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Islam's Future in America

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Muslims have been present in the United States for over two centuries. The first were from Africa, brought over in the slave trade. We do not know how many there were; nor do we know much of their history. It is still being pieced together from the few extant records they left behind. We do know—and this should come as no surprise—that their influence on American culture was basically negligible. In fact, it seems that the folk Islam that was brought over failed to survive the first generation.[1]

That changed in the late nineteenth century when the first Muslim missionary entered the United States. His name was Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb (1846–1916).[2] His story is interesting, for he was born in Hudson, New York, raised in a Presbyterian household, moved to Missouri for work as a journalist, where he became a materialist, toyed with spiritualism and the occult, and eventually joined the Pioneer Theosophical Society of St. Louis. In 1887 he was appointed to serve as the American consul to the Philippines. Between his arrival in Manila in 1888 and his resignation in 1892 he embraced Islam, established ties with Muslims in India, and received a commission from them to begin a mission to America.

It was called the American Islamic Propaganda. Already by 1893 it established a publishing company, opened a lecture hall, and created an organization called the American Moslem Brotherhood in New York City with the goal of disseminating information on Islam and creating the institution(s) necessary for the endeavors of future missionaries. In that same year, Webb was invited to address the World Parliament of Religions as the only representative of Islam, where he assured those gathered, "I have not returned to the United States to make you all Mussulmans in spite of yourselves . . . . But," he continued, "I have faith in the American intellect, in the American intelligence, and in the American love of fair play, and

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[1] Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9–94.

[2] Umar F. Abd-Allah, *A Muslim in Victorian America: The Life of Alexander Russell Webb* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 113–125.

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will defy any intelligent man to understand Islam and not love it."[3] As it turned out, Americans in the late nineteenth century did not love Islam. By 1897, his mission was obsolete. Shortly thereafter he moved to New Jersey and lived there until his death in 1916.

Despite Webb's failure, Islam still found a way into America in the late nineteenth century. It came with the thousands of immigrants who managed to circumvent the restrictions of the Immigration Act of 1891. They came from a variety of places; by the 1920s it is estimated that around 60,000 had settled in cities throughout the United States. Most of them kept their religion private and sometimes even lied about it. But a few were apparently emboldened to advance Islam. The first American journal to address Muslims affairs recounted some of the activities of these missionaries. One report described how an Indian Muslim named M.M. Sadiq experienced a good bit of success in winning converts amongst African Americans in Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, and St. Louis in just three years (1920–1923) by holding what are described as "Mosque meetings" where the "virtues of Islam were exalted and Christianity was severely criticized." Another missionary named M.B. Bengali, who worked mostly amidst whites, is described as declaring the "plan" of Islam to "conquer America" to a company of Muslims.[4]

It is around this time that Americans started paying attention to Islam. The *New York Times* frequently reported on Webb, describing him as "the American Mohammedan whom the wealthy Mussulmans of India and the East have sent to introduce the faith of Islam—the Religion of the Sword, as some have called it—among the 'civilized' Christians of the West."[5] Toward the end of his short-lived mission he was even ridiculed.[6] The *Syracuse Sunday Herald* reported on the "fanatical zeal" in which Muslims were attempting to bring Islam to Americans.[7] And the *Chicago Tribune* described the work of Webb and others like him as "a new fad for those curiously constructed beings who are always chasing after new and strange doctrines."[8]

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[3] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 119.

[4] Andrew T. Hoffert, "The Moslem Movement in America," *The Moslem World* 20, vol. 3 (1930): 209–210.

[5] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 120.

[6] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 120–124.

[7] Daniel Pipes, *Militant Islam Reaches America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002), 113.

[8] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 120.

It was evangelical Christians who took Islam the most serious. For them, "Islam was Christianity's only serious rival for the religious 'conquest of the world'" and "Christians' most aggressive evangelistic competitors on the world stage."[9] They thus began to develop plans for the "direct evangelization of Muslims where they might live."[10] Arabic and Islamic Studies were offered at an American seminary for the first time, beginning with the professorship of Duncan Black Macdonald (1863–1943) in Hartford, Connecticut.[11] Eventually an institute for the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations was established in his name. In 1911, the American apostle to Islam, Samuel Zwemer (1867–1952), established an academic journal primarily for missionaries entitled *The Moslem World*.

The interest of evangelicals in Islam and missions to Muslims continued and in some ways increased in the wake of the World War I, as did the interest of Muslims in settling in and influencing America. The most comprehensive study of Islam's history in America to date suggests that this was a pivotal stage ". . . in which American Muslims' institutions and community building efforts took root."[12] The activity of the Sudanese immigrant Satti Majid (1883–1963) provides a useful example of such endeavors.[13]

Satti, who appointed himself the Shaykh of Islam in America, arrived in 1904 and stayed until 1929. Estimating the national population of Muslims to be around 100,000 (20,000 of which he claimed were converts), but noting that there was not a single mosque, Muslim charity, or any national Muslim organization, he began to establish institutions designed to serve American Muslims. In Detroit he helped begin the Red Crescent, formed an organization called the Islamic Union, acquired plots for Muslim burials at Roselawn cemetery, and claimed to have even established the first mosque in America (though there is no extant evidence for it). Similar projects were pursued in other cities. Beyond this, he also worked to promote Islam in the public sphere by writing editorials for the *New York Times.* They never published them, and so—perhaps in the first

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[9] Thomas S. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 62.

[10] Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 64.

[11] Willem A. Bijlefeld, "A Century of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Hartford Seminary," *The Muslim World* 83, vol. 2 (1993): 103–117.

[12] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 165.

[13] Patrick D. Bowen, "Satti Majid: A Sudanese Founder of American Islam," *Journal of Africana Religion* 1, vol. 2 (2013): 194–209; cf. GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 172–178.

instance of struggling to silence opposition to Islam through litigation—he attempted to sue the paper for not publishing his articles and what he described as its "anti-Islamic propaganda."[14] At the same time that Satti Majid was working to support and promote a fairly orthodox form of Islam in the United States, heterodox or—by normal Sunni standards—heretical Muslim groups like the Moorish Science Temple, Nation of Islam, and Ahmadiyya movement were taking root and began to thrive, particularly amidst African Americans.[15] The first verifiable mosques serving orthodox Muslims were also established in a variety of cities and towns like Ross, North Dakota, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The former, built around 1929, was torn down in the 1970s and rebuilt in 2005; the latter—the so-called Mother Mosque—was built in 1934 and still stands today.

Around the time that Majid was working in America, forces were at work in the Muslim world that would increase the number of Muslims and strengthen the presence of Islam in America. The Ottoman Empire came to an end after World War I. The caliphate—a 1300-year old institution believed to be divinely instituted—was abolished. European powers—primarily the British and the French—began their supervision of the region under the League of Nations mandate system. New states were created, governments established, and economies reformed.[16] While many benefitted from these changes, some Muslim thinkers concluded that Islamic civilization had finally lost its soul. After centuries of decline under the Ottomans, it was now dead and a new secular order had emerged. Nowhere was this view more pronounced than in the rhetoric of Hassan al-Banna (1904–1949) and the Muslim Brotherhood.[17]

The Brotherhood began in 1928. Its early activities centered on preaching and social welfare, but it soon turned to violence. Because it was seen as the only really legitimate Islamic group that resisted the expansion and dominance of secular influences within Muslim societies, it grew quickly.

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[14] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 173.

[15] Ahmed I. Abu Shouk, J.O. Hunwick, and R.S. O'Fahey, "A Sudanese Missionary to the United States: Satti Majid, '*Shaykh al-Islam* in North America,' and His Encounter with Noble Drew Ali, Prophet of the Moorish Science Temple Movement," *Sudanic Africa* 8 (1997): 137–191.

[16] On the significance of World War I on the Middle East and Islam, see James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 180–231.

[17] See Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Barry Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

By 1948, it had a half a million members, and branches could be found throughout Egypt. It did experience some setbacks, though. For example, the Egyptian government arrested much of its leadership, and al-Banna was assassinated in 1949. But the Brotherhood would receive renewed vigor a year or two later when a man named Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) returned from a two year visit to America and began writing some of the most influential texts informing what is often described as Islamism.[18]

Islamism is Islam viewed as an all-encompassing worldview or ideology. Governance, politics, law, morality, and every other aspect of life is ordered by the Qur'an and Islamic tradition.[19] For every real or perceived problem, Islamists claim, "Islam is the solution." Qutb described the world as suffering from the same basic condition. It was mired in *jahiliyya* or ignorance of Islam. This included the Muslim world in the mid-twentieth century, as well as the Western world. Muslims, thus, had a global mission that included bearing witness to Islam in or outside of Muslim majority lands. This played some role in the increasing number of Muslims who migrated to the United States on student visas shortly after the end of World War II. Many of them, being too radical for the secularized Muslim states in the Middle East (the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, was and still is routinely outlawed), moved here and took advantage of American ignorance of their totalitarian ideology and began to make their way into and influence American Muslim organizations. In the mid-twentieth century, GhaneaBassiri observes that they soon began purposely working toward having "Islam recognized as an American religion."[20]

An opportunity presented itself with the rise of American civil religion before and during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953–1961). In 1948, the National Education Association began promoting the advancement of a universal vision of moral and spiritual values that were "shared by the members of all religious faiths."[21] This enabled the newly established Federation of Islamic Associations to begin efforts at defining "Islam as yet another of the monotheistic religions upon which American

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[18] See John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); for an essential collection of primary texts illustrative of Islamist thought in the twentieth century, see Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to bin Laden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[19] On the distinction between Islam and Islamism from the perspective of a liberal Muslim, see Bassam Tibi, *Islamism and Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[20] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 228.

[21] Educational Policies Commission, *Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1951), 6.

values were founded."[22] They were largely successful. By 1957, their work led to the building of the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., where, at its inauguration, President Eisenhower praised what Islam had allegedly "contributed to the building of civilization" and "contributed to the advancement of mankind." He then acknowledged Islam's place in the American religious landscape as "many from the Muslims lands—students, businessmen, and representatives of states—are enjoying the benefits of experience among the people of the United States," and assured Muslims that "Americans would fight with all their strength" for the right of Muslims to assemble at their mosques (he called them churches) and worship according to their conscience.[23]

Just how many Muslims were in America in the mid-twentieth century is unclear. There were enough, though, that mission agencies and Middle Eastern governments began to take notice. In 1959, for example, the Federation of Islamic Associations was invited to establish formal ties with Egypt and Syria (under the auspices of the short-lived United Arab Republic). Its leadership was brought out to Cairo for meetings, solidifying their ties, which included generous donations for the building of an Islamic Center in Detroit. Two years later, in 1961, the Saudis got involved and began their efforts to exert control over Muslim institutions in the United States, efforts which still continue today.[24]

The 1960s, in general, were productive years for the strengthening of Islam in America. The number of students sent here on scholarship from places like Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia was over 10,000. A little more than a decade earlier there were not even 3,000.[25] Also at the same time, American Muslim students began to receive scholarships to study at Muslim universities, though numbers on this are unknown.[26] Some received more than just a university education; they also received an education in Islamism. For example, in 1964 when Malcolm X (1925–1965) went on pilgrimage to Mecca, he was trained in Sunni Islamic ideology and provided with guarantees for scholarships to American Muslims at the University of Medina. All of this

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[22] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 238.

[23] "Eisenhower's 1957 Speech at Islamic Center of Washington," (speech, June 28, 1957), http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2007/06/20070626154822 lnkais0.6946985.html#axzz3h8JYVpgQ.

[24] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America,* 254–263.

[25] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America,* 264.

[26] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 263.

was provided by the Muslim World League, an organization founded in 1962 by Hassan al-Banna's son-in-law Said Ramadan (1926–1995). It was designed to unite Islamist groups from around the Muslim world in the common cause of advancing Islam across the globe.

Those who came under its spell and the general spell of Islamism established the Muslim Student Association in 1963 on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This organization, which now has hundreds of chapters across North America, laid the foundation for the subsequent history of Islam in America. It "saw itself as the provider of [the] 'means and methods' of maintaining a Muslim way of life for earlier established mosques and American Muslim organizations [like the Federation of Islamic Associations]."[27] It also saw the "United States as a blank slate for the realization" of an authentic Islamic lifestyle in accordance with the Qur'an and classical traditions of Islam.[28] Secularized autocratic governments in the Muslim world had begun to clamp down on Islamism and for good reason, as many of them were increasingly turning towards violence in their struggle or *jihad* against the corruptions of Islam in the Muslim world.

America became, in a way, a land of promise for Muslims, especially those with Islamist commitments, in the 1960s. A study of the Muslim World League even expressed that despite "the sorry state of affairs prevailing in the Muslim countries," they were optimistic for the future of Islam. Their source of hope was found in the Muslim minorities of America and Europe that "might one day produce those sons and daughters of Islam who might change the whole course of events of the entire Muslim *ummah* [global community]."[29]

At about the same time that Islamism established its base, organizationally, other expressions of Islam began to appear as a wide array of Muslims began to immigrate here in droves after passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 abolished national origins quotas from immigration law. With this came a tremendous amount of diversity where the increasing Muslim population became a "microcosm of Muslims in the 'Old World.'"[30] Sunnis, Shia, and Sufis of every confession and practice began to appear alongside some of the indigenous American Muslim organizations like the Nation of Islam. The problem, at least for the

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[27] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 270.

[28] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 268.

[29] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 260; M. Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1986), xvii–xviii.

[30] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 295.

historian, is that they did not leave much of a verifiable record before the 1980s. Most, as they still do today, are assimilated Americans who practice some spiritualized or watered-down version of Islam and do so in private.

Those who did leave a distinct record were, of course, the Islamists, committed as they were to advancing Islam in American culture. And the record is clear that they intended to increase their efforts. For example, in 1975 the Muslim Student Association published its priorities for the future of "Islamic work" in the United States. Along with strengthening in-stitutions that already existed, they listed as their first priority the "[p]roduction and dissemination of Islamic knowledge . . . in its purity in all fields necessary for building an Islamic civilization."[31] Muslims affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, which by the 1970s had become a global organization with millions of members, saw this as commensurate with their goals and began to consider how the Muslim Student Association and other similar American Muslim organizations might be used to achieve their broader socio-political goals. In a document not in-tended for public dissemination entitled "An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal of the Group in North America," the Brother-hood outlined a fairly comprehensive strategy that would use the MSA and over twenty other similar organizations overtly tied to or at least friendly to the Islamists' cause that could be used to fundamentally trans-form America by uniting Muslims who had settled in America. Here's how the memo puts it:

> The Ikhwan [Brotherhood] must understand that their work in Amer-ica is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions . . . . It is a Muslim's destiny to perform Jihad and work wherever he is and wherever he lands until the final hour comes.[32]

How is this jihad to be performed? The document goes into pretty comprehensive detail but names the presenting of Islam as a "civilization

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[31] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 305.

[32] Mohamed Akram, "An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America," memorandum of the Muslim Brotherhood, May 22, 1991, 21; this is available online at the Investigative Project on Terrorism web site, http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/20.pdf. On this document in the context of the Muslim Brotherhood's operations in the United States, see Andrew C. McCarthy and others, *Sharia: The Threat to America* (Washington, DC: The Center for Security Policy, 2010), 107–168.

alternative" as the chief means. In other words, rather than some show of force or even overt political activity, the Islamist group in America—and we do not know all who were and continue to be involved—sought (and seeks) to pursue the advance of Islam slowly, patiently, and even peacefully and, while doing so, to portray Islam as a legitimate and rational alternative to the hedonistic, relativistic, and materialistic culture that dominates the West. They were and have been pretty good at it, too. In 1980, for example, while federal employees were being held hostage by Muslims in Tehran for over a year, the United States Congress saw fit to recognize the 1,400-year anniversary of Muhammad's call to prophethood.[33]

The success of the revolution in Iran and especially the Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union had the curious effect of emboldening and increasing Islamic activism in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s. A good percentage of Islamic organizations like the Islamic Society of North America were established then. The Muslim city of Islamberg in rural New York was founded; and a number of mosques were constructed. The Muslim population increased at this time as well. Some of it was simply the result of natural, biological unions between a Muslim man and his wife or wives. A good portion of it—well over a million, in fact—came from an increasing number of immigrants from every walk of life and represented every disposition in Islam. This included Islamist jihadists. Bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri (b. 1951), for example, toured Silicon Valley in the early 1990s raising funds to support the fighters and organizations that would soon become al-Qaeda. On the East Coast, mosques in New York and New Jersey used by the CIA in the 1980s to support the Afghan jihad were also used to recruit the jihadists who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993.

Some Muslims who were publically active moved in a different direction. Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988) began explaining Islam to non-Muslims in a number of publications from his post at the University of Chicago. His perspective was conservative yet, at the same time, progressive. He believed Islam—an Islam ordered by the Qur'an and not historical interpretations of it—could thrive in American culture without being at odds with it. He was even optimistic that Muslims and Christians in America and beyond could be brought together in some way "by way of positive cooperation, provided that Muslims hearken more to the Qur'an than to the historic formulations of Islam and provided that," what he called,

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[33] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 309–310.

"recent pioneering efforts continue to yield a Christian doctrine more compatible with universal monotheism and egalitarianism."[34]

It is interesting that, despite the increasing presence of Islamists in the United States and even more so across the globe during the last two decades of the twentieth century, there was still much ambivalence towards Islam. There was some anti-Arab sentiment as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian issue—the most extreme example being the murder of the Muslim scholar Isma'il al-Faruqi and his wife in Pennsylvania in 1986. The Council on American-Islamic Relations was even established to defend Muslims against perceived and sometimes real discrimination. But, particularly among the political elite, Islam was not seen as posing a challenge or threat. It was accepted and perhaps even embraced by them as a legitimate American worldview. In 1991, Siraj Wahhaj, an imam of a large mosque in Brooklyn and leader of the Muslim Alliance in North America, who has numerous ties to Islamists, was invited and opened a session of the House of Representatives with a prayer to Allah. Warith Deen Muhammad (1933–2008) offered a prayer to Allah on the Senate floor less than a year later. In 1993, the first Muslim chaplain, Abdul Rasheed Muhammad, was appointed to the U.S. military. In 1996, Hillary Clinton began the tradition of celebrating *'Id al-Fitr*, the end of the month of Ramadan, at the White House. And her husband, President Bill Clinton (1993–2001), established what seems like the American doctrine of Islam-is-a-religion-of-peace, despite any stubborn facts that might suggest otherwise. For example, at a meeting of the Jordanian Parliament in 1994, he affirmed Islam as a religion that embodies values in "harmony with the best of American ideals."[35] Muslims pursuing violent jihad, he continued, "cloak themselves in the rhetoric of religion and nationalism, but behave in ways that contradict the very teachings of their faith."[36]

The two subsequent presidents, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, have continued to reinforce this doctrine of disassociating Islam from violence. However, especially after September 11, 2001, many average Americans began to see things differently. But even before, during the 1990s, men like Daniel Pipes and Steven Emerson were warning Americans in print and other media about the deleterious influence and potential violent

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[34] Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 170.

[35] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 339.

[36] GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, 340.

consequences of Islamism left unchecked.[37] Now there is a whole industry dedicated to fighting it, from The Investigative Project on Terrorism to The Center for the Study of Political Islam to Robert Spencer's numerous books, just to name a few.

Muslims have responded to this in a variety of ways. Some perform what is called *taqiyya* and *iham,* dissimilation and deception.[38] The activity of Anwar al-Awlaki (1971–2011) is a case in point. As a young and articulate imam serving in mosques from southern California to northern Virginia he was invited to lead prayers for Muslim congressional staffers and lobbyists in Washington, D.C., serve as chaplain at George Washington University, and lecture on moderate Islam in the Pentagon. He was described by the *New York Times* a month after 9/11 as a leading example of a new generation of Muslim leaders "capable of merging East and West" or reconciling Islam with American culture.[39] In a *National Geographic* article on Muslim responses to the recent attacks, he is quoted as saying, "There is no way that the people who did this could be Muslim, and if they claim to be Muslim, then they have perverted their religion."[40] In 2002, however, he left the United States and by 2004 he had settled in Yemen where he took up leadership in the branch of al-Qaeda there until he was killed in a drone strike in 2011. The Clintons' preferred consultant on all matters Islamic, Abdul Rahman Al-Amoudi, is another good example. For years he enjoyed special access to and privilege amidst leaders in both the Democrat and Republican parties, acted as consultant to the Pentagon, and was involved in the selection of Muslim chaplains. At the same time, he was raising funds to finance terrorist operations and even took part in a plot to assassinate the then-crown prince and now recently deceased King of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud (1924–2015).[41] He is now serving a 23-year prison sentence.

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[37] See Daniel Pipes, "The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!" *National Review* 42, no. 22 (1990): 28–31; available online at the Middle East Forum web site, http://www.danielpipes.org/198/the-muslims-are-coming-the-muslims-are-coming, as well as Steven Emerson's PBS documentary *Jihad in America* that aired on November 12, 1994.

[38] See Tibi, *Islamism and Islam,* 152.

[39] James Taranto, "'Moderate Meets Maker': Anwar al-Awlaki, Then and Now," *Wall Street Journal*, September 30, 2011, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1000142405297 0204138204576602984278140322.

[40] Brian Handwerk and Zain Habboo, "Attack on America: An Islamic Scholar's Perspective—Part 1," *National Geographic News*, September 28, 2001, http://news. nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/09/0927_imampart1.html.

[41] Steven Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islam in America* (Amherst, MA: Prometheus Books, 2006), 347–352, 389–390.

This list could go on. But chances are, unless you are a student of counterterrorism, you will not have heard much about these cases. What you no doubt have heard quite a bit about, though, are the efforts of Muslims to, as it is sometimes put, take back Islam from those who have allegedly corrupted it. These are people like Zuhdi Jassar who have fully assimilated into American culture and maintain a private, spiritualized view and practice of Islam. Some of them have even made remarkable contributions toward efforts to educate and expose the proliferation and danger of Islamist ideology amidst a significant number of American Muslims and their organizations. The Third Jihad, a documentary film released in 2008 featuring Zuhdi, is a great example of such a project. The problem with some of these moderate, assimilated Muslims is that their knowledge of and credentials to speak on Islam are either weak or lack credibility with Muslims. Muslims who strive to align their beliefs, practices, and activities with traditional orthodoxy view them as misguided Muslims at best, who select passages from the Qur'an or Islamic tradition regardless of context or legitimacy and use them to support a novel or historically and legally marginalized view of Islam.

Other moderate Muslims are attempting to reform Islam from within the basic parameters of historical Islam, looking for pieces of evidence that might support a re-envisioned Islam suitable for contemporary socio-political and cultural norms. They justify their revision of Islam by appealing to *ijtihad*,[42] generally understood as the contextualizing of Islam using reason to reconsider the tradition of Islam, and have experienced some success at changing the way some American Muslims think about and express their faith.[43] This does hold some promise at the very least in pacifying Islam and legitimizing the assimilation of Muslims, but contemporary *mujtahids* (those who practice *ijtihad*) face an uphill battle given the closing or proscribing of such practices in the classical period of Muslim jurisprudence.[44] They are also viewed with suspicion by observant Muslims and charged with capitulating to non-Islamic standards and innovation (*bid'a*)—a sin in Islam.

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[42] See David R. Smock, "Ijtihad: Reinterpreting Islamic Principles for the Twenty-First Century," Special Report 125 (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2004).

[43] See Paul M. Barrett, *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion* (New York: Picador, 2007).

[44] See Robert R. Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2010).

The work of Abdulaziz Sachedina, Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Virginia and George Mason University, provides a good example of this. He is often viewed as one of the leading academic figures in the reinterpretation and pacification of Islam. He was even brought in by the State Department in 2005 to help draft the constitution of Iraq with high hopes that the proposals he made in his books, like the peculiarly titled *Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (2001), would establish Iraq as a model for other Muslim-majority nations to follow. Sachedina has tried to advance what he calls an Islamic theology for the twenty-first century that is established "within the sacred boundaries of the Islamic revelatory sources."[45] He sees this task as essential, for among the world's religions "Islam provides the sole coherent worldview of any political significance" that also has the potential to build a "just society in which peoples of different religions would coexist in peace and harmony."[46] And it alone can help "to deepen the West's self-understanding in its liberal project of a public international order."[47]

How does he do this? He deconstructs the classical (and exclusivist) politicized theology of Islam and reconstructs in its place an Islam that has never existed—one that champions constitutional government, tolerance, pluralism, etc. He does so by assigning new meaning to the quranic text. For example, he contends that *jihad* is not physical warfare with religious significance, as Muslim tradition has almost universally held; [48] it is a "moral endeavor to work for peace with justice."[49] And as far as the exclusive nature of Islam goes, he essentially sees all people who, in their own way and in accordance with their own religion, submit to God as *ipso facto* Islamic. Passages that encourage the killing of polytheists, Jews, and Christians are all the result of particular historical circumstances. Religious pluralism is, he contends, the universal norm and doctrine of the Qur'an. He even suggests that the first religiously-inspired pluralist democratic political order was promoted by Muhammad in Mecca. Sachedina's method is very postmodern, and that is probably the reason he has only really

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[45] Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41.

[46] Sachedina, *Islamic Roots*, 136.

[47] Sachedina, *Islamic Roots*, 42.

[48] For the best treatment of *jihad,* see David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[49] Sachedina, *Islamic Roots,* 113.

been well received by liberal academics but Muslims have been instructed by their authorities not to listen to him.[50]

What seems to be the wave of the future in Muslim thought on their role in America (and the west in general) is the perspective advanced by Tariq Ramadan, the so-called Martin Luther of Islam. He makes his home in the West, teaching in Europe and also America (since Hilary Clinton lifted the ban on him despite his donations to Hamas). He appeals to Islamists and moderate Muslims alike, for he is a conservative who grapples with what it means to be Muslim in societies that are not. This is a huge question, for historically and legally Muslims are required by the sharia to reside in what is deemed *dar al-Islam*, or the abode of Islam.[51] For only in the abode of Islam, where Muslims dominate the population and Islamic law informs the institutions and preserves the mores of society, can Muslims properly submit to Allah. Islamic law has allowed for some exceptions. Muslims can engage in commerce, diplomacy, and of course fight in jihad outside of the abode of Islam, but only temporarily. After all, that territory—outside of the abode of Islam—is deemed the domain of war or *dar al-Harb* in classic Muslim jurisprudence. It is the territory into which the abode of Islam is to expand in what Muhammad described as a perpetual jihad that should take place until the day of judgment.[52]

In *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Ramadan argues that Muslims need to rethink this classic bifurcation of the world into essentially two warring camps. For, as he put it, there is no real *dar al-Islam* or properly constituted Islamic state that exists. "It is high time to define the responsibilities of Muslims in the West," he writes, "Our world is now, whether we like it or not, *an open world*."[53] He does not follow his Muslim Brotherhood ancestors (his grandfather is Hasan al-Banna and father Said Ramadan) in calling the whole world the domain of jahiliyya, but rather refers to the West, as well as the heartland of Islam, as the *dar al-shahada*,

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[50] See Sachedina, "What Happened in Najaf?" available online at the University of Georgia website, http://islam.uga.edu/sachedina_silencing.html.

[51] See Bernard Lewis, "Legal and Historical Reflections on the Position of Muslim Populations under Non-Muslim Rule," in *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 43–57; Yahya Michot, *Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule* (Oxford: Interface Publications, 2006).

[52] See Abu Dawud al-Sijistani, *Sunan Abu Dawud,* trans. Ahmad Hasan (Lahore: Ashraf Press, 1984), 2:702; Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence,* 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 207.

[53] Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 73–75.

the domain of testimony wherein Muslims are called, whether they are in America or Egypt, to bear witness and promote the will of Allah and vision of Muhammad. In other words, Islam is again in a formative period, and Muslims are called to help if not lead the charge in shaping it wherever they might be.

Muslims concerned with confessing and promoting orthodox Islam do not see this as something that can or should be done willy-nilly. Rather, it is to be done in accordance with what Muslims across the world almost universally subscribe to as Allah's clear and perfectly preserved revelation, the Qur'an, alongside—in one way or another—the traditions (Sunna) passed down concerning Muhammad and the first Muslim polities.

In light of all this, it is time to ask the question implied in the title: What might Islam look like in America in the future? It is hard to say, but the trends of the past that continue to shape the present will most likely persist into the future. Islam will continue to assert itself and even enjoy greater influence. There are currently about five million Muslims in America, give or take a million or two; we still do not have good data on this. Expect that number to rise though. Muslims typically have larger families than your average American and certainly the average European.

We should also expect a great bit of diversity amidst Muslims. There will be Twelver, Sevener, Fiver, and every other sort of Shia Muslim alongside Sunnis who are progressivists, secularists, Islamists, and even jihadists. However, the institutions representing American Muslims and public discourse on the character of Islam in America will be predominantly Islamist of one sort or another. These Islamists organizations have learned to contextualize their speech. They say one thing but mean another. For example, Islam means peace, it has been said, and in a way—though not literally—it does. But it is a peace defined by Islam and one that will not be realized until all individuals, their institutions, and societies submit entirely to Allah.

Amidst America's Muslims there will be and already is a contest for the soul and posture of Islam. Moderates and progressives are already battling with conservatives. This is mostly an internal debate, though it has been suggested non-Muslims should seize any opportunity to promote a moderate Islam. Perhaps. But Mark Steyn offers a word of caution as well as a corrective in which Christians could certainly participate. He has argued that promoting moderate Islam is a quick fix to the challenges posed by radical Islam and, in the end, will be ineffective as it is virtually impossible to get around the injunctions to violence in the Qur'an. "[T]he

most effective strategy against the resurgence of Islam," then, he suggests, "may be the oldest of all—an evangelizing Christianity."[54]

Nevertheless, we should expect more of the violence happening across the globe to find its way here. It already has. What to do with it or how to preempt it, though, is still the question. Muslims have the right to practice their religion and—according to popular notions of what liberty or freedom means—order their life as they see fit. For religions committed to a distinction between religion and politics or theology and civil law the first amendment poses little to no problem to the integrity of that religion or the state. For Islam—at least classical orthodox versions of it—it does. Herein lies one of the most basic problems associated with Islam in the West, particularly in a secular and pluralist democracy like America.

Regardless of all the trends, debates, policies, and postures associated with the problems of Islam and its future in America. We can count on the fact that Islam is and will continue to become a part of mainstream American culture. Whether it gets stirred up in the melting pot or not is anyone's guess at this point. Whether it succeeds in influencing the broader culture or not will probably not be determined by Islam itself, though. Rather, the future of American culture will be determined by those, as it has been said, who show up for it. Muslims are poised to do just that. So are secularists. Are Christians? Only the future will tell.

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[54] Mark Steyn, "Apostasy in Moderation," *National Review* 60, vol. 7 (2008): 64.

How Do You Know
Whether You Are a Man or a Woman?

Scott E. Stiegemeyer

The transformation of Bruce Jenner into Caitlyn Jenner in 2015 has brought the issue of gender identity into the lives of almost every American. How will Christians respond? Well, we have already begun to think through these issues. In 2014, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod published a document entitled: *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective.* The CTCR is to be commended for addressing this important issue that has captured the attention of the American public. Given that the CTCR document is simply too brief to address the many issues related to this complex subject, this article will provide supplemental information and observations to shed further light on the subject.[1]

The conclusions of the CTCR document, based on the Holy Scriptures, are sound, but this subject is inherently multi-disciplinary. The Scriptures do not address every imaginable topic; Christians must also, at times, utilize empirical observations and their God-given reason. Our understanding of the natural world is changing and advancing rapidly. Medical knowledge about sexual development, neuroscience, psychology, and ethical theory have relevance here. The very best that these disciplines and others have to offer should be given consideration. Sexuality is not just a religious or moral issue. The CTCR document is aware of the diverse literature but does not engage it in a thorough manner. More can and should be said.

The church understands the meaning of sex and gender foremost as a theological issue, though much further articulation is needed, especially in Lutheran circles. The creation of man as male and female is theologically significant. We make a grave error if we think that moral direction for those suffering with gender dysphoria is confined to the fine print of the Law or the mere rubrics of Christian living. The development of a fully elaborated theology of the body, including but not exclusive to human

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[1] The ever-changing theories about the origins and complexities of sexual orientation and attraction are important, but related topics will not be treated here.

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sexuality, is the most important theological issue of our time. The human body had become the battleground of conflicting ideas and values. Indeed, our culture is propelled by an inadequate anthropology. This inadequacy distorts the world's understanding of marriage, sex, family, procreation, the treatment of the poor and more. John Paul II once wrote that he believed the root of many of our problems today is the "pulverization" of the dignity of the human person.[2]

The creation of individuals as male or female was an uncontested catholic doctrine, held by all Christians until the late twentieth century. The very title of the CTCR document, *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*, and its corresponding footnote[3] acknowledge this. Gender dysphoria (previously called Gender Identity Disorder) is a rare and puzzling state of extreme and, at times, debilitating discomfort with one's natal sex. In addition to the psychological condition called gender dysphoria, a related matter is intersexuality, which is the group of medical concerns that results in a person having a body that is sexually atypical. Helpfully, the CTCR document includes an excursus on intersex conditions.[4]

The CTCR document focuses on the moral dimension of sex and gender confusion, which is perfectly correct. Less clear is the facet of gender dysphoria as a psychological condition, a mental health issue, or a neurological one. We can maintain that drunkenness is the result of sinful behavior and still acknowledge that medical or psychotherapeutic techniques can be tremendously helpful in overcoming the temptation to drink. The document acknowledges this fact. A pastor is a curate of the soul, a *Seelsorger*, but it is erroneous to think we can treat the spiritual needs with-

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[2] In a 1968 letter to the French theologian Henri de Lubac, Archbishop Karol Wojtyla wrote: "The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person. This evil is even much more of the metaphysical order than of the moral order. To this disintegration, planned at times by atheistic ideologies, we must oppose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of 'recapitulation' of the inviolable mystery of the person . . . ." Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings*, trans. Anne Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 172.

[3] "The general perspective of this report . . . is one that is not simply that of the Lutheran theological tradition, but rather stands within the broad (catholic) consensus of traditional Christian teaching." *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (2014), 1n1.

[4] *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*, 7–8.

out taking the mind and body into account. Pastors are not called to be therapists and physicians, but since human beings are holistic body-mind-Spirit entities, the *Seelsorger*, is, in truth, a little bit of all three. Jesus himself linked physical healing with the forgiveness of sins on several occasions, as does the book of James. The Lutheran church, as a whole, has not dealt with this relationship sufficiently.

The CTCR document makes a point to distinguish gender dysphoria from physiological abnormalities, but it will not be easy or advisable to divide the mind from the body too forcefully. Moods and psychological states are always body related. The mind is not just an isolated passenger carried along by an advanced organic machine. The reason this is a pastoral issue is because Lutheran clergy are not merely concerned with behavior modification. Nor are we able to apply the gospel to disembodied human spirits.[5] Rather, we address the grand questions such as "What am I?" This question must be answered well before we can make sense of subsequent ethical instruction. One must discern what a thing is before knowing what it is for or how it may function properly. This is also true for the human body in the ways that it is manifest, male and female.[6]

I. Sex and Gender

When you meet someone new, you unconsciously decide if the person is male or female. It is automatic. Depending on your culture, determining the sex of a person may have a significant effect on how you are expected to relate to that person. In some corners of the world, it is socially unacceptable, possibly even criminal, for a man to speak in public with a woman who is not a close relative. Apart from social norms, most people feel uncomfortable if they are unable to discern whether the person they have met is male or female. It is in our nature to categorize. Ambiguous things can seem threatening. Anthropologist Mary Douglas says that "the activity of classifying is a human universal."[7]

What are the clues you look at to draw a conclusion, realizing that some of the details might be culturally determined? First, we consider the

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[5] Confessional Lutheranism is in need of related study on the healing ministry of Jesus and the apostles and its relevance to the church as apostolic today.

[6] Given most pastors' relative unfamiliarity with gender dysphoria and related issues, the author begs the reader's patience as he wades through these sometimes uncomfortable waters, promising a fruitful discussion at the end concerning how the church can respond.

[7] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), xvii.

person's outward presentation, such as clothing, hairstyle, cosmetics, and jewelry to ascertain whether these conform to expected gender norms. Presentation also includes vocal patterns, gestures, stride, how the person sits, etc. At the same time, we are noticing the secondary sex traits of the body: breasts, hips, shoulders, musculature, the Adam's apple, and voice pitch. If these are inconclusive, we have little additional recourse in the typical social encounter.

Within a medical context, an examination of the external genitalia could be done. There are intersex individuals, however, for whom even this level of intimate detail is unclear. Perhaps the internal organs can be examined in an autopsy or using imaging technology, but this will not be an option in all scenarios. Modern science has given us the ability to go so far as to examine people's chromosomes. Even here, however, not every individual person fits neatly into the categories of male or female. What if you do all of these examinations and the evidence is still inconclusive? What if there remains an incongruity between, say, one's chromosomes and the same person's external sex organs? Which takes precedence? The church must not conclude that DNA is always the grand arbiter of human identity. Is one's so-called true sex located in the structures or modes of the brain, as some claim? And which sex, if any, will intersex people be at the resurrection of the body on the Last Day?

Knowing what to count as the finally determinative sexual anatomy (genes, genitalia, internal reproductive organ, the brain, etc.) can be problematic, but most will agree that certain organs are ordinarily found only in either males or females. For instance, though there are individuals born with XXY or XYY sex chromosomes, most females possess the XX chromosomes, and most males possess the XY chromosomes.[8]

How, then, can you tell if a person is male or female? Can we really say that every person fits into one of these two categories? The answers to these questions are obvious for most people. The majority of people never think much about their sex or gender identity. The Scriptures clearly teach that God created man as male and female. But for a number of complex and poorly understood reasons, there are people in the world as we presently experience it for whom a definite either/or answer is elusive. This question is important for those who hold to a traditional Christian perspective that assigns meaning to the fundamental division of humanity into male and female.

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[8] This is not necessarily meant to give chromosomes ultimate priority, but only as an example.

As we begin, it is necessary to define a few critical terms. Until recent times, the terms *gender* and *sex* were used interchangeably. Current standard usage, however, employs a distinction. Sexologist Dr. John Money claims to be the source of this parlance:

> Because sex differences are not only genitally sexual, although they may be secondarily derived from the procreative organs, I found a need some thirty years ago for a word under which to classify them. That word, which has now become accepted into language, is gender. Everyone has a gender identity/role, one part of which is one's genital or genitosexual gender identity/role . . . . the masculinity and/or femininity of your gender role is like the outside of a revolving globe that everyone can observe and read the meaning of. Inside the globe are the private workings of your gender identity.[9]

In sum, according to current usage, s*ex* refers to a person's anatomical traits. *Gender* is how one views oneself and presents oneself to the world. Gender has become the subjective internal sense that one is male or female, or both (e.g., transgender). A third term, *sexuality,* refers to erotic attraction.

II. Intersexuality

As previously mentioned, there are a variety of medical conditions that lead to atypical development of physical sex characteristics that are collectively referred to as *intersex* conditions. These conditions can involve abnormalities of the external genitals, the internal reproductive organs, sex chromosomes, and/or sex-related hormones. These unusual anatomies can result in confusion within individuals about whether they should be considered male or female or something else. Historically, these people were labeled "hermaphrodites." In Greek mythology, Hermaphroditus was the son of Hermes and Aphrodite. Originally a boy, he was transformed into a creature of both sexes by union with a Naiad. During the twentieth century, the medical designation of "intersexual" has become the more accepted nomenclature. These, and other unusual births, were, in former

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[9] John R. Money, *Gay, Straight, and In-Between* (New York: Oxford University, 1988), 77. John Money taught psychology and pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University for over fifty years until his death in 2006. Money was a pioneer in treating intersex patients and for decades held the spotlight as the preeminent authority on such treatment. His philosophy held that gender identity is entirely sociologically constructed and that there may be instances, either due to birth defect or mutilation, when the best course of action is to raise as girls children born as boys. One particular high profile case, Brenda/David Reimer, which called his research and theory into serious question, is discussed later.

times, seen as evidence of God's particular judgment on the parents or the community.

When a baby is born, common practice is to examine the genitalia in order to make a judgment about whether a baby is male or female. The importance of this is indicated by the fact that this is the first question people will ask when a baby's birth is announced: "Is it a boy or girl?" There are births that occur, however, in which a visual inspection alone is insufficient to determine the sex of the baby. This causes a great deal of distress for parents, as one might expect.

While transgender activism is chipping away at society's views regarding the differentiation of the sexes, most people still consider sex determination important in certain contexts, such as which public restroom one can use and the kinds of clothes one may be expected to wear. Just a couple of generations ago, voting rights, property ownership, inheritance, the availability of education, and certain types of employment were strictly dictated by a person's sex.

The International Olympics Committee has felt the need to address this issue. Female athletes are inspected to make sure that there are no men masquerading as women under the assumption that a man would enjoy an unfair advantage in a women's competition. The committee's decisions, however, about how to tell who is a *real* woman keep changing and are regularly challenged. At first, modern Olympic officials relied on the athletes to sort themselves by male and female. In the 1936 Summer Olympics at Berlin, Dora Ratjen was a German athlete in the women's high jump, finishing fourth, and was later determined to be male. Dora was probably not guilty of intentional subterfuge but possessed ambiguous anatomy that resulted in the controversy.[10] After this episode, Olympic officials began to use genital exams to sort male athletes from female. In 1968, Olympic officials started to examine the sex chromosomes, but even at that level of scrutiny, a definitive determination can be elusive.

Intersex births present a unique challenge. Up to the present time, doctors would paternalistically act as the arbiters of the intersex patient's sexual identity. They would assign a sex to them. In the attempt to give their patients a somewhat normal life, including the possibility to marry,

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[10] Stefan Berg, "1936 Olympics: How Dora the Man Competed in the Woman's High Jump," *Spiegel Online*, September 15, 2009, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/1936-berlin-olympics-how-dora-the-man-competed-in-the-woman-s-high-jump-a-649104.html.

they often recommended surgery as early as possible, an approach that is largely seen now as outmoded.

Even for those with XX or XY chromosomes, there are conditions in which the sexual development of the person is atypical. One example is androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS), a condition in which the XY chromosomes indicate the person is male, but the body is incapable of accepting the testosterone it produces, resulting in female physical features. AIS can be either partial or complete. In the case of complete AIS, individuals are nearly always assigned a female identity at birth based on visual inspection. It is only when the child grows and never begins to menstruate that further medical examinations occur. The testicles, which remain undescended, are often removed, as they frequently develop cancer later on in this condition. Some intersex conditions can be diagnosed at birth. Others, like AIS, do not become apparent until later in life, often around puberty.

When babies are born with ambiguous or confusing genitals, there are several important goals for treatment. These include preserving fertility where possible, ensuring bowel and bladder function, preserving genital sensation, and cosmetic agreeability. Ensuring that these goals are met, the likelihood of the child's satisfaction with his or her sex later in life is maximized. Immediate surgery is only necessary to correct specific conditions that may be detrimental to the baby's health or endanger his or her life. *Cosmetic* reconstruction is not usually medically necessary at birth.

For a boy born with a genito-urinary deformity, the easiest surgical solution oftentimes is to remove the male-specific tissues and to construct a cosmetically satisfactory labial and vaginal configuration. If the intervention occurs early enough, the parents of these children are counseled to raise them as girls, even though they possess the male XY chromosomes and were born with typical, though malformed, male genitalia. The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) calls this the concealment-centered model of treatment.

It is natural for people to try to find structure in their world. An important clarification is whether the structures we find are inherent to the world or imposed by our desire for order. The discovery of a confusing body raises doubts not just about the particular body in question, but about all bodies. The questioned body forces us to ask what exactly it is—if anything—that makes the rest of us unquestionable. It forces the not-so-easy question of what it means to be a "normal" male or a "normal" female.

In terms of medical treatment, the ISNA acknowledges a shift that is occurring away from the concealment-centered model, exemplified by John Money, to what they call a patient-centered model. Many who advocate this latter approach want to move away from seeing the intersex condition as an abnormality but to see it instead as a natural variation, like eye color.

One does not need to accept intersexuality as normal to acknowledge that the paternalistic approach of doctors making decisions about a patient's "true" sex has caused great harm to patients and their families. The Intersex Society of North America encourages honesty, transparency, and the avoidance of reducing human beings to a disorder or medical oddity. The newer model described by the ISNA that intersex is a natural variation comparable to eye color, however, fails to take into consideration that nature itself tells us that human bodies must be either male or female to reproduce. This must be important. Attitudes toward gender identity these days might not favor the binary, but the human reproductive system does. When organs or tissues are unable to carry out their natural function, it is appropriate to view this as an abnormality. Eye color serves no known function. Not all intersex people are incapable of reproduction, but to do so definitely requires the involvement of one male person and one female person.

