it seemed to many within The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) that the cleft between moderates and conservatives had become so pronounced that the two sides could no longer remain together. Some argued for a peaceful separation. The administration of President Oliver Harms (1962–1969) struggled to hold the synod intact. The momentum of change in the LCMS had accelerated to the point that by the 1965 Detroit convention the moderate agenda seemed fully to have carried the day. Reflecting on what he believed was a pivotal convention, Richard John Neuhaus spoke of the emergence of a new Missouri and the passing of what had been.

> The organizational structure [of old Missouri] and the name remain (although the convention resolved to consider a new name). But the self-understandings that have characterized Missouri over the years have been discarded in a manner so gentle that it almost amounts to self-deception. Many delegates at Detroit were vaguely aware that more was happening than a modification or natural development of "old Missouri." A few seemed to realize that something had died and that this was the price of new life needing room to grow.[1]

Approval of LCMS participation in the Lutheran Council USA (LCUSA), participation in the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (ILCW), and adoption of the Mission Affirmations had poised the synod to pursue a fundamentally new direction—one from which there was no going back—at least in some peoples' minds.

Implicit in such forward-looking actions was, at the very least, a move away from the past and, at most, a radical disavowal of the synod's theological limitations. Indeed, Neuhaus was so brash as to speak of the death of old Missouri and its "errors."

> For what has died some of us will shed no tears. It is not that we are insensitive to the brief tradition of the last several decades. Since it usually contains a fragment of truth, one can even grow fond of error. If he has

[1] Richard John Neuhaus, "The Song of Three Synods: Detroit, 1965," *Una Sancta* 22 (no. 3): 33.

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> been nurtured by the fragment long enough and if it is valued by those he knows and loves, he will not discard it in cavalier fashion. But discard it he must.[2]

Strikingly, however, in little more than a decade, the LCMS would experience tension, controversy, and, ultimately, schism. Neuhaus himself left the LCMS, eventually making his way from the Lutheran tradition into Roman Catholicism. "Old Missouri" had not, in fact, died. It was back and back to stay—at least in some peoples' minds.

How did this happen? Already in the late 1950s—and certainly by the early 1960s—formal organizations that self-consciously saw themselves as "conservative" over against the "liberal" or "moderate" direction of the "new Missouri" coalesced into what some have seen as a well-organized, powerful, and very effective "conservative movement." The most evident success of this movement was getting J.A.O. Preus elected to the presidency of the LCMS in 1969. With key figures like Cameron MacKenzie Sr. (at least initially), Waldo Werning, Herman Otten, Karl Barth, and Ralph Bohlmann, along with laymen Fred Rutz, Chet Swanson, Larry Marquardt, and Glen Peglau, this movement succeeded in redefining the terms of the debate—at least in some peoples' minds.[3]

An historical problem, however, exists. What seemed a unified conservative juggernaut in 1969 was by 1977 deeply fragmented, with some conservatives seeking to replace their party's leader. What happened? James Burkee has suggested that the conservative coalition was just that: a disparate grouping of individuals—most of them clergy—some of whom were more concerned with a generic conservative platform that featured such planks as anti-communism and anti-civil rights as much as anything theological, to others who were consumed largely by theological issues. When the common enemy had been displaced, says Burkee, the movement lacked sufficient ideological commonality to hold it together. To put it another way, politics held the conservatives together when they were on the "outs," but once they were "in," differing commitments led to the collapse of the movement.[4]

This interpretation does reflect the realities, at least to a certain degree. In a piece written in 1975, layman Chet Swanson described the vagaries of

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[2] Neuhaus, "Song of Three Synods," 33.

[3] For one interpretation of the early conservative movement by a participant, see Waldo J. Werning, *Making the Missouri Synod Functional Again* (Fort Wayne: Biblical Renewal, 1992).

[4] James Burkee, *Pastors and Politics: The Conservative Movement in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, 1956-1981*, Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2003.

conservatism as a movement and showed its sometimes complementary and sometimes competitive branches. His bottom line was that it is impossible to get conservatives to agree completely on every theological and political point. As a result, getting them to work in concert is consistently difficult. The best one can do, he concluded, is seek to get them to respect the eleventh commandment—thou shalt not speak evilly of a fellow conservative.[5]

Mary Todd suggests that the struggles in the LCMS in general and among conservatives in particular lie in J.A.O. Preus's removal of only four of eight district presidents in April 1976. She states: "had the purge been complete, the story of political division in Missouri should be history."[6] Jack Preus's failure to remove all eight district presidents in 1976, when he had the authority and opportunity, produced far-reaching results in and for the Missouri Synod. For one thing, it defused a situation where entire districts—or at least the congregations of those districts—might have left the synod. Preus's limited action, as it were, tempered the effectiveness of the rhetoric that portrayed Preus as a power-seeking despot—at least in the minds of some. Preus's failure to use the full power that the LCMS had granted him in Convention (1975) helped avoid a more profound schism. The question was whether that was a good or a bad thing.

John Tietjen thought it was a bad thing.[7] In *Memoirs in Exile* he states:

> The number of congregations that helped form the synods of the AELC [Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches] or that joined it later was considerably less than the leaders of the Coordinating Council had anticipated. It had been expected that twelve hundred Missouri Synod

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[5] C.A. Swanson, "Present Situation in the LCMS regarding Conservative Groups," November 29, 1975 (paper in personal possession of the author): "The answer is to communicate with each other and respect each other. Keep our minds and hearts in the common cause. And, in those rare instances where disagreements among conservatives are unavoidable, let us learn to disagree agreeably." See also C.A. Swanson to the Rev. Robert Nordlie, January 27, 1976, CTS Archives, and Burkee, *Pastors and Politics*, 226.

[6] Mary Todd, "The Curious Case of the Missouri Synod," in *Lutherans Today: American Lutheran Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Richard Cimino (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 34. J.A.O. Preus had removed four district presidents from their positions on April 2, 1976. The reason for the removals was that these district presidents were approving men for ordination who had not been certified by a recognized LCMS seminary faculty.

[7] Elsewhere I have written on Tietjen's assessment of the matter. Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Challenges to Inerrancy Today," in *Divine Multi-Media: The Manifold Means of Grace in the Life of the Church*, ed. John A. Maxfield, Luther Academy Lecture Series no. 11 (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 2005), 17–35.

> congregations would join the new church, but only 250 did so. Even the English Synod, the largest of the AELC synods, received only a little more than half the congregations that could legitimately have been expected to leave the English District, judging from the actions of its convention delegates.[8]

Tietjen offered six reasons for the failure of congregations to leave the LCMS for the AELC.[9] First, pastors who had not sufficiently prepared their congregations for the potential move were unable to bring their congregations with them. Second, leaders in congregations were unsuccessful in obtaining the two-thirds majorities needed to move congregations into a new synodical affiliation, forcing these individuals to make their way into the AELC apart from their congregations. Third, "vocational and security concerns caused previously outspoken pastors to be silent when the time for decision arrived." Fourth, some pastors and congregations decided to "stay and fight." Fifth, some pastors avoided the conflict that pressing such a move would have entailed out of respect for the congregation's mission. Sixth, some "decided that institutional affiliation was not important." Tietjen's rather dispassionate assessment of the situation is rather striking given his fervent commitment to Seminex and his conviction that the LCMS was dead.[10] Eventually in the memoirs his objectivity gave way to an impassioned critique of those who did not leave Missouri. He states: "I am convinced that 40 percent of those in the Missouri Synod compromised their integrity rather than pay the price of following through on the principles to which they were committed."[11]

A congruency between Todd's claim and Tietjen's reflections exists, and I think both have much to recommend them. But more is necessary to get the whole picture. Jack Preus's removal of four district presidents on April 2, 1976, was interpreted in at least three ways and, of course, these three interpretations also reveal a spectrum of application. First, there were those who were incensed by what they believed was an exercise of brute force and power at the expense of people who were acting courageously

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[8] John H. Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile: Confessional Hope and Institutional Conflict* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1990), 269.

[9] Tietjen, *Memoirs*, 269. The short quotations in these six reasons that follow are from Tietjen.

[10] John H. Tietjen, "The Pangs of Death," text of Sermon at ELIM Assembly Eucharist, August 26, 1974, O'Hare Inn, Des Plaines, Illinois, 6: "Shall we stand in God's way by trying to hold on to the past? Shall we interfere with God's work by seeking to preserve the institutions and organizations he has already consigned to destruction? . . . The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is dead. Let the dead bury their own dead."

[11] Tietjen, *Memoirs*, 283.

and appropriately, both morally and theologically. Many of these people left to help form the AELC, though some stayed. Second, some thought President Preus was simply carrying out his duties in an appropriate fashion—lopping off the real "troublemakers," if you will, while allowing for others who were willing to "play ball" to clean up their act. He was just doing his job. Finally, a third interpretation held that Preus had failed to carry out his responsibilities as directed by the synod. This group saw this *not* as a first failure on Preus's part, but as the last straw in a series of leadership failures that could no longer be excused as understandable faux pas, but rather were part of the Preus fabric, a demonstrable pattern of lying and duplicity that had to be ended through the election of a new, truly conservative president of the LCMS. Chet Swanson was one who held this opinion; Herman Otten was another.[12] But there were plenty more, as the following letter establishes (though written a few years later).

> Prior to your election in 1969 as our LCMS President, at a mass gathering of California Lutherans, in the sacristy of St. Paul's Church, you signed a document solemnly signed by 1000 troubled ministers of the Missouri Synod, stating that "for conscience and doctrinal reasons" the proposed fellowship resolution with the ALC must be rejected. Two weeks later you told the Denver Convention, if elected president, you could live with the ALC proposal.
>
> Since that time you have tried to silence Christian News, Affirm, and the united conservative voice who prayed and worked for your election. You betrayed us and you continue to turn against your best conservative friends in the Missouri Synod. I'm stating true facts, Mr. President. Our Lutheran Witness is liberally slanted and managed. Many of our outspoken liberal pastors and district presidents are throwing their weight around with their evolution theories and practicing altar and pulpit fellowship with churches not in doctrinal agreement with us—and you are doing nothing about it!
>
> The sooner you resign the better. At the Devil's Elbow our founding fathers gave their deceitful leader, Rev. Martin Stephan, a free one way boat ride and to replace him God gave them Dr. C.F.W. Walther to chart our ship, the LCMS. We need a new leader like Dr. Walther. [13]

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[12] See the series of articles that appeared in the late winter and spring of 1977 (e.g., February 5, 1977) in *Christian News* challenging President Preus and ultimately arguing for new leadership among the conservatives. See "A Clear Choice for Conservatives: Maier or Preus?" and "Four More Years of Duplicity?" both in *Christian News* (July 4, 1977).

[13] Norman P. Gutschmidt to J.A.O. Preus, September 5, 1980 (underlining original). CTS Archives.

II. Will the Real Jack Preus Stand Up!

Who is this man, vilified by right and left, conservative and liberal? What was he like? Was he a theologian or a churchman or both? First, a brief biography is in order, and then we will return to some of these other questions in order to try and get a partial picture of our subject.

Jacob Aall Ottesen Preus Jr. (January 8, 1920–August 13, 1994) came from a long line of Lutheran preachers, though his father, "Jake" (Jacob Aall Ottesen Preus [August 28, 1883–May 24, 1961]) was a well-known Republican politician in Minnesota. The elder Preus served as the state auditor (1915–1921), then as the governor (1921–1925), after which he moved to Chicago and helped form Lutheran Brotherhood, now part of Thrivent. Viewed as politically savvy, Jake Preus played a formative role in the lives of his two sons, particularly Jack, if Adams's *Preus of Missouri* is to be believed.[14]

Jack himself attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, graduating in 1941, and there met his future wife, Delpha Mae Hollecue. He then entered Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, from which he graduated in 1945. His experience, however, was not a positive one, and he chose to seek ordination in the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (familiarly known as the "Little Norwegian Synod," which took the name Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS] in 1957). He served congregations in Minnesota, as well as serving on the staff at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota.

Preus quickly distinguished himself in the Norwegian Synod, offering one of the two primary doctrinal essays at its meeting in 1948.[15] "What Stands Between" is a scathing denunciation of false doctrine and "loose practice" in the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC).[16] In a fast-paced, direct manner, Preus condemned the ELC's positions on the Madison Settlement (or Agreement), conversion, the will, original sin, predestination, justification, objective justification more specifically, conversion after death, Hades, millennialism, antichrist, creation, and Scripture. On each point, the ELC is found lacking. Worse, however, is that

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[14] James E. Adams, *Preus of Missouri and the Great Lutheran Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

[15] *Report of the Thirty-First Regular Convention of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota (June 6–10, 1948), 31–56.

[16] The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was formed in 1917 as a merger of the Hauge Synod, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, and Norwegian Synod. It took the name the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1946.

false doctrine has found its way into that church's life. "Loose practice" in respect to the lodge, deistic societies (including the Boy Scouts), women in the church (particularly voting), church and state, and a pervasive spirit of unionism all make the ELC a less-than-truly Lutheran body. To prove his point, Preus pointed to the official pronouncements of the church body, and, more importantly, what he had learned at Luther Seminary as a student. The presence of false doctrine in the faculty and classrooms of Luther Seminary produced assured results in the life of the church—false doctrine and false practice.

Though still in his mid-twenties when he delivered this essay, Preus's intellectual gifts were obvious. Indeed, by 1951 he had earned a doctorate in Classics at the University of Minnesota. Gifted in other ways, he quickly emerged as a leader in the Norwegian Synod. So it is not at all surprising that when, in 1955, a proposal for a "suspension" of fellowship with the LCMS was presented and adopted by the ELS, Preus, along with his brother Robert, were instrumental in leading the ELS to this action.[17] The LCMS, the ELS's longtime partner in the Synodical Conference, was considered to have fallen into some of the same errors as the ELC.

And so, it was with some incredulity that Missourians saw the Preus brothers come into the LCMS shortly thereafter. Robert was called to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1957 to teach systematic theology. Jack received a call to teach Greek and New Testament at Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, in 1958.

Why this move? Leigh Jordahl, in his obituary of Jack in *Logia,* traces it to Robert being passed over for a teaching position at Bethany. This was tantamount to "repudiation" and may have triggered the twin moves.[18] Pastor Rudolph Nordein, believing that Jack's talents were "withering on the vine" at Bethany, wrote to President Walter Baepler of Springfield in late 1957 stating that he "would like to see [Jack] get into our Synod as a seminary professor."[19] Things moved quickly. Baepler invited Preus to

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[17] See also the *Report of the ELS* for the year *1955,* pages 41–46.

[18] Leigh Jordahl, "J.A.O. Preus," *Logia* 5 (Eastertide 1996): 48. For my part, I can say this: one of the things largely missing from the archival materials I read in preparing this paper was the personal side of Jack Preus. He seems to have kept that part of his life pretty well isolated from his professional life. However, the video "Warrior of God—Man of Peace" offers several small windows into his "ordinary" life.

[19] Rudolph Nordein to Walter Baepler, November 8, 1957, CTS Archives. Baepler indicates that he had made personal contact with Preus already in the fall of 1957 and that Preus had visited Baepler around Christmas of the same year. Walter Baepler to J.A.O. Preus, March 1, 1958, CTS Archives.

visit Springfield, which Jack did on March 14–15, 1958. The visit went well; Baepler requested prior approval from the President of Synod and Board for Higher Education on March 17; approval was granted March 21 and 25, respectively; a contract was offered on March 26, and Jack returned it with his acceptance on April 21, 1958. His appointment formally commenced on July 1, 1958.[20]

One of the things that made Jack an attractive candidate for a professorship at Springfield in 1958 (and Robert for one at St. Louis in 1957) was the need for faculty with terminal degrees. Jack's Ph.D. in Classics was unique among the Springfield faculty in the late 50s. However, Baepler had been working diligently to move Springfield away from its historic position as the "practical seminary" for what were mischaracterized as less capable students. Accreditation was a desired goal (reached in 1968), and for that to become a reality called for credentialed faculty. It also required a more robust curriculum that made greater demands of its students, particularly in the biblical languages, especially Greek. It seemed like a match made in heaven.

III. Seminary President Preus

Perhaps it was, in a way, for Jack Preus. He and his family seem to have thrived in Springfield. Jack and Delpha had seven daughters (Patricia, Delpha, Carolin, Sarah, Idella, Mary, and Margaret), and a son (Jacob). Jack quickly became a favorite teacher for his open, frank, and earthy style. Jack Preus told it like it is—and the students loved it. But he also began to emerge as a leader in this setting as well. George Beto succeeded Baepler as president in 1959, but soon moved on to lead the Texas penal system.[21] Preus was named the acting president in the winter of 1962 and later that same year he was chosen as Springfield's tenth president.

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[20] J.A.O. Preus to Walter Baepler, March 4, 1958; Walter Baepler to J.A.O. Preus, March 6, 1958; Walter A. Baepler to John W. Behnken, March 17, 1958; Hugo G. Kleiner to Walter A. Baepler, March 21, 1958; John W. Behnken to Walter Baepler, March 25, 1958; "Contract and Agreement," March 26, 1958; J.A.O. Preus to Walter Baepler, April 21, 1958; all in CTS Archives. In his letter to Baepler, Behnken writes: "Herewith I want to inform you that the appointment meets with my approval. I have seen him work with the Committee on Doctrinal Unity and I believe that he is by no means a man who would cause you difficulty. If anything, he will be of value to you in preserving, under God's guidance, soundness of doctrine."

[21] David M. Horton and George R. Nielsen, *Walking George: The Life of George John Beto and the Rise of the Modern Texas Prison System* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2005).

Over the course the 1960s, Jack Preus's star continued to rise. He slowly surfaced as one of the leading lights in the emerging conservative movement. Springfield was increasingly seen as the "conservative" seminary, particularly once the contracts of Richard Jungkuntz and Curtis Huber were not renewed.[22] More popularly, Preus's name became more familiar through the publication of articles on missions and general church life in forums like the *Lutheran Witness* and the *Lutheran Layman,* as well as AAL's *Bond,* which featured the "energetic" Jack Preus on its cover in the mid 60s.

As a result, Preus entered into correspondence with a variety of people in the LCMS. Hot letters passed between Preus and leading conservative Carl Hoffmeyer over the presence of Jungkuntz and Huber on the faculty. Much of the mail was more restrained. Writing to a regular correspondent, Ralph Lohrengel, Preus tried to allay fears of a split in the LCMS: "I do not even like to think about a split in our church," he wrote; "I feel that 95% of the clergy and laity of our church are soundly Lutheran, and if there is to be any split the liberals should be the ones to blame and to be put out."[23]

IV. Synodical President Preus

In 1969, Preus was elected president of the Missouri Synod, ousting incumbent Oliver Harms.[24] The welcome home to Springfield was pure celebration. Many thought that conservatism was surely back as the ideology of choice for the LCMS. But more battles lay ahead. Events, familiar I think to most of us, quickly led to a confrontation. In 1973–74, a battle over teachings at the Missouri Synod's flagship seminary, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, resulted in the suspension of the president of Concordia Seminary, John Tietjen, and a walkout of seminary professors and students to form a seminary, commonly referred to as Seminex.

However, already shortly after Preus's election to the synodical presidency, several of his actions drew fire from critics across the

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[22] Richard John Neuhaus, "More on the Travail of Missouri," *Una Sancta* 27 (January 1970): 16: "Richard Jungkuntz and Curtis Huber were two of the bright lights that President George Beto had acquired to give a modicum of academic respectability to the glorified Bible Institute at Springfield."

[23] J.A.O. Preus to Ralph Lohrengel, December 12, 1966. CTS Archives.

[24] Robert D. Preus, "After Denver, What? Four Predictions," *The Lutheran Layman* (June 1969): 11; Carl Lawrenz, "Some Significant Positions and Decisions at the Denver Convention of the LCMS" (1969), http://www.wlsessays.net/files/LawrenzDenver.pdf; W.M. Oesch, "Analysis of the Present Situation of Confessional Lutheranism in America and the World," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 10 Special Edition (Winter 1969–70): 35.

spectrum. In November 1969, following the dismissal of Richard Jungkuntz from his position as executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Missouri United Free Evangelical* first appeared. In it, editor Richard Koenig wrote:

> Preus's policies make it necessary for us, however reluctantly, to concern ourselves once again with the issues of evangelical freedom and the mission of the Church in our Synod. Missouri's line of development, carefully marked by decisions of the Synod at conventions over the past quarter of a century and implemented by responsible leaders, hard-working pastors and laymen, is in jeopardy. In the interest of the Missouri Synod of the fellowship resolution and mission affirmations and many other progressive measures we appeal for your prayers, support, and help. Your immediate response is earnestly solicited (p. 1).
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> While it is painful to have to undertake a movement of the sort these letters will espouse, it has ever been thus in the Church. Legalism is always the dark shadow of the Gospel, and legalism has always been the foe within the Missouri Synod. What we are engaged in, therefore, is not "synodical politics" but a question of fundamental importance to the church. But since it is a question of the Gospel, we are sure of the outcome. Churches and individuals can forget or obscure the Gospel and its power for a while, but they constantly re-assert themselves. We have to bring our brothers to the point where they along with us experience anew the liberating force of the message which creates, preserves, and builds the church of Jesus Christ (p. 3).[25]

Unhappy as the "moderates" were, the "conservatives" were at least as enraged, due to Preus's support of a resolution in the LCMS Council of Presidents that condemned Herman Otten and his *Christian News*.[26] Some folks began to ask, will the real Jack Preus please stand up? Or, as William Wincke put it, "The Rev. J.A.O. Preus . . . appears to be the Richard Nixon of the theological world. No one is sure where he stands on the liberal-conservative issues that divide the 2-million-member denomination."[27]

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[25] November 3, 1969: First number of MUFE published. Later it was revised and resent on November 18, 1969.

[26] Statement of the Council of Presidents, October 3, 1969.

[27] November 29, 1969. He continued: "Liberals fear that Dr. Preus is attempting to negate the liberal steps taken by the denomination in recent years. But conservatives are not convinced that their president can be relied upon to protect their church against the encroachment of doctrinal dilution by the American Lutheran Church and biblical experts who question the denomination's literalistic position on the scriptures." Cited in MUFE #2 12-16, 1969.

V. Garbage In, Garbage Out

Trying to summarize the events of 1969 to February 19, 1974, briefly is challenging. To put it rather crassly, it might be said that two (at least) contending understandings of Lutheranism joined in battle. Among the leaders of the more progressive group was John Tietjen, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Among the leaders of the more conservative party were the Preus brothers, Jacob and Robert, along with Ralph Bohlmann of the systematics department at the St. Louis Seminary. As the issue moved toward a confrontation, Tietjen claimed that President Preus's vision was fundamentally flawed and that his Fact Finding Committee's report compromised the gospel. He wrote: "A theology whose basic thrust is unLutheran underlies the Report of the president's Committee and served as the yardstick for measuring the confessional position of the faculty, resulting in a basic distortion and misrepresentation of faculty views."[28] The Preuses' vision of Lutheranism was one informed by their reading of the Great Tradition of Lutheranism particularly as laid out in Lutheran orthodoxy. The switches had been thrown, and the trains were heading right at one another.

The details leading up to the walkout will not be rehearsed here. Suffice it to say, after the events of the first half of 1974, John Tietjen thought there was no going back.

> We are free to find new forms and methods to bring God's Gospel to the world. God has set us free from the law, including any system of rules, no matter how serviceable it may have been, which seeks to muzzle the free proclamation of the grace of God. . . . Shall we stand in God's way by trying to hold on to the past? Shall we interfere with God's work by seeking to preserve the institutions and organizations he has already consigned to destruction? . . . The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is dead. Let the dead bury their own dead. The organization that has given us life and nurtured us is no more. Its structures are hopelessly corrupt. Its leadership is morally bankrupt. Let the dead bury their own dead.[29]

Shortly before Tietjen delivered his remarks, Robert D. Preus was elected president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. In little more than a year, the LCMS in convention closed Concordia Senior College and moved Concordia Theological Seminary from Springfield, Illinois, to Fort Wayne, Indiana. With that election and move, what was already a vibrant and dynamic enterprise took on an even more vital role

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[28] Tietjen, *Fact Finding or Fault Finding? An Analysis of President J.A.O. Preus' Investigation of Concordia Seminary* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1972), 34.

[29] John H. Tietjen, "The Pangs of Death," 6–7.

in the life of the LCMS. What one of my colleagues has called the "days of dead orthodoxy" were about to begin and the Missouri Synod would never be the same. But what emerged was, frankly, not "old Missouri," and part of the reason for that lay in the work of Jack and Robert Preus.

Not everyone was optimistic, however. Tietjen looked at the LCMS and saw a corpse. Others in the conservative camp were beginning to think that Jack Preus himself might be the problem.

VI. Schism(s)

1975 and 1976 each provided a crucial event in the ultimate departure of pastors and congregations from the Missouri Synod to form the AELC. 1975's Anaheim Convention, among other things, voted to close Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne and to transfer the Springfield seminary to the Senior College campus. Beyond this, delegates agreed that district presidents may not ordain candidates without the formal certification of one of the two official seminaries of the LCMS. Further, the convention granted the synodical president the authority to declare vacant the office of any district president who should ordain a non-certified candidate.

Commenting on the situation, *Time* magazine stated:

> Even if Preus declares the eight posts vacant, at least seven of the presidents are expected to be defiantly re-elected by their districts. Whether the confrontation will compel the moderates actually to break with the official church—or how such a rupture would come about—remains to be seen. Evangelical Lutherans in Mission, an organization of moderates that the convention declared "schismatic," will meet next month to discuss what to do. [30]

The article further stated, "If a split does occur, it is uncertain how many would leave the Missouri Synod. Tietjen predicts that more than 1,500 congregations will depart. Others put the figure much lower, at a maximum of 500 congregations encompassing some 250,000 members."[31]

Preus did remove four of the eight district presidents. As noted earlier, however, his reticence in removing all eight—even after the eight had made it clear that they intended to stand together—created distress not only among the "moderates," but also among the "conservatives." This proved to be too much for some conservatives, and efforts began to find a replacement for Preus. By way of one example is the following:

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[30] "Preus' Purge," *Time*, Monday, July 21, 1975, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,913312,00.html.

[31] "Preus' Purge," *Time*, July 21, 1975.

> Since published reports would, no doubt, generate a lot of untimely publicity which would not enhance your chances of reelection, I therefore strongly urge you to open your books for inspection and answer my questions before this occurs. It seems to me that both you and your attorney are very shortsighted as there is no way you can escape answering questions regarding Synod's financial operations which has produced such tragic results.[32]

Despite the grumbling, Preus was returned to office in 1977. There was now, however, a clear division in the conservative ranks bordering on schism. As the 1981 nomination cycle was about to begin, Preus surprised many and came out with a letter indicating his unwillingness to allow his name to stand for another term.

In his retirement, Jack worked on fundraising for a new chapel on the St. Louis campus. He also completed a biography of Chemnitz that proved to be popular. Further, he remained involved in certain theological disputes and continued to appear at synodical conventions. He was named President Emeritus of the Missouri Synod in 1992.

Jacob A.O. Preus died on August 13, 1994, and is buried in Concordia Cemetery in St. Louis. Though his death occurred more than a decade and a half ago, he remains a controversial figure in the history of American Lutheranism generally and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod specifically.

VII. Conclusion: Coming to Grips with an Old Problem

The question still remains unanswered: Was Jack Preus a theologian, a churchman, or both? Perhaps you have formed an opinion by now—or perhaps the opinion you had previously has remained intact. My answer is simple: I would say both—and more. Preus's role in the controversies of the 60s and 70s will always offer the temptation to take the path of least resistance. Perhaps some of you have heard that simple interpretation: Jack was the politician and Robert was the theologian. I just think that is too easy a way out.

When Robert and Jack Preus came to the Missouri Synod, they brought with them a new way of doing things. Ironically enough, those opportunities would likely not have been open to them had it not been for the openness to new theological perspectives at St. Louis especially, though also at Springfield. In other words, Robert and Jack brought a fresh

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[32] Fred C. Rutz to J.A.O. Preus, February 24, 1977. CTS Archives.

look at Lutheran orthodoxy to Missourians through their teaching, writing, and translating.

Lutheran orthodoxy had been largely defined in terms of Pieper's dogmatics at both seminaries by this time. It is worth noting, however, that Pieper was translated initially in the edited form of J.T. Mueller's dogmatics. Up to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the LCMS, the most consistently used dogmatics textbook at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, was Walther's edition of Baier's *Compendium.*[33] Whatever limitations that text may have had—and I happen to like it—it did still place one into conversation with at least a portion of the Great Tradition. When Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* appeared, however, the focus seems to have shifted. Granted, Pieper's work is nothing short of remarkable—the production of a dogmatics makes extraordinary demands on its author(s); just ask those working on the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics or Concordia Publishing House's Bohlmann/Nafzger dogmatics—some 20 years later! So my purpose is not to denigrate Pieper, but simply to make this point. Where Walther's edition of Baier was connected to the historic Lutheran chorus through the voices that sounded from the pages themselves, Pieper's dogmatics was a solo. And by becoming the "standard" text, his dogmatics in some ways closed the LCMS's theological system. Add to that the very real limitations of the Mueller edition, and the system could—perhaps did—become self-referencing.

Enter the new thinking at St. Louis and the broader familiarity with Lutheran orthodoxy of the Preus brothers. Two new ways of viewing the Lutheran world—at least. Robert read and summarized the thought of the Lutheran Orthodox fathers in his wonderful *Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism.*[34] Jack translated Chemnitz's *The Two Natures in Christ,* along with other key texts, and helped ensure that others would be translated.[35] Think of the other texts that we now take for granted that have appeared in English translation since 1957: Chemnitz's *Examination of the Council of*

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[33] Johann Wilhelm Baier and C.F.W. Walther, *Compendium theologiae positivae: adjectis notis amplioribus, quibus doctrina orthodoxa ad ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΝ academicam explicatur atque ex Scriptura S. eique innixis rationibus theologicis confirmatur* (Grand Rapids: Emmanuel Press, 2006).

[34] Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), and Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism 2, God and His Creation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972).

[35] Martin Chemnitz and J.A.O. Preus, *The Two Natures in Christ* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971). For example, Jack was key in getting the word out about Chemnitz's wonderful *Enchiridion: Ministry, Word, and Sacraments.*

Trent and *The Lord's Supper*, to name only two. The Gerhard project now underway and the expansion of the American Edition of Luther's Works are two more recent examples.[36] These texts are forcing us to reengage the Lutheran portion of the Great Tradition and will continue to do so.

What systematic theology does—indeed, what it is supposed to do—is weave a web of perfect symmetry. Robert did this with his *Post-Reformation Lutheranism* and Jack supported it with his translations. Their contributions were rightfully formative for a generation of pastors. But beneath their snapshot of orthodoxy are churning historical realities. Lutheranism was a mess and in danger always of falling apart during the original days of dead orthodoxy. Orthodox theologians did things inconsistent with the true faith. For my part, I am suspicious of Abraham Calov—he was too influenced by Pietism for my comfort. But you would never know that from Robert Preus's *Post-Reformation Lutheranism*; Calov was simply one of the "orthodox" voices in the choir. As such, the Preuses' approach to Lutheran Orthodoxy was something like that of Perry Miller, the great historian of Puritanism in the colonial period of America. Miller simply identified a "New England Mind." In *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* he did not even bother to cite his sources, so convinced was he of the fundamental philosophical agreement among the New England Puritans.[37] For Jack and Robert Preus "Orthodox Lutheranism" was a life of the mind, a symmetrical system—the "web of doctrine" of which these two brilliantly, passionately, and persuasively spoke.

The fact is, however, that even the best web has its asymmetries. And here I cannot speak to Jack, but I can to Robert. He was a fine historian and knew that no system was ever perfectly applied. He convinced me of the perfect ideal, but he also taught me how to live with the historical realities. And so, even the most perfect web must have its asymmetries if the web is going to work. The spider cannot connect all the pieces and parts of the web without having to bend the perfect frame somewhat to the circumstances in which it is being built. But even as it does so, it constructs a piece of functional beauty.

We human beings tend to see beauty and truth in symmetry. Life, however, is not always like that. While in South Africa during February 2008, I went on a game walk with some African guides. As we walked through the fog, I nearly walked into a massive spider web in which a bird

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[36] Martin Chemnitz, Fred Kramer, Luther Poellot, J.A.O. Preus, and Georg Williams, *Chemnitz's Works* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008).

