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Observing Two Anniversaries

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on October 25, 1811, in Langenchursdorf, Saxony, Germany. It is appropriate that this issue honor C.F.W. Walther on this 200th anniversary of his birth because of his significant influence as the first president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (1847–1850 and 1864–1878) and also professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1850–1887). Most of the articles below, which were first presented at the 2011 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in Fort Wayne, reflect his influence in many areas of biblical teaching, confessional subscription, and the life of the church in mission. These historical and theological studies are offered here so that Walther may be understood in his context and continue to be a blessed voice in our synod as we face the future.

This issue also recognizes one other anniversary. The venerated King James Version of the Bible, first printed in 1611, is now 400 years old. The article below on the King James Version was originally given as a paper at the 2011 Symposium on Exegetical Theology in honor of this anniversary. The importance of this translation for the English-speaking world is widely acknowledged. Although many may think that its day has passed, this article demonstrates the ongoing influence of the King James Version through other translations.

The Editors

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Walther and the Revival of Confessional Lutheranism

Martin R. Noland

I was a student at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in the early 1980s. My classmates and I often talked about the Lutheran church and its future. It was an exciting, even invigorating time to be a conservative Lutheran. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) President J.A.O. Preus had accomplished significant things during his tenure. It was apparent that either of the main contenders for his office, Ralph Bohlmann or Walter A. Maier II, would steer the same course of conservatism. Ahead in our future we could see nothing but clear blue skies and fields of good soil in church and community, ripe for the seed of the gospel! Even though the LCMS in the 1970s survived its battles, we did not realize that the battle in world Lutheranism was raging on. What do we see in world Lutheranism today, thirty years later?

In 1999, the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church signed together the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification." On the one hand, as Gottfried Martens recently argued, the signatures have been inconsequential in the life of the Roman and Lutheran churches.[1] On the other hand, the fact that the officials of the Lutheran church put so much effort into the Joint Declaration's acceptance certainly says something about them, if not the churches they serve.

Regarding the doctrine of justification, Luther said in the Smalcald Articles:

> On this article rests *all* that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain and *have no*

[1] For a recent review of the "Joint Declaration," see Gottfried Martens, "Inconsequential Signatures? The Decade after the Signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*," *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 no. 3 (Autumn 2010): 310–336. A magisterial review of the history and theology of the ecumenical discussions of the doctrine of justification that preceded the "Joint Declaration" may be found in Gottfried Martens, *Die Rechtfertigung des Sünders—Rettungshandeln Gottes oder historisches Interpretament? Grundentscheidungen lutherischer Theologie und Kirche bei der Behandlung des Themas 'Rechtfertigung' im ökumenischen Kontext*, Forschungen zur systematischen und ökumenischen Theologie 64 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1992).

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> *doubts about it.* Otherwise all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the victory.[2]

So by this judgment of Luther against the "Joint Declaration," most of the worldwide Lutheran church is already dead.

More recently, in 2009, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) infamously agreed to accept homosexual clergy and the marital blessing of homosexual couples. This has created a scene of incredible complexity for American Lutherans, as former "radicals" Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson help lead the pack out of the ELCA into various networks and small synods. Disintegration, which is what is happening in that part of American Lutheranism, is its own type of death.

Those of us in the LCMS, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), and smaller Lutheran synods are not immune to the dangers of the slippery slope to the Stygian shore. So-called "church-growth" experts warn us that the Lutheran church is dying, that many congregations are dying, and that they need to be "revitalized." The 2007 LCMS convention even had a resolution about "revitalization,"[3] a word which means "bringing back from the dead."

Do you get the mood . . . the *Angst*, as the Germans say? That morbid mood is what bothered C.F.W. Walther and his classmates at the University of Leipzig in the early 1830s. As believers planning to go into the pastoral ministry, they were up against the feeling that the Lutheran church was dead because the "rationalists" had killed it. How could they be pastors if the Lutheran church was dead?

I like to compare the German rationalist theologian Gotthold Ephraim Lessing to David Niven in the movie "Bridge on the River Kwai." The Lutheran church was the train rushing down the tracks, heedless of its impending danger. When the train began to cross the bridge, Lessing plunged the handle into the detonator, there was a great explosion, and the train went crashing into "Lessing's ditch." That happened in 1777,[4] during the middle of the American Revolutionary War. The Lutheran church was

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[2] SA II, I, 5. Emphasis mine.

[3] See Resolution 1–01A "To Support Revitalization of LCMS Congregations," *Convention Proceedings 2007: 63rd Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Houston, TX, July 14–19, 2010* (St Louis: LCMS, 2007), 111.

[4] The famous ditch of Lessing was explained in his essay, "The Proof of the Spirit and Power," published in 1777. For an English translation see Gotthold Lessing, *Lessing's Theological Writings*, ed. and tr. Henry Chadwick (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), 51–56.

still a train wreck mired in "Lessing's ditch" in 1830 while Walther was at the university. And in many respects, it still is suffering from that train wreck today.

I. Who Was the Father of Confessional Lutheranism?

"Confessional Lutheranism" is a term that often befuddles. Theodore Tappert gave a definition with which I agree:

> Ever since the Reformation, churches had been identified by their confessions—that is, by the statements of faith that set forth what they believed and taught. . . . [In nineteenth century "confessionalism"], authority was thought to reside not only in historic confessions of faith but also in the distinctive theological formulations, liturgical customs, and types of piety that had grown up since the Reformation . . . the "confessionalism" that now emerged was as a rule woven out of a combination of orthodoxist and pietist strands.[5]

If the "confessional Lutheranism" that arose in the nineteenth century was as a rule woven out of both orthodoxist and neo-pietist strands, this also means that there could be some brands of "confessionalism" that were an exception to that rule.

In the Lutheran sphere, there has been an "exception to the rule" woven out of only the orthodox strand and defined solely on the basis of its historic confessions of faith. This was the brand that became associated with C.F.W. Walther and his church, which we call today The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Although many in the LCMS might be tempted to say that C.F.W. Walther was the father of this sort of "confessional Lutheranism," the real father of this type of confessional Lutheranism was someone chronologically much closer to Luther, namely, Martin Chemnitz.

In his book, *The Second Martin*, J.A.O. Preus explained how Chemnitz came to understand the importance of confessions for the unity of the church. Preus pointed to Chemnitz's treatise *Iudicium*,[6] written in March 1561, as the source for this idea of "confessions." The treatise was written fifteen years before the Formula of Concord. In the *Iudicium*, Chemnitz asserted that there are two improper approaches to controversies. On the one side, some try to paper everything over, and on the other side, others try to overturn gradually even moderately helpful *corpora doctrinae* by starting new and unnecessary arguments. Chemnitz then stated:

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[5] Theodore Tappert, *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840–1880*, A Library of Protestant Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 8.

[6] Full title: *De Controversiis quibusdam quae superiori tempore circa quosdam Augstanae Confessionis articulos motae et agitatae sunt. Iudicium d. Martini Chemnitii.*

> Neither side should be approved. Both for the sake of teachers as well as learners and also for the sake of our adversaries, there must be a correct form and systematic summary [*methodica summa*] of the divine teaching. . . . If any statements fail to measure up to this norm, they should not require some clever interpretation or some whitewashed reconciliation, but they should be clearly disapproved and rejected. . . . Therefore, just as the ancients had their symbols in which in opposition to the corruptions of heretics there was the form and pattern of sound words for the sake both of those who teach and those who learn, so for us is the *corpus doctrinae* of our churches, which we judge to be the true and unchangeable teaching of the prophetic and apostolic writings in the sense that is expressed in our approved symbols, that is, the Augsburg Confession and its Apology and the Smalcald Articles.[7]

These statements of Chemnitz find fuller expression in the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, in the section "Rule and Norm."

What should be noted here is that the Augustana, its Apology, and the Smalcald Articles were written as a defense of Lutheran teaching and practice for the sake of the Roman Catholic opponents. With Chemnitz's *Iudicium* of 1561 and the Book of Concord in 1580, confessions took on a different role as normative "judges" in the internal disputes of the church. As Preus observed, Chemnitz's idea was that confessions should be the means to theological unity within the Lutheran church. This was in contrast to the Gnesio-Lutherans, such as Flacius, who thought that church conventions or synods could achieve concord by themselves.[8] Chemnitz's idea of "confessional Lutheranism" was the dominant idea of the Lutheran church in Germany for a little over one hundred years, from 1580 until 1691.

Recent conflict within the Lutheran church has led those trained in the history of the Lutheran Confessions to go back to the process invented by Chemnitz. This is undoubtedly what led J.A.O. Preus and other LCMS theologians, most noticeably Ralph Bohlmann, to formulate "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" in 1972 and what recently led Matthew Harrison to advocate a similar process in his 2009 essay "It's Time: LCMS Unity and Mission. The Real Problem We Face and How to Solve It."[9]

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[7] J. A. O. Preus, *The Second Martin: The Life and Thought of Martin Chemnitz* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 118–119.

[8] Preus, *The Second Martin*, 121–123.

[9] http://www.itistime.org/index.php?option=com_rubberdoc&view=doc&id=2&format=raw (accessed December 2010).

II. Who Killed Confessional Lutheranism?

When you examine the demise of the confessional Lutheran church before the nineteenth century, it is like the rare "whodunit" novel where everyone implicated is actually guilty of the murder. Still, the church historian has some responsibility for pointing to the most significant factors, and that can be done in this case. The four most significant factors were Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, pietism, and rationalism.

Regarding the first factor, prior to the Peace of Westphalia, the Roman Catholic forces had reasserted their control by forcing the Lutherans out of Austria, Moravia, Bohemia, Bavaria, Salzburg, Upper Palatinate, Bamberg, Würzburg, Fulda, Paderborn, Westphalia, Osnabrück, and Cologne. Shortly thereafter, they also regained control of Poland. In these cases, confessional Lutheranism was killed in a territory by forcing its adherents to leave.

With respect to the second factor, Calvinists were responsible for the demise of the Lutheran church in the states over which they gained control in the Holy Roman Empire. The Electoral Palatinate became Reformed in 1561 under Elector Frederick III (1515–1576; Elector 1559–1576). The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563, commissioned by that elector, became the most widely accepted confession of the German Reformed faith. Other states in the Holy Roman Empire that fell to this brand of Calvinism included Nassau in 1578, Bremen in 1595, Anhalt in 1579, Hesse-Kassel in 1607, and Bentheim in 1613.[10]

More significant for the future of German Protestantism was the conversion of the Elector of Brandenburg to the Reformed faith.[11] In 1613, the Elector John Sigismund (1572–1619; Elector 1608–1619) announced his conversion to Calvinism, which made possible his acquisition of the lower Rhine states of Cleves, Jülich, Berg, Mark, and Ravensberg in the Treaty of Xanten (1614). These states were the foothold by which Brandenburg and

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[10] For a fuller discussion of the early German Reformed churches, see Jan Rohls, *Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen*, tr. John Hoffmeyer, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 20–22.

[11] On the transformation of Brandenburg into a Calvinist state, see Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Other studies that include a discussion on the growth of Calvinism in the Holy Roman Empire in this period include: Bodo Nischan, "Confessionalism and absolutism: the case of Brandenburg," in Pettegree, Duke, and Lewis, eds. *Calvinism in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 181–204; Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 202–229; and the still useful work by John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 268–289.

its successor, Prussia, became the dominant power in the states of the Holy Roman Empire and later in the nation of Germany. Where Prussia ruled, its religious policy also ruled.

Elector John Sigismund had hoped to convert all of his subjects to the Reformed faith, but he soon found out that Lutherans are a stubborn lot. He eventually resigned himself to a court full of Calvinists in a country full of Lutherans, with royal policies favoring the Reformed faith and unionistic practices. He commissioned the "Sigismund Confession" in 1614 which was more of a personal than a church-wide confession.[12] He included the Minutes of the Leipzig Colloquy (1631) and the Declaration of Thorn (1645) with his own confession in the *Corpus constitutionum marchicarum*, which became the Prussian equivalent of the Book of Concord.

The successors to Sigismund not only increased the territory of Brandenburg-Prussia, they also increased the power and influence of the Reformed faith over against the Lutheran church in their lands. Sigismund's grandson, the "Great Elector" Frederick William (1620–88; Elector 1640–88), distributed Calvinist "court preachers" throughout his lands. He encouraged the immigration of Calvinist refugees, notably from Scotland, Silesia, France (a.k.a. the "Huguenots"), the Palatinate, the upper Rhine region, and the Habsburg lands, as well as Waldensians and Bohemian Brethren.[13] Perhaps more important for the long-term, the "Great Elector" bound the Lutheran clergy's judicial authority to the central bureaucracy ruled by Calvinists.[14] This meant that in almost any disagreement between Lutherans and Calvinists, the Calvinists would win in a final appeal in the church court.

The Great Elector's son, King Frederick I of Prussia (1657–1713; Elector 1688–1713; King 1701–1713), continued his father's policies of beating back the Lutherans. But King Frederick I found a new weapon in pietism, the third significant factor in the demise of the confessional Lutheran church. The king found an ally in the pietist patriarch, Philip Jacob Spener, whom he warmly welcomed to the important Saint Nicholas Church in central Berlin in 1691. Spener's emphasis on a changed life in Christ, in place of the Lutheran emphasis on the correct teaching and understanding of the

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[12] Rohls, *Reformed Confessions*, 21–22; see also the excellent discussion on Elector Sigismund and early Prussia in Richard L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 42–53.

[13] Gawthrop, *Pietism*, 45–46.

[14] Gawthrop, *Pietism*, 51–52.

Scriptures, was appreciated by the king.[15] The king realized that pietism had utility as a means for the ideological and organizational support of Prussian absolutism. Subsequent Prussian kings understood the political utility of pietism.[16]

In 1692, the king founded the University of Halle as a pietist institution in cooperation with the grand master of pietism, August Hermann Francke.[17] The University of Halle was intended by the king to compete for religious allegiance with the older Lutheran universities, such as Wittenberg and Jena.[18] It far surpassed that plan, due to the genius of Francke, who attracted zealous students from all over Europe and who expanded his work into missionary and charitable institutions. Francke obtained the vital support of the next Prussian monarch, King Frederick William I (1688–1740; King 1713–1740), when in 1713 Francke implicitly agreed to support the king's militaristic ventures.[19] As Frederick Herzog observes, "Pietism at Halle gave a blank check to the absolutist aspirations of the Prussian Elector. It became a key part of the establishment [of the Prussian state] in no uncertain terms."[20]

To be fair to the Prussian kings who struggled against the Lutheran church, we should note that the Saxon kings also had abandoned the Lutheran church. Frederick Augustus I of Saxony (1670–1733; Elector 1694–1733; King 1697–1704, 1709–1733) adopted the Roman Catholic faith in 1697 in order to become King of Poland. The rulers of Saxony continued to be Roman Catholic until the monarchy was abolished in 1918. Furthermore, Elector George I of Hanover (1660–1727; Elector 1698–1727; King 1714–27) became Anglican when he accepted the royal throne over Great Britain and Ireland in 1714. Although the Lutheran church survived into the eighteenth century, it did so without support from royalty in the largest and most significant states of the Holy Roman Empire.

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[15] See K. James Stein, *Philipp Jakob Spener: Pietist Patriarch* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1986), 128. Spener's most famous writing is available in English; see *Pia Desideria*, tr. and ed. Theodore Tappert, Seminar Editions (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964).

[16] See Mary Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemberg, and Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9. This point was made originally by Carl Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1971), 254ff. and 173.

[17] Gawthrop, *Pietism*, 60–63.

[18] Gawthrop, *Pietism*, 61.

[19] Fulbrook, 164–166.

[20] Frederick Herzog, *European Pietism Reviewed* (San Jose, CA: Pickwick Publications, 2003), 29.

When Prussian King Frederick William III (1770–1840; King 1797–1840) issued orders for a common Lutheran and Reformed agenda in 1798 and then announced the "Prussian Union" on September 27, 1817, he was not doing something new. He was simply continuing the policies of his Brandenburg-Prussian predecessors, stretching all the way back to Elector John Sigismund in 1614. The Prussian Union united the Lutherans and Reformed Protestants in the court and military, and asked for the voluntary union of all Lutherans and Reformed in Prussia and other places in the states of the German Confederation. The Prussian Union was not enforced immediately at the congregational level. The king waited until April 1830 to enforce the union of congregations in Prussia, and this act met with significant resistance.[21]

The final factor in the demise of the confessional Lutheran church was rationalism. The famous German journalist, Heinrich Heine, properly defined rationalists in 1852 as those "theologians who removed everything historical from Christianity."[22] In Germany, this began in the eighteenth century with Johann Semler (1725–1791) and his major work, *A Free Investigation of the Canon* (1771–1775).[23] In this work, Semler was the first Lutheran theologian to make a radical distinction between the Scriptures and the Word of God.[24]

The rationalist approach to the Bible and theology received powerful support from the Prussian king, Frederick II "The Great" (1712–1786; King 1740–1786).[25] During the latter part of his reign, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing published in series from 1774–1779 portions of an enormous unpublished work by Hermann Samuel Reimarus, titled *Apology for the Rational Worshippers of God*, which series are also known as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments*. These publications of Reimarus caused great controversy, as well as consternation among traditionalist clergy and laymen.

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[21] See Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 57–61.

[22] Heinrich Heine, "On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," 2nd ed., in *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany and Other Writings*, ed. Terry Pinkard, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 65.

[23] Johann Semler, *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon* (Halle: 1771). The previous development of these ideas in England, in Deism and Latitudinarianism, is explored in depth in the magisterial work: Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, tr. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

[24] See Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 90.

[25] Heine, *History of Religion*, 65–71.

Concurrent with the publication of these fragments, Lessing published his essay "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power" in 1777, the essay that carved out his famous "ditch." He wrote:

> Who will deny (not I) that the reports of these [biblical] miracles and prophecies are as reliable as historical truths ever can be? But if they are only as reliable as this, why are they treated as if they were infinitely more reliable? And in what way? In this way, that some-thing quite different and much greater is founded upon them than it is legitimate to found upon truths historically proved. If no historical truth can be demonstrated [by the proofs of reason], then nothing can be demonstrated by means of historical truth. That is: accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason.[26]

Here Lessing had created a problem in Protestant theology of no mean significance. He had uncovered the epistemological roots of scriptural theology and poured in the acid of Cartesian certainty, poisoning the whole tree of Protestant theology.

Lessing was espousing the basic principle of rationalist philosphy, explained earlier by Rene Descartes (1596–1650): "We reject all modes of knowledge that are merely probable (*tantum probabiles*), and resolve to believe only that which is perfectly known, and in respect of which doubt is not possible."[27] In other words, Lessing argued that since humans cannot obtain historical knowledge with absolute certainty—history always being plagued by doubts, both real and potential—therefore, the knowledge of God and his revelation cannot depend on the historical accounts in the Bible. This is Lessing's ditch and a train wreck for the Protestant church if there ever was one! Many, however, embraced rationalism and Lessing. Heinrich Heine even compared Lessing's accomplishments to those of Luther with these words in 1852:

> After Luther freed us from tradition and made the Bible into the sole source of Christianity, there arose . . . a rigid worship of the word, and the letter of the Bible ruled just as tyrannically as once tradition had. Lessing was the one who contributed most to our liberation from the tyranny of the letter [of Scripture]. . . . Lessing, too, had his allies, but he was the most forceful in the fight against the letter [of Scripture].[28]

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[26] Lessing, *Theological Writings*, 53.

[27] Rule II in *Regulae ad directionem ingenii*. Quotation from Rene Descartes, "Rules for the Guidance of our Native Powers," in *Descartes Philosophical Writings*, ed. and tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Modern Library, 1958), 4.

[28] Heine, *History of Religion*, 74–75.

III. Who Revived Confessional Lutheranism?

Confessional Lutheranism revived from the quadruple attacks of Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, pietism, and rationalism with some difficulty in two stages. The first stage was a conservative religious revival in the German states in the early nineteenth century known as the *Erweckungsbewegung* (the "Awakening Movement"). It parallels and shares some aspects with what is called the "Second Great Awakening" of Protestantism in America. It also shares many aspects with pietism, which has led some scholars to call it "neo–pietism."

I think that our Missouri Synod historians have not paid enough attention to the *Erweckungsbewegung*. Referring to this movement, C. S. Meyer stated in *Moving Frontiers*, "The processes by which this happened have not yet been definitively studied."[29] Meyer wrote that in 1964. Since that time a number of studies on the *Erweckungsbewegung*, or neo–pietism, have appeared in English.[30] In one of these studies, Walter Conser explained that the *Erweckungsbewegung* had its roots in the older pietist tradition, but was transformed by its encounter with romanticism.[31] Conser wrote, "Above all else, German romanticism was a break from rationalism and a critique of the Enlightenment."[32] Describing the romanticists, Conser stated, "Their celebration of creative expression, their apotheosis of artistic insight . . . and their endorsement of imagination and intuition again signified a break with the Enlightenment."[33] Conser observed, "This romantic sense for the mysterious contained a renewed historical consciousness, one having implications for politics as well as religion.[34] Conser described the regional variations of the *Erweckungs-bewegung* and then concluded:

> Scriptural study and personal piety, Christian unity and confessional differences, the appeal to tradition and the experience of faith, the

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[29] Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 61.

[30] Walter H. Conser, Jr., *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815–1866*, Mercer Classroom Series (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984); Robert M. Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism: The Rise of the Protestant Church Elite in Prussia, 1815–1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); and Crowner and Christianson, eds. *The Spirituality of the German Awakening*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 2003).

[31] On the influence of 19th-century romanticism on religion, see also Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism*, Studies in Early Nineteenth-Century Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[32] Conser, *Church and Confession*, 28.

[33] Conser, *Church and Confession*, 29.

[34] Conser, *Church and Confession*, 29.

> claims of authority and the politics of conscience—all these features were present . . . and all would again come into play between the years 1830 and 1866. The Erweckungsbewegung had a strong but complex effect on religious life in Germany.[35]

Some of the leaders of this conservative revival of the Christian religion included Johann Urslperger of Basel, Gottfried Krummacher of Wuppertal, Theodor Fliedner of Kaiserswerth, and Baron von Kottwitz of Berlin with his circle of friends, including August Tholuck, August Neander, Ludwig von Gerlach, and Ernst Hengstenberg.[36] We should observe that the *Erweckungsbewegung* was, for the most part, ecumenical in extent, if not by intent. Remembering the early days of this revival, Gottfried Thomasius wrote:

> We were then all one. Herrnhutter, pietist, Lutheran, Reformed, Catholic were unanimously together and rejoiced in their Lord and Savior. One knew nothing of confessional differences. It was really a beautiful age of revitalized faith.[37]

What happened to the "beautiful age of revitalized faith" and harmony between Christians of all types? It led to the second stage in the revival of a specifically Lutheran faith. Thomasius continued, referring to his experience in Bavaria:

> As soon as we began to investigate the road along which God had led us, about the testimonies out of which our faith had arisen, and about the historical roots of our church's past and present condition, we became aware of standing in the very middle of Lutheranism. Our Christian faith was the Lutheran faith, exactly as the Lutheran church is and aspires to be. . . . In this way we became Lutherans voluntarily, from the inside out.[38]

Some scholars have noted how the observance between 1817 and 1846 of a series of tercentenary celebrations connected to Luther and the Reformation contributed to the revival of the Lutheran church as a distinct

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[35] Conser, *Church and Confession*, 38.

[36] These are the leaders mentioned in Crowner and Christianson, 16–19; this reader includes writings by August Tholuck, Theodor Fliedner, Johann Wichern, and Friedrich von Bodelschwingh.

[37] Quote from Conser, *Church and Confession*, 32; from Gottfried Thomasius, *Die Wiedererwachen des evangelischen Lebens in der lutherische Kirche Bayerns. Ein süddeutscher Kirchengeschichte, 1800–1840* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1867), 144.

[38] Quote from Conser, 38; from Thomasius, 244–245.

confession in Germany.[39] This is a point that should be remembered as the quinquecentenary of the Reformation approaches us in 2017. The leaders of the nineteenth–century confessional Lutheran revival included Johann Scheibel of Breslau,[40] Wilhelm Löhe of Bavaria, Theodore Kliefoth of Mecklenburg, Adolf Harless and other members of the University of Erlangen faculty, August Vilmar of Hesse, Andreas Rudelbach of Saxony, Heinrich Guericke at Halle, Ludwig Petri of Hanover, Claus Harms of Kiel, and Franz Delitzsch of Erlangen.[41]

A few Lutheran leaders decided that an exodus with their disciples was a better approach than confessional revival, namely, Martin Stephan of Saxony, and the Prussian pastors Johann Grabau, Johann Kilian, and August Kavel.[42] Stephan went to Missouri, Kilian to Texas, Grabau to New York, and Kavel went to Australia.

IV. Walther as a Father of Confessional Lutheranism

C.F.W. Walther was a product of the revival of confessional Lutheranism in Germany, not its progenitor. His spiritual development followed the two–stage pattern I have just outlined. While studying at the University of Leipzig, Walther joined a group of the "Awakened" who met for group Bible study and prayer, patterned after similar groups started by

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[39] See Tappert, *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840–1880*, 9; and Martin Schmidt, "Die innere Einheit der Erweckungsfrömmigkeit im Uebergangsstadium zum lutherischen Konfessionalismus," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 74 (1949), 17–28.

[40] See Martin Kiunke, *Johann Gottfried Scheibel und sein Ringen um die Kirche der lutherischen Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985); Manfred Roensch, *Zeugen der Ersten Stunde: Johann Gottfried Scheibel, Eduard Kellner, & Friedrich Brunn* (Oberursel, Taunus: Inge Hartmann und Sohn, 1980); and Peter Hauptmann, ed., *Gerettete Kirche: Studien zum Anliegen des Breslauers Lutheraners Johann Gottfried Scheibel (1783–1843)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987). An older work dealing with the Breslau Lutherans is Georg Froböss, *Drei Lutheraner an der Universität Breslau: Die Professoren Scheibel, Steffens, Huschke . . .* (Breslau: Evangesliche Buchhandlung Gerhard Kaufmann, 1911). An important work on the development of the Breslau church polity, which was the first free Lutheran church in 19th century Germany, is Jobst Schöne, *Kirche und Kirchenregiment im Wirken und Denken George Philipp Eduard Huschkes* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1969), which was Schöne's dissertation at the University of Münster.

[41] See Conser, *Church and Confession*, 54–55, and Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 65–86.

[42] For a useful study of the migrations to North America, see Historical Research Team of the Eastern District of the LCMS, *Confessional Lutheran Migrations to America* (n.p., 1988). Regarding Kavel's migration to Australia, see David Schubert, *Kavel's People: From Prussia to South Australia* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1985); also see Everard Leske, *For Faith and Freedom: The Story of Lutherans and Lutheranism in Australia 1838–1996* (Adelaide: Open Book Publishers, 1996).

Francke.[43] Members of this group who would play a role in LCMS history included, besides C.F.W. Walther, Ernst G.W. Keyl, Ernst M. Bürger, Theodor Julius Brohm, Ottomar Fürbringer, Johann F. Bünger, Otto Hermann Walther (Carl's older brother), Georg A. Schieferdecker, Carl L. Geyer, and Johann Gönner. Of this group, Walter Forster observed:

> As for doctrinal position, the group, in the true spirit of the *Erweckung*, had none for a long time. Then, in the course of their private discussions, the question came up: What are we? Lutheran, Reformed, or something quite different? The majority reached the *questionable* conclusion that they were Lutherans.[44]

As Walther's biographers have demonstrated, Martin Stephan should get a great deal of credit for converting the "Awakened" Walther into a follower of Luther and a firm defender of the Lutheran Confessions.[45] Walther himself later attested to Stephan's loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions. After quoting Stephan's personal confession of faith, Walther noted that Stephan's Dresden congregation had in 1833 made "the same simple conservative Lutheran confession; by appealing, and that by name, to all recognized faithful teachers of our Church from Luther down to the most recent times."[46] Here we can see the origin of the seemingly artless method of Walther's theology. When there was a disagreement or debate, Walther would craft a simple thesis, and then appeal by name with quotations to all recognized faithful teachers of the Lutheran church from Luther down to recent times.

Although Walther was not the father of the confessional Lutheran revival in Germany, he, along with Stephan, Grabau, and Löhe, et al., should receive credit for introducing this type of Lutheranism to North America. More significantly, Walther could lay claim to inventing a specific type of confessional Lutheranism that elevated the Lutheran Confessions into the chief church authority, after the pattern of Chemnitz's *Iudicium* and the Formula of Concord. This is how it happened. Let me warn you that I am now going to upset some historical "apple carts."

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[43] D. H. Steffens, *Doctor Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1917), 36–44; see also Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839–1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 36–53, and August R, Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 22–25.

[44] Forster, *Zion*, 39 (emphasis mine); cf. Steffens, *Doctor Walther*, 51.

[45] Steffens, *Doctor Walther*, 47–50, 95–99; cf. Forster, *Zion*, 27–36.

[46] Steffens, *Doctor Walther* 98; Steffens quotes here from C.F.W. Walther, *Kurzer Lebenslauf des weiland ehrwürdigen pastor Joh. Frieder. Bünger* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), about page 22.

After Martin Stephan was removed from his office of bishop over the Saxon congregations on May 30, 1839,[47] Pastor Gotthold Loeber of Altenburg, Missouri, wrote to Heinrich von Rohr of Freistadt, Wisconsin, informing him of Stephan's deposal.[48] Von Rohr was the leader of the Prussian emigrant society that had emigrated with Grabau to Wisconsin and Buffalo. Loeber and the other Saxon pastors had met with von Rohr in the fall of 1838 as they were on their way to Bremerhaven, in order to see if the two groups could merge or cooperate.[49] Cooperation was not possible in 1838, but since Stephan was gone by June 1839, Loeber wondered whether it made sense for the two groups to reconsider cooperation.

As part of the negotiations for cooperation, Pastor Loeber sent to von Rohr or Grabau a copy of the "Church Principles and Parish Order," which the Saxons in Missouri had accepted as their church constitution in 1839 and 1840.[50] The contents of this church order are explained, for the first time in English, by Charles Schaum in the introductory chapter to the latest edition of Walther's *Law and Gospel*.[51]

This church order is significant for LCMS history because it was the "first shot fired" in what was to become the battle between the Missouri Synod and the Buffalo Synod over the doctrine of church and ministry, with Buffalo eventually being the "loser." What is very odd is that none of

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[47] Forster, *Zion*, 418.

[48] This story is told in a three-part series by Roy Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," Pts. 1–3 *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 27 no. 1 (April 1954): 1–19; 27 no. 2 (July 1954): 57–73; 27 no. 3 (October 1954): 97–132. Hereafter *Concordia Historical Institute* will be abbreviated with *CHIQ*.

[49] Historical Research Team of the Eastern District of the LCMS, *Confessional Lutheran Migrations to America*, 22. Wilhelm Iwan notes that the meeting between Heinrich von Rohr and the Saxon pastors took place in Magdeburg, see: Wilhelm Iwan, *Die altlutherische Auswanderung um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols., Johann–Hess Institute, Breslau (Ludwigsburg: Eichhorn Verlag Lothar Kallenberg, 1943); in English: Wilhelm Iwan, *The Old Lutheran Emigration of the Mid-19th Century . . .* , 3 vols. (Mequon, WI: Freistadt Historical Society, 2003).

[50] A copy of this "Church Principles and Parish Order" was published in the published minutes of the Buffalo Synod: *Fünfter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preussen ausgewanderten evangelisch-lutheriscen Kirche, versammelte zu Buffalo, N.Y. von 23. Juni bix 5. Juli 1856* (Buffalo: Druck von Friedrich Reienecke, Eck von Main- und Geneseestrasse, 1856), 49–52. Reference to the role played by this document can be found in Roy Suelflow, 7–8, and Wilhelm Iwan, *Die altlutherische Auswanderung um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*.

[51] C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ed. Charles P. Schaum, tr. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), xxiii–xxiv. Schaum has also translated the 1839–1840 "Church Principles and Parish Order" into English, and I have encouraged him to seek its publication in the near future.

the Missouri Synod historians mention this church order, except for one article by Roy Suelflow in 1954.[52] Perhaps Missouri Synod historians have not been willing to admit that on the basis of the 1839–1840 church order Grabau had grounds for complaint against the Saxons. After receiving this "Church Principles and Parish Order," Grabau drafted his reply, dated December 1, 1840. It was titled *Hirtenbrief* and was received both by the Saxon pastors in Perry County and Trinity congregation in Saint Louis.[53] Trinity con-gregation took up the letter at its meeting of February 22, 1841, but did not respond to Grabau, probably because it had no pastor at the time.

The Perry County pastors did not reply by letter to Grabau immediately, waiting until July 3, 1843, to send a response. Before they sent their letter of reply, they had to work out the theological challenges in Grabau's *Hirtenbrief*. Thus the first response to Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* was not two years later, but four months later, on April 15 and 21, 1841, when Walther debated his "Eight Theses on the Church" in the log cabin at Altenburg.

There are several points in Walther's Altenburg Theses that are a direct answer to Grabau's *Hirtenbrief*. First, there was Grabau's assertion that the Lutheran fathers would never allow the practice that:

> Every congregation, or even every group that falls away from the true church and honors itself with the name "congregation," could appoint someone in its midst to the spiritual office as it wishes.[54]

If anything was offensive to the Saxons *sans episcopus*, this was it! It implied that the Saxons were no longer part of the "true church"! So in Altenburg Theses I–VI, Walther defended the Saxons as being part of the "true church" and that "even heterodox companies have church power; even among them the goods of the Church may be validly administered, [and] the ministry established."[55]

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[52] Roy Suelflow, "Missouri and Buffalo", 7–8.

[53] Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod: The Genesis of Decentralized Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 123 n. 16. The *Hirtenbrief* can be found in English translation in Johannes A. A. Grabau, "Hirtenbrief," tr. William Schumacher, in Kolb and Manteufel, eds., *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C.F.W. Walther in Memory of August Sueflow* (n.p., n.d.), 141–154. The Saxon pastor's reply can be found ibid., 155–176; an introductory essay to the exchange of letters can be found ibid., 133–140.

[54] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief," 150, under Section III.

[55] Forster, *Zion*, 523–524.

The second assertion of Grabau was the matter of authority in the church. Grabau stated:

> What is and is not opposed to God's Word is not decided by any single member of the church but by the church itself in its symbols, church orders, and synods.[56]

Walther's response was his Eighth Thesis in the Altenburg Debate, which stated:

> The orthodox Church is chiefly to be judged by the common, orthodox, public confession to which its members acknowledge and confess themselves to be pledged.[57]

So instead of Grabau's lineup of "symbols, church orders, and synodical decrees," Walther posited only the "common, orthodox, public confession" by which the church is to be chiefly judged. This principle of doctrinal authority in the church agrees with the intent of the authors of the Book of Concord, who stated:

> Our intention was only to have a *single, universally accepted, certain, and common* form of doctrine which all our Evangelical churches subscribe and from which and according to which, *because it is drawn from the Word of God, all other writings* are to be approved and accepted, judged and regulated.[58]

Walther's brand of "confessional Lutheranism" was not a confusing mixture of Lutheran confessions and "theological formulations, liturgical customs, and types of piety" "woven out of a combination of orthodoxist and pietist strands."[59] Walther's Altenburg Thesis Eight was plain and simple, easy to grasp, easy to use, and ready-made for the layman in the pew and the prairie pastors who had gotten by without a university education. The primary historical significance of the log cabin debate at Altenburg in 1841 was not the doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers" or the survival of the Perry County colony.[60] Its primary significance was the

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[56] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief," 145; this is point 8 under Section One.

[57] Forster, *Zion*, 525.

[58] *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. & ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 506 (FC SD Rule and Norm, 10) [hereafter Tappert]. Emphasis mine.

[59] Theodore Tappert, *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840–1880*, 8.

[60] I do not intend to discredit previous discussions in the literature about the role of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the Perry County colonists' unhappiness with their new home and thoughts about returning to Germany. This undoubtedly played some part in the discussions leading up to, and the actual discussion at, the Altenburg Debate. My point is that the Altenburg Theses themselves,

establishment of the Lutheran Confessions as the chief theological authority among the Saxon emigrants, in the sense in which that was understood by the authors of the Book of Concord.

After Altenburg, Walther was consistent in his confessional method. When Gotthold Loeber and Walther replied to Grabau's letter in July 1843, they quoted the Apology of the Augsburg Confession against Grabau's use of the old German church orders.[61] When asked by Löhe's *Sendlinge*, Adam Ernst, about what he would require of a new church body, Walther replied on August 21, 1845: "1. That the Synod organize itself, in addition to the Word of God, on the basis of all the Symbols of our church."[62] The constitution adopted by the Missouri Synod in 1847 included several provisions that pertained to the Lutheran Confessions. Walther's influence here is obvious. The most important provision was Article II, part 2 under "Conditions under which a congregation may join Synod and remain a member":

> Acceptance of all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church . . . as the pure and unadulterated explanation and presentation of the Word of God.[63]

Other provisions included: that a purpose of the synod was to "make possible the promotion of special church projects" such as the publication of the Book of Concord (Article I.6);[64] that one condition of membership was "exclusive use of doctrinally pure church books and schoolbooks (agendas, hymnals, readers, etc.),"(Article II.4)[65] whose doctrine was presumably to be judged by the Lutheran Confessions; that candidates both for the pastoral and teaching offices were to be examined orally regarding their knowledge of the Lutheran Confessions (Articles IV.10b and

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authored by Walther, are primarily a response to Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* and that, in the process of developing them, Walther discovered, explicated, and/or applied the theological method of confessional authority that was characteristic of his type of "confessional Lutheranism."

[61] Kolb and Manteufel, eds., *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C.F.W. Walther in Memory of August Sueflow*, 160.

[62] Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 143; cf. Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847–1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 86.

[63] Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 149–150, which is the 1854 version; cf. William Gustave Polack, "Our First Synodical Constitution," *CHIQ* 16 no. 1 (April 1943): 3, which is the 1847 version.

[64] Polack, "First Constitution", 3; cf. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 150, where this clause became part of Article I.3.

[65] Polack, "First Constitution", 3; cf. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers,* 150.

IV.10f);[66] and that both pastors and teachers were to be installed with a solemn pledge to all of the Lutheran Confessions (Articles IV.10f and IV.11).[67]

Walther later wrote two essays in which he forcefully argued that subscription to the Lutheran Confessions was necessary for all Lutherans. The first was an article in 1849 titled "Why Should We, Even in This Day, Hold Unflinchingly to the Confessional Writings of Our Evangelical Lutheran Church?"[68] The second was an essay in 1858 titled "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers, and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church?"[69]

Finally, in the battle that defined the end of his career, Walther fought for the doctrine of election found in the Formula of Concord, Article XI against the teaching of many of the old orthodox Lutheran theologians. This was an unusual stance for a theologian so well-versed in these theologians, who had taught dogmatics from Baier's *Compendium*, and who had been accused of being a "citation theologian" because of his seemingly artless use of citations from the orthodox Lutheran fathers.[70] But when "push came to shove" between the Book of Concord and the orthodox theologians, the latter got the "shove."

Walther's theological method was summed up in these words in 1881 in one of his essays on predestination:

> Whenever a controversy arises concerning the question, whether a doctrine is Lutheran, we must not ask: "What does this or that *father* of

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[66] Polack, "First Constitution", 8–9; cf. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 154–155, where these clauses became part of Articles V.A.13 and V.B.2.

[67] Polack, "First Constitution", 9–10; Cf. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 154, where these clauses became part of Articles V.A.13 and V.A.14.

[68] C.F.W. Walther, "Warum sollen wir an den Bekenntnisschriften unserer evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche auch und noch jetzt unerschütterlich festhalten?" *Der Lutheraner* 5:11 (January 23, 1849): 81–84.

[69] *Concordia Theological Monthly* 18 no. 4 (April 1947): 241–253; cf. other translations in Theodore Tappert, *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840–1880*, 55–77; and C. F. W. Walther, "Confessional Subscription," in C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, 2 vols., ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 19–29.

[70] The dogmatics used by Walther in his classroom was J. W. Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae,* ed. C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879). Robert Preus addresses the issue of Walther's "citation method" in "Walther the Dogmatician," *C.F.W. Walther: The American Luther*, ed. Arthur Drevlow (Mankato, MN: Walther Press, 1987), 149–160. Walther himself addressed this issue in "Foreword to the 1862 Volume: Do We Lack Creative Activity?", *Editorials from Lehre und Wehre,* tr. H. A. Bouman, *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 102–114; original in *Lehre und Wehre* 8 no. 1 (January 1862): 1–6.

> the Lutheran church teach in his private writings?" for he also may have fallen into error; on the contrary, we must ask: "What does the public Confession of the Lutheran Church teach concerning the controverted point?" for in her confession our Church has recorded *for all times* what she believes, teaches, and confesses.[71]

V. Was Walther Right?

Walther believed that the Lutheran church had found its perennial theology in the Book of Concord. Was he right? Or are the Lutheran Confessions just a time-bound expression of a branch of the Christian church—a church whose provisional job is to heal the breach of the 16th century and be the agent for the visible unity of the whole church, as some "Evangelical-Catholic" Lutherans have argued?[72]

One answer comes from the *Bethel Confession* of August 1933, whose chief authors were Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hermann Sasse. In response to the question "What is Reformation?" the Bethel Confession replied:

> The Reformation is essentially a return to Holy Scripture, *a bowing under Holy Scripture.* In it, Martin Luther is the teacher of Holy Scripture that is *obedient* to the word.[73]

Those of us who have studied the Book of Concord for years know that Luther and the other Lutheran confessors did indeed bow to the authority of Scriptures. Luther and the confessors did not add to, remove, twist, tropologically modify, explain away, or evade the intent of any doctrine in the canonical Scriptures. Furthermore, Luther and the confessors faithfully observed the relationships between those doctrines and their relative emphases in the Bible.

The obedience of Luther and the Lutheran confessors to the Scriptures is perhaps the most repulsive thing about them to the modern man and

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[71] C.F.W. Walther, *The Controversy Concerning Predestination*, tr. August Crull (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881; reprint, Concordia Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, IN, 1993), 5–6 (emphasis mine). Walther's full discussion of the predestination doctrine, with reference to Formula of Concord XI, may be found in: C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, 2:106–219.

[72] See for example Richard John Neuhaus, "On the Occasion of the First Awarding of the Arthur Carl Piepkorn Prize," October 1984, in Plekon and Wiecher, *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, 2nd ed., 2 vol. (Delhi, NY: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2006), 1: 337.

[73] See German text in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Kirchenkampf und Finkenwalde: Resolutionen, Aufsätze, Rundbriefe,* ed. E. Bethge, 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser, 1965), 95 (emphasis mine). An English summary with some translated quotes is available online. See http://www.lutheranwiki.org/Bethel_Confession (accessed December 2010).

woman.[74] Because of their obedience to the Scriptures, modern man sees Luther and the Lutheran Confessions as medieval, not modern. This, at least, was the judgment of Adolf von Harnack.[75] Whether medieval or modern, the Lutheran Confessions are the product of a "conscience bound by Scripture," to use Luther's battle-cry at Worms. If your conscience is bound by Scripture, like Luther, then you will agree that Walther was right to uphold the Book of Concord as the church's perennial theology.

More difficult to answer is the question whether or not Walther was right to uphold the Book of Concord in light of its challenges from rationalism and modern thought. After Lessing's ditch, it would seem that all historical assertions in the Scriptures, including miracles, prophecies, and the resurrection, have to be relegated to the dustbin of "uncertainty" or "open questions." Modern theology has proceeded under this assumption and scuttled not only the Book of Concord, but all Protestant confessions.

Francis Pieper answered the rationalist problem of certainty by appealing to the doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*[76] and by asserting that "theology is the perfect science, the only reliable science on earth."[77] Frankly, these answers of Pieper did not solve the problems posed by

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[74] For Walther's defense of his obedience to Scripture, see "Foreword to the 1875 Volume: Are We Guilty of Despising Scholarship?" *Editorials from Lehre und Wehre*, 122–142.

[75] This was the conclusion of Adolf von Harnack in his magisterial *History of Dogma*; see *Adolf von Harnack: Liberal Theology at Its Height*, ed. Martin Rumscheidt, The Making of Modern Theology, gen. ed. John de Gruchy (London: Collins Publishers, 1989), 251–268. Harnack saw Luther's "religion" as new, but his attachment to "dogma," with its authority and obedience, as medieval and an "Old Catholic" phenomenon. Harnack's peer, Ernst Troeltsch, made a more complex assessment of Luther, with specific application to his social teachings. See Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World*, Fortress Texts in Modern Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); and Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols., tr. Olive Wyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 2:461–575. Troeltsch's assessment was that both Lutheranism and Calvinism perpetuated the medieval idea of authority, but removed many obstacles for the rise of the modern world and, in this respect, Calvinism was more progressive than Lutheranism; see Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, 10–11.

[76] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1:106–129, 307–317. I attempted to examine the problems of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* in Francis Pieper's theology in my thesis: "The doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* as *a* Calvinistic element in Lutheran theology," Concordia Theological Seminary, M.Div. thesis, 1983. David P. Scaer comments on the role of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* in Robert Preus' theology in "The Theology of Robert David Preus," *CTQ* 74 (January/April 2010): 75–92.

[77] Pieper, 1:107.

rationalism. Although that defect does not affect the rest of his theology, which is perfectly orthodox, his approach is not persuasive to anyone who has imbibed from the fountains of modern theology or philosophy. A more useful response to rationalism and modern thought is found in Kurt Marquart's essay, "The Sacramentality of Truth":

> In mathematics and logic . . . we can often "prove" things with a deductive certainty which is the envy of other disciplines. Certainly the wranglings over historical interpretations, not to mention theological dogmas, are quite untidy by comparison. Yet the apparent superiority of mathematics and logic rests on a sort of conjurer's trick . . . Nothing can appear in the conclusions which we have not first put into the premises. Empirical natural science, though not quite as tidy as mathematics, is not nearly as "messy" as the humanities. It is simply incomparably easier to describe the "behavior" of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, than to describe that of Julius Caesar or Marie Antoinette, especially when they are dead and gone. The decreasing rigor of proof possible as we ascend the scale of human relevance and value attests [to] the complexity and importance of the human reality, not its triviality.[78]

In non-philosophical terms this means that the most important decisions you have to make in life are the most complex and the most freighted with uncertainty. There is the decision to buy a particular house or car, whose problems become evident only after you have made a purchase. There is the decision to buy particular stocks, bonds, or other investments, whose problems become evident only after you have made the purchase. There is the decision to get married to a particular person, whom you know to some degree, but hardly to the extent required to have absolute certainty about the choice. The decision to believe, i.e., to have faith in God's Word and promises, is comparable to the marriage decision. You accept and weigh all the evidence that you can get and then choose. Not to choose is to choose.

Descartes and Lessing, in setting up the criterion of absolute certainty, were arguing for an epistemological position that philosophers today call

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[78] Kurt Marquart, "The Sacramentality of Truth," in *And Every Tongue Confess: Essays in Honor of Norman Nagel on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Krispin, and Vieker (Dearborn, MI: Nagel Festschrift Committee, 1990), 89–90. In this essay, Marquart shows his appreciation for Karl Popper's "critical rationalism" and Tarski's rehabilitation of the correspondence theory of truth. For an accessible collection of essays on these subjects, see Karl Popper, *Popper Selections,* ed. David Miller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

"infallibilism."[79] Amateur philosophers and students new to philosophy often fall prey to "infallibilist" arguments. Clergy and theologians are amateur philosophers and we have been fooled by Lessing's Ditch for over two hundred years.

A better way out of Lessing's Ditch is suggested by American philosopher Alvin Goldman, professor of philosophy at Rutgers University. Goldman is a leading proponent of "reliabilism," which posits "degrees of reasonableness" instead of the false dilemma of either certainty or uncertainty.[80] Also useful is the work of Richard Swinburne, professor of philosophy at Oxford, who has demonstrated that the existence of God is the most "reasonable" explanation for the universe, though it cannot be "proven" by traditional logic or scientific means.[81]

Before his passing, Kurt Marquart told me that he sincerely regretted not having completed the first volume in the *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics* dealing with *prolegomena*. In his introductory paragraph to his proposal for that book, Marquart stated:

> The two great creed-and-confession-making periods of antiquity and the Reformation dealt with "the highest Mystery in heaven and earth" (Trinity/Christology) and Soteriology, respectively. Today the main battle is about prolegomena—the apostolic-prophetic foundation of the Christian faith and church (Eph. 2:20). At stake are not technical details, but the very possibility of truth, doctrine, and revelation.[82]

I agree with Marquart. The heirs of Walther still have their work cut out for them in the field of *prolegomena*. The fact that we can still work on these problems, and make progress on them, proves that confessional Lutheranism is not dead—yet.

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[79] See the brief and accessible discussion of "infallibilism" in Stephen Law, *Philosophy* (London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd., 2007), 58–59.

[80] For a technical discussion of these problems in philosophy, see George Pappas, ed., *Justification and Knowledge* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979). A paper by Alvin Goldman is included, pp. 1–24, titled "What is Justified Belief?"

[81] See, e.g., Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1993); Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[82] Kurt Marquart, "Proposed Outline for *Confessional Dogmatics* volume on Prolegomena" (unpublished paper dated March 28, 2000).