Dr. Paul McHugh suggests a third approach, which is to not perform irreversible genital reconstruction in non-life-threatening cases and instead allow the child to grow up as intersex until the child can determine his or her own sex.[11] The parents, at birth, may provisionally assign a sex, with the full intention of explaining to the maturing child how they are different. In most cases, the expectation is that the children will identify more strongly with one sex or the other and can make informed decisions for themselves. Waiting to perform surgery, however, can be difficult for parents. Still, McHugh's recommendation seems like the best way to minimize the suffering of intersex children in the long term.

III. Gender: Fixed or Malleable?

American missionaries in parts of Africa often notice a number of young men walking around publicly holding hands with each other. In some cultures, it is socially acceptable for heterosexual male friends to hold

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[11] Paul R. McHugh, "Surgical Sex: Why We Stopped Doing Sex Change Operations," *First Things*, November 2004, http://www.firstthings.com/article/2004/11/surgical-sex.

hands in public. In North America, two people of the same sex holding hands in public means something different than in Kenya, for instance. Conversely, in certain cultures, an unmarried man and woman holding hands in public would be considered indecent. To be sure, some aspects of male and female presentation and behavior are culturally directed. This cannot be denied. And yet there are still certain universals that seem to transcend time and place.

There are two main hypotheses about how gender identity, behavior, and preference originate: the psychological hypothesis and the sociological hypothesis. The psychological hypothesis holds that men and women are essentially different. We think and behave differently because our brains develop differently starting *in utero*. This perspective says that a person's subjective sense of being male or female is the result of the nature of his or her brain. The sociological hypothesis, in contrast, says that there are no inborn psychological differences between men and women, nor any meaningful brain differences, but that all apparent differences of behavior and self-image arise from one's upbringing. Many proponents of feminist theory deny essentialism and maintain that gender identity is fundamentally a product of environment. They hold that objectively there are only human beings; male and female are subjective categories determined by society. Phyllis Burke, for example, argues that gender and sex are *completely separate* elements of the person. She believes that gender identity is something that emerges as a result of environmental conditioning and nothing more. She writes: "I have learned that everyone falls along a gender continuum, but where they are on that continuum, which expresses the fullest range of human experience, *has nothing to do with their sex*."[12]

Clearly, gender expression is not fixed. There is a wide array of human psychological and behavioral traits, some considered male-typical and others female-typical. We all possess both sets to varying degrees. Some males are very nurturing. Some females are very assertive. The boundary lines are not crystalline. That having been said, surely it is a critical overstatement to say that one's body has *nothing* to do with one's gender.

J. Michael Bailey, a psychologist from Northwestern University, wrote a divisive but illuminating book in 2003 titled *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transexualism*, in which he pushes against mainstream academia by offering empirical evidence that concepts such as femininity and masculinity are more than mere cultural con-

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[12] Phyllis Burke, *Gender Shock: Exploding the Myths of Male and Female* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), xviii; emphasis added.

structions and do indeed refer to aspects of an individual's essential nature.[13] He is fundamentally saying that certain traits are associated with one sex or the other because of real biological and psychological indications. Bailey explains the etiology of sex and gender differences in this way:

> Just after conception, male and female fetuses are quite similar. What makes them differ are the direct and indirect effects of testosterone, which is present in much higher levels in males . . . . Many scientists believe that there are important brain differences between newborn boys and girls that contribute to later behavioral differences. Other scientists believe that at birth the brains of boys and girls are essentially identical, and that girls and boys behave differently entirely due to the socialization they receive.[14]

The standard politically correct position is that biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender role behavior are discrete categories. Bailey sees them as more interlocking and inter-related. There is a growing scientific evidence to support the position that our sexual identity, including our orientation, is largely formed prenatally.[15]

IV. The David Reimer Case

As noted above, John Money is the formerly celebrated sex expert who argued that children are psychosexually neutral at birth. His writings in the latter half of the twentieth century influenced doctors and mental health professionals around the world to view the psychological and behavioral differences between boys and girls as purely socio-cultural. To support this position, Money frequently cited his work with a particular pair of male twins, one of whom lost his penis from an error committed during his circumcision. This is the case of David Reimer. David's birth name was Bruce. He and his twin brother, Brian, were born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1965.

After the medical accident in his infancy, his distraught parents took him to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to be treated by Money. He urged the parents to allow his team to remove David's gonads and begin to surgically construct a vagina. He prescribed hormone treatments and he told them that they must unequivocally raise their son as female. He assured

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[13] J. Michael Bailey, *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism* (Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press, 2003).

[14] Bailey, *The Man Who Would Be Queen*, 44.

[15] Bailey, *The Man Who Would Be Queen*, 45–54.

them that so long as this process was begun early enough, their child, now considered a daughter, would grow up to enjoy a relatively normal life. Bruce was renamed Brenda.

Money met with the Reimer children annually throughout their childhood. In his published works, he referred to this case as a beaming success, proving that gender identity is not biologically or psychologically established at birth. On this basis, many other physicians followed the same course of action when faced with similar conundrums.

The truth, we now know, was far from the rosy picture of success that Money claimed. Brenda was miserable as a girl, acting out constantly at home and school. Teachers and school psychologists knew something was gravely out of sorts. Brenda fought the boys, like a boy. She was exceedingly unladylike in her body language. She wanted to dress as a boy. She was drawn to male typical toys and activities and preferred playing with boys. Trying to do what they thought best for their child, Mr. and Mrs. Reimer assured themselves, at Money's prompting, that Brenda was just a tomboy, and that hormone treatments and further surgeries as she got older would make all things right.

Nonetheless, Brenda Reimer's life did not begin to improve as she entered puberty. Her misery and misbehavior caused tremendous anxiety for the family. Her father drank excessively, and her mother became clinically depressed. No relief could be found until Brenda's parents, against Dr. Money's firm insistence, revealed to her at age fourteen that she was born biologically a boy. Immediately, Brenda chose a male name, David, and began to present himself to the world as a boy. Soon he received reconstructive surgery to reverse, as much as possible, the work of John Money. David began taking testosterone treatments to counter the years of estrogen he had been given and caused his body to masculinize. Eventually, David got married to a woman, got a job in a slaughterhouse with all male co-workers, and attempted to lead a normal life as a man.[16]

David Reimer's saga ended badly. In 2004, at age 38, he took his own life. This remarkable man endured tremendous adversity. His father's recurrent alcoholism and his mother's chronic depression at least partially resulted from their anguish over David's issues. The tragic death of his twin brother, the loss of his job, and separation from his wife were too much for him.

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[16] This tragic story is recounted in John Colapinto, *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2000).

Parents of children with intersex conditions often wonder how much and when they should tell their children about their condition. The Intersex Society of North America recommends telling children about their condition throughout their lives in an age-appropriate manner. The David Reimer case is one tragic example of what happens when this information is kept from a person. Experienced mental health professionals can help parents decide what information is age-appropriate and how best to share it.

In 1979, Paul McHugh, head of the psychiatry department at Johns Hopkins Hospital, put an end to sex reassignment surgery. He identified two flawed assumptions underlying Money's approach to treatment: "(1) that humans at birth are neutral as to the sexual identity, and (2) that for humans it is the postnatal, cultural, non-hormonal influences, especially those of early childhood, that most influence their ultimate sexual identity."[17] McHugh pointed to research that showed that these patients, despite the earnest efforts of their parents to raise them as girls, were almost never comfortable as females as they grew and developed. It was as if their internal subjective sense of themselves as male was hardwired in the mind, in spite of their changed anatomies and powerful social influences.

V. Gender Dysphoria

The newest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5, replaces the diagnostic term *Gender Identity Disorder* with the term *Gender Dysphoria* (GD). Presumably, this new terminology is less pejorative. The problem is relocated from being a disorder in the person's identity to being an unwanted emotional state. The transgender community wishes to divorce their concerns from the stigma of mental illness.[18]

Gender dysphoria has been diagnosed in children as young as three years of age. The diagnostic criteria for children differ somewhat from the diagnosis in adolescents and adults, but in all cases the affected individuals experience extreme discomfort because their internal sense of self as male or female does not correspond with their biological sex.

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[17] McHugh, "Surgical Sex."

[18] One assumes GD is still included in the manual so that patients may qualify for insurance-covered treatment, if so desired.

The DSM-5 states that gender dysphoria in adolescents and adults is experienced as:

A. A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least 6 months' duration, as manifested by at least two of the following:

1. A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics (or in young adolescents, the anticipated secondary sex characteristics).

2. A strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one's experienced/expressed gender (or in young adolescents, a desire to prevent the development of the anticipated secondary sex characteristics).

3. A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender.

4. A strong desire to be of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

5. A strong desire to be treated as the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

6. A strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

B. The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.[19]

In treating cases of gender dysphoria, there are two possible approaches. One must either attempt to align the body with the mind or the mind with the body. Sex reassignment surgery is the attempt to align the body with the mind. Many point out that, at present, there has been meager success at finding ways to align the mind with the body. There is no form of talk therapy or psychotropic medication that can fully assuage the intense dysphoria felt by many transgender patients. If one of the key aims of medicine is to relieve suffering, some argue that surgery should not be ruled out. Considering the high rate of suicidality in patients with

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[19] American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 452; hereafter DSM-5.

gender dysphoria, the intensity of their psychological suffering must not be taken lightly.

The great question is whether sex reassignment surgery truly alleviates the psychological suffering of GD patients. Paul McHugh believes there is evidence to suggest it does not, though his basis is anecdotal.[20] In 2004, the *Guardian* newspaper published studies that claim there is no evidence that sex reassignment surgery is successful in terms of improving the lives of transsexuals, with "many remaining severely distressed and even suicidal after the operation."[21] This is not merely based on anecdotal evidence but upon more than one hundred international studies of post-operative trans-sexuals by the University of Birmingham. The finding says that studies which report patient satisfactions are unsound because researchers lost contact with over half the participants. The doctor in charge of the University of Birmingham review says, "The bottom line is that although it's clear that some people do well with gender reassignment surgery, the available research does little to reassure about how many patients do badly and, if so, how badly."[22]

Given this data, it is questionable that the medical community would ever approve of such a poorly attested practice if politics and social ideology were not factored in. How many doctors would be willing to perform irreversible life-altering surgery with uncertainty about the well-being of more than 50% of patients? The main argument of those in support of the practice point out that there are no other effective treatments for transgender people and that many do, in fact, experience life improvement. Clearly, this *Guardian* publication is now more than ten years old, and since then other studies have addressed the high dropout rate of participants. Let if suffice to say that the claims of the psychological and social benefits of the procedure remain disputed.

When we consider that only 27% of children with gender dysphoria continue to experience these feelings into adulthood, it does appear to be possible for gender dysphoria to diminish apart from surgical intervention, at least for children. For 73% of children with gender dysphoria, the mind becomes congruent with the body over time. It may become possible then for the same congruency to be achieved through psychotherapy and medication for the others.

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[20] McHugh, "Surgical Sex."

[21] David Batty, "Sex changes are not effective, say researchers," *The Guardian*, July 30, 2004, http://www.theguardian.com/society/2004/jul/30/health.mentalhealth.

[22] Batty, "Sex changes are not effective."

Oliver O'Donovan, a prominent Christian ethicist, argues that when sex traits are unambiguous, male and female identity should be assigned according to those sex traits.[23] The argument is that sex, rather than gender as that has come to be understood, should be the determining factor. Stated in another way, the physical body ultimately provides the limits to the expression of a person's male or female identity. Many transgender activists, however, argue against the prioritization of sex over gender in determining identity. This view holds that a person's true identity (revealed by self-identification) is sometimes masked by the material body, requiring a physical alteration (sex-reassignment surgery) to conform the body to one's gender self-identification.

VI. Transgender and Transsexual

The mental health community defines transgender persons as those "who transiently or persistently identify with a gender different from their natal gender" and transsexual persons as those who seek or undergo "a social transition from male to female or female to male" up to and including hormone treatments and surgery.[24]

There are different kinds of transgender people, and not everyone seeks to transition for the same reasons. Some of them are attracted to people of their own birth sex. That is, they are homosexuals. Others are only attracted to members of the opposite sex. A transgender person may be born a heterosexual male, attracted to women, yet experience the subjective sense of himself as truly a woman inside a man's body. If he has the surgery, he goes from being a heterosexual man to being a self-identified lesbian. It gets confusing because homosexuality is a separate issue from transsexuality, though they can overlap.

Many homosexual men exhibit effeminate characteristics. If so, according to Bailey, they almost certainly displayed these tendencies very early in life. Not all gay men are effeminate, but almost all highly feminine men are gay, he claims.[25] However, the vast majority of gay men do not find effeminacy attractive in a man. Most gay men, like most women, are

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[23] "If I claim to have a 'real sex,' which may be at war with the sex of my body and is at least in a rather uncertain relationship to it, I am shrinking from the glad acceptance of myself as a physical as well as a spiritual being, and seeking self-knowledge in a kind of Gnostic withdrawal from material creation." Oliver O'Donovan, "Transsexualism and Christian Marriage," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 11, no. 1 (1983): 147.

[24] DSM-5, 451.

[25] J. Michael Bailey, *The Man Who Would Be Queen*, 62–63.

attracted to masculine men, even hyper-masculine men. There is a quandary. Many gay men have innate effeminate characteristics, which most gay men do not find appealing in a partner. What occurs for some of these men is that they develop a powerful sense that they will never attract the kind of man they want as a partner, which leads to despondency. A fantasy emerges for them of attracting a masculine partner. A very small number of them will come to the point where they feel that the only way they can attract a masculine male is by becoming a sexy female. So that is what they aspire to do.

Bailey's book upset many in the transgender community, because while he is in favor of gay rights and is by no means a social conservative, he does advocate specialized professional treatment for gender-bending children. The activists want to eradicate all notions that there is anything wrong with being transgender at any age. Bailey recognizes the tremendous hardships associated with making the full surgical transition and the adversity many post-operative transsexuals experience in society and believes it would be better to prevent the perceived need, if possible. Few post-operative transsexuals ever find a long-term partner, the very thing that many of them seek. Neither are gay men interested in them erotically, nor are most heterosexual men attracted to them. If the transsexual happens to be one of the very few individuals who could truly pass for being a natural woman and is able to catch the eye of a heterosexual man, the dilemma of whether or not, or when and how, to reveal the truth arises.

Other men who seek sex reassignment surgery are those Bailey refers to as autogynephiles. These are heterosexual men who find tremendous sexual arousal in fantasizing about being a women.

VII. The Ethics of Mutilation

Gender dysphoria has been compared to Body Integrity Identity Disorder (BIID), also known as Amputee Identity Disorder (AID). BIID is a psychological condition, not yet classified in the DSM, in which the patient feels that one or more of his limbs should not be there. They suffer from a persistent desire to amputate healthy limbs in order to match their physical bodies with their idealized image of themselves.

What these disorders own in common is that the sufferers experience intense feelings that their bodies are not right in some way, even though all of their limbs and organs are fully functional. As with transgender persons, BIID causes individuals to feel isolated, believing that no one can

understand them. They may behave as if the limb were gone and express envy of amputees. Patients with BIID have gone to extraordinary lengths to have healthy legs or arms amputated. Some attempt to remove their limbs themselves. Or they may attempt to severely injure the limb in order to cause a surgeon to amputate it. Ethicists are concerned that treating BIID by amputating the offending limb(s) violates the principal of bodily integrity. Oliver O'Donovan's comment on the unacceptablity of sex reassignment surgery on account of its rejection of the physical self would also apply here.

Robert Smith, physician of Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary in Scotland, is one who has performed elective amputations for BIID patients. He was subsequently expelled from his hospital. He states:

> It gave me considerable pause for thought and it took me a year-and-a-half of investigation before I agreed to do the first patient . . . . I became increasingly convinced that the patients had had very little success from their treatments by psychiatrists and psychologists over the years. These two patients had been fully assessed by two psychiatrists, one of whom has an interest in gender reassignment disorders, and also by a psychologist.[26]

Michael First of Columbia University was one of the earliest medical professionals to recognize and attempt to define BIID, in the hopes of making treatment available to patients who need it. Proponents of its inclusion in the DSM-5 observe that it would have made the condition easier to treat by making it more widely recognized by the medical community. Patients with BIID hope that someday elective surgical procedures may be available to help them, much like sex reassignment surgery is presently used to treat people with gender dysphoria.

Though BIID is not in the DSM-5, Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is included.[27] People with BDD experience strong feelings that their bodies are ugly or incorrect in some manner. This is akin to the feelings of those with eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa. Sometimes those with BIID

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[26] "Surgeon Defends Amputations," *BBC News*, January 31, 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/625680.stm.

[27] It may be that one reason for the reticence of the psychological community to establish BIID as a disorder in the DSM-5 is the indirect effect this could have. "To use Ian Hacking's term, psychiatric categories have a 'looping' effect: once in play, people use them to construct their identities, and this in turn reinforces their reality as medical conditions . . . . The very awareness of a disorder can contribute to its proliferation." Tim Bayne and Neil Levy, "Amputees by Choice: Body Integrity Identity Disorder and the Ethics of Amputation," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 22, no. 1 (2005): 85.

or gender dysphoria are compared to those with body dysmorphic disorder. The common thread in these conditions is a specific, usually monothematic, and persistent belief about one's body, a belief that others would objectively dispute. All are also resistant to recognized forms of talk therapy. In all cases, the people feel alienated from a limb or another aspect of their physical selves.

There exists for these persons a discrepancy between their physical bodies and how they subjectively experience them. Tim Bayne of Oxford University and Neil Levy of the University of Melbourne, in an article addressing the desire of some individuals to undergo elective amputation, employ the term "body schema" to describe the subconscious moment-by-moment awareness we all have of the structure, location, and articulation of our body and its parts.[28] Your body schema is what allows you to move yourself and your limbs without always needing to observe visually the relative locations of your parts to your surroundings. For instance, you can usually pick up your phone without looking at either your hand or the phone because your body schema gives you an awareness of where your hand is and what it is doing. When your body schema differs from your objective somatic form, you experience intense unease. More well-known is the inverse phantom limb phenomenon, when a patient senses that a limb is present that has been removed. Here also the subjective body schema differs from the body's actual material structure.[29]

Bayne and Levy offer three arguments in favor of allowing elective amputations that merit our careful consideration because similar arguments are made in defense of sex reassignment surgery. The first argument is harm minimization. This is the lesser of evils argument. It posits that regardless of legality or mainstream acceptance, a certain number of people will still seek amputation, even to the point of taking the matter into their own hands. Cases do exist of patients damaging themselves with a shotgun, a chainsaw, or a wood chipper. Others turned to unscrupulous

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[28] Bayne and Levy, "Amputees by Choice," 76.

[29] Today there is much talk of body image. Body image is similar to body schema but differs in being the *conscious* impression of the general shape and structure of one's body. People who undergo cosmetic surgery do so because their body does not match some idealized image they have of themselves. What, then, is the qualitative difference between rhinoplasty and sex reassignment surgery or elective limb amputation? I assume most people would indeed have a visceral sense that they are qualitatively different. Perhaps instead of accepting sex reassignment surgery or elective limb amputation as psychotherapeutically beneficial body modifications, we should reconsider the wide acceptance of cosmetic surgery in our society, including, no doubt, among Christians.

black-market physicians to acquire the desired procedures. Given that some individuals will go to such lengths, it can be argued that granting their requests is a way to lessen the degree of harm done.

Their second argument is about personal autonomy. It is a fundamental principle of bioethics that the treatment goals of competent people who possess decision-making capacity should be respected. The principle of personal autonomy is taken so seriously that doctors will even refrain from relatively simple life-saving treatments, such as blood transfusions, if the patient's religion forbids it (i.e., Jehovah's Witnesses). The doctor's religious opinion on the matter is seen as irrelevant. The requirement of informed consent is an inviolable principle in the medical arts. Bayne and Levy propose that the principle of autonomy should guide doctors whose patients request a limb amputation in order to relieve their psychological distress. Such an expansive view of autonomy, however, could lead to unanticipated outcomes that would be even more detrimental to patient well-being and human flourishing.

Bioethicist Arthur Caplan maintains that the request to remove a healthy limb demonstrates that the patient is not thinking rationally and therefore lacks capacity to make this medical decision.[30] The desire to remove a healthy body part may, in fact, reflect an as yet unclassified mental illness, but again, once we stand on this claim, further undesirable outcomes are likely. Ignoring the patient's autonomy because he makes medical choices for himself that one finds disagreeable is a risky precedent. It is not too much of a stretch, for instance, for a doctor with no religious beliefs to respond the same way towards adult Jehovah's Witnesses. To refuse a simple, low-risk and life-saving procedure based on unprovable religious beliefs may be judged a sign of mental incapacity. In Caplan's mind, the BIID patient is evidently delusional. In a time when religious liberties are increasingly threatened, it is best to be cautious before attaching the word delusional to someone who holds a persistent belief that is in contrast to one's own. The word "delusional" has a very specific meaning in the DSM and BIID sufferers do not generally exhibit the determinative symptoms.

Even if these patients are not delusional and can be reckoned to be autonomous and to possess decisional capacity, the principle of autonomy does not obligate physicians to render services if they finds them to be morally objectionable and/or medically futile to do so. Bayne and Levy are correct that these discussions certainly put our notions of autonomy and

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[30] Bayne and Levy, "Amputees by Choice," 80.

competency to the test. One of the dangers with prioritizing autonomy is that the practice of medicine will move from healing to providing services for cash, a consumerization of medicine that is already occurring.

The therapeutic argument is the strongest of the three from Bayne and Levy. There are four premises underneath this argument:

(i) [The patients] endure serious suffering as a result of their condition;

(ii) amputation will—or is likely to—secure relief from this suffering;

(iii) this relief cannot be secured by less drastic means;

(iv) securing relief from this suffering is worth the cost of amputation.[31]

The value of the therapeutic argument depends on whether these four premises can be verified. The trouble is the subjectivity of premises (ii) and (iv).

Research data clearly supports the first premise. BIID patients do experience grave psychological unease. In a study cited by Bayne and Levy, 44% of the subjects reported that their condition causes disruption with social functioning and occupational functioning. One is left to wonder, though, whether being an amputee might not cause even more disruptions.

The second premise is more controverted. Even though distinguished psychologists and psychiatrists believe that psychotherapy is the appropriate treatment plan, there is, in fact, a paucity of empirical data about the effects of psychotherapy on those who seek amputations. What little data that does exist suggest it is ineffective. The sample sizes are just too small for conclusions to be drawn from it. Even if psychotherapy is unable to provide relief, that does not mean that surgery would. Here is a catch-22: in order to study the therapeutic effect of elective amputations, these operations must occur. But without this very data, it is unlikely they will be approved any time soon. As with the second premise, the third premise has not been subjected to a controlled study. The fourth premise is purely subjective.

Bayne and Levy believe these surgeries should be permitted in order to alleviate the suffering of the patients. Yet from a strictly therapeutic perspective, there remain too many unknowns to make a sufficient moral

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[31] Bayne and Levy, "Amputees by Choice," 82.

claim that elective amputations should be allowed. The strongest claim Bayne and Levy can make is that "the costs might be offset by the benefits of amputation in some cases and not in others."[32] No one has even attempted to calculate the costs, not just to the individual, but to the patient's loved ones and society as a whole. Homes will need to be remodeled and medical appliances and prostheses utilized. Workplace productivity may be affected. No one can say what other material and moral costs will be incurred from becoming the type of society that permits elective limb amputations. Given the impairment and irreversibility of amputating a limb, it is difficult to see how the therapeutic case can succeed.

Bayne and Levy suggest that simple repugnance, or the "Yuck Factor" of Arthur Caplan and Leon Kass, is behind most people's general disapproval of elective amputations.[33] They might be correct but, from a natural law perspective, this should not be quickly dismissed. Even when a limb is severely injured and *must* be removed to save the person's life, an amputation is considered tragic. The inherent goodness of the body's form and function is deeply rooted in our consciences.

This does not mean, on the other hand, that every action generally considered repugnant is ethically problematic. The disgust a person feels toward something may be as much a cultural or social bias as an indication of transgressing natural law. Desegregated lunch counters and interracial marriage have both, it is sad to say, generated visceral aversion in the past, but blessedly few today would seek a return to segregation.

In his article on the ethics of mutilation, Robert Song observes in regard to BIID that elective amputations could "represent a further step in the direction of the instrumentalisation and consumerization of the body," and he asks the question, "once we accept the principle that we may provide surgical solutions to emotional distress, what other practices might we also find ourselves legitimating?"[34] If the patients see themselves as consumers and physicians as mere service providers, the cultural pressure will build in ways we do not intend and cannot anticipate.

An expansionist philosophy of personal autonomy, instead of respect for bodily integrity, is, for many, the guiding ethical compass. If the body

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[32] Bayne and Levy, "Amputees by Choice," 83.

[33] Bayne and Levy, "Amputees by Choice," 84.

[34] Robert Song, "Body Integrity Identity Disorder and the Ethics of Mutilation," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 25, no. 4 (2012): 500.

is not seen as meaningfully integral to the self, there can be no fundamental goodness of the body beyond that which we decide to award it, Song notes.[35]

Christian doctrine affirms the essential goodness of the body as part of God's created order, maintaining a certain dignity that was not obliterated by the fall. "The body is meant . . . for the Lord and the Lord for the body (1 Cor 6:13)," St. Paul writes. In what sense is the Lord meant for the body, if not the everlasting incarnation of the Divine Logos. In light of this, our attitude toward altering or rearranging the body, for no objective medical reason, should remain unacceptable to the church. To treat the human body as merely raw material out of which we may construct for ourselves any product of will and desire diminishes a sense of its intrinsic value. Oliver O'Donovan has stated, "The good is found in and through creation and its fulfillment, not in escape from or denial of it."[36] A natural law argument against permitting elective amputations is still fairly strong. The case must be established that the limbs in question are, in fact, not healthy in some actual sense, beyond the patient's subjective report.

Interestingly, Robert Song points our attention to the *Summa Theologicæ* by Thomas Aquinas. Here Aquinas's Principle of Totality is instructive. He stresses that the form of our bodies which we receive from God must not be violated except under quite specific circumstances. When Aquinas examines the ethics of mutilation, he has in mind three different situations: amputation as a civil punishment, the ascetic practice of making oneself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven, and surgical removal of an infirm body part to save the person's life.[37]

In the case of civil punishment, Aquinas compares the social body to the individual human body. As a gangrenous toe may be removed to save the foot, so a member of society may be excised (executed) to benefit the community. If the greater excision, depriving a man of his life, is allowed, so a lesser excision, punitive amputation, may be administered by the public authority for a lesser crime to deter further wrongdoing. It is never lawful for a private individual to exact this penalty. In the second case, guided by the conviction that the welfare of the soul is more important than the welfare of the body, there were some ancient Christians who sought to be castrated as a means of guarding their chastity. This practice is condemned in the canons of the Council of Nicea, at least for the clergy

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[35] Song, "Body Integrity Identity Disorder," 494.

[36] See quotation in Song, "Body Integrity Identity Disorder," 494.

[37] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicæ* II-II, 65, 1.

(Canon 1). Aquinas firmly rejects self-mutilation for ascetic reasons. Sin is not constrained by maiming oneself, for sin is not rooted in the body as such but in the inner person. He writes: "It is always possible to further one's spiritual welfare otherwise than by cutting off a member, because sin is always subject to the will: and consequently in no case is it allowable to maim oneself, even to avoid any sin whatever."[38] Aquinas, Chrysostom and the canons of the Council of Nicaea all instruct us that castration is not an approved means of guarding chastity. In the third instance, Aquinas acknowledges that it may become necessary to surgically remove a part to preserve the life of the whole.[39] Surgical removal of a limb, "if it be done with the consent" of the person (autonomy), is permitted in these situations. Song believes that, "the general principle of totality is that mutilation of the body for one's own good is permitted 'when it is proportionately necessary or useful for the good of the whole (i.e., the person) . . . .'"[40] The Latin text of Aquinas says that for the good of the whole, a part may be cut off.[41] Does whole refer to the body alone, or to the whole person? Is mutilation only permissible in response to clearly physical maladies? Song suggests that Aquinas's meant that an amputation may be done if it is for the good of the whole *person.* In fact, the Latin should be understood to refer to the whole *body* because that is explicitly the case in every other instance in the surrounding context. It is not prudent to strain an application of Aquinas beyond cases he might have anticipated, which Song himself acknowledges.

Pope Pius XII, who sat from 1939 to 1958, taught that mutilations could be permitted in order to avoid serious and lasting damage. The Roman Catholic Church once opposed organ transplantation based upon the Thomist Principle of Totality. To remove a healthy kidney from a live man to donate to his son was originally seen as unlawfully mutilating a healthy body. The Church's ethical views on this topic, however, have evolved. It was eventually determined that organ donation, as long as it does not endanger the life of the donor, includes informed consent, and is motivated by altruism does not violate the spirit of the law. If the church evolved in its understanding on this bioethical topic, might such development occur also with regard to elective limb amputations or sex reassignment?

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[38] Aquinas, *Summa Theologicæ,* II-II, 65, 1.

[39] Aquinas, *Summa Theologicæ,* II-II, 65, 1.

[40] Song, "Body Integrity Identity Disorder," 494.

[41] Aquinas, *Summa Theologicæ,* II-II, 65, 1.

Paul McHugh and others state that we should not resort to surgical answers for psychological questions. Robert Song disagrees. Song believes that the lobotomy is an example of a surgical solution to mental suffering that was fairly widely used in the early twentieth century, even in Roman Catholic institutions, until the arrival of modern psychotropic drugs. His point is that mid-twentieth century Roman Catholic moral theology addresses and does approve of a surgical solution for a psychological problem.[42] The lobotomy, like sex reassignment surgery and limb amputation, involves major and irreversible effects for the patient. Where the comparison struggles is that many of the cases where lobotomies were performed involved maladies considerably more debilitating than BIID or GD. Robert Song argues: "On the face of it, if the objection to surgery in the case of BIID [much the same as for transsexualism] is that it uses a surgical solution to address a psychiatric need, then the same objection ought to obtain in the case of lobotomies that were endorsed for use in Catholic hospitals." Today, it borders on absurdity to argue for the morality of a practice by comparing it to getting a lobotomy. Two wrongs do not make a right. His point, however, is simply that the church has viewed surgical remedies for mental distress as morally acceptable in the past.

For Robert Song, the elective amputation of a healthy limb—and implicitly sex reassignment surgery—does not necessarily imply a docetic denial of the goodness of the body.[43] If the account of the mismatched mind and body is granted, then surgical interventions appear more reasonable. For Song and others, there evidently is something wrong with the health of the body when the internal schema conflicts with the objective form. How this drastic prioritization of the mind over the body is not docetic is difficult to fathom.

VIII. How Shall the Church Respond?

We now know that there are a number of complex and interrelated medical and psychological conditions that cause pain and confusion regarding sex and gender identity. It is important for us to discuss these matters unflinchingly as they touch upon deep elemental questions about human nature. Few pastors are trained to address either transgender advocacy or help those with gender dysphoria. Many theologically liberal churches are rallying around the transgender movement in the name of social justice. Politically motivated activists create more gender confusion

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[42] Song, "Body Integrity Identity Disorder," 498.

[43] Song, "Body Integrity Identity Disorder," 495.

by counseling the afflicted to affirm themselves rather than exercise self-discipline or seek treatment. Conservative churches hold that at creation, God established the male/female binary as the norm for humanity but show, perhaps, little understanding for those individuals who are genuinely confused about where they fit into the traditional taxonomy.

A chief aim of feminist and gay philosophers and transgender activists is to subvert and destabilize the natural categorization of human beings into male and female. Increasing portrayals, not only of same-sex couples, but now of transgender people, will gradually normalize such things in the minds of American society. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once said, our society is "defining deviancy down." The church is called by Christ to bear witness to the truth and to suffer inconvenience, torture, imprisonment, or even death rather than depart from it. Yet we must confess God's truth always with gentleness and respect.

In terms of pastoral care, it is tempting but misguided to rely upon compassion as the sole criterion of discernment. Willful disregard for the structures of our bodies must be gently reproved when necessary. Pastors have a responsibility to become well-informed about a wide range of issues and must spend lengthy hours of time listening empathetically to their suffering sheep. They must resist the urge to voice the correct answers and consider the matter sufficiently addressed in every case.

Confession and absolution are powerful means of communicating the forgiveness of God through Christ, but we must recognize that not every spiritual malady can be treated by absolution alone. Guilt before God is not our only trouble. Many people with sexual identity confusion suffer under a tremendous burden of shame, the sense of being unclean or unacceptable. This may not always be tied directly to specific transgressions of God's law on their part. Frequently, they were victims of sexual and other abuse. The pastor does well to offer the body and blood of Jesus to people in these cases, assuming they have been properly prepared to receive the Sacrament. The cleansing nature of Christ's blood can, at such times, provide much healing and comfort. Confession and Absolution and the reception of Christ's body and blood are always beneficial to sinners in mind, body, and Spirit.

The Word of God is, of course, one of the chief resources to which the pastor will turn in his care of souls. Its use not only for reproof and correction but for comfort and hope goes without saying. The pastor will draw from the wide array of biblical themes, highlighting especially those that can assist those troubled by their condition. For example, the *Christus*

Victor understanding of the atonement can provide tremendous consolation for those who battle the flesh, the world, and the devil. Christ as conqueror, as a theme for preaching and pastoral counseling, assures the battle weary of the Stronger One's victory.

Another dimension where the word of God can play a significant role is in the realm of a spoken blessing. As John Kleinig has pointed out, too little attention has been given to the pastoral practice of blessing God's people, both in the Divine Service and in pastoral care:

> When God blesses people, He does not just approve of them and affirm what is good in them . . . . rather, through Jesus Christ, God actually equips them with His good gifts, so that they can do His will; by blessing them He produces what is pleasing in His sight (Hebrews 13:21). His blessing empowers them to do what pleases Him."[44]

The pastoral blessing is more than just well wishing. It is a performative word. God's Word does what it says. When the Christian with gender dysphoria is broken and exhausted from trying to navigate the complicated waters of his condition, he might need something other than advice or instruction from his pastor. The blessing, in this context, is not an approval of sex-reassignment surgery nor does it trivialize the genuine anguish of the person. It is an operation where God is present to comfort and strengthen. "The Lord be with you" is more than the religious version of "Good luck with that." God is with us in his promises, in bread and wine, and in the compassionate embrace of the church. Thus, actual words from the Holy Scriptures adapted into a blessing that is spoken to the individual become a powerful means of comfort and strength.[45]

Gender dysphoria is not a matter of possessing insufficient theological information. Gender dysphoria is an enormous burden that may have little remedy this side of our final glorification. It is a burden that some must carry as a general result of the fall. We remember that Christ's love for the heavily burdened is paramount and that the results of the fall will be undone on the Last Day.

The preaching of Jesus and the apostles was accompanied by miraculous signs, usually of healing. The healing aspect of the pastoral office

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[44] John Kleinig, "Pastoring by Blessing," *Lutheran Theological Quarterly*, 43, no. 1 (2009), 33.

[45] Consider, for example, how the words of Psalm 33:7 might be crafted into a blessing: "The Lord be with you. Though we are filled with burning with no soundness in our flesh, God has not hid himself from you. He knows your sufferings and forgives you. May he who unites his body to yours continue to bless you and keep you."

has been sorely neglected in LCMS circles. What a delight to see that *Lutheran Service Book* resources include the apostolic practice of anointing the sick.[46] We must see ourselves as healers as well as teachers. Medical professionals, in general, are our allies. Teaching itself is salutary. The gospel works renewal in human beings in every capacity. As for miracles, if Baptism, Absolution, and the Eucharist are not signs of God's healing and re-creating presence, nothing is.

We must become better prepared to offer meaningful guidance, as well, to post-operative transsexuals who may, for instance, regret poor past decisions. It may be difficult for them to feel welcome in our churches. For those with unwanted same-sex attraction, a life of celibacy may be required. These are hard situations that call for a loving and well-prepared clergy.

A person who identifies with and desires to become the opposite sex has a disordered sinful desire. All children of Adam have disordered sinful desires but not all disordered sinful desires are exactly the same in terms of our lived existence. Some sins have a deeper grab on us than others. Some are habits. Others are embedded more deeply. Pastoral care toward all sinful brokenness is not one-sized-fits-all. Helping an alcoholic overcome his temptations might require a different approach than helping a person who struggles with envy or gossip. Baptism, Absolution, preaching, and the Eucharist are effectual to heal us, both in time and for eternity. But Thomas Hopko is exactly right that the techniques of psychologists and psychiatrists should be employed where appropriate as well.[47]

Paul McHugh gets to the heart of things when he writes, "Without any fixed position on what is given in human nature, any manipulation of it can be defended as legitimate."[48] Like it or not, this is where we live and work in our present context: under the assumptions of the plasticity of man. Cultural forces are critiquing the human body, as designed, as suboptimal and ultimately perfectible by us. St. Paul may have found it unthinkable that a person should hate his own body, but we know there are indeed such persons. Antipathy toward the human body emerges in various forms. There are those who pine for an unattainable idealized body

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[46] *Lutheran Service Book: Pastoral Care Companion* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 31.

[47] Thomas Hopko, *Christian Faith and Same-Sex Attraction* (Ben Lomond, CA: Conciliar Press, 2006), 51. Certainly, this takes for granted that the professionals to whom one might refer a parishioner are not antagonistic to the positions of the church.

[48] McHugh, "Surgical Sex."

and others who think that the future of mankind lies in a physical merger of our bodies with technology in order to attain a type of immortality.[49]

Theologians and pastors care about these topics because issues related to sex and gender touch upon deep elemental questions about human nature. Intersex conditions, gender dysphoria, and transsexualism are evidence that the natural world, as it exists today, does not display a clean binary split of humanity that neatly includes every person. Regrettably, religious communities are not always well informed about the perplexities of human life in a fallen world. The weakness of a common approach is that it fails to venture meaningfully beyond the Scriptures on a topic that is not merely spiritual. Would a statement on anorexia be adequate that attends to vanity while failing to deal with the psychiatric aspect of the condition? Would we address morbid obesity by condemning gluttony without discussing genetics or gastric bypass surgery? Let us make a greater effort to understand the complexity of our problems as they manifest in body, mind, and Spirit. This may require reaching out to disciplines other than theology. Christians must not approach what are at least partially medical issues with the same methodology as if it were simply discussing moral behaviors. More serious and extensive studies of the theological meaning of human embodiment, illness, disability, sex, the mind/body/Spirit relationship, and mental illness are needed.

As referenced previously, Bailey explains that there are several different types of transgender person. Some indeed are erotically motivated, so morality is involved. But it is too undemanding for the Church to analogize gender dysphoria to lust or another sinful desire. The truth is much more puzzling. We would not say that a soldier who had his leg removed in a battlefield hospital has sinful desire because he has the sense that he still possesses a leg that is gone. We should not say or imply that people who have the sense of incongruity between their mind and body are necessarily sinning. They are fallen sinners, yes, but is their confusion itself a sin or the result of their inherited sinful condition? It would indeed be a transgression of natural law and Aquinas's Principle of Totality to undergo the so-called sex reassignment surgery. Alternative medical and psychological treatments for GD should continue to be sought.

Our sex/gender is so constitutive to our identity that we continue as male and female in the resurrection. St. Augustine says in *The City of God* that we will recognize one another as male and female in the eschaton but

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[49] Consider Raymond Kurzweil and the Transhumanist movement.

without lust. [50] When asked about marriage in heaven, Jesus teaches that human marriage will no longer exist but says nothing about losing our sex identity, which as Augustine points out, would have been the logical time to mention it, if this were the case.

Since it is a fact that there are people born with ambiguous sex traits, and since we will exist as true men and women at the resurrection, that means every person has a "true sex," even when we are unable to ascertain it in our fallenness. God knows. This must, however, mean that gender identity does not arise exclusively from the reproductive organs or even the chromosomes. If the genitals or sex features were the root of one's sex/gender identity, then those who possess confusing or ambiguous bodies truly do not possess either a male or female identity. The claim that human beings are essentially male or female, even in spite of dubious outward evidence or mental confusion, means that the duality of the sexes is not merely a social convention nor just a characteristic of phenotype. The male/female dichotomy is normative by virtue of God's intention in creation. Both the reality and the significance of the dichotomy persist in the fallen world, however obscured the evidence may be.

The heart of it all is coming to terms with the personal meaning of the human body. Corrupted though it is, the embodied human person is a multi-dimensional visible representation of God in creation and is in the process of becoming something new, by merit of the incarnation of God's Word and his death and resurrection, and our personal incorporation into his corpus by means of Baptism and through the eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood. Satan attacks sexuality with such intensity because it is the conjugal union of man and woman, which is God's most powerful image in the world. Unable to strike God himself, the enemy strikes God's image!

The Platonizing tendencies of our culture must be resisted and the goodness of the objective body confirmed. It is essential to understand that psychological conditions are corporeal afflictions to the extent that our thoughts, will, desires, and memories are grounded in the material substance of the brain. The mind/soul is more than the brain but is not naturally dissociated from the brain. The hypothesis that gender dysphoria is an intersex condition of the mind/brain is consistent with the evidence. It also helps explain the strong resistance GD has to all forms of psychotherapy and all current drug therapies. If this hypothesis is granted, one cannot argue that maleness and femaleness are determined exclusively by the

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[50] Augustine, *City of God*, XXII, chap. 17.

genitals, gonads, secondary sex traits, or even chromosomes. Because our confession is that humanity is binary, people born with atypical bodies still presumably, we would say, possess a gender in some sense, confused though it is. The brain is involved. Though changing exterior character-istics is easier than changing the brain, this yet does not make the sex-change surgery acceptable. At present, we must conclude that there is simply no medical solution to GD. Grasping at straws is not an answer.

There will not be marriage in the resurrection, but there will still be men and women. And since our resurrection bodies will be absent every disease and disorder, we can assume intersex people will be raised as men and women, even if, due to the fall, their sex was questioned during their earthly life. Transgender people will finally know a sense of congruity between their objective bodies and their mental experiences of their sex. Human life will only know its fullest expression after the resurrection when all our infirmities of our body, mind, and Spirit will be extinguished forever. In the meantime, our churches are called to be sanctuaries of grace and mercy to all.

God Our Mother?
Biblical and Philosophical Considerations
in Feminist God Language

Mark P. Surburg

At the Sandy Hook interfaith prayer vigil, a Lutheran pastor prayed: "Lord God we call you by many names: Elohim Adonai, Great Spirit, Higher Power, Divine One. But however we address you, you are always Father and Mother to us all."[1] Naturally, this event received a great deal of attention because of issues it raised related to American civic religion and religious syncretism. What should also attract our attention is the manner in which this prayer summarizes all that has been said previously about God/the Divine Power in the words, "you are always Father and Mother to us all." The prayer makes clear that whatever we may say about God, God is both Father and Mother. The statement is remarkable, because in the present setting of our culture it is so *unremarkable*. It illustrates how language like this has become commonplace among many who claim to bear the name Christian.

Although Jesus Christ taught his followers to address God as "Father" in the Lord's Prayer, during the last forty years, feminism has vigorously raised the charge that this term can no longer effectively serve Christians as the exclusive reference to the first person of the Trinity. Instead, it has maintained that feminine names and terms of reference also need to be used. In particular, "Mother" has become a frequent term used in place of or alongside "Father."

I. The Feminist Challenge

In the early 1970s, Mary Daly made the accusation that has served as the radical leading edge of the feminist movement: "If God is male, then male is God."[2] In this rather sensational statement she raised the charge

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[1] The pastor is not part of the fellowship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Prayer transcribed from "Connecticut Elementary School Shooting: Memorial Service," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ow1OlcDzCE.

[2] Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*: *Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 21; Daly goes on to speak of the need for "castrating God."

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that if God is thought of as male and described in masculine language, then on earth the male ends up dominating women.

Orthodox Christianity easily parried this charge, since it has never said that God is male.[3] For example, Gregory of Nyssa wrote, "The distinction of male and female does not exist in the Divine and blessed nature."[4] However, Daly's statement has set the general direction for more reformist feminists.[5] These writers have questioned whether in the current social context Christian trinitarian theology can continue to use "Father" and "Son."[6]

Reformist feminists raise two objections to the use of "Father." First, they argue that the Scriptures are the product of a patriarchal and male-dominated society. Second, they have maintained that since language about God is metaphorical, other metaphors for God are both possible and preferable.

In the first objection, patriarchy is defined as "a system of social relations in which the male is normative and in which the male-female relationship is one of domination and subordination."[7] The language for God (and two-thirds of trinitarian language) is masculine because men in a male dominated society wrote the Bible.[8] It thus reflects more about an

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[3] In this article "orthodox" will refer to creedal Christianity in the sense of "right teaching" rather than the Eastern branch of Christianity.

[4] Gregory of Nyssa, "On the Making of Man," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 2nd ser., 14 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 5:412. While this is true, we must be aware that on the more popular level those wishing to be orthodox *have* made such statements.