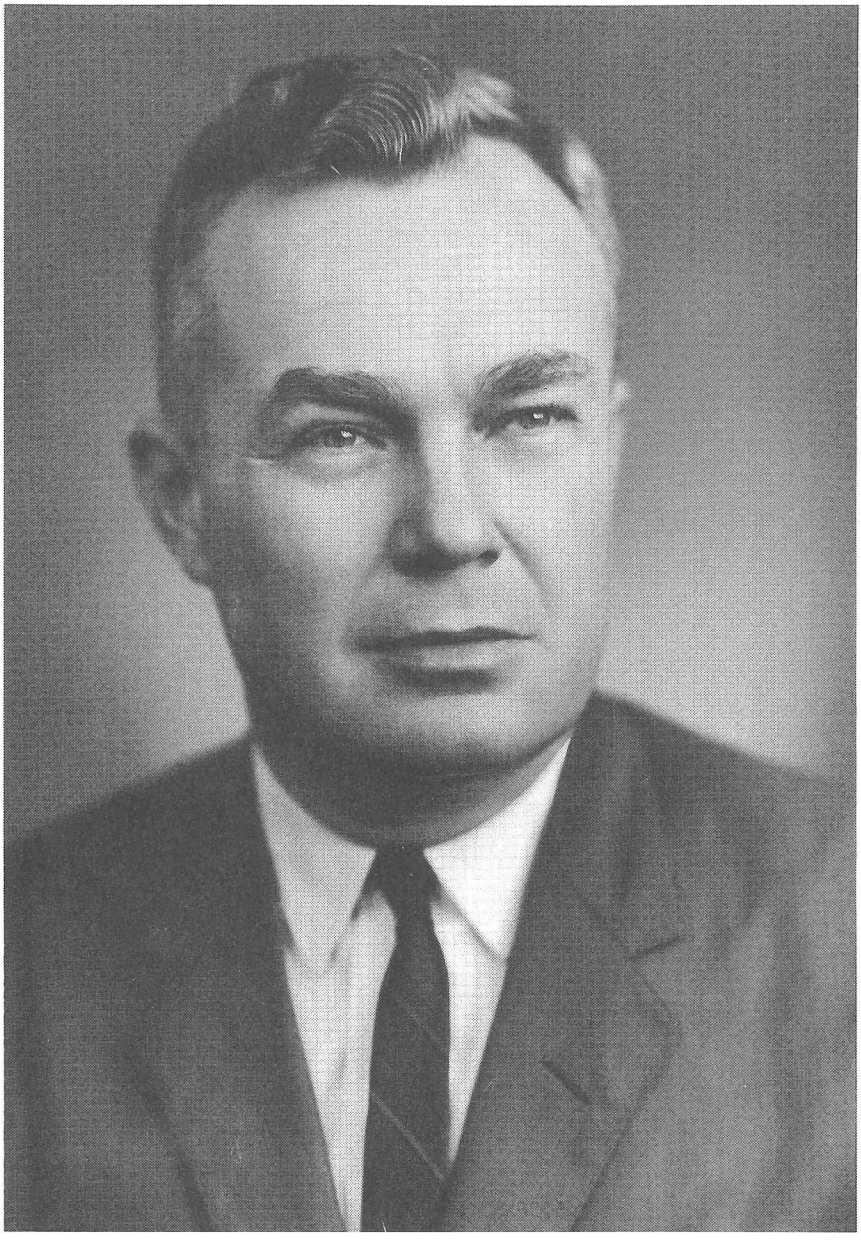
[37] Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983).

had been snared, wrapped, and sucked dry. It scared me to death! It had to be the ugliest, messiest, nastiest web that I have ever seen. But that ugly mess of a web got the job done. Being able to see that in the life of the church shows real historical perspective.

For a man whose experience was as varied as J.A.O. Preus's, one should not expect one descriptor to capture the entire man. The web of each of our lives is far messier than that. Still, as God's people, God accomplishes his will through inconsistent people like you and me—and J.A.O. Preus. And with that in mind, perhaps the more perspectival assessment offered by Leigh Jordahl offers us the best conclusion.

> Almost always jovial, always quick to form judgments, infatuated with watching people and sizing them up, impetuous, and given to generalizations expressed in sometimes wild hyperbole, he was restless, and, for someone so amazingly bright, too much on the move to become, as his younger brother did, a theologian in depth. And, as is well known, he hated face-to-face confrontation. It was a flaw in his character that . . . he tended to improvise and imply pacification when issues at hand should have been openly addressed and thrashed out. For that he sometimes was accused of being double-tongued. (I don't want to put too fine a point on that, since I wonder who could have done better at the tasks that confronted Preus when he came to leadership in the terribly divided Missouri of 1969.) Neither can I imagine him plugging along year after year in a pastorate where nothing exciting was apt to happen, as, for instance, the *Faith-Life* editor did for forty years in a non-growing country parish. Not that Jack sought or received much glory, but he was once lightheartedly described as a man who ate Mexican jumping beans for breakfast.[38]

[38] Jordahl, "J.A.O. Preus," 45.



J.A.O. Preus

Courtesy of Concordia Theological Seminary Archives

Robert David Preus

Courtesy of Concordia Theological Seminary Archives

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The Theology of Robert David Preus and His Person: Making a Difference

David P. Scaer

I. Fading Memory

Like them or not, brothers Jack and Robert Preus changed the direction of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the second half of the twentieth century, and Preus became a household word. Robert came to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1957, was the president of Concordia Theological Seminary, first in Springfield in 1974 and since 1976 in Fort Wayne, until he was dismissed in 1989 and then reinstated in 1992 before retiring in 1993. Jack came to Springfield in 1958, becoming its president in 1962 and LCMS president in 1969 until 1981. Both men's portraits hang on the seminary walls, but without continued narrative their accomplishments fade. Failing memory belongs to the human condition. Professors who died before my seminary enrollment—Graebner, Loeber, Sieck—and those who preceded me at Springfield—Albrecht, Hemmeter, Barth, Baepler—have no place in my historical consciousness. In my St. Louis seminary student years, an arch was dedicated in memory of Francis Pieper, one-time president of the LCMS, its chief theologian and the longest-serving president of that seminary. A grand faculty procession from the chapel to the arch would have been appropriate, but it did not happen. Even though the faculty occupied the Gothic styled buildings that were built during Pieper's years, nearly all were absent at the dedication. Isaac Watts said it all: "[They] fly forgotten as a dream / Dies at the opening day."[1] Ministerial memoirs are fascinating, as long as they are not written with the pretense of objectivity. Mix some facts with a few opinions and top off with a whiff of emotion for a perfect historical cocktail. What I say here is part memoir, part autobiographical, part disconnect, and somewhat theological.

[1] Issac Watts, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 733, stanza 5.

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II. Preus Comes to the LCMS

I met Robert Preus after his installation at the 1957 opening service of the St. Louis seminary. On Tuesday, October 31, 1995, I sat next to him at a dinner at the Sasse Symposium at the St. Catharines seminary. The next day we shared a ride to the Buffalo airport. A few days later, on Saturday, November 4, he died. It was not cradle to grave, but close to it. Preus was called to teach philosophy in the place of Donald Meyer, brother-in-law to Richard Koenig, later a spokesperson for the Seminex movement, and Paul Riedel, brother of Robert Riedel, who was removed later as LCMS New England District president by Jack. Meyer and Riedel died in successive years.

My first classroom experience with Preus was a graduate seminar in 1962. Our association was more personal than academic, but it was instrumental in his suggesting me in 1966 to Jack for an assistant professor position at Springfield. I met Jack at his September 1962 seminary presidential inauguration at Trinity, Springfield. In 1965 two professors were sidelined by heart attacks. With the first string sidelined and the second string declining, Jack went for the third string. For good or for bad, my seminary tenure of over four decades has "Preus" written all over it. This did not translate into theological influence or institutional advancement. Howard Tepker, Eugene Klug, and Harry Huth were Springfield's theologians and represented its theology on the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations. From the time he came in December 1975, Kurt Marquart had Preus's confidence and came to be regarded as the seminary's eminent theologian. My being Preus's last academic dean had more to do with administration and less with theology.

III. The First Taste of Neo-Orthodoxy

In the 1950s, St. Louis seminary students were assigned classes alphabetically. This sheep/goat division placed me in classes with Robert L. Wilken, the late Richard John Neuhaus, Paul Wildgrube, and John H. Elliott. Like myself and a quarter of the class, Neuhaus belonged to the Levitical priesthood of the LCMS. With a very orthodox Lutheran father, he belonged to the order of Aaron. Surviving classmates recall our theological confrontations. I do not. Some of our professors (e.g., Edgar Krentz, Fred Danker, Richard Caemmerer, and Martin Scharlemann) remained at the seminary until the February 1974 walkout. Robert Werberig, Everett Kalin, Ralph Klein, John Damm, John Tietjen, Edward Schroeder, Robert Bertram, and Richard Klann were not there in the 1950s when the newer theologies began emerging alongside the older one. One New Testament introduction course required three textbooks: one liberal,

one conservative or Reformed, and one middle of the road. We were left on our own to determine what position to take. Dogmatics followed Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* and was taught by the mainline Missourians Lorenz Wunderlich, Lewis Spitz, and Herbert Bouman. This was consistently unexciting. Henry Reimann had us read Emil Brunner's *The Divine-Human Encounter* but without analyzing how its neo-orthodoxy compared to the classical orthodoxy. Only in reading Brunner's *Der Mystik und das Wort* did I learn that neo-orthodoxy was a reaction to nineteenth-century liberalism. Brunner and Karl Barth's repudiation of Schleiermacher excelled Pieper's dislike for the father of liberalism.[2] If neo-orthodoxy was an alien element in LCMS theology, we shared a common enemy.

In contrast to the old liberalism, neo-orthodoxy put dogmatics back into the center of the church's life, but the fly in its ointment was its concept that hearers' encounter with Christ, the *Begegnung*, was the determinative factor in revelation. What the biblical writers encountered, they recorded. Through their writings, readers could share in the original encounter at a less intense level. Encounter, revelation, inspiration, and conversion were virtual synonyms for the reality of coming to an awareness of Christ. Unlike Schleiermacher's God consciousness, *Gottesbewusztsein*, the encounter with Christ was not self-originating but was aroused by hearing about past events recorded in the Scriptures.

Throughout the LCMS, the word "encounter" sprang up overnight like a weed. Neo-orthodoxy had a positive effect in reevaluating the traditional view that understood biblical inspiration as revelation. Lutheran Orthodoxy held, as did neo-orthodoxy, that revelation could be prior to inspiration, but also that divine mysteries were revealed by inspiration. The neo-orthodox definition that the Scriptures were a witness to revelation had something going for it. Inspired biblical writers recorded both ordinary and revelatory events. Faith was involved in both receiving the revelation and writing the inspired Scriptures.

Since the word for reveal, ἀποκαλύπτω, in the Gospels refers to awakening faith in what Jesus said about himself, confusion in coming to terms with neo-orthodoxy was inevitable. Peter's revelation that Jesus was the Christ did not result from a direct working of the Spirit from heaven.[3]

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[2] See Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen Winter Semester 1923/24*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982).

[3] "Inspiration is the act of the Holy Spirit whereby the actual knowledge of things is communicated supernaturally to the created intellect, or in an inner suggestion or

Pieper did not discuss revelation in the locus on God, but in response to neo-orthodoxy it was relocated in the prolegomena in a course called Revelation and Scriptures. Revelation was seen as prior to inspiration and distinct from it. The christological element in the neo-orthodox definition was not carried over into readjusted LCMS definitions of revelation, but stayed closer to the prevailing Evangelical definition that God could and did approach his people in revelation without Christ. Neo-orthodoxy was hardly a uniform system. Brunner and Barth differed on the natural knowledge of God. Rudolph Bultmann placed his demythologizing of the Gospels next to his understanding of justification as an encounter.

By the mid-1950s, a decade after it had come ashore in North America, neo-orthodoxy surfaced on the St. Louis faculty and made a formal entrance in Martin H. Scharlemann's February 25, 1958, essay, "The Inerrancy of Scripture." This reflected the faculty's undeveloped understanding of neo-orthodoxy and its relation to the classical theology.[4] Barely half a year earlier, Preus, whose doctoral supervisor was Thomas Forsyth Torrence, had joined the faculty. Torrence, who was the leading British neo-orthodox scholar and was designated by Barth to finish his *Church Dogmatics* if he became incapacitated,[5] said that Preus was the best student he ever had. Preus also heard Barth lecture. His still unpublished 1961 faculty essay, "Current Theological Problems Which Confront Our Church," was a response to neo-orthodoxy on the faculty and perhaps

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infusion of concepts, whether the concepts were known or unknown previous to the writing." Robert D. Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians* (Mankato, MN: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1955), 30. "Scripture was more than merely a record or history of God's revelation: it was revelation, or, to put it more accurately, it was revelation put down in writing" (31).

[4] One idiosyncratic version came from an Old Testament professor who designated only those sections of the Old Testament as the word of God which explicitly identified God as the author. In the sentence, "The Lord said, 'Go to Canaan,'" only 'Go to Canaan' was the word of God but not "the Lord said." This definition was of unknown origin. In any event a prophet like Isaiah got so caught up in what he was saying that he so forgot the distinction between what he and God said that he actually thought that what he said was God's word. Prophets thought their manuscripts possessed divine authority.

[5] John D. Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," *Trinity Journal* 25 (2004): 198. Also on the faculty of the University of Edinburgh during Preus's stay was John Baillie, whose *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956) was widely popular in North America. By 1967 it had gone through nine printings.

Scharlemann in particular. Faced with Preus's tour de force, Scharlemann withdrew his essay at the 1961 Cleveland LCMS convention.[6]

Neo-orthodoxy detached theology from history and so was not necessarily dependent on it. Theology and history operated in separate, almost autonomous spheres. While Bultmann did away with history, Barth mostly ignored it.[7] For a time it was as if I had been watching a tennis match thinking it was baseball. Failure to come to terms with the new theology partially resulted from the closed theological system of the LCMS, which since Pieper had engaged other theologies chiefly in a negative way. LCMS theology supported itself by references to its own theologians and official documents. In terms of Daniel's statue: the gold head was C.F.W. Walther, the silver torso was Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics,* and the clay feet were *The Abiding Word,* John Theodore Mueller's *Christian Dogmatics,* and Edward W.W. Koehler's *A Summary of Christian Doctrine.* Any closed system possesses an implicit infallibility and is susceptible to external infection. The LCMS was no exception. Adding to the bewilderment of those days was the fact that the St. Louis faculty functioned as the LCMS magisterium in interpreting doctrine, but it was no longer speaking with one voice. A student body expected to respect a magisterial faculty was hardly inclined or equipped to analyze its teachings. They could hardly be expected to dissect this Eutychian blend of classical orthodoxy with the new theology, especially if some professors

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[6] My colleague, Lawrence R. Rast Jr., called my attention to both essays and alerted me that the timing of the Preus essay indicated that it was a refutation of Scharlemann's position. The bulk of Preus's paper dissects contemporary views on revelation. Preus spanned the theological spectrum completely. Here are some of the theologians: Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Regin Prenter, Warren Quanbeck, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, S.T. Coleridge, Julius, Hare, F.D. Maurice, Anders Nygren, F.D.E. Schleiermacher, John and Donald Baillie, Martin Buber, G. Ernest Wright, Langdon Gilkey, A. Anderson, Abba, Heinecken, Albert Schweitzer, Schlier, C.H. Dodd, Kierkergaard, Albrecht Ritschl, Spinoza, Lessing, Christian Wolff, et al. In comparison, Scharlemann's 1958 essay, "The Inerrancy of Scripture," to which Preus seems to be partially responding, looked like a Rube Goldberg production, something on the order of J.A.T. Robinson's *Honest to God,* taking a little from Barth, Bultmann, and Tillich and mixing it into a punch. For Preus, LCMS problems with the Scriptures were traceable to the eighteenth-century enlightenment.

[7] Brent A. Strawn, a professor at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, says that with the perseverance of the historical-critical method, theology up to this time had not been a factor in biblical studies. This compartmentalization of history and theology has been reversed by such scholars as N.T. Wright, "Docetism, Kasemann, and Christology," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2/2 (2008): 161-180. The Gospels courses in our seminary's new curriculum treat theology and history together.

were themselves less than fully informed and, thus, could not come to terms with what was happening.

IV. *Sola Scriptura* vs. the *Analogia Fidei (Scripturae)*

I obtained a copy of Preus's *The Inspiration of the Scriptures* in 1957.[8] Evident were the author's clarity of thought and an orderly and expansive mind at home with all necessary sources, especially in comparison with the rising confusion among St. Louis faculty and students. Like most LCMS seminary students and clergy then and perhaps now, I did not distinguish between what Lutheran theologians said about this or that doctrine and what the biblical documents themselves said. What was Lutheran was biblical and vice versa. An argument not won by the Scriptures could be won by referencing Luther, the Confessions, or the Brief Statement. Pieper's *Dogmatics* was the court of final resort.

Analogia fidei, the consensus of doctrines derived from the clear biblical passages, provided solutions to biblical discrepancies arising from unclear passages. Majority rules. The LCMS had its own *deus ex machina* to resolve difficult situations. Some passages, the *sedes doctrinae*, are valued over others. A passage in conflict with a supposedly clear one had to give way to the *analogia fidei*, but this involves sacrificing the *sola scriptura* principle. It is a highly subjective method. What is unclear to one person may be absolutely clear to another. With God as their author, the Scriptures possessed authority, sufficiency, clarity, truthfulness (i.e., their inerrancy; God could not contradict himself), efficacy, and clarity (i.e., what God spoke had to be taken literally, the *sensus literalis*).[9] He did not allow "departure at all from the intended meaning of single Bible text." Preus was explicit in insisting on *sensus literalis*, the literal meaning of a passage. Better to let the discrepancy between two passages remain than to go against the clear, literal meaning, the *sensus literalis*. He went further in saying that the "*Sensus literalis* and the *analogia Scripturae* complement each other."[10] In the case of John 6, however, which speaks of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, the *analogia Scripturae* took precedence over the *sensus literalis*.[11] In line with Lutheran tradition, Preus went for the

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[8] See note 3 above.

[9] Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 371–372.

[10] Robert D. Preus, *Doctrine is Life: Essays on Scripture*, ed. Klemet I. Preus (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 233.

[11] Preus, *Doctrine is Life*, 228. For the full discussion, see 226–235. The chapter "The Hermeneutics of the Formula of Concord," 215–241, to which the following references

spiritual meaning. While he does not give an explanation for surrendering the *sensus literalis*, the reason was probably that the literal meaning challenged the Lutheran *analogia fidei* that only faith was absolutely necessary for salvation.[12] Luther faced the same problem in James, in which works were made a factor in justification, and simply removed the book from the canon.

As valuable as the *analogia fidei* is in furthering a unified theology, it can become a liability in wrestling with the Scriptures. Seminary students taught the method plod through the same biblical forest on the same paths and come across nothing really new. Answers are in hand before the questions are asked. A church's faith is fed by its past and its theology cannot contradict its official positions, but our response is that previous theologians cannot be allowed to corner the market on what the Scriptures have to offer. Preus did not differ from the LCMS official theology, but his thorough knowledge of seventeenth-century Lutheran theology and a direct encounter with neo-orthodoxy, which surfaced in his 1961 essay and his 1970 *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism,* gave him an advantage. While others were folding neo-orthodoxy into their theological positions, Preus knew the new theology first hand, provided an analysis of it, and, compared to others, had arguably the best understanding of it.

The Lutheran Orthodox position on inspiration, as Preus clarified in his *The Inspiration of Scripture,* was for many how the Scriptures presented their own origin. *Sola scriptura* did not differ from the LCMS's own *analogia fidei.* This approach cannot be dismissed out of hand. Scholars like Robert L. Wilken and Dale C. Allison are reviving often-ignored past interpretations in coming to terms with biblical texts.[13] A raw *sola scriptura* approach can produce devastating results. The Scriptures were written within the context of the church and intended to be understood there.[14] For the LCMS, the boundary date of that context was 1847.[15] Preus moved the

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are made, appeared in *No Other Gospel,* ed. A. Koeplin (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1980) and brought together earlier works in an essay delivered at the 1973 Bethany Lectures in Mankato, Minnesota.

[12] Preus, *Doctrine is Life,* 232–239.

[13] See, e.g., Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

[14] Assigning the role of interpreting the Bible to the academy will inevitably produce a different result than when that was done in the church. See Karl Paul Donfried, *Who Owns the Bible: Toward the Recovery of a Christian Hermeneutic* (New York: The Crossword Publishing Company, 2006).

[15] Current attention to past and often discredited historical interpretations of the Bible is partially a reaction to the fragmented and meager results of some historical-

ball back more than two centuries to the early seventeenth century and enlarged the playing field. He could take issue with these theologians on this or that point, but their position and that of Luther and the Confessions were his. Here was the seamless theological cloak. Close to the heart of the classical Lutheran position was the delineation of the process of biblical inspiration from the Spirit's directing the writers' research to the picking up of their pens.[16] Each was given "a specific command and impulse" to write, but was not necessarily aware that the Spirit was working directly on him.[17] The Scriptures' divine character of *autopistia* (i.e., their self-authentication) was demonstrable only by the Scriptures' own testimony to themselves. Each word was *autopistos* and could be recognized as divine by the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum.* Preus saw believing in Christ and accepting the Scriptures as God's word as one act worked by the Spirit, a view with which Barth could be comfortable. Claiming the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* as the proof of inspiration is not without problems. It comes close to a tautology, since accepting the Spirit's testimony is faith.[18] It suspiciously resembles Calvin's view of the indwelling of the Spirit as the evidence of faith.[19] Preus defends the Lutheran dogmaticians (and himself) by asserting that "belief in the authority of the Scripture is only a part of the total effect of the Spirit's effect in me," a topic which he promised to engage later.[20]

There is no quarrel that the Spirit inspires the Bible and creates faith, but axiomatic for Lutheran theology is that the Spirit works only through the word.[21] Since for Preus the "Word" is Christ, the Scriptures are

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critical methods that do not recognize that the Scriptures are primarily theological documents intended to produce theological results. The LCMS proclivity for seeing its history of less than two centuries as *Heilsgeschichte* hardly shares in the catholic scope of other endeavors but it is not atypical of how other churches interpret the Bible.

[16] Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture*, 50–52.

[17] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 276. Primary *sedes doctrinae* for biblical inspiration were Second Timothy 3:15–17 and Second Peter 1:21 (282–283).

[18] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 296–299. He points out that faith in the Scriptures cannot really be distinguished from faith in Christ and that both are worked by the Holy Spirit (302–303).

[19] John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 1:72.

[20] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 303. Rather than resolving a potentially major flaw, Preus advises the reader that the Spirit's work in believers will be undertaken in the section on soteriology, for which he did not live long enough to provide a volume.

[21] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 302. "All the Lutheran theologians stress that the work of the Spirit and the work of the Word in this regard, as

thoroughly christological,[22] though he acknowledges he does not know the reason for this.[23] For Preus, the Bible's christological character is determined by the Word that exists alongside of God without referring to it as the incarnate Word and so the historical aspects of Jesus' ministry are not included in the Spirit's inspiration of the Scriptures. Lutheran and Reformed theology differ on how God works with his creation. As is evident in their doctrine of the sacraments, Lutherans hold that God is comfortable working through things he created. In Reformed thought, God can never quite come to terms with his own creation and hence the Spirit is given directly, maybe alongside of things, but never through them. Here Lutherans and the Reformed face one another across an unbridgeable gap.[24] In defining the inspiration of the Scriptures, however, the Lutheran dogmaticians and Preus held to a direct working of the Spirit on the writers and went further to say that Christ as God's eternal Word was speaking in the Scriptures, but they did not take the next step in identifying the Word with the historical Jesus. In inspiring the Scriptures, the Spirit worked directly without means. Christ, assumably the Jesus of the Gospels, was the content of the Scriptures but was not part of the process of inspiration.[25] For the dogmaticians, the unity of the Scriptures was derived from common inspiration by the Spirit and not by their historical, organic interconnectedness.

The seventeenth-century dogmaticians did not know of the historical-critical method of interpreting away biblical history, but on the basis of the older theology, Preus did respond to it in his 1980 essay "The Hermeneutics of the Formula of Concord." In this essay he coins the

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in the work of conversion itself, is not two operations but one work, one unity of operation." In his *The Inspiration of Scripture* Preus discussed the fact that for the Lutheran dogmaticians the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* was always worked by the external word (108–118).

[22] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 270. "The orthodox Lutherans actually found Christ throughout Scripture. . . . To Lutheran theology the Christocentricity of Scripture is evidence of the identity of the Word of God, evidence of the intimate relation and conjunction of the hypostatic Word of Christ and the prophetic Word of God (Scripture), of the material principle of theology and the formal principle of theology."

[23] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 372.

[24] See my discussion of this in *Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, ed. John Stephenson (St. Louis: The Luther Academy), 159–161.

[25] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 372–373. Preus is adamant in holding that Christ is the content and purpose of the Scriptures and that "When Scripture speaks, Christ speaks," but he does not connect inspiration with the historical Jesus. Preus's position resembles Barth's.

phrase "biblical realism," by which he means that what the Bible sets forth as history must be taken that way. "Any genre suggested for a pericope or section of Scripture which would militate against a historical or real referent for theology would have been repudiated as allegorization and unbelief (e.g. etiological saga, didactic tale, symbolic history, faith event, midrash)."[26] These terms were probably used by some faculty colleagues to introduce the new theology into the LCMS. For Preus, what the Scriptures present as historical could not be reduced to literary forms. Preus, however, approaches biblical history from inspiration and not from a historical perspective, as has been recently done by Simon Gathercole,[27] N.T. Wright,[28] and Larry Hurtado.[29] His approach is ahistorical. Inspiration is the proof of an event's historical character. Just as historical circumstances of the biblical writers have no part in defining inspiration, so the historical events reported in the Scriptures are to be accepted because they have been recorded by inspiration.[30]

Here may be a parallel between the older Lutheran theology and Fundamentalism, or at least a caricature of it. Consistent with this view, Preus calls attempts of some Lutheran dogmaticians to use proofs to demonstrate the Bible's divine character "one of the most unfortunate concessions to rationalism in the theology of Lutheran orthodoxy."[31] These proofs are called internal and external criteria and can awaken a human

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[26] Preus, *Doctrine is Life*, 239.

[27] Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.)

[28] N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

[29] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); see David P. Scaer, "Recent Research on Jesus: Assessing the Contribution of Larry Hurtado," *CTQ* 69 (2005): 48–62.

[30] In his essay "The 'Realist Principle' of Theology," in *Doctrine is Life: Essays on Justification and the Lutheran Confessions*, ed. Klemet I. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 367–373, Kurt Marquart analyzes what he calls Preus's "realist principle" or "biblical realism" as set forth in "How Is the Lutheran Church to interpret and Use the Old and New Testaments?" *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 14 (Fall 1973): 31–32. While Marquart says that the lecture was given at Bethany Lectures in 1973, it is more likely that it was given the year before in 1972. In this lecture biblical realism includes not only the biblical history but doctrines like justification. In this essay Preus insisted "that history and reality underlay the theology of Scripture" (367), and "he specified 'biblical realism,' a presupposition for biblical interpretation" (368). Beneath the historical underlay, however, was inspiration.

[31] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 303. Arguably Lutheran Orthodoxy's external proofs for the divine nature may have been the seed bed for rationalism rather than the other way around as Preus sees it.

faith in the Bible, but ultimately recognition of the Scriptures' divine character comes from the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum.*[32] Absence of apologetics in Preus's theology fits his dislike of proofs for the Bible as rationalistic, an otherwise unremarkable observation except for his close association with Marquart, who saw apologetics as part of the theological task. While Preus engaged in the circular reasoning of the *autopistia* and *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* in demonstrating the Bible's authority, Marquart was comfortable and intellectually equipped in using the extra-biblical sources to support biblical inerrancy. This Preus did not do.[33] It is likely that Preus was aware of his differences with Marquart but made no mention of it. He had an openness of mind that allowed for different theological approaches.

V. Preus and Barth Compared

The title of an essay by John D. Morrison of Liberty University in *Trinity Journal,* "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals: Reassessing the Question of the Relation of Holy Scripture and the Word of 'God,"[34] indicates the Swiss theologian's doctrine on the Scriptures may not have been fully grasped by either his admirers or his detractors.[35] Barth may not have been the "Barthian" that others thought. Something like this goes on in Luther studies in showing that classical Lutheranism was not identical with the Reformer's views. Morrison argues that Barth did not hold that human words only become the word of God upon hearing them in the encounter. This was the position of the Barthians who followed him. Morrison argues that Barth held that the Scriptures' past inspiration was the basis for their becoming the inspiring word of God. The present inspiring character of the Bible was an extension of its past inspiration. "While Barth stresses Scripture's *function* as 'witness to' the Word (Christ), and, as witness its *present* inspiring and so its present 'becoming' as Word

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[32] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism,* 301. Listed are eight external and eight internal criteria. Among the former is the Bible's antiquity and among the latter are the depths of its mysteries and the harmony between the Old and New Testaments. One, "the majesty of God speaking to us in Scripture," seems indistinguishable from *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum.*

[33] Preus and Marquart agreed that the Bible was inspired and hence the authoritative word of God, but they reached that goal not only by different roads but on lanes going in opposite directions.

[34] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 187–213.

[35] Morrison discusses Cornelius Van Til, Gordon H. Clark, Carl F.H. Henry, and Berhard Ramm in "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 201–212. Clark and especially Henry were friends of Preus.

of God now by the Spirit, he thereby only 'mutes' his past affirmation of the *past inspiration* of Scripture."[36]

Objectivity adhered to the presence of "the Spirit of Christ the Word, thereby negating the notion that present authority is locked in human subjectivity."[37] For Barth, where and when the Scripture "becomes" the Word of God, it is only "becoming" what it already is,[38] but for the Barthians a present inspiration or inspiring in hearing the word replaces past inspiration.[39] Torrence, Preus's teacher, "saw Scripture as an opaque (though somehow 'inspired') human medium which is dramatically made transparent by the 'coming' of the Word 'through' that medium by the Spirit in order to 'encounter' the human hearer."[40] Morrison summarizes the Barthian (not Barth's) view of the Scripture as "only human text, which by the Spirit of God can 'become' that which it *is not*, the Word of God in the moment of 'encounter' with the risen Christ."[41] Evangelical theology, what Morrison calls, "'the Protestant orthodox' theology" also saw Barth's position as separating the word of God from the Bible.[42] Barth may have been responsible for his position being misunderstood by his caricaturing the classical Protestant doctrine of inspiration and placing the greater weight on the Scripture's "'inspiring' character at the expense of its '*inspiredness*.'" Nevertheless, Barth "still asserted that Holy Scripture *is* that Word of God which, by the Spirit, can 'become' the Word of God, the Word of God's redemptive truth and grace in Jesus Christ, to one who hears in faith."[43]

Reevaluation of Barth raises the possibility of finding points of agreement with Preus. Both were agreed that prior to their use the Scriptures were the word of God, efficacious and self-authenticating, a point Preus acknowledges.[44] Neither included the historical origins of the biblical documents in their doctrines of the Bible as the word of God. Both Preus and Barth began theology with the Scripture as the absolute word of

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[36] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 191, italics original.

[37] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 191.

[38] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 193. David Mueller, Otto Weber, and Arnold Come, identified as Barthians, place the moment of revelation in the encounter and not in the composition of the Scripture.

[39] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 195–198.

[40] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 198.

[41] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 200–201.

[42] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 212–213.

[43] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 213.

[44] Preus, *Doctrine is Life*, 43.

God, but Preus went from the word to history, what he called "biblical realism," a step Barth did not take. As Morrison points out, Barth's "radical historicity and total humanness of the text, seemed to allow the luxury of 'having their cake and eating it too.'"[45] It was the having the cake and eating it too among his colleagues that Preus addressed.[46]

VI. Preus and Christology

Preus's position on justification was formed in his student days by a controversy with a Luther Seminary professor who held to *intuitu fidei*, the belief condemned by the Lutheran Confessions that God predestined to salvation those who he knew would believe. For Preus faith could not be a cause of justification, a position that he and Jack later confronted in the LCMS. He might have been expected to write his dissertation on predestination or justification, but he chose inspiration. Later, justification with its christological component would play a determinative role in his theology. His 1955 *The Inspiration of Scripture* does not discuss the place of Christology in the classical Lutheran theology of the Scriptures, but his 1970 *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* makes it clear that the Bible is completely christological. In Barth-like language he says, "When Scripture speaks, Christ speaks."[47] As mentioned, Preus admits that the orthodox Lutheran theologians did not provide a reason for why the biblical content was christological.[48] Neither does he, but the matter surfaced in our different approaches to theology.

Preus's doctrine of inspiration was a theology "from above." My *The Apostolic Scriptures*, published in 1971, based biblical authority not on inspiration but on their apostolic origins and hence I approached theology "from below." Two years later Preus had wanted my popular Christology to be titled *What Do You Think of Christ?*, but at my insistence it appeared under the title *What Do You Think of Jesus?* Different titles indicated different approaches. I approached both the Scriptures and Jesus from their human side. At several systematics department meetings, these differences surfaced in discussions of how Christology should be taught in the classrooms. My approach evaluated the claims of the man Jesus to be divine, similar to what would later appear in Larry W. Hurtado's *Lord Jesus*

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[45] Morrison, "Barth, Barthians and Evangelicals," 213.

[46] Preus, *Doctrine is Life*, 45.

[47] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 373–374.

[48] "The Lutheran theologians refuse to debate how Christ is present in the Word of Scripture and how Scripture brings Christ to us." Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 374.

Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianty.[49] Preus favored Marquart's approach in following Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* that the first question in Christology should be how the divine became human, a question that divided Lutherans from the Reformed from the Reformation era. Knowing that the matter of how Christology was to be taught could not be resolved, Preus proposed two christological courses to accommodate the different approaches. Nothing came of it and each student determined from whom he took Christology.

On the christological issue, Preus favored Marquart, but enigmatically chose me to write the *Christology* volume in the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series.[50] A bit of irony and an even greater enigma was that he chose me to write the *Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace* volume, since these terms had no place in my preaching or theology and I had not offered courses on these topics.[51] Each time I tried to back out of this assignment, Preus would say, "Dave, I want you to do it." After his death in 1995, some series editors were not convinced that my volume should be published, but I took refuge in Preus's words, "Dave, I want you to do it." Well, I did it and in writing it I came to know what it meant that we must through much tribulation enter God's kingdom.

Another factor in Preus's christological thought was a formal charge of false doctrine brought against a colleague in 1988 who taught that all theology was Christology. To shore up his shaky position as seminary president, he could have backed away from the controversy, but as Christology surfaced as the chief element in his theology, this option was closed to him. This controversy gave Preus a place to reevaluate gospel reductionism, the view that the gospel existentially defined as the word of justification was the standard in judging the Scriptures. He rejected the view of gospel reductionism that juxtaposed the gospel to the Scriptures. However, if the Scriptures were thoroughly christological, which was Preus's position, then the gospel was the standard in judging the Scriptures. For Preus the outward and inward forms of the Scriptures were one. Preus was a prominent member of the Council for Biblical Inerrancy, a group that held to the Evangelical position that the Scriptures were inspired but not christological in every part. For gospel reductionism, only

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[49] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianty* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003).

[50] David P. Scaer, *Christology* (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 1998).

[51] David P. Scaer, *Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace* (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 2008).

those Scriptures in which Christ was encountered were word of God.[52] Classical Lutheranism as presented by Preus saw all of the Bible as word of God (inspired) and christological, but he did not explain how the Scriptures as the word of God came to be christological.