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Grabau Versus Walther: The Use of the *Book of Concord* in the American Lutheran Debate on Church and Ministry in the Nineteenth Century

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

This is not a story of good against evil, but of two justified sinners, each filled with anger at the other and often completely misunderstanding the other, due in part to their totally contrary experiences and fears. From the early 1840s until 1866, a dispute raged between Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther and the Missouri Synod, on the one hand, and Johannes Andreas August Grabau and the Buffalo Synod, on the other hand.[1] The debate centered on the doctrines of the church and the ministry. Here we will not describe the history in detail.[2] Instead, our task is to examine how Grabau used the *Book of Concord*, the authoritative statement of faith for the Lutheran Church, in his dispute with Walther. Since Walther's use of the confessions can be known from the English translations of his works, we will focus here on how Grabau used them. Both Grabau and Walther wanted to teach and conduct their ministries in accordance with the Scriptures and the *Book of Concord*. Yet despite these common authorities, the two men and the synods they led (the Buffalo and Missouri Synods) came to significantly different points of view on how parts of the *Book of Concord* should be understood.

By examining how Grabau used the *Book of Concord* in his dispute with Walther, we will see that, far from being Roman Catholic in teaching,

[1] Grabau's background of resistance to the Prussian Union and Walther's background of resistance to Martin Stephan, while perhaps not the only reasons for the positions they took, did shape the debate that followed. Yet Grabau and Walther agreed on many points of doctrine and practice, and these agreements should not be overlooked. For many points of agreement, see William M. Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry, 1840–1845," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 68 no. 2 (1995): 84–99. This journal will be abbreviated hereafter *CHIQ*.

[2] For that, see Roy A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (1954): 1–19, 57–73, 97–132; Johann A. Grabau, "Johann Andreas August Grabau: A Biographical Sketch," *CHIQ* 23–25 (1950): 10–17, 66–74, 170–75; 35–39, 74–79, 124–32; 49–71; David A. Gerber, "The Pathos of Exile: Old Lutheran Refugees in the United States and South Australia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 no. 3 (1984): 498–522.

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Grabau and the Buffalo Synod advocated a kind of Lutheranism that was based on the *Book of Concord* and the early Lutheran church orders.[3] In many points Grabau has been misunderstood by Missouri. At the same time, we will see places where Grabau and the Buffalo Synod misunderstood Walther and the Missouri Synod.

Much Missouri Synod scholarship on Grabau and the Buffalo Synod has been based on Christian Hochstetter's history of the Missouri Synod.[4] Hochstetter, a renegade Buffalo Synod pastor who challenged Grabau as leader of the Synod and then led a contingent of congregations from the Buffalo Synod to the Missouri Synod in 1866, characterized Grabau as hierarchical through and through. According to Hochstetter, Grabau's theology of the ministry was Roman Catholic, tyrannical, and utterly contrary to the Lutheran Confessions. However, Hochstetter's history is unreliable. He often gives quotations out of context and without citation, so that it is difficult to know whether he is fair with his sources.[5] His chapter on the Buffalo Synod reads more like propaganda than careful history. Thus, Hochstetter's work serves better as a reflection of Missouri Synod views toward the Buffalo Synod than as a primary source for understanding the Buffalo Synod and Grabau in and of themselves. The line of Missouri Synod scholarship tracing its lineage to Hochstetter needs to be questioned and should be reassessed through examination of primary sources.

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[3] For their part, Walther and the Missouri Synod advocated a kind of Lutheranism found in the *Book of Concord*, early Luther, earlier Lutheran Orthodoxy, and Phillip Jacob Spener. For example, the Missouri Saxons said that through Philipp Jacob Spener's book *Das geistliche Priesterthum* ("The Spiritual Priesthood") they knew about the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and its distinction from the ministry. Gotthold Heinrich Löber, et al., "Unsre Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung des Herrn Pastor Grabau ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," in *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840*, ed. G. H. Löber (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1849), 64–88, here at 67. The Saxons could have known Spener through the 1830 edition: Philipp Jakob Spener, *Das geistliche Priesterthum auß göttlichem Wort kürtzlich beschrieben, und mit einstimmenden Zeugnüssen gottseliger Lehrer bekräfftiget* (Berlin: Ludwig Oehmigke, 1830). See also Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 89.

[4] Christian Hochstetter, *Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode in Nordamerika, und ihrer Lehrkämpfe von der sächsischen Auswanderung im Jahre 1838 an bis zum Jahre 1884* (Dresden: Naumann, 1885). It appeared in English translation as Christian Hochstetter, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod in North America and Her Doctrinal Controversies from the Time of the Saxon Emigration in the Year 1838 Until the Year 1884,* tr. Walter J. Plischke and Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 2005).

[5] For example, the quote of the *Kirchliches Informatorium* on 196–197.

Following some articles of the Augsburg Confession, the controversy between Walther and Grabau will be examined as it touched on the understanding and use of the *Book of Concord*. Our examination will not be able to mention every quotation of the Lutheran symbolical books but must be limited to showing the main contours of how the confessions were used.

I. Augsburg Confession V: Is The Ministry Necessary for Salvation?

> That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel . . . (AC V, 1–2).[6]

Article V of the Augsburg Confession is an important place in the *Book of Concord* that speaks of God working through the office of the ministry (the *Amt*). There are especially two questions that came up in the 19th century dealing with Augsburg Confession V. First, what is meant by *Amt* (or in Latin, *officium*)? Second, in what sense is it necessary to have the *Amt* doing the functions of the ministry? Both the German and Latin words for "ministry" (*Amt, officium*) are notorious for ambiguity. Either they can mean the office or position that is given the responsibility of performing certain functions, or they can mean the functions themselves.[7] The former understanding has come to be called "ministry in the concrete" and the latter has been called "ministry in the abstract." The terms themselves go back at least to Johann Gerhard.[8] In the Augsburg Confession, Article V is often seen as dealing with the ministry *abstractly*, whereas Article XIV deals with the ministry *concretely*.[9]

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[6] Quotations of the *Book of Concord* are from Friedrich Bente and William Herman Theodore Dau, eds., *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921); some are my own translations.

[7] Compare Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), s.v. "officium," definitions II with II.B.2; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854), s.v. "Amt" and "Predigtamt."

[8] Johann Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces: On the Ecclesiastical Ministry,* tr. Richard J. Dinda, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), §§ 5, 13. For Gerhard, the "estate" is described by the abstract terms (§ 7) and the ministers are described by the concrete terms.

[9] Johann Wilhelm Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae, Adjectis Notis Amplioribus, Quibus Doctrina Orthodoxa Ad Παιδειαν Academicam Explicatur Atque Ex Scriptura S. Eique Innixis Rationibus Theologicis Confirmatur,* ed. C.F.W. Walther, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Ex Officina Synodi Missouriensis Lutheranae, 1879), 3: 685.

The terminology of abstract and concrete came up as the Missouri Saxons reacted to Grabau's definition of the ministry. Grabau's 1840 "Pastoral Letter" (or *Hirtenbrief*), which sparked the controversy, stated that God wants to deal with his people through the office of the ministry (*Amt*), which has been given the duty to preach the word and administer the sacraments.[10] Then, in his 1844 "Anti-critique," Grabau wrote, "Concerning the holy preaching office, Holy Scripture teaches that it is the sort of estate appointed by God on earth, in which *he* appoints [*verordnet*] certain fit persons from among human beings for the purpose that they, with divine authority as ambassadors in His stead, should set forth the Word of their Lord to others, distribute the Sacraments to them, lead them in this way to Christ, and edify them unto eternal life." Grabau also defined the ministry as, among other things, an estate (*Stand*).[11] The Missouri Saxons responded that Scripture has two ways of speaking of the "ministry," not only concretely, as Grabau had mentioned, but also abstractly, not as an "estate," but as an "order" or a "service" (*Dienst, ministerium*), a "power" (*Macht,* ἐξουσία), a "call," etc.[12] Grabau, for his part, did not reject this distinction of "concrete" and "abstract" as different ways of considering the same thing. But the problem with the Saxons' objection in his view is that he was discussing Augsburg Confession XIV, not Augsburg Confession V. The concept of "abstract ministry" does not apply to Augsburg Confession XIV. Grabau writes in the Buffalo Synod's "Second Synodical Letter" of 1848:

> On page 66 they philosophize and make a preaching office in the concrete and one in the abstract. In the concrete (that is, when certain people carry it out [*führen*]) it can be called an "estate" [*Stand*], but in the abstract (that is, without the people who carry it out) it must be

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[10] Johannes Andreas August Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," in *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840*, ed. G. H. Löber (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1849), 11–20, here at 15; translated by William Schumacher in *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C.F.W. Walther: In Memory of August R. Suelflow*, ed. Thomas Manteufel, and Robert Kolb (s.l., 2000), 141–154, here at 146. The Missouri Saxons were uncomfortable with this statement: Gotthold Heinrich Löber, et al., "Beurtheilung des vorstehenden Hirtenbriefs, wozu der Verfasser desselben uns aufgefordert hatte ['Critique,' July 3, 1843]," in *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840*, 20–36, here at 28; translated by William Schumacher in *Soli Deo Gloria*, 155–76, here at 166; Löber, et al., "Unsere Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," 82–83.

[11] Johannes Andreas August Grabau, "Herrn Pastor Grabau's vermeinte Widerlegung unsrer vorstehenden Beurtheilung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," in *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840*, here at 38.

[12] Löber, et al., "Unsere Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," 66.

> called an "order" or a service, a power, a call, and the like. All of this is babble, unfit for faith. The discussion is about the 14th article of the Augsburg Confession, which by *ordo ecclesiasticus* ["the ecclesiastical order"] or *Kirchenregiment* ["church government"] means the preaching office, which fit, orderly-called persons have and carry out, and *ordo ecclesiasticus* there means a churchly office or estate. See Abraham Calov in his dogmatics, who considers preaching office and estate as one thing, and doesn't bother with such sophistry [*Spitzfindigkeiten*], in that he (vol. 8, p. 309) directly declares that "the holy preaching office (*Ministerium*) is an estate ordered by God," etc. However, that one can and does distinguish the ministerial person and his commissioned work is understood of itself, but doesn't help at all for the 14th article of the Augsburg Confession. Thus, this is unnecessary talk. If the discussion had been about the 5th article of the Augsburg Confession, it might have been fitting.[13]

There are several interesting points here. First, apparently the Missouri Saxons acknowledged that the ministry is an estate (*Stand*), at least whenever the ministry is being discussed concretely.[14] Second, by admitting that the distinction between concrete and abstract might have been fitting if discussing Augsburg Confession V, Grabau shows that he understands and does not object to the Lutheran scholastic distinction of the ministry into "concrete" and "abstract," but rather he objects to the misuse of this distinction and its application to Augsburg Confession XIV. Third, Augsburg Confession XIV was at the heart of the controversy, not Augsburg Confession V.

A year later, in 1849, Grabau and the Buffalo Synod ministerium discussed Augsburg Confession V in a way such that they seem to understand *Amt* in Augsburg Confession V as concrete. The pastors of the Buffalo Synod were defending L.F.E. Krause, who had been accused by the 1848 Missouri Synod convention of retaining the Pomeranian Catechism

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[13] Johannes Andreas August Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c," in *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche, versammelt zu Buffalo, N.Y., im Juli 1848. Nebst etlichen Nachträgen des Kirchen-Ministerii gedachter Gemeinen, und einer Verantwortung des Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo gegen die missourischen Rottenbeschützer, Löber, Walther &c., als eine Wahrung der Rechte des christlichen Predigtamts und ernstliche Protestation gegen die Aufrichtung demokratischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche Nord-Amerika's; Öffentlich ausgegeben für alle lutherische Christen in Nord-Amerika und Deutschland* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Brunck u. Domedion, 1850), 99–158, here at 103.

[14] Cf. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt): Witnesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry,* tr. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia, 1987), Ministry thesis IV.

because, as they thought, it placed the power of the keys in the office of the holy ministry. After a long historical presentation, the Buffalo ministerium states that all orthodox Lutheran catechisms say the same thing as the Pomeranian Catechism. Then we get a rare statement on Augsburg Confession V. The Buffalo pastors do not use the terms "abstract" and "concrete" in this passage, but it is obvious that they are understanding the word *Amt* concretely as "office" or "estate," not abstractly as the function of preaching, etc. They write:

> Here, too, there is the same doctrine as in the Pomeranian Catechism on John 20:22–23, and it is understood exclusively as referring to the preaching office. So it is also in all the other orthodox catechisms. Pastor Krause thus had no need to abolish or retain the Pomeranian Catechism *because* it had words subject to misunderstanding: that Christ instituted this power in the preaching office. The institution of this power in the preaching office is clear enough in John 20:22–23. For the entire Gospel with its divine power and might is set [*gefasset*] into the preaching office. [15]

The footnote on this text says: "Therefore in the 5th article of the Augsburg Confession, *preaching office, Gospel,* and *Sacrament* are bound together directly. In the 28th article it is confessed that one cannot obtain these heavenly good otherwise than through the *office of preaching* and *distribution of the holy sacraments* [Augsburg Confession XXVIII 9]."[16] It is apparent that the pastors of the Buffalo Synod here understand *Amt* as concrete: that is, "office" or "estate." In these statements, the Buffalo Synod pastors emphasize that salvation is offered through the office, because the office has been given God's Word and Sacraments to distribute.

Grabau's 1840 "Pastoral Letter" had said the same. There, Grabau said the word of God is located in the rightly constituted pastoral office and he denied that the word is effective outside of the office.[17] Grabau had quoted

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[15] Ministerium of the Buffalo Synod, "Nachträge des Kirchen-Ministerii (1849)," in *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Brunck u. Domedion, 1850), 75–98, here at 89.

[16] Ministerium, Zweiter Synodal-Brief, 89n.; emphasis original. The Buffalo pastors here refer to the *Book of Concord* by page number: 110. They normally refer to the Baumgarten edition of the Lutheran Confessions: Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, ed., *Christliches Concordienbuch, darin öffentliche Bekentnisse und symbolische Schriften der evangelischlutherischen Kirche enthalten sind: mit Beifügung der verschiedenen Lesearten voriger Ausgaben sowol der einzeln Bekentnisse als des gesamten Concordienbuchs* (Halle: Gebauer, 1747); emphasis original.

[17] Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 88; see also Chr. Otto Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1911), 111.

Augsburg Confession V to show that God wants to deal with us through the ministry (*ministerium*). The Missouri Saxons, in their 1845 "Reply to Anti-critique," quote the Smalcald Articles III, VIII 3 to show that, at a more basic level, God wants to deal with us not through the office but through the Word. Yet they agree with Grabau that "ordinarily" God has his word and sacraments administered through his "ordered preaching office."[18] For his part, Grabau would explain that ordinarily the word is not effective outside of the office, but all along he said there are emergency situations and that the word is powerful in and of itself.[19] Grabau also gave examples of such "emergency situations":

> Under circumstances such as, for example, the [Napoleonic] war's devastation of 1806 and 1812 was with us, where several pastors had been exiled from their parishes by force and their parishes had been made into enemy headquarters, a few cantors and sacristans in the villages partly recited God's Word, partly expounded to the best of their ability, baptized, absolved, held the Supper [Footnote: Which . . . I, however, do not approve, since it was not necessary like Baptism], married, etc. although they neither had been called nor ordained.[20]

That is, an emergency situation is one in which there are no pastors, and it is impossible to get to one.

As the debate progressed, Grabau explained that the Office of the Holy Ministry is a "ministerial cause" of faith and salvation. This concept, based on passages such as 1 Tim 4:16 and 1 Cor 3:5, was set forth and expounded by Johann Gerhard.[21] When pressed by the Missouri Saxons, Grabau often resorted to this terminology as his explanation. We will examine Grabau's use of this terminology later, when we consider Augsburg Confession XIV.

Thus, as we look at the places where Augsburg Confession V surfaces in controversy between Grabau and Walther, we see that Grabau accepted the distinction of abstract and concrete as applying to pastors and their duties, not as different things. Nevertheless, he and the pastors of the Buffalo Synod usually understood "ministry" [*officium, Amt*] in the *Book of*

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[18] Löber, et al., "Unsere Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," 82–83.

[19] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 15–16.

[20] Johannes Andreas August Grabau, "Brief des Hrn. Pastor Grabau an Hrn. Pastor Brohm in New-York ['Ordination Letter,' June 26, 1844]," in *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840*, ed. G. H. Löber (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1849), 57–64, here at 58; translated by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "A Letter by Johannes Grabau on Christian Ordination," *CHIQ* 73: 3 (2000): 179–189, here at 180.

[21] Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces: On the Ecclesiastical Ministry,* § 55.

Concord as the office or estate that is charged with preaching and administering sacraments, not just as those functions themselves. The result is that Augsburg Confession V is read as meaning, "That we may obtain this faith, the office or estate of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted." Thus, except in emergency situations, God wills to distribute salvation through the work of his called ministers, and not otherwise. Yet, as will be shown later when discussing Augsburg Confession XIV, it is important to remember that Grabau did view the Word as powerful in itself. It is God's revealed will and institution that he stresses when he so often speaks of "ministry" as concrete.

II. Augsburg Confession VII–VIII: The Church as Visible and Invisible

> The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered (AC VII, 1). The Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers . . . (AC VIII, 1).

In 1849, the Buffalo Synod pastors defined the visible church as binary, consisting of teachers (i.e, pastors) and hearers. They write, "Church and teachers of the Church are divinely joined together. Where one is, there the other should be; they are correlatives [*Correlativa*]; as there can be no bride without a bridegroom."[22] This is obviously a definition of the visible church, around which the thoughts of the Buffalo Synod pastors seemed to turn.

Throughout the "Second Synodical Letter" and other Buffalo Synod literature, the Buffalo writers stress constantly the distinction between the Church and sectarian groups *[Rotten]*.[23] This distinction is of great importance to them, and may explain their insistence on strict church discipline and the great offense they took at Missourian attempts to establish rival Lutheran congregations nearby to Buffalo Synod congregations. According to the Buffalo Synod, a member of a sect cannot be saved. Drawing on the classical dogmatic statement that "there is no salvation outside the Church," which Johann Gerhard and others confess as applying not only to the invisible church but also to the visible—since there is no invisible church outside of the visible church—Grabau and the Buffalo Synod took a step beyond Gerhard and asserted that there is no salvation outside of the

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[22] Ministerium of the Buffalo Synod, "Nachträge des Kirchen-Ministerii (1849)," 97, n. ¶.

[23] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 136, 138, and *passim*.

visible Lutheran church.[24] This unfortunate statement may have resulted from the fact that "visible church" has two different meanings in classical Lutheran theology. On the one hand, it can mean a conspicuous, right-teaching church; for example, the territorial church of electoral Saxony at the time of Luther. Or on the other hand, it can mean a real gathering of Christian hearers and a preacher around the Word and sacraments, even if they are so few that the world considers them invisible or non-existent. Johann Gerhard says that for salvation, one must be within the latter.[25] The Buffalo Synod seems to say one must be in the former. Neither Grabau nor Gerhard would say only membership in the invisible church is necessary, as though the invisible church could be outside of the visible. And I do not think Walther intended to say this either.[26] Yet the Buffalo Synod position that salvation is only within the Lutheran church was rightly criticized by Walther.

As noted earlier, Grabau placed the word and sacraments within the pastoral office, as the office whereby God wants them to be distributed publicly. Yet this should not be understood to mean that, for the Buffalo Synod, the office of the holy ministry *makes* the word of God living and active. Against a brand of pietism that cropped up among Germans near Buffalo in 1846, who taught that "the efficaciousness of the preached Word of God is not only dependent on God's power, order, blessing, will, and good pleasure (Isa. 55:10–11), but also on the personal conversion of the preacher," the Buffalo Synod stated that this is a position "against which our Symbolical Books are earnestly opposed (Augsburg Confession VII–VIII). For the Word of God is living and powerful (Hebrews 4)."[27] Grabau and the Buffalo Synod here declare that the efficaciousness of God's word depends not on the personal characteristics of the pastor, but on "God's

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[24] Buffalo Synod, *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche, versammelt zu Buffalo, N.Y., im Juli 1848. Nebst etlichen Nachträgen des Kirchen-Ministerii gedachter Gemeinen, und einer Verantwortung des Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo gegen die missourischen Rottenbeschützer, Löber, Walther &c., als eine Wahrung der Rechte des christlichen Predigtamts und ernstliche Protestation gegen die Aufrichtung demokratischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche Nord-Amerika's; Oeffentlich ausgegeben für alle lutherische Christen in Nord-Amerika und Deutschland* (Buffalo: Brunck u. Domedion, 1850), 24; Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 65.

[25] See Johann Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces: On the Church,* tr. Richard J. Dinda, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), xiii.

[26] See Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*, church thesis 6; but cf. thesis 9, which makes the visible and invisible church sound like separate churches.

[27] Buffalo Synod, *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche*, 50.

power, order, blessing, will, and good pleasure." Of course, "order" includes the office of the holy ministry in all Buffalo Synod writings. But this quote shows us the Buffalo Synod's view that the word is indeed dependent on God's will and has power of itself, regardless of the personal character of the preacher.

Thus, on Augsburg Confession VII and VIII, we see that the Buffalo Synod especially emphasized the role of the visible church as the means through which God gives salvation. Perhaps because of some misunderstanding of what the Orthodox Lutherans meant by the axiom that "there is no salvation outside of the church," and the two ways that the visible church was defined, the Buffalo Synod came to the unfortunate and untenable position that there is no salvation outside the Lutheran Church. The Buffalo Synod was also careful to reject Donatism, yet they confessed that the office of the holy ministry is part of God's institution and order, and thus must be present for there to be efficacious preaching of the Word (barring emergencies, of course).

III. Augsburg Confession XIV: What Does *rite vocatus* Mean?

> Of the ecclesiastical order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be rightly called (AC XIV).

Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession was at the center of the dispute between Grabau and Walther. To Grabau, the fight with Missouri was mainly about "the proper distinction between the spiritual priesthood of all believers and the office of pastors and teachers in the Church."[28] Indeed, the purpose of Grabau's 1840 "Pastoral Letter" was to show "that the 14th article of the [Augsburg] Confession is based truly and deeply on Holy Scripture." Grabau admonished his Wisconsin parishioners "not to seize the administration of the holy sacraments without a right and complete ecclesiastical call."[29] Part two of the "Pastoral Letter" deals with the "great necessity of the valid [*rechten*] call."

Why is the call necessary before one can perform the ministerial functions of preaching, absolving, and administering sacraments? This necessity comes forth, according to Grabau, from the fact that St. Paul and

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[28] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn. Pastor Brohm ['Ordination Letter,' June 26, 1844]," 58; *CHIQ* 73:179; Frederick Weber likewise noted that Augsburg Confession XIV was central to the dispute: Frederich A. Weber, "J. A. A. Grabau and the Doctrine of the Pastoral Office" (Master of Sacred Theology thesis, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH, 1991), 44.

[29] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 12; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 142.

all the apostles refer to "the valid, divine call" at the beginning of their letters. They would not have done this if the call was an unimportant matter and "had contributed nothing to the point." Also, Jesus received His orderly call from the Father and testified that the Father *sent* Him.[30] Of course, there may be emergencies when a layman must perform public ministerial functions, such as absolution or Baptism, since no pastor can be found. Grabau, too, allowed for emergencies, but preferred to base his doctrine on the ordinary institution, not on the emergency situations.[31]

The Missouri Saxons, for their part, likewise emphasized the necessity of the call before anyone is permitted to carry out ministerial functions, though they argue strongly for the legitimacy of a call from laypeople without any pastors participating in the call process. The Missourian Saxons' view on the necessity of the call was obvious when they wrote in 1843, "But whenever a congregation, in arrogant despising of the ministerium placed over her [*vorgesetzten*] or otherwise amid recognition of *neighboring* orthodox preachers, nevertheless in personal hate and separatism, itself elects for itself a teacher [i.e, a preacher] out of its midst, and thus builds altar against altar, or even without any testing of the spirits and without invocation of God heaps up for itself teachers, after whom its ears itch, then this must, to be sure, be called ecclesiastical misconduct and an 'arbitrary appointment' of a preacher."[32] Thus, the Missouri Saxons, even though arguing on the basis of an emergency situation—an isolated congregation of laypeople without any pastors nearby—still agree that pastors should be involved in the call process and that neither Grabau nor they approved of lay ministry, where someone is "arbitrarily appointed" to perform the ministry without sufficient training and without the involvement of the whole church, including nearby orthodox pastors. As late as 1866, when Christian Hochstetter led a large part of the Buffalo Synod into fellowship with Missouri, all the participants at the Missouri-Buffalo colloquy, including C.F.W. Walther, agreed that lay ministry—that is, preaching and sacraments by an uncalled person—is sinful, on the basis of Heb. 5:4.[33]

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[30] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 14; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 146.

[31] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 15–16; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 147.

[32] Löber, et al., "Beurtheilung ['Critique,' July 3, 1843]," 31–32; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 170.

[33] Lutheran Synod of Buffalo and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Das Buffaloer Colloquium, abgehalten vom 20. November bis 5. December 1866, das ist, die schließlichen Erklärungen der die Synode von Buffalo und die von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vertretenden Colloquenten über die bisher zwischen beiden Synoden streitigen und besprochenen Lehren. Revidirt, unterzeichnet und veröffentlicht von den beiderseitigen Colloquenten* (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1866), 18–19.

IV. The Elements of a Valid Call

Once this necessity of a valid call was posited, the central question then was, what is a valid call? Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession does not list the elements of a valid call, nor does it line out the call process. In the 1840 "Pastoral Letter," Grabau noted that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, article XIV, 24, (1),[34] confesses the Lutheran preservation of old church usages. From there he went to the old Lutheran church orders, which all the Lutherans associated with him had previously agreed to uphold, and from these church orders he listed seven elements necessary for a right call to the ministry, on the assumption that the old church orders understood and implemented Augsburg Confession XIV correctly.[35]

But here is where several evaluations of Grabau's theology have failed.[36] To understand the real Grabau and Walther, one cannot simply read Grabau's 1840 "Pastoral Letter" (or *Hirtenbrief*) and the first Missouri Saxon "Critique" of it. The Missouri Saxons were concerned that Grabau's seven items requisite for a pastor to be "rightly called" [*rite vocatus*] in the sense of Augsburg Confession XIV mixed divine and human elements.[37] But Grabau soon corrected this and reduced the necessary, divinely instituted items to two: call and ordination.[38] As a result, the issue drops out of the debate in the later correspondence. What remained controversial

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[34] Grabau's reference is "fol. 90," referring to the pagination of the 1580 German *Book of Concord*. Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 12; cf. *Soli Deo Gloria*, 143.

[35] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 12–14; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 143–46. See also Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 6.

[36] Several scholars have not noticed that Grabau changed his position as time went on. Frederich Weber did not notice that Grabau reduced the number of requisite elements of a valid call to two. Wilhelm Loehe apparently did not notice this either. Weber, "J. A. A. Grabau and the Doctrine of the Pastoral Office," 45–46, 81, 97; Wilhelm Loehe, "Unsere kirchliche Lage: Zugabe," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzer, vol. 5/1 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1954), 369–492, here at 479; cf. Thomas M. Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Löhe to C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod in the Debate Concerning Church and Office," *Lutheran Theological Review* 7 (1995): 107–32, here at 126.

[37] Löber, et al., "Beurtheilung ["Critique," July 3, 1843]," 21–22; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 156.

[38] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn. Pastor Brohm (June 26, 1844)," 59–60; *CHIQ* 73:181–82; cf. Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Löhe to C.F.W. Walther," 121–22; Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 39.

was whether ordination is an adiaphoron, or whether it is divinely mandated as part of the call process.[39]

The first error that the Buffalo Synod's 1848 "Second Synodical Letter" identifies among the Missouri Synod is that "Missouri errs when it says that ordination is only an adiaphoron and of human origin."[40] It would be impossible to deal with the entire debate on ordination here, but a few things should be said. First, Grabau may have misunderstood Walther's position on ordination. William Cwirla found that the Missouri Saxons did not call ordination an "adiaphoron" in their dispute with Grabau.[41] Second, Walther and Grabau seem to have defined ordination differently, and because of this they came to different conclusions about whether it is part of the divinely instituted way that a man becomes a pastor (the call process). Grabau defined ordination not as the imposition of hands, but as the command of God to a man to perform pastoral functions.[42] In my 2006 article, I showed that Grabau's view of the ministry is fundamentally different than the Roman Catholic doctrine.[43] The same can be said for his view of ordination. It all hinges on the will and command of God, not on a special ministerial grace, nor an indelible character, nor even on the imposition of hands.[44] Grabau sees Christ's great commission spoken to the apostles at the end of each Gospel as including the essence of ordination: the command from Christ to exercise the ministerial functions of preaching, the keys, and the sacraments. Aside from passages such as 2 Tim 2:2 and Titus 1:5,[45] Grabau also appeals to Apology XIII 11–13, which reads, in part: "But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises. . . . If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands

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[39] Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 10–12.

[40] Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 101; see also Grabau, "Johann Andreas August Grabau: A Biographical Sketch," 24:129.

[41] Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 97. Cwirla's observation seems to be supported by Löber, et al., "Unsere Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," 75.

[42] Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 40–41.

[43] Benjamin T.G. Mayes, "Reconsidering Grabau on Ministry and Sacraments," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 no. 2 (2006): 190–212.

[44] For the classic Roman Catholic view on ordination from the Council of Trent, see Heinrich Denzinger, ed., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, tr. Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis: Herder, 1957), nos. 852 and 964.

[45] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 130.

a sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers. . . ." Yet even though the Lutheran Confessions are willing to call ordination a sacrament, depending on how "sacrament" is defined, Grabau does *not* call it a sacrament.[46] By his use of Apology XIII 11–13, Grabau only intends to underscore that ordination has God's command and promise. Each time Grabau cites Apology XIII, he emphasizes God's command and promise in ordination, not ordination's sacramentality. And in 1844, Grabau said that the imposition of hands is not necessary for ordination, but is a free ceremony.[47] Also, ordination itself is not "absolutely" necessary for the exercise of the ministry, though it cannot be omitted outside a case of emergency. Indeed, the call of the congregation itself is not "absolutely" necessary in a case of emergency, either.[48]

The other passages Grabau references with regard to ordination are Smalcald Articles III X 3, and Treatise 67, 69, 70, and 72.[49] Grabau's teaching on ordination can be found in detail in the letter he wrote to Theodore Julius Brohm in 1844.[50]

V. The Terms "Call" and "Ordination"

The terminology of "call" and "ordination" played a role here. Much of the dispute between Grabau and Walther involved the definition of these terms. The Missouri Saxons noted that there are narrow and wide senses of the term "ordination" in classic Lutheran theology. The wide sense refers to the entire process by which a man becomes a pastor, whereas the narrow sense is a wholesome church usage to confirm the call.[51] Grabau, on the other hand, at one point recognizes wide and narrow senses for the term "call," but not for "ordination." He writes,

> But we know that Luther and our Symbols by the term "calling" understand in part the election, in part the ordination, as does also the 14th article of the Augsburg Confession. As a result, electing can be named a "calling" and ordaining can also be named a "calling," and

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[46] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 130; Grabau, "Brief an Hrn. Pastor Brohm ['Ordination Letter,' June 26, 1844]," 60.

[47] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn. Pastor Brohm ['Ordination Letter,' June 26, 1844]," 58.

[48] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn.", 58.

[49] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn.", 61.

[50] Johannes Andreas August Grabau, "A Letter by Johannes Grabau on Christian Ordination," tr. Benjamin T. G. Mayes, *CHIQ* 73 no. 3 (2000): 179–189.

[51] Löber, et al., "Unsere Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," 70; Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 96.

> yet it is only *one* call. But in no way does "ordain" mean as much as "call" in *general*.[52]

That is, "call" in the wide sense can refer to both the selection (the narrow sense of "call") and to ordination, but "ordination" has only the narrow sense. More research is required to see if Grabau is consistent with his use of these terms. As for the Missouri Saxons, when they read the old Lutheran writers mentioning "ordination" as being necessary or bestowing divine gifts, they normally understood "ordination" in the wide sense as referring to the "call process," but not really "ordination" in the narrow sense.[53]

VI. Office and Efficaciousness of Word and Sacraments

Augsburg Confession XIV speaks of no one being permitted to preach or administer sacraments unless rightly called. Both Grabau and Walther agreed on this. Yet on this point historians of the American Lutheran church and ministry debate have divided Grabau and Walther as much as possible. Usually the story goes that for Walther the word itself is powerful to save and to effect sacraments, but for Grabau the office makes the word powerful, or the means of grace "depend" on the office for their efficaciousness or for the sacraments to be real.[54] This claim, popularized especially by Christian Hochstetter and Walter Baepler, is unfounded. For Grabau, the efficaciousness of the word and sacraments do not "depend on the office," and certainly not on a ministerial grace or on a characteristic of the minister. Instead, everything depends on the will of God and the order instituted by Christ. It is not that the sacraments depend on the ministry for their efficaciousness, but that it is the will of God that the ministry is to administer the sacraments and absolution, and that the valid call is necessary for this according to God's will.[55] Let one example suffice to show that for Grabau the sacraments did not depend on the office. In his "Anti-critique" (July 12, 1844) he wrote that:

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[52] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c." 113.

[53] See Loehe, "Unsere kirchliche Lage: Zugabe," in *Gesammelte Werke,* 5/1:483.

[54] See Karl Edwin Kuenzel, "The Doctrine of the Church and Its Ministry According to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the USA" (Th. D. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2006), 20–21, 56; Hochstetter, *Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode in Nordamerika*, 187, 204; Adolph Späth, "Nordamerika, Vereinigte Staaten: e) Die lutherische Kirche," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1896–1913), s.v.; Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: Missouri Synod 1847–1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 141.

[55] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 14–15; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 147; Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 44.

> The Word and the sacraments are certainly powerful in themselves, even if they are not exercised through the preaching-office, especially in hard misfortunes and emergencies; but God instituted the preaching-office to serve as the orderly manner, that His Word would become powerful with us and in us through *preaching*.[56]

This is a statement that Grabau could not have made if he thought that there was a power inhering in the office which was necessary to make the word and sacraments valid. In fact, early on in the correspondence, Grabau wrote in his "Pastoral Letter" that in cases of emergency a father of a household could administer the Lord's Supper to a dying person if a pastor was not available.[57] This is a point where the Missouri Saxons corrected Grabau. Walther, Löber, and the other Missouri Saxons denied that there is any such emergency that would require a lay administration of the Lord's Supper, and Grabau allowed himself to stand corrected on this point.[58]

Since I have set forth the positions of both Grabau and Walther from the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence previously, here I will focus on Grabau's statements in his 1850 response to that book, appended to the Buffalo Synod "Second Synodical Letter." As he had said previously in the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence, Grabau repeats here in the response to Löber's edition of that correspondence that the office of the holy ministry does not effect the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. He says, "The 'Pastoral Letter' had already explained this."[59] Grabau complains that the Saxons were twisting what he wrote in the "Pastoral Letter" as if he taught that "the office *causes* and *effects* the presence of the body and blood of Christ; when it actually taught correctly that the office is the *causa ministerialis*, 'serving cause,' which concurs or comes together with the efficient principal cause of all blessing, God Himself, in the power of His Word."[60] Johann Gerhard, too, had used similar terminology, speaking of the office as the *causa instrumentalis* in effecting salvation, based on 1 Corinthians 3:5 and 1 Timothy 4:16.[61] Yet the term must have been a source of confusion to anyone not familiar with the scholastic context from which

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[56] Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 44.

[57] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 15; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 147.

[58] Löber, et al., "Beurtheilung ['Critique,' July 3, 1843]," 31; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 169; Buffalo Synod, *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche*, 9.

[59] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c," 123, note ¶.

[60] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c," 122.

[61] Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces: On the Ecclesiastical Ministry,* §§ 55, 72.

it came. At the time of Johann Gerhard, a *causa* was not always what we think of as a "cause," something that effects something else. Gerhard and other 17th century Lutherans distinguished *causa* into a "principal cause" on the one hand, and an "instrumental cause" on the other. The "instrumental cause" is what we might call a "tool."[62] So in putting shingles on a roof, the workman is the principal cause, and the hammer he uses is the instrumental cause. Grabau seems to use his term *causa ministerialis* in the same way. The pastor is but a tool in the hand of God. But the Missourians could easily have misunderstood this as though Grabau meant that the ministry is a cause of salvation in such a way that it would be a principal cause.

In order to show how his Missourian opponents misconstrued his statements and accused him of error, Grabau chooses the issue of whether the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper depends on the office. Here I will give a longer quote which summarizes the conflict from Grabau's perspective. In it one hears the words "orderly called" as a translation of the German version of Augsburg Confession XIV's *rite vocatus*. Grabau writes:

> *A sentence in the "Pastoral Letter,"* page 15: "Of course, Christ does not *need* the office in order to bestow power on His words of institution, but because He, to give more assurance to us, in grace wills to *use* the office instituted by Himself to deal with men on earth by the power of His Word," etc.
>
> *Missourian conclusion*, page 28: The "Pastoral Letter" taught that the words of institution are powerful *because of the office*, *in such a way* that the stewards over God's mysteries through their office *effect* [*bewirken*] that bread and wine in the Supper are actually blessed and in them the body and blood of Christ are imparted.
>
> *Refutation of this conclusion in the "Anti-Critique,"* page 44–46: There is nothing in the "Pastoral Letter" about an *effecting* of the presence of the body and blood of Christ through the office, but only that an officeless man with all of *his* effort [*Fürnehmen*] can give neither the absolution nor distribute the body and blood of Christ; that on the other hand the orderly ministerial call of Christ is the *testimony* that

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[62] Johann Micraelius, *Lexicon philosophicum terminorum philosophis usitatorum*, Photomechan. Nachdr. der 2. Aufl. Stettin 1662, ed. Lutz Geldsetzer (Düsseldorf: Stern-Verlag, 1966), s.v. "Causa"; Johann Adam Scherzer, *Vade mecum sive manuale philosophicum*, ed. Stephan Meier-Oeser (Stuttgart- Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996), part 1, s.v. "Causa"; part 2/1, s.v. "Causa"; part 2/2, P VI, 363 (emphasis original).

> He wants to distribute His body and blood through that orderly called person and thus deal with us. For the presence of the body and blood of Christ is *effected* by Himself as the Head of His Church. The word of institution is the effecting means. The orderly office is the serving means [*Dienstmittel*] for it, *causa ministrans a Deo ordinata* ["Ministering cause ordained by God."] From this everyone sees that Pastor Grabau was right to reject the Missourian conclusion.
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> Heedless of this, there follows the *persistence of the Missourians in their evil conclusion:* Pastor Grabau's doctrine borders, nevertheless, quite closely on a *sacerdotum missaticum,* that is, a Roman mass-priesthood (page 68). And then, page 83: "*Yet it is and remains false, that God has bound this presence, etc., to the office of the called stewards*; for God has given the preaching office to the whole Church; how much more also the Keys and the holy Sacraments!" (With these latter words they reveal their unbelief and their own false doctrine.)
>
> *Admonition of our synod* in 1845. Page 89. No erroneous doctrine is really present, but their fault-finding wants to seek out scruples. We admonished them to cease doing this.
>
> *Missouri answer:* "On the basis of this we incriminate them yet again, most decisively, of the errors proven to them and not refuted by them." Page 92.
>
> Summary: *Stat pro ratione voluntas* ["the will stands in the place of reason"]. *Just because they want Pastor Grabau's doctrine to border on a Roman mass-priesthood, that is how it must be!* Or more completely: The erroneous doctrines of Pastor Grabau still remain in the *fancy* [*Dünken*] of the Missourians, and as long as they remain there, they have not been corrected, refuted, and retracted, but *remain erroneous doctrines*. In this way our synod, too, has errors in doctrine and confession, from which it must actually wash itself! And where are these errors? In the imagination of the Missourians.[63]

From this we see that Grabau had still not gotten beyond his scholastic vocabulary of *causa ministrans* or *ministerialis*, which because of the ambiguity of the word *causa* could still be misunderstood as a "principal cause" rather than as a "tool," which is how Grabau probably meant it. But we also see Grabau making a clear distinction between himself and the Roman Catholic doctrine of the priesthood, with its ministerial grace. The presence of Christ's body and blood, according to Grabau, depends on God's order, his institution. And God instituted that it should be the office of the holy

[63] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c," 129–130.

ministry that would consecrate and administer the Lord's Supper. The quotation also shows how exasperated the relation between Missouri and Buffalo had become by 1850. Finally, in 1866, Heinrich von Rohr summarized the Buffalo Synod position on the relationship of the ministry to the word and sacraments as follows:

> *On call and ministry* in reference to the power and efficacy of the divine Word, our synod teaches in the "Second Synodical Letter," pp. 11 and 12, according to my view: that the words in the Holy Supper are efficacious neither through the speaking of a layman or preacher, but that our Lord Jesus Christ only then wants to effect the presence of His body and blood when these words are spoken by such a man, to whom [Christ] has commanded it ordinarily [*ordentlicher Weise*] in the call and office, or extraordinarily in a case of emergency, as for example, in Baptism, where every Christian, man or woman, has the command to administer Baptism, which is necessary for salvation.[64]

Here we see the same points that Grabau had emphasized from 1840 through 1850. First, we see the Buffalo Synod position on the impossibility, not just impermissibility, of ordinary lay administration of sacraments. Second, we see that this impossibility is based by them on the will of God, not on a ministerial grace or a characteristic of the minister. Third, the Buffalo Synod distinguished between ordinary and extraordinary situations, and did allow for emergency situations, such as emergency Baptism. Fourth, the Buffalo Synod position was based on the ordinary institution of the office and the sacraments, not on the emergency situations. At the 1866 Missouri-Buffalo colloquy, Heinrich von Rohr, who claimed to uphold the Buffalo Synod's classic doctrine as set forth in the "Second Synodical Letter," stated that lay ministry (specifically lay celebration of the Lord's Supper) is sinful. All the other participants, including Christian Hochstetter and C.F.W. Walther, agreed with von Rohr on this point. But they also disagreed with him by stating that in a case of error or mistaken identity, it would be the real Lord's Supper.[65] Thus, both Missouri and Buffalo were opposed to lay ministry; the disagreement was not on whether the Lord's Supper consecrated and distributed by a layman was *permissible* (both sides said it was not), but whether it was *possible*.

VII. The Congregation's Right to Call Its Pastor

Another topic connected with Augsburg Confession XIV is the congregation's right to choose its pastor. Perhaps the stereotype is that

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[64] *Das Buffaloer Colloquium, abgehalten vom 20. November bis 5. December 1866*, 18.
[65] *Das Buffaloer*, 18–19.

Grabau domineered over the local congregations, not allowing them to call the pastors they wanted. One could perhaps understand the 1840 "Pastoral Letter" in this way. But several scholars have recognized Grabau's high view of the congregation's call, that he specifically defended the right of congregations to choose their pastor.[66] Grabau's views on this topic are clear from his "Anti-Critique" of 1844, from his "Ordination Letter" of 1844, and from his 1850 refutation of Löber's edition of the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence.[67] For example, in his "Ordination Letter" he writes:

> If the emergency comes high, both actions [call and ordination] can be missing. But that does not annul the divine order grounded in the N.T., which must occur again after the emergency has passed. There is no place in the Holy Scriptures where ordinarily the call of the local congregation is declared indispensable and Christian ordination dispensable. Instead they are ordinarily both important and necessary, but in the true misfortune both are dispensable. Nevertheless, in the latter case it is still always better that at least a call of the local congregation takes place, upon which, afterwards, after the misfortune has passed, the ordination can and may follow, if the person is found to be qualified for the office.[68]

In Germany, the church authorities could transfer ministers arbitrarily, without the voice of the congregation. This was one of the reasons many of Buffalo's congregations came to America: to avoid this sort of hierarchical encroachment on the congregation's right to choose its pastor.[69] Thus, for the Buffalo Synod, as for the Missouri Synod, the congregation's right to call a pastor was important.

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[66] Eugene W. Camann, "1843 Prussian Migration to Wheatfield, N.Y. and Wisconsin," in *Confessional Lutheran Migrations to America: 150th Anniversary* (Eastern District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1988), 30–42; Lowell C. Green, "Grabau and Walther: Theocentric Versus Anthropocentric Understanding of Church and Ministry," *Logia* 5 no. 2 (1996): 25–40, here at 31; Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Löhe to C.F.W. Walther," 119; Löhe, "Unsere kirchliche Lage: Zugabe," in *Gesammelte Werke*, 5/1:462–63. But cf. Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Löhe to C.F.W. Walther," 116. This was a point at which Löhe challenged both Buffalo and Missouri, believing that the ministerium alone has the duty not just to ordain but also to call. Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Löhe to C.F.W. Walther," 119–21.

[67] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn. Pastor Brohm ['Ordination Letter,' June 26, 1844]," 61–62; *CHIQ* 73:183–84; Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 47–48; Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 125.

[68] Grabau, "Brief an Hrn. Pastor Brohm ['Ordination Letter,' June 26, 1844]," 58; *CHIQ* 73:180.

[69] Heinrich von Rohr, "Versuch eines historischen Nachweises der Entwickelung der verschiedenen Richtungen der Synoden von Missouri und von Buffalo," *Kirchliches Informatorium* 3 no. 5 (1853): 33–36, here at 34.

VIII. Transferral Theory

The Missouri Saxons and, later, the Missouri Synod adopted the view that the rights and duties to perform ministerial functions such as preaching, sacraments, and the exercise of the keys (excommunication and absolution) were given by Christ first and foremost to the church, but that in the call, the church transfers these rights and duties to the pastor. This teaching has sometimes been called the "transferral theory" or "transference doctrine" or, in German, *Übertragungslehre*.[70] Not only did Walther and the Missourians use the terminology and concepts of "transferral" to speak of how a layman becomes a pastor, so did Grabau and the Buffalo Synod. The dispute between Missouri and Buffalo was not over whether the office is "transferred," but *by whom* this happens, and who has the "right" to do it.[71]

Grabau's view of the transferral of the office is that *Christ*, not the church or congregation, transfers the office, though Christ does this through the selection and ordination of the church.[72] Transferral is not the problem. The Buffalo Synod ministerium did not object to the concept of transferral, but rather they objected to a transferral *from laymen*. The Buffalo Synod pastors wrote in 1849: "Therefore we do not glory in man, that we received our office or ministerial right [*Amtsrecht*] *from* men, however holy they may be, but we glory in the transferring Lord, who has considered us faithful and put us into the office *through* men."[73] This actually sounds quite close to Walther's position—that the office comes from Christ, but is given through the church.[74] The difference would be through which people in the church, and what "through" means.

The Buffalo Synod pastors seem to have been comfortable with the idea that the church as a whole, the body of Christ, puts a man into the office. What they rejected was that the office belonged to each individual Christian. They write: "Not a single orthodox catechism nor our Symbolical Books teach anything about the transferral of might and the power of the keys from every individual member to his pastor [*Pfarrherrn*]."[75] In

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[70] See Craig L. Nessan, "Wilhelm Loehe's Missionary Correspondence 1852–1872," *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 no. 2 (2010): 137–150, here at 137–138.

[71] Even Hochstetter recognized this: *Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode*, 212n.

[72] Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 39. Emphasis original.

[73] Ministerium of the Buffalo Synod, "Nachträge des Kirchen-Ministerii (1849)," 92.

[74] Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*, 219 and 268, ministry theses VI and VII.

[75] Ministerium of the Buffalo Synod, "Nachträge des Kirchen-Ministerii (1849)," 92. Emphasis original.

his 1850 refutation of Löber's edition of the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence, Grabau says that laity are involved in the call process, but that it is God who transfers the office, not the laity who do it:

> But we know that the church members, as far as they, in divine order, call qualified persons, do not transfer and effect the office, but rather that God, through the order in which they remain, Himself gives and places faithful servants of the church, *transfers and effects the office*. Thus God is and remains—also *in the election* and *ordination*—the *causa officiens* or the only efficient cause of the office, Acts 20:28; Isa. 41:27.[76]

Here it is obvious that for Grabau, the calling (or electing) belongs to the laity according to God's order. Grabau does not reject the concept of "transferral" of office. What he rejects is that the laity transfer the office from *themselves* to the pastors. He explains:

> *Suffrage* [*Wahlrecht*] and *transferral* are two different things. Nevertheless, if the Missourian fanatics [*Schwärmer*] did not fight so hard for *their false doctrine* of the transferral, as if the congregation members had it in their fingers, then we would be satisfied that perhaps they *intended* to say that God the Lord is actually the *one who transfers*, as some teachers of the church also may speak. [77]

Here Grabau accepts "transferral," as long as God is doing the transferring. Also, the laity are part of this transferring process, though they do not individually possess the office. Grabau's shrill tone is hard to ignore, of course, and this bitter attitude obviously made reconciliation with the Missourians difficult. In all of this, Grabau was worried about Walther's doctrine. If a congregation of laity without any pastors could choose one of their own, thereby making him a pastor, the tragic result would be the arbitrary dismissal of faithful pastors without due process.

On this issue, Walther's book on *Church and Ministry* made clear in 1852 that God does the transferring through the congregation.[78] And then, in 1866 at the Missouri-Buffalo colloquy, Heinrich von Rohr accepted the Missourian doctrine of transferral, since the Missouri delegates emphasized their rejection of lay ministry. The Missouri delegates explained that the doctrine of transferral was meant to reject an understanding of the office according to Old Testament Levitical principles. However, the public

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[76] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 107. Emphasis orignal.

