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Inclusive Liturgical Language: Off-Ramp to Apostasy?

Paul J. Grime

The preparation of a new hymnal for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod presented the Commission on Worship with a wide array of issues that required ongoing attention. Hymn choices, lectionary revisions, rubrical details—the list was endless. No issue, however, caused as much angst, not to mention heated response, as did the matter of inclusive language. More specifically, it was the commission's work on the translation of the Nicene Creed that garnered the greatest outpouring of comments. Points of contention included the familiar "Christian Church" vs. "catholic Church" as well as the opening phrase "I believe" vs. "We believe." Most problematic, though, was the phrase "who for us men and for our salvation." In an attempt to ascertain the mind of the Synod, the Commission conducted a survey via the Internet in early 2003 and proposed a substitute for the word "men" so as to render the phrase "who for us *humans* and for our salvation." That the trial balloon was shot down in no time came as no surprise.

Political correctness, "P. C." as it is widely known, has been with us for some time,[1] though the fact that many of us can still remember when this was not that big of an issue ought to tell us something. On college campuses we have had three, maybe four, decades of the P. C. police sniffing out unnecessary masculine pronouns from term papers, theses, and dissertations. Never mind that such attempts at not giving offense frequently result in a frontal assault on the English language such that English teachers ought to rise up and revolt!

In the last half century, there have been significant changes in liturgical language. The move in the Roman Catholic Church from the Latin Mass to the vernacular following the Second Vatican Council certainly played a significant role. Imagine trying to craft a new liturgical language

[1] Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt, "De Divinis Nominibus: The Gender of God," *Worship* 56 (1982): 117–131.

Paul J. Grime is Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions and Dean of the Chapel at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

in the 1960s when the pop culture was pumping out memorable lines like "He ain't heavy, he's my brother." Protestant churches were not far behind in revising their liturgical language as well, and included in those revisions was the push toward inclusive language, mostly with respect to the way we spoke of fellow humans. Given that it was the age of sexual equality, that should not come as a surprise. For Lutherans in America, this re-adjustment was readily apparent with the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) and then with the LCMS revision, *Lutheran Worship* (1982). There was nothing too radical about the changes, which consisted mostly of replacing words like "man" and "sons."

Returning to the Nicene Creed, the phrase "for us men" became an early target in the push toward inclusivity. Even as the Roman Catholics were rolling out their first vernacular iterations of the Mass, Protestant churches were attempting to develop common translations of key liturgical texts. In 1975, the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) published the fruits of its labors in the document *Prayers We Have in Common*.[2] This document was later revised by the successor body, the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), in their 1988 publication, *Praying Together*.[3] In both of these documents, the revised text for the Nicene Creed omits the word "men." In the accompanying notes, the Consultation states that the word "men" "is increasingly misleading or excluding as tied to only one gender."[4] That brief explanation pretty well summed up the argument for making the liturgical adjustment: the word "man" was no longer understood in its generic sense and thus excluded more than half of the human race.

But is it true that "man" is no longer understood generically? Paul Mankowski, a Jesuit priest and one-time frequent contributor to *First Things*, begs to differ. In two insightful articles published in *Touchstone* magazine in 1994 and 2001, he argues that if the word "man" has lost its generic sense, then cognitive errors ought to occur when the older language is still used. As an absurd example, he offers up this scenario: suppose an apprentice female zookeeper is going about her daily rounds of feeding the animals. As she comes upon one particular cage, a warning sign confronts her: CAUTION: MAN-EATING TIGER. Because she is not a

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[2] International Consultation on English Texts, *Prayers We Have in Common*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). These are the texts that are used in Settings One and Two in the *Lutheran Service Book,* having been used previously in both *LBW* and *LW.*

[3] English Language Liturgical Consultation, *Praying Together* (Norwich, England: The Canterbury Press, 1988).

[4] *Praying Together*, 12.

man, is she safe to assume that she can enter the cage with impunity?[5] No matter how politically correct this zookeeper might fashion herself, she would know full well what the phrase "man-eating" meant and would not dare enter the cage without taking the necessary precautions. Indeed, her correct reading of the word "man" in the generic sense would be so spontaneous and natural that the irony of the situation would likely escape her!

Mankowski goes on to posit another proof that the word "man" has not lost its generic sense. Calling it the "naïve" use, he suggests that when the day comes that children on the playground instinctively avoid the use of masculine pronouns when speaking generically of both boys *and* girls, then we will know that the generic meaning has in fact been lost.[6]

Mankowski nicely summarizes what he believes is at work in the push for inclusive language. He writes:

> "Man," "he," etc., have precisely the same range of *meaning* today that they had in 1975 and 1675. No pertinent change has occurred in the language *per se*. What has changed is the social and political valence of the generic employment of these expressions; a taboo (that is, a supra-linguistic phenomenon, external to the grammar of the speaker) has been attached to the generic usage.

To put it bluntly, Mankowski continues, the generic use of "man" has been "stigmatized for political reasons." When it is used today, "it is met not with confusion but rather with resentment."[7]

So why did the Commission on Worship propose an alternate wording in its field-test proposal of the Nicene Creed? Prior to this proposal, the Liturgy and Translations Committees had done considerable research on this matter. In a study document drafted by Thomas Winger, they noted that "concerns have been raised that it is difficult for many women today to hear the phrase 'who for us *men*' as referring to them and that some, in fact, take offense at being asked to confess these words."[8] Note the language: "difficult to hear" and "take offense." Nowhere did the committees concede that the meaning of the word had changed; rather, the explanation gives a nod to the reality that in certain quarters some have been conditioned to "hear" the word as being exclusive.

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[5] Paul V. Mankowski, S.J., "Jesus: Son of Humankind," *Touchstone* 14, no. 8 (2001): 34. See also "A Fig Leaf for the Creed," *Touchstone* 7, no. 2 (1994): 11–14.

[6] Mankowski, "Jesus: Son of Humankind," 34.

[7] Mankowski, "Jesus: Son of Humankind," 33–34.

[8] *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 4: *Other Documents*, compiled by Paul J. Grime and Jon D. Vieker (St. Louis: Commission on Worship, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2007), 551.

But is that true? Digging deeper into the linguistic underpinnings of this debate, Mankowski offers another example. Consider the following sign:

It is difficult to imagine anyone mistaking the intention of this sign: don't litter. Though the symbol for the person is the same that is often used to indicate the male gender (just think of the signage on nearly every men's restroom), in this context the meaning is clear: don't litter—men or women. Now consider this sign:

Whereas the first sign was "unmarked" as to gender, the second sign is marked for gender. To see it in this context introduces confusion, or, at the very least, bewilderment.

Just as the first sign clearly communicates that the littering prohibition applies to all people, so does the use of the words "man" and "men" in specific contexts. Consider a few familiar examples from our hymnody:

> Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
> Let men their songs employ (*LSB* 387:2).
>
> Then why should men on earth be so sad,
> Since our Redeemer made us glad (*LSB* 377:2).
>
> God is man, man to deliver (*LSB* 360:2).
>
> Born that man no more may die (*LSB* 380:3).
>
> Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
> Jesus, our Immanuel (*LSB* 380:2).

In the case of several of these examples, one finds a rather poetic use of the word "man." There really would be no other way, for example, of saying "God is man, man to deliver" without butchering the elegance of the line. Similarly, while many hymnals, including *Lutheran Worship*, have revised the last of these examples, which is from "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" by replacing "man" with "us," that threefold rhyme of the original rightfully demands to be preserved ("*Man* with *man* . . . Im*man*uel").

As the Hymnody and Translations committees worked their way through each of the hymns for *Lutheran Service Book*, they were sensitive to the issue of inclusive language. Where hymns had previously been updated to remove words like "man," the committees sometimes recommended a return to the original version, such as is seen in the preceding examples. While the literary quality of the texts was of some concern, a more significant theological issue was also at stake, which was well articulated by Leonard Klein already in the late 1980s:

> [O]ne change may present more problems than some have thought, and that is the dropping of the term "man" for the human race. Not only does the term still merit consideration because it is widely used in a number of sciences and elsewhere as the name for the species, but in scientific theology as well it would seem to have a function that cannot be supplanted by the collective "people" or the abstractions "humankind" and "humanity." Theologically "man" means the adamic whole, the rebellious one who stands over against God as his enemy. Martin Franzmann put it well: "In Adam we have all been one, one huge rebellious man" (*LBW* 372). We have a solidarity in our sin and in our redemption by the second Adam that is watered down and obfuscated by more collective or abstract terms. Thus it is arguable that theology must continue to have not a doctrine of *humanity* but a doctrine of *man,* however we may choose to talk about the race in liturgy and preaching.[9]

I will admit that the phrase in question in the Nicene Creed is probably in a category all its own. I can think of no other place where the words "us" and "men" appear together. I imagine it is a double whammy for some women in our congregations not only to refer to themselves as "men" but to say "us men." It is admittedly clumsy. But to argue that the meaning of the phrase is at all unclear is intellectually dishonest. As Paul Mankowski explains:

> In linguistic terms, there is no such thing as inclusive or exclusive

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[9] Leonard Klein, "That God Is to Be Spoken of as 'He,'" *Lutheran Forum* 22 (Pentecost 1988): 23.

> language. Language is a vehicle of thought, capable of being steered in any direction by any speaker.
>
> The project that is termed "inclusive language" is in fact an etiquette. As an etiquette it is a complex system of rules, mainly prohibitions, used to encourage certain attitudes and types of behavior and discourage others, and to allow those who accept a particular code of conduct to recognize both conformists and non-conformists. This etiquette operates in the service of feminism in the broadest sense; to adopt inclusive language is to signal, if not personal agreement with specific feminist claims, at least a personal unwillingness to risk social unpleasantness resulting from rejection of such claims.[10]

To that end, the little explanation that the commission included at the end of the creed in *Lutheran Service Book*, stating that the phrase "*us men* means all people" was, while certainly well-meaning, perhaps a disservice in that what it actually does is insult the intelligence of anyone who is willing to read the phrase honestly within its context.

Thus far I have focused exclusively on the horizontal direction where language is directed toward other human beings. Of far greater contention in recent years has been the application of inclusive language principles to the vertical dimension, namely, the relationship between God and man. As vexing as language can be when describing the horizontal relationship, language that addresses God is far more consequential.

That the debate over inclusive language moved from the horizontal to the vertical dimension should not have surprised anyone.[11] Already in the mid-1980s, the National Council of Churches produced an inclusive-language lectionary that radically altered the biblical text in order to eliminate masculine references not only to humans but also to God. At the time, reactions were strongly negative, even in many of the mainline churches. As one member of the committee that prepared this lectionary summarized, "A quiet revolution is under way all around us, the *Lectionary* is lending it strong support in the church, and Christians of all stripes are perplexed

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[10]Mankowski, "Jesus, Son of Humankind," 37. Elsewhere, he writes even more bluntly: "The concept of inclusivity (as its partisans would have us understand it) is a phantasm, a category mistake, a chimera buzzing in a vacuum. Exclusion and inclusion have a political valence, but not a linguistic one, and the attempt to pretend otherwise is itself a politically motivated fraud . . . . In sum: inclusive language is a fraud. It may be a pious fraud, although I am inclined to think otherwise. In neither case does it make our thought more precise; in neither case does God's love for us shine more clearly through Sacred Scripture and sacred worship." Mankowski, "A Fig Leaf for the Creed," 11, 14.

[11] Klein, "That God Is to Be Spoken of as 'He,'" 23.

about what tactics to use to prevent its further advance."[12]

The primary culprits, of course, are those pesky masculine pronouns "he," "his," and "him." The ELLC document *Praying Together* lists several ways to avoid them. One is simply to repeat the word "God." Thus, we have, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth." The name "God" can show up multiple times in the same sentence. In extreme cases, the reflexive pronoun "himself" might even be rendered "Godself." Commenting on this particular attempt at avoiding the masculine pronouns in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's 2006 hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (*ELW*), Dan Biles throws up his hands, saying that it is just plain silly: "No one talks this way in real life."[13] More significant is the historical perspective into which Biles places the ELCA's most recent hymnal:

> It was the achievement and principle of Martin Luther to put the scriptures and liturgy in the language of the people. ELW has undone all that. ELW's language is surely not the language people use from day to day. It is a construct, a farce, a charade of the beauty of the English language and the classical liturgy of the Church.[14]

Another way of avoiding the use of masculine pronouns—an approach championed by the ELLC—is to change from active to passive voice. An example from the last line of the Magnificat will suffice:

ESV	ICET (1975); ELLC (1988)
as he spoke to our fathers,	the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.	to Abraham and his children for ever.

While the ELLC document argues that the Scriptures themselves use this form in various places, it cautions that such an approach should be used sparingly, only when it is evident to "a modern reader that the active subject is God."[15]

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[12] Burton H. Throckmorton, "Why the Inclusive Language Lectionary," *Christian Century* 101 (Aug. 1–8, 1983): 742.

[13] Dan Biles, "ELW and the Abuse of Language," *Lutheran Forum* 41, no. 1 (2007): 40.

[14] Biles, "ELW and the Abuse of Language," 41.

[15] *Praying Together*, xiii. Commenting on the dangers of this approach, Marcel Dumais writes, "The first consists in changing the verb in the sentence from the active to the passive. For example, 'He [God] has saved us' (Titus 3:5) would become 'We have been saved.' We grasp with little difficulty that something is lost in this kind of translation. Indeed, the action of God in salvation is no longer expressed." "Sexist Language and Biblical Translations," *Liturgical Ministry* 1 (Fall 1992): 130.

Yet another approach is simply to omit the masculine pronoun, with the result that sentences appear at times to be incomplete. Consider the Invitatory to the Venite in Morning Prayer. In *LBW*, as well as *LW* and *LSB*, the congregation responds: "Oh, come, let us worship him." In *ELW*, however, the editors simply omit the object of the verb and add a second verb in its place: "Oh, come, let us worship and praise." The natural question to ask upon singing this response might be, "worship and praise *whom*?"

Finally, there are some who advocate a more novel approach, namely, that of converting third-person speech into direct second-person address. The ELLC actually put this into practice in its 1988 document *Praying Together* by providing alternate versions of both the Benedictus and the Magnificat, the two canticles where masculine pronouns are in abundance. A quick comparison of the earlier and later textual revisions nicely demonstrates how this particular approach was applied to speech about God. Consider these two versions of the Magnificat:[16]

	ICET (1975)	ELLC (1988)
1	My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,	My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
2	my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;	my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
3	for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.	who has looked with favor on *his* lowly servant.
4	From this day all generations will call me blessed:	From this day all generations will call me blessed:
5	the Almighty has done great things for me,	the Almighty has done great things for me
6	and holy is his Name.	and holy is *his* name.
7	He has mercy on those who fear him	God has mercy on those who fear *him*,
8	in every generation.	from generation to generation.
9	He has shown the strength of his arm,	The Lord has shown strength with *his* arm
10	he has scattered the proud in their conceit.	and scattered the proud in their conceit,

[16] All ICET and ELLC texts cited in the following discussion are drawn from *Prayers We Have in Common* and *Praying Together*.

11 He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,	casting down the mighty from their thrones
12 and has lifted up the lowly.	and lifting up the lowly.
13 He has filled the hungry with good things,	<u>God</u> has filled the hungry with good things
14 and the rich he has sent away empty.	and sent the rich away empty.
15 He has come to the help of his servant Israel	*He* has come to the aid of *his* servant Israel,
16 for he has remembered his promise of mercy,	to remember the promise of mercy,
17 the promise he made to our fathers,	the promise made to our forebears,
18 to Abraham and his children for ever.	to Abraham and *his* children for ever.

In the 1975 version, there was no attempt to tamper with the vertical dimension. But that was not the case with the 1988 version. There are three things to note in this later revision.

1. The pronouns in boldface in the 1975 version are avoided in the later version without being replaced by anything else.
2. The underlined words in the 1988 version indicate places where the masculine pronoun has been replaced with words like "God," "Lord," or the relative pronoun "who."
3. The words in italics in the 1988 version identify places where the masculine pronoun has been retained.

In sum, sixteen masculine pronouns are reduced to seven through a variety of translation techniques.[17]

Now we will compare the ELLC version of the Magnificat, previously in the right-hand column, with the alternate version, also prepared by the ELLC and used in *ELW*, in which the third-person discourse is changed to second-person direct address.

[17] What is puzzling is that the consultation did not try to eliminate all of the masculine pronouns. An unintended consequence of this approach is that the sparing use of these pronouns actually calls greater attention to the masculinity of God, since when they occur, they tend to stand out as more pronounced.

	ELLC (1988)	ELLC (1988)—alternate version *ELW*
1	My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,	My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
2	my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,	my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
3	who has looked with favor on *his* lowly servant.	for **you**, Lord, have looked with favor on **your** lowly servant.
4	From this day all generations will call me blessed:	From this day all generations will call me blessed:
5	the Almighty has done great things for me	**you**, the Almighty, have done great things for me
6	and holy is *his* name.	and holy is **your** name.
7	God has mercy on those who fear *him*,	**You** have mercy on those who fear **you**,
8	from generation to generation.	from generation to generation.
9	The Lord has shown strength with *his* arm	**You** have shown" strength with **your** arm
10	and scattered the proud in their conceit,	and scattered the proud in their conceit,
11	casting down the mighty from their thrones	casting down the mighty from their thrones
12	and lifting up the lowly.	and lifting up the lowly.
13	God has filled the hungry with good things	**You** have filled the hungry with good things
14	and sent the rich away empty.	and sent the rich away empty.
15	*He* has come to the aid of *his* servant Israel,	**You** have come to the aid of **your** servant Israel,
16	to remember the promise of mercy,	to remember the promise of mercy,
17	the promise made to our forebears,	the promise made to our forebears,
18	to Abraham and *his* children for ever.	to Abraham and his children for ever.

All of the underlined and italicized words are now replaced with second-person pronouns. The ELLC document speaks well of this approach, citing

such benefits as "the smoothness and immediacy of the result."[18]

On one level, it is difficult to argue with that assessment. Compared to the version on the left, where various means are employed to eradicate the masculine pronouns, the alternate version with its direct address to God flows quite nicely. But at what cost? Philip Pfatteicher, author of numerous companion volumes for *LBW*, offers an insightful criticism of this alternate approach as it was used in the ELCA's new hymnal. Speaking of the Magnificat, he writes,

> This approach, among other things, destroys a principal beauty of the Magnificat. In the Bible, the frightened and bewildered young woman to whom an archangel spoke does not dare to address the "Most High" directly. With careful and humble indirection, she averts here [sic] eyes and confesses, "The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy in his name." Her use of the third person is essential in her address to God, which is at the same time an address to "all generations" that come after her.[19]

The ELLC's alternate version of the Benedictus, which is also used in *ELW*, presents a similar problem. In the original form, which is preserved below in the left-hand column, Zechariah speaks of God's work in the third person throughout the first half of the canticle, rejoicing in what God has accomplished in the incarnation of his Son in the womb of the virgin. (Remember, Mary was likely in the room as Zechariah uttered these words.) His third-person speech was a proclamation of God's saving deeds to all those who were present on the occasion of his son's naming and circumcision. As we appropriate his words today, we likewise proclaim to one another and to the world the same Gospel message. Then, beginning with line 15, Zechariah shifts from third-person address *about* God to second-person address that is directed to his son: "You, my child . . . ."

	ICET (1975)	ELLC (1988)—alternate version ELW
1	Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,	Blessed are **you**, Lord, the God of Israel,
2	*he* has come to *his* people and set them free….	**you** have come to **your** people and set them free….

[18] *Praying Together*, xiii.

[19] Philip H. Pfatteicher, "Reforming the Daily Office: Examining Two New Lutheran Books," *CrossAccents* 15, no. 2 (2007): 35.

10 This was the oath *he* swore to our father Abraham:	This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
11 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,	to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
12 free to worship *him* without fear,	free to worship **you** without fear,
13 holy and righteous in *his* sight,	holy and righteous before **you**,
14 all the days of our life.	all the days of our life.
15 You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High	And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High . . . .

In the ELLC alternate version (right-hand column), Zechariah's words *about* God have been changed to second-person address *to* God. This shift, however, introduces an unintended confusion into the text. In lines 1–14, each occurrence of the pronoun "you" refers to God, whereas in line 15 the word "you" now refers to John, creating a cognitive disconnect. Without serious catechesis of this canticle, the average worshiper will not understand the distinction and will miss the significance of Zachariah's proclamation.

While these two canticles are prime examples of how the new ELCA hymnal has applied inclusive language to speech about God, they are not isolated examples. A more far-reaching effort is found in the Psalter, where the editors have employed a variety of techniques to eliminate all masculine pronouns. The revision of Psalm 95, very familiar to us as the Venite in Matins and Morning Prayer, demonstrates the various techniques that the editors of *ELW* employ to accomplish their goal.

ELW	NRSV/ESV
1 Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.	O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
2 Let us come before **God's** presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the **Lord** with psalms.	Let us come into *his* presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to *him* with songs of praise!
3 For **you**, Lord, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.	For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.
4 In **your** hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also **yours**	In *his* hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are *his* also . . . .

7a	For the **Lord** is our **God**, and we are the people of **God's** pasture and the sheep of **God's** hand.	For *he* is our God, and we are the people of *his* pasture, and the sheep of *his* hand.

In vv. 2 and 7 the masculine pronouns are replaced with the words "Lord" and "God." Note how obnoxious the repetition of "God" becomes in v. 7. The assessment we heard earlier is correct: no one talks this way! Beginning in v. 3, the technique that was applied earlier to the canticles is used here with the substitution of the word "you," thus allowing the editors to eliminate the masculine pronouns through v. 5. While the masculine pronouns have been tidily expunged, the very nature of the psalm has been changed. Dan Biles explains this use of direct address to God in this way, "That is not what the Psalm is about. Nor is it what we are about at the beginning of morning prayer: we invite all who will respond to join in the praise of God. We praise God before those whom we invite to join in worship with us."[20]

This particular technique, the adjustment from third to second-person address, is employed throughout the Psalter and was touted by those who led the development of *ELW* as one of their prouder achievements for dealing with the inclusive language issue. In one sense, this approach is difficult to criticize. There are a number of psalms where even in the Hebrew text there exists a shifting back and forth between second- and third-person address.[21] Consider the example from Psalm 23.

	ELW	NRSV
1	The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.	The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2	The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.	*He* makes me lie down in green pastures; *he* leads me beside still waters;
3	You restore my soul, O Lord, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.	*he* restores my soul. *He* leads me in right paths for *his* name's sake.
4	Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for **you** are	Even though I walk through the darkest valley I fear no evil; for **you** are with me; **your** rod and

[20] Biles, "ELW and the Abuse of Language," 41.

[21] Examples, in addition to the example of Psalm 23 that follows, include 18:24–25; 97:8–9; 99:2–3; 102:15–16; 104:5–6, 14–16; 116:7–8, 15–16.

	with me; **your** rod and **your** staff, they comfort me.	**your** staff—they comfort me.
5	**You** prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; **you** anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.	**You** prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; **you** anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
6	Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.	Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

In the Hebrew, the shift from third to second person occurs at v. 4 and then back to third person in v. 6. In the *ELW* version, the shift to second person occurs one verse earlier in order to avoid the masculine pronouns in v. 3.

It is difficult to know what to make of all this. While I would never support the rewriting of Scripture as the editors of *ELW* have done, I do understand how they have justified their actions. I offer two brief thoughts. First, since the movement between second- and third-person address occurs in some of the psalms, this is an area that merits further study. A careful examination of every place in the psalms where this shift in persons exists in the original text might yield some insights as to why the biblical writers did what they did. Second, in the end the *ELW* editors are perhaps too clever by half. Whereas in English (and most other modern languages) masculine and feminine are distinguished grammatically only in the third person, in Hebrew the second person also distinguishes between the masculine and feminine. Thus, with every occurrence in the psalms where God is addressed as "you," the form is in the masculine. The irony is that were the revised psalms in *ELW* translated back into Hebrew, the translators would have to make a choice whether to use the masculine or feminine form.

There are other translations in the *ELW* Psalter than merit greater consideration. Take the opening verses of Psalm 1:

	ELW	NRSV	ESV
1	Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful.	Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;	Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

2	Their delight is in the law of the Lord, and they mediate on God's teaching day and night.	but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.	but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Looking past the unfortunate use of the word "happy," note the very significant switch from "man" to "they." Patrick Henry Reardon, a noted theologian in the Orthodox church, argues that the whole Psalter must be read christologically, that the psalms are, in fact, Christology in prayer form.[22] So argued Luther and the fathers of the church through the centuries.[23] The translators of the example given above (and note that here the *ELW* editors rely heavily on the New Revised Standard Version) are simply being dishonest. The word "man" in v. 1 is not the Hebrew word אָדָם, which encompasses the whole of humanity, but the gender-specific אִישׁ. The same tomfoolery occurs in the revisions to Psalm 8:

	ELW	NRSV	ESV
4	What are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them?	What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?	What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
5	Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor you crown them.	Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.	Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.
6	You have made them rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,	You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,	You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

[22] Patrick Henry Reardon, "Christology and the Psalter," *Touchstone* 7 (Spring 1994): 7. See also his devotional book, *Christ in the Psalms* (Ben Lomond, CA: Conciliar Press, 2000), where he carries out his thesis in his devotions on all of the psalms.

[23] Martin Luther, *First Lectures on the Psalms*, Luther's Works, vol. 10: *First Lectures on the Psalms* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 11.

Does the translation render the text less exclusive? Perhaps. But a new theology, I fear, is at work. Reardon summarizes the concerns presented by such retranslations:

> [O]ne observes that the choice of words has been determined by considerations of "political correctness," with no reference to a Christ-centered reading of the text.
>
> Quite simply, the psalm in question is not being presented in a Christian way, because Christ has been eliminated in the interests of an alien ideological agenda.[24]

So it is with other manipulations of the language of the psalms. For example, when masculine pronouns are repeatedly replaced with words like "Lord" or "God," one almost gets the impression that different gods are being spoken of. Note this example from Psalm 97:

ELW	NRSV/ESV
12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks to God's holy name.	Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

Or again, this example from Psalm 1:

ELW	NRSV
2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, and they mediate on God's teaching day and night.	but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.

While more examples could be adduced, the point is clear: a nip and tuck approach to cutting away supposedly offensive masculine pronouns is not the cosmetic surgery that proponents of this approach would have us believe.

There is, however, an additional consideration to which the call for inclusive language often leads, namely, the use of feminine imagery for God. For example, the National Council of Churches' *Inclusive Language Lectionary* provided this version of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane: "My father *[and Mother]*, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." Such language is so blatantly out of bounds that we have for the most part simply dismissed it out of hand and given it no further thought. While

[24] Reardon, "Christology and the Psalter," 10.

such a hands-off approach may have sufficed in the past, it is increasingly the case that more needs to be said. Consider very briefly the following.

First, no one who advocates the biblical, churchly language when referring to God believes that God is a male. Such an argument is a red herring. The fact of the matter is that when both masculine imagery and feminine imagery are used for God—either together or interchangeably—then the notion of sexuality is imported into the biblical witness where it did not exist in the first place. It will not do to argue that the cultural limitations of the ancient world were the reason why only masculine language for God is used in the Scriptures. The Israelites' neighbors had goddesses; so did the pagan religions of the New Testament world.[25] Even though there are places in the Bible where motherly characteristics are attributed to God, could it perhaps be, as Louis Roy suggests, "that the Holy Spirit, who inspired [the sacred writings], had his reasons, which the human reason cannot *fully* fathom."[26]

Leonard Klein attempts to fathom, at least in part, what patriarchal language for God might tell us about him. Klein writes:

> He is Father. That is, he is like a Hebrew patriarch, a Middle-eastern Shepherd-King, or a Greco-Roman paterfamilias. He provides, protects, and oversees, and therein powerfully he loves and cherishes. He is also those other things patriarchal that all our sinful flesh would like to repudiate. He is Lawgiver, Judge, and Chastiser. There is, we are here reminded, an opus alienum of God, a remote, mysterious otherness. He is ultimately our Executioner, who extracts from us the penalty of our sin. He is also the Victor over death, and so we proclaim at the Easter Vigil, "Yahweh is a Warrior; Yahweh is his name."[27]

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[25] William Weinrich, "'It Is Not Given to Women to Teach': A *Lex* in Search of a *Ratio*," in *Women Pastors?: The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison and John T. Pless, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), 462. See also the following from a 1996 report of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations: "Despite the fact that biblical language is thoroughly gender specific and that God is personally referred to through masculine names, titles, and pronouns (see below), the Bible contains explicit affirmation that God transcends all biological and gender categories. Sexual nature was characteristic of the pagan gods and goddesses in the environment of ancient Israel. But Israel steadfastly and uncompromisingly rejected any such understanding of God." *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1996), 8.

[26] Louis Roy, "Inclusive Language Regarding God, *Worship* 65, no. 3 (1991): 213; emphasis original.

[27] Leonard Klein, "That God Is to Be Spoken of as 'He,'" 24.

To reject this language, Klein suggests, is ultimately a denial of the Law. The use of feminine, motherly imagery for God plays into the attempt to overcome the otherness of God, which is nothing other than the "domestication of the deity." Klein continues: "The *skandalan* is not maleness. It is the otherness of God, and it is that upon which Christianity must absolutely insist. The God of the Bible is not to be co-opted by anyone who insists that the snake was right, that we are wise in our own right, and that the ways of God must be justified to us."[28] Paul Raabe points out how feminine language for God alters our relationship to God in a fundamental way: "The desire to change God-language into feminine language is based on a longing to become a peer with God, to relate to God as a 'mate,' as the Aussies would say . . . . The entire assumption here is false. We do not relate to God as fellow partners, as like-to-like."[29] Carl Braaten is even more devastating in his critique when he writes: "Any change in God's name points to a different religion. A different name means a different God and a different gospel. That is what the controversy is all about."[30]

Likewise, William Weinrich corroborates this critique of a feminized deity by pointing out that

> the idea of a divine Mother . . . is associated with the idea of a divine earth. The distinction between God and the creation is compromised and the notion of God's transcendence is lost. But with the loss of the distinction between God and the world there is the corresponding loss of the ideas of divine grace (God wills to love) and of hope (in divine purpose and in the possibility of newness).[31]

Pressing further, Weinrich explores the significance that God reveals himself as Father by using the example of the call of Abraham. He writes,

> [W]hat is important to note is that God's fatherhood is indicated by His free and gratuitous election of Abraham and, in him, of Israel. God related to Abraham as a distinct Other who, while free and possessing transcendent autonomy ("God Almighty"), *chooses* to focus and to direct His love to a particular people and on behalf of a particular people. By making covenant with Abraham, God in effect *adopts* Abraham and his descendants and makes them His own. And this God does without any corresponding divine motherhood . . . . It is

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[28] Leonard Klein, "That God Is to Be Spoken of as 'He,'" 27.

[29] Paul R. Raabe, "On Feminized God-Language," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 74 (2010): 130.

[30] Lowell G. Almen and Carl E. Braaten, "Inclusive Language and Speaking of God," *Word & World* 11, no. 1 (1991): 61.

[31] William Weinrich, "'It Is Not Given to Women to Teach,'" 487.

> this prevenient, free, and willing making of a people that we term grace (see Dt 7:6–8). Precisely as the God of grace is God "Father."[32]

Weinrich then goes on to demonstrate how this understanding of God as Father is carried through in the New Testament.

Christopher Seitz also supports this view that in the New Testament Jesus speaks of God as Father not "to assert the maleness of God, but to assert the closest personal relationship between himself and the transcendent God of Israel." He continues,

> "Mother" is further unfit . . . as a term of address because Jesus' mother is Mary, a woman. But Jesus' father is not a man, on crude analogy with Mary the woman, but the wholly other God of Israel who, nevertheless, is spoken to on the most intimate terms possible. By speaking of God as father, Jesus points the way toward a particularly intimate and personal relationship with God, one that he himself knows, and then offers to us and the world at large. This is not an act of sexual oppression, but an act of sheer grace and mercy.[33]

Those who might not want to go quite as far as using feminine names for God have tried other approaches. In *ELW* the following formula is provided as an alternate to the trinitarian formula: "Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever."[34] Another approach, sometimes seen in our own circles, is to substitute the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with titles like Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. The titles, however, are too limiting. Using the title of "Creator" for the Father is inadequate, given that the scriptures also speak of the participation of the Son and Spirit in the work of creation. To use such titles as the names for the persons limits language about God to the relationship between God and us, the economic Trinity. What is lost is any language for discussing the immanent Trinity, that is, the relationship of the persons within the Godhead.[35] In a similar fashion, the masculine pro-

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[32] William Weinrich, "'It Is Not Given to Women to Teach,'" 487.

[33] Christopher R. Seitz, "Reader Competence and the Offense of Biblical Language: The Limitations of So-Called Inclusive Language," *Pro Ecclesia* 2, no. 2 (1993): 145.

[34] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 94.

[35] Louis Roy, "Inclusive Language Regarding God," 210–211. Here Roy is referencing the work of Daniel Helminiak, "Doing Right by Women and the Trinity Too," *America* (11 February 1989): 110, 119. See also *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, 14–16, especially the following: "In God fatherhood is not extrinsic to the being of God. In him "Father" is not a title; it designates and specifies God's personal/hypostatic reality as Father who eternally begets his Son. Similarly, in God sonship is not extrinsic to his being. In him "Son" is not a title; it designates and specifies his personal/hypostatic reality as Son who is eternally begotten of the Father" (16).

nouns are essential to any discussion of the Trinity. Dan Biles offers this incisive observation, "One simply cannot do Trinitarian theology without the use of pronouns, which establish relationships between the persons of the Trinity."[36]

To excise the pronouns is, ultimately, to depersonalize God. And that is where liturgical readjustments have, one might say, served as an off-ramp to apostasy. What may have begun as good intentions by some has led the church quite astray. In this age of depersonalization, the last thing the church needs to do is eviscerate the personal relationship that God desires with his children. Katherine Sonderegger helpfully sums up this truth when she writes:

> Christians call God Father, I believe, not because we and all our ancestors grew up in a patriarchal culture, nor because the Roman father was the model and local authority of the Empire, but because Jesus of Nazareth called upon the God of Israel by that name. Indeed, I believe that only a revealer could disclose a new name for the Almighty Lord—not disciples, mystics, or scholars. Christianity is marked off from Judaism by its willingness to call God by a new name—Father, Son, Spirit—considered by Jews apostate on just these grounds. Only the reality of the incarnation itself could justify such a shocking and revolutionary renaming of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Should I be persuaded that names are in fact abbreviated descriptions, I would argue that Father means just this: the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus calls upon the Father; the Father bestows upon Jesus, at the baptism and the transfiguration, the name *Son.* It is an act of Christian boldness . . . to call God Father, because by that name we refer immediately and without fear to the very God that the Son knew. In that spiritual calling upon the Father's name, we stand where Christ stood: as adopted heirs, as the beloved.[37]

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[36] Biles, "ELW and the Abuse of Language," 42. See also Raabe, "On Feminized God-Language," 126–127, and Donald D. Hook and Alvin F. Kimel Jr., "The Pronouns of Deity: A Theolinguistic Critique of Feminist Proposals," in *This Is My Name Forever: The Trinity and Gender Language for God*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jr. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 62–87.

[37] Katherine Sonderegger, "On the Holy Name of God," *Theology Today* 58, no. 1 (2001): 397–398.

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Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Gospel of John

Charles A. Gieschen

Discussions among Lutherans about the sacraments within the Gospel of John are too often confined to the Nicodemus discourse in John 3 and the Bread of Life discourse in John 6. The former is given a place of honor as a proof text for Baptism, while the latter is confidently judged by some not to contain "even one syllable" that testifies to the Lord's Supper, to borrow the pronouncement of Martin Luther.[1] Evangelical commentaries are of little help in their interpretation of John's testimony to the sacraments because of the prevalent understanding that the Spirit works apart from the sacraments; as a result, testimony to the sacraments in John tends to be completely dismissed.[2] Historical critical commentaries are often of little more help because of the tendency either to disregard the theology of the sacraments in John or to regard it as originating much later in the history of the so-called "Johannine community" and certainly not with the historical Jesus. For example, the renowned source critic Rudolf Bultmann acknowledged three testimonies to Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Gospel but attributed all three to a later ecclesiastic redactor and even pronounced the Gospel of John to be "anti-sacramental."[3] Roman Catholic commentaries generally give more attention to Baptism and the Lord's Supper because such interpreters are reading John within the context of a sacramental church.[4] This is especially true of some of the

[1] For example, see Craig R. Koester, "John Six and the Lord's Supper," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4 (1990): 419–437. He supports the prominence of Baptism in John, but not the Lord's Supper; see 431–433. For his helpful history of interpretation of John 6, see 420–426.

[2] For example, see Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

[3] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 138–140, 300, 324–328, 677–678. The sacramental verses that he attributed to a later redactor are John 3:5; 6:51c–58; and 19:34.

[4] For example, see Raymond Brown's two-volume commentary, *The Gospel According to John I–XII,* Anchor Bible 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), and *The Gospel According to John XIII–XXI,* Anchor Bible 29A (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

Charles A. Gieschen is Academic Dean and Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

early church fathers.[5] If one is willing to look closely at some of the water that runs through this Gospel, more testimony to Baptism will be found beyond John 3. Furthermore, if one is willing to listen to Jesus and the evangelist in John 6 before using Luther's polemical pronouncement to stop up one's ears, one will hear testimony to the Lord's Supper there and elsewhere in this Gospel.[6]

The scope of this study is broad. It will demonstrate that there is significant testimony to Baptism and the Lord's Supper in John's Gospel because both sacraments are inherently joined to Jesus and the Spirit who testifies of Jesus. The language in this Gospel about abiding in Jesus and he in us, about drinking the living water he offers, or eating his flesh and blood, is inherently about participation in Jesus as he offers himself in the life of the church after the resurrection: through his proclaimed word and his sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

It may be helpful to begin by explaining the approach to the Gospel of John that will characterize this study. As with the other three Gospels, it is important to read the discourses in John not only with awareness to what Jesus was communicating to his original audience, but especially with sensitivity to what the evangelist John was communicating to the church for whom he is writing. Interpreters have noted that the evangelist gives the reader important hermeneutical guidance for understanding his Gospel, including its sacramental teaching, after the account of the cleansing of the temple in chapter two, where he states: "When, therefore, [Jesus] was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken" (John 2:22).[7] Even as the original hearers of Jesus did not understand some of his teaching about his death and resurrection until

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[5] See evidence in Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *John 1–10,* Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament IVA (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), and Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *John 11–21,* Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament IVB (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

[6] There are two major articles by fellow exegetes in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the past few decades that argue for a relationship between interpretation of John 6 and the Lord's Supper; see James W. Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6: Is It Eucharistic?" *Concordia Journal* 15 (1989): 29–37, and David P. Scaer, "Once More to John 6," *Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord: Essays in Honor of Glen Zweck on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday,* ed. Bart Day (Houston: The Zweck Festschrift Committee, 2000), 217–233, reprinted in this issue.

[7] To name two Lutheran interpreters who emphasize this hermeneutical point in their exegesis of John 6, see Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6," 35, and Scaer, "Once More to John 6," in *Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord*, 232; *CTQ* 78 (2014): 62.

after the resurrection (e.g., "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" in John 2:19), so also they did not understand some of his teaching about the sacraments until after the resurrection and ascension when the sacraments began to play a very significant role in mediating the presence and forgiveness of Jesus.

If one understands Jesus' discourses in this Gospel as sermons that John delivered to the post-Easter church that was baptizing people and celebrating the Lord's Supper weekly, then it is easier to understand how these discourses communicate about the sacraments. Xavier Léon-Dufour offers this guidance to the interpreter: "It is quite obvious that John was familiar with the early Church's sacramental practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper; it is therefore possible that this or that episode or statement of Jesus was deliberately chosen in order to call these sacraments to mind."[8] Oscar Cullmann, who wrote what remains the most significant book on the sacraments in the Gospel of John, goes further by stating that the historical events in John contain references to "*further facts of salvation with which these once-for-all key events are bound up*."[9] These "further facts" concern how Jesus would continue to be present and offer himself—his life-giving death—through the Spirit in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

What is present in John, therefore, are not texts that record the institution of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, but the words and works of Jesus that are to be understood in fuller ways after his resurrection when the church is gathered in worship. Raymond Brown makes this important observation:

> What a comparison with the Synoptics does show is that, while John may treat Baptism and the Eucharist, this Gospel does not associate these sacraments with a single, all-important saying of Jesus uttered at the end of his life as part of his departing instructions to his disciples. The Johannine references to these two sacraments, both the more explicit references and those that are symbolic, are scattered in scenes throughout the ministry. This seems to fit in with the Gospel's intention to show how the institutions of the Christian life are rooted in what Jesus said and did in his life.[10]

So how does one discern these references to the sacraments in John, especially when one may previously have been taught to ignore this

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[8] Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread: The Witness of the New Testament*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 272.

[9] Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, trans. A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 56; emphasis original.

[10] Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, CXIV.

testimony? Francis Moloney outlines four criteria for discerning teaching about the sacraments in John, three of which will be summarized here. First, one should look for language in the text that reflects some form of the sacramental elements or rituals. Second, one should be aware of the use of a particular text in the sacramental practice, literature, and art of the early church. Third, one should look for evidence in the text that speaks of the ongoing presence of Jesus through the Spirit that can be located and seen.[11] With these criteria in mind, evidence testifying to Baptism will be examined first and then evidence testifying to the Lord's Supper. After these major discussions, this study will address briefly John's testimony concerning where Baptism and the Lord's Supper have their origin—namely, in the death of Jesus who gave over the life-giving Spirit to his church as water and blood flowed from his pierced side (John 19:30, 34).

I. Baptism

The Baptism of Jesus and Baptizing with the Spirit

Jesus is first seen in the Gospel of John not as a baby in a manager or a man in the Jordan River, but after his baptism when John the Baptist identifies him as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). With this announcement, the evangelist joins Jesus' baptism to the removal of the world's sin that is "finished" with the atoning sacrifice of this Lamb of God in the death of Jesus.[12] Long before water flows from the Lamb's side, his death for sin is foreshadowed as the source of life by means of the Baptist's announcement of the Lamb, repeated a second time for emphasis (John 1:29, 36). The account of Jesus' baptism is then relayed to the hearer through John the Baptist's testimony.

> John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and it abided on him [ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν]. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and abiding [μένον], this one is he who

[11] Francis J. Moloney, "When Is John Talking about Sacraments?" *Australian Biblical Review* 30 (1982): 10–33. His other criterion is the polemical tone of the text (i.e., it is written not only as a record of an historical event in the life of Jesus, but to respond to a situation in the life of the Johannine church).

[12] See Charles A. Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John: Atonement for Sin?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 72 (2008): 243–261, esp. 254–256; see also Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 63–66. For a discussion of this Gospel's presentation of sin as a reality that enslaves the world, see Charles A. Gieschen, "Original Sin the in New Testament," *Concordia Journal* 31 (2005): 359–375, esp. 363–364.

> baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and borne witness that this one is the Son of God" (John 1:32–34).[13]

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, this Gospel does not contain a narrative account of Jesus' baptism, where the heavens open over Jesus as he stands in the Jordan, the Spirit is seen descending as a dove, and the voice of the Father is heard. Each of the Synoptic accounts is unique, but none of them is explicit about who witnessed the baptism of Jesus. The Gospel of John, however, emphatically states that John had been told by special revelation about what he would see and that he did indeed witness the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus with his own eyes. John the Baptist does not mention the voice of the Father; he himself testifies that Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:34). There is much emphasis on the Spirit in John's account. Like the Synoptic accounts, this Gospel contrasts the Baptist baptizing with water and Jesus baptizing "with the Holy Spirit" who descended upon him (John 1:33). John only, however, states that the Spirit *abides* on Jesus (John 1:32).[14] The Greek verb μένω ("I abide or remain") is important here and throughout John's Gospel.[15] Here it indicates that Jesus is the location and source of the Spirit (cf. John 7:39; 15:26; 16:7; 19:30). Where he is present, so is the Spirit.

This account of Jesus' baptism prepares the way for the joining of water with the Spirit in the rest of the Gospel. This joining is seen already in the Nicodemus narrative (John 3:1–21) but also in the narrative that follows about the question put to John the Baptist by his own disciples (John 3:22–30). These disciples were concerned that everyone was going to Jesus and being baptized by his disciples (cf. John 4:1–3). It is noteworthy that John is the only Gospel that emphasizes that the disciples of Jesus engaged in baptizing long before the command to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19) and their baptizing of 3,000 souls on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). John the Baptist recognized the ebbing of his baptisms and the flourishing of those administered by Jesus' disciples. He calms the fears of his own disciples with the words: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Why? Baptisms that are associated with Jesus are not only water, but "water *and the Spirit*" (John 3:5; cf. 1:33). In what immediately follows, the evangelist draws this parallel between the baptism of Jesus and the baptisms being done by his disciples: "He [Jesus] gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34; cf. 1 John 4:13). Before one

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[13] This and all subsequent translations are the author's.