VII. Breaking the Golden Ring or Getting on the Merry-Go-Round

Theology is like a perpetual merry-go-round. Ideally we should all get on at the same place, but we don't. Our presuppositions differ, and even if we can agree on the same way of doing theology, we still come to different conclusions. Outcomes cannot be predetermined. If we have been Christians since infancy, the question may have never crossed our minds why we believe in the Bible. We just do. "Jesus loves me for the Bible tells me so" says it all, at least for Barth and Preus. Current fascination with apologetics indicates that Preus's argument of the *autopistia* of the Scriptures coupled with the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* for some may not be enough. Now that Herod's tomb is found, maybe we can find Noah's ark in its place on Mount Ararat, and behold there will be more Christians. This would be foreign to Preus's thought, but the *autopistia* argument for biblical authority is not without problems. It is not an exclusively Christian argument. Other religions use it.

One solution may be found in expanding the classical Lutheran view that Christ is "present in the Word of Scripture,"[53] as the personal or hypostatic Word, "the Logos through whom God speaks his prophetic Word. He is the heart and content and meaning of the prophetic Word; He is the message and the purpose of all the Scriptures."[54] This should be expanded so that we first see the hypostatic or personal Word as the Word who preached in Galilee, was crucified and resurrected in Jerusalem. The Word who became flesh gives his Spirit to the apostles through whom the Scriptures are inspired.[55] Over against the Reformed, the basic Lutheran understanding is that the Creator is accessible through his creation and the divine word is accessed through human words. Hence Jesus of Nazareth is the essential component in inspiration. Preus held that the unity of the Scriptures resulted from their divine origin. This unity also arose from the

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[52] The Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son, as well as the giving of the Spirit by the incarnate Son to the apostles, becomes tangible in biblical inspiration that now can be understood less as a mystical act and more as a historical one.

[53] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 374.

[54] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 270.

[55] Preus said Christ's presence in the Scriptures was a mystery and any probing of this was philosophizing; *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 377. Not really.

historical interrelatedness of the biblical documents, but this did not belong to Preus's argument.

VIII. Concluding and Failing

In coming to the end of this essay, one is faced with the haunting feeling that the center of who Robert Preus was may never be fully discovered. A place to begin may be Jack and Robert's mercurial rise to influence and prominence in the LCMS. They were liked, disliked, loved, and hated by those on both sides of the aisle.[56] Wherever they were present, they were the center of attention. Robert's sermons began with the claim that the biblical text had been inspired by the Holy Spirit with additional laudatory remarks about the Bible. His sermons were riveting. Even during Robert's darkest days, after he was deprived of the seminary presidency, he attracted groups of students and pastors around him. This made him the envy of his opponents, who, living or dead, will be forgotten sooner than he will.[57]

At the January 1996 seminary symposium, two months after he died, professors who agreed with his removal from the presidency or with disallowing his return to the classroom gathered around his widow Donna to express their condolences. It was Mafia-like. Even after his death the Preus mystique remained, but what was this? He had the first published volume of the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics dedicated to Pieper, but he was not quite a Missourian. He worked to preserve the LCMS's traditional theology, but he worked outside the LCMS boundaries in establishing relations with churches still not in fellowship with the LCMS. He made the first contacts with Asian, African, and European churches that have since his death come into fellowship with the LCMS or are contemplating it. Even those who could not agree with his theology remained his friends. Those whom he appointed to prominent seminary positions and who shared his doctrines of justification and inspiration were among those who supported his removal as seminary president. One administrator who locked him out of the student commons so as not to allow him a place to speak on campus after his reinstatement as president in July 1992 still tells students that Robert Preus was a marvelous preacher and the LCMS's best theologian.

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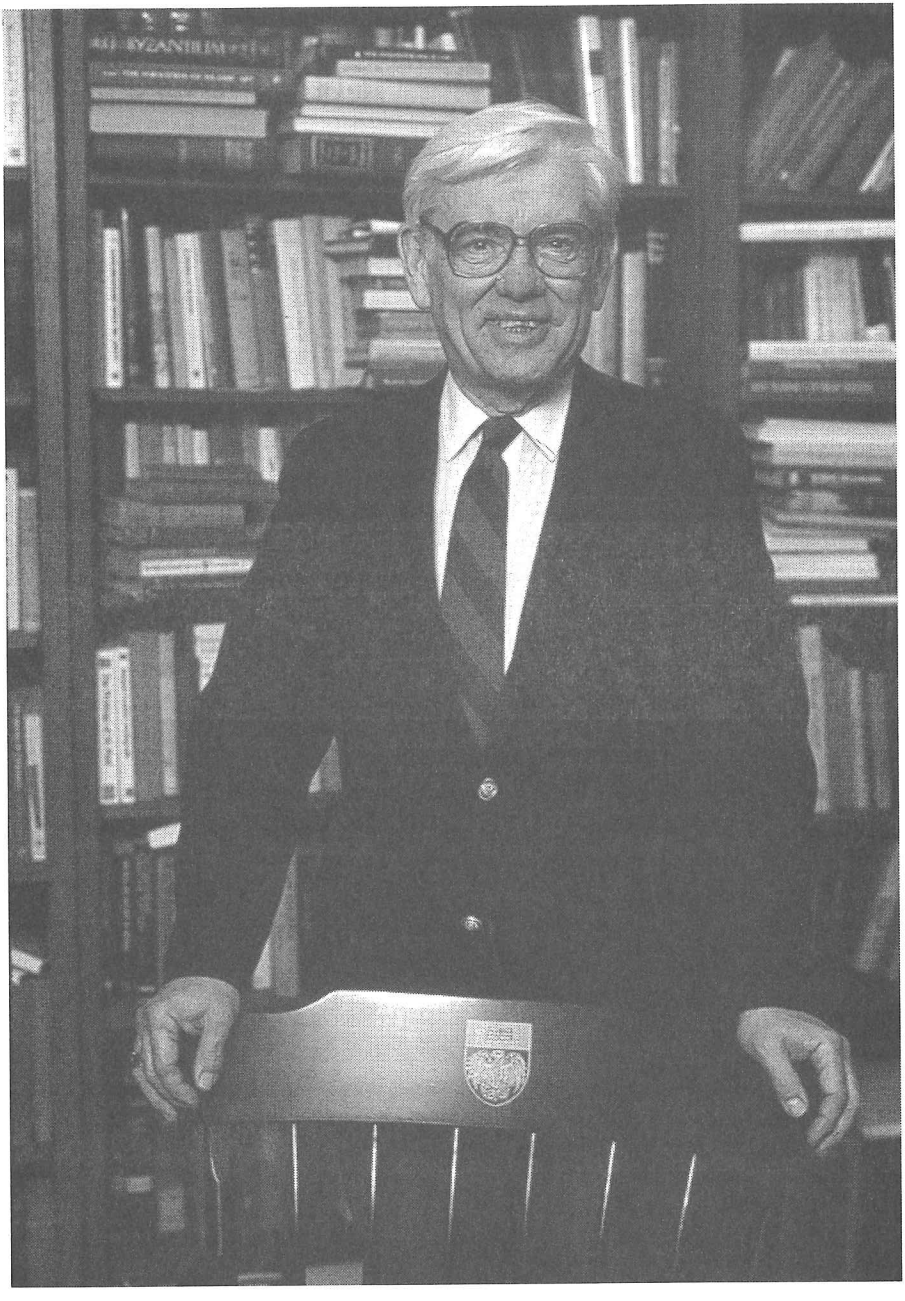
[56] Robert Preus's influence in the LCMS stretched from 1957–1995 (38 years), but Jack's was primarily from 1958–1981 (23 years).

[57] As evidence, see the essays in *The Theology and Life of Robert David Preus* (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 2009).

This riddle of who Preus was and what made him tick may never be resolved, but a living parable of who he was might be found in a party that he and Donna gave in Maple Grove, Minnesota, after leaving Fort Wayne in the spring of 1994. Like Caesar's Gaul, the guests had divided themselves into three groups. First was the ELCA group with ALC origins, including his cousin, David Preus, that church's last president. Second was the ELS group at whose Mankato seminary Robert finished his last semester of studies and two of whose congregations he served as pastor until 1957. Finally was the LCMS group. Robert felt at home with each group and they in turn were at home with him. Jack would die that summer and Robert the following year. The Preus era was coming to an end.

Both Preus brothers preferred preaching in black Geneva gowns. Liturgical protocol was not high on their agenda. Each made a point of their never having put on a clerical collar, mention of which mattered little to some and was annoying to others. They did not quite fit prescribed patterns, but years after their deaths they are remembered and continue to shape theological patterns for others. From their generation no one has had or will have the staying mystique and influence the Preus brothers had. For those who knew Jack and Robert, they remain so alive that if they would appear now in this place, we would have no difficulty in picking up the theological discourse they brought to the LCMS. For them, theology was the common discourse.



Jaroslav Pelikan

Courtesy of Michael Marsland/Yale University

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Jaroslav Pelikan and the Road to Orthodoxy

Robert Louis Wilken

For most of his life, Jaroslav Pelikan was a Lutheran who practiced his faith quietly and devotedly. Although he had been ordained to the ministry as a young man and preached and presided at the celebration of the Eucharist, as his scholarly work deepened and his engagement with the university grew, the churchly side of his vocation was less evident to the public.

But those who knew Pelikan well knew that at heart he was a seminary professor most at home in a theological community. He saw himself as *doctor ecclesiae*, a teacher of the church, and taught as a man of faith. And by "teaching" he meant the church's cardinal doctrines, that God is one, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that Christ is one person, fully God and fully man—those teachings that were solemnly declared in the ancient councils and are confessed in the ecumenical creeds. Pelikan's historical study had convinced him that the most faithful bearer of the apostolic faith was the great tradition of thought and practice as expounded in the writings of the orthodox church fathers, the medieval thinkers, and the magisterial reformers.

In the spring of 1994, after I had made the decision to be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, I was in New Haven for a conference celebrating Pelikan's seventieth birthday. My reception into the Roman Catholic Church was to take place in mid-summer on the day of St. Bridget of Sweden, July 23.

Pelikan had been my teacher and friend for thirty-five years, and I wanted him to know before rumors began to spread. I had first met Pelikan in the fall of 1959 when I was a student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis thinking about graduate study. Pelikan had come to town to give a lecture, and I had the privilege of driving him to the airport afterward. As a result of that conversation, I decided to apply to the University of Chicago. In the fall of 1960, I matriculated at the Divinity School. At Chicago, under Pelikan's tutelage, I read Tertullian and Leo the Great and Augustine among the Latin fathers, and Athanasius and Cyril among the Greek fathers, and I heard Pelikan lecture on the history of Christian thought. He led me to the topic which would become my dissertation and first book, Cyril of Alexandria's commentaries on the Gospels as a basis for

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understanding his theology. When I was a student at the University of Chicago, Pelikan proposed that we name the Lutheran campus ministry "St. Gregory of Nyssa Lutheran Church." The name was accepted, and during my years as a graduate student we would see each other weekly at the Eucharist at St. Gregory of Nyssa Church.

After he went to Yale in 1962 and I finished my Ph.D., we kept in touch. Over the years, our friendship was nurtured by a deep love of the church's classic theological tradition, particularly the church fathers and medieval thinkers. When I arrived in New Haven to celebrate his seventieth birthday, I had some trepidation wondering how he would respond to my decision to be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. During an afternoon break in the conference, I said I had something to tell him, and we walked about the Yale campus for an hour or so. When I finally came to the point of the talk and told him of my decision, he responded without hesitation: "Well, Robert, were I to do something similar, I would be received into the Orthodox Church."

That was all he said, but in the conversation that followed it seemed he had been thinking about his relation to the Orthodox Church for some time. That of course did not surprise me, because there was a definite trajectory in his scholarship that led him to the early church, particularly the Eastern fathers. This was not self-evident for someone raised in the Lutheran tradition. Pelikan began his scholarly career as a Reformation scholar. His dissertation was on Luther and the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535.

Pelikan's first and most ambitious scholarly project was the translation of the writings of Martin Luther into English. Pelikan was not the sole editor of the series. He shared the responsibility with Helmut Lehmann, who taught at Mt. Airy, the Lutheran Seminary. But Pelikan had a significant influence on the shape of the edition. Previously the only Luther available in English was a six-volume collection of translations made in the years between 1915 and 1932. It was a useful set of volumes, but limited because the translators had focused on his polemical, catechetical, and pastoral writings. There was little from his exegetical writings. The American Edition devoted more than half of the volumes to Luther's commentaries—a major intellectual and scholarly contribution.

The many volumes of Luther's exegetical writings helped scholars and theologians see Luther within the long tradition of biblical commentary going back to the early church. Along with the French Jesuits Jean Daniélou and Henri DeLubac, and the German Lutheran Gerhard Ebeling, Pelikan was one of the first to recognize the importance of the history of

exegesis for the understanding of the history of theology. And to demonstrate that exegesis did make a difference in how one interprets the theological tradition, Pelikan published a monograph as part of the series entitled *Luther the Expositor.*[1]

In this book, Pelikan had this wry comment on the way historians had approached the history of Christian thought:

> Entire histories have been written—histories of a whole section of the church, of an era in church history or of a major theological problem—which do not seriously consider the possibility that at least one of the decisive elements in the thought and action of a Christian man or group may have been the way they interpreted the Bible. And this in the face of the fact that these men and groups frequently made the claim they were speaking and acting as expounders of the Sacred Scriptures. Historians have sought to assess the influence of everything from the theologian's vanity to the theologian's viscera upon the formulation of theological doctrines, meanwhile regarding as naïve and uninformed the suggestion that the Bible may be a source of these doctrines.[2]

The study focused on Luther's exegesis of biblical texts relating to the Eucharist (e.g., "This is my body," "For the forgiveness of sins," and "Do this in remembrance of me").

So there was no question that as a scholar and theologian Pelikan was solidly rooted in the Lutheran tradition, in particular the Reformation and the thought of Martin Luther. Yet if one looks over his published books after the publication of *Luther the Expositor* and the completion of the American Edition, his scholarly—and I suspect spiritual—interests were more focused on the early church and the larger catholic tradition.

In the same year that he published *Luther the Expositor,* Pelikan also published *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism.*[3] This was a sympathetic, though not uncritical, presentation of Roman Catholicism before Vatican Council II, before the decades of ecumenical conversation between Catholics and various other communions, before the many years of Lutheran/Catholic dialogue, a time when few Lutherans had any firsthand experience of Catholicism. The book was a publishing success and helped non-Catholics overcome some of the prejudices that had developed over the centuries.

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[1] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

[2] Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor,* 6–7.

[3] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959).

During the next several decades, Pelikan published a number of books dealing with the church fathers. For example, *The Shape of Death* deals with life, death, and immortality in the early fathers.[4] He did a study of the iconoclastic controversy entitled *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons.*[5] His Gifford lectures dealt with the understanding of creation in the Greek fathers. He edited a little volume of the preaching of John Chrysostom on the Gospel of Matthew.[6] Another book of his, *The Melody of Theology,* dealt with the Greek Christian liturgical poet Romanos Melodos.[7]

But his magnum opus was *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine.*[8] For an understanding of Jaroslav Pelikan, it is of utmost importance to know that in this five-volume work he devoted an entire volume to Eastern Christianity, entitled *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700).* From the first sentence of his introduction, entitled "*ex oriente lux,*" it is clear that he wished to rehabilitate Eastern Christianity from its many detractors. For example, he cites the historian of dogma Adolf von Harnack, who said that in the seventh century, "the history of dogma in the Greek church came to an end [so that] any revival of that history is difficult to imagine," and Edward Gibbon, who wrote that Eastern Christians "held in their lifeless hands the riches of the fathers, without inheriting the spirit which had created and improved that sacred patrimony."[9]

Although he stood in the tradition of *Dogmengeschichte* going back to Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack, Pelikan wished to offer a wholly different understanding of the development of Christian doctrine. Harnack had seen the history of Christian thought as a gradual "hellenizing" of the gospel proclaimed during the apostolic age. As the primitive Christian faith became encrusted in Greek philosophical ideas, the essence of

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[4] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Shape of Death: Life, Death, and Immortality in the Early Church Fathers* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961).

[5] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[6] John Chrysostom, *The Preaching of Chrysostom: Homilies on the Sermon on the Mount,* edited with an introduction by Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).

[7] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1988).

[8] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971–1989).

[9] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1.

Christianity was obscured and corrupted. Harnack was tone-deaf to Eastern Christian writers, not only Clement and Origen, but also Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and Cyril of Alexandria. Through his research, Pelikan had come to the conclusion that patristic and Byzantine thought was a faithful interpretation of the Scriptures and of apostolic tradition. Pelikan's *Christian Tradition* showed that patristic and medieval thinkers had deepened and clarified what had been received from the apostles. When I published *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought,*[10] Pelikan wrote me to say that the sentence he liked best in the book was this: "The time has come to bid a fond farewell to the idea of Adolf von Harnack . . . whose thinking has influenced the interpretation of early Christian thought for more than a century."[11]

It is evident then that as a historical theologian who had made his life project a history of Christian doctrine Jaroslav Pelikan gave much thought to the continuity of Christian life and thought over the centuries. A theological as distinct from a strictly historical approach to the Christian past will ask whether the theological tradition has faithfully handed on the apostolic faith. And at some point one is likely to wonder how the tradition to which one belongs relates to the great tradition. In 1991 Pelikan published a book on "historical theology" with the subtitle *Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine.*[12] The more deeply he read the classical Christian thinkers, the more he was inclined to identify with them. At first these questions may have been historical and theological, but over time they became ecclesial. Pelikan's gradual move toward Orthodoxy came about in part through his historical and theological study and writing. And it is perhaps not beside the point, in light of our topic, to note that Pelikan wrote this sentence in the introduction to *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*: "Martin Luther appealed to the example of the East as proof that one could be catholic and orthodox without being papal."[13]

The volume on Eastern Christianity was published in 1974, but there was little in his public persona that would have led one who did not know him well to suspect that Pelikan was moving closer to Eastern Orthodoxy.

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[10] Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).

[11] Wilken, *Early Christian Thought,* xvi. Biographical note: Two of the pictures that hung on the wall of Pelikan's study were Adolf von Harnack and Georges Florovsky, the Orthodox theologian. Pelikan admired both, but his mind and heart were with Florovsky.

[12] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Historical Theology: Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine* (New York: Corpus, 1971).

[13] Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom,* 2.

I was told by a friend, however, that at a gathering of Lutheran clergy in New Haven in the mid-sixties in a talk on the nature of Lutheranism, Pelikan spoke of that strand of Lutheranism that led people to say that if they weren't Lutheran they would be Baptist because of the Bible. He said that was a misreading of Lutheranism and that Lutheranism was closer to Catholicism and Orthodoxy. And he added: If Lutheranism would lean in the direction of the Baptists or the Methodists, he would die in the bosom of the Orthodox Church.

To understand Pelikan's pilgrimage to Orthodoxy, it is necessary to say something about the theological and liturgical developments within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the 1950s. Pelikan completed his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1946 and joined the faculty of Valparaiso University. After three years, he moved to Concordia Seminary, where he taught from 1949 to 1953. I arrived at the seminary in St. Louis in 1955, so I did not have him as a professor. Shortly after Pelikan arrived in St. Louis, he was joined on the faculty by Arthur Carl Piepkorn. Piepkorn (born in 1907) was sixteen years older than Pelikan (born in 1923), but this was his first academic appointment. Piepkorn, too, had studied at the University of Chicago—in semitic languages—but he had served as a pastor in a small mining town in Minnesota, and then at St. Faith Lutheran Church in Cleveland. In 1951, he was asked to join the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.[14]

Piepkorn believed that Lutheranism was a reform movement within Catholicism, and this meant that its deepest commitment was to the historic Catholic faith and practice. Piepkorn taught his students that the first confessions of faith in the Book of Concord are not the Augsburg Confession but the three ancient creeds, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the *Quicumque vult* (the so-called Athanasian Creed). Piepkorn also pointed out that the Book of Concord included a Catalogue of Testimonies, which was a dossier of passages from the writings of the church fathers. Unfortunately, the Catalogue was not translated in the Tappert edition of the *Concordia*, so not all readers of the symbolical books know about them. In the critical edition of the confessional writings edited

[14] My father-in-law, T.A. Weinhold, president of the Western District, was on the small electoral board, and Piepkorn was apparently elected because someone who would have voted against him did not make the meeting. I am proud to say that Pastor Weinhold voted for him.

by Hans Lietzman, the texts are written out in Greek and Latin.[15] The two church fathers with the most citations are the Eastern writers Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria.

Pelikan too had a high regard for the symbolical books. For example, he translated the Apology of the Augsburg Confession for the Tappert edition. He respected the early Lutheran scholastic theologians, who were thoroughly at home in the writings of the church fathers. Among them was John Gerhard, the author of the first *Patrologia*, an introduction to early Christian literature and thought. Gerhard also wrote a beautiful devotional book, *Sacrae Meditationes*, which is steeped in medieval spiritual literature. In sum, Pelikan and Piepkorn embraced an interpretation of Lutheranism that was sacramental and doctrinal (in the sense of the ecumenical creeds) and grounded in the writings of the church fathers.[16]

Besides Piepkorn, the most influential professor on the faculty of Concordia Seminary in the 1950s was Richard Caemmerer, who taught homiletics. No one could come through Concordia Seminary in those years without being deeply influenced by Caemmerer, particularly by his theology of preaching, and students sensed that Caemmerer and Piepkorn presented alternative visions of Lutheranism. Caemmerer was not oriented to the Lutheran Confessions but to Luther, not to the liturgy but to preaching. Piepkorn was no less committed to the classic Lutheran teaching on justification than Caemmerer, but he did not define Lutheranism in terms of a theological conception. To use the old language of Lutheran scholasticism, Caemmerer saw Lutheranism in terms of its material principle, Piepkorn in terms of its formal principles: liturgy, sacraments, ministry, and doctrine. For Piepkorn the most important thing that happened on Sunday was the celebration of the full eucharistic liturgy, while for Caemmerer it was a sermon that proclaimed the gospel. In the car going to the internment of Piepkorn after his funeral at Concordia Seminary, I rode with Caemmerer and his son-in-law Raymond Schulze. On the way Caemmerer quipped, "He even had to have the Sacrament at his funeral."

Pelikan and Piepkorn had a warm relationship. Philip Secker has shared with me a letter Pelikan wrote to Piepkorn on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his doctorate from the University of Chicago. Pelikan wrote: "I am beholden to you for having been a doctor of theology to me so often

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[15] They are included, however, in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

[16] When I was thinking of graduate school, I asked Piepkorn what I should study if I wanted to be a theologian. His response: the church fathers.

and grateful to God for the blessing which He bestowed upon the Church by calling you to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and to the vocation of a theological doctor." Pelikan spoke of Piepkorn as an expositor of both *lex orandi* and *lex credendi,* and in an aside he suggested that Piepkorn, in a review of Paul Tillich, use the phrase, "*sicut errat in principio, et nunc, et semper,* but I hope not *per omnia.*"[17]

Pelikan's reasons for moving toward Orthodoxy were not only theological, but also personal. His father was a pastor in the Slovak Lutheran Church in this country and his mother was from Serbia. Though his family was Lutheran, Pelikan was raised in an Eastern European, Slavic home and learned to speak Slovak as a boy. As he grew older, he learned Russian, and all his life he had a deep, almost reverent, love of Slavic culture. At his memorial service at Yale University in the fall of 2006, he had asked that the Grand Inquisitor section from Dostoevsky's great novel *The Brothers Karamazov* be read. He also asked that the prayer to the *Theotokos* from Rachmaninoff's *Orthodox Vespers* be sung by the Yale Russian Chorus. He wrote a book on Cardinal Josyf Slipyj, head of the Ukrainian Church, *Confessor between East and West: A Portrait of Ukrainian Cardinal Josyf Slipyj,*[18] and another entitled *Jesus, not Caesar: The Religious World View of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk and the Spiritual Foundations of Czech and Slovak Culture.*[19]

It was not, however, until the early nineties that rumors began to spread in ecclesiastical and academic circles. I wrote to Pelikan in the summer of 1995 to ask whether the rumors were true, and he replied that he had not taken any formal steps in relation to Pravo-Slavie. "I attend liturgies of the OCA and of the Greek archdiocese when I can, and I continue to attend at Bethesda [the Lutheran Church in New Haven]." But then he added: "As Hamlet said (he had, you will recall, been a student at Wittenberg), it 'makes us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.'" A year later I met him in Rome and at dinner with him and his wife Sylvia he wanted to talk further about my being received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church and what it meant for me.

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[17] "*As he errs in the beginning, does now, and ever shall do,* but I hope not *throughout.*"

[18] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Confessor between East and West: A Portrait of Ukrainian Cardinal Josyf Slipyj* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1989).

[19] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus, not Caesar: The Religious World View of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk and the Spiritual Foundations of Czech and Slovak Culture* (Salt Lake City: Westminster College of Salt Lake City, 1991).

So I was not surprised when he wrote me a card on March 26, 1998, the day after his chrismation in the Orthodox Church: "From our ongoing conversation you will, I know, not be surprised to learn that yesterday afternoon at St. Vladimir's I was received into full communion with the Orthodox Church. *En kurio.* Jary."

So that is the story of Jaroslav Pelikan's pilgrimage from Lutheranism to Eastern Orthodoxy as I know and remember it. His embrace of Orthodoxy was no conversion, no turning about, no heading off in a new direction; it was a slow and gradual transformation over the course of forty years. The young Lutheran pastor and theologian and Slav in the 1950s was the same Pelikan who was received into the Orthodox Church in the 1990s. The decision grew slowly out of years of historical, theological, liturgical, and ecclesiological study and reflection.

But perhaps I should add one other factor. In the late 1980s, I was asked to serve as a Lutheran on the international commission for dialogue between the Lutheran Churches and the Orthodox Churches. At a meeting in Denmark, the topic was the seventh ecumenical council, the eighth-century council that rendered a definitive decision on the veneration of icons. The Lutherans came prepared to discuss the doctrinal decrees that had been solemnly declared at the council.

But in the very first session the Orthodox members of the dialogue said that we should discuss not only the doctrinal decrees, but also the canons. As you know, the ancient councils issued two sets of declarations, the first dealing with theological issues, the second with jurisdictional, moral, and liturgical matters. From these canons a body of ecclesiastical law arose. The Lutherans were surprised and perplexed because they had not given any thought to the canons. As it turned out this difference did not become a major issue of dispute, and most of our time was spent on the doctrinal decree on icons.

I learned from that encounter, however, a deep truth about the nature of Orthodoxy. The Orthodox thought of themselves as members of the same community that had agreed on the canons at the council. Because they belonged to that community, they felt a responsibility to what it had affirmed many centuries ago even in jurisdictional, moral, and liturgical matters. They knew of course that most of the canons were no longer applicable to the church's life today, yet they saw themselves as part of a living body whose history can be traced back through the bishops of the ancient councils to the apostles. Therefore, what had been decided centuries ago was part of their inheritance, something to be embraced as their own even though the changes had been many. Continuity with the

apostolic age was secured not only through doctrine, but also through persons.

You will recall that in the second century, when Irenaeus mounted a theological defense of apostolic Christianity against the Gnostics, he based his arguments on the interpretation of the Scriptures. He showed that the God of the Old Testament was the Father of Jesus Christ and that the Old Testament and the writings of the apostles were to be interpreted together. To support his interpretation of the Scriptures, he drew on the rule of faith, that simple summary of biblical teaching, a creed-like confession that would eventually grow into the Apostles' Creed.

But Irenaeus also appealed to the succession of bishops in the churches and named in particular several of the churches whose teaching had been handed on by those persons who stood in a tradition stretching back to the apostles. Recall that Paul wrote in Ephesians that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (2:20), not on the doctrine of the apostles. In Irenaeus's view, it was not enough simply to possess the Scriptures or the "rule of faith"; he believed that there had to be a tangible sign of continuity between the church of the present and the apostolic community. This aspect of continuity, the succession of bishops, was as important to him as doctrinal continuity

Shortly before Pelikan died, I drove to New Haven to have one last conversation with him. I spent part of the day with him and his wife Sylvia and shared a simple Lenten lunch. We talked of many things, including what he was reading: *Crime and Punishment* again, *Paradise Lost* (even though, he said, Milton was an Arian and possibly a Pelagian), and Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. He was listening to Bach, especially the B-Minor Mass.

On that last day I saw him alive, he raised the possibility of writing a book together if he had time. He wanted me as a Westerner to write on the Eastern church fathers, and he as an Easterner to write on the Western church fathers. This did not make much sense to me, because as former Lutherans we were both westerners. I said a more interesting book would be why he as a Lutheran became Orthodox and why I as a Lutheran became Roman Catholic. He agreed, but alas, he died six weeks later.

We also talked about the Orthodox Church and the mystery of the church's continuity with the apostles. In the end I think he became convinced that the Orthodox Church was apostolic and its life, liturgy, and teaching were faithful to the apostolic tradition. And it was this conviction, arrived at over time, that led him to be received into full communion.

For a churchman, scholar, and theologian like Pelikan, the reasons behind his decision to become Orthodox were theological, but also very personal, made in the depth of his soul. Though he ended his life in the Orthodox Church, his love and respect for Lutheranism remained undiminished. Jaroslav Pelikan died, I am confident, in the hope and with the prayer that one day the vision of the Lutheran reformers would be celebrated in union with the Orthodox Church.

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God, Christ, and Biblical Authority in the ELCA Today

Mark C. Chavez

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is experiencing a severe, tragic crisis with spiritual, theological, organizational, and financial dimensions. I ask for your prayers for all of us in the ELCA. It is a very difficult time for the ELCA, so your prayers are much appreciated. It has been most reassuring to hear from so many Christians in other churches here in the United States and from around the world who are keeping us in their prayers. The damage being done to the ELCA harms the whole body of Christ.

The ELCA's crisis is in part due to the fallout from the 2009 ELCA churchwide assembly's approval of a social statement on sexuality and ministry policy recommendations. Both documents were shaped more by culture than by Scripture. The crisis, however, was brewing years before the ELCA's first day of existence on January 1, 1988. The 2009 churchwide assembly was the tragic terminus of a trajectory that had been set decades earlier. On the surface it may look like the ELCA is divided by disagreement over sexual morality. The disagreement is far deeper.

Biblical authority is at the heart of the disagreement. The ELCA confession of faith states that it "accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life."[1] In practice Scripture is often not "the authoritative source and norm" in the ELCA. When human authorities supplant Scripture in doctrine and practice, divine authority—that of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit—gets called into question or even lost. Cutting to the chase and using blunt, biblical language, much of the ELCA has devolved and degenerated into idolatry.

I will discuss some key factors that set up the ELCA for the present crisis before its inception, some of the warning signs of an impending crisis in the ELCA's short history, and the current status of God, Christ, and biblical authority in the ELCA in the wake of the Minneapolis churchwide

[1] *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chapter 2, Confession of Faith,* 2.03.

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assembly. Some factors for the crisis were internal to the predecessor churches that formed the ELCA and internal to the ELCA. At least one key factor, however, that led the ELCA along a path toward idolatry was external and should be mentioned up front. Deeply embedded in North American culture and thinking is a worldview that completely opposes the biblical worldview. It is the underlying assumption or belief that there are no absolute truths. That widespread belief in North America puts all Christian churches at risk.

Before proceeding, I have two caveats. First, many ELCA members and churches are firmly opposed to the course chosen by the ELCA churchwide organization last year. Perhaps half or more of the ELCA's members have more in common with orthodox Christians in other churches—Lutheran, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox—than with ELCA members and leaders who believe the ELCA is on the right course. Not all leaders in the ELCA churchwide organization, synods, and seminaries believe the ELCA is on the right course. There are a few, unfortunately only a few, who know the ELCA has taken the wrong course. I use "ELCA" in a shorthand way to mean just those who sincerely believe the Holy Spirit is leading the ELCA on the right course. Second, the three Lutheran churches that formed the ELCA were likely headed for the same crisis now facing the ELCA, even if they had not merged in 1988. The formation of the ELCA accelerated the movement toward idolatry. It did not cause or set the course.

I. The Crisis Predates the ELCA's Formation

Hindsight is 20/20. Looking back, there were many signs that the ELCA would start off on the wrong course in 1988. Perhaps the clearest sign occurred in 1984. The founding documents and structural organization for the ELCA were formed and drafted by the Commission for the New Lutheran Church (CNLC), a group of seventy Lutheran leaders with proportional representation from the three merging churches—the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC).

In February 1984, the CNLC was considering the confession of faith in the draft constitution for the new church. The draft confession at that time read in part, "On the basis of sacred Scriptures, the Church's creeds and the Lutheran confessional writings, we confess our faith in the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Elwyn Ewald, an AELC lay CNLC member,

moved to amend the end of the phrase to read, "we confess our faith in the triune God," thereby deleting "Father, Son and Holy Spirit."[2]

Not surprisingly, there was a lively discussion in the CNLC about the proposed amendment. What might have been a surprise, at least for most people in the pews and pulpits of the three merging churches at the time, was the closeness of the vote on the amendment. God's revealed, proper name—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—was affirmed by a margin of just three votes. The amendment to remove this name from the confession of faith was supported by thirty CNLC members and opposed by thirty-three.

Even if all seventy members had been present and voted, and assuming there had been an additional seven votes affirming God's proper name, a 30-40 vote on the amendment should have been disturbing, to say the least. It was reason enough to call a halt to the formation of a new Lutheran church. The foundations for the new Lutheran church were deeply flawed and the course or trajectory that led to idolatry was already set well in place. Rather than being bound by Scripture's revelation of God's proper name and publicly confessing it, some Lutheran leaders intentionally wanted to avoid confessing it.

The 1984 CNLC vote was an indication of the number of clergy and lay leaders in the ELCA's predecessor churches who approached Scripture in a way in which humans place themselves in authority over Scripture, rather than submitting to Scripture's authority over all matters of faith and life. As sinners we all refuse to submit to Scripture's authority over us, but the closeness of the CNLC vote was an indication of an approach to Scripture used by a disturbing number of clergy and theologians in the ELCA's predecessor churches. The 1984 CNLC vote was also an indication of the number of Lutheran leaders who either approached Scripture and tradition with a radical feminist critique or were persuaded by the radical feminist critique that Christians ought to avoid addressing God by his proper name and confessing this name.