[77] Grabau, "Verantwortung", 119. Emphasis original.

[78] Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*, 219 and 268, ministry theses VI and VII.

preaching office was not only instituted by God for the sake of good order, according to Walther and the other Missouri delegates.[79]

In summary, both Grabau and Walther held that lay exercise of the public ministerial functions of preaching and administering sacraments is sinful, outside a case of emergency, and that a valid call is necessary before one may carry out these functions. Both Grabau and Walther accepted the call process as the "transferral" of the office, though they disagreed at first on who does the transferring, and especially on whether individual laypeople have the office, or whether the church as a body has it. The call process, according to Grabau, consists of two divinely instituted components: selection by the congregation and ordination by pastors. The call of the congregation is of divine origin. As for ordination, Grabau relied on Apology XIII to demonstrate its divine institution, but he refrained from calling it a "sacrament." Grabau defined ordination as the ceremony by which new pastors are given the command to carry out the functions of the ministry; he did not equate ordination with the imposition of hands. For both Grabau and Walther, lay celebration of the sacraments outside a case of emergency was impermissible, but for Grabau it was also impossible. If a layman attempted to play the pastor at a celebration of the Lord's Supper, the people would receive only bread and wine, according to him. Yet this was not based on a supposed ministerial grace or a characteristic of the minister, but simply on God's will, who instituted the office of the holy ministry to carry out these functions and does not want these functions to be carried out publicly by laymen. This aspect of Grabau's theology has been grossly misunderstood in the secondary literature, yet it is clear in the primary sources.

IX. Augsburg Confession XV: The Use of the Old Lutheran Church Orders in America

> Of usages in the Church they teach that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquillity and good order in the Church . . . (AC XV, 1).

In the early years of 1840–1843, the basic difference between the Missouri Saxons and the congregations associated with Grabau was that the Saxons were making a fresh start and breaking with the old customs of church government, while Grabau and his congregations were not.[80] The difference between them was not on liturgical grounds. Like Grabau, the

[79] *Das Buffaloer Colloquium, abgehalten vom 20. November bis 5. December 1866*, 12–14.

[80] Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 11.

Missouri Saxons wanted to preserve the old Lutheran liturgical customs.[81] Instead, the difference dealt with the role of the old Lutheran church orders as a form of church government in America. The Missouri Saxons in 1843 were especially concerned that Grabau's "Pastoral Letter" was mixing divine and human elements in the call process as he appealed to the old Lutheran church orders as his authority. This was a point at which Grabau admitted he should have done things differently. He wrote, "Nevertheless, I gladly admit that for the sake of clarity it would have been better not merely to quote from the church orders, but rather to divide human and divine elements strictly right away and to place each under its own rubric."[82] This quotation demonstrates several things. First, Grabau made corrections to his position as the debate progressed. Second, this is another reason never to limit one's research to Grabau's initial 1840 "Pastoral Letter," if we want to know what Grabau really thought. Third, the notion that Grabau thought the old Lutheran church orders had to be accepted as is, even in America, must be reconsidered.

Grabau and the Buffalo Synod were fundamentally conservative in their church polity and would often cite passages from the *Book of Concord* to undergird this institutional conservatism. The Buffalo Synod itself followed two particular church orders: the Pomeranian and Saxon church orders.[83] This attachment to these old Lutheran church orders was so strong that the Buffalo Synod congregations generally did not write congregational constitutions, but instead bound themselves to the old church orders.[84] Yet Grabau recognized that these church orders had to be modified for the American context, and he states in general what parts did not apply. Responding to an accusation from the Missouri Synod, he writes:

> Here they once again misrepresent us and act as if Pr. Grabau is again aiming at that old Lutheran princely episcopate [*Fürstenepiskopat*], consistorial and diocesan arrangement according to territorial com-

[81] Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 92.

[82] Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 48.

[83] So far I have been unable to locate the specific church orders that had legal standing in the Buffalo Synod and its predecessor congregations in the early years. Much later, in 1888, an Agenda based on the the Pomeranian and Saxon church orders was published for use by the Buffalo Synod: *Evangelisch Lutherische Agende, auf Grund der alten Pommerschen und Sächsischen Agenden bearbeitet und mit den nöthigen Zusätzen für hiesige Bedürfnisse vermehrt* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Lutherische Synode von Buffalo, 1888). See Chr. Otto Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1911), 107.

[84] Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen,* 106–107. Kraushaar notes that the Buffalo Synod congregations considered it unlutheran to make their own congregational constitutions.

> pulsion against independent freedom, and that this is what he wants to preserve! But every honest Christian will understand that what was said and meant was that here [in America] we do not have to let the old polity fall *completely*, that we have enough freedom to preserve it according to its Christian essence.[85]

Grabau did not simply read the passages of the *Book of Concord* which speak about preserving the old Catholic church polity[86] and apply them directly to the Lutheran church orders before the Enlightenment. Instead, he says that when the *Book of Concord* approves of the old Catholic church polity, what was good of that old church polity was brought forward into the old Lutheran church orders.[87] Grabau assumed a continuity between the pre-Reformation church polity and the pre-Enlightenment Lutheran church orders, such that the church orders could serve as an interpretation of what a Lutheran practice consistent with the *Book of Concord* would look like.[88] Yet the problem with the Buffalo Synod's use of these church orders is that they may not have specified what parts of them apply in America and what parts do not. That would require significant interpretation on a case by case basis, likely by Grabau and other pastors. This, too, would provide fodder for conflict.

X. Augsburg Confession XXVIII: Church Government

> There has been great controversy concerning the power of bishops . . . it is lawful for bishops or pastors to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the Church. . . . It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquillity, so far that one do not offend another, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion . . . (AC XXVIII, 1, 53, 55).

A common misconception is that Grabau, like Martin Stephan, was a bishop or that he wanted to establish an episcopal system of church government.[89] This is not true. Grabau's title in the Buffalo Synod was *senior ministerii* ["senior of the ministerium"], not "bishop." In fact, Grabau

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[85] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 121–122.

[86] Such as Ap XIV (VIII) 24 [1]; *Triglot Concordia*, 315.

[87] Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 12; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 143.

[88] Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 38; Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 91.

[89] Kuenzel, "The Doctrine of the Church and Its Ministry According to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the USA," 21, 43, 61–62, 64; Camann, "1843 Prussian Migration to Wheatfield, N.Y. and Wisconsin," 26; John C. Wohlrabe, "The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church," *CTQ* 52:1 (1988): 1–28, here at 9; John C. Wohlrabe, *Ministry in Missouri Until 1962* (n.p., 1992), 6–10.

referred to Treatise 61–65 and stated that an episcopal system was not in the New Testament, but developed "according to human order."[90] Instead, his goal was to establish the Lutheran Church's classic church polity here in America.[91] At the same time, Grabau's goal was not to give pastors the right to make new laws and ceremonies according to their whim. In 1850 he repeated the position he had set forth in his "Anti-Critique" of 1844. He says that the old church orders should not have been abolished among the congregations unnecessarily, because Apology XV, 51–52 (cf. AC XXVIII, 53, 55) says that nothing among churchly customs should be changed if they can be observed without sin, and that they should be kept for the sake of good order and tranquillity.[92] Grabau was against putting arbitrary power in the hands of the laity as well as in the hands of the pastors.

Grabau's common complaint against the Missouri Synod was that they had put this arbitrary power into the hands of the laity. He and other Buffalo pastors claimed the Missourians had fallen from one extreme to the other, from the papal authority of the bishop to the papal authority of the local congregation.[93] The Missourians, for their part, accused the Buffalo Synod of having hierarchical tendencies.[94] Yet the Buffalo Synod writers claimed that they opposed "hierarchical encroachments." Part of the reason that some of the Buffalo Synod congregations came to America was the fact that in Germany the church authorities could transfer ministers arbitrarily, without the voice of the congregation. In America they hoped to avoid these abuses of that hierarchical system.[95]

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[90] Grabau refers to this passage as folio 157 in the original Dresden 1580 *Book of Concord*. Grabau, "Hirtenbrief ['Pastoral Letter,' Dec. 1, 1840]," 16–17; *Soli Deo Gloria*, 148–49; Philipp Melanchthon, "[Treatise] Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope; Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops," in *Triglot Concordia*, 521–23.

[91] Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 5.

[92] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 118; Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 41–42.

[93] "Die Irrlehre des missourischen Lutheraners und der missourischen Synode," *Kirchliches Informatorium* 1, no. 3 (1851): 38–40, here at 38; Von Rohr, "Versuch eines historischen Nachweises der Entwickelung der verschiedenen Richtungen der Synoden von Missouri und von Buffalo," 33–34.

[94] Cf. the subtitle of Löber's edition of the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence, "against the validation of hierarchical principles within the Lutheran Church": G. H. Löber, ed., *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840. Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. Der Oeffentlichkeit übergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche* (New York: H. Ludwig & Co, 1849).

[95] Von Rohr, "Versuch eines historischen Nachweises der Entwickelung der verschiedenen Richtungen der Synoden von Missouri und von Buffalo," 34.

So what kind of a church government did the Buffalo Synod establish? At the congregational level, Buffalo Synod congregations were governed by the pastor and a small church council as a collegium, as well as by a board of trustees.[96] At the synodical level, both Grabau and Walther described the Buffalo Synod as having not an episcopal church government, but a "representative" church government. This had been the traditional Lutheran church polity used in Germany.[97] Walther rejected such a "representative" church polity for the Missouri Synod, whereas Grabau wanted to keep it for the Buffalo Synod.[98] This "representative" polity might better be called a "synodical" polity, where the representative synod makes decisions for the whole church, which the individual congregations must then obey.[99] This representative church polity is actually quite similar to the way the United States is governed. We send representatives to make laws, and then those laws are binding on everyone. Grabau was against congregational autonomy, which he saw as resulting in disunity of faith and practice. Following this old Lutheran "representative" polity, the Buffalo Synod's conventions functioned like a consistory or a board of adjudications to judge doubtful cases or disputes. The Buffalo Synod saw the synod as church, and the decisions of the synodical assembly as the church's decisions. They appealed to Treatise 56 as a basis for this view of synodical governance, where Melanchthon writes, "the decisions of Synods," that is, councils, "are the decisions of the Church."[100] Unlike the Missouri Synod, they did not make the local congregation the highest court of appeals. The synodical convention was supposed to play that role. Grabau contrasts this polity with Roman Catholic polity:

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[96] See Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen*, 106–14. However, Kraushaar (p. 113) says that this congregational constitution does not go back to the beginning of the congregation or of the Buffalo Synod. Therefore no firm conclusions can be drawn from this constitution to the Buffalo polity before 1866.

[97] See, for example, Johannes Hülsemann, *Extensio Breviarii Theologici, Exhibentis Praecipuas Et Recentiores Christianae Fidei Controversias: Addita Paraphrasi & Vindicatione Testimoniorum Sacrae Scripturae. Quae Pro Adstruenda Veritate Et Destruenda Falsitate Afferuntur*, 3rd ed. (Lipsiae: Ritzschius, 1655), ch. 18 "De Ecclesia Repraesentativa In Conciliis Et Doctoribus," pp. 318–65.

[98] W.H.T. Dau, "Waltheriana," *Theological Monthly* 2, no. 5 (1922): 129–40, here at 129; Löber, et al., "Beurtheilung ['Critique,' July 3, 1843]," 25–26; cf. *Soli Deo Gloria*, 162; Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 43; Löber, et al., "Unsere Beurtheilung der vorstehenden Widerlegung ['Reply to Anti-critique,' Jan. 15, 1845]," 82; Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 121.

[99] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 142.

[100] Ministerium of the Buffalo Synod, "Nachträge des Kirchen-Ministerii (1849)," 79–80; Melanchthon, "[Treatise] Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope; Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops," para. 56, in *Triglot Concordia*, p. 521.

> The essence of the papacy is also not this: that the holy teaching and preaching office gives judgment from God's Word in synodical assembly [*synodalisch*] on difficult cases, and in so doing refutes the erring, strengthens the weak, confirms the strong, etc.[101]

Thus, Grabau is not arguing for the power of pastors to judge doubtful cases on their own, but rather together in the synodical assembly.[102]

So what was the Missouri Synod's polity at the time? The Missouri Synod's polity has been described not as "congregational" but as "synodical."[103] However, since the Missouri Synod in convention had only advisory power over the congregations, I cannot see how it could be described as anything but congregational in its polity, yet with a heightened sense of fellowship with the other congregations of the synod. The question is whether you could appeal from the congregation's action to a higher churchly authority. In the Buffalo Synod one could appeal to the pastoral conference (*Ministerium*) or to the synodical convention (*Synode*). In the Missouri Synod it is at least unclear whether this was possible.

In his vice-presidential address at the 1849 Missouri Synod convention, Wilhelm Sihler portrayed the Missouri Synod as following a middle path between episcopal tyranny and democratic tyranny. Grabau summarized Sihler's presentation, saying:

> They supposedly have found the right way, where the congregations *govern themselves* and yet the divine *privilege of the holy preaching office remains uninjured*, for the servants of the Lord, ambassadors in the stead of Christ, and fellow workers of the Holy Spirit are not slaves of men, hired and fired arbitrarily.[104]

But Grabau could never approve of anything said or done by the Missouri Synod, it seems, even when the Missouri Synod was bolstering pastoral authority. Grabau responds,

> Oh the great hypocrisy! On one hand the congregations among them govern themselves and can depose and chase away their preachers; on the other hand the preachers are the servants of the Lord, who are supposed to have the power of the Word. Thus it is still the same

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[101] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c.," 141.

[102] Grabau, "Verantwortung," 142.

[103] Wohlrabe, "The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church," 13.

[104] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber&c," 143 (emphasis original).

> democratic mess [*Wirthschaft*] that stands in their new church order and was practiced in Watertown, Freystatt, Milwaukee, and Eden.[105]

Thus despite the Missouri Synod's attempts to support pastoral authority and prevent tyrannical attitudes of congregations toward their pastors, Grabau could see only hypocrisy.

Of course, the Missouri Synod did not want its democracy to go so far that anyone—layman or pastor—would have power to vote against Scriptural doctrine. But Grabau pointed out that, practically speaking, the Missouri Synod had no way of appealing nonscriptural decisions of congregations. If a congregational decision against Scripture is *de facto* null and void, what orderly, constituted way could this decision be overturned? Grabau points out that in the Missouri Synod there was none, since the congregation was the highest authority. Grabau explains:

> They cannot be serious about this since they have accepted the decision of our sectarians over their pastors every time as the highest court in the church, which must not be null and void. Indeed, they confirm it when they say, p. 101, 'The participating layman has the right (in contrast to his preacher) to appeal to the whole congregation as to the highest court in the church!' A frightful democracy![106]

Thus, no matter what the Missouri Synod said in convention, at the local level he saw the evidence of democratic tyranny.

The Missouri Synod polemics, according to Grabau, always assumed an adversarial relationship between pastor and laity in the local congergation, and thus saw Grabau's teaching as exalting the pastoral office over the priesthood of all believers. This adversarial posture, born from the bitter experience with Martin Stephan, led the Missouri Synod to subordinate pastors to the local congregations, which (according to Grabau) crippled pastors' ability to carry out their ministry, especially with regard to preaching the law and exercising church discipline.[107] Yet what is ironic is that despite Grabau's rejection of Missouri's congregational polity due to the constant strife and disputes it would engender, the Buffalo Synod, too, was constantly afflicted by congregational strife. If one reads enough Buffalo Synod literature, one realizes that Grabau's manner of dealing with those opposed to him was predominantly adversarial. Despite his attempt to avoid the adversarial relation of pastors and people, that is precisely what happened. And under those conditions, the classic Lutheran

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[105] Grabau, "Verantwortung wider die Rotten-Beschützer, Löber, Walther &c," 143.
[106] Grabau, "Verantwortung," 142–143.
[107] Grabau, "Verantwortung," 142.

"representative" polity that Grabau hoped to retain could not be seen by others as anything but tyrannical.

We have seen that the Buffalo Synod understood its church governance as "representative." So what role did laymen play in this governance? Grabau explains:

> However, that it is *permitted* to the church members of all estates in Christian order to take part in the discussions and questions from God's Word, to listen, to ask questions, and to let them be answered through God's Word, and accordingly to serve as fellow deliberating witnesses concerning the honesty of the preaching office in conference and synod—and with it to regard something as good, due to Christian conviction; all of this is certain from Acts 15:1–21.[108]

Thus, the laymen seem to have had voice but no vote, at least on doctrinal resolutions. Grabau supported such an approach to synodical governance from the Smalcald Articles II IV 9, where Luther says,

> Therefore the Church can never be better governed and preserved than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops, equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, Sacraments, prayer, and works of love, etc., as St. Jerome writes that the priests at Alexandria together and in common governed the churches, as did also the apostles, and afterwards all bishops throughout all Christendom. . . . [109]

Yet at the same time, the reports of the Buffalo Synod in convention are distinguished from the reports of the pastoral conference, and eighteen lay delegates, together with four pastors, were in attendance at the founding meetings of the Buffalo Synod.[110] Also, outside of the synodical conventions, the Buffalo Synod made it clear that judging doctrine is the duty of all Christians. They write: "This testing applies to all Christians. Whoever is too weak, let him turn to his pastor or other orthodox Christians, or compare it with Luther's *House* and *Church Postil*, and the sermon books of Johann Arndt, Valerius Herberger, and other right teachers."[111]

Thus, looking back at the use of Augsburg Confession XXVIII, we find that Grabau's ideal was not that individual pastors would have the right to

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[108] Grabau, "Verantwortung," 141–142.

[109] See Grabau, "Widerlegung ['Anti-Critique,' July 12, 1844]," 43–44.

[110] Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 60.

[111] Buffalo Synod, *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche*, 52.

make rules within the congregation, but that pastors and laypeople would uphold the old Lutheran church polity, in which a small council under the pastor's leadership governed the congregation, and the synodical convention governed the congregations. The Buffalo Synod was not episcopal; Grabau was not a bishop. Instead, they had a "representative" church government. Yet despite lay involvement, it seems that laymen were not given suffrage in synodical conventions. In the eyes of the Missouri Synod writers, this looked a lot like clerical domineering.

XI. Conclusions

Our goal in this essay has been to set forth the ways in which selected parts of the Augsburg Confession and other parts of the *Book of Concord* were used by Grabau in his correspondence and polemics against Walther and the Missouri Synod. This has not been an exhaustive treatment, yet by going beyond Grabau's 1840 "Pastoral Letter" and the first few rounds of correspondence between the two sides, we have found that Grabau's doctrine is based on the *Book of Concord* to a much greater extent than is often portrayed in the secondary literature, especially on the issues of church government, the call process, and the question of whether valid sacraments "depend on" the office of the holy ministry.

Regarding church government, the Buffalo Synod was not episcopal; Grabau was not a bishop. Instead, they had a "representative" church government. David A. Gerber says that Grabau's ideal church was the Prussian Lutheran state church before the Prussian Union.[112] Grabau's underlying motivation was a fundamental institutional conservatism, similar in attitude to that which is confessed in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology.[113] This led him to preserve the old Lutheran church government in America as much as possible. Yet despite lay involvement, especially at the congregational level, it seems that laymen were not given suffrage in synodical conventions, at least on doctrinal resolutions.

Regarding the call process, both Walther and Grabau held that the call of the congregation is of divine institution. Contrary to much literature on Grabau, he quickly moved past his seven items of the call process and narrowed it to two: call and ordination. The issue of whether ordination is a divinely instituted part of the call process remained contentious between

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[112] Gerber, "The Pathos of Exile," 509; in connection with this, Grabau's congregation in Buffalo was incorporated under the name "Old Lutheran Church," a name reminiscent of the Breslau Synod *Altlutheraner* in Prussia who resisted the Union: Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen*, 107.

[113] E.g., AC XV, 1; AC XXVIII, 76–78; Ap XIV, 24 [1].

Grabau and Walther, but both Buffalo and Missouri Synods continued to practice it. The Missouri Synod did not omit ordination in protest against Buffalo.

Regarding the question of whether valid sacraments "depend on" the office of the holy ministry, Grabau did view the word as powerful in itself and he did allow for emergency situations when pastors could not be had. Both Grabau and Walther held that lay exercise of the public ministerial functions of preaching and administering sacraments outside a case of emergency is sinful, and that a valid call is necessary before one may carry out these functions. Thus, in the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence, there is no practical difference between the Missouri Saxons and Grabau on the question of whether a layman may administer the Lord's Supper. For both, the answer is "no." When it comes to theory and doctrine, there is also no difference between them on whether the words of institution and absolution depend on, or draw power from, the office of the holy ministry. For both, the answer is "no." There was also agreement between the two groups on the fact that the office of the holy ministry was instituted by God and that it was given the responsibility of bringing the word and sacraments to God's people. Yet disagreements remained on whether, according to God's will, a layman *could* administer the Lord's Supper. The Saxons said "yes," since the preaching office was given directly to the whole church, by which they meant every believer individually. Grabau said "no," because the specific pastoral office is part of God's institution. Both sides seemed to be grappling with how to coordinate the inherent power of God's word with the divine institution of the office of the holy ministry. These two facts, held in faith to be true by confessional Lutherans, have caused many to ask questions such as these: If the word is powerful by itself, what need is there for the office of the holy ministry? If God instituted the office to preach the word and administer the sacraments, are the word and sacraments administered by someone outside this office, and thus contrary to the order willed by God, able somehow still to do God's will by forgiving sins through the word and sacrament? These questions show the tension between the two poles of divinely-instituted office, and word and sacraments efficacious in themselves. The natural human tendency is to abolish one or the other. Both Grabau and the Missouri Saxons avoided this temptation, though they came up with differing answers of how to deal with the tension.

Within the confines of this essay it has not been possible to deal with several issues at length, namely, ordination, the priesthood of all believers, and the keys. Especially the issue of the keys needs further research, since

so much of the conflict between the Buffalo and Missouri Synods arose from cases of church discipline.[114] Here the Buffalo Synod's problematic claim that there is no salvation outside the Lutheran church exasperated conflicts.

Sometimes the theological positions of Walther, Löhe, and Grabau are set up as though the three are a straight line, with Walther on one side, Grabau on the other, and Löhe in between.[115] Sometimes this comparison of the three men implies that Walther was too American or democratic in his doctrine of the ministry, while Grabau was too Episcopalian or Roman Catholic in his; Löhe, then, would be the golden mean. Our study of Grabau's use of the Lutheran Confessions calls this assumption into question. While this characterization may hold true for certain parts of the doctrine of the church and ministry, when the entire doctrine of church and ministry is taken as a whole, the Walther-Löhe-Grabau spectrum with Grabau on the fringe and Löhe in the middle cannot hold. With regard to the sacramentality of ordination or the congregation's participation in the call process, for example, Grabau actually belongs in the middle between Walther and Löhe![116]

Grabau's doctrine of the ministry was not Roman Catholic, but it was authoritarian and rigoristic. This is what gave Grabau and the Buffalo Synod so many problems. Grabau's main practical problem seemed to be a lack of tact and an adversarial attitude, combined with little patience. His rigorism can be seen not just in the polemical writings against Missouri, but also throughout his newspaper, the *Kirchliches Informatorium.* Moreover, as one reads the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence, the "Second Synodical Letter," and articles in the *Kirchliches Informatorium*, one is struck by how the Buffalo Synod pastors held grudges.[117] An adversarial attitude, of course, can also be seen in the writings of Walther and the Missouri Saxons against Grabau. Yet much of Walther's writing is characterized by warmth, piety, earnest preaching of the law, and the joy of the gospel. These facts may explain a lot about the success of the Missouri Synod and the failure of the Buffalo Synod.

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[114] On the Buffalo Synod's interpretation of Tr. 24, that Christ gave the keys principally and immediately, see Ministerium of the Buffalo Synod, "Nachträge des Kirchen-Ministerii (1849)," 95–98.

[115] Nessan, "Wilhelm Loehe's Missionary Correspondence 1852–1872," 138.

[116] For Löhe's views, see his *Aphorisms on the New Testament Offices and their Relationship to the Congregation [1849],* tr. John R. Stephenson (Malone, TX: Repristination, 2008); and Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Löhe to C.F.W. Walther."

[117] See Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," 103–105.

Grabau's attitudes eventually led to a rift within the Buffalo Synod. While the Prussian immigrants were becoming more Americanized in their social outlook, Grabau was becoming critical of his new home. Grabau's politics led to arsonists destroying his parsonage in January of 1864. His increasingly authoritarian conduct and his view of the American Civil War, which he saw as proof that America's democracy had failed, contributed to the unrest which in 1866 led a significant portion of the Buffalo Synod toward fellowship with the Missouri Synod.[118]

Grabau and Walther: both sides in this 19th-century debate focused on "rights." This made the whole issue a power struggle and put pastors and people at odds with each other from the start. The best situation is when pastors teach their people aright, and the people have "ears to hear"; and when not just the pastor, and not just the voters' assembly, but rather only the theologically catechized Lutherans—pastors and people together—are making decisions for the good of the church. But churches and congregations also need good ways to deal with conflict, and Grabau's Buffalo Synod did not seem to have these. Thus, the Buffalo Synod dwindled and fractured, while the Missouri Synod grew. The 19th-century American Lutheran debate on church and ministry still has many lessons to teach us today. May God grant us the charity, patience, and wisdom to learn those lessons.

[118] Gerber, "The Pathos of Exile," 510–514; Helen Mueller Ulrich, "Lutherans at First Trinity Congregation in Buffalo," in *Confessional Lutheran Migrations to America: 150th Anniversary* (Eastern District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1988), 67–75., here at 71.

Appendix: Timeline of Primary Sources

1840 (12–01) Grabau writes *Pastoral Letter* (Löber 1849,[119] document no. 1) to Lutherans in Wisconsin who had requested his opinion on lay ministry (Suelflow 1954, 4;[120] Löber 1849, 20).

1841? Mo. Saxons send Grabau *Die Missourischen Grundsätze und die Parochialordnung von 1839 und 1840* (Suelflow 1954, 8).

1843 (07–03) Löber and Walther (Löber 1849, 21) write Saxon *Critique* (Löber 1849, document no. 2) of Grabau's *Pastoral Letter* (Suelflow 1954, 9; Löber 1849, 36).

1844 Mo. Saxons begins to publish journal *Der Lutheraner*.

1844 (06–26) Grabau writes *Ordination Letter* (Löber 1849, document no. [4]) to Th. Brohm (Löber 1849, 57).

1844 (07–12) Grabau writes *Anti–critique* (Löber 1849, document no. 3) (Suelflow 1954, 12; Löber 1849, 37).

1845 (01–15) Saxons write *Reply to Anti-critique* (Löber 1849, document no. 5); Grabau refuses to respond, due to activities of Bürger, Geyer, and Klügel (Suelflow 1954, 13, 98; Löber 1849, 88). (Grabau finally responds in 1850, appendix to *Second Synodical Letter* of the Buffalo Synod.)

1845 (06–25) Organization of Buffalo Synod in Freistadt and Milwaukee; *First Synodical Letter* (Löber 1849, document no. 6) (Suelflow 1954, 1, 60; Löber 1849, 88).

1845 (08–02) Saxons write *Reply to First Synodical Letter* (Löber 1849, document no. 7) (Löber 1849, 91).

1849 *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840 Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften* (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1849) is published.

1850 *Second Synodical Letter* sets forth mature Buff. Syn. doctrine and lists thirteen Mo. Synod errors (Suelflow 1954, 65, 101–

[119] G. H. Löber, ed. *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840. Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. Der Oeffentlichkeit übergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche* (New York: H. Ludwig & Co, 1849).

[120] Roy A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (1954): 1–19, 57–73, 97–132.

105). The fourth part is Grabau's response to the publication of the *Hirtenbrief* correspondence.[121]

1850 Mo. Synod convention resolves to have Walther write *Church and Ministry* against Buffalo Synod's attacks (Suelflow 1954, 105).

1850 Löhe gives his opinion on the Missouri–Buffalo controversies in *Unsere kirchliche Lage* (cf. Suelflow 1954, 110).

1851 Mo. Synod convention approves Walther's theses on *Church and Ministry* (Suelflow 1954, 105).

1851 (07–15) Grabau begins publishing journal *Kirchliches Informatorium* (Suelflow 1954, 100).

1852 Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt: Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnissschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und aus den privatschriften rechtgläubiger Lehrer derselben. Von der Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und Anderen Staaten als ein Zeugniss ihres glaubens* (Erlangen: C.A.Ph.Th. Bläsing, 1852).

1853 Buff. Synod publishes *Sag's der Kirche!*, a pamphlet presenting their grievances toward Mo. Synod to church in Germany (Suelflow 1954, 114).

1855 Mo. Synod begins to publish journal *Lehre und Wehre* (Suelflow 1954, 108).

1857 (04) Friedrich Lochner begins to publish journal *Nothwehr-Blatt* against Buff. Synod (Suelflow 1954, 107–108).

1866 Mo.-Buff. colloquy held in Buffalo from Nov. 20 to Dec. 5. Missouri is represented by Walther, Sihler, Schwan, and three lay delegates; Buffalo is represented by Von Rohr, Hochstetter, Brand (not Grabau!), and three lay delegates. Buff. Synod delegates except Von Rohr come to agreement with Mo. Synod on all points. Von Rohr stands with Buff. Synod's *Second Synodical Letter.* Three-way split in Buff. Synod (Suelflow 1954, 127–131).

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[121] Buffalo Synod, *Zweiter Synodal-Brief von der Synode der aus Preußen ausgewanderten lutherischen Kirche, versammelt zu Buffalo, N.Y., im Juli 1848* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Brunck u. Domedion, 1850).

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C.F.W. Walther's Use of Luther

Cameron A. MacKenzie

To state the obvious: C.F.W. Walther was an admirer of Martin Luther. It began early and lasted all his life. In fact, just months after Walther's death, the Missouri Synod's theological journal published his recommendations for a "fruitful reading of the writings of Luther,"[1] and references to Luther's writings appear frequently in Walther's theological work. This commitment to Luther went back a long way and is readily apparent in connection with two of the great crises in his early life—his inner turmoil as a university student[2] and his spiritual distress in the wake of Martin Stephan's fall.[3] In both of these, Walther found solace and direction in the

[1] C.F.W. Walther, "The Fruitful Reading of the Writings of Luther," in Matthew C. Harrison, ed., *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* (n.p.: Lutheran Legacy, 2009), 333–343. This work originally appeared as "Das fruchtbare Lesen der Schriften Luthers," in *Lehre und Wehre* [hereafter *LuW*] 33 (1887): 305–314. Walther had previously presented it to the Missouri District Conference. In Thesis 7, Walther states that "These theses [his recommendations] are based upon this essayist's own experience [*eigene Erfahrung*]." Both Robert Kolb, "C.F.W. Walther, Interpreter of Luther on the American Frontier," *Lutheran Quarterly* N.S. 1 (1987): 478–80, and Eugene Klug, "Walther and Luther," in Arthur H. Drevlow, John M. Drickamer, and Glenn E. Reichwald, eds., *C.F.W. Walther: The American Luther* (Mankato, MN: Walther Press, 1987), 6–9, discuss Walther's "Fruitful Reading."

[2] See one of Walther's first biographers and one of his most recent, Martin Günther, *Dr. C.F.W. Walther: Lebensbild* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1890), 12, and August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 26. Much later, in his *Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, tr. W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), 188, Walther identified Luther's *The Keys* (*LW* 40: 325–77) as the writing from which he "first learned what the Gospel is."

[3] William J. Schmelder, "Walther at Altenburg," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 34 (1961): 79. In a letter to Wilhelm Sihler, Walther explained, "Through the discovery of the Stephanite deception we were driven into the writings of Luther. All of us [Saxon pastors] have, next to the Word of God, studied almost exclusively the writings of Luther, and we believe that through the guiding of the Holy Spirit by means of this incomparable treasure we have now first come to proper clarity." C.F.W. Walther to Wm. Sihler (Pomeroy, OH), Jan. 2, 1845, in Roy A. Suelflow, tr., *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther: Selected Letters* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 89. For the original German, see L. Fürbringer, ed., *Briefe von C. F. W. Walther*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1916), 1: 6–15.

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writings of Luther. In the first instance, while convalescing from illness, he read Luther and became convinced that the teachings of the Lutheran Church alone were scriptural. This was a conviction that never left him. And in the second, he found a theological justification for establishing a Lutheran Church in America, independent of the state. This was his life's work.

No matter the issue, no matter the time, Walther looked to Luther. On one occasion, a friend tried to call him "the *American* Luther"—a title that he rejected at once, preferring instead, "Luther's archivist (*sein Archivar*)" or record keeper.[4] This title was appropriate enough if one thinks, for example, of the Missouri Synod's great project begun late in Walther's life and completed only many years after his death, viz., the St. Louis edition of Luther's works.[5] But Walther was certainly much more than a promoter of reading the reformer—he was a theologian and church leader, committed not only to preserving Luther but also to appropriating Luther for a new time and place, for using Luther to address the challenges of 19th-century Lutheranism, especially in America. Examining and evaluating Walther's use of Luther in this context is the purpose of this essay.

To accomplish this end, this paper proceeds along two lines. First of all, it begins with an examination of Walther's attitude toward Luther's person, primarily on the basis of sermons that Walther preached over the course of a lifetime to commemorate the Reformation and Luther himself.[6] The second line of investigation has to do with Walther's use of Luther in presenting Christian doctrine. Anyone who has read just a little bit of

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[4] Suelflow, *Servant*, 7. See also C.F.W. Walther (St. Louis) to J. A. Ottesen, Feb. 8, 1870, in *Briefe* 2: 183.

[5] J. G. Walch, ed. *Dr. Martin Luther Sämmtliche Schriften*, rev. ed., 23 vols. in 25 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1880–1910). The first volume appeared in 1880, the last in 1910. For background to this project and Walther's interest in it, see Robert Kolb, "Luther for German Americans: The Saint Louis Edition of Luther's Works, 1880–1910," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 56 (1983): 98–110.

[6] Many of these are available now in English, thanks to the Rev. Joel Baseley, whose contributions to Lutheran scholarship as a translator of Walther and Luther are very impressive and much appreciated. For Walther's Reformation and Luther sermons especially, see Joel R. Baseley, tr., *Treasury of C.F.W. Walther*, vol. 4: *Festival Sermons and Prayers for Reformation and Luther Commemorations* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008). Baseley has gathered Walther's sermons from *Lutherische Brosamen: Predigten und Reden…dargeboten* (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, 1876) [hereafter *LB*]; *Ansprachen und Gebete…*(St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1888) [hereafter *AG*]; *Casual-Predigten und –Reden* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1889) [hereafter *CPR*]; and *Festklänge: Predigten über Festtexte des Kirchenjahrs* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1892) [hereafter *FK*].

Walther knows that his theological method routinely involved citations from Luther on doctrinal issues. But why? And was Walther true to Luther when he cited him?

The answers to such questions can be found for the most part in another important source for Walther studies, the well-known series of essays that Walther presented to the Western District of the Missouri Synod for 11 conventions in a row, 1873–1886, on the topic, "The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God, an Irrefutable Proof That Its Doctrine Alone Is True."[7] Although Walther never wrote a dogmatics, this series of essays provided the mature theologian with an opportunity to discuss a wide array of theological loci, instead of concentrating on just one, presented either on account of controversy, e.g., *Church and Ministry*,[8] or pedagogy, e.g., *Law and Gospel*.[9] Admittedly, the Predestination Controversy hijacked the series for a few years in the 1870s and 1880s, but Walther returned to his original list of topics in 1883 and finished a few years later.[10]

Of course, one must recognize that Walther was not a historian, attempting to explain Luther in Luther's own times and terms. Instead, he was a churchman, trying to find material in Luther's life and doctrine that was directly relevant to Walther's own situation. Furthermore, he was hardly the first person to do so.[11] Already in the 16th century, as the first

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[7] "Dass nur durch die Lehre der lutherischen Kirche Gott allein alle Ehre gegeben werde, ein unwidersprechlicher Beweis, dass die Lehre derselben die allein wahre sei," in *Siebzehnter Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts…1873* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1873), 26. The entire set has been translated into English and is available in two collections: August R. Suelflow, tr., *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther: Convention Essays* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981) for the 1873–1876 essays, and C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, vol. 2: *1877–1882* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), for the rest of the series.

[8] C.F.W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), translated from C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 3rd ed. (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1875). For a very fine comparison of the theses presented by Walther in this book to the teaching of Martin Luther, see Eugene F. A. Klug, *Church and Ministry: The Role of Church, Pastor, and People from Luther to Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993).

[9] C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, tr. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), translated from C.F.W. Walther, *Die rechte Untershceidung von Gesetz und Evangelium* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897).

[10] Suelflow, *Servant*, 155–160, offers a theological analysis of this series, especially the significance of the title.

[11] For a summary of Luther's treatment in history, see Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 199–237. For Walther and two contemporaries in American Lutheranism, see E. Theodore

Lutherans attempted to pull themselves out of the morass into which they had fallen upon the death of Luther and in the aftermath of the Schmalkald War, they looked to the reformer's writings for guidance. In *their* search for a usable Luther, some advocated establishing all of Luther's works as a doctrinal standard for the Lutheran church, but by the time of the Book of Concord, Chemnitz and company had agreed upon a much more limited and specific commitment, viz., the two catechisms and the Schmalkald Articles.[12] There are also favorable references in the Formula of Concord to several of Luther's other works such as his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*,[13] his *Sermon at Torgau on the Descent into Hell*,[14] his *Commentary on Galatians* (1535),[15] and *The Bondage of the Will*.[16] The fact remains, however, that only three of Luther's writings actually made it into the book.

Yet there is more to this story. From the standpoint of titles, the Concordia is evenly divided between Luther and Melanchthon, and the latter has the distinction of being chief penman of the Augsburg Confession (even though Walther could describe it as the confession of Luther, "expanded" by Melanchthon[17]). Nonetheless, the Formula of Concord points Lutherans to Luther as their teacher and not Melanchthon. In fact, the Formula does not cite Melanchthon by name even once,[18] but it does cite Luther on several occasions—over 60 times in the Solid Declaration.[19]

Bachmann, "Walther, Schaff, and Krauth on Luther," in Jarolsav Pelikan, ed., *Interpreters of Luther: Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 187–230. Other, more specialized treatments include Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Luther's Legacy: Martin Luther and the Reformation in the Estimation of the German Lutherans from Luther's Death to the beginning of the age of Goethe* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954), and Ottmar Hegemann, *Luther im kathlischen Urteil: Eine Wanderung durch vier Jahrhunderte* (München: J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1905).

[12] Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, Hero: Images of the Reformer, 1520–1620* (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, a division of Baker Books, 1999), 54–64.

[13] SD VII, 28.

[14] SD IX, 1.

[15] SD III, 28.

[16] SD II, 44.

[17] Baseley, 119. "…ein durch Melanchthon erweitertes Glaubensbekenntiss Luthers." *CPR* 52. See also Baseley, 130, (*CPR* 89) where Walther describes the Augustana as a summary of Luther's doctrine without even mentioning Melanchthon's name.

[18] F. Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Symbols," in *Concordia or Book of Concord: A Reprint of the English Text of the Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 244.

[19] Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 65: "There are seventeen citations in the article on the person of Christ (VIII) and eleven each in the articles on freedom of the will (II) and the Lord's Supper (VII). Except for Article XII, on factions and sects which had never accepted the Augsburg Confession, each article cites Luther at least once."

This compares to only four for Augustine, three for Chrysostom, and two for Cyril of Alexandria.[20] So even if the formulators did not commit themselves to all of Luther's writings, they did commit themselves to Luther.

As a Confessional Lutheran, therefore, Walther identified himself with that first generation of post-Luther Lutherans who presented their doctrine as "the sum and pattern of the doctrine which Dr. Luther of blessed memory clearly set forth in his writings on the basis of God's Word" (FC SD Rule, 9) and who furthermore described the reformer as a prophet of the last times: "By a special grace our merciful God has in these last days brought to light the truth of his Word . . . through the faithful ministry of that illustrious man of God, Dr. Luther" (FC SD Rule, 5).

One of Walther's principal goals was the furtherance of true Lutheranism in America.[21] But for Walther, true Lutheranism—as the Formula of Concord demonstrated—included a right appreciation of Martin Luther—his doctrine especially, but not only that. There was also Luther's place in the providence of God. In this respect also, Walther identified with his 16th-century predecessors. Robert Kolb has summarized the attitude of the first Lutherans to the reformer under three headings: Prophet, Teacher, and Hero.[22] Each of these is also clearly evident in Walther. For example, in his recommendation of Luther's writings at the end of his life, Walther justified himself by maintaining that "Luther is the only theologian who is prophesied in the Holy Scriptures" and that "Luther is not to be reckoned among the common pure theologians. He was rather the reformer of the Church and the revealer and destroyer of the Antichrist . . . chosen by God Himself."[23] In fact, Walther could even describe the Reformation as a "second Pentecost."[24]

This idea—that God raised up Luther especially and in fulfillment of prophecy to rescue the Church from Antichrist by recovering the Gospel—is prominent in Walther's sermons that commemorate Luther and the Reformation and that he delivered throughout his career. Not

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[20] Based on the "Verzeichnis der Zitate aus kirchlichen und Profanschriftstellern" in the *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche: Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 1145–1155.

[21] Bachmann, 194–196, 199–200, 209–211.

[22] Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 9–13. For Lutheran attitudes toward Luther in the 16th century, see also Zeeden, 3–35. Robert Kolb has also commented on Walther's treatment of Luther's biography, calling it "sacred history." See Kolb, "Interpreter of Luther," 472–475.

[23] "Fruitful Reading," 333 (*LuW* 33: 305).

[24] Baseley, 131 (*CPR* 90).

surprisingly, Walther maintained that Luther was the fulfillment of Revelation 14:6, "Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people." This identification went back at least to Bugenhagen's statement at Luther's funeral[25] and Lutherans had been repeating it ever since. So, in his 1845 sermon on the Reformation, Walther said bluntly, "The angel, the one sent by God, who flew through the midst of heaven, is Luther."[26] In 1872, he declared, "according to Revelation, Luther must . . . fly . . . 'in the midst of heaven.'"[27] He was still preaching this in 1881, "Our text [Revelation 14] is obviously a prophecy concerning the work of the Reformation."[28] In one of his convention essays (1873), Walther made an interesting concession regarding this passage, "Being a prophecy, we cannot absolutely require that others believe this. It does not belong to the articles of faith." Nevertheless, he went on to maintain that no one could deny that the terms of the prophecy had been fulfilled in Luther and the Reformation.[29]

But Luther was not only prophesied by Scripture, he himself also prophesied, at least according to some of his followers. Kolb recounts 16th-century Lutherans who published collections of Luther's "predictions,"[30] and in a sermon marking the 300th anniversary of Luther's death, Walther pointed out the fulfillment of Luther's prediction that after his death there would be a falling away from truth and that not even the Wittenberg faculty would not remain faithful.[31] But predictive prophecy is hardly the

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[25] Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 35.

[26] Baseley, 112 (*CPR* 44).

[27] Baseley, 14 (*LB* 227).

[28] Baseley, 102 (*CPR* 586). See also Baseley, 81–82 (*CPR* 581), 117 (*CPR* 49), and 128 (*CPR* 87). Walther also calls Luther "the Moses of the Church of the New Testament" (Baseley, 128; *CPR* 87) and Elijah (Baseley, 47; *CPR* 98–99), although Luther never became as discouraged as Elijah! In 1872, Walther preached on the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 8: 8–13) as "a likeness of the construction of the church of the Reformation in a prophetic image" (Baseley, 9; *LB* 223).

[29] *Convention Essays*, 20. 1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 35.

[30] Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 178–183.

[31] A major theme in this sermon (Baseley, 170–179; *CPR* 115–124) is the collapse of Lutheran orthodoxy. Walther contended that it began, as Luther had predicted, right after his death and was being accomplished in Walther's own times. For Luther's predictions, see especially pp. 171, 172, and 174 (*CPR* 116, 117, 119). Walther expressed somewhat the same insight in a Reformation sermon from 1843 (Baseley, 51–52; *CPR* 29–30). In an 1846 sermon Walther cited Luther's confidence that he would die in peace before turmoil broke out in Germany. Walther actually calls Luther a "prophet" [*Prophet*] in this sermon (Baseley, 168; *CPR* 112–113).

most prominent characteristic of Walther's admiration for Luther. Instead, it is Luther's commitment to the word of God.

Over and over again, Walther described the Reformation as a recovery of true scriptural doctrine and Luther as God's agent in effecting that recovery. Of course, the Middle Ages were a period of immense spiritual darkness. In 1845 Walther preached, "The Holy Scriptures lay in the dust. . . . Christians were warned that this book was off limits to them, a dangerous book, so that they were barred from accessing the fountain of the water of eternal life." But, Walther added, God "led [Luther] to find the Holy Bible," authorized him to preach it as a doctor of the Church, and equipped him by experience, talent, and character both to understand and to expound God's Word:

> A man who serves as an instrument of true Reformation must . . . [have] a living, more than common, knowledge of the saving doctrine, compelling rhetoric, ready knowledge of salient passages of Scripture, heroic faith and a most uncommon denial of himself. We meet all of these in Luther.[32]

Walther expressed these convictions early in his ministry, they remained with him for the rest of his life, and he regularly returned to them as pastor and teacher. Here are a few additional pieces of evidence—this one from the end of Walther's life:

> Luther had behind him nothing but hellish error. He could only go to the Scriptures and mine the truth. No man can comprehend how that was possible. It may appear to have been quite an easy thing, but it could not have happened without a completely unique enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.[33]

In 1854, Walther began a Reformation sermon by thanking God: "You sent your servant, Luther, and used him to place the light of your Word upon its lamp."[34] In 1867, he proclaimed the same idea, "God finally heard the thousand-year groans of his elect, awakened a poor defenseless monk, and he with nothing but the light of the Bible . . . now revealed . . . the horrible hidden evil."[35] In 1872, he preached that on the first Reformation day, "It was not the temporal light of reason, but the heavenly light of the

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[32] Baseley, 110, 114–115 (*CPR* 42, 46–47).
[33] "Fruitful Reading," 334 (*LuW* 33: 306).
[34] Baseley, 31 (*CPR* 68)
[35] Baseley 128 (*CPR* 87).

Word of the prophets and the apostles, that was the sun breaking through the darkness of Christian people on this day, long ago."[36]

What was it that God moved Luther to discover in the Scriptures? The gospel, of course. The message of God's free grace in Christ was yet another theme in Luther's ministry that Walther highlighted in his presentation of the Reformation. Again, we see this very early (1843) in Walther's preaching:

> Luther was not ashamed of this Gospel. . . . As soon as he had himself experienced in his heart its power to save, the aim and goal of all his preaching, speaking and writing, beginning, middle and end, was now the Gospel of Christ. . . . He proclaimed the great joy of God's grace in Christ Jesus. He showed how poor sinners could be helped.

We also see this emphasis late in Walther's career when in 1881 he divided his Reformation sermon into two parts: "The work of the Reformation rests . . . 1. upon the principle that only God's written Word is the saving truth and 2. upon the principle that only God's free grace in Christ is the way to eternal salvation."[37]

The emphasis upon Luther's recovery of true doctrine, especially the doctrine of salvation, reveals Luther as a teacher of the church without equal since the days of the apostles. Because of Luther's strict biblicism, Walther maintained (1845) what the banner of *Der Lutheraner* always affirmed, "God's Word and Luther's doctrine will never pass away."[38] He also insisted that "if we were ashamed of Luther and his doctrine . . . we would also be ashamed of Christ and his eternal Gospel."[39] Walther admitted [1858] that Luther was "no prophet, no apostle, who, being infallible, had the truth given *directly* into the shrine of his heart";[40] but by

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[36] Baseley 9 (*LB* 222).

[37] Baseley, 57 (*CPR* 35–36), 102 (*CPR* 586).

[38] "Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr vergehet nun und nimmermehr." Baseley, 121 (*CPR* 53). Cf. *Der Lutheraner*, September 1, 1844. The phrase is not original to Walther. Zeeden, 32, cites the inscription on a coin from 1564 that is very close to the motto of *Der Lutheraner*, "Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr wird vergehen nimmermehr." The phrase was subsequently repeated with variations in the 17th century. See Zeeden, 37, and Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 288n. 9. Zeeden, 39–45, also shows that John Gerhard (d. 1637) maintained the same conviction as *Der Lutheraner*'s motto that "Luther's doctrine is identical with God's word."

[39] Baseley, 121 (*CPR* 53).