[5] According to Sallie McFague feminism falls into two camps: revolutionary and reformist. Revolutionary feminists have no desire to remain within Christianity. Reformists wish to reshape the tradition and make it more amenable to women and their experiences. Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 152.

[6] For an extended examination of feminist objections, see Hannah Bacon, *What's Right with the Trinity?: Conversations in Feminist Theology* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 15–52.

[7] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, "The Baptismal Formula, Feminist Objections, and Trinitarian Theology," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26, no. 2 (1989): 236.

[8] "The Bible is not just interpreted from a male perspective, as some feminists argued. Rather, it is manmade because it is written by men and is the expression of a patriarchal culture." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983), 13. It is interesting to note that when feminists locate the problem in biblical culture, they also feel constrained to add caveats so as not to appear anti-Semitic. As Fiorenza judges, "To rediscover 'Jesus, the feminist,' over and against these

ancient culture than about God. Modern thought, as the argument goes, has moved beyond this and now realizes that such language hinders women in their religious experience.[9]

Orthodox writers have delivered a vigorous critique of this position on two fronts. In the first place they have observed that it is a non sequitur to link masculine God language as the obvious outgrowth of patriarchal culture.[10] "Patriarchal" cultures do not *necessarily* use a massive preponderance of masculine language when talking about the Deity. In fact, most decidedly "patriarchal" cultures had numerous feminine references and deities.[11]

Jewish roots of the early Christian movement can only lead to a further deepening of anti-Judaism . . . . The praxis and vision of Jesus and his movement is best understood as an inner-Jewish renewal movement that presented an *alternative* option to the dominant patriarchal structure rather than an oppositional formation rejecting the values and praxis of Judaism" (107; emphasis original).

[9] Proctor-Smith advocates a move toward "emancipatory language": "Nonsexist language seeks to avoid gender-specific terms. Inclusive language seeks to balance gender references. Emancipatory language seeks to transform language use and to challenge stereotypical gender references"; cited in Susan Brooks Thistlewaite, "On the Trinity," *Interpretation* 45, no. 2 (1991): 168.

[10] Mollenkott illustrates such an approach when she writes, "My own sense is that it is perfectly natural for the Bible to contain a vast predominance of masculine God-language, springing as it does from a deeply patriarchal culture." Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 110.

[11] Kimel points out that "the divine masculinity of the Judaeo-Christian God must not be rejected as patriarchal projection. Israel was perhaps the one culture during biblical times that did not incorporate the feminine principle into the deity. The Sumerians, the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans—all had pantheons of male and female deities, yet each were at least as patriarchal and sexist as Israel. Patriarchy is no bar to interpreting deity in feminine terms." Alvin F. Kimel, "The Holy Trinity Meets Ashtoreth: A Critique of the Episcopal 'Inclusive' Liturgies," *Anglican Theological Review* 71, no. 1 (1989): 40. The Mother goddess was a significant feature of paganism in the Near Eastern and Greco-Roman worlds. John Ferguson comments: "The Mother's names were innumerable. In Sumer she was Inanna, among the Akkadians Ishtar, in Ugarit Anat, in Syria Atargatis. At Ephesus she was Artemis-Diana, in Priene Baubo, in Cyprus Aprhodite, in Crete Rhea or Dictynna, at Eleusis Demeter, in Sparta Orthia, in Thrace Bendis, in Egypt Isis or Hathor, at Pessinus Cybele." John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 16; see his discussion of the Great Mother, 13–31. In 205 BC, the Romans determined that the Phrygian Cybele should be brought to Rome and become a Roman god. The festival for Cybele, the Megalensia, became part of the official religious calendar that was observed in all Roman colonies throughout the empire. See Robert Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 28–74.

This leads to a second and even more insightful observation about the Scriptures' theological perspective and "God language." Rather than being typical in the absence of feminine God language, the Bible is in fact *atypical*. As noted feminist Elaine Pagels observes: "Indeed, the absence of feminine symbolism of God marks Judaism, Christianity and Islam in striking contrast to the world's other religious traditions, whether in Egypt, Babylonia, Greece and Rome or Africa, Polynesia, India and North America."[12] The biblical writers did not unknowingly avoid feminine language due to their "patriarchalism." Their references to God as Father "were not culturally imposed but were made in awareness of the alternatives, an awareness fuller and more immediate than our own."[13] These writers acted out of a fundamentally theological presupposition.

The biblical writers sought to avoid a theology that identified the Creator with the creation "and that identification almost automatically comes about when feminine language for God is used."[14] Fallen man continues to want to "be like God" (Gen 3:5) and seeks to avoid a transcendent Creator located over him. Cultures have repeatedly sought to bridge this gap by identifying God with the world. They have used feminine language for God, precisely because when God "is portrayed in feminine language, the figures of carrying in the womb, of giving birth, and of suckling immediately come into play."[15]

God and the world become linked through birth, and creation becomes an outgrowth of God. As mythology expert Joseph Campbell observes: "When you have a Goddess as the creator, it's her own body that is the universe. She is identical with the universe."[16] This tendency is readily

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[12] Elaine H. Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, ed. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1979), 107.

[13] Roland M. Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language: Problems and Principles," in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 22.

[14] Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods': A Discussion of Female Language for God," in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 12. This piece is a later revised version of Achtemeier's "Female Language for God: Should the Church Adopt It?" in *The Hermeneutical Quest: Essays in Honor of James Luther Mays on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Donald G. Miller (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications), 97–114.

[15] Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods'," 9.

[16] Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 167.

seen in the modern appellation "Mother Earth" that is often associated with environmental concerns such as Earth Day. We are told, "Love your Mother."

Biblical theology will have no part of this since "Yahweh is transcendent Creator, the absolute other, differentiated completely from his creation. He is neither the universe nor the self but the Lord and ruler of both."[17] The masculine biblical language operates on a de-sexualized model. It focuses on the God who gives (just as the male in the procreative act),[18] while avoiding the feminine language that leads to a fusing of Creator and creation.[19] The presence of male *and* absence of female language leaves the emphasis on God as creator, while eliminating the "biological father God" of paganism and making "non-idolatrous, metaphorical 'father language' about God possible."[20] Because it removes sexuality from the equation (God has no consort or feminine other), it both avoids fallen man's desire to fuse Creator and creation *and* confesses that God alone creates outside of himself. This fact has important theological implications: "Because God is not identical with the things which he has made, he is free to love the world by virtue of his own good will. That God creates the world is, therefore, the basis for what the Scriptures call 'grace' and 'love,' the sheer goodness which will to give favor and life apart from any 'merit or worthiness' in the recipient."[21]

Reformist feminism's second objection revolves around language and its ability to communicate a transcendent Deity. This approach focuses on

[17] Kimel, "The Holy Trinity Meets Ashtoreth," 41.

[18] James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean?: Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 180–181.

[19] Achtemeier notes, "But we can never rightly understand ourselves and our place in the universe, the Bible tells us, until we realize that we are not gods and goddesses. Rather we are creatures, wondrously and lovingly made by a sovereign Creator: 'It is he who made us, and not we ourselves' (Ps 100:3). The Bible will use no language which undermines that confession. It therefore eschews all feminine language for God that might open the door to such error, and it is rigorous in its opposition to every other religion and cultic practice that identifies creation and creator." Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods'," 9.

[20] Janet Martin Soskice, "Can a Feminist Call God 'Father'?" in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 89.

[21] *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (1998), 22–23. This report is a very helpful resource in considering these issues. The name of the commission is often abbreviated CTCR.

the incomprehensibility and inadequacy of human language in talking about God. Soskice summarizes this argument: "In any religion where God is conceived of as radically transcendent, it is arguable that all the language used of God will be metaphorical or at least figurative. This means that a change in preferred metaphor or notation is always a theoretical possibility."[22]

Feminists argue that since all language about God is metaphorical, it is all equally adequate *and* equally inadequate. We can therefore alter the metaphors used, they argue, as the need arises. In this reformist understanding, "Father," "Son," and even "Spirit" are metaphors that have been used in the past. However, they are *only* metaphors with their own unique baggage. As metaphors they can just as easily be replaced by other metaphors for the trinitarian God that are not products of patriarchalism and that function better in modern society, such as Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier; God, Word, Spirit; Creator, Christ, Holy Spirit; Parent, Child, Transformer; and Abba, Servant, Paraclete.[23]

II. Philosophical Discussions about Metaphor and God Language: McFague and Soskice

The discussion in this objection has focused upon the nature of metaphor and how it functions. During the last three decades, Sallie McFague and Janet Martin Soskice have been two of the leading figures in the debate about metaphor and feminist religious God language. McFague's work presents one of the most highly developed accounts of metaphor from the perspective of reformist feminism and displays the features that are common in this approach. Soskice, on the other hand, has developed the most thoroughgoing philosophical case for critical theological realism, which maintains the intellectual legitimacy of orthodox Christian language about God. A brief examination of their work will demonstrate the important contours of this debate.

The point of entry for this discussion is the relationship between models and metaphors. McFague conflates the two when she describes a

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[22] Soskice, "Can a Feminist Call God 'Father'?" 82.

[23] Wainwright observes: "It is a common move in feminist theology to invoke the category of metaphor and then, on the too easy assumption that 'all our language about God is metaphorical,' go on to say that 'Father' may be replaced or complemented by 'Mother,' 'Friend,' and so on." Geoffrey Wainwright, "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Where the Church Stands or Falls," *Interpretation* 45, no. 2 (1991): 119.

model "as a dominant metaphor, a metaphor with staying power."[24] Soskice correctly rejects such conflation.[25] She defines metaphor as "that figure of speech whereby *we speak* of one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another."[26] On the other hand, a model is when "an object or state of affairs . . . *is viewed* in terms of some object or state of affairs."[27] Therefore, though closely related, the two differ in that metaphor is a *linguistic* phenomenon.[28]

In considering how metaphor operates, McFague and Soskice begin with I.A. Richard's statement that "when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is the resultant of their interaction."[29] However, from here the two go in different directions. McFague adopts Max Black's grid/screen understanding of metaphor.[30] More significantly, McFague argues that "the heart of metaphorical reference, as Ricoeur insists, is summarized in the aphorism 'is and is not.'"[31] McFague takes the is/is not in a comparative sense, so that "God is mother" means "God is/is

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[24] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 23. For her, models differ from metaphors in that "some metaphors gain wide appeal and become major ways of structuring and ordering experience" (23). In McFague's work they differ only in extent of use and breadth of application.

[25] She notes, "It seems the universal practice in the theological literature to use the terms 'model' and 'metaphor' synonymously." Janice Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 55.

[26] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 5; emphasis added.

[27] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 55; emphasis added.

[28] Soskice concludes that "metaphors arise when we speak on the basis of models" (*Metaphor and Religious Language*, 101) and "talk based on models will be metaphorical" (55). The close relation between the two continues in that the linguistic presentation of models usually occurs via metaphor (102).

[29] I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford, 1936), 93. The reference is cited by McFague (*Metaphorical Theology,* 37) and Soskice (*Metaphor and Religious Language*, 39).

[30] Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962). In this view, metaphor provides a "grid," "screen," or "filter" that organizes thought about less familiar subjects by seeing them in terms of familiar ones (McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 23). Like others, Soskice criticizes several aspects of this view related to "filtering." Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 41–42.

[31] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 134. The "is and is not" of metaphor is a recurring theme in McFague, exemplified in her statement, "Metaphorical theology, most basically, insists on the dialectic of the positive and the negative, on the 'is and is not,' and that tension permeates every aspect of it." McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 134.

not mother," or "God as mother."[32] In her view, the is/is not also means that models and metaphors are *both* true and untrue.[33] For this reason "they invite existential commitment . . . in a qualified manner."[34]

The position taken by McFague proves illuminating since it provides an example of the view that there is "double meaning" (literal and metaphorical) and "double truth" (a false literal meaning and a true metaphorical one) in metaphor. Soskice offers a devastating critique as she notes that most metaphors do not have two meanings. Instead, "the alternative to understanding them as metaphors is not to understand them literally but to fail to make sense of them at all." McFague's position derives from failing to distinguish "between what the speaker says (the words and sentences he or she uses) and what the speaker intends by uttering them within a particular context."[35] Likewise, metaphors are not inherently *both* true and false. Only by taking the complete utterance in its context can we assess it and determine its accuracy. As Soskice writes, "Once we understand the claim to be metaphorical, we can make a judgment as to its accuracy."[36]

In McFague's position, the is/is not of metaphor means that metaphorical statements are always indirect. McFague adds an *additional* factor when she employs Ricoeur's term "redescription" and asserts that reality is redescribed through metaphors.[37] She writes, "The reference is, however, not only indirect but redescriptive; that is, metaphorical construction refers to reality both in the sense of *creation* as well as discovery."[38] Thus for McFague, metaphors both refer indirectly to reality and also redescribe or create in order to do so. However, Soskice has underscored the inherent flaw in the concept of "redescription." She observes: "This point deserves emphasis—redescription, however radical, is always *re*-description. The

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[32] Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 23.

[33] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 92.

[34] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 134.

[35] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 85.

[36] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 86. This has important consequences, since it means that "the truth or falsity of the metaphorical claim can be assessed only at the level of intended meaning" (86).

[37] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 39–40, 132, 136.

[38] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 13; emphasis added.

interesting thing about metaphor, or at least about some metaphors, is that they are used not to redescribe but to disclose for the first time."[39]

Soskice rejects a comparative approach to metaphor because this cannot explain how metaphor is able to say something new. Her own inter-animation theory of metaphor draws upon I.A. Richard's "tenor" (the metaphor's underlying subject) and "vehicle" (the mode of expression).[40] Both tenor and vehicle carry with them a network of associations that interact with one another in depicting the one true subject of the metaphor.[41] This unity of subject matter and plurality of associative networks operate together in a given context as the reference is "effected by the speaker's employment of the whole utterance in its context."[42]

McFague and Soskice present very different views of how metaphor works, and these differences bear important implications for God talk. Both sides recognize that metaphor is "indirect," in that reference can only occur through metaphor. Yet for McFague, the adjective "metaphorical" primarily connotes uncertainty. This must be so since not only does it work indirectly, but as "redescription" it also employs *creation* of versions of reality.[43]

By contrast, Soskice's position sets forth a far more capable tool that offers the real possibility of meaningfully speaking about God. Since Soskice operates within the bounds of traditional Christianity, she sees the need for a robust critical realism. She openly grants that "a form of critical realism is advocated, not because it is the only cogent position, but because so much of the Christian tradition has been undeniably realist in sensibility."[44] One cannot ignore the fact that Christians have taken their models to be explanatory and reality depicting.[45] Because Soskice works within a

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[39] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 89.

[40] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language,* 39. Or to put it another way, the vehicle is the thing to which the term normally applies, while the tenor is the thing to which it refers in the metaphor's use. See G.B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 152. For example, as Paul Raabe explains, "In the metaphor 'drinking the cup of Yahweh's wrath' the tenor or subject is one's experience of divine wrath, and the vehicle or symbol is drinking a cup of wine." Paul R. Raabe, *Obadiah* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 207.

[41] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 47.

[42] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 53.

[43] McFague, *Models of God*, 26.

[44] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 137.

[45] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 112. In fact, she concludes, "One might even say that Christianity stands or falls on its conviction that its claims concern that

framework that presupposes a transcendent God, she realizes that human descriptions and references to God will face limitations, yet she argues that such language is depicting reality.[46]

III. Biblical Language about God

In responding to the feminist position, orthodox writers have first of all pointed out that one cannot accurately say that *all* language about God is metaphorical. The statement, "God is Creator," is literal in that "the conceptual signified evoked by *Creator* is fully congruent with the characteristics of God as maker of all things."[47]

That being said, orthodox writers have also noted that all metaphors, which serve as the method employed for most "God talk," are not equal. One cannot say that the statements "God is our Father" and "God is rot" (רָקָב; Hos 5:12) are equally true of God. They differ in that the vehicle "father" has a much higher degree of correspondence to the tenor than the vehicle "rot."[48] Many more characteristics of "father" correspond to God than characteristics of "rot".

All metaphors then are equal (in that they are metaphors), but some metaphors are more equal than others—they are "more literal" than others since a higher number of components of meaning correspond between vehicle and tenor. As Voelz observes: "Some also have such a greater degree of correspondence that they begin to distance themselves from metaphors and become, as it were, a *tertium quid*, a third option, a 'virtual literal'

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which really is the case with God and humanity." Janet Martin Soskice, "Knowledge and Experience in Science and Religion: Can We Be Realists?" in *Physics, Philosophy And Theology: A Common Quest For Understanding*, ed. Robert J. Russel, William R. Stoeger, and George V. Coyne (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1988), 174. Compare this with the statement by McFague: "Like theology as construction, theology as heuristics supports the assertion that our concept of God is precisely that—*our concept* of God—and not God." McFague, *Models of God*, 37; emphasis original.

[46] Soskice's defense of critical realism rests upon a crucial distinction between referring to God and defining him. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 140. She writes, "Our concern is with the conceptual possibility rather than proof, and with a demonstration that we may justly claim to speak of God without claiming to define him, and to do so by means of metaphor" (148).

[47] Voelz, *What Does This Mean?* 177–178; emphasis original.

[48] Voelz, *What Does This Mean?* 178. See Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 153–154, for a further discussion of "degree of correspondence."

usage. If we may 'adjust' Thomas Aquinas' terminology a bit . . . we may call them '**virtually literal analogies**.'"[49]

Certain of these metaphors become controlling metaphors because of their frequency and fundamental character in understanding God and his relation to man.[50] With good reason, Achtemeier maintains that "the God of the Bible has revealed himself in five principal metaphors as King, Father, Judge, Husband, and Master, and finally, decisively, as God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."[51] The CTCR document, *Biblical Language and Inclusive Language*, goes on to comment about Achtemeier's work, "We might add the metaphor of the Shepherd, but our focus here is on the nature, not the number of these principal metaphors. The metaphors are each masculine and are indicated to be such by the corresponding pronouns and verbs used with them."[52]

Nowhere in the entire Bible is God addressed as "mother" or directly referred to using the noun "mother."[53] In fact, "*[i]n neither the Old Testament nor in the New Testament is God ever referred to by a feminine pronoun. This is important, for the character of a pronoun is to point to its referent. A pronoun specifies and identifies.*"[54]

There is a very small group of passages that use feminine and/or maternal imagery to describe God and his actions.[55] It is critical to recognize that almost all of these are in the form of a simile (or if not in the explicit form with "like" or "as," they are the functional equivalent).[56] A simile provides a more limited figure of speech since it draws "a self-limiting comparison."[57] As Achtemeier explains, "A simile compares one aspect of something to another. For example, in Isa 42:14, God will 'cry out

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[49] Voelz, *What Does This Mean?* 179; emphasis original.

[50] Voelz, *What Does This Mean?* 180.

[51] Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods'," 5.

[52] *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, 13.

[53] *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, 21; Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language," 29.

[54] *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, 11; emphasis original.

[55] Generally agreed upon are Deut 32:12; Isa 42:13–14; 45:10; 49:14–15; 66:13; see also feminine bird imagery: Deut 32:11–12; Isa 31:5; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:39.

[56] See the very helpful exegetical discussion of the five main texts (Deut 32:12; Isa 42:13–14; 45:10; 49:14–15; 66:13) in *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, 18–21.

[57] Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language," 39. *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language* notes, "It is the function of simile to compare two or more different things *according to a limited, yet shared characteristic*" (19; emphasis added).

like a women in travail,' but only his *crying out* is being referred to; he is not being identified as a whole with the figure of a woman in childbirth."[58] Both in quantity and form, the biblical language about God cannot be used to justify feminist God language.

IV. Defense of Biblical Trinitarian Language

As so often in the church's history, a challenge on one point of doctrine has led to a deeper reflection on the content revealed in Scripture. Pressed by the challenge of feminism, Christian thinkers have given more thought to the trinitarian expression of God's name as classically expressed in Scripture and liturgy. This consideration has produced four significant objections to any attempt to change the way the church refers to the three persons of the Trinity.

First, the church cannot move beyond the received trinitarian language because it has been bestowed by the language of revelation. For this reason she has neither the right nor the ability to make changes in favor of more "culturally acceptable" terms. Kimel observes:

> By the direction of the Spirit, God chooses the names and metaphors by which he will be known and addressed. They are authoritatively communicated in the Holy Scriptures and enjoy a normative, para-digmatic status in the life of the Christian church . . . . The revelatory efficacy of these images depends not on their natural, iconic character, but on the fact that God has clothed himself in them.[59]

Just as the church cannot move beyond the revelation of God through the incarnation of the Son in this world, so also she cannot move beyond the revelation of God through the language of this world that he has chosen. The CTCR summarizes this well in its report:

> Israel did not choose on its own to speak of God in the way of the Bible. Rather, God has revealed himself in the specific and particular events and words of the Scriptures. If the church is to speak meaningfully of a God who speaks and acts, and who in those words and deeds reveals himself, it is crucial that the church resist the temptation to think of the language of the Bible as merely an expression of cultural bias. The church must affirm that the language of the Bible is precisely the language by which, and alone by which, God wishes to be known and is known. The language of the Scriptures, therefore, is

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[58] Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods'," 5; emphasis original.

[59] Kimel, "The Holy Trinity Meets Ashtoreth," 33.

the foundational and determinative language which the church is to use to speak about God and the things of God.[60]

Second, the church is unable to move beyond the basic fact that she addresses God as Father because Jesus taught and authorized her to do so. Jenson has argued that Jesus' command permanently weds the church to "Father" and "Son." In his opinion, "Since the church's address of God is authorized only as a repetition of Jesus' address, this fact about him is determinative for the church."[61] He maintains that "the deepest origin and continuing reason for the Christian address of God as 'Father' and the 'Father/Son' pairing within the triune name is the instruction Jesus gave his disciples when they asked their master how to pray."[62]

Third, the church is unable to move beyond "Father" and "Son" because this is how *they addressed one another*. Raabe notes:

As recorded in the gospels, this is how God spoke to Jesus—"You are my beloved Son"—and this is how Jesus spoke to God—"My Father." It is not a question of whether we like this language or not, whether this language furthers our goals or not. This is how God and Jesus addressed each other. It is an historical given that exists outside of us and our ability to spin or re-conceive or re-imagine. God is the Father of his Son. The Son is the Son of God his Father. This is the way they are related, whether people like it or not.[63]

Fourth, in our knowledge of God's trinitarian character we have received an insight into the inner-trinitarian life of God. Man cannot arrive on his own at the terms used in this regard—*only God can reveal them*. As DiNoia correctly judges:

These names do not originate in our experience of God and his agency in the world, as do many of the essential names we use to speak of God. We have no basis for naming the persons of the Trinity by their proper names except by their own "usage." . . . These names are proper because they identify nonagential relations internal to the Trinity itself. The exclu-

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[60] *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language*, 7.

[61] Robert. W. Jenson, "'The Father, He . . .,'" in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 104.

[62] Jenson, "'The Father, He . . .,'" 103.

[63] Paul R. Raabe, "On Feminized God-Language," *CTQ* 74 (2010): 126.

sive warrant of their aptness lies in Christ's revelation of the inner-trinitarian life.[64]

The inner-trinitarian aspect revealed by God in the terms "Father" and "Son" should keep us from trying to find other terms.[65] The truth of this is demonstrated by the kinds of substitutes that have been suggested. For example, the popular "Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier" confuses the inner-trinitarian relationships with the Trinity's external acts toward creation (*opera ad extra*) and divides the external action of the Trinity.[66]

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[64] J.A. DiNoia, "Knowing and Naming the Triune God: The Grammar of Trinitarian Confession," in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 184. The CTCR document notes: "God's fatherhood and God's sonship, however, are rooted ultimately not in his election of Israel but in his divine being. 'Father' and 'Son,' therefore, designate the first and second persons of the Trinity in relation to one another. 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." *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language,* 16.

[65] LaCugna is partially correct when she observes: "Prior to the fourth century, in the New Testament, in early Christian theology, and in early Christian creeds, 'Father' had been synonymous with 'Godhead' and did not carry any 'intra-trinitarian' meaning." LaCugna, "The Baptismal Formula, Feminist Objections, and Trinitarian Theology," 241. However, biblical usage *does* contain statements that, if not overtly, then latently, bear witness to intra-trinitarian relations (cf. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7–15). One cannot dismiss "Father" and "Son" as expressions of intra-trinitarian meaning because the Church did not immediately perceive their significance. The incarnation forced a shift from absolute monotheism (cf. Deut 6:4) to monotheism understood in a trinitarian fashion. This insight and shift could not happen overnight, and only deeper reflection on issues such as Christology and Pneumatology could move the church to perceive the full import of passages such as those in John. The fact that earlier theologians did not yet perceive it does not invalidate later reflection based on biblical evidence. We cannot make pre-Nicene theology absolutely normative unless we expect the church to cease the theological task after the third century. Kimel offers a similar sentiment when he observes: "But as the Church comes to understand and appropriate the full divinity of both the Son and Spirit, such manner of speaking is increasingly misleading. 'God' ceases to function theologically as a proper name and instead becomes a common term predicated of the three persons of the Trinity. 'When I said God,' Gregory of Nazianzen explained, 'I mean Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' Simply to return to the earlier tradition is to repudiate the dogmatic insight of the Nicene Creed into the triune nature of the deity." Kimel, "Trinity Meets Ashtoreth," 36.

[66] "The problem with this replacement is twofold. First, it designates the Trinity's external works toward creation, *opera ad extra*, but the revealed Trinitarian terms designate the persons' relationships to each other within the Trinity, the Father of the Son and

V. The Feminist Contradiction

When considering feminist God language, it is necessary to recognize that the theological structure of Scripture (the understanding about God it provides) simply will not permit many alternative feminine formulations that have been suggested. Feminists exhibit contextual naiveté when they posit that all metaphors are equal, and that we are therefore free to change "Father" and "Son" if we so choose. Contextual conditions place limitations on the range of options available. In the particular instance examined above, we noted that when mankind uses feminine language for God, the distinction between Creator and creation breaks down. However, Scripture contains a theology with a strong Creator/creation distinction, and therefore feminine language for God is not an option. The only way to get around this is to posit a different god that matches the language. This is precisely the goal of those who advocate feminist God language.

An analysis of the feminist challenge to the received language for the Trinity reveals that feminists operate with an agenda that includes two mutually contradictory principles. On the one hand they want to avoid a transcendent, Creator God who is distinct from creation. As McFague argues, "At the heart of patriarchalism as root-metaphor is a subject-object split in which man is envisioned over against God and vice versa."[67] In the view of feminist theology, this transcendence of God leads to the subjection of women and humanity in general.[68]

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the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Second, the replacement divides the external action of the Trinity, the *opera ad extra*. In contrast, the Trinity is undivided and therefore the Trinity's actions toward the outside are non-divisible (*opera ad extra non divisa sunt*)." Raabe, "Feminized God-Language," 128.

[67] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 148. McFague later laments that "the gains made in the middle ages towards the flexibility in metaphors for the divine-human relationship—gains towards female, natural, non-gender-related images—were to die out with the Reformation's turn from contemplative, immanental piety to an emphasis on the transcendence of God" (176).

[68] Rosemary Reuther complains, "Patriarchal theology uses the parent image for God to prolong the spiritual infantilism as virtue and to make autonomy and assertion of free will a sin." Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 69. McFague offers a similar sentiment when she judges that "if the traditional model of God's saving activity [a transcendent God who comes to rescue] contributes to a view of human life as infantile, individualistic, and isolated, then it is deeply in need of substantial revision, for human life cannot responsibly be seen in those terms." McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 185. Achtemeier concludes, "But Reuther, like all of the feminist writers, does not want her deity to rule over her: as I said at the beginning, feminists want to get rid of a hierarchical view in which God is their Lord." Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods'," 12.

The biblical God confessed in creedal Christianity *is*, however, the transcendent, Creator God (First Article of the Creed) who remains distinct from his creation. Leonard Klein has observed quite correctly that in the feminist discussion, "The *skandalon* is not maleness. It is the otherness of God, and it is that upon which Christianity must absolutely insist."[69] The remarkable claim of Christianity is that in the incarnation the transcendent God *enters* this world in order to save humanity (John 1:14) and creation itself (Rom 8:18–23).[70]

At the same time feminists want an utterly transcendent God/Deity (separated from humanity) who can then be defined *on their own terms*. Jenson comments: "A God close up is likely to afflict us with his own particular reality, but we do like to peek at divinity from a safe metaphysical distance. From sufficient remove, we need have only 'glimpses' that we can connect according to our needs."[71] Feminists want an impermeable metaphysical barrier between God and creation so that they can define God as the sort of God *they* desire: "Unwilling to accept God's historic self-definition, it embarks on another quest to invent a deity more amenable to it concerns." However in doing this "the God it ends up with is merely the mirror image of itself."[72]

This particular principle proves to be the most troubling for the practice of trinitarian theology. If we are completely cut off from God and our only real knowledge of him is a constantly changing kaleidoscope of metaphors and images (that *we* can freely change), then we can never have any real knowledge about the triune God. Christianity becomes cut off from any knowledge about the immanent Trinity and the intra-trinitarian life. Ultimately, trinitarian theology ceases to exist.

The feminist issue has highlighted the historical role that feminine language about God has played. The Scriptures avoid feminine language that would serve to fuse Creator and creation, and only at the risk of losing a transcendent Creator God who is willing to condescend and save man

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[69] Leonard Klein, "The God Is to Be Spoken of as 'He'," *Lutheran Forum* 22 (Pentecost 1988): 27.

[70] See the discussion in Mark P. Surburg, "Good Stuff!: The Material Creation and the Christian Faith," *Concordia Journal* 36, no. 3 (2010): 245–262.

[71] Jenson, "'The Father, He . . .,'" 97.

[72] Kimel, "The Holy Trinity Meets Ashtoreth," 46. Raabe describes how an assumption of feminist God language is that human beings can relate to God as a peer. Raabe, "On Feminized God-Language," 130–132.

through the incarnation can Christianity inject significant amounts of feminine language. The history of human cultures has shown where this leads.

The feminist challenge to "Father" and trinitarian language in general does not simply revolve around different terms for the Trinity. Rather it arrives as the product of presuppositions that are hostile to biblical and creedal Christianity.[73] Reformist feminists and Christians who wish to speak in ways that are amenable to our culture may want to stay within Christianity, but their presuppositions logically lead to the positions held by radical feminists such as Daly and Reuther.[74] Feminist God language creates its own god in place of the God who has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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[73] Jenson concludes, "The current attack upon the received linguistic structure of Christianity is not an inner-Christian dispute; it is occasioned by the invasion of an antagonistic religious discourse and represents a true crisis of the faith that cannot be dealt with by compromise." Robert Jenson, "'The Father, He . . .'" 96.

[74] In her *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, Reuther speaks of God/ess (70). Achtemeier judges that, "distinctive Christian experiences and beliefs are expressed through distinctive language about God, and the changes in that language proposed by femininst theologians do not merely add a few unfamiliar words for God, as some would like to think, but in fact introduce beliefs about God that differ radically from those inherent in Christian faith, understanding, and Scripture." Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods'," 17.

Another Look at *Imago Dei*:
Fulfilled in the Incarnate One

Burnell F. Eckardt Jr.

The Lutheran Confessions refer to the image of God as the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth (Ap II 18); this reference is commonly considered to be the complete definition. The 1943 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism* essentially provides this interpretation and follows the Confessions in declaring that therefore the image was lost entirely.[1] Nathan Jastram has provided a comprehensive study of how the term has been variously understood among Lutherans.[2] Jastram notes that while some prefer this narrow definition, others have used a wider one that includes various characteristics.[3] He also quotes Francis Pieper, who, while preferring the former, states, "It will be seen that these two interpretations do not differ materially."[4]

There is considerable warrant for understanding the image of God in what Jastram refers to as the wider sense, although he prefers not to use this terminology.[5] This study proposes that *imago Dei* has additional, especially physical, facets that expand upon the narrow definition and provide additional information concerning what it means to be human, to be redeemed, and to be Christian.

If one restricts the image of God to the narrow definition, then it is necessary to say that the image was altogether lost, for this is nothing else than to say that all righteousness in man was lost due to the fall. Hence the Formula of Concord avers:

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[1] Martin Luther, *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), 96–97. The 1991 and 2005 editions of the Small Catechism have maintained this definition.

[2] Nathan Jastram, "Man as Male and Female: Created in the Image of God," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2004): 5–96.

[3] Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 8–18.

[4] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 1:518–520, quoted in Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 9.

[5] Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 55–56.

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> [Hereditary evil] is an entire want or lack of the concreated hereditary righteousness in Paradise, or of God's image, according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness, and righteousness. . . . [O]riginal sin (in human nature) is not only this entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but . . . instead of the lost image of God in man, it is at the same time also a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its power. (FC SD I 10–11)[6]

But if the image of God may be defined in the wider sense—a sense, I submit, that is more compatible with the biblical and patristic data—then it does not seem necessary to declare that the image was entirely lost.[7]

Certainly the image of God has to do with righteousness, but according to its context in Genesis 1:26, it seems also to have to do with the plurality of persons in the Godhead, according to the words, "Let us make"; with dominion, according to the words, "and let them have dominion"; and, in some way, with appearance, according to the very word "image."

Reformed scholar Millard J. Erickson has labeled three general schools of interpretation regarding the image of God as the substantive, the relational, and the functional.[8] According to the substantive view there are certain qualities in mankind that mirror or reflect God, such as rationality, volition, affections, and morality; that is, psychological similarities between God and man. The relational view, espoused by neo-orthodox proponents, rejects this view and counters with the contention that the *imago Dei* is seen in man's capacity, as Karl Barth put it, to reflect "the internal communion and encounter present within God."[9] Neo-orthodox theologian Emil Brunner also understood portraying the image as having to do

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[6] Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of the Lutheran Confessions are taken from *Concordia Triglotta: die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche,* trans. W.H.T. Dau and F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921).

[7] Jastram not only concedes this point but explains it as compatible even with the catechism's definition (referenced above): "When the [catechism's] 'Explanation' poses the question of whether people still have the image of God and then briefly answers, 'No, this image was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin,' it should not be understood as denying that natural man has the image of God *in any sense.* Otherwise it would be in conflict with the biblical passages that teach that all people are made in the image of God" (Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 15); emphasis original.

[8] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 520–527.

[9] Cited in Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 525–526.

with man's freedom.[10] The functional view, preferred by Erickson himself, sees the image in what one does, especially in the exercise of dominion, in accordance with Genesis 1:26–28.[11] Certainly this view has merit, most clearly because of its reading of the text, which has "and let them have dominion" coming immediately after "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."[12]

But it is remarkable that in none of these views is any credence given to the idea that image and likeness might have to do with form or shape.[13] Gannon Murphy has even gone as far as to say that "only very radical, indeed heretical, fringe groups have held to any kind of literal physical similitude."[14] Reformed Scholar Angus Stewart declares,

> The anthropomorphites . . . err grievously. Since Jesus expressly declared that "God is a spirit" (John 4:24), man's body cannot be the principle thing in his being the image of God. Furthermore, according to Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10, the *imago dei* must, at the very least, be located primarily in spiritual characteristics.[15]

John Calvin himself declared, "The Anthropomorphites were too gross in seeking this resemblance in the human body; let that reverie therefore remain entombed."[16]

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[10] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption: Dogmatics*, *Vol. II*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 55–58. Reformed scholar Gannon Murphy provides a helpful refutation of this view, and indeed of neo-orthodoxy itself, which is beyond the scope of this study. See Murphy, "On the Doctrine of the Imago Dei (Man in God's Image)," *Free Republic*, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/698208/posts.

[11] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 527. The question whether image and likeness are epexegetical terms seems to have existed between medieval Rome on the one hand, which drew a distinction between them (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicæ* I, 93, 9, quoting Augustine favorably, QQ. 83, qu. 51), and John Calvin and Martin Luther on the other, who saw them as synonymous, a hendiadys. This debate is also beyond the scope of this study.

[12] Jastram goes into some detail on the association of the image of God to dominion in the biblical text ("Man as Male and Female," 23–25).

[13] Jastram acknowledges that צֶלֶם most commonly has to do with "concrete" meaning ("Man as Male and Female," 41).

[14] Murphy, "On the Doctrine of the Imago Dei."

[15] Angus Stewart, "The Image of God in Man: A Reformed Reassessment," from the website of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, http://www.cprf.co.uk/articles/imageofgod.htm.

[16] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 2 vols., trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), 1:94.

It is true, to be sure, that there are some radical groups that have held to the notion that God has a kind of eternal, divine body. The Swedenborgians, for instance, view the image of God as indicating that God has a kind of eternal human form. Emmanuel Swedenborg (d. 1688) considered heaven to have a human form, the *Maximus Homo*.[17] So too, the Mormon canonical book *Pearl of Great Price* declares, "In the image of his own body, male and female, created he them" (Moses 6:9).[18]

Undoubtedly the lack of serious attention accorded the idea that image and likeness might have to do with form or shape is attributable to the fact that, as Stewart reminds us, God is a spirit (John 4:24), that he is said to be invisible (1 Tim 1:17), and that no one has seen the Father except the only-begotten Son (John 1:18). Various Old Testament theophanies—to Abraham (Gen 17:1; 18:1–2), to Jacob (Gen 28:13), to Isaiah (Isa 6:1), and the like—are temporary visible appearances, although it is worth noting that in several instances the temporary form is that of a man.[19]

Thus, dating back at least as far as Augustine (AD 354–430), explanations of the image of God have generally been bereft of any reference to form or shape, and this in spite of the fact that textual study of the Hebrew צֶלֶם, the term that occurs in בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים ("image of God," Gen 1:27), generally yields the concept of something seen: a semblance, or a resemblance.

The term is used elsewhere of a representative figure, as of an idol, such as when the Philistines set the ark of the Lord on their cart with gold rats and images of their tumors (1 Sam 6:11) or when Amos chastises Israel for their images of the pagan deities Sikkuh and Chiun (Amos 5:26). Other examples include Moses's instruction to tell the Israelites to destroy all the

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[17] "Universal Human," *Swedenborg Foundation*, http://www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/explore/universal-human/.

[18] Interestingly, this book also contains a paraphrase of Gen 1:26–27 that reads, "And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so . . . . And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them" (Moses 2:27). Unfortunately, for Mormonism this Only Begotten, whom they identify as Jesus Christ, is not himself the eternal God: "Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is called the Only Begotten Son because He is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. He inherited divine powers from God, His Father." See "The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: The Only Begotten Son," *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, https://www.lds.org/liahona/2013/12/the-divine-mission-of-jesus-christ-the-only-begotten-son?lang=eng#footnote1-10792_000_006.

[19] See Charles A. Gieschen, "The Real Presence of the Son before Christ: Revisiting an Old Approach to Old Testament Christology," *CTQ* 68, no. 2 (2004): 105–126.

molten images they would find in Canaan (Num 33:52), a reference to images of the Chaldeans portrayed on the wall (Ezek 23:14), Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold (Dan 3:1), and David's words, "Surely a man goes about as a shadow" (Ps 39:6). This term is translated into Greek with the word εἰκών, from which, obviously, the English "icon" is derived.[20]

Augustine seems to have been the first to see a trinitarian connection between God and man, namely in man's intellect, memory, and will—three faculties in the unity of the soul.[21] What is noticeable in his definition is something Erickson failed to notice in his dismissal of the so-called substantive view of the image of God. Where Erickson sees in this view mirrors or reflections of the *mind* of God—rationality, volition, affections, and morality—Augustine sees in the mind of man reflections of the *essence* of God—namely, that he is triune. For although Augustine is talking about aspects of the mind, he is seeking something triune in the mind in order thereby to see the trinitarian image stamped somehow on man. Augustine's conception of this trinitarian stamp, as it were, is tied to his discussion of "let us make," which he sees as an inter-trinitarian dialogue.[22]

Luther expanded on this definition of the image of God in his commentary, suggesting that while Augustine's search for reflections of the Trinity in man need not be set aside, it seems less than entirely useful.[23] What Luther sees in the image, also fixing his attention on the essence of God, is beauty and perfection:

> Therefore the image of God in which Adam was created was . . . of the purest kind. His intellect was the purest, his memory was the best, and his will was the most straightforward—all in the most beautiful

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[20] The term פֶּסֶל (pesel, "idol") seems to be a cognate, though this term is generally used in the negative: e.g., when God said, "You shall not make for yourselves a carved image" (Deut 4:16) or when Manasseh made a carved image, an idol (2 Chron 33:7). The term דְמוּת (likeness), found beside צֶלֶם in Gen 1:26, also has to do with resemblance, model, or shape. The word "likeness" is translated differently in the Septuagint each time it occurs: In Gen 1:26, it is ὁμοίωσις; in Gen 5:1, it is εἰκών; and in Gen 5:3, it is ἰδέα.

[21] Augustine, "De Trinitatis" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 3:143; see also 3:186. Thomas Aquinas follows with a similar interpretation, seeing the Trinity in the intellect, in the understanding, and in love (*Summa Theologicæ* I, 93, 4).

[22] Augustine, "De Trinitatis," 113.

[23] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapers 1-5*, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–1986), 1:60; abbreviated AE henceforth.

tranquility of mind, without any fear of death and without any an-xiety. To these inner qualities came also the most beautiful and superb qualities of body and of all the limbs, qualities in which he surpassed all the remaining creatures. I am fully convinced that before Adam's sin, his eyes were so sharp and clear that they surpassed those of the lynx and eagle. He was stronger than the lions and bears, whose strength is very great; and he handled them the way we handle puppies . . . . Therefore my understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being and that he not only knew God and believed that He was good, but that he also lived in a life that was wholly godly; that is, he was without the fear of death or of any other danger, and was content with God's favor."[24]

Thus Luther, like Augustine, locates the image of God in the essence of God more than in the mind of God.

Still, even the Reformer seems to have taken the matter only as far as seeing in man a reflection of something eternal in God, and thus does not seem to have considered the term צֶלֶם according to its seminal and normal usage. God has no shape; therefore, the image of God must be something else. So the thinking goes.

Luther, however, does note that in Genesis the things declared are spoken of darkly until the birth of Christ,[25] although he says this as a re-sponse to the Jews and others who would object to his seeing the Trinity in the plural pronoun ("Let *us* make man") and in the plural noun for God (אֱלֹהִים). Perhaps this is precisely what needs to be applied to gain a better understanding of the image of God, as Augustine had done, and even in a further sense than Augustine had done.

We should not be so swift, it would appear, to dismiss the seminal usage of צֶלֶם. Although certainly it is true that when God created man he did not have an image in any corporeal or visible sense, it is just as true that God's incarnational purpose was as eternal as God himself. What could prevent us from seeing the image of God in man as referring, at least among other things, to what God would look like at some point in the future? Adam, according to this interpretation, would be a kind of tem-plate for the Incarnate One, a prefiguration of the coming of God in the flesh. What this would mean, then, is that the incarnation is not so much a

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[24] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, AE 1:62–63.

[25] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, AE 1:62–63.

condescension of God to man's place as it is a fulfillment of God's original desire: to form a bond with his prime creature.[26]

This interpretation, it turns out, is by no means a novel one. Irenaeus, among the foremost of ancient authorities, had this to say:

> For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore also did he easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Word became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.[27]

Here Irenaeus makes much of the time factor: before the incarnation, "it was not actually shown," and this because "the Word was *as yet* invisible." But at once he ties this to the image of God. This is the ingredient that is, somewhat surprisingly, altogether absent from the later interpretations of the image of God. God is invisible, they say, therefore צֶלֶם cannot be a reference to anything visible. But what if God was here looking forward? What if he was already foretelling things to come? What if, as Luther has said, the things declared in Genesis, and indeed in the entire Old Testament, were spoken of darkly, to be fully revealed at and by the birth of Christ?

This interpretation is attractive not only for the convincing manner of its interpretation of צֶלֶם, but also for its helpfulness in setting forth from the very opening chapter of Genesis the manner in which we should be well advised to look at the entire Old Testament. According to a late medieval rhyme, "in the Old the New lies concealed, in the New the Old is revealed." Abigail Ann Young provides a concise and helpful summary of the continuous strain of scriptural interpretation leading up to the twelfth century—a tradition derived ultimately from the New Testament itself, especially from the words of Jesus—that sees the Old Testament as being in a sense entirely typological, or forward-looking toward the coming of

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[26] Here, in my opinion, is where Jastram errs, namely, in failing to see the complete compatibility of God himself with his prime creature, for he appears to balk at the idea of complete unity of God and mankind: "Finally, at the resurrection, he comes as close to the likeness of God *as is humanly possible.*" Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 58; emphasis added.

[27] Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book V: 16, 2, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1:544.

Christ in every way.[28] Jesus said, "search the Scriptures . . . it is they that bear witness about me" (John 5:39, ESV), and again, "everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). Much of patristic and medieval exegesis can be seen as a working out of how the concealment in the Old Testament and the revelation in the New are to be understood in accordance with the messianic character of all of the Scriptures.