[14] As noted in Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 65.

[15] For this prominent theme, see John 1:38–39; 4:40; 5:38; 6:27; 8:31, 35; 12:46; 14:10, 17, 25; and 15:4–7, 9–10, 16.

hears the Nicodemus narrative, one has already learned from this Gospel that Christian baptisms have their source in Jesus who gives the Spirit without measure, the Spirit who abides with the baptized, even as he abides with Jesus.

Baptism as the Begetting from Above

Those familiar with the Gospel of John know that the Nicodemus narrative (John 3:1–21) is among the most important scriptural testimonies to both the need for "spiritual begetting" due to man's sinful condition of death ("that which is flesh is flesh") and "water and Spirit" baptism as the means through which God accomplishes this "begetting from above."[16] The evangelist John communicates this while never using the words "baptize" or "baptism." Because Anabaptist churches, which are so prevalent in the United States, abuse this text as supporting their mandate to be "born again" apart from and even before baptism with water, careful attention must be given to this testimony.

In contrast to the pleasantries of Nicodemus, Jesus is direct and blunt. The two present general conditional sentences early in the narrative parallel one another in structure and meaning:

ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν,
οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

"Unless one is begotten from above,
one is not able to see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος,
οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

"Unless one is begotten of water and the Spirit,
one is not able to enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

There are two translation issues here. First, although γεννάω can be translated "born," this Greek verb signifies the broader *parental* action of conceiving, carrying, birthing, and not the *infant's* action of coming out of the womb in birth.[17] This broader meaning of the verb, as well as its passive voice, is better expressed in English with the term "begotten."[18] As

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[16] The translation "begetting," rather than "born," is intentional and will be explained below.

[17] *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition, ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 193; hereafter cited as BDAG.

[18] Related to this is John's use of μονογενής as a term to describe the divine mystery

children are not responsible for their own conception, nurturing in the womb, and birth, so also the Christian is not responsible for the miracle of life given in Baptism; it is the result of a *divine* begetting from start to finish. Second, although ἄνωθεν can mean either "above" and "again," it is clear from the wider context, where John describes Jesus as the one who is "from above" (John 3:31), that this is the preferred translation here.[19] The "begetting from above" that is necessary *to see* the kingdom of God is the "begetting of water and the Spirit" that is necessary *to enter* the kingdom of God. The language of "above" emphasizes that this begetting is from the divine realm, from God himself (i.e., from the Spirit who descended and remained upon Jesus); it is not from man, his efforts, or this earthly realm. Divine monergism could not be proclaimed more clearly.

This miraculous spiritual begetting from above in Baptism is probably the basis for John's references to Christians as "children," as John 1:13 affirms: "Whoever received him, he gave to them authority to become children of God, to the ones who believe in his name, who are begotten neither of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but begotten of God [ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν]." This understanding of God as the Father who has spiritually begotten us is also found in John's first epistle: "Everyone begotten of God [πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ] does not make a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been begotten of God [ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται] (1 John 3:9). God as Father begetting children through Baptism is probably part of the background for the frequent use of the title "children" when John addresses his fellow Christians as their spiritual father (1 John 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3:1–2, 7, 9; cf. John 14:33).

The Nicodemus narrative, like the baptism of Jesus, links the begetting with water and the Spirit closely with the source of the life it offers, namely, the death of Jesus: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him has eternal life" (John 3:14).[20] Nicodemus did not understand his own sinful condition ("earthly things"), so he did not understand how water and the Spirit would join him to the death of Jesus ("heavenly things").

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of the relationship between the Father and the Son from eternity (John 1:14, 18; 3:16); contrary to BDAG, 658, this term is best rendered "only-begotten" rather than "unique, one of a kind."

[19] Contrary to BDAG, 92, which renders ἄνωθεν in John 3:31 as "from above," but as "again, anew" in John 3:3.

[20] For "lifted up" as a reference to the death of Jesus, see Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John," 250–252.

With the resurrection, however, this teaching came into focus (cf. John 2:22).

Baptism as Marriage to the Bridegroom

One of the most prominent descriptions of the church as the bride of Christ is Paul's exposition in Ephesians about Christ who has cleansed his bride in Baptism:

> Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order that he sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of water with the word [καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι], in order that he present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:25b–27).

The presentation of Baptism as marriage in John, however, is oftentimes overlooked, in spite of its prominence in John 2–4 where there is already much mention given to water and Baptism.[21] It is John the Baptist who explicitly identifies Jesus as the bridegroom who has the bride coming to him for cleansing in Baptism: "The one who has the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3:29). Before and after this announcement, however, are two accounts that present Jesus as the bridegroom who brings purification to his bride.

The first of these accounts is the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11). Jesus chooses to show himself as the bridegroom to his bride Israel in the context of a wedding celebration.[22] With the abundant wine here, some might assume that if this text is sacramental, it must be eucharistic.[23] What is striking, however, is that the text explicitly mentions "six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding two to three measures" or a total of 120–150 gallons of water after they were filled (John 2:6). These repeated washings were very important for Jews, as emphasized again later in this Gospel through the discussion of the Baptist's disciples with a Jew "concerning purifying" (περὶ καθαρισμοῦ; John 3:25). Because Jesus, who takes away the sin of his bride, is present, there is no

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[21] Exceptions are Peter J. Scaer, "Jesus and the Woman at the Well: Where Mission Meets Worship," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 67 (2003): 3–18, and John Bligh, "Jesus in Samaria," *Heythrop Journal* 3 (1962): 329–346.

[22] Contrary to Ridderbos, who surprisingly asserts "there is not a single hint in *this* wedding story that Jesus is acting as host or bridegroom," *The Gospel of John*, 109; emphasis original.

[23] Examples of modern interpreters who support a eucharistic interpretation include Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 66–71, and Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread,* 272–273.

longer need for the repeated ritual washings.[24] But if the water is used for wine at the wedding celebration, then where is baptism here? The implicit message is that purification from sin now comes to the bride through the bridegroom in the one-time washing with water and the Spirit, not through the repeated washings of Jewish purification rites. Cleansing or purification from sin through Jesus is also stressed in 1 John (1:7, 9 and 3:3). Such purification is found in Baptism, which is featured prominently in John 1–4.

The second of these marriage accounts is the narrative of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well (John 4:4–42). One can see Jesus as the bridegroom here because the setting at a well is the scene of some famous bride selections in the early history of Israel, especially Jacob's meeting of Rachel by a well (Gen 29:9–12; cf. the selection of Rebekah by a well in Gen 24:10–66). Here we see Jesus as the bridegroom who in love courts an adulterous and idolatrous woman.[25] The bridegroom picques the woman's interest with this contrary-to-fact conditional sentence: "If you knew the gift of God and who is the one saying to you 'Give me to drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water [ὕδωρ ζῶν]" (John 4:10).

Here Jesus uses the imagery of drinking living water as a metaphor for receiving the Spirit and believing in him. The early church did not have a problem applying the image of drinking water to baptism: the woman at the well is frequently used in artistic depictions of Baptism.[26] Peter Scaer offers this explanation:

> Indeed, the imagery of drinking in the life-giving Spirit at baptism is natural, for it teaches an essential baptismal truth; namely, that not only do the waters of baptism wash away sins and offer second life, but through them, the Spirit enters the Christian and makes His home therein. By teaching about baptism in this way, John may be combating a tendency toward seeing baptism as simply an outward, symbolic ritual.[27]

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[24] The one-time washing of Baptism was understood to be the fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:25–27a ("I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness . . . . And I will put my Spirit within you").

[25] See Scaer, "Jesus and the Woman at the Well," 3–18.

[26] See evidence in Robin Jensen, *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism,* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, vol. 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[27] Scaer, "Jesus and the Woman at the Well," 14.

What is this "living water" that Jesus offers?[28] There is a clear prophetic hope in Zechariah, grounded in the visionary prophecy expressed in Ezekiel 47:1–12, that one day "living water" would flow from the temple: "On that day living water [LXX: ὕδωρ ζῶν] shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter. And the LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one and his name one" (Zech 14:8–9).[29] The purpose of this water is giving life through purification from sin: "On that day there shall be a fountain opened . . . to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness" (Zech 13:1).

The explicit identification of the "living water" with the Spirit, which sounds like the discussion of Baptism in the Nicodemus narrative, does not occur in the Samaritan woman narrative. It comes later in the Gospel of John in the context of the water libation ceremony at the conclusion of the feast of Tabernacles:

> Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me, and the one who believes in me, let him drink.[30] As the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly will flow rivers of living water'" [ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος].[31] This he said about the Spirit

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[28] It is helpful to note that there is both Samaritan and Jewish evidence that identifies Torah as "living water" (e.g. *Memar Marqah* II.1, VI.3; Sirach 24:30–31; and *2 Baruch* 23:30–31). Jesus' teaching, therefore, identifying the "living water" as the Spirit whom he gives, appears to have a polemical edge against some Jewish and Samaritan interpretation.

[29] See Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 279–280.

[30] This translation does not follow the typical punctuation of these sentences, which understands the first part of John 7:38 as introducing a new sentence, rather than functioning as part of the prior sentence in v. 37. By following the typical punctuation, which I deem erroneous, one is led to understand that the Old Testament quotation concerns the one who believes in Jesus rather than Jesus himself. Jesus is speaking here of himself as the source of the living water, which is the Spirit. This is confirmed in the passion narrative when water and blood flow from Jesus' pierced side (John 19:34). For a discussion of this Christological interpretation, which has a strong history, see Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII,* 320–321.

[31] Although it has proven difficult to identify the exact source of the citation in John 7:38, the language reflects the prophetic hope expressed in Ezekiel 47:1–11 and Zechariah 14:8 about life-giving water flowing from the temple as it once miraculously flowed from the rock during the exodus (Exod 17:6; Ps 75:15–16; cf. Jesus as the new temple in John 2:19). See the discussion in Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII,* 321–323. For a very intriguing proposal that the citation here is an adaptation of Isaiah 12:3 ("With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"), see Joel Marcus, "Rivers of Living Water from Jesus' Belly (John 7:38)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117

> whom the ones believing in him were to receive, for the Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37–39).

Jesus had already identified his body as the temple (John 2:19). The "living water" is the Spirit whom Jesus gives over to the church at his death (John 19:30) when water and blood flow from him (John 19:34), through which the Spirit works to bring the life won in Jesus' death to the world. The miraculous catch of 153 fish in John 21:11 confirms that the living water is flowing out from Jerusalem, bringing life as Ezekiel prophesied.[32]

Anyone who argues that Jesus' offer of living water to the Samaritan woman is about faith in Jesus but not Baptism is drawing a false dichotomy. This text is about receiving Jesus and his saving work through his gift of the Spirit. For the woman at the well, Jesus was standing before her eyes as the source of the Spirit. For John's church, however, Jesus offered himself in the living water that is none other than the "water and Spirit" of Baptism. In both cases, no matter what the assorted religious or marital history has been, they receive the Spirit and become the purified bride of Christ who confesses: "This is indeed the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).

Baptism as the Giving of Spiritual Sight

Another of the signs of Jesus through which John teaches the church about Baptism is the healing of the blind man in John 9.[33] This account is about much more than physical sight, which Jesus alludes to immediately before the miracle by declaring "As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World" (John 9:5). The Gospel of John then gives this account:

> He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed [ἐπέχρισεν] the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go wash [νίψαι] in the Pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed [ἐνίψατο] and came back seeing (John 9:6–7).

Notice that Jesus spits on the ground, makes mud and *anoints* the blind man's eyes, and then instructs him to *wash* his eyes in the Pool of Siloam.

(1998): 328–330; see also David P. Scaer, *Baptism,* Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, vol. 11 (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 1999), 116–118. Marcus notes that the chanting of Isaiah 12:3 was featured in the water libation ceremony during the Feast of Tabernacles.

[32] Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 271–284.

[33] The seven "signs" are typically enumerated as follows: 1) changing water to wine at Cana (2:1–12), 2) healing of the official's son (4:43–54), 3) healing at Bethesda (5:1–47), 4) feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–15), 5) walking on water (6:16–24), 6) healing of the blind man (9:1–41), and 7) the raising of Lazarus (11:1–54).

The language of anointing is used in connection with Baptism by John in his first epistle: "But you have the anointing [χρῖσμα] by the Holy One . . . . the anointing [τὸ χρῖσμα] you received from him abides in you [μένει ἐν ὑμῖν], and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing [τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα] teaches you about everything . . . abide in him [μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ]" (1 John 2:20, 27).[34] More happens in the account of the blind man than the miracle of physical sight; this blind man is also begotten from above "to see the kingdom of God." He progressively gains spiritual sight as this narrative progresses, as seen when he confesses Jesus to be first "the man" (John 9:11), then "a prophet" (9:17), then "a man from God" (9:33), which leads to his expulsion from the synagogue (9:34). After Jesus finds him, the man born blind acknowledges Jesus to be "the Son of Man," confesses him as "Lord," and then worships him (9:38).

John gives us a historical account of both physical and spiritual healing. He knew, however, that Christians who have been washed and anointed with the Holy Spirit in Baptism will see this anointing and washing miracle as also teaching them about the miracle of spiritual sight given in Baptism that leads them to confess and worship Christ, even if this confession results in religious persecution, such as excommunication from their (former) spiritual home.[35]

Baptism as Receiving and Believing in the Divine Name

One of the most underappreciated testimonies to Baptism in John's Gospel and Epistles is the teaching about receiving and believing in the unique name that Jesus possesses, primarily because most modern interpreters do not listen to these texts like a first-century Jewish Christian would.[36] John teaches that the Father and the Son share the same name, which is none other than the unique divine name YHWH (John 5:43; 10:25;

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[34] See Bruce G. Schuchard, *1–3 John*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), 270. The "abiding" language in 1 John 2:27 echoes the baptism of Jesus account where the Spirit "abides upon" Jesus (John 1:32–33); for other examples in the Gospel of John, see note 13 above.

[35] J. Louis Martyn has promoted the argument that John 9 should be understood as primarily reflecting the history of the late first-century experience of the Johannine community being excommunicated from synagogue worship due to their confession of Christ; see *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel,* revised and enlarged (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979). Although John is without doubt using this account to address the challenges being experienced by later Christians, it is important to emphasize that it is a historical account of an event from the life of Jesus.

[36] See especially Charles A. Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003): 115–158, especially 135–141.

14:10–11; 12:28; 17:6, 11, 26; 3 John 7). One example of this is present already in the Prologue: "Whoever received him, he gave to them authority to become children of God, to the ones who *believe in his name*" (John 1:12). The emphasis that this Gospel places on believing in his name (John 1:12, 2:23, and 3:18), asking in his name (e.g., John 14:12–13), and suffering on account of his name (John 15:21), grows out of the understanding that the Divine Name of the Son has been revealed, given, and made known to Christians already in Baptism where it was the powerful word used with water (cf. John 17:6, 26).

John's first epistle also teaches about baptism by mentioning the name or word given in Baptism. 1 John 2:12 states, "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven *through his name*" (i.e., sins forgiven through the name given in Baptism).[37] 1 John 2:14 states, "I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and *the Word of God* remains in you (The "Word of God" here is both the person Jesus and the name given in Baptism). Finally, 1 John 5:13 states, "I write these things to you who believe in *the name of the Son of God* that you know that you have eternal life" (i.e., that you believe Jesus is YHWH because you received that name shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Baptism).

II. The Lord's Supper

The preceding discussion of Baptism in the Gospel of John leads one to conclude that the teaching of Baptism is often subtle, implicit, and scattered widely in the Gospel; it is not direct, explicit, and limited to one major proof text. If this is true with Baptism, one would expect that John would teach about the Lord's Supper in a similar way. And he does. John, who has a lengthy five-chapter farewell narrative, does not include an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. One should not conclude, however, that this Gospel is void of eucharistic teaching. As will be demonstrated, teaching about the Lord's Supper in John is also often subtle, implicit, and scattered widely in the Gospel.

The Feeding of the 5,000

As in the Synoptic Gospels, this miracle became a very important prophetic action in the Gospel of John that foreshadowed the institution of the Lord's Supper as the means by which Christ would miraculously feed his church after the resurrection. When one looks at early Christian art, it is five loaves and two fish that become a major symbolic portrait for the

[37] See Schuchard, *1–3 John*, 202 and 217, and Scaer, *Baptism,* 143–144.

Eucharist.[38] Unlike the Synoptic accounts, John also notes that the miracle took place when "Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand" (John 6:4), one year before the Lord's Supper was instituted at Passover. John's account reads as follows:

> Jesus, therefore, took the loaves [ἔλαβεν οὖν τοὺς ἄρτους ὁ Ἰησοῦς] and, after he had given thanks [καὶ εὐχαριστήσας], he gave it to the ones who were seated [διέδωκεν τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις], so also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten (John 6:11–13).

As with the Synoptic accounts, there is language here that reflects the Verba of the Lord's Supper, especially the verbs λαμβάνω and εὐχαρίστω, as well as the common element, the bread. Hearers of this account who celebrate the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day and know the Verba do not miss the relationship between this meal and theirs. Like the Synoptic accounts, the fragments are treated with respect and gathered into twelve baskets, enough to feed the new Israel. This aspect of the miracle was certainly interpreted as testifying to the Lord's Supper in our earliest example of a eucharistic prayer, namely, the one found in the *Didache*:

> We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever (9:3–4).[39]

A detail unique to John is that Jesus himself gives out both the bread and the fish; he is depicted as Israel's Lord who as Shepherd lays down his sheep on green grass and feeds them, an image that is developed and expanded in his discourse on the Noble Shepherd in John 10.[40]

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[38] Maurice Hassett, "Early Symbols of the Eucharist," *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 5* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05590a.htm (accessed 8 April 2014).

[39] *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings*, 2nd edition, trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 261.

[40] See Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John," 256–258.

It is important to be very clear about what is being asserted here. John gives a historical account of the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish; it was not the Eucharist that Jesus fed to this gathering of 5,000. John, however, like the other Gospel writers, uses this miracle to teach the church much about the Lord's Supper as the miraculous meal that our Shepherd continues to serve his sheep. Attributing authorship to a fisherman does not mean these texts are, therefore, without complexity in their intended sense. To see and believe this miracle of feeding is to be given assurance about the even greater miracle of feeding that takes place in the Lord's Supper.

The Bread of Life Discourse: Partaking of the Passover Lamb of God

One of the challenges that comes with the lengthy Bread of Life discourse (John 6:25–65) is that interpreters, including Lutheran pastors, tend to see only two clear-cut conclusions: either the discourse is understood as speaking of a metaphorical eating/drinking of Jesus or a eucharistic eating/drinking of Jesus. It will be argued in what follows that a faithful interpretation of this discourse does not neatly land in one of these mutually exclusive categories.[41] In spite of these disparate interpretations, the basic purpose of this discourse is neither difficult to discern nor unclear. This discourse is about receiving the flesh and blood of Jesus in faith in the ways that he offers himself. The strong incarnational emphasis of the Prologue, which announced that "the Word became flesh," continues here. Because the articles by Scaer and Voelz address many of the concerns raised by Lutheran interpreters, the focus here will be on a few additional interpretive observations.[42]

As stated in the introduction above, interpreters of this discourse must be aware that they are interpreting not only what the original speaker (i.e., Jesus) was communicating to the original audience (i.e., Jews and disciples of Jesus), but primarily what the author (i.e., John) was communicating to his readers (i.e., post-Easter Christians). Even though the interpreter should focus especially on how John and the hearers of his Gospel would have understood this discourse, what can be said about the original communication? Jesus' words were spoken to encourage those listening to receive him as God in flesh and blood by faith. Even though he spoke these words long before he instituted the Lord's Supper, he certainly knew that

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[41] This is a very helpful aspect of the discussion in Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6."

[42] Scaer, "Once More to John 6," and Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6."

he would institute the sacrament, just as he knew that he would die and rise again. Jesus, therefore, knew that these words would take on additional significance for Christians who ate his body and drank his blood after the institution of the Lord's Supper. The language of eating flesh and drinking blood that is so vivid in this discourse makes it very probable that Jesus was intentionally alluding to the Lord's Supper, knowing his teaching would take on fuller meaning after this supper was instituted and began to be celebrated regularly.

Even though it is helpful to understand what Jesus was communicating when he spoke these words, the primary purpose of the interpreter is to understand what the author John, under the guidance of the Spirit, was communicating to post-Easter Christians through his recording of this discourse in his Gospel. John wrote these words, which speak of receiving the flesh and blood Jesus by faith, a number of years after the Lord's Supper was instituted. John was well aware that a central means for this receiving of Jesus after his ascension is the Lord's Supper. Talk about partaking of the flesh and blood Jesus by faith does not preclude also sacramental eating since faith is vital for sacramental eating to be of benefit. Léon-Dufour stresses this point: "The relation between faith and sacramental participation is asserted *simultaneously* throughout the text."[43] That John intended readers of his Gospel to see a relationship between this discourse and their participation in the Lord's Supper is made even more apparent by observing that he does not teach about the Lord's Supper through an institution account in his passion narrative.

Having in mind the importance of interpreting what John wrote with sensitivity to how it would have been understood by the post-Easter Christians for whom he wrote, it is appropriate to examine briefly the specific elements of this discourse that lend themselves to a eucharistic interpretation. There is a distinct shift in the discourse at John 6:51 from Jesus identifying himself as the bread of life to identifying this bread to be specifically his flesh as the Passover Lamb who will be sacrificed: καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἡ σάρξ μού ἐστιν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς ("and the bread that I will give in behalf of the life of the world is my flesh"). Many Christians who commune regularly hear an echo here of some of the words of institution, such as in Luke 22:19: Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον ("This is my body given in behalf of you"). Note the correspondence between not only "flesh" with "body," but the verbs (δώσω and διδόμενον) and preposition (ὑπὲρ). Once again, what is especially important here is not how Jesus' original hearers understood these words,

[43] Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 261; emphasis original.

but how these words would have been understood by Christians for whom this Gospel was written.

In this context of Passover, Jesus goes on to speak about eating his flesh and also drinking his blood, vividly echoing eucharistic language and actions.[44]

> Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh [φάγητε τὴν σάρκα] of the Son of man and drink his blood [πίητε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα], you have no life in you; the one who is eating my flesh [ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα] and drinking my blood [πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα] has eternal life. For my flesh [σάρξ μου] is true food and my blood [τὸ αἷμά μου] is true drink. The one who is eating my flesh [ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα] and drinking my blood [πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα] abides [μένει] in me and I in you (John 6:53–56).

As stated above, these words are about receiving the flesh and blood Jesus in faith through the means he himself offers. One of the primary means for receiving Jesus at the time John was writing and Christians were reading his Gospel was by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus in faith at the Lord's Supper. Another important link between this text and the Lord's Supper in the Gospel of John is the participle ὁ τρώγων ("the one who is eating"), used here and also in John's farewell narrative when talking about the last meal Jesus had with his disciples before his arrest and death (John 13:18; cf. Matt 24:38). Many have asserted that τρώγω has the specialized meaning of "bite or chew audibly,"[45] but recent research by David Hasselbrook indicates that τρώγω was preferred over ἐσθίω by some Greek writers when the present tense is used and signifies the same the general sense of ἐσθίω ("I eat").[46]

The Bread of Life discourse, therefore, is about receiving the flesh and blood Jesus in faith.[47] It should not be understood as speaking *solely* about the Lord's Supper, but neither should it be interpreted as having *little or nothing* to say about this sacrament. The words of Jesus in John 6 are about

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[44] The "eating" of Jesus is not totally surprising in the Gospel because it is Passover and he has been identified earlier as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). The drinking of his blood, however, is shocking.

[45] E.g., BDAG, 1019.

[46] David S. Hasselbrook, *Studies in New Testament Lexicography*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, series 2, vol. 303 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 130–144. Hasselbrook offers evidence that ἔφαγον served as the aorist form of τρώγω for some first-century writers such as John.

[47] Because of this, John 6:53 cannot be understood as requiring participation in the Lord's Supper for salvation (e.g., infant communion in the Eastern Orthodox Church).

"eating and drinking" the flesh and blood Jesus in faith through the means by which he offers himself to us. In the context of John and his readers, therefore, these words certainly address the receiving of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. This discourse is, in fact, the primary source of teaching about the Lord's Supper in John.

But what about Luther's comments on John 6? Some take his statement that John 6 "does not refer to the sacrament in a single syllable" as representative of the Lutheran position on the relationship between John 6 and the Lord's Supper.[48] Luther made this statement in his argument against Rome's use of John 6 as speaking of the necessity of the Sacrament for salvation in distinction to Luther's emphasis on faith alone; rather than meet the argument, he removed John 6 from discussion.[49] He also avoided the use of John 6 in addressing Zwingli's eucharistic theology, especially prior to the Marburg Colloquy in 1528, since Zwingli argued that John 6 was eucharistic and used John 6:63 ("the flesh is of no avail") against the doctrine of the real presence and sacramental eating.[50] While it is important to agree with Luther that the primary focus for teaching about the Lord's Supper should be on the words of institution found in the Synoptic Gospels and 1 Corinthians, there are solid biblical reasons not to follow Luther in taking John 6 off the eucharistic table.[51]

Martin Chemnitz was more nuanced in understanding the relationship of John 6 to the Lord's Supper. He demonstrates that Lutherans can and should use John 6 in teaching about the Lord's Supper, as he does in the Formula of Concord:

> So there is a twofold eating of the flesh of Christ [in the Lord's Supper]. First, there is a spiritual kind of eating, of which Christ treats above all in John 6 [:35–58]. This occurs in no other way than with the

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[48] "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520), AE 36:19. See also "Lectures on Hebrews," AE 29:10, and "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6–8," AE 23:117–155.

[49] Scaer meets this objection; see "Once More to John 6," 218–220; *CTQ* 78 (2014): 48–50.

[50] Lowell C. Green, "Philosophical Presuppositions in the Lutheran-Reformed Debate on John 6," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 56 (1992): 17-37.

[51] It should be noted that Luther did use John 6 in his sacramental piety, such as in his Easter hymn, *Christ Lag in Todesbanden*; see Kenneth F. Korby, "The Use of John 6 in Lutheran Sacramental Piety," *Shepherd of the Church: Essays in Honor of the Rev. Dr. Roger D. Pittelko*, ed. Frederic W. Baue et al. (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2002), 129–144, esp. 139.

> Spirit and faith in the proclamation of and meditation on the gospel *as well as in the Lord's Supper.*[52]

There is other early evidence that Christians spoke of what is received in the Lord's Supper is the flesh and blood of Christ. The Epistles of John testify that there were some in the Johannine church who had left because they denied the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh.[53] John's Gospel appears to be testifying against a docetic Christology that downplays or denies the flesh and blood incarnation of the Son.[54] It is significant that Ignatius of Antioch, the church father who wrote several letters on the way to his martyrdom in Rome in the early second century, uses the flesh-blood language of John—not the body-blood language of the *verba*—in his descriptions of the Lord's Supper.[55] Where does Ignatius detect the manifestation of the docetic heresy in the church? He sees it at the Lord's table when individuals refuse to eat the flesh and blood of Jesus.

> They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the-having-suffered-on-account-of-our-sins flesh which in goodness the Father raised up again. The ones who are denying, therefore, the good gift of God die while being contentious. It would be to their benefit to love, in order that they also rise up. It is fitting, therefore, that you should avoid such persons and not speak of them either in private or public (Symneans 6:2–7:2).[56]

Could John have confronted a similar problem: Christians denying the Son of God in the flesh by abstaining from the Lord's Supper and then leaving? In light of 1 John, probably so.

The Vine and the Branches as an Exposition of the Last Supper

Although John does not record the institution of the Lord's Supper, there is no doubt that he is well-aware of the significance of this meal. He calls attention to the meal being set during the Feast of the Passover (13:1), twice refers to it as "supper" (13:2, 4), and twice mentions the morsel of bread given to Judas during the meal (13:26, 30).

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[52] FD SD VII 61; emphasis added. Translation from Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds.), *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 604.

[53] See Schuchard, *1–3 John*, 14–17.

[54] Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John,* trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

[55] See especially these four texts from the Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch: Trallians 8:2; Romans 7:3; Philadelphians 4; and Symneans 6:2.

[56] This is my translation from the Greek text in Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 188.

Even though one does not find the eucharistic words in the farewell narrative, one does find a eucharistic homily of sorts. Cullman notes that the discourse on Christ as the Vine is a complement to the earlier discourse on Christ as the Bread. Léon-Dufour astutely observes that it is not far from "the fruit of the vine" in the Synoptic accounts (Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18) to "the vine and the fruit" of John 15:1–11.[57] Note especially these words of Jesus:

> Abide in me [μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί], and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine [ἐὰν μὴ μένῃ ἐν τῇ ἀμπέλῳ], neither can you, unless you abide in me [ἐὰν μὴ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένητε]. I am the vine, you are the branches. The one who abides in me [ὁ μένων ἐν ἐμοὶ], and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4–5)

There are those who say that this discourse, like John 6, is only about abiding in Jesus through faith.[58] Yes, it is about abiding in Jesus through faith. But how does abiding in faith happen? Certainly it happens through hearing Jesus' word, but also through eating and drinking his Supper. Faith in the person of Jesus and participation in his Supper are not two separate realities; participation in his Supper requires faith in Jesus and nurtures this living relationship. As Léon-Dufour states, "His [John's] teaching on the sacrament is given not after but through his teaching on faith, while conversely faith in the person of Jesus is not simply the starting point of eucharistic practice but also inspires it at every moment."[59]

The verbal portrait of the plurality of branches continually "abiding" (μένω) in Jesus as the single life-giving vine also reflects both the communal character of the Lord's Supper and its repeated celebrations. Cullmann articulates a helpful distinction between the sacraments within John: Baptism is the one-time divine begetting for an individual convert, whereas the Lord's Supper is the repeatedly celebrated meal eaten by a community of believers.[60] Baptism is a means by which the Spirit is given and new life in Jesus is begun; the Lord's Supper is a means by which the Spirit comes again and again to nurture the continual abiding in Jesus.

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[57] Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 274.

[58] For example, Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 240–242.

[59] Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 272.

[60] Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 119.

The Meal with the Risen Christ on the Shore

Part of the unique post-resurrection witness of John is his record of the miraculous catch followed by a meal that occurred (John 21:1–14). Cullmann offers this advice about understanding such post-resurrection meals: "If, then, the first appearances of the risen Christ took place during meals, we must take into consideration, much more than is generally done, the fact that *the first eucharistic feasts of the community look back to the Easter meals,* in which the Messianic Meal promised by Jesus at the Last Supper was already partly anticipated."[61] Note the characteristics this account shares with the Feeding of the 5,000:

> When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them [λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον καὶ δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς], and so with the fish (John 21:9–13).

As with the Feeding of the 5,000, Jesus takes (λαμβάνει) the bread and fish and gives (δίδωσιν) these to them, verbs that are found in all four institution accounts of the Lord's Supper. These were part of the miraculous catch of 153 fish, an abundance that shows the living waters flowing from Jesus' death are indeed fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy about the river from Jerusalem producing many fish; here is a literal fulfillment that foreshadows what the Spirit will accomplish spiritually in Baptism (Ezek 47:10).[62] As with the meal at Emmaus in Luke 24, the disciples recognize Jesus as Lord in this meal context. Is this the Eucharist? No, but as with the feeding of the 5,000, Christians are to see how this meal teaches them about the ongoing presence of the risen Lord, who now prepares and serves his church with the miraculous food of his flesh and blood.

III. Blood and Water at the Death of Jesus

There is no text in this Gospel more important for understanding John's testimony to Baptism and the Lord's Supper than his narration of the death of Jesus.

He bowed his head and gave over the Spirit [παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα]

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[61] Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 15; emphasis original.

[62] Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 271–284.

(John 19:30).

> But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out [ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ]. He who saw it has borne witness and his witness is true, and that one knows that he tells the truth, in order that you believe (John 19:34–35).

With these words, John presents the sacraments as mysteriously "instituted" in the death of Jesus. John wants the hearer to see the significance of the blood and water coming from his side, so he waves the flag that this is his own eye-witness account and later quotes Zechariah ("They will look upon him whom they pierced"; John 19:37; cf. Zech 12:10). Here Jesus gives over the Spirit in the tangible forms of water and blood that flow from his side. The hearer of this account will remember that Jesus had promised this giving of the Spirit with the words "out of his belly will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38–39). Jesus is here both the unblemished Lamb of God who is sacrificed and the temple where the sacrifice has taken place. Now the river that Ezekiel and Zechariah saw coming from the eschatological temple begins to flow from his side (Ezek 47:1–11; Zech 14:8). Jesus' atoning death is the source of life—depicted as water and blood—that is delivered by the Spirit in the water of Baptism and blood of the Lord's Supper.[63] What is taking place here is expressed profoundly by E. C. Hoskyns:

> He [the Beloved Disciple] perceived that purification (water) and new life (blood) flow from the completed sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and he bears witness to the truth and efficacy of the Gospel, in order that those who read his gospel may believe that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, and that they are cleansed and enlivened by His Blood (1 John i. 7). And since, moveover, the benefits of the Sacrifice on Calvary are appropriated by the faithful Christian when he is reborn from above of water and the Spirit (iii. 3–5), and when he drinks of the blood of the Son of Man (vi. 53–6), the death of the Christ and the effusion of the Spirit (v. 30) and of the blood and the water, are declared to be the true institution of Christian Baptism and the Eucharist. The sacraments are not to the author of the gospels two independent rites, but means by which each faithful Christian is enabled to stand on Calvary with the Beloved Disciple and receive that purification and new life which is the life of the Spirit.[64]

The water of Baptism and the blood of the Lord's Supper not only

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[63] Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 115.

[64] Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 533.

impart the Spirit who unites us with Jesus, they impart the life won for the world through his atoning death. Why are there not narrations of Baptism and the Lord's Supper being instituted in this Gospel, especially from an eye-witness such as John? It may be that he does not want the sacraments to take on a life of their own, separate from Jesus and his death. Moloney notes that John 19:34–35 "presupposes the readers' knowledge and experience of the 'water' of Baptism (cf. 3:5) and the 'blood' of Eucharist (cf. 6:53, 54, 55–56), and links them with the cross."[65] The Spirit active in Baptism and the Lord's Supper could not have been depicted in any closer union with the incarnate Son and his death that is the source of life.

If one thinks this is over-reading John 19:34–35, listen to what John himself says about "blood and water" in his first epistle: "He is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not in water only but in water and blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one" (1 John 5:6–8). Here John interprets his own passion narrative through a wonderful integration of Christology, Pneumatology, and Sacramentology. The Spirit testifies through the sacraments to the true identity of Jesus as God in flesh for the salvation of the world.[66]

IV. Conclusion

Raymond Brown draws this insightful conclusion about John's testimony to Baptism and the Lord's Supper: "He could not interpolate sacramental theology into the Gospel story by anachronistic and extraneous additions, but he could show the sacramental undertones of the words and works of Jesus that were already part of the Gospel tradition."[67] This study has highlighted these "sacramental undertones of the words and works of Jesus" in this Gospel in order to demonstrate that there is significant testimony to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, far beyond John 3 and John 6, because both sacraments are inherently joined to Jesus and the Spirit who testifies of Jesus. What is present in John, therefore, are not texts that record the institution of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, but the words and works of Jesus that are to be understood in fuller ways after his resurrection when the church is gathered in worship, where Baptism and the Lord's Supper are central to how Jesus continues to abide in us and we in him, bringing us the life given in his death.

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[65] Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 505–506.

[66] See especially Schuchard, *1–3 John*, 535–537.

[67] Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, CXIV.

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Once More to John 6*

David P. Scaer

Some years ago, a now-deceased colleague and a life-long opponent of the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 found himself preaching from this chapter in the chapel of Concordia Theological Seminary. He was as much a scholar as he was one who lived existentially, especially as he lived out his last four months. Knowing death was near, he rejected any suggestion of prolonging life through additional medical treatment and proceeded to enjoy his last summer by visiting his children. In preaching, his characteristically existential bent frequently took command of his hermeneutical principles, which themselves did not allow him to see John 6 as eucharistic.

In preaching on the controverted pericope, he found himself caught in the currents of the text and slipped into an extemporaneous eucharistic interpretation. The surface language of John 6, which is eucharistic—as even the opponents of this interpretation admit—had broken his previous scholarly restraints.[1] In the moment of proclamation, faith's intuitive finger had pressed the override button, prevailing over the preacher's own life-long commitment to the traditional Lutheran hesitancy to see a eucharistic message anywhere in John, including, and especially, in the sixth chapter. Perhaps many other Lutheran pastors have been caught in the same dilemma. Even Luther himself, while flatly denying a sacramental spin to chapter 6 in his lectures on the Fourth Gospel, could pen a beautiful Easter hymn which clearly reflected a eucharistic understanding of John 6.[2]

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[1] Inevitably, Johannine commentators who are opposed to a eucharistic interpretation of John 6 find themselves obligated to explain why it is not eucharistic. This fact alone is telling.

[2] Martin Luther, "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands," *Lutheran Service Book* 458:7 (hereafter *LSB*).

David P. Scaer is the David P. Scaer Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology and Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

I. Rethinking John 6

Both Luther and Zwingli agreed that the eating and drinking language of John 6 described faith as grasping hold of salvation.[3] However, Zwingli proceeded to use 6:63, "the flesh profits nothing," against a physical eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood in order to support his view that salvation is conveyed by the Spirit and not the sacraments.[4] Luther based his arguments for the real presence on the Synoptic and Pauline words of institution, "This is my body," and did not allow John 6 to enter the debate. Luther's removal of John 6 from the eucharistic playing field has deprived Lutheran theology of what is arguably the most extensive and detailed discourse in the New Testament on the nature of the Lord's Supper and its benefits. John 6 has incarnation, atonement, forgiveness, and resurrection all woven within a eucharistic cloth.

Perhaps the most convincing and also the most overlooked evidence that John 6 is eucharistic is that the *order* of the words of institution in the Synoptic Gospels, where Jesus calls the bread his body (τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου; Matt 26:26), is reversed in John's Gospel, where Jesus says that he is the bread (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς·; 6:48). Switching subject nouns with predicate nominatives may be grammatically precarious, but in this case the Synoptic and Johannine versions inform one another to provide a full eucharistic theology. It is as if each is providing a commentary on the other. Andreas Karlstadt's interpretation—which even Zwingli did not accept—that with the words "This is my body" Jesus was pointing to himself and not to consecrated bread, loses its force, since in the light of John 6 Jesus calls himself "bread."

Historical, dogmatical, and exegetical objections have been raised against the eucharistic interpretation of John 6. Chief among the historical objections is the opposition of Luther and the dogmaticians. The historical objection certainly carries with it a bit of nostalgia. A dogmatic objection is that a eucharistic interpretation would make the Lord's Supper the one thing necessary for salvation, a point that cannot be conceded, especially since salvation is *sola fide.* An exegetical objection is that when Jesus spoke

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[3] W. P. Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63: 'Spiritus est qui vivificat, caro nihil prodest," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 160, 168–169, 173.

[4] Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 180, ". . . [Zwingli] does not regard the eucharist as the subject of John 6 . . . " and 181, "However, Zwingli always insists that faith comes only from the Spirit and speaks of the sacraments as giving simply historical faith."

about "flesh and blood," he had not yet instituted the Lord's Supper. These objections will be addressed in the following discourse.

Luther's opposition to the eucharistic interpretation, which set the tone for Lutheran theology after him, surfaced in his Marburg debate with Zwingli in October 1529. His exegesis of the biblical texts usually employed a radical sacramentality. His non-sacramental approach in John was uncharacteristic of his exegesis, which can be seen as reaching an apex in his *Lectures on Genesis,* which were delivered in the last ten years of his life (1535–1545). Genesis was not even a New Testament book, yet Luther found the sacraments everywhere.

John 6, however, presented special considerations. Rome had used the argument that since blood was already in the flesh, the laity need receive only the consecrated bread in the Sacrament. Physiologically, this argument that flesh and blood are so coterminous as to be inseparable might have some validity. This is also true of certain, perhaps the majority of, biblical references to flesh and blood. Such phrases as "flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God," and "flesh and blood has not revealed it to you" have the same referent as "flesh" in "what is born of the flesh is flesh." "Flesh and blood" or simply "flesh" means "human nature in opposition to God." In the context of the Passover, into which the John 6 narrative is placed, "flesh and blood" suggest "sacrifice," and in this case suggest Christ's sacrifice as atonement (6:51). Blood leaving the body or flesh signals that death has occurred and a sacrifice is accomplished. In depriving the laity of the chalice, Rome's argument that blood was already in the flesh was hardly more than an excuse for a practice that had been instituted for other reasons.

On the other side of the coin, in offering a symbolical meaning of the Lord's Supper, Zwingli found a useful argument in "the flesh profits nothing" (6:63). Here was the evidence he needed to support his view that Christ was not physically present in the Lord's Supper, or for that matter anywhere else on earth.[5] Rome's use of John 6 to deprive the laity of the chalice and Zwingli's use of the same chapter to deny a physical eating of Christ's body provided enough reason to keep John 6 out of or remove it from any eucharistic debate. The Lutherans were cutting their losses, sacrificing their legions, and determining to fight the battle on the Synoptic and Pauline battlefields.

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[5] For a fuller discussion of the influence of both Erasmus and Augustine on Zwingli, see Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 160–162.

Another problem would present itself in John 6:54, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have not life in yourselves" (KJV). Here it was suggested that the Lord's Supper was as necessary as faith for salvation. It is on the basis of this passage that the eastern church communes infants, a practice that Luther did not know since the West had given it up long before the Reformation.[6] He did not, however, condemn it.

II. Keeping Sola Fide out of the Debate

Since the *sola fide* principle of the Reformation appears to be at stake, it might be best to address this question first. That which is "necessary for salvation" belongs more properly to the area of pastoral practice and should be kept out of theology proper, especially in making it a basis for a theological system. The end result of beginning theology with "what is necessary" is the kind of minimalism offered by Bultmann and the gospel reductionism associated with Seminex in the Missouri Synod controversies of the 1970s. When the question of what is absolutely necessary is imposed upon the exegetical task, the results can be disastrous.

Likewise, in the case of John 6, having to choose between faith or Eucharist as "necessary for salvation" will produce the same results as if we had been forced to choose between faith and Baptism in John 3! Must the sacramental interpretation of John 3 be forsaken in order to protect the *sola fide* principle? Must the sacramental interpretation of John 6 be forsaken in order to do the same? Or is it more necessary to surrender a sacramental meaning in John 6 than it is in John 3? Not only is "the tail wagging the dog," we may actually be starting at the wrong end of the dog.

In their respective theologies, it was Zwingli and not Luther who saw a physical understanding of the sacraments contradicting faith as the only requirement for salvation. Lutherans, however, have not been averse to giving Zwingli's principle a Lutheran hue. In a Lutheran playing off of faith against the Eucharist, faith becomes a thing, an autonomous substance that challenges the Sacrament for pride of place in the Christian life. A sacramental interpretation of John 6, so it is argued, would militate against the cardinal article on justification in Augsburg Confession IV, which holds that faith alone is necessary for salvation. Yet properly understood, faith has no life of its own but only that which Christ gives it in the sacrament. The Eucharist does not displace faith's function in the plan of

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[6] Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959), 179–180.

salvation but gives faith its substance. Seeing the role of faith in John's Gospel certainly does not militate against the eucharistic interpretation but in fact requires it. Hermann Sasse notes that interpreting the eating and drinking of John 6 as "faith" does not rule out the involvement of a physical eating and drinking.[7] We go further and assert that the Eucharist provides faith with its form and content, in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 11:26. God's action in the Eucharist summons faith as the believer's appropriate response. This "either-or" argument—that one must choose between either faith or Christ's body and blood—is purely Zwinglian!

Another argument against positing the eucharistic interpretation is that such an assertion leads to the erosion of the doctrine of Baptism as the foundational sacrament of the church.[8] This argument proves too much. Taken seriously, perhaps we should dispense with the Eucharist altogether in order to appreciate Baptism more. Then possibly we should dispense with Baptism for the sake of honoring preaching. The argument's weakness is that it fails to distinguish between the unique characteristics of preaching, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, a weakness that is unfortunately a common bane among even the most conservative of Lutherans.