The CNLC vote in 1984 was not an isolated event or a freak aberration unrepresentative of what some Lutherans believed and practiced at the time. Consider this pastoral statement from the ELCA Conference of Bishops in 1989, one year into the ELCA's new life: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the only doctrinally acceptable way for a person to be baptized into the body of Christ." The

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[2] Edgar R. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger: People, Dynamics, and Decisions That Shaped the ELCA* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), 60.

bishops admonished pastors to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit because some were using other wording when they baptized. Some had started doing it well before the merger. Perhaps the most commonly used wording was "Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier." Some pastors were using words like "Mother, Friend, and Comforter." Some seminary professors and pastors believed that it was not only legitimate and proper to avoid using "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," but proper to be creative in using other wording.

Let us realize how audacious it is to think that we can choose a name for God. How would we like it if someone refused to call us by our proper name, gave us a different name, addressed us by that name, and always introduced us to others by that name? Even Jacob, perhaps the most manipulative figure in the Bible, who almost always responded to God's unconditional promises to him with a conditional promise—"If you will be with me . . . , then I'll give you a tenth of all that I have" (Gen 28:20-22)—did not have the audacity to name God. At the end of his all-night wrestling match with God, Jacob politely asked, "Please tell me your name" (Gen 32:29).

The early signs of trouble in the ELCA were noticed by some people. One year after the bishops issued their pastoral statement about Baptism, about one thousand ELCA members—pastors, theologians, and laypersons—met at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, in June 1990. They attended a gathering entitled "Call to Faithfulness," which was sponsored by the three independent Lutheran theological journals affiliated with the ELCA: *Lutheran Forum*, *Lutheran Quarterly*, and *Dialog*.

Among the people who met were representatives of all the biblical, confessional, evangelical groups in the ELCA—pietists, charismatics, and low-church Lutherans on one side, and high-church evangelical catholics on the other side, with people from every position in between. All of the prominent confessional theologians in the ELCA were present. (I think there were some LCMS members present too.)

With the exception of two of the speakers, Herbert Chilstrom, first presiding bishop of the ELCA, and Larry Rasmussen, from Union Seminary in New York, almost all of the other speakers, workshop leaders, and participants agreed that the Word of God was being silenced in the ELCA. Sexuality was identified as a symptom, but most of the attention was on other symptoms—the naming of God, separating law from gospel, and other troubling signs. Two years into the life of the new church, some knew the ELCA was in crisis.

II. God and Christ in the New ELCA Hymnal

Given the CNLC vote in 1984, no one should be surprised that years later the ELCA's new hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (*ELW*), printed an option to avoid invoking God's proper name at the beginning of the Communion service by providing these words: "Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever." Nor should one be surprised that compared with the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (*LBW*), the number of prayers addressed to God the Father are far fewer in *ELW*. The new hymnal also reflects an intentional effort to avoid using masculine pronouns with reference to God. The text of the Apostles' Creed was changed so that Christ Jesus is no longer "His only Son" but "God's only Son."

Avoiding masculine pronouns is also evident in the Psalms in *ELW*. The tinkering with the text of the Psalms is one of the clearest examples of humans placing themselves in authority over Scripture. The texts of various Psalms in *ELW* are new, but they are not new translations from the Hebrew text. Rather, the starting point was the psalm texts used in *LBW*. Those texts were problematic to begin with because they were taken from the Episcopal Church's proposed texts in 1977 for the forthcoming 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. The Episcopalians had tinkered with the wording, especially phrases that apparently were perceived to be too harsh or militaristic. They had also started to avoid using masculine pronouns in some places.

The *ELW* architects eliminated more masculine pronouns. A couple of examples will suffice. Verse 2 of Psalm 23 in *ELW* reads, "*The LORD* makes me lie down in green pastures *and leads* me beside still waters" (emphasis added). "He" was completely removed from the verse. Verse 3 in *ELW* reads: "*You* restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for *your* name's sake" (emphasis added). The *ELW* architects changed this verse from the third person to the second person to avoid using the masculine pronoun.

As my colleague Erma Wolf has noted, one result of removing masculine pronouns from the Psalms is that it obscures the christological connections in the Psalms.[3] She notes this in the rewording of Psalm 80 in *ELW*, a psalm that pleads for God to save his people. Verse 17 of the *ELW* text reads, "Let your hand be upon the *one* of your right hand, the *one* you have made so strong for yourself" (emphasis added). The *LBW* text reads

[3] See Erma Wolf, "Proposed Changes in the Psalms," http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/changes-psalms.shtml.

"Let your hand be upon the *man* of your right hand, the *son of man* you have made so strong for yourself" (emphasis added). The clear christological reference in "the son of man" is lost in *ELW*.

Psalm 24 in both *ELW* and *LBW* is perhaps most indicative of Wolf's observation. Here are verses 2–5 in *ELW*:

> For *the LORD* has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD, and who may stand in *God's* holy place? *Those* of innocent hands and purity of heart, who do not swear on God's being, nor do *they* pledge by what is false. *They* shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of *their* salvation. (emphasis added)

Here are those verses in *LBW*:

> For *it is he who* founded it upon the seas and made it firm upon the rivers of the deep. Who can ascend the hill of the LORD, and who can stand in *his* holy place? *Those* who have clean hands and a pure heart, who have not pledged themselves to falsehood, nor sworn by what is a fraud. *They* shall receive a blessing from the LORD and a just reward from the God of *their* salvation. (emphasis added)

To be fair to the *ELW* architects, some of the revisions they made to the *LBW* text move the text closer to the Hebrew text. In their aversion to masculine pronouns, however, they preserved one of the most significant and unfortunate revisions that the Episcopalians had made and which had been imported into *LBW*. They changed verses 4–5 from third-person singular (as in the Hebrew text and most English translations) to third-person plural. In answer to the question posed in verse 3, from the Christian point of view, only one is worthy to stand in the holy place—Jesus Christ. The *LBW* and *ELW* texts not only obscure the christological reference, but actually deny that Christ alone is worthy to stand in the holy place.

III. Biblical Authority: Just One of Many Authorities and Not Even the First

The willingness to tinker with psalm texts reflects the larger crisis of biblical authority in the ELCA. In 1999 the Church in Society office of the ELCA churchwide organization developed a new resource for ELCA congregations. It was a study booklet entitled "Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues." It is still available on the ELCA

website.[4] A parallel resource, "Talking Together as Christians about Homosexuality," was also made available at the time but is no longer available online.

The Church in Society resources advocated this basic method for discussing tough social issues:

> Let's assume we have gathered together to talk about a social issue in our lives or world today, and do so in light of our faith. Scripture is the source and norm for our faith and life, but that doesn't necessarily mean that our conversation *begins* with Scripture. We first need to get a clearer sense of (1) how different people experience the issue and (2) a better understanding of the issue, how it came about, and what's at stake in it. This will take some time—if we do some deep listening and talking with one another, and are open to learning from the shared wisdom the participants bring to the discussion. After we have spent some time on this, we are ready to try (3) to discern together how our faith—as shaped by Scripture, theology, traditions, and practices of the Church—speaks to us regarding this issue, and how we experience and understand it today. Depending on the purpose of the conversation, this may lead us to consider (4) what to do in relation to the issue.[5]

In amplifying on the starting point, experience, the resource states, "Our conversation needs to be grounded in how people experience the issue—the actual human points of contact. Our immediate emotional reactions or associations with an issue are important."[6] In this method, the discussion is grounded in the worst possible place—sinful human experience.

In amplifying on the third step, discernment, the resource states:

> Here we turn to Scripture, to the traditions and teachings the Church has confessed and lived out through the ages, as well as to other forms of witness to the faith, such as traditions within denominations or those of particular congregations. *The temptation is to turn to one particular passage in Scripture that seems to relate to the issue at hand, and to use that as a "proof text" for a position arrived at on other grounds.* In some cases, there are clear scriptural stances, for example, in opposition to killing, adultery, or unjust treatment of the poor (even though there may be differences in how particular situations are dealt with). *But often Scripture is less than clear about how people of faith should respond to issues today.* That's why we need

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[4] See http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality/Faithful-Journey-Resources/Discussion-and-Study-Aides/Talking-Together-as-Christians-about-Tough-Social-Issues.aspx.

[5] "Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues," 11.

[6] "Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues," 14.

> to talk together with one another. What we hear and how we interpret what we hear from Scripture is incomplete, partial, and affected by our own experience and understandings. Our own vested interests can get in the way.[7]

On that same page in a pull-out box are these words: "Our world is significantly different from that of biblical times." That bold assertion is highly debatable. On the basis of Scripture and reason, I would argue that, in the context of social issues and ethics, it is false. Our world is more like biblical times than not.

For instance, a few years ago we intentionally invited speakers on opposite sides of the homosexuality issue to address the WordAlone Network annual convention. We invited four ELCA theologians, two biblical theologians and two systematic theologians, to speak on the first day. The two in favor of approving of homosexual behavior made the argument that our world is much different because the ancient world did not know about homosexual orientation and life-long same-sex sexual relationships. The next day psychologists Warren Throckmorton and Simon Rosser made their presentations. Dr. Rosser, who spoke in favor of homosexual behavior, was the Director of the HIV/STI Intervention and Prevention Studies at the Program in Human Sexuality, University of Minnesota Medical School in Minneapolis. At the beginning of his PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Rosser documented that in fact the ancient world did know about homosexual orientation and life-long same-sex sexual relationships. Not knowing what the two ELCA theologians had said the day before, he completely undercut one of their main points.

For now, I simply note how the ELCA resource calls into question the trustworthiness of the Bible as the authoritative source and norm for all of faith and life. The ELCA's method in such resources conflicts with key Lutheran teachings about biblical authority. Scripture is not the authority that stands over all other authorities. It is just one of many and can be discounted by the other authorities. Personal experience is given primacy. Scripture is also lumped with tradition, including traditions of local churches, in such a way that tradition appears to be on the same plane as Scripture.

A few years after the 1999 resources were produced, the ELCA sexuality task force appointed after the 2001 churchwide assembly suggested in its studies that Scripture is not clear about homosexuality.

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[7] "Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues," 15 (emphasis added).

The task force reported that biblical scholars are divided on the interpretation of scriptural passages about homosexuality. The clear implication was that if the scholars cannot reach agreement, then the Bible must not be clear.

It is easy to find scholars in North America who are divided on the issue of homosexuality, but even within North America most Christian biblical scholars still believe that Scripture is clear not only about homosexual behavior but about all sexual behavior. This is even more the case among the rest of the Christian churches around the world. The vast majority of biblical scholars today (as well as all Christians) still hear God speaking a clear word in Scripture—no one should even think about having a sexual relationship outside of the lifelong marriage of one man and one woman. Whether our sexual inclinations are homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual, all of us have failed to keep the commandment not to have sex outside of marriage. The problem with the Bible is not that it is unclear, but that it is all too clear and none of us can stand it. Even though the ELCA has prided itself on its ecumenical relations with churches here in North America and around the world, when it deals with sexuality the ELCA is decidedly un-ecumenical in disregarding what most churches believe and teach.

Ironically, the denial of the clarity of Scripture and the placing of Scripture alongside tradition were essentially no different than the Roman Catholic positions over against Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. Also ironic is that the primacy of personal experience was essentially no different than the assertions of Luther's opponents on the opposite side, the enthusiasts.

IV. The Authority of Personal Experience in the ELCA

Personal experience carries a lot of weight. Church Innovations, a research and consulting firm for churches led by Patrick Keifert and Pat Taylor Ellison, developed a method for dealing with tough social issues that intentionally starts with Scripture. A few years ago, my Southwestern Minnesota Synod had Church Innovations lead pastors in an all-day training event to help us talk about homosexuality and help us talk about it with our congregations. Throughout the day, we moved between whole-group sessions and small-group sessions. At the start of each session we began by listening to a reading from Scripture and then discussing the passage.

At the end of the day we met as a whole one last time. Ellison asked for feedback from our small groups. One pastor said that beginning with Scripture each time was helpful and led to good discussion, but all

discussion stopped as soon as someone shared an emotional personal experience. Ellison responded that they had received the same feedback in their training sessions with other groups. Keifert, who was sitting next to me, turned and said, "Yes, personal experience trumps Scripture every time."

The same dynamic played out at ELCA churchwide assemblies the past several years. A media relations expert told us that the voting members who spoke at the 2005 and 2007 churchwide assemblies in opposition to the approval of homosexual behavior would have won a formal debate hands down. They spoke articulately on the basis of Scripture and reason. Many of the speakers in favor of homosexual behavior focused their remarks on emotional, personal experiences. The media relations expert said the personal experience stories were probably more persuasive for undecided voting members at the assemblies.

In practice, individual personal experience is the ultimate authority in the ELCA, all the more so now that the ELCA officially teaches that there must be respect for the "bound conscience." The sexuality task force's novel definition of the bound conscience approved by the 2009 churchwide assembly is very revealing: "The task force understands the term 'bound conscience' to describe the situation of those who hold a particular position because they are convinced of it by *particular understandings of Scripture and tradition.*"[8]

The sexuality task force quoted Luther's statement at the Diet of Worms in support of its definition of the "bound conscience": "Unless I am persuaded by the testimony of Scripture and by clear reason . . . I am conquered by the Scripture passages I have adduced and my conscience is captive to the words of God."[9] Notice however the subtle shift from Luther's statement and the new ELCA teaching. Luther's conscience was captive to the word of God—an external word, as Luther always emphasized. In the ELCA's new teaching the "bound conscience" is tied to "particular understandings" of God's word.

Our particular understandings or personal interpretations of God's word are notoriously slippery, deceptive, and untrustworthy. They can

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[8] Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, February 19, 2009, lines 406–408 (emphasis added).

[9] "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," 41, footnote 26. This document is available at http://www.elca.org/~/media/Files/What%20We%20Believe/Social%20Issues/sexuality/Human%20Sexuality%20Social%20Statement.pdf.

easily be an internal word shaped by our personal experience or personal desires rather than the external word of God. Luther cited the importance of the "testimony of Scripture" and "clear reason" precisely because he was aware of the danger of his conscience being captive to an internal word rather to than the external word of God.

My first encounter with personal experience being made the ultimate norm was in my last year of confirmation class in the late 1960s in northern California. My confirmation pastor, an LCA pastor, told us in one of our sessions that we were free to do whatever we wanted if we were convinced in our minds that it was okay with God. We were only a two-hour drive from Haight-Ashbury and much of our class was already doing whatever we wanted! I could not believe what I had heard, so I asked my pastor, "Do you mean that if I think it is okay with God for me to kill someone, I may kill that person?" My pastor said, "Yes."Again, this is another indication of how deeply embedded the crisis was that had begun in the predecessor churches of the ELCA.

V. Law is Separated from Gospel

The other significant way in which the ELCA has undermined biblical authority is by violating one of the most important Lutheran teachings about God's word. Lutherans have taught that it is important to distinguish law and gospel, but they should not be separated. In the early 1990s, however, I heard an ELCA pastor separate law from gospel when he said to other pastors, "As Lutherans the only thing we need to agree upon is the gospel. We can disagree on social issues and ethics." His assertion is embedded in the ELCA's new social statement on sexuality:

> In our Christian freedom, we therefore seek responsible actions that serve others and do so with humility and deep respect for the conscience-bound beliefs of others. *We understand that, in this discernment about ethics and church practice, faithful people can and will come to different conclusions about the meaning of Scripture and about what constitutes responsible action. We further believe that this church, on the basis of "the bound conscience," will include these different understandings and practices within its life* as it seeks to live out its mission and ministry in the world.[10]

Footnote 26 in that section is very important:

> The Apostle Paul testifies to conscience as the unconditional moral responsibility of the individual before God (Romans 2:15-16). In the face of different conclusions about what constitutes responsible action, the concept of "the conscience" becomes pivotal. *When the clear word of God's*

[10] "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," 19 (emphasis added).

> *saving action by grace through faith is at stake, Christian conscience becomes as adamant as Paul,* who opposed those who insisted upon circumcision. (Galatians 1:8). In the same way Luther announced at his trial for heresy, "Unless I am persuaded by the testimony of Scripture and by clear reason . . . I am conquered by the Scripture passages I have adduced and my conscience is captive to the words of God. I neither can nor desire to recant anything, when to do so against conscience would be neither safe nor wholesome" (WA 7:838; Luther's Works 32:112). *However, when the question is about morality or church practice, the Pauline and Lutheran witness is less adamant and believes we may be called to respect the bound conscience of the neighbor. That is, if salvation is not at stake in a particular question, Christians are free to give priority to the neighbor's well-being and will protect the conscience of the neighbor who may well view the same question in such a way as to affect faith itself.* . . . This social statement draws upon this rich understanding of the role of conscience and calls upon this church, *when in disagreement concerning matters around which salvation is not at stake, including human sexuality,* to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), honor the conscience and seek the well-being of the neighbor.[11]

Every time I read those assertions in the ELCA social statement, I am shocked. They certainly cannot be reconciled with our Lord's own words in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, in which he speaks the law as clearly and as forcefully as anywhere else in the Bible: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matt 5:17). Nor can the ELCA's teaching be reconciled with Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9–11)

The ELCA teaching pits Christ against his words in the Bible and God the Father against his word. When we as sinners separate law from gospel, we will fashion a god who just happens to approve of our sinful inclinations.

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[11] "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," 41, footnote 26 (emphasis added).

VI. The Underlying Belief That There Are No Absolute Truths

The ELCA's course is similar to the course taken by other churches, most notably and tragically the United Church of Christ and The Episcopal Church here in the United States. The course that leads to idolatry can be seen primarily in churches in the global north, but not exclusively. The ELCA and mainline Protestant denominations, however, are not the only churches at risk of being in a crisis over biblical authority. At least one key factor puts all churches in North America at risk—Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, non-denominational, and all the rest. Some churches are better able to withstand the risk than others, but no church is completely immune.

Not that many years ago most people used to believe that there are absolute truths. Somewhere along the way in the past thirty to forty years there was a fundamental shift. A recent Barna Group study confirms what many have observed: "Only one-third (34%) [of adults in America] believe in absolute moral truth."[12] The denial of absolute truth is a denial of the biblical worldview. The Bible confesses and reveals from beginning to end that there is absolute truth and locates truth in the most radical way in one man: Jesus Christ. Our Lord said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The Barna Group has documented in other studies that most Americans, even most Christians, do not hold to a biblical worldview. Lutherans are no exception, and we do not appear to be significantly different than mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics in our overall beliefs.

Here are two instances of the denial of absolute truth. An ELCA news release in March 2005 quoted Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson when he first publicly commented on the sexuality task force proposals for the 2005 churchwide assembly at a meeting of the ELCA Bishops:

> Hanson said: Two "hermeneutics" or paradigms are at work among the members of the ELCA that make agreement difficult on scriptural and theological matters. The Rev. Craig L. Nessan, academic dean and professor of contextual theology, Wartburg Theological Seminary . . . writes *that there is a "traditional approach" and a "contextual approach" in interpreting Scripture, both of which are valid and irreconcilable,* Hanson told the bishops. Similarly, Dr. Marcus J. Borg, Department of Philosophy, Oregon State University, Corvallis, writes that *there are two irreconcilable "paradigms" in which Christians differ in their understandings of the Christian tradition and their interpretation of Scripture, creeds and the confessions,* he

[12] "Barna Studies the Research, Offers a Year-in-Review Perspective," Dec 2009, www.barna.org.

> said. Hanson said he's heard people with different understandings of Scripture and theology seeking to find a place for their views in the sexuality recommendations. "Do we expect a resolution to provide a bridge between two extremes?" Hanson asked the bishops. "We Lutherans have come to say that *when something is 'paradoxical' that we're going to live in the paradox at the foot of the cross and not force ourselves to decide it with a vote.*"[13]

If both approaches, traditional and contextual, are valid, then the conclusions reached by each approach must be true. If it is true for some Christians that all sexual relationships outside of the lifelong marriage of one man and one woman are sinful, then it is true for other Christians that not all sexual relationships outside of marriage of one man and one woman are sinful.

A second example of the denial of absolute truth was seen when Bishop Margaret Payne of the New England Synod of the ELCA (and chair of the sexuality task force from 2002–2005) expressed her support for opposing points of view in her synod after the 2005 churchwide assembly. That assembly had affirmed the 1993 statement by the ELCA Conference of Bishops, which said in part:

> There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister.[14]

Bishop Payne wrote in early 2006 about the synod's guidelines for blessing people in same-sex sexual relationships:

> After I was elected bishop, *according to my interpretation of the 1993 statement from the Conference of Bishops and after consultation with representatives of the Churchwide expression of the ELCA,* I made it known that I believed it possible to regard officiating at a ceremony of civil union, and prayerful support of those couples, as appropriate pastoral care that

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[13] ELCA News Service, March 11, 2005, "ELCA Bishops Hear Concerns, Surplus News from Presiding Bishop," 05-042-JB (emphasis added).

[14] Conference of Bishops, October 5–8, 1993, "Blessing of Homosexual Relationships," CB93.10.25.

did not necessitate discipline for the pastor as long as these guidelines were observed.[15]

Bishop Payne, with support from churchwide leaders, had for years interpreted the 1993 Bishops' statement as support for two opposing beliefs and practices. She also wrote in her letter:

> Pastors in this synod differ in their beliefs about the appropriateness of using the term "blessing" and they differ in their opinions about whether or not it is appropriate to preside at civil-unions or blessings. As long as a pastor is a responsible and responsive leader and a faithful pastor of the church, makes decisions in a collaborative fashion, and observes the policies of the ELCA, I trust and support that pastor's discretion to make the appropriate pastoral decision in each situation. There are pastors in this synod who are not willing to preside at any form of same-sex blessing and I support them fully in that decision.[16]

The New England Synod Council approved a statement in December 2006 entitled "Guidance for Pastors and Congregations of the New England Synod, ELCA Regarding the Blessing of Unions of Same Sex Couples." The statement offered supportive guidance for pastors and congregations who wanted to bless same-sex unions. In a May 2007 letter to synod rostered leaders, the New England Synod Council clarified the intent of the December 2006 statement:

> This Guidance Statement was written to respond to congregations and pastors who have requested such guidance from their Synod. Bishop Payne has stated repeatedly and publicly that she and the Synod Council fully support those congregations and pastors who, for reasons of conscience or in the exercise of pastoral discretion, choose not to offer such Blessings. . . . We fully honor and respect those whose views regarding the appropriate pastoral care for gay and lesbian people differ from those expressed in this statement.[17]

The New England Synod's repeated declaration of support for pastors and churches that wanted to bless same-sex sexual relationships and those who did not illustrates the denial of absolute moral truths. This is now the official teaching for the entire ELCA in the new social statement on sexuality:

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[15] "Statement on Sexuality Issues in the New England Synod of the ELCA," January 26, 2006 (emphasis added).

[16] "Statement on Sexuality Issues in the New England Synod of the ELCA," January 26, 2006.

[17] Letter from New England Synod Council to rostered leaders, May 2007.

> Thus, we recognize that this church's deliberations related to human sexuality do not threaten the center of our faith, but rather require our best moral discernment and practical wisdom in the worldly realm. We also understand that in this realm faithful people can and will come to different conclusions about what constitutes responsible action. Therefore, this social statement seeks to assist this church in discerning what best serves the neighbor in the complexity of human relationships and social needs in the midst of daily life.[18]

The assumption that there are no absolute truths puts all churches at risk. With the exception of orthodox religious traditions (Christian, Muslim, and Jewish), it is a given throughout our culture that there are no absolute truths. Churches and denominations may officially teach that there are absolute truths, but many of their members deny it. The Barna studies confirm how erosive this factor is in shaping the beliefs of Americans. In this regard our Lutheran churches in North America, the Roman Catholic Church, and mainline Protestant churches are all in the same boat. For example, consider how many Roman Catholic politicians waffle on the morality of abortion.

VII. Conclusion: Idolatry in the ELCA

In conclusion, as Lutherans we should call a thing what it is: idolatry is running loose in the ELCA. Instead of carving metal and wood or sculpting stone to make gods, the ELCA is using paper, ink, and the worldwide web. One way or another, we sinners will make the god we think we need or want and turn away from the living God.

The most extreme example of this in the ELCA is Ebenezer Lutheran Church in San Francisco, California (see herchurch.org). This ELCA church worships a goddess of its own making and will even sell you rosary beads to help you worship its goddess. It is a gross example and surely destructive, but the subtlety of the other forms of idolatry is more pervasive and more destructive. Intentionally not confessing God's proper name is to confess some other god. Changing the words in the Psalms, pitting Christ against the Bible, separating law and gospel, and questioning the clarity of the Bible are all subtle forms of fashioning a god that suits us.

There is one other form of idolatry evident in the ELCA: church unity, both at the churchwide level and at the congregational level. Idolatry at the

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[18] "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," 10, last paragraph in Section II.

churchwide level was evident in the first of the recommendations from the sexuality task force approved by the 2005 churchwide assembly:

> Because the God-given mission and communion we share is at least as important as the issues about which faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds, the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements.[19]

The constant mantra in the ELCA is that we can agree to disagree, but still be one in Christ and have unity in the ELCA. When the unity of the denomination takes precedence over confession of the truth of God's word, we have turned the denomination into an idol.

The congregational form of idolatry is also evident. Most ELCA congregations did not participate in any substantial way in the process that led to the 2009 churchwide assembly decisions. Many did not know about the decisions until after the assembly. Some pastors (and church councils who did know about the decisions) were reluctant to start a discussion in their congregations because of concern that it would threaten the unity of the congregation. Many congregations are still reluctant to deal with the crisis in the ELCA for the same reason. My guess is that making the unity of the local congregation the ultimate priority is a form of idolatry that is not unique to the ELCA. Either way, when denominational unity or congregational unity takes precedence, God, Christ, and biblical authority get shoved aside. Lord, save us from ourselves!

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[19] "Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality," January 13, 2005, 5.

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On Feminized God-Language

Paul R. Raabe

A couple of Mormon missionaries stopped by our house. Usually I like to take the time to talk with them, but this time I was in a hurry, late for another commitment. So I answered the door and said, "We are Trinitarian Monotheists who confess the Nicene Creed. May I help you?" Needless to say, there wasn't much of a conversation that time. My wife said I was too hard on them. They were, after all, only teenagers. She was right. But I thought I would cut to the chase.

I. Trinitarian Monotheists

We are Trinitarian Monotheists who confess the Nicene Creed, or what is technically called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.[1] It begins, "We believe in one God, the Father." In the New Testament the word "God" (θεός) occurs over 1300 times and almost always (over ninety-five percent of the time) refers to the First Person of the Trinity. Consider, for example, the apostolic benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:14), or the apostolic blessing, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3; cf. 2 Cor 11:31). Jesus is "the Son of God," not the Son of the Trinity but the Son of the First Person.

The Scriptures clearly teach the deity of Christ. There are at least eight New Testament texts that explicitly use the word "God" (θεός) to refer to the Son (Matt 1:23; John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; 2 Pet 1:1).[2] The Nicene Creed rightly confesses him to be "God from [ἐκ] God." At least one text explicitly calls the Holy Spirit "God" (Acts 5:3–4). While the New Testament teaches the deity of the Son and the Spirit, the vast majority of New Testament texts use the word "God" [θεός] to refer to the First Person of the Trinity, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is how I will use the word "God" in this paper. I will focus my

[1] On the creed and its history, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd edition (New York: Longman Group, 1972); Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983).

[2] For a solid treatment of the deity of Jesus Christ, see Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007).

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comments about "God-language" on the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father.

II. One God

"We believe in one God, the Father." The "God" we are confessing is not Baal or Zeus. This God is not an impersonal force, as in Star Wars: "Use the force, Luke." The God we are referring to is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the God who called Abraham, the God of ancient Israel, the God who spoke by the Prophets. Our God is the God of Moses and the Prophets. We must always anchor our "God-talk" in the Old Testament. This is especially important in our current context of religious pluralism.

In the ancient world there were many gods and goddesses, but we confess with ancient Israel that there is only one God (Deut 6:4). Jesus reaffirms ancient Israel's monotheism in his prayer to his Father: "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). In First Corinthians 8:6 the Apostle Paul writes, "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." The Holy Spirit enables us to believe and confess this (1 Cor 12:3). In these kinds of texts, the emphasis on "one God" is not used in contrast to the Son or the Holy Spirit but in contrast to other gods. The Persons of the Trinity cannot be divided or separated.

The term "God" must always be used in the singular, and we must always be ready to add, "and there is no other god." So the Father is God and there is no other god; Jesus is God, and there is no other god; the Spirit is God and there is no other god. We cannot think of a Person of the Trinity as one-third of God. Each one is all of God and there is no other god. The divine nature/essence/substance cannot be divided.

III. The Trinitarian Narrative

We believe in one God, the Father. This God did his mighty deeds in the history of ancient Israel as recorded in Moses and the Prophets. This God spoke by the prophets of ancient Israel. The narrative does not stop there but moves on to the fulfillment. The Scriptures reveal two different ways of speaking about the fulfillment of the overall narrative. One way is illustrated by Isaiah 35: God himself will come into history mighty to save. Jesus is the God of Israel in the flesh. The other biblical approach speaks of the God of Israel sending his Son into the world. Both approaches are true and should not be pitted against one another. It is the second approach

that I wish to develop here. The Apostle Paul summarizes this narrative in Galatians 4:4-6:

> But when the fullness of time had come, God [this same God of Moses and the Prophets] sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

There is a narrative here, and it is a trinitarian narrative. This is not just a story but a narrative that refers to real actions done in history. The Christian faith does not live in the world of mythology, as one myth among others, as one religion among others. The trinitarian narrative that we believe, teach, and confess refers to real actions done in history and real words spoken in history. God sent forth his Son into human history, born of the woman Mary, his human mother, born under the law. The Son's purpose was to redeem those under the law, so that all of us "might receive the adoptive sonship" (υἱοθεσία). The eternal Son of God makes us adopted sons of his Father.

The Trinitarian narrative does not stop there. There are two "sendings" by God the Father. The Apostle Paul continues his summary of the Trinitarian narrative by stating that God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, enabling us to call God "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6). By the Spirit of the Son we address God as our Father.

We were baptized into the trinitarian name, "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). To avoid modalism—speaking of God as if one person with three terms—it is important with that baptismal formula that we use all four definite articles ("the") and both conjunctions ("and").[3] We are unashamedly Trinitarian Monotheists who confess God the Father and his Son and the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. In order to speak of God, the church must always keep fully operative both the monotheistic—one God—language and the trinitarian—three persons—language.

IV. God the Father

Athanasius had to emphasize against Arius that when we say "God" and then add "the Father," we are immediately talking within the framework of the Trinity. The term Father necessitates another, the Father

[3] See Peter Toon, *Our Triune God: A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 236-238.

of another, the Father of his Son.[4] There was never a once when the Son did not exist, and there was never a once when the Father was not Father. The Son existed eternally as the Son of the Father and the Father was always his Father. God did not become Father at some later point in time. And the Spirit is and has always been the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

The First Person of the Trinity is fundamentally Father from eternity. This is not just a simile. It does not simply mean that God's actions toward his people are "father-like." Even before creation he was Father of his Son. This is the deepest reality of the First Person. Before being Creator, Lord, and Judge of creation, he was and is and forever will be the eternal Father of his eternal Son. Faith does not change or marginalize that term "Father." Faith extols it.

God is the Father. This language cannot be dismissed as simply the way a male-dominated patriarchal society imagined God or constructed God-language. As recorded in the gospels, this is how God spoke to Jesus—"You are my beloved Son"—and this is how Jesus spoke to God—"My Father."[5] It is not a question of whether we like this language or not, whether this language furthers our goals or not. This is how God and Jesus addressed each other. It is an historical given that exists outside of us and our ability to spin or re-conceive or re-imagine. God is the Father of his Son. The Son is the Son of God his Father. That is the way they are related, whether people like it or not.

V. The Pronoun "He"

Because the First Person is fundamentally Father from eternity, the biblical writers correspondingly use masculine pronouns for God. God is a "he," not a "she." Moreover, God the Father is a person, not an impersonal "it." To refer to God, Hebrew uses the masculine pronoun, not the feminine pronoun, and Greek uses the masculine pronoun, not the feminine or neuter pronoun. This is the standard biblical language for God, which appears not just occasionally but dozens of times on every page in both Testaments. To be sure, the Scriptures can speak of God's

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[4] For an excellent introduction to the trinitarian arguments of Athanasius, see Thomas G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

[5] See, for example, David P. Scaer on the Trinity in Matthew, *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 201–209.

actions in history with a variety of similes, including feminine similes.[6] For example, God comforts Zion like a mother comforts her child (Isa 66:13). Such similes are ways of communicating what God's actions are like in history. But the Scriptures never directly call God a "she." The excellent CTCR document on "Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language" provides a good discussion of this whole issue. They observe: *"In neither the Old Testament nor in the New Testament is God ever referred to by a feminine pronoun."*[7]

For the First Person, the language of "he" does not mean a sexual male. God the Father is not a sexual male. The First Person of the Trinity does not have a human body. We are not Mormons. He does not have a goddess as a wife. The biblical faith is radically contrasted with the religions of the Ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world. With the First Person of the Trinity there is a basic distinction between the grammatical gender "he" and the sexual male.

The pronoun for God the Father is "he," not "she" or "it." The pronoun for God the Son is "he," not "she" or "it." And the proper pronoun for God the Holy Spirit is "he," not "she" or "it." While the grammatical gender of the Hebrew word for "Spirit" (רוּחַ) is usually feminine (although sometimes masculine) and the grammatical gender of the Greek word for "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) is neuter, the Apostle John deliberately stresses that the proper pronoun for the Spirit is "he" (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7–8, 13–14).[8] The Holy Spirit is not a sexual female "she." The Holy Spirit is not a sexual male either. The Holy Spirit has no body. Nor is the Holy Spirit an impersonal "it" such as an impersonal energy. The Holy Spirit as a Person of the Trinity is properly a "he." In short, the proper pronoun for each of the Triune Persons is "he," not "she." This is the pattern of sound words given by God's own self-revelation recorded in the Scriptures.