For Irenaeus, whose high Christology is evident, the creation of man in the image of God is a clear instance of this: at the nativity of our Lord the fulfillment of the Scriptures declaring that man was made in the image of God becomes evident. Here the invisible God finally becomes visible as man, since the Word has become flesh and is manifested to us: "He became himself what was His image," says Irenaeus; and not merely this, for through the incarnation man is assimilated "to the *invisible* Father through means of the *visible* Word."[29]

Likewise Tertullian sees in the creation of man as the image of God a foretelling of the Incarnation. After speaking of the plurality of "us" as referring to the Trinity, he says:

> He purposely adopted the plural phrase, "Let *us* make;" and, "in *our* image;" and, "become as one *of us*." For with whom did He make man? and to whom did He make him like? (The answer must be), the Son on the one hand, who was one day to put on human nature; and the Spirit on the other, who was to sanctify man . . . . But there was One in whose image God was making man, that is to say, Christ's image, who, being one day about to become Man (more surely and more truly so), had already caused the man to be called His image, who was then going to be formed of clay—the image and similitude of the true and perfect Man.[30]

Here, too, as with Irenaeus, the matter of time's passage—before the incarnation as opposed to after—is taken into account. The image of God was not to be fulfilled until the time when the Son would put on human nature, until that "one day" when he would become man. When referring

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[28] Abigail Ann Young, *The Fourth Gospel in the Twelfth Century: Rupert of Deutz on the Gospel of John* (Toronto: University of Toronto, Computing in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1984); http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~young/text.html#part2.

[29] Irenaeus, "Against Heresies,"1:544; emphasis added.

[30] Tertullian, "Against Praxeas," ch 12, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 3:606–607.

to man's being fashioned "out of clay," Tertullian refers to Adam as "the image and similitude of the true and perfect Man." In short, the creation of Adam is the first and most prominent of all the ways in which Scripture foretells the coming of Christ the perfect man.

As we have seen, Augustine does not seem to have carried this idea into his own conception of the image of God, tending rather to emphasize an eternal aspect of the Godhead, namely, that it is triune. Two of the Cappadocian Fathers, who were roughly contemporary with Augustine, similarly tended to do this, although with a greater emphasis on similitude than he, following more closely the thinking of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Basil of Caesarea, in particular, refers to Christ as "the image of the invisible God," declaring then that "Let us make" was the Father speaking to the Son, that is, "to His living image, to Him Who has said, 'I and my Father are one,' 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,'" and that "[M]an was created in the image of God, and . . . shares this resemblance . . . ."[31] For Basil it is evident that image is something seen.

Basil's younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa, sees the matter more as Augustine sees it, declaring that "the Divine beauty is not adorned with any shape or endowment of form, by any beauty of colour, but is contemplated as excellence in unspeakable bliss." Hence the adornment of man consists for Gregory in other divine characteristics: "purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, alienation from all evil, and all those attributes of the like kind which help to form in men the likeness of God: with such hues as these did the maker of His own image mark our nature."[32]

Taken together, this evidence, especially that there are prominent early fathers who have seen in the image of God a reference to the as then future incarnation of God, and the fact that צֶלֶם in common biblical usage has to do with shape and form, gives us ample reason to reject the refusal of Erickson and Calvin to see *imago dei* as having anything to do with similitude, their dismissiveness notwithstanding, and if we couple this ingredient with other aspects of it, we can come to a richer understanding of what it means to be man.

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[31] Basil of Caesarea, "The Hexaemeron," Homily IX, 6 in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952–1957), 8:106–107.

[32] Gregory of Nyssa, "On the Making of Man," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952–1957), 5:391.

Luther might easily have gone further. We could add to his delightful ruminations on Adam before the fall, as having eyesight like the eagle, strength surpassing the lion, and enjoyment of goodness, tranquility, and utter contentedness, by saying that man must also have been an utterly beautiful specimen, indeed the most beautiful of all the good things that God created, in that he was the very embodiment, or picture, of the invisible God. Indeed, the term "embodied" is used in the Apology, where it defines the image of God as having to do with wisdom and righteousness:

> Scripture testifies to this, when it says, Gen. 1:27, that man was fashioned in the image and likeness of God. What else is this than that there were embodied in man such wisdom and righteousness as apprehended God, and in which God was reflected, i.e., to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like? (Ap II 18)
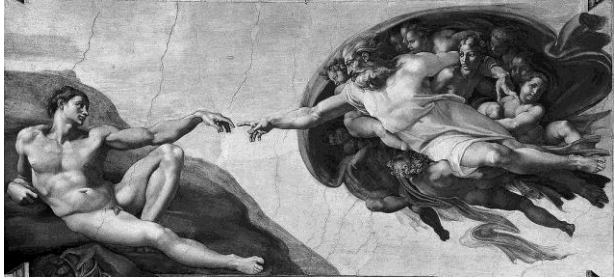
The term "embodied" here is a translation of the German "*bildet*," literally, "pictured."

What I maintain, therefore, is that we understand the image of God to be more than only righteousness, though it must include that. The declaration of Genesis 1:26–27, that man was made in the image of God, must above all be understood according to its own context and usage. The fact that God does not say "Let us make" until he creates man, and that, when he does so, also says, "in our image," must at least give some weight to Augustine's argument that there is something trinitarian in man. What likely cautioned Luther about opining as far as Augustine had is that the question as to what that trinitarian thing might be is open to speculation—always a dangerous enterprise. But the contributions of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Basil are well worth considering, if we wish to take צֶלֶם in accordance with its customary usage. Then the trinitarian language of "let us make" also makes perfect sense, for, as Basil put it, here the Father is then understood as speaking to the Son, who would later say, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." For Jesus is himself the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

Adam, therefore, was made from the dust of the ground to be the expressed and wonderful representation of God himself, both as he himself is, and as he would one day appear. Adam speaks because God speaks. Adam has dominion because God has dominion. Adam is in command of all the earth because God is in command of all his creation. Adam loves because God loves (consider how Adam rejoices on first seeing his wife, Gen 2:23). Adam is an enfleshed, living soul because God would one day

enflesh Himself in the Virgin's womb. Adam as man, bearer of human flesh and soul, is therefore holy—not merely because he is without sin, for even the beasts are without sin—but because he is set apart from all other creatures.[33] Adam alone represents God, and this, because God wills to bind himself to Adam in the Incarnate One.[34]

The famed artist Michelangelo had it right when he painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Leave it to a painter to understand the meaning of images, for his depiction of Adam reclining on earth, as the mirror-image of God surrounded in heaven by angels, seems to me to be very close to the meaning intended in "Let us make man in our image." This perspective can be a powerful and comforting governing factor in our own enfleshed lives, for as the Psalmist says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14). We are fallen creatures, so the image of God is marred in us: speech becomes lies (Psalm 116:11), dominion becomes tyranny, love becomes lust, and even flesh becomes ugly and ultimately grotesque in its mortality. But vestiges remain: we are still occasionally, if minimally, capable of integrity in speech, thought, self-control, and selfless love, and these features become more evident in our regeneration.

But as long as we live in our fallenness, we struggle with our immense distance from our ideal, from the image of God in which we were once

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[33] This is the likely reason for Paul's admonition that a man should not cover his head, "forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7).

[34] The question of the image of God in woman is beyond the scope of this study, though a consideration of the relation of man and woman is clearly in view in 1 Corinthians 11, according to which we may propose, while acknowledging male and female as both being created in the image of God, that priority is accorded to the male as bearing the image of God more fully. Here especially is it helpful to set aside a narrow definition, which would require an untenable proposition of male as somehow more righteous than female; on the other hand, image as prefiguration of Christ is perfectly sensible here: physically a man is more like another man than a woman is. Jastram notes the importance of the wider definition in his discussion of male and female, though he emphasizes authority and order and does not reference the fact that Christ is male except within a quotation from Bonaventure on which he makes no comment. Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 82–96, esp. 87–88.

created. Nevertheless, we remain even now, because we are still mankind, embodiments—pictures—of the invisible God. At least we still look like Jesus, and even if it is only in this way, we still retain a vestige of the image of God. Not only so, but we also may look forward with joyful anticipation to the full restoration of that image in us, according to the truth we confess daily, "I believe in the resurrection of the body"; at that day we, like Adam, shall see like the eagle, have the might of the lion, and enjoy the perfect righteousness, contentedness, and beauty not merely of Adam but of the man Jesus Christ, who is the eternal image of the Father, now risen from the dead, and ascended to his right hand on high.

The Divine Presence within the Cloud

Walter A. Maier III

During the biblical era God manifested his presence to people in various ways. One such method was by the use of a cloud, in which would be the special presence of the invisible Lord. The cloud thus proclaimed to the people, "Here is God," without their actually seeing the Deity. Further, a cloud is mentioned with regard to the presence of the Lord in poetical and figurative passages of Scripture and in passages recounting visions. A cloud was prominent at the transfiguration of Christ. Finally, biblical passages foretelling the coming of the Lord in judgment, including the ultimate reckoning on the Last Day, associate these manifestations of God with a cloud or clouds.[1]

I. The Pillar of Cloud That Accompanied Israel

During the exodus from Egypt and the wilderness wanderings, God was with the Israelites in a striking, continually visible manner—in a pillar of cloud by day, that turned into a pillar of, or that produced, fire at night.[2]

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[1] The following passages cited from the Hebrew Bible all have the Hebrew word עָנָן, "cloud," except where otherwise noted.

[2] See C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. 1, *The Pentateuch Three Volumes in One*, trans. James Martin et al. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), 41. Note Exod 14:24; their understanding is that this one pillar or column was simultaneously of both cloud *and* fire and that even when shining in the dark, it is still called the pillar of cloud (Exod 14:19) or the cloud (Num 9:21). Their conclusion is that "it was a cloud with a dark side and a bright one, causing darkness and also lighting the night [Exod 14:20] . . . or 'a cloud, and fire in it by night' [Exod 40:38] . . . Consequently we have to imagine the cloud as the covering of the fire, so that by day it appeared as a dark cloud in contrast with the light of the sun, but by night as a fiery splendor, 'a fire-look' [Num 9:15, 16]." They are also of the opinion that, while this cloud assumed the form of a column as it went before Israel, when it stood still above the tabernacle or came down upon the tent, "it most probably took the form of a round globe of cloud, and when it separated the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, we have to imagine it spread out like a bank of cloud, forming, as it were, a dividing wall." For these latter two assumptions (concerning the round-globe shape and the spreading out as a wall), however, there is no decisive evidence in Scripture.

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Several verses make this clear. The supernatural pillar was usually above
the people, and it also led them (at night lighting the way for them).

Exodus 13:21–22

[21] Now Yahweh was going before them by day in a pillar [בְּעַמּוּד, or
"column"] of cloud to lead them on the way, and at night in a pillar
[בְּעַמּוּד] of fire to give light to them, that they might travel by day or [or
"and"] by night. [22] The pillar of cloud did not depart [imperfect; some,
"He did not remove"] by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from
before the people.[3]

Note the two-fold use of the preposition בְּ. Yahweh was "in" the pillar, or
column. Specifically, it was the Divine Angel, the Second Person of the
Trinity, who was in the cloud and fire, as Exodus 14:19 indicates.

Exodus 14:19

[19] The Angel of God, the one going before the camp of Israel, moved
and went behind them [the Israelites]; and the pillar of cloud moved
from before them and stood behind them.

This and the previous passage show that Yahweh, or the Divine Angel,
and the pillar were closely associated because Yahweh's presence is direct-
ly linked to the pillar of cloud. Exodus 23:20, 21, and 23 also lead to the
conclusion that the Divine Angel, or the Second Person, led the people.

Exodus 23:20, 21, and 23a

[20] "Behold, I am sending an Angel[4] before you to guard you on the
way, and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. [21] Be on
guard before him, and listen to his voice. Do not rebel against him,
because he will not forgive your transgression, for my name is in him
. . . . [23] For my Angel will go before you . . . . "

This description of the Angel indicates his divinity, especially the matter of
his not forgiving, and by implication, forgiving, sins. Thus, the Hebrew
Bible exhibits flexibility when speaking of the divine presence within the
pillar of cloud, making reference to Yahweh or to the Angel.

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[3] All translations are the author's, except where otherwise noted. Keil and Delitzsch
observe that most later passages (e.g., Exod 40:34; Num 9:15; 10:11–12) refer to *the* cloud,
with the definite article, as something already known, so that all these passages refer
back to Exod 13:21. *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:40n1.

[4] Although several Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, and the Vulgate have "my
Angel," this could be an intentional harmonization with Exod 23:23.

Exodus 14:24

[24] Now it was at the morning watch that Yahweh, in a pillar of fire and cloud, looked down at the army of Egypt and threw into confusion the army of Egypt.

After Moses wrote in Exodus 14:19-20 about the Angel of God and the cloud moving from before the camp of Israel to a location behind the Israelites, in between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, he then uses the name "Yahweh" in Exodus 14:24 in connection with the pillar.

Exodus 40:36–38

[36] Now when the cloud was taken up [Niphal of עָלָה; or "arose"[5]] from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel would set out on all their journeys. [37] But if the cloud was not taken up, they would not set out until the day when it was taken up. [38] For the cloud of Yahweh was over the tabernacle by day, and fire would be in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys.

When the tabernacle was constructed, the pillar stood above that sanctuary. When the pillar moved, the people of Israel also moved and followed the pillar until it stood still over another place, which would be their new camping site.

Numbers 9:15–17, 21b–23

[15] Now on the day the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was over the tabernacle, as the appearance of fire, until morning. [16] So it would be continually; the cloud would cover it, and [have] the appearance of fire by night.[6] [17] And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tent, then after this the children of Israel would set out, and at the place where the cloud would settle, there the children of Israel would camp . . . . [21b] Whether during the day or the night, when the cloud

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[5] Ludwig Köhler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:829.

[6] Concerning v. 16, Ronald B. Allen writes: "The cloud and fire were both reversals of the expected phenomena of the time. Both the cloud and the fire were striking, unusual, and unexpected. These were symbols one would not, could not ignore. They were awesome and eerie, unnatural and unexpected, comforting and protective. To relieve the heat of the desert sun, there was a cloud by day. To reverse the cold darkness of the desert night, there was the comforting fire overhead. Everything about this paragraph [Num 9:15–23] is wrapped in mystery, a mystic sense of the Divine Presence. The passage shimmers with awe and delight." Ronald B. Allen, "Numbers," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:776.

was taken up, they would set out. [22] Whether two days or a month or days ["an indefinitely long period"[7]; some, "a year"], when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle to stay over it, the children of Israel remained encamped and they would not set out, and when it was taken up they would set out. [23] At the command [literally, "mouth"] of Yahweh they would camp, and at the command of Yahweh they would set out. The charge of Yahweh [first, before the verb, for emphasis] they kept, at the command of Yahweh through [literally, "by the hand of"] Moses.

Similar to the Exodus 40 passage is Numbers 9:15–23, which describes in a fuller manner what had briefly been reported in Exodus 40:36–38. That the cloud covered the tabernacle could mean that the pillar covered all of the sanctuary or part of it. The people knew that they were to remain encamped in an area when the cloud stayed over the tabernacle and that when the cloud lifted and moved, they were to follow it to a new location, because God had indicated this to them—had so commanded them—through Moses (Num 9:23). Note that the cloud arising and moving, and lingering—signs to the Israelites—are both referred to as "the command [lit., mouth] of Yahweh." This could be regarded as an indication of the special presence of Yahweh within the cloud. While the Deity did not actually speak to the people, he was still making clear to them his will.[8]

Related passages in the Pentateuch are Numbers 10:11, 12, 34; 14:14; and Deuteronomy 1:33; related passages in the Hebrew Bible outside of the Pentateuch include Psalm 78:14 and Nehemiah 9:12.[9]

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[7] Francis Brown et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, with an Appendix, Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 399, abbreviated BDB.

[8] Allen notes that "the movement of the cloud and its presence were unpredictable, with no discernable pattern," and explains, "This was to impress on the people the sense that it was God who was leading them, not some pattern of creation nor some whim from above . . . . The variation from a night's rest, to a camp of a couple of days, to a month-long rest, to a lengthy period . . . was all dependent on the work and will of God. In no case was there an explanation given or needed from God" (Allen, "Numbers," 777–778). George Bush comments that the people's movements "were constantly regulated by the divine direction, and this again was undoubtedly governed by reasons of infinite wisdom, though not expressly made known." George Bush, *Notes on Numbers* (New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1858; Minneapolis: James & Klock, 1976), 132. Citations are to the James & Klock edition.

[9] Cf. Neh 9:19, "'And you [Yahweh], in your abundant mercies, did not abandon them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud did not turn aside from above them by day, to lead them in the way, nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they should go.'" For the use of the sign of the definite direct object, אֶת־, to introduce a

Numbers 14:14

14 "They [the inhabitants of Canaan] have heard that You, Yahweh, are in the midst of this people; that you, Yahweh, are seen eye to eye, and your cloud is standing over them, and in a pillar of cloud you are going before them by day, and in a pillar of fire by night."

With the phrase "you, Yahweh, are seen eye to eye," Moses possibly is describing in a dramatic way, with some hyperbole, how near (so to speak) the people were to Yahweh, whose special presence was close to them in the cloud that stood above them and that led them by day and by night.[10]

In the pillar of cloud, God at times manifested his glory. The glory of God can be defined as the sum total of God's attributes, or some of them, or one of them, becoming evident for people to behold. In the context of the cloud passages, the glory of God perhaps should be understood as a dazzling display of his majestic splendor, which display nevertheless was muted for the sake of sinful mortals. Following are relevant passages.

Exodus 16:10

And it happened, as Aaron spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, that they turned toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory [כְּבוֹד] of Yahweh appeared in the cloud.

This event occured shortly after the miracle at the sea, right before Yahweh miraculously provided food for the Israelites and before the tabernacle had been constructed. Also in Numbers 17:7 the congregation of Israel turns to look at the cloud.

Numbers 17:7 (ET 16:42)

Now it happened, when the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tent of meeting [the tabernacle], and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of Yahweh appeared.

When the tabernacle had been built and set up for the first time, the cloud covered it, and the glory of Yahweh proceeded, apparently, from the cloud into the tent.

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subject, see Andrew E. Steinmann, *Ezra and Nehemiah,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 527.

10 For an alternative way of understanding this passage, see the discussion of Exod 33:7–11a below.

Exodus 40:34–35

[34] Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. [35] And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud stayed over it, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.

On this special occasion the glory of Yahweh clearly was connected with the cloud. At the dedication of the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem something similar occurred, as related by 1 Kings 8:10–12 (cf. 2 Chr 5:13c–14).

1 Kings 8:10–12

[10] And it happened, when the priests came out from the Holy Place, that the cloud filled the temple of Yahweh. [11] And the priests were not able to stand to minister because of the cloud, because the glory of Yahweh filled the temple of Yahweh. [12] Then Solomon said, "Yahweh said that he would abide in the heavy cloud [עֲרָפֶל]."

This cloud suddenly appeared and is referred to as "*the* cloud," because this was the reappearance of the well-known cloud from the time of Moses, the exodus, and the wilderness wandering. Once again, Yahweh's special presence was in this cloud, in which Yahweh now manifested his glory. 1 Kings 8:10 states specifically that the cloud, and so also the revealed glory of God, "filled" the temple. Thus, the cloud did not stay over the building but entered it. Whether this is to be perceived as a new and different development from when the tabernacle was first set up, and if so, how this difference should be understood, remains uncertain. In the Hebrew text of 1 Kings 8:10, that the subject, "the cloud," precedes the verb is noteworthy, especially if the verb is a perfect (it could be an active participle); this word order signifies that emphasis is being put on "the cloud." The last word of 1 Kings 8:12 (עֲרָפֶל) could also be rendered "thick darkness." "Heavy [or thick] cloud" was chosen for the translation,[11] because this seemed to fit better with the immediate context, namely, the reference in v. 10 to the theophanic cloud of the Mosaic era. That this cloud entered and filled the temple showed Yahweh's approval and acceptance of the temple and his taking up "residence" there. The cloud filling the whole temple and this display of God's glory were temporary (only for the dedication).

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[11] Only in Exod 20:21; Deut 5:22; and 1 Kgs 8:12 (cf. 2 Chr 6:1) does עֲרָפֶל have the definite article. See M.J. Mulder, "*'ărāpel*," in G. Johannes Bottweck et al., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 15 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 11:371–375; see also C.F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 109.

As passages discussed below will indicate (Ps 97:2; Lev 16:2), Yahweh would continue to dwell in a cloud in heaven and in a cloud over the ark of the covenant that had just been placed in the Most Holy Place of the Jerusalem temple. These clouds, as well as the pillar of cloud of Moses' time and the cloud that descended on Mount Sinai, are all related—they were all connected with the divine presence.

Ezekiel 10 reflects the imagery from the scenes in Exodus 40 and 1 Kings 8 of the sanctuary, the cloud, and the glory of Yahweh. In Ezekiel 8–11, Ezekiel relates a vision granted to him by God, in which the prophet, an exile in Babylonia, is transported back to Jerusalem. In the vision he finds himself at the Solomonic temple. Ezekiel 10:3–4 reports part of what he sees there.

Ezekiel 10:3–4

[3] Now the cherubim were standing on the south [literally, "right"] side of the temple . . . and the cloud filled the inner court. [4] The glory of Yahweh went up from above the cherubim [understanding the singular noun as a collective] to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the bright-ness of the glory of Yahweh.

The definite article with "cloud"—"*the* cloud"—means that the cloud of Ezekiel's vision is to be associated with the pillar of cloud of the exodus and wilderness wanderings that was seen above the tabernacle and that then filled the Jerusalem temple at its dedication.[12] Given the background passages from the Torah and 1 Kings, a natural interpretation of Ezekiel 10:3–4 is that the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud, and when the cloud filled the temple, the "brightness of the glory" spilled out into the temple court. That Ezekiel sees the cloud and the glory at the temple indicates that the presence of Yahweh was still a reality at the Jerusalem temple. However, in the vision the glory of Yahweh, and presumably also the cloud, leave the immediate temple area and eventually go outside of Jerusalem—a sign that Yahweh would abandon his house and chosen city because of the wickedness of the inhabitants of Judah. Both the sanctuary and Jerusalem would undergo judgment from the Lord, namely, de-struction by the Babylonians.

Hummel makes a convincing case for viewing the references to the glory of Yahweh in Ezekiel as a manifestation especially of the preincar-

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[12] Horace Hummel reaches the same conclusion. See Horace Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 296.

nate Christ.[13] Hummel does so based in part on Ezekiel's inaugural vision when he was commissioned to be a prophet of Yahweh. In Ezekiel 1:26, the prophet reports that he saw "a likeness like the appearance of a man," a phrase that points to the incarnation of the Son of God, and in Ezekiel 1:28 the prophet realizes that what he is gazing upon is "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh."[14] Such an understanding of the glory of Yahweh mentioned in Ezekiel's visions parallels the reality of the Divine Angel being within the pillar of cloud that led Moses and the children of Israel.

This pillar of cloud accompanying the Israelites could, so to speak, come down from above and stand opposite a person or people. The first account of such an occurrence is in Exodus 33:7–11.

Exodus 33:7–11a

[7] Now Moses used to take the tent [a pre-tabernacle shrine] and pitch it outside the camp, at some distance from the camp. He called it the tent of meeting. It would be that anyone seeking Yahweh would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. [8] It would be, whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and watch Moses until he entered the tent. [9] It would be, when Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stand at the entrance of the tent, and he [Yahweh] spoke with Moses. [10] All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, and all the people arose and bowed down [or "worshipped"], each at the entrance of his tent. [11] So Yahweh spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

Without question, "the pillar of cloud" mentioned is the same one that appeared at the start of the exodus, and Yahweh—that is, his special presence—was within the pillar. At the entrance to the tent the invisible God, to use anthropomorphic language, "stood" opposite Moses and spoke with him, as the text states, "face to face." This reading of Exodus 33:7–11a serves as the lens through which later and similar passages are to be viewed.

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[13] Note especially Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 64–67. See also Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 42 (Boston: Brill, 1998), 80–84.

[14] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 64–65.

Numbers 11:24–25a

24 Moses went out and spoke to the people the words of Yahweh. He gathered seventy men from the elders of the people and caused them to stand around the tent [the tabernacle]. 25 Yahweh came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and drew [?] from the Spirit which was on him [Moses], and put [it] upon the seventy elders.

Numbers 11:25 speaks simply of "the cloud," but this is to be understood as the pillar of cloud mentioned in Exodus 33:9–10. The next passage occurs in the context of the account of Miriam and Aaron talking against Moses because of their jealousy of his leadership position, and Yahweh's reaction to their opposition.

Numbers 12:5, 9–10a

5 Yahweh came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam. Both of them came forward. 9 The anger of Yahweh burned against them, and he went away. 10 Now the cloud departed from over the tent, and behold, Miriam was leprous . . . .

Though the MT of Numbers 12:5 reads "a pillar of cloud," a number of Hebrew manuscripts have instead "the pillar of cloud" with the definite article prefixed to "cloud," the last word in the construct chain. Indeed, the definite article could have been accidentally omitted by a scribe (due to the similar appearance of the preceding *dalet* at the end of "pillar"), so the original text quite possibly read "the pillar of cloud." In this pillar, the same one referenced in the preceding passages, Yahweh "came down" and "stood" at the entrance of the tabernacle. Though the text does not state this explicitly, the impression given is that he spoke also with Aaron and Miriam "face to face." Then, apparently, Yahweh and the cloud went up from the entrance of the tent to the cloud's usual position above the tabernacle, and from there the cloud, and Yahweh, "departed" (סור), a dramatic demonstration of Yahweh's intense displeasure with Miriam and Aaron. This seems to indicate that the cloud left the Israelite camp, but where it went to and how long it was gone remains uncertain. Perhaps it did not go far away and was not long gone, for Aaron, right after Miriam was struck with leprosy, confessed the sin of both of them to Moses and pleaded for the healing of his sister. Then Moses cried out to Yahweh to heal Miriam, and immediately Yahweh responded, saying that she should be shut out of the Israelite camp for seven days, after which she could be received again (the implication being, by that point in time she would be healed, if this in fact had not already happened soon after Moses' petition). Another such

incident involving the pillar of cloud of cloud at the entrance of the tabernacle occurred shortly before the death of Moses, this time involving Moses and Joshua.

Deuteronomy 31:14b–15

[14] So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. [15] And Yahweh appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud and the pillar of cloud stood at [or "over"; Hebrew עַל] the entrance of the tent.

While the original text most likely had in Deuteronomy 31:15 the phrase, "Yahweh appeared at the tent in *a* pillar of cloud,"[15] this was the same pillar as in all the other passages previously examined. Psalm 99:6a–7 could be a summary of some of these passages, or perhaps presents new information regarding Aaron.

Psalm 99:6, 7

[6] Moses and Aaron were among his priests . . . . [7] In a pillar of cloud he used to speak to them. They kept his testimonies and statutes he gave to them.

Here the psalmist, recalling a portion of his nation's history that took place long before his lifetime, referred to the pillar as "*a* pillar of cloud," mainly because he had not previously mentioned it in the psalm. On the other hand, since the literary genre is poetry, the translation could read, "the pillar of cloud," even though the definite article is absent.

1 Corinthians 10:1–2

[1] For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that our fathers all were under the cloud, and all went through the sea, [2] and all were baptized into Moses in connection with [ἐν] the cloud and the sea.

Many versions translate 1 Corinthians 10:2 as "and all were baptized into Moses *in* the cloud and the sea," but this can be misleading and is not the best choice. Moses and the Israelites were never *in* the pillar of cloud. Rather, Paul uses the Greek preposition ἐν here, as he often does, with the sense "in connection with." The cloud—that is, Yahweh inside the cloud—had kept the Egyptians apart from the children of Israel, then led the Israelites through the sea—all of this making possible the "baptism"

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[15] Possibly the reading was "in the cloud"; see the apparatus of *BHS*. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997), 343.

into Moses. The sea, or water, also made possible this "baptism." Paul's use of the verb "baptized" leads to the conclusion that the sea crossing should be regarded as a type, a foreshadowing of the sacrament of Holy Baptism. The experience with the cloud and the water in the end decisively separated the children of Israel from the wicked Egyptians, made the Israelites into a unified body, and united them with Moses in a way in which they had not previously been joined to him (cf. Exod 14:31). So also Christian Baptism separates the baptized person from the unbelieving world, brings about a unified body, the one, holy Christian church, and unites the baptized with Christ in a new, blessed relationship.

Isaiah 4:5

> [5] Yahweh will create over all the place of Mount Zion and over its assembly a cloud by day and smoke and brightness of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory will be a canopy.

The wording of this verse clearly borrows from the earlier history of Israel during the time of Moses and is similar to the poetic language of Psalm 105:38a, 39: "Egypt was glad when they departed . . . . He spread a cloud for a covering [or "screen"] and fire to give light by night."[16] In the context of Isaiah 4:2–6, "Mount Zion" and "its assembly" is phraseology designating the Messiah's spiritual kingdom. The people whom the Messiah rules, who are in this kingdom, have been cleansed by him and endowed with wonderful blessings of salvation. Thus, "Mount Zion" and "its assembly" can also be called "the glory"; the Church is indeed glorious since she is the radiant bride of Christ (Eph 5:25–27). The imagery of "a cloud by day and smoke and brightness of a flaming fire by night," recalling the exodus and wilderness wandering, are terms of reassurance and comfort, portraying the fact that God will protect, lead, guide, and provide for those in spiritual Zion. At the end of Isaiah 4:5, "canopy" renders the Hebrew word חֻפָּה, which also occurs in wedding contexts (Ps 19:6 [ET 5]; Joel 2:16). "Canopy" is equal to the cloud mentioned earlier in this text. Whereas the pillar of cloud in Moses' day was in one limited area at any given time and not over the whole Israelite camp, the cloud/canopy of Isaiah 4:5 covered all Mount Zion and its assembly. This portrays the spiritual union each believer has with Christ. In reality, the Old Testament-era believers had similar union with the preincarnate Messiah through faith in him.

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[16] See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:385. Kaiser thinks, on the basis of Ps 105:39, that the width of the pillar of cloud at the base was sufficiently large to provide cover for Israel from the intense heat.

II. The Cloud of Mount Sinai

In addition to the pillar of cloud mentioned in the preceding passages, the Israelites saw another cloud in which was the special presence of Yahweh. This was the cloud that descended on Mount Sinai, where God gave to the nation his covenant guidelines through Moses. God foretold the coming of this cloud, which then, of course, actually appeared.

Exodus 19:9, 16-17

9 Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in the thick cloud [בְּעַב הֶעָנָן, literally, "in the thickness of the cloud"[17]], in order that the people may hear when I speak with you, and also that they may believe in you forever." 16 So it was on the third day, when it was the morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes, and a heavy [כָּבֵד] cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet sound. All the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 Moses brought out the people from the camp to meet God. They stood at the lowest part [or "foot"] of the mountain.

Again, this cloud was distinct from the pillar of cloud. This new cloud is described in a different way—as "a thick cloud" (Exod 19:9a) or "a heavy cloud" (Exod 19:16). Furthermore, it was not over the people but over Mount Sinai. In addition, accompanying this mountain cloud were thunder and lightning and a very loud trumpet sound. This combination frightened the Israelites so that they trembled, a reaction not reported in connection with the pillar of cloud. But also within the mountain cloud was the divine presence.

Exodus 24:15–18

15 Moses went up to the mountain and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of Yahweh settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. He called to Moses on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud. 17 Now the appearance of the glory of Yahweh to the eyes of the children of Israel was as a devouring fire on the top of the mountain. 18 Moses went into [בּוֹא] the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Evidently, Moses initially went a certain distance up the mountain, stopped, and stayed there for six days. Then on the seventh day, at the call of Yahweh, Moses entered the cloud and went up higher on Mount Sinai.

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17 See *BDB*, 716.

Also, in this cloud Yahweh manifested his glory, which now appeared as a devouring fire.

Exodus 34:4–6

⁴ So he [Moses] hewed out two stone tablets, like the first ones. Moses arose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as Yahweh had commanded him. He took in his hand two stone tablets. ⁵ Yahweh came down in the cloud and stood there with him. He called on the name of Yahweh. ⁶ Yahweh crossed by in front of him and proclaimed, "Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in gracious faithfulness and truth."

After forty days and forty nights on the mountain, Moses came down from Sinai, saw the golden calf, and in his anger threw down the two stone tablets given to him by Yahweh, shattering them at the foot of the mountain. Therefore, Moses returned to the mountain with two new tablets. Exodus 34:5 could be interpreted as indicating that the mountain cloud had departed Sinai, but now returned, within which was the presence of the Deity. Moses was once more in this cloud, and Yahweh, as the text states, "stood there with him." This is reminiscent of the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent and of Yahweh speaking with Moses "face to face" from that pillar.

Deuteronomy 4:11–12

¹¹ [Moses said to the people,] "You drew near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire unto the heart of the heavens; darkness, and cloud, and thick darkness [or "heavy cloud"; עֲרָפֶל]. ¹² Yahweh spoke to you from the midst of the fire. The sound of words you were hearing, but a form you were not seeing, only a voice."

Deuteronomy 5:19 (ET 22)

¹⁹ These words Yahweh spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness [עֲרָפֶל], with a loud voice, and he added no more.

In Deuteronomy, Moses recalls the experience at Sinai, which included the people seeing the mountain cloud and their awareness of Yahweh being within that cloud.

Psalm 97:2

² A cloud and thick darkness [עֲרָפֶל] are around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

God's coming down to Mount Sinai in a cloud likely is the background for, or at least partly related to, later passages in the Hebrew Bible. Psalm 97 describes Yahweh as Ruler.

Lamentations 3:44

[44] You have covered yourself with the cloud, preventing a prayer passing through.[18]

In Lamentations, the author grieves over Yahweh's allowing the destruction of Jerusalem and uses imagery from the Exodus.

Ezekiel 1:4

[4] I looked and behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud, and flashing fire, and brightness around it, and from its midst like the appearance of electrum from the midst of the fire.

Ezekiel's inaugural vision, in which he sees "a likeness like the appearance of a man" and "the appearance of the glory of Yahweh," begins with the approach of a storm wind and a great cloud.

Deuteronomy 33:2

[2] And he said, "Yahweh came from Sinai, he shone on them from Seir. He shone forth from Mount Paran and came from [some, "with," perhaps with textual emendation] ten thousands of holy ones.

Before leaving this discussion of the cloud of Sinai, there is one further consideration. When God descended on the mountain he was not alone; angels accompanied him. Deuteronomy 33:2, in the context of the poetic blessing given by Moses to the children of Israel just before his death, perhaps hints at this. One possible deduction from this verse is that thousands of angels had been with Yahweh at Sinai.[19] A similar thought can be derived from Psalm 68:18 (ET 17).

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[18] With regard to Ps 97:2, Lam 3:44, and the Sinai cloud in which God's glory was manifested as a blazing fire, compare certain passages in the Hebrew Bible in which עָב, "cloud(s), dark cloud, cloud mass" appears: Job 22:14; Ps 18:12–13 (ET 11–12); similar are 2 Sam 22:12–13 and Ps 104:3.

[19] Various translations have been proposed other than "ten thousands of holy ones." For example, Duane Christensen renders the phrase as a place name, Ribeboth-kodesh, which he thinks is to be interpreted as Kadesh-barnea (i.e., "Ribeboth at, or near, Kadesh"). Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10—34:12*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6B (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 832, 836, 838. See also J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), 307–308. For the MT's וְאָתָה מֵרִבְבֹת קֹדֶשׁ, the LXX gives witness to the

Psalm 68:18 (ET 17)

[18] The chariots of God are twenty thousand, thousands of thousands. The Lord is among them, as at Sinai, in holiness [or, with textual emendation, "The Lord has come from Sinai in holiness"].

The phrase "the chariots of God" should be understood as a reference to God's holy angels.[20] Some uncertainty remains regarding both the original reading and the translation of the second half of Psalm 68:18. The rendering "The Lord is among them, as at Sinai, in holiness" leads to the conclusion that myriads of angels were with God on Sinai when he gave the covenant guidelines to Moses.

Acts 7:53

[53] ". . . you who received the law by directions of angels [εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων[21]] and have not kept it."

This line of thought, based on these two Old Testament verses, is reinforced by passages from the New Testament. Stephen, shortly before his martyrdom in his sermon before the Sanhedrin, alludes to the presence of angels at Sinai. The law that Moses had received at Sinai was passed down from generation to generation, and in that way had come to the religious leaders of Stephen's day. The implication of Acts 7:53 is that Moses

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reading אֵת רִבְבֹת קֹדֶשׁ, "with the ten thousands of Kadesh." The Syriac, though, supports the reading וְאִתּוֹ רִבְבֹת קֹדֶשׁ, "and with him [were] ten thousands of holy ones." The following phrase (the remainder of Deut 33:2), according to the MT, is מִימִינוֹ אֵשְׁדָּת לָמוֹ, which is ambiguous and textually suspect. A frequent emendation is to separate אֵשׁ and דָּת, which results in the translation "from his right ["hand" or "side"] was the fire of law [= "fiery law"] for them." However, for this portion of Deut 33:2 the LXX has instead ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ, "from his right angels were with him." Richard Longenecker writes that "the first explicit association of angels with the giving of the law came about, it seems, with the LXX's translation of this phrase." Richard Longenecker, *Galatians,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 139.

[20] Terrance Callan notes that in later rabbinic thought Ps 68:18 was a key verse for the association of angels with the giving of the law, for the chariots of God mentioned there were "regularly understood as a reference to a large number of angels accompanying God at Sinai." Terrence Callan, "Pauline Midrash: The Exegetical Background of Gal 3:19b," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99, no. 4 (1980): 551. Marvin Tate, however, thinks that "Sinai" in this verse is a divine epithet, and renders the last portion as "Sinai is among the holy ones!" (the holy ones of the heavenly host). Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas, Word Books, 1990), 161, 166, 181.

[21] The translation is that of Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 237; abbreviated henceforth, *BDAG.*

acquired this "by directions of angels," by angels under God's direction to transmit it.[22] These angels, then, were with God at Sinai. Both of the following statements are true: God gave the law to Moses on the mountain, and angels gave him the law under God's direction.

Galatians 3:19

[19] Why therefore the law? It was added on account of transgressions, ordered [διαταγεὶς, aorist passive participle of διατάσσω] through angels by the hand of a mediator until the Seed should come to whom the promise had been made.

In this passage Paul expresses a thought similar to that of Stephen. Instead of "ordered,"[23] other translations have, for example, "enacted,"[24] "put into effect" (NIV), "having been ordained" (NAS), "appointed" (NKJV), and "put in place" (ESV). Whichever translation is used, Paul seems to be saying that on Sinai God gave the law "through," or "by means of," or "through the mediation of" angels.[25] God also used Moses, the "mediator," who received the law and then brought it to the Israelites.

Hebrews 2:2

[2] For if the word spoken through angels was firm [βέβαιος, which also can mean "reliable," "abiding," "in force"], and all transgression and disobedience received just recompense . . . .

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[22] *BDAG*, 237. Lenski notes that the translation and explanation of εἰς in the phrase is a crux. He thinks that the genitive "of angels" is subjective: they made "dispositions" or "arrangements." R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 301–302. Nevertheless, Lenski comes basically to the same conclusion as *BDAG*, namely, that angels helped in the giving of the law.

[23] *BDAG*, 238.

[24] Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, 1980), 509.

[25] See R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 170. Lenski writes, "God used the angels in his communication of the ordinances to Moses . . . . Just how the angels functioned in the giving of the law to Moses we do not know." See also R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1966), 65. For this understanding of God giving the Mosaic law through angels, cf. *Jubilees* 1.27–29; Philo, *De Somniis*, 1.140–143; and Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15.136 (some hold that "angels" in this passage from Josephus may be a reference to human messengers [prophets]). For other references, see Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 65, and A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), 361–362.

This verse, too, provides the information that God spoke or delivered the law "through" or "by means of" angels, this law from the start being firm and in force and the basis for meeting out just recompense to all transgressions and disobedience.[26]

Acts 7:38

> [38] This [Moses] is the one who was in the assembly in the desert with the angel who was speaking to him at [or "on"] Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers, the one who received living words to give to us.

Although God descended on Sinai with myriads of angels, one angel in particular was instrumental in the law coming to Moses. Based on the passages that have already been examined, a legitimate proposal is that this angel was preeminent among the others, and while he could have spoken to Moses directly, he made use of other angels, at least in part, to deliver his words to the prophet. Since it was the Divine Angel who spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3), a natural conclusion is that the angel of Acts 7:38 is also the Second Person of the Trinity (cf. Exod 34:5). Thus, God did not descend on Sinai by himself. He came in a cloud with thousands upon thousands of holy angels, including the Divine Angel.

III. The Cloud over the Ark of the Covenant

In Leviticus 16, God set forth instructions for the observance of the Day of Atonement. On that day, the most solemn in the Hebrew religious calendar, and on that day only, the high priest, and only the high priest, entered the Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies) to make ritual atonement for all the people of Israel.

Leviticus 16:2

> [2] Yahweh said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother that he should not go just at any time into the Holy Place, within the curtain, in front of the atonement cover which is on the ark, so he will not die. For in the cloud I appear over the atonement cover."

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[26] F.F. Bruce comments that "Stephen (Luke), Paul, and the writer to the Hebrews all seem to treat the angelic mediation of the law as a familiar and accepted idea." F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 153n99. See also F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 67n3.

In this verse, the term "Holy Place" is used for the Most Holy Place.[27] The verb translated "I appear" is the Niphal imperfect, first common singular of the root רָאָה, "to see"; another rendering could be, "I will appear."

One understanding of "the cloud" mentioned in Leviticus 16:2[28] is that this is the incense smoke that God, later in 16:12–13, will command the high priest to produce when he enters the Most Holy Place.[29] He does this by taking a pan full of glowing coals and two handfuls of incense and putting the incense on the fiery coals as soon as he enters the Most Holy Place. Leviticus 16:13 states that the cloud from the incense would cover the atonement cover with the result that the high priest would not die. The translation "I will appear" would lend support to this interpretation.

While such an understanding of the cloud of Leviticus 16:2 may indeed be correct, this paper takes a different position, namely, that the cloud was continually over the atonement cover.[30] Located there within the Most Holy Place, it was distinct from the pillar of cloud and the mountain cloud. The main reason for this interpretation is the phrase, "just at any time." This can be understood as indicating that the high priest could not enter the Most Holy Place at any time he wanted, in any way he chose, because the cloud in which God manifested his presence was *all the time* over the ark of the covenant. The imperfect Niphal verb conveyed to Moses the present, ongoing, and *constant* reality. Yahweh, to use biblical phraseology, was the one "dwelling over the cherubim"[31]—an image of a cherub was at each end of the atonement cover—and he did so in a cloud.

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[27] This is also the case elsewhere in Leviticus 16 (Lev 16:16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 33; see also 4:6; Ezek 41:21, 23). See John Kleinig, *Leviticus*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), 329. However, as Kleinig notes, in Lev 16:3 the term also refers to the area in the courtyard around the altar for burnt offering (as in Lev 10:4, 17, 18b; 14:13).

[28] John Hartley notes that the phrase "in the cloud" appears before the verb ("I appear/will appear") for emphasis. See John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 222.

[29] See, for example, Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 329. Cf. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1014–1015; Milgrom suggests that "the cloud" was produced not by the incense but by a separate ingredient placed on the coals before the high priest entered the Most Holy Place.

[30] See David N. Freedman and B.E. Willoughby, "עָנָן," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 15 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 11:256. They seem to take the same position, referring to "the cloud . . . that floats around and above the cover of the ark in the most holy place of the tent of meeting (Lev 16:2)."

[31] 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ps 80:2 [ET 80:1]; 99:1; Isa 37:16; cf. Exod 25:22; 30:6, 36; Num 7:89; 17:19 (ET 17:4). Moses listened to God from the Holy Place, the first compartment of the tabernacle.

Two questions arise. First, why did the high priest need an incense cloud to screen him from the cloud over the ark, whereas no screening was necessary between the pillar of cloud and the mountain cloud on the one hand and the children of Israel on the other? Perhaps this was because Yahweh manifested himself in a different way in the atonement-cover cloud—in a manner that would have caused death if seen by mortal eyes.[32] Second, why is this cloud not mentioned again? The answer might be that the atonement-cover cloud was never seen—not by the high priest who entered the Most Holy Place just one time each year, and certainly not by the other people of Israel.[33]

IV. The Transfiguration Cloud

The three Synoptic Gospels each report that a cloud was present during the transfiguration of Christ.