[40] Baseley, 81 (*CPR* 581); emphasis mine. Likewise, in discussing the doctrine of the word of God before the Western District in 1873 (*Convention Essays*, 33; 1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 48), Walther admitted that "Luther was neither a prophet

God's grace, Luther did confess the Scriptures correctly, "God's Word is nothing other than Luther's doctrine and Luther's doctrine nothing other than God's Word."[41]

Besides being a prophet and teacher in Walther's presentations, Luther was also a hero. His life and character matched his message and further demonstrated his unique role in history under the providence of God. Even though Walther confessed the sinfulness of all men, he did not really present Luther as a sinner in his Reformation sermons, not even in Luther's early years. Instead, Walther portrayed him as a victim of the medieval church. Walther described him as an "honest, pious lad" who nevertheless was spiritually restless, "He had no peace in his soul. He wanted to be saved but his conscience told him that he could not yet stand before God with all his piety." So, scared by the death of a close friend, Luther entered the monastery, "but even here . . . this precious man could not find what his terrified conscience sought."[42]

Walther went on to describe Luther's wrestling with Romans 1:16, 17, and his repeated failures to find peace with God through his own efforts until, finally, God led him to the conviction that it was the righteousness of Christ that the gospel revealed, a righteousness "by which everyone who believes is now justified." And from this fundamental insight proceeded the Reformation, for Luther, once he had experienced the gospel, was not about to give it up: "He would not allow his soul to let go of this great anchor, but would grasp it tightly with both hands. So, naturally, he also had to immediately confess and give a clear witness to it."[43] From this conviction therefore proceeded the Indulgence Controversy and all the rest of the Reformation.

This is the narrative of Luther's life that Walther presented in 1843 and it remained with him the rest of his ministry. In 1881, for instance, Walther was still describing the young Luther this way, "Already as a boy, God had moved Luther to take his salvation very seriously. Therefore, his efforts to obtain salvation by his works knew no bounds." Again, circumstances led Luther into the monastery but with negative results until he

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nor an apostle, who could not err" and agreed to subject Luther's German Bible to the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

[41] "Gottes Wort ist nichts Anderes als Luthers Lehre und Luthers Lehre nichts Anderes als Gottes Wort," Baseley 84 (*CPR* 584). Bachmann, 195, quotes Walther at the dedication of Concordia Seminary's new buildings in 1883 to the effect that after Christ and the apostles, Luther would be the chief teacher at the school.

[42] Baseley, 54 (*CPR* 32).

[43] Baseley, 55 (*CPR* 33, 34).

came upon Romans 1:16, 17, and finally, "like a terrifying bolt of lightning," he realized that "everyone who believes in Christ . . . will be . . . saved." Combined with his scriptural principle, Luther's gospel principle undergirded "the whole work of the Lutheran church Reformation."[44]

Moreover, Luther was the man whom God had perfectly equipped to carry out the Reformation. On a couple of occasions in these sermons, Walther described Luther's character. Again, he carefully avoided any reference to sinful indulgence or weakness. In 1867, Walther insisted that Lutherans have every reason to praise the person of Luther in response to the slanders of the papists and then went on to offer a description of someone who was virtually flawless. This is a long quotation but deserves consideration since it demonstrates clearly the heroic nature of Walther's Luther:

> Luther's piety with no hypocrisy, his irrepressible faithfulness, his unflappable courage in all dangers, his tireless zeal in prayer and intercession, his deep humility and singleness in heart, his fine unselfishness, lack of greed and avarice, his tender mercy towards all who were suffering and his sacrificial generosity towards all the poor, his honesty and openness, that was never hypocritical nor manipulative towards those of high or low estate, his strict moderation, soberness and chastity, his self effacing industriousness, his conscientious faithfulness as a son, as husband, as father, as preacher, as university professor, as friend, advisor, citizen, in short, his exemplary Christianity, by which he established for all times a wondrous model of a true Christian, is worthy of imitation. Further, it is also good that we have reason enough to highly boast of Luther's great gifts and service, his deep knowledge, his rare scholarship, his thorough going understanding, his powerful oration, his rare writing skills, his incomparable service to church, state and all stations of life, to arts and science, to our German name and our wonderful language, for all the gigantic work of the Reformation for which the church, after God, has Luther to thank.[45]

That is really extraordinary. There is not a hint of any weakness or character flaw in this description—nor is this statement unique in this series of sermons. Luther is extraordinarily brave, talented, and faithful—a real hero in Church history.[46] For the sake of the word, he defies pope and

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[44] Baseley, 105–106, 107 (*CPR* 590–591, 586).

[45] Baseley, 140–141 (*LB* 252).

[46] Cf. also *Convention Essays*, 172 [*Zwanzigster Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts …1876* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1876), 60–61].

emperor.[47] For the sake of the word, he refuses to accommodate Zwingli and the Reformed.[48] And by the power of the gospel, he dies confessing the faith.[49] Walther elaborated on all of these and not once did he comment adversely on Luther's behavior. I suppose that when preaching on the Reformation, one is always going to comment on Luther's achievements, but it seems reasonable also at least to acknowledge Luther's sinfulness. Luther did,[50] but not Walther.

Walther was convinced that Luther's life validated his ministry. Walther made this point in a rhetorical question in 1845, "So tell me, how do you explain Luther's zealous, heroic faith [*Heldenglauben*] if you do not conclude that God armed him by it so that he was able to carry out the work for which God had chosen him?" And from this conviction Walther drew the conclusion for his own times, "Is it not a terrible contradiction to admit that Luther was the man chosen by God which cannot be denied, and to surrender his doctrine . . . ?" When all is said and done, Luther's doctrine is Walther's bottom line. He wrote (1867), "So highly as we might praise Luther's person, life and works, we would yet be putting him to shame if, along with all that, we were ashamed of the Gospel that he preached; if we, along with all that, were ashamed of his doctrine [*uns seiner* Lehre *schämten*]" (emphasis original).[51]

It is Luther's doctrine to which we now turn—at least Walther's version of it in his series of convention essays on the theme, "The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God." But what exactly is "the doctrine of the Lutheran Church"? In an earlier essay (1866) on "the true visible Church," Walther had answered this question very precisely: "the doctrine which was restored by the Reformation of Luther and was summarily submitted in writing at Augsburg in 1530 to the emperor and the realm, and was treated and expounded in the other so-called Lutheran symbols, as the pure doctrine of the divine Word."[52] Walther recognized three constituent elements in this description: Scripture, the Book of Concord, and Luther.

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[47] Baseley, 23 (*CPR* 59), 78 (*CPR* 577–578), 91–92 (*LB* 210–212), 119 (*CPR* 51–52), 128–130 (*CPR* 87–89), 162 (*CPR* 105).

[48] Baseley, 78–79 (*CPR* 578), 120 (*CPR* 52).

[49] Baseley, 161–166 (*CPR* 105–110).

[50] E.g., "Although we sin daily and deserve nothing but punishment . . . " SC III, 5.

[51] Baseley, 117 (*CPR* 49), 118–19 (*CPR* 51), 141 (*LB* 252).

[52] C.F.W. Walther, *The True Visible Church*, tr. John T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 42. For the original, see C.F.W. Walther, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche: die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden* (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867) [hereafter *ELK*], 50–51.

Of course, Walther's essay goes on to distinguish between these three and gives primacy of place to the Scriptures,[53] but Luther is definitely in the mix. Even though his doctrine derives from the Scriptures or, better, precisely because it derives from the Scriptures, Walther routinely quoted him when setting forth the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. According to Walther's own statements, Luther could have gotten something wrong: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church recognizes *no human interpreter* of Holy Scripture whose ex officio interpretation must be regarded as infallible and binding."[54] However, convinced as he was about Luther's place in the providence of God, Walther did not conceive that Luther ever actually *did* get it wrong—at least once the Reformation got rolling.[55] Indeed, with respect to Luther's earliest writings, Walther could admit in his "Fruitful Reading" (1887) that "there is still much that is unclear" and went on to write of the 95 Theses, "we marvel at how they could cause such a great stir. There is so much darkness [*Dunkelheit*] ruling in them." Even so, however, Walther claimed that they contained "the doctrine of justification [*die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*]."[56]

More importantly, however, Walther maintained that "after the apostles and prophets, Luther had no one in the Church to compare with him" and he issued this challenge, "Let someone name just one single doctrine, that Luther did not interpret most clearly and gloriously." For Walther, that was impossible; and so, of course, he quoted Luther all the time.[57]

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[53] Walther, *True Visible Church*, 43–44 *(ELK*, 51–52), quotes the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, to describe the role of the Confessions. In Thesis 13 (p. 50; *ELK*, 59), Walther reiterates the primacy of the Scriptures: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church recognizes the written Word of the apostles and prophets as the sole and perfect source, rule, and norm, and the judge of all doctrine; (a) not reason; (b) not tradition; and (c) not new revelations." True to his convictions, Walther's method in this treatise is to quote Scripture and then witnesses in support of his theses, and among the witnesses first come the Confessions and then Luther.

[54] "True Visible Church," 61 (*ELK*, 70); emphasis mine. See also *Convention Essays*, 33 (1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 48).

[55] In Thesis 16 of his "Fruitful Reading," 342 (*LuW* 33: 313), Walther undertakes to defend Luther's "plainspoken style, tautologies, or apparent contradictions [*scheinbaren Widersprüchen*]" but admits to some real contradictions on account of the fact that "Luther did not achieve the full truth at once, as through the wave of a magic wand."

[56] "Fruitful Reading," 338 (*LuW* 33: 309).

[57] "Fruitful Reading," 334. In the German, Walther's rhetoric is a little different from the translation since he frames his conviction as a challenge rather than a rhetorical question, "Mann nenne nur eine einzige Lehre, welche Luther nicht auf das allerklarste und herrliche dargelegt hätte." Hence, the translation of this sentence in the essay is mine. Cf. *LuW* 33: 305.

In nine essays[58] devoted to the theme, "The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God," Walther cited Luther 183[59] times from 72 different works,[60] although there were several citations whose sources Walther did not indicate.[61] This amounted to about one citation for every 2.5 pages of text in the district proceedings, but the essays varied widely in the frequency of citations. The 1885 essay on the proper scope of temporal authority had the most citations (one for every 1.3 pages) while the 1877 essay dealing with predestination had the least (one for every 5.0 pages). The citations could be short (just a line or two) or quite long (a page or more), but usually they were somewhere in between, a paragraph or so. The sources were of various kinds[62]—exegetical works (e.g., *The Great Galatians Commentary* or *The Genesis Commentary*, also Luther's "Preface to Romans" and his "Preface to the Old Testament"), treatises (e.g., *Treatise on Good Works*, *Freedom of a Christian*, and *On the Councils and the Church*), polemical works (e.g., *Against the Bull of Antichrist*, *Great Confession Concerning the Lord's Supper*, and *Against the Heavenly Prophets*), programmatic works (e.g., *Address to the Christian Nobility* and *Instructions to the Visitors*), pastoral works (e.g., the Catechisms, *Warning to His Dear German People*, and *On War Against the Turks*), sermons (e.g., *The House Postils*, Sermons on John, and Sermons on Matthew), letters (to Amsdorf,

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Walther, *Essays* 2: 139 [*Einundzwanzigster Synodal–Bericht des Westlichen Districts …1877* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und anderen Staaten, 1877), 91], did concede with respect to Luther's German Bible, "At times Luther has translated . . . in a way that a heretic with his false teaching can find a loophole in this simple translation—although he is caught when faced with the original." But even in this case, Walther maintained that "Luther has translated in such a way that he has rightly captured the sense of the original text."

[58] There were actually 11, but Walther presented the essays for 1879 and 1880 after the Predestination Controversy in the Synodical Conference had begun, so I omitted them from this study so as not to skew the results toward that particular doctrine. See Suelflow, *Servant*, 167–173, for Walther's role in the controversy.

[59] Counting citations is somewhat arbitrary. If Walther referred to something Luther said or wrote, I counted it as a citation. In many of the longer passages, Walther might interrupt his quotation with a few words, e.g., "Luther further writes." On the other hand, he might go on at some length before quoting again. In the former case, I ignored Walther's brief remarks and counted the entire quotation as one citation. In the latter case where there was a significant interruption, I counted the citations separately.

[60] On many occasions, Walther did not mention the source by name but did include a reference to Luther's works (usually the Walch edition) so that one could discover the specific title.

[61] There were 29 of these, usually just brief quotations.

[62] Identifying genres can also be arbitrary. I have combined considerations of content (e.g., polemical works) along with literary form (e.g., letters), but there is a lot of overlap between the categories (e.g., treatises and polemical works).

Melanchthon, and several others), and the "Table Talk." The citations range from early in Luther's career (e.g., Ninety-five Theses, 1517) to rather late (e.g., *Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil*, 1545). The two most cited sources were *Bondage of the Will* and the *Church Postils*; each of them were cited eight times.

More important than the numbers, however, is accuracy. Did Walther understand Luther correctly and apply him fairly? The answer is overwhelmingly yes, but not always to both of those questions—understanding and application. The doctrinal scope of Walther's nine essays is considerable. He identifies twelve distinct teachings of the Lutheran church at the outset of this series,[63] and each of these doctrines has numerous subpoints. Walther's topics range all the way from "the Word of God"[64] to relations between domestic servants and their employers.[65] Of course, he does not cite Luther for every subdivision, but certainly for all the main points, and anyone who knows Luther's theology at all will recognize that Walther's use of Luther is both fair and accurate.

So, for example, in his treatment of regeneration, Walther maintains that "where there is faith a person becomes a new creature, born again in regeneration" and proceeds to cite Luther, "What we Lutherans understand by true faith Luther stated in his *Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*." Walther provides five paragraphs of quotation—no problem with citing Luther out of context here. All of them are right on target, so Walther concludes, "Not only enthusiasts know that man must be born again. Luther also experienced it and taught it."[66] The citation is apt. Walther understood Luther and quoted him appropriately.

To spend a lot of time on Walther's appropriate citations would be tedious. Of course, one must readily acknowledge that Walther did not

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[63] Walther presents the list at the beginning of the series and it is repeated at some of the conventions thereafter. Here is the list from the 1873 Convention (*Convention Essays*, 22; 1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 37): "(1) On the Word of God; (2) On the origin of sin, death, hell, and damnation; (3) On divine providence; (4) On the universal grace of God; (5) On the reconciliation and redemption of the human race; (6) On the justification of the sinner by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ without any merit of works; (7) On the necessity of regeneration and sanctification; (8) On the institution, validity, power, and unchangeability of the means of grace; (9) On conversion; (10) On petitions and prayers to God; (11) On obedience toward men in matters of faith and conscience; [and] (12) On the election of grace."

[64] *Convention Essays*, 26–37 (1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 41–52).

[65] *Essays* 2: 310–313 [*Siebenundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts …1886* (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1886), 52–58].

[66] *Convention Essays*, 113–115 (1877 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts,* 91).

always raise the same questions regarding Luther as our contemporaries do. For example, in his discussion of justification by faith, Walther does not consider whether Luther believed that faith effected a "union with Christ."[67] Instead, he quotes three of Luther's works, his *Sermon on the Mount*, his *Commentary on Galatians,* and his *Explanations of the Ninety-five Theses*, in order to make the case that Lutheranism rejects justification by works.[68] Here again, of course, he has understood Luther correctly, even if he has not probed into Luther's doctrine as deeply as we might like today.

Instead of demonstrating that Walther was not aware of *our* concerns in his use of Luther, it is more interesting to analyze the instances in which Walther was wrong about Luther. These are not numerous but they are instructive. One of them involves the Ninety-five Theses. As noted above, in "The Fruitful Reading," Walther maintains that one can find "justification by faith" in the Ninety-five Theses. Not surprisingly, therefore, Walther quotes them in support of what we would call objective justification.[69] He uses two other, more appropriate quotations and then says, "Christ has granted them [all these glorious gifts—righteousness, life, salvation] to mankind through His gospel, as Luther so well confessed in the *95 Theses*: 'The true treasure of the church . . . is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.'" Then, Walther draws the conclusion:

> It is of primary concern . . . that we make use of these marvelous gifts. . . . They have already been *given* us, are always available for our benefit, even though we do not have faith. . . . Therefore Luther here says [Walther is paraphrasing]: "Do you want to use these great blessings? Very well! He has already given them to you."[70]

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[67] This interpretation has been advanced recently by scholars associated with Tuomo Mannermaa. See Carl E. Braaaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdaman Publishing Co., 1998). But see also Carl R. Trueman, "Is the Finnish Line a New Beginning? A Critical Assessment of the Reading of Luther Offered by the Helsinki Circle," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 231–44.

[68] *Convention Essays*, 103–104 [*Neunzehnter Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts …1875* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1875), 30–31].

[69] "*Subjective justification*, Rom 4, 6 [is] . . . the personal application, through faith, of the merits which Christ has secured for the whole world by his substitutionary atonement (*objective justification*)." John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics: A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers and Laymen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 367.

[70] *Convention Essays*, 78–79 [*Achtzehntert Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts …1874* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1874), 47]. The Luther quotation is from *LW* 31: 31.

Clearly, Walther understands "gospel" in the Ninety-five Theses as Luther and Lutherans later defined it; many of us today would be hesitant to understand the theses in a similar manner.[71] But Walther's "mistake"—if we can call it that—arose out of a misunderstanding of Luther's biography. For Walther, Luther had come to a correct understanding of justification by faith before the Indulgence Controversy. Already at the time of his pilgrimage to Rome when he climbed to the top of Pilate's stairway, he heard a voice resounding in his head, "The just shall live by faith."[72] That Luther came to his new understanding of the gospel at that time or shortly thereafter was a commonplace in Luther biographies at the time[73] and it shaped

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[71] For example, Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 198, characterizes the 95 Theses this way: "The spirit in which they were written is not yet the later evangelical and reformatory one, no matter how much they attack the current ecclesiastical practice and it problematical foundations. All of this was still happening from the basis of the theology and piety of humility."

[72] Baseley, 55–57 (*CPR* 33), 110–111 (*CPR* 42).

[73] An excellent example of this is the biography by one of Walther's fellow synodical founders, Hermann Fick. According to Carl S. Meyer, "Walther's Biographies of Buenger and Fick," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (1972): 197, Fick's *Das Lutherbuch* was published by the Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Druckerei der evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St., 1855) and had reached 20 printings by 1885. Matthias Loy of the Ohio Synod prepared an English language version, *Life and Deeds of Dr. Martin Luther* (3rd ed., Columbus, O.: J. A. Schulze, 1869). According to Fick (16th German ed., 1877, pp. 49, 53–54; 3rd English ed., pp. 57, 62–63), Luther heard the words, "The just shall live by faith," on the stairs in Rome and came to a full realization of their import on his way back to Germany and then finally in Wittenberg. Another biography known to Walther was Moritz Meurer's *Luthers Leben*. In his 1882 doctrinal essay, *Essays*, 230 [*Vierundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts…1882* (St. Louis: Druckerei des Lutherischen Concordia-Verlags, 1874), 42], Walther refers to an 1878 edition of this work, the "Jugend und Volksausgabe." In the 1870 edition, *Luther's Leben aus den Quellen erzählt*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Justus Naumann's Buchhandlung, 1870), Meurer, p. 39, also refers to Luther's hearing Paul's words on the stairway in Rome and continuing to ponder them upon his return to Wittenberg. Although Meurer offers no specific date for Luther's breakthrough, he clearly suggests that it was some time before the Indulgence Controversy.

Another author of a popular biography from that period, Jules Köstlin, *Luthers Leben*, 10th ed. (Leipzig: D. R. Reisland, 1892), 62, 67–68, says that already at the time of his pilgrimage Luther knew about justification by faith. E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times: The Reformation from a New Perspective* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 175, explains that the story about the stairway and the voice goes back to two late 16th-century historians who depended on Luther's son, Paul. However, Paul was only 11 when his father died. Neither Melanchthon nor Mathesius includes this story in his account of Luther's pilgrimage. According to Schwiebert, 187, Luther mentioned the episode in a sermon preached in 1545 and described the skepticism he experienced on the stairway about releasing someone from purgatory but did not mention the voice or Bible passage.

Walther's understanding of the Ninety-five Theses and the origins of the Reformation.[74]

A second error in Walther's citing of Luther is more serious but quite understandable also. Walther is concerned to shield Luther from the charge of Calvinism, especially with respect to the *Bondage of the Will*. On the one hand, Walther knows that Luther thought this one of his best works.[75] On the other hand, Walther also admits that "on occasion he [Luther] speaks in terms similar to Calvin"; he insists, however, that Luther's purpose was not to teach absolute predestination but "to deny the existence of man's free will in spiritual matters." Walther then cites the Augustana and the Formula in order to make the point that the Lutheran Church teaches that "man's salvation is exclusively a gift of God; in the case of damnation he is exclusively on his own."[76]

So far so good. Walther, however, wants specifically to rescue Luther from the accusation by others (Walther mentions the Iowa Synod[77]) that he, like Calvin, taught that God did not intend all people to be saved. Walther roars back with what appears to be an unanswerable quotation from *Bondage*,

> God does not deplore the death of his people which he works in them, but he deplores the death which he finds in his people and desires to remove from them. . . . For he wills all men to be saved [1 Tim. 2:4], seeing that he comes with the word of salvation to all, and the fault is in the will that does not admit him, as he says in Matthew 23[:37]: "How often would I have gathered your children, and you would not!"[78]

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[74] In his 1843 Reformation sermon (Baseley, 55; *CPR* 33), Walther seems to entertain a later date for Luther's Gospel discovery, but even so, Walther states regarding this experience, "Now Luther rejoiced and his soul was at rest. That was the situation when Tetzel…came to Saxony . . . ."

[75] *Convention Essays*, 38–39 (1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 54).

[76] *Convention Essays*, 39–40 (1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 54–55, 56).

[77] According to Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 156, Gottfried Fritschel accused the Missouri Synod in 1870 of "slavish dependence" on Martin Luther even though he had "obviously erred" in his *Bondage of the Will*. Thus began a preliminary battle regarding predestination between the Missouri and Iowa Synods even before the formation of the Synodical Conference which would shatter over the same subject just a few years after its founding (1872). For details regarding the Missouri/Iowa skirmish, see Hans R. Haug, "The Predestination Controversy in the Lutheran Church in North American" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1968), 109–235.

[78] *Convention Essays*, 40–41 (1873 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 56).

This is a great quotation for Walther's position.[79] Unfortunately, it is also somewhat misleading, for it contains an ellipsis of over 40 lines (in the Walch edition to which the Proceedings refer[80]) that qualifies greatly what Luther is saying. Walther has omitted the reformer's statements regarding the hidden will of God that is very different from the revealed will. So, for example, Walther has omitted this statement, "But God hidden in his majesty neither deplores nor takes away death, but works life, death, and all in all,"[81] and this one, "God does many things that he does not disclose to us in his word; he also wills many things which he does not disclose himself as willing in his word. Thus, he does not will the death of a sinner, according to his word, but he wills it according to that inscrutable will of his."[82]

Now it may be that one can actually rescue *Bondage of the Will* from the charge of Calvinism—and Walther returns to this task a couple more times in his essays to the Western District[83]—but Walther's citation from Luther in this instance is not a sufficient representation of what the reformer

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[79] And it brings Luther right into line with the Formula. This was basic to Walther's thinking about Luther—the reformer and the Lutheran Confessions spoke with one voice. Cf. *LuW* 21 (1875): 67, in which Walther equates Luther with the Book of Concord, "They do not know us who label our theology that of the seventeenth century. As highly as we treasure the immense accomplishments of the great Lutheran dogmaticians of this period, it is nevertheless not really to them that we return, but rather above all to our precious Book of Concord and to Luther, in whom we recognize the man whom God chose as the Moses of his church of the New Covenant, to lead his church, which had fallen into slavery to the Antichrist, out of that slavery. He is the column of smoke and fire of the Word of God, clear and pure as gold as it is." Quoted and translated in Kolb, "Luther for German Americans," 99.

[80] Johann Georg Walch, ed., *D. Martin Luthers sowol in deutsche als lateinischer Sprache verfertigte und aus der letztern in die erstere übersetzte saämtliche Schriften*, 24 vols. (Salle im Magdeburgischen: Druckts und verlegts Johann Justinus Gebauer, 1739–53).

[81] LW 33: 140. "Gott aber, wie er verborgen ist in der Majestät, trauert nicht, nimmt den Tod nicht weg, sondern wirket Tod, Leben, etc., alles in allen." Walch 18: col. 2235.

[82] LW 33: 140. "Es thut Gott viel Dinges, das er uns durchs Wort nicht zeiget; er will auch viel Dinges, das er uns durchs Wort nicht zeiget, dass ers will. Also will er den Tod des Sünders nicht nach dem Willen, den er durchs Wort offenbaret hat; er will aber nach dem verborgenen, unerforschlichen Willen." Walch 18: col. 2236.

[83] 1874, *Convention Essays*, 67–68 (1874 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 33–36); and 1877, *Essays* 2: 142–143 (1877 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 97–100). In the latter case, Predestination, Walther admits that "contrary to our usual practice," he has cited Luther rarely and undertakes to produce only passages that show he was not a Calvinist. Presumably, there were other passages not so clear. Walther also includes (p. 143) the same misleading quotation from *Bondage of the Will* that he had used in 1873.

actually said. Walther omitted the evidence that did not immediately confirm Walther's own position.[84]

In one other matter, Walther also skews evidence from Luther in order to draw a conclusion that Walther prefers but that is not exactly the same as Luther's position, and that has to do with the separation of church and state. Walther viewed the American arrangement as a great blessing. In his 1885 essay, he writes, "We Lutherans in America can never sufficiently thank God that the federal Constitution makes it impossible for the government to favor one religion over another" and "freedom of religion . . . continues to benefit both state and church with the choicest and most precious benefits."[85]

For someone who otherwise had no use for American notions of natural rights and liberties, this is a remarkable position,[86] especially since the first Lutherans had relied so heavily on the temporal authorities to protect them and to promote their faith. The result had been Lutheran state churches. But Walther isn't buying it. For him, the correct position is to limit the state to temporal matters only. This is how he put it in his 1885 essay, "Government has neither the right nor the power to arrogate to itself control over church government, nor to force people to conform to the true faith, or what it may consider to be true faith."[87] Therefore, the later Lutherans were wrong in their defense of the state church system. He states bluntly, "The dogmaticians of the 17th century strayed from Scripture and the Confessions by favoring state churches." But what about Luther and the first Lutherans? Walther insists that "during its initial period . . . the Lutheran Church held firmly to the doctrine that the government has neither the right nor the power to assume control of the church."[88] And who better to cite as proof of this position than Martin Luther?

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[84] Another part of the problem may be that Walther read Luther in the context of later Lutheranism. As Robert Kolb, "Interpreter of Luther," 482, suggests, "[Walther's] knowledge of Luther came from his own reading of the sources, but that reading has been poured into forms and categories dictated by later generations."

[85] *Essays* 2: 288–289 [*Sechsundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts…1885* (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia–Verlag, 1885), 50].

[86] Cf. my essay, "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Public Square in the Era of C.F.W. Walther," in *The Anonymous God: The Church Confronts Civil Religion and American Society*, eds. David L. Adams and Ken Schurb (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 93–119.

[87] *Essays* 2: 277 (1885 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 27).

[88] *Essays* 2: 278, 281 (1885 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 30, 35). Bachmann, 189, asserts that a common view of Protestant America in 1883 regarding the long-range

Walther produces many passages from Luther to the effect that government has authority in temporal matters only, not spiritual. The only problem with this approach is that Walther suppresses the evidence that shows just how broad was Luther's understanding of "temporal." For example, Walther cites Luther's statement in his Commentary on Psalm 82 that the government has the right to prosecute heretics who are also revolutionaries but fails to mention that in that same commentary, Luther also envisions the government's repressing false teachers, settling doctrinal disputes between rival preachers, and silencing preachers who try to bind men's consciences to ceremonies.[89] Similarly, Walther cites Luther's preface to the Small Catechism that "we cannot and should not compel anyone to believe" but does not go on to cite what follows, "Parents and employers should refuse to furnish them [those who refuse to accept instructions in the catechism] with food and drink and should notify them that the prince is disposed to banish such rude people from his land" (SC Preface 12).[90]

Walther could also have known that in Luther's Commentary on Psalm 101,[91] Luther praises David for his management of his kingdom in both spiritual and secular affairs, and in answer to those who object that David is mingling the two kingdoms, Luther insists that "they [the two kinds of authority] should even be mixed into one another like one cake, everyone of them helping the other to be obedient." Luther says explicitly that "if David or a prince teaches or gives orders to fear God and to listen to His Word, he is not acting as a lord of that Word but as an obedient servant." A ruler crosses the line when he commands something contrary to the Word of God. "That," says Luther, "could truly have been called a mingling of spiritual and secular, or of divine and human authority."[92]

Of course, we do not know if Walther was familiar with this particular work. At least, he does not cite it in this series of essays. In any case, he should have known that Luther's position on the role of the godly prince in the affairs of the Church was considerably greater than he made it seem in his essay. Obviously, Walther was willing to see errors in later

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political consequences of the Lutheran Reformation was "the full separation of church and state and . . . unprecedented individual freedom."

[89] *Essays* 2: 285 (1885 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 43). But cf. Walch 5: cols. 1055–59 (LW 13: 61–63).

[90] *Essays* 2: 282 (1885 *Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts*, 37).

[91] Walther should have known this because it was a part of the Walch edition of Luther's works (5: 1172–1295) to which he routinely appeals and which was the basis for the St. Louis edition, already underway.

[92] LW 13: 195–197 (Walch 5: cols. 1250–1253).

Lutherans, but not in Luther himself—if in fact, it was Luther who was wrong and not Walther.

In instances like this one and the other two cited above, we can see the weaknesses of Walther's approach to Luther's doctrine. By equating it with the Scriptures, it can never be wrong. Walther typically interprets it as "orthodox" even if that means glossing over some of the counter-evidence. Similarly, with respect to Luther's biography, the life validates the doctrine. Therefore, Walther overlooks or explains away what others might see as sinful.

We do not do either of these things today. We expect our heroes both to have weaknesses and to make mistakes—and they do. Martin Luther and oh, yes, C.F.W. Walther. But Walther is long gone and so is his whole approach to Martin Luther as hero and infallible teacher. Nonetheless, Walther remains correct in the main things: Luther's doctrine is true because it is scriptural, and God used Luther mightily to recover the gospel. And also with Walther, I find it hard to comprehend how the Lutheran church can really remain Lutheran without a hearty dose of Martin Luther.

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Mission through Witness, Mercy, Life Together in Walther and the First Fathers of Missouri

Albert B. Collver

"Oh, how important it is, therefore, my brethren, that we make the salvation of souls above all things the chief object of our joint labor in the kingdom of Christ," said C.F.W. Walther in the opening sermon for the Synodical Conference in 1872.[1] The "salvation of souls," that is, "mission," is the chief objective of a synod. This sermon is far the only place that C.F.W. Walther expressed such thoughts. The presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) who immediately followed Walther also seem to have the notion that "mission" is one of the primary reasons for the existence of the LCMS. Perhaps through ignorance rather than malicious intent, critics of the LCMS have stated that Walther and those who immediately followed him were not missional. In fact, the allegations do not stop with those involved in the early days of the LCMS, but extend back to Luther and the Reformation. In the late 19th century, Gustav Adolf Warneck alleged that the church which emerged out of the Reformation conducted no mission activity[2] and that the 16th-century reformers did not even have the idea of mission.[3] For many would-be missiologists, Luther and the reformers are of little help in developing a theory for mission. To make matters worse, the Lutheran Confessions seem to be of little help in this mission task, except for a few theologians.[4] If Luther, the other reformers, and the Lutheran Confessions are little to no help in formulating a missional theology, then other sources must be used, most notably non-Lutheran sources. Yet if Luther and the Confessions are not helpful in the

[1] C.F.W. Walther, "On Pure Doctrine for the Salvation of Souls: Opening Sermon for the Synodical Conference 1872," in *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*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison, various translators (Bridgeport, TX: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2009), 199.

[2] Gustav Adolf Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time*, ed. George Robson (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), 8.

[3] Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*, 9.

[4] Klaus Detlev Schulz, "Christ's Ambassadors: A Confessional Perspective on the Missionary Office of the Church," *Logia* VII: 3 (1998): 13–18.

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field of missions, how did C.F.W. Walther arrive at the conclusion that the primary task of the synod was mission?

Since the 2010 convention, the LCMS has embarked on the task of restructuring itself "to accomplish God's mission most effectively."[5] It might be good for us to consider how Walther and his immediate successors viewed mission and compare that missiological theory to what was present in the 20th century. In the process of comparing Walther and the other German-born presidents of the LCMS, we may learn that Walther's definition of mission and use of missiological language is different from that of 20th-century missiologists. Finally, as a way forward, and freely admitting that Walther and his successors did not use this terminology, we would suggest that the early LCMS mission could be categorized or described in terms of witness, mercy, and life together.

I. Missiology in the 20th Century

It is impossible to provide a complete overview of 20th-century missiology within the confines of this paper. Nevertheless, a brief review is necessary in order to contrast contemporary views with those of Walther and other LCMS presidents during the first 75 years of the Synod's existence. Missiology, as many understand it today, only became a separate and discrete discipline in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The father of modern "mission science" was Gustav Warneck (1834–1910), who taught in Halle, Germany.[6] As noted previously, Warnek did not believe the Reformation or Luther even possessed the idea of mission, let alone the desire or ability to carry it out. The belief that the parousia was near, a belief held by Luther and other Lutherans who lived in the 16th and 17th centuries, is another reason cited for the lack of interest in missions by Lutherans.[7] Robert Kolb has noted that Warneck's question to Luther was anachronistic in that Luther did not think in the same categories as the missiologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[8] In fact, the word "mission" in Luther's day did not refer to what we understand as "missions" today. In the 16th century, the term "mission" was understood

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[5] BRTFSSG Taskforce. *THE FINAL REPORT of The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, October 2009), 1.

[6] Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 45.

[7] David J Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 251.

[8] Robert Kolb, "Late Reformation Lutherans on Mission and Confession," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20: 1 (2006): 26–43, 26.

in terms of the Father sending his Son into the world. Toward the end of the 16th century, the Jesuits began to use the term "mission" in the sense that we are accustomed today.[9] In the field of modern missiology, the Jesuits from the Roman Catholic side, and the Pietists from the Protestant side, are seen as the proponents of the contemporary understanding of mission.[10] A common theme emerging in the history of missions is how the "official Church" resisted these movements. When reading the missiological literature, one almost gets the impression that missiologists have a secret *gnosis* (knowledge) that needs to be shared with the church at large if the church is going to continue to exist. This is perhaps in part connected to the tension between witness and confession.

The group that "saved" missions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries is seen as the laity.[11] This corresponds to the rise in Bible and mission societies, which was the *Zeitgeist* of the day. One mission society was connected to Wihlem Löhe and contributed to the founding of the LCMS. However, it should be noted that Löhe's mission society sent pastors rather than lay people to serve in overseas missions. We should also note that Walther and his immediate successors were contemporaries of and sometimes benefitted from these mission societies. Generally speaking, Walther and his immediate successors did not sing the praises of or give ringing endorsements for the mission societies.[12] As mission societies from various denominations worked in the same areas, many people began to wonder why Christians were not united in their approach to missions, and in a way that would consolidate resources to reach the heathen. The modern ecumenical movement emerged out of the mission society movement, from which is derived the notion that "doctrine divides but service unites."[13] Closely connected to this idea is the notion that witness and confession or doctrine are at odds with each other. Thus, the missiology movement developed in the milieu of Bible and mission societies and the ecumenical movement.

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[9] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 2.

[10] Shenk, Wilbert R. "New Wineskins for New Wine: Toward a Post-Christendom Ecclesiology," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29: 2 (2005): 73–79, 74.

[11] Shenk, "New Wineskins for New Wine," 75.

[12] See the comment Francis Pieper makes about women, who murder their young through abortion but seek to save heathen children through their work in mission societies. Francis Pieper, "The Assassination of President McKinley and Public Misfortune: What Does God Desire to Teach Us through the Public Misfortune That Has Come Upon Our Country? 1901," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 609–612.

[13] See Albert B. Collver, "Works of Mercy and Church Unity: Does Service Unify and Doctrine Divide?" *Concordia Journal* 36: 4 (2010): 342–353.

The next stage in the development of the missiology in the 20th century was the movement of "mission" from societies (what we would call para-church organizations today) to the church itself. In fact, "mission" was to become the defining principle of the church. This move occurred in 1932 when Karl Barth presented a paper in which he defined the church as a missional community.[14] Until this time, the church had been described in terms of how it could be located and what went on inside the church. Historically, the first definition of the church is found in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, written in 1530. After the Augsburg Confession was presented to Emperor Charles V, various Protestant groups developed a confessional statement about the nature of the church, as did Rome in the Council of Trent.[15] Karl Barth's definition of the church as a "missional community" cast doubt on all previous confessions and definitions of the church, including the Augsburg Confession, at least among missiologists. Two years later, responding to Karl Barth's definition of a "missional community" and his emphasis on *actio Dei*, Karl Hartenstein[16] coined the term "missio Dei" ("the sending of God") to indicate that churches should be about God's mission rather than their own mission.[17]

Hartenstein incorporated Barth's Trinitarian theology into the theology of mission. *Missio Dei* is viewed as an attribute of God flowing from his Trinitarian nature: the Father sending His Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. The concept of *missio Dei* has been called a "Copernican revolution" in mission theology, resulting in a shift from the church existing to do mission, to the church existing because of mission, and becoming a participant in God's mission. Bosch explains, "God's salvific work precedes both the church and mission. We should not subordinate mission to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*."[18] In other words, the church is not the source of missions nor is it the goal of missions. The church and the planting of churches is not the goal of missions according to *missio Dei*. The term *missio Dei* became increasingly popular in the later

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[14] Derrick Lemons, "The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth*, Winter (2009): 51–55, 51.

[15] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 248.

[16] Karl Hartenstein (1894–1952) was a Wurttemburg prelate and former director of the Basel Mission. He was a supporter of the confessing church movement and a proponent of ecumenism.

[17] Lemons, "The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics," 51.

[18] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 370.

part of the 20th century.[19] Building on the concept of *missio Dei*, David Bosch and Darrell Guder coined "the term missional church. They hoped to forever marry the church's identity to mission."[20] The language and terminology of the missiology movement had its birth in the Reformed tradition, most notably with Karl Barth and the University of Basel in Switzerland.[21] The *missio Dei* movement arose out of Neo-orthodoxy, a compromising reaction to liberal theology. The Church Growth Movement also has a connection to *missio Dei.* The Church Growth Movement is a conservative reaction of evangelicalism that attempts to understand the rapid growth of the church, primarily in India, during the early- and mid-20th century.[22]

Since *missio Dei* is seen as an attribute of God, it affects how the church is understood and defined. *Missio Dei* also effects the roles of laity, clergy, and church structure. Article VII of the Augsburg Confession confesses that the holy, Christian church is "the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are distributed according to the gospel."[23] Walther in *Church and Ministry* builds upon AC VII when he says, "The church in the proper sense of the term is the congregation of saints (Thesis 1)," and that the church can be recognized by "the marks of the pure preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution (Thesis 5)."[24] For Walther and the Lutheran Confessions, the church is where believers are gathered around the Word and the Sacraments. In contrast, the theology of *missio Dei* and the missional church movement believe that missions must define the ecclesiology.[25]

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[19] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 2.

[20] Lemons, "The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics," 51.

[21] David Bosch studied at the University of Basel under Oscar Cullman. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bosch (accessed January 20, 2011).

[22] David J Bosch, "'Ecumenicals' and 'Evangelicals': a growing relationship?" *Ecumenical Review* 40, no. 3–4 (1988): 458–472, 459. Bosch mentions that, because of the Evangelicals' view of scriptures and a pessimistic view of man, mission and evangelism are seen in terms of bringing the lost into the church with the goal of expanding the church numerically.

[23] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 42.

[24] C.F.W. Walther, *Church and Ministry: Witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry*. tr. J.T. Mueller. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 19.

[25] Richard H. Bliese, "The mission matrix: mapping out the complexities of a missional ecclesiology," *Word & World* 26: 3 (2006): 237–248, 239.

So what does an "ecclesiology driven by a theology of missions"[26] look like? In order to understand the advantages of a missional ecclesiology, the problems with historic ecclesiology need to be described. David Bosch describes the problem with Article VII of the Augsburg Confession as he sees it:

> The church was defined in terms of what happens inside its four walls, not in terms of its calling in the world. The verbs used in the Augustana are all in the passive voice: the church is a place where the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. It is a place where something is done, not a living organism doing something . . . The church of pure doctrine was, however, a church without mission, and its theology more scholastic than apostolic.[27]

According to Bosch, the church of the Augustana is a church without mission. The church has to be doing and sending, rather than receiving Christ's gifts. Other authors argue that a post-Christendom, missional ecclesiology must replace the static model of historic ecclesiology in order to engage the culture of the day.[28] A missional ecclesiology also is a post-denominational ecclesiology, since a denominational ecclesiology focuses on what churches *do*, whereas a missional ecclesiology focuses on what a church *is*.[29]

According to the chief missiological thinkers of the 20th century, the church of the Reformation inherited from the reformers and from their creeds the notion that the church

> is "a place where certain things happen" (i.e. the right preaching of the gospel, the right administration of the sacraments, the exercise of church discipline). In this century, Hunsberger said, we have re-claimed the biblical notion that the church is "a body of people sent on a mission."[30]

This missional ecclesiology envisions the church as a "sent community" rather than a "vendor of services," with the services being the word and

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[26] Bliese, "The Mission Matrix," 245.

[27] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 249.

[28] Shenk, "New Wineskins for New Wine," 73–79.

[29] Craig Van Gelder, "Rethinking denominations and denominationalism in light of a missional ecclesiology," *Word & World* 25: 1 (2005): 23–33, 31.

[30] George R. Hunsberger, "Birthing missional faithfulness: accents in a North American movement." *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 365 (2003): 145–152, 146.

sacraments. This view represents a "fundamental alteration in the way the church exists."[31]

Indeed, the fundamental alteration in the way the church exists includes changes in the role of the pastor, the liturgy, and in the structure of the church. Instead of being the place where Christ bestows his gifts of forgiveness to his people through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments, worship becomes a celebration and a sending event.[32] Missional worship always is a sending. The pastor is to become a missionary to the congregation, sending them into their community.[33] Just as *missio Dei* is viewed as an attribute of God, making him into a sending God, so too, is it to become an attribute of the church.[34] Leadership in a missional church needs to be more than preaching and teaching; it needs to be interactive and apostolic.[35] Finally, ordination is seen as undermining the priesthood of all believers by minimizing the gifts of leadership found in the non-ordained.[36] In summary, a missional ecclesiology, as expounded by the chief missional theologians of the 20th century, promotes fundamental changes in how the church has been historically conceived. First, missional ecclesiology shifts the focus away from creeds and confessions. Second, it demphasizes the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. Third, it alters the concept of worship from receiving Christ's gifts to a celebration and sending service. Fourth, in planting churches, it deemphasizes the need for professionally trained clergy, and presses the laity into service as the ones sent out into the world. This view of church and mission is very different than that of C.F.W. Walther and the other presidents of the Missouri Synod's first seventy-five years.

II. Mission in the House of Missouri's Fathers

For C.F.W. Walther and those who immediately followed him, mission was about the salvation of souls, which occured by connecting people to the gospel and the sacraments located in a Lutheran congregation. For Walther, to borrow from the motto from the Bleckmar Mission, Lutheran

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[31] Hunsberger, "Birthing Missional Faithfulness," 150.

[32] Darrell L. Guder, "Missional Structures: The Particular Community," in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 221–247.

[33] Guder, "Missional Structures," 241.

[34] Guder, "Missional Structures," 222.

[35] Alan J. Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership: Equipping God's People for Mission." ed. by Darrell L. Guder, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 183–220.

[36] Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership," 195.

missions lead to Lutheran congregations and Lutheran congregations do Lutheran mission. While the term *missio Dei* had not been formulated, nor missional theology conceived, Walther probably would not have been surprised by their development. Church union efforts and some mission societies promoted similar concepts in his day. Walther did not promote mission at the expense of confession, as he saw mission (witness) as integrally connected to the confession of the church. Walther also taught that part of the life of the church involved taking care of those in need, that is, showing mercy or compassion to people. He also believed that the church had a fellowship or life together in promoting the goal of the salvation of souls. It would be irresponsible historical revisionism to suggest that Walther, and the four LCMS presidents who followed him, spoke of or described the church using the terminology "witness, mercy, life together." That being said, I would suggest that Walther and his successors spoke about the church can be described in terms of witness, mercy, life together. I would also suggest that such a description is helpful for the church today, both in countering errant views of mission and in describing the LCMS national and international mission work today.[37]

The current emphasis for the LCMS is witness, mercy, and life together.[38] In brief summary, witness (*martyria*) in Scriptures refers to the testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who has come to save his people. Witness (*martyria*) is the proclamation of the gospel and the bestowal of Christ's forgiving gifts. Another aspect of witness (*martyria*) is confession. The Gospel of John uses the word *martyria* in both ways—to describe the testimony or witness given and as a synonym for *homologein*, to confess. Witness and confession, mission and confession, mission and doctrine go hand in hand. Mercy (*diakonia*) is compassion and service for those inside and outside the church in their physical needs. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus had compassion on people in need (Mark 6:34). Before Jesus was crucified, he prayed that the church would be one (John 17:11, 21, 23). He desired for his church to be in fellowship to have a life together (*koinonia*) with his Father. Jesus' ministry on earth involved *martyria* (witness), *diakonia* (mercy), *koinonia* (life together). In a similar way, the church's work is patterned after this threefold emphasis and can also be found in Walther and the early years of the LCMS.

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[37] The LCMS convention held in Houston, Texas, in July 2010, voted to restructure the work of the church into two categories: national mission and international mission.

[38] For a brief introduction to the threefold emphasis of witness, mercy, and life together, see Albert B. Collver, "Witness, Mercy, Life Together." *The Lutheran Witness*. Saint Louis, MO, January 2011. Available at http://bit.ly/ibD6Lq (accessed January 18, 2011).

While quotations from people can be arranged in ways to support positions and ideas never intended by the original authors, at the dedication of Walther's Mausoleum in 1892, Francis Pieper provided a summary of C.F.W. Walther's teachings. Pieper writes:

> Finally, Walther did not neglect to show the congregations their Christian duties. He taught: The entire congregation is to be concerned for and is therefore answerable to Christ to see that God's Word holds sway pure and clear and richly in its midst. The entire Christian congregation is thus the spiritual society [*Verein*] established by God, that is, to place the light of divine truth upon the lampstand. Walther taught: The entire congregation has the duty to see to it that in its midst, Christian discipline is exercised, in order to guard against offense and so that the fallen brother be returned to the way of life. The Christian congregation is therefore the society established by God, in which the members are duty-bound to aid each other toward the acquisition of the final goal, the acquisition of salvation. Walther taught: The entire Christian congregation is duty-bound to take on also the physical need of its brothers, knowing that in these suffering brothers, Christ suffers, and that in them, Christ is served. Walther taught: The entire Christian congregation is given the concern for the spreading of the Church through the preaching of the Gospel. The establishment, maintenance, and upkeep of Christian institutions are duties inseparably bound together with the Christian estate. The entire Christian congregation is therefore the mission society established by Christ.[39]

As Pieper explains Walther's teaching, the theme of witness, mercy, and life together emerges. First, the church is a society created by God, where the word of God is preached. The witness, that is, the proclamation of the Gospel, creates the church, a life together, for the people of God. The divine truth is placed on the lampstand for all to see; this is mission. The diligence to the truth of God's word is the flipside of witness, that is, it is confession. Confession and mission, confession and witness, belong together. Without the truth, without pure doctrine, there can be no mission. As part of the church's life together, mercy is shown to those in physical need. As part of the church's life together, Christian institutions such as seminaries, schools, publishing houses, et. al., are established and maintained. Finally, the Christian congregation is established as a "mission society" to do the work of witness, mercy, and life together.

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[39] Francis Pieper, "Address at the Dedication of the Walther Mausoleum 1892," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 603.

Walther specifically talks about the connection between mission and confession. In his *On Pure Doctrine for the Salvation of Souls*, which was preached at the opening of the Synodial Conference in 1872, Walther said:

> As you know, my brethren, it is a common saying in our time that the continual urging of the doctrine is a most pernicious tendency, only hindering, yea, destroying the kingdom of God. People say, "Instead of disputing so much about the doctrine, you ought rather to think of taking care of the souls and of leading them to Christ." But all who speak this way certainly do not know what they say and what they do. As it would be folly to chide the tiller of the ground for his diligence to obtain good seed, and to demand that he should be eager only to obtain good fruit, so it would be folly to chide those that take heed unto the doctrine above all things, and to demand of them that they should rather endeavor only to save souls. For as the tiller of the ground must be eager to obtain good seed above all things, if he wishes to reap good fruit, so must the Church care for sound doctrine above all things, if she wishes to save souls.[40]

Even in Walther's day, people were pitting pure doctrine against the mission cause. Yet Walther rejects this false distinction and rightly points out that confession and pure doctrine ensure that the seed being planted is good seed. Without confession and pure doctrine, the witness or mission effort will plant bad seed that will either not sprout or will produce a sickly plant. Walther clearly ties the salvation of souls to the proclamation of pure doctrine.

In a similar way, in his 1900 address, "We Are God's Fellow Workers," the LCMS President Friedrich Pfotenhauer said,

> That a preacher or missionary who claims the Gospel is not enough to build the Church, and therefore one must employ all manner of "new methods," is an unfaithful servant, and despite all his business, will receive an evil reward. Let us not even attempt to convert men with methods of our own choosing, but always remember that we are God's servants and that we, according to His will, are to use no other means than His Word and Sacraments.[41]

Pfotenhauer's point is that pastors and missionaries as servants of God are bound to use the methods that the Lord himself has instituted and man-

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[40] C.F.W. Walther, "On Pure Doctrine for the Salvation of Souls: Opening Sermon for the Synodical Conference 1872," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 198.