In denying any sacramental significance to John 6, Zwingli provided the model for Reformed biblical scholars, who in turn have gone on to influence Lutheran scholars.[9] Consider Leon Morris, whose commentary on John is regularly used in conservative Lutheran seminaries. Morris holds that a eucharistic interpretation would require the damnation of anyone not receiving the sacrament. He uses the same argument against seeing a baptismal reference to the water in John 3:5, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Lutheran opponents of the eucharistic interpretation in John 6 seem blissfully unaware that the same argument is used against Baptism. Or perhaps they deliberately choose to ignore this, which is even worse.

Even after Luther had adopted his non-eucharistic interpretation of John 6 in 1520, he used the language of John 6 in his referring to the Lord's Supper as the "medicine of immortality." In his 1527 treatise against

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[7] Sasse, *This Is My Body*, 178.

[8] It is also argued that a eucharistic interpretation would require that infants be communed. However, the age of first communion for Luther and the Lutherans is a matter of practice and not dogma, and fellowship with the eastern church could never be refused on these grounds.

[9] Stephens observes the following about Zwingli's interpretation of John 6:29: "the work through which we obtain food is faith in Christ and not eating the body bodily. There would otherwise be two ways of salvation." "Zwingli on John 6:63," 169.

Zwingli, *This Is My Body,* Luther used the language of John 6:63 in holding that Christ's body is the same imperishable food, for "whether it enters the mouth or the heart, it is the same body."[10] Luther showed a similar inconsistency in citing the epistle of James after he had ejected it from the canon. And, as mentioned earlier, the last stanza of Luther's Easter hymn, "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands," comes straight from John 6, though it may be claimed that he penned these words quite early. Somehow the situation in which the Reformer found himself provided cause for suspending his usual procedures to serve what he saw as a greater purpose. Without question, the greater purpose in the eucharistic debate was upholding a physical eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. This issue became more pressing for Luther, since Zwingli had boasted that with John 6:63 he was going to break Luther's neck.[11]

III. Dogmatics and Exegesis: Mixing Apples and Oranges

Some objections to the eucharistic reading of John 6 combine dogmatic and exegetical arguments and introduce the *analogia fidei* argument where its place is questionable. If only believers can receive the Lord's Supper (dogmatic argument), then John 6, which is addressed to unbelievers (exegetical conclusion), cannot be sacramental.

This argument can also be spun around. If John 6 is addressed to believers (exegetical conclusion), then any reference to the Eucharist granting salvation is redundant since believers are already saved (dogmatic argument). This line of thought is a variant of the argument that, if we are saved by faith, we cannot be saved by participating in the Eucharist.[12] This argument, essential to Zwingli's denial of the physical eating of Christ's body, makes faith a means of grace in place of the sacraments. Problematic for the adherents of this argument is that if eating and drinking the flesh and blood of Jesus is equivalent to the demand to believe in him,[13] why was it addressed to those who already believe in him? Yet if the demand to eat and drink Christ's body and blood is a demand to participate in a higher reality than what they are now experiencing by faith in the gospel, then in light of such eucharistic language as eat, drink, blood and even

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[10] AE 37:100; cf. 37:118.

[11] Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 153.

[12] Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 153.

[13] This is Zwingli's position: "Christ is not speaking of this sacrament but is preaching the gospel under the figure of eating his flesh and drinking his blood." Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 174.

flesh, the eucharistic interpretation certainly is not only possible, but probable.[14]

A third argument against the eucharistic rendering of John 6 is that it would imply that unbelievers participating in the Lord's Supper receive eternal life. This would contradict Paul's view that some participants in the Sacrament receive it to their judgment. This argument is seriously flawed, since Paul is speaking of a temporal punishment of death for believers and not an eternal condemnation for unbelievers. Non-Christians not only did not receive the Sacrament but they were not even present for its celebration. Leon Morris argues that the vocabulary of John 6 does not correspond with the eucharistic vocabulary of the other New Testament references to the Lord's Supper.[15] He notes that "flesh is not the ordinary word for the Eucharist in the New Testament."[16] Morris is more motivated by the Zwinglian influence in his Reformed bias than he is by the biblical evidence. "Body" in the Synoptic Gospels and "flesh" in John both translate the Hebrew and the Aramaic בָּשָׂר. Other words such as "eat," "bread," "drink," and "blood" are eucharistic terms that are common to the Synoptics, John, and Paul. Yet all five terms agree in that what is devoured by the mouth is the cause of salvation.[17]

Not incidentally, John's statement "The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world" (6:51) strikingly resembles Luke's "This is my body given for you" (22:19). In Matthew, blood sacrificially poured out for many (26:28) corresponds to John's bread, which is Christ's flesh given for the life of the world (John 6:51). Matthew locates the cause of salvation in Christ's blood, John finds it in his flesh, and Paul and Luke ascribe salvific power to both the body and the blood. In regard to either eucharistic element, the body or the blood, Matthew sees an atonement for the "many" (a word indicating "church"), John views an atonement for the world (which fits his "universalistic" theme),[18] and Paul and Luke offer

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[14] Zwingli dismisses the view that Christ is issuing an invitation to believe that the eucharistic bread is his body, since this would offer another way of salvation. Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 173.

[15] On the vocabulary issue, see James Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6: Is It Eucharistic?" *Concordia Journal* 15, no. 1 (1989): 31–32.

[16] Leon Morris, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 376–377.

[17] Voelz writes, "Therefore this discourse is worded in such a way that its words cause Christian hearers to think about the oral eating of the Sacrament of the Altar, . . . while at the same time they point beyond the oral eating to the spiritual eating." Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6," 34.

[18] To the issue of vocabulary, John is not only idiosyncratic in using "flesh" instead of "body," but he uses "water" for "baptism," as in John 3. Paul and all the evangelists,

salvation "for you." To repeat, John 6 agrees with the Synoptic Gospels and Paul in that what is devoured in the Eucharist is the cause of salvation.

Another favorite exegetical argument against the eucharistic interpretation is that the sacrament had not been instituted.[19] We are as much amused as we are baffled at this objection, for at least two reasons. First, Jesus, like the Old Testament prophets, consistently provided explanations of events before they happened. Nothing ever happens by surprise, whether it be the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the fall of Jerusalem, or Christ's resurrection. Such events are not only predicted but are defined before they take place. Why should an exception be made for Baptism and Eucharist? Even Reformed scholars concede that Jesus gave instructions regarding the Eucharist before its institution.

Secondly, the view that the evangelist could not be writing about the Lord's Supper assumes that the material in the Gospels is arranged chronologically like diaries, examples of which are those English Bibles that conveniently—and nearly in all cases erroneously—date the sayings and acts of Jesus. Gospels are not diaries but post-resurrection, interpretative, theological commentaries on what Jesus said and did (John 2:22; 12:16; 21:25). All four evangelists, and not just John, wrote their Gospels after and in the light of the resurrection within the real-life church situations in which the authors found themselves. With the exception of the birth, death, and resurrection narratives, the Gospels are theologically arranged, not necessarily according to time sequence, but according to

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including John, use "flesh" as a totally negative description of humankind as ignorant opposition to God. "Flesh and blood" do not understand the things of God and cannot inherit his kingdom. John, however, raises the word "flesh" to a new level, since in coming to man's redemption, the eternal Word of God assumes flesh. The flesh assumed by the Son of God no longer opposes God but gives life to the world. Whoever wants to live forever must eat of the flesh which by the incarnation gives life. This flesh and not manna is the real bread from heaven. The phrase "The flesh profits nothing" (6:63) annuls neither the incarnation or the life-giving quality of Christ's flesh in the Eucharist, but rather describes those who refuse to eat the life-giving bread from heaven. They are "in the flesh" because they do not recognize that God himself is hidden in the flesh of Jesus. Hence the Creed's incarnation phrase, *incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto*, anticipates the eucharistic belief that the flesh of Jesus is the life-giving bread in the Sacrament. John adheres to his original meaning that flesh by itself is sinful, but in Christ "flesh" shares in all God's glory. That is, "Christ's flesh profiteth everything," as Luther implies: "again we should like to be assured that 'FLESH IS OF NO AVAIL' is said concerning Christ's body." See his remarks in AE 37:145; emphasis original.

[19] Luther, too, used this argument in AE 36:19. Against this argument, one may also consult James Voelz, "The Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6," 35.

topics. Topics progress in an ascending order, so that at the conclusion of the Gospel the catechesis of the believer culminates with Baptism and Eucharist, a participation in the great mysteries of Jesus' death and resurrection.

A chronological approach to the Gospel may provide a distorted interpretation. For example, in Matthew the evangelist tells about the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, even though it has not yet happened in the narrative (10:4)! Mark (3:19) and Luke (6:16) mention Judas as traitor even earlier in their Gospels. Elsewhere Jesus tells Christians both that they will be persecuted (Matt 5:10–12) and that they are to take up their crosses (Matt 10:38). Without understanding these dire words in light of Christ's suffering, which is only revealed later in the narrative, such words could easily be understood as suggesting that suffering has a value in itself. The words in the Lord's Prayer, "and forgive us our trespasses," are presented in Matthew ten chapters before the announcement of the death of Jesus and fourteen chapters before the meaning of his death as atonement is presented. Are we to believe that God's forgiving us in the Lord's Prayer or our forgiving one another has nothing to do with Jesus' atonement and death? Without the foundation of Christ's death, the Lord's Prayer degenerates into moralisms in which forgiving one another is simply a good policy. This kind of ethical behavior can be expected of and admired even in unbelievers.

Early on, John leaves obvious clues that those who heard his Gospel were already acquainted with the concluding events in the life of Jesus (2:22; 6:70–71). This is as true for Christ's death and resurrection as it is for Baptism and the Eucharist. Gospels are not missionary but catechetical documents. Early Christians were acquainted with the Supper, which certainly had been instituted by the time the Fourth Gospel was written. The argument that John 6 is not eucharistic because the Lord's Supper had not yet been instituted exposes a remarkable ignorance about what the Gospels are. The real fallacy behind this objection is that we cannot speak of the Sacrament at all unless we speak of the words of institution.

IV. Inconsistent Piety

In spite of a virtually official, non-eucharistic interpretation of John 6, Lutherans do use the language of this discourse in their sermons, hymns, and devotions in order to promote the characteristic Lutheran understanding of the Lord's Supper. An approach that allows a certain interpretation in sermons and liturgical life but which contradicts standard exegetical tradition leaves something to be desired, especially for a church that prides itself in standing under the *sola scriptura.* Such an approach draws things

from the text that had never entered the mind of the evangelist or his readers, let alone Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Some opponents of a eucharistic interpretation allow their piety a latitude that their exegesis denies. In spite of the exegetical conclusions, they use and tolerate the language of John 6 in hymns such as "O Living Bread from Heaven"[20] or "Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread,"[21] both penned by Johann Rist (1607–1667). This is eating your devotional cake, even if your exegesis cannot demonstrate the existence of a cake. What Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the evangelist did not intend, Christian piety creates. Schleiermacher, *vivis!*

Unbelief in the Face of the Eucharist

The argument that John 6 is addressed to an unbelieving crowd of Jews, and hence makes a eucharistic interpretation impossible, was mentioned earlier. This argument overlooks the fact that the disciples and not just the anonymous crowds are guilty of unbelief (6:60). Jesus' question to Philip about obtaining bread for the crowds elicits the unbelieving response that even if there was money, there was no store nearby to make the purchase. Andrew is unbelieving in asking how a boy's fish and loaves can feed such a large crowd (6:5–9). John 6 not only uncovers eucharistic unbelief but also incarnational unbelief, and this not only among the Jews but also among the disciples, who themselves fail to recognize who Jesus really is. Both the disciples and the crowds do not come to terms with Jesus as God's Son. At Jesus' invitation to eat and drink his flesh and blood, unbelievers grind their teeth in rebellion and ridicule him as Joseph's son and not God's Son. Their denial of the incarnation surfaces in their refusing to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink his blood. Some would-be followers now leave (6:67). Crowds do not believe and the disciples only reluctantly see that the multiplied loaves are only passing shadows of Jesus, who himself is the true bread. At the end of the discourse, Peter confesses that Jesus' words must be accepted at face value and believed for eternal life. Peter believes, but without fully understanding.

Eucharist as Necessary for Salvation

As mentioned earlier, especially problematic in a Lutheran context is the position that a eucharistic interpretation of the discourse requires this sacrament as necessary for salvation. We have already pointed out the inconsistent self-generosity of those who make exceptions for a baptismal

[20] *LSB* 642.

[21] *LSB* 625.

necessity found in John 3,[22] yet refuse to do so for a eucharistic necessity in John 6.[23] The Reformed are consistent in their disposing of the sacraments in both John 3 and 6.

The dilemma of an absolute necessity for Baptism and the Lord's Supper in John's Gospel is not without resolution. John's prologue states that Jesus, who is with God and is the world's creator, is the light who enlightens everyone coming into the world (1:9). There are no exceptions. He enlightens everyone: a beautiful absolute universalism, if it were not for the near-total contradiction of sin. A universal salvation dwindles to a remnant, so that Jesus is rejected not only by the world that he himself created, but by the people he chose as his own as well. Insult is added to injury. God's judgment against unbelief in no way nullifies his intention to enlighten everyone who comes into the world. This universalistic motif translates into how God sees believers as totally perfect saints, all of whom believe him without doubts, are without exception baptized, and so receive the Eucharist under both kinds.

The divine reality—what God really sees and what we can only know by faith—is contradicted by the realities that we see: the world rejects Jesus, the disciples doubt to the point of unbelief, Nicodemus rejects Baptism, and the Jews make Christ's invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood out to be a cause of their own unbelief.

This unbelief, which hesitates at finding Christ in the sacraments, still divides Christians. Further, it often causes those with a right understanding to hesitate at receiving Christ in the sacraments. Inconsistencies in Christian belief and practice are necessary effects of an evil world infecting God's realm. God's grace in the gospel and in the sacraments is constant and remains forever absolute. It may be contradicted but not annulled.

V. Suspending the Hermeneutical Rules

A non-eucharistic interpretation of John 6 requires allegorizing the text in order that "eating and drinking" become "faith," and "flesh and blood" become "Christ's teaching," though there is nothing in the text suggesting this procedure. Allegorizing, which is not allowed by some Lutheran exegetes for the purpose of interpreting the parables, suddenly becomes acceptable in the interpretation of John 6, which is not parabolic. It is as if

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[22] John 3:5: "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"

[23] John 6:53: "So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'"

they are bent on a non-eucharistic interpretation at all costs. Left unresolved is how the spiritual eating of Christ's body is distinguished from the spiritual drinking of his blood (6:53–56). More to the point, a non-sacramental reading of John 6—which requires a figurative interpretation of "eating" as "belief in Christ"—provides no satisfactory explanation of 1) how the eating of the manna is a physical eating (v. 49), or 2) how the eating required of Christians (6:50–51) is only the figurative eating done in faith.[24] A non-eucharistic interpretation of John breaks the hermeneutical rule that the meaning of the word is determined by its context. Suddenly the *unus sensus literalis est* becomes inoperative for them. Unless the eating of the manna in the wilderness is a parabolic eating, can the eating of Christ's body be a parabolic reference to faith. Perhaps some commentators may find a natural cause for the eating of manna and the quail; none would find the eating to be allegorical. Even within the terms of a legend or a tale, eating is real eating.[25]

Also problematic for the figurative interpretation of eating is that John not only speaks of eating the flesh of Jesus (ἐσθίω), but chewing at it with one's teeth (τρώγω). Both verbs speak of eating, but the second one with the tearing of flesh is more picturesque. John uses exaggerated language to emphasize the truth that Christ's body is really consumed by the mouth. Such emphatic language is common for him. Jesus not only became *anthropos,* a human being, but he became *sarx,* humanity in its opposition to God. Eating flesh as a metaphor for faith is problematic, since eating someone's flesh is a metaphor for a hostile action. Satan is an eater of the flesh, "the slanderer and adversary par excellence."[26] Similarly the drinking of human blood is a horrendous thing. The only favorable use of such horrendous

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[24] John 6:49–51: ''Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (RSV).

[25] In the controversy over the Lord's Supper, Luther was willing to let an unbeliever determine whether the words, "this is my body," were in any sense figurative or whether they had to be taken at face value. We do not want to put this forward as an acceptable form of biblical interpretation, but for the sake of argument we mention the case of Porphyry of Tyre (AD 233–305). An enemy of the church, he created a compendium entitled *Against the Christians in Fifteen Books* (AD 270). He saw the requirement of John 6:54 of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood worse than anything cannibals could do. Porphyry was thoroughly acquainted with Christianity and knew the ancient church's position in this matter. See David Laird Dugan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 89–97.

[26] Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), 284.

eating of flesh and drinking of blood is the eucharistic interpretation in which for our salvation we eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood.

Excursus

Both Pietism and Rationalism took the Bible and the right of interpretation out of the church. Our experiences with the Bible in classrooms and lecture halls stand in contradiction both to the origins of the Old Testament in the worshiping congregation of Israel and to the Gospels and Epistles in the churches. Churches were not crowds in fields and arenas, but baptized assemblies preparing to receive the Eucharist. The sacraments constituted the apostolic church's life and gave it its outward form. Without sacraments they were not and could not be church. Christ was not only in the sacramental elements but he was the one administering them. Believers were made holy precisely because they were baptized, and by receiving the body of the resurrected one they received the medicine of immortality and the promise of the resurrection. Scriptures were sacramental first in the sense that they brought converts to Baptism and the Lord's Supper and thus incorporated them into the church as the body of Christ. They continued to be not only sacramental for believers because they were reports about Christ's life, but especially because Christ himself was their author and was, through the hearing of his words, still pleading to find life with him. This is true of the Synoptic Gospels, but it was especially true of the Fourth Gospel, where John weaves baptismal and eucharistic themes from the beginning to the end. It is not simply a matter of isolating the eucharistic theme in John 6, but rather seeing the discourse on the Bread from Heaven within the sacramental fiber of the entire Gospel. The prologue necessitates that one adopt a sacramental consciousness in order to understand the theology of this Gospel. By his incarnation Jesus becomes the principle sacrament of salvation and, in the process, sacramentalizes all creation. Soteriology and Christology are interconnected in John, and their nexus occurs with the sacramental Christ living in the sacramental community. The wedding of Cana introduces the sacramental elements of water and wine. Water points both back to John's baptism and ahead to the account of Nicodemus and the woman at the well who is invited by Jesus to drink the living water. Cana's miraculous wine prepares the hearer for Jesus's claim that he is the real vine. Both elements flow gloriously from the Savior's side. So the new, true, and real Adam gives life to the new Eve, which is his church. Believers who are introduced to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world know that the bread of the eucharist is the flesh that Jesus gives for the life of the world. In one case, water can symbolize Baptism and in

another the Eucharist, or it may mean both simultaneously. Even the metaphors of Jesus—the door, the vine, the good shepherd—are sacramental.

Judas and the Night of the Betrayal

The Synoptic accounts of the Eucharist include Judas's betrayal of Jesus, an event so significant that Paul begins his account of the Last Supper with the words, "on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus took bread." Judas betrays Jesus in connection with the institution of the church's most sacred rite. John closes the account of Jesus as the living bread with a reference to the betrayal of Judas (6:70–71). Thus the original hearers of the Gospel already knew in listening to John 6 that Judas had betrayed Jesus in connection with the Last Supper. Those who heard the Gospel already knew certain things about the Lord's Supper. This interpretation is confirmed when Jesus gives the morsel to Judas (John 13:24–30).

Other Eucharistic Clues

In the apostolic church, *Pascha,* the word for Passover, meant the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus as one unified Easter event, which was thereby commemorated by the Eucharist (1 Cor 5:7). This is the occasion for John 6 (v. 4).[27] Of John's three Passover accounts, the last one provides the occasion for the death of Jesus. Jesus—and not the lambs slaughtered for the Jewish holiday—is the real Passover: "not a bone of him shall be broken" (John 19:36). The Jewish Passover was a sacramental celebration of God's rescuing Israel from Egypt. Blood of a slaughtered

[27] Christ by his death passed through the Sea, and the church by Baptism shared in his being saved by God. All this has already been suggested to John's readers by the Baptizer's announcement that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes the away the sin of the world. This theme reoccurs in John 6, where Jesus says that the flesh he gives for eating by believers is the same flesh by which life is won for the world. The world, which stands in the same relationship of enmity with God as the flesh does, is now, like the flesh, transformed. A world doomed to damnation is transformed by the death of Christ so that it no longer is destined to death but is instead transformed into life. One who shares in Christ's flesh in the sacrament also shares in Christ's resurrection so the flesh in the sacrament becomes the medicine of immortality. The presence of faith is essential to this pericope. Those who have faith, namely Peter and the disciples, know what Jesus is talking about. Unbelievers also know that Jesus is talking not only about the necessity of believing but the necessity of participating in him through the Sacrament. It is because they know exactly what he is talking about that they turn against him. Drinking animal blood is forbidden and repulsive, and drinking human blood is unforgivable cannibalism. Yet, as the atonement has transformed the world, so also the incarnation transformed the flesh and blood of Jesus into the flesh and blood of God. It is the flesh and blood of God that transforms all those who receive those elements.

lamb spared the first-born son from death, and the lamb's flesh was eaten. Jesus is identified as the Lamb of God first at his baptism (John 1:29) and then again at his death (19:36). His blood spares us from death and his flesh is as much our food as was the Passover lamb for the Jews. John expands the Passover theme by identifying Jesus as the heavenly manna, the true and living bread. Jews who ate manna and the 5,000 who ate the miraculous bread died, but whoever feeds on Jesus lives forever and will be raised from the dead. Passover lamb and heavenly manna constitute one flesh and one food.

Another eucharistic clue is that the blessing of the bread and fish follows the eucharistic formula (6:11) found in the other Gospels and Paul. Similarly, the sacred crumbs, the κλάσματα, must be gathered and not destroyed, a reserved host, so to speak (6:12). The crumbs, like the bread of the Eucharist, have been made holy by the Lord's blessing.

Still another eucharistic clue is found in Jesus' saying that the one who comes to him shall never thirst (6:35). This is strange because eating bread and fish have nothing to do with drinking; but drinking itself does have a lot to do with the Eucharist. "Drinking" recalls the account of the woman at the Samaritan well (John 4), which anticipates Jesus's prediction that from his heart will flow living waters (John 7). The Jordan, Cana, and Tiberias are foundational for the church as the places where Christ began providing the shape for the sacraments. This shape was given in its final form when the Savior provided the content in the blood and water that flowed from his side.[28] John 6 combines incarnational, sacramental, and sacrificial themes into one reality. Where there is incarnation, there is sacrifice; where there is sacrifice, there is sacrament. The wedding of Cana, the cleansing of the temple, the healing waters, the Samaritan well, the imagery of both the shepherd and the vine, and the water and blood flowing from the side of Jesus are only some of John's sacramental themes. The *unus sensus literalis est* is often invoked as an argument against sacramental interpretations, but to the contrary this principle clearly requires that we uncover a sacramental interpretation in the very fiber of John's Gospel.

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[28] John 4:46: "So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine." John 6:23: "However, boats from Tiberias came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks." At these places Jesus began to give us the Eucharist, just as he began to give us Baptism in the Jordan. Thus John 10:40, "He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained." It can also be noted that Cana and the miraculous feeding are occasions in which the disciples believe.

VI. A Post-Easter Hermeneutic

The disciples to whom the words of Jesus are entrusted do not understand the things that Jesus has done until he has been raised from the dead (John 2:22). Near the beginning of his Gospel, John has set forth his hermeneutical principle that only Christ's resurrection will provide the full and conclusive meaning of his words. A post-Easter church celebrating the Eucharist understood these words in the light of her own sacramental practice. Jesus in John was speaking not only to his first disciples, but to all his baptized disciples still gathering at his altar. The feeding of the 5,000 was miraculous, but not as miraculous as what would later happen at the altar where Jesus feeds his church—the redeemed world and God's new humanity—with his flesh and blood.

John 6 is the chessboard on which the traditional hermeneutical rules are either ignored or shown to be inadequate. In making John 6 a discourse on faith, the *unus sensus literalis est*—which interprets "eating" as really "eating" and not "faith," and "flesh" as really "flesh"—is replaced by a purely allegorical interpretation in which these words are given a different meaning. Then there is the rule that the so-called clear passages determine the meaning of the unclear ones. Zwingli's denial of a physical eating in the sacrament was dependent on the same rule! For him, "the flesh profits nothing" was so "clear" as to demand a figurative meaning of "This is my body."[29] This requires another essay on analyzing rules that waft the air of infallibility to some of us. Luther's genius becomes evident in not allowing Zwingli to play his trump card, "the flesh profits nothing," thus forcing him instead to the words, "This is my body." Luther allowed himself a method that we should, or at least may, allow. In a different situation the reformer may have allowed his intuition to follow his instincts to develop a eucharistic interpretation of John 6. His situation did not allow him this luxury. Ours does.

[29] Stephens, "Zwingli on John 6:63," 171–172.

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Barley, Flesh, and Life: The Bread of Life Discourse and the Lord's Supper

Jason M. Braaten

The Gospel of John is often noted for its cultic imagery.[1] Central are the Jewish feasts and the temple, as the terminology proper to them saturates John's narrative. In fact, Mary Coloe states that the temple "is not just one symbol among many, used by the community to express who Jesus is for them; for the Johannine community the temple is the *major* symbol," a symbol that appropriates to Jesus the whole of the tabernacle/temple cult.[2] In other words, Jesus in his person and work fulfills—bringing to its ultimate conclusion—everything that belongs to the tabernacle/temple cult—its rites, ceremonies, sacrifices, feasts, furnishings, and sacrificial elements (bread, lambs, light, water, and blood). Thus, the Gospel of John shows that as Jesus fulfills the old tabernacle/temple cult, he establishes at the same time a new cultus, a new form of worship, a new means by which the Lord would dwell among his people to be their God. This new cultus would be tied not to a geographical place or to specific days but to Jesus himself.

With this in mind, this study will examine the feeding of the 5,000 and the Bread of Life discourse to mine the significance of the details John provides—the feast of Passover, the barley loaves, the use of the word *flesh,* and the life that eating this flesh gives—and their relationship to the Lord's Supper.

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[1] See J. K. Howard, "Passover and Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 20 (1967): 330–331, and Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper* (New York: Doubleday, 2011).

[2] Mary Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 3; emphasis original.

Jason M. Braaten is Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tuscola, Illinois.

I. The Feast of Passover, Galilee, and Barley Loaves

The mandate and institution of the Feast of Passover is given in Exodus 12, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16. It was to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan), "when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight"(Exod 12:6). The very first Passover was the means by which the Lord would deliver his people from the bondage of Egypt, but more specifically from their slavery to the Egyptian gods, so that the Lord would dwell with them and free them for divine service:[3]

> It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt (Exod 12:11–13).

The blood that was to be smeared on the doorposts and lintels was a sign for them, for when the Lord saw the blood, he would pass over them, and nothing would destroy them. Thus, the blood was not simply a negative sign, a sign that they would not be destroyed; it was also a positive sign, a sign that they would live. It marked the people of Israel as those who would remain alive. It was a sign of life before the Lord, for the blood has the life in it (Deut 12:23; Lev 17:11).[4]

After this initial Passover, each subsequent celebration of the Passover was to be a pilgrimage feast, for the Passover sacrifice was to be offered at a holy convocation before the Lord in the place where he chose to make his name dwell (Exod 12:16; Lev 23:4; Deut 16:2). It was given as an everlasting ordinance and was to be for them a meal of remembrance of what the Lord had done for the people of Israel when he rescued them from the bondage of Egypt and slavery to their gods in order that they may freely serve the Lord in the act of being served by him in the wilderness (Exod 12:14).

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[3] The Book of Exodus makes use of a rich pun on the word עֲבֹדָה. It is used interchangeably either for work as a slave and slavery or as service of the Lord and worship. Thus, Israel, the Lord's firstborn son, is freed from slavery to Egypt and their idolatrous gods for the service of the Lord, that is, for divine service (e.g. Exod 3:12; 4:22–23; 6:6–9).

[4] Gale A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989), 52–53.

The feast that serves as the context for the feeding of the 5,000 and the Bread of Life discourse is "the Passover, the feast of the Jews" (John 6:4). However, two elements within John 6 cause difficulty for understanding this as the Passover celebrated on 14 Nisan. The first element deals with location, and the second with chronology.

The Feast of Passover was a pilgrimage feast. All were to travel to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast where the Lord had made his name dwell (Deut 16:2). This is the only feast of the six mentioned in John's Gospel that Jesus is not described as either making pilgrimage to, or already in, Jerusalem; rather, he is in the area around the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1). "He miraculously feeds 5,000 (6:1–15), walks on the Sea of Tiberias (6:16–21), proclaims himself the 'Bread of Life' (6:22–59) and suffers a schism among his disciples (6:60–71); but at no point is he described as 'going up' to Jerusalem to observe this festival."[5] If John's purpose in writing his Gospel is to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfillment of the entire tabernacle/temple cult, why would he not be in Jerusalem observing this foundational feast of the Jews? Furthermore, why are none of the others mentioned in the Bread of Life discourse concerned about heading toward Jerusalem? This feast was not optional. It was an everlasting ordinance, an ordinance that if not observed was punishable by death.[6]

Furthermore, the mention of barley loaves that Jesus used for the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6:9 presents a difficulty with chronology. Barley came to harvest at the beginning of the year between the months of Nisan and Sivan.[7] But according to the law of *ḥadāš* (new produce), this newly harvested grain could not be consumed for non-cultic purposes until its firstfruits had been offered at the Waving of the Omer, as commanded by the Lord.[8]

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[5] Michael A. Daise, *Feasts in John: Jewish Festivals and Jesus' "Hour" in the Fourth Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 143.

[6] "But if anyone who is clean and is not on a journey fails to keep the Passover, that person shall be cut off from his people because he did not bring the Lord's offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin" (Num 9:13).

[7] "The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up" (Exod 9:31–32). See also Jacob Milgrom, *A Continental Commentary: Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 277, and Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 157.

[8] Daise, *Feasts in John*, 105.

> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings (Lev 23:9–14, cf. Deut 16:9–10).

This offering of the sheaf of the firstfruits was to be reaped on the evening, at twilight, of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (15 Nisan), the day after the Feast of Passover (14 Nisan), and the offering was to be made on the following morning (16 Nisan).[9] That barley is in view for this offering is clear for two reasons. First, it "was the only cereal that would have ripened at the time specified." Second, "it is stated plainly to be such in Second Temple and early Rabbinic traditions."[10] If the Passover mentioned in the feeding of the 5,000 has in view the Passover of 14 Nisan, then the barley loaves provided by the young boy would be illicit because the offering of the sheaf of the firstfruits had not yet taken place. The use of barley at this time for non-cultic purposes was contrary to the law of *ḥadāš*.

What, then, is John referring to when he writes, "the Passover, the Feast of the Jews was at hand" (John 6:4)? Is any light shed upon the text? Is our understanding helped if perhaps the Passover referred to in the Bread of Life discourse is the Second Passover, or Little Passover, mentioned in Numbers 9:9–12?

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[9] Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 197–205.

[10] Daise, *Feasts in John*, 105. See also Jud Davis, "Acts 2 and the Old Testament: The Pentecost Event in Light of Sinai, Babel, and the Table of Nations," *Criswell Theological Review* 7, no. 1 (2009), 31–34; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 277; and Levine, *Leviticus*, 157.

II. Second Passover and John 6

In Numbers 9, Moses identifies two reasons for not celebrating the Passover: 1) because a person is ritually defiled by contact with a dead body, or 2) because he or she is away on a long journey. This does not mean, however, that they never celebrate the Passover; rather, they are to celebrate the Passover one month later (14 Iyyar).

> And there were certain men who were unclean through touching a dead body, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day, and they came before Moses and Aaron on that day. And those men said to him, "We are unclean through touching a dead body. Why are we kept from bringing the Lord's offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel?" And Moses said to them, "Wait, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you."
>
> The Lord spoke to Moses, saying,"Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If any one of you or of your descendants is unclean through touching a dead body, or is on a long journey, he shall still keep the Passover to the Lord. In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it (Num 9:6–12).

This Passover, in distinction from the regular Passover, came to be called Second, or Little, Passover.[11]

In his *Life of Moses II*, Philo mentions this Second Passover. He relates the account of Numbers 9 as an act of mercy on behalf of Moses and the Lord. The Israelites who were unable to observe the regular Passover due to ritual uncleanness had become so because they were in mourning for their recently deceased relatives. Thus, they had a twofold grief because they not only mourned the death of their family members but also because they were barred from the feast because of it. In a merciful response to this predicament, the Lord, says Philo, established a perpetual Passover on the fourteenth of the second month for anyone who found himself in similar circumstances.[12]

The regular Passover and its pilgrimage were to be kept on pain of death. The Second Passover, however, was a contingent festival, hinging

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[11] Despite being called the Second, or Little, Passover, oftentimes it is referred to simply as Passover, just like the regular Passover of 14 Nisan. See Daise, *Feasts in John*, 118–138.

[12] Philo, *Life of Moses II*, 41, 225–232.

upon whether the first, regular Passover was missed. This would explain Jesus' lack of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, for the observance of the Second Passover would have been rendered unnecessary if he had already observed the first (John 2:13).

Besides the two previously mentioned elements (the disparity in location and chronology) that commend the Passover of the Bread of Life discourse as the Second Passover, the primary theme of the Bread of Life discourse is also suggestive of this. That theme is the manna event in Exodus. As Michael Daise points out:

> That John 6 turns on manna tradition is beyond question. Jesus launches his Bread of Life discourse when his interlocutors cite it [John 6:31] . . . the Jews and Jesus' disciples "murmur" (γογγύζειν), after the manner the Israelites did when they first provoked God to give them quails and manna and when they later tired of the manna in favor of meat . . . . the initial lack of bread (6:5), Jesus' question on how to feed so many, the two fish (as meat), the multitude's eating till satisfied, the collection of leftover fragments, the christophany on the water, the greater interest in eating than believing or obeying, the demand for more food, manna as bread and a bread from heaven, the Father as giver of that manna, eating flesh, eating Jesus' flesh instead of manna and Jesus as the manna and word that proceeds from the mouth of God.[13]

The Second Passover is relevant here because of the date of the first giving of the manna as recorded in Exodus 16:1, "They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt." Daise explains that

> since Exodus considers "the beginning of months" to be the one in which the First Passover was observed (Exodus 12:1–2), the second month "from their going out from the land of Egypt" would have been the second month of the year. This is made explicit in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, which identifies that month outright as 'Iyyar, "They moved from Elim . . . on the fifteenth day of the month of 'Iyyar, that is, the second month from their going forth from the land of Egypt."[14]

Even though Second Passover, according to Numbers 9:11, is to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the second month, the "observance was to span, like the First Passover, 'between the evenings' (בֵּין הָעַרְבַּיִם;

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[13] Daise, *Feasts in John*, 138–139.

[14] Daise, *Feasts in John*, 141. Cf. Exodus 16:1; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2005).

Num 9:11), that is, into the next morning, the fifteenth day of the second month. Thus, the giving of the first manna falls on the same day as the observance of the Second Passover."[15]

If, therefore, the Passover mentioned at the beginning of Jesus' Bread of Life discourse is understood as the Second Passover, a number of difficulties of geography and chronology are avoided, while at the same time a fuller understanding of the discourse's theme is gained. The Second Passover, which was initially instituted for those unable to observe the First Passover due to ritual impurity by contact with a corpse, ties together the themes from Exodus' Passover ritual (eating of the flesh of the Passover lamb) and the giving of manna (bread from heaven) and quail (flesh from heaven) in the wilderness wandering to the Bread of Life discourse: life versus death, eating bread and meat (flesh) from heaven, and the Lord's word (command and promise) that bring it about.

III. The Flesh That Gives Life

Most controversial, both for its original and present-day hearers, in the Bread of Life discourse is Jesus' mention of his flesh. His statements about eating his flesh made those who were following him grumble at this difficult teaching. And it is a difficult teaching. This is perhaps most understandable for the discourse's original hearers. But what is it about this text that makes it difficult for present-day hearers, especially Lutherans? Why do Lutherans, who take Jesus at his word in the Synoptic Gospels that the bread eaten and the wine drunk are in fact his body and his blood, grumble at this teaching? What, if anything, are we missing? What is it about the word *flesh* that rouses our defenses?

Given the context of the Bread of Life discourse as stated above, Jesus' use of the word *flesh* is perhaps not as strange as it first seems. The time of the Second Passover was near, which was to be observed by those who had recently suffered the loss of relatives by death. Their ritual impurity from contact with a dead body kept them from observing the regular Passover. Thus, the consequences of death were intensified. They suffered, as Philo stated, a double mourning—not only the loss of a member of their family but also exclusion from the rest of the community during a time of celebration. Combine this with the miraculous multiplication of the barley loaves in the feeding of the 5,000, which was given at Jesus' command (legitimately used because the offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest had already taken place on 16 Nisan) and the manna tradition (the

[15] Daise, *Feasts in John*, 142.

giving of bread and flesh from heaven at the Lord's command) from Exodus' account of Israel's wilderness wandering, and the picture comes into focus: viewed altogether, Jesus is setting forth a new Passover and manna tradition. He is establishing a new temple/tabernacle cult, a new form of worship, a new way in which God would dwell and remain with his people (John 1:14; 2:16–21; 14:1–7).

Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, whose flesh and blood not only mark them for life but actually give life. He is the Bread of Life, the new manna, come down from heaven, sent by the Father. He is the firstfruits of the barley harvest, waved and offered to the Lord on the day of his resurrection (1 Cor 15:20). Jesus is raised from the dead on the day of the Waving of the Omer, 16 Nisan (John 20:1). Thus, he is the food that does not perish (τὴν ἀπολλυμένην). He is the food that remains (τὴν μένουσαν), that is left over (περισσεύω), that endures (cf. John 3:16, 6:12–13; 6:26–27) and fills twelve baskets full, just as the barley loaves in the feeding of the 5,000, for he is not dead but alive. Thus does he give; he distributes, according to his word (which is Spirit and life) his flesh and his blood to be consumed, which give life to those who feed (ὁ τρώγων) upon it.

Some have noted the switch from the verb ἔφαγον to τρώγω in John 6. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* argues that the verb τρώγω is more earthy and physical than ἐσθίω, the aorist of which is ἔφαγον. Τρώγω literally means "to gnaw, to bite, to chew." It does not support a metaphorical use, a spiritualization, like its counterpart ἐσθίω. The movement from the verb ἐσθίω to τρώγω indicates a movement away from a purely metaphorical, or spiritual, reading to a reading that includes the physical (John 6:51–58). Thus, "to eat" no longer simply means receiving Jesus' giving of himself by faith in his words, but now includes the reception of that self-giving by physical eating.[16] Craig Koester argues that the use of τρώγω

> actually shows that John 6 should not be connected with the supper. In 6:54–58 Jesus promised that the one who "eats" would abide in him and live forever, but at the last supper the word "eat" is used only for Judas, who was united with Satan, not Jesus (13:18, 26–27), and who found destruction rather than life (17:12).[17]

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[16] See Leonhard Goppelt, "τρώγω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. ed. Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976), 8:236–237.

[17] See Craig R. Koester, "John 6 and the Lord's Supper," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4 (1990): 433.

One must, however, simply ask: does Judas' eating in John 13:18, 26–27 take away Christ's own promise in John 6:54–58? Perhaps a better explanation is that Judas' eating shows what happens to those who eat without faith (SD VII 59–72). Taken in this way, one of the chief arguments against the sacramental reading of John 6 disappears—John 6 lacks the *manducatio impiorum, manducatio indignorum.* With this, then, John 6 is in line with St. Paul's warning to the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor 11:27–32).

Recent scholarship, however, calls into question this hard distinction between ἐσθίω and τρώγω. David Hasselbrook points out that by the time the Gospel of John was written, the word τρώγω was the common form for "eating," that is, chewing and swallowing, with no special emphasis on chewing in the present tense. He writes:

> In this Gospel, we find that τρώγω occurs five times and the aorist forms of ἔφαγον occur fifteen times. However, rather than viewing the aorist forms of ἔφαγον as aorist forms of ἐσθίω, John's usage and the full diachronic history of τρώγω itself suggest that in John's Gospel ἔφαγον is very likely serving as his aorist form of τρώγω. Or, to put it another way, for John, τρώγω is serving as the present tense form of ἔφαγον, a verb that held and continues to hold the dominant position as the past tense verb for "eating." This latter point is relevant for John's other uses of τρώγω, all of which occur in the Bread of Life discourse in chapter 6 (6:25–59). After using ἔφαγον in verses 26, 31 (two times), 49, 50, 52, and 53, he switches to τρώγω in verses 54, 56, 57, and 58, and then finally ends again with ἔφαγον in the latter half of verse 58. One who looks at the pre-New Testament usage of τρώγω will probably find this shift to be significant in terms of meaning of verb forms. However, one who looks at the post-New Testament oral history of τρώγω will find this shift necessary due to changes in aspectual focus or usage, such as is the case with the interchange of ἐσθίω and ἔφαγον in other writings of the New Testament (e.g., Matt 14:16, 20, 21; 15:32, 37, 38; Rom 14:2, 3, 6, 20, 21, 23; 1 Cor 8:7, 10, 13; 9:4, 7, 13; 11:20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34).[18]

This is, in fact, what one finds in the Bread of Life discourse:

> The past tense eating of the manna by the fathers (which, by the way, involved some kind of chewing and was done on a regular basis) and their subsequent past tense death is contrasted with an ongoing eating of Christ and the ongoing life it brings. The contrast here is not be-

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[18] David S. Hasselbrook, *Studies in New Testament Lexicography: Advancing toward a Full Diachronic Approach with the Greek Language*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2nd series, vol. 303 (Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 143.

> tween a general eating and an eating that involves more chewing. The significance lies, rather, in what was/is eaten and the need for the ongoing eating of Christ.[19]

The contrast is between eating (chewing and swallowing) the flesh from the wilderness and what that brings, and eating (chewing and swallowing) the flesh of Christ and what that brings.

The Passover lamb was to be roasted and then physically eaten (Exod 12:8; cf. John 18:28).[20] The blood of the lamb was to be applied physically to their doorposts to save their firstborn sons from death, thereby marking them for life, a sign to the Lord that when he sees the blood he will pass them over (Exod 12:13; John 19:34–37).[21] The manna and quail were to be physically eaten (Exod 16:8). This food was the flesh (BHS: הַבָּשָׂר;LXX: κρέα; Exod 12:8; 16:8) that the Lord provided to bless them so that he would dwell with them and be their God, and they would be his people. It preserved them as the Lord's firstborn son (Exod 4:22–23), who is "born not of blood, or the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). This food was the flesh that the Lord provided to his people to give them life: life from out of the death of slavery to the Egyptians and their idolatrous gods and life in the midst of death as they wandered the wilderness of Sin. In this way, the external (physical) and the internal (spiritual) are combined, without separation.[22] The two belong together, for the spiritual comes and is comprehended by means of the physical. The spiritual is enacted in ritual. Thus, they ate flesh (κρέας). They ate it in faith at the Lord's command and with the Lord's promise. It was the flesh of the sacrifice, the flesh of the Lord's giving, but it was dead flesh (Deut 12:20–28).

The word κρέας always refers to dead flesh, flesh that has no life in it. It is never used in the Old Testament for living flesh (e.g., Gen 9:4). Thus, the Israelites could eat κρέα, but they could not eat σάρξ**.** They could eat dead

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[19] Hasselbrook, *Studies in New Testament Lexicography*, 143–144.

[20] Eating the Passover is the celebration of the Passover in John 18:28, "They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover." See also Matt 26:17; Mark 14:12–14; Luke 22:8–11.

[21] For a fuller discussion of the relation between the sign of the blood in Exodus and the signs in John's Gospel, see Joseph A. Grassi, "Eating Jesus' Flesh and Drinking His Blood: The Centrality and Meaning of John 6:51–58," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 17, no. 1 (1987): 24–30.

[22] See a fuller discussion of this in Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 147–192.

flesh, but they could not eat living flesh (Deut 12:20–28). And so they ate the flesh provided by the Lord. They ate the Passover lamb, the manna, and the quail. They ate dead flesh and they died.

But the flesh that Jesus promises to give in the Bread of Life discourse is not dead flesh. He does not give us his κρέα. He gives us his living flesh, his σάρξ.[23] The flesh he gives is his living, life-giving, Spirit-filled, risen flesh (σάρξ), which he gives along with his blood. It is the same flesh that the Word, the perpetual ordinance and everlasting covenant of the Father, took up in order to dwell, to tabernacle, among us (John 1:14). He gives it with the promise that his living, risen flesh and blood will give life, and not just life to live another day, another week, month or year, but life to live eternally (John 6:53–58).