Matthew 17:5–6

[5] While he [Peter] was still speaking, behold, a bright [φωτεινὴ; or "shining," "radiant"] cloud overshadowed[34] them, and behold, a voice from the cloud speaking, "This one is my beloved Son, in whom I am pleased. Hear him!" [6] And the disciples, hearing, fell on their face and were very afraid.

Mark 9:6–7

[6] For he [Peter] did not know what he should answer, for they were terrified. [7] And a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and there was a voice from the cloud, "This one is my beloved Son, hear him!"

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[32] The Niphal verb "appear" is flexible and uncertain as to precise meaning so that definite, specific conclusions cannot be drawn from it. The Niphal of the same verbal root occurs in Deut 31:15, which states that Yahweh "appeared" in the pillar of cloud; see the prior discussion of this verse.

[33] This line of thought could be relevant with regard to a third question: When the ark was being moved, and was thus outside the Most Holy Place, was this cloud then visible? Perhaps the answer is "no" since the cloud might have been a reality only within the Most Holy Place.

[34] D.A. Carson writes that "it is uncertain whether *epeskiasen* means 'enveloped' . . . or 'overshadowed.'" See D.A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: with the New International Version of the Holy Bible, Vol. 8: Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 386.

Luke 9:34–35

> [34] And while he [Peter] was saying these things a cloud formed and was overshadowing them. And they were afraid when they went into the cloud. [35] And there was a voice from the cloud saying, "This one is my chosen Son; hear him!"

This study proposes a link between the transfiguration event, which involved a cloud, a mountaintop, and Moses, and the descent of God in a cloud on Mount Sinai and his meeting with Moses. Besides those obvious similarities, there are further hints in the Gospel accounts that lead to this connection. Matthew describes the transfiguration cloud as "bright." This reminds one that, although there was darkness at Sinai, the glory of the Lord was also evident through the thick cloud, appearing as a consuming fire (Exod 24:16–17; cf. Deut 4:11; 5:19 [ET 22]; Ezek 1:4; 10:4), which implies an aspect of brightness. Exodus 19:16 also refers to lightning flashes.

Luke is the only Gospel writer who uses the Greek word ἔξοδος ("exodus") in his transfiguration narrative—Moses and Elijah were speaking about Christ's "exodus" that he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). As Arthur Just explains, the use of the word "exodus" by Luke embraced Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, as it "calls to mind the exodus of the Israelites, the greatest redemptive event in OT history."[35]

In Luke 9:34 there is another link with the time of Moses, and specifically with the event at Mount Sinai. Luke writes that "they [the disciples] were afraid when *they went into* [εἰσελθεῖν] *the cloud*." This leads one to recall Exodus 24:18, where "Moses *went into the midst of the cloud*" on Sinai. Luke is reporting what actually took place. But his including in his account that the disciples entered the cloud and his choice of words to relate this, especially after he had used the word "exodus," permits the suggestion that Luke (who, after all, was taught by the Apostle Paul) saw behind the transfiguration the event at Mount Sinai.

No doubt, Peter, James, and John, having heard the Torah throughout their lifetime in the synagogue, thought of this event as they went into the cloud on the mountain and saw the glorified Christ. It is no wonder they were afraid. What other manifestation of the awesome divine presence would they encounter? The Israelites were rightfully afraid at what they saw at the top of Sinai, and only the great Moses, God's chosen leader of

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[35] Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 1:1—9:50*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 1996), 403.

his people, could go into the cloud. How could they, fishermen from Galilee, also enter a supernatural cloud? They were not in the same category, the same class, as Moses.

However, in a sense they were, and this might be one truth conveyed by the transfiguration account. Peter, James, and John can be seen as representatives of the disciples, who (except for Judas) would be God's chosen leaders of the New Testament era. Christ used them to found his New Testament church. In a very real way they spoke face to face with the Lord and were taught by him. Like Moses, they performed miracles by God's power. Through them, God gave his word to the people, as he did through Moses.

There is one other suggestion for consideration, in the form of a question. The voice coming from the transfiguration cloud was that of God the Father (cf. 2 Pet 1:18). Thus, within that cloud, the divine presence involved the First and Second Persons of the Trinity. A voice also emanated from the Sinai cloud, which the Israelites heard (Deut 4:11–12; 5:19 [ET 22]; cf. Exod 19:9). The Gospel writers, especially Luke, lead us to connect the transfiguration event with the event at Mount Sinai, that is, to see a relationship between the two. This paper has taken the position that on Sinai, within the cloud, the Divine Angel, namely, the Son of God, spoke to Moses. If the linking of the Sinai and transfiguration events is correct, should we see the voice at Mount Sinai as that of God the Father?

V. The Cloud(s) of Judgment Day

In a number of Old Testament passages, clouds were associated with God and his judging during the course of this world's history. For example, in a context foretelling judgment on Egypt, Ezekiel wrote, "For near is a day; even the day of Yahweh is near. It will be a day of cloud, a time for nations" (Ezek 30:3).[36] Isaiah, in an oracle concerning Egypt, used the Hebrew word עָב, which also means "cloud": "Behold, Yahweh is riding on a swift cloud, and coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them" (Isa 19:1).

Joel 2:2, describing the final judgment at the end of world history, mentions clouds: "A day of darkness and gloom; a day of cloud and thick cloud [עֲרָפֶל]." Zephaniah 1:14a–15 is similar: "Near is the great day of Yahweh . . . . A day of fury is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day

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[36] Cf. Ezek 30:18; 32:7; 34:12; Nah 1:3.

of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick cloud [עֲרָפֶל]."

In a context dealing with the Last Day, Daniel 7:13 prophesies that Jesus Christ will appear with clouds, "I kept looking in the visions of the night, and behold, with [עִם] the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming. He came to the Ancient of Days, and he was brought before him."[37] The "one like a Son of Man" is Christ, who is human but also much more than a mere human being.

The theme of Christ and the clouds on Judgment Day continues in New Testament literature. This is seen in the Gospel accounts of the teaching of Christ about his second advent, which he spoke after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and before his sufferings began. For example, from Matthew 24:30, "And then will be revealed the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will strike their breast and will see the Son of Man coming on [ἐπὶ; Mark and Luke use ἐν] the clouds of heaven with power and much glory."[38] Jesus used similar language in his trial before the high priest Caiaphas, "Jesus said to him, 'You yourself said it. Moreover, I say to you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power and coming on [ἐπὶ; Mark 14:62 uses μετὰ] the clouds of heaven'" (Matt 26:64). And in Revelation 1:7 the apostle John wrote about the second coming of Jesus: "Behold, he is coming with [μετὰ] the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him."[39]

In these passages, we see flexibility with regard to the preposition, namely, that Jesus, in coming "in" clouds, at the same time will be coming "on" clouds and "with" clouds. Also, Jesus will be coming in a particular cloud along with other clouds. Once again Luke leads us to recall the Sinai event with his precise wording in Luke 21:27: "And then they will see the Son of Man coming *in a cloud* [singular] with power and much glory." In Exodus 19:9a, Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you *in* the thick *cloud* [singular]," and Exodus 34:5 reports that "Yahweh came down *in* the *cloud* [singular]." As we have seen, the other passages from the

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[37] The translation is that of Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2008), 337.

[38] Lenski regards the clouds as the symbol of God's heavenly majesty and of the divine judgment. See R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 949, 1065–1066.

[39] Concerning other New Testament passages, cf. 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 10:1; 14:14–16; also Acts 1:9, 11.

Pentateuch that relate what took place at Sinai, also used the singular of עָנָן, "cloud."

Furthermore, Jesus mentions a trumpet sounding at his second advent in Matthew 24:31, as does Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, and Exodus 19:16 stated that there was "a very loud trumpet sound" at Sinai. In addition, speaking about Judgment Day, Jesus said, "And when the Son of Man comes in his *glory*, and *all the angels with him*, then he will sit down on his throne of glory" (Matt 25:31). One is reminded of the fact that God displayed his glory at Sinai[40] and that the Divine Angel came there with thousands upon thousands of his holy angels.

Thus, Scripture teaches that the Last Day, Judgment Day, will involve the divine presence within the cloud, or clouds. However, when this happens, this presence will be actually visible and not hidden by the cloud, because God became a man, Jesus Christ.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

The pillar of cloud, the Mount Sinai cloud, and, as it was known by the Israelites, the cloud above the ark of the covenant, both revealed and concealed God. The special presence of the Lord was within those clouds, but still, Yahweh was not actually seen by the people. Through the pillar and mountain clouds, God manifested his glory to them, yet this was a muted, indeed a veiled, revelation.

These three clouds conveyed the reality of the immanence and transcendence of God, that is, his nearness to, and distance from, the Israelites. God was right there with the people: in the pillar of cloud that led them, that entered the tabernacle, that stayed over the tabernacle, and that would come down to the entrance of the tent; in the mountain cloud that was relatively close to the Israelite camp; and in the cloud above the atonement cover, the ark being within the tabernacle, which was in the midst of the camp. However, there was also a space between the Israelites and the pillar of cloud, and only Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Joshua had a closer encounter with this cloud. Only Moses entered the Sinai cloud. Only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies once a year, and the incense cloud he produced upon his entrance screened him from the cloud above the ark of the covenant.

The pillar of cloud, the mountain cloud, and the atonement-cover cloud reminded the Israelites that God could be at different locations at the

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[40] Regarding "glory," see also Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26; and Luke 21:27.

same time. They could speak of Yahweh's presence being localized but also confess that Yahweh was omnipresent.

Especially with the pillar of cloud, which was evidently with the Israelites until their entrance into the Promised Land, and in which was the Divine Angel of Yahweh, there is a foreshadowing of the incarnation of the Son of God. The Israelites saw God, so to speak, veiled within the cloud. With regard to the Second Person becoming man, the Christmas hymn states accurately, "veiled in flesh the Godhead see."[41] When the people saw Jesus, they were seeing God in the form of, in the body of, a man.

The event at Mount Sinai foreshadowed the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain. In both a cloud was present, as well as the Son of God and Moses; also, the glory of God was manifested. This study has suggested that the voice coming from the cloud on Sinai was that of God the Father, as on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Furthermore, the event at Sinai foreshadowed the second coming of Christ. What took place at the desert mountain will occur once more on Judgment Day: the Son of God coming in a cloud in glory, proclaiming his word, with the myriads of holy angels and with the sound of a trumpet.

We see, then, a fundamental relationship among the clouds examined in this study; the pillar of cloud, the Sinai cloud, the atonement-cover cloud, the transfiguration cloud, and the cloud(s) of Christ's second advent. Within each was, or will be, the divine presence. That was a blessed reality for the Israelites and for the apostles, and it will be for us on the Last Day.

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[41] "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 380:2.

Not Just Proof-Texting:
Friedrich Balduin's Orthodox Lutheran Use
of Exegesis for Doctrine

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

Lutheran exegesis in the Orthodox period (1580–1750)[1] took place in a wide variety of contexts and forms. Much has been explored regarding Orthodox Lutheran dogmatics, and more has been done recently to study their piety and meditation. But the history of scriptural exegesis is still mostly untouched.[2] In textbooks of church history, the military history of the Thirty Years War takes far more space than the theology and religious life of Lutherans in the seventeenth century. The theology of the period is remembered as scholastic. The work of hymn writers is remembered, but nothing more.[3] The theology of the period was supposedly based on Scripture, but due to "rigid, exact, and demanding intellectual conformity,"[4] faith had become impersonal, consisting of assent to dogma. This Protestant Scholasticism, so it is often thought, was influenced by the rationalism against which it struggled.[5]

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[1] Robert Kolb, "Lutheran Theology in Seventeenth-Century Germany," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (2006): 429–456; Ernst Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter: Katholizismus, Luthertum, Calvinismus (1563–1675)* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 211–259; Markus Matthias, "Orthodoxie: I. Lutherische Orthodoxie," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995); Johannes Wallmann, "Lutherische Konfessionalisierung—Ein Überblick," in *Die Lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1992), 33–53.

[2] Johann Anselm Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy," in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbø, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 2:699; Kolb, "Lutheran Theology in Seventeenth-Century Germany," 444.

[3] Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985), 526–534.

[4] Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 587.

[5] Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 587; Jürgen Quack, *Evangelische Bibelvorreden von der Reformation bis zur Aufklärung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1975), 167, 176.

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This view of the era, however, is quite narrow. It knows the theology of the era only via the dogmatics texts, superficially considered. Not surprisingly, scholars who only know of dogmatics texts think that Lutheran exegesis in the seventeenth century declined sharply. Humanism was set aside, they think, and the scholasticism that Luther had condemned marched victoriously into Lutheran theology. Even though Johann Gerhard, as a prominent example, used Scripture copiously in his *Theological Commonplaces* and other works, many still think that, as a whole, Scriptural exegesis retreated. The Bible was used, they think, merely as proof-texts for preconceived dogmatic theses. While it may have been pious, the Lutheran Orthodox system was supposedly only the production of an uncreative age, deficient of authority; dogmatics and polemics choked all other theological disciplines, including exegesis; the Bible became nothing more than a collection of proof texts; the results of this "phony philology" were grotesque, according to this view, such as the attempt to find all of Lutheran dogma in the book of Genesis.[6]

Thankfully, a number of recent studies have called into question this view of the Orthodox Lutherans only as defenders of rigid dogma to the neglect of exegesis. These recent studies have noticed the central role that exegesis played for the Orthodox Lutherans in general.[7] Richard A. Muller's words are fitting: "Since it has so often been implied that the Reformation was a time of exegesis, virtually without dogma, and the era of orthodoxy was a time of dogmatic system without exegesis, it must be added that at no time before or since the era of orthodoxy was systematic

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[6] Friedrich Uhlhorn, *Geschichte der deutsch-lutherischen Kirche*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1911), 1:135–136; Karl Heussi, *Kompendium Der Kirchengeschichte*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1956), 356–366.

[7] Kenneth G. Appold, "Abraham Calov on the 'Usefulness' of Doctrine," in *Hermeneutica Sacra: Studies of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the Sixteenth and Seventeeth Centuries*, ed. Torbjörn Johansson, Robert Kolb, and Johann Anselm Steiger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 312; Kenneth G. Appold, "Scriptural Authority in the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy," in *The Bible in the History of the Lutheran Church*, ed. John A. Maxfield (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 2005), 26; Michael Coors, *Scriptura efficax: Die biblisch-dogmatische Grundlegung des theologischen Systems bei Johann Andreas Quenstedt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 23–25; Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy," 723; Volker Jung, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift: Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung bei Abraham Calov* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1999), 222–223; Robert D. Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 193–194; Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene J. Lund, 4th English ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 299–303.

theology so closely wedded to the textual and linguistic work of the exegete."[8] In both Latin and German, Lutherans in Germany wrote cursory explanations of biblical books; preached through books of the Bible and the Apocrypha at midweek services; published postils and sermon studies for the liturgical year; published polyglot Bibles and study Bibles; wrote rhymed paraphrases of biblical books; and published pedagogical, philological, and exegetical Bible commentaries. Indeed, the center of theological study was the philological study of the Bible.[9]

Much Orthodox Lutheran exegesis, but by no means all of it, was dogmatic and polemical. In this Lutheran dogmatic exegesis, exegetes were interested in presenting the doctrines of the Christian faith as resting on certain, clear passages of Scripture (*loci classici* or *sedes doctrinae*).[10] This approach to exegesis, which gathered dogmatic points of teaching as a result of exegetical work, can be seen first of all in Johann Gerhard's locus *On Christ* (1625), in which his entire chapter on the two states of Christ is an extended commentary on Philippians 2.[11] The same approach can be seen, secondly, in Gerhard's *Method of Theological Study.* From the very beginning of theological study, Gerhard leads his students to read Scripture in two ways: cursorily and accurately. In the cursory reading, the student reads through the Bible every year in the vernacular or Latin, reading didactic books of Scripture in the morning and historical books in the evening. The accurate reading of Scripture requires students to study

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[8] Richard A. Muller, "Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries," in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 135–136.

[9] Ernst Koch, "Die 'Himlische Philosophia des heiligen Geistes'. Zur Bedeutung alttestamentlicher Spruchweisheit im Luthertum des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 115 (1990): 706–20; Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter*, 227; Stephen G. Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500–1660)* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 93–137; Johann Georg Walch, *Bibliotheca Theologica Selecta Litterariis Adnotationibus Instructa*, 4 vols. (Jenae: sumtu viduae Croeckerianae, 1765), 4:400–1050; Muller, "Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries," 146.

[10] Jung, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift*; Hägglund, *History of Theology*; Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy"; Appold, "Abraham Calov on the 'Usefulness' of Doctrine"; Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture*; Muller, "Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries"; Koch, "Die 'Himlische Philosophia des heiligen Geistes'. Zur Bedeutung alttestamentlicher Spruchweisheit im Luthertum des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts."

[11] Johann Gerhard, *On the Person and Office of Christ*, ed. Benjamin T.G. Mayes, trans. Richard J. Dinda, Theological Commonplaces, Exegesis IV (1625) (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009), 298–317.

the Bible in Greek and Hebrew every day, reading a trusted commentary alongside, and writing observations and excerpts in large blank books that would serve future ministers as a portable library. In disputations, students were instructed to take the foundations of their position first from Scripture, including necessary conclusions drawn from Scripture, and only thereafter to bring forth testimonies of the early church fathers and decrees of councils as witnesses, followed by an argumentative use of the adversaries' assent and philosophy. Doctrinal and exegetical tradition was cultivated and revered, but not seen as above criticism.[12]

I. Friedrich Balduin and Dogmatic Exegesis

The exegesis of Wittenberg theology professor Friedrich Balduin (1575–1627) sets forth this same approach to dogmatic exegesis. Balduin became superintendent and chief preacher of Wittenberg in 1607, succeeding Georg Mylius. In 1608 he became the senior member of the Wittenberg faculty, after the death of Leonhard Hutter.[13] His often-reprinted works include sermon studies for the church year (*Hypomnemata*); Latin commentaries on Luther's *Smalcald Articles* (1537) and the Saxon *Visitation Articles* (1592); polemical works against Roman Catholics, Socinians, and the Reformed; a short hermeneutics text; and large-scale commentaries on the Pauline Epistles arising from his presidency at academic disputations. In German he published sermon series on Old Testament books, a plethora of funeral sermons, books on types of Christ from the Old Testament, and a postil. Posthumously his *Cases of Conscience* and editions of his collected Pauline commentaries were reprinted several times.

Besides writing a significant Lutheran casuistry,[14] Balduin's work centered on exegesis and dogmatics. His exegesis is typical of all the Lutheran

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[12] Johann Gerhard, *Methodus Studii Theologici* (Jenae: Tobiae Steinmanni, 1620); Johann Gerhard, *On Interpreting Sacred Scripture and Method of Theological Study*, ed. Benjamin T.G. Mayes, trans. Richard J. Dinda, Theological Commonplaces, I–II (St. Louis: Concordia, forthcoming 2017); Benjamin T.G. Mayes, "Lumina, Non Numina: Patristic Authority according to Lutheran Arch-Theologian Johann Gerhard," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*, ed. Jordan Ballor, David Sytsma, and Jason Zuidema (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 457–470.

[13] Roderick Henry Martin, "The Reformation of Conscience: Rhetoric in the Lutheran Casuistry of Friedrich Balduin (1575–1627)" (Ph.D., University of Virginia, 2008), 59–85.

[14] Benjamin T.G. Mayes, *Counsel and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning after the Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 30–37.

Orthodox. In his exegesis, he analyzes and explains sections of the biblical text with the goal of discovering the doctrines that they contain.

All of this may seem vague, however. How could dogmatics and scriptural exegesis come together? A key to answering this question can be found in a little-known book of Balduin, the *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum* ("Way of Biblical Dispositions," 1622). This work is a guide to exegesis and preaching, very similar in aim to St. Augustine's *On Christian Teaching.* In this little book, written in Latin, Balduin directs the reader of Scripture first of all to pray, and then to explain and analyze the text regarding its structure. After a biblical pericope has been explained and partitioned, the next step is to gather doctrines from the text. The gathering of doctrines is not left to the whim of the interpreter; Balduin provides nine rules that draw mainly on Scripture (but also on early church fathers) for their support. Finally, not just the text but also the doctrines are to be applied both to the "well" and to the "sick."[15] Part two of the text is an isagogical introduction to the books of Scripture. Part three deals with how to interpret different biblical genres. This is also where allegories and types are discussed, as well as homiletics.

Because Balduin's rules for deriving doctrine from exegesis are completely unknown to churches and scholars of our day, it will be useful to examine what these rules were. Chapter four, where Balduin explains his rules, is entitled, "How to Gather Doctrines from the Text, After It Has Been Explained and Divided."[16] The word for "divided" here is *distributo,* meaning "outlined" or "partitioned." That is, one must know what parts of the text belong together. Now, the point of gathering doctrines from Scripture is to make "use" of it. Balduin writes: "The meaning of Scripture without use is empty knowledge. Paul writes that this 'puffs up' (1 Cor 8:1)." All that were written (*scripta*) were written for our teaching (*in nostram doctrinam*) (Rom 15:4). Scripture is "divinely inspired" (θεόπνευστος), and is useful for teaching (*ad docendum*), etc. (2 Tim 3:16).[17] Therefore, after understanding Scripture, it is correct to deal with its *use,* which consists in its true application. Application deals with the doctrines that are to be

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[15] Friedrich Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum* (Wittebergae: Helwigius, 1622); Appold, "Scriptural Authority in the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy," 27–28; Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 1:337.

[16] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 31. All translations are the author's.

[17] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 31.

drawn from the biblical text and then also with the people whom those doctrines serve.[18]

The first rule is, "Doctrines must not be heterogenous" (i.e., of a different kind) "from the text, but similar [*conformes*] to it." Thus a legal text does not yield an evangelical doctrine. Therefore it would be erroneous to derive doctrine about Christ from the Decalog, since the Decalog in and of itself does not mention Christ. Nevertheless, indirectly, Christ can be mentioned since he is the fulfillment of the law, and for this reason the law is called a "tutor unto Christ" in Galatians 3:24.[19] Balduin here recognizes different categories and genres in Scripture. He denies that everything can be gotten from just any passage. Not all passages are gospel. Not every passage speaks explicitly and directly of Christ.

The second rule is, "Doctrines must not be taken from corrupt translations, but must flow from the sources themselves, if possible." For example, it would be bad to teach from the Vulgate of Titus 3:10 that "a heretical man [should be removed] from life" (*Haereticum hominem devita*) since the Greek means "avoid or shun a heretical man."[20]

The third rule: "An example in its own genus—for example, ethical, domestic [*Oeconomicum*]—has the force of a general rule, according to the logical axiom, 'A genus in actuality is in each species.'" Thus Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:11 says the examples of the punished Israelites were our types. (He means, they instructed us not to act as they did.) And Christ in Luke 13:3 used the example of the death of Galileans to make the general rule that unless you repent, you all will perish together.[21] Note that these are examples where God's judgment was also expressed. Balduin does not make this clear, but his examples demonstrate it. Thus his rule could be reformulated to say, "Whenever an example is given with a divine judgment on that action, this has the force of a general rule within its category."

The fourth rule: "There can be many doctrines from one Scripture [passage], but not all should always be set forth at the same time. Instead, one should select those that are apt to each place and time."[22] For example, when Christ preached on Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," etc., he did not deal with the Holy Spirit's person and office, manner of

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[18] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 32.

[19] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 32.

[20] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 32.

[21] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 33.

[22] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 33.

anointing, or other doctrines, but only with his ministry, in which that prophecy had been fulfilled (Luke 4:18). That is what he intended to fulfill at that time.[23] This rule, by the way, makes it clear that Balduin is using the word *doctrina* to mean not just a "doctrine" (i.e., an official point of the church's faith and teaching) but also "teaching" in a more general sense, that is, something that a preacher needs to teach his people on a given occasion. For Balduin, doctrines are not just formulaic statements in catechisms and textbooks but scriptural content relating to faith in Christ and life according to God's law that is actually being taught.

The fifth rule: "Even though the doctrines that flow from the letter of the text are the best of all, because it is certain that the Holy Spirit intended them, nevertheless it is not always necessary that all [doctrines] be precisely literal. Rather, the text can also be applied to other things that the Holy Spirit did not directly intend, as long as they are not completely heterogenous, but have an analogy with the literal sense."[24] This is the broadest of the rules, and Balduin gives many examples of it.

The Holy Spirit himself gives examples of this rule when he applies Old Testament texts in the New Testament to doctrines that are not found directly in the text. Hebrews 4:3 uses Psalm 95:11, "they will not enter into my rest," to teach about eternal life since "allegorically" the land of Canaan signified this. The doctrine is gotten "by the translation of hypothesis to thesis," or the application of the history to a commonplace. For example, this is how the gathering of the manna in Exodus 16:18 is applied in 2 Corinthians 8:14–15. Another example is Jeremiah 48:10: "Cursed is he who does the Lord's work negligently." Literally and historically this applied to the war against the Midianites, but it is correct to apply it, says Balduin, to any work commanded by the Lord in any genus of life.[25] This seems to be a case where the Scriptures give a general principle. Balduin is saying that one may gather doctrines from these general principles even if the application of the principle in the biblical text was different.

Sometimes doctrines are taken from *types*. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7) is taken from the history of the Passover lamb in

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23 Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 33–34.

24 Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 34.

25 Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 34–35.

Exodus 12. Now, Exodus 12 says nothing about Christ or the lamb being sacrificed, yet Paul refers it to Christ who was sacrificed on the cross.[26]

Sometimes doctrines are taken from *anagogy.* For example, Deuteronomy 25:4 reads, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and Paul applies this to the salary of ministers (1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18). Here again, a general principle is drawn out and applied to different situations. Likewise, the ancients used Isaiah 1:5 and Luke 10:30 (the man "half dead" in the parable of the Good Samaritan) to speak of the corruption of human nature in spiritual matters.[27]

Sometimes a doctrine is drawn out by *synecdoche.* Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I have called my son," is applied to Christ, the head of his people (Matt 2:15). The ancients applied Hosea 6:2, "After two days he will revive us," to the resurrection of Christ. Hosea was speaking of the members, and this is rightly applied to the head, Christ.[28]

Sometimes doctrines are elicited from a text by *fitting argumentation* when the letter of the text does not contain it. In Rom 3:11, Paul teaches that the whole world is guilty of sin on the basis of several Psalms and of Isaiah 9, even though those passages deal with the specific sins of certain individuals. Paul is arguing from the lesser to the greater. If things were bad at the time of David and Hezekiah, things are much worse now, he argues.[29]

Balduin explains why he has used all these biblical examples. It appears that he is guarding the legitimacy of deriving doctrine from Scripture where it is implied but not explicitly stated. He writes,

> More doctrines of this sort, which should be drawn from the text even though the literal exposition does not suggest them, could be noted from the Scriptures of the New Testament. But these suffice, and we should set them against the ignorant and rigid censors, who criticize a similar application of passages of Scripture—something they cannot by rights do unless they want to criticize the holy apostles, who gather doctrines from the Scriptures similarly in this category.[30]

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[26] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 35.

[27] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 35–37.

[28] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 37.

[29] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 37.

[30] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 37–38.

From this, it is clear that Balduin sees the apostles' exegesis of the Old Testament as *exemplary* for our exegesis, not *exhaustive* of the prophetic, typological, and doctrinal content of the Old Testament.

The sixth rule: "From one passage diverse doctrines can be elicited, as long as they are not contrary." For example, from Isaiah 43:19, "Behold, I make all things new," Paul teaches about the renewal of man in 2 Corinthians 5:17, while John in Revelation 5:17 speaks of the glory of the blessed in the other life. Paul's doctrine flows from the literal sense of that passage, while John's only alludes to it.[31]

The seventh rule: "Sometimes one doctrine is confirmed from two passages of Scripture." When Jesus cleanses the temple in Luke 19:46, for example, he takes his biblical rationale for his action from two separate passages: Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. Paul in Romans 9:25–26 proves the calling of the Gentiles from Hosea 1:10 and 2:23.[32] Thus according to Balduin, a doctrine does not have to be stated in its entirety in a single part of Scripture. Due to the unity of divinely inspired Scripture, a doctrine can be drawn from multiple passages.

The eighth rule: "From the Scriptures that deal with the created things that were made for our use, moral doctrines should be taken." The beauty of the sun and stars should not only teach us about their more beautiful and glorious Creator. If God adorned his exiles with excellent gifts, even though they are burdened with the stain of sin, the gifts he gives to his elect in the blessedness of heaven will be even more splendid. The earth on which we tread should teach us humility, since we ourselves were made of it. The dominion that we have over beasts should admonish us to love mankind and not to become brutish since we are lords over the brutes. A quote from St. Basil's commentary on the seven days of creation, the *Hexaemeron,* extends the treatment here.[33] In this rule Balduin seems to be saying that when finding created things in a text of Scripture, keep in mind the purpose for which they were created, especially as this is stated at the beginning of Genesis. This created purpose, then, will lead the interpreter to derive a moral doctrine from them.

Finally, the ninth rule: "In the sins of the saints, doctrine is not to be referred to imitation, but to emendation and caution." A quotation from St. Augustine's *On Christian Teaching* (chs. 22–23) ends with: "There is almost

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[31] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 38.

[32] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 38–39.

[33] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 39–40.

no page of the Sacred Books in which one does not hear that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble."[34]

The next chapter of this book, chapter 5, is worthy of future study. In brief, Balduin deals there with the "Distinction of Sacred Doctrines." After discussing the difference between "open" and "hidden" doctrines, he discusses legitimate ways to gather doctrines by drawing conclusions from statements in the biblical text. These are: 1) Concluding the genus from a species, 2) An antitype from the type, 3) The lesser from the greater, 4) The greater from the lesser, 5) The effect from the cause, 6) The cause from the effect, 7) One contrary from the other, and 8) The antecedent from the consequent. In the final section of the chapter he discusses the different kinds of doctrines that one will find in Scripture: "teaching," "reproof," "instruction in righteousness," and "correction." He draws these from 2 Timothy 3:6, a verse that gave very many of the Lutheran Orthodox their approach to exegesis: finding not "law and gospel" in the text, but finding the *use.*[35]

In his commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, which were published individually during his lifetime and in a single large volume after his death,[36] Balduin put this method into practice. For each chapter of Paul's epistles, Balduin provided a summary and general outline, the biblical text in Greek and Latin, analysis and explanation of the text, a paraphrase, questions that arise from the text with their answers (usually resolving apparent contradictions, sometimes polemical), and finally theological aphorisms—a plethora of doctrinal statements resting on each section of Pauline text. Each of these sections merits further study. Balduin's dogmatic exegesis shows that the search for dogmas in the text of Scripture came especially from the desire to make salutary application (*usus*) of the text to the lives of Christians.

II. An Example of Dogmatic Exegesis, on 2 Corinthians 3:1–5

How, then, is dogmatic exegesis done? As an example, we choose Balduin's comments on 2 Corinthians 3:1–5, of which only verse 5 is cited in the Book of Concord, where it helps prove that fallen human beings have no free will in spiritual matters before conversion (FC Ep II 3; SD II

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[34] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 40–41.

[35] Balduin, *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, 41–47.

[36] See, for example, Friedrich Balduin, *Apologia Apostolica: hoc est, S. Apostoli Pauli Epistola Posterior Ad Corinthios, Commentario perspicuo illustrata* (Wittebergae: Selfichius, 1620); Friedrich Balduin, *Commentarius In Omnes Epistolas Beati Apostoli Pauli* (Francofurti: Mevius, 1654).

12, 26, 71). Given this use in the Book of Concord, one would expect Balduin to find the doctrine of the bondage of the will in this text as well. Balduin, however, finds much more in this passage.

Overview and Translation

At the beginning of his commentary on 2 Corinthians 3, Balduin gives a brief overview of the chapter and summarizes the pericope we will consider. "Therefore there are two parts of the chapter. The former includes a commendation of the apostle's ministry and of the labors in it that he had undertaken hitherto, up to verse 6."[37] He then provides the Greek text of 2 Corinthians 3:1–5 parallel with a Latin translation. His Latin version, translated into English, reads:

> [1] Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Do we really need, as some [do], letters of commendation among you, or of commendation from you? [2] You are our letter, written in our hearts, which is understood and read by all men, [3] while you declare that you are a letter of Christ furnished by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but in fleshy tablets of the heart. [4] This is the sort of confidence that we have through Christ toward God, [5] not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as from ourselves, but if we are sufficient for anything, it is from God.[38]

Explication of the Text

The first main part of Balduin's commentary consists of analysis and explication of the text. Paul here is using two arguments to commend the dignity of his ministry. First, he cites the testimony of the Corinthians, whom he had converted to faith in Christ. Second, he cites the authority of God himself, who had committed this office to him and equipped him with sufficient gifts. He uses the metaphor of a "letter." Their piety and faith were the "letters in action" [*reales literae*] that testified of Paul's sincerity and fidelity.[39] Balduin unpacks what features every letter has and shows how Paul mentions these: author, amanuensis, writing material, and page. The language of writing letters on fleshy hearts was undoubtedly taken, according to Balduin, from Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26; and Jeremiah 31:33.[40]

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[37] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 591.

[38] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 591.

[39] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 591.

[40] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 592.

The second argument to commend Paul's ministry is the efficient cause of his ministry: God. He is the one who made Paul sufficient for this ministry even though of himself Paul was insufficient for it. He did this by granting Paul the gifts necessary for such a great undertaking. Yet Paul is careful to take glory away from himself and to refer it to God. He attributes all the power of the preached gospel to God. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul calls himself a "minister of the New Testament," that is, a herald of the gospel (that is, of the doctrine of Christ incarnate, the fulfillment of the predictions and promises of Moses and the prophets). "Testament" means all the doctrine pertaining to the new covenant that was sanctioned by the blood of Christ on the cross toward God and in the Lord's Supper toward us. What is set forth in the covenant in brief words is explained in Holy Writ most fully. From this occasion Paul will next transition to a comparison of the two testaments in the second part of the chapter.[41]

Paraphrase of the Text

After the commentary, Balduin gives a paraphrase of the biblical text. This is where he restates the apostolic text in accord with the explanation that he just gave. For example, he paraphrases verses 1–2 as follows:

> In all of these things which I hitherto have written about myself—lest I seem to be a witness in my own suit, as some people commend themselves or take your testimonies forcefully—I am appealing explicitly to the testimonies of all the churches in which I have been teaching hitherto. Moreover, I am producing you yourselves as a living testimony that is written not on paper or parchment, where it could be erased easily, but in the innermost part of my heart, where it has the indelible testimony of my office, that I have administered it rightly among you.[42]

Questions Arising from the Text

Next, Balduin presents several "questions" on the text. The question section for each pericope presents apparent contradictions and doctrinal challenges that Balduin then resolves. The questions that he considers are often taken from the Bible commentaries of theological adversaries, who use the biblical text to try to prove false doctrine. On 2 Corinthians 3:1–5, Balduin answers the following questions:

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[41] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 592.

[42] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 592–593.

1. Why does the apostle speak with such contempt about letters of recommendation, which teachers of the word receive from their churches (v. 1), when elsewhere he writes that a bishop must have a good testimony from those who are outside (1 Tim 3:7)?

2. Why does the apostle write in verse 3 that the Corinthians are a letter of Christ written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not in stone tablets but in fleshy tablets of the heart? Is it right to infer from this that in the time of the New Testament there is no need for the written word, that traditions of the living voice suffice, which penetrate the heart itself and do not remain in written letters?

3. Is it right to infer from our apostle's text, where he says, "Christians have the Spirit of God in fleshy tablets of the heart," that the justification of the ungodly consists not in the forgiveness of sins alone but in the sanctification and renewal of the inner man?

4. The heart of a man not yet converted is compared with tablets of stone in v. 3. Is there, therefore, no difference between a heart not yet converted and a stone tablet?

5. Paul speaks non-specifically about the "powerlessness" of human powers, namely, that we are not sufficient of ourselves "to consider anything." Hence, it is not at all beside the point to ask: in all matters whatsoever, can man think nothing good without the specific aid of God?

6. In v. 5 Paul writes that we are not sufficient to think anything from ourselves, as of ourselves, etc. On the basis of this, is it possible to establish free choice in spiritual matters?[43]

Question 2 gives Balduin the opportunity to discuss the five-fold necessity of apostolic Scripture. Here the discussion is against the Roman Catholic claim that unwritten, nonscriptural traditions are necessary.[44] Question 3 deals with justification. Here Balduin grapples with the exegesis of Petrus Stevartius, who claimed from this passage that the justification of the wicked consists in the sanctification and renovation of the inner man.[45] Question 4 deals with conversion. Here Paul's discussion of writing not on tablets of stone but on the fleshy tablets of hearts leads Balduin to consider the difference between the human heart and stone,[46] a

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[43] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 593–596.

[44] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 593–594.

[45] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 594–595.

[46] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 595.

topic that also had arisen in FC SD II 59 ("On Free Will"). In question 6, Balduin opposes exegesis based on rationalization (λογίσασθαι), which tries to narrow the scope of this passage from dealing with our human thoughts to dealing only with rational conclusions.[47]

In question 5, 2 Corinthians 3:5 leads to the question of whether God's special help is needed for man to think anything good in absolutely all matters. The question is dealing with whether there is any goodness left in natural man after the fall, even in civil matters. Balduin is careful to explain the context of 2 Corinthians 3:5. Paul is ascribing the efficacy of his ministry not to his own powers but to God, who made him sufficient as a minister of the New Testament. Balduin then limits how far this text can be used to make doctrine. "But if this hypothesis should be transferred to thesis,[48] beyond spiritual actions concerning the cure of the soul and or our salvation, this text cannot be extended." But it does speak to natural man's ability to think salutary thoughts of himself.[49] Here we should note that Balduin exercises restraint in how 2 Corinthians 3 can be used for doctrine. This could be an example of Balduin's rule 1, that "Doctrines must not be heterogenous from the text." Not every doctrine can be derived from every passage of Scripture.

These questions depict Balduin's rule 4, that there can be many doctrines from one passage of Scripture, and rule 7, that one doctrine is sometimes taken not from just one passage but from several passages together. Most of the time, however, he is not discovering doctrines in the text, but dealing with the false doctrines that other commentators had tried to find there.

Theological Aphorisms Arising from the Text

In the final section, Balduin lists ten theological aphorisms that he has drawn from this text. This is especially where we see his dogmatic exegesis at work.

"1. Ministers of the word should see to it that they are commended not so much by their hearers as by their own conscience."[50] Here, in accord with rule 3, the example of Paul's conduct toward the Corinthians has be-

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[47] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 596–597.

[48] Balduin used this expression in rule 5 of his *Idea Dispositionum Biblicarum*, where it dealt with applying a history to a commonplace.

[49] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 595.

[50] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 597.

come a general rule for those in the same category as Paul, i.e., ministers of the word.

"2. Hearers of the word are like a mirror or book in which what teachers of the church have taught by word or example is contained and presented to others to see."[51] This is drawing from 2 Corinthians 3:2 and stating that what holds true for the Corinthians holds true also for all Christian hearers of the word. This seems, again, to be an application of Balduin's rule 3.

"3. Love between teachers and hearers of the word ought to be a wall, so that they may offer each other mutual testimony wherever it is needed."[52] This is a moral doctrine, once again taking Paul's statements of how love in the Corinthian congregation was supposed to be and applying it more widely to all preachers and their hearers.

"4. The conversion of man is a work of the Holy Spirit, who through the ministry of the word makes stone hearts fleshy, v. 3." This draws in other verses that are similar to 2 Corinthians 3:3 in order to assert this doctrine (Psalm 51; Ezekiel 36), which Balduin's rule 7 had explained. He adds a moral doctrine: "The third verse therefore teaches us to consider the fall of man as sad and his restoration through the Holy Spirit of Christ as desirable."[53]

In Aphorism 5, Balduin posits a threefold inscription of God's law on human hearts: first, in creation (Gen 1:27; Rom 2:15); second, by Satan after the fall, by which he uses the law to accuse us (Jer 17:1); third, in the restitution of man through Christ, of which Paul is speaking in this passage and in Ephesians 4:24. God himself says the same in Jeremiah 31.[54] Balduin is not drawing doctrines from the text that are not present. He is careful to limit the claims he makes from 2 Corinthians 3:1–5, but he also shows how this passage fits together with others to speak of this doctrine. Here we again have an application of Balduin's rule 7.

In the explication of the text, Balduin had identified what are the epistle, amanuenses, pens, subject matter, and letters. In Aphorism 6 he draws two reminders from the text: "First, let the teachers of the word not be despised, for they are God's secretaries and scribes; wrongdoing toward them passes on to God himself. Second, let everyone see to it that he not

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[51] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 597.

[52] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 597.

[53] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 597–598.

[54] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 598.

delete the letters written in his heart by impurity of life; instead, let him live in such a way that everyone may recognize the mark of the Holy Spirit in his behavior and pursuits."[55] This seems to be a doctrine from analogy (Balduin's rule 5) with implicit support from elsewhere in Scripture (rule 7).

In Aphorism 7, the reference to the "living God" in 2 Corinthians 3:3 has to do with his work referenced here, of inscribing the "doctrine of life" into our hearts, renewing them, preparing them for living works, and pre-serving them for eternal life.[56] Here Balduin again is drawing a doctrine from analogy with the text (rule 5).

Aphorism 8 deals with the distinction of law and gospel on the basis of Jeremiah 31:33. The law had been written upon stone hearts, but the gospel was written through the Holy Spirit on fleshy hearts. The doctrine of the law was unable to take away the hardness of our hearts, but the Holy Spirit through the doctrine of the gospel pours in grace and makes hearts soft.[57] Again, Balduin has placed this text into a larger constellation of texts that, together, present a doctrine about the inscription of hearts and the two covenants. Again, we have an example of Balduin's rule 7.

"9. Christ is the one through whom we have access to the Father, and in him alone we have confidence toward God, as Paul speaks in v. 4, for outside of Christ neither the person nor his works can please God." Balduin cites Ephesians 3:12 and mentions that since we have Christ, we do not need the patronage of the saints.[58] Here Balduin is taking the clear text and making its antithesis explicit. This was not one of his rules.

In Aphorism 10 Balduin draws together thoughts from Ephesians 4:17–18; John 1:5; Ephesians 6; Ecclesiastes 1; and Psalm 62:

> The capability of human powers in spiritual matters is none at all. For even the thinking about good is denied to man considered in his na-ture, v. 5. Of course, in human matters we attribute to man thinking and good plans, even in divine matters, those things that pertain to ex-ternal motion, such as that one can hear and read the word. But from himself he is unable to be concerned or to think about his conversion, much less either to prepare himself for grace or help the Holy Spirit.

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[55] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 598.

[56] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 598.

[57] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 598.

[58] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 598.

Man is *pure passive* in conversion.[59] Balduin had explained this aphorism in question 5. The doctrine is based on the clear text of 2 Corinthians 3:5. Balduin's rule 3 may be in play here. What Paul asserts of himself holds true for all who share his fallen nature. It should also be mentioned that this is the one way in which the Book of Concord used 2 Corinthians 3:1–5 in the Formula of Concord's discussion of free will (Article II). Balduin's doctrine corresponds with that of the Formula exactly, but he does not quote the Formula or even refer to it.

III. Conclusion

In this short section of Balduin's *Commentary on All the Epistles of St. Paul*, many of his rules for dogmatic exegesis have been seen. Rule 3 figures prominently. What Paul asserts as holding true for himself and the Corinthians is more broadly applicable to all who share their vocations. An example in its own genus has the force of a general rule, but only to the other members of the same genus or category. Rule 4, that there can be many doctrines from the same passage, is also prominent. 2 Corinthians 3:3 gives Balduin the opportunity to discuss the relation of preachers and hearers, regeneration, conversion, and the effects of law and gospel. Rule 5, on analogy, allows Balduin to find several doctrines in the text. The metaphor of a letter written on hearts allows Balduin to derive doctrines from analogy with letter-writing practice at the time of Paul and Balduin's own time, as he admonishes people on this basis to respect preachers as God's scribes. Rule 7 is used quite often. Sometimes a text only seems to allude to other passages where a doctrine is taught explicitly. Thus when 2 Corinthians 3:3 mentions writing on tablets of stone and fleshy hearts, Balduin connects this with Jeremiah 31:33 and draws doctrine from the whole constellation of topically-related passages.

By considering Balduin's rules for drawing doctrines from Scripture, it has become clear that "doctrines" are not just things written in catechisms and textbooks, but also "teachings" that a preacher communicates to his hearers. (Thus, for example, rule 4 speaks of a selection that should be made among many doctrines that are to be presented to the people, and this must be suitable to the place and time. The example is of how Jesus did this in his own preaching.) So doctrines are for preaching and for the *use* of Christians. Doctrines are not merely speculative; they are eminently practical. True, Balduin is not starting from a blank slate as he approaches the Bible. He knows the creed and the Reformation doctrine—not to men-

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[59] Balduin, *In Omnes Epistolas Pauli*, 598.

tion logic with its genera, species, contraries, synecdoches, antecedents, and consequents—and he does not pretend not to know these things as he does his exegesis.[60] At the same time, he is very clear about two things: First, the literal sense in its original context must be understood. Second, after that, doctrines must be discovered from the text for the purpose of teaching and preaching. This search for doctrines is motivated by 2 Timothy 3:6 and the needs of Christians to *use* Scripture for warning, admonition, teaching, and consolation. That is to say, doctrinal, dogmatic exegesis served practical purposes. Dogma was motivated not just by the love of truth but also the love of people and the necessity of serving them with the means of grace and the knowledge of God's word.