[41] Friedrich Pfotenhauer, "We Are God's Fellow Workers 1900," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 723.

dated, namely, the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The use of methods or techniques not prescribed by the Lord for the purpose of mission makes the pastor or missionary an unfaithful servant. Doctrine and mission go together. Once again, we see that the challenges and temptations facing the pastor and missionary are not new; that is why St. Paul instructed Timothy to "guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge'" (1 Timothy 6:20).

Pieper provides good insight on how to handle the charge that pure doctrine gets in the way of mission. He did this in an opinion on a situation Missouri Synod missionaries encountered in India in 1926. The missionaries there found that the church's teaching against polygamy hindered their mission work. So a request was sent back to St. Louis asking if polygamy could be permitted among converted people in India. Pieper wrote back,

> On the contrary, we remind ourselves that our Savior is certainly more concerned with the spread of His Church than we are. Now if the insistence on monogamy were really a hindrance for mission, Christ would not have so strictly bound the church of the New Testament to monogamy, as is the case in Matthew 19.[42]

Pieper's response is appropriate for handling nearly any circumstance where faithfulness to pure doctrine is alleged to hurt mission. Christ our Savior is more concerned with the growth of his church than are we; he would not give us a teaching that is harmful to his church. Once again, we see the emphasis of witness and confession working hand-in-hand.

Pfotenhauer also provides a glimpse into how active the Missouri Synod was in the missionary endeavor, which may serve as a sort of commentary on the various mission societies of his day. In his "The Lord's Sending of the Seventy," delivered in 1898, Pfotenhauer wrote:

> It is a fact that presently no district in our Synod, nor another church body, can point to such evident results in the area of inner mission as our Minnesota and Dakota District. Our messengers have moved over great territories, entire states, as though they had wings. In hundreds of places, where the feet of those we've sent [*Sendlinge*] have touched the ground, Christian congregations now bloom. Often as a result of such a mission trip, an entire garland of preaching stations arises. Also at such places, where at first only a few souls listened, but nevertheless were diligently and regularly visited by our missionaries, the

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[42] Franicis Pieper, "A Gutachen on Polygamy 1926," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 666.

> Lord blessed this faithful yearlong ministry of His servant. The number of believers has gradually increased so that they now have begun to become an independent parish.[43]

Pfotenhauer joyfully proclaims that no other church body can match the results of the mission efforts in the Minnesota and Dakota District. The mission strategy is remarkably simple: preach the Gospel and start congregations. Lutheran mission indeed leads to Lutheran congregations. Pfotenhauer also notes how such reports of mission brings joy to the congregation and encourages us in our life together.[44]

The fathers of the LCMS also were concerned with the church's life together. In a day when great distances separated pastors and congregations and when communication was not as good as today, it was very easy for a pastor to become so immersed in his congregational work that he lost sight of the larger church around him. Writing "On Christian Stewardship," Pieper addressed this very concern. He writes,

> You have the duty as a Christian to keep your own eyes open. Perhaps you do not even keep a church paper, such as the *Lutheran Witness* or *Der Lutheraner*, which will keep you in constant touch with the events and the needs of the kingdom of God. It is not only a small, but a very great shortcoming, and truly a disgrace, if there are congregation members who do not read a church paper.[45]

Part of Christian stewardship, part of our life together, is staying abreast of the events within our Synod so that we know who and what to pray for as well as where our support is most needed. Who would have thought that reading the *Reporter* or the *Lutheran Witness* was part of our life together in the church? There are many other areas where Walther and the other fathers of the Missouri Synod wrote about our life together as it pertained to Lutheran day schools, seminaries, and synodical gatherings.

III. Conclusion

Pfotenhauer echoes Walther in stating the central purpose of the LCMS:

> We exist and have founded a synod in order, as much as possible, to bring men to salvation, and thereby to check the misery in Christendom and the number of the lost in the poor blind heathen world. If we

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[43] Friedrich Pfotenhauer,"The Lord's Sending of the Seventy: An Encouragement to Mission! 1898," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 718.

[44] Pfotenhauer, "The Lord's Sending of the Seventy," 719.

[45] Francis Pieper, "On Christian Stewardship: The Gifts of the Christians," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 656.

> do not do this, if we fail to seek the honor of Christ and the salvation of souls, Luther fears, as he says, "then may the dear God convene a synod, namely a 'council of angels' in order to carry out his judgment."[46]

For Walther and the LCMS presidents who came after him, the purpose of the Synod was to bring men to salvation. All the work that the LCMS did was directed to this task and goal. Pure doctrine and confession assisted the witness of the church by ensuring good seed was sown. Congregations were started to hold the pure truth of God on a lampstand for their communities to see and come to hear the gospel and receive the sacraments. Works of mercy were shown to people in physical need. Hospitals and orphanages were built not only to take care of the needy, but also to provide a place where the gospel could be taught. Institutions, schools, and other agencies of the Synod were established and maintained to promote our life together in the body of Christ. Educational institutions such as Lutheran day schools and seminaries were part of the church's life together to ensure that the witness of the gospel would continue for their children and grandchildren. Hopefully, this brief survey into Walther and the first fathers of Missouri encourages the exploration of other examples where the Missouri Synod carried out witness, mercy, and life together. Now that the Synod in convention this past July has decided to categorize all the work that the Synod does as mission, it is more important than ever to recall how the Synod in the past had a holistic view of mission that included the emphasis of witness, mercy, and life together.

Words from Walther's "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1879" provide an apt conclusion:

> A synod is to be a living member of the body of Christ, and together with every other living member of that most sacred body in the whole world, it must do whatever it possibly can to spread Christ's kingdom and, wherever possible, to win for Christ and to lead into His sheepfold all those whom Christ has bought with His precious blood, and ultimately to lead them into the salvation of everlasting life.[47]

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[46] Friedrich Pfotenhauer, "Doctrine and Mission: The Purpose of Synod Meetings 1892," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 698.

[47] C.F.W. Walther, "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1879," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 328.

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Eduard Preuss and C.F.W. Walther

Roland F. Ziegler

On Friday, January 26, 1872, in Saint Mary of Victories church at 744 South Third Street in St. Louis, the second oldest Roman Catholic church in the city and center of the German Roman Catholic population at that time, an adult was baptized. Only two months before, he was a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Eduard Preuss was received into communion with Rome. From all appearances, there was no long gradual change in Preuss; the defection was sudden and unexpected.

One might expect that this defection caused controversy, but there was no controversy in Missouri. There was no lengthy exchange and lively theological debate between Walther and Preuss on the doctrine of justification, comparable to the discussions on church and ministry or on election between Walther and diverse theologians. Preuss left, and that was it. Seven years later Preuss gave an account of his story in his anonymously published book "*In Praise of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin.*"[1] This study will give you an outline of the story, then analyze Preuss's reasons for leaving. Since this is the Walther anniversary, if and how Walther in his *Law and Gospel* addressed the issues raised by Preuss will also be investigated.

I. The Story

Friedrich Reinhold Eduard Preuss was born July 10, 1834, in Königsberg, Prussia, and earned a licentiate in theology (the equivalent of a Th.D.), a Ph.D., and the *venia legendi* (the permission to lecture at the university) at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität in Berlin.[2] As a *Privatdozent* he was allowed to lecture but was not salaried, so that he made a

[1] *Zum Lobe der unbefleckten Empfängniß der Allerseligsten Jungfrau* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1879), 181–227.

[2] The main sources for his biography are his book *Zum Lobe der unbefleckten Empfängniß der Allerseligsten Jungfrau,* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1879), 181–227, which was published anonymously; C.F.W. Walther, "Ein Abfall", *Der Lutheraner* 28 (1871/72), 73–75; and the chapter on him in Ludwig Ernest Fuerbringer's *Eighty Eventful Years* (St. Louis, Mo: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), 230–238. See also David August Rosenthal, *Convertitenbilder aus dem Neunzehnten Jahrhundert* vol. 1, *Deutschland Part 3*, 3rd ed. (Regensburg: Verlagsanstalt vorm. G. J. Manz, 1901), 663–672.

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living teaching at the Friedrich-Wihelms-Gymnasium (a preparatory school). He devoted himself primarily to the editing of classical Lutheran texts. He edited Martin Chemnitz' *Examination of the Council of Trent,*[3] Johann Wilhelm Baier's *Compendium,*[4] and started the reprint of Johann Gerhard's *Loci theologici*.[5] Out of his edition of Chemnitz' *Examen* grew his monograph on the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary.[6] His *Justification of a Sinner before God* came out of the controversy started by Hengstenberg.[7]

Preuss's career came to a sudden halt when he was accused of improper relations with his pupils.[8] He resigned from his position and, without any prospects in teaching, friends collected money for him to emigrate to America. There he was welcomed by the Missouri Synod after Karl Büchsel, the General Superintendent of Berlin, vouched for his innocence.[9] He became a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and taught Church history, and Old and New Testament from 1869 till 1871.[10]

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[3] Martin Chemnitz, *Examen Concilii Tridentini* (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1861); reprinted 1915 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung) and 1972 (Wiesbaden: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft). Preuss wrote an introduction and a supplement dealing with the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary.

[4] Jo. Guilelmi Baier, *Compendium theologiae positivae: secundum editionem anni 1694, denuo accuratissime typis exscribendum curavit vitam B. Baieri ac indices necessarios adjecit Ed. Preuss* (Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1864).

[5] Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici,* vol. 1–5 (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1863–67). Vol. 5–9 had different editors.

[6] *Die Römische Lehre von der unbefleckten Empfängniss: Aus den Quellen dargestellt und aus Gottes Wort widerlegt* (Berlin: Gustav Schlawitz, 1865). For English translation see *The Romish Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception Traced From Its Sources*. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1867).

[7] Eduard Preuss, *Die Rechtfertigung des Sünders vor Gott. Aus der heiligen Schrift dargelegt* (Berlin: Gustav Schlawitz, 1868). A second edition, was an identical reprint of the first, was published in 1871.

[8] Cf. Walther, *Briefe* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1916), 2: 157; "Lic. Dr. E. Preuss," *Lehre und Wehre* 15 (1869), 203. Preuss himself says that he was accused "durchaus tadelnswerte Zärtlichkeiten gegen einzelne seiner Schüler erlaubt" (Preuss, *Lobe*, 193) and says that this was exaggerated but there was a truth in it, since the ideal of his youth was Horace, not St. Aloysius. He was also accused of using improper and coarse language in class when talking about their late majesties Louis XV of France and Katharine II of Russia, whose personal life was admittedly not above reproach. Here too, Preuss confesses that the accusations were exaggerated, but that he had, influenced by the style and language of Luther and the polemicists of the 16th and 17th century, used "unclean terms."

[9] Cf. C.F.W. Walther, "Lic. Dr. E. Preuss," *Lehre und Wehre* 15 (1869), 203–210

[10] He published during this time "Was lehren die neueren orthodox sein wollenden Theologen von der Inspiration?" *Lehre und Wehre* 17 (1871), 33–45, 65–76, 97–106, 129–

During this time he married Paulina Concordia Schuricht (1850–1935). At the end of 1871, Preuss suddenly resigned his position at the seminary; he was received into the Roman Catholic Church by baptism in early 1872. He became the editor of the German language Roman Catholic periodical *Amerika.* In 1887 he received the *Laetare* medal, awarded to outstanding Roman laypeople, from Notre Dame University. He did not publish any more books except, as mentioned above, one anonymously in which he retracted his critique of the dogma of the immaculate conception and gave an account of his rejection of Lutheranism. He died on July 17, 1904, in St. Louis, Missouri.

II. Reasons for Defecting to Rome

The only source for Preuss's reasons for defecting to Rome is the account he published seven years later. As with all such accounts of a change in denomination, there is the danger that one's past is rewritten to fit one's present, not necessarily to give an account, as Ranke put it, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*" ("as it actually was").[11] With this caveat in mind, that which follows reflects Preuss's own view of things.[12]

The most prominent feature in Preuss's account was the experience of failure. What got him to doubt was the dissonance between his zealous defense of pure doctrine and the personal and professional disaster he experienced in Germany. The "*Lutheranergott*" ("god of the Lutherans"), as he called the deity, he worshipped when he was a Lutheran, a deity, as he stated, that was half-forgotten when Preuss had started to defend him, had allowed that his livelihood was destroyed.[13] "Truly, the god of the Lutherans has to be a completely impotent being, more impotent even than 'the absolute Spirit' of the rationalists, of whose nullity the editor of Gerhard's *Loci* [i.e. Preuss] had previously made fun."[14] Of course, Preuss knew that the Christians had suffered persecution before. But their persecutions had glorified God's cause and led to the conversion of many.

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141 (Fuerbringer, op. cit., 233f) and "Die Lehre vom Hades" *Lehre und Wehre* 17 (1871), 289–295, 321–329, 353–366 (Walther, op. cit., 74).

[11] Leopold von Ranke, *Geschichten der romanischen und Germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Verlag von Dunckler & Humblot, 1885), VII.

[12] I did not engage in any archival research. There might exist material in the archives of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, or in the unpublished correspondence of C.F.W. Walther that would shed more light on the whole affair.

[13] Preuss obviously did not believe that the God whom Lutherans worship is the true God. Therefore, in quotations taken from Preuss, I do not capitalize "God." I know it is an offence to a Christian to repeat Preuss's blasphemy, but in the interest of the historical record I cannot but do it; cf. SD VII, 67.

[14] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 199.

Preuss's sufferings led not to the increase of the church, rather, the liberals triumphed—and that was it. There was no happy ending for him.

Preuss saw this story also repeated in the fate of the Lutheran Church. Elector John the Constant was incarcerated and lost most of his territory. The university he founded, Jena, had become a bullwark of the Enlightenment by the 19th century.[15] The city of Magdeburg, our Lord's chancellery during the interim, was destroyed in 1631 by a Roman Catholic army, and there was no Lutheranism in it left at the time he wrote. Lutheranism in general had turned into pietism and rationalism and then into atheism. "The poor god of the Lutherans had to watch calmly, as other, more powerful ones, robbed millions of his children."[16] Thus, it is the experience of God's absence and his perceived non-interference in the world, his experienced powerlessness, that made Preuss question his faith. The God whom Preuss experienced was a God who lacked the predicates of omnipotence and wisdom.[17] In contrast to Lutheranism that was in shambles after three hundred years, stood the Roman Church, which was powerful, making converts, and was not riled by apostasy from the faith. Thus, behind Preuss's problems was the expectation that God's might is manifested in the preservation and growth of his church.

The experience of failure made him also question his belief that justification is through faith alone by the righteousness of Christ alone. Rather vividly he describes his experience on his way to the United States. His ship got into a ferocious storm, and he feared for his life when he heard that the ship had a leak. He started to prepare for death. With all his strength he clung to the "bloody sufferings of Christ." This and this alone he put before God and at last, literally, struggled with him, as he had learned it from Luther. But to all his ardent prayers, indeed, to every outcry of his deadly wounded heart an answer sounded, which, though not spoken by human lips, drowned out the tumult of the elements: "And their works followed them" [Rev 14:13]. And now they appeared out of the night, all his works, from the first moment of his conscious life, in such a horrible detail, that, lying on his face, he trembled. A long, long series, they came, steadily looking at him: [*Opera tua sumus, non te deseremus*.] We are your works, and will not forsake you. "Christ's blood and righteousness, that is my jewelry and garment of honor, with that I will endure before

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[15] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 199. What is said here is actually true of Johann Friedrich I, the Magnanimous, the son of John the Constant, who died in 1532.

[16] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 201.

[17] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 201.

God when I will enter heaven."[18] But the almighty God opened his living word: "I will give each according to his works" [Rev 2:23]. And it was, as if in an instant, all the texts of Scripture were before him in shining letters, which he had twisted in his books so cruelly. The one who has been "justified" by mere faith had received every fortnight the Lord's Supper, had with him in his pocket a copy of the Psalms, had written books for his and his God's honor, but to take care of the sick, to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, or give drink to the thirsty, he had made never his business. Good works in the sense of the judge he did not have. But more than once he had acted against his conscience. Could then—could his fate be anything but damnation, if there is one atom of truth in the Bible?[19]

The ship did not sink, and when Preuss arrived in New York he did continue to contemplate his fate and that of Lutheranism and wondered whether the providence of God was manifested in it. But he also sent a letter to Walther and was welcomed into the Missouri Synod.[20] His affliction did not subsume completely, but, as he said, when he was perturbed, he prayed the hymn "Trust patiently, my soul, trust in the Lord."[21] His peace at the "American Zion"[22] was disturbed by the defection of Hermann Michael Baumstark, a teacher at the *Gymnasium*, then located with the seminary in St. Louis, who joined the Roman Catholic Church.[23] Baumstark put the thought in Preuss's head that it was not the word of God that had built the Missouri Synod and made it into an orthodox Lutheran Church, but the personal genius of Walther (i.e., that the "miraculous things" worked in the Missouri Synod were man-made, not God's work).[24] Additionally, Preuss continued to be attacked in journals.[25]

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[18] Preuss quotes here the first stanza of the hymn by Zinzendorf "Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit." In English, a free cento translation by Charles Wesley is known as "Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness." Unfortunately, it is so free that its first stanza in does not convey the meaning which is decisive here, so that I have to supply a prose translation.

[19] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 196–197.

[20] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 198–201.

[21] "Harre, meine Seele," Friedrich Räder, 1848. For an English translation, see Peter Krey http://peterkrey.wordpress.com/category/my-poems/translation/ (accessed 16 January 2011).

[22] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 201.

[23] Hermann Michael (1839–1876) wrote with his brother Reinhold a book about their defection: "Unser Weg zur katholischen Kirche," Freiburg: Herder, 1870.

[24] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 203.

[25] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 203, mentions examples from Roman Catholic and Protestant journals, but does not give the names of the journals.

In his continued study of Scripture, he became convinced that the Lutheran doctrine was wrong. He was convinced that a Christian is saved by faith *and* works by passages like Matthew 7:24–27 ("Everyone who hears my word and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rocks"); by Jesus' rejection of those who only say "Lord, Lord" (Luke 6:46), in which description he found himself, in his defence of pure doctrine but lack of works of mercy, and by James 1:25 (not the hearer, but the doer of the work will be saved in his deed).[26] The true order of salvation Preuss found in Acts 10:34–35. It was not that first one was a poor sinner, then repentance and faith and acceptance by Christ. But rather, as in the case of Cornelius, it was first good works, especially alms, then Cornelius received full grace and came to be born again.

After Preuss had resigned from his professorship at Concordia Seminary in 1871, he started to study the decrees of the Council of Trent. Now the questions of ecclesiology came to the forefront. If the church is the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim 3:15), then it must exist continuously. But since the Lutheran church did not exist continuosly, therefore it cannot be the church.[27] Additionally, since the gates of hell will not prevail against the church, it could not be that the church existed only in a corrupted way, as the Lutheran church did between 1750 and 1839. The church is to be recognized, according to Roman Catholic doctrine, by its fruits, following Matthew 7:16, 20, not by its causes, word and sacrament, as the Lutherans teach. The fruits of the Roman Catholic Church can be seen in its saints, whereas Luther had broken a solemn vow and used hateful, coarse and indecent language.[28] The Roman Catholic Church, so Preuss reasoned, had retained the fundamental Christians doctrines, whereas Lutheranism had given birth to rationalism and atheism.[29] The Roman Catholic Church, so Preuss thought, had kept the unity for which Christ had prayed in John 17, whereas the Reformation brought disunity, as the split between Zwingli and Luther shows. This split, then, fostered indifferentism and atheism in Europe.

But what about communion under one kind and priestly celibacy? This raised the question of the authority of the church. Preuss found a solution

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[26] Preuss, *Empfängniß,* 205.

[27] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 217.

[28] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 219.

[29] I have to interrupt here the description and put in a commentary: as far as I know, neither the French encyclopedists, the epitome of rationalism like Baron D'Holbach and Denis Diderot, or somebody like Voltaire, or Thomas Jefferson, or Thomas Paine and Ellery Channing, chief theologian of unitarianism were brought up Lutheran.

in the so-called Apostolic Council of Acts 15. As the council forbade the consuming of blood, but the later church made no issue of it anymore, it shows that the church has the authority to make and abolish regulations.

With all the rather nasty things Preuss has to say about the Lutheran church, he also sees some good in it. The emphasis on the concept of the church, a reverent traditionalism which has a certain *fides implicita*, and the strong authority of Walther were all positives. The latter proved to him that the church is not governed by an "impersonal word of God," but by a person. The church needs "a supreme judge in matters of faith and handler of its order like the daily bread, yea, that without such a monarchical head it cannot exist."[30] After all, the pedigree of Pius IX was more impressive than that of Walther, who was "irrespective of his most excellent capabilites, but the successor of that preacher from Dresden, whom his own congregation in 1839, for the weightiest reasons, had ferried across the Mississippi at the 'devil's stove.'"[31]

In summary, Preuss was moved to defect to Rome by a theological interpretation of his life in which he interpreted his sufferings as the expressions of the impotence of the god whom he served. This was because in the face of the accusing law he found no peace in the gospel; rather, he came to reject the Lutheran understanding of the gospel. He did not properly distinguish law and gospel and did not see how this distinction is the most important hermeneutical rule to understand Scripture properly, as the Formula of Concord states: "The distinction between law and gospel is a particularly glorious light. It serves to divide God's word properly and to explain correctly and make understandable the writings of the holy prophets and apostles" (SD V, 1). Additionally, Preuss left because he became convinced that the church is a visible institution that manifests in its life holiness and unity, for which a monarchical authority is necessary.

III. Walther's Response in *Law and Gospel*

Preuss's critique of the Lutheran doctrine of justification and thus of law and gospel—for the doctrine of justification is nothing but the proper distinction of law and gospel—will now be contrasted with Walther's 39 evening lectures on *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, given

[30] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 225.
[31] Preuss, *Empfängniß*, 225.

between September 12, 1884, and November 6, 1885, published posthumuously in 1901. [32]

Though Preuss is not even mentioned in these lectures, they can, nevertheless, be read as a summary of Walther's experience and study, of which the Preuss affair is a part. It is not misleading to read it also as an answer to the accusations made by Preuss.[33] Thus, I want to present to you two topics that are pertinent to the entire affair. First, affliction in the Christian life. Second, the difference between "dead faith of reason" and true faith, and the question of experience.

Affliction in the Christian Life

For Walther, the existence of the Christian is characterized by struggle.[34] Against a revivalistic piety that poses a pentitential struggle before the breakthrough to faith, Walther sees the major struggle for the Christian coming after conversion. Those who do not believe are, after all, dead and cannot fight. But once revived, then the fight starts, consisting in killing one's own flesh, suffering the world's scorn, fighting the devil, and turning away from the world's vanities and treasures.[35] Walther thinks that actually a great number of people are converted by preaching, but then many fall away from the faith because they do not want to enter into this struggle.

There is also an affliction that is specific to the pastor. Walther mentions that the hardest task of the pastor is to reject false doctrine. This, according to the old proverb *veritas odium parit* ("The truth gives birth to hatred"), causes division.[36] Preaching divides the hearers into two classes: those who believe and those who reject the word of God. Those who reject it start to hate and persecute the Christians. The preacher should remember that in this life the church is always *ecclesia militans* ("a fighting church"), and if there is an *ecclesia quiescens* ("a church at rest"), then this is surely a false church. Additionally, as a shepherd he not only feeds the

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[32] C.F.W. Walther, *Die rechte Unterscheidung von Gesetz und Evangelium. 30 Abendvorträge von Dr. C.F.W. Walther. Aus seinem Nachlaß* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1901). This edition was photographically reprinted in 1946. I am using the 1901 edition; all translations are mine. Roman numerals when followed by arabic numerals refer to the lecture, arabic numerals to the page.

[33] To my knowledge, Walther took no notice of Preuss's book.

[34] "Die Christen haben viel mehr Angst und Noth und Trübsal als die Welt. Aber dennoch ist der Christ viel seliger" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, VII, 51).

[35] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXV, 355.

[36] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXV, 254. The proverb is from Terence, *Andria* 68 and says: "Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit."

flock but protects the sheep from the wolf. Therefore: "If you want to be faithful servants of Christ, then it is impossible that you will become that without battle and strife against false doctrine, against the false gospel, against the false faith."[37] Therefore *Anfechtung* (affliction) is part of being a pastor. Walther can even state: "Who does not experience affliction, he may be industrious in his office, it is not the right kind of industry."[38] The right kind of industry does not only include planting and building, but it also means that one goes forward to fight the Lord's wars. Thus, it is inevitable that one is slandered by the community of false Christians and declared to be an abomination. The comfort in this struggle is eschatological: the reward the faithful servant of the Lord will receive from his master (Matt 25:21).

If we read this after we have looked at Preuss, it is telling that Walther does not expect some kind of resolution in history as Preuss expected (i.e., the triumph of truth over its enemies and thus the growth of the true church in time). Walther's view of the church includes that there is never any kind of rest for the church and individual pastors. The struggle and the situation of affliction, rather, is a constant feature because of the enduring reality of unbelief and the double effect the word has: in those who do not believe it it stirs up unbelief into a rejection of truth which manifests itself in vocal opposition to the truth and in the persecution of the true church. Preuss rejected this view of the course of the word of God in in the world. For him, God as the ruler of the world must overcome his enemies in this world, otherwise he is the "god of the Lutherans," an impotent being. The fundamental error of Preuss is to conflate God's providence and general rule of the world, the hidden God, with his revelation in the gospel. Rather, these are two ways one encounters God which are irreducible in this life; they even seem, as Preuss's interpretation of history shows, to be contradictory. Why is the true church so weak and why does the error flourish if God governs everything? The solution is, as Walther points out here, only eschatological: God will vindicate his servants on judgment day and approve their work, but there is no solution for this dissonance until that day.

In this context it is interesting that in all his affliction Preuss did not seem to have sought either absolution or the consolation of the brethren.

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[37] "Wollen Sie ein treuer Diener Christi sein, so ist es unmöglich, daß Sie das werden ohne Kampf und Streit gegen die falsche Lehre, gegen das falsche Evangelium, gegen den falschen Glauben" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium,* XXV, 256).

[38] "Wer keine Anfechtung erfährt, der mag noch so fleißig sein in seinem Amt, es ist nicht der rechte Fleiß" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXV, 256).

He mentions that he recited Bible passages and hymn verses in his affliction, but he did not seek the comfort of the word of forgiveness spoken to him. Walther dedicates his eighteenth lecture to the doctrine of absolution, pointing out its consolation and defending it against the errors of Rome that make the power of the absolution dependent on the office and against the scorn of the Reformed that absolution is a remnant of the papacy in Lutheranism.[39] Absolution is the individual application of the gospel to the person, and thus the power of the gospel lies not in the officiant but in the words themselves that are true because of the death of Christ.

Of course, nobody knows if the gospel would have comforted Preuss had he sought absolution. Certainly, it would have been embarrassing for a theologian of his stature to admit that he had doubts on what he had so forcefully defended. But if anything, it shows that even a highly trained theologian should not think that he can work through afflictions all by himself, that he can apply law and gospel properly to himself. He, too, needs to hear the comfort of the gospel in situations like Preuss's or, conversely, needs to hear the law when he hardens in his sin. Walther's praise of absolution can also be read as an admonition to the lonely pastor to seek the comfort of absolution said to him in his struggles instead of "sitting in his corner."[40]

"Dead Faith of Reason," True Faith, and the Question of Experience

In his article after Preuss's defection, Walther mentions that he had for a while the suspicion that Preuss was not truly converted.[41] Walther

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[39] Walther refers here to a selection of quotes by Luther, among others from his house postil "Sermon on the 19th Sunday after Pentecost," St. L. 13a, 912–925. (*WA* 52, 497–504). For the original notes cf. *WA* 37, 174–179.

[40] Walther quotes Luther (Housepostill) : "Da lehrt die Heilige Schrift mich und alle Christen, wenn ich Vergebung der Sünden will haben, müsse ich mich nicht in den Winkel setzen und sagen: mein Gott, vergib mir meine Sünden; und alsdann warten, wenn ein Engel vom Himmel komme und mir sage: Deine Sünden sind dir vergeben" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium,* XVIII, 172).

[41] "Zwar müssen wir gestehen, daß wir schon seit einiger Zeit von starken Zweifeln, ob Dr. Preuß ein bekehrter Christ sei, angefochten worden waren, welche Zweifel wir auch wiederholt unseren Herrn Collegen eröffnet haben. Denn weit entfernt, daß die stete Bereitwilligkeit des Dr. Preuß, alles, bis auf die subtilsten Puncte, anzunehmen und zu vertheidigen, was wir je als Wahrheit aufstellten, und weit entfernt, daß die schneidende, über das Herz richtende und dabei oft leichtfertige Art gegen im Glauben Irrige zu streiten, weit enfernt, sagen wir, daß dies uns Zutrauen zu dem Manne eingeflößt haben sollte, erregte es im Gegentheil neben anderen Charakteräußerungen in uns seit einiger Zeit den höchst peinlichen Zweifel, ob Dr. Preuß, was er bekenne, auch selbst von Herzen glaube, oder ob nicht sein ganzer

mentions one reason for this was his abrasive and uncharitable polemics. Walther is here making the distinction between somebody who agrees to all doctrines of the Christian faith but nevertheless is not a Christian and a person who agrees to all doctrines and truly is a Christian. The language might first seem to betray a pietistic bias towards "heart faith" against "head faith," but even a superficial acquaintance with Walther should be enough to dissipate any suspicion that he is downplaying the im-portance of doctrine in favor of some emotional piety. Rather, if we want to understand him, it might be helpful to see it as a reception of the distinction between *fides historica* and justifying faith made by Melanchthon in the Apology. Melanchthon writes:

> But that faith which justifies is not only historical knowledge, but to assent to the promise of God, by which freely on account of Christ forgiveness of sins and justification are offered. And so that nobody suspects that it is only knowledge, we add further: it is to will and receive the offered promise of the forgiveness of sins and of justification.[42]

This faith is not an idle thought, but liberates from death and gives birth to new life in the heart (Ap IV, 64; cf. SD IV, 10, an echo from Luther's preface to Romans).

What then distinguishes "dead head faith" from "true faith"? First, the complete person is affected. "The thought: 'I believe' is not yet the thought, but my entire heart must be affected, must rest in the gospel. Then I am also changed, then I cannot but love and serve God."[43]

Secondly, true faith is existential faith: beyond believing the *fides quae*, it includes also the belief that *my* sins are forgiven.[44] Thus, Walther can say: "What is a living, true faith of the heart other than the divine certainty that

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sogenannter Glaube nur eine das Herz leer, kalt und unveränderrt lassende Sache seines Verstandes sei" (Walther, "Ein Abfall," *Der Lutheraner* 28 [1871/72]), 73–75, 73.

[42] "Sed illa fides, quae iustificat, non est tantum notitia historiae, sed est assentiri promissioni Dei, in qua gratis propter Chrstum offertur remissio peccatorum et iustificatio. Et ne quis suspicetur tantum notitiam esse, addemum amplius: est velle et accipere oblatam promissionem remissionis peccatorum et iustificationis." Ap IV, 48 (BSLK 169, 39—170, 2)

[43] "Der Gedanke: 'Ich glaube' ist noch nicht der Glaube, sondern meine ganzes Herz muß erfaßt sein, muß in dem Evangelium ruhen. Dann bin ich auch umgewandelt, dann kann ich nicht anders, als Gott lieben und ihm dienen." (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium* V, 35)

[44] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXVII, 279.

one has forgiveness of sins and that the gates of heaven are open to us?"[45] This again is not a subjectivization of the faith, but follows Melanchthon in the Apology. "Beyond such belief [sc. that there is God, that he punishes the ungodly] we require that each one believes that the sins are forgiven to him."[46] Walther assumes that there are people who have a mere historical faith among the listeners of a sermon, thus the preacher has to point out this distinction as part of preaching the law.[47] For that, though, it is necessary that the pastor himself knows this difference, not only intellectually, but personally, i.e., that he has true faith, not only historical faith.[48]

But beyond that, Walther also says that real faith is connected to experience. In my view, he tries to go a middle way. On the one hand, he rejects the view which he associates with Methodism, a view that grounds the certainty of salvation on one's experience. On the other hand, he also rejects the total divorce of faith from experience:

> There are people who think of themselves as good Christians but they are spiritually dead. They never experienced true anxiety because of their sins, they were never filled with terror of them, they never were scared of hell, of which nevertheless they are guilty, they never were on their knees, they never lamented with tears to God that they are despicable, condemned sinners, and much less they have shed tears of joy and praised God that he had mercy on them. They read God's

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[45] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXXVIII, 379: "Was ist ein lebendiger, wahrer Herzensglaube anders, als die göttliche Gewißheit, daß man Vergebung der Sünden habe und daß die Pforten der Himmels uns offen stehen?"

[46] "Nos praeter illam fidem requirimus, ut credat sibis quisque remitti peccata." Ap XII, 60, BSLK 263, 32–34

[47] "Aber die Unchristen sind nicht alle gleich. Der eine ist ein grober Religionsspötter und Bibelverächter, der andere ist orthodox, hat den todten Verstandesglauben, aber der Prediger merkt: 'Du bist noch noch blind, du liegst noch im geistlichen Tode.' Wer natürlich noch selbst in Sünden liegt, der weiß auch einen solchen nicht zu beurtheilen" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, VII, 53).

[48] "Wenn man bloß so objectiv die verschiedenen Lehren darstellt, so hilft das nicht genug. Wer zwar orthodox ist, wer zwar die reine Lehre gefaßt hat, er steht aber nicht selbst im Verkehr mit Gott, hat noch nicht seine Rechnung mit Gott abgeschlossen, hat noch nicht Gewißheit erlangt, ob ihm seine Sündenschuld vergeben ist oder nicht, wie kann der eine christliche Predigt machen? Ja, es gilt auch hier wie bei den Heiden das Wort: 'pectus disertum facit' 'das Herz macht beredt.'" (VII, 49) Though, Walther will reject the idea that only the sermon of a believing pastor faith can be generated: "Wer das alles [sc. die Verdammung des Gesetzes und den Trost des Evangeliums RZ] nicht erfahren hat, der ist – sine mente sonans, der ist wie eine klingende Schelle und wie ein tönend Erz. Wenn aber ein Prediger das selbst erfahren hat und es geht nun recht von Herzen, so geht es auch wieder zu Herzen. Wenn durch einen unbekehrten Prediger jemand erweckt und bekehrt wird, so geschieht as bloß per accidens." (Lecture III, 21)

> word, they hear it, but they experience nothing. They go to church, get absolved, and it does not refresh them; they go to the Lord's Supper and stay cold as ice and feel nothing. But they think, when they at times get restless because of it, that they are so indifferent in respect to their salvation that they have no taste for the Word of God and try to calm themselves thus: "Well, in the Lutheran Church they teach that feeling does not matter. Thus, even if I have not felt anything, it does not hurt. I can nevertheless be a good Christian, since I believe." But this is a great, terrible self deception. He who is in such a state has nothing but a dead faith of reason, has only a sham faith, or, to put it coarsely, a snout-faith. Though he speaks with his mouth "I believe," with his heart he does not know anything of it. No, God's word calls to us: "Taste and see how friendly the Lord is." He who has never tasted how friendly the Lord is may not think that he is in the true faith.[49]

Hearing this, especially talking about tears, you might feel a little uncomfortable, even thinking that Walther had not quite outgrown his pietistic phase. Those of you who are fond of the early church should remember that "the gift of tears" was a common matter of discussion among monks and a spiritual gift eagerly sought for.[50] But if you are inclined to dismiss him as a pietist, consider again state the difference to revivalistic piety: law and gospel produce experiences, yes, indeed,

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[49] "Es gibt Menschen, die halten sich für gute Christen und sind doch geistlich todt. Sie haben nie eine rechte Angst wegen ihrer Sünden erfahren, sie sind nie mit Schrecken darüber erfüllt worden, sie haben sich nie entsetzt vor der Hölle, deren sie doch würdig sind, sie haben nie auf ihren Knien gelegen, haben es nie mit heißen Thränen Gott geklagt, daß sie greuliche, verdammte Sünder seien, und viel weniger haben sie süße Thränen der Freude geweint und Gott gepriesen, daß er sich ihrer erbarmt habe. Sie lesen Gottes Wort, sie hören es auch, aber sie erfahren nichts dabei. Sie gehen in die Kirche, sie lassen sich absolvieren, und es erquickt sie nicht, sie gehen zum heiligen Abendmahl und bleiben kalt wie Eis und fühlen nichts. Aber sie denken, wenn sie ja einmal unruhig deswegen werden, daß sie so gleichgültig in Absicht auf ihr Heil und ihre Seligkeit sind, daß ihnen das Wort Gottes gar nicht schmeckt, und suchen sich dadurch zu beruhigen: ‚Ja, in der lutherischen Kirche wird doch gelehrt: Auf das Gefühl kommt nichts an. Also wenn ich auch gar nichts gefühlt habe, das schadet nichts. Ich kann deswegen doch ein guter Christ sein, denn ich glaube ja.' Aber das ist eine große, schreckliche Sclbsttäuschung! Wer in einem solchen Zustand ist, der hat nichts als einen todten Verstandesglauben, hat nur einen Scheinglauben, oder—um es grob auszudrücken—einen Maulglauben. Er spricht wohl mit dem Mund: ‚Ich glaube,' aber sein Herz weiß nichts davon. Nein, Gottes Wort ruft uns zu: ‚*Schmecket* und sehet, wie freundlich der HErr ist!' Wer das nie geschmeckt ha, wie freundlich der HErr ist, der meine nur nicht, daß er im wahren Glauben stehe!"

[50] Cf. John Cassian's discussion in his "Collationes," 9 *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 49, 804-807, *Series Latina* (Paris: Migne, 1846), 28–30.

feelings in the Christian, but the Christian does not rely on them when he wants to know if he is saved. It is similar to the Christian's relationship to works: good works are a necessary consequence of faith, and their absence is an indication of the lack of faith, without faith being identical with works or the Christian relying on works. Additionally, Walther does not state that the Christian has all the time the full experience of the law which results in terrors of conscience—a term often used in the confessions, by the way—nor does he prescribe a certain experience at conversion.[51] Neither does he claim that the sweetness of the gospel, of the forgiveness of sins, is always felt but discusses at length the feelings of desertion the Christian experiences.[52] Law and gospel stay not outside of a person's heart (i.e., his complete personality); they not only concern his transcendental Ego, but also the empirical Ego. So there is an affective dimension to faith, even though his experience will never be completely congruent with law or gospel, i.e., his reaction to the law will be many times deficient because it affects only parts of his person like the intellect, but not his feelings, conversely, the good news will not always elicit great joy. But that does not mean that this lack is good or that the complete absence of an impact on the whole person is not alarming.[53]

Walther claims Luther for his thesis that law and gospel do create experiences. He quotes from Luther's Church Postil, from the sermon on the epistle of the Sunday after Christmas on Gal 4:1–7. The quoted passage is an explication of Gal 4:6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Luther says:

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[51] "Zwar können wir den Sündern nicht den *Grad* der Buße vorschreiben; denn wir finden in der heiligen Schrift, daß der Grad der Buße ein sehr verschiedener gewesen sei bei denen, von welcher uns berichtet wird, daß sie bekehrt wurden. Aber etwas von der bitteren Bitterkeit der Buße muß jedermann erfaheren haben, oder wer wird nie etwas von der Süßigkeit der Evangeliums schmecken. *Und wenn der liebe Gott einen solchen Menschen ohne viel Angst und Schrecken zum Glauben hat kommen lasse, um ihn zur Seligkeit zu bringen, so holt er das immer später nach"* (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIII, 110).

[52] Wo?

[53] Walther finds his experience of the law in Paul's statement of the divine sorrow (2 Cor 7:10) and in Melanchthon's description of contrition (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXII, 231–232, Ap XII, 29: "Sed dicimus contritionem esse veros terrores conscientiae, quae Deum sentit irasci peccato, et dolet se pecasse." Ap XII, 32: "In his terroribus sentit conscientia iram Dei adversus peccatum, quae est ignota securis hominibus secundum carnem ambulantibus. Videt peccati turpitudinem et serio dolet se pecasse; etiam fugit interim horribilem iram Dei, quia non sustentetur verbo Dei."). Walther praises Melanchthon's treatment of the law here because it shows that it is not a theoretical construction, but "everything is said from Scripture and experience" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXII, 232–233).

> Here everyone has to perceive and to examine whether he feels the Holy Spirit and senses his voice in himself; for St. Paul says here: Where he is in the heart, there he calls: Abba, dear Father, as he also says in Romans 8: Ye have received the spirit of gracious childhood of God through which we call: Abba, dear Father. But this calling one feels, when the conscience, without wavering, is strongly confident and is certain is the same manner that not only one's sins are forgiven, but also that one is God's child and be assured of salvation, and that with a joyous, certain heart, and with all confidence may call God one's dear Father and may call upon him.[54]

Luther says in the same sermon:

> If you do not feel that calling, then think and rest not, till God will listen to you; for you are Cain, and you are not well. But do not desire that this calling is there alone and pure in you, there shall also be the cry of the murderer, which will drive you to such calling and exercise you, as it happens with all others. Your sin will also cry, that is: create a strong despondency in your conscience.[55]

Walther comments on this: "If a Christian is certain in his state of grace, nevertheless, always he will hear the murderous cry of the devil."[56] It is the accusing voice of the law, pointing out one's sin, that Walther here identifies with the voice of the accuser, the voice of the devil.[57] In this situation of the affliction, the Spirit gives to the Christian confidence that his sins are forgiven. Again, Walther is rejecting the idea that the experience gives

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[54] "Hie ist nu eynem iglichen wartzunhemen und tzu prüffen, ob er den heyligen geyst auch fule und seyne stymme empfinde ynn yhm; denn S. Paulus spricht hie: Wo er ynn den hertzen ist, da ruffet er; Abba, lieber vater, wie er auch sagt Ro. 8: Ihr habt empfangen den geyst der gnedigen kindschafft gottis, durch wilchen eyr ruffen; Abba, lieber vatter. Das rufen fulet man aber denn, wenn das gewissen on alles manchken und tzweyffelln festiglich sich vormuttet und gleych gewiß ist, das nit alleyn seyn sund yhm vorgeben seyn, ßondern das es auch gottis kynd sey und der selickeytt sicher, und mit frolichem, gewissen hertzen, ynn aller tzuuorsicht mag Gott seynen liben vatter nennen und ruffen." Text according to *WA* 10 I 1, 370,18—371,3. Walther quotes Luther, as is his custom, according to the edition of Walch (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIX, 185–186).

[55] "Fuelstu nu das ruffen nit, ßo denck und ruge nit mit bitten, biß das gott dich erhore; denn du bist Cayn, und es steht nit wol umb dich. Doch soltu nit begeren, das solchs ruffen alleynn unnd lautter ynn dyr sey, es wirt auch mussen eyn mordschrey daneben seyn, das dich ynn solchem ruffen treyb und ube, wie allen andern geschen ist. Deyn sund wirt auch schreyen, das ist: eyn starcks vortzagen ynn deynem gewissen anrichten" (*WA* 10 I 1 , 373, 2–8).

[56] "Wenn einer noch so gewiß ist in seinem Gnadenstande, immer wir er noch ein Mordgeschrei des Teufels hören" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIX, 188).

[57] He does not reflect on this point that it is also the voice of God, since it is the accusation of his law.

certainty of salvation. He rather says that first one has to believe, then one feels. "Feeling comes from faith, not faith from feeling. The one whose faith comes from feeling has no true faith, for faith needs a divine promise."[58]

Thus, if the Christian realizes that he does not feel anything, that he is "dead" and "cold," that he has no taste for the word of God, that the absolution does not comfort him, that he does not feel the witness of the Spirit, he cries out, and God will, in good measure, give him the experience. Walther cautions that some experience grace all the time, others are led by God through "darkness, through great anxiety, through great doubts, and all kinds of misery (*Noth*)."[59] So what is the difference between the one who is dead without experience and the Christian without experience? According to Walther, it is the anxiety experienced because of the lack of experience: "For when I am anxious about the fact that I do not feel and sense anything, and I would dearly like to sense and feel something, then it is a sign that I am a true Christian."[60]

Therefore, Walther warns his students not to fall in the error, in order to convict the hypocrites, to picture the Christian in a way that does not take into account that the strength of faith, feeling and fruitfulness can fluctuate.[61] Rather, a pastor has to keep in mind: "A Christian acts oftentimes in a unchristian way."[62] Even though, according to Romans 7, the Christian has a good will, he nevertheless not only has a good will, but in his actions he sins. It is therefore also necessary to keep in mind the distinction between the enduring sinfulness which excludes any form of perfectionism and falling into a mortal sin.[63] Therefore, the Christian should not be depicted as always experiencing sweetness.[64] Lack of full experience of the comfort of the gospel is therefore a part of the *simul iustus et peccator.*

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[58] "Das Gefühl kommt aus dem Glauben, und nicht der Glaube aus dem Gefühl. Und wessen Glaube aus dem Gefühl kommt, der hat keinen wahren Glauben; denn der Glaube braucht eine göttliche Verheißung" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIX, 189).

[59] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIX, 190.

[60] "Denn wenn ich in Angst bin darüber, daß ich nichts fühle und empfinde, und ich möchte doch so gerne etwas empfinden und fühlen, so ist das ein Zeichen, daß ich ein wahrer Christ bin" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIX, 190).

[61] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXIX, 296–304.

[62] "Ein Christ handelt oft sehr unchristlich" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium,* XXIX, 297).

[63] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium* ,XXIX, 299.

[64] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXIX, 300.

Walther also sees a difference regarding experiences God gives in the stages of the Christian's life. Experiences of joy predominate when someone comes to faith, then these experiences fade. He compares it with first getting sweet breads, then rye bread. He sees it as a process of purification of the believer.[65]

Walther is walking here a thin line. I think he is successful in avoiding the errors of a Christianity based on feeling and of a Christianity that is devoid of any concept of experience and for which faith is nothing but assent to certain doctrines. But the integration of human experience and its analysis from a theological point of view is risky, and it may seem to be a safer way to stay in a supposedly objective distance. The price to pay, however, is that then faith becomes mere *fides historica*, knowledge and assent—or salvation is mediated *ex opere operato* ritually.

And even though Walther's language might be pietistically tinted, the issue is not some form of pietistic deviation. The experiential side of the work of law and gospel in regard to the Christian was already pointed out by Luther, whose sermons on Exodus are quoted by Walther:

> A Christian is not impertinent, wild and coarse, but his conscience is timid, faint-hearted and pusillanimous; sin bites them and they are afraid of God's wrath, the devil, and death; Christ tastes good to such a downcast and pulverized heart. In the same manner, the salvation from sin, death, devil, and hell tastes good to those who are stuck in death and feel such need and would like to have rest. They get it when the heart has faith, but they feel on the side how frail the old Adam is.[66]

Walther comments on this quote:

> An important saying! According to Luther those are certainly not Christians who are not bitten by their sins, who are not in a fight with sin and even may ask: "What evil do I do?" For if you are a true

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[65] "Die Liebe eines alten, erfahrenen Christen zu seinem Heiland schmeckt wohl nicht mer so süß, sie ist aber viel lauterer, denn da sind viele Schlacken herausgebrannt worden, die erst noch da waren" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIX, 193).

[66] "Ein Christ ist nicht frech, wild und rohe, Sondern sein Gewissen ist blöde, kleinmütig und verzagt, die Sünde beisset sie, und fürchten sich für Gottes zorn und für dem Teufel und Tode, einem sölchen nidergeschlagenen und zertriebenen Hertzen schmecket der Herre Christus wol. Item die Erlösung von der Sünde, Tod, Teufel und Hellen schmecket denen auch wol, die in dem Tode stecken und fülen sölche not und wolten gerne ruge haben, die bekommen sie, wenn das Hertz den Glauben hat, Aber sie fülen auch darneben, wie gebrechlich der alte Adam sei" (*WA* 16, 232,22–31, vgl. [W 3,1285; W² 3,858]).

> Christian, you think: Indeed, sins are going over my head, not only when I was not yet converted, but even now. I do not only believe that, because I know it from Scripture, but because I daily experience what an evil thing my heart is, how frail the old Adam is.[67]

The error of the Reformed or the pietists is that they point to an experience of grace which assures one of salvation instead of pointing them to word and sacrament. Walther sees in this a mixing of law and gospel. Why? It seems that he understands such an experience as man-made. The Reformed counsel the person affected by the law "through praying and struggling to gain the state of grace till he feels it."[68] Walther says: "That looks quite pious, quite Christian, and he—who has no exper-ience—is easily deceived. But we have—thanks be to God!—a word that does not deceive us in which we can trust; we can stay with it in the darkness, that is our lamp."[69] It is interesting how experience plays here into the ability to discern the error. This fits with the overall approach that the proper distinction between law and gospel is something which has to be learned during one's life. The inexperienced is deceived by pious phrases and the seeming sincerity, how sin in such a case is taken seriously, how "cheap grace" is avoided. The experienced Christian who has learned to distinguish law and gospel properly and analyze the situation of a person using this paradigm realizes that pointing someone who is bothered by his sins to an experience he somehow must produce is just another form of works righteousness. Of course, the response might be that it is not a man-made experience, but rather a God-made experience. Then the situation is indeed different. The problem is not works rightousness but rather idolatry, because a human experience is put in place of the divine promise, which means that a man-made sign of God's grace is worshipped (i.e., trusted in) instead of the divinely established signs of God's grace. It is a man-made gospel, therefore no gospel.