This is the bread of his flesh and the drink of his blood that would be the means by which Jesus would continue to dwell among his people. It was how he would remain with them.[24] It would be the means by which they would celebrate the New Passover, when God marks his people, his firstborn sons, not for death but for life with the blood of the Lamb who was slain.

How would the beloved disciple, the women at the foot of the cross, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus celebrate the Passover? How would they physically eat the flesh of the Lord's Passover sacrifice? How would they, as firstborn sons by the will of God, be marked for life and not death by the blood of the Lamb of God? They could not, for they were ritually impure by contact with a dead body, the body of the crucified Jesus. Theirs was a double mourning, as Philo stated. They mourned the death of their Lord, and they mourned the inability to keep the Passover.

But they would be marked for life. They would be marked by feeding on the Bread of Life come down from heaven, given by the Father to die on

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[23] The Greek word σάρξ, like the Hebrew word בָּשָׂר, has a wider range of meaning. It can refer to meat, dead flesh, or a corpse. It can be spiritualized in a theological sense to mean sinful flesh. It can refer to man, or that which is opposite of spirit. And it can refer to sexual organs. The Greek word κρέας, however, always refers in the Old Testament to meat that is for eating, sacrificial meat, or a corpse of man or animal. I thank John W. Kleinig for this insight and his help. See Friedrich Baumgärtel, Rudolf Meyer, and Eduard Schweizer, "σάρξ,"in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 7:108–109.

[24] See John 1:14; 2:16–21 and compare to John 14:1–7. Jesus is the tabernacling presence of God on earth. He replaces the temple, which is his Father's house. The Father's house that has many rooms (μοναὶ), or dwellings, is related to the word for remaining (μένω). For more on this, see Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 157–178.

the cross and rise again on the third day. The day he was raised was the day of the Waving of the Omer, the day of the offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest (John 20:1). In Jesus' resurrection, the Bread of Life—the firstfruits of the barley harvest, the same bread multiplied by his word and at his command—was offered to the Father, so that whenever Christians gathered to eat of this heavenly bread, they fed on the living flesh (σάρξ) of the crucified but risen Jesus. And when they did so, it was not illicitly under threat of condemnation, but with the promise of his blessing to mark them as children of God who shall live. By eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood, they received the sign that when the Lord saw it the angel of death would pass over them (Exod 12:13; John 19:34–37).

Thus, the resurrection of Jesus as the firstfruits of the harvest of those who have died can be seen as the ritual act that authorizes the eucharistic consumption of Jesus' flesh and blood as the Bread of Life. He is not the food that perishes, but that which endures and remains unto eternal life, for he is risen from the dead. In this way, Jesus' resurrection institutes and legitimizes the use of his living flesh for consumption. The offering of the firstfruits has been made, and what remains is authorized for consumption. Everything that was left over, all that was gathered together filling twelve baskets full, is now ready for distribution, for this is the food that does not perish but endures to eternal life (John 6:12–13; 6:26–27).

There is now no more need for a Second Passover; there is no more need for the regular Passover. Jesus is the Passover. He is the Lamb of God, the sacrificial flesh offered on the cross, roasted in the Father's wrath against sin, to be eaten unto eternal life.[25] He is the manna and the quail, the heavenly food provided by the Father for life. He is the food that remains when all others have perished. He is the leftover fragments saved up in twelve baskets for future use so that none will perish. All who believe will eat this food and live eternally (John 3:16; 6:39–40). Where death once reigned, now life has overcome death, and the wilderness of Sin is left behind for the Promised Land. This is indeed reason for eucharist. It is the Eucharist—the Word of God becoming flesh in bread and wine, thus becoming flesh in all those who consume it, who receive him in it and believe in him, in order to dwell with his people and to make them children, firstborn sons, of God, who are born, "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13–14). And receiving this, their double mourning is no more. Every tear is wiped away

[25] John's Gospel places the crucifixion on the Day of Preparation of the Feast of Passover so that Jesus' death coincides with the slaughter of the lambs for the feast. See John 1:29; 19:14; 19:31–36 and compare with Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12.

from their eyes (Rev 7:17), for they shall live. They will be raised up on the Last Day (John 6:39–40). They shall see their loved ones again because they have seen the Son, crucified yet risen, and have fed upon his life-giving, risen flesh and blood.

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The Doctrine of the Ministry in Salomon Glassius

Armin H. Wenz

"Am I supposed to know this fellow?" This was the response of a fellow pastor and friend when I described my present research on Salomon Glassius' figurative hermeneutic. Glassius was born in the town of Sondershausen in Thuringia in 1593, went to school in Gotha, and studied philosophy at the University of Jena from 1612 to 1615. In 1615 he went to the University of Wittenberg and had the chance to hear Leonhard Hütter, Friedrich Balduin, Wolfgang Franz, and Balthasar Meisner. A severe fever forced him to return to Jena, where he very soon had the privilege of becoming a student, table fellow, and close friend of Johann Gerhard, who had just recently become a professor at that university. From 1621 to 1625, Glassius served as professor of Hebrew at his alma mater. Thereafter, in 1625, he accepted a call to become superintendent at the town of his birth, Sondershausen. In 1638, he was called to become Johann Gerhard's successor as professor of theology at the University of Jena, as Gerhard himself earnestly desired. But only two years later Glassius returned to the episcopal office, when Duke Ernest the Pious (Ernst der Fromme, 1601–1675) of Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg called him to be *Generalsuperintendent* at Gotha in order to restore the churchly life in his duchy after the turmoils of the Thirty Years' War. Glassius remained in this office until his death on July 27, 1656.

I. Salomon Glassius—Lutheran Theologian: Forgotten and Recently Rediscovered

For too long a time, Salomon Glassius has belonged to the forgotten theologians of the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. Perhaps this is because he never wrote a complete dogmatics such as Hütter, König, Gerhard, Quenstedt, or Hollaz. The familiarity of their names, compared to Glassius,

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Armin H. Wenz, currently Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Oberursel, Germany, has accepted the call to serve as Pastor of St. Maria-Magdalena in Halle; both are congregations of the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church). He also serves as a Lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Oberursel.

might be another indication of the fact that friends and foes of the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy tend to identify this era with dogmatic or systematic theology. But there are many more areas in which theologians of that time made significant and sophisticated contributions. This is especially true for the art of Lutheran hermeneutics, rhetoric, and homiletics. And this is the field to which Glassius contributed most of his written works.

Glassius' *Philologia Sacra*, published between 1623 and 1634, makes him one of the most prominent Lutheran interpreters, standing together with Matthias Flacius (1520–1575),[1] Johann Gerhard (1582–1637),[2] Wolfgang Franzius (1564–1628),[3] and Johann Konrad Dannhauer (1603–1666).[4] Johann Anselm Steiger, church historian at the University of Hamburg, makes the claim that Luther's hermeneutic, which he applied in his biblical exegesis practically, but never had time to expound systematically, "was brought to completion" in the sophisticated "hermeneutica sacra" of Lutheran Orthodoxy in the work of Glassius, Dannhauer, and others.[5] Glassius was not only an undisputed expert in the biblical languages and a profound exegetical researcher and hermeneutical thinker, but he also was engaged in the important task of transferring his results of his endeavors and those of fellow theologians' to the laity, most of whom were not able to read the academic literature written in Latin, which was the language used for most hermeneutical works.

The publication of the so-called *Weimar Electors' Bible* provided occasion for Glassius to transfer such knowledge to the laity. This huge edition of the Luther Bible included verse-by-verse commentaries between the lines, along with content outlines and summaries expounding the theological and practical use of each chapter of the Bible. The driving force behind the edition was Duke Ernst. The commentaries were written by almost thirty Lutheran theologians, including professors from Jena and Erfurt, as well as other theologians serving in the pastoral office. The most

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[1] *Clavis Scripturae*, 1576.

[2] *Tractatus de legitima scripturae sacrae interpretatione*, 1610. See my review in *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 18, no. 1 (2009), 52–54.

[3] *Tractatus novus*, 1619.

[4] *Hermeneutica sacra*, 1654.

[5] Johann Anselm Steiger, *Philologia Sacra. Zur Exegese der Heiligen Schrift im Protestantismus des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, Biblisch-Theologische Studien, vol. 117 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2011), 15. See also Steiger's comments in "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy," *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation*, ed., Magne Saebø, 5 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 2:702.

prominent and leading coworkers in this project were the Jena professors Johann Himmel (1582–1642), Johann Major (1564–1654), and Johann Gerhard, the so-called *johannitica theologorum triga*. They not only served as commentators but also had the task of examining and revising all collected contributions. Johann Gerhard wrote the notes for Genesis, Daniel, and Revelation. Glassius belonged to the narrow circle of this team, cooperating closely with his friend Gerhard.

When Gerhard died before the completion of this monumental work, Glassius succeeded him also in the task of coordinating, revising, and editing, even as he continued to write the commentaries on the poetical books of the Old Testament and the Gospel of John. In his new position, Glassius wrote the extensive German preface to the *Weimar Electors' Bible*, dated on the 110th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, June 25, 1640. Steiger counts this Bible, including Glassius' introduction, as a prominent example of "the Orthodox efforts to open up the textual worlds of the Holy Scriptures for educational purposes."[6] The *Weimar Electors' Bible* saw fourteen editions between 1641 and 1768. Its influence reached well beyond Thuringia, as German emigrants carried it with them to distant lands. Thus, this edition of the Bible was influential in German-speaking Lutheran churches for centuries, evidenced, for example, by a more or less unaltered edition printed jointly in 1877 by the German-American publisher F. Dette from St. Louis and a German printer from Leipzig. C. F. W. Walther, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, crowned this edition with his own foreword, in which he especially recommended Glassius' introduction, which also was reprinted in the new edition. It comes as no surprise to discover that Christopher Mitchell, editor of the current Concordia Commentary Series, makes broad use of Glassius' hermeneutical and exegetical insights in his outstanding commentary on the Song of Songs. A glance at Mitchell's index proves the very important role Glassius plays in his commentary.[7]

Mitchell's commentary brings us directly to our topic when he writes concerning Song of Songs 8:11–12 that

> Luther's exposition of 8:11–12 considers it to be among those biblical passages in which the kingdom and people of God are metaphorically depicted as a vineyard: "Solomon is looking forward . . . to the king-

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[6] Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy," 746. Also note the reference to the *Kurfürsten-Bibel* on p. 747.

[7] With thanks to Walther and Mitchell, I can now tell my friend who asked me whether he was supposed to know Glassius that Missouri Synod theologians are well acquainted with that champion of orthodoxy, Lutheran hermeneutics, and exegetics.

> dom of Christ, in which the Word of grace would be spread abroad throughout the whole wide world . . . . However tiny their (Solomon's and Israel's) kingdom is in comparison with other gentile realms, it is the seedbed of the future kingdom of Christ. This vineyard . . . will have its own husbandmen—*apostles and other ministers of the Word*. Through them the Holy Spirit will adorn the churches with various gifts."
>
> Glassius follows in Luther's train but adds more detail and Scripture references. The vineyard is God's (OT and NT) church, upon whom God has lavished much work, expecting to receive from it the fruit of the true, living faith (Is 5:2; Jn 15:2, 5, 8). The Christian church will be the spiritual seed of Abraham, gathered from all peoples (Gen 17:5; Rom 4:16–17). *The caretakers are those whom God stationed to watch over souls* (Ezek 3:17; Heb 13:17; Is 61:5), *his apostles and ministers of the holy Gospel, who labor in unadulterated doctrine and holy lives* (2 Tim 2:15; 1 Tim 4:12). The fruit brought forth by the divine Word they proclaim includes the grace of God, heavenly wisdom, peace in the heart and conscience (2 Cor 1:12), and the hope of eternal glory (1 Thess 2:19). The thousand silver shekels represent praise and thanks rendered to the heavenly Solomon. Those workers who remain faithful and true in the spiritual work of the vineyard to the end will receive the commendation from the mouth of their Lord (1 Cor 4:5; Mt 25, 21, 23) and a hundredfold reward (Mt 19:29)."[8]

This paraphrase of Glassius' commentary already intimates his doctrine of the ministry. Like Luther, Glassius is able to name "apostles and other ministers of the Word" in one breath, differentiating between them without separating them one from another. It is also clear that there is no church or vineyard without the ministers as workers. Their task is depicted by the expressions "caretakers," "watchers," and "ministers of the Gospel." The faithfulness demanded of them in the fulfillment of these tasks covers both their doctrine and life. They are not only to serve as teachers and preachers but also as examples for the faithful. Their faithfulness brings about many fruits, both in this earthly and in the heavenly life. In Glassius' German text, we also find a hint of the cross and the temptations the ministers are exposed to in their service, but which nevertheless cannot take away the aforementioned benefits.[9]

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[8] Christopher W. Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 1273; emphasis added.

[9] Glassius comments on the "fruits" received by the ministers (Song 8:12) reminding the reader that these fruits are received from God's mild hand only under many experiences of cross and persecutions (Mark 10:30; 2 Cor 4:1, 4:8–10).

II. The Theologian and Minister of the Word as a Sacred "Philologian"

Gottlieb Theophil Spitzel (1639–1691) in his *Templum Honoris*, a collection of biographies and bibliographies of about fifty prominent theologians and philologians from the age of Orthodoxy, calls Glassius a *sacer philologus*, that is, a holy philologian.[10] This very nicely summarizes Glassius' theological approach and also hints at one aspect of his understanding of the ministry, namely, how for theological reasons every pastor as a minister of the gospel of Christ necessarily has to be a philologian, someone who is in love with the Word of God (*ein Liebhaber des Wortes Gottes*),[11] both in its written form, which is the foundation of his ministry, as well as in its oral form, which is the very focus of his ministry.

The foundations and implications of this philological approach are put forth by Glassius himself in the third chapter of his edifying work *Arbor Vitae* (Tree of Life) of 1629. Here, Glassius calls God a *bonum sui communicativum*, that is, a "good that communicates itself."[12] God's very essence and will are hidden from sinful natural man. Knowledge of God, therefore, is only possible if God reveals himself. God, however, not only reveals himself, but in Christ and through the Holy Spirit saves humans from sin and damnation by communicating himself to them. Holy Writ in this context is the very means, ordained by God,[13] in which God reveals and communicates himself. The Bible, as a means of God's revelation and self-communication, thus reflects and represents Christ himself, who is called the "Book of Life" in whom all faithful children of God are inscribed from eternity and ordained (*verordnet*) to eternal life.[14] This Book of Life,

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[10] Gottlieb Theophil Spitzel, *Templum Honoris* (Augsburg: Gottlieb Goebel, 1673), 218.

[11] Salomon Glassius, *Prophetischer Spruch-Postill*, 4 vols. (Nuremberg: Wolfgang Endter, 1642–1654). 1:132, 158, 605ff; 2:234ff, 376 (*Liebhaber der himmlischen Weisheit*), 608, 623, 686, 734, 853; 3: Preface, *passim*, 54, 189 194; 4: Preface, *passim*, 194, 734, 765. To be a *Liebhaber des Wortes*, that is, "a lover of the Word," is an equivalent expression of being a *Liebhaber Gottes* ("a lover of God") and the opposite of being a *Liebhaber der Welt* ("a lover of the world") in Glassius' works. Note that the prefaces in these volumes are without page numbers. Hereafter abbreviated *PSP*.

[12] Salomon Glassius, *Arbor Vitae: Der Baum des Lebens, Jesus Christus, aus göttlicher Schrifft durch die Gnade des heiligen Geistes vorgestellet, und zu tröstlicher Betrachtung, unnd nöthiger Lebenserbawung in fünff Büchlein verfasset* (Jena: Tobias Steinmann, 1629), Book 2, ch. 17, 136. Glassius here refers to 2 Peter 1:3–4.

[13] The oft repeated expression *verordnet* (ordained) in the following quotes refers to the eternal election of the faithful as well as to God's self-revelation and the Spirit's saving work through the means of grace, which are "ordained" by God himself.

[14] *Arbor Vitae*, Book 3, ch. 1, 200.

according to Glassius, is—as can be clearly seen in the unanimous testimony of the Holy Scriptures—not an unmethodical book, but a very methodical one (*nicht LIBER AMETHODUS, SED METHODICUS MAXIME*), since it is written with a specific divine order.[15] God has ordained his elect to eternal life through given means that he himself has chosen in order that those should have eternal life who through the power of the Holy Spirit are drawn to the Son of God, receive true faith from his very word, and remain in it to the end.[16] The biblical "method" displayed here includes the office of the ministry, since this office also is ordained (*verordnet*) by God himself. This is true not only generally speaking but also specifically for each ordained servant of the word, and thus reveals Glassius' self-understanding as a holy philologian when he writes:

> Regarding what has just been expounded about the true, blessed use and study of Holy Scripture and about the saving knowledge of Christ, which flows from the same, I have up to now, in the teaching office in which the dear Lord has put and ordained me (*gesetzet vnd verordnet hat*), found myself obliged to attend to this study and use of Scripture with diligence and faithfulness. And on this basis, I, by the aid of God's good Spirit, have earnestly tried to find Jesus Christ in his revealed word and Holy Scripture through diligent (re-)search, not just for my own soul (which is a great gift of grace and also a most holy example of life), but also in order to present and inculcate him for others, whom I am obliged to edify and to guide to eternal life.[17]

As a lover (*Liebhaber*) of the word, the minister of the word has a twofold task in the context of the divine *methodus*, a task that is identical with the method of legitimate biblical interpretation: when reading, examining, and interpreting the Bible, he has to search for Christ who is the central scope of the Scriptures. According to the main use (*Nutzen*) or function of the Scriptures as means of the Holy Spirit, the biblical texts, which preach Christ clearly and dearly (*klar und lieblich*), must be proclaimed to the present hearers in a correspondingly clear and dear or edifying manner in order to create and sustain saving faith in Christ. The *Logos* and the Book of Life, which is Christ, shall as the main topic of the Scriptures turn into a *logos emphytos*, the implanted word (Jas 1:21) in the heart of the faithful through the service of the philological theologian, and thus the Book of Life shall be written again in the living hearts of the believers.

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[15] *Arbor Vitae*, Book 3, ch. 2, 205, 207.

[16] *Arbor Vitae*, Book 3, ch. 3, 207.

[17] *Arbor Vitae*, Preface (6–7, no page numbers in the print). English translation is this author's.

Glassius in his writings was most eagerly engaged in both pillars of this *methodus biblica*, this biblical method. In his *Philologia Sacra* he examined the very multitude of rhetorical means the Spirit uses to proclaim Christ in the Bible. In his homiletical writings, he himself showed in an exemplary manner how the biblical riches can and should be applied to the hearers of his and of other ages by the minister of the word.

The *methodus* of the Book of Life as discovered and presented by Glassius stands on two pillars, both of which are ordained by God. The first pillar is Scripture as the ordained means of God's revelation and self-communication as source and foundation of sacred philology. The second pillar is the office of the ministry, or, as Glassius calls it in passages we shall soon expound, the "ministry of the Holy Spirit." This ministry is the goal and purpose of sacred philology, since it is the divinely ordained means for the proclamation and distribution of God's biblical self-revelation. Revelation and communication of man's salvation are as inseparably intertwined as are Scripture and the office of the ministry. As the Bible is called God's book of comfort and doctrine (*Trost= vnd Lehrbuch Gottes*) by Glassius,[18] so the office of the apostles and the ministers of the church as their successors, can be labeled as an office of comfort and teaching (*Trost= vnd Lehr=Ampt*).[19] The divinely ordained eternal election of the faithful, as it is generally proclaimed in the Scriptures, is specifically distributed through the office of the ministry. It is quite obvious that the biblical *methodus* expounded by Glassius in his work *Arbor Vitae* can be read as an extensive explication of Article V of the Augsburg Confession.

III. The Office of the Ministry in Glassius' *Prophetische Spruch-Postill*

Between 1642 and 1654, Glassius published his *Prophetische Spruch-Postill* in four volumes (hereafter abbreviated as *PSP*).[20] This massive homiletical work is based on sermons that Glassius preached in Gotha. Motivated by the surfeit of New Testament passages that speak about the importance of the prophets in the Old Testament, Glassius interrupted the customary practice of preaching on the Gospels in order to preach on prophetic texts. To highlight the unity of the Scriptures, Glassius does not ignore the Gospels of the respective holy days, but rather compares both

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[18] *PSP* 1:830.

[19] *PSP* 2:81.

[20] Volumes 1, 2, and 4 of the *PSP* are accessible in the Rare Book Room of the library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

texts for the benefit of the Christian hearers.[21] For most of the appointed gospels of the Sundays or holy days, Glassius presents two sermons on two different prophetic texts (see Appendix). In each case, the first sermon is based on a text from the book of Isaiah, followed by a second sermon from another prophetic book of the Old Testament. The consistent use of Isaiah for each Sunday and festival demonstrates that also for Glassius Isaiah truly is a gospel book in which one can find the totality of Christian doctrine.

The first volume of Glassius' sermons covers the festive holidays of the church year, including all of the apostles' days and other days such as the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. The second and third volumes cover all the other Sundays of the church year. The fourth volume presents sermons on prophetic texts not yet covered in the first three volumes, here without special reference to specific days of the church year. Since Glassius speaks in his prefaces about the listeners of his sermons who asked him to publish them, we can assume that the sermons presented in the books correspond to sermons preached by Glassius. But given that the printed versions include extensive Latin quotations from all eras of church history, it his hardly plausible that they were delivered exactly as printed. Therefore, it is likely that Glassius published these sermons primarily for his fellow pastors, whom he wanted to encourage to dig more deeply and extensively into the Old Testament in their proclamation as guided by the New Testament itself.[22]

This is confirmed by the observation that Glassius points to important sections from Paul's pastoral letters in prominent passages of his introductions to his *Spruch-Postill*. Toward the end of the preface to the first volume, he refers to 2 Timothy 1:6, where Paul encourages Timothy to "stir up the gift of God," which is a reminder of his ordination.[23] Glassius points out that those called and ordained into the ministry are to stir up this gift by constantly using und exercising the divine, saving word entrusted to them.[24] In the preface to the fourth volume, Glassius takes up 1 Timothy 4:13–16 and 2 Timothy 1:13–14 in order to admonish his fellow "teachers of the church" to keep faithfully the "manna" of the divine Word and to pass it on to succeeding generations. Glassius then discusses the ministry extensively in the volumes of his *Spruch-Postill* that provide sermons for the apostles' days and for Sundays like third Advent, Septuagesima, Laetare,

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[21] *PSP* 1: Preface.

[22] *PSP* 1: Preface.

[23] *PSP* 4:722.

[24] *PSP* 1: Preface.

Quasimodogeniti, Misericordias Domini, Exaudi, and the fifth, eighth, and sixteenth Sundays after Trinity. Glassius' understanding of the ministry on the basis of these sermons shall now be examined.

The Divine Preaching Office of Christ

The holy Trinity is the source and origin of the office of the ministry. Throughout salvation history, God presents himself as a preacher, communicating through the means of his revealed word, asking mankind to listen to him and teaching them the way of salvation.[25] God speaks, preaches, and invites mankind to listen to him not only through David, but through all the patriarchs, prophets, priests, teachers, and ministers of the word in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament, in which beautiful words of divine promises can be read.[26]

In this context, Jesus Christ as the Son—sent by God as the anointed one, the Messiah—is the foremost incumbent of that very office. When discussing the authority of the office of the ministry in his sermon for Quasimodogeniti on Isaiah 52:7–10 in combination with the Holy Gospel from John 20:19–31, Glassius points out that only the certainty of its divine institution guarantees the dignity and majesty of the ministry. This divine institution can be perceived biblically in both the prophetic predictions of the ministry in the Old Testament and in the divine sending of the messengers. Both aspects refer to the ministry of Christ himself, of the apostles sent by him, and of the later preachers of the church as the apostles' successors.[27]

Christ connects and even unites his own sending with that of his apostles' (John 20:21).[28] Only for Christ, however, is it true that he had preached also in the Old Testament. On the basis of the doctrine of Christ's eternal pre-existence and of the ubiquity of the divine *Logos*, it was most plausible for Glassius to perceive Christ as speaking and preaching already

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[25] Refering to the ways the Lord guides his people (according to Psalm 25:4–5), Glassius writes that he does so not without means (*nicht ohne Mittel*), "but through his holy revealed word and its proclamation. Thus he presents himself as preacher and calls human beings, including all of us, to himself, in order to listen to him in his Psalms and to learn from them as from the other divine writings the way of God that leads to eternal life." *PSP* 4:556.

[26] *PSP* 4:556.

[27] *PSP* 2:682–683.

[28] *PSP* 2:683: Glassius writes concerning this verse that Christ here closely associates his and his apostles' sending.

in Old Testament passages.[29] In a sermon for Laetare, Glassius calls Christ the teacher of the church who speaks in Isaiah 50:4.[30] In the sermon on Isaiah 52:7–10, Glassius makes the point that Christ himself announces in v. 6 that he will arrive in due time as the promised Messiah and talk to the people.[31] The fulfillment of this promise is reported in Hebrews 1:1–2 and John 1:18. Immediately after the promise made in Isaiah 52:6 that Christ himself will come and speak, there follows the promise of the messengers who bring good tidings on the mountains (Isa 52:7). From this it can be clearly seen that when Christ would complete his own visible preaching office on earth, his beloved apostles should follow him according to his command in the very same teaching office. Through this chosen band, he would proclaim the gospel to the whole world, thereby calling men to the heavenly kingdom, whose word and office (as pertains to teaching and distributing the sacraments) would last until the end of the world on earth as is indicated Isaiah 52:10.[32]

When the divine command to preach is heard in Isaiah 40:1–11, this also concerns all the ministers of the divine word,[33] the priests and prophets in the Old Testament, the apostles, evangelists, bishops, shepherds, and teachers in the New Testament, all of whom are called and installed by God to preach and to comfort. The most prominent among these ministers, though, is Christ himself, whose Spirit was in the prophets (1 Pet 1:11) and who in the days of his flesh faithfully fulfilled his preaching office, as he himself announced in Isaiah 61:1[34] and 63:1.[35] When Christ says: "I have come in my Father's name" (John 5:43), he makes it clear that he was called

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[29] Cf. Steiger, *Philologia Sacra*, 59–60 (John 1:1; Hebr 1:1, 2; 1 Cor 10:4).

[30] *PSP* 2:592. Isaiah has: "The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught" (50:4).

[31] "Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am" (Isa 52:6).

[32] *PSP* 2:684, with reference to Isaiah 52:10: "The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our GOD."

[33] *PSP* 3:183.

[34] "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

[35] "Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.'"

and sent into the world by the Father.[36] The difference between Christ and all other incumbents of the preaching office can also be highlighted by the contrast Glassius draws between the angel in Isaiah 6 who brings forgiveness to Isaiah as a servant and tool of God (*diakonikoos*), and Christ, who has the power and authority to forgive sins *autokratorikoos*, that is as the very Lord himself.[37]

Some of the aforementioned quotations already indicate that for Glassius Christ's preaching office goes far beyond his earthly ministry as the incarnate Son of God. It includes the prophets preceding him and the apostles and ministers succeeding him. This is confirmed in another sermon, where Glassius, commenting on Isaiah 63:1b ("It is I, speaking in righteousness"), writes,

> He spoke and taught both in his own person, when he walked on earth in the state of his humiliation, as well as later on through his beloved apostles, whom he sent out into the world to preach to all nations, who served as Christ's mouth, so to speak, and through whose word he brought about people's salvation, as it thereafter and at all times is the case with all faithful ministers of his Word.[38]

In a sermon on the call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6), combined with the parable of the royal wedding feast (Matt 22:1–14), Glassius writes that Isaiah was one of the servants sent out by the king in the parable. According to St. Paul (Acts 28:25), it was the Holy Spirit who called Isaiah to preach in Isaiah 6:9–10. This is the very same Spirit who, according to Acts 20:28, installed teachers and preachers to be bishops in order to shepherd the church. Therefore, according the Glassius, when God speaks of himself in the plural (*in pluralis numero*) in Isaiah 6:8, as in Genesis 1:26, we see the three persons of the Trinity in conversation. This is also the case in the parable that ascribes to the Father the preparation of a wedding feast for his Son. Since the Holy Spirit, who spoke through the prophets (1 Pet 1:11) is the Spirit of Christ, Christ was the one who called the prophets—among them Isaiah—as well as the apostles later on and sent them into the world, equipping them with the gift of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to the nations.[39]

Glassius draws the conclusion that thus we get to know the Lord himself as the very holder of the office of the ministry, who truly is the

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[36] *PSP* 3:217.

[37] *PSP* 3:506.

[38] *PSP* 2:592.

[39] *PSP* 3:524.

highly honored Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To all those who despise this ministry and its incumbents, Glassius issues the warning that they should ponder whom they despise and what their reward will be.[40] In another sermon, the Gotha Superintendent writes, "The highest president and ruler of the office of the ministry is the Spirit of God, indeed, the Trinity,"[41] as can be seen when all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in John 15:26–27, where Christ also speaks about the calling of the apostles to be his witnesses.

The Office of the Holy Spirit

The foundation of the office of the ministry in the New Testament is the calling of the apostles by Christ himself (Matt 4:18–22; John 1:35–51),[42] his sending them into the world (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46–47),[43] and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as promised by Christ. The apostles refer to this very calling, through Christ himself, when they preach the gospel.[44] Because Christ does not call his ministers without equipping them with his Holy Spirit, and because this very Spirit himself is promised to work and speak through these ministers, Glassius frequently speaks of the ministry of the New Testament, which unlike the ministry of the Old Testament in a narrow sense is no longer local, but universal,[45] as the *ministry or office of the Holy Spirit***.**

The calling by Christ himself and the sending and equipping of his called ones with the Holy Spirit thus is the foundation both of the inspiration and canonization of the New Testament. Likewise included is the oral proclamation of his servants that continues after the death of the apostles until the end of the days.[46]

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[40] *PSP* 3:524.

[41] *PSP* 2:862.

[42] *PSP* 1:577–578.

[43] *PSP* 1:580.

[44] See the quotation of Acts 10:42 in 1:580, "And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead."

[45] *PSP* 2:815 (concerning Jer 31:34: "And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.") For Glassius, this passage indicates the universality and permanence of the evangelical preaching office (*des Evangelischen Predig-Ampts*), both in its local and in its temporal dimension.

[46] *PSP* 2:105. Christ, as the angel of the covenant, reveals God's counsel and will (John 1:18), and sends his disciples (John 20:21) as he is sent by the Father in order to

Since the command to preach continues also in the church, the "office of the Spirit," that is, the office of the New Testament, comprises not only the apostles but also the pastors and bishops as their successors in the Christian church (*der Amptsfolgern in der Christlichen Kirchen*).[47] In a sermon on Isaiah 40:6–8 for the day of St. Andrew, Glassius asks whether the commandment to preach, issued in Isaiah 40:6 and fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament, is not heard any longer after the death of the apostles? The answer is that also in the Christian church the divine voice speaks: "Preach." The same person who gave the apostles the command to teach all nations added his promise to be with them to the end of the world. From this promise follows that Christ is also with us and that he builds his kingdom of grace also among us who live at the end times of the world and teach and hear his word. Christ is present among us as the one who sends shepherds and teachers who proclaim and spread his holy word for the salvation of men (Eph 4:11–12; 2 Cor 5:20). All servants of the divine word who are properly called and installed are incumbents of the office of the Spirit, which is explicitly mentioned in 2 Corinthians 3:6. They are installed by the Spirit through a proper call in the orthodox church to be bishops and shepherds of the church of God (Acts 20:28), and to be Christ's servants and stewards of the divine mysteries (1 Cor 4:2).[48]

In a sermon on Malachi 3:1 for the Third Sunday in Advent,[49] Glassius refers to the biblical motif in both the Old and New Testaments that God's messengers and servants in the preaching office are called מַלְאָכִים (angels). Angels of the church are the Old Testament prophets (Mal 2:7; Hag 1:13)

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proclaim God's counsel (Acts 20:28). This sending includes the writing of the apostles (1 John 1:3, 4) because through their word faith should be received and preserved (John 17:20; Rom 1:16). Thus Christ, who on account of his ascension fills all things, continues until the Last Day to send and install pastors and teachers in his church for the edifying of his spiritual body, that is, the church (Eph 4:10–11; 2 Cor 5:20).

[47] *PSP* 2:682.

[48] *PSP* 2:81. The command to preach in Isaiah 40:6 concerns all faithful servants in the Christian church who are the apostles' successors in the preaching office; *PSP* 1:580–581. Glassius here demonstrates that according to Christ's own promises he still sends shepherds, preachers, and teachers through whom he continually preaches his gospel and rules his kingdom of grace until the end of the world (Isa 40:8, Matt 28:18.20, Eph 4:11–12, 2 Cor 5:20, 3:6, Acts 20:28, 1 Cor 4:2). These preachers are installed as bishops by the Holy Spirit by means of an orderly call issued in the orthodox church (*vermittels des ordentlichen Beruffs in der rechtgläubigen Kirchen*). See the end of the very long paragraph on *PSP* 1:581 with references to 2 Cor 3:6, Acts 20:28, and 1 Cor 4:2.

[49] "'Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming,' says the LORD of hosts."

and the New Testament bishops and preachers (Rev 1:20; 2:1, 8, 12).[50] The difference between the church angels in the first group, which includes prophets and apostles, and the second group, which comprises bishops and pastors, is the way they received their callings. Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles were called without external means immediately by Christ or the Trinity. Pastors and bishops, however, receive their calling intermediately (*mittelbarer weise*).[51]

Since both groups can be called "angels," Glassius takes this as a clear indication of God's grace and mercy in that he not only wanted to save mankind through his Son but also wanted to have this high work of our salvation proclaimed by humans as mediating persons (*Mittels-Personen*).[52] In a group of sermons on Ezekiel 33 added to the first volume of the *Spruch-Postill*, Glassius points out that it is not without reason that God does not want to use angels or other creatures in the ministry, since those who are to be saved are humans themselves. Therefore, God points us to humans, through whom, according to his intention, he wants the way to eternal salvation to be proclaimed.[53] Thus, the Lord of hosts rules not only the host of the heavenly angels but also the host of the church angels, which is the church and primarily the servants of the word,[54] as can be seen in Psalm 68:11.[55] In these passages Glassius takes up the anti-enthusiast principles of the Lutheran Confessions by pointing to the written word of God, as well as to the office of teaching and preaching, as an expression of the very same divine will to bring salvation through means that shall not be despised.[56]

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[50] *PSP* 2:93–94.

[51] Glassius points out concerning John the Baptist (John 1:6) that he was not called intermediately as the preachers in the Christian church, but without means through a special and miraculous inspiration of the Holy Trinity; *PSP* 2:97–98.

[52] *PSP* 2:99.

[53] *PSP* 1:1024–1025. Glassius here writes concerning God's naming his servant Ezekiel as "Son of man": "This is not without reason, since it indicates that the Lord God in this holy office and task wanted to use not the service of angels or other creatures, but of humans" (2 Cor 4:7). Glassius here also refers to Luke 16:19–31, where the rich man in the furnace of hell is not satisfied with the human messengers of the Old Testament.

[54] *PSP* 1:1025.

[55] Luther translated: "The Lord gave the word with great droves of evangelists" (*mit großen Scharen Evangelisten*).

[56] *PSP* 2:104–105: "Not in an enthusiastic manner does he comes to us and illumine us—without means—as it happened before through visions and dreams, but through given means, to which he has bound us and without which he does not bestow our eternal salvation on us." See also *PSP* 2:810.

Another biblical concept or motif that denotes the office of the Spirit, besides the "church angel," is the office of the prophet. "Prophet" in the Bible can mean two things. First, it can mean persons, immediately called by God himself to proclaim his will in law and gospel and to proclaim things to come, especially concerning the promised Messiah and his church. This office can still be found in the New Testament (e.g., Acts 11:18; 21:9). Second, it indicates the office that we have in the present age, namely, the prophets whose task it is to interpret Scripture and to teach the church, since they have received the divine gift of explaining it.[57]

More passages that discuss the "office of the Spirit" in the same context can be found in Romans 10:14, combined with John 20 and Isaiah 52:7–10.[58] In a sermon for Misericordias Domini on Isaiah 40:9–11 and John 10, Glassius expounds on the divine order of grace (*die Gnaden Ordnung Gottes*)[59] in which Christ's saving work is the primary cause of our salvation (*causa principalis & meritoria*); the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake is the formal cause of our salvation (*causa formalis justificationis*); and the word of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19) is the effective tool (*causa organica*) through which God justifies humans. Finally, the ambassadors or messengers (2 Cor 5:20) are the persons through whom God himself proclaims his word (*causa ministerialis*) and creates saving faith in the hearers (*causa organica ex parte hominis*, the receiving "organ" in man)."[60]

Criteria for the Authenticity of the New Testament Office of the Ministry

Already in the Bible it can be observed that there are also false prophets and ministers of the word.[61] It is, therefore, of utmost importance to shape the ministry of the church in accordance with the Scriptures, that is, in conformity with the true prophets and apostles of whom the ministers of the church are to be successors.

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[57] *PSP* 3:216. For the second meaning, Glassius refers to Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:28–29, 14:29, 32, 37; Ephesians 3:5, 4:11.

[58] *PSP* 2:682.

[59] *PSP* 2:812.

[60] *PSP* 2:811–812.

[61] Glassius discusses the false prophets or ministers broadly in his sermon on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity on Jeremiah 23:19–22 and the Gospel text from Matthew 7:12–23 (*PSP* 3:216–220).

The Preparation of the Ministers

Since the immediate calling of ministers, prophets, and apostles has come to the end,[62] and since a true minister cannot be without an external divine call, this calling of ministers in the post-apostolic age must be issued by the church-at-large. Citing Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 2:2, and Titus 1:5, Glassius recognizes such calls, externally and intermediately issued in the church (*der äußerliche Beruff . . . durch Mittel in der Kirchen*), to be divine and valid (*ein Göttlicher Beruff*).[63]

This external calling begins with the prayer of the church, asking God as the Lord of the church and the Lord of the ministry for workers in the harvest (Matt 9:37–38).[64] Even the apostles did not begin from scratch but were called into a field where others had labored before, as Jesus himself spoke: "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor" (John 4:38). For Glassius, this implies that there was the highest conformity in doctrine between Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles,[65] only that the former taught and preached the Messiah who was to come and the latter the Messiah who had been manifested in the flesh.[66]

Such conformity also is demanded concerning the ministers of the church who therefore are to be instructed in the true understanding of Holy Scripture and in the salutary doctrine of faith and Christian life.[67] No one should be admitted to the ministry on the basis of money, relationships, popularity, or other devious ways of intrusion, but only those who prove their diligence in searching the Scriptures (John 5:39; 1 Tim 4:13–16).[68]

This conformity not only extends to conformity in doctrine, but also to observance of the model that was handed down by the holy apostles in their writings. This model prescribes that only those are to be considered true prophets, that is, teachers of the divine word, who through the cooperation of the church's three estates were properly called in the name of the Holy Trinity and ordained and consecrated into the preaching

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[62] *PSP* 3:219.

[63] *PSP* 4:533.

[64] *PSP* 4:533.

[65] *PSP* 4:533 (Acts 26:22; 1 Pet 1:10–12).

[66] *PSP* 4:534.

[67] *PSP* 3:219.

[68] *PSP* 4:722.

office.[69] Anyone asserting himself into the ministry without a public and valid call of the church, feigning an inner call only, is to be considered a false prophet.[70] Glassius, quoting Luther's tract "*Von Schleichern und Winckelpredigern*," points out that the Holy Spirit does not creep as the snakes do, but publicly flies down from heaven like a dove.[71] He adds more thoughts of the reformer, such as Luther's musings on Jesus' words, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me" (John 7:16). Here Glassius concludes that all misfortune (in the church) can be traced back to disobedience toward two things, the office and the word, namely, the properly ordered call to teach and purity of doctrine, noting that such disobedience is the case among the enthusiasts.[72] Glassius concludes that this should serve as an admonition to all those who intend to serve the Lord and his church in the holy office. Even if they are prepared, they should not initiate anything without a legitimate call, but wait for a definite call, so that they might not run without being called in an orderly way and thus imitate the false prophets.[73] The promise to bring forth fruit is valid only when there is a legitimate call, since our Lord Jesus Christ is only one, who himself teaches and creates fruit through his servants. But the one who teaches without a proper call teaches both to his own and to his hearers' disadvantage, since Christ is not with him.[74] Where there is no heavenly call, the feet of the messengers are not beautiful (Isa 52:7); they are to be considered an abominition before God (Jer 23:14, 21).[75]

The Tasks of the Ministers and the Benefits of Their Ministry

The ministers of the word are to stir up the gift they received in their calling (1 Tim 4:14) by diligently observing the prophetic word (2 Pet 1:16, 19) and by observing the salutary words of Christ himself and the doctrine

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[69] *PSP* 3:219; 1:581.

[70] *PSP* 3:219.

[71] *PSP* 3:220.

[72] *PSP* 3:221. Glassius quotes from a sermon by Luther on John 7:16 (cf. WA 33:359, 18ff).

[73] *PSP* 3:526; 3:221; 1:685.

[74] *PSP* 3:222. Glassius here refers to Luther's *Lectures on Galatians* (1519, WA 2:454ff), cf. AE 27:167: "Nobody produces fruit by means of the Word unless he is called to teach without wishing for it. For One is our Teacher, Jesus Christ (Matt. 23:10). He alone, through His called servants, teaches and produces fruit. But the man who teaches without being called does so to his own harm and that of his hearers, because Christ is not with him."

[75] *PSP* 2:685.

of the true faith (1 Tim 6:3–4).[76] Thus they are obliged to follow the example of the apostles by teaching and passing on only what they themselves have received from Christ and from his Spirit.[77] This takes place when they observe the *sola scriptura* principle and draw their thoughts and words from Scripture alone.[78] Glassius describes this process of receiving and passing on the word with the image of miners' work, an image many teachers of the church find implicit in John 5:39. As miners use all their strength and knowledge to bring to light treasures hidden in the depths of the earth and make them usable for mankind, so does the minister handle the Scriptures.[79]

Ministers are not to engage in useless fighting (*Wortkriege*). Their preaching not only takes place in word but also in deed, which is a daily proclamation that takes on the shape of an exemplary life and a faithful lifestyle.[80] As can be seen in Jonah and other biblical preachers, however, ministers of the word are also sinners in need of repentance and forgiveness. Inclusion of these figures in the biblical witness is not that present-day ministers would imitate them but that they would flee from sin (*non ad imitationem, sed cautelam*),[81] and thus give no cause for God's enemies to blaspheme, as happened in the case of David.[82] Glassius calls his fellow ministers to research and meditate on Scripture more diligently, to pray more intensively and eagerly, and to live a more God-pleasing life so that they may serve as stars of the churches (Rev 1:16, 20), as well as keep the order as defined by Paul (1 Tim 3:2–5).[83] Thus, they shall have as permanent symbol and memorial (*Symbolum vnd stetiges Gedenckwort*)[84] what is said in Isaiah 21:8 and Habakkuk 2:1. To be an "ambassador for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20) is not only a name of honor (*nomen honoris*), but also a name of duty (*nomen laboris*).[85]

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[76] *PSP* 1:582.

[77] Glassius quotes Romans 15:18: "For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed."

[78] *PSP* 1:588 (cf. 2 Tim 1:13–14).

[79] *PSP* 2:383. Glassius here combines John 5:39 with a reference to Job 39:32.

[80] *PSP* 1:583 (cf. 1 Pet 5:2–3; 1 Tim 4:12–16).

[81] *PSP* 2:398.

[82] *PSP* 2:575.

[83] *PSP* 1:631.

[84] *PSP* 1:631.

[85] *PSP* 2:94.