This is not to say that there was no illegitimate proof-texting going on. One side of the scholarly debate has said that Lutheran Orthodoxy practiced stiff, proof-text exegesis, while the other side has shown that there was more to it than this, that Lutherans approached Scripture as a whole and then derived doctrine from it. An explanation was given by Jaroslav Pelikan, who suggested that only later, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, did the Orthodox Lutheran theologians subordinate exegesis to dogmatics, and that this provoked Pietism's criticism and explains their focus on biblical theology.[61] There was a lot of "dogmatic" exegesis in which Lutherans were interested in presenting the doctrines of the Christian faith as resting on certain clear passages of Scripture. While specific examples could perhaps be given in which a Lutheran exegete forced Scripture to conform to pre-defined dogmas, this by no means *characterizes* Lutheran exegesis of the period, which studied Scripture as a whole and had many other genres of commentary and uses of Scripture than just dogmatic exegesis.

The study of Balduin's dogmatic exegesis, however, debunks a number of myths and hopefully motivates us to study Scripture and draw from it the doctrines taught by the Holy Spirit, who inspired the prophets and apostles. The Bible would have far less to teach us if we refused to draw doctrines from it in the way that Balduin explains.

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[60] A listing of works of logic that are roughly contemporary with Balduin can be found in Johann Anselm Steiger and Alexander Bitzel, eds., *Bibliotheca Gerhardina: Rekonstruktion der Gelehrten- und Leihbibliothek Johann Gerhards (1582–1637) und seines Sohnes Johann Ernst Gerhard (1621–1668)* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2002), 408–412.

[61] Jaroslav Pelikan, "In Memoriam: Johann Albrecht Bengel," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 23, no. 11 (1952): 793.

Confirmation, Catechesis, and Communion:
A Historical Survey

Geoffrey R. Boyle

White-robed eighth graders stand before the congregation, donning red stoles. Some read papers they have written, others confess answers to questions from the Catechism—all commune, typically for the first time. Each student receives a certificate, a "life-verse," possibly even the laying on of hands.

Then there's the party: the meal, the cake, the excitement, and the gifts. Then, the following Sunday . . . *they're gone*. So goes the old joke. An old country church was full of horse flies—you know, the big ones that really can leave a welt if they bite. The elders and trustees did everything they could to get rid of them—they were a nuisance, scaring the children and making church unpleasant for all—but no luck. They asked the pastor if he had any ideas on how to get these flies to leave the church. Wisely, he replied, "Well, let's confirm them." Sadly, no joke is funny unless there is a bit of truth to it. And that is the point: there is a serious pastoral problem when it comes to confirmation.[1]

So what *is* confirmation? Did St. Thomas Aquinas get a confirmation verse? Was Luther examined in the catechism before the congregation? Did St. Jerome commune for the first time at age thirteen or fourteen? And what is with the laying hands on the head of each of these confirmands? Is it a sacrament or not? What about the red stoles and the certificate and the party?

Then there is the problem of how much is enough. Who gets confirmed—those who score a certain percentage in the class, or who reach a

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[1] John T. Pless notes: "We have all heard the statistics of the number of youth who drop out of the church after confirmation. We know that confirmation is to be seen in light of Holy Baptism and not vice versa. We know that confirmation is not graduation from catechesis. Yet what pastor has not experienced some degree of frustration and disappointment when it comes to the instruction of the youth and their subsequent confirmation?" John T. Pless, "Catechesis for Life in the Royal Priesthood," *Logia* 3, no. 4 (1994): 6.

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certain age, or who simply attend on a regular basis? Must one memorize the *whole* catechism, questions and proof-texts included? What are the criteria? Are there exceptions? Does anyone get held back? And how does Holy Communion fit in? Frank Klos, who headed up a study of this topic in the 1960s, put it this way:

> Confirmation simply has not been defined. Lutheran theologians, particularly, had a way of talking around the subject without coming to grips with it. Lacking a solid, workable definition, the church has suffered ever since. It is not surprising that apples and bananas and oranges got all mixed up, and confirmation became a kind of fruit basket.[2]

This study has two purposes. The first is to offer a brief overview of what confirmation is, including what it was and how it has been understood by Lutherans since the Reformation. The second is to reflect on what this means for us today, presenting a way forward.

The terrain before us is not uncharted; however, it is full of challenges. Confirmation is a phenomenon unto itself. How can it be so universal among us and yet so sorely misunderstood by many who go through the process and rite? We do well to study the subject carefully before proposing changes. G.K. Chesterton once said,

> In the matter of reforming things, as distinct from deforming them, there is one plain and simple principle; a principle which will probably be called a paradox. There exists in such a case a certain institution or law; let us say, for the sake of simplicity, a fence or gate erected across a road. The more modern type of reformer goes gaily up to it and says, "I don't see the use of this; let us clear it away." To which the more intelligent type of reformer will do well to answer: "If you don't see the use of it, I certainly won't let you clear it away. Go away and think. Then, when you can come back and tell me that you do see the use of it, I may allow you to destroy it.[3]

So why is that wall there? That is, why is there this thing called confirmation? It has become a cliché.[4] For the most part, we struggle to understand why we do what we do.

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[2] Frank W. Klos, *Confirmation and First Communion: A Study Book* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), 141.

[3] G.K. Chesterton, *The Thing: Why I Am a Catholic*, vol. 3, *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 157.

[4] I use "cliché" in a technical sense. The authority is Anton C. Zijderveld, *On Clichés* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). One might also consult Uwe Siemon-Netto,

It is always difficult to approach the familiar critically. It demands humility and a willingness to test the spirits. The goal here is not to present all the answers but to help ask the questions with faithfulness toward the Scriptures and integrity toward our Lutheran Confessions, the inheritance we have received. Of course, no pastor should simply take matters into his own hands.[5] Any further action, in light of what we find confirmation to be and to do, ought to be enacted with love. For it is love, Luther says, that bends and suffers for the sake of our neighbor.[6] Any pastor, however, who has taught a year or two of confirmation has to recognize there is a problem. We are faced with the reality that what should secure our children in the Christian faith and spur on a life of faithfulness is not working. As with most things, however, simply fixing the form will not solve the problem. Form and content go together. We must know what we are doing and why we are doing it.

I. Confirmation's Origins and Development

Frank Senn summarizes the scattered and confused history of confirmation by noting, "It had been a practice in search of a theory."[7] William Bausch, a Roman Catholic, calls it a "sacrament in search of a theology."[8] Jean Daniélou, another Roman Catholic, admits, "The history of the origins of the sacrament of Confirmation is one of the most obscure chapters in the origins of Christian worship. There is, first of all, some hesitation about the meaning of the sacrament."[9] And most recently, Mark Surburg, an LCMS

The Fabricated Luther: The Rise and Fall of the Shirer Myth (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995).

[5] While we are free towards God in the things neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture (AC VII; FC SD X 9), we nevertheless, in love towards our neighbor, seek to serve one another in support of the unity of faith. As LCMS President Matthew Harrison notes, "The answer to our liturgical struggles today is not the imposition of sixteenth-century liturgical directives upon our modern church." Matthew C. Harrison, "Liturgical Uniformity and Church Polity in the Augustana and the Formula: the Church Orders as Hermeneutical Key," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (2002): 72.

[6] Martin Luther, "Eight Sermons at Wittenberg" (1522), *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–1986), 51:72; abbreviated AE henceforth.

[7] Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 292.

[8] William J. Bausch, *A New Look at the Sacraments* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1983), 92.

[9] Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 114.

pastor comments, "It is remarkable that Confirmation exists at all—much less in the Lutheran Church. The history of Confirmation is a weird and wacky story that twists and turns in unexpected ways."[10] So how did it come to this?

Sphragis, Chrism, and Muron: Post-Baptismal Rites of the Early Church

We start at the beginning in order to get our bearings. Difficulties present themselves from the outset, however, because the word *confirmation* does not seem to appear until the fifth century at several councils in Southern Gaul. We first see it in Canons 3 and 4 of the Council of Riez (AD 439), where a bishop was determined to be illegally ordained and yet retained the power to confirm neophytes.[11] Several years later we see the word again at the Council of Orange (AD 529). It then appears a decade later at the Third Council of Arles (somewhere between AD 449–461), where the power of the bishop was clearly delineated from that of presbyter with regards to confirmation. It appears that it was around the middle of the fifth century that the word *confirmation* became a technical term used by the church.

But before confirmation was a technical term, the practice of confirmation had already developed. The first thing to note is that the early church's baptismal rite was not just water and word. It was that, to be sure, but it was also enlistment, exorcism, catechesis, stripping, anointing, washing, sealing, clothing, and communing. Daniélou writes,

> In the Christian initiation which took place during the Easter Vigil, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist formed *one whole*, constituting the introduction of the new Christian into the Church. And, in the catecheses made to explain to the new Christians the sacraments which they had received, these sacraments are presented as *immediately succeeding one another*.[12]

Of course, as Lutherans, we recognize that Baptism is not an isolated part of a larger sacramental initiation—it is not lacking until completed by

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[10] Mark P. Surburg, "The Weird and Wacky History of Confirmation, Part 1: When there was no Confirmation—the Western Church before Nicaea," http://surburg. blogspot.com/2015/01/weird-and-wacky-history-of-confirmation.html. In a series of blog posts over the last year or so, Surburg has traced much of the historical background of confirmation from the early through the medieval church.

[11] Gabriele Winkler, "Confirmation or Chismation?: A Study in Comparative Liturgy," *Worship* 58, no. 1 (1984): 8–9.

[12] Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 127; emphasis added.

either confirmation or the Sacrament of the Altar—but that the water and the word sufficiently deliver the gift of God in its entirety by the forgiveness of sin.

Because these initiation rites of the early church are sufficiently covered elsewhere,[13] we will limit ourselves to two chief and pertinent parts of the rite: the oil and the hands. Tertullian, one of our earliest sources, writes,

> Having come out of the baptismal pool, we are anointed with blessed oil according to the ancient discipline in which it was customary to be anointed with oil spread on the horn to receive the priesthood. It is with this oil that Aaron was anointed by Moses; whence comes his name of the Anointed (*christus*) which comes from *chrisma*, meaning anointing.[14]

The imagery of the anointing comes chiefly from the priestly anointing (Exod 29:7, 21; Lev 8:12, 30) and the royal anointing (1 Sam 10:1; 16:12–13; Ps 2:2). Peter draws the two together proclaiming, "But you are . . . a *royal priesthood*" (1 Pet 2:9). Some have so linked this priesthood to baptism that the term "*priesthood of the baptized*" has become somewhat common.[15] St. Peter also connects this baptismal priesthood to the "sprinkling with his blood" (1 Pet 1:2).

But returning for a moment to Tertullian's *chrism*, *christus,* and the *Christian,* Daniélou says, "This anointing, finally, is called *chrisma*, and he who receives it, *Christos*. In some of these early Christian rites, this constituted a new aspect of confirmation: the oil was the chrism by which the baptized became a new *Christos*, or *christianos*."[16] Tertullian spoke of the oil the same way he spoke of the water, as material things delivering spiritual

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[13] See, for example, Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*; Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1978); G.W.H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers*, 2nd ed. (London: S.P.C.K., 1967).

[14] Tertullian, "On Baptism," chap. 7 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 3:672.

[15] Thomas M. Winger, "The Priesthood of All the Baptized: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation" (Master of Sacred Theology thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1992).

[16] Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 116.

realities.[17] So, to be anointed—christened—in the baptismal rite was to be united with Christ and to participate in his kingdom and priesthood.[18]

To be fair, the oil in the baptismal rite varies. In the early rites there were three anointings: one, just before the water, where the catechumen was covered from head to toe (sometimes called the "oil of exorcism"); then, after the water, a *seal*, or *sphragis* (sometimes called the "oil of thanks-giving"); and finally, in some parts, a post-baptismal anointing by the bishop when the baptismal party returned to the gathering of the church.[19]

The meaning of the oil varied, depending on where it fell in the rite. Cyril of Jerusalem gives the following explanation for the pre-baptismal anointing:

> Stripped of your garments, you were anointed with oil that had been exorcised, from the top of your head to your feet, and you were made partakers in the true olive tree which is Jesus Christ. Cut off from the wild olive and grafted on the cultivated tree, you have been given a share in the richness of the true oil. For the exorcised oil is a symbol of participation in the richness of Christ. It causes every trace of the ene-my's power to vanish. By the invocation of God and by prayer, the oil has gained the power, not only to purify you from the vestiges of sin by consuming them, but also to put to flight all the invisible powers of the Evil One.[20]

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[17] Tertullian, "On Baptism," 7.

[18] "Prefigured by the priestly and royal anointing of the Old Testament, the Christian anointing is, moreover, a participation in the anointing of Christ." Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 117.

[19] Some rites held this anointing prior to the baptismal rites, even at the enrollment (Pseudo-Dionysius, AD 396–400). Others placed it between the renunciation of Satan and the washing itself (Theodore of Mopsuestia, bishop from AD 392–428). Most common, however, was placing the *sphragis* at the end of the rite, following the washing (Cyril of Jerusalem; Ambrose of Milan). Daniélou makes an important observation when he says, "The importance of the rite appears from the fact that it often serves to denote baptism as a whole, this often being called the *sphragis*." He then goes on to suggest that "perhaps as early as St. Paul: 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13—and, in any case in the earliest fathers: Clement of Rome, *Epist.*, VII, 6; Shepherd of Hermas *Sim.*, IX, 6:3; 16:4; and Tertullian, *De pudic.*, IX, 9." Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 54–55. See also Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, chap. 22.

[20] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Protocatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses*, ed. F.L. Cross (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 60.

Cyril also describes the *sphragis* as an anointing of oil in the form of a cross first on the forehead, then the ears, then the nostrils, and finally on the breast. He says,

> For as Christ after His baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise, having, after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, put on the whole armour of the Holy Ghost, do ye stand against the power of the enemy, and vanquish it . . . . When ye are counted worthy of this Holy Chrism, ye are called Christians, verifying also the name by your new birth. For before you were vouchsafed this grace, ye had properly no right to this title, but were advancing on your way towards being Christians.[21]

Ambrose adds, "Baptism is followed by the spiritual seal (*signaculum*) because, after the beginning, perfection is still to be achieved. This takes place when, at the invocation of the priest, the Holy Spirit is poured out."[22]

From this, we can note a distinction being made between the sealing and the washing—namely, perfection. So how does one attain perfection? For some of the early fathers of the church, it was by the gifts of the Spirit now applied through the seal. This distinction between Baptism and the sealing would later be understood as follows: "in Confirmation [is] the sacrament of spiritual progress, while Baptism is that of spiritual birth."[23]

Again, and we cannot emphasize this enough, the Lord does not give his forgiveness piece-meal or in part but always whole and total, according to the sacrifice of his Son. What we need to recognize, however, is that this anointing—this seal, or *sphragis*—was believed actually to do something, making it a sacrament of sorts. Pseudo-Dionysius says plainly, "our masters have called it the sacrament of the anointing."[24]

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[21] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*, 64–65.

[22] Ambrose, *De Sacrementis* III, 8; cited in Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 119. This notion of "perfection" is picked up by Daniélou as a common theme among the early Christians. He notes: "Here also appears the connection between confirmation and the spiritual life, considered as the development of the grace given in seed-form in Baptism. This also is where the idea of confirmation is given its meaning: it is concerned with the strengthening of the spiritual life, which is still weak in the baptized, and which is carried out under the action of the Holy Spirit" (126).

[23] Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 120.

[24] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy IV*, in *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857–1886), I:484, B–485A; cf. Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 120.

Let us now summarize. For the early church there was an order: Baptism, anointing (chrismation with *muron*), and the Eucharist. If one was not yet baptized, he could not be anointed with the *muron*—an oil uniquely separate from the catechumenate oil, marked by a perfumed scent—nor could he receive the Eucharist. And yet, on the other hand, when he received the first, he received all three. Nothing came individually, at least not as one entered the church's life.[25]

While confirmation was not the technical term until the mid-fifth century, there was much talk of anointing with oil. Today, this seems a bit strange, but it was not always. In fact, according to Leonel Mitchell, it was commonplace: "To a Roman or Hellenistic Greek anointing would be associated with washing as naturally as we associate soap with water. When a Roman went to the bath he took a towel and oil."[26] Bathing in the bathhouses was a standard and assumed mark of civilization in the Roman life. So also was anointing: water and oil, though they don't mix, were certainly never far apart. Interestingly, Jesus also has plenty of water and oil references close at hand. Twice Luke speaks of Jesus' anointing with the Spirit at the Jordan (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38). What goes for Christ goes also for the baptized (1 John 2:20); our anointing unites us with his.

The anointing of the baptized with the Holy Spirit appears to be synonymous with the sealing of the Spirit, what the early church called the *sphragis* (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:22).[27] *Sphragis,* by synechdoche, represented the whole liturgy of Baptism, including the washing and the anointing. It also worked the other way around: to be baptized was to be sealed, *esphragizomai-ed*. This helps explain why the early church was able to distinguish between the various portions of the rite in their explanations while at the same time never separating the rubrics into self-standing rites. They were parts of a whole, not separate activities pieced together—and most often in the early church they certainly were not separated by time or space.[28] For instance, Tertullian describes "Baptism" as including washing

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[25] Thus far, we have only discussed the first two: Baptism and the oil. Later we will consider how the Eucharist should be understood in connection to these two.

[26] Leonel L. Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 26.

[27] For a detailed account of the early church's understanding and biblical imagery of the *sphragis*, see Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 54–69. See also Rom 4:11; Col 2:11–12; Gen 4:15; Ezek 9:4; and Rev 7:4.

[28] Aidan Kavanagh asserts: "This should alert one to the probability that when the New Testament texts refer, especially in passing, to 'baptism' they mean something ritually larger and increasingly more sophisticated and complex than the water bath alone.

with water, anointing, *sphragis*, and the laying on of hands.[29] In fact, Tertullian goes to lengths to point out that it is not the waters that deliver the Spirit but that the waters prepare one for the Spirit, which comes through the laying on of hands and prayer.[30] This is not to suggest that Tertullian undermines our baptismal theology but to recognize the weightiness and significance of the oil in the baptismal rite of the early Christians.

East, West, and the Medieval Transition

Why did this common and united practice change? What separated the three rites—*baptism, chrism, communion*—and how did it get to be the way it is today?

This is actually one of the differences between the East and the West: the Eastern churches still hold the three together. For the most part, this is strictly a Western phenomenon. The difference seems to lie in a diverging understanding of clerical authority. The East, for example, always permitted a presbyter to apply the *chrism*. However, already in the fourth century, the West delineated strongly between presbyter and bishop. Paul Turner notes:

> According to the [*Apostolic Tradition*], a priest gives a post-baptismal anointing at the font, and then the newly baptized are brought to the bishop for the imposition of his hand and another anointing with chrism. From this text and other sources it seems clear that this ritual of sealing after Baptism was performed by the bishop.[31]

As converts increased and bishops became fewer, there was great difficulty for the bishop to seal all the baptized. The solution in the West was, rather than permitting the local presbyter to perform the entire rite, to

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If this is *not* presumed, then it becomes impossible to account for how rites particularly related to the Spirit and in closer ritual contact with the water bath than proclamation prior to it, *suddenly* appear as though from nowhere during the second and third centuries. Nor does it explain why these rites quickly become accepted as traditional in churches obsessed with fidelity to the gospel and apostolic tradition." Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 28.

[29] Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 7–8; *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 8.

[30] Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 6.

[31] Paul Turner, *Confirmation: The Baby in Solomon's Court* (Chicago: Hillenbrand, 2006), 28.

permit the laying on of hands to be delayed. The laying on of hands was reserved for bishops only—in confirmation and in ordination.[32]

Not until the beginning of the seventh century, with the second council of Seville, does one find presbyters forbidden to anoint the forehead of the baptized—evidence, surely, of increasing Roman influence. Yet even then the prohibition does not seem to have been taken very seriously, since Bishop Braulio of Saragossa (AD 631–651) allowed his presbyters to perform the anointing as long as the oil was blessed by the bishop.[33] It is this separation, this work of the bishop *after* the baptism, that ultimately paved the way for confirmation.[34]

These formerly unified rites were so splintered by the Scholastic era that the Council of Lambeth (AD 1281) could rule that unconfirmed persons were not permitted to receive communion. This separation of Baptism and confirmation (and, therefore, Holy Communion) was the regular custom in the West by the time of the Reformation. Practically, we see the widespread practice of separating the rites in the twelfth century.[35] It had been practiced previously that even though confirmation came later by the bishop, the children were still communed.[36] Frank Senn notes that even after this *official* practice, there were exceptions to the rule:

> Of course, it was still possible for a bishop to preside at baptism, perform the anointing at that time, and administer communion to the infant immediately. In England this was done for royal children as late as the time of the birth of King Henry VIII's children, Elizabeth in 1533 and Edward in 1537. But most children, by this time, were not communed until later when they made their first confession or were confirmed.[37]

It appears royalty were still given a share of the ancient catechumenate, even in the sixteenth century.

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[32] Turner, *Confirmation: The Baby in Solomon's Court*, 28–29.

[33] Winkler, "Confirmation or Chrismation?" 7.

[34] This is Aiden Kavanagh's thesis in *Confirmation: Origins and Reform* (New York: Pueblo, 1988), 70.

[35] It was in the thirteenth century that it became officially clear that the unconfirmed were not to commune. This is Peter Browe's argument in his historical survey of first communion in the Middle Ages: "Die Kinderkommunion im Mittelalter," *Scholastik* 5 (1930): 1–45.

[36] Cf. David L. Pearcy, "Infant Communion, Part I: The Historical Practice," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 7, no. 3 (1980): 166–170.

[37] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 226–227.

Encountering the Reformation: From Sacramental Rite to Process of Catechesis

As we approach the Reformation a good *terminus ad quem* is the Council of Trent (AD 1545–1563). Canon 1 states:

> If anyone says that the confirmation of the baptized is a useless ceremony and not rather a true and proper sacrament, or that it was at one time nothing else than a certain instruction by which those approaching adolescence confessed the ground of their faith before the Church, let him be anathema.[38]

But what is confirmation according to Rome in the mid-sixteenth century? Martin Chemnitz defines it, using Rome's own terminology:

> Confirmation itself they define as the anointing or besmearing with the consecrated chrism which is performed by the bishop with the thumb on the forehead of the baptized person, not in the act of Baptism itself but later in a special sacrament by means of the form or figure of the cross with the pronouncing of these words: "I sign you with the sign of the cross," etc. However, in that same act also other formal prayers are added, and the words: "Peace be with you" are pronounced. After this first act the bishop strikes the anointed person on the cheek with his thumb, thereupon with his whole hand. Then the forehead, which has been anointed with the ointment, is bound round about with a white cloth, which is taken off on the seventh day thereafter, that the recent anointing may not flow down or be wiped off. Finally, he is committed to his guardians. This is the act of confirmation.[39]

Chemnitz highlights a consistency in Rome that sets Baptism and confirmation against each other. He says,

> They suppose the sacrament of confirmation to be more excellent, worthier, and greater, so that it is to be venerated and held in greater reverence (for these are their own words) than Baptism itself, they take in part from the nature of the minister by whom it is performed or administered, who must be a bishop. But chiefly they take it from the effects, which are superior to those of Baptism itself.[40]

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[38] Third Topic, Canon I, "Concerning Confirmation" from the Seventh Session of the Council of Trent, March 3, 1547. Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, 30th ed. (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 1954), 265.

[39] Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), 2:182.

[40] Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 2:182.

Pope Urban himself says: "All the faithful must receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands of the bishops after Baptism, in order that they may be found *full* Christians."[41]

It was thought that confirmation—through the laying on of hands by the bishop—delivered the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit (Isa 11:2), just as the church sings in the great Pentecost hymn "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest":

> In You, with graces seven-fold,
> We God's almighty hand behold
> While You with tongues of fire proclaim
> To all the world His holy name.[42]

Admittedly, Rome leaned on the authority of Clement and Cyprian for such an association. However, again, both Clement and Cyprian would only have had a confirmation, or the laying on of hands and the anointing, in conjunction with the Baptism. While distinct, they were not separate. At this point, the rites had been separated even to the point of division.

So what did Luther have to say about all this? His opinion varied, sometimes calling confirmation "monkey business" (*Affenspiel*), other times "a fanciful deception" (*Lügenstand*)[43] or "mumbo-jumbo" (*Gaukelwerk*).[44] Luther's longest foray into the discussion of confirmation comes in his *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, where he especially emphasized confirmation as a sacramental ritual but not a sacrament in its own right as instituted by Christ. There he spoke of the current practice as an invention "to adorn the office of bishops, that they may not be entirely without work in the church."[45] In 1522 he showed a bit more sympathy towards confirmation, saying that he "would permit confirmation as long as it is

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[41] Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 2:182; emphasis added.

[42] *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 499:3. Interestingly, this is also the designated ordination hymn that even Luther recommends. The notion of the seven-fold Spirit of the Lord rushing upon the ordained at the laying on of hands has been a common understanding of the sacramental character of ordination. For this reason the Lutheran Confessions are willing to let ordination be called a sacrament, as long it is understood rightly in this precise way (Ap XIII 11). This seven-fold spiritual gift, however, can be traced to Isa 11:2; and Rev 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6.

[43] Martin Luther, "Sermon on Married Life" (1522), AE 45:24.

[44] Luther, "The Persons Related by Consanguinity and Affinity Who Are Forbidden to Marry According to the Scriptures, Leviticus 18" (1522), AE 45:8.

[45] Luther, "Babylonian Captivity of the Church," (1959), AE 36:91.

understood that God knows nothing of it, and has said nothing about it, and that what the bishops claim for it is untrue."[46]

The Lutheran Confessions express no necessity for confirmation:

Confirmation and extreme unction are rites received from the Fathers that not even the Church requires as necessary to salvation, because they do not have God's command. Therefore, it is useful to distinguish these rites from the former, which have God's direct command and a clear promise of grace. (Ap XIII 6)

There is no need to discuss the other duties of bishops. It is not necessary to speak about confirmation or the consecration of bells nor other such *delusions* [or, *humbuggery*], which are almost the only things they have kept. (Tr 73)[47]

Chemnitz makes it very clear in his *Examination* that the issue at hand is setting Baptism *against* confirmation, "that whatever effects are ascribed to confirmation are by that very fact denied to or taken away from Baptism."[48] This is what Luther and the early Lutherans opposed more than anything else, the Roman attack against Baptism.[49] For such an attack, there is no early church evidence. Any distinction that might have been made between the water and the hands and the oil is a distinction and not a separation. They were all parts of the same whole, and one was not set against the other. When this was lost in the West, the theology was forced to adapt.

Nevertheless, Luther apparently conceded "that every pastor might investigate the faith from children and if it be good and sincere, he may

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[46] Luther, "Sermon on Married Life," 24–25; cited in Arthur C. Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 15–17.

[47] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); emphasis added.

[48] Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 2:182.

[49] This defense of Baptism may also be seen both in the recent opinion of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), "Knowing What We Seek and Why We Come: Questions and Answers concerning the Communing of Infants and Young Children" (October 2014), and the "Theses on Infant/Toddler Communion," which it cites: "4. Arguments for infant/toddler communion bypass the truth that in Baptism, we receive 'victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God's grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts' (LC IV:41–42, K/W, 461) as though the promise of Baptism remained unfulfilled without the Lord's Supper" (6–7).

impose hands and confirm."[50] Even so, it should be noted that Luther never composed a rite of confirmation. Frank Senn affirms this: "Under Olavus Petri and Johannes Bugenhagen, who were disciples of Luther in this matter, the rite of confirmation was eliminated in the Scandinavian churches."[51] As Senn also notes, "Luther had little interest in a rite of confirmation as such, but a great deal of interest in catechesis."[52] That would be confirmation's way forward.

Ultimately, it was Martin Bucer who created the practice of confirmation as we recognize it today. Senn notes,

> The first evangelical rite of confirmation (as distinct from catechesis leading to first communion) appeared in the Hessian church in 1538, where it was introduced by Bucer . . . [who] developed a rite that was marked by a public profession of faith and a vow of obedience to Christ and the "holy church." This rite was used to mark the completion of catechetical instruction and served as a gateway to the fellowship of the altar.[53]

The laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit were likewise included. Apparently Flacius vehemently opposed Bucer's rite for the laying on of hands, and Brenz agreed that it was no *adiaphoron*. Chemnitz, on the other hand, thought it could be retained, so long as it was done without superstition. Interestingly, the Brandenburg Order of 1540 retained the traditional rite (laying on of hands, invocation of the Holy Spirit, and the examination of the faith for communion). But then again, Luther called the rite *Witzelisch*—referring to Georg Witzel, a Romanizer who ended up defecting back to Rome—similar to today's "That's Catholic!"

While Bucer's practice was rejected by Luther, Bugenhagen was able to win approval in Pomerania. C.F.W. Walther notes how the practice moved from Bugenhagen into the seventeenth century:

> Bugenhagen, with Luther's approval, introduced a purely evangelical confirmation in Pomerania, which example was soon followed in the church of Electoral Brandenburg, Strassburg, and Hesse . . . . But con-

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[50] Martin Luther, "Predigt am Sonntag Laetare Nachmittags (March 15, 1523)," *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Werke*], 72 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 11:66; abbreviated *WA*.

[51] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 559. Apparently it was reinstated in 1575 under the *Nova ordinantia ecclesiastica*, but then again abolished by the Uppsala Mote of 1593, when Petri's church order was reinstated (559–560).

[52] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 293.

[53] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 350.

firmation was not a universal institution in our church in the sixteenth century. Even though M. Chemnitz recommended it urgently in his *Examen*, it declined through the confusion of the Thirty Year's War [1618–1648] even where it had been introduced. One of the first who called attention to this institution and its blessing again was Dr. J. Quistorp, professor of theology at St. James Church in Rostock. For a more general introduction of the confirmation ceremony after 1666, Spener is known to have been active more than others. Loescher also calls it "a very praiseworthy and edifying ceremony," but adds, "which, however, cannot be introduced everywhere and is also not absolutely necessary."[54]

Confirmation of the Heart: The Influence of Pietism

Under the pietistic likes of Philipp Jakob Spener, whose chief goal in confirmation was conversion, Pietism required the child to be able to examine himself in such a way as to determine whether he was truly a Christian and able to apply Christian doctrine to his life. To accomplish this, the age at which children were confirmed necessarily increased. Arthur Repp notes,

> Before Pietism the catechumen was rarely older than 12 and usually a year or two younger. Under the influence of Pietism the church orders gradually required the catechumen to be older. The Luneburg CO [Church Order], 1689, set the age at 15, and the Schleswig-Holstein order required boys to be 16. Generally, however, the age was nearer 14.[55]

Pietism's emphasis on the subjective had a lasting influence on the development of Lutheran confirmation. One highly memorable aspect is the individual *Einsegnungswünsche*.[56] The later Pietists made every effort to bring forth "holy tears" from the children.[57] The desire to push the confirmands into making a confession of the faith *in their own words* derives from August Hermann Francke (1663–1727). He did away with the time-tested words of the Apostles' Creed and encouraged a variety of expressions, all intended to reveal the personal faith of the heart.

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[54] C.F.W. Walther, *Walther's Pastorale, that is, American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, trans. John M. Drickamer (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, 1995), 187. Repp, by the way, lists Quistorp as a Pietist and Loescher under more neutral terms.

[55] Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 75.

[56] Literally, "confirmation wishes."

[57] Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 72.

Pietism brought confirmation into the common framework of Lutherans, though admittedly through great struggle in many territories. Nevertheless, by the middle of the eighteenth century, confirmation was known throughout the majority of Germany.[58]

Confirmation of the Head: The Influence of Rationalism

It is under the influence of Rationalism that we find a focus on examination—not of one's sin but of knowledge. At this point the exams became so long that they were separated from the rite itself, much like we see today, where many confirmands write an exam or are examined at a separate gathering of the church, if not in the Sunday service itself.[59]

Important items such as the wearing of a new suit or dress, special flower arrangements, and timing the rite to coincide with the completion of school (which, at that time would have fallen just before Holy Week, leading confirmation to be practiced on Palm Sunday, with first communion celebrated Maundy Thursday) all were introduced under Rationalism. Here, confirmation became not only the gateway to Communion but was also a requirement for getting married in the church and for serving as a baptismal sponsor. In some places, confirmation even became the necessary step towards high school, serving in the work force, or joining a guild.[60]

Repp nicely summarizes this one-two punch of Pietism and Rationalism in the post-Reformation development of confirmation:

> With such an exalted and distorted view of confirmation, extravagant statements naturally followed. In contrast to the casual practice of the sixteenth century, confirmation became "the great festival of youth," *die Kinderweihe*, "the festival of human nature," "the most important day of a child's life," "the festival that cannot be made solemn enough." "Know this day is really your first true baptismal day," said J.F. Schlez. Chr. W. Oemler asserted that confirmation can not be sufficiently recommended, for it is an institution which is never too important for a real servant of Christ. The confirmation day must be like another birthday for children, a holy festival for the congregation, and the beginning of a new spiritual harvest for the teacher. Georg

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[58] Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 74.

[59] One of my older shut-ins remembers this well—still with fear!—calling it "Prüfung Sonntag," or "Examination Sunday."

[60] Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 81–82.

Seiler referred to the Confirmands in his prayer as "new cocitizens of the kingdom of God."[61]

Further still, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), the theologian of feeling, declared confirmation to be the second half of Baptism—in fact, "its necessary completion."[62]

In any case, by the nineteenth century, Lutherans viewed confirmation as a common churchly rite. Most Lutherans, however, carefully distinguished confirmation from the sacraments. For example, Theodore Kliefoth states, "In all these ceremonies God acts through men. In confirmation it is not God but the church that acts. To be sure, God acts through the Word before and after confirmation, but not in the rite."[63]

II. Confirmation Today—What Are We Confessing?

In his *Pastorale*, Walther brings up the matter of confirmation while discussing the Synod's first constitution, saying,

> The district synod is to exercise supervision so that its pastors confirm catechumens only when they can at least recite the text of the Catechism verbatim, without the exposition, and their understanding of it has been brought to the point that they are capable of examining themselves according to 1 Cor. 11:28. The synod requires that more capable catechumens, where possible, be brought to the point of being able to prove the doctrines of the Christian faith from the clearest proof passages of Scripture and to refute the erring doctrines of the sects from them. Where possible, a hundred hours should be used to instruct Confirmands. The preacher should also see to it that his Confirmands have memorized a good number of those good, churchly, basic hymns that may serve to accompany them for their whole life.[64]

Compared to the expectations set forth by Walther, our modern practice could be judged lax—at least in some quarters. Memorization, rather than being utilized, is often discouraged in modern educational theory. Hardly anyone sings hymns at home, which makes learning them by heart quite difficult. And while pastors struggle to defend the doctrines of our

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[61] Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 78.

[62] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 562.

[63] Theodor Kliefoth, "Die Confirmation," in *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, 8 vols. (Schwerin: Stiller'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1856), 3:35; cited in Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 211.

[64] Walther, *Pastorale,* 188.

church and refute erring doctrines, how many confirmands are trained in apologetics? How old must or should a Christian be to adequately accomplish all this?

Today, whether it is accomplished or not, most confirmands are thirteen to fourteen years of age. In the thirteenth century, we saw for the first time the phrase: "*anni discretionis* [age of discretion]," which crept in through the Scholastic movement, possibly on account of the rediscovery of Aristotle. This age was relative, as Peter Browe persuasively shows, but ranged from roughly seven to fourteen.[65] At the time of the Reformation, Bugenhagen suggested age eight *or younger*.[66]

Whatever the "age of discretion" might be, it is important to know its heritage in Scholasticism, Pietism, and Rationalism. The trend since the great Lateran Council has been a steady rise in the age. Benjamin Kurtz (1795–1865) noted that the majority of Lutherans confirmed in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century were between fifteen and twenty.[67] And for Roman Catholics, Browe notes that the age was only brought back down to seven in the 1910 encyclical by Pope Pius X, "*Quam singulari.*"[68] While considering that ten or eleven is better, Löhe adamantly refused to put an age on the practice:

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[65] See Peter Browe: "From these considerations, the 'age of discretion,' which the Council [Lateran Council of 1215] had decreed for the reception of both sacraments, became accepted and attempts were made in two ways to determine exactly what it was. The one was understood as the discernment between good and evil and expressed in the Ordinary Gloss: *When the child is able to sin, then he must conform to the command.* This juridical way of determination drew its point of view from the duty of confession and is not exactly taken from communion. Others moved from reception itself and said the child may commune when he has enough understanding and reverence for this Sacrament—he must know what he does." Peter Browe, "Die Kinderkommunion im Mittelalter," in *Die Eucharistie im Mittelalter: Liturgiehistorische Forschungen in kulturwissenschaftlicher Absicht*, vol. 1, Vergessene Theologen (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), 101–102; translated by Gifford Grobien.

[66] See also Bugenhagen's preface to the Danish edition of the Enchiridion of 1538, where he notes "that after this confession is made, also the little children of about eight years or less should be admitted to the table of Him who says: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.'" Cited in F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 82.

[67] Cited in Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 125.

[68] See Browe, 114. Cf. Turner, who says, "The origins of this instruction [of a catechetical age of fourteen] seem to come from the Code of Canon Law. Not the current one, but the code of 1917. There, canon 744 suggests that the Baptism 'of adults' may be referred to the bishop. The current code expands on this expression: 'The baptism of adults, at least those who have completed fourteen years of age is to be referred to the

When children have arrived at an understanding of the catechism that they can examine themselves according to the command of the holy apostle, 1 Cor 11:28, then they should no longer be restrained from partaking of the Holy Supper. Not knowledge attained at school but an understanding of the catechism shall be decisive. This does not mean that a high degree of knowledge of the catechism is essential, but rather the minimum essentials necessary for self-examination. Admission to the examination should not be determined by a specified age . . . . Not age but the required ability of 1 Cor 11:28 to examine oneself is to be decisive in every case.[69]

Walther held to age twelve, at the earliest, arguing on the basis of Luke 2:41–42, when Jesus went to Jerusalem at the age of twelve.[70]

III. Conclusion—Confirmation, Catechesis, and Communion

As is evident, there are good questions we may ask concerning healthy confirmation practices. Although Paul Turner subtitled his recent book on confirmation, *The Baby in Solomon's Court*, we are free to proceed without cutting the baby in half.[71] Our way forward through the impasse of confirmation may be to consider some such practices that see the reception of Holy Communion to be separate from the rite of confirmation, thus letting the sacrament be understood not strictly on the basis of intellectual achievement and maturity, while at the same time retaining a rite of catechetical formation—though not a sacramental one. Another consideration might be to unite confirmation and Communion but to do so on the basis of catechesis, not strictly age. Considering these approaches allows us to recognize that catechesis is from cradle to grave (regardless of how the rite

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bishop.' Where does the notion come from that adults are those who have reached 14 years of age? It comes from early Roman law, which set adulthood at puberty." Turner, *Confirmation: The Baby in Solomon's Court*, 16.

[69] Wilhelm Löhe, *Agende für chistliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (Nordlingen: C.H.Beck'schen Buchhandlung, 1844). Löhe writes: "I generally prefer to admit the children to the sacrament—the fountain of grace—as soon as possible . . . I have, in my twenty-eight years in the office, often been in the situation of wishing that not the age, but the readiness of the person would be the decisive factor." Wilhelm Löhe, "Neuendettelsau Letters, 1858," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert, vol. 3.1 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2008), 226–228. Translated by Jacob Corzine and published on the *Logia* website, October 13, 2014: http://www.logia.org/logia-online/postid.

[70] Walther, *Pastorale*, 188.

[71] Turner, *Confirmation: The Baby in Solomon's Court*.

of confirmation is celebrated). Confirmation then shines best as it extols both catechesis and the Supper.

As Luther taught, we need a full-blown catechesis that accompanies the Christian before, during, and after receiving the blessed sacrament.[72] Some of the ancients spoke of a mystagogical catechesis: teaching and training in what was received and why. Though Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia implemented this mystagogy immediately prior to the baptismal ceremony—probably beginning on Holy Thursday—others, like Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose taught these classes *after* the rite, during the octave of Easter. The idea was that the mysteries are best experienced and later explained.[73] The comprehensive approach to catechesis sees no need to set one against another—the faith ought to be created and handed on from the very beginning until the very end. In this way Paul's admonition might ring true: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16).

Though confirmation's history and development ebbed and flowed through various false doctrines and poor philosophies, it need not be discarded simply on the basis of *ad hominem* attacks. The Enlightenment's move toward a thorough examination, or Pietism's putting the faith in one's own words are not wrong *per se*. What we need is a critical examination of what we do and why, and then the ability to use what is good for purposes that best serve the church in the promotion of the gospel. A comprehensive catechesis will best accomplish this.

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[72] Such was argued recently in a presentation by D. Richard Stuckwisch, who outlined a comprehensive view of catechesis as the pastoral basis of joining the Christian to the altar. D. Richard Stuckwisch, "The Pastoral Care of Catechumens and Communicants," presentation, St. Michael's Conference—Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Detroit, MI (September 2014), http://www.ziondetroit.org/assets/conferences/2014/docs/stuckwischpresentation.pdf.

[73] William Harless notes: "Fourth-century mystagogical catecheses typically wove together three common elements: (1) gestures and words drawn from the liturgies of the vigil, (2) scriptural themes and images, (3) analogies drawn from nature or the local culture." William Harless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville: MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 71. I have no romantic vision of repristinating this early practice. Even Harless notes some of its downfalls: "The third-century catechumenate, for all its sectarian rigor, did not guarantee high standards or stalwart congregations. During the persecution of Decius (250–251), thousands of Christians lapsed, fomenting a massive pastoral crisis not only in North Africa, but across the empire" (51). And how many times did Origin chastise the Christians for their chit-chatting during the Divine Service, or Chrysostom having to yell in order to be heard over the rabble! Cf. Origen, "*In Genesim Homiliae,*" 10.1-2, in *Fathers of the Church Series,* 127 vols., trans. Ronald E. Heine (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press), 71:157.

Above all, we must remember that we are free—not free to do whatever we want but free to teach our members in a way that best serves them with the gospel. Confirmation is, in this sense, an *adiaphoron*.[74] It is neither commanded nor forbidden in the Scriptures—in fact, as we have seen, it is not even mentioned. As Walther said in his *Pastoral Theology*, "Confirmation is an *adiaphoron*, not a divine institution, much less a sacrament; but it is a churchly institution which, if correctly used, can be accompanied by great blessing."[75] Furthermore, nowhere will you find it prescribed by the Lutheran Confessions. And yet, confirmation has a history, checkered, though it may be; it is tradition. Our unity as a church should not rest simply in the outward practice of a rite neither commanded nor forbidden in the Scriptures (or the Confessions); rather, it should rest on a common and thorough catechesis.

When the joint-synod study on confirmation was released in the late 1960s with the intention that it be reviewed and discussed by the respective church bodies, the LCMS had more pressing issues on the docket. We were in the midst of a civil war, of sorts. And as important an issue as this study was, we were not in a position to address it as it needed. Perhaps we are at that point now, nearly a half century later. Can serious theological and practical dialogue go forth? Can an analysis of our confirmation practice be handled properly? If so, we may also find a more fruitful way forward through the recent issues concerning the proper age of communion.[76] Of course, such a communion based in thorough catechesis would permit self-examination and signs of reflective faith.

A fruitful conversation must first begin within the congregation and among the local pastors. The Koinonia Project provides a notable model.[77]

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[74] This was Repp's conclusion: "Because Lutheran confirmation is and will remain an unsolved question, church bodies and larger districts within a synod should be encouraged to experiment in order to find better solutions to meet the varying needs of the Lutheran Church today. Once the clergy and the laity, particularly in the United States and Canada, become more aware that confirmation is truly an *adiaphoron* with an involved history influenced by many trends and tendencies, a more relaxed attitude toward wholesome experimenting will be taken." Repp, *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*, 229.

[75] Walther, *Pastorale,* 185.

[76] Cf. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, "Knowing What We Seek and Why We Come: Questions and Answers concerning the Communing of Infants and Young Children," 1–10.

[77] Consider the concept paper authored by Herbert Mueller, "The 'Koinonia' Project" (June 2013). It can be located on the web: http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1041.