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[67] "Ein wichtiges Wort! Nach Luther sind das gewiß keine Christen, die ihre Sünde nicht beißt, die nicht im Kampf mit der Sünde stehen und wohl gar fragen: 'Was thue ich den Böses?' Denn bist du ein wahrer Christ, so denkst du: 'Ja freilich, die Sünden gehen über mein Haupt, nicht nur damals, als ich noch nicht bekehrt war, sondern auch jetzt noch. Ich glaube das nicht nur, weil ich das aus der Bibel weiß, sondern weil ich es auch täglich erfahre, was für ein böses Ding mein Herz ist, wie gebrechlich der alte Adam ist" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XIII, 112).

[68] ". . . durch Beten und Kämpfen sich den Gnadenstand zu erringen, bis er die Gnade fühle" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XVI, 143).

[69] "Das sieht ja freilich recht fromm, recht christlich aus, und wer keine Erfahrung hat, der läßt sich leicht täuschen, Aber wir haben, Gott Lob! ein Wort, das täuscht uns nicht, dem können wir trauen, be dem könne wir in der Finsterniß bleiben, das ist undere Leurchte" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XVI, 143).

Walther's View of Roman Catholicism

It is not surprising that Walther defended the traditional Lutheran view that the pope is the antichrist and that papacy is antichristianity.[70] He attributes the unpopularity of this statement, the scorn that says this a spleen of narrow minds who do not want to go with the times,[71] to the loss of discerning what antichristianity is. Against the thesis that, after all, there is no church which has no errors, and that the Roman Church at least holds on to the ecumenical creeds so that there is an agreement in fundamental articles of faith, indeed, that the papacy is a "strong dam against the horrible deluge of unbelief which has flooded Christendom," Walther points out that the antichrist, since he sits in the church, has to mask himself with Christian doctrines. The papacy is antichristianity because it alone within Christendom (i.e., the churches which are trinitarian) is an enemy of free grace in Christ because it teaches that Christ is a new legislator and the gospel is a doctrine of works. That would not be different from Arminianism, which dominated American Protestantism at Walther's time. Rather, "the gospel is obscured in all sects, but it is not condemned and anathemized, as the pope does."[72]

Preuss himself certainly saw the difference between the Lutheran and the Roman church in that point. For Preuss, Lutheranism was wrong and unscriptural. Justification by faith and works was biblical and right. The Preuss affair would have therefore only confirmed Walther's view of Roman Catholicism. Today, we are confronted with some of the same accusations and arguments as Walther was. We, too, hear that saying the pope is antichrist is just being cranky and reactionary or that the papacy is not the enemy of Christianity but holds to the essentials of Christianity and is the bullwark against the foes of Christianity and the tide of immorality. This, of course, is a topic too broad to address here. But in order at least to begin to answer who is the antichrist, one has to ask if the gospel—that is, salvation without the works of man, alone through Christ, alone through grace, alone through faith in the gospel promise—is essential for Christianity or not. And, is the papacy still the enemy of the gospel, or has it either been all a great misunderstanding since the 16th century or has the ecumenical movement done away with the differences and reached a consensus in the fundamentals also of the gospel, as the "Joint Declaration

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[70] Compare Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, IX, 62–71 for the following.

[71] "eine Schrulle beschränkter Köpfe, die der Zeit nicht folgen wollen" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, IX, 62).

[72] "Das Evangelium wird wohl in allen Secten verdunkelt, aber nicht verdammt und verflucht, wie der Pabst es thut" (Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, IX, 69).

on the Doctrine of Justification" claimed? Simply to repeat what was said before, without checking whether changes in Rome have made statements like those of Walther obsolete, would mean one is a reactionary blockhead. But if the gospel of free grace is still condemned by Rome, then the papacy is what it was before.

But what is the attraction of the papacy? It is, according to Walther, the "appearance of good works spread by the papists."[73] The same error that values God's work for little, but man's work highly is not specific to the Roman Catholic Church. Walther thinks that the appearance of good works is also the reason why enthusiastic preachers attract people in the United States.

IV. Conclusion

Even though Walther does not reference Preuss, this comparision shows that Walther has an answer to Preuss's critique of Lutheranism. First, Walther rejects Preuss's theology of glory that identifies success and the gospel and emphasizes that suffering, struggle, and rejection is the normal state of the members of the *ecclesia militans*. Secondly, the accusations of the law do not cease with conversion, but rather continue and have to continue. And this experience of the law is an experience of the wrath of God.[74] The only escape is the flight to the gospel which alone comforts without being cheap. The tragic of Preuss's life was that he did not find the way to the gospel but remained stuck in the law, a law which is only bearable when it is lessened as it is in the Roman Catholic Church. Walther develops in his *Law and Gospel* a nuanced understanding of experience, so that law and gospel are never abstracted from the life of the Christian without at the same time being identified with interior states of the Christian. One could wish that Preuss would have had the courage and, maybe, humility to seek spiritual counsel from Walther or another pastor. The tragic apostasy of Preuss is a warning to all of us: "Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12). No Christian ever simply "has" the gospel, because he is always also under the condemnation of the law. May God grant to all of us that when

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[73] Walther, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, XXXVI, 359.

[74] Cf. Apology IV, 79: "Id est, peccatum perterrefacit conscientias; id fit per legem, quae ostendit iram Dei adversus peccatum, sed vincimus per Christum." (BSLK 176,7–10) "That is, sin terrifies the consciences, this happens through teh law, which shows forth the wrath of God against sin, but we overcome through Christ." Cf. also Ap IV, 295 (174): "Ac ne diligere quidem possumus iratum Deum, et lex semper accusat nos, semper ostendit iratum Deum." "And nobody can love a wrathful God, and the law always accuses us, always shows the wrathful God."

the law comes down on us with ferocity—when we hear the murderous voice of the accuser that wants to drive into despair—that then we do not try to find a solution for ourselves, but turn to someone who will tell us the gospel so that in the midst of our death we may have life. For this we pray in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation":

> We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.[75]

[75] *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 21–22.

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Wilhelm Löhe: His Voice Still Heard in Walther's Church

John T. Pless

Writing on the bicentennial of Wilhelm Löhe's birth, Craig Nessan suggested two trajectories of the Neuendettelsau pastor's influence in contemporary American Lutheranism: one through the Iowa Synod and into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the other through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Given the fact that the Iowa Synod merged in 1930 with the Ohio and Buffalo Synods to form the "old" American Lutheran Church, which would join with other bodies to form the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960 and finally the ELCA in 1988, Nessan observes that Löhe's influence in the ELCA is mainly discerned in two institutions initially connected with his work: Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, and Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Apart from these institutions there was little, if any, recognition of the Löhe anniversary within the ELCA. By way of contrast, Nessan notes, "As the two-hundredth anniversary of Löhe's birth is celebrated in 2008, Löhe is being reclaimed as an important ancestor in the history and life of the LCMS."[1]

Why is Löhe "being reclaimed as an important ancestor"? Hermann Sasse points to a parting of the ways between Löhe and Walther that impacted the role Löhe played in the young Missouri Synod.

> One of the most grievous events in the history of the Lutheran Church in the 19th century was the fact that the two great churchmen Wilhelm Löhe and Ferdinand Walther went separate ways after the great theological leader of the Missouri Synod had in 1851 a most promising meeting with Löhe in Neuendettelsau.[2]

Sasse echoes the deep pathos that surrounds these two men who seemingly shared so much in common within the context of the confessional revival of their day. This paper will rehearse in part the history of how

[1] Craig Nessan, "Löhe in America: Two Historical Trajectories in the Missouri and Iowa Synods," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17:3 (Holy Trinity 2008), 21.

[2] Hermann Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation" in *We Confess the Church,* tr. Norman E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 69.

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Walther and Löhe would make common cause in their tireless efforts for confessional Lutheranism in mid-19th-century North America and chronicle the details of the fracture.[3] In the main it will examine how it is that Löhe's voice continues to be heard in the church body that received its theological and ecclesial shape from his contemporary, C.F.W. Walther (1811–1887).

The primary link between Löhe and Walther is found in F.C.D. Wyneken (1810–1876), whose impassioned literary plea, *The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America,* captured Löhe's attention in 1840 and spurred him to action on behalf of scattered German immigrants on the American frontier. Conversely, it is through Löhe that Wyneken was then led to embrace authentic Lutheranism. By the time Wyneken wrote his *Distress of the German Lutherans in North America,* his Lutheran convictions and consciousness were becoming more solidly formed, even though the congregation that he served in Fort Wayne was one of mixed confession, both Lutheran and Reformed. Before his visit to Germany in 1841, Wyneken remained open to pastors who were either Lutheran or Reformed. His visit to Germany in late 1841 and early 1842 provided him with an opportunity to meet Löhe. The contact with Löhe deepened Wyneken's Lutheran instincts. When he returned to Fort Wayne, Wyneken began to preach on the differences between the Lutheran and Reformed confessions, leading the Reformed component of his congregation to withdraw and organize a congregation of its own.

Löhe's literary activities served as a robust echo of Wyneken's appeal. In response to Löhe's publicity of the dire needs in America, Adam Ernst and Georg Burger presented themselves as candidates for service on the frontier. Löhe provided training for these two men in a variety of theological and secular subjects. In the summer of 1842, Ernst and Burger were sent to the United States after agreeing to a set of stipulations that would govern their work and affiliations. Initially, Ernst and Burger made their way to Columbus to study at the seminary of the Ohio Synod. After the Ohio Synod affirmed the use of the unionistic distribution formula in the communion liturgy in 1845, Löhe ended his support of the Columbus seminary.

Eleven of the men sent by Löhe were among the 22 who met in Cleveland on September 13–18, 1845, to draw up a declaration of separa-tion from the Ohio Synod. The document adopted by the assembly listed

[3] For a more complete telling of this story, see John T. Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," in *Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872): Seine Bedeutung für Kirche und Diakonie,* ed. Hermann Schoenauer (Stuttgart: Verlag Kohlhammer, 2008), 119–134.

several reasons for their departure from the Synod: Ohio's favorable disposition toward unionism, the retention of the problematic distribution formula, the refusal to require a vow to the Book of Concord in ordination, the practice of licensing candidates for a specific period of time rather than issuing a call, and the toleration of some Reformed congregations in the membership of the Synod. The conference in Cleveland opened the way for a new synodical body that was marked by complete loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions and a renunciation of unionism.

Löhe knew of both the Saxons in Missouri and the Prussians in New York and Wisconsin who formed the Buffalo Synod. In a letter to Ernst in October 1843, Löhe expressed his mistrust of J.A.A. Grabau's hierarchical approach to the governance of the church.[4] Likewise, Löhe deplored the absolutistic claims made by Martin Stephan. In another letter, Löhe wrote to Ernst: "One recognizes that the scattered Saxons in Missouri have been purified and strengthened through the fire of tribulation, and certainly our hope is not in vain that other friends over there may be able to unite completely with them in *one* holy communion. In this the work of the church there will flourish more and more"[5]

Ernst's positive impression of the Saxons was gained by his reading of *Der Lutheraner,* a church paper edited by Walther. When Ernst first saw the paper during a visit to Wyneken in Fort Wayne, he remarked: "Thank God, there are still real Lutherans in America."[6] Löhe likewise was impressed by the sturdy confessional and churchly nature of the paper. Ernst was encouraged to go to St. Louis for a meeting with Walther. This trip had to be delayed due to the upcoming gathering in Cleveland.

Walther was invited to attend the Cleveland conference but was unable to attend due to illness. Instead Walther drafted a letter to Ernst expressing his support for a new synod and the desire of the Saxons to enter into a body of genuinely Lutheran character. In this letter, Walther noted that such a body should be marked by six characteristics: (1) it should be based on the Lutheran Symbols as contained in the Book of Concord and, if possible, the Saxon Visitation Articles; (2) it should eschew

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[4] James Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church: A Study in the History of Lutheran Mission" (Th.D. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1961), 105. See also Benjamin Mayes, "Grabau Versus Walther: The Use of the *Book of Concord* in the American Lutheran Debate on Church and Ministry in the Nineteenth Century," *CTQ* 75 (2011): 217–252.

[5] James Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (May 1972), 58.

[6] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 107–108.

all syncretistic activity; (3) it should guard and promote the unity and purity of Lutheran doctrine; (4) it should be a consultative, not a judicial body; (5) it should give the laity rights as well as the clergy; and (6) it should allow each congregation to pass judgment on the synod's decisions.

Those meeting in Cleveland authorized Ernst, Frederich Lochner, and Wilhelm Sihler to undertake a trip to St. Louis for a meeting with Walther. The meeting, which took place in May of 1846, resulted in a draft of a constitutional proposal drawn up chiefly by Walther but signed by Ernst, Lochner, Sihler, Walther, and six of the Saxon pastors. This document became the basis for a more formal constitution that was presented in Fort Wayne in July. Some potential synod members could not be present at this meeting so it was decided that the constitution would not go into effect for a year in order that it might be studied by those who were absent. The next meeting would be held in Chicago in April, 1847. It was at this meeting that the Missouri Synod was actually established with all but one of Löhe's men joining the new synod.[7] Over half of the ministerium of the newly-organized Missouri Synod was composed of Löhe's men. Schaaf mistakenly asserts that of the Löhe contingent only Craemer was elected to a leadership.[8] In fact, the constituting convention elected Shiler to serve as vice president. While Walther clearly emerged as the theological and organizational leader of the Missouri Synod, Löhe's men exerted considerable influence in the formation of the Synod.

At the organizing convention a resolution was passed requesting Löhe to transfer the Fort Wayne seminary to the Synod while at the same time continuing to support the institution with funds and books. After consulting with Wucherer, Löhe replied affirmatively to the request with three provisions: (1) that the seminary would serve only the Lutheran Church that accepts the entire Book of Concord; (2) only German would be used in instruction; (3) the seminary would not alter its mission of speedy preparation of pastors for German-speaking congregations.[9] The seminary, now out of his hands, was perhaps his greatest gift to the Missouri Synod.

Löhe had reservations about the constitutional foundation of the Synod from the beginning. He was especially uneasy regarding the notion of equal representation of clergy and laity in church governance. This

[7] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 109.

[8] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 110.

[9] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 114. On the issue of the German language, it is important to remember the paucity of confessionally sound Lutheran literature in English at this time. The first English translation of the *Book of Concord* would not appear until 1851.

seemed to him to reflect a democratic form of church life more reflective of American principles than the ecclesiology of the New Testament. Such a democratic approach, Löhe feared, would subordinate the pastor to the will of the congregation. But at this early stage, Löhe chose not to protest too strongly, believing that over time the weaknesses of this approach would be realized and appropriate adjustments made in the constitution. Schaaf observes that for Löhe, "The desire for unity with confessionally minded Lutherans was stronger than the fear of congregationalism."[10]

In the months after the constituting convention, Löhe expressed his reservations in a number of letters. In a letter to Walther, written in September of 1847, Löhe wrote:

> With heartfelt sorrow we have noted that your synodical constitution, as it now stands, could not completely meet the model of the first congregations and we fear, certainly with complete justification, that the fundamental strong mixing of democratic, independent, congregational principles in your constitution will cause greater damage than the mixing of princes and secular authorities in our homeland. Careful attention to many teachings of the holy apostle about the organization of the church and the *Seelsorge* in general would have taught the dear lay brethren something different. A constitution is a dogmatic adiaphoron, but not a practical one.[11]

A few months later, in December of 1847, Löhe wrote to his German pastoral colleague, Ludwig Adolph Petri:

> One thing is regrettable. When our good people arrive over there and breathe the American air they become imbued with democracy and one hears with amazement how independent and congregational they think about church organization. They are in danger of forgetting the high, divine honor of their office and becoming slaves to their congregations.[12]

These letters point to a conflict that would emerge in the coming years and ultimately contribute to a rift between Löhe and the Synod that he helped to establish.

Casting shadows over the Synod's organizing convention in 1847 were two factors. First, there was the fresh and painful memory of the Stephan debacle and the spiritual anguish that it had inflicted among the Perry County colonists, even to the point of creating doubt as to whether they

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[10] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 118.
[11] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 60.
[12] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 60.

were still members of the *una sancta*.[13] Then there was Grabau and his authoritarian defense of the pastoral office. Walther had come into conflict with Grabau as early as 1840 at the time the Prussian pastor had published his *Hirtenbrief*.[14]

The two groups had experienced opposite threats. For Walther and the Saxons, it was the threat of abused episcopal authority in the hierarchical attitude of Stephan, whereas for Grabau and the Buffalo Synod, it was the threat of conventicles that would circumvent the ministerial office. There was heated literary exchange between the two groups, complicated by the unwillingness of the Missouri party to recognize excommunications enacted by Buffalo pastors that were often deemed unjust actions from the Missourian's point of view.

Löhe's attempt to mediate this dispute earned him the disfavor of both groups. Pointing out what he believed to be errors in both the approaches of Grabau and Walther, Löhe urged each of the parties to something of a truce, leaving the disputed issues as "open questions" until they could resolve them in an amicable manner and, in this way, achieve reconciliation.

The debate continued to simmer. At its 1850 convention, the Missouri Synod requested Walther to prepare a document clearly stating the Synod's position on church and ministry. That same convention invited Löhe to visit the United States in order to inspect the field cultivated by his labor and, most importantly, to meet with Walther and his associates to discuss the questions of church and ministry. Due to circumstances in Bavaria, Löhe declined this invitation in a letter to Wyneken dated February 13, 1851.[15] The synod, meeting in convention later that year, deputized Walther and Wyneken to travel to Neudendettelsau to meet with Löhe in order to address what appeared to be a growing rift.

In September 1851, Walther and Wyneken arrived in Germany where Löhe was embedded in controversy with the Upper Consistory of the Bavarian Church. Löhe and others were threatened with suspension for their insistence that the territorial church cease in admitting the Reformed

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[13] See Walter Foster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839–1841* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 411–534.

[14] For an account of the early relationship of Grabau and the Saxons, see William Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry 1840–1845," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (Summer 1995), 84–99. Also see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Reconsidering Grabau on Ministry and Sacraments," *Lutheran Quarterly* 28 (Summer 2006), 190–212, and Mayes, "Grabau Versus Walther," 217–252.

[15] The text of the letter is found in *Gesammelte Werke,* Vol. 2 "Briefe 1848–1871," ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1985), 121.

to the sacrament. The Missourians stood with Löhe's insistence on the closure of Lutheran altars to the Reformed, even though this stance would come at the price of forgoing potential financial support from Bavaria.[16]

Walther's reports on his meetings with Löhe were strikingly positive. Just prior to departing Germany, Walther wrote a letter of thanks to Löhe, stating:

> I can and must confess to you that the unhappy prejudices with which I entered your house have completely dissipated; that I am taking with me a heartfelt trust in your fidelity to our dear Lutheran Church, and the strongest conviction of the unity of the spirit in which we Lutherans in North America stand with you. . . . I have seen how precious the welfare of our Church, which is largely a plant of your faithful care, lies to your heart, therefore, I do not have to beg you to do all your conscience will permit, that our orphan church in America may ever be able to extol her closest unity with you before the whole world.[17]

Upon his return to the United States, Walther praised Löhe in the May 25, 1852, issue of *Der Lutheraner:* "We may assure our dear readers that a reconciliation in the truth and in love has by the grace of God been attained which is of far greater value than one which gets its guarantee from a subscription to certain strictly formulated theses, attained through insistent demands."[18]

Löhe likewise evaluated the meetings positively. He lauded the fraternal love and goodwill expressed by his Missouri visitors: "Such a spirit requires no haste to become one in formulas and theses. Hand in hand they go to the school of the Holy Spirit, where they see over the doorway the inscription: 'the longer, the more love; the longer, the greater unity and faithfulness."[19] Löhe extoled the progress made:

> We do have a common fundamental concept of the Church; we are one in the acknowledgement of a divinely-instituted pastoral office; the practice of our American brethren . . . is known to us and recognized by us as altogether good and proper; so that we joyfully desire

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[16] See "Addendum to the Trip Report: Löhe Correspondence on Unionistic Practice" translated by Roland Ziegler with Matthew C. Harrison in *At Home in the House of My Fathers,* ed. Matthew C. Harrison (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2009), 107–112.

[17] Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod, 1841–1853" (Ph.D. Diss. University of Illinois, Urbana, 1964), 201.

[18] Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 204.

[19] Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 204.

> to, and shall send our students to them and none other. We repeatedly found ourselves acknowledging to each other that we are fundamentally one.[20]

Löhe also included a reproof of Grabau's reckless handling of excommunication and rebuked him for his harsh words against the Missourians. Löhe added that he rendered this judgment against Grabau on his own accord and not at the prompting of his guests.

Neither Walther nor Löhe thought that all disputed points had been resolved. Löhe listed four points he thought his American counterparts needed to address: (1) the relation of the invisible church to the visible, the necessity of a living expression and form of the invisible church to the visible; (2) the God-pleasing connection of the individual congregation with the whole church, the presentation of the doctrine of the body and its members in the pilgrim church; (3) the difference between Law and apostolic institution, and the full recognition of the latter for guidance of the visible church; (4) the proper recognition of the progress and victory of the Lutheran church in the Pietistic and related controversies of the previous centuries.[21] In this same article, Löhe declared his intention with the Missouri Synod but reserved for himself certain independence for future activity in the States.

Coupled with the disputed theological issues of church and office, it was the friction that had developed in Saginaw that ultimately led to the break between Löhe and Walther. In addition to the four colonies Löhe had established in Michigan, he founded a teacher's seminary in Saginaw in 1852. The Michigan seminary, unlike the Fort Wayne institu-tion, was not handed over to the Missouri Synod. The director of the seminary, Georg Grossmann (1823–1897) chose not to affiliate with the Missouri Synod, even though he was a member of Holy Cross congre-gation. Grossmann was involved in a dispute with Ottomar Cloeter (1825–1897), another Löhe man who was the pastor at Holy Cross, on the doctrine of church and ministry.[22] There were also tensions surrounding the last of the Löhe colonies established in Michigan. This colony was under the

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[20] Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 207.

[21] Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 207–208.

[22] For perspectives on this dispute, see Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 168ff; Craig Nessan, "Wilhelm Löhe's Iowa Missionary Correspondence 1852–1872," *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 (Summer 2010), 137–141; and Albert L Hoek, *The Pilgrim Colony: The History of Saint Sebald Congregation, the Two Wartburgs, and the Synods of Iowa and Missouri* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2004), 64–115.

leadership of Pastor Johannes Deindoerfer (1828–1907), who remained sympathetic to Löhe's position on church and ministry. James Schaaf observes:

> The actual incidents in the Michigan colonies which led to the break with Missouri are shrouded in silence; the participants were loath to discuss the painful details and contented themselves with presenting generalities. Apparently no one single item led to the decision to leave Michigan; the final break was a result of hard feelings and dissatisfaction which had been building for years.[23]

The break came in the summer of 1853. Grossmann and Deindoerfer decided to relocate in Iowa. Löhe sent a letter to Ferdinand Sievers, symbolically bordered in black, bidding farewell but also rebuking the Missourians for what Löhe identified as their "papistical territorialism."[24]

The controversy in Saginaw was between three young men—all in their twenties—sent by Löhe. Cloeter had arrived in 1849. Deindoerfer came in 1851 and was followed by Grossmann the next year. One might ask, how is it that Löhe's emissaries came to find themselves in conflict with one another? Siegfried Hebart suggests that Löhe's doctrine of the ministry evolved in four distinct periods. The first period embraced the early years of Löhe's work, up until 1841. In this period, Löhe's views on the office reflected the Lutheran dogmaticians of the 17th century. A second period, stretching from 1841 to 1848, included the publication of *Three Books About the Church* in 1844. In this period, Löhe sought to demonstrate how the invisible church is made visible. The Revolution of 1848 also accented the conservative, anti-democratic themes in Löhe. The third period ran from 1848 to 1860. This period is marked by the *Aphorismen* of 1849 and 1851 where Löhe became more innovative and used the language of spiritual aristocracy to describe the clergy. In the final stage, 1861–1872, Löhe does not contribute anything new or different to his discussion of the office.[25] Hebart's characterization of Löhe's theological development led James Schaaf to conclude that Löhe's early emissaries were steeped in his earlier teaching and did not find his later position congenial, while Grossmann and Deindoerfer would have been trained with the newly-developed insights of their teacher.[26]

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[23] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 165.

[24] Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 233.

[25] See Siegfried Hebart, *Wilhelm Löhes Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment; Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie im 19. Jahrhundret* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1939), 39–292.

[26] Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 147.

There was occasional contact between the Missourians and their former mentor. For example, Johann Streckfuss wrote Löhe, saying that he did not wish to be counted among his ungrateful pupils.[27] Sievers and Ernst were among those who remained on amicable terms with Löhe. Friedrich Wyneken's son, H.C. Wyneken, took an extended trip to Germany in 1869–1870. In his diary of June 23, 1869, he described his visit with the aging Pastor Löhe:

> I will not forget how he greeted be with a warm handshake and a sweet-melancholy smile, after having read my name on Mr. Volck's card. And my heart ached when he said: 'Yes, there is friendship between me and your father, which seems to have been forgotten, though.' My silly heart's emotion only allowed me to say 'No, not at all.' I have retained my immense love and respect for this man from the very first moment I saw him.[28]

The reception of Löhe in the Missouri Synod in the latter part of the 19th century cannot be fully understood apart from the emergence of the Iowa Synod, established in 1854 by those who departed Saginaw. Led by Deindoerfer and Grossmann, a band of about 20 settlers established a congregation and colony, Saint Sebald, in Clayton County, Iowa. This group became the nucleus of the Iowa Synod, dedicated to maintaining Löhe's teaching and to fulfill his vision of a missionary post on the American frontier.

Even though the Iowa Synod had its genesis in the controversy over the ministerial office, the new synod did not practice Löhe's doctrine. In fact, Todd Nichol has demonstrated that the Iowa Synod embodied much of Löhe's legacy but not his doctrine of the ministry:

> The Iowa Synod, its history makes clear, learned much at the knee of Wilhelm Löhe, but not its doctrine of the ministry. Like its synodical counterparts in the nineteenth century, Iowa drew its understanding of the ordained ministry from a fresh reading of the Scripture, of the Lutheran Confessions, and of the history of the wider Lutheran tradition. The synod's leading theologians, indeed, developed their views on the ministry on the basis of a new consideration of the sources of Christian and Lutheran traditions and in light of consider-able practical experience of church life in the United States. On the basis of this theological study and experience, they self-consciously entered

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[27] Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 237.

[28] Heinrich Christian Wyneken, *A Journal of Travels in Germany 1869–1870,* tr. Erika Bullman Flores (privately printed, 1999), 57.

> into what they regarded not only as an American Lutheran consensus but as a consensus representing the Lutheran tradition as a whole.[29]

In the remaining years of the 19th century, free conferences and literary exchanges between the Iowa and Missouri Synods gravitated toward other issues, including the scope of confessional subscription, eschatology, and especially the place of "open questions."

Löhe had maintained that the doctrine of church and ministry was left unsettled by the Confessions and therefore open to fuller development and clarification. Walther and the Missourians were ultimately unwilling to concede this point. The Iowans never understood differences on this doctrine as church divisive. Hence, they developed a polity for their new context that was at variance with Löhe's own preference. It is interesting to note that years after the break in Saginaw, Deindoerfer would write in the setting of another controversy—this time predestination—that while the ministry was an open question, election is not: "Although in former years the difference between us and the Missouri Synod did not stand in the way of church fellowship, the difference now existing in the doctrine [of predestination] is of such a nature that there can no longer be any church fellowship."[30]

The older Löhe was able to recognize shifts and changes in his own thinking that put him at odds with not only with the Missourians but also other confessionally-minded Lutherans in Germany. At a pastoral conference in 1865 he stated:

> Formerly for me to be a Lutheran meant to confess the Symbols from A to Z. Now all of Lutheranism is wrapped up for me in the Sacrament of the Altar. . . . It is not so much the Lutheran doctrine about the Holy Supper, but the sacramental living and the experience of the blessing of the sacrament which is made possible only through frequent participation. This is now the main thing for me. My progress is summed up in the words "sacramental Lutheranism."[31]

During the final twenty years of his life, Löhe especially focused on the deaconess house. It is in this context that he wrote,

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[29] Todd Nichol, "Wilhelm Löhe, the Iowa Synod and the Ordained Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4 (Spring 1990): 24–25.

[30] Martin J. Lohrmann, "A Monument to American Intolerance: The Iowa Synod's 'Open Questions' in Their American Context," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 305.

[31] Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Löhe 1808–1872,* tr. Wolf Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 209.

> If you want to know what we really desired, you have only to look at the Deaconess Institution. But you should not think only of the sisters. We wanted an apostolic-episcopal Church of Brothers. Lutheranism is not a part matter for us. What makes us Lutheran with all our soul is the Sacrament of the Altar and the doctrine of justification. We are not Lutherans in the sense of the Missourians, nor in the sense of the *Altlutheraner* (an orthodox Lutheran group). We are very old and very modern. What we really wanted in the final instance was for a Lutheranism to progress to an apostolic-episcopal Church of Brothers.[32]

Löhe's vision of "an apostolic-episcopal Church of Brothers" was never realized in Germany or in the Missouri and Iowa Synods. Löhe's dream of such a church, along with his eschatological speculations, made him increasingly suspect in the Missouri Synod[33]

Even as Missouri's understanding of doctrine and confessional subscription came under fire in the Iowa Synod, so Löhe and his American heirs would come under criticism by the Missourians in the last two decades of his life. When Löhe died in 1872, the February 15th issue of *Der Lutheraner* announced his death with little comment: "From *Lutherische Zeitung* we learned the shocking news that Pastor Loehe of Neuendettelsau, 'after a brief illness' died at five forty-five o'clock on the evening of January second."[34]

The significance of Löhe's work was often overlooked in the first one hundred years of the Missouri Synod's history. Writing in 1944, Theodore Graebner included a chapter on Löhe in his book *Church Bells in the Forest: A Story of Lutheran Pioneer Work on the Michigan Frontier 1840–1850,* describing him as "a man with a good heart."[35] Walther Baepler's *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847–1947* gives a positive but scant treatment of Löhe's role in the formative stage of the Missouri Synod's life.[36] The few references to Löhe in Franz Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* are

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[32] Geiger, 211. Here also see Wolfhart Schlichting, "Kirche-Bekenntnis-Pluralität bei Wilhelm Löhe," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision.* Schlichting points out significant shifts in the later Löhe, noting that the Sacrament of the Altar becomes his "material principle," 143–145.

[33] See Geiger, 206, for a description of this controversy.

[34] Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," Preface.

[35] Theodore Graebner, *Church Bells in the Forest: A Story of Lutheran Pioneer Work on the Michigan Frontier 1840–1850* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), 15–16.

[36] Walter Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847–1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 65–74.

all negative, identifying him as one given to "Romanizing tendencies,"[37] thus echoing commentary often made in *Lehre und Wehre* in the second half of the 19th century.

Only in the 1950s and 1960s did a more appreciative picture of Löhe begin to emerge in the LCMS. This may, in part, come from the influence of Hermann Sasse, who himself came to a Lutheran confessional position through his reading of Löhe's *Three Books About the Church* while doing graduate studies at Hartford Seminary in 1925–1926. A number of Sasse's essays made positive use of Löhe.[38] In 1949, Sasse wrote an article entitled "Walther and Löhe: On the Church,"[39] in which he argued that Walther and Löhe shared much more in common than is often realized, and that each failed to apply his own principles in relation to the other. It was also during this post-war period that a number of Missouri Synod students pursued doctoral work at Erlangen, where the memory and to some extent the influence of Löhe was discernible.[40]

While there seem to be some parallels drawn between Arthur Carl Piepkorn and Löhe, especially in relationship to ecclesiology and the Lord's Supper, as far as I can tell, Piepkorn never produced any published essays dealing with Löhe in depth. In his *Profiles in Belief*, Piepkorn refers to Löhe as one who "argued that the confessional position of the Church of the Augsburg Confession is identical with that of the New Testament. He could, therefore, also affirm the catholicity and ecumenicity of the Lutheran Confessions."[41] A number of Piepkorn's students, however,

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[37] Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* 3 vols., tr. Walter W.F. Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3: 447–449. Also see Geiger, 204–205. Löhe defends himself against the charge: "I am opposed to Rome as much as anyone. But the way I feel, this opposition does not prevent me from seeing much that is laudable in less important things on the other side and much that is perverted and wrong on our side. Precisely because I find myself completely separated from the Roman Church, as also from other Church parties, I dare to notice the good things, and I do not shy away from saying it" (cited in Geiger, 205, from *GW* 5/2, 865).

[38] See Hermann Sasse, *The Lonely Way,* 2 vols., tr. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002–2003).

[39] Hermann Sasse, "Walther and Löhe: On the Church," *Springfielder* (December 1971), 176–182, written as a "Letter to Lutheran Pastors" in July 1949. A fresh translation by Norman E. Nagel appeared in *We Confess the Church,* 69–83.

[40] For the influence of Löhe at Erlangen, see Karl Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (Erlangen: Martin Luther-Verlag, 1993), 51–53, and Lowell Green, *The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching, and Practice* (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2010), 27–32.

[41] Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *Profiles in Belief,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 2: 28.

wrote on Löhe. In 1954, John Tietjen submitted an S.T.M. thesis to Union Seminary on "The Ecclesiology of Wilhelm Loehe." Walter Bouman (1929–2005) wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1962 on "The Unity of the Church in Nineteenth Century Lutheranism" for Edmund Schlink at Heidelberg and devoted a significant portion of this project to Löhe.

Bouman examined the ecclesiological thinking of 14 German-Lutheran theologians of the 19th century, probing their articulation of the nature and unity of the church. Among them was Löhe. Bouman observed that Löhe sought the church's perfection, that is, the invisible church being made visible, the church militant becoming more and more like the church triumphant.[42] He identified Löhe as being a representative of an irenic, ecumenical Lutheranism and credited Löhe for speaking of the catholicity of the Lutheran church as it takes its middle place among the denominations.[43] The category of "open questions" provided space for growth and development. Bouman noted Löhe's preference for the imagery of Romanticism in describing the periods of the church as blossoms on a flower.[44] While not attempting to equate his own view with that of Löhe, he saw some aspects in Löhe's ecclesiology that provide a reserve for ecumenical efforts. Bouman concluded, "But perhaps the discussion of the 19th century—still unresolved today—indicates that this is in need of further dogmatic definition. Perhaps the C.A. has only made a beginning. Perhaps the dogmatic definition of the Church is still before us—before the whole of Christendom."[45]

This is not to say that Bouman finds Löhe without difficulty. For example, he sees in Löhe's thinking an identification of the apostolic word with Scripture rather than preaching.[46] Nor did he think that Löhe was sufficiently able to work out the "ecclesiological significance" of an already existing unity.[47]

Beyond his dissertation Bouman did not do any additional work on Löhe. Before he left the Missouri Synod in 1977 for a teaching position at the Columbus seminary of the ALC, Bouman was a vocal participant in efforts to increase ecumenical participation and liturgical renewal. The remainder of his career, spent in the ALC and the ELCA, was marked by

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[42] Walter Richard Bouman, "The Unity of the Church in Nineteenth Century Lutheranism" (Th.D. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1962), 46.

[43] Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 47.

[44] Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 351.

[45] Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 365.

[46] Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 49.

[47] Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 341.

his aggressive advocacy of *Called to Common Mission,* which finally established full communion between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church in 1999. Bouman identified himself as an "evangelical catholic." Although this term is elusive and elastic, David Ratke suggests that Löhe's theology "reveals a marked similarity" to this movement. [48]

Most significantly, Kenneth F. Korby (1924–2006) authored his dissertation on "Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and the Laity" at Concordia Seminary in Exile in 1976.[49] Korby, a professor for many years at Valparaiso University and then a parish pastor and adjunct professor for Concordia Theological Seminary, stimulated a renewed interest in Löhe. His instruction of future deaconesses at Valparaiso connected them with the diaconal tradition of Neuendettelsau. As an adjunct professor at Fort Wayne and frequent conference lecturer in the 1980s and 1990s, Korby challenged stereotypical renderings of Löhe, presenting him as a model for pastoral theology and mission in contrast to the therapeutic approaches of pastoral counseling and "church growth" paradigms for mission that were becoming increasingly popular in the LCMS. Among other things, Korby urged a recovery of the practice of private confession and absolution as the basis of pastoral care.[50] One can also detect the imprint of images drawn from Löhe in Korby's own writing and preaching.

In 1964, Erich Heintzen authored a doctoral dissertation entitled "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod 1841–1853." Heintzen concluded his dissertation with Walther's tribute to Löhe in 1852:

> Next to God, it is only Pastor Loehe to whom our Synod is indebted for its happy beginning and rapid growth in which it rejoices; it may well honor him as its spiritual father. It would fill the pages of an entire book to recount even briefly what for many years this man, with tireless zeal and in the noblest unselfish spirit, has done for our Lutheran Church and our Synod in particular.[51]

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[48] David C. Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 207.

[49] Kenneth F. Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and Pastoral Care* (Th.D. diss. Concordia Seminary in Exile, 1976). Also see John T. Pless, "The Contribution of Kenneth Korby to a Renewed Interest in Pastoral Theology," *CTQ* 73 (April 2009): 99–114.

[50] Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and Pastoral Care,* 236–272. For Löhe's influence in the young Missouri Synod in regard to private confession and absolution, see Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 347–351.

[51] Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 249.

Then Heintzen includes his own reflection on this tribute:

> These words, it is true, were written when the romance between Loehe and the Synod, though threatened, was still in bloom. After it faded, such acknowledgements became noticeably restrained, and Loehe gradually forgotten. The tribute, however, still remains what it was. Like any monument, though largely ignored, it stands for all to see if they will but look.[52]

A condensed and popular version of Heintzen's dissertation appeared in 1973 as *Love Leaves Home: Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod.*[53] When Concordia Thelogical Seminary celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1971, an anniversary issue of its theological journal, *The Springfielder*, prominently featured the legacy of Löhe.[54] Other popular works, such as Herman Zehnder's "*Teach My People the Truth!" The Story of Frankenmuth, Michigan* published in 1970,[55] Richard Stuckwisch's *Johannes Konrad Wilhelm Loehe: Portrait of a Confessional Lutheran Missiologist* published in 1993,[56] and A.M. Bickel's *Our Forgotten Founding Father* in 1997[57] served to accent Löhe's contributions to the LCMS.

For much of the Missouri Synod's history, the significance of the pastor from Neuendettelsau has been only partially appreciated. At worst, Löhe was characterized as guilty of "Romanizing tendencies" as noted above. More generous assessments recognize his early assistance in providing human and financial resources that would be crucial for the development of what would become the Missouri Synod.[58] The bicentennial of Löhe's birth in 2008 saw significant and positive appreciation of Löhe in the church body that he had a hand in establishing as a "father from afar." Evidence of this is seen in the fact that Concordia Theological Seminary hosted a conference on Löhe on October 10–11, 2008. The February 2008 issue of the Synod's official magazine, *The Lutheran Witness*,

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[52] Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 249.

[53] Erich Heintzen, *Love Leaves Home: Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973).

[54] This issue contained the previously cited essay of Sasse on Walther and Löhe, as well as articles by F.W. Kantzenbach of Neuendettelsau and Max Löhe of the Lutheran Church in Australia.

[55] Herman F. Zehnder, "*Teach My Pepole the Truth!" The Story of Frankenmuth, Michigan* (Frankenmuth, Michigan: Privately printed, 1970).

[56] Richard Stuckwisch, *Johannes Konrad Wilhelm Loehe: Portrait of a Confessional Lutheran Missiologist* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop, 1993).

[57] A.M. Bickel, *Our Forgotten Father* (Napoleon, Ohio: Privately printed, 1997).

[58] See John T. Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod: Forgotten Paternity or Living Legacy?" *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (April 2006), 122–137.

carried an article on Löhe. [59] The Holy Trinity 2008 issue of *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology,* an independent journal with heavy influences from LCMS pastors, was published as "the Loehe bicentennial issue," featuring essays by North American and European scholars.[60] *Concordia Pulpit Resources,* a homiletical journal for LCMS pastors, noted Löhe's contributions to preaching and included the translation of one of his sermons on the Lord's Supper at the occasion of the Löhe bicentennial.[61] Concordia Publishing House published David C. Ratke's *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* in 2001. In 2006, LCMS World Relief and Human Care commissioned a translation of *Löhe on Mercy: Six Chapters for Everyone, the Seventh for the Servants of Mercy* and has widely distributed this booklet throughout the congregations of the synod.[62] John Stephenson, a professor of the Missouri Synod's sister church in Canada (Lutheran Church—Canada), has translated Löhe's 1849 *Aphorisms*.[63] Concordia Publishing House recently released a translation of *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Löhe*, a full length biography by Erika Geiger, a former Neuendettelsau deaconess.[64]

Löhe's liturgical influence was felt in the early years of the Missouri Synod through his 1844 *Agenda* dedicated to Wyneken; it shaped the worship life of congregations until the adoption of the Saxon *Agenda* of 1856.[65] Friedrich Lochner (1822–1902) transmitted something of the liturgical legacy he received from Löhe to students at the Springfield seminary. Lochner's book on liturgy was used at both LCMS seminaries well into the 20th century.[66]

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[59] John T. Pless, "The Missionary Who Never Left Home," *Lutheran Witness* 127 (February 2008): 11–13.

[60] Included in this issue are articles by Dietrich Blaufuß, Craig Nessan, and Walter Conser, as well as Frank Senn's introduction to the Preface of the 1844 Agenda and a translation of one of Löhe's Trinity Sunday sermons.

[61] Wilhelm Löhe, "Historical Sermon: A Sermon on the Lord's Supper," tr. Jason D. Lane, *Concordia Pulpit Resources* 18 (August 24–November 23, 2008), 3–6.

[62] Wilhelm Löhe, *Löhe on Mercy: Six Chapters For Everyone, the Seventh for Servants of Mercy,* tr. Holger Sonntag with a Preface by Matthew C. Harrison (Saint Louis: LCMS Board for World Relief and Human Care, 2007).

[63] Wilhelm Löhe, *Aphorisms on the New Testament Offices and Their Relationship to the Congregation*, tr. John Stephenson (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2008).

[64] Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe 1808–1872*, tr. Wolf Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010).

[65] See Wilhelm Löhe, "Prefaces to the Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses" with an introduction by Frank C. Senn, *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17 (Holy Trinity 2008), 31–38

[66] Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 133.

Löhe's liturgical influence is still visible in the LCMS. The LCMS hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book* (*LSB*) contains one of Löhe's hymns, "Wide Open Stand the Gates" (*LSB* 639). *LSB* lists January 2, the date of Löhe's death, to commemorate his vocation as a pastor. The *LSB Agenda* and the *Pastoral Care Companion* bear some marks of Löhe's influence. This may be seen in the distinction made between "ordinary" and "extraordinary" means of pastoral care in the Introduction.[67] Ironically, Löhe's rite for the anointing of the sick, which occasioned controversy in Germany and criticism from the 19th-century Missourians, is incorporated into the order for "Visiting the Sick and the Distressed" in the *LSB Agenda.*[68]

Löhe's voice has never been absent in Walther's church. Sometimes it has been muted and barely heard. Yet Löhe played an important role as he sent men and resources across the Atlantic, helping to shape the identity of the fledgling synod. In more recent years, various aspects of Löhe's legacy have been retrieved in LCMS efforts to broaden ecumenical perspective, deepen pastoral theology, enrich liturgical life, give shape to an authentically Lutheran missiology, enhance the place of the female diaconate, sustain the church's corporate life of mercy, or to provide what is seen as a corrective to Walther's understanding of the office.

Reviewing the reception of Löhe in Germany, Dietrich Blaufuss has noted attempts to render the Bavarian churchman either a "saint" or a "heretic," often without serious engagement with Löhe's own literary work.[69] Fresh, unbiased engagement of Löhe's work is to be welcomed as an appropriate way to appreciate his legacy, alongside that of Walther, in order that his voice may contribute to the life and mission of the Lutheran church in our day.

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[67] See *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), ix. Compare this with Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe,* 245–246; also Kennth Korby, "Löhe's *Seelsorge* for His Fellow Lutherans in North America" *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (November, 1972), 227–246 and John T. Pless, "Löhe as Pastoral Theologian: The Discipline of the Shepherd" *Lutheran Theological Journal* 43 (August 2009), 110–117.

[68] *LSB Agenda,* 45. See Geiger, 158–159 for a description of the controversy.

[69] Dietrich Blaufuß, "Saint and Heretic: Wilhelm Löhe in German Historiography since 1872," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (April 2006): 103–112.

CTQ 75 (2011): 329–342

Walther, the Third Use of the Law, and Contemporary Issues

David P. Scaer

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther's 24 theses on the law and the gospel do not easily lend themselves to a developed doctrine on the third use of the law, an insight already made by Scott R. Murray.[1] Werner Elert and Gerhard Forde proposed that the third use of the law outlined in Article VI of the Formula of Concord was not held by Luther and hence had no place in Lutheran theology.[2] Confusing the Reformed view that law in its third use prods the regenerate to do good works with that of the Formula may be one reason for its rejection. For Walther, the Reformed position of applying the law to produce good works is a confusion of law and gospel, which is what his theses are all about.[3] Since Article VI has do with the law in all three uses, especially the second or accusatory function, it might be better entitled "The Three Uses of the Law." Article VI is really an extension of Article IV, "Good Works" and Article V, "Concerning Law and Gospel." According to Article VI, good works flow from a free and merry spirit meeting the law's specification (17, 23), but at the base of the article is the Lutheran anthropology that the believer is more sinner than saint and hence it speaks of the law's second use that the sinful flesh needs to be

[1] Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 25–26.

[2] For a fuller discussion, see Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 26–30. This position has been convincingly rebutted by Ed Engelbrecht, "Luther's Threefold Use of the Law," *CTQ* 75 (2011): 135–150.

[3] Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ed. Charles P. Schaum, John P. Hellwege Jr., and Thomas E. Manteufel; tr. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 5. "Thesis XXIII. You are not rightly distinguishing Law and Gospel God in the Word of God . . . if you use commands of the Law—rather than the admonitions of the Gospel—to urge the regenerate to do good." Walther's lectures on the law and the gospel were given from September 12, 1884 to November 6, 1885. A German edition was published in 1901, an English edition in 1929, ed. W.H.T. Dau, and condensed editions under the title *God's No and God's Yes: The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, cond. Walter C. Pieper (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973, 1981).

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threatened and compelled by the law (9, 18–20).[4] Christians, as believers, are driven by the Spirit of Christ to do good according to the law of Christ, that is, the gospel (17). Apart from a reference to the Spirit of Christ, a christological component is missing. Though the law has three functions, it has only one meaning as "the unchanging will of God, according to which human beings are to conduct themselves in this life" (15). So the law's first and third functions result in the same outward behavior in the performance of good works (16), with the proviso that deeds done according to the first use are driven by fear of the law's penalties and the desire for reward. Good works done according to the third use come from the Spirit. First and second uses of the law resemble each other in that failure results in penalties. Caught between the Reformed position that the third use is a reimposition of the law's threats in how the believer as believer lives and the Lutheran concentration on the second use, some theologians have found good reason to deny the third use altogether. This is exacerbated by a less than fully defined third use of the law in the Formula, a matter addressed below.

The law-gospel paradigm by which Lutheran theology is usually defined and the Formula's lack of a fully developed definition of the third use may have provided a basis among some Lutherans for ordaining women and, more recently, homosexuals. Should any regulations or prohibitions about these matters be identified in the Scriptures, they would be superceded by the gospel, or so the argument goes. A less than fully developed doctrine of the third use in the Formula and Lutheran theology in general is rooted in the Lutheran concentration on original sin from which even in doing good works believers remain sinners. In spite of their faith in Christ, believers are constantly going back to square one. So pervasive is the reality of sin that discussion on the third use with its positive aspects soon reverts to the second use. Gilbert Meilaender addresses this Lutheran dilemma:

> If I am an inattentive thoughtless, or even abusive husband and father—and my neighbor is just the opposite, an exemplary husband and father—what Lutheranism too often has to say to us is exactly the same: that before God we are sinners in need of justifying grace. And if I want help to become more like my exemplary neighbor, the message is likely to be precisely the same: that I am sinner in need of grace. All of which is, of course, true. But it is not the only theological

[4] *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, tr. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). References in the sentences are to the paragraphs in Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord.