In his sermon for Quasimodogeniti on Isaiah 52:7–10 and John 20:19–31, Glassius systematically displays the use (*Nutzen*) and effect of the ministry. Concerning their duties, Glassius applies the prophetic text by naming teaching, praising, and watching. The ministers are to teach the word by comforting the repentant and by terrifying the unrepentant. They are to praise God with word and life, as Paul does in Romans 15:5–6, and they are to watch over believers and unbelievers.[86] Furthermore, he talks about the character or manner with which ministers are to conduct these duties: universally (*universaliter)*, fervently (*ferventer*), visibly (*luculenter*), humbly (*humiliter*), and unanimously (*concorditer*). With all these qualities they follow the example of the apostles. First, they must be aware that their ministry, as part of the general mission of the church, implies both a public and universal horizon. Second, their zeal and seriousness in the conduct of their office must be visible to everyone.[87] Third, just as the gospel is clear, so also their proclamation must be clear, distinct, and comprehensible.[88] Fourth, they shall conduct their ministry not for the sake of earthly honor and advantage, but in humility, as servants according to the example of the apostles. Fifth, true, heartfelt love, peacefulness, and harmony shall shape the community of the ministers as they walk in one Spirit and in the same steps (2 Cor 12:18).[89] Concerning the *objectum* of the ministry, that which the ministers are to deal with, Glassius makes the distinction between the *objectum reale sive personale* and the *objectum verbale*. The first is Christ, whom alone the ministers shall preach (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2). The second is the gospel, which they are to preach according to its very character as a beautiful, loving, and graceful word that brings divine goods and eternal peace of the heart.[90]

In this regard, it is the task of the ministers to divide (*teilen*) correctly the Scriptures by preaching law and gospel, to preach and administer the sacraments,[91] that is, to distribute the bread of life, which is Christ and his merit, and the water of life, which is the word of God,[92] and thus to call and bring their hearers to repentance and to faith in Christ by applying the word in all its aspects, in doctrine, reproof, comfort, improvement, and correction (Rom 15:4; 2 Tim 3:16).[93]

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[86] *PSP* 2:687–690.

[87] *PSP* 2:692.

[88] *PSP* 2:693.

[89] *PSP* 2:693–695.

[90] *PSP* 2:695–698.

[91] *PSP* 3:150.

[92] *PSP* 3:153.

[93] *PSP* 3:441.

Not only Scripture and doctrine must be their focus but also the hearers over whom the ministers—like the prophets and apostles—serve as ordained watchers (*verordneter Wächter*),[94] helping them to remain in the true faith and live a corresponding life, and protecting them from errors both in life and in doctrine.[95] Because they are ordained watchers, the servants of the church are also called "bishops," those who shall oversee and watch over the church by taking care of salutary doctrine, by conducting their office without fear and without partiality or respect of persons, and by observing the times, especially the times of danger for the church and the souls.[96] Scripture compares the office of the Spirit with the voice of the trumpet. As spiritual trumpets, the ministers call people into the assembly of the church, they call the faithful to spiritual war against the devil, and they announce times of worship and praise of God.[97] At all times, they must issue warnings to those going astray,[98] and they must comfort those who repent of their sins and errors.[99]

As the heavenly angels guide and keep the faithful, so too is this the duty of the ministers as the church's angels, as Glassius points out by quoting a gloss from Luther.[100] Concerning the usefulness of the ministry of the word, the Bible very often uses the imagery of rain and thaw, indicating that through his servants God creates faith and makes it grow in his people, prepares them for good works, and comforts them in times of famine, temptation, and need in order, finally, to grant them eternal life in his heavenly glory, which is the very best and most valuable fruit of the word of Christ and of the office of the Spirit.[101] The angel who brings God's absolution to Isaiah (Isa 6:6–7) serves as an image for the benefit of God's ambassadors, who, according to the divine command, bring burning coals to us in that they preach Christ crucified, and thus the way to salvation, absolving, comforting, edifying us for life eternal, which is God's order that must not be overthrown by the dreams of the enthusiasts.[102]

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[94] *PSP* 1:629.

[95] *PSP* 1:630 (cf. Ezek 3:17 and Heb 13:17).

[96] *PSP* 4:560–563.

[97] *PSP* 4:563–564.

[98] *PSP* 1:630–631; Glassius often and broadly applies Ezekiel 3 and 33 in these passages.

[99] *PSP* 3:527; 1:1013–1069 (here are several sermons on Ezekiel 3).

[100] *PSP* 2:576 (the gloss is from Zechariah 3:7 in Luther's Bible of 1545).

[101] *PSP* 2:871; 3:441 (with references to Hag 1:13; Mal 2:7; Rev 1:20).

[102] *PSP* 3:504–505.

The Cross and Temptation of the Ministers

If the ministers of the church have the same task as the prophets and apostles in preaching God's word to the world, they—as long as they remain lovers of the word and do not become lovers of the world—share in the very same fate that the prophets and apostles shared. People who respond to the word with unbelief and doubt over against God's promises and threats will mock the bringers of the message and give them reason to lament (Ps 31:14 and Jer 20:8).[103] Glassius knows from Scripture, as well as from experience, that nothing in the world is more despised than the word and its servants who are faithful in their office.[104] Since Christ himself was not welcomed by many of his hearers, so also preachers today should not be surprised if the outcome of their ministry is not as they desire.[105] Since Christ inseparably connects himself with his ministers (John 15:18–19),[106] it is undoubtedly a sign of true teachers when they share the same fate as their Lord and Master.[107] Thus, they may share in the lamentations of the prophets, the apostles, and Christ himself (Isa 49:4; 53:1; Rom 10:16). At the same time, however, in this very fellowship they should not become negligent and tired, but prevail in what they are commanded to do.[108] Glassius advises the teachers and confessors of the word to take Psalm 116:10 as their *symbolum*: "I believed, therefore I spoke, 'I am greatly afflicted,'" because Christ himself made the prediction that his servants would have to suffer much.[109]

The Comfort of Ministers

Since the ministers share the same office and the same cross as the prophets and apostles before them, they also share the same comfort, which is presented repeatedly in the Scriptures.

They are told that even though their work might appear in vain in the eyes of the world, it is not so before God,[110] as they hear St. Paul's

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[103] *PSP* 1:633.

[104] *PSP* 2:697–698; 4:559.

[105] *PSP* 1:825.

[106] "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

[107] *PSP* 1:825.

[108] *PSP* 2:686.

[109] *PSP* 2:861.

[110] *PSP* 1:827.

comforting words: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor 15:58) and as will be made public on the day of judgment (Matt 25:21 and Dan 12:3).[111] Glassius also encourages ministers to take comfort in the certainty of their divine calling to be ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor 5:20),[112] which is a title of honor (*nomen honoris*).[113] Such certainty about their office in God's service brings already temporal blessings in that God promises his servants the guidance of his heavenly angels.[114] Glassius opens the narrow, sad, and fearful minds and eyes of the servants suffering under the people's ingratitude by speaking about the universal and eschatological relevance of the ministers' work (*Amtsarbeit*),[115] which has the promise that it does not end before the end of the world and that it is never in vain in God's sight.[116] Similarly, he reminds preachers of the holy seed of God that will be found at all places, even if despisers are in the majority.[117] Glassius encourages preachers to be patient, never ceasing to proclaim repentance, because they shall give birth to the spiritual children of God through the word and the sacraments; they shall not abort them or bring them to birth in an untimely fashion.[118] From the example of fishermen, spiritual fishermen can learn that even though not every day is a day of catching, every day has to be a day of fishing.[119] Only when fishermen cast out their nets is there a chance that they will catch some fish, which only seldom are big ones. God will, nevertheless, give little ones all the more.[120] Elijah wanted to catch Ahab and got 7,000 instead; Christ wanted to catch the Pharisees, but caught publicans and sinners; Paul wanted to catch Felix and Agrippa, but God gave him other fish. So each faithful teacher casts out his net and lets God decide who will

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[111] *PSP* 1:828.

[112] *PSP* 2:685.

[113] *PSP* 2:94.

[114] *PSP* 2:99 (cf. Zech 3:7).

[115] *PSP* 4:559 (cf. John 12:26)

[116] *PSP* 2:379.

[117] *PSP* 2:379–380.

[118] *PSP* 2:381.

[119] *PSP* 3:150.

[120] *PSP* 3:151: "Geschicht das / gewislich / es gehet ohne Nutz nicht ab / werden nicht alle Fisch gefangen / so werden doch etliche gefangen / gibt's nicht grosse Hechte oder Karen / ey so gibt's doch kleine Schmerlin vnd Elritzen. Manchmal wolt man gern einen grossen gewaltigen Fisch fahen / der entwischt / vnd GOtt bescheret doch andere kleine Fischlein / in grosser Menge / als man gedacht."

be caught; his work will never be in vain.[121] Thus, it is not the successful but the faithful minister to whom eternal reward is promised by his Lord, so that he will be able to end his life and fulfill his walk with the same words as St. Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim 4:7–8).[122]

IV. Conclusion

One aspect that can be highlighted when reading Glassius' postils is what I would like to call the theological "equiprimordiality" (*Gleichursprünglichkeit*) of the office of the ministry and of the canonization of both the Old and New Testaments. Both Scripture and the preaching office, or office of the ministry, are institutions that have their foundation and origin in the explicit will of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. He, as divine subject, rules his church through the word and sacraments instituted by him according to the Scriptures and distributed by him through his ministers, those who preceded his sending in the Old Testament and those who succeeded his sending in the New Testament. The preaching office (*Predigtamt*) in both Testaments flows forth christologically (according to the fathers ever since Genesis 2 and 3) from Christ's own office as the most solemn prophet and apostle (John 20:21; Heb 3:1).

This insight is relevant in many aspects. For example, the hermeneutical circle in theology is not one between an ancient text and abstract modern hearers or readers, but one between a most effective biblical word, through which Christ's Spirit kills sinners and makes them alive, and the very execution of this work of the Spirit through the distribution of the means of grace—a most solemn task and the very essence of the office of the ministry. For those who at first glance would think that this gives the ministry "too much dignity," the antidote is Glassius' constant reminder concerning what it means to "stir up" the gift entrusted to the ministers in their ordination. This stirring up, according to Glassius, can be nothing else than the obligation of the ministers to prove themselves as most diligent and earnest philologians, lovers of the word, who let themselves thoroughly be shaped by the biblical message. So again, Glassius does not talk about a lofty delight in some special superiority that exalts the ministers above everyone else; rather, following the biblical norm of the

[121] *PSP* 3:151.

[122] *PSP* 3:443; 4:534.

pastoral letters, he speaks of ministers' special obligation that at same time has divine promises and brings salutary benefits to the church and to all believers.

Of course, Glassius does not exhibit in his sermons an extensive or even complete doctrine of the ministry. His sermons, however, show that in seventeenth-century Lutheranism, the biblical doctrine of the ministry could be preached extensively in a most edifying way. In my opinion, these sermons show that a Lutheran theology of the ministry, if it follows the Lutheran Confessions, is not deficient at all. Of course, when we ask for completeness, we must turn, for example, to the *Theological Commonplaces* of Johann Gerhard, Glassius' fatherly friend and teacher.[123] When we ask for concrete historical facts, we have to turn to the church orders and the ordination practice of the Lutheran church of those days that has only recently been thoroughly researched, showing that the early ordination practice in the Lutheran territories was catholic in the best sense of the word.[124]

If we broaden our perspective in these directions, we will stumble especially across one aspect of Glassius' as well as in Gerhard's doctrine of the ministry. Both champions of Lutheran Orthodoxy hold that the ministers are to be properly called and ordained into the office "through the cooperation of the church's three estates,"[125] which includes the cooperation of the political authorities next to the parochial households and the churchly authorities. But even here, Glassius and Gerhard follow the Confessions, that is, Melanchthon's conception of the political rulers as *praecipua membra ecclesiae* (most eminent members of the church).[126] On the one hand, this cooperation is valid only as long as the rulers are members of the church and abide by biblical authority. On the other hand, even in politically secularized regions of the world the church has to relate to the political authorities and must depend—even for the education and work of

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[123] Cf. Johann Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces* XXVI/1. On the Ministry, Part One, trans. Richard J. Dinda, ed. with annotations by Benjamin G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011). See § IV: The mediate call, 111ff.

[124] This is especially the case for the theology of the ministry and of ordination in the work and life of Luther's friend, Georg III of Anhalt, whose writings Glassius refers to, for example, in his Preface to the *Weimar Elector's Bible*. See Achim Detmers, ed., *Georg III. von Anhalt (1507–1553). Reichsfürst, Reformator und Bischof* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007); Reinhard Sander, O*rdinatio Apostolica. Studien zu Ordinationstheologie im Luthertum des 16. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1: *Gregor III. von Anhalt (1507–1553)* (Innsbruck, Vienna: Tyrolia, 2004).

[125] *PSP* 3:219; 1:581.

[126] Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 54.

her ministers—on the infrastructure and legal framework supported and guaranteed by the state (cf. 1 Tim 2:1–4).

Nevertheless, even a "reduced" form of the Reformation doctrine of the estates would enable the church in our day to resolve the harmful antagonism between the priesthood of believers and the ordained ministry. The doctrine of the three estates, after all, helps to differentiate the criteria by which these estates work in a God-pleasing way. In politics (and economics!), the chief criterion is the law; in the church, that is, for the royal priests as well as for the serving ministers, it is the gospel. It is most touching to observe how Glassius in his postils approaches the ministers' temptations caused by an apparent lack of success of their preaching, especially in our post-Constantinian age. We could conclude that it poses not only a danger for the church when her institutional separation from the state is imperfect, but that it is at least as harmful for the well-being of the church and her ministers when criteria taken from society, like popularity, or others taken from the realm of economics, like countable and even predictable success, turn the church into a hire-and-fire corporation, run by royal priests who in reality act as self-proclaimed chief executive officers.

Thus, Glassius' reminder that the church does not need successful but faithful incumbents of the ministry is most beneficial also for the church in our day. His postils, in any case, serve as a wonderful pattern for faithful biblical preaching as well as for admonishing and consoling both hearers and preachers of the gospel, that is, the royal priests and the serving ministers, to embrace their divine calling.

Appendix

Salomon Glassius' Old Testament Texts for the One–year Lectionary

Sunday/Festival	Holy Gospel	First OT Text	Second OT Text
Advent 1 (Ad te levavi)	Matt 21:1–9	Isa 62:10–12	Zech 9:9
Advent 2 (Populus Zion)	Luke 21:25–36	Isa 51:6	Dan 12:1–3
Advent 3 (Gaudete)	Matt 11:2–10	Isa 35:3–4	Mal 3:1
Advent 4 (Rorate coeli)	John 1:19–28	Isa 40:3–5	Mal 3:23–24 (4:5–6)

Sunday/Festival	Holy Gospel	First OT Text	Second OT Text
Christmas	Luke 2:1–14	Isa 9:6–7	Jer 23:5–6
Christmas 1	Luke 2:33–40	Isa 4:2–5	Ezek 17:22–24
Christmas 2	Matt 2:13–23	Isa 61:1–3	Ezek 17:23–24
Epiphany	Matt 2:1–12	Isa 61:10–11	Micah 5:2
Epiphany 1	Luke 2:41–52	Isa 50:4–6	Jer 30:21–22
Epiphany 2	John 2:1–11	Isa 62:5	Hos 2:21–24
Epiphany 3	Matt 8:1–13	Isa 2:2–3	Jer 17:13–14
Epiphany 4	Matt 8:23–27	Isa 51:9–11	Jer 31:25–26
Epiphany 5	Matt 13:24–30	Isa 55:10–11	Mal 3:19–21 (4:1–3)
Septuagesima	Matt 20:1–16	Isa 65:21–23	Jonah 1–4
Sexagesima	Luke 8:4–15	Isa 2:3	Micah 6:8
Quinquagesima	Luke 18:31–43	Isa 42:5–7	Zech 13:7
Lent 1 (Invocabit)	Matt 4:1–11	Isa 27:1	Jer 23:28
Lent 2 (Reminiscere)	Matt 15:21–28	Isa 65:24	Jer 31:20
Lent 3 (Oculi)	Luke 11:14–28	Isa 49:24–26	Zech 3:1–7
Lent 4 (Laetare)	John 6:1–15	Isa 30:18–21	Jer 15:16
Lent 5 (Judica)	John 8:46–59	Isa 41:10–12	Daniel 6
Palm Sunday (Palmarum)	Matt 21:1–9	Isa 63:1–6	Zech 9:10–12
Holy (Maundy) Thursday	John 13:1–15	Isa 55:1–3	Zech 9:16–17
Good Friday	*John 19:16–30*	Isa 43:24	Zech 3:8–10
Easter Day	Mark 16:1–8	Isa 49:8–13	Jonah 1–4
Easter Evening/Monday	Luke 24:13–35	Isa 49:8	Jonah 1–4
Easter Tuesday	Luke 24:36–48	Isa 49:9–13	Jonah 1–4

Sunday/Festival	Holy Gospel	First OT Text	Second OT Text
Easter 1 (Quasimodo geniti)	John 20:19–31	Isa 52:7–10	Zech 12:10
Easter 2 (Misericordias Domini)	John 10:11–16	Is 40:9–11	Ezek 34:23–24
Easter 3 (Jubilate)	John 16:16–22	Isa 54:7–8	Mic 7:7–9
Easter 4 (Cantate)	John 16:5–15	Isa 32:15–18	Jer 31:33–34
Easter 5 (Rogate)	John 16:23–30	Isa 1:15	Dan 9:17–19
Ascension	Mark 16:14–20	Isa 45:22–24	Zech 14:4–5
Easter 6 (Exaudi)	John 15:26–16:4	Isa 57:19–21	Micah 5:7
Pentecost Day	John 14:23–31	Isa 11:1–4	Joel 2:23—3:1
Pentecost Evening/Monday	John 3:16–21	Isa 11:3–5	Zeph 3:9
Pentecost Tuesday	John 10:1–10	Isa 11:6–7	Mic 2:12–13
Trinity Sunday	John 3:1–15	Isa 12:3	Ezek 36:25–27
Trinity 1	Luke 16:19–31	Isa 51:10–11	Jer. 12:1–3
Trinity 2	Luke 14:15–24	Isa 25:6	Mic 4:1–2
Trinity 3	Luke 15:1–10	Isa 55:6–7	Ezek 34:15–16
Trinity 4	Luke 6:36–42	Isa 32:5–7	Zech 7:8–14
Trinity 5	Luke 5:1–11	Isa 9:1–4	Ezek 47:8–10
Trinity 6	Matt 5:20–26	Isa 33:15–17	Dan 9:24
Trinity 7	Mark 8:1–9	Isa 3:10	Amos 8:11–13
Trinity 8	Matt 7:15–23	Isa 29:13–14	Jer 23:19–22
Trinity 9	Luke 16:1–9	Isa 58:7–9	Dan 4:24
Trinity 10	Luke 19:41–48	Isa 29:1–6	Jer 9:10–16
Trinity 11	Luke 18:9–14	Isa 38:14–15	Jer 14:19–22
Trinity 12	Mark 7:31–37	Isa 22:22	Ezek 37:1–14

Sunday/Festival	Holy Gospel	First OT Text	Second OT Text
Trinity 13	Luke 10:23–37	Isa 57:15–16	Hos 6:4–6
Trinity 14	Luke 17:11–19	Isa 24:13–18	Mal 1:6
Trinity 15	Matt 6:24–34	Isa 30:15	Ezek 7:19
Trinity 16	Luke 7:11–17	Isa 26:1–4	Ezek 37
Trinity 17	Luke 14:1–11	Isa 58:13–14	Ezek 21:26
Trinity 18	Matt 22:34–46	Isa 33:22	Jer 33:14–16
Trinity 19	Matt 9:1–8	Isa 6:5–7	Mic 7:18–20
Trinity 20	Matt 22:1–14	Isa 6:8–13	Hos 13:9
Trinity 21	John 4:46–54	Isa 38:16–17	Jer 5:3
Trinity 22	Matt 18:21–35	Is 44:21–23	Jer 8:7
Trinity 23	Matt 22:15–22	Isa 8:13–15	Jer 17:9–10
Trinity 24	Matt 9:18–26	Isa 42:1–4	Ezek 37
Trinity 25	Matt 24:15–28	Isa 26:21	Dan 9:26–27
Trinity 26	Matt 25:31–46	Isa 30:33	Hab 2:3–4
Trinity 27 (Last Sunday)	*Matt 17:1–9*	Isa 65:17–19	Hos 2:19–20

Salomon Glassius' Old Testament Texts for Holy Days

Feast/Festival	Holy Gospel	First OT Text	Second OT Text
November 30 St. Andrew	Matt 4:18–22	Isa 40:6–8	Ezek 47:1–12
December 21 St. Thomas	John 20:24–29	Isa 40:1–2	Hab 2:1–4

Feast/Festival	Holy Gospel	First OT Text	Second OT Text
January 1 Circumcision and Name of Jesus	Luke 2:21	Isa 45:8	Ezek 17:22–23
January 25 Conversion of St. Paul	Matt 19:27–30	Isa 60:1–3	Mal 1:11
February 2 The Purification and Presentation	Luke 2:22–32	Isa 49:6	Hag 2:7–10 (6–9)
February 24 St. Matthias	Matt 11:25–30	Isa 66:13–14	Zeph 3:16–17
March 25 The Annunciation of Our Lord	Luke 1:26–38	Isa 11:1	Dan 2:44–45
May 1 St. Philip and St. James	John 14:1–14	Isa 35:8–9	Mal 3:16–18
May 31 The Visitation	Luke 1:39–56	Isa 12:1–6	Jer 9:23–24
June 24 The Nativity of John the Baptizer	Luke 1:57–80	Isa 32:1–4	Mal 4:2
June 29 St. Peter and St. Paul	Matt 16:13–19	Isa 28:16	Zech 6:12–13
July 25 St. James the Elder	Matt 20:20–23	Isa 45:15–17	Zech 12:10
August 24 St. Bartholomew	Luke 22:24–30	Isa 8:16	Hos 13:14
September 21 St. Matthew	Matt 9:9–13	Isa 49:1–2	Hos 5:15—6:1
September 29 St. Michael and All Angels	Matt 18:1–11	Isa 6:1–4	Dan 7:9–10
October 28 St. Simon and St. Jude	John 15:17–21	Isa 49:3–4	Zeph 3:7–8

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Defining Humanity in the Lutheran Confessions and in Lutheran Orthodoxy

Roland F. Ziegler

Definitions originate either in the pursuit of a scholarly, clear theology or, more often, in controversy, when there is no agreement on the meaning of a term or which entities are in the class delineated by such a term and which are excluded. Defining is, of course, not specific to theology. Part of the business of philosophy, at least since Socrates was walking the streets of Athens, involved engaging people in discussions on topics such as piety, courage, the good, and love. Neither is trying to define humanity as a distinctly theological enterprise. Plato suggested a definition of man as a "featherless biped," which gave opportunity to one of the stunts of Diogenes of Sinope, the first punk philosopher, who presented a plucked chicken and said: "Here is Plato's man." Plato then amended his definition: "Man is a featherless biped with straight nails."[1] This definition has not become classic, for good reasons. But the Greek definition of man as ζῷον λόγον ἔχον, "an animal (or living being) that has reason/language," has become classic. In this definition, we encounter what medieval philosophers in the vein of Aristotle have called an "essential definition." For such a definition, one needs the genus, the class of beings to which it belongs (in our case, "animal"), and the specific difference that distinguishes man from other animals, namely, that he has "logos."[2] This definition has been influential in the Christian church since it was found to be consonant with the biblical witness.

We are, of course, all aware that this debate about defining man is not only an academic debate but a legal one. How "human being" is defined

[1] Diogenes Laertius, *Leben und Meinungen berühmter Philosophen,* trans. Otto Apelt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2008), 314.

[2] A more modern and less ambitious form of definition that aims not at defining beings but defining terms would see this as a subsection of an intensional definition, where a term is defined by class and attributes. In contrast to this, a definition by extension would be to enumerate all members of this class, e.g., "The Baltic states are Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania."

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

answers to a great extent, for example, how one views abortion. The widespread acceptance of abortion in late modernity shows an epochal shift in the understanding of what it means to be human. In the western world, it is another sign of the diminishing influence of Christianity in society-at-large since the Enlightenment and the end of a traditional cultural hegemony enjoyed by Christian thought.

I. Luther: Man as an Eccentric-Responsoric Being

Before we examine the Confessions, it is appropriate to have at least a look at Luther. After all, he is the foremost teacher of the Augsburg Confession (FC SD VII 34). For our topic it is especially appropriate that we look at him. Luther research in the twentieth century produced several important books on Luther's anthropology, among them Wilfried Joest's *Ontology of the Person in Luther* and Gerhard Ebeling's magisterial commentary in two tomes on Luther's *Disputation on Man.*[3] Already at the beginning of the so-called Luther-Renaissance, Rudolf Hermann's book on the *simul iustus et peccator* stands out.[4] While an adequate treatment of Luther's anthropology cannot, of course, be given here, the main points can be mentioned. Luther's understanding of man's existence is that man is an "eccentric" and "responsoric" being, to use the language of Wilfried Joest.[5] "Eccentric" means that the center of the Christian's existence or being (and the Christian is the mode in which man is supposed to exist) is not *in* him, but outside of him. This is a statement against the traditional understanding of man as a substance, which held that a substance is something that exists independently and does not exist in something else. Otherwise, it would be an accident. But man is not a self-contained being. Consider the Lutheran understanding of the righteousness of faith. The righteousness of faith is Christ's, and it remains Christ's. We are Christians because it is ours, outside of us, imputed to us, and in it we have our being as Christians. What is central to our being as Christians is neither a substance nor a quality that inheres in our substance, but the alien righteousness of Christ *extra nos* that nevertheless defines who we are: righteous before God because of Christ's righteousness. The center is not in me, it is outside of me, thus eccentric.

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[3] Wilfried Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 1967; Gerhard Ebeling, *Disputatio de homine*, 2 vol. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1977–1989); see especially 2:1–3.

[4] Rudolf Hermann, *Luthers These: "Gerecht und Sünder zugleich"* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1930).

[5] Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 233–274.

The second term Joest uses to describe Luther's anthropology is "responsoric."[6] It means that a human being is one who is addressed by God and who answers to this word of God. The proper response, though, is created by God's address in the gospel and consists in faith. To be human, therefore, has this relational aspect that contradicts the understanding of man as a self-subsisting substance.

The sinner does not want to live as an "eccentric" being; he seeks to exist as a being that has complete self-standing, whose center is in himself. Neither is his life responsoric in the right way; rather, unbelief is the rejection of God's word, and thus he turns inward, he is curved into himself, *incurvatus in se ipse*.

Luther can, like the tradition, speak of man as a being consisting of body and rational soul. But this philosophical definition, a truth he does not reject, is not sufficient for a theological definition. It is not even a good definition in philosophy, because reason by itself does not know the efficient cause, namely, God the creator. Neither does it know man's final cause. Thinking that the goal of man is to live a good, peaceful life does not reach an appropriate understanding of man's soul.[7] To define man truly, it is necessary to include *history* and *man's relationship to God.* Therefore, it is theology that gives the perfect definition of what man is:

> Man is God's creature, consisting of flesh and a living soul, made in the beginning in the image of God without sin, so that he procreates and rules creation and never dies. But after Adam's fall, mankind is subject to the devil, sin, and death, eternal evils he cannot overcome by his powers, except when he is liberated by the Son of God, Jesus Christ (if he believes in him) and bestowed with eternal life (Theses 21–23).[8]

In his "Disputation on Man," Luther distills his definition of man to this profound truth: man is justified by faith.[9] The specific difference between man and the other animals, which—Luther affirms along with tradition—is the *genus,* consists in that man and man alone is to be justified.

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[6] Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 274–310.

[7] We see here, by the way, how Luther uses the scheme of the four causes to define a term.

[8] Martin Luther, "Disputatio de homine" in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1914), 39 I, 176, 7–13. Hereafter abbreviated WA. This translation and all following are this author's unless specifically noted.

[9] Thesis 32: "Paul in Romans 3, 'We hold that man is justified by faith apart from works,' briefly sums up the definition of man, saying, 'Man is justified by faith'" (WA 39 I, 176, 33–35).

Man's uniqueness consists in his relation to God and what God does with him. It does not consist in an inherent quality; rather, it consists in the goal of his existence and in the work of God towards him. This definition is quite astonishing in that it does not reject an ontology of substance, but rather widens it. It is also a decidedly *theological* definition: man cannot be understood properly without his history and relationship to God. It is, finally, and obviously, a very *Lutheran* definition. At the center of God's relationship with man is God's act of justifying man; man is as God wants him to be when he is justified and lives in faith. Thus, God is the center of man's being, and man has his being in God's address.

Though neither the Confessions nor Quenstedt quote Luther's "Disputation on Man," I think that nevertheless central elements of Luther's anthropology are integrated in the Confessions and in Lutheran Orthodoxy.

II. The Lutheran Confessions

Anthropological Terms: Nature and Person

Turning to the Lutheran Confessions, let us first look at the terms "nature" and "person." The term "nature," as that which summarizes what man is, is most familiar from the Christological discussion. It is, though, not unique, but became a general term for what a thing is. The Confessions use "person" also for an individual human being, often synonymous with nature (FD SD I 8).[10]

Person denotes the whole of the human being, as contrasted with individual faculties. Therefore original sin, which affects every aspect of the human being, is the sin of the person. In quoting Luther, the Formula of Concord speaks of original sin as "sin of nature or person" (FC SD I 6). Luther uses this term, as does the Solid Declaration, to show that "man's nature and person sins, that is, that through hereditary sin as by spiritual leprosy through and through, he is completely poisoned and corrupted before God" (FC SD I 6).[11] Because person and nature can be used almost synonymously, original sin can also be named "sin of nature, sin of person, essential sin," so that nature, person, and the essence of man are not clearly distinguished (FC SD I 53). Obviously, at least in regard to substance, the Flacian controversy necessitated a more careful use of the term "essence," and "nature," so that nature can mean the essence of a being or the

[10] In the composition with "sin," see FC SD I 44.

[11] All translations of the *Book of Concord* are the author's.

condition or quality of a being; it did not, however, force the authors of the Formula to reflect on the term "person" in reference to anthropology (FC SD I 51).

Similarly, in the context of the discussion of good works, the term "person" is used to state that a good work is not produced by an isolated faculty of the human being, but rather that only a good—that is, a righteous—person can produce good works. In other words, the entire human being has to be good. "For good works do not precede justification, but follow it, and the person must be first righteous before he can do good works" (FC SD III 27). "First the person has to be pleasing to God, and this alone for Christ's sake, if also the works of that person should be pleasing to God" (FC SD IV 8). In this context, though, person is not used interchangeably with nature.

Nowhere do we find "person" used in the technical sense acquired during the Middle Ages. Boethius handed to the Middle Ages the definition of person as a substance of a rational nature.[12] In the Middle Ages, the concept of person was discussed mainly in the context of trinitarian and Christological questions, not as an anthropological term. Person is that which exists independently in itself.[13]As we have seen, although Luther knows this philosophical definition and quotes it, he has a fundamentally different understanding of human nature.[14] Man does not subsist in himself; he subsists in faith. "Faith makes the person."[15] The

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[12] "A person is an individual substance of a rational nature." Boethius, *Contra Eutychien et Nestorium*, V, 1–3.

[13] William of Ockham defined person as *suppositum intellectuale*, writing, "A *suppositum* is a complete being that does not constitute another being, does not inhere in something else by nature, nor is it carried by another substance." William of Ockham, 1 Sent 23, 1, *Opera philosophica et theolog*. 4, 61; quoted in B. Th. Kible, "Person. II. Hoch- und Spätscholastik; Meister Eckhart; Luther," *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 13 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 7:296. The same definition also appears in Joannes Altenstaig and Joannes Tytz, *Lexicon theologicum* (Hildesheim; New York: Olms, 1974; reprint of the edition Köln, 1619). One part of the traditional definition of person is found in AC I in regard to the persons of the Trinity: person is neither part nor quality in something else, but that which subsists by itself (*quod proprie subsistit*). Such a definition is somewhat incomplete, because not everything that subsists by itself is a person. There must be a specific difference, not mentioned by Melanchthon (e.g., rational substances that subsist by themselves, or beings with free will or a similar property).

[14] WA 39 II, 10.

[15] WA 39 I, 282, 16. Cf. Kible, "Person. II. Hoch- und Spätscholastik; Meister Eckhart; Luther," 297ff; Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 247–250. In regard to the sinner, Luther says: "Where and as long as the person is, there is sin" (WA 10 I 1, 509, 3). Kilbe, 298, sees here a break with the tradition. According to tradition, a person is

question as to whether the Confessions have the same understanding of person as Luther cannot be decided by the use of the word "person"; rather, the question can only be answered after a clearer picture of the Confession's anthropology has been given, since there is no technical definition of what it means for a human being to be a person in the Confessions, unlike the definition for a trinitarian person in AC I.[16]

Man as Creature

After this terminological investigation, the first thing to be said about man is that he is a creature. This is such a given that the Confessions rarely dwell on it. In the Small Catechism, Luther individualizes and existentializes the doctrine of creation by starting with the creation of the person making the confession: "I believe that God created me . . . ," without, of course, excluding the extra-human creation: "together with all creatures." Being creature is not only something that determines the beginning of man's existence; rather, because of the daily work of God, who protects and provides for man, it is a continual relation.

The issue of man as God's creature played a role in the Flacian controversy. One of the arguments used against Flacius' identification of man's substance with sin was that since man is created by God, original sin therefore cannot be the substance of man, since a substance is either God or a creature created by God (FC SD I 55). Man remains a creature also after the fall, and since God is not the creator of sin, the substance of man cannot be identified with sin (FC SD I 38). Being a creature and being a sinner are therefore not the same. Creation and fall have to be distinguished; sin is not some inescapable condition given with creation. After the fall, though, it is much harder to distinguish between creation and sin. The distinction has to be made, but not in such a way that certain aspects of man can be seen as purely creaturely and others as corrupted by original sin. Rather, everything man does, thinks, and is, is corrupted by original sin. The distinction between sin and creation is made by the gospel, not by the law. In the light of the law, man has to consider himself completely sinful. The rejection of Flacius' teaching that original sin is the substance of man is not made on the basis of an analysis of man's

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incommunicable; what makes a person is in the person. Here, though, what makes the Christian a person does not rest in himself, but rather in God.

[16] See the extensive monograph by Gunter Wenz on the Confessions, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der lutherischen Kirche*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996–1997), where the author provides several remarks on the trinitarian concept of person (1:555, 563, 638) and a summary of Luther's concept of person (1:104), but nothing on the concept of person as it is used in the Confessions.

existence, finding there evidence of his creaturely goodness that is to be distinguished from sin. Rather, it is derived from the article on creation, the Christological statement that Christ, according to his human nature, is consubstantial to the rest of humanity, and on the nature of redemption, which does not consist in an exchange of substances. To put it differently, it does not mean that justification and resurrection are in some way the end of the human being as human being and the transition to another being. The distinction between creature and sin has to be believed on the basis of God's word. From this follows, though, the truth that "pure human nature" is never open to our observation. "Pure" is here understood as "human nature in itself" (*an sich*) and also equates with sinlessness. Such a nature can be construed by abstraction, that is, by taking away sinful actions, because sin not only consists in acts but is also a corruption of man's being. This is one of the reasons why, as seen in Luther's description of Adam in his lectures on Genesis, any reconstruction of the pre-fall condition of man beyond the statement that there was no sin and that man was in perfect harmony with God remains highly speculative.

The Substance of Man—Body and Soul

Though it is not the main emphasis when the Confessions speak of man, they nevertheless presuppose that man is made of body and soul and that the category of substance, therefore, can be used to describe man. In his explanation of the First Article in the Small Catechism, Luther lists "body and soul" first in his enumeration of all that God has given to man. Both body and soul are affected by original sin (SA III I 11). Rejected is the opinion that the rational soul in its highest faculties is substantially original sin (FC SD I 1). Rejected, therefore, is also the opinion that in conversion and regeneration the rational soul has to be annihilated and a new soul created out of nothing (FC SD I 81). Here the traditional terms for rational soul (*vornunftige Seele* or *anima rationalis*) are used, admittedly not in a description of the Formula's position, but nevertheless indicating that dichotomism, not trichotomism, is assumed here—namely, that man consists of body and rational soul, not of body, soul, and spirit."[17]

[17] The traditional distinction between body and soul is also found in the description of the Lord's Supper as a "food for the soul, nourishing and strengthening the new man." See LC V 23: the Lord's Supper is given to sustain faith, and faith is associated with the soul, not with the body. See also Ap IV 304: faith does not only consist in the intellect, namely as knowledge, but also as assent in the will—both, of course, powers of the soul.

Man as Sinner

Thus, man after the fall is qualified as a sinner. The language of *Personsünde* (sin of the person) shows that sin is not simply affecting certain aspects of man, but everything in him. This radical view of man as sinner leads to the Flacian controversy, since it quite naturally raises the question whether sin and creature can still be distinguished. The Lutheran Confessions continue the distinction between original and actual sin as it was developed in the Latin west. Original sin is described as man being without faith in God, without fear of God, and with concupiscence (AC II). This definition is rejected by the Roman Catholic Confutation, since faith in God cannot be present in infants, who nevertheless have original sin. AC II defines or describes original sin in two different ways: first, by speaking relationally of a lack of faith and fear toward God, and second, by ascribing a quality to man. Obviously, while the two are not independent, they can be distinguished, as the later discussion with Rome showed. In the Christian, concupiscence continues to exist, though in regard to the relational descriptions of original sin there is a radical change. It is in the very essence of being a Christian that one believes or trusts in God and fears God. To this day, the question of original sin and how it relates to the Christian is a point of controversy with Rome. The sinner is, in one sense, in agreement with himself: his inner being and his relation to God are harmonious. The believer, on the other hand, lives in an inner conflict: the corruption of his nature and his faith are not in agreement: there is a struggle going on. The unity of his being is not a matter of experience but of faith and hope: he will be one, once God will have dealt with his sin and stripped him of it in death, but not before. The unity of his being is therefore eschatological.

Original sin manifests itself primarily in ignorance of God, lack of faith and fear of God, hatred against God's judgment, despairing of grace, putting one's trust in earthly things, etc. (Ap II 8). Concupiscence means to seek carnal things against the will of God—not only the lust of the body but also carnal wisdom and righteousness—and to despise God (Ap II 26). Melanchthon emphasizes over and again that concupiscence not only deals with the lower appetites of the soul, such that it could be reduced to bodily desires, but also manifests itself and thus affects especially and foremost the highest faculties of man, his search for truth, wisdom, goodness, and God.

How are we to define original sin in terms of the traditional ontological categories? As concupiscence, it is not a substance, but rather a corruption of a substance and therefore a quality in man. As such, it is an accident, as are all entities except substances in Aristotelian categories. But

even though the Formula admits the validity of the substance/accident scheme, it attempts to safeguard against any understanding of original sin as accident or quality that would affect only part of the substance of humanity. Rather, it is an accident that affects the entire man (FC SD I 21). In the end, the Formula assumes a certain distance from the philosophical understanding of accident, even though, of course, the term is philosophical. There remains the impression that substance and accident as basic ontological categories are not quite adequate to understand original sin correctly (FC SD I 60).[18]

The Image of God

The image of God is for many in the Christian tradition the central distinction of man from other animals. Since Irenaeus, Genesis 1:27 was understood in the sense that the Hebrew terms צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת refer to two different things, so that "image" and "likeness" are to be distinguished.[19] Likeness consists in ethical perfection, image in rationality and freedom of the will. The likeness of God was lost after the fall, the image of God was retained by man. Luther broke with this exegetical tradition and held that image and likeness denote the same object. This is expressed in his translation of Genesis 1:26: "Laßt uns Menschen machen, ein Bild, das uns gleich sei" ("Let us create man [in] an image that is like us").[20] In his lectures on Genesis, Luther argued for this understanding, and in the Lutheran Confessions we find the same position. It is affirmed, of course, that man was created in the image of God (FC Ep VI 2).[21] Melanchthon identifies the image of God and likeness in his discussion of original sin. It consists in original righteousness, as the scholastics said, or, in the words

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[18] But what about unbelief? Is lack of faith and fear of God also an accident? It could probably be said so, but one does not want to imply an understanding of faith as a quality in man. This is the case even though Luther, for example, states that trust of the heart is what makes God (LC I 2–3) or the previously mentioned statements by Melanchthon that faith is not only knowledge but also trust.

[19] Cf. David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: Collins, 1973), 28.

[20] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Die Deutsche Bibel*, 15 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1906–1961), 8:39. In the marriage booklet, Luther quotes Genesis 1:27–28 in a slightly different translation: "Gott schuf den Menschen ihm selbs zum Bilde, ja zum Bilde Gottes schuf er ihn . . . " *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche,* 5th ed. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963) 533, 37–38 (hereafter BSLK). Here, too, Luther does not use different terms to translate צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת; rather he uses "image" for both.

[21] This is in the context of the discussion on the third use of the law. The law was written in the heart of man before the fall since Adam and Eve were created in God's image.

of Paul, in the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth (Eph 5:9; Col 3:10, Ap II 15–19).[22] This position is repeated in the Formula in the article on original sin, paraphrasing the Apology. Original sin is the complete lack of the created hereditary righteousness in paradise or of the image of God, according to which man was created in the beginning in truth, holiness, and righteousness (FC SD I 10). That means that the Confessions teach unambiguously that the fall results in the loss of the image of God and that the fallen man in his sinful state is without the image of God.[23] The image of God, though, is regained once a person becomes a Christian. To acquire the knowledge of God, fear of God, hope, or love means therefore that the person is transformed into the image of God (Ap IV 351).[24]

If the image of God is equated with original righteousness, then there is at least a relational aspect of the image of God in Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. "While Catholic theology interpreted *imago* to refer to man's resources as a created, rational being, and *similitude* to refer to the supernatural likeness, given by grace, the Lutheran Confessions interpreted both as the consequences of man's unbroken relationship to God and the resulting reflection of God's essence."[25]

The New Man

Talking about humanity means, as we have seen, talking not simply about a human nature that always stays the same; it is, rather, telling a story about human beings. This story, of course, would not be complete if we did not talk about the new man. The Formula quotes Luther's preface to Romans on the origin of the new man: "Therefore faith is a divine work in us that changes us and gives birth to us anew and kills the old Adam, makes us into entirely new men in heart, mind, attitude, and all powers and brings the Holy Spirit with it" (FC SD IV 10). The new man is,

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[22] Strangely enough, Melanchthon claims Irenaeus for his position, which is only possible since Melanchthon identifies that which Irenaeus says about the likeness with the image of God.

[23] "Of fallen man the Confessions do not teach that he is in the image of God and at the same time not in the image of God. The image of God and the loss of the image are not placed in dialectical antithesis, like creatureliness and corruption. Rather, the fact that fallen man is at the same time wholly a creature and wholly corrupt is given this unambiguous significance: He has lost the image of God." Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), 47. Cf. Wenz, *Theologie*, 2:99.

[24] Wenz, *Theologie*, 2:230.

[25] Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confession: 1529–1537* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 132.

therefore, truly a new man, not only the infusion of some qualities in the old man. That is only possible if he is constituted not by himself, but by the Holy Spirit, thus having his being outside of himself. Here we see how the Confessions take up Luther's understanding of a person. Faith, which receives the promise, constitutes the new man: "This happens when they believe the promise of Christ, that on account of him they may have forgiveness of sins. This faith rises up in those who tremble, and comforts and receives the forgiveness of sins, justifies and makes alive" (Ap IV 62). Additionally, there is the aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit after the new man has been constituted, with an internal renewal, i.e., the killing of the old man and the creation of new impulses in him.

Old man and new man are not subsequent phases but, rather, simultaneous descriptions of man's existence, as Luther explains in the Small Catechism regarding the daily drowning of the old Adam and raising up of the new man (SC IV 12). But what is the difference between old and new man? In what way does man change and in what way does he stay the same? From the preceding we already know that man stays the same in his substance, i.e., that he is an embodied soul. The change is therefore not in the category of substance (FC Ep II, 14; SD II, 81). The cause of the new man is the Holy Spirit acting through the word: God makes alive through his word (Ap XII 4).[26] Thus, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to give new life; it is not a result of human works (Ap IV 130, 195; VII 14; XVIII 9; FC SD II 25; III 22; VI 1). The beginning of this new life can also be described as justification. After the preaching of the condemning law and the terror it creates in the hearts of the unbeliever, the comfort of the promise of the forgiveness of sins is received.

The consequences of the new being concern the entire man. He is now qualified as a believer. God changes the will of man so that man obeys the will of God (FC SD II 6). New impulses in man are created (Ap IV 125, 348, 349; FC SD IV 10). The freed will can now cooperate with God in doing good works and does good works voluntarily. As such, the new man is not under the law, but lives in the law (FC Ep VI 6, 11; SD VI 1; SD II 85; Ap IV 175; Ap XII 82). At the same time, the old Adam is still there. The renewal of man is incomplete; neither the renewed will nor the new impulses are the only reality in man. Original sin as corruption still spawns sin, so that the sinful flesh is a reality in this life and will be destroyed only in death. As such, the law continues to accuse also the Christian (FC SD VI 14).

To summarize the existence of the new man: the new life is created by

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[26] Cf. FC SD XI 69. This includes, of course, also the sacraments, since they too are speech acts (FC SD II 5, 65; Ap IV 190).

the Holy Spirit and defined as faith in the promise. It results in a change in man regarding the knowledge of God, his will, and also spiritual impulses, without nevertheless eliminating completely the corruption caused by original sin.