In love, may we ask one another: "Why do you do what you do?" Admittedly, most of us do what we do because that is what has been done before. Because there is so much to do, we rarely have the time even to ask that question, let alone reflect upon it. The resources are available, so let us figure out what is on the other side of the wall.

We need not tear down the wall of confirmation; rather, we can strengthen and extol it through faithful catechesis, before, during, and after the sacramental rites of Baptism and the Holy Supper. As John Pless describes,

> Catechesis is the process of transmitting the word of God so that the mind and life of the one who receives it grows up in every way into Jesus Christ, living in faith toward him and in love toward the neighbor. While catechesis does lead from the font to the altar, culminating in the extolling of the Lord's gifts and the confession of his name in that churchly rite called confirmation, *catechesis itself is from the womb to the tomb.*[78]

Such is the goal of Luther's *Small Catechism*, the depths of which are, by his own admission, unfathomable.

But why reconsider this? Why go through the effort? It is clear that there is no formula that leads to the growth of the church—either in strength or in numbers—though that is often what we seek. The reason to reconsider is the obvious problem we face: the confirmed are leaving and no longer coming back. Even the Roman Catholic Church in the 1970s recognized the problem. Turner shows that the move towards adolescent confirmation was a practical move: "Early results demonstrated to many catechists that confirmed teens persevered in their Church membership."[79] As we do that, we will everyday learn the gifts of being a sacramental church and what it means to derive our very life from the means by which our Lord bestows life. Then, we will rightly emphasize the completeness of Baptism and simultaneously the rich gift of the Supper, never setting one against another.

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[78] Pless, "Catechesis for Life in the Royal Priesthood," 3; emphasis added.

[79] Turner, *Confirmation: The Baby in Solomon's Court*, 98.

Religious Freedom in America

R. Neely Owen

In his 2014 address to the Tenth Annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, Robert P. George gave the following wake-up call that has application to all Christians who are the true catholic (i.e., universal) church:

> The days of socially acceptable Christianity are over. The days of comfortable Catholicism are past. It is no longer easy to be a faithful Christian, a good Catholic, an authentic witness to the truths of the Gospel. A price is demanded and must be paid. There are costs of discipleship—heavy costs, costs that are burdensome and painful to bear. Of course, one can still safely identify oneself as a "Catholic," and even be seen going to mass. That is because the guardians of those norms of cultural orthodoxy that we have come to call "political correctness" do not assume that identifying as "Catholic" or going to mass necessarily means that one *actually believes what the Church teaches* on issues such as marriage and sexual morality and the sanctity of human life. And if one in fact does not believe what the Church teaches, or, for now at least, even if one does believe those teachings but is prepared to be completely silent about them, one is safe—one can still be a comfortable Catholic. In other words, a tame Catholic, a Catholic who is ashamed of the Gospel—or who is willing to act publicly as if he or she were ashamed—is still socially acceptable. But a Catholic who makes it clear that he or she is not ashamed is in for a rough go—he or she must be prepared to take risks and make sacrifices. "If," Jesus said, "anyone wants to be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me." We American Catholics, having become comfortable, had forgotten, or ignored, that timeless Gospel truth. There will be no ignoring it now.[1]

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[1]   https://americanprinciplesproject.org/social-issues/robert-p-george-speaks-at-national-catholic-prayer-breakfast/; emphasis added. A video recording of the address, delivered on May 16, 2014, is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= tSZY0IsYCFs. Robert P. George is the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and

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The events we see unfolding before us did not just begin but have their foundations much further back in time. From the beginning there have been difficulties for those who wished to worship and exercise their religious beliefs in peace. Religious persecution is arguably as old as man's first expressions of faith:

> In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. (Gen 4:2-8).

What was the impetus for Cain's action? What was the force that drove him to inflict this level of hatred for his brother? Jealousy? Insecurity? Anger that his brother was accepted rather than he? Certainly all these things are arguably true, but at the base of it all was a difference and distinction in his faith as compared to that of Abel's. Rather than in faith trusting what God had said to him, Cain trusted his own sinful desires and acted upon his brother in the most severe expression of persecution. By murdering his brother he gave vent to his inner turmoil.

As far back as the serpent's temptation of Eve, the foundations for religious persecution were being set in an effort to destroy faith and to interfere with its free, unhindered, and unimpeded expression. At the core of every expression of religious persecution may be found this question: "Did God really say . . . ?" Rather than make an effort to see whether God had indeed said the very thing that is the point of controversy, some individuals find themselves driven to destroy those whom they perceive as different in their religious faith. It is strange that humanity would find it necessary to do so, rather than letting God defend Himself.

Christ was presented with these same circumstances while suffering in the wilderness. Satan came to our Lord with Scripture out of context, where sense and meaning had been twisted and turned to suit his argument. In response, Jesus presented us with the paradigm of how to answer

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heresy rather than to yield to the temptation to sin that Satan presented. The Word made flesh brought forth the spoken word in context, fullness, and clarity. It is this orthodox word that drove Satan away. As believers reliant upon this word, we, too, will be faced with various and sundry temptations to react poorly to those who depend upon heresy to affirm sinful desires or idolatry. Our response as Christians must be to resist the temptation to attack them. Instead, we must seize the opportunity to ring out the clarion call of God's truth. This is true especially when we are the ones being persecuted through all manner of lies and calumny.

Regardless of when it first began, mankind appears to have always struggled to acknowledge the rights of individuals to worship freely, to express their faith openly, and to live their lives according to the mandates of their consciences without experiencing severe and sometimes deadly persecution from others. Though I am Christian and my faith is that Christ is the only way to the Father, this study addresses general principles concerning religious freedom as it has been developed in the United States. It concerns the essential right of everyone to express freely their faith through their speech and their lawful actions, both privately and in the public square. Unless these rights are preserved and protected for everyone—including those who believe differently than we do or perhaps believe in nothing at all—then we will find our claim to religious freedom a hollow shell.

I. Old Beginnings in the New World

When the new world was discovered, access to it and escape from the old world order offered many the promise of a place in which they could truly begin to experience religious freedom. Exploitation of the natural resources of the new world was a huge factor in the development of these areas; however, opportunities for freedom in the vast open territories were also an attractive lure. Far from the reaches of the established governments of the old world, those who came here had the chance to create themselves anew with little restriction upon how they accomplished this—including opportunities to worship without interference.

Though many of us like to think of the colonies as havens of religious freedom, a fairer general description would be that they represented circumscribed areas in which individual Christian denominations flourished to the exclusion of other denominations. Religious prejudice was no stranger to the colonies. According to Professor Michael I. Myerson "[a]t least five colonies denied Catholics the right to vote, and many explicitly

excluded them from the guarantee of free exercise of religion."[2] Following the defeat of the British the landscape improved somewhat:

> The Church of England, associated with the newly defeated enemy, was no longer established in any state. With New York, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia joining the states that never had an establishment,[3] eight states firmly embraced disestablishment as a fundamental principle. Five states had varying degrees of establishment, ranging from Maryland, which permitted, without ever implementing, a tax to benefit Christian churches, to South Carolina, which had established the Christian religion, to the New England states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, which maintained establishments that favored Congregational churches.
>
> All states generally allowed people to practice their religion in peace. Rhode Island removed its restriction on Catholic voting by statute in 1783. Most states, however, imposed legal restrictions on non-Protestants. New Jersey, Delaware, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, and Vermont barred Catholics, Jews, and other non-Protestants from serving in the government. Jews, but not Catholics, were excluded from the legislatures of Pennsylvania and Maryland, while South Carolina limited voting rights to those who believed in God. Each state's laws reflected its local concerns and varying degrees of religious homogeneity.[4]

Having come to a new land, the religious denominations that had had their origins in the old world brought with them their own prejudices and biases against those unlike themselves. These biases and prejudices were arguably the result of persecutions they had experienced themselves and a zealous desire for self-preservation. Moreover, this mindset appears to have underlain their desires to have religious freedom specifically set forth

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[2] Michael I. Myerson, *Endowed by Our Creator: The Birth of Religious Freedom in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 56.

[3] In this quote, Prof. Myerson is referring to circumstances post-American Revolution as concerns establishment. As he indicates elsewhere, "The American *colonies* thus displayed a broad range of approaches to the establishment of religion. With the exception of New York, the colonies that established the Church of England were limited to the South. Maryland was the most northern of the clearly Anglican-established colonies. Georgia, chartered in 1732, declared the Church of England its established church in 1758, the five southern most colonies, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, shared a common established religion. The strength of this establishment varied, with North Carolina and Georgia having the weakest centralized church." Meyerson, *Endowed by Our Creator*, 26; emphasis added.

[4] Meyerson, *Endowed by Our Creator*, 82.

as protected under the Constitution. Rather than promote their own denomination as a potential national church (recognizing that politics could bring another denomination to the fore), they were more interested in ensuring their own preservation and protecting against their own demise.

Rev. John Leland, a Baptist minister in Virginia and a close friend of James Madison made it quite clear that he intended to run for public office against Madison, unless Madison included an amendment for religious freedom to the Constitution.[5] Demands for the inclusion of a Bill of Rights had begun even as the Constitutional Convention had concluded. The promise that these rights would be recognized in writing was ultimately important to the ratification of the Constitution. Rhode Island was the last state to ratify the Constitution on May 29, 1790,[6] with the Bill of Rights ratified by three-fourths of the states' legislatures on December 15, 1791.[7]

First among the amendments that are now known as the Bill of Rights is the affirmation that "Congress *shall* make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . ."[8] Even during these very first years after the American Revolution, it is quite clear that the states considered this as a prohibition against federal action, fearing the power of a strong central government that might ultimately establish as a national religion something other than what they had themselves established in their own states.[9]

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[5] Robert P. George, "Religious Freedom & Why It Matters: Working in the Spirit of John Leland," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity* 27, no. 3 (2014): 23; see also Meyerson, *Endowed by Our Creator*, 154–158.

[6] The provisions of the Constitution were that in order for ratification to occur, nine of the legislatures of the thirteen original states would need to accept the Constitution. North Carolina was the ninth state to ratify the Constitution on November 21, 1789 with a vote of 194 for and 77 against. Rhode Island's legislature ratified the Constitution on May 29, 1790 with a vote of 34 to 32. See http://www.usconstitution.net/ratifications.html.

[7] Virginia was the last state legislature to ratify the Bill of Rights on Dec 15, 1791. See http://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/bill-of-rights.

[8] The full text of the First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

[9] Cf. Meyerson, *Endowed by Our Creator*, 175–179.

II. The Development of Jurisprudence on Religious Freedom

Until the first part of the twentieth century, very little jurisprudence or case law of significance is seen at the federal level, primarily because the First Amendment was generally considered applicable only to the federal government.[10] In *Cantwell v. State of Connecticut*, the Supreme Court found the prohibition of government action referenced in the First Amendment applicable to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment.[11]

Since this time, a substantial body of law has developed concerning religious freedom. The path that this area of constitutional law has followed has been rather peripatetic. Though the Supreme Court has appeared to be a strong protector of religious freedom in some areas, in others it appears to have no real clue as to the important correlation between a privately held belief and the open expression of this belief in the public square. For some on the Court, it would appear that religious freedom should be protected so long as it has no real impact on others.

Ian Millhiser[12] offered a brief commentary on *Holt v. Hobbs*, a recent decision concerning religious freedom by the Supreme Court of the United States (hereinafter sometimes referred to as SCOTUS).[13] A Muslim incarcerated in the Arkansas Department of Corrections had been denied a right to grow a half-inch beard that he asserted was in accord with his religious beliefs. In an opinion issued by Justice Alito, the Court held that this was a violation of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized

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[10] Of the cases that do exist prior to the twentieth century, *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. (1879) does have some major impact on religious freedom. In this matter Congress had enacted legislation outlawing polygamy. Reynolds was charged with bigamy and raised as an affirmative defense that it was his religious duty to marry multiple women and as such under the First Amendment the law was ineffective against him. The decision stated in part that "[l]aws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinions, they may with practices." Myerson, *Endowed by Our Creator*, 165.

[11] *Cantwell v. State of Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296 (1940). This case dealt with Jehovah's Witnesses who had been charged with violation of a licensing solicitation ordinance and disturbance of the peace. Their convictions at the state levels were overturned by the United States Supreme Court as violative of the First Amendment protection of free exercise of religion.

[12] Ian Millhiser, "Justice Ginsberg Explains Everything You need To Know About Religious Liberty in Two Sentences," http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/01/20/ 3613196/justice-ginsburg-explains-everything. Millhiser is Senior Fellow at American Progress; his work focuses on the Constitution and the judiciary. See https:// www.americanprogress.org/about/staff/millhiser-ian/bio.

[13] *Holt v. Hobbs*, 574 S. Ct. 853 (2015).

Persons Act of 2000, "which prohibits a state or local government from taking any action that substantially burdens the religious exercise of an institutionalized person unless the government demonstrates that the action constitutes the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental interest."[14] In discussing the import of the case Millhiser referenced a two sentence concurring opinion from Justice Ginsburg "explaining why . . . [the *Holt* decision] is a proper application of an individual's freedoms—and why she believes that the Court's birth control decision in *Hobby Lobby* was erroneous." Ginsburg writes, "Unlike the exemption this Court approved in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, accommodating petitioner's religious belief in this case would not detrimentally affect others who do not share the petitioner's belief. On that understanding, I join the Court's opinion."[15] Millhiser went on to say:

> People of faith have robust rights to honor their beliefs and act on their legal conscience but they couldn't interfere with someone else's legal rights . . . . Unlike Hobby Lobby, Muhammed [Holt] sought a concession to his faith that has no impact on anyone other than himself. As Alito's opinion in *Holt* lays out, the prison's concern about the consequences of allowing him to grow a beard were unwarranted. And no one else will have to do anything with their facial hair (or for that matter, lose access to important medical care), because Muhammed will be allowed to grow a beard.[16]

The problem with this argument and line of reasoning is that it does not consider the implications it has for any constitutional right and freedom. Indeed, all decisions concerning constitutional rights and freedoms balance the effect of one constitutionally protected freedom against any competing freedom. In *Holt*, however, the determining factor was that there was no governmental interest in preserving the security of its facility and the other inmates that would outweigh Holt's religious freedom to maintain an appearance consistent with his faith.

The difficulty is that the tenor and tone of this argument and the comment of Justice Ginsberg imply that where religious freedom is concerned, this is a second-class freedom not deserving full protection and entitled to its exercise only when and where no one else is impacted thereby. It, and the long line of SCOTUS opinions which hint at this in their reasoning, ignore the fact that religious freedom is not only a freedom explicitly

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[14] *Holt v. Hobbs*, 853.

[15] Millhiser, "Justice Ginsberg Explains."

[16] Millhiser, "Justice Ginsberg Explains."

acknowledged by the Constitution, it is embodied in the very first amendment thereto—*first* among the Bill of Rights, whose ten amendments were a matter of extreme importance in having the Constitution ratified by the original states in the confederation.

Moreover, in the case of *Hobby Lobby*, where the owners of the corporation were motivated by their religious freedom to refuse participation in any arrangement that would support the use of abortifacients under a scheme of medical insurance, I can conceive of no opposing constitutional freedom that this would have been balanced against—either among their employees or anyone else.[17] I know of no Supreme Court decision case where there has been discovered a constitutionally protected right to have someone pay for abortions or the acquisition of abortifacients or, for that matter, of a constitutionally protected right to have one's employer pay for medical insurance.

The problem with the line of reasoning expressed by Justice Ginsburg, Ian Millhiser, and others like them is that if accepted, they allow the judiciary to shave away our constitutionally protected freedoms bit by bit in the name of protecting and preserving other legislation Congress may have enacted, any Executive Order that the Court may favor, or any other perceived right the Court may find that is not expressly stated in the Constitution.

The manner in which case law has developed in this particular area concerning constitutional freedom is directly related to humanity's insatiable desire for an autonomy that confuses license with freedom. If unchecked, the ultimate result will be anarchy. Rather than the full maturation of our society, we will see the Constitution stripped of its authority, and true religious freedom, along with other freedoms, becomes but a faint memory of something longed for but no more.

III. Where Things Began To Go Drastically Wrong

The sexual revolution of the 1960s has been Pandora's box for our society; once opened it unleashed untold misery upon us. Having lived through that time period, it was not a time highlighted by free love, peace, and flowers but rather a period of uncertainty. To understand more fully what happened then, imagine waking up while on a journey and finding that all your maps were completely useless. It was not that some of the roads had been altered. More than that, the entire landscape was shifting

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[17] *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, 134 S. Ct. 2751 (2014).

and changing, moment by moment, with each step taken. During this period, all values and morality that had been certain and sure only a short time before had been upended. Our society was like a child constantly challenging the boundaries to see where they were, only to find the boundaries constantly moving.

Making matters worse, the very "freedoms" being discovered during this period merely fed society's sense of licentiousness and irresponsibility. The mantra of "sex, drugs, and rock & roll" covered our culture like a numbing anesthetic until we could no longer find our way. The wreckage strewn along the course of the past decades appears much like the discarded battle gear left behind by a defeated army trying to escape the last battle: broken homes, destroyed family structures, people with lives ruined by addictions and various other social maladies arising from the so-called free lifestyles—all touted by those most fully committed to the course.

Though there are many cases we could consider as we track the path taken by the Supreme Court concerning religious freedom, there is one that is particularly fitting. About the time the decision in this case was handed down, I recall reading an article in which Justice Sandra Day O'Connor reportedly indicated that morality cannot be the basis for legislation. I thought it an idiotic comment then, and still find it incomprehensible that an individual chosen to serve in this highest position in our judicial system would have said something like this. In the case of *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, the Supreme Court found unconstitutional a Texas state statute that made it illegal for members of the same sex to engage in what is commonly known as sodomy.[18] Though Justice Kennedy delivered the opinion for the Court, several justices appended concurring or dissenting opinions. In support of the constitutionality of the statute, Texas had argued that the statutes had as a rational basis the promotion of public morality. In her concurring opinion, Justice O'Connor wrote: "Moral disapproval of a group cannot be a legitimate governmental interest under the Equal Protection Clause because legal classifications must not be 'drawn for the purpose of disadvantaging the group burdened by the law.'"[19] Though Justice O'Connor was arguing a subtle distinction in the

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[18] *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2006).

[19] *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, 583. Interestingly, Justice O'Connor also indicated "[t]hat this law as applied to private, consensual conduct is unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause does not mean that other laws distinguishing between heterosexuals and homosexuals would similarly fail under rational basis review. Texas cannot assert any legitimate state interest here, such as national security or preserving the traditional institution of marriage. Unlike the moral disapproval of same-sex relations—

basis for the ruling under the Equal Protection Clause, her relation of this argument to the issue of morality seems to say more than just a fine point of constitutional law. It echoed a quote from another case that Justice Kennedy had stated in the majority decision:

> For many persons these are not trivial concerns [that is, questions about sexual behavior] but profound and deep convictions accepted as ethical and moral principles to which they aspire and which thus determine the course of their lives. These considerations do not answer the question before us, however. The issue is whether the majority may use the power of the State to enforce these views on the whole society through operation of the criminal law. "Our obligation is to define the liberty of all, not to mandate our own moral code."[20]

What bothered me most about these comments in the reasoning of the Supreme Court was that it seems to fly in the face of much I had understood about our judicial process and the reasons for laws, both criminal and civil. For me, it was the sound of fingernails across the chalkboard, yet quite revealing because it reflects the current landscape at the intersection of American jurisprudence and culture.

The structure and form of a government do not create morality in its people. As those saved by grace understand, no law can effectuate the result or the object of its command. Nevertheless, the legislation of a government will inevitably reflect the morality of its people, either in the way it is written or in the way it is enforced. There is a deterrent effect in some circumstances and in others a positive effect on the conduct a law may encourage. Secular law is simply a mirror of our culture—a snapshot of our condition in a certain timeframe. Witness the many laws still on the books in various jurisdictions that are no longer prosecuted.

Over thirty years ago, when I was the prosecuting attorney for a rural community in Virginia, I never had a case of adultery brought before me for criminal prosecution—and our community was certainly not a bedrock of marital fidelity. I believe it is still a crime to commit adultery, but in the time since then I still have not heard of a case of prosecution for this. As morality in our society has worsened and values have diminished, the lack of prosecution of a specific law is often argued as a reason to act more freely and without the burden of the law, such as the various arguments in

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the asserted state interest in this case—other reasons exist to promote the institution of marriage beyond mere moral disapproval of an excluded group" (585).

[20] *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, 571.

areas of sexual freedom and the de-criminalization of marijuana. Were our society different morally, I submit that these arguments would not be raised.

The dissenting opinion written by Justice Antonin Scalia in *Lawrence v. The State of Texas* (which was joined in by then-Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice Thomas) does a tremendous job of outlining the pitfalls of this ruling and the potential future problems, many of which have come to fruition. It is a truism indeed that one cannot legislate morality. No law has ever been put into effect that has had the effect of changing wholesale the values of a people, but this is not to say that morality cannot be the basis, direction, and intent of any legislation. Consider the various laws for the solicitation of prostitution, public intoxication, and the like. In fact, in any court case, a party is entitled to impeach the testimony of any witness—that is, to raise the inference that it is not truthful—if they have been convicted in the past of a crime involving moral turpitude,[21] something that many states recognize as crimes involving lying, cheating, stealing, or making false witness.[22]

In this same case of *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, numerous references are made to our ever increasing desire for autonomy in all things. In developing the argument of the majority decision, Justice Kennedy wrote that a review of the laws and traditions of the past century had shown ". . . an emerging awareness that liberty gives substantial protection to adult persons in deciding how to conduct their private lives in matters pertaining to sex. '[H]istory and tradition are the starting point but not in all cases the ending point of the substantive due process inquiry.'"[23]

Quoting from another case, Justice Kennedy continued:

[O]ur laws and tradition afford constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, child rearing, and education . . . . In explaining the respect the Constitution demands for the autonomy of the person in making these choices, we stated as follows: "These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the

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[21] "Gross violation of standards of moral conduct, vileness, such that an act involving moral turpitude was intentionally evil, making the act a crime. The existence of moral turpitude can bring a more severe criminal charge or penalty for a criminal defendant." *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, 2nd ed., s.v. "moral turpitude."

[22] See, for example, *Newton v. Commonwwealth*, 29 Va. App. 433 (1999); this can be found at https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/1066400/newton-v-com.

[23] *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, 572.

liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State." . . . Persons in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for these purposes, just as heterosexual persons do.[24]

In his dissenting opinion, Justice Scalia recognized the decision in *Lawrence* as essentially laying the ground work for the ultimate approval of homosexual marriages.[25] The difficulty has never been with the nature of whatever peculiar freedom or right the Supreme Court has been asked to identify or protect. Rather it has been with the manner and method through which the Court has discovered such freedoms and rights and then "balanced" them against freedoms and protections specifically stated in the Constitution. Early in our history of jurisprudence, the decision-making process used by our courts began to allow societal changes in our values and mores to be a determinative factor in how a statute would be read and how a constitutional provision would be interpreted. This process has occurred under the theory of a "living Constitution" that changes and develops through the creation of decisional law. Decisional law adjusts what the Constitution means through the passage of time depending on the societal developments without resorting to the process of amendment that was initially established for changing the document. Amending the Constitution is cumbersome and indeed difficult, one might argue, in order to protect the integrity of those freedoms referenced at the outset. Writing about this danger, Justice Scalia notes:

> If the courts are free to write the Constitution anew, they will by God, write it in a way the majority wants; the appointment and confirmation process will see to that. This, of course, is the end of the Bill of Rights, whose meaning will be committed to the very body it was meant to protect against: the majority. By trying to make the constitution do everything that needs doing from age to age, we shall have caused it to do nothing at all.[26]

What we are seeing is a "right to privacy," which concept (as developed by the Court) has become the underlying basis for the reduction of

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[24] *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, 574.

[25] *Lawrence v. The State of Texas*, 604–605.

[26] Antonin Scalia and others, *A Matter of Interpretation: Federal Courts and the Law (An Essay by Antonin Scalia)*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 47.

other freedoms or rights specifically stated in the Constitution, all for the purpose of promoting individual autonomy.

IV. What Hope Is There?

We must all be willing to do the hard work necessary to protect and preserve our rights as stated and acknowledged in the Constitution. These rights are essential to our existence as human beings. Our founding fathers were not afraid to leave a little of their blood on the floor in the process of doing so—many at that time and since have left their all. Those who have followed in their steps have also been asked to sacrifice.

Martin Luther King Jr. was willing to give his all and ultimately paid with his life for the voice of freedom. How can we consider any less of a commitment to the cause of our religious rights? In his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King noted: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."[27]

Our world is not as it was when I was a child, and in many ways I am thankful for that. Our country is also not as it was when I was a child, and in many ways I am thankful for that as well. All change, however, is not positive or constructive, and many of the shifts and movements that have taken place since have caused erosion in much we have valued. Since the 1960s, there have been many signs that our republic is experiencing many of the difficulties that Rome lived through in its last days as an empire. Yet, hope rises up as a breath of warm anticipation as we look to spring. We are a country born in the face of adversity and birthed by men who cherished their freedom enough to sacrifice and place their lives and fortunes at full risk in order to ensure the protection of those freedoms for their progeny and their future.

During the Vietnam era a certain phrase was popular among the military. Its sanitized version goes like this: "If you have them by their progenerative faculties, their hearts and minds will follow." The intention was that with enough force you can make things go the way you wish, and you can make people believe the way you force them to believe. But we all know that this is not true.

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[27] Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

The actual basis for the understanding that "hearts and minds will follow" originated during a counter insurgency program developed and directed by Brigadier General Gerald Templar, who at the time was in charge of fighting the Communists in Malaysia in the 1950s. In this he talked about "winning the hearts and minds of the people," which gave no thought to subduing a people by brute force. Instead, he recognized that if one truly wished to fight for a people and expected them to join in fighting for themselves, more had to be done than simply giving it one's all in the fight. The people had to be presented with a goal worth fighting for, something that required and understanding of their true needs.

Though General Templar's program included vigorous fighting against the insurgents, it also recognized the essential nature of having the support of the indigenous people. A great part of his efforts included programs focused on giving the people what they really needed—agricultural assistance, educational aid, health care, and the like. In much the same way, Christians in a struggle for religious freedom are fighting forces with Satan at their head. The battleground is set within our culture, where the opposing combatants both seek control over the "hearts and minds of the people." As with General Templar's program, we must look to the real need of the people—namely, the truth. We must continue our efforts in the courts, but more importantly, we must stand boldly in the public square, contending for those who are being misled by secularism. We must teach our people the truth, enabling them to recognize it and to distinguish it from the counterfeit forms offered them. We must engage the issues genuinely, fairly, and with the courage of our convictions.

Instead of angrily shouting down someone with opposing views, we must seek to engage them in genuine conversation. We cannot relinquish our right to speak, but we can everywhere offer the truth with "gentleness and respect," remembering that it is ultimately God's hand which provides the peace that passes all understanding and keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7). Truth must ultimately inform culture. If we abdicate this part of the fight, it will matter little what we do in the courts and our various legislatures. Refusing to become directly involved in this responsibility makes us silent witnesses as circumstances grow worse. We cannot afford simply to stand by and watch as this precious freedom circles the drain in our society's return to paganism.

V. What If the Supreme Court Rules Incorrectly?

Though much fear hangs in the air as we reflect on the recent action of SCOTUS legalizing same-sex marriage,[28] we must never forget: the Supreme Court can be wrong. As a prime example (among many) we need only consider *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, which has been identified as one of the top ten worst decisions of the Supreme Court, some arguing that it has been the worst decision ever from this august body.[29] It took the bloodiest conflict we have ever experienced (with casualties greater than the total losses of all conflicts from our inception through the Vietnam War[30]) along with the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth Amendment to correct. We must not be surprised when they get it wrong. We cannot expect them to be infallible. They are not gods. They have made wrong decisions. They have made bad decisions. They will continue to get things wrong. They will also get things wrong by overruling prior decisions which were actually correct. The question for us is this: "What shall we do when this happens?"

Abraham Lincoln said, "We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to over-throw the men who pervert the Constitution."[31] We must continue all legal means available to us. We must fight our battles in the courts so our rights may be preserved, undiluted either by liberal politicians or an activist judiciary. We must speak out clearly against anyone seeking to expand manufactured "rights" and privileges at the expense of those core and basic freedoms so clearly set forth in the Bill of Rights.[32] No less an important front in this war exists in the hearts and minds of our people. There is a role for pastors to be active citizens of our nation and to encourage their congregants to do the same. Standing in the gap betwixt the government and the culture is the church. It is the church whose clarion call sounds out the truth when that which is not truth comes from either the government or culture, catching the people in the crossfire.

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[28] This study was written several months prior to the Court's *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision concerning same-sex marriage; see *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 135 S. Ct. 1039 (2015).

[29] *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 US 393 (1857); see also http://www.britannica.com/list/148/editor-picks-the-10-worst-us-supreme-court-decisions-part-one and http://faculty.washington.edu/sstreich/documents/ worstdecisionever.pdf.

[30] http://www.civilwar.org/education/civil-war-casualties.html.

[31] http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/abrahamlin109278.html; see also http://declarationofdependence.org/abraham-lincoln.

[32] See also, R.R. Reno, "Religion and Public Life in America" *Imprimus* 42, no. 4 (2013): 1-8.

The development of jurisprudence in the area of religious freedom has resulted not so much in a coherent body of law that fits well together, but rather a patchwork quilt poorly pieced together. We impose coherence on it by a backwards view because we desire structure and order. The development of this area of jurisprudence has been directed by the influences of a changing culture whose sense of morality and human worth has ebbed and flowed in a generally downward direction.

It is the culture, by and large, that has driven the direction of judicial decisions. Over the course of our country's existence, one need only consider how new rights and privileges have been discovered by those on the highest courts of the land, generally to the detriment and diminishment of those freedoms originally asserted for our people in the Bill of Rights. These decisions are bound up in what appears to be an ever evolving subjective sense of what is right that is not measured by an outside, objective, and unchanging guide. The subtle influence of our secular society has been a powerful force exerting substantial effect over time, wearing down freedoms in one area and building up new ones in other areas. Regardless of these forces, however, we must not diminish our efforts.

VI. What Role for Christians?

Our task as a people of Christ is to stand secure in the in-between place—in the public square—and by our lives, our speech, and our actions to be witnesses to the truth and indeed martyrs where we must. When the Ukrainian conflict began in 2013–2014, there were photographs published in the various news outlets showing the forces of the government and those revolting arrayed across from each other in the public square.[33] In the middle between the opposing forces stood a lone, Orthodox priest in his vestments holding up a crucifix. This photograph depicted for me the raw necessity for religious expression in the public square. A priest stands between the state with all its force and might, and the citizens, with all their myriad voices raising a cacophony of issues. This photograph shows the public square in all its power, fury, danger, and immediacy. What would the secular humanist have happen here? They would remove the priest and have the public square devoid of religion—without the faith, values, and substantive force that could be brought to bear in the midst of

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[33] See, for example, Max Fisher, "Dramatic Photos: Ukraine's Priests Take an Active Role in Protests," *Washington Post*, February 20, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/02/20/dramatic-photos-ukraines-priests-take-an-active-role-in-protests.

this ongoing struggle. This would be a public square naked and devoid of a voice that that can properly and valuably inform the public debate.[34]

As Christians who still hold firmly to the truth, we may legitimately ask ourselves what can we do to affect our culture and to be a voice in the public square? For one thing, we must continue doing what we are doing. In the case of our seminaries, that means continuing to develop and train men for the pastoral office so truth may resonate loud and clear wherever they are called to minister. Likewise, deaconesses can serve a vital role as beacons of light that pierce a world shrouded in darkness. We must encourage these young—and sometimes not so young—men and women to engage the culture wherever and however they may find opportunity. They can write columns on culture, morals, and values for their local newspapers, write letters to the editor, or start a blog. Now is the time to bring back Lutheran Laymen's League or Lutheran Women's Missionary League groups where they have gone dormant or seek to reinvigorate those still meeting, engaging them in topics designed to focus on a culture gone awry and how it can be brought back to center. Above all, they must be encouraged to integrate themselves into their communities, performing acts of mercy and telling those who ask about Christ that he is the reason they are impelled to do so.

Why should we be bold in engaging the culture surrounding us? We acknowledge the force and effect the word of God may have on indigenous cultures when we go into the mission field. If centuries ago someone had not been bold enough to take the Word to my people I would likely be worshipping at sacred oaks and following the teachings of the Druids. And yet paganism is once again rearing its ugly head, with a new temple to Odin recently built in Iceland, neo-Druids celebrating the spring and summer solstices at Stonehenge—and the world's religions on our very door steps with Ashrams, mosques, and who knows what else right around the corner.

From the words of R.R. Reno, editor of *First Things*:

There is another, deeper argument that must be made in the defense of religion: It is the most secure guarantee of freedom. America's Founders, some of them Christian and others not, agreed in principle that the law of God trumps the law of men. This has obvious implication: The Declaration of Independence appeals to the unalienable rights given by our Creator that cannot be overridden or taken away.

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[34] See generally, Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdman's Publishing Co.), 1986.

> In this sense religion is especially beneficial . . . . religion gives us a place to stand outside of politics, and without it we're vulnerable to a system in which the state defines everything, which is the essence of tyranny. That is why gay marriage, which is sold as an expansion of freedom, is in fact a profound threat to liberty . . . . [We should] focus not on fury but on the remarkable capacity for communities of faith to survive . . . . The Church did not need constitutional protections in order to take root in a hostile pagan culture two thousand years ago . . . . Over the long haul, religious faith has proven itself the most powerful and enduring force in human history.[35]

Our job as Christians is to stand in the gap—be present in the "in-between" place—and be the filter through which the discussions that matter take place—the substance that supports the values and mores being challenged and attacked by the culture and society. Our responsibility is to make clear our convictions regarding the truth and thereby to shore up those things that Satan is attempting to tear down.

Finally, consider Psalm 1, which gives us an image of society constantly infused with the word of God and contrasts it with a society where the word is completely absent:

> **1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **2** But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (KJV)

Where the word of God is, there is life in all abundance—prosperity and all good things. If it is absent, there is nothing but darkness and death. Let us be of good cheer, for he who is with us is greater than he who is in the world! May our gracious Lord, the giver of light and sustainer of all life, give us opportunities to work while the day is yet with us.

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[35] Reno, "Religion and Public Life in America," 7–8.

Theological Observer

The Sanctity of Marriage

The following discussion points concerning the sanctity of marriage and the U.S. Supreme Court's June 26, 2015, decision regarding same-sex marriage were prepared by Peter J. Scaer, Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

1.   The Supreme Court decision changes nothing about our Christian faith. We believe that there is still a higher court and that Christ will be our final judge. As Christians, we obey the government (Romans 13), but we recognize that our greatest allegiance is to God and his word, and that in matters of conscience, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

2.   We therefore will continue to support one man one woman marriage, as it is taught in Genesis 1 and 2, and as it is taught by Christ himself (Matt 19:1–9 and Mark 10:1–12).

3.   We will continue to preach marriage as a picture of Christ's sacrificial love for his bride the church (Ephesians 5), even as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is the beginning of the wedding feast that has no end (Matthew 22; Revelation 21).

4.   The church will continue to be a place of healing and forgiveness, restoration and mercy. As our Lord has said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31–32).

5.   We are all called to repentance. As a people, we have not treated marriage with the respect that it deserves. Divorce is far too common among us, and too often we condone and support even our fellow Christians as they live together outside of wedlock. Knowing that we cannot rely upon worldly wisdom, we are called to hear and reflect upon God's Word and once more come to him for forgiveness.

6.   True love calls us to speak the truth so that all may know the forgiveness and love of Christ. We cannot celebrate that which God calls sin (Rom 1:18–32; 1 Cor 6:9). By doing so, we leave people in their sin and apart from Christ.

7.   We will also continue to support traditional marriage as an earthly institution, knowing that it is a reflection of natural law and that any law that goes against the natural law will necessarily be harmful and unjust. Written into creation, marriage is good for men, women and children.

8.   The Court has been wrong before. In the Dred Scott decision, African Americans were counted as less than human. In Roe v. Wade, the rights of the littlest children were ignored, leading to the deaths of 57 million children. The Supreme Court, like any human institution, is prone to error. As Christians, we recognize that there is a higher, heavenly court and that God's Word does not change. We also recognize that unjust decisions must be challenged for the good of our neighbor.

9.   The debate over marriage has nothing to do with equality. The pertinent question is, "What is Marriage?" The traditional definition is not arbitrary, but is based upon the fact that every child has a biological mother and father and should have a reasonable expectation that he/she will be raised by those parents. Traditional marriage discriminates against no one. The real discrimination will come against those who hold fast to God's Word.

10. Same-sex marriage is not a civil rights issue. Whether you are black or white makes no difference, but men and women are different biologically, psychologically, and emotionally. From our differences, new life comes into the world, and with our complementary differences, we are best able to support and nurture the next generation.

11. Marriage is the only institution that binds a man to his wife and to any children that result from that union. Only the union of one man and one woman is able to produce a child, and for that reason there is marriage.

12. Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable. For good reason, we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day. It is a blessing to have both a mom and a dad, each of whom brings something special to the family. In a fallen world this is not always possible. God salvages difficult situations. Therefore, our congregations will continue to be true families in Christ, as we continue to call upon God as our Father.

13. Some ask, "How will same-sex marriage affect me?" Consider, for instance, the way that no-fault divorce laws have hurt our society and left so many of our children abandoned and unprotected. The values of permanence, exclusivity, and monogamy are inherently tied to the fact that only man and one woman can produce a child and have an obligation to care for that child.

14. So-called "gay marriage" is not the end of the debate but only the beginning. There is now no consistent logical argument against polygamy, group marriage or temporary marriage. Such arguments, once thought to be extreme, are now commonplace. In the midst of such confusion, the church must continue to speak the truth in love.

15. Marriage is about more than the relationship of two people. It is the institution that binds the generations together. At the birth of every child, the mother, by the very nature of things, is present. Marriage is the one institution that encourages, incentivizes, and obligates the father to be present as well. Marriage then creates a network of aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins, helping to establish a child's sense of belonging.

16. As same-sex marriage becomes the law of the land, Christians will be increasingly persecuted for their belief. Already, florists and bakers have come under fire. Businessmen have lost their jobs and reputations. Christian adoption agencies have been forced to close. Pastors have had their sermons subpoenaed. Christian schools have already come under assault, having to fight for their accreditation. The free exercise of religion, a constitutionally protected right, is under great assault. We therefore must stand together with people of conscience. We must support those who speak God's truth in love and are persecuted for living according to their faith in Christ.

17. As Christians, we are called to be faithful to Christ our Bridegroom. The days ahead will be trying and our faith will be tested. The world will call us haters and we will be mocked and ridiculed (John 15:18–25). Yet, even in the midst of persecution, Jesus calls us to rejoice, saying, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt 5:12). As Christians, we will listen to the Good Shepherd, knowing that his words are faithful and true. Though the world may hate us, we cling to Christ who says, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10).

Rev. Dr. Ronald R. Feuerhahn Remembered

His face beamed with delight when I entered his room in the rehabilitation wing of Laclede Groves Convalescent Home in St. Louis. Whatever the circumstances, Ron and Carol always welcomed visitors with warm smiles. Ronald's delight was heightened by the chocolate ice cream he was savoring, and its consumption would not be interrupted by a visit from an old friend, student, and former pastor. Our visits usually included updates on the whereabouts and accomplishments of his students. This always brought him joy. He loved his students and was proud of them. We in return loved and respected him.

It was the Lord's Day, March 8, 2015, and I didn't know it would be the last time I would see him on this side of eternity. The last memory engraved in my mind and heart might have been that of his smiling face taking delight in the bowl of ice cream, devouring it as if it was the best thing he had ever tasted in life. As it turned out, this would not be the last image of my former teacher and friend. I concluded the visit with prayer. Ron, Carol, and I then prayed the Lord's Prayer together, and finally, with his head tilted to the side, shoulders bent and arm twisted, he made the sign of the cross as he pronounced a final blessing. The last words I heard him speak were accompanied with the sign of the cross as he placed upon us the Lord's name. Where his name is, there is he, and with this his grace and peace were bestowed anew. Ronald R. Feuerhahn: doctor of the church, theologian, church historian, churchman—but most of all a pastor.

Ron and Carol were faithful members at Reformation Lutheran Church in St. Louis where I served as pastor for ten years. They were actively involved in the life of the church and were loved and respected by their fellow members. Their participation included regular attendance in Bible class, singing in the church choir under Kantor Henry Gerike, and Ron assisting with liturgy and preaching. One Sunday following the Divine Service, Dr. Feuerhahn and Dr. Horace Hummel approached me with a serious look on their faces. They asked to see me in my office. I wondered, "What did I do wrong now?" They entered my office with sheepish smiles on their faces and a box in hand. "We would like to donate this to the church," they said. The box contained a beautiful chalice. Since its founding, the congregation never had a common cup. Now we did.

It was a great honor to be Ron's pastor, graduate student, brother in the Office of the Holy Ministry, and colleague in international theological education. Dr. Feuerhahn's ministry took place at the seminary, congregational, synodical, and international levels. All who were privileged to work with him agreed that he was the epitome of what it means to be a churchman, teacher of the church, and a gentleman.

> Stay with us, Lord, and keep us true;
> Preserve our faith our whole life through—
> Your Word alone our heart's defense,
> The Church's glorious confidence. *LSB 585:6*

Timothy C. J. Quill

Book Reviews

Review Essay

A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics. **By Joel Biermann. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 204 Pages. Softcover. $23.50.**

Does redemption in Christ free a person from a limiting structure of being, or does it establish a person within such a structured existence? Biermann offers his volume on virtue ethics not merely as a case for a particular ethical methodology but as a diagnosis of the "theological barrier" to moral instruction that he finds within Lutheranism (5). This barrier is gospel reductionism, or a practical antinomianism, and, in this criticism, Biermann follows in the footsteps of others before him, notably Scott Murray's *Law, Life, and the Living God*. The unique contribution of *A Case for Character* is that Biermann is not satisfied merely to "address" and "expose" gospel reductionism, but to overcome it with a paradigm for ethical training that would shape character and not merely rely on the teaching of principles (5, 9).

A notable strength of Biermann's work is his compilation of various sources treating key elements of this topic. He summarizes leading ethicists who have before him diagnosed the challenge of gospel reductionism. He makes readily available key passages in the Lutheran Confessions and in the writings of Luther and Melanchthon that emphasize the importance of promoting good works and forming Christians through catechesis and habituation. He provides for a Lutheran audience a timely primer on virtue ethics, even as the field is being rejuvenated among those concerned with ethics.

I am less convinced that Biermann will overcome gospel reductionism with his new paradigm, a creedal paradigm that incorporates the three kinds of righteousness. Time will tell. However, by not treating centrally the question of how Christ's work of redemption and the application of the gospel forms the Christian life, methodologically he is unable to overcome the dominance of gospel reductionism. Instead of showing the proper role of the gospel in formation, he excludes a treatment of it. Thus he leaves the reader wondering what the role of the gospel is in ethical formation, potentially inviting abuse of the role of the gospel in the Christian life.

I. Key Insights

Biermann's study summarizes important material in the area of virtue ethics and presents a number of clarifying insights into the interconnection between law and gospel, ethics, and virtue. To begin with, he presents in chapter one an accessible overview of the current state of virtue ethics, highlighting contributions of key figures such as Josef Pieper, Alisdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, and Gilbert Meilaender. Virtues are dispositions toward the goods of human flourishing. Biermann explains the significance of community practices for the formation of virtue. A *practice* is not just any repeated activity, but one that 1) is social and cooperative, 2) aims at a purpose, 3) is characterized by internal goods (not merely external goods such as payment or prestige), 4) has standards of excellence, without which the goods and purpose cannot be achieved, and 5) develops over time, contributing to a tradition (18–19). Participation in these community practices habituates community members in certain virtues.

Biermann also presents a select overview of ethicists who have criticized the contemporary structures in Lutheran theology that mitigate against comprehensive development of theological ethics (39–63). Fundamental to these erring structures is the misconstrual of the law-gospel relationship as an opposition. Law and gospel should not be conceived of as two ends of a pole. When speaking of the law with respect to good works, the law refers to the unchanging and good will of God (FC SD VI 4, 15). The gospel frees people from the punishment for failing to keep the law. It does not free people from doing the law. On the contrary, the gospel regenerates and grants the Holy Spirit, who empowers life according to God's will (FC SD VI 6, 11, 17). The law and the gospel are not alternatives. Rather, when it comes to good works, the gospel empowers a person to do them.

Were law and gospel set in opposition to each other, the gospel would free one from the law, not from the punishment of failing to keep the law. It would follow that the free person has no concern for striving after the law or disciplining himself according to it. Furthermore, any order or structure for the new life would be only a condemning law in opposition to what the gospel frees the Christian from (40–41, 46, 115–16). On the contrary, according to Biermann, the gospel grants us new life, a life that takes its form in accordance with the will of God. This life is not amorphous—gnostic—but structured according to the will of God (42). Another way to think of it is that the form and structure of life that God takes on in the incarnation models the new life to which each Christian, baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, is born (41).