VI. Feminist Challenge on God-Language

Now enter the feminist revisionists. There are, of course, women theologians who are orthodox, biblical, creedal theologians. We should

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[6] On feminine similes for God in the Bible, see Alvin F. Kimel Jr., "The Holy Trinity Meets Ashtoreth: A Critique of The Episcopal 'Inclusive' Liturgies," *Anglican Theological Review* 71 (1989) 25–47.

[7] *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (1998), 11 (emphasis original).

[8] See Hermann Sasse, "On the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," 17–39 in *We Confess the Church*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 26.

honor good, orthodox theological work done by women. By the term "feminist revisionists" I am referring to those who want to revise the church's traditional God-language. They generally oppose the church's use of masculine language for God, especially calling God "Father."

To be sure, we should not too easily classify every characteristic and action as either distinctively masculine or distinctively feminine. For example, "compassion" is often considered distinctively feminine, but Psalm 103 attributes "compassion" to fathers (v. 13). We often think of "strength" as a distinctively masculine trait, but Proverb 31 attributes "strength" to the godly woman (vv. 17, 25, 29).

Nevertheless, the church does traditionally use masculine language for God. God is the Father; God is he. Feminist revisionists object precisely to this use of masculine language. One popular suggestion is to replace the trinitarian formula with this formula: "Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier." The problem with this replacement is twofold. First, it designates the Trinity's external works toward creation, *opera ad extra*, but the revealed trinitarian terms designate the Persons' relationships to each other within the Trinity, the Father of the Son and the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Second, the replacement divides the external actions of the Trinity, the *opera ad extra*. In contrast, the Trinity is undivided and therefore the Trinity's actions toward the outside are non-divisible (*opera ad extra non divisa sunt*). The works of creation, redemption, and sanctification flow from the Father through His Son and in His Holy Spirit. There can be no substitutions for the trinitarian name.

Feminist revisionists challenge the church's preference for masculine God-language. Their literature reveals that they generally operate with two key assumptions: first, that God-language is designed to shape society; and second, that we relate to God as like-to-like. Both assumptions deserve to be challenged.

VII. Assumption: God-Language Shapes Society

Feminist revisionists assume that God-talk impacts societal relationships. If we use masculine language for God, then the males get to dominate society. Mary Daly puts it this way: "if God is male, then the male is God."[9] She assumes that speaking of God as Father privileges human males over females, making the human males more god-like and

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[9] Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 19.

hence more powerful in society. Sallie McFague asserts: "The androcentric metaphors that form the principal imagery for God in the Western religious tradition return to us with divine sanction to legitimate the patriarchal world in which we live."[10] Masculine God-language reinforces a patriarchal, androcentric culture. A key way, then, to change the societal status quo is to change the language for God. Since the institutional church is so prominent in the United States, this means changing the church's God-talk. Feminist revisionists consider language about God to be an instrument or tool for shaping society. By using feminine language for God, women will enjoy more empowerment and liberation in society from patriarchal and sexist oppression.

The assumption that religious language legitimates the societal status quo might, in fact, be true for ancient Near Eastern polytheism. A good case can be made that ancient Syro-Palestinian religion with its heavenly bureaucracy of gods and goddesses reinforced the city-state bureaucracy.[11] The connection makes sense for non-Christian religions. If a religion is constructed out of human reason and imagination, it is likely that the religion will support the power of those who create it.

For Christian theology, however, the assumption is false. We do not construct our own God-language. Christian theology is not a human discipline that can be imagined and re-imagined and reinvented by us humans. Christian theology is not simply anthropology or sociology. We do not create God-language in order to bring about certain societal conditions. Proper God-language is given from above. God has taken the initiative and revealed himself.

Apart from God's own self-revelation, we all would have to rely on our own imaginations to construct a deity or deities. That is what the Scriptures call idolatry, humans creating god. Such a god might be wood, metal, or stone. Such a god might be lofty ideals. In either case, that god is an idol, something constructed by sinners. Both Luther and Calvin observed that the human heart is an idol factory.[12] Left to ourselves, we would all just be groping in the dark, exchanging the truth of God for a lie and worshiping the creature (Rom 1:25). But the Creator—blessed be his name—has stepped out into the light and made himself known—first

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[10] Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 151.

[11] Lowell K. Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven: The Syro-Palestinian Pantheon as Bureaucracy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994).

[12] Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 83.

through his historical deeds and words with ancient Israel as recorded and given by Moses and the Prophets. And now in these last days he has revealed himself in fulfillment of Moses and the Prophets through Jesus, his own incarnate Son.

Proper God-language is a gift from above. To be used for what purpose? The purpose of God's self-revelation is not to construct a different kind of government or human culture or society. It is not for human self-empowerment. It is not to change societal relationships and redistribute earthly power. Its purpose is to lead sinners to know God the Father and Jesus Christ, whom the Father has sent, for that is eternal life (John 17:3). In this entire discussion we need to emphasize divine revelation and the vertical purpose of theological language. God takes the initiative and reveals himself and the way we should confess him. God reveals the proper God-language to use, and its purpose is to lead us to confess and praise him to his glory (Phil 2:11). And the purpose of God-given theological language is to bring sinners into a righteous standing before their Maker and Judge. It is not to change society.

VIII. Assumption: Relating to God as Peers

Feminist revisionists charge that speaking of God as "Father" excludes half of the human race. According to Rosemary Radford Ruether, images of God "must be transformative, pointing us back to our authentic potential and forward to new redeemed possibilities." She complains that God as Father (or Mother, for that matter):

> suggests a kind of permanent parent-child relationship to God. God becomes a neurotic parent who does not want us to grow up. To become autonomous and responsible for our own lives is the gravest sin against God. Patriarchal theology uses the parent image for God to prolong spiritual infantilism as virtue and to make autonomy and assertion of free will a sin.[13]

The desire to change God-language into feminine language is based on a longing to become a peer with God, to relate to God as a "mate," as the Aussies would say. Women can relate to a God imaged in feminine terms better than a God in masculine terms.

The entire assumption here is false. We do not relate to God as fellow partners, as like-to-like. Human fathers do not relate to God our Father as

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[13] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 69.

fellow fathers themselves. "As one father to another Father, I know what you are going through. I can sympathize. It's tough being a father." That is not how human fathers relate to God our Father. Rather, human fathers relate to God our Father as his children. He is your Father and you are his child. He is the perfect Father, our heavenly Father through his Son Jesus.

So let's take a short quiz. Fill in the blanks.

1) God is our Father and we are his _____(children).

2) God is our Creator and we are his ____(creatures).

3) God is our King and we are his _____(subjects).

4) God is our Lord and we are his _____(servants).

You get the idea. We do not relate to God as a fellow partner, as like to like.

It is the same for our relationship to Christ. Mollenkott complains that "to speak of Christ always as he is to deny the Christedness of women, the presence and contribution of women within the Body of Christ."[14] However, we relate to Christ as his disciples, not as fellow christs ourselves. We relate to Jesus our Lord as his servants, not as fellow lords. Human bridegrooms do not relate to Jesus, the Bridegroom of the church, as fellow bridegrooms but as members of his bride, the church. This is belaboring the obvious but sometimes the obvious needs to be belabored. God is God and we are not. For every term used in the Scriptures to refer to God, we need to ask: How do we relate to that God?

The program to reimage God in feminist terms is dominated by the desire to be like God. God-language is seen as serving self-empowerment. It is basically a modern, sexualized way of repeating the original sin in the Garden of Eden, trying to be like God, trying to make God like us.

The truth of the matter is just the opposite. Lutheran theology understands this point more clearly than anyone. We all stand before God as passive recipients. Men are righteous before God in the same way that women are righteous before God. All of us, both men and women, stand before God as rebellious sinners and all of us are justified before God in the same way, by God's undeserved favor, through faith alone, and on account of the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ his Son for us. In the horizontal dimension toward each other, husbands and wives have

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[14] Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Godding: Human Responsibility and the Bible* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 51.

different vocations based on creation. But in the vertical dimension before God we are all sinners and we are all justified by faith. Human fathers do not relate to God the Father in a way different from human mothers. The gospel of justification, redemption, reconciliation, and the kingdom of God is the same for both men and women.

The First Person of the Trinity is the Father of Jesus his Son, who is "begotten of His Father before all worlds . . . of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father." The First Person of the Trinity is also the God of Jesus according to the human nature of Jesus (John 20:17; 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:17).[15] Jesus remains true Man, the last Adam, the new and greater Davidic King, and so on. Jesus makes his God our God and makes his Father our Father. As Jesus says in John 20:17, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

One of the Trinity has become one of us. Jesus is our Brother by virtue of the same Father. We do not have the same mother. His mother was Mary. To feminize God as Mother or to de-gender God is to separate our God from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. Then we would no longer be in the family of Jesus.

IX. Faith Does Not Require a Simpatico Human Experience

Faith does not require a simpatico existential experience of a status on the human level. For example, human bridegrooms do not relate to Christ the Bridegroom as fellow bridegrooms. By faith human bridegrooms are part of the Bride of Christ, his church. But how can men relate to being a bride? Such an objection is irrelevant. Faith is trust in the external promises of Christ. Men can understand what it means to be Christ's bride and by the Spirit can trust the promises of Christ. The same is true for women. By faith in the Son of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit women receive the gift of adopted sonship and are heirs of the promise (Gal 4:6-7). It is not necessary to be a human male to be adopted sons of God with Jesus as their Brother. Faith is trust in the external promises of Christ. It does not presuppose an existential experience of a given status on the human level. You do not have to be male to understand the blessing of sonship given by the Son of God or to receive that blessing by faith.

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[15] In the common formula "the God and Father of the Lord Jesus," both nouns apply to the genitive. See Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 275.

X. A Hermeneutic of Suspicion

Feminist revisionists generally read the Scriptures with a hermeneutic of suspicion. They think of the biblical writers as unconsciously and yet pervasively sexist, androcentric, or at least patriarchal. So the biblical writers would naturally favor masculine language over feminine language for God. Some feminist writers are more respectful of scriptural authority. They explain the biblical language as a necessary fitting-in with their patriarchal society. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott writes:

> My own sense is that it is perfectly natural for the Bible to contain a vast predominance of masculine God-language, springing as it does out of a deeply patriarchal culture. . . . After all, males held all the honor and power in society. Nothing would seem more natural to them than to honor God by exclusively masculine references.[16]

Mollenkott claims that the biblical writers had no other option. To address God point blank as a "she" would have been too frontally insulting in a male-oriented culture.

Because the biblical texts were produced supposedly in such a sexist culture, feminist revisionists maintain that contemporary readers must sift through this patriarchalism and find those parts of the Scriptures that, according to them, are truly liberating for women. Very often this process involves pitting one biblical text against another.

Such views of biblical language reflect older forms of liberal theology. Peter Toon reminds us that for over a century liberal Protestantism has proclaimed that "we name God out of our religious experience and thus project our naming of God into God (whoever God as ultimate Mystery be)."[17] Liberal Protestantism has always considered God-language to be a human construction based on human experience. If that were the case, then contemporary people would indeed have the right to revise the God-language used by the biblical writers.

In contrast to such a skeptical approach to the biblical text and the church's language, we affirm the normative authority of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the sole rule and norm for what the church believes, teaches, and confesses. The Scriptures give God's own self-revelation.

The issue of the authority of the Scriptures is tied up with the issue of hermeneutics. It is not enough simply to assert that the Scriptures are

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[16] Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 110.

[17] Toon, *Our Triune God*, 239.

authoritative. How in fact do they wield their normative authority in the church? So many theological debates end up being about hermeneutics, and this is just one example. The hermeneutic of suspicion places the interpreter over the Scriptures as their judge. Accordingly, the magisterial interpreter must lift up those parts of Scripture that are more "liberating" and marginalize those parts that are not. For example, Rosemary Radford Ruether employs the prophetic and liberation biblical streams as norm against other parts of Scripture.[18]

We on the contrary want to take a ministerial posture under the Scriptures, following an approach that affirms the centrality of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that affirms the overall unity and coherence of the Scriptures, and that seriously attends to the integrity of each specific text.[19] Accordingly, we work at trying to understand a passage according to its language, its historical setting, and its context. Our approach lets the Scriptures interpret themselves, allowing an author and other parts of the Scriptures to clarify a given passage. Our goal is to teach what in fact the Scriptures teach, not to contradict, subvert, or deconstruct their teaching.

The church's theological God-language is not something to be reached by negotiation whereby different political factions try to reach a compromise position. The church does not operate like U.S. politics. The church gladly receives God's word as a gift. Faith does not criticize the Scriptures. Faith receives God's own self-revelation through the Scriptures as a gift. The theological task is to seek to understand that gift as revealed in the Scriptures in a humble and thankful way. Yes, there is theological work to be done. It requires our best intellectual efforts. But it is done with the ministerial use of reason under the authority of the Scriptures. The old adage remains true: *Fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith (not skepticism) seeking understanding."

XI. Temptation toward Compromise

The effort to feminize God-language has been around for decades. For example, the 1932 Christian Science Hymnal has a verse that goes like this: "Grant then, dear Father-Mother, God, whatever else befall, / This largess of a grateful heart that loves and blesses all."[20] The attempt picked up

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[18] Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 22–33, 61–71.

[19] For a summary of this approach, see James Voelz, *What Does This Mean?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 352–358.

[20] *Christian Science Hymnal* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1932, renewed 1960), hymn number 3.

steam in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. Leading names included among others Mary Daly, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Sally McFague, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Letty M. Russell, and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. They offer a variety of substitutes for the church's God-language: to call the Trinity "Mother, Lover, Friend,"[21] to refer to God as "God/ess,"[22] to revise the Lord's Prayer to "Our Father/Mother who is in Heaven,"[23] etc. The entire effort to feminize God-language is rank heresy, worse than the Arian heresy of the fourth century. The church must not compromise with it one iota.

Intellectual trends typically begin with the scholars and then gradually trickle down. Now decades later one hears lay people talk this way. "That is masculine language for God. Let's use some feminine language." And precisely in this situation churches face a great temptation. It is the temptation to find a compromise, to reach a political reconciliation for the sake of external tranquility within an institutional church body. The compromise typically takes the form of avoiding both feminine and masculine language, avoiding the use of any third-person pronouns at all for God. The result is that God is neither "Mother" nor "Father," neither "she" nor "he." You have to repeat the noun "God" and the adjective "divine" endlessly: "God revealed God-self," "God sent God's Son," "God will keep God's promises," "God spoke the divine word," and so on. Try speaking of God without using the masculine pronoun "he/his/him." It is very difficult indeed. You have to employ all sorts of circumlocutions.

XII. The New ELCA Hymnal

An example of such a compromise is the new ELCA hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.[24] Consider how they have revised the wording to de-gender references to God. For example, they use an inclusive version of the Psalms that refrains from referring to God as "he/his/him." They offer two versions of the Common Doxology, one with traditional wording and one with revised language so as to remove the masculine pronoun "him": "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."[25]

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[21] Sally McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

[22] Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 46.

[23] Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine*, 116.

[24] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

[25] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Hymn 885.

Their hymn based on the Magnificat not only removes masculine pronouns but also significantly alters the trinitarian doxology: "Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the incarnate Word, / And praise the Pow'r of God most high, from age to age by all adored."[26]

What do you make of this prayer to be spoken at the Lord's Supper? "O God most majestic, O God most motherly, O God our strength and our song, you show us a vision of a tree of life with fruits for all and leaves that heal the nations. Grant us such life, the life of the Father to the Son, the life of the Spirit of our risen Savior, life in you, now and forever."[27] Is there a fourth person in the Trinity—"O God most motherly"—who grants us the life of the Father to the Son, the life of the Spirit? Attempting to compromise with an alien ideology soon ties a prayer-writer in knots.

To their credit, the hymnal keeps the Lord's Prayer in the liturgy and includes Luther's Small Catechism, which reads under the Lord's Prayer:

> Our Father in heaven. *What is this?* **OR** *What does this mean?* With these words God wants to attract us, so that we come to believe he is truly our Father and we are truly his children, in order that we may ask him boldly and with complete confidence, just as loving children ask their loving father.[28]

Yet a harsh dissonance is created between the Lord's Prayer with its "Our Father in heaven" and the prayers they prepared for the church year and other occasions. I count 377 prayers printed in the first part of the hymnal.[29] Of those 377 prayers, only 13 explicitly address "God the Father,"[30] and only 4 explicitly address "God our Father."[31] To be fair, it should be noted that these prayers consistently speak of Jesus as "Son" and conclude with the trinitarian formula. Some are addressed to Jesus Christ. But the vast majority of the prayers are addressed to "God," "almighty God," "sovereign God," "Lord God," and the like.

The new ELCA hymnal intentionally tries to avoid addressing God as "our Father." Contrast the four Gospels. A speed-read through Matthew, for example, reveals that Jesus wants and invites his disciples to pray to God as their Father. It is not simply that God does father-like actions. God

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[26] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Hymn 573.
[27] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 69.
[28] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 1163.
[29] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 18–87.
[30] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 27, 41, 54, 58, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 74, 86, 87 twice.
[31] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 22, 61 twice, 77.

is our Father in Christ. Jesus blesses us with the right to call his Father our Father. "Only those whom the Son of God has called to faith and discipleship have received the privilege and honor of addressing the Father of Jesus, the Son, as 'our Father' (6:9)."[32] Jesus has brought us into his family—not in the sense of making us members of the Trinity but of making himself our Brother and his Father by nature from eternity our Father by adoption in time. The Lord's Prayer with its address to "our Father in heaven" has always been honored by the church as the paradigmatic standard for Christian prayer to God. But in the new ELCA hymnal the Lord's Prayer with its "Our Father" sticks out like a sore thumb, a strange exception among the liturgical prayers.

The old adage is true: *lex orandi lex credendi*, "The way of praying becomes the way of believing." If the people do not pray to "God our Father," will they believe in God their Father through his Son, Jesus the Messiah?

XIII. Conclusion

The church should follow a simple rule: Joyfully use the same language that the ancient Scriptures use. If the church is unable to do that, something is wrong. If scriptural language contradicts your mindset, change your mindset. Instead of reading the Scriptures with a hermeneutic of suspicion, learn to think and speak along *with* the scriptural language. The Scriptures are not a quarry from which to mine some ideas that we can then manipulate. The Scriptures refer to reality. They accurately record God's self-revelation in history through deeds and words. Not only that, they also provide the church with the proper way to speak of the revealed God, the pattern of sound words, the church's theological grammar.

Faith does not bristle at the language of God our Father. Faith does not want to avoid that language or balance that language with God our Mother language. Faith, Holy Spirit-wrought faith, extols the fact that God is our Father through his Son. The almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth, the majestic and holy One who brought into existence the vastness of the universe, the One who is our Maker and Judge—that Creator has become our Father. Jesus Christ has brought us sinners into his family so that he is our Brother and his Father is now our Father. The almighty Creator is our heavenly Father in Christ. And we come before him not only as his creatures but also as his children, members of his family. We pray to our almighty Maker and Judge as children to their Father. That is not

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[32] Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 321–322.

something to be embarrassed about. That is something to spread boldly in every land. That is something to extol, to sing and praise from the mountaintops.

There are huge issues at stake in this controversy over God-talk. The church must not compromise with the effort to feminize or de-gender God-language. It is essential for the church, for pastors and teachers, for all Christians to embrace what the Apostle Paul says to Timothy: "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you" (2 Tim 1:13–14).

Follow the pattern of sound and healthy words. Guard the good deposit. Only these sound words give eternal life. Continue to be Trinitarian Monotheists who confess the Nicene Creed. Continue to say with the Apostle Paul: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And continue to pray every morning and every evening with a free and merry heart, "I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son. . . . Amen."

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Research Notes

The Identity of Michael in Revelation 12: Created Angel or the Son of God?

The church observes St. Michael and All Angels Day on September 29. Michael is the angel mentioned in three canonical books (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; and Rev 12:7–9) and in a wide range of extra-canonical literature (Jewish, Christian, and Islamic).[1] Michael shares the distinction with Gabriel of being one of the only two angels in the Scriptures who bear personal names. His exalted status among the angels is based upon the scriptural testimony in which he is called "one of the chief princes" (אַחַד הַשָּׂרִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים MT; εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν πρώτων LXX; Dan 10:13) and even "the archangel" (ὁ ἀρχάγγελος; Jude 9). While the church honors Michael with the title of "saint," some interpreters have given him an even more exalted status than archangel and saint; namely, they have understood him to be the Son of God.[2] After all, Michael's name in Hebrew (מִיכָאֵל) means "Who is like God?"

Of the various biblical references to Michael, it is especially Revelation 12:7–9 that has led interpreters to this conclusion. This identification has been made by none other than Martin Luther,[3] as well as several subsequent interpreters from our Lutheran circles, including George Stoeckhardt,[4] G.

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[1] For a brief introduction to Michael in Jewish and Christian traditions, see Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte Des Antiken Judentums und Des Urchristentums 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 126–131, and Michael Mach, "Michael," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toom, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill 1995), 1065–1072.

[2] The early Christian evidence of this is thoroughly documented in Darrell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity*, Wissenchaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.109 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999). Hannah and others have noted evidence that there is some precedent for understanding Michael as divine in pre-Christian Jewish texts.

[3] See the identification of Michael as Christ in a 1544 sermon of Luther's in Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Schriften*], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), vol. 49:570–587, esp. 578.

[4] Stoeckhardt states: "This Michael often appears in the Old Testament. That is the Angel which appears as the Protector of the people of God. He is the Angel of the Lord, the Christ. He takes up the battle against the dragon, and brings on a great war in the realm of the spirit world. And the outcome of this warfare shows that the devil and his angels cannot overcome Christ and His angels. . . . But now the devil has lost his chance to accuse them because he has lost his power to lead them into sin. And for this we must thank Michael, that heavenly Prince, Christ, who has fought for them to make them free." See George Stoeckhardt, *Exegetical Lectures on the Revelation of St. John*, trans. H.W. Degner (an unpublished 1964 copyrighted ms. based upon the class notes taken by H.E. Meyer in German at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1898, later printed and sold by CTS Bookstore, Fort Wayne, IN), 47.

Gösswein,[5] Ludwig Fuerbringer,[6] Luther Poellet,[7] John Strelan,[8] and Stephen Wiest.[9] Louis Brighton clearly states that Michael in Revelation 12 should *not* be identified as the Son of God as was done by some in the early centuries of Christianity, but he does not address the fact that some Lutheran exegetes have also made this identification.[10] Siegbert Becker does mention that Lutherans have identified Michael as Christ here, but he also argues against this position before concluding, "It makes little difference whether one considers Michael to be a created angel or the 'Angel of the Lord,' who is the 'captain of the hosts of the Lord.'"[11] This subject, therefore, merits brief attention here. It will be demonstrated that Michael in Revelation 12:7–9 is definitely not the Son of God, but the created angel who functions as the leader

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[5] Gösswein asserts that Michael in Revelation 12 is "understood to be only Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Mary's Son, the Lord of hosts, the Prince of the army of the Lord and head of all principality and power"; see G. Gösswein, *Schriftgemässe und erbauliche Erklärung der Offenbarung St. Johannis* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1900), 186. This English translation is from G. Gösswein, *Scriptural and Edifying Explanation of the Revelation of St. John*, trans. Faculty and Students of Martin Luther Institute of Sacred Studies, Decatur, Indiana, 1999–2001 (no publisher or copyright given), 196.

[6] Fuerbringer appears to follow Stoeckhardt's interpretation in terse fashion: "That [Michael] is the angel of the Lord, like God in essence (essentia), Christ Himself." See L. Feurbringer, "The Revelation of St. John" (unpublished ms. of class notes taken by a student and mimeographed with Feurbringer's permission, but not corrected by Feurbringer), 28.

[7] Poellet states: "Many Lutheran commentators understand the name here to refer to Jesus, the Champion of His church." See Luther Poellet, *Revelation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 159. Poellet's comment is virtually a quotation of a sentence in "Michael," *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P.E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), 469. Poellet cites this entry on 159 n. 18.

[8] Strelan is aware that many do not make the identification between Michael and Christ but nevertheless states, "While we cannot speak with absolute certainty, the view taken in this commentary is that it is the Lord Jesus Christ himself who, under the name of Michael ('he who is like God'), refuted the accusations of the dragon, won the legal battle, and drew from God a sentence of 'Not guilty' for all believers in Christ"; see John G. Strelan, *Where Earth Meets Heaven: A Commentary on Revelation* (Adelaide, Australia: Open Book Publishers, 1994), 201.

[9] One of his published sermons states that Michael "*must* be the Lord Christ, for the heavenly angels of Revelation 12 are said to be *his*" (emphasis original); see Stephen Wiest, "The Feast of Michaelmas," *Gottesdeinst* (Michaelmas 1997): 5. This sermon was early in Wiest's ministry and is influenced by his reading of Luther. Based upon some personal discussion with him after his doctoral work at Marquette and before his untimely death, I think that Wiest later stepped back a bit from the position on the identification of Michael as Christ that is expressed in this sermon.

[10] Louis Brighton, *Revelation*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 320–322.

[11] Siegbert W. Becker, *Revelation: The Distant Triumph Song* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1985), 187.

of God's good angels—which is also Michael's person and work in the book of Daniel—in bringing the effects of the victory of the Lamb over Satan and the other rebellious angels to the heavenly realm.[12]

It is very apparent that Luther and others who make the identification between Michael and Christ base their conclusion primarily upon the action of Michael and his good angels in throwing Satan and his evil angels from the heavenly realm in Revelation 12:7–9:

> And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

The logic is that a created angel could not have accomplished such a feat; it would be created angel (Michael) going against created angel (Satan). Since this is seen as a divine action, the logical conclusion is that the person who carries this out must be divine. Hence, as the argument goes, Michael here must be Christ and not a created angel. Thus Satan (angel) is overcome by Michael (the Son of God).

This interpretation of Michael's identity is inadequate for three primary reasons. First, it does not give sufficient weight to the fact that Revelation is a text that repeatedly alludes to Daniel and is congruent with the content of Daniel. In spite of some scholarly attempts to identify the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7:13 as Michael, there is a clear distinction between Michael and the "one like a son of man" figure in Daniel, as has again been demonstrated by Andrew Steinmann.[13] This "divine man" figure, who appears again in Daniel 10–12 without being identified as "one like a son of man," is the Son of God in the Book of Daniel; he is not Michael. The seer John in Revelation, like the prophet Daniel, sees a clear distinction between the "one like a son of man" and Michael, and also identifies the Son of God with the former but not the latter.[14]

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[12] Although I identify many appearances of an angel in the biblical narrative as the Son of God, and I identify several angelic figures in Revelation as Christ (cf. my *Angelomorphic Christology* as in n. 1 above), I do not identify Michael as the Son of God anywhere in the canonical texts. It is necessary to make a distinction between the angel in the Old Testament who shares the divine name YHWH and the angels who have personal names like Michael and Gabriel. The former is the Son of God, but not the latter. See Charles A. Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003) 115–157.

[13] Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008).

[14] For example, the specific title from Daniel 7:13 is used in identifying Christ in Revelation 1:13 and 14:14, and his physical appearance is described in 1:13–16 with

A second problem with the identification of Michael as Christ is that the war in heaven scene is not interpreted with what immediately precedes: the messianic birth and snatching-up scene in Revelation 12:1–6. Although scenes in Revelation do not typically follow one after another in a neat chronological progression, there are certainly scenes in which there is such a progression. For example, the victory of the Lamb in Revelation 4–5 is celebrated as a reality that preceded and commences the three cycles of seven that follow, namely, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls of wrath. The war in heaven describes what subsequently happens *in heaven* as a result of the prior birth and victory of the Messiah *on earth*. The result of Christ's work on earth is then brought to bear upon Satan by Michael and his fellow good angels in heaven. Because the Lamb has atoned for the sins of all humanity, Satan no longer has a basis for bringing accusations against any individual (Rev 12:10; cf. 1:5 and 5:9). Revelation 5 testifies that the Lamb has taken his place before the Father on the divine throne. First John testifies to the wonderful advocacy work that Christ carries out in this position: "If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1b–2). Paul also testifies of Christ interceding before the Father: "Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is also interceding for us" (Rom 8:34). Once Christ begins this advocacy before the Father, Satan is denied access to heaven and is thrown to earth.

A closely related third problem with the identification of Michael with Christ is that it does not give sufficient attention to the source of the victory confessed elsewhere in Revelation, including the words of praise in Revelation 12:10–12 that immediately follow the war in heaven scene:

> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them."

This song of praise notes that the faithful martyrs conquered Satan "by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony" (12:11a). This is an obvious reference to Jesus as the unblemished sacrifice whose blood makes payment for all the sin of mankind. This Lamb Christology is the dominant portrait of Christ in Revelation, in spite of his several appearances as a glorious man.[15] If the martyrs on earth conquer Satan "by the blood of the Lamb and

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language that is often drawn from the description of the divine man in Daniel 10; see Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 246–252, and Steinmann, *Daniel*, 499.

[15] I argue this fully in Charles A. Gieschen, "The Lamb (Not the Man) on the Divine Throne," *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism*

the word of their testimony," then how did Michael and the good angels conquer Satan and the evil angels in heaven? Not with brute force, but "by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11). Like the martyrs, Michael and the good angels are created beings who fight in a war in which the victory has already been won by Christ. All the actions against Satan in Revelation—from throwing him to earth to throwing him into the lake of fire—are the result of the Lamb's sacrifice.

The source of victory in the war in heaven, then, is the blood of the Lamb that was shed on earth. The key battle in the war was not the confrontation of one angel, Michael, with another angel, Satan; it was the Lord Christ confronting Satan and all the forces of evil, and yet remaining obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Michael and his angels are not an independent militia; they are the army of the Lamb and are carrying out the victory that the Lamb won on earth by casting Satan out of heaven. Darrell Hannah, who has pored over the Michael-Christ identification more than any other scholar, also argues against any identification of Michael as Christ in Revelation.[16] He concludes that all victories in Revelation, by angels or martyrs, are grounded in the victory of Christ as the slaughtered Lamb: "Michael's victory is not decisive in its own right, but dependent upon Christ's."[17]

One final thing. Although I disagree with Luther and others who have identified Michael as the Son of God, I agree with them that Old Testament appearances of the Angel of the Lord are theophanies of the Son of God. The avoidance of such a christological interpretation of the Old Testament has plagued biblical interpretation since Augustine, and especially since the Enlightenment.[18] While I have argued that Michael is not the Son of God, there are many places in the Scriptures where the angel truly is the Son of God.

Charles A. Gieschen

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and Christianity. Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal, ed. David B. Capes, April D. DeConick, Helen K. Bond, and Troy A. Miller (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 221-243.

[16] Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 127-130.

[17] Hannah, *Michael and Christ*, 129.

[18] See further Charles A. Gieschen, "The Real Presence of the Son Before Christ: Revisiting an Old Approach to Old Testament Christology," *CTQ* 68 (2004): 105-126.

Theological Observer

The 2009 Commencement Address

To the board of regents, governors of hope and vision for this place; faculty and staff, serving in ways seen and unseen to extend the premier reputation of this institution; distinguished President, Dean Wenthe; worthy honorees; cherished family and friends, and Facebook friends, too, and all of you who like the Verizon network stand behind these graduates like a cloud of witnesses . . . we have sixteen nations represented in this room here today; brother pastors, sister deaconesses, those on the doorstep of your holy vocation, graduates; I was more than a little nervous coming to Indiana to be your commencement speaker, after seeing what happened last week over in South Bend.[1] So, let me just say up front and for the record, as a former board member of Lutherans For Life, I reject the scandal that denies God's gift of life from the womb to the tomb. Period. Full Stop.

With that out of the way, I hope, I'd like to talk for just about twelve more minutes (I promise) on what we do for the sake of the life of the world, framing my comments on two short phrases spoken first by Wilhelm Sihler, the tireless founder of this peerless place—two phrases that bracket the beginning and the end of his public ministry. Sihler, born in 1801, highly educated, Ph.D. from Berlin—they say he carried himself like a Prussian army officer. I walked in this evening beside President Wenthe, and I watched him walk in today's procession. Thanks for not walking in like that, Dean.

Sihler began his life in a culture some would designate the center of civilization until a call came to him to come to the fringes, to the American outback, to the frontier edges among the desperate, poor and sick, spiritually underfed immigrants in the U.S. 150 years ago. Conditions were bleak in the village of Fort Wayne. According to historian Lewis Spitz, life here was "primitive, and life expectancy was short." Dramatically, Sihler heard the words, "you must go!"

Hold these three words for yourselves, candidates and graduates: "You must go!" In your own way, you've likely already heard that call, but may I propose another level of awareness in the spirit of Sihler? Fort Wayne seminary nowadays represents a sort of center of theological, liturgical, and confessional sophistication. But even as you walk across this center stage today, remember how you were formed here to teach the faithful, to reach the lost, and to care for all.

Even as you walk across this center stage, you walk out into a world that's more like Sihler's world than you may first realize: a world of immense

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[1] [*President Obama spoke at the May 2009 commencement of the University of Notre Dame, an action protested by Roman Catholics who support the right-to-life movement. The Editors*]

suffering; a world with H1N1; a world with an economy that, economic experts say, sucks; a world where, as the prophet Isaiah says, "Justice is turned back, righteousness stands at a distance, and truth stumbles in the public square" (Isa 59:14). But you must go! You must go toward this world. You cannot walk away *from* it; this world where ten million children under age five die each year from causes related to poverty, like measles, diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria. You can ask Bishop Walter Obare, here with us today. He can tell you about family members dying from disease. He's had ten brothers and sisters die prematurely from malaria, ten from one mother! These are diseases that, we believe at Lutheran World Relief (LWR), are beatable and treatable; 27,000 children die a day from them, a football stadium full of young children who won't ever make it to their first confirmation class, dying every day—38 a minute, more than 250 since I've been talking. The "go" of the gospel includes these least, last, lost, "leftover" people living and dying on the fringes.