> truth, nor the one that always best suits our condition. A theology that has learned to speak in such a monotone about grace—always as pardon but not also as power—gives no guidance or direction to the serious Christian. The Christian life, engaged only in instant return to pardoning word, goes nowhere.[5]

Walther's *Law and Gospel* informs classical Lutheran homiletical tradition that law and gospel are diametrically opposed to each other. Law not only serves but virtually exhausts its purpose in condemning sinners in preparation for hearing the gospel.[6] His theses do not develop the law's positive aspect in providing specific guidance in how Christians are to live. He speaks of renewal and love, but only in the sense that they along with faith are not causes of one's salvation. A third use of the law may be implied in Walther's exegesis of Romans 3 and 4 in which he says that first the law threatens with the wrath of God and then the gospel announces the comforting promises of God. Then he adds, "This is followed by instruction regarding the things we are to do after becoming new people,"[7] but he does not elucidate what these things are.

Walther regards law as divine threat and gospel as divine comfort, definitions that serve his ultimate purpose in showing that the two are not to be commingled. Believers converted by the gospel are not to be burdened with other requirements. Walther's concentration on the second use reflects Reformation thought, but he probably was also reacting to Rationalism with its positive appraisal of man's moral capabilities in which the law's accusatory function no longer was prominent. Within the context of 18th century Europe, the church as a *Volkeskirche* was coextensive with the state and so in practice the first and third uses of the law became virtually indistinguishable. Walther's experience with Pietism may have been more significant for his not providing an explicit discussion of the law's third use. After faith was created, Pietists reinserted regulations into Christian life, while the Reformed saw law as goading Christians to good works. For Walther, the gospel was God's last word, but ironically this idea, that was given legs by Werner Elert and Robert Schulz in the 20th century, provided a basis for the view that the law was not applicable in Christian life. Apart from the question of whether Walther's theology was abused, an abridged edition of his *Law and Gospel* appeared as *God's No and God's Yes,* a title suggesting that law and gospel are two incompatible

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[5] Gilbert Meileaender, "The Catholic I Am," *First Things* 210 (February 2011): 29.

[6] Walther, *Law and Gospel*, 1–8.

[7] Walther, *Law and Gospel*, 105. " In more theological terms he writes: "Genuine sanctification *follows* justification, and genuine justification comes *after* repentance." Emphasis original.

revelations of God. Compared to promises of the gospel with no conditions attached, law with its conditions, prohibitions and condemnations comes across as one big "no." This characterization is so persuasive that many a Lutheran sermon predictably closes with an executive pardon for all transgressions.

A discussion on the law in its three uses would have remained the purview of the theologians had it not been for decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that were based on the law-gospel paradigm that the gospel is God's last word—though it should be quickly added that recent events would have taken place even without theological arguments.[8] False doctrine is not as easily recognized as aberrant practice, and reactions to the ELCA's decisions prove the point. Trinitarian issues have surfaced along with these decisions. Much trinitarian discussion is so abstract as to remain beyond the interest of many clergy and the grasp of the laity, but the introduction of an alternate form of the Lord's Prayer addressing God as Mother could not pass unnoticed, even by those who worship infrequently. At this point theology kicks in. If the first person of the Trinity can be known as Mother, then child can be substituted for Son and, we ask, why could the second person of the Trinity not be known as the daughter? In use already is the trinitarian alternative of Creator-Redeemer-Sanctifier that allows for the ancient heresy of Modalism.

For those who lived through discussions leading up to the introduction of women clergy persons in the 1970s, recent ELCA decisions are a *déjà vu* experience—been there, seen that, heard that. Then as now, arguments center around two fulcra. First, Old and New Testament citations, traditionally understood as disallowing these recently approved behaviors, are reinterpreted. Second, even if traditional prohibitions are acknowledged as correct interpretations of the disputed passages, they have been abrogated by the gospel. Gospel is God's last word, and law has outlived its purpose. This argument is a form of dispensationalism, though it is rarely recognized as such. Arguments for ordaining women in the 1970s were more diverse and prolonged than those for ordaining practicing homosexuals. In one moment it was proposed and another accepted, or so it seems.[9] Since regularizing the ordination of women, officially sponsored ELCA discussions on the matter have ceased. Ordination of homosexuals

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[8] Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God,* 26, goes as far as saying that "Walther's work set the agenda for discussion of Law and Gospel in America until the present."

[9] Giving the primacy to the gospel may lead to this absurd opinion that homosexual behavior is allowed for those who find themselves under the gospel but not for those under the law.

is already incontestible practice matching incontestable dogma. These disruptive controversies might show that while Lutherans were absorbed with the law's second or accusatory function, they should have been examining the law's third use in its application to the private and corporate lives of Christians.

Since its formation, the ELCA has moved away from its Lutheran heritage by establishing fellowship with the Reformed, Episcopalians, Moravians, and Methodists and has signed an accord on justification with the Catholics. Female theological students are approaching a majority in the ELCA. Homosexual unions can be given marriage blessings. During the radicalization of church practice, a sense of what it means to be Lutheran amazingly remains and has given birth to protest movements calling for reform and the formation of new synods. A revival of the Lutheran spirit was evident in a gathering at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, opposite the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, on the after-noon of Sunday, October 17, 2010. The speaker was Paull L. Spring, former bishop of one of the ELCA's geographic synods in Pennsylvania, and interim bishop of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). Objections raised there to the recent ELCA decisions might be described as intuitive rather than theological. One lady expressed dismay at allowing divorced persons to remain as pastors. A lay person asked for the definition of the word "orthodox," a question unlikely to be raised at similar LCMS gatherings. One pastor asked whether natural law could be taught at the seminaries, a question with profound theological significance. They were groping for reasons to counter the newer practices. Most clergy are patient with deviations in practice and doctrine, but it is another matter when an entire church body regularizes a deviation. Regularized deviations in practices in the ELCA bring to the surface doctrinal aberrations that would have otherwise remain unnoticed. In Bishop Spring's opinion, ELCA decisions to ordain practicing homosexuals were motivated more by cultural fluctuations than by agreed upon biblical conclusions. He did not mention that cultural forces were at work decision to ordain women in the 1970s. In both cases, the goals of ordaining women and homosexuals were in view by their proponents before and apart from the retrieval of biblical evidences and catholic practice.

Decisions and the ensuing discussions about ordaining women in the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the major constituting churches of the ELCA, can best be explained by the cultural climate of the debate over the Equal Rights Amendment to the American constitution. Rights that women had in society were seen as

rights they also had in the church. Voila, ordained women pastors. A malformed understanding of the universal priesthood of believers served this agenda well, as did the law-gospel paradigm in which the gospel as God's last word trumped the law. Recent decisions reflect and correspond to current cultural values expressed in judicial, legislative, and executive actions allowing gays to enter into contractual unions, marry, and serve openly in military. When the church absorbs the prevailing culture into its practices and then adjusts its theology to justify these practices, the church becomes so undistinguishable from society that it is no longer recognizable as church, a point Bishop Spring made in his lecture. Friedrich Schleiermacher constructed a form of Christianity from the German culture of the early 19th century. American churches may be constructing a religion out of the standards of Western culture but without historic Christian components that were still available in the early 19th German culture. Also lacking today is a noteworthy theologian like Schleiermacher. Present innovations look for support in the law-gospel paradigm that characterizes Lutheranism and the denial by some Lutheran scholars of the law's third use. These two things converge.

So we go back to the question of what role the third use had for Walther. His *Pastoral Theology* sets down standards for pastoral conduct and procedures for exercising discipline.[10] Christians not living up to church standards could be expelled from the congregation. This looks like law but perhaps not in its third function. Walther's edition of Baier's *Compendium* offers no section on the third use, but a definition may be extracted from the section on sanctification.[11] Good works are described as spontaneous, an argument advanced in Article IV of the Formula on good works, but not in Article VI on the third use.[12] For Walther, justification precedes sanctification, the life of good works, but it is pre-cisely in the discussion of sanctification where the law's third use has a place. Current confusion about the third use may have been tempered, if it had been combined with the Formula's article on good works and the sections of Lutheran dogmatics on sanctification.

Ordination of women and homosexuals, practices that find precedence in ancient Gnosticism and not early church catholicism, were taking place

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[10] C.F.W. Walther, *Americanish-Lutherishe Pastoraltheologie,* 5th ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), 338–354. American *Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, tr. and abr. John Drickamer (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., 1995), esp. 247–251.

[11] Chapter VI, "De Renovatione et Bonis Operibus," *Compendium*, 299–336.

[12] Johann Wilhelm Baier, *Compendium Theologie Positivae*, ed. C.F.W. Walther (St. Louis: Lutherishe Concordia Verlag, 1879), 330.

in the Episcopal Church and the ELCA before either church legitimated them. Arguments offered for these changes were not without biblical support, but the prevailing one offered by Lutherans was that the gospel is God's last word. Hence any prohibitions concerning such behaviors are no longer applicable. Even though the law-gospel paradigm as articulated by Walther and Elert was not intended to support these practices, it did. Call it unintended consequences, a phrase that is eminently useful in theological discussion. This interpretation of the law-gospel paradigm in which the gospel has the last word finds collateral support in the now widely held view that Luther did not hold to the law's third use. This has proved to be a recipe for ethical disaster and ecclesiastical collapse. Yes, the law, depending on the circumstances, can be divided into functions, but there is only one law.

Hence, an abrogation in one function of the law contributes to or reflects a parallel malfunction in the other two. Practitioners and supporters of homosexual behavior no longer have to face the law's accusations from the pulpit. They are no longer called to repentance and then faith. Confession in the confessional booth is adjusted by abridgment to the new standards. Only at one's own risk does a clergy person of a church allowing women and homosexual preachers and the blessing of same sex marriage preach against these practices. He will inevitably run afoul of church officials and comprise his political future. In the state-affiliated churches of Scandinavia, some pastors have already been subject to ecclesiastical censure and civil penalties. In regard to the law's first use, ELCA decisions are in line with what is allowed by governments of countries in the West and, in a kind of perverse way, demonstrates the Formula's view that the law in its first and third uses results in or at least allows the same behaviors. This is not the case in Islamic countries and African countries with significant Christian populations, where such behaviors are frowned upon and have led some Lutheran churches to contemplate breaking communion with the ELCA. Compared to Roman Catholics and the Reformed, Lutherans are less politically active, but this may prove to our detriment. What is allowed under civil law, the law's first use, becomes more easily accepted under the third use and so redefines the doctrine of Christian sanctification.

Seeing things in historical perspective helps. Saxon and Bavarian Lutherans, who arrived first into the Midwest in the 1830s, understood that the Rationalist and Pietist theologies from which they fled found a poor sister in the Lutheranism that sprang up a century before in colonial Pennsylvania and New York. Early American Lutheranism had multi-varied roots

in Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism and was soon overcome by German Rationalism with an assist from New England Congregationalism, which turned into the Unitarianism of Harvard where the president of the New York Synod Frederick Quitman had studied. The contagion of revivalism that loomed up in Jonathan Edward's New England and was advanced in the Methodism of George Whitefield found its way on to the prairies where the new arrivals were settling. All this was brought together by Samuel S. Schmucker's American Recension of the Augsburg Confession. To make sure that they were not trading European products for inferior American ones, leaders of the Lutheran immigration established their own synods, among which The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) still survives.

Jumping out of the devouring flames of European Rationalism into the American Protestant frying pan was not an option for the LCMS's fathers, and so the lines were quickly and sharply drawn between established Lutheranism and the bourgeoning Lutheranism of the plains. Had the older American Lutheranism found entrance among the newly arrived immigrants, they would have escaped one devil to meet another one with duller, less theologically honed horns. Zion on the Mississippi had to resist being overwhelmed by the waters that flowed from the Hudson, Delaware, and Susquehanna westward over the Appalachians to the Midwestern prairies. Zion's inhabitants sandbagged their fortress on Mississippi against eastern floods (Is 8:6–8). In this complex of metaphors lurks a composite parable that scientific principles are not hardwired. Take for example the principle that all rivers flow downward. This might be true, unless it was Fort Wayne in March of 1982, when the waters of the St. Joseph River met the swift flowing waters of the St. Mary's River coming from the south and the St. Joe began to flow upstream. If commonly accepted principles are open to reevaluation, then so are common theological assumptions. Perhaps theological influences can flow in unexpected directions. Thus, influences flowing from Missouri's Zion on the Mississippi could reverse course and flow north into ELCA seminaries. Well, according to Carl E. Braaten, this is what happened, and details are provided in his *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian*.[13]

For years Braaten, along with his co-editor Robert W. Jensen of the *Christian Dogmatics*, has been called to task for holding a little less than authentic Lutheran theology, but he turns the tables around in attributing ELCA problems to LCMS blue bloods. Waters from the Concordia

[13] Carl E. Braaten, *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 118–122

Seminary, St. Louis, channeled through Christ Seminary in Exile, Seminex, flowed upstream to Chicago in 1982 when the former Saint Louis faculty from Seminex joined, and then took control of, the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC). Braaten relates how ten former Seminex professors voted as a block to bring down the existing faculty structure and administration. Having taken the top faculty positions for themselves at LSTC, they put in place the egalitarian model of Concordia Seminary's administration of John H. Tietjen in which "secretaries, janitors, and kitchen help" were included in faculty social gatherings. This was more than a political maneuver, but in Braaten's opinion theological antinomianism was at work. "The theology that backed up the 'paradigm shift' at LTSC was antinomian or a close relative." All this laid on the shoulders of former LCMS clergy who found their way into his church.[14]

The unexpected consequence of such a strong contingency of Seminex personnel was to move the faculty and student body to the left on social, cultural, and theological issues. Having been condemned as liberals and heretics in their home church, they became advocates of a progressive agenda in their new ecclesial setting. The poison of political correctness spread into every aspect of seminary life. [15]

Braaten takes it a step further in seeing these actions as the core of the resolutions adopted by the August 2009 ELCA convention regularizing the ordination of gays and the blessing of their unions as marriages. Tietjen anticipated this as the role of his faculty.[16] Braaten is not the only one pointing the finger at the LCMS for ELCA problems. At his October 17, 2010, presentation, Bishop Spring located the cause of what he called the antinomianism in the ELCA in "Gospel reductionism" and commended J.A.O. Preus for recognizing it for what it really was.[17] Gospel reductionism extends the law-gospel paradigm used in preaching, especially as it was set forth by Walther, into biblical interpretation in providing the only required meaning of a biblical text. If the biblical text births law and gospel, everything else in the text is up for grabs.[18]

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[14] Braaten, *Because of Christ,* 120–121.

[15] Braaten, *Because of Christ,* 120.

[16] John H. Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 299.

[17] Spring attributed the phrase to the late LCMS president Jacob Preus, though its popularity can be traced to John Warwick Montgomery's series of lectures entitled "Law/Gospel reductionism"and came to be known in its abbreviated form as "Gospel reductionism." See Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God* , 103

[18] Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 103, 215.

The subtitle of Walther's *Law and Gospel*, *How To Read and Apply the Bible* implied that law and gospel was more than a preaching technique, but that it was a hermeneutical one also, and so it was taken. For self-styled confessional minded preachers, the core meaning of a biblical passage is exhausted if, after bringing the people to their knees, they are lifted up by the gospel. In certain and perhaps most cases, the imposition of the principle curtails rather than helps determine what was on the mind of the inspired writer. Walther did not preach like this, as is obvious from his robust engagement with the biblical texts, but the law-gospel principle came to form the basis of "Gospel reductionism." Preach law and gospel and the preacher has license to say whatever he or she wants about the biblical text. *How to Read and the Apply the Bible* said too much about Walther's book or, for that matter, any book. The next step is that ethical matters are up for grabs.

Applied unilaterally, "Gospel reductionism" results in antinomianism, as both Bishop Spring and Carl Braaten observe, and compromises the law in all three functions. Bishop Spring said that culture and not Scripture is determining the ELCA's agenda. Meilaender speaks of "Lutheranism's decline into antinomianism."[19] In the mores of society a century ago, mainline churches had no thought of ordaining women. This was something Pentecostal churches did. Two generations ago the blessing of a gay marriage was unheard of. Had the culture not lost its moral bearings, what is understood as the first use of the law, problems now affecting church life, matters of the law's third use, would not have arisen. When the sense of right and wrong binding a society together is eroded, it becomes difficult for the church to bring people to an awareness of their sin in preparation for the gospel. Reformed theologian Michael Horton has said that if the church does not change culture, culture will change the church, a theme constantly reappearing in *First Things*. Though the task of improving the culture has more of a place in Calvinism, culture has changed the church and we are suffering the consequences.

After his lecture, Bishop Spring told a circle of people gathered around him that current ELCA problems were traceable to those LCMS clergy who, as members of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), were later involved in the formation of the ELCA, the same point Braaten makes in his autobiography.[20] When two points are located on the circumference of a circle, the center can be located. Spring and Braaten serve as those points and the lines to the center converge on the LCMS,

[19] Meilaender, "The Catholic I Am," 30.
[20] Braaten, *Because of Christ,* 120.

particularly gospel reductionism as it emerged from the law-gospel paradigm. Along with the intrusion of a foreign theological element into the body politic, Bishop Spring pointed out that a merger of the LCA and the ALC may not have taken place without the persistent instigation of the dissident Missourians. At least this was the vision of Tietjen before the union of the three synods.[21] Bishop Spring claims that had a merger taken place without the one-time Missourians, the results would have been different. A bit of historical revisionism may be at play here, since already in 1972 the ALC had introduced the ordination of women and the LCA soon followed suit. Plans to ordain women without synod approval were already afoot at that time at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, under the Tietjen administration, so on this issue there was prior agreement. With one Lutheran church in view, a spirit of triumphalism may have overtaken the three uniting synods that did not allow them to recognize potentially disruptive practices. Matters among ELCA dissidents will be resolved only when they recognize that arguments used for the ordination of women were resurrected in regularizing homosexual clergy. Claims that emerging synods will be no different from the parent ELCA, except for disallowing homosexual clergy, overlooks the serious attention by their theologians being given to defining the law.

The antinomianism that surfaced in the August 2009 ELCA decisions was already at work in how the former Saint Louis faculty members were organizing the Chicago seminary. All were equal. Leaders in the egalitarian movement, as identified by Braaten, were Robert Bertram and Edward Schroeder, who are described as "founders of Crossings, an educational institution whose purpose was to relate the gospel to daily life. They followed Elert in rejecting the third use of the law." So Murray's assessment that Elert's denial of the third use of the law was a factor in disruptions in American Lutheran theology is confirmed.[22] Even if antinomianism cannot be laid at Elert's feet, his theology provided the soil for its growth.[23] The egalitarianism at work in organizing LSTC and later

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[21] Tietjen's vision of a union of the three synods is found in chapter 14 of his *Memoirs in Exile,* as the title, "A Yeast in Flour," suggests (289–315), and particularly in this sentence: "I had been wondering for some time if one purpose God may have had in mind for Seminex and the AELC was to serve as yeast for a larger Lutheran union" (299). He goes to recount a meeting with E. Clifford Nelson in which both men saw a recapitulation of the formation of the Anti-Missouri Brotherhood in the 19th century leading up to the union of all Norwegian Lutherans in the events later leading up to the formation of what would be organized as the ELCA.

[22] Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God*, 178–179.

[23] Reinhard Hauber argues that Elert was antinomian. "Werner Elert, Einfuehrung in Leben und Werk eines 'Lutheranismus,'" *Neue Zeitschrift fuer Systematische Theologie*

the ELCA was followed by libertarianism, which I suppose is a synonym for antinomianism. Braaten says that for the new line of thought to "offer any rules or restrictions regarding the sexual behavior of a Christian . . . is to legalize the gospel, that is, to make the gospel of God's love and forgiveness what the law is designed to do."[24] Braaten's vilification by the LCMS conservatives adds to the value of his appraisal. Spring's and Braaten's appraisal of the ELCA is confirmed by Letter #673 circulated by Edward Schroeder in which a certain Peter Keyel says that the Scriptures do not require any one understanding of marriage or codes for sexual behavior. Setting up sexual standards, in Keyel's opinion, sets aside faith and the gospel as the rule by which Christians live. One has to ask why gospel freedom is not applicable to the other commandments in the second table and only to the sixth, or perhaps it is? The fifth has already been infringed upon by ELCA insurance plans funding abortions, an action probably taken without recourse to theological argumentation. Then there is the Eighth Commandment. ELCA officers have made unkind remarks about those who take exception to the new measures.[25] After his lecture Bishop Spring said, "We live in interesting times." Agreed! Rightly or wrongly, the LCMS is being held responsible, at least partially, for another church's problems. Waters do some times flow upstream.

Systematic theology serves to clarify church doctrine, but at times its structures may be too restrictive. This may have been the case with the second use having monopolized the definition of the law so that ignoring the third use of the law allowed for its denial. A solution might be found in expanding the definition of the third use in seeing it as a replication of what the law was in the paradise of Genesis 2 and then fast forwarding into the paradise of the end time. What Adam did by nature corresponded to what God required. For him, imperative and indicative were one thing. Interrogative was the grammatical form of the serpent. Adam's offense was not merely the abrogation of this or that commandment, but in his attempt to take the place of his creator, his was an act of "unfaith," if we dare speak like this. He believed the promise of the serpent's gospel that he and his wife would be like gods and soon discovered that Satan is the

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und Religionsphilosophie, vol 28 (1986), 113–146. Lowell C. Green refutes the allegation. *The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching and Practice* (Fort Wayne, IN: Lutheran Legacy, 2010), 249. As Green points out "the order of creation must 'build upon the rules of nature as created by God.'"

[24] Braaten, *Because of Christ*, 121.

[25] Bishop Spring claims that the editor of *The Lutheran*, the official ELCA publication, called Spring and his group "a boil to be lanced" and "ludicrous." When asked to resign, Spring replied, "Hell's going to freeze over before I resign."

father of lies (Jn 8:44). Adam inverted the image of God in which he was created so that he and not God defined the relationship between them. In those fleeting moments when we love God and the neighbor more than we do ourselves, the paradise understanding of the law reemerges as flickers of light in an otherwise dark place in which the law accuses us. Just as the third use of the law allows for a brief, temporary and sporadic return to Paradise Lost, so it anticipates the final paradise when the second use of the law with the first use will pass away. Then the redeemed will no longer be confronted by the law's accusations and Moses will be seen with Christ as a redemptive figure.[26] From a cheerful and willing spirit, each will live in harmony with God and his neighbor. At that time justification will no longer be forensic, a declaration that sins are forgiven, but it will be intrinsic. We will be made righteousness, as the etymology of the word justification suggests. Christ will completely envelop our existence. At that time a complete theosis will be realized.

In brief, the third use of the law is nothing else than sanctification that will in the resurrection reach and exceed the perfection of the first paradise. In the first paradise God was the lawgiver and in the final paradise he will be both lawgiver and fulfiller and so the law will be endowed with a greater magnificence. Not only will the law's prohibitions and penalties be forever silenced, but law shall be recognized as the perfect description of God. It will no longer be "God's No and God's Yes," but it will be God's Yes and God's Yes! All this is an anticipation of what will be and comes to life here when brothers and sisters live in peace with one other. We might discover that Luther's doctrine of vocation is nothing else but the application of third use of the law, because each performs the work assigned to him or her, a principle that Adam did not understand.

Recent ELCA decisions can be seen as offenses in the light of natural law and specific biblical prohibitions, but ultimately must be seen as offenses against Christ. Again, this leads to the conclusion that the most significant deficit in Lutheran definitions of the third use of the law is the christological component. Current crises bring up the question whether the gospel is God's last word. Yes, perhaps in the sense that what Christ has done comes alive in the lives of Christians. Consider these words of Jesus, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). That's gospel and the third use altogether. Now, I am not so sure that the first and third uses of the law produce the same external results. At the end time the first and second uses of the law will pass

[26] Rev 15:3 states, "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, Great and wonderful are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty."

away and only the third will remain. Maybe this is what Paul meant: "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (2 Cor 13:13).

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The King James Version: The Beginning or the End?

Cameron A. MacKenzie

When asked to write something for the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, I thought it would be an exercise in nostalgia, a fond remembrance of a Bible that few in the audience could actually recall but that at least I and a handful of others would recognize as the Bible of our childhood from which we first learned the word of God. The days when the King James Version was *the* Bible in the English-speaking world are long gone, and it survives today more as a museum piece than as a vehicle for Christian proclamation and piety. At least, that is what I thought was true when I began my work, and it probably is true in an assembly like this; but it is not as true as I had originally thought.

According to the most recent list of best sellers compiled by the CBA (formerly the Christian Booksellers Association), the King James Version (KJV) was second only to the New International Version (NIV) among number of Bibles sold in the U.S., and the New King James Version (NKJV) was third![1] Given all the competition—to say nothing of the obvious changes in language and scholarship since 1611—that is really amazing. Now, of course, just because people buy a version does not mean they actually read it; nonetheless, these figures suggest that, 400 years after it first was published, the King James Version of the Bible still has a lot of life left. Moreover, besides the New King James, one other translation included in the list of the CBA's 10 best sellers also had direct connections with the King James, viz., the English Standard Version (ESV), which comes in fifth place. So both on its own and in its successors, the King James Version remains a powerful force in shaping the biblical message in the English-

[1] "February 2011 CBA Best Sellers" http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/BSLs/Bible_Translations.pdf (accessed on January 16, 2011). When I first accessed this site (Nov. 24, 2010), it was posting the "December 2010 CBA Best Sellers." The list was very similar. According to the website, the list is based on "actual sales in Christian retail stores in the United States through January 1, 2011, using CROSS: SCAN as the source for the data collection." The positions of NIV, KJV, and NKJV were the same in both the list determined by unit sales and in the one determined by dollar sales.

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speaking world. Whether this is a good thing or not is another question, one to which I will return shortly; but before I do so, I will consider briefly how this happened in the first place. How did the King James Version achieve such eminence in the English-speaking world?

To answer that question, we need to review a little history and recall, first of all, that the King James Version was the culmination of much translation work that came before it during the Reformation. Or, to put it another way, the King James Version represents the end of the beginning in the story of the English Bible.[2]

The beginning of the beginning is, of course, the work of William Tyndale.[3] His pioneering efforts resulted in an English New Testament in 1526 and parts of the Old Testament thereafter.[4] Subsequent translations in the 16th century usually began with Tyndale. That was still true with respect to the King James Version. In the preface to the latter, Miles Smith indicated its relationship to its Protestant predecessors in answer to Catholics who criticized Protestants for publishing new versions of the English Bible:

> We never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against, that hath been our endeavour, that our mark.[5]

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[2] See Appendix A on 364. For the prehistory of the King James Version, see Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible*, 3rd rev. ed. by William Aldis Wright, reprint ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998); J. Isaacs, "The Sixteenth-Century English Versions," in *The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions,* ed. H. Wheeler Robinson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 146–195; S.L. Greenslade, "English Versions of the Bible, 1525–1611," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3: *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day,* ed. S.L. Greenslade, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 141–163; and F.F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 24–95.

[3] For Tyndale's translation work, see J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (London: SPCK, 1937), 75–109, 173–186, and David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 108–116, 134–142, 283–315, 330–331.

[4] Besides the Pentateuch and Jonah that appeared in print during Tyndale's lifetime, both Mozley, *Tyndale*, 179–186, and Daniell, *Tyndale*, 333–357, credit him with the translation of the historical books, Joshua through 2 Chronicles (Mozley) or Nehemiah (Daniell), that appeared in Matthew's Bible and became the basis for subsequent 16th-century translations.

[5] "The Translators to the Reader," in *The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible with the Apocrypha: King James Version,* ed. David Norton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Improving on their predecessors—but not repudiating them—was the goal of the King James translators right from the beginning. In fact, in the "rules" provided for the translators, the first of them specified that "the ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the *Bishops' Bible*, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit," and a subsequent rule told the translators to use these versions—Tyndale's, Matthew's, and Coverdale's Bibles, the Great Bible, and the Geneva Bible—in places where they were more accurate than the Bishops' Bible.[6] Moreover, all of these versions incorporated huge amounts of Tyndale, and none of them besides his began *totally* afresh from the original languages. Together, they constitute a family of closely related versions known as the Great Tradition.[7] The similarities are quite evident when one compares particular passages.

Here are a couple of examples. Let's start with the first two verses of Genesis:[8]

> Tyndale:[9] In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.
>
> Coverdale:[10] In the beginning God created heaven and earth; and the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.
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> Matthew's:[11] In the beginning GOD created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.

Press, 2005), xxxi. Unless otherwise noted, all citations of the King James Version come from this edition. For the ascription of the preface to Miles Smith, see Bruce, *History*, 98.

[6] Alfred W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1911), 53–54.

[7] The first time I came across this designation, the Great Tradition, for the family of Bibles connected to the King James Version was in the title of Arthur L. Farstad, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

[8] For ease of reading, I have either employed a modernized spelling and punctuation edition or else have updated it myself.

[9] David Daniell, ed., *Tyndale's Old Testament: Being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah, Translated by William Tyndale* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

[10] Unless otherwise noted, Coverdale Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1535 text available in *The Bible in English* at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htx, (accessed November 30, 2010).

> Great Bible:[12] In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
>
> Geneva:[13] In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters.
>
> Bishops':[14] In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and was void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
>
> King James: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

A New Testament example, Matthew 6:7, shows how a difference in understanding the Greek could affect the tradition. Should βατταλογέω be rendered "babble" or "vain repetitions"? Then again, maybe it was just a matter of style: Does "babble" belong in the mouth of our Lord or is "vain repetitions" more fitting? Whatever their thinking, the translators in the Great Tradition had a hard time making up their minds.

> Tyndale:[15] And when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard, for their much babbling's sake.

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[11] Unless otherwise noted, Matthew's Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1549 text available in *The Bible in English* at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htx, (accessed November 30, 2010).

[12] Unless otherwise noted, Great Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1540 text available in *The Bible in English* at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htx, (accessed November 30, 2010).

[13] Unless otherwise noted, Geneva Bible citations are from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007).

[14] Unless otherwise noted, Bishops' Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1568 text available in *The Bible in English* at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htx, (accessed November 30, 2010).

[15] Unless otherwise noted, Tyndale New Testament citations are from David Daniell, ed., *Tyndale's New Testament Translated from the Greek by William Tyndale in 1534*, modern spelling ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

> Coverdale: And when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard, for their much babbling's sake.
>
> Matthew's: But when ye pray, babble not much as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard, for their much babbling sake.
>
> Great Bible: But when ye pray babble not much, as the heathen do: for they think it will come to pass that they shall be heard for their much babbling's sake.
>
> Geneva: Also when ye pray, use no vain repetitions as the heathen, for they think to be heard for their much babbling.
>
> Bishops': But when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do. For they think it will come to pass that they shall be heard, for their much babbling's sake.
>
> King James: But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

For the sake of contrast with the Great Tradition, consider two modern language versions, the Revised English Bible[16] (REB) and the Good News Bible[17] (GNB), in order to see that the Tyndale rendering is not inevitable. First, Genesis 1:1–2:

> REB: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a vast waste, darkness covered the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water.

Verse one sounds like Tyndale, but verse two certainly does not. The difference is even more pronounced in GNB.

> GNB: In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the power of God was moving over the water.

Similar departures from the Tyndale tradition are evident in Matthew 6:7 also:

> REB: In your prayers do not go babbling on like the heathen, who imagine that the more they say the more likely they are to be heard.

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[16] *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[17] *Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1976).

> GNB: When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that God will hear them because their prayers are long.

These passages show that an English translation does not have to sound like William Tyndale, but the 16th-century versions to which the King James translators referred all show a reliance upon the first version, that of Tyndale. Therefore, the King James Version was just one more step in the development of this particular line of Bibles. Of course, it was a very impressive step since it involved dozens of translators from both Oxford and Cambridge as well as scholars outside the universities,[18] and they committed themselves first of all to faithfulness to the original languages. After all, Rule #1 directed the translators to follow the Bishops' Bible only insofar as "the Truth of the original will permit."[19] Nonetheless, when the work was finished more than seven years after the king had first agreed to it, the end result remained quite close to its predecessors. In fact, one estimate is that 90% of the King James is Tyndale,[20] at least in those portions that Tyndale had completed before his death: the entire New Testament, the Pentateuch, Jonah, and very probably Joshua through 2 Chronicles.[21]

For Lutherans, it is probably also worth noting that Tyndale was indebted to Martin Luther for both his Bible translation and his theology. In fact, the history books sometimes call him "Lutheran."[22] This is not en-

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[18] For the origins and organization of the King James translation, see Westcott, 107–121; J. Isaacs, "The Authorized Version and After," in Robinson, *Ancient and English*, 196–204; Bruce, *History*, 96–112; and Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611–2011* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 32–85. Also very informative are the following (although aimed more at a popular audience than an academic one): Gustavus S. Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959, paperback ed., 1977); Olga S. Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1982); Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); and Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003).

[19] Pollard, *Records*, 53.

[20] See G. E. Duffield, "Introduction," in *The Work of William Tyndale* (Appleford, Bershire, England: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964), xxxv–xxxvi, but Campbell, *Bible*, 15, says only 83 percent.

[21] Perhaps the best book demonstrating the literary connections between the King James Version and its predecessors is Charles C. Butterworth, *The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible, 1340–1611* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), but see also Gerald Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible* (Manchester, Great Britain: Carcanet Press, 1982); Isaacs, "Authorized Version," 204–223; and Westcott, 123–284.

[22] E.g., Conrad Russell, "The Reformation and the Creation of the Church of England, 1500–1640," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. John

tirely accurate, especially regarding the sacraments, but Tyndale did use Luther's works to create his own, often just translating or paraphrasing Luther's German into English, e.g., his *An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII Chapters of Matthew*,[23] and other times, just integrating large portions of Luther into his own material, e.g., *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*.[24] The same is true of the materials that accompany his Bible translations, e.g., about 75 percent of Tyndale's prologue to Romans in his 1534 Testament is a translation of Luther's preface that first appeared in 1522.[25] Tyndale even arranged the books of the New Testament the way Luther did and so placed Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation at the end without numbering them.[26]

Finally, Tyndale also translated like Luther in that he employed a natural vernacular instead of a more stilted and latinate style that often characterized the pre-Reformation versions[27] and, again, like Luther, avoided terminology that reinforced the aberrant theology of the Middle Ages. For example, Tyndale used "congregation" for ἐκκλησία instead of "church" (Luther used *gemeyne*); "elder" for πρεσβύτερος instead of *priest* (Luther used *Elltiste*); and "repent" for μετανοεῖτε instead of "do penance" (Luther used *bessert euch*).[28]

Morrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 267, and Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113.

[23] Duffield, *Work*, 180–304. For Luther, see Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 21: 1–294 (hereafter *LW*).

[24] Daniell, *Tyndale*, 156–169, discusses this work, including its relation to Luther.

[25] Duffield, *Work*, 119–146; Westcott, *General View*, 147–148. For Luther, see *LW* 35: 365–380.

[26] For the degree of Tyndale's dependence upon Luther in the material that accompanied the biblical text, see Westcott, *General View*, 139–153, and Daniell, *Tyndale*, 113–133.

[27] For medieval vernacular versions, see "The Vernacular Scriptures," in *The Cambridge History of the English Bible*, vol. 2: *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 338–491.

[28] For examples of each of these, see Matt 18:17 ("congregation"), Titus 1:5 ("elders" —Tyndale's first edition used "seniors"), and Matt 3:2 ("repent"). For references to Luther's Bible, I have used Martin Luther, *Das Neue Testament Deutsch Wittenberg 1522: Septembertestament*, facsimile ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

For Luther's influence on Tyndale as a translator, see especially Heinz Bluhm, *Martin Luther: Creative Translator*, reprint ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984, c. 1965), 169–180, and Heinz Bluhm, "Martin Luther and the English Bible:

Some of this material made it into the King James version, e.g., "elder" and "repent." But in general, there is little direct influence from Luther on the King James Version. Coverdale omitted the prefaces, the Great Bible reintegrated Luther's antilegomena into the New Testament canon, and Geneva brought back in "the church." In fact, the King James translators were ordered to use "the old Ecclesiastical Words . . . the Word *Church* not to be translated *Congregation*, etc."[29] Moreover, by the time we get to the second half of the 16th century, the most direct influences upon the English versions were Reformed scholars like Theodore Beza; the so-called Geneva versions of the English Bible were heavily marked by Reformed theology. Nonetheless, the Elizabethan Bibles continued to imitate Tyndale's and Luther's versions in that they used notes and prologues to advance a particular theological position. The King James version did not.[30]

Once again, the rules instructed the KJV translators *not* to add marginal notes (except to explain difficulties in the original languages)[31] and the king himself had expressed a dislike for the notes attached to the Geneva version.[32] So, compared to its immediate predecessors (Bishops' as well as Geneva), the King James Version was much less polemical. It was still overtly Protestant. After all, the Apocrypha was still set apart from the Old Testament (incidentally, another of the Lutheran elements that survived in the KJV). One can also detect a theological point of view in things like the chapter summaries. The one for Romans 3, for example, includes the entry, "Therefore no flesh is justified by the Law, but all, without difference, by faith onely"; and the one for Hebrews 10 reads, "The sacrifice of Christ's body once offered, forever, hath taken away sinnes." There is also a preface, entitled "The Translators to the Reader," that includes an argument on behalf of vernacular Scriptures to answer Roman Catholic critics. It explicitly indicts the "Church of Rome" for its hostility toward the vernacular.[33] Even so, compared to its Elizabethan predecessors, there is relatively little material designed to advance a specific version of the Christian faith. This is especially true when one looks for

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Tyndale and Coverdale," in *Martin Luther Quincentennial,* ed. G. Dünnhaupt, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 112–125.

[29] Pollard, *Records*, 53. See also Isaacs, "Sixteenth Century," 183; Greenslade, *Cambridge*, 149; and Bruce, *History*, 78.

[30] For the theology of the Elizabethan Bibles, see my *The Battle for the Bible in England, 1557–1582* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

[31] Pollard, *Records*, 54.

[32] Apparently, James objected especially to notes that he perceived as justifying sedition and treason. See Campbell, *Bible*, 28, 37, and Bruce, *History*, 96–97.

[33] Norton, *New Cambridge*, xxv–xxxi.

something that would favor one side or another in the internal Protestant debates of the period, e.g., between presbyterians and episcopalians. After all, not only "elders" but also "bishops" made it into the text of the King James.[34]

Perhaps that is one reason why the King James Version eventually became the Bible of the Protestant sects that fought so bitterly in England over the course of the 17th century. Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers all ended up using the King James Version just like the Anglicans.[35] Nonetheless, we should not imagine that the King James Version was an immediate success in 1611 and that everyone acknowledged it as a kind of stopping point in the process of preparing English Bibles. *We* are calling it the end of the beginning, but contemp-oraries did not realize that for all practical purposes the King James Version would become the Bible in English for more than three centuries.

For an entire generation after 1611, the Geneva Bible remained in print, being published in Amsterdam and then imported for sale in England.[36] Right from the beginning there were also suggestions and sometimes even plans for revision of the KJV. When it first appeared, the Hebrew scholar, Hugh Broughton, published a *Censure of the Late Translation*, in which he complained that the new translation produced in him a "sadnes that will greeve me while I have breath. It is so ill done," although his tract went on to criticize only twelve passages and not very persuasively.[37]

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[34] In fact, both terms went all the way back to Tyndale. Cf. Titus 1: 5, 7. Deacons, too (e.g., 1 Tim 3: 8).

[35] David Norton, *A History of the Bible as Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 2: 225–228; and Campbell, *Bible*, 127.

[36] The last such edition appeared in 1644. Norton, *Bible as Literature* 1: 210–215. Norton also points out that there were nine editions of the KJV between 1641 and 1715 that incorporated the Geneva notes.

[37] Hugh Broughton, *A Censure of the Late Translation for Our Churches Sent unto a Right Worshipfull Knight, Attendant upon the King* [Middleburg: R. Schilders, 1611?], STC (2nd ed.) 3847. Electronic edition: http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=pgimages.cfg&action=byid&id=99850031&file=../session/1293804446_18747&searchscreen=default&vid=15214&pageno=1&zoom=&viewport=&searchconfig=config.cfg&display=author&highlight_keyword (accessed December, 31, 2010).

Indicative of Broughton's concerns were his criticism of three KJV renderings in Stephen's sermon in Acts 7. The issues he raised had to do with harmonizing Stephen's account of Israel's history with the Old Testament. He also objected to the placing of the parenthesis in Luke 3 regarding the genealogy of Jesus: are the ancestors those of Joseph? Broughton did not think so. For an assessment of Broughton's criticism, see Norton, *Bible as Literature* 1: 139–144, 159–161.

Broughton's criticism came to nothing,[38] but at the time of the English Civil War, and especially after defeat of Charles I, there was a flurry of activity in favor of a new version by the victorious Puritan party. The Hebrew scholar, John Lightfoot, called for revision in a sermon preached before the Long Parliament in 1645 and cited the need for a Bible that would unite the English speakers of the British Isles in understanding "the proper and genuine reading of the Scripture, by an exact, vigorous, and lively translation." Unfortunately, he did not offer any specifics of what he thought "amisse" with the current version.[39] Subsequently, other tracts and treatises did appear that offered a range of complaints. Though not widespread, the criticisms of the King James Version were extensive. William Kilburne published only a small tract of 15 pages,[40] but Robert Gell's *An Essay Toward the Amendment of the Last English Translation of the Bible* was 800 pages long![41] The arguments raised in such works ranged from criticizing printers' errors to demanding a more literal translation.

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[38] Nor did that of Ambrose Ussher (d. 1629), brother to the more famous, James Ussher, who constructed a biblical chronology that found a place in King James Versions for centuries. The former translated most of the Bible and composed a dedication to King James in which he indicated some of the reasons behind his work. However, neither translation nor dedication was ever published. They survive only in manuscript. See Norton, *Bible as Literature* 1: 215–216.

[39] John Lightfoot, *A sermon preached before the Honorable House of Commons: at Margarets Westminster, upon the 26. day of August 1645. being the day of their solemne monethly fast* (London : Printed by R.C. for Andrew Crook, 1645), Wing (2nd ed.) L2068, 30–31. Electronic edition: http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_recsource=pgthumbs.cfg&action=byid&id=99861043&file=../session/1293805492_20776&searchscreen=citations&searchconfig=var_spell.cfg&display=author (accessed December, 31, 2010).

[40] William Kilburne, *Dangerous Errors in Several late printed Bibles* (Finsbury: n.p., 1659). Kilburne provides examples of printing mistakes in seven editions of the Bible printed in the 1650's. Electronic edition: http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=var_spell.cfg&action=single&id=11931231&ecco=n&file=../session/1293811428_7201&searchscreen=citations&display=author&subset=1&entries=1&highlight_keyword=default (accessed December, 31, 2010).

[41] Robert Gell, *An Essay Toward the Amendment of the Last English–Translation of the Bible* (London: R. Norton for Andrew Crook, 1659). In his preface, Gell seems to be calling for a very literal translation that will provide the basis for spiritually profitable interpretation. Online edition: http://books.google.com/books?id=rcvbaaaacaaj&printsec=frontcover&dq=gell+and+essay&hl=en&ei=uwAetfgmftctnqf8nenmdq&sa=x&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0cdmq6aewaq#v=onepage&q&f=false. (accessed December 31, 2010).

Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 141, identifies Gell as an Anglican clergyman who managed to remain in his London parish during the entire Interregnum. See also Campbell, *Bible*, 127.

Oh, yes, there were also complaints about the "prelatical" terminology employed in some verses, e.g., "Easter" used to translate πάσχα instead of "Passover" (Acts 12:4), "Bishoprick" for ἐπισκοπή (Acts 1:20), and "Robbers of Churches, for Robbers of the Temple, namely of *Diana*, Acts 19:37. As if there were Treasures, as Copes, Surplices, Hangings, Plate, etc. in the meeting place of Gods worship."[42] According to J.I. Mombert, a bill was introduced into the Long Parliament in 1653 (presumably the Rump Parliament), calling for a revision of the Bible and naming a committee to do it. Although short on specifics, the legislation indicated a concern "to remove the stumbling-blocks and offence of the weak, or the cavils of others when they hear in sermons preached or printed, or in other treatises, that the original bears it better thus and thus."[43]

Not long thereafter, Cromwell sent the Rump Parliament packing and the proposed revision never went forward.[44] A few years later the project surfaced again. Parliament's Grand Committee for Religion instructed a sub-committee to consider the proposal, but it came to nothing when parliament dissolved.[45] This occurred just shortly before Cromwell's death in 1658 and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy in 1660. From that point forward until the second half of the 19th century, the King James Version reigned supreme in the English-speaking world.

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[42] Edward Whiston [?], *The life and death of Mr. Henry Jessy…* ([London: s.n.], 1671), Wing 1679, 48–49. According to Norton, *Bible as Literature*, 1: 219, Jessy was a Baptist divine and "the most active promoter of religion." Electronic edition: http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=var_spell.cfg&action=byid&id=18207164&ecco=undefined&file=../session/1293809818_533&searchscreen=citations&display=author&highlight_keyword=param(highlight_keyword). (accessed December 31, 2010)..

[43] J. I. Mombert, *English Versions of the Bible* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1907), 443. Online edition: http://books.google.com/books?id=2HVbaaaamaaj&printsec=frontcover&dq=mombert+and+english+versions+of+the+Bible&hl=en&ei=zz1ttbgik4sdlgekvinzba&sa=x&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0cd8Q6aewaa#v=onepage&q&f=false. (accessed December 31, 2010).

[44] The best summary of the arguments put forth at this time is in Norton, *Bible as Literature*, 1: 215–225. For Cromwell and various forms of Parliament during the Interregnum, see Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England, 1485–1714* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 244–264, and for the Puritans in power, see John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603–1689* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 114–130.

[45] Norton, *Bible as Literature*, 1: 218–219, and Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English affairs, or, An historical account of what passed from the beginning of the reign of King Charles the First, to King Charles the Second his happy restauration* (London: Printed for Nathaniel Ponder, 1682), 645 (W1986). Electronic version: http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=var_spell.cfg&action=byid&id=11832455&ecco=undefined&file=../session/1295274144_20477&searchscreen=citations&display=author&highlight_keyword=param(highlight_keyword). (accessed January 17, 2011).

During that long period of time, there were occasional efforts to improve the English text of the Bible, even if no complete revision on the basis of the original languages took place. The most important of these efforts were those of F.S. Parris on behalf of the University of Cambridge Press in the 1740s and those of Benjamin Blayney for the University Press at Oxford about 25 years later. Making use of Parris's work, Blayney modified the King James Version in thousands of places,[46] and Oxford published the results in 1769. This edition became the standard King James Version of the Bible and remains so today.

As an indication of what Parris and Blayney had to deal with, here is Genesis 1:2 as printed in 1611:

> And the earth was without forme, and voyd, and darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters.

To "modernize" texts like these, Parris and Blayney had to make many changes, each one of which addressed an apparently minor point, (e.g., dropping the silent "e" from many words and adjusting the print font for "u's" and "v's"), but which all together were an enormous undertaking. In addition to the changes needed for this verse, they also inserted possessive apostrophes throughout the text since these were not used in the 1611 version. Many of their changes were simply matters of spelling (e.g., "moe" to "more" and "then" to "than") or pronunciation (e.g., "crudled" to "curdled" [Job 10:10] and "neesed" to "sneezed" [2 Kings 4:35]). Some of their changes to the text reflected a greater commitment to consistency than the original translators felt necessary. For example, they were stricter about employing "ye" for the nominative and vocative and "you" for the other cases of the second person plural pronoun. In a few places, they changed singulars to plurals either because the original demanded it or because the sense did (e.g., "words" to "word" in Matt 26:75 and "hands" to "hand" in Acts 7:35). Perhaps the most dramatic change was that of Parris who replaced "fourscore" with "eightieth" in 1 Kings 6:1.

Besides changing the biblical text itself, the two men also redid the italics in the text that translators used to indicate words not actually in the Hebrew or Greek, and they improved the marginal notes—cross references and alternative translations. The result of their combined efforts was a modernized biblical text but hardly a modern one. Nevertheless, the

[46] Campbell, *Bible*, 235, says 16,000.

Parris/Blayney version helped to maintain the monopoly of the King James for another century.[47]

But the end of that monopoly *was* coming, and in the changed circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries, the King James Version became the starting point for a wide array of subsequent English versions. In other words, the King James became the foundation for another line of English Bibles. What was originally the end of one process now became the beginning of another. Not all modern translations can trace their lineage back to the King James, but many of them can and do.[48] In other words, many of the new versions attempt to retain the "sound" of the KJV—its vocabulary and syntax—while also accommodating contemporary con-cerns. The nature of these concerns, as well as the degree to which the translators committed themselves to the King James and related versions, accounts for substantial differences among them, but they nevertheless bear a family resemblance and constitute another phase of the Great Tradition (see Appendix B, 365). Here, for example, is John 3:16 in four of the more recent members of this group, along with the KJV itself.

> King James Version: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
>
> New King James Bible:[49] "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

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[47] Norton, *Text*, 104–114, notes 99 significant textual variants in Parris and 58 in Blayney, the majority of them matters of English usage and not translation. See also Isaacs, "Authorized Version," 225; Campbell, *Bible*, 132–142; and F. H. A. Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611): Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: University Press, 1884), 28–35.

[48] And sometimes even those that do not belong to the Great Tradition feel compelled to acknowledge the excellence of the KJV. For example, the opening paragraph of *The Contemporary English Version*, first published by the American Bible Society in 1995, states bluntly, "The most important document in the history of the English language is the *King James Version* of the Bible" and then maintains that its own "translators . . . have diligently sought to *capture the spirit* of the *King James Version*" (italics mine). This from a translation that renders Genesis 1:2, "The earth was barren, with no form of life; it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving over the water." As the CEV acknowledged, the "spirit" of the KJV clearly did not include its form.