Consequently, while the commandments condemn sin, they also express the form of life God desires and for which he prepares the Christian (while always accusing the sin that remains). The free Christian does not oppose the good life, but desires and embraces it as true freedom. The commandments form the Christian so that he embodies the new life given in justification. Thus justification and the new life are connected through the commandments (59–60).

For Biermann, then, the law-gospel structure of the condemning law brought to an end by the forgiveness of the gospel serves to explain the Christian's standing before God (*coram deo*), whereas the better paradigm for explaining ethics and one's life in the world (*coram mundo*) is that of the two or three *kinds of righteousness* (119). Biermann's distinction between these two paradigms corresponds to the methodology of the Formula of Concord: when treating one's standing before God, the Formula upholds the distinction between law and gospel, labeling any word that convicts or condemns as law, and the forgiving, reconciling word as gospel (FC V). However, when speaking of good works or fruits of the Spirit in the world, the Formula describes the law not only as condemning, but as indicative of God's will (FC VI; the Formula explicitly makes the distinction between the two kinds of righteousness in SD III 32, 41).

So what are the *three* kinds of righteousness? This comes from Biermann's helpful distinction between *civil righteousness*, outward good works that can be done by anyone, and the *righteousness of the law*, good works done by Christians. This is no innovation; Luther makes this same distinction in his "Sermon on the Threefold Righteousness" (1518; WA 2, 41–47). In this framework, civil righteousness refers to outward conformity to the moral law, regardless of the condition of one's heart. A person who obeys those in authority, refrains from violence, is faithful to his spouse, does not act or speak dishonestly, and so on, has acted, in these cases, according to civil righteousness, even if he denies Christ in his heart or thinks all kinds of evil thoughts in his heart. The righteousness of the law refers to the truly good works that Christians do because they are regenerate and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This includes outward actions, as well as righteous inclinations and thoughts from the heart (121–122).

In summary, in Biermann's framework civil righteousness is the first kind of righteousness, which all can do; justifying righteousness is the second kind of righteousness, given freely on account of Christ to those who believe; and the righteousness of the law is the third kind of righteousness, good works done out of faith. For clarity, Biermann refers to

these as *governing* righteousness, *justifying* righteousness, and *conforming* righteousness, respectively (129). Biermann's careful explanation sheds valuable light on discussions about the kinds of righteousness, and the precise delineation of the three kinds of righteousness is one of the highlights of the work.

II. A Creedal Paradigm

Chapters five and six are the culminating section of the book, where Biermann presents his constructive proposal for virtue ethics within a creedal paradigm. Biermann says that he will consider "the benefits of thinking of the creed in terms of a paradigm," and that he will go on to "describe a single guiding frame that adopts the three-kinds-of-righteousness framework and then roots that framework within the basic creedal paradigm." His subsequent explanation indicates that he means that the three kinds of righteousness are best understood as an expression of the creedal confession. The three kinds of righteousness express righteousness corresponding to the three articles of the creeds, and in this sense accord with the "creedal framework" (136). "The redemption accomplished in the second article of the creed leads the believer back into the first-article world of creation, there to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, who carries out the third-article work of restoration and fulfillment" (142). God's creative work finds one element of expression in the ethical life of created human beings, that is, in the civil or governing righteousness after which human beings strive. God saves people through his justifying righteousness on account of Christ. One element of sanctification is the active or conforming righteousness of the faithful. According to Biermann, the benefits of the creedal paradigm are that justification and a Christian's life in the world are not set up as a polarity that diminishes one when the other is emphasized. More fundamentally, the creed sets forth all righteousness, whether governing, justifying, or conforming, as the work of the Holy Trinity (136). As one who is redeemed and sanctified, the Christian endeavors in creation to serve others. This is his life *coram mundo* (140).

It is worth noting in this discussion that Biermann presents a brief but helpful critique of contemporary so-called trinitarian ethics, promoted by Jürgen Moltmann, Stanley Grenz, and others. The creedal paradigm, although clearly trinitarian, is not to be confused with this so-called trinitarian ethics. This so-called trinitarian ethics argues for using the intertrinitarian relationships as a model for human relationships and society. The problem with this way of thinking is that we have a limited knowledge of intertrinitarian relationships: the Father is unbegotten, the

Son is begotten of the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Little else may be said without speculation, leaving little to serve as a model for ethics. Even that which we do know has little correspondence to human society, as the relation of begetting does not extend outside the family, and the relation of proceeding is not a human relation. When ethics is based on speculations about the intertrinitarian relationship, then the vocation given us in this life and revealed by Scripture is overlooked. As creatures, redeemed by Christ and sanctified by the Spirit, people are given vocations by which to serve one another in their places in life according to the commandments (139–40). Therefore, the purpose or telos of a human person is not to imitate strictly or speculatively the intertrinitarian life, but to live out God's will for him in creation, as directed by the word, most specifically, the Ten Commandments (144).

The creedal paradigm iterates, "Thus the creed, with articles on creation, redemption, and restoration/fulfillment, pulls together the Christian's life *coram Deo* and *coram mundo*" (178). The creed assures of the unity of Christian identity before God, that he will resolve the gap between God's view of our righteousness in Christ and our performance in the world. In the meantime, the Christian strives to be more Christ-like, to be more fully human (178). Each of the three ecumenical creeds "directs and explains" the Christian, living, by grace, "to accomplish the purpose of the Creator by serving the rest of creation, in anticipation of the Creator's promised consummation of all creation" (180).

III. Creation and Eschatology

It is in these constructive chapters that the reader most desires to hear Biermann's unique voice. Instead, the source material often ends up dominating the text. Much of the final two chapters summarizes other scholars' research without significant analysis or structuring of the material in a way that gives unique dynamism to Biermann's argument. The reader is not engaged with a compelling, centering argument that carries him through a variety of contributing scholarly material. Rather, a collection of authorities is strung together to give impetus to the idea that the creed provides structure to the Christian life, unified *coram Deo* and *coram mundo*.

For example, Biermann begins to demonstrate the close relationship between the doctrine of creation and the virtuous life by arguing that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit directs the Christian back into creation where he serves others according to his vocation. To be fully human is to live according to the righteousness that God intended for us. Yet as he is beginning to develop this argument, he switches to another topic, noting

that "the question of humanity's destiny or telos will be taken up again in a subsequent section" (144). When the reader arrives at this subsequent section, Biermann tantalizes the reader by indicating that this restoration to "God's original creative intent" also "accommodates essential aspects of eschatological truths . . . . With the incarnation, God's plan for creation was elevated and expanded in ways that could not have been anticipated by Adam" (151–152).

Yet, what are the elevations and expansions to which Biermann refers? He never develops this line of thought. This leaves the reader with at least one fundamental line of questioning: what, particularly, distinguishes the eschatologically-oriented life from a mere restoration to the created state? How do the incarnation and sanctification transform created life beyond its Edenic beginnings? Specifically, for Biermann's purposes, how does this trajectory affect ethical formation? How do the commandments as the articulation of God's will express this move from Eden to the New Jerusalem?

The Scriptures indicate that this trajectory includes a participation of the redeemed in the body of Christ, a grafting into the one who has taken on human nature, that they "grow up in every way into him who is the head . . . [who] makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Eph 4:15–16). In this way the redeemed do not exist in the same way as Adam was created in the beginning, but dwell in Christ in anticipation of the consummation of the new creation in which "the dwelling place of God is with man" (Rev 21:3). In this dwelling place, the river of the water of life with the tree of life do not merely stand in a garden to be cultivated, but they adorn and nourish Christ's people in the completed city of God (Rev 22:1–5). Biermann rightly notes the eschatological trajectory of the sanctified. Developing his presentation of it more extensively would have provided further groundwork for the conforming righteousness of the sanctified life in contrast to the governing righteousness of all people.

IV. Formation and the Gospel

Perhaps most enigmatic is that Biermann does not delve more deeply into the relationship between justifying righteousness and conforming righteousness. It is central to his argument that conforming righteousness lives out of justifying righteousness—in fact, to overcome the polarized view of law and gospel, this relationship is necessary and vital: "Righteousness 3, conforming righteousness, grows out of God's monergistic action of righteousness 2 [justification] and must be joined to it. The conforming righteousness is uniquely Christian and driven by the truths of

the second article . . ." (149). Uniquely Christian works of loving God and the neighbor are fruits of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Yet throughout the work Biermann declines to explore the details and contours of this relationship. For example, he says:

> It is important that strong and lively connections between the believer's life *coram Deo* and *coram mundo* be maintained. Yet, a clear delineation of these connections is not only difficult, but dangerous—at least theologically dangerous. Meilaender himself warns elsewhere against yielding to "the temptation to step across the gap which divides inculcation of the virtues from shaping the soul." The interrelationship between growth in virtue *coram mundo* and individual identity *coram Deo* remains at once tremendously dense and delicate, and wisdom would dictate a marked reticence about offering descriptions of it. While an explication of the relationship remains elusive, it is evident that a relationship does, nevertheless, exist. (175–176)

On the one hand, the relationship must be maintained; on the other hand, attempting to describe this relationship is dangerous. Yet the potential danger suggests that theologians and pastors ought to examine the question according to the Scriptures and Confessions and to have a ready explanation that says as much as the Scriptures say, while also guarding against saying more than the Scriptures say. However, Biermann is reticent to engage in this task:

> In the realm of theology, it is too often the case that attempts at explanation end badly—merely spawning misleading or false doctrine . . . . [A]ny effort to elaborate on the interaction between justifying righteousness and conforming righteousness is an ill-advised adventure since it always forces the would-be teacher into the role of innovator. Scripture says very little about the inner workings of the relationship between justification and a life of good works, and the Confessions are similarly all but silent about *how* justification and new obedience are related. The two are related—period. (131)

How "very little" the Scriptures and Confessions say about this relationship is open to discussion, as this is a relative claim. The task of theology is to say what the Scriptures say, and no more, as Biermann warns, but also no less. Saying as much as the Scriptures say and distinguishing this from errors that say either too much or too little is the central task of a theologian.

Surely there are great limits to our understanding. Furthermore, this review does not allow the space to develop a biblical theology of the rela-

tion between justifying and conforming righteousness. Nevertheless, I note a few passages that suggest that the Scriptures and the Confessions do have significant things to say on this question, things that could serve as starting points for this investigation. Romans 6–7, for example, famously expressed Paul's account of the flesh and the new man. The new man lives out of justification, having risen with Christ in Baptism (6:4). This new man delights in the good law of God and desires and strives to fulfill it, although he is often thwarted by the flesh (7:15–23). Overcoming these failures—overcoming sin—even after justification requires continued reliance on the merits and mercy of Christ, who saves the new man from the flesh, the body of death (7:24–25). The Formula of Concord expresses in several places that the regenerate are changed and have "new impulses and movements in mind, will, and heart" (SD II 70; cf. SD II 63–70; III 27–33, 41–43; IV 7–11; VI 12, 17). Thus, the good works of conforming righteousness are fruits of the new man who is created anew and sustained by the meritorious justifying righteousness of Christ.

The Bible says more about the nature and strength of this new man. Galatians 2:20 proclaims that the flesh has been crucified with Christ while the new life is Christ living in the new man. The life and power of Christ is communicated to the faithful. The earthly continues to be put to death, while the new self continues to be renewed after the image of Christ (Col 3:5, 10). The putting to death of the old, earthly flesh continues daily through repentance under the law and the enlivening of faith through the gospel in the means of grace. Preaching, pastoral exhortation to repentance, the daily use and practice of Baptism, and the faithful reception of the Lord's Supper are the abundant variety of ways that the Holy Spirit continuously strengthens the new life. Luther's words on the use of Baptism are especially poignant here: the "purging" and "daily decrease" of the old Adam is to practice and to "plunge into Baptism and daily to come forth again," and "when we enter Christ's kingdom, this corruption must daily decrease so that the longer we live the more gentle, patient, and meek we become, and the more we break away from greed, hatred, envy, and pride" (LC IV 65–73). Here is some of the Confessions' strongest language on formation, expressed not as instruction in the law, the cultivation of community, or habituating practices, but in the faithful reception and exercise of Baptism.

Thus the lack of a comprehensive treatment of the place of the gospel and the means of grace in formation is a significant ellipsis in this work. In illustrating his argument with the example of a converted truck driver, Biermann notes that the driver "avails himself of the blessings of word and

sacrament that constitute the community that is the church" (160). This is, however, the most explicit acknowledgment of the role of the means of grace in formation, and it is not developed further.

V. Ethical Formation in the Congregation

In explaining Christian formation, Biermann offers three sections of application: "Training in Virtue" (189–191), "Cultivation of Community" (191–194), and "Ethics for Ordinary Life" (194–196). In the first of these, he begins by speaking of the importance of catechesis and instruction, while balancing this with a criticism of moralism. Teaching should give attention to the Commandments and the four cardinal virtues, especially as they ought to be practiced (rather than merely thought about). Cultivating community centers on modeling the Christian life for newer or younger Christians by more mature Christians and establishing a community that challenges the individualistic, selfish vices a person develops when he follows his sinful nature. Such modelling engages individuals emotionally through vivid example, stirring up the imagination and challenging Christians to discern how these models give concrete expression to virtue. Ethics for ordinary life gives attention to the kind of person one ought to be in everyday relationships and responsibilities, rather than dwelling on ethical quandaries that are rarely, if ever, faced. This development of an ordinary Christian ethic is supported through the rituals of everyday life, such as daily prayer, liturgical ceremonies, or making the sign of the cross.

Thus Biermann's case for character is that it be shaped through discipline, modelling, and habituation, under the central narrative of the creed, so that Christians take the form of the incarnate life God desires for them in Jesus Christ. Largely left out of the conversation is the place of the means of grace, specifically the regular, faithful use of Confession and Absolution (returning to Baptism), attention to the preached call to repentance and faith, and the forgiving, nourishing work of the Lord's Supper. Because Biermann states as one of his purposes that he desires to counter the influence of gospel reductionism, he may see the inclusion of the means of grace in the shaping of character as another way that gospel reductionism may erode true character formation. That is, if formation occurs through the means of grace, then this might invite the reduction of formation only to attending services, hearing preaching, taking the Supper, and letting the Holy Spirit do the rest of the formative work. He also is concerned about mixing law and gospel, that is, in this case, to develop an ethical system that blurs or confuses the pardoning declaration of the gospel (50–53).

By declining to treat the place of the gospel in ethical formation, Biermann has missed the opportunity to develop the regenerative power of the gospel. The gospel not only declares a person to be righteous; it begins to make a person righteous (Ap IV 72, 78, 117, 132). To restore the proper understanding of the regenerative power of the gospel, without mixing law and gospel or reverting to gospel reductionism, is vital to a renaissance in Lutheran ethics. With a deep, careful explanation of the role of the gospel in formation, the case for character will be made.

VI. Concluding Thoughts

Lest my criticism seem too strong or extended, I will close with a reiteration of the great value this work holds for the Lutheran Church at this time. Biermann's efforts ought to raise greatly the awareness in Lutheran circles of the importance of virtue ethics. Indeed, his efforts raise the importance again of ethics in general in the life of the church. He effectively counters the view that law-gospel is a polarity, and he demonstrates the importance of understanding the law as informing the structure of good human life. His account of the kinds of righteousness is the most detailed and accessible contemporary account available in published form. His guidance to the church for ways to think again about the external practice of formation will be of value to pastors and congregational leaders. This work is highly recommended for all audiences as the beginning of a conversation that will hopefully bear much fruit for years to come.

Gifford A. Grobien

Review of Four Books in the "Bible Discovery Series"

Bible Basics: Finding Tools to Read and Interpret Scripture. **By Donald W. Patterson. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2010. 96 pages. Softcover. $13.50.**

Bible Basics, the first of four resources reviewed here from the "Bible Discovery Series" of Northwestern Publishing House, the publishing arm of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), is presented as a book for all levels of Bible readers, but its primary audience is the reader who knows little to nothing about the Bible. In the first chapter, Donald Patterson gives a basic description of the Bible, addressing the most basic terms and concepts. In the second chapter he describes what the Bible has to say about itself, giving attention to the divine origin of the Scriptures, the human authors, Christ as the "main message," and the power of the Bible to change people's lives. Chapters three and four are summaries of the Old and New Testaments, respectively, focusing primarily on the narrative content and placing the authorship of the various books in the historical setting of the narrative. The fifth chapter provides practical instruction on interpreting and applying the Bible. Patterson addresses the actual reading of the text, noting the importance of its meaning to the original author and audience, the historical and literary context, the practice of the letting the Bible interpret itself, and applying what is read to the reader. He also lists and briefly discusses useful resources for the study of the Bible: teachers, study Bibles, commentaries, Bible encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, concordances, and electronic devices. In the sixth chapter he returns to the books of the Bible, categorizing the books or portions of their content by style as historical or sermonic narrative, poetry, prophecy, letters, and parables. The final, brief chapter suggests ways or useful guides for reading the Bible.

Patterson's writing style is simple and readable. The book could be used to prepare someone who is unfamiliar with the Bible for catechesis. It attempts to address the challenge of creating Biblical literacy in someone who has very little previous church or Sunday School experience.

Because the purpose of the book requires simplification and summary, the pastor who wishes to use it to prepare catechumens might argue for things that have been left out. The simplification often has the effect of obscuring the Christological, sacramental, and ecclesial content of the Scriptures. Christ's presence and saving work in the Old Testament is limited to sixty prophecies, leaving the rest of the text primarily as morality lessons or Christ-free portrayals of God. A further concern is that

Patterson's description of the content of Scriptures does not lead the reader to Baptism, toward the catechesis of the church, into the Lord's Supper, or into the liturgy and life of the local congregation. For instance, he records the events of Maundy Thursday but makes no mention of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, the central event of that narrative. While he clearly indicates that the Old Testament is God's word, he does not discuss how these writings have now become the Scriptures of the New Testament church. Likewise, he does not emphasize that the New Testament writings arose out of the church's life and were written for use in the church's preaching and catechesis.

A pastor who considers placing this book into the hands of a potential catechumen might also regret the lack of other items. There is no apologetic bringing forth external witnesses in the reception of the Old or New Testament canon, questions that this reviewer has often fielded from potential catechumens. The book gives no reference to the Bible as the source of the church's public creeds and confessions. The Office of the Holy Ministry is referred to in passing, in one instance as a subset of "teachers" in the church, but this sole, divinely instituted office does not appear at home in the Bible. A pastor will also note that no instruction is given regarding the distinction between the law and the gospel in Holy Scriptures, or how important this distinction is for a proper understanding of the content of Scriptures.

One God—Two Covenants?: Discovering the Heart of the Old Testament. **By Lyle W. Lange. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2010. 127 pages. Softcover. $16.00.**

In *One God—Two Covenants?* Lyle Lange attempts to highlight and preserve the theological distinction between the law and the gospel in the Old Testament. The two covenants of the title are the Abrahamic covenant concerning the Savior and the Sinai Covenant. He summarizes the story of the Old Testament, giving particular attention to the promises of the Savior and the teaching of justification by faith alone (which he identifies with the covenant to Abraham), and contrasts these promises with the covenant instituted at Sinai. In the Sinai covenant he examines the ceremonial parts of the Ten Commandments, ceremonial law, civil law and its application. His argument in the book rightly asserts that salvation is in Jesus Christ alone, that the Christians of the Old Testament were saved by faith alone in the promises of God, that the mandates of the Sinai covenant were provisional until fulfilled by Christ, and that the Sinai covenant was only for the people of Israel.

Despite this overall sound dogmatic framework, however, his treatment of certain aspects of the Old Testament passes over the text itself. He does not, for example, show that the word "law" in both Old and New Testaments frequently refers to the Torah, the teaching or books of Moses, and as such might be the law, the gospel, or both, rightly divided. From the outset this omission lends confusion to a difficult subject.

Lange defines the entire Sinai covenant and cultus as law (in contrast to gospel). But he completely fails to teach that the tabernacle, sacrifices, priesthood, etc., were actually forms of the gospel, provisionally and for the Jews only, in that through these means the holy God actually dwelt among his sinful people, atoned for their sin, forgave them, sanctified them, and blessed them. By rendering these ritual mandates of God as mere pictures, he empties them of their gospel content, obscuring their prophetic anticipation of and participation in Christ. For example, the flesh of Christ as our tabernacle (John 1:14) and temple (John 2:21) becomes a meaningful fulfillment of the Sinai covenant only if God actually dwelt in the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament and rendered true and saving atonement, forgiveness, and blessings to his people in them. Such an understanding of God's ritual mandate for the Divine Service under Moses compromises neither the distinction between the law and the gospel nor the glory of Christ's fulfillment, but rather enables the New Testament Christian to take seriously both the weak and provisional rituals of the Old Testament and their universal, all-encompassing, and permanent fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ and in the rituals he instituted in the New Testament. Indeed, the law itself, as presented in the ritual legislation of the Torah, thus stands in sharper contrast to the gospel in the Torah. Christ's fulfillment of the Mosaic ritual mandates and legislation is the gospel.

In the final chapter Lange rightly warns the reader against paganism, legalism, formalism, and work righteousness. He might also warn against spiritualizing the ritual legislation of the New Testament and robbing it of its gospel content. Insofar as God's Old Testament mandates or ritual legislation are gospel, they serve as a prophetic anticipation of the ritual legislation of the New Testament, i.e., Baptism, Absolution, preaching, and the Lord's Supper (e.g. 1 Cor 10:1–5). Just as God is the principle actor in the Old Testament rituals of atonement in which sins were forgiven (e.g. Lev 4:35), so also he is the principle actor in the ritual sacraments of the New Testament such as the Lord's Supper, in which sins are forgiven (Matt 26:28).

The Torah should be read on its own terms as both the law and the gospel, as God's dealings with man and his gracious ritual mandates for his people, and simultaneously as the icons and foreshadowing of the Christ, from whom alone they derive their substantial power and worth. Then the entire "Torah of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" may reveal and be fulfilled in the crucified and risen Christ (Luke 24:44–49). Then also rich New Testament terms and concepts such as purification, clean, holy, atonement, forgiveness, peace, salvation, redemption, blessings, etc. may be taught from the original Old Testament Scriptures of the apostolic church and be found to be the Scriptures of Jesus Christ, which "reveal the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

Grand Themes and Key Words: Exploring Important Bible Terms. **By Karl A. Walther. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 157 pages. Softcover. $17.00.**

Karl Walther provides forty-one essays on biblical terms and concepts from A to Z in *Grand Themes and Key Words*. Many of the terms will be the topic of questions and interest by the average church member. He illuminates terms whose meaning might elude many readers of the Bible. For example, he identifies the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament with the pre-incarnate person of Jesus Christ and Baptism as the anointing of the New Testament Christian. A critique of the book will naturally examine the terms included and those excluded. One might wish to see entries on dogmatic items such as Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Office of the Holy Ministry, the Church, etc. On the other hand, articles on faith, grace, redemption, righteousness, etc. address topics of confessional concern. His essays do not quote or reference Lutheran confessional writings, but their content is nevertheless clearly Lutheran.

Some of the entries lack the precision or depth this reader would like to see, but such editorial choices are inevitable given the scope and length of the book. Restriction to the New International Version (NIV) translation creates occasional unfortunate limitations or consequences. For example, the NIV translation of 1 Corinthians 12:12 speaks of the body of Christ in the industrial terms of "unit" and "parts" rather than the natural and organic (original) terms of "one" and "members"; unfortunately, Walther ignores this mistranslation in his essay.

Walther accomplishes his overall objective. This book is a good addition to a church library and a useful teaching tool for the pastor or for the teacher in the classroom.

Four Portraits of the One Savior: Discovering Why the Bible Has Four Gospels. **By Mark J. Lenz. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2012. 98 pages. Softcover. $13.50.**

Mark Lenz's title indicates the contents of the book. The book takes each of the four Gospels and discusses the author, intended audience, date, contents, and unique characteristics of each. Matthew is the tax collector-made-disciple writing to a Jewish audience, with a deliberate scheme for answering questions that pertain to his audience. Matthew's portrait of Jesus includes the use of groupings, an emphasis on discipleship, the kingship of Jesus as the Messiah, and the frequent evidence of Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy. Mark's history and association with Paul and Peter are reviewed. Mark wrote for a Roman audience that appreciated Jesus as a man of action. He did not write in an orderly fashion as Matthew. His portrayal of Jesus, however, offers a more intimate glimpse of Jesus, and especially of his humanity. Luke's history in Acts and the Epistles is also reviewed, demonstrating when he probably wrote his Gospel and to whom. In his Gospel Luke gives greater attention to the historical and biographical details of Jesus' life. Lenz highlights Luke's inclusion of the four canticles, his emphasis on prayer, and Christ's love for all people. He concludes the chapter on Luke with a brief comparison of the Synoptics. Finally, he introduces John's historical place, his audience and date, and the characteristics of his Gospel. He notes the unique aspects of John's Gospel, the many "I Am" statements of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and numerous repeated words that carry his theological emphases.

Lenz writes for the lay Christian who has the average parishioner's knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and wants to understand the distinctive characteristics of the four Gospels. His descriptions are accurate and replete with quotations and references to the text itself (NIV translation). He focuses on narrative themes of each Gospel, particularly relative to the person and work of Christ. The reader should not look for a discussion of each Gospel's reception in the liturgical life of the original audience, nor for each Gospel's theological contours of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Office of the Holy Ministry, the church, and the like. This book could be used as a Bible study text or resource for a congregational study of the four Gospels.

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Mark 1:1—8:26. **Concordia Commentary. By James W. Voelz. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013. 624 pages. Hardcover. $54.99.**

James Voelz's much anticipated first volume on the Gospel of Mark has hit the presses and is sure to find a welcome place on the bookshelves of many pastors and scholars.

Those familiar with Voelz's work and expecting an emphasis on ling–uistics and grammar will not be disappointed. His former students may even feel like they are back in his classroom. Voelz's first excursus, titled "Grammatical Review," accents verbal features, including "Aspect," "Tense," "Voice," and "Participial Usage." In his second excursus, Voelz fixes our attention on his understanding of linguistics, a topic central to his scholarly career. His fourth excursus is likewise highly conceptual, dealing with "The Hermeneutics of Narrative Interpretation." Here he outlines his understanding of the dynamics of communication, including the place of the author, the text, and the reader. Some readers may be tempted to skip these sections and get right to the meat of the commentary, but this would be a mistake, as these ideas form the conceptual framework for much of his exegesis.

As you may have already guessed, this is not a typical commentary. I can think of no one who so closely follows the mechanics of writing and communication. The first thing one notices is that Voelz does not simply rely on the text of Nestle-Aland but offers his own reconstruction based largely upon Vaticanus (B), which he feels best represents the contours and characteristics of Mark. The reader will be impressed to see that Voelz has translated the Gospel in such a way as to highlight his distinct inter-pretation. He places in bold type those words that he feels bear special emphasis, or are in some way striking or emphatic. He uses italics to reflect "subtleties of verbal aspect," and he underlines "non-literalistic" rend-erings of the underlying Greek (p. 27). His translations are not for the faint of heart, and may need, in fact, further translation and decoding. While this may take a while to get used to, readers will surely be rewarded by repeated usage. Even more, pastors will be inspired to ask how to translate Mark's message for their own sermons.

With every exegetical treatment, Voelz offers an analysis of the "Linguistic Essentials." Voelz parses the verbs, and incudes notes on "Verbal Aspect," which has to do with an emphasis on the action or activity of a verb, or upon the connection between the actor and the action. This is a bit complicated, and may lead many to reread Voelz's "Grammatical Review." Perhaps more accessible is Voelz's attention to

"Marcan Usage," in which he notes the peculiar and distinctive ways in which Mark communicates his message. Particularly arresting is Mark's use of the "historical present," which gives Mark's gospel such vividness and power. Likewise, Mark's use of asyndeton, which is the absence of connecting words, keeps the hearer/reader on his toes and propels the narrative forward. These linguistic features fit in well with Mark's theological presentation, in which the mission of Jesus is marked by a jarring urgency. For this type of thing, Voelz is an experienced and invaluable guide. Here is a scholar who has lived long with the gospel of Mark, and it shows. His sections on "Literary Features" and "Literary Assumptions" are likewise excellent and may serve well as a map for those who seek to navigate their way through Markan waters.

We also should note that the author's attention to detail often pays big dividends. Mark is a notoriously quirky gospel, and the evangelist's word choices are often strange or jarring. Voelz sees this not as an example of Mark's supposed primitive nature but as a sign of Mark's theological and literary sophistication. For instance, Voelz notes that in Jesus' Baptism, the Holy Spirit does not simply descend upon Jesus, but "into" him (Mark 1:10). Intriguingly, Voelz sees this as an indication that Jesus is himself "possessed" by the Holy Spirit (p. 131). This valuable insight helps us to see Jesus as both strange and mysterious, moody and magnificent. Voelz recognizes a Markan theme dear to Lutherans: Jesus remains in many ways unknown, and is revealed fully only on the cross.

Voelz typically structures his exegesis on a verse-by-verse basis. One wishes, at times, that the author, so apt to plumb the depths, would come up more often, as it were, for air, to give the reader the bigger picture. So, for instance, Voelz notes the linguistic parallels of the Feeding of the 5000 to the Lord's Supper, but does not go much further. Did Mark want his readers to think of the Lord's Supper? Was Jesus himself preparing for the climactic meal? Voelz concludes, "We may see a connection, but *only in a complex way*" (429, emphasis original). One wishes, perhaps, that Voelz would unpack for us this complexity.

Indeed, this commentary's complexity may be its greatest strength and weakness. Some connections the reader must simply make for himself. While Voelz excels on the micro level, he is reticent to make larger connections. The picture of the boat, for example, recurs in the gospel, and it seems to be the way that the second evangelist depicts the church as a place of both danger and safety, but Voelz treats this only as a metaphoric possibility. He sees connections between Mark's story and Homer's *Odyssey* but hesitates to make the connection forward to the church. This is

especially vexing, given Voelz's attention to detail. For instance, in the pericope of Jesus walking on water (6:45–52), the disciples are said to be "tormented" in their rowing. Joel Marcus, like other commentators, has noted that the word in Greek is used in the book of Revelation to describe eschatological tribulation. Mark is offering here a preview of life in the church, which will be marked by tribulation and suffering. Voelz, as a rule, appears reticent to see within the stories a picture of Mark's church.

On perhaps a side note, it is welcome to see that Voelz has included various references to the works of classical antiquity. For instance, he notes how Jesus' stilling of the storm (Mark 4:31–35) bears resemblance to Homer's *Odyssey*, specifically Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops. Such references remind us that Mark's Gospel has a place within the work of Roman antiquity, and that its writing was shaped and influenced by the evangelist's desire to bring his message to the Greco-Roman world.

Voelz's work is admittedly out of the ordinary. This commentary takes time to digest and is not for those looking for an easy nighttime read. On the other hand, exegetes will love its attention to detail. For Lutheran exegetes, it will be required reading for many years to come. It is truly a masterwork, a must buy, and a most welcome contribution to the Concordia Commentary Series.

<div align="right">Peter J. Scaer</div>

Isaiah 56–66. By Reed R. Lessing. Concordia Commentary Series. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014. 577 pages. Hardcover. $54.99.

As his fourth contribution to the Concordia Commentary Series, Lessing's handling of Isaiah 56–66 follows the pattern of his previous commentaries. He balances between summarizing and responding to existing scholarship, a thorough treatment of the Hebrew text, and commentary that flows from both scholarly and textual insight while also serving the Church faithfully.

Lessing's treatment of the existing scholarly approach to Isaiah 56–66 focuses upon Bernhard Duhm as progenitor and representative of standard scholarship. The treatment is fair, but limited in scope. The reader who wishes to investigate further the arguments of Duhm and others will need to turn to the firsthand sources or to critical commentaries that build upon Duhm and others. What is particularly helpful in Lessing's treatment is his response to the standard critical arguments that would define these chapters as "trito-Isaiah." Lessing sets forth lexical links between Isaiah

40–55 and 56–66 along with other connections. Lessing's defense of a unified Isaiah is quite beneficial.

Even more beneficial, however, is the treatment of the text. The pastor who has been deprived of the blessing of learning Hebrew will find the textual notes challenging at times, but the notes also present an opportunity to reinvigorate his handling of the word of the Lord. From a clear handling of the text, Lessing leads the reader into an exploration of its meaning. The Christocentric approach to Isaiah yields homiletical and pedagogical wealth.

Lessing's commentary will not be highly valued by those who have subordinated the word of God to critical theories. But for those who hold Scripture to be not only the inspired word of God but also a revelation of Christ, Lessing's *Isaiah 56–66* will be cherished as the standard commentary for these rich chapters of the word of the Lord through his prophet.

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The Second Letter to the Corinthians. **By Mark A. Seifrid. Pillar New Testament Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014. 535 pages. Hardcover. $50.00.**

From its cover, this volume of the Pillar New Testament Commentary rightly appears an attractive choice for those desiring rigorous exegesis with "pastoral sensitivity." Yet, from its cover, which speaks of the series' commitment to "questioning obedience," and its authorship by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Mark Seifrid, it may still appear as a typical commentary by a Protestant Evangelical, colored with such lenses.

However, a quick glance at the dust jacket reveals high praise for this volume from various A-list conservative Evangelical and Lutheran scholars, including James Voelz and Oswald Bayer. Read almost anywhere into the book and one finds it dripping in the theology of the cross, highlighting the eccentricity of faith, and expounding the God-driven nature of the Christian life, with plenty of Luther and Bayer insights for further elucidation, all while remaining true to the text. It leaves the unknowing reader seriously wondering if Seifrid is a closet Lutheran.

As it turns out, shortly after this reviewer began writing this review, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, announced that Seifrid will join its faculty. Welcome Dr. Seifrid! This volume will teach his students well, and be a great help and comfort to pastors and others who are afflicted for remaining faithful.

Seifrid points out an abundance of helpful significant details on the text in its context, while not bogging down the reader in finer technical matters and unnecessary dialogue with other commentaries. This allows for a true theological commentary, keeping the matters before Paul here in the wider scope of his theology, and smoothly and convincingly revealing a unity to the epistle through its various topics. Woven throughout is its theme of the cruciform nature of the Christian life, as exemplified in the apostle. This epistle is Paul's response of faithful and loving service to the Corinthians, despite previous conflicts and false expectations impregnated in them by "successful" apostles.

The middle chapters of the epistle, urging completion of the collection for the Jerusalem church, are thematically connected to the beginning and end, in that Paul's theology of giving is an invitation for the Corinthians to become like him and Christ Himself—"weak" through charitable giving of their resources. In this, their work would reveal a "divine quality," in that it would be generous while relying on the God's power to sustain. The final chapters remarkably demonstrate Christ's presence and power in weakness as seen in Paul's apostolic service. In a section of this epistle many readers find confusing, Seifrid aptly sorts out Paul's abundant use of irony and connects it to his intent.

Several things are left to be desired from this commentary. As much as faith's eccentric nature is emphasized, and as the epistle has an ecclesial scope, there is hardly any recognition of what this reviewer would discern as baptismal language, or discussion of how Baptism applies. This no doubt would have shed additional light on the text. Second, for all the volume's practical insights and applications, as well as the discussion of Titus' and other apostles' roles, it would have been helpful to hear more on the Office of the Holy Ministry itself.

However, these apparent lackings should not deter one from this commentary in the least. It is full of useful knowledge, beneficial insight, wisdom, encouragement, and divine truth for those bearing the cross today. And even more, it is a pleasure to read!

Peter J. Scaer

Luther's Works, Volume 68: Sermons on Matthew, Chapters 19–24, Edited by Benjamin T.G. Mayes and Christopher Boyd Brown. Translated by Kevin G. Walker. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014. 456 pages. Hardcover. $54.99.

For the sake of our own lively confession, for the edification given by the certainties of our Lord's incarnation, atonement, and sacraments among us and for us, and for the thoughtful pastoral and practical helps it offers the busy, needy pastor, we should all be reading more Luther. Concordia Publishing House's recent expansion of the American Edition of *Luther's Works* that is underway (an additional twenty-eight volumes) gives a host of new material in various genres in careful, easy-to-read English. This new series is an invitation to re-immerse ourselves in the theology and ecclesial practice of that Reformer whose great confession has shaped our identity.

In this volume of *Sermons on Matthew, Chapters 19–24*, we hear Luther from the pulpit (via his recording secretaries and editorial commonplaces of the day) preaching serially through the first Gospel with fifty-six sermons delivered between 1537 and 1540, though with a few breaks in between. Compliments to Kevin Walker who, with the editorial team, have produced an excellent translation with just the right amount of introductory insight and notes for needed context.

Beyond the taking up of the texts themselves, the sermons can almost be read as a diary of sorts: the autobiographical and personal comments by the preacher; the press of current events surrounding the oft re-scheduled (and finally jettisoned until Trent in 1545) Mantua church council that figured in Luther's writing of the Schmalkald Articles (1537) just prior to these sermons, critiques of Müntzer's "Wordless Spirit" and "Spiritless Word" enthusiasms, and the threat of radical Islam (the "Turks")—all from a Wittenberg church experiencing the occasional plague and deadly illness.

For the preacher overly familiar with the Matthean texts that he has preached many times, this volume is a fresh resource and a new (or old) "set of eyes" on the standard pericopes—an animated, still contemporary (five hundred years later), and earthy addition to twenty-first century sermon contemplation. Those who use the historic, one-year lectionary will find food for Advent 1; Septuagesima; Palm Sunday; and Trinity 18, 20, 23, and 25, along with plenty of other fodder. Those who use *Series A* will likewise gain from Luther's treatment for Advent 1 (both alternatives) and Propers 20 through 26, with a few saints' days and other observances as well. Luther approaches topics or texts that we would likely shy away from in a sermon in the manner that he takes them on (e.g., marriage,

divorce, God's design for man and woman, "woes," role of government and rulers, and the end times). Yet Luther, in his own context, still must have ruffled the feathers of "the comfortable" of his day as he charges ahead with clear direction.

One aside regarding this reviewer's peculiar predilections: The aim of reading Luther writings of every sort was first fired in me by the late Dr. Heino Kadai at the Fort Wayne seminary in the late 1980s. My family purchased the individual volumes as gifts for me over a number of years until I had the whole American Edition. Out of my own curiosity and budding theological interests, I took to pencil-marking page numbers and margins (in my deeply unscientific way) each mention of the sacraments made in whatever context and genre (to include even what some might refer to with the derogatory "dragging-it-in" category). It is a habit I have not shaken. The "count" for this volume of the Wittenberg sermons is that references to our Lord's sacramental gifts appear on 77 of the 341 pages (in various contexts). That is remarkable, although I have nothing else with which to compare it. If nothing else, it gives a strong indication of Luther's own theological assumptions in preaching the visible Word. By reading more Luther, perhaps we will recognize our own.

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Chance and the Sovereignty of God: A God-Centered Approach to Probability and Random Events. **By Vern S. Poythress. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. 368 pages. Softcover. $25.00.**

Many people, even Christians, wish each other "good luck." But luck implies chance, and chance is an issue for people who believe in a creating God who providentially supports all things. If God is sovereign over all things, is anything truly left to chance? Poythress, who holds doctorates in both mathematics and New Testament theology, takes up this issue in *Chance and the Sovereignty of God*.

Poythress' work is grounded in a solid respect for Scripture as the source and norm of Christian faith. Early chapters include significant passages that speak to the question of God's foreknowledge of events as well as his control over them. The passages are used well and in context. They reveal the depth of the Lord's foreknowledge and his intimate involvement in all facets of creation and human activity. The chapter that attempts to reconcile human choice with God's will, however, seems weak. The

impression given is that God has written out a script that all humans are fated to follow yet for which they are nonetheless held responsible.

In the latter half of the book he delves directly into the mathematics of probability. He points out that the so-called laws of nature are simply observed regularities in God's orderly governance. Drawing on his early work in symmetry, he also argues that the laws governing probability reflect both God's attributes as well as his triune nature.

Over all, the book provides some good mathematical and theological insights into the question of how seemingly random events are reconciled with a God who is omnipotent. It serves as a good response to the growing idolatry of "chance" in our culture and a reminder that there is no such thing as luck—good or bad—in our world.

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The Holy Spirit—In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today. **By Anthony C. Thiselton. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013. 579 pages. Softcover. $46.00.**

Thiselton, who is one of the world's foremost scholar of hermeneutics, brings his considerable theological acumen to the study of the Holy Spirit and has produced a magisterial volume that should prove valuable to scholars and pastors alike. The book is divided into three main parts in which Thiselton brings together exegetical, systematic, and historical theology as he ranges across the breadth and depth of Christian tradition. He begins with an examination of the Holy Spirit in the texts of the Old and New Testaments, which is then followed by a survey of the doctrine of the Sprit from the early church through the eighteenth century. The third part of the book deals with the Spirit in modern theology from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century and includes interaction with scholars from the Pentecostal tradition and Charismatic Renewal movements. The final chapter acts as summary for the entire study, in which Thiselton offers his own reflections and conclusions, and points out areas where mutual dialogue among Christians (particularly between Pentecostals/Charistmatics and more orthodox Christians) needs to take place.

Like most of Thiselton's books, this one features his usual, well-footnoted interaction with both primary and secondary sources. Nearly every major figure in church history who has written about the Holy Spirit

can be found here, which allows the book to function at times almost like a reference book. Of particular interest to Lutherans will be his chapter on the major reformers, which deals in part with Luther's interaction with the enthusiasts.

Things get a little different when he gets to the latter parts of the book and starts to include voices from more recent times. Here Thiselton has to make a more conscious choice of which writers to feature, and he is open about whom he chooses and why. He makes sure that he has representatives from Protestantism, Catholicism, and Eastern Orthodoxy. He is also intentional about including writers from the Pentecostal and Renewal traditions. He is especially careful in choosing writers he believes to be scholars who happen to be Pentecostal, rather than "Pentecostal scholars." He is especially appreciative of Pentecostal writers who critique their movement from within. Here the book is especially valuable as Thiselton critiques the hermeneutical and exegetical abuses that lie behind many Pentecostal teachings and shows just how far some in that tradition have wandered from orthodox Christianity. He points out the irony that Pentecostal hermeneutics pit Paul against Luke, which gives it more common ground with critical scholarship than most Pentecostals would find acceptable. Thiselton does more than offer a polemic here; he also praises those movements where they have offered legitimate critiques of traditionalism, and he does believe that with some correction Pentecostalism may have something valuable to offer the church at large.

All in all, Thiselton has produced a much-needed contribution to the study of the Holy Spirit that goes beyond the polemical and seeks to offer a way forward.

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The Handy Guide to New Testament Greek: Grammar, Syntax, and Diagramming. **By Douglas S. Huffman. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2012. 112 pages. Softcover. $16.99.**

The author states, "This volume has been created because one year of Greek is dangerous; the language needs review and further study to become truly usable in the study of the Greek NT" (5). Accordingly, the book is filled with an assortment of "handy" paradigm charts and other useful tools to help second-year Greek students, as well as parish pastors, continue their study of, and work in, the Greek New Testament. The book

is small, only 112 pages, and has approximately the same physical dimensions as the standard Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament. Designed to supplement Greek grammar and syntax textbooks, it also contains an extensive bibliography that lists many resources to which readers can turn for additional study.

The book is divided into three parts. The first is an overview of Greek grammar. In about forty-five pages, Huffman briefly describes everything from the Greek alphabet, breathing marks, and accents to nouns, prepositions, and verbs. Much of this section is filled with the same kinds of paradigm charts that one would find in a standard Greek grammar. The charts are very similar, for example, to those in *Fundamental Greek Grammar* by James Voelz, the standard textbook for many LCMS pastors.

The second section of the book provides a summary of Greek syntax. The section begins with a brief but extensive summary of the different ways that the Greek cases (i.e., vocative, nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative) can be used. For example, a reader can quickly look up the difference between a subjective and objective genitive, along with eighteen other possible uses of the genitive case. This is followed by a summary of verbal aspect and the variety of ways in which Greek verb tenses can be translated, building on what Voelz, for example, teaches in his grammar.

The author devotes the final section of his book to phrase diagramming. He sees phrase diagramming as "a tool to discover sermon and lesson outlines quickly in the Greek text" (5). As such, he provides step-by-step instructions for diagramming 1 Peter 1:3–9, as well as a sample sermon outline, as an example of how this technique can be used.

This little volume is indeed "handy" and deserves a place on the bookshelves of seminary students and pastors alike. As the author states, having only one year of Greek instruction is dangerous; what is even worse, in my opinion, is to stop using Greek altogether after having invested so much time and energy in trying to learn it. The author has provided a great service with this little book to help students of Greek enhance their skills to read the New Testament in its original language.

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