I have three daughters in college and a fourth who is not, but should be. This fourth regularly reminds me that one of the world's wealthiest men never completed his college education at Harvard. But not finishing college was not Bill Gates's biggest unfinished business; according to him, "I do have one big regret." The Microsoft man has remarked, "I left Harvard with no real awareness of the awful inequities in the world, the appalling disparities of health and wealth and opportunity that condemn millions to lives of despair." The Gates Foundation is now making a huge difference. And at LWR we work with them. But we desire to work *more* with you, also—with the church. Because you possess something special: You go into the world—as women and men—splashed in the strong name of the Three-Person God; therefore, the transcendent dignity of every human person is *not* a question for you. People living in oppression need your theology-on-the-go, and your theology, in order not to become docetic, needs them. The first phrase is, "you must go." Let those words from Sihler shake you into service.

The second three-word phrase is from Sihler's deathbed. His wife Susanna asked him, "Is there anything you'd like me to share with the children?" The octogenarian breathed out with one of his last breaths and told them to "abide in Christ." Abide in Christ is my second charge to you.

Abide—there's an archaic, quaint ring to that verb: "Might we abide together to view the NBA playoffs this eventide?" (Bring your ale!) People hang out, "chill" together. To "abide" connotes a sense of permanence, something more than casually skimming the surface. "Abide in Christ" implies an entwining, an immersion, a *perichoresis*, an embeddedness, going deep with God, who, like the poet said, is "the stranger who has loved you / all your life,

whom you ignored / for another, who knows you by heart."[2] Abiding is simply something God does because of who God is, whether we abide or not.

Abiding from *your* perspective, graduates, is something on which you and the Holy Spirit will have to work. To put a little spin on Alexander Pope's observation, I wish I had known the following when I graduated from seminary: "A little theological learning is a dangerous thing. / Drink deeply or touch not this Book of Concord spring. / For shallow drafts intoxicate the brain, / And drinking largely sobers us again." I am drinking more these days, so to speak, at least weekly at an altar, but I also now have blocks of time on my Outlook Calendar for thinking and praying, drinking contemplatively. Abiding takes time, because, as David Scaer reminds us, "For us Christians, there is never a time when faith is very far from the edge of unbelief. Satan never leaves us Christians alone, but each day works harder to take us away from Christ."[3] And especially now for you, graduates.

Abiding in Christ means meditating on the cross, God's victory over human injustice, including the sins of marketeering schemes that misrepresent the mystery of God, like the Golgotha Fun Park in Kentucky featuring a "Bible-themed miniature golf course starting with the Creation at the first hole and ending with the Resurrection at the 18th."[4]

No! Abide with the man of suffering, born humbly in backwater Bethlehem, nurtured in blue-collar Nazareth, not Rome or Athens, crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem, in the words of Sihler again, recently translated by my friend, Matthew Harrison, an alum, who once sat where you now sit, and now spoken for the first time in public: "you will not only confess Christ with your mouth, but also be his disciple. . . . You are a lion in the Lord, but a lamb in your [own] matters. For only when you endure with Christ, shall you also rule with Christ. Only when you die with Christ, shall you also live with Christ."[5]

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[2] Derek Walcott, "Love after Love," in *Sea Grapes* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 66.

[3] David P. Scaer, "Faith Driven to the Edge of Unbelief," *Concordia Pulpit Resources* 18 (Advent-Transfiguration, 2007–2008), 20.

[4] Michiko Kakutani, "Almighty Empire: Surveying the Global Reach of Religion," a review of *God is Back* by John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *New York Times*, March 31, 2009, C1 and C6.

[5] For reasons of speech rhetoric, I offer in the second person what Harrison's original renders in the third person: "he would not merely confess Christ, but also be his disciple. He is a lion in the Lord, a lamb in his own matters. For only when he endures with Christ, shall he also rule with him. Only when he dies with Christ, shall he also live with him." "Address at the Dedication of the New Building at the Lutheran Preachers' Seminary at Fort Wayne," called the "Wolter House," on August 29, 1850. Given by Dr. W. Sihler, President of the Seminary, and translated by Matthew Harrison.

Yes, abide in Christ, Sihler tells his children, and tells us still, because apart from Christ we are nothing! "Apart from Christ we have no gifts, no worship, no sacrifice of our own to offer God."[6] No power to bind up a blind and broken world. Abide, as women and men on a mission, going, as you must, like St. Patrick, singing:

I bind unto myself today
The pow'r of God to hold and lead.
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need,
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward,
The Word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.[7]

You must go. Abide in Christ! Thank you, congratulations, and God bless you!

John Nunes
President and Chief Executive Officer
Lutheran World Relief

The 10th Anniversary of the Luther Foundation Finland

The Luther Foundation Finland, founded in October 1999, celebrated its first ten years of operation on October 31, 2009. The goal of its work has been straightforward and simple: to form Lutheran communities (also called "koinonias") that provide a loving, social context, built around the gracious gifts of God given to us in the Divine Service.

The history thus far is characterized by rapid growth and controversy. In August 2000, the first koinonia began its work in Helsinki, led by a part-time pastor, Dean Juhana Pohjola. Today, the foundation operates in eighteen cities across Finland and has twelve workers, most of them pastors. Furthermore, quite a few retired pastors are helping the cause, raising the number of ministers serving congregations to over twenty. Sunday service attendance varies, depending on the city, between twenty and two hundred, with a total, country-wide weekly attendance of over a thousand Lutherans.

Although Juhana Pohjola was originally commissioned to his task by Olavi Rimpiläinen, the Bishop of Oulu (the last confessional bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland), the Luther Foundation later found its way into headlines—and has stayed there ever since. In March 2004, the Bishop of the Helsinki diocese, Eero Huovinen, attended the service in Helsinki. Juhana, together with his colleague Sakari Korpinen, asked the

[6] *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue*, III: 190.

[7] *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 604, stanza 3.

bishop to abstain himself from the Holy Communion, on the grounds of doctrinal controversy. News of the incident spread rapidly, and the secular media, usually quite uninterested in ecclesial matters, made sure that soon thereafter almost everyone in Finland knew about the religious atrocities of the Luther Foundation.

The resulting scandal had a two-sided effect among the conservatives of the state church. Many of them felt that the Luther Foundation had "gone too far and too fast" and effectively turned their back on them. Others saw what happened as an encouraging example of how "someone is finally doing something!" The result of the media massacre was, in the end, a boost in the Luther Foundation's work. More and more people contacted the new foundation, wanting to join in the work of building koinonias.

January 2005 saw a new phase begin when the Swedish Mission Province had its first bishop, Arne Olsson, consecrated by Kenyan Bishop Walter Obare. In the ordination service that followed, a Finn—among others—was ordained to the Holy Ministry, and thus the Luther Foundation received its first newly ordained pastor, Niko Vannasmaa. Already seven other men have been called to serve the church as pastors through these ordinations. The bishops of the state church recognize these as Lutheran pastors, albeit with no juridical rights to serve in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF).

This led to a new controversy in the spring of 2008, when Pastor Kalle Väätäinen baptized a child in his own koinonia. The local bishop, Wille Riekkinen, had already threatened Väätäinen with police intervention, should he try to do that. True to the duties of his office, however, Pastor Väätäinen realized he could not refuse if the members of his koinonia asked him to baptize their children. In the ensuing controversy, Dr. Risto Saarinen from Helsinki University even proposed that the baptism performed by the pastors ordained in the Mission Province might not be a real or "valid" baptism at all. Theologians both in Finland and abroad were shocked to hear that baptism "done by using water, in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit" might be considered null. Soon, however, the council of bishops had to give in, grudgingly, and the baptisms were recognized as true, Christian baptisms.

The Luther Foundation acquired its first realty in July 2008, when it purchased a business space in the Helsinki downtown area. Now, a year later, a koinonia center operates at Kalevankatu 53, offering space for a number of congregational meetings as well as the Luther Foundation's first international koinonia, the International Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, shepherded by a Richard Ondicho, a Kenyan pastor.

From its beginning, the Luther Foundation has had close relations with the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF), and together they have published a great variety of confessional Lutheran literature in Finnish. Among the most notable projects is the translation and printing of Luther's lectures on Genesis,

never before available in Finnish. LHF has also helped with the hymnal project, through which a number of new hymns are translated or composed for congregational use. This has opened a previously unknown treasure of American and British hymns to Finnish Lutherans, to whom the Scandinavian and German hymnology was more familiar.

"The American connection" is strong also in education and theology: four pastors (Matti Väisänen, Juhana Pohjola, Markus Pöyry, and Esko Murto) have at some point in their careers studied at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Many others have visited there. The theologians of the Luther Foundation have also had the pleasure of welcoming a number of their American colleagues in Finland.

While the cultural and religious atmosphere in Finland, as in all Scandinavian countries, constantly grows darker, the basic atmosphere in the Luther Foundation koinonias is hopeful, even enthusiastic. More and more people are coming into contact with sound and stable Lutheran congregational life, and the work goes forward. Alas, the need is constantly greater than the resources available, which especially calls for wise stewardship. Nevertheless, the trust that this is the path which is prepared for us is strong.

Esko Murto
Pastor of St. Matthew's Koinonia
Hämeelinna, Finland

[*Esko Murto was a resident student at Concordia Theological Seminary in 2007–2008 and was later awarded the S.T.M. degree. The Editors*]

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya's Statement on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Resolution on Same Sex Marriage

The General Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya issued their statement on September 25, 2009, in Kapenguria, on the decision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to roster among her clergy those who are in same sex marital unions.

We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, have received with shock, dismay and disappointment, the news that the ELCA, in her Churchwide Assembly held on 21 August 2009, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, resolved officially to open the door of the office of the public ministry to those who are in "committed" same gender sexual relations. We, therefore, would like the general public, particularly the Church of Christ here in Kenya and elsewhere in the world, to take note of the following:

1. that the church body involved in this act (ELCA) is not associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya;

2. that we condemn in the strongest terms possible this unfortunate and anti-scriptural development in a church body that bears the name of the great reformer, Dr. Martin Luther;

3. that we condemn sexual perversion in all its manifestations;

4. that same sex marital union is not only contrary to God's will as clearly expressed in the Holy Scripture, but also repugnant to the natural created social order;

5. that God's plan and purpose of marriage is fulfilled *only* in heterosexual (one man-one woman) lifelong commitment;

6. that this act by the ELCA constitutes a loveless and callous disregard of the spiritual condition of those caught in homosexual bondage; and

7. that, most seriously of all, it is nothing less than a denial of the transformative power of the love we know in our Savior Jesus Christ, Who seeks all sinners in order to restore them to communion with the Father through the ministrations of His Holy Spirit in Word and sacrament.

Therefore, we must confess the Word of God and be faithful to it. In the name of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to repent of its apostasy from the truth. We feel compassion for those among us who are caught in homosexual bondage and want them to know the transforming power of God's forgiveness and love. Thus we hereby dedicate ourselves anew into the service of Him Who came to serve us sinners, including those caught in homosexual bondage, and Who by the power of His cross and resurrection creates in us a new will to please Him in patterns of living that are chaste and pure. In saying these things, we are standing with our fellow redeemed in the great consensus of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, particularly with those church bodies in the International Lutheran Council. We acknowledge there are many Christians within the ELCA itself who are offended by the action of their church body, and we want them to be assured of our prayers and support.

Signed this 25th day of September 2009:

Rev. Bishop William Lopeta, North West Diocese

Rev. Bishop Richard Amayo, Lake Diocese

Rev. Bishop Thomas Asiago, South West Diocese

Most Rev. Dr. Walter Obare, Archbishop

Rev. John Halakhe, General Secretary

Message from the Meeting of the Baltic Lutheran Bishops

The leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania met in Tallinn on the 3rd and 4th of November, 2009 to strengthen the long experience of unity of the Lutheran churches in the Baltic countries and to pray for the fellowship among Christians of the whole world, recognizing that in our time the ties among and with Christian communities in many places are put to the test. Bishops also discussed tasks and responsibilities of their churches looking for better ways of co-operation in the future. Christian faith means living with Christ and serving one another.

Especially at times of economic difficulties when so many people have lost their external foothold and inner peace, we invite our compatriots to extend their appreciation of their Christian roots and to utilize all the spiritual wealth that is revealed in Holy Scripture and offered to everyone who turns to God and puts their trust in Christ. The present crisis of the world economy is a fruit of a long term failure to act accordingly to the principles which God has laid in the foundations of His creation. Consumerism and individualism of the modern society have taken their toll. To look for a solution only by means of mending the economy would mean to repeat the same mistake. A spiritual renewal must come first, a renewed sense of balance between rights and obligations, communion empathy, solidarity, and mutual support. We believe that the most convincing inner motivation for that change is found in an encounter of a person with the living Christ. To facilitate that encounter by word and deed is the first and foremost calling of the Christian church. Jesus Christ said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19–20).

The Christian community as a part of the society is not separated from issues related to the natural and human environment both locally and globally. Justice in the society, life quality of the people, or protection of our Baltic Sea against the state negligence and corporate exploitation are some of the critical examples of this area of concern. As communities gathered around the Word of God and the keepers of the Christian ethos, our churches must address the spiritual root-causes of the contemporary problems. The churches must remember that the main instrument entrusted to them by God is His word—the law and the gospel—and the service to the neighbor in charity.

We also invite our political powers to realize more clearly the spiritual dimension of the human life and the good fruits of a positive co-operation between state, municipalities, schools, and the church. Teaching and implementing Christian principles strengthen the family as well as the whole community. Liberty of conscience and freedom of speech belong to the values of society defining religious life not only as private but also as a public social

right which has to be fostered. Religious education and religious studies form an inseparable part of this right.

At the present time, a common witness of churches is vitally important. Therefore, we express our deepest concern about modern tendencies that weaken the fellowship among Christians and cause divisions among churches. The recent decisions made by some member churches of the Lutheran World Federation to approve of religious matrimony for couples of the same gender and to equate such conjugal life with marriage or to ordain non-celibate homosexual persons for pastoral or episcopal office epitomize these tendencies that are tearing apart fellowship among Christians. We affirm that marriage is the conjugal life between a man and a woman and that homosexual activity is incompatible with the discipleship of Christ. We believe that in following the modern trends, churches are departing from the apostolic doctrine of human sexuality and marriage. We see the Lutheran communion and ecumenical efforts endangered by such decisions and actions because they lead to a situation where the Lutheran churches, members of the Lutheran World Federation, are not able to fully recognize each other's ecclesiastical offices, to exchange ministries and participate together in preaching the Word and celebrating the sacraments.

We call upon our Lutheran sisters and brothers to unity and co-operation based on the foundation of Holy Scripture and loyalty to the Lutheran confessions. Contemporary challenges demand a firm stand based upon timeless truths and values. The common understanding of the Gospel by churches is a treasure we cannot afford to lose and it needs to be passed on to the current and future generations. Our mission is to be faithful in that which we have received, God's mercy. We are to serve our Lord and our neighbors thus until we *all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God* (Eph 4:13).

Archbishop of Riga, Janis Vangas, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
Bishop of Daugavpils, Einars Alpe, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
Bishop of Liepaja, Pavils Bruvers, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania
Archbishop Andres Poder, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Archbishop emeritus Kuno Pajula, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Bishop Einar Soone, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

On the Nature of Confessional Subscription: An Explanation on the Action of the Missouri Synod at New Orleans in July 1973

[Although written shortly after the 1973 LCMS Convention, this piece was retrieved from the seminary archives and has ongoing relevance especially in light of the article on J.A.O. Preus in this issue. The Editors]

The action of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's convention at New Orleans in the summer of 1973 has raised again the questions of how confessions are made and what is the binding nature of confessions in regard to their origins. The problem most specifically facing many pastors and congregations is how it is possible for one man, in this case, President J.A.O. Preus, or one convention, in this case, the New Orleans convention, to make binding doctrinal or confessional statements. The controversy centers specifically around two actions of the LCMS. The first is the right of the LCMS to adopt or pass binding statements. The second is the action of the LCMS to accept President Preus's *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* (hereafter, *A Statement*) "as deriving its authority from the Word of God." A greater majority recognized the right of the LCMS to pass or make binding resolutions (653-381) than recognized Preus's statement as being such a binding resolution (562-455).

The New York Times (Saturday, July 21, 1973) expressed the feelings of many in stating that with such actions the Lutherans were acting like the Church of Rome from which Luther broke four and a half centuries ago. *Newsweek* made a similar comparison. Many Missourians have concluded that President Preus was "adding" to the Lutheran Confessions or becoming more of a pope than the Bishop of Rome himself. In the midst of such an electrified climate, a few brief words on what confessions mean might be helpful to those who want to shed some light on a confusing situation.

As I have observed the matter in the Missouri Synod, there is a point of view which exists within Lutheranism but which fails to live up to the real intent of Lutheranism. As it has been intimated that President Preus is a pope, it might be best to see what the Church of Rome does teach in regard to doctrinal formulation.

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes three ways in which doctrine may be established and, therefore, be considered binding: first, all of the bishops assembled together in "ecumenical" council; second, the universal or ecumenical consensus of the church; third, the pope. According to the procedures of the Church of Rome, these three different ways never work independently, but together. Some examples will suffice. Before the dogma on the Assumption of Mary was proclaimed, argumentation from history and from the contemporary situation was submitted to show that the pope was simply proclaiming that which was already believed. The evidence offered

might be contested, but this was the approach. Even the infallibility of the pope was endorsed by a council, Vatican I, and there was an attempt to get all dissenters eventually to endorse this action. Vatican II is another example of where the pope endorsed the actions of a universal meeting of the bishops in communion with him.

Strange as it might seem, some ideas basic to Roman Catholicism are found in all corners of Lutheranism. It appears hypothetically like this: "The Missouri Synod cannot formulate doctrine or issue a new binding confession because it is only one segment of Lutheranism. A gathering of world-wide Lutheranism could take such action, but not the Missouri Synod." A few comments on this view are necessary.

There is no guarantee that a convention or conference representing all Lutherans or all Christians would arrive closer to the truth than one man (SD X). It would truly be non-Lutheran to state that even the action of the Missouri Synod was true simply *because* the Missouri Synod did it. No group or man is per se the guarantor of the truth. There are cases when one man has been right and all others have been dead wrong. Luther!

It would not be difficult to demonstrate from the history of Lutheranism where one man in and of himself was recognized as the standard of the truth, though there is no reason to indicate that we would ever be immune from the possibility. There are cases where the individual writings of one man have been recognized as confessionally valued by others. All of the Lutheran Confessions, with the exception of the Formula of Concord, were individual productions by either Melanchthon or Luther. Lutherans have never said that the writings of these men were per se always true. Melanchthon is a case in point where one man was right once and wrong in another instance. Melanchthon is the author the Augustana, the Apology, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, but later his ideas are condemned in the Formula. Lutherans who unwittingly had endorsed Melanchthon's *Variata* retracted from a deficient confessional formula.

The false concept afloat in Lutheranism is that somehow all Lutherans or their representatives can get closer to the truth than one man or one segment of Lutheranism. This is of course only a Roman Catholic view with the outward trappings of Lutheranism. In addition, such a "conciliar" view of the origin of doctrine works on the unfounded presupposition that "Lutheranism" is a recognizable, unified entity and that synods are parts of the greater whole. There is no agreed definition of what it means to be "Lutheran" by those who are called by this name. Therefore there is at best a unity in nomenclature. To put it bluntly, in reality there is no whole in Lutheranism of which there could possibly be parts. At best we have a good sense of ecclesiastical equivocation. For those who have had difficulty following this argument, maybe this example would be helpful. A convention of the Lutheran World Federation, because it represents a larger segment of those who call themselves

"Lutheran," does not necessarily come closer to the truth than a church which claims only ten thousand members. If numbers did indeed determine truth, then Rome has the most truth.

Any argument against *A Statement* which suggests because Missouri "goes it alone," therefore Missouri cannot be right or cannot expect others to hold to her opinions is totally without warrant. The history of Christendom is replete with examples of where one church, a minority, held to the truth, over against a majority of churches, which eventually were found in error.

Arguments against adoption of *A Statement* seem contradictory or, at best, lacking in uniformity. The charge that Preus is some type of "Lutheran pope" because he issued the statement seems to conflict with the reality that it was not Preus who made it synodical policy, but the synod itself in a regularly scheduled convention. Still the charge of popery or papism against Preus should be studied for a moment. Basically the charge is this. No one man or individual has the right to issue a confession which is binding on others. There is some basic lack of clarity in the charge that should be cleared up before further examination. While Preus issued the statement, it was the convention that accepted the statement as a valid expression of the Missouri Synod's faith.

Now the question is this: Can one man write a confession? If the answer is not affirmative, then even those who have protested Preus's action on this very basis will find themselves in the very embarrassing position of being with very few confessions, if any at all. The Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Augustana, the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, the Small and Large Catechisms, each had one basic author! Multiple authorship accounts for the Formula of Concord, but the sections were individually assigned and written. The only creed left is the Apostles' Creed, whose authorship in its present form is not known, but it may be ascertained with near certainly that it is not the product of a council or other synodical group. In addition to the near-total elimination of the historical classical creeds under the principle that one man cannot issue a creed, doubt would have to be cast on the initial Petrine confession (Matt 16) "Thou art the Christ," because it was spoken by one man. Peter at this time did not speak from the authority of his apostolic office—and hence not that type of inspiration associated with the biblical writing—but from the same type of Spirit motivation that instigates all Christians to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. He spoke from faith, and not from the supervisory authority by which he was later to lead the church. It might even be safe to say that all great confessions of the church are produced by individuals first. It therefore becomes apparent that on the basis of the Biblical and historical witness the charge of papism cannot be leveled against Preus simply because the church convention endorsed his statement as an expression of its own faith. Lutherans could hardly be Lutherans if by principle we stated that one man could not express the faith of the whole community.

The charge of papism could only be sustained against Preus if it could be demonstrated that his statement was issued without sufficient biblical warrant. A charge of papism is in order if it can be shown that Preus said that the statement is true because he issued it. But this is hardly the case with Preus. On the contrary, the LCMS has had opportunity to react to it. Each confessing Christian is under obligation to point out specific errors where *A Statement* may be in error and call this immediately to the attention of Preus and to the LCMS. This is perfectly in order and in fact demanded, because it is a public document. Charges against the tone of this or any document are simply too nebulous. Charges must deal with specific statements which are contrary to fact in regard to the Bible. For the sake of witness, it would also have to be shown how a given Lutheran confessional principle is contradicted. But this has not been the case so far. Charges deal with Preus's right to issue a confession and not with specific charges in regard to the content. Matters of punctuation, phrasing, spelling, and other related matters should be speedily noted, reported, and corrected. Grammar is important, but confessional discussions should not degenerate into secretarial nit-picking. Preus has issued materials providing evidence to show why he believes that the document is founded in the Bible and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions. His opponents have managed to smother any legitimate criticisms they might have had by a cloud of rhetoric. Two criticisms, however, do seem to come through at times in regard to *A Statement*. The first is that *A Statement* is not complete. The second is that *A Statement* adds to or replaces the historic Lutheran Confessions.

The charge of completeness is shallow and in principle would invalidate all present confessions. No confession is complete in the sense that each and every possible biblical truth revealed by God is confessed. Dogmatical texts come closer to covering all points in greater detail. Since it is the nature of confessions that they reflect in some way the situation in which they arise and since the world has not yet come to an end, it is impossible from the very nature of confessions that they be exhaustive. Shall we deprive posterity of any and all rights to make confessions? Also since confessions reflect primarily the current dilemmas and past ones in retrospect, it is not satisfactory to criticize a confession because an historical factor, prominent in a past era, is not elucidated more fully in the newer confessions. In the specific Lutheran Confessions, the matter of the Trinity receives comparatively scant attention. If these lacunae are legitimate grounds for criticism, then not one of our present confessions can stand. A lacuna in a confession is only confessionally significant if the point which is overlooked has been one of doctrinal contention. Then this is a serious matter.

Now the second charge. To criticize Preus on the charge that he has added to the Lutheran Confessions also indicates an additional lack of understanding of what confessions are. The church does not add confessions in the sense that it sticks one more out on a string. The preface to the Solid Declaration is also

apropos in the matter of Preus's Statement. Newer confessions grow out of older ones and explicate them. The confession that Jesus was the Lord was not an addition but a further explanation of the Shema of Israel that the Lord God was one Lord. The Apostles' Creed follows the New Testament in the same way. This is the way that the Lutheran Confessions want to stand in regard to the earlier catholic creeds. The church will cease to be the church if she relegates the tasks of confessing its faith to the historical past. It is the glorification, yes, the deification of history to state that even though the Christians in the past could confess the truth to their situations, Christians today *cannot*. To assert that "confessionalism" was an attribute of the fourth or sixteenth century is either to canonize these centuries, putting them on the level of the apostles, or to condemn our century to a hopeless search for the truth, always approximating but never attaining.

What then should be the posture of Missouri Synod members and indeed of all interested Christians throughout the world to Preus's *A Statement*? The action of the LCMS in making *A Statement* an expression of the Missouri Synod's faith does give the writing a more important position than what it occupied before the action was taken. While some, if not most, of the productions of theological leaders may be ignored, a statement formalized by a prominent denomination may not be ignored. The Presbyterian Confession of 1967 demands more attention than for example this essay since it states the position of a larger number of people. More is at stake, more is involved. Missouri Synod members and others interested must examine Preus's *A Statement* to see if the document is in accord with the Holy Scriptures. Without sounding disrespectful of our Lutheran heritage, it must be subjected to the same scrutiny as we subject our historic confessions. The age of a document is no guarantee of its reliability. If after careful examination of Preus's statement (or the Lutheran Confessions, for that matter) we find things which are contrary to the Bible, then we are obligated by the Bible to bring this to the attention of the church. If it is a correct and valid reflection of the biblical revelation, then we are under obligation to endorse it—regardless of the origin of the document. Confessions attain and maintain their validity not by their author or origin, but by their witness to the biblical revelation. If confessional unity is to be attained in the Missouri Synod at least, then this principle of perpetual scrutiny must be scrupulously employed. If the principle is avoided then we may safely assume without prejudice that unity in doctrine or confessions is not really a desired goal.

Some say that it is tyranny to demand subscription to another confession, especially one written by one man. Some of these matters have been treated above. If in a matter of controversy, a confession (this is what *A Statement* is) is prepared that speaks to the issue, then we should willingly submit ourselves to the document. If such a document is contrary to the word of God, then we are conscience bound to indicate this. Issuing *A Statement* is not per se contrary to the word of God. In fact it is demanded. Some statements maintain an

operative validity only for as long as a problem persists in the church. Some problems are more parochial in scope than others and thus confessions arising from these situations will of course be limited by time and place. Other problems are near universal in their scope. The eventual fate of Preus's *A Statement* cannot now be predicted with certainty. For each confession accepted on a wider scale there are many others whose truth content is no less which are lost in the sands of time. The major problem confronted by Preus's statement is whether or not the Bible is historically reliable. This is not a parochial problem limited to the Missouri Synod. The problem is near universal in embracing all corners of Christendom and has been around in the church for about two hundred years. Preus is responding to a truly ecumenical or catholic problem to which other churches should have responded and failed. What the ultimate confessional outcome of this problem will be cannot be predicted now, but at least Preus's *A Statement* will be recognized as one of those documents that either became a confession or became part of the family tree of confessions still to be written. This is indeed an honor also conferred on many prominent documents.

David P. Scaer

Twenty Years Later—Things Have Not Changed That Much

Readers with copies of the January-April 1989 issue of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* on their shelves might find that the contents may be as useful today as they were then. Printed in the back are faculty overtures to the Wichita Convention "To Encourage Use of the Historic Liturgies of the Church"; "To Maintain the Practice of Close Communion"; "To Affirm the Divinity of the Call"; "To Seek and Determine Alternate Routes into the Ministry"; "To Clarify Status with the ELCA and Welcome Confessional Pastors of the ELCA"; "To Reject 'Renewal in Missouri'"; "To Resist the Intrusion of Feminist Theology and Language"; and "To Fund the Association of Confessional Lutheran Seminaries." Perhaps the only thing that has really changed is that with our current associate editor, dates of the issue of the *CTQ* are more likely to correspond with real time, but since a reprint of the issue would be as meaningful in 2009 as it was in 1989, *CTQ* arrival in the mailbox may not be all that crucial. The Association of Confessional Lutheran Seminaries was dissolved at a September 1989 meeting of International Lutheran Conference in Seoul, Korea, and was reconstituted a few years later. Differences about liturgies, who may receive communion, and the office of the ministry persist. Alternate routes to the ministry are already in place. Feminist language is used in the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible and in some churches. The CTCR has subsequently addressed this issue in *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (February 1998). A few ELCA pastors have found their way into the LCMS, but this

hardly qualified as major hemorrhaging. Things have changed with the September 25–26, 2009, meeting in Fishers, Indiana, of CORE, a group of ELCA pastors and laity who are opposed to the decisions of its August 2009 Minneapolis convention on ordaining homosexual pastors and blessing same-sex unions. Represented in CORE are multifaceted theologies and practices that will require attention by the LCMS officials, but pastors and congregations on the local level are probably already responding to concerns raised by their ELCA counterparts. The ELCA and its counterpart in Canada were a union of approximately seventy-five percent of all Lutherans in North America. What our faculty said twenty years ago still has value in that we recognize ELCA pastors who are "the spiritual heirs of confessionally faithful teachers like Charles Porterfield Krauth" and that the Colloquy Board and others entrusted with these responsibilities "at their discretion adjust the colloquy requirements to ease entry of such men into the ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod." Their congregations would also be welcome, but the formation of their own synod might have advantages for all. Now what about the articles in the issue that presented these resolutions? Walter A. Maier wrote on charismatic renewal in the Lutheran church, John Stephenson wrote on "Open Versus Close Communion," and the undersigned wrote one on the feminization of worship in ordaining women. The seminary does not have enough copies for those who were ordained since 1989, but some of you might borrow a copy from older neighboring pastors. This offer is also open to ELCA pastors and laity. Individual parts of the issue are now available electronically at http://media.ctsfw.edu/.

David P. Scaer

Johann Georg Hamann: Retrieval of a Post-Enlightenment Thinker

Hunter College in Manhattan was the venue for an international conference on Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788) on March 20–21, 2009, dedicated to the exploration of the legacy of this eighteenth-century Lutheran philosopher from Königsberg. Hamann has remained something of an enigma, identified by Isaiah Berlin as a modern irrationalist and often dismissed as a minor figure in comparison with his contemporaries G.E. Lessing, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, and David Hume. Yet Kierkegaard called him "the greatest humorist in Christendom," which is to say "the greatest humorist in the world." John Betz argues that Hamann prefigures Kierkegaard and is, in fact, in many ways to be preferred to him as a critic of the Enlightenment (see John Betz, "Hamann Before Kierkegaard: A Systematic Theological Oversight," in *Pro Ecclesia,* Summer 2007, 299–333). Hamann would exert influence on the confessional revival that would emerge in the century after his death. Lowell Green identifies him as a forerunner of the Erlangen School. He is quoted favorably by C.F.W. Walther.

The conference itself was an exercise in interdisciplinary research with theologians, philosophers, and literary critics addressing multiple dimensions of Hamann's life and work. John Betz (Loyola) located Hamann within the history of ideas, drawing on his recently published *After Enlightenment: Hamann as Post-Secularist Visionary* (Blackwell, 2008). Gwen Griffith-Dickson (King's College) probed Hamann's relationship to the Personalist Tradition. Katie Terezakis (Rochester Institute of Technology) took up the question, is "Theology Possible After Hamann?" which she answered in the negative. Oswald Bayer (Tübingen) delivered the keynote address: "God as Author: The Theological Foundation of Hamann's *Autorpoetik*." Kenneth Haynes (Brown), the editor of Hamann's *Writings on Philosophy and Language* published in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, examined "Tradition and Testimony in Hamann," while Manfred Kuehn (Boston) contrasted Hamann with Kant and Hume on reason. Johannes von Lüpke (Wuppertal), a Lutheran professor of systematic theology and Director of the *Internationales Hamann-Kolloquium*, demonstrated Hamann's dependence on classical Lutheran themes for his understanding of the Word of God. Two panel discussions featuring scholars who did not present full papers took up a variety of questions in Hamann scholarship, ranging from Hamann's linguistic philosophy to his Christology, his impact on German Romantic drama to his fables of dismemberment. The papers, along with the panel-discussion presentations, will be published under the editorship of the convener of the conference, Professor Lisa Marie Anderson, by Northwestern University Press.

Hamann did not see himself as a theologian but as a "Philologus crucis," a philologist of the cross. Hamann's ongoing significance for contemporary Lutheran theology has been most articulately argued by Oswald Bayer. Several of Bayer's books recently translated into English make use of Hamann in arguing that Hamann was no irrationalist but a radical Enlightenment thinker who turned away from the dogmatism of reason to the Triune God, who addresses the creature through fellow creatures. Holy Scripture is not a text to be interpreted but a divine text which interprets the hearer. The imprint of Hamann is evident in Bayer's *Theology the Lutheran Way* (Eerdmans, 2007), *Freedom in Response--Lutheran Ethics: Sources and Controversies* (Oxford), and numerous articles, including "Hermeneutical Theology," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56 (2003), 131–147, and "God as Author of My Life-History," in *Lutheran Quarterly* 2 (1988), 437–456. Bayer has also authored an introduction to Hamann written for a general audience under the title *Zeitgenosse im Widerspruch: Johann Georg Hamann als radikaler Aufklärer*. This work has been translated into English by Mark Mattes and Roy Harrisville and will be published in the near future. Hamann's work, mediated by Bayer, has much to offer Lutherans in a postmodern context. The conference at Hunter College laid a good foundation for a broader discussion and appropriation of his legacy.

John T. Pless

Latin Lives On

Integral to the well-being of the church on earth is the contribution of the languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin—for the preaching of Christ crucified, risen, and ascended. Concordia Theological Seminary is pleased, therefore, to offer "Lutheranism and the Classics," to be held on campus October 1–2, 2010. The goal of this conference is to consider how the classical languages have influenced Lutheranism in the past and how Greek and Latin are poised to enrich church, academy, and culture in both the present and the future. The conference features three plenary papers, a banquet address, and twelve sectional presenters who will deliver shorter papers related to three tracks: Academic, Classical Education, and Concordia (sectional papers will be presented twice). Latin will be used in three worship settings. The presentation by representatives of the John Burroughs School (St. Louis, Missouri) is intended especially for classical educators. Attendees can expect to leave the conference with an awareness of how important the classical languages are for keeping the Lutheran church vital in the world and for the propagation of the faith to present and future generations. Those interested in attending may register online at www.ctsfw.edu/classics.