III. Lutheran Orthodoxy: The Example of Johann Andreas Quenstedt

The Place of Anthropology in the Dogmatic System

We turn now to anthropology in the dogmatics of Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617–1688), who treats the doctrine of man in two different places.[27] The first is a relatively short section of sixteen pages in the locus on creation. Immediately following his treatment on angels and before the doctrine of providence, Quenstedt provides a relatively short anthropology.[28] Here, man is distinguished according to how he comes into being, for which the four causes give the outline, plus the additional point of the time of creation (namely, during the hexaemeron, on the sixth day). In regard to man as he exists now, his internal constitutive principles and his different statuses are to be considered. The producing cause of man is the triune God. The material cause of Adam is the dust of the earth, and of Eve the rib and soul of Adam. The mode of production is discussed; the goal of man is the glory of God and eternal salvation. The essential principles of man are distinguished in matter and form (*forma physica*). The matter is an animated body, before the fall impassible and immortal. The form is the rational soul. The states of man are the states of innocence, misery, glory, and damnation. This is all that Quenstedt says in this context in the affirmative. He continues with a polemical treatment of the topic as he examines the following questions: 1) Was Adam the first man? 2) Does man have three parts, body, soul, and spirit? 3) Is man's soul nowadays created by God, or is it propagated through transferal?

That Quenstedt has considerably more to say about man becomes evident in the second part of his dogmatics, which is dedicated entirely to anthropology. Here, his focus is on the states of man and not on his essence. Man is the subject of theology—cast down from his first happy

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[27] First published in 1685, I am using Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*, 4 vols. (Wittenberg: *Sumptibus Johannis Ludolphi Quenstedii*, 1691). For a brief introduction to Quenstedt, see Robert Preus, *Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 1:62–63.

[28] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, I, XIII (1:511–517).

state into misery—who is to be led to God and to eternal salvation.[29] It might be somewhat strange that man is the subject of theology, and we might suspect that it is heading the way towards the Enlightenment and Barthian accusations against orthodoxy. In his discussion of the subject of theology, Quenstedt identifies three ways of answering the question.[30] The first is the subject of inherence or name (*denominationis*); second, the subject that is treated; third, of operation. The subject of inherence is twofold again: first, *subjectum quod*—it is man in whom the habit of theology inheres; the *subjectum quo* is the mind and intellect in which the habit of theology dwells; second, the *subjectum tractationis seu considerationis* (subject that is treated or considered). This is what we mostly think of when we talk about the subject of theology, since it is synonymous with the object of theology. These are the matters of theology that are divinely revealed, insofar as they pertain to eternal salvation. This is also known as "the true religion." Note here again that since theology is for Quenstedt a practical science, the subject matter is not simply God and what can be known about him; rather, theology is in its very nature soteriological. The subject of operation, or who is acted upon, so to speak, is sinful man. Since theology as a habit is practical, it aims toward leading a person to salvation. Thus, when Quenstedt calls sinful man the subject of theology, he does not dissolve theology into anthropology, saying that theology talks only about man; rather, he says that sinful man is the one to be taught, the *subjectum operationis*. Thus, for Quenstedt the main interest in theological anthropology is not in the substance of man, but rather in the history of man and, more specifically, his history in relation to God, namely, as the one who has fallen into sin and is brought back to God.

The Image of God

Before examining Quenstedt's view of the image of God, we must first engage Robert Jenson's misinterpretation concerning the teaching on the image of God in Lutheran orthodoxy. Jenson, in his *Systematic Theology,* references Johann Gerhard: "Man is made in the image and similitude of God, which distinguishes him from all other corporeal creatures."[31] Though Jenson deplores the stress on the image as the specific difference of humanity as it is traditional in theology, he is willing to live with it since it is "too rooted in the tradition now to be displaced."[32] Jenson goes on to

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[29] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, 1, 1, thesis I (2:1).

[30] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, I, I, 1, thesis 37 (1:12–13).

[31]Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2:53. Jenson is citing Gerhard's *Loci theologici* II, 8, 13.

[32] Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 53.

point out that the difficulty of the Lutheran position is that after the fall "it appears that fallen humanity, having lost perfect righteousness, must now be at best partially human."[33] In a footnote, Jenson charges Lutheran orthodoxy with a move towards "a real semi-Pelagianism": "Indeed, in a most ironic reversal." Jenson continues,

> Identification of the image of God as actual righteousness exerted strong pressure on Reformation scholastic theologians toward a real semi-Pelagianism. If they were not to say that the image and so our specific humanity is simply gone, then they had to posit a continuing actual righteousness in fallen humans also prior to justification.[34]

This is a rather serious accusation, for which Jenson brings no reference to prove that the orthodox fathers endorsed semi-Pelagianism or that they did so because of their view of the image of God.

There are several problems with Jenson's statement. First, it assumes that when Gerhard states that man is created in the image of God and that this fact gives him—before all bodily creatures—a specific and proper dignity, then the image of God is what makes man a man. In traditional metaphysical language, this claims that the image is equated with man's substance or at least something intrinsic as an essential attribute that cannot be lost. But Gerhard explicitly discusses the topic of the ontological status of the image of God. The third chapter in the locus *de imagine dei* is titled "The image of God has not been man's substance."[35] The image of God, were it a substance, could be the entire man, his soul, his body, an essential part of the soul, or a substance that is different from the human substance. All these options are rejected by Gerhard. The substance of man, that which distinguishes him from all other beings, is that he is a composite being of a rational soul and a body.[36] There is therefore no problem saying that after the fall Adam and his descendants are still human, since to be human and to have the image of God are not the same. Jenson creates a problem the orthodox dogmaticians did not have.

Let us now return to Quenstedt. The image of God is the central term for the treatment of the first state of man, the state of integrity. The image

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[33] Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 55.

[34] Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 55.

[35] Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, 4 vols., ed. Johann F. Cotta (Tübingen: Sumptibus Johann Georg Cotta, 1763), loc. IX (3:267–268).

[36] Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, IX, proemium, 12. This definition of human nature recurs in Gerhard's treatment on the human nature of Christ. See Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, loc. IV, 78 (6:400).

of God in man is not an essential image, as a son is called the image of a father.[37] In man, it is, properly speaking, the interior integrity and rightness of the powers of man that can also be called original righteousness. Improperly, it can be used for a certain general likeness in which man's soul expresses something divine, or also the dominion over the earth, as some of the older theologians used the term.[38] Quenstedt continues his analysis by using the scheme of the causes: the efficient cause is the entire Trinity, the internal motivating cause is the goodness of God, the matter of the image of God is totally rational man, primarily partial the rational soul, secondarily partial the body of man, in so far as it is formed by the soul. The form of the image of God is in man's conformity with God, which encompasses all the powers and faculties of the soul and the integrity of the body. This perfection is first found in the soul, concerning the intellect in the knowledge of God, and in wisdom, concerning the will in its conformity with God's holiness and liberty. Finally, in the appetites the conformity is found in chastity, purity, and sufficiency (*autarkia*). In a secondary way, the image of God is found in the impassibility of the body and its immortality and in the dominion over the other animals. The goal (*finis*) of the image of God in regard to God is the communication of the divine goodness and the demonstration of God's goodness and wisdom; in regard to man it is the knowledge of God and the love and celebration of God. In summary, the definition of the image of God is that "the image of God is the natural perfection that consists in the outstanding conformity with the wisdom, righteousness, immortality, and majesty of God, divinely concreated with the first man, to the perfect knowing, loving and glorifying of God the creator."[39]

So much for the positive part. In the second, the polemical part, nine questions are discussed. 1) Was man originally created in a neutral state, i.e., neither good nor evil? 2) Was the first man created with a dissenting and rebellious sensitive and rational appetite? 3) Was Eve also created in the image of God? 4) Was the image of God the substance or a substantial form? 5) Did the image of God consist in wisdom, righteousness, and holiness? 6) Did the image of God consist also in immortality and impassibility and in dominion over the other animals? 7) Was original righteousness a supernatural gift or rather the natural perfection of the first man? 8) Was immortality in the first man a supernatural gift? 9) Has the

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[37] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, I, I, thesis 5 (2:2).

[38] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico* II, I, I, thesis 7.8 (2:3). The existence of the image of God is proved by Genesis 1:26–27; 5:1; Colossians 2:10; Ephesians 4:24; and Wisdom 2:23.

[39] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, I, I, thesis 24 (2:9).

image of God been lost and destroyed by the fall of the protoplaste? Of these points, I will address only two: whether the image of God was the substance or the substantial form of man (question four), and whether the image has been lost by the fall (question nine).

Concerning Quenstedt's fourth question, on the image as substance or substantial form, what does he mean by a substantial form? In scholastic Aristotelian philosophy, things consisted of matter and form. Every existing being consists of a substantial form and first matter.[40] Matter does not exist without form; the form is what gives a thing its distinctiveness. Thus, Quenstedt's point is that the image of God is neither substance nor substantial form, i.e., neither the entire man nor a part of man, but an accidental perfection in the essence of man, namely, the rightness and integrity of all powers of body and soul.[41] In this context, Quenstedt rejects also the idea that the *imago dei* is the human nature of Christ. Man was not created in the image of the human nature of Christ but in the image of God, namely, his righteousness and holiness.[42] Rejected also are those scholastics who saw the image of God in the threefold faculties of the soul: intellect, will, and memory.[43] Of course, here Flacius is also rejected with his position that original sin is the substantial form of man.[44]

It follows from this that originally the image of God was a quality in man. According to Quenstedt, and unlike many modern theologians, it does not consist in relationality; neither does it consist in faith, as Melanchthon taught. The image of God, properly speaking, is lost after the fall. What about the restitution of the image of God? If justification is not the infusion of new qualities in man, then justification and the restitution of the image of God cannot be the same.[45] We find, therefore, the restitution of the divine image not in the article on justification but in the article on the renewal of man. "The immediate effect of the renewing is the renewal (*instauratio*) of the divine image, or inherent sanctity; the mediate effect, good works."[46]

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[40] Cf. F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas: An Introduction to the Life and Work of the Great Medieval Thinker* (New York: Penguin Books, 1955), 89–90; Joseph Gredt, *Elementa Philosophica Aristotelico-Thomisticae* (Freiberg: Verlag Herder, 1937), 1:210.

[41] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, I, IV, thesis (2:17).

[42] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, I, IV, ekthesis 11 (2:18).

[43] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, I, IV antithesis 4 (2:18). This position is later attributed to Tertullian, diverse Origenists, and Andreas Osiander (2:19).

[44] Quenstedt refers to Flacius, Clavis, s.v. "imago." Cf. Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Clavis scripturae sacrae* (Basileae: Apud Heinricpetrino, 1628), 414–417.

[45] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, VIII, I, thesis 3 (3:514).

[46] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, XI, I, thesis 12 (3:635).

Traducianism and Creationism

Since a hot-button issue like abortion has commanded so much of the church's attention in recent years, it may be helpful to examine the topic in light of Quenstedt's definitions. Abortion was not a controversial issue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *Constitutio criminalis Carolingia,* the first criminal code in Germany, issued in 1532 by Emperor Charles V, punished a woman who had aborted a child with the death penalty if the child was "alive"; if the child was no longer alive, the punishment was left to the court.[47] Behind this distinction is most likely the philosophical doctrine, received in the medieval Roman church, that the embryo does not have a soul from the very beginning. According to Thomas Aquinas, the soul is infused into the embryo after forty days in the case of males and ninety days in the case of females.[48] This doctrine depends on two things. First, it relies on the philosophical doctrine that the soul is the form of the body; thus, where the body is not yet formed, there is no soul. Second, it depends on creationism, namely, the doctrine that every human soul is created directly by God and that therefore there is a special act of ensoulment at some point. Creationism was the predominant theory in Roman Catholicism, although Tertullian and perhaps Augustine held to traducianism, the position that the body and soul come into being through the parents; they are, so to speak traduced, or handed over, in procreation. This Thomistic position made it possible to view abortion in early pregnancy not as the killing of a human being since, according to this theory, the fruit of the womb in the early stage of pregnancy is not yet a human being. This position was put forward in 1970 by Father Joseph F. Donceel, S.J.[49] The church's magisterium has, of course, rejected this position in recent times. It acknowledged, however, in its "Declaration on Procured Abortion" (1974) that in the Middle Ages there were different opinions about the status of the embryo before and after ensoulment. On

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[47] "Peinliche Halsgerichtsordnung Kaiser Karls V." (Constitutio Criminalis Carolina), § 133; http://www.llv.li/pdf-llv-la-recht-1532__peinliche_halsgerichts ordnung__carolina_.pdf (accessed January 20, 2013). Cf. Günter Jerouschek, "Die juristische Konstruktion des Abtreibungsrechts," in *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts,* ed. Ute Gerhard (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1997), 254–255.

[48] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Sentences*, trans. Ralph McInery; Bk. III, dist. 3, q. 5, a. 2, *Responsio.* http://dhspriory.org/thomas/Sentences.htm (accessed February 17, 2014).

[49] Joseph F. Donceel, "A Liberal Catholic View," in *Abortion in a Changing World,* vol. 1, ed. Robert E. Hall (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 39–45.

the other hand, the group Catholics for Choice claims this theological tradition as the rationale for their pro-abortion stand.[50]

Lutherans, for the most part, have been traducianists, holding that there was no act of ensoulment that occurred after conception. From the moment of conception, the infant was an embodied rational soul, a human being in the full sense of the word, unlike the dominant opinion in scholasticism.[51] The debate between creationism and traducianism is not explicitly referenced in the Confessions, but Quenstedt discusses the point and affirms traducianism—namely, that the fruit of the womb is a human being from the moment of conception, also with the argument that otherwise the incarnation would not have happened at the moment when Mary conceived Christ.

Quenstedt and the Eccentric-responsoric Nature of Humanity

Does Quenstedt have any concept of the "eccentric-responsoric" nature of man? He does, but not in his treatment of the image of God or in his section on anthropology. Rather, it can be found in the discussion of the Christian's righteousness, which is not an inherent quality but the imputation of Christ's righteousness or the merit of Christ grasped by faith.[52] Christ's righteousness does not become our formal righteousness. It does not inhere in the subject, but is nevertheless truly ours by imputation; thus, we are formally justified. It remains extrinsic to us and remains ours as the extrinsic righteousness. It is intrinsic to us by imputation, not by becoming a quality. Quenstedt draws the parallel to the relationship of man's sin and Christ: man's sin is Christ's by imputation. They are extrinsic to him insofar as they are not qualities inhering in Christ, but are nevertheless his, so that he is judged guilty of them.[53] The renewal of man, the interior righteousness, either habitually in the soul or actually in the good works of the Christian, follows the imputation and is to be distinguished.[54]

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[50] For the position of the Vatican, cf. "Declaration on Procured Abortion," November 18, 1974; http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/ congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19741118_declaration-abortion_en.html (accessed January 21, 2013). For the position of Catholics for Choice, cf. "The Truth About Catholics and Abortion" (Washington, D.C.: Catholics for Choice, 2011), 5; http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/topics/abortion/documents/TruthaboutCatholics andAbortion.pdf (accessed January 21, 2013).

[51] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico,* II, XII, II, qu.2 (1:519–527) discusses the issue of creationism vs. traducianism.

[52] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, VIII, II, qu. IV, thesis (3:539).

[53] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, VIII, II, qu. IV, XII (3:540).

[54] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, VIII, II, qu. V Objectionum Διάλυσις, II (3:544).

What about the responsoric aspect of man? This leads to the discussion of faith in Quenstedt's dogmatics, a topic that he addresses in his discussion on justification. In the polemical section, the role of faith as instrumental cause is argued.[55] Justifying faith is distinguished from any other type of faith, such as the dead faith of hypocrites, historical faith, or *fides miraculosa*, the faith that believes that God can do miracles. Excluded are also faith as a *habitus* (a formation of the soul) in the heart of the Christian, faith as summary of the Christian doctrine, and reflexive faith—faith that reflects on itself. Justifying faith is not a quality or action in man; rather, it exists in the category of relation. It looks at the merit of Christ, grasps it, and appropriates it to the person. Justifying faith is thus the faith *of* the person; it is not a *quality* in the soul of the person or an *action* of the person but rather a description of a *relation*. Thus, justifying faith is to be considered *ut est in sanguine Christi, sive prout relative spectator* (as it is in the blood of Christ, namely, as it is viewed in relation to it).[56] This is a strange way to put it. Faith subsists not simply in the believer, though it is his faith, but in the object of the faith, taking here "blood of Christ" as shorthand for "forgiveness of sins on account of Christ's death." The point, nevertheless, is that justifying faith here is not defined as a *habitus* or a quality in the soul, but rather as a relation. This faith is also a gift from God that man cannot produce by himself.[57] In the chapter on repentance, Quenstedt defines faith thus:

> By the word faith . . . we do not understand *epignosis* or knowledge in the mind by which we know divine things, nor *synkatathesis* or assent, through which we believe God and his word, but *prosdegma* or a faithful apprehension, whereby we apply and appropriate to us the suffering and death of Christ, and thus his blood-stained merit.[58]

Faith is clearly distinguished from knowledge and assent. The language of apprehension and application can lend itself to misinterpretation as categorizing faith as man's action. This simply shows how difficult it is to describe the nature of faith or, to that extent, the nature of the believer without making faith a quality or action of man and, at the same time, express that it is the person who believes.

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[55] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, VIII, II, qu. VI (3:547–552)

[56] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, II, VII, II, qu. VI, Objectionum Διάλυσις (3:552).

[57] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, II, qu. 4, Fontes Solutium, IX (3:40).

[58] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico*, III, IX, I, thesis 9, nota IV (3:583).

IV. Conclusion

What are we to make of this historical overview? First, even though Lutheranism received the traditional philosophical—and that is equivalent to what we would call today scientific—definition of man as rational animal as being compatible with the biblical description of man, it nevertheless deemed that definition to be insufficient. Man had to be defined historically, namely, as a being who comes from God, falls away from him, and is reconciled to him. That includes the belief that man has to be defined as a being who exists in a unique relationship with God—as the being who has sinned and who is justified. History and relation become important categories, all the while not discarding the traditional philosophical categories of substance and accident that are actually enshrined in the Book of Concord. Contrary to large segments of Christianity, be it Roman Catholic,[59] or contemporary Reformed theology, for Lutherans the image of God is not seen as an inherent factor in man that distinguishes him even after the fall and describes his essence.[60] It is curious that even among some Lutherans the statement "through the fall man lost the image of God" seems to cause uneasiness, even though it is a confessional statement. In many Christian circles, "the image of God" seems to become *the* term to express what it means to be human. According to the Lutheran Confessions, the sinner who has lost the image of God is still a human being. Furthermore, Quenstedt explicitly denies that the image of God is the substance of humanity. The continuity of man is on the one hand in his substance, namely, body and soul, and on the other in the continued special relation God has to man and therefore man has to God. Man is the only being to whom God speaks the gospel, and man is the only being who is called to faith.

This view of man is not the majority opinion today. In regard to the substance of man, body and soul, the materialistic preoccupation of western civilization over the last two hundred years has made this view of man less and less convincing in general culture. Evolutionism did its part to destroy the traditional understanding of humanity, and materialism brings

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[59] As documented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2003), §1702: "The divine image is present in every man."

[60] As seen in Anthony A. Hoekema's monograph on anthropology, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986): "Though, as we have seen, the Bible teaches that man's fall into sin has seriously perverted the image of God in him, it also teaches that fallen man is still to be regarded as an image-bearer of God"(98). For the traditional Lutheran view on this point, cf. Werner Elert, *The Christian Ethos* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 226. For Luther's view, cf. Albrecht Peters, *Der Mensch* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1979), 43–49.

with it atheism. Here apologetics has an important task to show that materialism is not the only rationally defensible worldview, but that a universe that includes God and the soul makes more sense. In regard to the special relationship of God to man as the being that is to be justified, this view is only plausible to those who believe the gospel, that is, to Christians. Conversion to Christianity will therefore not only lead to the true knowledge of God but also to a true understanding of humanity. And not only that, the gospel makes us truly human. It turns sinful man from an unhappy god into a true human being.

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Robert George's Natural Law Argument against Same-Sex Marriage

Scott Stiegemeyer

In every age, the Christian Church has addressed issues that pertain to understanding God and our life in Christ. Our calling is to be light for the nations. Ancient church fathers addressed gladiatorial games and infanticide while also clarifying and articulating the biblical understanding of the Trinity. The sixteenth-century reformers discussed two-kingdom understanding and vocation as well as forensic justification. Nineteenth-century church leaders grappled with slavery as well as the challenges of modernism.

As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, same-sex marriage is one of the premiere issues for traditionally-minded Christians. This is not a marginal topic, affecting only the very small number of people who desire to marry someone of the same sex. Defining marriage correctly affects everyone.

Christians must remember that marriage is a theological matter, first and foremost, not purely social or cultural. The Bible begins and ends with a wedding. Nuptial imagery is pervasive throughout the Old and New Testaments, where it serves to elucidate God's relationship with his chosen people. Redefining marriage undercuts our proclamation of the gospel. Our case is biblical and doctrinal. And yet, prudence requires that we equip ourselves to speak truthfully in a variety of settings, including contexts in which biblical proof-texting will not be accepted. We must do a better job of arguing persuasively in the public realm, on this topic and others, instead of congratulating one another. To the secularist, missional Christians must address his argument to the secularist so as to win the secularist.

Robert George is a Roman Catholic Christian who teaches law and philosophy at both Princeton and Harvard. In 2009, *The New York Times Magazine* called him this country's "most influential conservative Christian

Scott Stiegemeyer is Pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Elmhurst, Illinois, and is currently completing a Master of Arts in Bioethics at Trinity International University at Deerfield, Illinois.

thinker."[1] Along with Sherif Girgis and Ryan T. Anderson, George maintains in their recent book, *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense,* that serious social harms will result from the further destabilization of marriage that the same-sex debate incurs.[2] There are a number of ways to respond to this issue. George and his colleagues, as proponents of natural law, provide pastors and churches a helpful tool for discourse in the public square. The authors intentionally determined to make a reasoned defense of the traditional view of marriage without reference to sacred texts. They begin by explaining that the contemporary controversy over marriage equality is not really about whom we allow to marry, but about the essence of marriage. They argue that, by definition, marriage can only exist between one man and one woman. All other bonds, even if sexual and domestic, are not marriage. There can no more be a non-marital marriage than there could be a square circle. States that legally redefine same-sex unions as marriage are not expanding marriage rights, but redefining the institution.

People on both ends of the political spectrum may fail to see the harm of same-sex "marriage." Libertarians may say that marriage is a private matter with no public significance and call, therefore, for the state to get out of marriage altogether. Those on the left deny the distinctive public value of traditional marriage and conclude that a society may redefine marriage to accommodate a variety of arrangements.[3] Some go even further and claim that this is an issue of justice, meaning that a just society *must* permit same-sex unions.

The law has always set terms for some human relationships and not others. George argues that the state does have an interest in marriage, which is why every society has laws regulating marriage. The law does not set terms for our platonic friendships, but marriage is different because "friendship does not affect the common good in structured ways that warrant legal recognition and regulation; marriage does."[4] We all have an

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[1] David D. Kirkpatrick, "The Conservative-Christian Big Thinker," *The New York Times Magazine,* December 16, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/20/magazine/20george-t.html?_r=0; accessed December 8, 2013.

[2] Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George, *What Is Marriage?: Man and Woman: A Defense* (New York: Encounter Books, 2012). Though George had two co-authors, I will refer to the book by his name for the sake of expediency.

[3] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?,* 37.

[4] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 38.

interest in our neighbors' marriages because marriage serves as a stabilizing force in society.

George and his co-authors define two views of marriage at work today: the traditional view, which he calls the conjugal view, and the revisionist view. The conjugal view, which has long informed civil law, says that marriage is a bodily as well as emotional bond, distinguished by its comprehensiveness and its inherent ordering toward procreation. It is comprehensive in the sense that it joins the two in body as well as mind and emotion. It is also characterized by exclusivity and permanence.

I. The Nature of Conjugal Union

Any union of two people must include a bodily union to be comprehensive. It if did not, it would leave out a basic part of each person's being. Our bodies consist of numerous different systems: the cardiovascular system, the respiratory system, the nervous system, etc. Each system functions fully for the individual. The one organic system that is incomplete, in itself, is the reproductive system. These organs are not able to function fully without union to another body, one of the opposite sex. In sexual reproduction, a person's mate truly makes him or her complete. By contrast, "two men, two women, and larger groups cannot achieve organic bodily union: there is no bodily good or function toward which their bodies can coordinate."[5] Organic bodily union cannot be comprehensive except in the matching of one man with one woman. Whatever else same-sex unions might be, they can never be a comprehensive bodily union.

George's natural law argument is that it is neither love nor sex that makes a marriage, but the comprehensive union. Of course, marriage also involves love and sex, but it is the unique biological ordering of men with women toward procreation that forms the foundation of all society. Feelings of affection are not unique to marriage. People can indeed form affectionate bonds with members of both sexes apart from marriage. People can also engage in sexual behaviors with people of both sexes, with or without love. Our bodies can be made to touch and interlock with other bodies in several fashions, but these actions, apart from conjugal marriage, have no generative significance.[6]

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[5] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 27.

[6] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 36.

In his article, "What Marriage Is—And What It Isn't," George demonstrates that the problem is a redefinition of marriage. He points out, for instance, that everyone agrees that marriage is a relationship in which persons are united. He takes a step back and asks, "But what is a person? And how is it possible for two or more of them to unite?"[7] The marriage revisionists begin with a false view of the human person. They assume a type of dualism in which the true identity of a person is the part that wills and desires. The body is merely a container. It is nothing more than an instrument to be used for the purpose of the person's will or desire. He summarizes their view this way: "The person inhabits (or is somehow associated with) a body, certainly, but the body is regarded (if often only implicitly) as a subpersonal reality, rather than a part of the personal reality of the human being whose body it is."[8] In this view, the body is an instrument of the person to be used for extrinsic purposes such as pleasure or even procreation.

Marriage is a true union of persons. The revisionists agree. But, they would say that since the essence of the person is the will and emotions, not the body, then same-sex couples can achieve personal union as well as male and female couples. This collapses, however, if we understand the body as more than incidental to the person. If a person is a body-mind-soul unity, then a comprehensive union must include a bodily union. This unified view of the human person is what Isaiah Berlin once referred to as the central tradition of Western thought.[9]

One reason the marriage revisionists are making such progress with their agenda is because this dualistic understanding is widely held. If love, understood emotionally, makes a family, then the joining of a same-sex couple can qualify as a marriage. But if the defining feature of marital love is the comprehensive union of persons, then this can only occur between one man and one woman.

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[7] Robert P. George, "What Marriage Is—And What It Isn't," *First Things*, no. 195 (August/September 2009), 35.

[8] George, "What Marriage Is—And What It Isn't," 35.

[9] Robert P. George "Law and Moral Purpose," *First Things*, no. 179 (January 2008), 25. "According to this view, human beings are not nonbodily persons (consciousnesses, minds, spirits, what have you) inhabiting and using nonpersonal bodies. Rather a human person is a dynamic unity of body, mind and spirit. Bodily union is thus personal union, and comprehensive personal union—marital union—is founded on bodily union."

But why is the conjugal arrangement superior and deserving of special recognition and privilege? Quite simply, society depends on successful sexual unions ordered toward procreation and the rearing of children. "Relationships of two men, two women, or more than two, whatever their moral status, cannot be marriages because they lack this inherent link to procreation."[10] The revisionists misconstrue the conjugal position when they argue that same-sex couples should be compared to heterosexual couples who are infertile.[11] Since, they argue, the traditional view does not deny that men and women who are unable, for whatever reason, to conceive and bear children still achieve comprehensive personal union, then the same privilege should be accorded to same sex couples. This is a false comparison. Male-female couples fulfill the behavioral conditions of procreation, regardless of whether there are non-behavioral factors that prevent conception from occurring.[12]

Only one man united to one woman can form a comprehensive union, and this is strongest when also characterized by exclusiveness and permanence. Conjugal unions must be exclusive because comprehensive union can be achieved *only* by two people. No act can organically unite three or more people bodily.[13] It must be permanent to provide the ideal environment for the raising of children to be stable and productive members of society. Strong marriages are essential for a civilization to flourish.[14] Almost every culture recognizes the inherent good associated with marriage and regulates it accordingly.[15]

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[10] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 30.

[11] Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, "Quaestio Disputata: What Male-Female Complementarity Makes Possible: Marriage As a Two-In-One-Flesh Union," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 644.

[12] Lee and George, "Quaestio Disputata," 650.

[13] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 36. "In choosing such biological coordination, spouses unite bodily, in a way that has generative significance, and do not merely touch or interlock. This generative kind of act physically embodies their specific, marital commitment."

[14] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 38. "That state of economic and social development we call 'civilization' depends on healthy, upright and productive citizens. But regularly producing such citizens is nearly impossible unless men and women commit their lives to each other and any children they might have. So it is a summary, but hardly an exaggeration, to say that civilization depends on strong marriages"

[15] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 38.

II. Social Benefits of Conjugal Marriage

Conjugal marriage should receive special treatment under the law because of the distinctive way it benefits society at large. George says that "marriage exists as a protected legal institution primarily because of societal values associated with the propagation of the human race."[16] Precisely the thing that makes marriage different from every other human association is that it is uniquely capable of generating and nurturing future citizens. George maintains:

> There is a reason that all cultures treat marriage as a matter of public concern and even recognize it in law and regulate it. The family is the fundamental unit of society. Governments rely on families to produce something that governments need—but, on their own, they could not possibly produce: upright, decent people who make honest, law-abiding, public-spirited citizens.[17]

The furtherance of the human race is dependent on men and women doing what comes naturally. Reason, supported by strong evidence, attests to the facts that marriage benefits both spouses and children, fights poverty, and limits state power.[18]

There is, first of all, a spousal benefit. George writes, "Marriage tends to make spouses healthier, happier, and wealthier than they would otherwise be."[19] And further:

> men, after their wedding, tend to spend more time at work, less time at bars, more time at religious gatherings, less time in jail, and more time with family. The shape of marriage as a permanent and exclusive union ordered to family life helps explain these benefits.[20]

The conjugal view does not disregard the emotional aspect of marriage; it is a natural law argument precisely because it posits that human beings are more inclined to be happy when they live according to their nature.

Stable conjugal marriage also greatly benefits children. Ample sociological data demonstrate conclusively that certain arrangements are generally superior for rearing children. The left-leaning research institution Child Matters offers this powerful analysis:

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[16] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 44.

[17] George, "Law and Moral Purpose," 25.

[18] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 42.

[19] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 8.

[20] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 44.

> Research clearly demonstrates that family structure matters for children, and the family structure that helps children the most is a family headed by two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage. . . . There is thus value for children in promoting strong, stable marriages between biological parents. . . . It is not simply the presence of two parents . . . but the presence of *two biological parents* that seems to support children's development.[21]

We do not need to speculate about which kinds of household groupings are most advantageous to children. "Single-motherhood, cohabitation, joint custody after divorce, and step-parenting have all been reliably studied, and the result is clear: Children tend to fare worse under every one of these alternatives to married biological parenting."[22] Married biological parenting is impossible for same-sex couples. When political and ideological goals are put to the side, the evidence demonstrates that the state must encourage stable conjugal marriages to the exclusion of some alternative arrangements. Indeed, any legal contract will exclude some parties.

Since the revisionist view is dependent on the premise that there are no important differences between same- and opposite-sex unions,[23] they should likewise claim that there are no important differences between these kinds of marriages in terms of how the children in these households fare overall. And yet this is demonstrably not true.

> Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grew up in a household with both of their biological parents. . . . regardless of whether the resident parent remarries. This point reinforces the idea that the state's primary interest is in upholding marital norms *to keep biological parents together*, and not simply in promoting two-parent households.[24]

The link of traditional marriage to children's welfare is what makes marriage a public good that the state should recognize and support. Simple observation coupled with the best available sociological data tell us that conjugal marriages are the most effective means of rearing healthy and well-adjusted children and that a flourishing society depends on the rearing of healthy and well-adjusted children. "That is why law, though it

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[21] Cited in Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 43.

[22] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 44.

[23] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 63.

[24] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 62.

may take no notice of ordinary friendships, should recognize and support conjugal marriages over all other alternative arrangements."[25] There is a firm, demonstrable link between stable heterosexual marriages and the welfare of children. If we can agree that there is also a link between children's welfare and every dimension of the public good, then we should resist trends and legislation that sever or weaken this link.[26]

III. Social Harms of the Revisionist View

Christians and others who disapprove of same-sex marriage are accused of intruding upon a matter that is essentially about private behavior. Ryan MacPherson sums up why this is, in fact, a public concern: "What harms the family ultimately will ruin society and civil government, and vice versa; similarly, what strengthens the family will ultimately improve society and civil government."[27] This is at the heart of George's case. His agenda in *What is Marriage?* is not about private behavior, but about what sort of relationships should be formalized and regulated by the state. He sums up his whole line of reasoning with three points: 1) law affects beliefs; 2) beliefs affect behaviors; 3) beliefs and behaviors affect the common good.[28] The revisionist proposal would harm society by reinforcing a flawed idea of what marriage is. "It would teach that marriage is about emotional union and cohabitation, without any inherent connections to bodily union or family life. As people internalize this view, their ability to realize genuine marital union would diminish. This would be bad in itself, since marital union is good in itself."[29] To the extent that marriage is misunderstood, it will be harder to understand its norms and urge them on others.

Of course, the revisionist view of marriage as a fundamentally emotional and domestic arrangement is not limited to those who advocate same-sex marriage. Many cultural developments in the last half-century have combined to instill this understanding widely, even among Christians. The rise in divorce is a good example. Social pressure and law once

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[25] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 7.

[26] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 52.

[27] Ryan C. MacPherson, "The Natural Law of the Family," in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, ed. Robert C. Baker and Roland Cap Ehlke (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 202.

[28] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 54.

[29] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 8.

supported the view that, in the majority of cases, marriage should be a permanent arrangement. That is why our marriage rite states that it should not be entered into lightly or inadvisably. However, no-fault divorce laws make sense when marriage is seen as primarily an emotional pact. Emotions wax and wane. People tend to require social pressures to get married and stay married.[30] While in former times the law strongly encouraged couples to stay together, now marriage is the easiest of all legal contracts to dissolve.[31]

The development of the birth control pill and other forms of contraception—whether one views these as morally acceptable or not—has separated the unitive act of marriage from the procreative one. When sex is not tied to the generation and nurture of children, the institution of marriage is destabilized. The erosion of permanence and exclusivity as marital norms did not begin with the same-sex marriage movement, but the damage is compounded by it. George writes that "in the revisionist account of marriage, where organic bodily union, an orientation to family life, and broad domestic sharing are at best optional, so are permanence and exclusivity."[32]

Dan Savage, a syndicated columnist and homosexual activist, writes a regular column carried by dozens of newspapers in North America and Europe. He is the creator of the *It Gets Better Project,* a series of short Internet videos in which celebrities and leaders give encouraging remarks targeted at LGBT teenagers who are the victims of bullying. Contributors include President Obama and Vice President Biden, whose *It Gets Better Project* videos are linked on the White House website. Savage is a key figure in the movement and is frequently invited to campuses with his anti-bullying campaign. While bullying is a destructive behavior that can cause lasting harm, Savage has an ulterior motive behind his campaign, namely, the promotion of new sexual norms. In the June 30, 2011, edition of *The New York Times Magazine*, Mark Oppenheimer featured Savage in an article entitled "Married, with Infidelities." He writes:

> "The mistake that straight people made," Savage told me, "was imposing the monogamous expectation on men. Men were never expected to be monogamous. Men had concubines, mistresses and access to prostitutes, until everybody decided marriage had to be

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[30] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 39.

[31] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 57.

[32] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 34.

> egalitarian and fairsey." In the feminist revolution, rather than extending to women "the same latitude and license and pressure-release valve that men had always enjoyed," we extended to men the confines women had always endured. "And it's been a disaster for marriage."[33]

Savage and his partner prefer the term "monogamish." It is like monogamy, but not quite. It seems comparable to what some in the "swinging 70s" might have called an open marriage. The redefinition of marriage in the current debate may well have further reaching implications than some of the more moderate LBGT advocates anticipate. There is, for example, research showing that the vast majority of homosexual male couples expect outside sexual activities to occur, even when they have committed partners. "By contrast, 99 percent of opposite-sex couples expect—that is, demand of each other and anticipate—sexual exclusivity in marriage."[34]

Dan Savage's honesty, at least, is appreciated. He is right that certain movements in recent decades have been disastrous for marriage, but not for the reasons he identifies. It almost sounds like he is making an argument from nature, as if to say that it is natural for men to have multiple sexual partners. To many, this has the ring of truth, but only if sexual intercourse exists primarily for the sake of pleasure. Hopefully, a convincing case has been made above that marriage as a comprehensive bodily union is rightly ordered toward children and family life. In that scenario, infidelities are injurious in that they divide the precious resources of time and material goods. Savage's influential views confirm those of Robert George when he writes, "If marriage is understood as an essentially emotional union, then marital norms, especially permanence and exclusivity, will make less sense."[35]

Laws that distinguish marriage bonds from other bonds, such as platonic friendship, or the relationships between teammates or roommates, will always leave some arrangements out.[36] Insofar as the sexual revisionist view takes hold, we should expect additional arrangements to be

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[33] Mark Oppenheimer, "Married with Infidelities," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 30, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/magazine/infidelity-will-keep-us-together.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1& (accessed December 8, 2013).

[34] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 71.

[35] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 67.

[36] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 80.

seriously proposed. Indeed, if marriage is fundamentally an emotional and domestic bond, there is little reason to deny it to members of the same sex, or groups of three or more, for that matter.

Redefining marriage harms "lower-income communities and African Americans the most. In fact, a leading indicator of whether someone will know poverty or prosperity is whether she grew up knowing the love and security of her married mother and father."[37] It is in the best interest of everyone to reestablish the understanding of marriage as a comprehensive union oriented toward procreation and characterized by exclusivity and permanence.

In many places, marriage of any sort is becoming an endangered species. In most of the European Union, for instance, marriage is at an all-time low. The marriage rate declined from 7.9 marriages per 1000 inhabitants in 1970 to 4.4. in 2010, a decline of 36 percent.[38] The downward trend is true in the United States as well. In 1960, 72 percent of those 18 or older were married. The percentage fell to 57 percent in 2000, and today it is just 51 percent, according to the latest census data.[39] Younger adults appear to be more cynical about marriage as an institution. They are getting married less often and are waiting longer when they do. Since these are the first children to come of age after the relaxation of divorce laws, it is frequently surmised that their hesitance to marry is reflective of the pain of their parents' divorces.

It is not unusual to hear expressions of hostility toward marriage altogether. J. Larry Yoder reports a conversation he had with a denominational staffer who stated, "I consider marriage a patriarchal invention of power designed to subjugate women."[40] If marriage is viewed as merely a social construction instead of divine in origin or something built into human nature, then its redefinition or dissolution is accepted.

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[37] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 45.

[38] Eurostat. "Marriage and Divorce Statistics" (October 2012), http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Marriage_and_divorce_statistics (accessed December 10, 2013).

[39] "Marriage in America: The Fraying Knot," *The Economist* (January 12, 2013), http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21569433-americas-marriage-rate-falling-and-its-out-wedlock-birth-rate-soaring-fraying (accessed December 10, 2013).

[40] Marianne Howard Yoder and J. Larry Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA" in *Natural Law*: *A Lutheran Reappraisal*, 169.

Failed marriages are bad for children and ultimately burden all of society. Where marriages break down, "the state expands to fill the domestic vacuum by lawsuits to determine paternity, visitation rights, child support, and alimony. . . . As absentee fathers and out-of-wedlock births become common, a train of social pathologies follows, and with it greater demand for policing and state-provided social services."[41] Where marriage and family are undermined, the role of the state in our lives becomes more intrusive. "As the family weakens, our welfare and correctional bureaucracies grow."[42]

The need for children to be raised in intact families, amply confirmed by the social sciences, is the very reason the state regulates marriage in the first place.[43] "The revisionist view severs this important link. If marriage is centrally an emotional union, rather than one inherently ordered to family life, it becomes much harder to show why the state should concern itself with marriage any more than with friendship."[44] Even if many rank-and-file revisionists continue to support monogamy as the legal norm, as George claims, it is not apparent why that must be the case.[45]

With a revised definition of marriage, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to limit marriage to two people. In fact, there are examples of prominent figures in the LGBT movement who do advocate for the recognition of polyamorous relationship and other novel configurations. George writes:

> If you insist as a matter of *principle* that we should recognize same-sex relationships as marriages, the same principle will require you to accept (and favor legally recognizing) polyamorous . . . relationships as marriages. If you think conjugal marriage laws unjustly discriminate against same-sex relationships, you will have no way of showing why the same is not true of multi-partner and nonsexual ones.[46]

This is not a slippery slope argument, but merely the logical outcome of the revisionist position. People who reject the conjugal view and say that love is all that matters—whether that love exists between two people of the

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[41] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 45.

[42] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 9.

[43] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 11.

[44] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 16.

[45] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 52.

[46] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 20.

same sex or opposite sex—will have to acknowledge that, "by the same token, it would not matter if the love were among three or more people."[47]

Finally, those who uphold traditional views of sexual morality will face potential academic censure, penalties in the workplace, and other social pressures to conform. To affirm what all Christians, Jews, Muslims and many others have asserted for millennia now opens one to charges of bigotry, anti-intellectualism, and hatred. "Homophobia" with its clinical sounding name implies a mental health disorder. The public, political, educational, professional, and legal marginalization of any who make known their opposition can lead them to be treated as the societal equivalent of racists.

IV. Why Marriage Instead of Civil Unions?

The same-sex marriage debate is not about anyone's private behavior, but about legal recognition of some relationships to the exclusion of others. Laws affect beliefs and behaviors. Clearly, shifting social attitudes have helped recent court cases overturn the traditional view. But legal recognition of same-sex unions as marriage definitely "affects our ideas of what is reasonable and appropriate."[48] The revisionists are asking for equal status for same-sex unions, not merely equivalent financial and social benefits as conjugal marriages. The revisionists are specifically fighting for *marriage* rights, even in states where same-sex civil unions are legal, because they recognize that some relationships are stigmatized when not given the status of marriage. Natural law thinkers may not, therefore, object to civil unions, whereas they find tremendous social harm in calling these contracts marriages because it further erodes the traditional view that marriage is a comprehensive union of persons ordered toward procreation and characterized by exclusivity and permanence.

George would not oppose conferring certain benefits to civil unions between same-sex couples. Such things as hospital visitation rights, inheritance rights, and other recognitions could be granted to such unions. In fact, one does not need to be married to acquire these rights now. There are already legal avenues, such as the power of attorney for health care, whereby individuals can insure that advantages normally enjoyed by married couples are directed according to their wishes.

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[47] George, "What Marriage Is—And What It Isn't," 36.

[48] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 54.

George's dispute is not with granting benefits to same-sex couples, for it is not the "conferral of benefits on same-sex relationship itself but *redefining marriage in the public mind* that bodes ill for the common good. . . . If the law defines marriage to include same-sex partners, many will come to misunderstand marriage. They will not see it as essentially comprehensive, or thus (among other things) as ordered to procreation and family life—but as essentially an emotional union."[49] A change in the law to recognize same-sex relationships as marriages sends a strong message to the public.

Privacy and Consent

Proponents of same-sex marriage argue that the sexual behavior of consenting adults should not be subject to criticism. What if the consenting adults are close relatives (e.g., brother and sister or father and daughter)? The reply is that such unions would still be banned because of the high likelihood of genetic abnormalities in any offspring. Presumably, if the two consenting relatives agree to be sterilized, removing any chance of offspring, then there can be no stricture.

The rectitude of actions by consenting adults is unquestioned. But why must they be adults? And why must they consent? Indeed, are not these terms culturally conditioned to a certain extent? Certainly, concepts of adulthood and consent differ between France, Saudi Arabia, tribes in the Amazon, and the United States. All societies place some restrictions on sexual behavior, regardless of the subject's consent. However, as Harry Jaffa points out, "Someone who cannot say that sodomy is unnatural cannot say that incest is unnatural."[50] A brother and sister could consent. The consent of subjects, rather than their nature or relationship, has become the key moral benchmark.

Traditional thinking says that man and woman are made for each other, that there is complementarity. The acceptance of same-sex behavior, enshrined in marriage law,

> is predicated upon the assumption that male and female are not made for one another. It defines male apart from female, female apart from male; or it leaves those terms free-floating, without definition. Young

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[49] Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage?*, 7; emphasis original.