[49] *Holy Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

> New American Standard Bible (Updated ed.):[50] "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
>
> New Revised Standard Version:[51] "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."
>
> English Standard Version:[52] "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Clearly, all of these renderings are very similar to each other, and this is deliberate. An English translation does not, however, have to sound like the King James Version.[53] Here, for example, is John 3:16 in the Contemporary English Version.

> Contemporary English Version:[54] "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die."

For the most part, the contemporary versions that belong to the Great Tradition want readers to know their lineage. The preface to New Revised Standard Version (1989), for example, described the version this way,

> The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, which was a revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which, in turn, embodied earlier revisions of the King James Version, published in 1611.[55]

The English Standard Version had a similar statement.[56] As its title already indicates, the New King James Version stressed its commitment to the 1611

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[50] *New American Standard Bible: Reference Edition* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1995).

[51] *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, 1990).

[52] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

[53] Even if many of them do. Cf. John 3:16 in *Today's New International Version* (2005), *New Living Bible* (1996), and *Revised English Bible* (1989) for contemporary versions that are not a part of the Great Tradition but nevertheless sound like the KJV on this particular verse.

[54] *Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1995).

[55] Bruce M. Metzger, "To the Reader," NRSV, vii.

[56] "Preface," ESV, vii. Besides the versions mentioned by the NRSV, the ESV claims a connection also to the Revised Version (1885) and to Tyndale's pioneering work.

version.[57] Also, as indicated by its title, the New American Standard Bible singled out the American Standard Version as its direct predecessor but mentioned other Great Tradition translations as well.[58]

What is it that accounts for this proliferation of versions, these variations on a theme, so to speak? Why not just stick with the King James? We can identify three distinct factors that have motivated the new translations since the end of the 19th century: text, language, and ideology. First of all, the text. Many have become convinced that the underlying Hebrew and Greek of the King James Version are not the original texts of the Scriptures. Therefore, the new translations often differ from the King James on account of different views about which Hebrew and Greek text to translate.[59]

The first major attempt to replace the King James Version was the Revised Version of the 1880s, and its motivation was very much textual considerations, especially in regard to the New Testament.[60] In fact, the Revised Version did not attempt to modernize the English language. The rules for the translators directed them to use "the language of the Authorised and earlier English versions" when making changes,[61] changes that were necessitated by faithfulness to the original texts. Thus, the revisers ended up constructing a deliberately archaic text so that it would continue to sound like the King James. But that did not keep their achievement from generating controversy because their textual changes were traumatic. Among other things, they raised doubts about the last twelve verses of Mark and omitted from the biblical text the conclusion to the

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[57] "Preface," NKJV, iii.

[58] "Forward," NASB (Updated), v. Although the most recent editions of the NASB simply refer to preserving the "values" of the *American Standard Version* (1901), the earlier editions described the NASB as "a revision" of the ASV. Cf. "Forward," *New American Standard Bible: New Testament* (Washington, DC: Christianity Today, 1963), iii.

[59] The question of the underlying text has been discussed and debated frequently and still is. Standard introductions include Bruce Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995). A new edition of the latter work, prepared by Alexander Fischer, was published in 2009, *Der Text des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009).

[60] For the story of the Revised Version, see C.J. Cadoux, "The Revised Version and After," in *Ancient and English*, ed. Robinson, 235–266; Bruce, *History*, 135–152; Campbell, *Bible*, 212–227; and Norton, *Bible as Literature* 2: 218–255.

[61] See Bruce, *History*, 137, for the eight "Principles of Revision."

Lord's Prayer and the so-called Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7, 8), the latter of which served as a proof passage for the doctrine of the Trinity![62]

In the 20th century, textual issues continued to provoke new translations. On the one hand, especially with the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls but also out of increasing respect for the ancient translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, some translations have reflected new ideas about the text of the Old Testament.[63] The New Revised Standard Version, for example, made extensive use of the Qumran materials in 1 Samuel. This has resulted in many new readings, including an extra four sentences at the end of chapter 10.[64] Evidence from the ancient versions accounted for several other changes from the KJV text, like the inclusion of Cain's statement to Abel, "Let us go out to the field" in Genesis 4:8, that is not in the Hebrew.[65]

On the other hand, beginning already in the 1880s, people have come to varying conclusions regarding the new texts, and this accounts in part for the different versions. For example, the ESV employed a Greek text that was very similar to the one used by the NRSV, but for the Old Testament, the ESV took a more conservative approach than the NRSV (1 Samuel 10 and Genesis 4:8 stayed as they are in the KJV) without excluding the newer

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[62] Advocates for a new critical Greek text of the New Testament and also members of the revision committees were B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, whose Greek text appeared almost simultaneously with the Revised New Testament (Bruce, *History*, 139). A leading spokesman in defense of the Greek text of the King James Version was John W. Burgon. His work, *The Revision Revised* (London: J. Murray, 1883), took issue with the entire enterprise of revision. Even today, advocates of using the King James only as their English Bible still employ Burgon's arguments. See, for example, *Which Bible?*, ed. David O. Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 2000), and the homepage of the Dean Burgon Society [sic] which maintains, "The God-honored Authorized King James Bible has been, and continues to be, the only accurate English translation of the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and preserved original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of God for the English-speaking people." http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/ (accessed March 2, 2011).

[63] For a comparison of modern versions, includng the NRSV and REB (but not the ESV), regarding the influence of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the text, see Harold Scanlin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls & Modern Translations of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993).

[64] The NRSV departed from the Masoretic text in 1 Samuel about 110 times; the RSV 60; and the NIV only 15. See Scanlin, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 25–26, 114–115, 119–120.

[65] This particular reading from the Septuagint was already in the RSV; however, according to Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV: A History and Evaluation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 380–382, the NRSV uses the evidence of the ancient versions much more than did the RSV.

evidence entirely.[66] Even more conservative on textual questions was the New King James Bible. It decided to use the same textual basis for the New Testament as did the original King James. Thus, the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer, the ending of Mark, and the Johannine Comma are back in.[67]

If they were so committed to the traditional text, however, why did the translators prepare a *New* King James Bible in the first place? This brings us to the second factor that accounts for the new versions, viz., language, the English language. Even if the Revised Version of 1881 and 1885 did not update the language, all of its successors in the Great Tradition have done so,[68] but the degree to which the newer versions have modernized their diction has varied. So, for example, "and it came to pass" in the King James survived in the New King James (although sometimes "and" became "now"), became "now it came about" in the NASB Update, and disappeared entirely from the ESV. Here is an example, Genesis 6:1.

> King James Version: *And it came to pass*, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.
>
> New King James Version: *Now it came to pass*, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them.
>
> New American Standard Bible (Updated ed.): *Now it came about*, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them.

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[66] The preface (p. ix) indicated the ESV translators' commitment to "translate difficult Hebrew passages as they stand in the Masoretic text" but left the door open to emendations or alternative readings in "exceptional, difficult cases." One online reviewer indicated that the ESV is much more conservative in this respect than even the original RSV, which emended the Hebrew text of Job 63 times. The ESV, in contrast, emended it only six times. Cf. Michael Marlow, "English Standard Version." http://www.bible-researcher.com/esv.html. (accessed January 3, 2011).

[67] "Preface," NKJV, v. See also Lewis, *The English Bible*, 332–333, and Farstad, *New King James*, 110–117. However, the New King James translators (Preface, iv–v) were a little more adventuresome in the Old Testament and used an updated version of the Masoretic Hebrew rather than the 17th-century version. They also left the door open for the versions and the Dead Sea scrolls in difficult cases. See Farstad, *New King James*, 93–101. However, according to Scanlin, 34, "evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls is cited in only six footnotes in the entire Old Testament" of the NKJV and in just one case, Isaiah 49: 5, does the text actually follow the Qumran material.

[68] This began already with the 1901 American recension of the Revised Version which, for example, changed the Lord's Prayer from "Our Father, *which* art in heaven" to "who." See Lewis, *The English Bible*, 73–74, and Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 103–104.

English Standard Version: When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them.

This example also indicates differences over the extent to which the translation should retain the idiom of the original. Although all the versions in the Great Tradition are basically literal translations, some are more literal than others.[69] The New King James is probably the most literal. The preface called its translation philosophy "complete equivalence" because this version "seeks to preserve all of the information in the text." This even includes the interjections that other versions omit (e.g., "behold" in Luke 2:9).[70]

Probably the least literal of the newer translations in the Great Tradition is the New Revised Standard Version, but this, in turn, raises yet another explanation for the differences between the versions: not language *per se*, but ideology. In the case of the NRSV, the translators committed themselves to feminist terminology and deliberately avoided traditional English usage like generic "man" and indefinite "he."[71] But in order to carry out this commitment, the NRSV departed in thousands of instances not only from the King James Version but also from the original Greek and Hebrew (e.g., turning singulars into plurals and third person pronouns

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[69] By "literal," I mean a translation that commits itself to translating the form of the original text into English, e.g., grammar, style, idioms, figures of speech, and individual vocables, to the degree possible still consistent with understanding. The opposite kind of translating commits itself to choosing the form in English that best expresses the *meaning* of the original without reference to its form in the original language. See David Dewey, *A User's Guide to Bible Translations: Making the Most of Different Versions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 29–89.

[70] "Preface," NKJB, iii. Here is Luke 2: 9 in four Great Tradition versions:

KJV: And, *lo*, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

NKJV: And *behold*, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

NASB (Updated ed.): And an angel of the Lord *suddenly* stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

ESV: And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

[71] In his preface to the NRSV, Bruce Metzger maintains that the NRSV "remains essentially a literal translation" but then admits that "paraphrastic renderings" were used to avoid indefinite "he." He also lays the groundwork for other changes by railing against the "linguistic sexism" of the English language.

into second). The result of this is a tendentious translation, but one generally acceptable to the more liberal side of American Christianity.[72]

On the other side of the coin, the ESV is a conservative translation. In fact, the prime movers behind this version included many who were upset by the decision of the Committee on Bible Translation to revise the NIV in the interests of accommodating feminism.[73] So, led by evangelical leader Wayne Grudem and publisher Lane Dennis, Crossway Bibles (a division of Good News Publishers) obtained the rights to the (1971) Revised Standard Version, which, when it first appeared in the 1940s and 1950s, had experienced withering criticism from conservatives for, among other things, its handling of Old Testament messianic prophecy.[74] Therefore, the ESV revisers modified the RSV text so that once again Isaiah predicts the virgin birth (not "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14) and God promises Abraham an offspring in whom the nations of the earth will be blessed (instead of "descendants" by whom the nations will "bless themselves" in Genesis 22:18).[75] In this way, the ESV combined traditional theology along with traditional language.[76]

Both the NRSV and the ESV belong to the Great Tradition and therefore echo the King James in many instances, but because of different ideological commitments they are very different versions of the English Bible. Thus ideology, along with decisions regarding text and language, has resulted in not just one but in many efforts to replace the King James. Yet the King James Version continues to sell. Why is that? Why do people

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[72] See my "The English Bible in a Postmodern Age," in *Mysteria Dei: Essays in Honor of Kurt Marquart*, ed. Paul T. McCain and John R. Stephenson (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1999), 155–168.

[73] See, for example, Wayne Grudem, "A Brief Summary of Concerns about the TNIV," *The Journal for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2002), http://www.cbmw.org/Journal/Vol-7-No-2/A-Brief-Summary-of-Concerns-About-the-TNIV (accessed January, 4, 2011).

[74] See, for example, articles by C.P. Lincoln, Merrill F. Unger, and S. Lewis Johnson that first appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 110 (Jan. 1953): 50–66, available online at http://www.bible-researcher.com/rsv-bibsac.html (accessed 3/3/11). For a history of the controversy, see Peter J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 93–144.

[75] For RSV references, see *The Holy Bible. The Old Testament: Revised Standard Version*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952).

[76] For a very fine comparison of the various versions on the basis of doctrine as well as language and text, see *Comparative Study of Bible Translations*, prepared by the Commission of Worship of the LCMS and available online at http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/Worship/BibleComp.pdf. For background to the ESV, see Michael Marlowe, "English Standard Version," online article. http://www.bible-researcher.com/esv.html (accessed January 17, 2011); and Dewey, *User's Guide*, 187–192.

continue to purchase and, presumably, read a 17th-century version of the Bible when there are so many contemporary Bibles that are modeled on the King James?

We can only speculate, but certainly a part of the explanation must be the appeal of tradition in a rapidly changing world. When everything is up for grabs—theology, morality, social mores, and the Word of God itself—the tried and the true has its appeal. Efforts to justify departures from the traditional English Bible, even if based only on language (let alone text or ideology), can easily look like an assault on true religion. Moreover, the change never ends, so that if someone decides that being Christian today demands accepting some change in the Bible, say, to the limited extent represented by the ESV, he soon finds out that there is more to come. For instance, the ESV published a new edition in 2007 only six years after the first appearance of the original![77] Obviously, only when you do not change, do you escape change.

When I first set out on this project, I had planned to call the second half of this paper "the beginning of the end for the King James Version," since, I thought, after the first full scale revision of the 1880s, the Authorized Version would eventually lose out to its successors. But now, I do not think so. The King James Version has not arrived at the end, but is only somewhere in the middle of its history. With the demise of the evangelical consensus behind the NIV, there is absolutely no chance that a modern version will establish itself as the Bible among English-reading Christians, and more versions are certainly on the way. Textual considerations alone will see to that.[78]

More change means that there will still be a market for stability, which is exactly what the King James Version offers. The product of an era that acknowledged the Bible as God's Word, prepared by the best biblical scholars of their day, and established as both a religious and cultural icon simply by the passage of time, the King James Version continues to appeal to religious conservatives put off by what is happening in the churches

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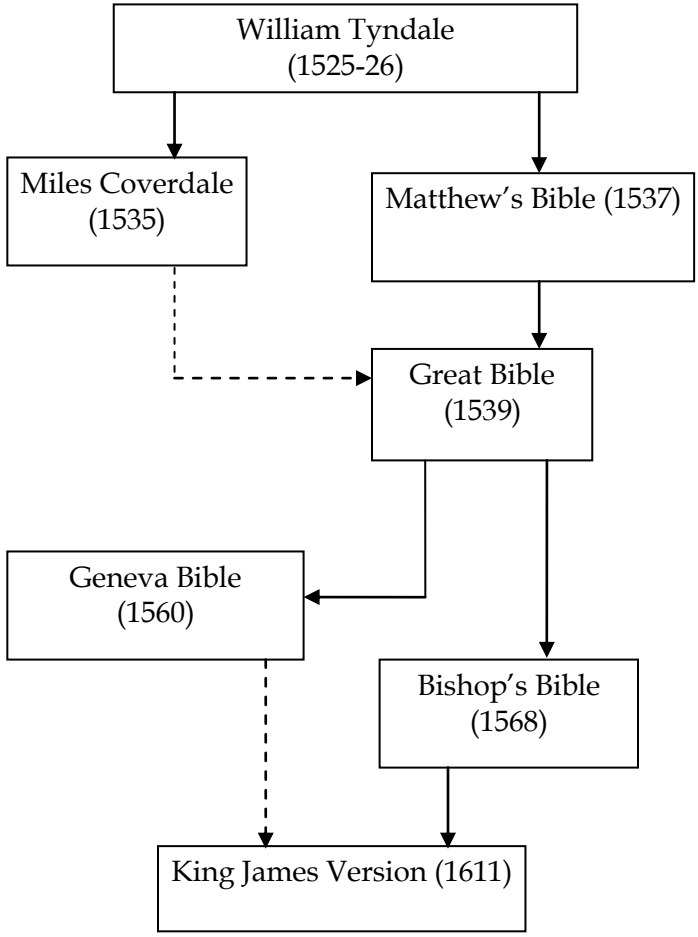
[77] Marlowe, "English Standard Version" (accessed January, 17, 2011).

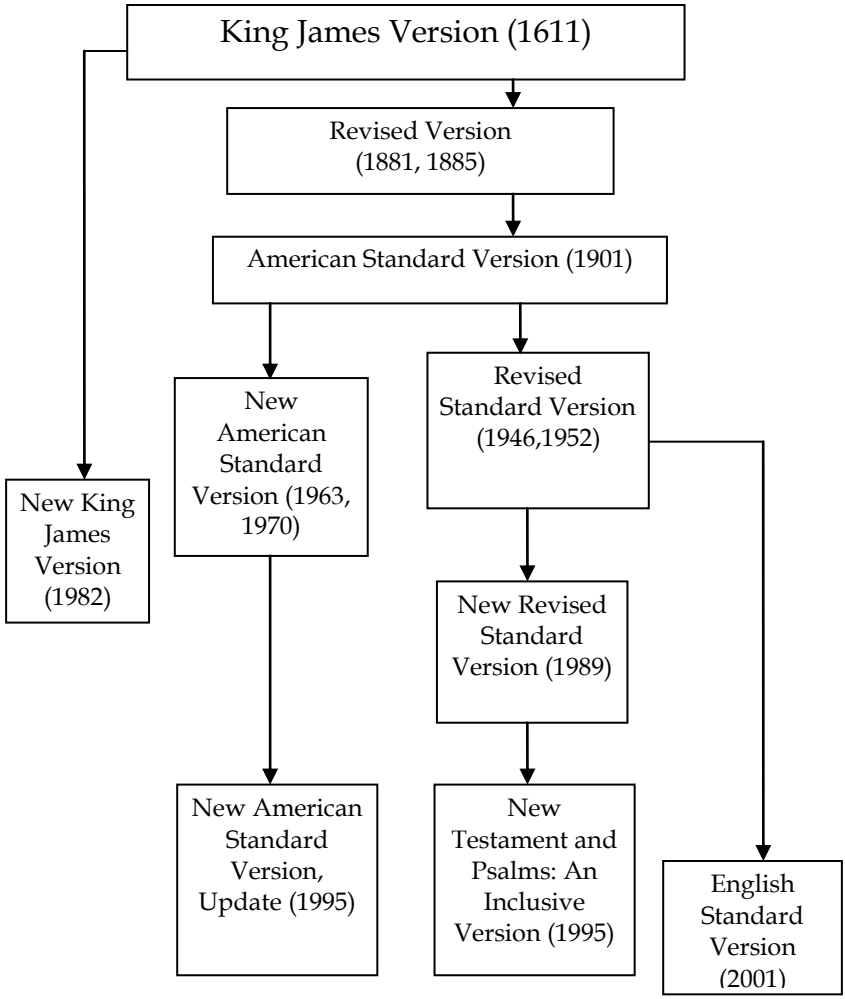
[78] There is a lot more to come from the Dead Sea scrolls (although Scanlin, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 139–140, cautions against expecting any "dramatic" changes in the OT text) and textual critics are now sifting through the variants with help from the computer (Metzger, *Text*, 240–246) and arriving at some very different conclusions. See, for example, the changes from Nestle-Aland 27 in the new *Editio Critica Maior*, available at http://www-user.uni-bremen.de/~wie/ECM/ECM-index.html (accessed January 17, 2011).

today. Protestants are not supposed to believe in tradition, but many of them prefer a traditional Bible.

Appendix A
The Great Tradition of English Bibles, Part I



Appendix B
The Great Tradition of English Bibles, Part II



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Theological Observer

Dean Wenthe: An Appreciation

[*The following remarks were offered at the banquet recognizing the retirement of Dr. Dean O. Wenthe from the presidency of Concordia Theological Seminary on May 26, 2011. They are reprinted from* For the Life of the World (July 2011): 12–13. *The Editors*]

One thing that has always characterized Dr. Dean Wenthe is his engaging, encouraging personality. From the time I was a student at this seminary, agonizing over sermon preparation, to discussing "future possibilities" with him following his election to the presidency of CTS in the spring of 1996, to serving with him in seminary administration, he has consistently held forth a gracious, Christ-centered vision for this institution and encouraged his colleagues in the same.

President Wenthe's accomplishments in office are too lengthy to list at this point. However, it is worth noting that having assumed the presidency in challenging circumstances, he has provided the seminary with outstanding leadership. First, he was guiding the seminary as it received, for the first time in its history, ten-year accreditation from both the Association of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the highest level of accreditation achievable. Secondly, his commitment to mission has led to this institution being known the world over through its international work, particularly his support of the "Russian Program." Thirdly, his compassion has found concrete expression in the establishment of the deaconess program in 2003. Finally, no retrospective of his service would be complete if it failed to mention that it was under Dr. Wenthe's leadership that, after more than 30 years, the seminary has successfully begun expansion of its library facilities, creating a structure that can only be described as world class.

Recently, while doing some research in the CTS archives, I found a document delivered by Dr. Wenthe in 1979. During this time he was pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Atlantic, Iowa. He had been invited to return to campus to speak to the fourth-year class, to whom he said:

> Our primary calling as theologians is to interpret reality for ourselves and for our people. In our day, we behold the tragic paradox of secular man seeking something more solid than the phony, penultimate, pleasure trips, of either the gross or more refined variety, that are constantly held before us as the only route worth traveling . . . and, in their seeking, find no one to speak to them of that which is solid and real. The saints whom you serve will at times overwhelm you with their support and love. The sinners whom you serve will at times send you scampering to the throne of grace for more patience and wisdom than your flesh can muster. And yet,

> on this latter point, I can forthrightly say that for all their frailties you will find your flock a joy to serve. I was simply not prepared for that closeness which is forged between Pastor and people as they seek to live a real life in the midst of a phony world. Frankly, it's great! And if these tasks do not plant the seeds of joy and happiness in our service, then we have ourselves drifted from that which is real.

For nearly 40 years of service to this seminary, 15 of which were spent as president, we can only say "thank you" to Dr. Dean Wenthe for his collegiality and the way in which he has embodied this CTS mission to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

An Old Seminary, a New President, and the Unfolding of Divine History

[*The following is the collegial recognition speech given by the Academic Dean on behalf of the faculty at the banquet that followed the installation of Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. as the 16th President of Concordia Theological Seminary on September 11, 2011. The Editors*]

Although you know this already, President Rast, let me assure you and the whole church that the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary is profoundly thankful to our Lord for your election and installation, and each member of this faculty stands united with you as we serve under your leadership in the vital work of forming servants in Jesus Christ for his harvest field. As a highly respected colleague for the past 15 years who has been involved in seminary administration in some manner almost as long, you already enjoy the faculty's complete confidence and support. Let me also assure you of even our sympathy and sincere prayers as you formally take up your challenging duties!

I think it was one of my colleagues who quipped that with the election of Larry Rast as seminary president and the transition of Dean Wenthe out of that office, we had witnessed Moses handing over his staff to younger Joshua. This historical analogy is worth pressing a bit further. The person who would lead Israel out of the slavery of Egypt was no by no means clear to Israel, much less to Moses, as can be seen from the narrative in Exodus. Who would fill the presidential void here in the post-Robert Preus era was certainly not clear to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, much less to Dean Wenthe, until the Lord gave him the staff in the midst of a challenging time in this seminary's history. The past 15 years have been richly blessed, but—as we all know—they have not been a quick triumphant march to the promised land, always flowing with the milk of the church's support and the honey of abundant students. It took our Moses 14 years to drain the lake so that bulldozers could cross on dry ground to construct a library that was needed already when this seminary

returned here from Springfield in 1976. Unlike 15 years ago, however, there was little doubt among your colleagues that the Lord had raised up one who would follow faithful Moses, the younger Joshua. We only waited for the electors to confirm the Lord's will.

The reason the installation we just witnessed in Kramer Chapel is significant is that it is part of divine history. At the time, few in this world beyond Jericho and some other conquered cities took notice of Joshua and the people of Israel. The reason Moses, Joshua, the people of Israel, Wenthe, Rast, and this seminary in Fort Wayne are significant is because we are part of divine history. Several psalms of the Psalter adeptly express the history of Israel as divine history: it is God acting in and through sinful people, sometimes in spite of them! Who at the time thought that Jesus' three-year training of his first twelve pastors, primarily in the hinterland of Galilee, was important for the world's future? Luke, among others, however, viewed the actions of the apostles as divine history that was transforming the world: "The Word of the Lord grew and multiplied." Why was Luther so important? He was part of divine history, an instrument used by God to testify mightily to God's grace in Christ Jesus. Anyone who has read Erich Heintzen's *Prairie School of the Prophets* realizes that the history of this seminary is very often, as our new president would bluntly put it, rather depressing! Yet, with all its struggles to survive and journeys between three states, we recognize and rejoice that this seminary is part of divine history as Jesus has called, formed, and sent forth countless servants faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, year after year, decade after decade, for 165 years.

President Rast, your colleagues are confident you will help us learn from the past as you lead this seminary with confessional integrity and boldness into the future. May you be encouraged by the realization that we are participants in the divine history of salvation that our Lord is continuing to unfold in our midst. It is a history unfolding with each service in Kramer Chapel in which Jesus is present with his gifts of life and forgiveness, every class that lifts up his death and resurrection as the source of salvation, every faithful student who is sent from here to testify to Jesus in this world. It is a history that will not end with seminary enrollment struggles or income shortfalls, but with our Lord's glorious return and our resurrection. When a future generation reflects on the divine history unfolding right here and now with you, President Rast, may it be written: "As for him and his seminary-fold, they served the Lord."

Charles A. Gieschen

The Sacred Character of Human Life

[*This is the response of Dr. Dean O. Wenthe upon receiving the Telemachus Award from the Allen County Right to Life for Pro-Life Activities at their annual banquet in Fort Wayne on October 10, 2011. The Editors*]

My gratitude for this award is joined to gratitude for all of you who support life. I rejoice in the clear and courageous witness of Bishop Emeritus D'Arcy, Bishop Rhoades, the Roman Catholic Church, and Evangelical Christians in many denominations and other traditions who confess the sacred character of life. I am also grateful for my own portion of the Christian family, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, her president, Matthew C. Harrison, and my colleagues and students at Concordia Theological Seminary for their solidarity on this crucial matter. And, on a personal level, I am thankful for my ever supportive wife, Linda, who as a nurse and mother has stood for life.

What we are about is far more than a question of ethics, the righteous propriety of a particular act, though, such a question merits our full energies in and of itself where life is at stake. Rather, we are engaged in a foundational and fundamental debate on what it is to be a human being. On this level of reflection, some human beings without the benefit of scriptural revelation have come to the right answer. Ancient Assyrians, Hippocrates, as well as diverse peoples and cultures around the globe and through time have rightly perceived that to end life in the womb is murder. Natural law speaks truth while the deceptive vocabulary of a secular culture seeks to disguise the fact that a baby is alive with heart and organs by use of terms such as "fetus" or simply "pregnancy." Natural law still works.

With the light of revelation, however, what it is to be human becomes even clearer—beautifully clear! When Moses penned Genesis, the Egyptian, Palestinian, and Mesopotamian cultures were rich with epic accounts of the cosmos. In their grand epics, the narrative of creation placed the real action with the gods whom they identified with the sun, the moon, stars, the sea, various creatures, and even statuary. History was an unfolding story of the gods' preferences and choices. Human beings were simply not major players. They were marginal and insignificant. In such a context, Genesis 1 and 2 are revolutionary. They offer a radically different view of what it is to be human. Here human beings are not marginal and incidental. Here Adam and Eve are the very apex of God's creative labors. They alone are made in God's image for intimate communion with him. Here the sun, the moon, and all of creation are gifts from a gracious God to support the life of humanity. Here God personally and intimately forms human beings as a potter molds clay and breathes into human beings the breath of life.

This answer to what constitutes human life is full of wonder and imparts value to every single individual. This answer is so clearly and lovingly

expressed by Jesus when he asserts: "There is joy among the angels of heaven over one sinner who repents" Luke 15:10. That is how much value each and every human being has by virtue of who we are as the handiwork of a gracious, giving God. Indeed, God gives us His Son as a man. Gabriel addresses Mary: "You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus" [Luke 1:31 NIV]. The original is much more specific for it literally reads "you will become pregnant in your womb." I very much appreciate the artist Fra Angelico's rendering of the Annunciation, for he shows Mary reverencing the angel; yet, the Angel Gabriel is also reverencing Mary, for God—Jesus—is now present in her womb. How beautiful! This moment defines all others as God becomes flesh for us and displays in Jesus what it is to be fully human. As the poet John Donne captured:

Twas much that man was made
    Like God before
But that God would be made
    Like man much more.

My encouragement is that we courageously and tirelessly articulate and confess the beauty of this Christian vision, for it is foundational truth about human life. Powerful and winsomely deceptive voices in our day seek to re-mythologize the cosmos and to reduce human beings to mere accidents in an evolutionary black hole. With Moses, with Jesus, we bring a word that redeems human beings from such a cold, dark existence and end. May God bless us and our words so that every human being may be refreshed by the beautiful truth about who they are in the essence of their being. And by God's grace, may all hear the good news of Jesus who lifts our lives to God when he says: "I have come that you might have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

Dean O. Wenthe

CTQ 75 (2011): 372–380

Book Reviews

***Walther*, DVD, four disks. Directed by Dale Ward. Produced by John Klinger. Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Seminary, 2011.**

Arriving in time for the 200th anniversary of C.F.W. Walther's birth, *Walther* is the story of the Saxon immigration under Martin Stephan in audio-visual form. The first president of the Missouri Synod is the most prominent figure in the account, but it is really about the Stephanite immigrants, their troubled settlement in St. Louis and Perry County, and the resolution of their identity as a Lutheran church leading to the formation of the Synod.

Movies have to be understood by people who have no previous knowledge of the story, have to maintain a narrative flow, and are expected to portray a conflict, its development, and resolution. *Walther* succeeds in all three areas. Historical and theological commentary background materials are supplied by historians from the St. Louis and Fort Wayne seminaries. The archivist of Trinity Lutheran Church in Saint Louis provides the perspective of the congregation that was at center of the Synod's founding. The fourth disk offers reflections about Walther from synodical and seminary presidents, Ralph Bohlmann, Karl Barth, John F. Johnson, Dale C. Meyer, Robert Kuhn, Gerald Kieschnick, Matthew Harrison, Dean Wenthe, and Lawrence. Rast. On the same disk is the 1938 commemorative movie, *Call of the Cross*, as well as deleted scenes from the 2011 version, printable poster, discussion guide, and bibliography. All four disks are congregation friendly.

Since the question of a balanced treatment comes with all attempts to depict the past, commentary from historians might have been added. For example nothing is said of Walther's insistence on organizing the Synod on the basis of all of the Lutheran Confessions. The story would have more intriguing by calling attention to Johann Grabau's attempt to subordinate the Saxons to his authority, a threat that Saxon pastors recognized and was a factor in both the Altenburg Debate and the formation of the synod.

This movie continues the time worn impression that the synod was primarily or even exclusively a result of the experiences of the Saxon Lutherans who settled in Missouri. Sihler and Lochner are included, but more could have been said about these and others whom Wilhelm Löhe sent to America. Their ideas had a role in what the Missouri Synod became and is. These critiques do not detract from the educational experience provided by this movie and its executive producer John Klinger—an opportunity to tell the whole story, one that Lutherans can ponder in understanding our Synod!

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***The Second Church. Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400*. By Ramsay MacMullen. Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 1. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009. 210 + xii pages. Paperback, $24.95.**

The bishops—Chrysostom, Augustine, and others—liked to speak of Christianity as it should be. Theirs was a theoretical, often normative, view, represented in countless tracts and sermons that have come down to us in pristine form. Unfortunately, opines MacMullen, the episcopal proclamations reached perhaps 5% of the population originally, and only the upper-crust at that. The majority of the rest (95%) rarely attended church, ate memorial meals to ancestors, and venerated the blessed martyrs at cemeteries. Their "faith" (if one could even call it that) was more pagan than Christian. What MacMullen tries to show is how little influence Christianity had, practically speaking, upon the populations of the towns and cities (and in the country, none at all):

> [T]he formal, organized, scripturally supported, public, well-seen and well funded parts of religion—could be left in the hands of the 5 per cent. For other worshippers, address to a superhuman Being for strength and favor in return for prayers and vows might be imagined as only an occasional thing, untaught or at least not consciously learned. Yet they were not irreligious. There was, after all, never a catechuminate [sp] in Isis-worship or the worship of Athena; yet each in her time had her millions of the faithful. They came to her when they needed to. Religion can only have been spontaneous; in people's homes it was perhaps little thought on[,] though comforting; and that comfort, by many, was only rarely sought in any serious way (113).

The book is organized geographically into five chapters: (1) The Eastern Empire; (2) Greece and the Balkans; (3) North Africa; (4) Italy and the Northwest; (5) Conclusions. Lengthy and very densely written endnotes comprise nearly one third of the book. (I was constantly flipping to the back, then to the bibliography; such "reading" is not pleasant!) Specialized studies in languages other than English abound in the bibliography (177–203), and the book is crammed with maps, tables, site plans, photographs of ruined mausolea, and artists' reconstructions of the martyr-memorial services (e.g., Fig. 2.7 on pg. 43).

Nevertheless—and in a manner reminiscent of a mosquito attacking an elephant—I think MacMullen's thesis could be challenged. The picture of the emerging Christian movement in the NT, at least, is that of constant, if not explosive, growth (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31, 42; 11:21, 24; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12—in Acts alone). The idea that at most 5 percent of the population attended church or were catechized (because there was not enough room for such crowds in the existing churches) does not ring true. Nor does it take long

to find scholars who hold differing views: W. Harmless, e.g., supposed Augustine preached to a wide swath of North African society, and "the majority seems to have been poor townspeople" (William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995], 162, n. 21). But Harmless based his opinions on literary, not archaeological, evidence—in his case, upon the sermons of St. Augustine, rather than the physical remains of the cramped basilicas wherein Augustine preached. Still I wonder whether one really can evaluate Augustine on the basis of isometric reconstructions wherein each worshipper requires one square meter (12). What about the multitudes who could not fit, but would have done almost anything to hear Augustine preach? (See my "The Preaching of St. Augustine," in *Preaching Through the Ages*, ed., J. A. Maxfield [The Pieper Lectures, vol. 8; St. Louis, MO and Northville, SD: Concordia Historical Institute and The Luther Academy, 2004] 35–63). And Augustine preached two or three times *per day* (not just Sundays), sometimes for as long as *three hours* per occasion! I am not persuaded, therefore, that physical remains ever do a sufficient justice to what must have been the reality. Still, it is hard to argue with MacMullen's facts and figures, and he has long been an authority in such matters. MacMullen has provided an extraordinarily well-substantiated volume which challenges glib assumptions.

John G. Nordling

The Scandalous God: The Use and Abuse of the Cross. **By Vítor Westhelle. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006. 180 pages. Paperback, $17.94.**

Building on Luther's argument at Heidelberg that the theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is, the Brazilian-American systematic theologian Vítor Westhelle seeks to articulate the raw scandal of the crucifixion for contemporary proclamation.

Engaging those who finally dismiss the cross as incongruent with the narrative of God's love as well as those who would blur the terror of the crucifixion by dogmatic domestication, Westhelle strives to use Luther's potent *theologia crucis* to let the offense of the cross stand unmitigated by what he sees as theories about the atonement or sentimental reconstructions of Christianity devoid of the word of the cross:

> The particularity of the cross, its literal meaning and the attributes attached to the person of Jesus cannot be washed away with an allegorical soap. Its meaning is at once ultimate and yet fragmentary. Ultimate, because it has the apocalyptic urgency of calling the event God's final revelation; fragmentary, not because it is a disjointed narrative, but because it fragments our attempt to hold it as an integral whole, administer and control and it at our whim. This is what the scandal means; it disrupts an expected fulfillment and enclosure of meaning (15).

Westhelle examines "the early stages of a theology of the cross" in the New Testament, asserting that the servant poem of Isaiah 53 is not used as a frame of reference for the passion narrative without giving a convincing argument as to why this is the case. He does not, for example, engage with contemporary scholars, such as Richard Bauckham (see *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*) or Peter Stuhlmacher (see "Vicariously Giving His Life for Many, Mark 10:45 [Matt 20:28]" in *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology).* Westhelle sees the New Testament as transmitting, in a variety of literary forms, the apocalyptic reality of Jesus' death as contradiction and reversal of the powers of this age with their expected and predictable patterns. Thus, Westhelle maintains that in the early church only the language of paradox would suffice to confess the event of the cross. Without paradox, doctrinal formulations are muted abstractions.

Taking a synthetic approach to narrating a theology of the cross, Westhelle is wide-ranging in his movement from biblical text to contemporary literary and artistic works, including indigenous poems and songs from South America. Clearly he reflects themes from various liberationist theologies in that context. He is conversant with postmodern figures such as Michael Foucault and René Girard. John Douglas Hall and Jürgen Moltmann are significant conversation partners for Westhelle as he seeks to address questions of human suffering and victimization, faith and reason, creation, epistemology, and eschatology through his version of the theology of the cross.

Perhaps the most helpful section of Westhelle's work is chapter three, which is devoted to Luther. Here the author demonstrates Luther's creative transformation of the medieval triad of *lectio, oratio, contemplatio* to *oratio, meditatio, tentatio* in his 1539 "Preface to the Wittenberg Edition" as providing space for the cross as affliction of tribulation. This chapter includes a rich and instructive treatment of Luther's use of language and the distinction between "seeing" and "hearing" in the Christian's life in this world.

The Scandal of the Cross: The Use and Abuse of the Cross is not an easy read. The author assumes an audience that is acquainted with contemporary theology and social theory as well as postmodern philosophy and literature as he seeks to deconstruct what he sees as mistaken affirmations and dismissals of the theology of the cross. His engagement with Luther is valuable. The late Gerhard Forde often warned against turning the theology of the cross into an "ideology of the cross." I am not sure that Westhelle has sufficiently escaped this difficulty.

John T. Pless

***The New Testament in His Blood: A Study of the Holy Liturgy of the Christian Church*. By Burnell F. Eckardt. Kewanee, IL: Gottesdienst, 2010. Paperback. 217 pages. Paperback, $18.00.**

Author Burnell F. Eckhardt, who has made a name for himself for his interest in things liturgical through his periodical *Gottesdienst*, has gathered his thoughts into this easy to read paperback. In the first of three sections he discusses the biblical basis for liturgy and then proceeds to show the all-embracing character of the liturgy. A final section deals with how one does the liturgy. Eckhardt is never uncertain in presenting his arguments and so the reader is constantly responding with assent and dissent. In working towards and never really achieving liturgical uniformity among Lutherans, the author has provided a place to begin and continue discussion. Recommended for private and conference study.

David P. Scaer

***Two Kinds of Love: Martin Luther's Religious World*. By Tuomo Mannermaa, translated, edited, and introduced by Krisi I. Stjerna with an afterword by Juhani Forsberg. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. 125 pages. Paperback, $19.00.**

Tuomo Mannermaa, Emeritus Professor of Ecumenical Theology at the University of Helsinki, has long been recognized as the pioneer of what has come to be known as the Finnish school of Luther research. Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson were largely responsible for introducing this novel and, more often than not, controversial approach to Luther studies to an English-speaking audience as they edited a volume of seminal essays by Mannermaa and his associates under the title *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Eerdmans, 1998) with the hope that this approach would lead Lutherans into a richer ecumenical engagement by freeing them from categories overly dominated by a forensic definition of justification. Since 1998, Mannermaa's *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Fortress, 2005) has also appeared in English translation, as have numerous journal articles and chapters by Finnish scholars influenced by Mannermaa. A helpful roadmap to this scholarship is provided in the lengthy "Afterword," entitled "Finnish Luther Research Since 1979," by Juhani Forsberg.

Mannermaa works with the distinction made by Luther in thesis 28 of the Heidelberg Theses that there are two kinds of love, God's love and human love. Luther formulates the distinction between these two loves by asserting that divine love does not find but creates its object, while human love is attracted by the characteristics that made its object desirable. Thus, Mannermaa observes that for Luther God's love and human love are "polar opposites." Yet Mannermaa seeks to argue that for Luther these "opposites"

are not mutually exclusive but rather that they constitute a paradox that provides an entrée into the reformer's entire theology.

Engaging continuity and discontinuity with Thomas Aquinas, Mannermaa argues that Luther's critique of scholasticism's understanding of love is twofold: (1) human love as a unifying power; and (2) the assumption that human beings can comprehend the essence of God on the basis of creaturely realities without the cross of Christ. This leads Mannermaa to work out Luther's contrast between the two kinds of love as a contrast between the theology of the cross and a theology of glory. Mannermaa rightly points out that "the core of Luther's Reformation program finds its expression in the following statement: 'But where they [the scholastics] speak of love, we speak of faith'" (p. 46). Faith receives God's love in Christ. Yet, according to Mannermaa, there is reciprocity with God's love that enables the human being to love God. Hence the Christian is seen as participating in the love of God.

It is at this juncture that the continuity with Mannermaa's previous work becomes most apparent. Drawing on an exceedingly early Christmas sermon (1516!), Luther, it is argued, makes use of a doctrine of divinization which he is said to have received from the early church, although Mannermaa provides no textual evidence for this claim. While Mannermaa references Luther's later works, like the 1535 lectures on Galatians, he does not give adequate attention to shifts in Luther's thinking. Finally, Mannermaa seems to divide love for the neighbor from love for God, while Luther sees the Christian's love for God as expressed in one's love for the neighbor. God is loved through the neighbor.

The readability of this short book is severely hampered by the translator's attempt at inclusive language to the extent of eliminating masculine pronouns for the deity by substituting the awkward term "Godself."

John T. Pless

***Christology and Ethics.* Edited by F. LeRon Shults and Brent Waters. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 224 pages. Paperback, $21.28.**

These eight essays, originally presented at a conference sponsored by the Stead Center for Ethics and Values, held on the campus of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 2007, seek to link the doctrine of the person and work of Christ to faithful living in the world in conformity to the way of Christ. The authors, in their own ways, attempt to overcome what they see as a bifurcation of Christology and ethics.

Brent Waters argues for a correspondence between the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ and the cardinal virtues of charity, hope, and obedience in an essay on "The Incarnation and the Moral Life." Barthian scholar John Webster seeks to broaden the presentation of the moral life from the

Haustafel of Colossians 3:18—4:1 to a more cosmic scope embodied in the Risen Christ who is head of all things, asserting that Christ establishes" the order of moral knowing" (p. 46). Drawing on Jürgen Moltmann, John Zizioulas, Miroslav Volf, Leonard Boff, and Catherine LaCugna, the contribution of Kathryn Tanner, "Trinity, Christology, and Community," cautions against inflated claims made for Trinitarian theology in contemporary social ethics, suggesting that the incarnation itself establishes a community of kinship.

Bernd Wannenwetsch enters into a conversation with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christology (in particular, his 1933 lectures on Christology), investigating the formulae *Christus totus, Christus praesens,* and *Christus pro me* and teasing out implications for Christian moral discourse that avoids both idealist and foundationalist tendencies. "Forgiveness as New Creation: Christ and the Moral Life Revisited" is the title of Lois Malcolm's chapter. Malcolm argues for a reading of Pauline Christology that holds the forgiveness of sins together with the new creation while examining secular appropriations of Christian notions of forgiveness (Hannah Arendt, Julia Kristeva). Referencing the final judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 as the basis for his study, Jan-Olav Henrikson sees divine judgment as entailing both justice and surprise. J. Wentzel von Huyssteen's essay, "Should We Do What Jesus Did?: Evolutionary Perspectives on Christology and Ethics," asserts that an understanding of Jesus within the matrix of evolutionary history keeps tradition and innovation in tension. Revisiting Schleiermacher, van Huyssteen suggests that an evolutionary sense of God consciousness provides a frame for moral direction through ongoing critical discernment. A final chapter by F. LeRon Shults, "The Philosophical Turn to Alterity in Christology and Ethics," examines the categories of "sameness" and "otherness" in light of cross-disciplinary approaches to ethical theory.

Each of the essayists, in his or her way, attempts to provide a theological grounding for ethics both in theory and practice via Christology. The results are uneven.

John T. Pless

***Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation*. By Bonnie Noble. New York: University Press of America, 2009. 227 pages. Paperback, $36.99.**

This is a good book—and not just because it has pictures! Bonnie Noble, professor of art history at the Univeristy of North Carolina at Charlotte, not only exegetes some of the most significant works of the Reformation master but also gently guides the reader through the complexities of art appreciation. It should come as no surprise that Cranach's creations are more than just

pretty pictures; the strength of Noble's book is that she helps the reader understand why Cranach's paintings are so noteworthy.

Noble begins with a brief survey of the literature on Cranach's artwork. As one might expect, much of this work has appeared only in German. Noble is less than satisfied with the consensus view that there exists a "perfect reciprocity between Luther's ideas and Cranach's images" (7). Of course, the interpretation of art is never that easy. Throughout her treatment, Noble addresses the age-old discussion of the relationship between art and text. Can a piece of art lead the viewer to discover new theological insights, or is the purpose of the work of art to illustrate the theological texts that exist independently of it?

From the outset, Noble offers a helpful summary of the way in which Cranach's paintings aided in the development of a Lutheran understanding of art: "Broadly speaking, art functioned to instruct believers in theology and grace and helped define the theological parameters of religious communities" (10). Noble goes on to summarize specific functions of that art: (1) the paintings "are didactic, instructing believers in the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith without works"; (2) the artist limited his selection of subjects to those found in the Bible; (3) "Lutheran art redefined sacraments," especially as it related to the faithful reception of these gifts; and (4) the inclusion of portraits of significant religious and civic leaders redefined the understanding of piety (more on this below).

Noble organizes her study around several significant groupings of Cranach's paintings. These include his famous *Law and Gospel* paintings (comparing and contrasting two examples of this style in Gotha and Prague), which attempt "to reduce complex theological issues into a (pictorial) slogan" (52). What Noble demonstrates regarding these paintings is that, despite their intended simplicity, they are amazingly complex, inviting the viewer to wrestle with the intracacies of scriptural interpretation and theological discourse.

The next two paintings that are examined are the *Schneeberg Altarpiece* and the more famous *Wittenberg Altarpiece*. The latter, completed a year after Luther's death, is best known for its inclusion of both Philip Melanchthon (at the font) and Martin Luther (in the pulpit). Because it is not possible to include images of these altarpieces in this review, any attempt to summarize Noble's discussion is virtually impossible.

One side issue that applies to both altarpieces concerns the inclusion of portraits of various individuals. These include not only religious leaders like Luther and Melanchthon but also significant political leaders and sometimes donors of the artwork. Noble points out that in pre-Reformation art the portraits of donors were often included as a nod to the piety of the individual—more precisely, to signify that by commissioning the work of art the donor was performing a good work. For Lutheran art, the focus was different.

The inclusion of the donor's portrait was intended to signify that person's faith in Christ, with the proximity of the individual's portrait to the image of Christ in the painting reinforcing this perspective (79–84).

One final topic concerns Noble's examination of Cranach's *Madonna Panels*. Both pre-Reformation and post-Reformation examples exist of these panels, thus making it possible to contrast the two. After 1520, Cranach stopped painting images of Mary that were based on extra-biblical legends and focused on images of Mary with the Christ child. Halos, crowns, and backgrounds of gold—so prevalent in the pre-Reformation panels—are replaced with an image of Mary that is best summarized as a real, earthly mother (170). As Noble explains: "The Virgin Mary became a paragon of Lutheran virtue rather than a worker of miracles or guarantor of salvation. No longer an intercessor, the Virgin became the quintessential, ideal model of perfect grace" (10).

As I said, this is a great book, pictures and all. It is too bad that the pictures are only in black and white. While color plates would have made the book cost-prohibitive, the publisher could have established a Website where the color images might be quickly accessed. There is, of course, nothing that prevents the reader from making his or her own search on the Internet to locate color images of each painting; it can only add to the enjoyment of reading Noble's book!

Paul J. Grime

Books Received

Belcher, Kimberly Hope. *Efficacious Engagement: Sacramental Participation in the Trinitarian Mystery*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011. 199 Pages. Paperback. $29.95.

Braaten, Carl E. *Preaching Christ in a Pluralistic Age*. Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2011. 172 Pages. Paperback. $18.00.

Deutschlander, Daniel M. *The Narrow Lutheran Middle: Following the Scriptural Road*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 235 Pages. Paperback. $18.50.

Nass, Thomas P. *End Times: Jesus is Coming Soon*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 398 Pages. Paperback. $18.50.

Panning, Armin J. *Life in the New Testament World: Understanding Professions, Practices, and Politics*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 139 Pages. Paperback. $16.00.

Piper, John. *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011. 304 Pages. Hardback. $22.95.

Preus, Peter, *And She Was a Christian: Why Do Believers Commit Suicide?* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 183 Pages. Paperback. $25.99.

Reimringer, John. *Vestments: A Novel*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2011. 407 Pages. Paperback. $16.00.

Springer, Carl P. *Luther's Aesop*. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2011. 249 Pages. Paperback. $39.95.

Walther, Karl A. *Grand Themes and Key Words: Exploring Important Bible Terms*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 157 Pages. Paperback. $17.00.

Wüstenberg, Ralf K. *The Political Dimension of Reconciliation: A Theological Analysis of Ways of Dealing with Guilt during the Transition to Democracy in South Africa and (East) Germany*. Translated by Randi H. Lundell. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009. 434 Pages. Paperback. $50.00.

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