Lutheran interest in the classical languages also continues to flourish beyond the CTS community: a new Latin e-mail discussion group on the Lutheran confessions, *Confessionum Lutheranarum Studiosi*, has recently been founded, and others are invited to join. The purpose of the group is to have a place where the confessions of our church can be discussed in Latin, the language in which many of them were written, as were so many other theological treasures that have yet to be translated. Discussions are solely in Latin and are not to be corrected unless requested by the writer. Those who wish to observe without directly participating are welcome. Also provided are web pages aiding in Latin conversation and composition and listing Latin editions of the Book of Concord. Colloquium leaders are Jon Bruss, Benjamin Mayes, and Josh Hayes. Information on the group can be found at http://groups.google.com/group/confessionum-lutheranarum-studiosi.

John G. Nordling

Errata

There were a few Hebrew and Greek words that were scrambled due to a font transfer problem in the printed version of Reinhard Slenczka, "Agreement and Disagreement about Justification: Ten Years after the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*," *CTQ* 73:4 (October 2009): 291–316. We apologize for this error. A version of this article with the correct fonts is available at http://media.ctsfw.edu/. The Editors

Book Reviews

***A Seminary in Crisis: The Inside Story of the Preus Fact Finding Committee.* By Paul A. Zimmerman. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007. Hard cover. 444 Pages. $51.00.**

This review of a narrative of the events before and after the St. Louis Seminary faculty walkout on February 19, 1974, is appearing thirty-six years after they happened. Of special note is that this account is provided by the chairman of the Fact Finding Committee appointed by then LCMS president J.A.O. Preus to ascertain the validity of allegations that the faculty's theology did not conform to LCMS doctrinal standards. Like *Memoirs in Exile* (1990), by former St. Louis seminary president John H. Tietjen, a major player in these events, *A Seminary in Crisis* is written from the inside.

Direct involvement with the events leading up to the walkout began with Zimmerman's appointment to the committee in May 1970 described in the second chapter. His committee's carrying out the task and its report to Preus in June 1971 are the subjects of chapters three and four. Chapters five through eight describe events from the completion of the report to the seminary walkout. After the narrative (13–144) with end notes (145–151) follows a bibliography (152–153). The bulk of *A Seminary in Crisis* (155–444) consists of the *Report of the Fact Finding Committee* and *Report of the Synodical President* to the 1971 LCMS Milwaukee convention in which are included the transcripts of committee interviews with the individual professors. Majority and minority reports from the seminary's regents are also included as are statements and letters from the synod president, the seminary faculty, and its president. Also found here is "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" adopted by the synod in response to the faculty's theology.

Those desiring to examine or reexamine those tension-filled times have here the necessary documents. Those acquainted with Kurt Marquart's *Anatomy of an Explosion* (1977) and Tietjen's *Memoirs in Exile* already know the events of these times, but as an insider, Zimmerman also is positioned to provide details known only to him. While Marquart's approach is theological and Tietjen's is autobiographical written with pathos, Zimmerman's style is matter-of-fact. He takes issue here and there with Tietjen, e.g., on whether the student walkout was really spontaneous (126). Now nearly two generations have passed and many of the principals in the controversy have gone to their eternal reward, but should rapprochement be possible for those who are still at odds with one another, it could begin by an in-depth study of the committee's "Summary Statement of the Positions Held by Professors at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri" (160–168). While the faculty claimed that biblical authority depends on the Scriptures presenting the gospel, the synod view was that Christ is revealed in the Scriptures as the written word of God (162). Though the faculty accepts the virgin birth, some were not willing to

condemn those who for exegetical reasons could not (166). If the virgin birth is up for grabs, then so are the miracles and the resurrection. Still-living faculty members might provide a reason, other than tradition, that these articles should not be dropped from the creeds. Discussion could start there.

In the final chapter of the narrative section, chapter ten (142–144), Zimmerman speaks to future generations. First, "the Church's leaders must be willing to take action without paralyzing delays or hoping the problem will go away without any decisive action being taken." Second, "we must continue to produce educated seminary graduates." Third, if seminaries do not receive support from congregations, they will move away from the church. Less certain is that the church will take these words to heart. Doubtful is whether any pastors younger than their mid-50s have a living memory of events in the early 1970s. Only the author and Karl Barth, later St. Louis seminary president, whom Zimmerman consulted, remain from the five-member Fact Finding Committee. Martin Scharlemann, J.A.O. Preus, his brother Robert, John Tietjen, Arthur Repp, Richard Caemmerer, Eugene Klug, George Wollenburg, E.J. Otto, all who played a role on one side or the other, have passed away. Paul A. Zimmerman, now in his 90s, has performed an admirable service in leaving us an eyewitness account of those times and in collecting the necessary documents. At the beginning of my seminary-student days in 1955, I was hardly concerned with what happened in the synod in 1918, thirty-seven years before. Here's a prayer that this generation will not be so complacent. Endnotes which consistently refer to the proceedings and minutes are used. Footnotes would have provided unnecessary clutter. The titles "Dr." and "President" are inconsistently used and should be omitted altogether in a second printing. We are too obsessed with titles.

David P. Scaer

***At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth.* Edited by Matthew C. Harrison. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2009. 826 Pages. Hardcover. $19.95.**

Matthew Harrison, Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, has distinguished himself as a pastor, author, translator, administrator, and humanitarian. This large book (over 800 pages!), a collection of writings of C.F.W. Walther, Friedrich Wynecken, Heinrich Schwan, Francis Pieper, Friedrich Pfotenhauer, and others, is a remarkable volume by any standard. While not the translator of every essay, Harrison introduces each essay with candor and warmth. Nostalgia is one of the most powerful of human emotions, but these essays are not offered in wistfulness—they are offered for thought-provoking guidance. We tend to look at our problems as unprecedented. Harrison shows that this belief is not true. We can look to the leaders of the

past for help, since the similarities between challenges faced in the past and today outweigh the differences.

Harrison desires to cultivate unity and direction for the LCMS through wisdom, not through a denominational program. As noted, the choice of essays indicates remarkable parallels between the young LCMS and that of today. The early leaders of the LCMS faced technological advances, religious pluralism, economic catastrophes, social problems, cantankerous leaders, and other vexing matters. This volume is especially valuable for those theologians and pastors seeking integrity for their ministry.

Naturally a review of such a large volume cannot deal with every essay included. We will focus on some important highlights. This reader especially found those letters and essays dealing with Walther's break with Loehe of great interest. Harrison indicates that Walther's questioning of Loehe's confessional integrity does not present Walther at his best since Loehe advocated closed communion at some risk to his ministry in the Bavarian Lutheran Church. However, Harrison notes that Loehe's apparently weaker confessional stance—as it became embodied in the Iowa Synod—perhaps contributed to current problems in the ELCA (224). Certainly Loehe's development of institutions of mercy indicates that a confessional stance naturally harmonizes with a charitable disposition for those in need. This spirit was echoed by Walther and continues in the LCMS.

Walther's response to the Norwegian American pastor J.A. Ottesen, who asked about the appropriateness of lay preachers (used by the Norse Pietists in this country), wisely counsels that we should steer a course between "*Pfafferei*" (priestly rule) and *Schwaermerei* (lay revivalism) in the church.

In his office, Harrison has significantly brought to the fore the problem of clergy depression. Here, Harrison does not step away from the breakdowns of both Walther and Wyneken due to the stress of their workload. While a slight setback for their ministries, such melancholy did not prevent these leaders from carrying on in their leadership—though a sabbatical to Germany was most helpful for Walther. Counter to all accusations that confessionalists are indifferent to social welfare, Walther's concern for social ministry is evidenced in "The Pastor's Responsibility for Care for the Physical Needs of Members of His Congregation." To be confessionally true is not to be socially indifferent—as it is so often caricatured by liberal versions of Lutheranism. Likewise, in light of current heretical trends in the ELCA, Walther urged confessionally faithful pastors and candidates for ministry not to bolt from unorthodox church bodies, but instead to fight for truth from within (176–82).

Harrison notes that Walther alighted on a reference to Missouri's strength in a quote from a General Council pastor: "Now I understand why the Missourians are so unified. The reason is that they always spend a great deal of time in the thorough study of doctrine. They don't merely discuss it

thoroughly, but they always try to get down to the basic principles and prove everything on the basis of Scripture. That is the secret of the Missourians. With that kind of approach, they cannot help being unified" (299). There is much to be learned today from this observation!

A potent essay of Walther's deals with whether the use of Methodist hymns in Lutheran Sunday Schools is permissible. Given today's "praise band" culture, the response is most helpful: "For, first of all, the true Lutheran spirit is found in none of them; second, our hymns are more powerful, more substantive, and more prosaic; third, those hymns which deal with the Holy Sacraments are completely in error; fourth, when these little sectarian hymnbooks come into the hand of our children, they openly read and sing false hymns" (332). How even more true of "praise songs" and the like in current "contemporary" services!

The same Spirit empowering Walther empowered the other leaders in this volume. Hence, Wyneken defends the doctrine of justification as the "beginning, middle, and end" of Christian truth (409), and Schwann seeks for the synod to find a path between "faddishness" (again think church-growth ideology) and sluggishness (541). Pieper charges us to do no "whoring with the spirit of the times" (571) and sees the weakness of an "ecumenical Lutheranism" willing to sell its birthright.

All in all, this volume is highly recommended indeed, not only for the professional scholar, historian, and theologian, but especially for the parish pastor seeking strength to carry out his ministry based on truth and consistency of practice.

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At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth. **Edited by Matthew C. Harrison. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2009. 826 Pages. Hardcover. $19.95.**

A Daystar Reader. **Edited by Matthew L. Becker. Fountainhead Press, 2010. Softcover. 245 Pages.**

Editors of each collection of essays want to call the attention of LCMS readers to critical periods in its history, Harrison on the synod's first leaders and Becker on events leading to 1974. First to Harrison's volume.

Beyond Walther's *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* and his *The Form of a Christian Congregation,* his writings and those of the LCMS's other founders are largely unknown. Harrison rectifies this with translations of Walther's other writings along with those Friedrich Wynken, Heinrich C.

Schwan, Francis Pieper, and Friedrich Pfotenhauer, all LCMS presidents. Selections are fascinating. Described is a trip with Wyneken to Germany in 1851 in which Walther meets with such leading university theologians as Hoefling in Erlangen and Loehe. Provided with each selection is a preface explaining the context in which it was written. We learn that breakdowns from stress and hard work were common. Wyneken preached one-and-a-half-hour sermons from notes and so left few manuscripts. Schwann and Pieper speak of their distress for the synod's future as they contemplate Walther's impending death, a reappearing theme in their funeral orations. Pieper was a pallbearer at Walther's funeral and John Behnken preached the funeral sermon for Friedrich Pfotenhauer, whom four years prior he had unseated as president, the first but not the last time this would happen.

Harrison's introductions provide a narrative of the synod from 1848 to 1939. Written with conviction, the intimate thoughts of the founding fathers will evoke a bit of emotion not only from the blue-blood clergy descended from the synod's first members, but also from the ever-increasing majority of "Gentile" clergy who by choice and not only by heritage have attached themselves to the synod's confession. Problems pastors face today are hardly different from the first leaders and so this collection could easily substitute as a pastoral theology. These men were more open minded than what might be thought. When requested, pastors are to marry and bury those with only tangential ties with the church. Students in churches with inadequate confessional commitments should remain until they are removed. Pieper chastised congregations who gave their pastors measly salaries. Over and over again the forefathers urged commitment to the truth, but in these essays they do provide extended or in-depth theological and biblical expositions. These probably are accessible elsewhere. 826 pages is a lot of reading, but each of the approximately 100 items can be read separately. Walther accounts for roughly 40% of the content. An initial offering price of $20 seems too good to be true and the volume may no longer be available at that price, but even at double the amount, it is a bargain that cannot be passed up.

As the preface explains, *A Daystar Reader* is a collection of essays coming from a movement within the LCMS self-identified as the *Daystar Network*. Without dates and no citation in the bibliography, a fair but imprecise guess is that they were written from about 1970 to 2005. The nine-page introduction lays out the historical origin and theological platform for the movement and summarizes the twenty-two chapters, which are subdivided into six sections (xvi–xvii). The first four sections set down the theological bases: I. For the Sake of the Gospel; II. Preaching the Gospel; III. Church and Ministry; and IV. Church Fellowship. Section V, entitled "The Ordination of Women" and comprising six chapters, indicates its importance (103–156). Four chapters make up the sixth and final section, "Science and Theology," whose first chapter, "The Scandal of the LCMS Mind," presents the case for evolution as compatible with divine creation. The existence of vestigial organ parts as an

argument for evolution might have to be reevaluated, since a use for the appendix has been found. This argument can be eliminated in the next edition by which time a function may be found for wisdom teeth (171). Since the writer offers seven arguments for evolution, he is unlikely to change his mind (170-171). The final chapter, "The Neurobiology of Gender: Cultural and Religious Dilemmas," urges a reevaluation of homosexuality (205-210). The August 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly did just that and earned a note of displeasure from the LCMS president. End notes from all the essays are lumped together with continuous numbers for a total of 216 (215-238). For discussion and reference each essay is entitled to its own notes. In the table of contents, twenty-two chapters are numbered (iii-iv), but the numbers do not appear next to the chapter titles. Also, the Roman numeral for 9 is "ix" not "ixi." These matters can be adjusted in the second edition. As mentioned, an introductory paragraph with the historical context for each essay, as Harrison provided, would allow readers to better engage the arguments. A lengthy "who's who" pedigree for the Daystar Network includes Walter A. Maier, only surprising because an equal claim is in *Walter A. Maier Still Speaks* (New Haven, MO, 2008). This may not measure up as a crusade for relics between competing armies, but it comes close to the Lutheran counterpart to Mormon baptism in behalf of the dead. Though the context of the essays is missing, names of the contributors with degrees and professional accomplishments are listed in the forefront. Thirteen of the twenty-two contributors graduated from Saint Louis before 1973, as did the undersigned, and one from Seminex. A glimpse into synod's life in this period can be found in Mary Todd's valedictory in leaving the synod (153-156).

Neither *House of My Fathers* nor *A Daystar Reader* gives place of publication and in the case of the latter only in the "Acknowledgements" is the name of Fountain Press discovered as the printer. This belongs on the opposite side of the title page alongside Daystar.net as the copyright holder. "Acknowledgements" (iii, x) is an acceptable spelling, but the dictionary and the word processor prefer "Acknowledgments." Readers may want to contact the respective editors or call a CPH bookstore for copies. Both are worthwhile, full-length portraits of different parts of Missouri's past. Nominations for awards from the Concordia Historical Institute are in order.

David P. Scaer

***Fighting for the Cross: Crusading to the Holy Land.* By Norman Housley. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 357 Pages. Hardcover. $38.00.**

Tremendous advances have been made in crusade scholarship over the last forty years. There is, however, still much to be learned. And paving the way is Norman Housley and his recent contribution to the field, *Fighting for the Cross.*

The book focuses entirely on the crusades sent to the Holy Land. It starts by masterfully summarizing the events that unfolded after Pope Urban II's well-known, though not well-documented, sermon at the Council of Clermont (AD 1095) and continues to the fall of Acre in 1291. But this is only covered to establish the backdrop for what follows: the social and intellectual history of the crusades. Motivations and preparations for crusading, details of travel and combat, logistics, and the mental world and accomplishments of crusaders are then examined with exacting detail.

Aiding the reader, Housley also provides numerous maps and several truly remarkable illustrations. But the greatest strength of the book, perhaps, is—in addition to its exclusive use of primary sources—its elegant prose untainted by modern biases. Accordingly, it does a fantastic job of drawing readers into the medieval world and describing the crusades in light of that world.

The one weakness is that it does not cover other theaters of crusading activity in the Middle Ages, such as the notorious Albigensian crusade against the Cathars of southern France. Nor does it cover the later crusades in defense of Europe from the Islamic imperialism of the Ottomans. This would require a volume at least twice the size of this one, and Housley has covered and continues to cover this in other studies. Nevertheless, for anyone seeking to understand the events and ethos of the crusading enterprise in the Holy Land, *Fighting for the Cross* is highly recommended.

Adam S. Francisco

***The Rising of Bread for the World: An Outcry of Citizens Against Hunger.* By Arthur Simon. New York and Mahweh, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009. 168 Pages. Paperback. $16.95.**

LCMS pastor Arthur Simon uses his life story as an outline for the account of his organizing Bread for the World in 1974, his turning over the reins of that organization to David Beckman in 1991, and his involvement in the Christian Children's Fund in 1997. Bread for the World crosses denominational lines to arouse public attention and obtain government support to relieve starving populations throughout the world. Its goals are set down in chapters ten through twelve, "The Right to Food," "The Fight for Food," and "Hunger at Home."

The first half of the book is autobiographical, leading up to how the author became involved in Bread for the World, the subject of the second half. Upon seminary graduation, his father, the Rev. Martin Simon, Ed.D., who would go on to write children's literature, was assigned as a missionary to China (1926). As a pastor in Eugene, Oregon, he preached a radio sermon against President Roosevelt's internment of Japanese American citizens. This courage to stand up against overwhelming odds was inherited by Arthur and his older brother

Paul, who took on the Illinois political machine to win seats in the Illinois assembly and senate and then to become lieutenant governor. (Residency in the capital city brought him to our Springfield seminary campus several times.) He later became a U.S. senator and was unsuccessful in his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

My acquaintance with Arthur Simon goes back to 1955–57 at the end of his seminary days and the beginning of mine. Reference to tumultuous seminary times is made generously without names. Martin Scharlemann, who is commended for supporting Simon's theological position and for introducing a more evangelical view of the Scriptures into the LCMS, is held responsible for the disruption at the St. Louis seminary in 1974 (38–39). After a two-year stint at the LCMS college in River Forest and a pastorate in Denver, Simon became pastor of Trinity in New York City, where with cousins Richard John Neuhaus and Erv Prang and John Puelle, a long time friend of mine, he became active in civil rights causes. Simon recounts successes and failures in acquiring government funding from American presidents. George Bush comes out a little bit better than Bill Clinton (158, 169), if I read this correctly.

Because he, his father, and his brother were significant LCMS figures in the middle of the last century, Simon's narrative will be of particular interest to our readers. In the nearly half a century since our seminary days, the world has changed. So has the LCMS, which today is engaged extensively in relieving hunger and assisting in natural catastrophes through its Board for World Relief and Human Care and Lutheran World Relief, both headed by LCMS pastors. So Art Simon's work continues in a way he may not have anticipated. Art Simon worked to sustain life in feeding the poor. Sadly, his brother's support for abortion allowed lives to be snuffed out before they could join those who could help feed others or be fed by groups in which Christ's love to the poor could come to fruition.

David P. Scaer

***Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design.* By Stephen C. Meyer. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009. 611 pages. Hardcover. $28.99.**

2009 is the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, patron saint of the believers in evolution. This has given rise to renewed interest in the theory of evolution and its meaning. On September 12, *The Wall Street Journal* in its Weekend Journal section published an article by Richard Dawkins, prominent English atheist. Dawkins asserted, "Evolution is the creator of life." He added, "Evolution is God's redundancy notice, his pink slip." However, it is refreshing to note the recent publication of a definitive book that makes a compelling new case for Intelligent Design theory based on recent revolutionary discoveries in science. In *Signature in the Cell,* Stephen C.

Meyer exposes the weakness of Darwin's theory of evolution. He effectively shows the evidence that points to an intelligent designer, a creator.

Stephen C. Meyer received his Ph.D. in the philosophy of science from the University of Cambridge. A former geophysicist and college professor, he now directs the Center of Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. He has written and spoken widely and is one of the leaders in the Intelligent Design movement.

Meyer's book has been called a blueprint for twenty-first-century biological science. In years past, the cell, the basic unit of all living organisms, was considered to be fairly simple in structure and operation. That all changed, however, with a discovery by James Watson and Francis Crick in 1953. Using X-ray studies, they discovered in the nucleus of cells a giant molecule known as deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Watson and Crick discovered that this giant molecule provided the blueprint and means of cell reproduction together with the many proteins that need to be manufactured. It was found to have the structure of a double helix joined together by a series of chemical bases that act like a computer program. The helix is similar to a twisted ladder. When it unwinds and splits into two segments, each single chain acts as a template for the synthesis of a new one. Some DNA molecules contain as many as 4 million base pairs or units. Meyer's book provides a series of diagrams to make this bit of biochemistry understandable.

Meyer tells the interesting story of the research that followed Watson and Crick's discovery. As the years progressed, scientific experts on the origin of life attempted without success to explain how DNA could have first arisen by chance from non-living materials. Then, in 1985, Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley, and Roger Olsen published a book called *The Mystery of Life.* They suggested that the information that guides reproduction in DNA might have originated from an intelligent source. The information in the DNA molecule is "mathematically identical" to a computer code. It points to a programmer, an intelligence. This was a death blow to evolutionary theory, which cannot explain the origin of the complex genetic information in DNA.

Signature in the Cell tells the story of how further research showed that genes in the DNA interacted with other molecules such as RNA. The process is even more complicated than Watson and Crick thought. Meyer describes how the support for Intelligent Design increased. He relates interesting stories of his contacts with leading scientists studying the question of the origin of life. As evolutionists tried to show how blind chance could have produced first life, Meyer writes, "Model after model failed to explain the origin of biological information, the DNA enigma" (294-295). Meyer quotes experts Orgel and Joyce. In 1993, they concluded, "The *de novo* appearance of oligonucleotides (i.e., specifically sequenced RNA bases [large protein complexes that copy the DNA text]) on the primitive earth would have been a near miracle" (322).

Signature in the Cell devotes a chapter to demonstrating that Intelligent Design is scientifically based. Critics frequently allege that it is mere disguised "creationism." But Meyer competently shows that the theory is based on the latest research. It does, however, have powerful philosophical implications. Meyer writes, "The scientific case for intelligent design is fraught with philosophical significance and poses a serious challenge to the materialistic worldview that has long dominated science and much of western culture" (449).

The author writes that he is a Christian. He says, however, that "Intelligent Design does not answer questions about the nature of God or even make claims about God's existence" (442). He adds, however, "Intelligent design, arguably, has specifically theistic implications because intelligent design confirms a major tenet of a theistic worldview, namely that life was designed by conscious and intelligent being, a purposive agent with a mind" (443).

Psalm 53:1 says plainly, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:20 of God's "eternal power and deity," which are clearly seen "in the things that have been made." We call this the natural knowledge of God. But we must ever emphasize that Holy Scripture is the source of our knowledge of the true God, of all His works, and especially of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Signature in the Cell is a valuable resource for the pastor who counsels with his youth, who are certain to encounter evolution and its materialistic philosophy in high school, college, and university.

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***Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense.* By N.T. Wright. HarperOne, 2010. 256 Pages. Hardcover. $24.99.**

Most books of this nature are often categorized as spiritual theology and are ridden with anthropocentric overtones, sounding more psychological and sociological than theological. The few, however, that maintain a theological thrust (e.g., Henri Nouwen's numerous works) often operate from a very modern perspective, working from Scripture to the world. These are, it would seem, less appealing to the postmodern reader, who appears to be a bit more naturally given to being and belonging than knowing and discerning.

Simply Christian, however, proposes a fresh way of looking at the current cultural milieu in which we live. In effect, N.T. Wright turns modern spiritual theology on its head by beginning with the world and the world's struggles, only then to proceed to the text of Holy Scripture and the way in which it engages human beings in every aspect of life.

Wright's first section, "Echoes of a Voice," explores four areas—"longing for justice, the quest for spirituality, the hunger for relationships, and the delight in beauty" (x)—in which he proposes that in the recesses of human existence, we can hear an echo, even if it be ever so faint, of the voice of Jesus Christ, the one who speaks with a *viva vox*, a living voice. And it is through these echoes that we are plunged "into the center of the story which, according to the Christian tradition, makes sense of our longing for justice, spirituality, relationship, and beauty" (51).

Wright's second section, "Staring at the Sun," begins to reveal to us the person behind the voice which has been echoed throughout creation beginning in Eden. Here, Wright sees the story of Scripture as one grand narrative whose God is so deeply and personally connected to this world that he is willing to hand over his Son in order to "put the entire creation back to rights" (86). Indeed, Wright is thoroughly christological here because, for him, "Christianity is about something that *happened*. Something that happened *to Jesus of Nazareth*. Something that happened *through* Jesus of Nazareth" (91). For Wright, the way back to Eden begins, continues, and ends in Jesus.

His third and final section, "Reflecting the Image," summons the reader "to become more truly human, to reflect the image of God into the world" (140) by joyfully living within the story of Jesus, echoed in section one and explicated in section two. This is where Wright pushes the reader beyond the simple desire to get to heaven and instead to live as "instruments of God's new creation, the world-put-to-rights which has already been launched in Jesus and of which Jesus' followers are supposed to be not simply beneficiaries but also agents" (xi). It is as though Wright is calling all Christians to live as a means of grace, a tangible point of contact between the living Christ and this dying world.

Throughout *Simply Christian*, one can see at least two patterns at play. First, there is the father-theologian-bishop pattern. In other words, in section one, we see Wright as a dad who desperately wants his children and his children's children to hear and rejoice in the echo, and more, the one whose voice is behind it (xii). In section two, we see him as a biblical scholar, unmatched in his ability to read the text of Scripture in its totality as the all-encompassing story of Jesus. And in section three, we see him as a bishop, one who cares deeply for the flock entrusted to his care, and who longs for the day when they come to the full realization that "the point of Christianity is not 'to go to heaven when you die'" (217), but to be put to good use *now*, as those who have been fully forgiven and fully joined to the life of Jesus.

But we also see this pattern at play in the three sections of *Simply Christian*: our story-Christ's story-living within Christ's story. Strikingly, this is the same pattern found in the ancient catechumenate, in which catechumens pass from inquiry to catechesis (including intense pre-baptismal catechesis) to mystagogy. And if Wright's book is written for a postmodern audience, and if

postmoderns are drawn to the ancient (see James K.A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*), then maybe *Simply Christian* has something to offer those who are looking for new and fresh ways (while actually being quite ancient!) to make disciples of Jesus and make them stronger.

In the spirit of full disclosure, it should be noted that for many readers the most troubling section will undoubtedly be the first. And yet, I would propose that these echoes should not come as a surprise to the church. For what is justice but the normal ebb and flow of confession and absolution? What is spirituality but the normal rhythm of the church's liturgy? What is relationship but a community of believers bound concretely by the eucharistic meal? And what is beauty but what the Scriptures have always called beauty—the incarnational presence of the Lord on His sacrificial altar? Indeed, these echoes, while being thoroughly postmodern, find their origin and truest expression in the church and her liturgy, and so Wright's plea for us to tend them is one well taken.

To that end, I conclude with a short bit from the end of *Simply Christian*, which sums up the intent of Wright's work, and which should whet the appetite of those interested in discovering the totality of the Christian life, even if it be from a thoroughgoing Calvinist:

> Made for spirituality, we wallow in introspection. Made for joy, we settle for pleasure. Made for justice, we clamor for vengeance. Made for relationship, we insist on our own way. Made for beauty, we are satisfied with sentiment. But new creation has already begun. The sun has begun to rise. Christians are called to leave behind, in the tomb of Jesus Christ, all that belongs to the brokenness and incompleteness of the present world. It is time, in the power of the Spirit, to take up our proper role, our fully human role, as agents, heralds, and stewards of the new day that is dawning. That, quite simply, is what it means to be Christian: to follow Jesus Christ into the new world, God's new world, which he has thrown open before us (237).

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***Forgiveness and Christian Ethics.* By Anthony Bash. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Hardback. 208 Pages. $85.00.**

Anthony Bash of Durham University takes up the question, "What does it mean to forgive?" Recognizing the complexities that surround the practice of forgiveness, Bash examines philosophical, psychological, social, and legal dimensions to the question. He relates his own theoretical explorations to issues raised by such high-profile events as 9/11, the Holocaust, and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. In short, Bash

wishes to articulate how forgiveness is moral response to a morally wrong act. Along the way, he takes up a variety of accompanying items, such as the issue of self-forgiveness, forgiveness without repentance, forgiveness as psychological therapy, and forgiveness in relation to reconciliation.

Leading off with Nietzsche's claim that forgiveness is a sign of impotence that exalts weakness and is therefore both unhealthy and immoral, Bash enters into a conversation with a variety of philosophers (Derrida, Kierkegaard, Kant, Lévinas, Milbank) that moves through the volume. Only one chapter (Chapter 5, "Forgiveness and the New Testament") devotes itself explicitly to a theological understanding of the forgiveness of sins. Bash argues that "forgiveness is a characteristic ethic of the kingdom of God" (99). He never comes to see that in the New Testament forgiveness of sins is linked to the atoning death of Jesus and is therefore eschatological in nature, that is, it spells an end to the old and brings about a new reality that transcends moral categories as God actually justifies the ungodly. Bash contends that "despite Lucan suggestions to the contrary, Jesus did not absolve sins," though he did embody forgiveness in his life (99).

Above all, Bash wants to articulate forgiveness as "an elusive gift" that is complete with "moral richness" and "transformative power" (186). Hence he continually attempts to squeeze forgiveness into ethical and therapeutic categories which is much like trying to pour new wine into old skins, to use a biblical metaphor. Lutherans would insist that forgiveness is not directed simply to wrongdoers but to sinners. The biblical teaching is not merely about forgiveness but the forgiveness of sins. This is missing in *Forgiveness and Christian Ethics*. What is missing in Bash may be found in Steven Paulson's essay, "The Forgiveness of Sins," in *Exploring and Proclaiming the Apostles' Creed*, edited by Roger E. Van Harn (Eerdmans, 2004), 240–253.

John T. Pless

***Catechismus Minor Martini Lutheri [The Small Catechism of Martin Luther].* Notes by Edward Naumann. Washington, DC, 2009. Paperback. 79 + xv Pages.**

Several years ago, Edward Naumann produced a Latin text of Martin Luther's Small Catechism because a pastor wanted to use one for students in his parochial school. Now, with students of his own, Naumann has republished the text with grammatical notes on each page and a Latin vocabulary list at the end. His aim is to make more readily available one of the versions of the Small Catechism used by many children in Reformation times when Latin was a spoken language. The educational objective of this book is "reactionary" (xiii):

> It is an education that refuses to follow modern fashions and theories, and instead tries to reach back to the rigorous standards of a Golden Age long

> forgotten. While I am under no illusions as to the possibilities for the actualization of such a dream . . ., my sympathies must abide with those who see the potential for brilliance in the minds of our youth and who wish for them the opportunity to rise above the mediocrity of their surroundings (xiii–xiv).

Thus, one either favors the Latin of the Small Catechism and the educational agenda presupposed or leaves well enough alone. Naumann has adopted this take-it-or-leave-it approach in the way he published the book: though professionally bound in durable paperback (the front cover sports an austere prie-dieu), there is apparently no publisher other than Naumann himself.

Gene Edward Veith's Preface (viii–xii) explains that a certain Johannes Sauermann actually Latinized Luther's *Small Catechism* in 1529 "by the advice and order of the author himself" (viii). The Latin text is based on the readings of two prior editions, first, the *Concordia Triglotta* (originally published by Concordia Publishing House, 1921) and second, *liber Concordiae* (Breitkopf and Haertel, Leipzig, 1846). The notes at the bottom of each page are designed for novice Latinists.

John G. Nordling

***The Righteousness of Faith According to Luther.* By Hans J. Iwand with an Introduction by Gregory A. Walter. Translated by Randi Lundell and edited by Virgil F. Thompson. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008. Paperback. 116 Pages. $16.00.**

Hans Joachim Iwand (1899–1960) was a professor of theology at Göttingen and Bonn. A student of Rudolf Hermann (1887–1962), Iwand would chart his own path in Luther studies in reaction to Karl Holl and before him Albrecht Ritschl. Iwand's work on the *theologia crucis* would be important for his student Jürgen Moltmann's book, *The Crucified God.* Gregory Walter, whose Princeton doctoral work focused on Iwand's Christology as a response to Karl Holl, provides a lucid introduction to Iwand's life and work in the context of the Luther Renaissance.

The appearance of this book in English is long overdue. Prior to the appearance of these essays in *Lutheran Quarterly* and Jacob Corzine's translation of "The Freedom of the Christian and the Bondage of the Will" in *Logia,* little of Iwand had been rendered into English and he was largely unknown in North America, except, perhaps, from his influence on the thinking of Gerhard Forde. James Nestingen has spotted Iwand as a key source in Forde's theological development (see James Nestingen, "Examining Sources: Influences on Gerhard Forde's Theology," in *By Faith Alone: Essays in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde,* 10–21).

Hans Joachim Iwand's theological career was forged by an early and ongoing critical engagement with Barth, the necessity of confessional witness in the face of Hitler, and a profound grasp of the heart of Luther's theology. Like Luther, Iwand's theological work is geared toward the proclamation of the righteousness of faith found only in Christ Jesus. The fundamental and critical distinction for theology is thus the distinction between the law and the gospel. Here Iwand is radically and refreshingly Lutheran in a way that deconstructs moralisms of the left and the right so that Christ alone is preached as the end of the law for all who believe. *The Righteousness of Faith According to Luther* is more than just another historical study of a Reformation theme; it is a vigorous exercise in pastoral dogmatics. Iwand teases out the nuances in Luther's distinction of the law from the gospel with provocative insights on nearly every page. For example, Iwand asserts,

> An evangelical church that views the teaching of the righteousness of faith as self-evident—but about which no one should trouble himself any further because other issues are more important—has in principle robbed itself of the central solution by which all other questions are illuminated. Such a church will become increasingly splintered and worn down. If we take the article of justification out of the center very soon we will not know why we are evangelical Christians or should remain so. As a result we will strive for the unity of the church and will sacrifice the purity of the gospel; we will have more confidence in church organization and church government and will promise more on the basis of the reform of Christian authority and church training than either can deliver. If we lose our center, we will court pietism and listen to other teachings and we will be in danger of being tolerant where we should be radical and radical where we should be tolerant (18).