[50] Harry V. Jaffa, *Homosexuality and the Natural Law* (Montclair, CA: Center for the Study of the Natural Law, Claremont Institute, 1990), 34.

> men and young women already are growing up without understanding what they are to be for one another.[51]

The liberal Protestant churches that have approved blessing same-sex unions argue that this is a justice issue. Human laws may change according to culture and circumstance, but our human legislation is not beyond all scrutiny. The justness of human law is determined by whether it conforms to natural law. In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. cites Thomas Aquinas when stating, "An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and the natural law."[52] He was talking about the immoral Jim Crow laws of the American South. His point, however, applies equally well in the debate over legalizing same-sex marriage. This helps to explain the general opposition of the African American churches, even though homosexual activists are working to frame the issue as a new civil rights movement. Dr. King believed that certain actions were wrong, even if the majority of the people consent to them. All civil legislation must conform to a higher divine law, which can be known by clear thinking and, in King's case, through Judeo-Christian formulations. Just laws conform to God's moral law, even if no one believes it.

Marriage is a temporal institution. In the new creation, there will be no marrying or giving in marriage. The shadow will give way to the substance. Jesus did not command his disciples to perform weddings. Though Jesus blessed marriage by his first recorded miracle at Cana (John 2:1–11), he did not officiate the ceremony. Some Lutherans might be tempted to sit on the sidelines of this battle by saying that marriage is purely a matter of the left-hand kingdom. The inadequacy of this attitude is demonstrated by Genesis, the testimony of Jesus, and St. Paul.

Public Health Concerns

Where the traditional conjugal view of marriage prevails, that is, one man and one woman in a life-long exclusive marriage to one another, then dozens of horrific, disfiguring, sterilizing, and potentially deadly venereal diseases can be largely avoided. Venereal diseases flourish where there is

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[51] Anthony Esolen, "Sanity & Matrimony: Ten Arguments in Defense of Marriage (Part 1 of 2), *Touchstone* 23, no. 4 (July/August 2010), http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=23-04-028-f (accessed April 24, 2014).

[52] Cited in Yoder and Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA," 160.

promiscuity. But a man and woman who are chaste before and during marriage presumably are protected.[53]

Robert Gagnon provides extensive verification that the harms of homosexuality include catastrophic rates of disease and a significantly lower life expectancy. Homosexual males have a twenty-five to thirty year lower life-expectancy. The elevated rates of physical diseases such as rectal cancer, bowel disease, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, substance abuse, suicide, and domestic violence are well documented.[54] Ultimately, this concerns society in general, as costs generated by same-sex activity, as with other risky behaviors, will be borne by all.

The homosexual subculture does not generally value monogamy. In one study, 84 percent of white homosexual males and 77 percent of African-Americans had fifty or more sexual partners. Twenty-eight percent of white homosexual males reported having more than one thousand sexual partners. Most of these encounters are anonymous. The vast majority of heterosexual males report having fewer than ten sexual partners, but only three percent of white homosexual males have fewer than ten.[55] Even within the context of a committed relationship, homosexual men rarely exhibit monogamy, let alone life-long monogamy.[56] Remember Dan Savage's *monogamish*.

V. The Basis for Homosexual Inclinations

The causes of homosexual inclinations are still poorly understood. It is frequently claimed that people are born with a same-sex attraction. They say that one person is born with a heterosexual orientation; that is his nature. Another is born with a homosexual orientation; that is his nature. Would not an argument from natural law suggest that what might be unnatural for one person, could be natural for another?[57] From the earliest times until fairly recently, Judaism and Christianity universally deemed same-sex sexual behaviors as contrary to divine law. This view prevailed

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[53] Jaffa, *Homosexuality and the Natural Law*, 17.

[54] Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 473.

[55] Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 453.

[56] Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 456.

[57] For further information on the history of the idea of sexual orientation, see Roland D. Martinson, "Sexual Orientation: The History and Significance of an Idea," *Word & World*: *Theology for Christian Ministry* 14, no. 3 (1994): 239–245.

until the modern era. Those engaging in such behaviors were not considered different in nature but were considered guilty of deviance.

The paradigm shifted in the nineteenth century with the birth of psychotherapy and the move to medicalize same-sex desire. Instead of labeling the desire a sin, the profession diagnosed it as a mental illness. Throughout most of the twentieth century, doctors continued to view homosexuality as a pathological condition. Researchers attempted therapies to cure people of homosexual desires. This approach was largely abandoned in 1973 when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its diagnostic manual, indicating that the profession no longer considered homosexuality a disease or a disorder. Today, it is common for people to claim that their sexual desires are integral to their identity.[58]

In fact, current scientific research of identical twins does not support the position that homosexual orientation is due to genetic causation. It appears that a complex combination of factors, including genes, intrauterine and post-uterine biological development, environment, and choice are at work. The head of the human genome project recently opined that while genetic factors may lead to a predisposition, genetics alone are not determinative. Dr. Francis Collins succinctly reviewed the research on homosexuality and offers the following:

> An area of particularly strong public interest is the genetic basis of homosexuality. Evidence from twin studies does in fact support the conclusion that heritable factors play a role in male homosexuality. However, the likelihood that the identical twin of a homosexual male will also be gay is about 20% (compared with 2–4 percent of males in the general population), indicating that sexual orientation is genetically influenced but not hardwired by DNA, and that whatever genes are involved represent predispositions, not predeterminations.[59]

Similarly, a person might have a genetic predisposition toward alcoholism, but it is life experiences that determine whether the physical dependence

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[58] With the shift in attitudes, our lexicon has also undergone change. We speak of "gender" and "sexuality" to refer to the interlocking aspects of desires, behavior, and social constructions. Your "sex" is determined by your anatomy; your "gender" is your view of yourself as male or female.

[59] A. Dean Byrd. "'Homosexuality Is Not Hardwired,' Concludes Dr. Francis S. Collins, Head of the Human Genome Project," *National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality*, http://www.narth.org/docs/nothardwired.html (accessed December 10, 2013).

will take hold. As is so frequently the case in this matter, when ideologies are exposed to sound reasoning and demonstrable evidence, the revisionist view suffers.

VI. A Lutheran Natural Law Case against Same-Sex Marriage

When Martin Luther was ordered at the Diet of Worms in 1521 to recant of his evangelical doctrine, he famously responded: "Unless I can be persuaded by plain reason and the Holy Scriptures . . . *I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.*"[60] *What is needed today in the Lutheran Church is not simply a persuasive biblical argument, but also one that employs plain reason.*

Many Protestant Christians are wary of natural law theory because they associate it with Roman Catholicism's over-confidence on reason to discern divine truth and a weak view of original sin. This wariness goes too far, however, if it assumes that natural law did not play a key role in the thinking of the reformers. Martin Luther was very critical of Aquinas and the other scholastics on many points, yet on this major question he did not disparage them.

In 1525, Luther preached a sermon titled "How Christians Should Regard Moses," in which he defines the role of Old Testament law for Christians. Why do Christians appear to follow some laws from the Old Testament but not others? He explains the differentiation between natural law, which is applicable to all people—Gentiles as well as the Jewish nation—and the parts of the Mosaic code that were only intended for the Hebrew people in order to set them apart and to foreshadow the coming Messiah.

Proponents of same-sex unions within the church equate the biblical stricture against same-sex sexual behavior with other biblical prohibitions, such as this one found in Deuteronomy 22:11: "You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together." But Jews and Christians have always understood the differentiation between laws that, on the one hand, belong strictly to the Hebrew people of the old covenant and, on the other hand, are timeless, universal moral laws. Many moral directives are known, and we are held accountable to them from birth. Cain was indicted by God for murdering Abel, even though no written proscription against fratricide was known. God could hold Cain accountable for his actions on account of

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[60] Quoted in Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, trans. James L. Schaaf, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985–93), 1:460.

the law inscribed on his heart. In an extended discussion of this topic, Luther observed:

> Here the law of Moses has its place. It is no longer binding on us because it was given only to the people of Israel. And Israel accepted this law for itself and its descendants, while the Gentiles were excluded. To be sure, the Gentiles have certain laws in common with the Jews, such as these: there is one God, no one is to do wrong to another, no one is to commit adultery or murder or steal, and others like them. *This is written by nature into their hearts;* they did not hear it straight from heaven as the Jews did. This is why this entire text does not pertain to the Gentiles. . . .
>
> We will regard Moses as a teacher, but we will not regard him as our lawgiver—unless he agrees with both the New Testament and *the natural law*. When these factious spirits come, however, and say, "Moses has commanded it," then simply drop Moses and reply, "I am not concerned about what Moses commands." "Yes," they say, "he has commanded that we should have one God, that we should trust and believe in him, that we should not swear by his name; that we should honor father and mother; not kill, steal, commit adultery; not bear false witness, and not covet [Exod. 20:3–17]; should we not keep these commandments?" You reply: *Nature also has these laws. Nature provides* that we should call upon God. The Gentiles attest to this fact. For there never was a Gentile who did not call upon his idols, even though these were not the true God. This also happened among the Jews, for they had their idols as did the Gentiles; only the Jews have received the law. The Gentiles have it written in their heart, and there is no distinction [Rom. 3:22]. As St. Paul also shows in Romans 2:14–15, *the Gentiles, who have no law, have the law written in their heart*.
>
> But just as the Jews fail, so also do the Gentiles. *Therefore it is natural* to honor God, not steal, not commit adultery, not bear false witness, not murder; and what Moses commands is nothing new. For what God has given the Jews from heaven, he has also written in the hearts of all men. Thus I keep the commandments which Moses has given, not because Moses gave the commandment, but because *they have been implanted in me by nature,* and Moses agrees exactly with nature, etc. [61]

Luther's co-reformer in Wittenberg, Philip Melanchthon, devoted a section to natural law in his *Loci Communes*, 1543. Like Luther, he believed

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[61] Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, trans. and ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 107; emphasis added.

that "certain knowledge has been implanted in the minds of men by which they understand and evaluate many things."[62] The reformers were quick to point out the limitations of natural knowledge, especially in matters that pertain to God. Special revelation, such as the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, became necessary because of the distorting effects of sin. In the state of innocence, man could perceive the divine law perfectly. After the fall into sin, this perception was badly obscured, though not entirely extinguished. Melanchthon writes:

> To be sure, these principles governing our conduct ought to be as clear to us as the knowledge of numbers, and yet because of our original fall, a certain darkness has come over us and the human heart has conflicting desires over against the distinction between the upright and the immoral. . . . The knowledge of the Law remains, but our assent to it is weak because of the stubbornness of our heart. This knowledge is a testimony that we have had our origin in God and that we owe obedience to Him and that He accuses our disobedience.[63]

Melanchthon ties the inborn knowledge of God's law to the *imago Dei*. Human beings, male and female, were created in the image of God.

> Therefore the correct definition of the law of nature is this: The law of nature is the knowledge of the divine law which has been grafted into the nature of man. For this reason man is said to have been created in the image of God, because in him shone the image, that is, the knowledge of God and the likeness to the mind of God, that is, the understanding of the difference between the honorable and the shameful; and the powers of man concurred or agreed with this knowledge. . . . Although in this corruption of our nature the image of God has been so deformed that the knowledge of Him does not shine forth like it did, yet the knowledge does remain, but our heart contends against it and our doubts arise because of certain things which seem to conflict with this knowledge. . . . Yet the natural knowledge of God is not entirely extinct.[64]

Luther's well-known indictments against human reason were not meant to drive us into fundamentalist biblicism. He asserted that *sola ratio* is incapable of fully knowing Jesus and his gospel apart from special revelation. Faith comes by hearing the preached revelation of Christ.

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[62] Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, *1543*, trans. Jacob A. O. Preus, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 70.

[63] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, 70.

[64] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, 70–72.

However, the beloved *sola Scriptura* principle does not mean that human reason is totally incapable of acquiring any useful knowledge, even divine law. The ministerial use of reason is not disavowed.

As we have seen, Melanchthon ascribes natural knowledge of God's eternal law to the image of God imprinted on the heart of mankind at creation.

> The Formula of Concord reiterates the teaching of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession that the image of God in humankind (*imago Dei*) is not so totally destroyed by sin and the fall as to leave human beings totally incapable of discerning the difference between what is right and wrong, good and evil, true and false. The natural law is essential to the human quest for justice and in defense of human rights.[65]

There are universal laws that originate with God and are embedded within man that can be discerned by our faculty of reason.

The church, along with all clear-thinking people, can and must teach these naturally known laws. Because moral law can be known by all people and applies to all people, as opposed to just Israel or just Christians, it is a fundamental element of the church's message to the world. Natural law arguments are ways the church can and must engage in the civil realm. Carl Braaten is right: "When the Church and its officials make moral pronouncements on any of these topics, it makes no sense if all they do is preach Christ or quote the Bible. Their position statements will be persuasive to non-Christians solely on the condition that they are backed by reasonable arguments intelligible to those who do not happen to believe in Christ and the Bible."[66]

The natural law is a matter of the left-hand kingdom, but it is not only for the left hand. Bold proclamation of God's law is an essential aspect of the work of the church, as God's right-hand rule. Without a clear apprehension of the accusation of the law, the message of divine pardon through Christ is unintelligible. J. Yoder rightly notes:

> The proclamation of the Gospel in our time presupposes a vigorous preaching of the Law. The law is not obliterated in the new covenant. Adultery is still sin. Honoring one's parents is required. Keeping God's name holy is not perfunctory but mandatory. . . . We will not begin to understand either the power or the beauty of the Gospel until

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[65] Carl E. Braaten, "A Lutheran Affirmation of the Natural Law," in *Natural Law*: *A Lutheran Reappraisal*, 8.

[66] Braaten, "A Lutheran Affirmation of the Natural Law," 14.

> we understand the requirements, the severity, and the judgment of the law.[67]

It can be known by observation and rational thinking that homosexual behavior is contrary to nature. People do not need to read the Bible to know how our sexual organs are intended to be used. Men and women are physically complementary to each other in ways that individuals of the same sex are not. Occasional references to rare examples from the animal kingdom of same-sex activity do not deny the fact that opposite sex coupling is necessary, in every case, for the species to flourish and survive. Reading human emotions and motivations in non-human species based on appearances is not good science. Besides, if the rectitude of human actions can be determined by those observed in the non-human species, then killing and eating our young should be seen as natural and acceptable for humans. Many animals do it. Male-on-male rutting among non-human species could be an example of domination, making it more akin to rape than marital self-giving love among humans. There is no other satisfactory explanation from an evolutionary perspective. Even if there could be claimed some evolutionary advantage, we who accept the authority of Scripture maintain that human marriage embodies the divine mystery of God and his people in a way that is unique in all of creation, dogs and giraffes notwithstanding.

Starting with Aristotle, natural law theory teaches that everything is ordered toward a purpose. An acorn is intended to become an oak tree, for example. The purpose of the oak tree could be to provide shelter for human beings. The application to sex is not hard to fathom. "Sexual morality, according to natural law, would involve using one's sexual organs for their intended purpose (i.e., the purpose of the Creator/ Designer)."[68] The sexual complementarity of men and women is not subject to debate; it is the relevance of this complementarity to marriage that is questioned.

Confessional Lutherans must care about this debate for the sake of loving the neighbor. Numerous societal detriments have been highlighted. Most importantly, it is not only society that suffers when same-sex behavior is approved. It is the individual homosexual man or woman who suffers in his or her relationship to God when the church fails in its duty to

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[67] Yoder and Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA," 175.

[68] Yoder and Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA," 159.

denounce sin.[69] The words of Jesus certainly apply here, "I tell you that unless you repent you will perish" (Luke 13:2). Whenever the church's message is altered to accommodate sinful actions, the power of the gospel is thwarted. Jesus not only said, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them," but also "if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld" (John 20:23). This means that there really are sins that are not forgiven. The ingredient that makes the difference is repentance, as the *Small Catechism* makes clear (cf. Acts 3:19).

It is misleading to claim, as many do, that Jesus was silent on the issue of same-sex marriage or homosexual behavior. Though he does not address the topic explicitly, the same could be said of many other topics, such as bestiality and incest. By the reasoning of some, this means that Jesus approves of sodomizing the livestock and molesting the children. The more rational position is that Jesus is an exemplar of his culture and tradition and so affirms the moral teaching found in Moses. If Jesus had, in fact, tolerated homosexual behavior, this would have been extraordinary enough that, given the Jewish beliefs on the matter, it would have warranted being recorded. When Jesus does speak about marriage, for example, in Mark 10:1–9, he directs his interlocutors back to Genesis 1 and 2. As Robert Gagnon observes, "On matters relating to sexual ethics Jesus often adopted stricter, not more lenient, demands than most other Jews of his time. . . . Rather than adopt a more liberal stance toward divorce, Jesus closed this loophole in the Law."[70]

Traditional conjugal marriage is not just a peripheral social teaching but goes to the heart of the gospel. The Apostle Paul describes how husbands and wives should relate to one another and then transitions to saying that the higher application of these teachings is to Christ and his bride, the church. Even if we in our denomination never solemnize same-sex marriage, it will nevertheless become even more difficult for our people to understand the meaning of sexuality in an already severely confused time. Quite simply, this impacts everyone.

VII. Conclusion

As helpful as it is, a natural law argument against legalizing same-sex marriage will probably not prevail on its own. The natural law argument assumes that a right understanding of human behavior can be discerned

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[69] Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 484.

[70] Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 197, 203.

by reason; we, however, do not live in a time characterized by rationality. Decisions about right and wrong are not well-reasoned; they are governed more by emotion and will. Philosopher Marianne Yoder and theologian J. Larry Yoder, both professors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, describe with considerable dismay the progress of the pro-homosexual lobby in their denomination. In a denominational convention in Minneapolis in 2009, the ELCA approved the blessing of same-sex unions and ordaining non-celibate homosexual clergy. The Yoders' evaluation of this landmark disposal of catholic teaching and practice is that it came about by means of powerful political machinations and emotional appeals, not well-reasoned arguments or dispassionate theological reflection.[71]

This issue is only a symptom of a larger problem, a flawed epistemology. Aristotle claimed that every *ethos* implies a *mythos*. In other words, character development (*ethos*) requires a coherent narrative (or *mythos*). Without a sound metanarrative, our society is floundering to know how to live. Marilyn Yoder says, "Emotivism is the prevailing ethical understanding in our culture today, and perhaps the majority of people in our democratic society think that is as it should be, even though emotivism is a path to radical subjectivism."[72] Without a clearly realized plot to shape our thinking, our behavior will be directed by passions and preferences. Worse, without an awareness of law that is applicable to all people at all times, the old adage comes true: might makes right. In postmodern society, truth becomes little more than an expression of power.[73] The benefit of postmodernism is what it corrects; the hazard is where it overcorrects. Postmodern philosophy underscores the elusiveness of meaning and knowledge. Yet, unchecked, postmodernism's distrust of rationalism will lead to nihilism. We will have so overcorrected ourselves that we end up in the ditch on the other side of the road.

Maybe the best we can hope for is to slow the pace of the movement to give the world time to consider all the implications involved. It will be much harder to reverse same-sex marriage laws once they have been passed. Though on the face of things it seems that an argument from the natural law is unlikely to change minds, it is still worth making. As one

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[71] Yoder and Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA," 168.

[72] Yoder and Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA," 168.

[73] As J Larry Yoder contends, "the 'first principle' of the ELCA: power, and who has it." Yoder and Yoder, "Natural Law and the ELCA," 172.

historian observes, "Sometimes seeds that you were sure were dead, suddenly sprout."[74]

In the end, the Lord of history and his kingdom will prevail. Traditional Christians should not resign themselves to pessimism in this time of great confusion. There was once a time in Great Britain and the United States when banning the slave trade was unthinkable. While on this side of the pond it took a bloody civil war to resolve the issue, in England Christian leaders, such as William Wilberforce, were able to persuade enough people of the rightness of the abolitionist cause that a tipping point was finally reached. Christian teaching has been attacked before. The remnant has always been preserved. Through the ages the church militant strives both to make God rightly known and to serve our neighbor in love. A clear defense of conjugal marriage, because it elucidates the gospel and benefits human flourishing, is part of the church's responsibility today.

[74] Jaffa, *Homosexuality and the Natural Law*, 12.

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Theological Observer

A Vision for Lutheranism in Central Europe

[*The following essay was first delivered as one of the Luther Academy Lectures for the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic at Saint Charles University in Prague on September 28, 2013. The Editors.*]

Prague has been the location for many notable events and anniversaries over the past millennium. Many of these events, such as the Second Defenestration of Prague, led to the tragic events of the execution of the twenty-seven nobles and the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, both of which had a negative effect on the influence of Lutheranism in the world. On September 29, 2013, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic observed the twentieth anniversary of its founding with a celebration at St. Michael's Church on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. The appointed readings for this particular feast demonstrate that the power of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh are defeated not with might of arms but with the word of God alone. In fact, the very same weapon Jesus used to fend off Satan when he was being tempted, "every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4), is the very same weapon that he has given to his church on earth. This very word of God, both the law and the gospel, provides the vision for Lutheranism not only in Central Europe but also throughout the world.

I. Anniversaries and the Reformation

As the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation approaches, it might do us well to reflect for a moment upon past centennial anniversaries. The year 1617 marked one of the first significant celebrations of the Reformation. The apparent organizers of the centennial celebration were none other than the Lutherans in Saxony, Germany, the birthplace of the Reformation. Broadsheets commemorating the Reformation were produced. In January 1617, the pope began the centennial of the Reformation with a prayer calling for a reunification of Christendom and for the eradication of heretics.[1] In response to the pope's tacit war against non-Roman

[1] Neil MacGregor, "Reformation centenary broadsheet (printed in 1617), from Germany," *BBC & The British Museum: A History of the World*, 2010, http://www.bbc.co.

Catholic Christians, the Lutherans responded with the first Reformation celebration on October 31, 1617.

Fig. 1. A 1617 centennial Reformation broadsheet.

The broadsheet produced for this first Reformation celebration depicts Martin Luther with a giant ink-quill in his hand writing his complaint against indulgences on the castle door in Wittenberg. The other end of Luther's ink-quill goes through both ears of a lion that represents Pope Leo X, knocking off his tiara and destroying the power of the pope. This first Reformation broadsheet was intended to rally the hearts and minds of the Lutherans/Protestants to prepare for war against Rome and her allies. Hans Herbele, a Lutheran cobbler, wrote in his diary about the 1617 Reformation celebration: "The anniversary festival was the beginning of the war, for one can read frequently in Catholic records about how the sight of this celebration stuck painfully in their eyes."[2] Indeed, war quickly

uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/transcripts/episode85/ (accessed September 27, 2013).

[2] Eric Lund, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517–1750* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2002), 174.

came the following year with the Second Defenestration of Prague on May 23, 1618, the event that began the Thirty Years' War.[3]

Subsequent centenary celebrations of the Reformation were fraught with similar challenges. In 1717, the Reformation was observed during a highly political moment in time. In 1817 and 1917, Reformation celebrations were guided by nationalism.[4] The great ecumenist and defender of confessional Lutheranism, Herman Sasse, once said, "Beware of Reformation anniversaries!" He writes, "In view of the many Reformation anniversaries which we have celebrated . . . one might well ask whether we have now had enough of looking back to the past, whether we have heard enough speeches and read enough anniversary articles."[5] The purpose of Reformation anniversaries rarely promotes the primary theme of the Reformation, which is encapsulated in Thesis 1 of the Ninety-five Theses: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" [Matt. 4:17], he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."[6] The message of repentance never has been popular in this world, given that it caused the Old Testament prophets to become martyrs, led to the crucifixion of Jesus, the death of untold martyrs and would-be reformers, and to the inception of the Reformation.

The message of repentance is the delivery of the law of God, which condemns sinful human beings, and the proclamation of the gospel, which

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[3] Herbele later recorded in the diary, "In the year 1619 Ferdinand II became the Holy Roman Emperor, and under him a great persecution arose, with war, rebellion, and the shedding of much blood, as a few examples will demonstrate. First, a great war began in Bohemia, which he attempted to restore by force to his religion. After that, war spread in the following years to the territories of Braunschweig, Mecklenburg, Lüneburg, Friesland, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Gottland, Austria, Moravia, Silesia, Heidelberg, indeed, to almost all of Germany, about which I cannot tell or describe anything . . . . " Lund, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism*, 174.

[4] Hartmut Lehmann, "From the Reformation until today: politics on Luther's back" (Interview with the historian Hartmut Lehmann about the celebrations of Reformation Day during history and in modern times), *Luther 2017*, http://www.luther2017.de/en/24637/reformation-until-today-politics-luthers-back (accessed September 27, 2013).

[5] Hermann Sasse, "The Social Doctrine of the Augsburg Confession and Its Significance for the Present," in *The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters (1927–1939)*, vol. 1, ed. Ronald Feuerhahn, trans. Matthew Harrison (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 89.

[6] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works,* vol. 31*: Career of the Reformer I*, ed. Jaroslav J. Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 25. Hereafter abbreviated as AE.

delivers humans from condemnation by the forgiveness of sins bestowed because of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Every Reformation anniversary and anniversary of a Lutheran church needs to focus on the core of the Reformation and on the very words of Jesus' earthly ministry, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near" (Matt 4:17). Martin Luther, reflecting on the history of the Christian church and that of his own German people, notes how the proclamation of God's word passes from one region to another, and that it is essential to seize the moment of the gospel when it is upon you. Luther writes,

> If we let it just slip by without thanks and honor, I fear we shall suffer a still more dreadful darkness and plague. O my beloved Germans, buy while the market is at your door; gather in the harvest while there is sunshine and fair weather; make use of God's grace and word while it is there! For you should know that God's word and grace is like a passing shower of rain which does not return where it has once been."[7]

The dreadful "darkness and plague" that Luther describes, which is caused by an ingratitude for the gospel, is upon world Lutheranism. In fact, it is upon all of western civilization.

II. Challenges Facing World Lutheranism

In world Lutheranism, a divide exists between the global north and south as well as between the east and west. The cause of the divide is multi-faceted, involving culture, language, geo-politics, economic development, demographics, and a different perspective toward the Holy Scriptures. A demographic reality driving part of the shift is the declining birth rate among western European and North American people groups, while in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia the birth rate has remained constant or has increased. A logical consequence of a lower birth rate is fewer people to attend church in Europe and North America. In the global south, there is a demographic increase of people as well as more people attending church. Demographics, of course, do not account for the entire decline, but they are a factor.

At the same time, the churches of Europe and North America, while smaller numerically than many of the African churches, still possess the majority of monetary resources, allowing the churches of the global north

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[7] AE 45:352.

to influence disproportionately the churches of the global south. The churches of the global north generally possess better education than the churches of the global south, making it more difficult for the latter to express disagreement in a manner that is considered intellectually sophisticated and hermeneutically sound according to academic standards. Such differences in educational standards allow North American and European theologians to dismiss the position of African theologians when the latter hold a view that is unpopular in America or Europe. Recent examples of this include the biblical prohibition of homosexual activity, abortion, and the ordination of women. When disagreements arise on topics such as these, the European or American theologian can "confidently" dismiss the view of an African theologian, for example, because he is ignorant of proper biblical hermeneutics.

To help bridge the gap between the theologians of the global north and those of the global south with regard to biblical interpretation, the Lutheran World Federation has launched an initiative on biblical hermeneutics that "seeks to strengthen the capacities of member churches to understand the word of God that comes through Scripture and the Lutheran theological heritage that looks to renew the church and society."[8] While on the surface this statement has the appearance of being Lutheran, it is necessary to deconstruct it. Note what is actually said: "to understand the word of God *that* comes through Scripture." A distinction is made between "the word of God" and the "Scripture." According to this statement, "hermeneutics" is required to sort out or to detect the "word of God" that might be found in the text of the Scripture. In essence, the position of the Lutheran World Federation is that the Scriptures as we have received them are a mixture of God's word and human words, requiring hermeneutics to make a determination of what part of the Bible is God's word and what is not. Once again, this procedure is very effective at removing parts of the Scriptures that do not fit the global north's agenda, societal norms, or social and political agendas. Quite literally, the LWF's hermeneutics program causes one to ask, "Did God really say?" (Gen 3:1).[9]

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[8] "Lutheran Hermeneutics," *Lutheran World Federation*, 2013; http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/lutheran-hermeneutics (accessed September 28, 2013).

[9] Many "biblical" scholars would dispute that Genesis 3 is legitimately God's word, given that the first three chapters of Genesis allegedly contradict western science. Once again, the "hermeneutical" presuppositions would answer the question, "Did God really say?" with "No, he did not."

One of the goals of the LWF's hermeneutics program is to "hold hermeneutics workshops for member churches to strengthen the capacity of pastors" and to "train theology and seminary faculties in transformative hermeneutics." The more "western" style hermeneutics that member churches of the LWF are taught, the more that these churches in the global south will ostensibly accept the positions of the North American and European churches. However, with the position that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Church of Sweden have taken regarding the acceptance of practicing homosexuals as pastors and bishops, the churches in the global south are holding fast in rejecting this new hermeneutic, which would literally steal the word of God from them.

A final note on this "transformative" hermeneutics promoted by the Lutheran World Federation. The first time the phrase "transformative hermeneutics" appeared in academic literature was in Alan Sokal's 1996 article, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity."[10] Alan Sokal invented the nonsense category of "transformative hermeneutics" to see if an American humanities journal would publish an article that "sounded good" and flattered the "editors' ideological preconceptions."[11] Sokal wrote his bogus paper in order to demonstrate the lack of academic rigor, as compared to the hard sciences such as physics, in the humanities and social sciences. From this ignoble origin comes the term "transformative hermeneutics."

What is meant by transformative hermeneutics? Presumably the LWF is not aware of this history and does not intend to discredit itself. The LWF intends that a "transformative hermeneutic" help Europeans and North Americans develop a shared meaning with Africans and the global south. The global south tends to read the biblical text in a literal manner, while

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[10] Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," *Social Text* 46/47 (Spring/Summer 1996): 217–252; http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/transgress_v2/transgress_v2_singlefile.html (accessed September 27, 2013).

[11] Alan D. Sokal, "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," *Lingua Franca* (May/June 1996). http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/ lingua_franca _v4/ lingua_franca_v4.html (accessed September 27, 2013): "So, to test the prevailing intellectual standards, I decided to try a modest (though admittedly uncontrolled) experiment: Would a leading North American journal of cultural studies—whose editorial collective includes such luminaries as Fredric Jameson and Andrew Ross—publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions? The answer, unfortunately, is yes."

the global north tends to read and apply the biblical text to a particular social situation. There is a tension between what the text meant and what it means today. Europeans tend to think of their context as far removed from that of the ancient biblical writers. Meanwhile, they consider Africans to be closer to the original context of the biblical writers. Thus, there is a conflict in interpretation between the modern European or North American and the typical African of today. Transformative hermeneutics seeks to bridge the gap between the historical basis of the biblical text and the contemporary significance. Transformative hermeneutics is "at its core transformative—that embraces both historical investigation and contemporary significance, then propels them both towards a third horizon: spiritual transformation."[12]

Perhaps it is too simplistic to see the historical as the thesis, the contemporary significance as the anti-thesis, and the spiritual transformation as the synthesis—as a Hegelian solution to a intransitive situation. Presumably, the agreement between the opposing ways of interpreting the Scriptures is found in its spiritual meaning. In any case, one is left with a Bible that needs to have the word of God divined out and separated out from the human words. Biblical hermeneutics becomes a task of separating the wheat from the chaff. The end result is a loss of the Scriptures, a loss of the word of God, and a loss of not only Lutheran identity but also the Christian faith.

When the results of such a hermeneutic stayed in the classroom, the global south more or less could tolerate, if not ignore, it. Now that this hermeneutic has led from the ordination of women to the ordination of homosexuals, the global south and some Eastern European Lutherans can no longer acquiesce. The understanding of the Scriptures is one of the largest issues confronting Lutherans today. Are the Scriptures the word of God? While saying "yes" exposes a person to intellectual ridicule, it allows that same individual to remain both a Christian and a Lutheran. Many churches in the global south are deciding to keep the Scriptures and remain Christian, rather than lose their souls to western secularism.

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[12] Leslie T. Hardin, "Searching for a transformative hermeneutic," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 5, no. 1 (2012): 145.

III. Lutheran Identity

Connected with the challenge to retain the Holy Scriptures is that of maintaining Lutheran identity. Many Lutheran churches around the world are Lutheran in name, or Lutheran by cultural heritage, or Lutheran due to historical circumstance, but not Lutheran by conviction. Remaining a Lutheran by confession or conviction or rediscovering Lutheran identity is both lonely and difficult. Both the Scriptures and Lutheran identity are maintained through the study of the Lutheran Confessions. Herman Sasse writes,

> It is a completely incontrovertible fact of church history that the authority of the Bible stands and falls with the authority of the confessions which interpret the Bible. The greatest example of this is the Reformation itself. Without the confession of the church with its "service to the Word," with its respect for the Word, the Bible becomes the plaything of arbitrary, sectarian exposition.[13]

Many Lutheran churches around the world do not have the *Book of Concord*, the Lutheran Symbols, in their own language. If it is available, few pastors own it. Frequently, only parts of the *Book of Concord* have been translated, such as the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession. While it is possible to be a Lutheran with only the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, the task is inordinately more difficult. Yet the Lutheran churches that have strayed the furthest from Lutheran identity are those who have had the Lutheran Confessions in their language, but have relegated them to the bookshelf for lacking cultural relevance. Lutheran identity is connected to the Lutheran Confessions. Without the *Book of Concord*, a church body cannot remain Lutheran for long. As Luther noted, the passing rain shower is caused by ingratitude for the gospel. This is why every Reformation event must begin with repentance.

IV. Towards the Future and Anniversary Remembrances

What will the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 bring? The anniversary in 1617 brought war and great hardship to Central Europe. Subsequent anniversaries in 1717, 1817, and 1917 have been described as anti-ecumenical, not to mention that they also brought war and forced unionism with the Reformed church.[14] Yet an "ecumenical"

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[13] Hermann Sasse, *The Lonely Way,* 1:477.

[14] Charlotte Hays writes: "'We can now tell the story of the Reformation in a way

Reformation that does not distinguish truth from error or clearly identify the Reformation message as "repent and believe the gospel" will fail in the same way past Reformation celebrations have failed. The voice of confessional Lutheranism will be lost amongst the din of how Lutherans and Anglicans or Lutherans and the Reformed should worship together. It will be lost in the noise of how if Luther lived today he would welcome dialog with the Roman Catholic Church, or if Luther were alive today he would allow the "gospel" to predominate and accept practicing homosexuals.

In light of the upcoming five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation and the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic, how should we regard such anniversaries? Herman Sasse, quoting Matthias Hoe von Hoenegg (1580–1645), the Electoral Saxony Court preacher in Dresden, wrote of the anniversary festival

> first as a "remembrance festival," at which we remember a great historical event; second, as a "praise and thanksgiving festival;" third, as a "miracle festival" concerning God's miracles; fourth, a "prayer festival" at which we "desire to pray for the preservation of the divine Word;" and fifth, as a "festival of repentance," at which we pray for the forgiveness of our sins in the despising of the Word of God, "and that we should begin and strive for a new life with greater zeal for and devotion to his preached Word as doers of the same." Then the festival becomes a "festival of rejoicing and jubilation in heaven"[15] [Luke 15:10].

Those planning anniversary celebrations, whether locally, as in the Czech Republic, or globally, with the upcoming five hundredth anniversary of Reformation, should remember the events that led to the formation of the Lutheran Church. Part of this remembrance is a recovery of the Lutheran Confessions. Without the Lutheran Confessions, Lutheran identity cannot be maintained. In addition, praise and thanksgiving should accompany an

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both sides will recognize as accurate,' Root said. 'If you look at the celebrations in 1917, 1817 and 1717, they were anti-ecumenical events, with Lutherans often celebrating it as light after darkness.'" In "After Five Centuries of Division, Catholics and Lutherans Consider Their Common Heritage," *National Catholic Register*; http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/after-five-centuries-of-division-catholics-and-lutherans-consider-their-com/ (accessed September 28, 2013).

[15] Hermann Sasse, *Letters to Lutheran Pastors* 60, 1967; http://mercyjourney.blogspot.com/2011/10/sasse-definition-of-reformation.html (accessed September 28, 2013).

anniversary celebration. The praise and thanksgiving must be directed to the Lord God, thanking and praising him for his Holy Scriptures, for the confession of faith, and for the Lutheran Confessions. All of these the Lord has graciously bestowed upon us. The rain shower of the gospel passes away due to ingratitude. May Christ preserve us from taking his precious gospel for granted and for lacking thankfulness for this gift that he bestowed on us! Do we pray, not for the preservation of our kingdom, or the preservation of our church or position, but for the preservation of his word preached purely among us? Do we pray that his word and the true confession of faith will remain among us? Finally, repent! Repent for neglecting God's word. Repent for neglecting the Lutheran Confessions. Repent and receive the gospel.

The future of the Lutheran Church in Central Europe is connected to repentance. Without repentance, the Lutheran Church in Central Europe will become a distant memory. The rain shower of the gospel will depart Central Europe and find a repentant people elsewhere—a people who will be thankful to receive the word of God and the Lutheran Confession. The future of the Lutheran Church in Central Europe is no different than that of any other Lutheran Church. The future of the Lutheran Church rests in repentance, forgiveness, and a bold confession of the truth. Confession brings *martyria*, that is, a witness to a world that does not want to hear the message of the Reformation: "Repent and believe the gospel." The Reformation, the revitalization of the Lutheran Church in Central Europe, must be founded in repentance. Repentance will lead to a church life together lived in the gospel. It will lead to a renewal in the study of the Holy Scriptures. It will lead to an embrace of the Lutheran Confessions. It will lead to bold proclamation of the gospel. It also will bring cross, suffering, and hardship. Yet the Lord promises to work all this for the good of his church (Romans 8).

V. Conclusion

The future of the church is bright because Christ is the future of the church. Because Christ has a future, so too, does his church. The Lutheran Church is equipped to proclaim the light of the gospel to a world lost in darkness. There is a shift in world Lutheranism. The churches of the global south have come to recognize that the acceptance of western societal norms will cause them to lose the truth of the Holy Scriptures. These churches are not only seeking to grow deeper in the Holy Scriptures but to reaffirm their Lutheran identity. As these churches seek to grow in their

Lutheran identity, they seek the assistance of western churches. As a result, both churches are able to grow in their knowledge of and their conviction in the Lutheran Confessions. Now is the moment to be Lutheran, not by birth, not by cultural heritage, but by conviction of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. The Reformation of the church always begins with repentance. May we learn from those who have gone before us, from Martin Luther, Třanovský, and others: "Repent and believe the gospel." The Lord is faithful; he will fulfill his promises and grant us a future with him.

Albert B. Collver
Director of Church Relations—Assistant to the President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
St. Louis, Missouri

"Noah": A Movie Review

"Noah" is a recent blockbuster movie that is full of action, adventure, and spectacular special effects. It is certainly the equal of the Indiana Jones movies and has a little Harry Potter sentiment as well. It might fall short of some of the recent sci-fi releases in terms of over-the-top special effects, but a raging flood gives many an opportunity for thrills. "Noah" doesn't quite measure up to the parting of the Red Sea in "The Ten Commandments"—even with a six-decade advancement in technology—but it is still riveting. All this makes Noah a great secular epic worth seeing.

However, if you are expecting a biblical epic, see another movie such as "The Son of God," also recently released and very faithful to Scripture. "Noah" is way off-target biblically. For starters, the director gets the headcount wrong regarding the number of people on the ark. Noah is depicted as a stern, mean man—even to the point of being willing to kill those on the ark. And, in a huge bow to political correctness—and to make the film appealing to Jews and Muslims—"god" is never referred to as God, but instead as "the creator." The viewer can supply his own god as "the creator." The true Creator–Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is never mentioned in the film. That is sad, for the biblical account of Noah is all about salvation in the flood of sin through the coming Christ.

Be aware that there is a strong dose of environmentalism and animalism in the movie as well. The animals are mostly cute, benign, and cooperative as they file onto the ark. A pretty, little daisy pops up out of a

rock once the ark hits land. "Noah" is more concerned with saving the earth than humanity. I guess all this is not surprising, given the Easter egg hunt for dogs held in a Fort Wayne public park this past Easter Sunday, replete with little doggie bones in the plastic eggs!

So, go see "Noah." Do so only after first reading Genesis 6–9 in order to remember the whole, correct account of how a gracious God saved a faithful remnant out of a disobedient world. Do so looking for a fun, entertaining tale. You might even recommend the movie to others, but only to those who know the real story and who will not be negatively catechized by it. And for an insightful review of "Noah," see Charlotte Allen's recent commentary in the *Wall Street Journal*, "A 'Noah' for Our Secular Times." (The URL is too complicated to include here. Simply go to wsj.com and use the Journal's search feature using the keywords "Noah" and "secular.")

Richard T. Nuffer

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Book Reviews

A Commentary on the Psalms: Vol. 1 (1–41). **By Allen Ross. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 887 pages. Softcover. $44.99.**

The author states, "My purpose in writing this commentary was to focus on the chief aim of exegesis, the exposition of the text" (11). He correctly points out that this is a neglected use of the Psalms. While we use the Psalms for worship, liturgy, prayer, music and devotions, the use of the Psalter in preaching has become rare. Thus, the author's goal is to provide a useful commentary on the Psalms that will encourage their preaching.

As this is the first of several intended volumes, the author begins by providing helpful information concerning the Psalms in the opening chapters. Before individual Psalms are engaged, there are chapters on the 1) Value of the Psalms, 2) Text and Ancient Versions of the Psalms, 3) Titles and Headings of the Psalms, 4) History of the Interpretation of the Psalms, 5) Interpreting Biblical Poetry, 6) Literary Forms and Functions in the Psalms, 7) Psalms in Worship, 8) Theology of the Psalms, 9) and Exposition of the Psalms. This provides helpful information in a more concise manner than is the norm.

As a whole, this is an excellent work for the pastor who wants to engage the Psalms for the purpose of preaching. Ross does betray his theological roots when he states that the central theme of the Psalter is the sovereign rule of the Lord God over his creation, not just Israel, but the entire world. He is correct that the Psalter must have a consistent theology and message, but he does not consider that theology and message to be Christology. This is not to say that he does not see Christ in the Psalter. He acknowledges his presence in Messianic Psalms and the like, but for him the central theme is one of the sovereignty of the Lord God. In all fairness, this does not stand in the way of this volume's usefulness.

The author accomplishes his stated goal and provides an excellent primer for preaching the Psalms, while at the same time walking the reader through the preacher's task of sermon preparation very clearly and in detail.

Jeffrey H. Pulse

***Fichte: Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*. By Garrett Green and Allan Wood. New York: NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 158 pages. Hardback $80.00, Softcover $27.99.**

When *Versuch einer Kritic aller Offenbarung* was published anonymously in 1792, some believed that Immanuel Kant to be the author. Appearing only a few years after his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 2nd edition, 1787) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), it appeared that Kant was applying his critical work into the religious sphere. Kant, however, denied the speculations and named naming the real author as Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). Once this truth was confirmed, Fichte was appointed as chair of philosophy at the University in Jena in 1794 (cf. Introduction, ix).

Fichte observes that every culture has some sort of revelation, more or less developed (7). Thus, "for a thorough philosophy it seems more fitting to trace its origin, to investigate its presumptions and warrants, and to pronounce judgment on it according to these discoveries than to relegate it directly and unexamined either to the fabrication of swindlers or to the land of dreams" (7). Fichte does not examine the concrete critical methods of revelation, such as text criticism, historical research, or other methods of investigation. He notes, "This investigation will also abstract completely from anything particular that might be possible in a given revelation; indeed, it will even ignore the question of whether any revelation is given, in order generally to establish principles valid for every revelation" (15). Revelation is to be tested on a higher level in order to establish its claims or cast them aside. He wants to get behind the Scriptures by dealing with the anthropological problem. He avoids the revelatory claims of other religious traditions.

Fichte's most famous section in this work is his theory of the will. Revelation as a source of knowledge was a problem that needed working out according to the newly-arranged epistemology. Passive sense data is arranged with an active faculty of understanding according to the categories of the mind. How revealed religion could have an effect on the will of the individual is the question Fichte tries to answer. Fichte defends a free will to act in accord with moral law in man (22). He emphasizes the moral law in God (38). Reason is *a priori* the source of the concept of God (39). This common theme of the Enlightenment is perhaps better than the relativism of our day. When one has an emphasis on natural law, it is possible for Christians to confess biblical theology with non-Christians, starting from a common moral understanding and observation of lowering moral standards in culture. On this point, Fichte would be a useful ally.