Iwand's discussion of antinomianism is incisive: "With the question of Antinomianism, we are dealing with a problem at the inner core of Protestantism and one that has perhaps shaped contemporary Protestantism more than any other" (43). Noting that antinomians say almost exactly the same thing as Luther yet ultimately make the end of the law an ideology which reduces the gospel to lawlessness, Iwand demonstrates the necessity of the law's proclamation for the sake of the gospel. "Only angels don't need the law anymore" (45).

This is a volume not simply for Reformation scholars but for seminarians, pastors, and thoughtful laity. I look forward to using it in the classroom and beyond.

John T. Pless

***Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ.* By Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007. 392 Pages. Paperback. $18.99.**

Recent years have seen a large number of studies of early Christology which have challenged the prevalent view that the belief in Christ's divinity is a later development under pagan influence. Bowman and Komoszewski have managed to bring the results of many of these studies together in this very readable volume. They show not only that the earliest Jewish Christians believed in Christ's divine identity, but that the entire New Testament in many and various ways gives witness to this belief. Readers may be surprised by the amount of evidence that can be adduced. This book will certainly assist pastors in teaching the Scriptures' witness to Christ's divinity in sermons and Bible classes. Endnotes and bibliography give references for further readings. Furthermore, it is a book to recommend to interested laypeople and those whose belief in this basic doctrine has been challenged, whether by the Jehovah's Witnesses, popular literature such as *The Da Vinci Code*, or skeptical literature at universities.

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***God's War: A New History of the Crusades.* By Christopher Tyerman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006. 1024 Pages. Paperback. $22.95.**

Christopher Tyerman is a brilliant historian of the crusades, but he is prone to write history in a condescending and polemical manner. This is all too easy but all too inappropriate for scholarly historiography, particularly when it purports to remedy gross misunderstandings and subsequent misappropriation of allusions to the crusades in contemporary European and Middle Eastern socio-politics. Nevertheless, Tyerman's most recent work, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, is in many ways a *volte-face* to the indignant ranting and raving found, for example, in his 2004 book entitled *Fighting for Christendom*.

God's War is much more historical, too (whereas *Fighting for Christendom* was particularly conceptual). It begins with a disclosure: "this study is intended as a history, not a polemic, an account not a judgment, an exploration of an important episode of world history of enormous imaginative as well as intellectual fascination, not a confessional apologia or witness statement in some cosmic lawsuit." And Tyerman more than accomplishes this. First, he quickly moves into the medieval world by honing in on the geopolitical realities of Europe and the Mediterranean rim in the eleventh century. Then, he masterfully and elegantly weaves his way, providing numerous maps and illustrations, through every ideological, logistical, and military front of the crusades up until the early sixteenth century. After 900 pages, he then wraps

up his study with a short yet incisive assessment of how, from the standpoint of Europe's religious and political legacy, what was once an "edifice of papal pretensions" soon "looked increasingly awkward in the face of sixteenth-century scriptural theology" and was finally and totally discredited by the rise of international-law theory in the seventeenth century.

A book of this magnitude written by so eminent an author is hard to criticize. If there is one point worth a pedantic note, though, it would be Tyerman's take on jihad (which played a big part in the initial Muslim conquest of the Holy Land). He is correct in his description of it as a compulsory duty in Islam, but he is wrong when he asserts (on page 53) that from early on the greatest form of jihad was conceived of as an "internal struggle to achieve personal unity." The opposite is actually true. Jihad is and has always been defined—in classic Islamic thought—as a political and military struggle to advance the geopolitical domain of Islam; the so-called greater jihad (*al-jihād al-akbar*), routinely peddled by duplicitous Muslim theologians and uninformed western scholars and journalists as the original understanding of jihad, is an historical and theological innovation advocated by very few in historical Muslim thought. Despite this small, yet significant, oversight, *God's War* is highly recommended to those who have the time and stamina to read this massive tome.

Adam S. Francisco

***Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin.* By Randall C. Zachman. Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. 548 Pages. Hardcover, $55.00. Paperback, $40.00.**

The traditional Reformed or Presbyterian view of worship, governed by what is sometimes called the "regulative principle," says that God requires "that we in nowise make any image of God, nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word" (Heidelberg Catechism, q. 96; cf. Westminster Confession of Faith 21.1; Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* 3:343, 646). Classic Calvinist worship is an auditory experience, not a visual one.

But Randall Zachman, associate professor of Reformation studies at the University of Notre Dame, contends that this way of approaching worship (and religion in general) is not faithful to the theology of John Calvin. After an important introductory chapter, in which Zachman interacts with Calvin scholarship, the other chapters consist of diachronic presentations of Calvin's thought on the following issues: the universe as a living image of God, the image of God in humankind, providence, God's self-revelation in Scripture to Israel and the church, the sacraments, ceremonies, interpersonal communication, and signs of one's predestination to salvation.

Zachman's four objectives are, first, to show that for Calvin, God reveals Himself not only through the word but also through creation, not just through

proclamation, but also through manifestation. This move, being explicitly against Barth and Bultmann, is motivated by ecological concerns. Second, he aims to foster theological aesthetics and liturgical renewal among Reformed and Presbyterian congregations. Third, he aims to encourage gestures as vehicles of liturgical communication. Fourth, and most importantly, he aims to portray Calvin's theology as ecumenically open toward the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox traditions.

The diachronic arrangement of the chapters resolves many of the cognitive dissonances in Calvin's statements as a change over time, but other contradictions in Calvin's thought remain, most especially, according to Zachman, on the issue of God's invisibility and visibility (through "living images"), and on the issue of the sacraments. Zachman explains these as an intentional dialectic on Calvin's part.

Lutheran readers may find this book to be a helpful introduction to various themes in Calvin's thought with a few unexpected turns along the way—such as that Calvin taught the imposition of hands in ordination to be a sacrament and to bestow the Holy Spirit (315-318). Zachman's work will undoubtedly be important for evangelicals and Calvinists who seek to remain faithful to Calvin's theology and yet also move in ecumenical and liturgical directions.

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***The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology.* Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 380 Pages. Paperback. $45.00.**

The Reformation had its origin in a crisis of pastoral care and Luther's reforming work would leave no aspect of ministerial practice, church life, catechesis, or piety untouched. In eighteen informative essays drawn from the work of an international array of recognized Luther scholars, the Reformer's evangelical understanding of issues ranging from preaching and Christian education, sacramental practice and consolation in the face of suffering, art and piety, are presented in view of challenges faced by twenty-first-century pastors. Most of the essays originally appeared in *Lutheran Quarterly,* and the book is a companion volume to the earlier *Lutheran Quarterly* book also edited by Timothy Wengert, *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church,* published in 2004.

Wengert provides an introductory essay observing that the pastoral aspect of Luther's work is often missed both in biographical studies and in surveys of his theology. Wengert rightly notes that Gerhard Ebeling's magisterial study, *Luthers Seelsorge: Theologie in der Vielfalt der Lebenssituationen an seinen Briefen*

dargestellt (1997), which deals with the Reformer's pastoral care from the perspective of his letters, is an exception to this trend. More recently it might be noted that Neil Leroux's *Martin Luther as Comforter: Writings on Death* (2007) and *Luther as Spiritual Advisor* (2007) bear evidence to a retrieval of the ministerial significance of Luther's work.

Wengert observes that for Luther, pastoral care

> is by definition always a matter of distinguishing law and gospel (that is, terrifying the comfortable and comforting the terrified). Moreover, this distinguishing takes place under the shadow of the cross: the Word itself, the pastor who delivers it, and the ones who receive it are weak and live by grace alone. At the same time, pastoral acts arise for Luther out of God's gracious declaration justifying the ungodly, a Word received by faith alone. Furthermore, this declared righteousness must always stand over against the external righteousness of this world (justice) to which pastors also call their flocks. Thus, Luther conceived pastoral admonition and care (*Seelsorge;* literally, care of souls) as defining all aspects of pastoral ministry, rather than as a separate specialty of the pastor tied to therapy and personal well-being and separated from Word and sacrament. (4)

Echoing Gerhard Ebeling, Wengert sees Luther proceeding "out of his regular encounter with God's Word and human need in prayer" (6). Whether in public preaching and teaching, literary endeavors, correspondence, or personal conversation, Luther works as a pastor setting human life before God's law and gospel.

The essays in this book are divided into five categories: The Theological Heart of the Pastor; Preaching the Living Word; The Teaching Ministry; The Pastor and the People's Piety; and The Pastor in the World. It would exceed the scope of this brief review to attempt to summarize or engage each of the essays. Several essays, however, are worthy of note. Robert Kolb's essay on "Luther on the Theology of the Cross" is a fine, concise introduction to this theme as a "conceptual framework" (34) for Luther's confession of the work of God and what this means for human suffering in the world. The third section of the book, devoted to "The Teaching Ministry," is composed primarily of articles that treat the parts of the Catechism. Pastors and other catechists will find Wengert's essays on the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer and Charles Arand's article on the Creed rich resources for their own teaching of the Catechism.

Also included in this section are fine essays by Reinhard Schwarz on the Lord's Supper and Ronald Rittgers on private confession. Schwarz demonstrates how Luther articulates the testamentary character of the Lord's Supper, tracing his development of this theme from his exegesis of Galatians 3:15–18 in 1519 through his polemical writings of 1520–1521 and into his later sacramental writings. Further, Schwarz points out how Luther's confession of

the Lord's Supper as testament was echoed by Urbanus Rhegius and Johannes Bugenhagen. The significance of the Lord's Supper as testament would apply to Luther's rejection not only of the Roman teaching of sacrifice but also of Zwingli's view of the Supper as a communal remembrance of thanksgiving, drawing out appropriate implications for contemporary ecumenical discussions.

Drawn from material in his earlier book, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in the Sixteenth Century,* Rittgers examines Luther's critique of the medieval practice of confession and his reformation of the rite according to the gospel. Especially informative is Rittgers' account of the conflict between Luther and Osiander over the retention of general absolution and the subsequent ambiguity of the sacramental status of absolution in the Lutheran Confessions.

Dorethea Wendebourg provides an interesting treatment of "Luther on Monasticism," noting that Luther's negative appraisal of monasticism often fails to give attention to positive elements which he inherited from his time in the cloister. Here Wendebourg recalls Luther's knowledge of the Psalter and the way monastic prayer offices shaped morning and evening prayer in the Catechism. H.S. Wilson offers a solid introduction to Luther's assertion that preaching is God speaking. Christoph Weimer shows how Cranach used images to express Luther's teaching on justification. Robin Leaver examines Luther's use of music, while Eric Gritsch has a delightful chapter on Luther's humor, which could be both profoundly earthy and theological. Jane Strohl examines Luther's *Fourteen Consolations* as an example of literary pastoral care. Robert Rosin probes the Reformer's concept of education. James Estes treats Luther's relation to secular authority. Mickey Mattox explores Luther's writings on women, while Beth Kreitzer comments on Luther's views on Mary. Vítor Westhelle investigates Luther's use of language.

The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology will be an indispensable tool not only for Reformation scholars but also for pastoral theologians who seek to understand and anchor contemporary practices in the ancient yet ever-lively confession of God's grace articulated by the Wittenberg pastor. Luther's pastoral theology has been a neglected theme; this volume happily fills that void with first-rate scholarship that will serve both academy and church.

John T. Pless

***The Theology and Life of Robert David Preus.* Edited by Jennifer H. Maxfield and Bethany Preus. St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 2009. 142 Pages. Paperback.**

A collection of essays about Robert D. Preus, the late seminary president and a widely admired theologian, were given as lectures in 1999 to

commemorate the seventy-fifth year of his birth. Robert and his older brother J.A.O. ("Jack") had name recognition throughout American Lutheranism, especially in connection with events at the St. Louis seminary in the 1970s. A moving tribute by an ELCA Luther scholar Kenneth Hagen, now professor emeritus at the Jesuit Marquette University, has the first position in the collection in showing that Preus's theology of the cross was lived out in his life. Oliver Olson, former *Lutheran Quarterly* editor and now its president, places Preus in the tradition of Norwegian Lutheranism in America. Jobst Schone, formerly bishop of the Independent Lutheran Church of Germany, outlines Preus's contribution to confessional Lutheranism throughout the world. Reformed scholar Michael Horton lays out Preus's place in the resurgent Evangelical movement at the end of the twentieth century. Two essays are offered by sons Daniel and Rolf. Kurt E. Marquart, now deceased, shows how Preus understood church fellowship confessionally. Since these essays were written by those who knew him and in some cases worked with him, they provide details from his life that would be otherwise unknown. They will stir the memories of those who knew him and for others they will introduce a man who made a difference in our church's life. At the time of the lectures, less than four years had passed since his death. Now that the years have reached fifteen, the essays serve an even more important purpose. A similar volume is needed for his brother. Lest we forget.

David P. Scaer

***Martin Luther as Comforter: Writings on Death.* By Neil Leroux. Leiden: Brill, 2007. 336 Pages. Hardcover. $147.00.**

From the somber opening line of his Invocavit sermon of 1522 where he asserts that the summons of death comes to all and no one can die for another we see that Luther is not reluctant to speak about death. In fact, Luther's reformatory work is done in the face of death both personally and theologically. His own close encounters with death are almost too numerous to list, including the deaths of his parents, two children, Wittenberg students, victims of the plague and persecution, and various colleagues. Death would leave its imprint in Luther's preaching, treatises, and correspondence, not simply as a factor in life's story but as a theological event. Death for Luther was both worked by God and an enemy defeated by the same God. Neil Leroux has carefully worked through key Luther texts on death, observing the Reformer's use of rhetorical devices to bring confidence to those preparing for death and consolation to those grieving the loss of loved ones.

While his aim is rhetorical analysis, Leroux is attentive to the theological themes that Luther is working out as he seeks to pastorally prepare people for death and bring comfort to those who mourn their dead. Leroux rightly observes that Luther understands death in light of God's judgment and grace, law and gospel. Humanity's problem is not simply mortality but sin

characterized as the failure to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. Hence, death brings judgment, which is the consummation of the law. It is only through the forgiveness of sins that human beings can be delivered from the terror of death. Unfortunately, Leroux makes only a slight reference to Luther's monumental treatment of death in his lecture on Psalm 90, which might well be Luther's most thoroughly worked out theological treatment of death and which is then given pastoral expression in Luther's consolatory letters, tracts, and sermons, which are treated in such a masterful fashion by Leroux.

Martin Luther as Comforter: Writings on Death makes an excellent companion to Theodore Tappert's anthology, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel,* as this volume contains many of the texts treated by Leroux. Leroux moves from Luther's writings designed to comfort people in affliction and prepare them for death ("Fourteen Consolations" and "Sermon on Preparing to Die," both of 1519), to martyrological literature (letters to those imprisoned and persecuted for the faith such as Lambert Thorn and Leonhard Kaiser and more open letters to cities or regions that had witnessed the martyrdom of young Lutherans such as Henrik van Zutphen), to funeral sermons (two sermons from 1532 preached on the occasion of Elector John's unexpected death), to consolatory letters written to bereaved parents, spouses, and siblings, to a tract on ethical behavior in the face of potential death ("On Whether One May Flee from a Plague"). Examining a good cross-section of Luther's pastoral and practical writings, Leroux is able to provide readers with an insightful study of Luther's use of language in preaching and soul care.

Leroux recognizes that Luther's Reformation left no dimension of life or death untouched. The older Catholic approaches to *ars moriendi* gave way to evangelically oriented sermons and tracts designed to focus the dying on the promises of the crucified and risen Christ. Leroux demonstrates how Luther uses verbal imagery to comfort the dying and the bereaved, such as a picture of "death as a short journey" in a letter to his dying father. While he does not work directly with Gerhard Ebeling's expression of *memorierbare Glaubenssätze,* or "memorizable faith sayings," in Luther's *Seelsorge,* Leroux does observe how Luther uses specific scriptural texts, formulaic expressions of Christian faith that the dying could learn by heart and repeat to themselves for comfort.

Martin Luther as Comforter: Writings on Death is thoroughly researched and carefully documented. The bibliography is extensive. Leroux draws on the work not only of Luther scholars and theologians but of social historians, grief therapists, contemporary pastoral theologians, and homileticians. Leroux notes the impact of the death of his own teenage son as giving an existential impetus for the writing of this book. This is a book that will inform, edify, and strengthen Lutheran pastors in caring for the dying and comforting the bereaved. I highly recommend it for this purpose.

John T. Pless

***The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Edited by James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009. 312 Pages. Paperback. $16.71.**

The historical quest for Jesus has been going for about three hundred years, but involved the LCMS first in the St. Louis seminary crisis in the 1970s. Ironically, with their firm commitment to biblical inspiration and inerrancy, Evangelicals have been fully engaged in the quest and have taken the lead in bringing five scholars from across the spectrum to face off against one another. Each contributor presents his own view to which the others respond. Zondervan used the same format with Baptism and the Lord's Supper and IVP with Baptism, but these volumes had no real surprises, since Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, and Catholic differences have remained in place since the Reformation. Since the quest for the historical Jesus is not a denominational issue, *The Historical Jesus* is arguably the most intriguing of these kinds of studies. John Dominic Crossan's reputation as a radical critic was assured by his positing Jesus as a peasant philosopher, but he comes across as a conservative at the hands of the skeptic Robert B. Price. At the other end of the spectrum is Darrell L. Bock, who argues for the connection between the Christ of faith and the historical Jesus, a view that is attractive to James D.G. Dunn, who stands a bit to the left but not much. Bock defends the historical reliability of the Scriptures and Dunn promotes the near-inviolability of oral tradition. His argument that documents are more susceptible to alteration than traditions is a bit specious. Luke Timothy Johnson is suspicious of historical reconstructions of Jesus from the gospels, but still sees them as excellent witnesses to his humanity. This middle position seems the least tenable. Majority scholarship dates the epistles before the gospels, a bit of a problem for me, since Paul's churches would have had documents outlining doctrines and ethical exhortations, but no writings about Jesus. Dunn overcomes this problem by proposing that these early churches had an almost inviolable oral tradition about Jesus before they had copies of Paul's epistles. Left unexplained is why these churches made copies of Paul's writings but did not put oral gospel tradition down on papyrus. College students will most likely get their first introduction into the New Testament through books like those written by Bart D. Ehrman that cast doubts on the historical reliability of the New Testament's testimony to Jesus. Some students pass through this fire unscathed. Others do not. For those who want to see the options, *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* does the job. It is a debate on paper. With discussions over the Gospel of Judas out in the public square, the question of the place of Jesus in history can hardly be ignored.

David P. Scaer

***Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith.* By Timothy J. Wengert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009. 196 pages. Paperback. $18.00.**

Reformation scholar Timothy Wengert has produced a primer, sprightly written and conversational in style, for those who would teach the Catechism. Peppered with insights from Charles Arand, Gerhard Forde, James Nestingen, Oswald Bayer, Robert Kolb, and Albrecht Peters, Wengert has condensed the fruit of his considerable Reformation scholarship into an accessible format. His book is an unabashed apologetic for the use of the Small Catechism in contemporary North American Lutheranism. It brings new insights for seasoned catechists even as it whets the appetite for those who are preparing to teach it for the first time. Laced with remembrances from his own life with the Catechism as a child and later on as a parish pastor and seminary professor, Wengert opens the world of the Catechism with clarity and often with humor.

Martin Luther's Catechisms is not a "how-to-teach-the-Catechism" manual, nor is it a workbook that runs the risk of interposing yet another text between the Catechism and the catechumen. Instead, Wengert has provided a historically grounded overview of the Catechism's structure and contents. In the first chapter, Wengert sets Luther's catechisms—both Small and Large—in the context of Christendom's variegated catechetical traditions and squarely at the center of Luther's reforming work. The catechisms distill Luther's theology in a form that enables the teaching to be handed over to learners in a way that is memorable and that they in turn can pass on to others, particularly their children. Wengert tells the story of how Luther came to craft the catechisms in 1529, taking into account the controversy between Melanchthon and Agricola over the place of the law in the Christian life, the Saxon Visitation in 1528, which revealed the deplorable shape of doctrinal literacy in the evangelical congregations, and the pleas of others for a catechism for children and the laity. Wengert provides a cogent argument that the ordering of the six chief parts of the Catechism reflected the sequence of repentance, faith, and vocation over and against Agricola's faith, repentance, and good works. Agricola's sequence was, in fact, a return to the medieval ordering of Creed, Ten Commandments, and Lord's Prayer. Wengert is rightly critical of catechetical handbooks that change Luther's ordering, beginning with Baptism or perhaps the Creed. Luther knew what he was doing when he began with the Decalogue.

Wengert devotes a chapter to each of the six chief parts. He shows how Luther understands each of the commandments in light of the first commandment as God's law functions theologically to diagnose sin as unbelief. Wengert understands Luther's confession of the Apostles' Creed as a "reversed Trinity" as the Spirit brings to the Son and the Son gives us the knowledge of God's fatherly heart. A chapter on the Lord's Prayer demonstrates how Luther understood prayer as "rubbing God's promises into

His ears" when believers are confronted by their own neediness. The chapter on Baptism, reworked from an earlier essay, "Luther on Children: Baptism and the Fourth Commandment" (published in *Dialog* in 1998), is weighted with material from the Large Catechism on baptizing infants (a topic not made explicit in the Small Catechism), although Wengert does not neglect other baptismal themes. Wengert makes it clear that Luther did not see Baptism as one link in a sequence of initiation rites but as the sacrament of justification enveloping the believer's whole existence, brought to fulfillment only in the resurrection. Chapter 6 connects Absolution to Baptism as the practice of private confession was reclaimed by Luther in light of the reality of the Christian at the same time righteous and sinner. An added *bon mot* in this chapter is Wengert's lucid exposition of the *simul iustus et peccator* in the face of those who would claim that it is a later interpretation read back into Luther which ought to be jettisoned today for reasons of ecumenicity or ethics. The chapter on the Lord's Supper shows how Luther fought the battle for the Sacrament on two fronts, against both Rome and the Sacramentarians, accenting its promissory character. In many ways, the strongest chapter in this book is the final chapter, "The Catechism as a Vocational School," where Wengert deals with the most-neglected aspects of Luther's Catechism, the daily prayers and the table of duties.

The book concludes with a bibliography of significant books and articles on the catechisms published within the last century. Wengert's text is supplemented by Reformation-era catechetical woodcuts. *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* would be a fine addition to congregational libraries. It could easily be adapted as a study text for an adult Bible class. Pastors and other catechists will find their teaching of the Catechism enriched by Wengert's insightful work.

John T. Pless

***Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary and Theological Survey.* By Mark Allan Powell. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009, Hardcover. 559 Pages.**

To make New Testament introductions more attractive to college and seminary students, they are more likely to come with photographs of biblical sites, ancient and modern paintings, and diagrams. This volume is no exception, and so the reader is led into a very easy-to-read account of how New Testament books came into existence. Powell is a first-class scholar and well equipped for this task, and not unexpectedly he marches right in the middle of the mainline of scholarly thought (e.g., the tiresome ideas that Matthew is dependent on Mark and the Q source and that the Pastoral Epistles are pseudepigraphal). Powell places himself with the majority scholarship on nearly every issue, but does include traditional views, so the reader knows what once the church thought. A more attractive introduction to the New

Testament can hardly be imagined, but for a change of scenery, someone should tackle the long-held views of scholars. Without Jesus' death and resurrection, Q does not have the minimum qualifications for a Christian manuscript, but somehow Matthew and Luke were so drawn to it as to include it in their Gospels. You explain. A glossary and index makes this book as useful as it is attractive, even if surprises are few and far between.

David P. Scaer

***The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture.* By Mark Leiderbach and Alvin L. Reid. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009. 302 pages. Paperback. $19.99.**

There is little doubt that the last fifty years have seen vast changes in Western culture, and the church is no stranger to the effects of those changes. As culture echoes with the shift from modernism to postmodernism, the church struggles to maintain missional relevancy on the one hand and to preserve its fundamental doctrines on the other. The rise of interdenominational and often anti-denominational movements in recent decades has laid the foundation for what many are calling the "Emerging Church."

As members of the Southern Baptist Convention, Leiderbach and Reid have a firm basis in the traditional institutional church, yet hear some very legitimate needs expressed in the work of many emerging-church leaders. In this volume they set out to paint a middle way between the emerging and the traditional churches.

The text is divided into three sections. The first of these is undoubtedly the most useful within the text, especially for those who have trouble wrapping words around the cultural transition occurring around us. The authors spend three chapters in this section tracing the rise of modernist thought through the works of Descartes to its apex in the writings of Kant. From that framework they then begin to expand on the philosophical transition which has resulted from Descartes' original theology of doubt and spills over into full-blown relativism in postmodernity. These are samples only, however, and a more serious scholar will find them most useful as a sampler to compose a reading list.

Having established the relativist nature of postmodern culture, the authors turn then to how the church might best address the needs of that culture while at the same time remaining what it has always been, the church. Unsurprisingly, given the reformed background of the authors, this conversation plays out in the form of how the postmodern Christian church goes about living a life of complete worship and submission to God. The bias is subtle, but echoes throughout the remainder of the text. The end goal of man for Leiderbach and Reid is not simply to be justified by Christ, but, having

been justified, to reveal the sovereignty of God by living out a life that worships Him in all things.

Having accepted this bias, however, the discerning reader will find much here of value. While we might differ in focus, we acknowledge substantively the Christian life of sanctification lived out as one of the ways in which the glory of God is revealed in our world. As such, then, the remaining chapters, which focus first on developing a theology of worship as a life of sanctification and then on what that life looks like lived out in our cultural context today, are of great value for those seeking to interact with a rapidly changing world.

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***Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke.* By C. Kavin Rowe. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. 277 Pages. Paperback.**

The prominence of the title "Lord" (ὁ κύριος) in the Gospel of Luke has not gone unnoticed by scholars. Its significance and purpose within Luke, however, have not, in the opinion of C. Kavin Rowe, assistant professor of New Testament at Duke University Divinity School, received adequate exegetical attention. Thus, Rowe sets out to bring his readers up to speed on the importance of this title for Lukan exegesis and for the study of early Christology.

Rowe's argument, which he develops through multiple examples from Luke, is that the occurrences of the title ὁ κύριος and its vocative κύριε cannot be read in isolation from each other. That is to say, because they all occur in the same narrative, and because they are used of the same *character* within the narrative, there ought to be a unified approach to their interpretation. Essential to Luke's Christology is the purposeful ambiguity with which the title is used in the narrative, at times referring to the God of Israel, and at other times to Jesus, the Son of God.

Evidence of this ambiguity can be found already at the beginning of Luke, which for Rowe sets the tone for how subsequent uses of κύριος should be interpreted in the Gospel. In Luke 1:6, for example, speaking of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Luke says that they "were both righteous before God (τοῦ θεοῦ), walking blamelessly in all the commandments of the Lord (τοῦ κυρίου)," obviously referring to YHWH. A few verses later, in 1:9, Luke says that Zechariah entered the temple of the Lord (τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου), again a clear reference to the God of Israel (34–35). Luke's readers are, however, alerted early on that the God of Israel is not the only referent of κύριος. When Elizabeth greets Mary (1:43), she exclaims: "And why is this granted to me,

that the mother of my Lord (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου) come to me?" The same title is used both of God (YHWH) and of Jesus, implying a shared identity between the two. By introducing Jesus as κύριος from the very beginning of his life, indeed, from his mother's womb, Luke makes it clear that there was never a time at which Jesus was not κύριος.

Another example of this pattern is found in the quote from Isaiah 40:3 in Luke 3:4-6, "A voice crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord (LXX: κυρίου)." In its Old Testament context, Rowe asserts that this verse "clearly refers to YHWH" (71). Yet, since John the Baptist actually does prepare the way for Jesus, it also can and should be taken as a reference to Jesus. In preparing the way for Jesus, John the Baptist prepares the "way of the Lord." Once again, by applying a term originally referring to YHWH to Jesus, Luke demonstrates a shared identity between the God of Israel and Jesus. Throughout subsequent chapters, Rowe consistently employs the same hermeneutic, examining each occurrence of ὁ κύριος in light of its narrative context.

While showing evidence of a shared identity between Jesus and the God of Israel through the title κύριος, Rowe is careful to observe how Luke preserves the distinction between the Father and Son. In Luke 10:21, Jesus the "Lord" prays to his Father, saying: "I thank you Father, *Lord* (κύριε) of heaven and earth." The Son and the Father, while remaining distinct, share the same identity as κύριος. This exegetical truth is reflected in dogmatic form in the Athanasian Creed: "The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord, and yet there are not three Lords but one Lord." Summarizing this distinction of persons, Rowe writes: "To put it briefly: what it means for the Father to be κύριος of heaven and earth is fleshed out, or given content, in the sending of the κύριος Jesus his Son—told via Luke's διήγησις. There is a correlation of υἱός and πατήρ through the word κύριος such that the former reveals the latter, and, indeed, that the coming of the latter is embodied in the life of the former" (141-142).

Throughout his work, Rowe confidently dismisses the common reading of κύριε as "sir" or "milord" and insists on the inner-connectedness of the different uses of the term in Luke. While acknowledging that *outside of* the Lukan context the vocative κύριε has various meanings, including the more polite address, it is simply inadequate, argues Rowe, to read those meanings into Luke's narrative, especially given the christological significance of κύριος in other parts of Luke. For example, in Peter's address to Jesus in Luke 5:8, after witnessing the miraculous catch of fish, the Apostle says: "Depart from me κύριε for I am a sinful man!" For Rowe, this first occurrence of the vocative is "indisputably far more than 'sir'" (204). Rowe applies the same principle to the other occurrences of the vocative in Luke, arguing persuasively for a "religious" reading of κύριε. Whether or not the characters in Luke's story who

use the vocative to address Jesus always understood the deeper significance of it, the point remains that for Luke's readers, who have already encountered the word multiple times throughout the narrative, the christological implications would be unmistakable: for Luke, κύριε means Lord.

Suffice it to say that Rowe leaves no exegetical stone unturned. He looks at every occurrence of κύριος in Luke, engages past and present scholarship through extensive footnotes, offering fair criticism where it is due, and maintains his focus throughout the entire book. In many cases, Rowe shows the importance of variant readings of the Greek text, adeptly making use of the critical apparatus. Also helpful are several appendices, one of which includes a comprehensive list of occurrences of various forms of κύριος in Luke, its vocative case, and its authorial/editorial uses. From beginning to end, Rowe provides ample evidence in support of his thesis that in the Gospel of Luke, the title κύριος is developed in such a way as to bind the identity of Jesus to the identity of the God of Israel. Readers of this volume will not be disappointed.

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***Treasures Old & New. Daily Readings From the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.* By John C. Jeske. Edited by Glen L. Thompson. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009. 384 + vi pages. Paperback.**

Many pastors—strapped for time, but desirous of maintaining language skills honed in college and seminary—use for daily devotions Heinrich Bitzer's *Light on the Path* (and its successor *More Light on the Path*). Bitzer's resources contain a daily Old Testament selection in Hebrew and a New Testament selection in Greek, both with basic lexical notes for the reader. Jeske's *Treasures Old & New* adheres to Bitzer's format, but overcomes several weaknesses in Bitzer. Instead of featuring unusually difficult Old Testament passages that have little to do with the church year, *Treasures Old & New* displays Hebrew passages that are less difficult, intentionally adhere to the church year, and possess a gospel emphasis, so that the text selections speak not merely to "a language scholar but to a child of God" (iii). Jeske first identified 366 Old Testament passages, then matched these with appropriate New Testament passages, and finally wrote up the grammatical and lexical helps for each day of the year. An additional and especially welcome feature is a small daily excerpt from the *Book of Concord* that the editor, Glen L. Thompson, added in 2008, the year he was asked to help see the project through to completion. These latter passages, too, fit the overall themes of the Old and New Testament lections and allow pastors to maintain brief, yet daily appreciations of the Lutheran Confessions. The citations of the confessional material derive from

Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions – A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord, published by Concordia Publishing House.

The volume represents the fruit of Prof. Jeske's many years of biblical study and teaching at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WELS). Let us hope that this "labor of love" (iii) may continue Jeske's legacy of teaching the Scriptures to seminary students and pastors for many years to come.

John G. Nordling

Books Received

Anderson, Steven. *My Last Sermon Was Better Than My First: Preaching in the 21st Century.* Sherrard, IL: Connemara Publishing, 2009. 143 Pages. Paperback.

Beeson, Trevor. *In Tuneful Accord: The Church Musicians.* Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing Corp., 2009. 246 Pages. Hardcover. $29.99.

Bird, Michael F. and Preston M. Sprinkle. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009. 350 Pages. Paperback. $19.95.

Green, Garrett and Allen Wood. *Fichte: Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 158 Pages. Hardcover. $80.00. Paperback. $27.99.

Jeske, John C. *Treasures Old and New: Daily Readings from the Greek and Hebrew Scripture and the Lutheran Confession.* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009. 384 Pages. Paperback. $24.99.

Kasl, Ronda. *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World.* New York: Yale University Press, 2009. 357 Pages. Hardcover. $52.00.

Klaits, Frederick. *Death of a Church of Life: Moral Passion During Botswana's Time of AIDS.* Berkley: University of California Press, 2010. 368 Pages. Paperback. $24.95.

Lang, Bernhard. *Joseph in Egypt: A Cultural Icon from Grotius to Goethe.* New York: Yale University Press, 2009. 391 Pages. Hardcover. $36.00.

Nessan, Craig L. *Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2010. 178 Pages. Paperback. $20.00.

Robinson, Thomas A. *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways: Early Jewish-Christian Relations.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009. 285 Pages. Paperback. $27.95.

Smith, Mark S. *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2010. 315 Pages. Paperback. $22.50.

Tanner, Kathryn. *Christ the Key.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 309 Pages. Hardcover. $70.00. Paperback. $28.99.

Taussig, Hal. *In The Beginning Was The Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2009. 262 Pages. Hardcover. $39.00.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century.* Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010. 559 Pages. Hardcover. $38.99.

Young, Katherine K., and Paul Nathanson. *Sanctifying Misandry: Goddess Ideology and the Fall of Man.* Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010. 407 Pages. Hardcover. $39.95.