Still, Fichte's strict emphasis on the moral law within makes legalistic enthusiasts with no need for the external word of God with its Spirit-inspired, life-giving words. Fichte's free will is a cold, dead will with no need for Christ, his atonement, or the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. There is no distinction of the strength of the human will over "things subject to reason" and not over "spiritual righteousness" before God (cf. AC XVIII).

Fichte's essay is labor-intensive, background reading, and therefore is not a high priority for pastors to read. However, if one reads Fichte in light of Kant's friend, Johann George Hamann (1730–1788), then Fichte is a great foil. Fichte is the excited student pushing his teacher's new ideas. Hamann wrote the first critique of Kant's first *Critique*: *The Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*. "Reason is language," Hamann provocatively defended (cf. Oswald Bayer, *A Contemporary in Dissent: Johann Georg Hamann as a Radical Enlightener,* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012], 155). His theological insight into revelation, reason, and the nature of language slowed the Kantian project before it could begin.

Cambridge is to be commended for this volume. It has a broad biographical introduction to Fichte's life and work. Two minor errors stuck out: 1) the book mentions "today's Eastern Germany" (xxix), and 2) there is a Greek error in the footnote. It should read "κατ' ἄνθρωπον" (23).

Travis J. Loeslie
St. Peter Lutheran Church
Lester Prairie, Minnesota

***Sacra Pagina: Colossians, Ephesians*. By Margaret Y. MacDonald. Edited by Daniel Harrington. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000. 394 pages. Softcover. $30.00.**

Ephesians and Colossians have become more widely examined and quoted in recent years, no doubt because the topics and themes taken up therein are increasingly on the minds of Christians in our context. In this volume of the *Sacra Pagina* series, Margaret MacDonald conducts a historical-grammatical study that also employs social-scientific insights to elucidate the meaning and likely religious/cultural situations surrounding the origins of these epistles.

As suggested by the title, MacDonald argues that Colossians is chronologically prior to Ephesians, though both were likely written around the time of Paul's imprisonment and/or departure toward the end

of his life. These epistles address churches that were being established in the face of ongoing external and internal challenges, and soon were to lose their charismatic apostle. Accordingly, both are recognized as having a pervasive baptismal theme throughout. MacDonald discerns Colossians to be especially addressing temptations to worldly identity and syncretism with both Jewish and Gentile beliefs. Ephesians is more general.

While MacDonald's exposition of the literal meaning of the text itself is very much in agreement with Lutheran doctrine, the spiritual meaning and applications are usually not her primary concern. Her interest is more in discerning the chronological events and sociological and ecclesial structural concerns of the congregations in these settings. One notable exception to her normal pattern is where, after interpreting the literal meaning of the later verses of Ephesians 5 to reveal a rather traditional, orthodox Christian understanding of husbands and wives in marriage, she states this understanding cannot apply to today. She does not, however, offer much on what from this passage does apply.

Like more critical scholars, though by no means radically critical, the consistency of doctrine with the whole of Scripture does not appear to be MacDonald's belief or assumption. Such also leads her to deduce a deutero-Pauline authorship of these Epistles. Especially with regard to Ephesians, her arguments are hardly convincing, in this reviewer's opinion. She fails to use the same criteria she uses elsewhere for establishing facts and making assumptions.

MacDonald overall does provide a clear, readable, historical-grammatical interpretation of the text itself. This, together with her fair and generally well-reasoned assessments of others' scholarship, make this commentary valuable in itself. Its peculiar benefit for pastors and scholars alike, though, is its fusing of these with modern sociological insights, social/historical studies of the Biblical settings (e.g., Malina and Neyrey), and Kittel-esque information.

Craig Meissner
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Steger, Illinois

***Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*. Edited by C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2012. 242 Pages. Softcover. $19.99.**

Most of the essays in this collection call for a renewed use of the Psalms in worship. The general criticism of the essays is that, while Christian worship may draw from a large repertoire of hymns and songs, in comparison to the use in the church historically, especially among Reformation churches, the Psalms today are relatively neglected. More specifically, each essay focuses on one or a few benefits that may be regained by the church through a more regular and intentional use of the Psalms. Thus, the book does not call for the singing and praying of Psalms for their own sake, but because of the unique role and benefits of the Psalms.

The quality of the essays varies considerably. Several simply affirm the truisms that the Psalms are models of prayer, are formative through their repeated use, were sung in corporate worship by the Israelites, and were used extensively in the early church (chap. 2–4, 6, 8, 11). A number of essays are not groundbreaking, but offer occasional interesting insight or practical advice on the use of the Psalms. Witvliet's "Words to Grow Into: The Psalms as Formative Speech," not only speaks of the formative nature of the Psalms, but examines the difference between the expressive and formative nature of worship. The Psalms both give voice to our petitions and teach us the kind of petitions that are pleasing to God, even if they do not seem to be pleasing on their face (9–16). Bond's "Biblical Poetry in a Postbiblical, Postpoetry World" points out the need to pray and study the Psalms in order to restore a poetic sensibility to American Christians, for poetry is universal and inclusive in expression (67–71).

Perhaps the gem of the volume is Leland Ryken's contribution, "Reclaiming the Psalms for Private Worship," where he focuses on the lyrical character of the psalms. He opposes the current trend of imposing a narrative character on all literature. Rather than seeing the psalms as telling a developed story, they should be seen as the psychological expression of the author. To read and understand the psalms means first to dwell on and appreciate their reflective and affective imagery. "Poetry is comprised of imagery, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and other figures of speech. As a result, a prime hermeneutical principle is that we should not leapfrog over the poetic texture of a psalm—the images and figures of speech—in order to get to its ideas. The ideas do not exist independently of the poetic texture" (132). In other words, interpreting the psalms calls first for appreciating the pastoral imagery of Psalm 23, or the battle imagery of Psalm 144. Any attempt to extract the ideas of the Psalms without dealing

extensively with the imagery does not do justice to the Psalms. Because of the lyric, reflective character of the Psalms, the Psalms are universal expressions of prayer, made fruitful for those who meditatively read them with attention to their basic imagery.

Other stimulating chapters include Calvin Seerveld's "Why We Need to Learn to Cry in Church," and Wells's "The Cry of the Heart and the Cure of the Souls: Interpreting the Psalms for Pastoral Care." Seerveld calls for the singing of versified lament Psalms set to strong, often minor-key tunes, in order to offer the opportunity for lamentation in corporate worship. He reminds us that when churches sing mostly upbeat or happy songs, not only is little room made for the tempted, troubled, and grieving, but temptations and troubles are ignored or suppressed rather than confessed and forgiven. Wells suggests that the Psalms be interpreted phenomenologically and psychologically to aid in pastoral care. He is not calling for an imposition of a particular theory of psychology onto the Psalms. Rather, he suggests that the Psalms themselves be understood in part as righteous expressions of the psyche that may help those who are psychologically distressed to articulate their troubles and thus be aided in the cure of their souls.

Several essays encourage the singing of Psalms in metrical form in order to aid congregational familiarity and memorization. Although the Reformed leaning of the editors and contributors is especially apparent in the versions and tunes suggested, the idea is worth considering. Luther himself versified several Psalms. James F. Lambert's *Luther's Hymns* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1917) is one source for further information on Luther's hymns, including his Psalm hymns. Some pastors, hymn writers, and musicians may bless the church in our day by providing fresh metrical versions of the Psalms and appropriate tunes to match.

Forgotten Songs is accessible to laymen. It would be of interest to laymen and pastors who are interested in the topics highlighted in this review. However, other established works, such as Athanasius's "Letter to Marcellinus," Oswald Bayer's "Toward a Theology of Lament," Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* , C. S. Lewis' *Reflections on the Psalms*, Luther's "Preface to the Psalter" (AE 35:253–57), and Patrick Reardon's *Christ in the Psalms* address many of these topics in a richer way. There is probably little of value in *Forgotten Songs* for scholars of the Psalms.

Gifford A. Grobien

***The Lord's Supper*: *Five Views*. Edited by Gordon T. Smith. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 159 pages. Softcover. $18.00.**

If you like roundtable or panel discussions, you'll probably enjoy this volume. If on the other hand you don't care for "he said, she said" banter, you should look elsewhere. Five seminary professors are each given sixteen to nineteen pages to focus on the Lord's Supper. After each essay the other four writers are given two pages to respond. The editor provides a six-page introduction and a four-pages to conclusion. At the outset Smith writes, "a concise summary of distinctive perspectives" is offered here. Lastly, each author is given a page to supply an annotated list of suggested readings. One annotation admits that a typical Pentecostal exposition "reflects the lack of interest among many Pentecostals in sacramentology"(153).

One half-page of Bible references makes up the Scripture index. Three listings are erroneous. Of the fifty-nine references, thirty are supplied by the Lutheran essayist. The Roman Catholic author can claim eleven. The Reformed essayist cites Scripture only in a quotation from Zwingli. The Reformed essay in the main engages in comparative symbolics of Zwingli, Bullinger, and Calvin. Of the five, only the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal authors employ a number of topical divisions throughout their material. The divisions help in both organization and mental digestion of the content.

From Zondervan one may find similar volumes devoted to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In those works Lutherans Robert Kolb and David Scaer were invited to contribute. In this IVP volume, John Stephenson speaks for the Lutherans. There are no real surprises in this text (except for the Protestants' dearth of exegesis). The editor reflects: "we have some quite strong differences of opinion" (7). If you're looking for a vigorous defense of the Lutheran position, you'll find it scattered throughout. The Baptist responder, resembling a number of online reviewers, does not find this vigor appealing to his theological palate. The Baptist writer calls Stephenson's essay "bewildering . . . even most Lutherans cannot stomach it" (64). He is joined by the Pentecostal in wondering how another "brand of Lutheranism" might be worth hearing (66).

The specific intent of this work is to have authors approach the Eucharist with three defining criteria in mind: the person/work of Christ; the nature/mission of the church; the Christian life and the work of the Spirit. As a touchstone for this approach, the editor references the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* document from the World Council of Churches

(1982), also suggested as prerequisite reading. The Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Pentecostal participants make intentional reference to the so-called Lima Document. The Roman Catholic writer also draws from a broad array of internal documents on doctrine and ecumenicity.

Stephenson abides by the request to begin with Christology. A high Christology anticipates and challenges his critics right at the outset. He warns against imposing "restraints" on Jesus (41). He exposes one's inability to perceive the Supper as "a real irruption of heaven onto earth" (42, 58). The vertical aspect of the Sacrament thus precedes the horizontal aspect. The former actualizes the latter.

The Baptist responder cannot do anything but fall under Stephenson's predicted censure. His protest reveals the classic inability to accept sacraments. Though he remains puzzled "as to why different understandings of the Supper should divide Christians," a more attentive read of Stephenson would have supplied insight (48, 55–56). The same is true for his concern for "the necessity of faith." Asked and answered by Stephenson (53–55), who calls out the three Protestant descendants of Zwingli united in denying the real presence (112, 138).

In his turn, the Baptist takes seven healthy paragraphs to set up his launch into the Lord's Supper treatment. The bulk of his ink is spilled on the more influential Baptist statements of faith regarding the Lord's Supper. One wonders why a Baptist would be the choice for a communion discussion when among Baptists "little real consensus exists about what it is" (93). Perhaps they consider it to be a secondary non-fundamental doctrine. Whatever the case, "Baptist diversity is wild" (92). To us it can be more helpful that they reveal such things themselves than for us to insist to our Lutheran people what the Baptist situation is. The last fourteen lines of the essay are left to capsulize the Baptist understanding of the church.

The Pentecostal includes an interesting subsection that addresses the Supper as a healing event, to wit, "there is healing at the table" (127). One may inquire how this can be real healing when the real presence is not real. Another telling admission: "It is questionable whether Pentecostals have a distinctive ecclesiology at all" (130). And "oddly enough" for Pentecostal theologians, the connection between Holy Spirit and Holy Communion has only been discussed in passing (133). The author indicates that more theological clarification and construction are both needed and underway within his camp.

While acknowledging the cleavage between Lutherans on the eucharistic teaching, Stephenson aligns himself with the "genuine Lutherans" who are faithful to the words of Christ and St. Paul, the Book of Concord, Luther, and the testimony of the ancient church (47). Though there is a personal presence of Christ in the sacramental action, there is, further, his corporeal presence (48). Stephenson's approach is akin to the Augustana, irenic towards Rome yet galvanizing against "the wide world of Protestantism" (50). Still, he is ecumenically scrupulous when identifying conflicts between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, viz., offering Christ to the Father (53, 33). One may wish to line up for comparison Stephenson's gentle remarks on transubstantiation (51–52) alongside the Smalcald Articles. For benefits in the Christian life, he draws from the Large Catechism.

When one throws a stick into a pack of dogs, you know which dog got hit by the yelp that you hear. Stephenson is throwing the right stick, and more than one (simply referencing God's Word in copious amounts has a way of doing that). In this volume, the Lutheran approach is not presented in the vogue ecumenical fashion that holds all confessions to be relative expressions of the truth. Rather the reader observes: the one truth of the one gospel is given for the one church.

Jody A. Rinas
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Clifford, Ontario, Canada

***The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*. By Ronald K. Rittgers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Hardcover. 482 pages. $74.00.**

The Lutheran Reformation had far reaching results not only for doctrinal structures but for every aspect of life in sixteenth-century Germany. Not the least among the shifts initiated by the Reformation was the way that human suffering was experienced and understood. Long-standing patterns of piety, which provided mechanisms for locating meaning in suffering and death were deconstructed with the appearance of the evangelical preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ. Ronald K. Rittgers is a masterful guide to the changes that took place in both pastoral care and lay piety in the face of suffering as the message of the Reformation worked its way into the fabric of ordinary life, creating a "Lutheran confessional culture" (7). Rittgers demonstrates how "in many ways, suffering

was the most important battlefield for the reformers and their movement" (184) as pastors were challenged to strip their congregants of all recourse to magic, reliance on relics and saints, and penitential mechanisms so that their reliance would be in the promises of Christ alone proclaimed in Word and Sacrament.

After a survey of attitudes toward suffering in the late medieval period, especially its penitential character, Rittgers turns to Luther and traces his movement away from this paradigm beginning with his early lectures on the Psalms (1513–1515) to his articulation of the *theologia crucis* in 1518. "This rejection of suffering as penance signaled a crucial break with late medieval penitential theology and much of the Latin Christian tradition" (108). Understanding God's work to be both alien and proper, killing and making alive, Luther comes to understand suffering as neither a work of penance nor a prerequisite for a mystical union with Christ, but as a means that God uses to accomplish the salvation of human beings. God reveals his fatherly heart in Christ crucified, demonstrating that he is not against sinners but for them in grace and mercy, so that in their tribulations and afflictions they might rest on the consolation of God's promises. Luther and the evangelical Christians who followed him "did not believe that they were dealing with sheer power in their tribulations; they thought they were dealing with their Almighty Father" (244).

Rittgers does not stop with Luther but tracks how fundamental themes in the reformer were reflected in the consolatory literature that was produced by those within the "Wittenberg Circle." Medieval *ars moriendi* (art of dying) manuals were replaced by a new genre of evangelically-based handbooks of consolation, exemplified in Johannes Spangenberg (1484–1550) with his works *On the Christian Knight* and *The Booklet of Comfort for the Sick.*

The Reformation of Suffering is carefully researched and documented, drawing on the most recent research in Reformation studies in German and English; it is also eloquently crafted and accessible. Contemporary pastors who console the sick and the dying will find much in this volume which will undergird their ministry. It is highly recommended for Reformation scholars, as well as for pastors who engage in the care of souls in the tradition of Luther.

John T. Pless

***Luther's Aesop* (*Early Modern Studies*, 8). By Carl P. E. Springer. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2011. xiv + 249 pages. Softcover. $39.95.**

A dog once waded through a stream with a piece of meat in his mouth. In the middle of the stream, he looked down, saw the meat reflected on the surface of the water, and, thinking to add to his meal, opened his mouth to snap up the reflection. The meat fell out of his mouth and was swept downstream, and so the dog lost both meat and reflection.

This fable, one of the fourteen included in Springer's *Luther's Aesop* (124), not only illustrates Luther's great appreciation for Aesop, but also his bearing toward the classical heritage (8, 11, 13, *et passim*). While Luther is best known as an *ad fontes* theological Reformer, that Renaissance impulse moved also his thinking on the classics. Luther's moral to the fable of the dog and the meat is, "Many lose what is certain for what is uncertain" (124, 128). In Luther's mind, and despite his considerable venom toward the misuse of "the Stagirite," the Roman and Greek pagans had supplied the world with a wealth of wisdom pertinent to "the kingdom of the left hand of God" (36). Although this wisdom was sometimes in need of correction, "Luther was no more interested in rejecting out of hand . . . the classical tradition than he was in simply overthrowing the traditional liturgy connected with the Mass" (33).

Luther's Aesop thus uses the manuscript for an edition of Aesop Luther planned at the Coburg in the heady weeks before and during the Diet at Augsburg in 1530 in order to examine Luther's reception of the classical tradition. Chapter 1, "Wittenberg and Athens," offers a corrective to one-dimensional representations of Luther as nothing more than what amounts to a Bible college teacher, and examines his considerable use and critical reception of the Greek and Roman pagans. Springer demonstrates that Luther's interaction with the pagans required more than a passing acquaintance with such authors and, indeed, depends upon him being thoughtfully well-versed. Even, and especially, the mistakes in Luther's citations of the classical pagans demonstrate how profoundly at home Luther was in this source material. Chapter 2, "'Best after the Bible,'" mines the Luther corpus for references to Aesop and his fables. Springer gives a total of eighty-six such known references, quantitative evidence of Luther's judgment that "the moral value of the fables of Aesop is second only to the Bible" (36). "Luther the Editor," chapter 3, investigates Luther as historical and textual critic and appraises his aesthetic sensibilities and consideration of the moral aims of his Aesop. "A Lutheran Fable Book" anchors this volume. For the first time in English, Springer here gives the

full text of Luther's Aesop edition (which Luther himself left incomplete and was, therefore, never able to publish). The chapter includes translations of both Luther's first draft and fair copy, where they exist. Footnotes give Luther's German. Springer also offers both summary and often word-by-word commentary on each fable. The comments are charmingly arbitrary, filled with observations that range from notices on Brer Rabbit and Pinocchio (152), to divergences from Luther's exemplar, Steinhöwel's edition (116–117), notices on the German text (121), references to Ovid and Euripides (131), Luther's theological hermeneutics (142), and much more. The reader who uses chapter 4 as a technical philological and literary commentary will be disappointed and frustrated; the reader seeking an appreciative romp will find great pleasure. The final chapter, "Luther as Aesop," examines Luther's intrigue with the multiple characterizations of the figure of Aesop and the characters and audience of his fables—for example, Luther as "wise fool" (154–161) and the reader as "man between God and the animals" (162–171). Appendixes A–C give useful primary texts cited in the body of the work. The bibliography witnesses to the evident learnedness of Springer's work and provides resources for further study, and a small but efficient index aids the reader in hunting down what cannot be readily found using the structure of the volume.

Luther's Aesop challenges its readers to take a critical, second look at one-dimensional representations of Luther the reformer and to see him instead as a figure with broader interests that extend to the pagan classics. But there is a moral to this story, too. Luther's appreciation for the classics in general, and Aesop in particular, is like that piece of meat in the dog's mouth. Lutherans today can either snap after reflections or enjoy the meat in their mouth. The use of classical authors and classical modes of education in Lutheran schools and homes offers, from the very intellectual bowels of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, a wonderful way to form habits of mind and character. Springer's volume helps us to think about how to do that in the twenty-first century.

Jon S. Bruss
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Topeka, Kansas

***1–3 John*. By Bruce Schuchard. Concordia Commentary Series. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012. 752 pages. Hardcover. $49.99.**

This addition to the Concordia Commentary Series continues its long run as an excellent resource for Lutheran, incarnational, and sacramental commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. Weighing in at 752 pages of

commentary on the three slight epistles of John, Dr. Schuchard has produced an exhaustive treatment of these texts. 1–3 John can easily be overlooked in Lutheran circles, where attention to the Pauline corpus sometimes trumps all other epistles. Schuchard argues for the importance of the Johannine corpus in the early church and in particular the importance of these letters as a reliable historical witness to the theological thought and legacy of the elder and apostle whose name was John.

Among many valuable insights, Schuchard points to the insistence of John's epistles that believers distinguish between orthodoxy and heresy. This need to "wrestle with the issue of who is right and who is wrong" (57) is much more than an academic or philosophical concern for John. Rather, as Schuchard makes clear, it is a concern that gets to the heart of a faith that a "has as its focus the right object—that is Jesus Christ in the flesh."(57). Thus, a concern for true doctrine leads directly to a concern for the Incarnation, that Jesus has truly taken on our flesh. To confess that Christ has come in the flesh is to confess "the substance of the Gospel" and it is to say that God has cleansed us from all our sin (422–423). Schuchard thus does a fine job of tying together John's polemical, anti-Gnostic concerns with his creedal and soteriological ones. Schuchard also follows John's train of thought to "love" as that which characterizes God himself, his Son, and that household of those who are born of God (444).

The commentary spends a large amount of time analyzing the deceptively simple Greek text of John's letters. The grammatical work forces the casual reader to discover what countless students of John have found to be true: his simple style delivers profound, almost endless, theological depth. Schuchard is at home with a variety of commentaries and resources, from recent scholarship, Luther, patristic sources as well as a welcome heavy use of liturgical and particularly hymnic material. He has produced a commentary well worth a deep investment of time and study by anyone interested in the New Testament.

Paul Gregory Alms
Redeemer Lutheran Church
Catawba, North Carolina

***A Reader's Lexicon of the Apostolic Fathers.* Edited by Daniel B. Wallace Brittany C. Burnette, and Terri Darby Moore. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2013. 250 pages. Hardcover. $34.99.**

The influence of the Apostolic Fathers for the Christian Church today cannot be overstated. Despite this fact, the average reader may never en-

counter the AF in the original Greek, leaving this work to the more serious scholars. *A Reader's Lexicon of the Apostolic Fathers* makes the AF much more accessible to the average pastor, seminarian, or serious layman by briefly defining all the words used in the AF which appear less than thirty times in the New Testament. This lexicon is organized by book, chapter, and verse so that the reader need not tediously look up every unfamiliar word in a larger lexicon. This is a perfect tool for making the AF more accessible to a wider audience so that the serious scholars are no longer the only ones who get to enjoy the rich wisdom of the AF in their original language.

Roger A. Peters
Graduate Assistant in Exegetical Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary

***Colossians and Philemon*, 2nd edition. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (EGGNT). By Murray J. Harris. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010. xxvii + 272 pages. Softcover. $27.99.**

I turned repeatedly to the 1991 first edition of Harris's *Colossians and Philemon* for help with parsing and establishing the original text while writing *Philemon* for the Concordia Commentary Series, and I was not disappointed. The first volume of the *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (*EGGNT*) series aims to close the gap between morphological analysis of a given text of the Greek New Testament and the exegetical treatment of the same. Rich exegetical notes comprise the bulk of the volume. Covering the text paragraph by paragraph, the *Guide* provides the following: (1) structural analysis of the Greek text; (2) discussion of each Greek phrase in turn, treating significant textual variants and vocabulary, grammatical analysis (including parsing), disputed points of exegesis, and a terse exegetical summation from such reference works as BDAG, *TDNT*, New Testament grammars, specialized studies, and nine standard commentaries on Colossians and Philemon; (3) a list of exegetical and bibliographical topics arising in the text, as well as suggestions "For Further Study," with a detailed bibliography provided for each topic; (4) rough homiletical outlines that move the preacher from the Greek text toward sermonic application; and (5) a more-or-less literal translation of each biblical book, followed by an expanded paraphrase of the same.

At the end of the book stands a very helpful glossary of grammatical and rhetorical terms (251–72) that figure in Colossians and Philemon, so that readers can understand discussions in the exegetical treatment on

such items as The Canon of Apollonius (255), Granville Sharp's Rule (262), or paronomasia (267).

However, this is the *second* edition (2010) of a book that appeared originally in 1991. A side-by-side comparison of the two editions reveals that Harris has updated the original volume substantially, incorporating scholarship that has been published since 1991 and excising older works that to him seemed dated. For unknown reasons, no *EGGNT* volumes have appeared since 1991 (nearly twenty years!), even though Harris's *Colossians and Philemon* was to be only the first of a projected twenty volumes. Thus, publication of the *second* edition of Harris's *Colossians and Philemon* would seem to indicate that the series has not been abandoned, and a Google search reveals that B&H Academic has now published volumes on *James* (in the *EGGNT* series) and 1 Peter.

John G. Nordling

***Paul among the People: The Apostle Reinterpreted and Reimagined in His Own Time*. By Sarah Ruden. New York: Image Books, 2010. xix + 214 pages. Softcover. $25.00.**

The last thing Sarah Ruden expected was for her Greek and Latin to be of any use in understanding Paul. She is a Christian (Quaker), but, like many nowadays, kept Paul "in a pen out back with the louder and more sexist Old Testament prophets" (3). Jesus was her teacher and Paul an embarrassment. Then one day she was at Bible class where a fellow student objected to the stricture against "sorcery" (*pharmakeia*, Gal 5:20) in one of the Pauline catalogues. Ruden tried to be sympathetic ("Ah, well, Paul *was* kind of a brute, wasn't he?") but she could not shake what sorcery meant in a Greco-Roman context: the Roman poet Horace describes a young boy buried up to his neck to starve whilst staring at food set out before him, so that his liver and bone marrow—which now must be imbued with his frenzied hunger—could serve as a love charm for some upper-crust Roman. Likely Paul had never read Horace, but the poem shows the type of reputation "sorcery" possessed among those Romans who read Paul's letters.

And so Ruden proceeds from there. Her goal is to research the origins of "our bad impressions of Paul" (4). After a brief preface ("Who was Paul?"), she sets out the following chapters on Paul and… 1) Carousing (cf. *kōmoi*, Gal 5:21); 2) Pleasure; 3) Homosexuality; 4) Women; 5) the State; 6) Slavery; and 7) Love. Most of the problematic areas are covered in this

purview. Ruden spent seven years at Harvard, earning a Ph.D. in Classics, so she is an outstanding translator of Greek and Roman texts and has even supported herself financially by publishing original poetry and fresh translations of the *Aeneid, Homeric Hymns*, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, and Petronius' *Satyricon*. She reads Paul with ease—in the original Greek—and expresses his thinking with exceptional clarity and dash. I just love reading her prose! Here is what she says about crucifixion, for example, which should be of interest to a Christian:

> Crucifixion was the nadir of torture. It was never careless or whimsical, but was always a punishment, and a punishment for a crime that threated the system, such as property crime in the case of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, and such as the slave revolt led by Spartacus, which ended in the crucifixion of thousands. This was the punishment for those who, like Jesus, stepped far out of line.
>
> For maximum humiliation, and maximum edification of others, crucifixion was public. Crosses with their victims on them might stand beside roadsides or on hills. The crucified were totally naked, without loincloths. Anyone could point and comment, and Greeks and Romans, with their intense interest in the phallus, no doubt did. Was it too large (a not unknown complaint)? Not dainty and shapely (as they preferred)? Was it—grotesque!—circumcised? (42)

See what I mean? Her writing—all of it in this book—is graphic, informed, and *interesting*. Her superior English reveals her command of Greek and Latin. And this is precisely why *pastors* should master Greek and Hebrew too, and allow these languages to affect their diction in the pulpit. Learning to preach well to modern Americans requires learning Greek (at least) rather well (see my "Teaching Greek at the Seminary," *Logia* 21.2 [Eastertide 2012], 69–75).

There is not space to explore every problematic area Ruden addresses. At the top of the list is homosexuality. A sanctioned role of slave boys was anal sex with free adults, but Paul's background was Judaism, which regarded all homosexual acts—whether passive (*eromenos* = beloved) or active (*erastes* = lover)—an abomination (Lev 18:22; 20:13). Such "scholarship" as Boswell's does not contribute to peace and clarity among Christians (let alone others), but, rather, furthers conflict. Anyone cognizant of the ancient situation realizes that Platonic homoerotic sublimity is "total hokey" (59) and mainly "fantasy," with scant reality behind it (62). There were no gay households at all in antiquity, nor was there any "gay culture" in the modern sense. Instead, homosexuality was a great blot on society—though it existed everywhere, and in the public gaze.

Brutish men with large *phalloi* lorded it over the weak, young, and defenseless. No wonder parents guarded their boys doggedly. The pedagogue or "child leader" (cf. Gal 3:24, "the law is our *paidagogos* unto Christ") guarded the young boy's chastity, which was important for preserving the family line. There was no tolerance of sodomy, so any young boy who had been violated in this manner was ruined for life. Paul's "rebellious against parents" (Rom 1:30, *goneusin apeitheis*) reveals what would have been a parent's worst nightmare: losing control of a son (the future of the family) and seeing him lost to decent society forever. Other words in the catalogue of Romans 1—"wickedness," "God-haters"—show that homosexuality really represents a contempt for God himself, an insult to divinity, which was roused to avenge the helpless. Hence, homosexuality represented to the ancient mind—pagan as well as Christian—an affront to justice, and the arrogant and power-hungry were going to be sorry.

> The concept did not change over the next six hundred years. Paul's Roman audience knew what justice was, if only through missing it. They would have been surprised to hear that justice applied to homosexuality, of all things. But many of them—slaves, freedmen, the poor, the young—would have understood in the next instant. Christ, the only Son of God, gave his body to save mankind. What greater contrast could there be to the tradition of using a weaker body for selfish pleasure or a power trip? Among Christians, there would have been no quibbling about what to do: no one could have imagined homosexuality's being different than it was; it would have to go. And tolerance for it did disappear from the church (71).

Far from being a bigot, then, Paul cared deeply for humanity and was the channel for God's love to sinners in Christ Jesus. This is the type of conclusion Ruden eventually reaches at the end of each chapter dealing with the problematic areas. My biggest critique of the book is that she does not provide precise references for her many extra-biblical quotations, thus making it difficult to use this resource to buttress one's own research. Ruden, however, did not write the book to produce a piece of academic scholarship, of which there is far too much already; rather, she writes at a popular level for those who have difficulty comprehending Paul in our post-Christian day and age. Another problem: the book is weak in comment upon Paul's obvious connection to Judaism and the Old Testament (a point which she admits, 189–190). Nevertheless, Jews of Paul's day lived and thought like Greeks and Romans most of the time, and their Old Testament Scripture mainly came by way of the splendid Greek translation (Septuagint); so when Paul used metaphors for the

athletic games, for example, he was writing of something known everywhere—"even as Pacific islanders today know about [snow] skiing through American media" (190). Ruden would support the notion, then, that Christians have a lot to learn about the biblical, Christ-centered gospel by reading the (pagan) classics. I concur.

The book seems especially well-suited to the laity who, by Ruden's superior writing, are now enabled to come to terms with the Pauline thinking and reasoning which is so at odds with modernism. A pastor and Bible class could profitably spend an hour of Sunday morning study on each one of the seven chapters.

John G. Nordling

***Late Medieval Mysticism of the Low Countries*. Edited by Rik Van Nieuwenhove, Robert Faesen, SJ, and Helen Rolfson. Classics of Western Spirituality Series. New York: Paulist Press, 2008. 416 pages. Paperback, $29.95.**

"Mystical," tracing to the Greek word *muein*, to close, means simply that which is hidden or unseen. The early use of "mystical" referred to truths of the Christian faith that were hidden, but of which insight could be gained through the meditative study of Scripture and participation in the liturgy. Early monastic mystical theology was of this scriptural and liturgical kind, and was coupled with some degree of separation from secular distractions. Scripture and the liturgy point beyond the physical and sensible facets of creation to the presence and activity of God in all of creation.

The centuries-long development emphasizing inner experience and internal states in mystical theology led to an emphasis on spiritual union with God, including a partaking of divine wisdom or fellowship it is understood broadly as that life process of growing closer to God, it need not be seen as separate from mainstream Christianity. Nevertheless, through the late Middle Ages, and certainly by the 17th century, a divide had opened between mainstream Christianity and this emphasis on inner experience and union. Such an emphasis suggests a moving beyond the Scripture and the liturgy to focus on the direct encounter with the divine presence. The term "mysticism" comes from the recognition of this divide.

One aspect of mysticism that is perennially criticized is the inability to verify a person's mystical experience. Because mysticism includes the stripping away of natural and sensory experience, there is no empirical

confirmation for those outside of the experience. Verification is thus limited to the change in the mystic's life, such as in his wisdom or virtue.

Late Medieval Mysticism of the Low Countries is a collection of writings of Flemish mystics of the late Middle Ages. Their mystical themes heavily emphasized the desire for union with God and the resting in his presence, a return to one's "true being, which has been timelessly in the triune God from all eternity," and that the love of God that draws the mystic is infinite and can never be "mastered." Flemish mystics emphasized such a strong union with God that they were sometimes criticized for eliminating any distinction between the mystic and God. They were also anti-quietist, promoting an active mystical life of prayer, contemplation, and devotional exercises.

This volume is oriented toward specialists, and there is little of the medieval mystical tradition that appears to resonate with evangelical theology. Martin Luther, however, did cultivate an interest in mystical theology early in his career (as seen, for example in his early Psalms lectures), and for the discerning reader, some sections may stimulate fruitful reflection. For example, the opening selection, "The Kiss of Mouth," presents a path of ascent to union with God through an allegorical interpretation of Song of Songs. The steps in the path are the "loving gaze," "loving conversing," friendly action, and finally the "kiss of mouth" (3). The kiss represents the union of the soul with God, a union that is deepened through active love, the form of God. Thus the substances of the soul and of God remain distinct, but their form becomes one, as the soul acts in love. Loving acts open the soul to greater love and acts of love (30–31). One could compare and contrast this to Luther's understanding of union with Christ through faith, which he refers to in his *Lectures on Galatians* (i.e., AE 26:133, 168).

There are two texts dedicated to the meditation of the suffering of Christ: "A Ladder of Eight Rungs" and "The Nine Little Flowers of the Passion." The former describes the eight rungs a person takes in order to ascend into the sufferings of Christ. Each rung is a meditation on Christ's sufferings that leads eventually to union with God, the final rung. This notion of union as the culmination of an extended exercise in ascending meditation contrasts with an understanding of union accomplished by incarnation, crucifixion, and Christ's continuous descent in the means of grace. Luther's theology of the cross does not encourage meditation on the suffering of Christ so much as it calls the Christian to see God at work in one's experiences of suffering. Perhaps these themes are complementary:

meditation on Christ's sufferings is a way of interpreting and understanding one's worldly suffering.

The centerpiece of the collection is the third part of *The Evangelical Pearl*, which takes up 117 pages of the book. This mystical treatise elaborates the devotion and contemplation that leads to the highest union with God, the "superessential life of contemplation" (216). Sections include descriptions of the soul's conversation with God, ascending the ladder through Christ and his passion to union, the prayers and daily exercises of the devotee, and how God imparts himself to the mystic. Underlying the text is a promotion of the active mystical life, that is, a soul that actively calls out to God and directs one's thoughts toward God and his commandments (316). *The Evangelical Pearl* drew from notable Flemish mystic Jan van Ruusbroec, as well as from German mystics Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler. It was translated into Latin, French, and German, solidifying the lasting legacy of Flemish mysticism as the mystical school of *devotio moderna* rose in influence.

Late Medieval Mysticism is recommended for specialists and for those with an interest in Flemish mysticism. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* was consulted in preparing this review, and readers are encouraged to consult essays and entries there for an introduction to Christian medieval mysticism. Bernard McGinn's works also are excellent resources, while Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* is a classic primary text. For Luther's relationship to the mystics, see Bengt R. Hoffman, *Luther and the Mystics* (Augsburg, 1976).

Gifford A. Grobien

***Onesimus Our Brother: Reading Religion, Race, and Culture in Philemon*. Edited by Matthew V. Johnson, James A. Noel, and Demetrius K. Williams. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. 176 pages. Hardcover. $39.00.**

Onesimus Our Brother is comprised of three editors, seven chapters, an introduction, conclusion, endnotes, and one page author index (175) at the end. Each editor authors a chapter in his own right; four other contributors round out the volume. The best chapter in my opinion is that by Mitzi Smith (47–58), but here she constantly alludes to one of her earlier pieces ("Roman Slavery in Antiquity," in *Holy Bible: African American Jubilee Edition* [New York: American Bible Society, 1999], 156–185) and so never really breaks new ground in the book under investigation. Nor does she ever opine whether Onesimus actually ran away from his master or was

manumitted—matters the other contributors dispute given their largely ahistorical approach.

What does unite the book thematically is the contributors' contention that Onesimus, the third member of the Paul-Philemon-Onesimus triad, should be given a "voice." He has been silent all these years because he was "only" a slave, and everyone knows that slaves had "no power, no agency" (1). Naturally, the experience of African slaves in the antebellum American South is key to interpret all Scripture, let alone this shortest of Paul's letters. Postmodernism allows readers to appreciate biblical texts apart from "Eurocentric interpretive limitations and interests," so that now "nonwhite, nonmale, nonheterosexual" and "disordered" interpretations are welcome (4). "White male" interpretations are most *un*welcome, for oppressors have used the texts to exploit marginalized persons for centuries. The contributors go out of their way, therefore, to avoid historical-critical methodology (historical objectivity is a myth of the enfranchised to dominate others, and 2) use "newer" approaches that avoid "racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and so on" (4).

My "quite erudite and learned" commentary on Philemon (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004) is cited once (43) by Williams for presenting the historical-critical paradigm. There I maintained that Christians ought not reinterpret ancient evidence to suit certain mentalities of today (an "American" view, e.g.), but rather allow the New Testament and ancient texts to speak for themselves regarding any topic, including slavery. That is to say, there is a *theology* connected to biblical slavery (the institution simply cannot be dismissed as so much "sin," as several contributors assume), but the one true faith virtually requires Christians to see themselves *as slaves* "in service" to God the Father (e.g., Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30) and to one's fellow man in the context of daily vocation (Gal 5:13; Eph 6:7; Col 3:24; cf. Nordling, *Philemon*, 116–128, 137–139). In the opinion of Williams, however, my "plain-sense hermeneutic" "mutes" the voices of those who have actually experienced slavery (44). Well perhaps, given the African- American hermeneutic. Nevertheless, moderns should understand that in the ancient world more white-skinned persons were enslaved to master classes than black Africans (see Nordling, *Philemon*, 70), and so-called "racial prejudice" existed along completely different lines than that pervasively assumed today. Civilized persons in antiquity feared barbarian *whites*, not blacks.

The real failure of this book, however, is in its overlooking the redemptive theology of Philemon centered in verses 18–19a: "and if he

[Onesimus] wronged you in any way or owes you anything, credit this to my account. I Paul write with my own hand: 'I shall repay it'" (on which see Nordling, *Philemon*, xvi, 272–75, 325–326). While occasionally mentioning "the Christ event" or Buber's "I-Thou" relationship, the contributors virtually redefine the gospel as liberation (e.g., 4, 35, 38) or equality (88, 99, 118)—not that place where Paul, in the stead of Christ, paid all Onesimus's debts, just as Christ our Lord paid for the sins of all humanity on the cross. Luther's Christological insights pave the way for the latter approach:

> What Christ has done for us with God the Father, that St. Paul does also for Onesimus with Philemon. For Christ emptied himself of his rights [Phil. 2:7] and overcame the Father with love and humility, so that the Father had to put away his wrath and rights, and receive us into favor for the sake of Christ, who so earnestly advocates our cause and so heartily takes our part. For we are all his Onesimus's if we believe (AE 35:390).

John G. Nordling

***Wilhelm Gesenius Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*. Edited by Herbert Donner, Rudolf Meyer, Udo Rüterswörden and Johannes Renz. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 2013. 1672 pages. Hardcover. $109.00.**

In September 2013, after nearly thirty years of preparation, the 18th edition of Wilhelm Gesenius's *Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament* was finally printed. How significant this is, is not adequately depicted with the reference to three decades of preparation. The 17th edition, which the publication replaces, was originally published in 1915, and has been constantly reprinted since then. It was the standard German-language Old Testament lexicon for ninety-eight years. This may seem of little consequence to the English-speaking Hebrew student or scholar, but it is not. The work many of us have on our shelves, *Brown-Driver-Briggs*, is even older, published in 1906. And further: the 1906 BDB, though structured differently than Gesenius and thus more than simply a translation, is nevertheless based on the scholarship documented in the 11th (1890), 12th (1895), and 13th (1899) editions of the German. The completed volumes of what would be BDB were themselves published over a period of seventeen years, from 1891 to 1906. Assuming continued research in the study of Old Testament Hebrew and Aramaic, the need for the 18th edition of Gesenius should be quite clear.

The chief editor, Prof. Dr. Herbert Donner (Kiel, Germany), notes six principles of the Gesenius lexicon that are preserved in the 18th edition: 1) The inclusion of all the forms of a word that appear in the Hebrew Old Testament (as the text is printed in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*); 2) the inclusion of the context in which words appear, so that Hebrew constructions of multiple words are made clear; 3) reservation in the discussion of historic and stylistic questions; 4) some inclusion of or reference to text-critical questions; 5) the inclusion of all proper names, both of persons and of locations; and 6) the taking into account of information available on Near-Eastern history. Finally, it is of note that the editors refrained almost entirely from including words from outside of the Old Testament in the lexicon.

Gesenius 18 is structured differently than BDB. The words are not grouped alphabetically according to their root word, but rather arranged strictly alphabetically. In comparison with BDB or Gesenius 17, the new volume is more comfortable to use, as obvious progress in book publishing shows itself over a near one-hundred year gap. The different sections within an individual entry are much easier to identify, and the text is generally easier to scan searching for forms, something the user tends to do, since Gesenius lists most (now: all) forms of a word that appear in the Old Testament.

Obviously, Gesenius will be of limited use for the English speaker. One can still scan for Hebrew forms to see, for example, to which stem a particular appearance of a verb belongs. The focused scholar is also presented with a wealth of lexicographic and etymological information which represents, if not the most recent research, nevertheless a far more up-to-date position than in any other one-volume lexicon. For these reasons, it seems a necessary purchase for every institutional theological library. But given the hefty price, it will probably rise to the top of few pastors' wish lists.

Jacob Corzine
Lutheran Campus Ministry
Pretoria, South Africa

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Books Received

Bateman IV, Herbert W. *Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook*. Edited by John D. Harvey. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013. 320 pages. Softcover. $29.99.

Brand, Chad and Tom Pratt. *Seeking the City: Wealth, Poverty, and Political Economy in Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013. 905 pages. Hardcover. $54.99.

Brown, William P. *Wisdom's Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible's Wisdom Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 220 pages. Softcover. $25.00.

Chisholm Jr., Robert B. *A Commentary on Judges and Ruth*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013. 697 pages. Hardcover. $39.99.

DeRouchie, Jason S., ed. *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013. 496 pages. Hardcover. $45.99.

Hamm, Berndt. *The Early Luther: Stages in a Reformation Reorientation*. Translated by Martin J. Lohrmann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 286 pages. Softcover. $36.00.

Hart, Addison Hodges. *Taking Jesus at His Word: What Jesus Really Said in the Sermon on the Mount*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 166 pages. Softcover. $18.00.

Hellerman, Joseph H. *Embracing Shared Ministry: Power and Status in the Early Church and Why It Matters Today*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2013. 313 pages. Softcover. $17.99.

Jones, David W. *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*. Edited by Daniel R. Heimbach. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013. 226 pages. Softcover. $24.99.

Lane, Tony. *Exploring Christian Doctrine: A Guide to What Christians Believe*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014. 308 pages. Hardcover. $30.00.

Maas, Korey and Adam Francisco, ed. *Making the Case for Christianity: Responding to Modern Objections*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014. 214 pages. Softcover. $19.99.

Melanchthon, Philip. *Commonplaces: Loci Communes 1521*. Translated with Introduction and Notes by Christian Preus. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014. 208 pages. Softcover. $19.99.

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Ross, Allen P. *A Commentary on the Psalms, Volume 2 (42–89)*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013. 841 pages. Hardcover. $44.99.

Schwarz, Hans. *The Human Being: A Theological Anthropology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 402 pages. Softcover. $35.00.

Seevers, Boyd. *Warfare in the Old Testament: The Organization, Weapons, and Tactics of Ancient Near Eastern Armies*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013. 328 pages. Hardcover. $34.99.

Wallace, Daniel B., Brittany C. Burnette, and Terri Darby Moore, eds. *A Reader's Lexicon of the Apostolic Fathers*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2013. 250 pages. Hardcover. $34.99.

Welker, Michael. *God the Revealed: Christology*. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 346 pages. Softcover. $29.00.