Concordia Theological Quarterly

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Forty Years after Seminex:
Reflections on Social and Theological
Factors Leading to the Walkout

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is a problem—for the historian, at least. And the problem, stated simply, is this: Where exactly does one place the LCMS in the larger landscape of American Christianity? Obviously we're not Roman Catholic. But does that make us Protestant? No, we're *Lutheran*, we answer. But that won't do for the demographers; they need a category. And, so, since we're not Catholic, we get lumped in with the Protestants. However, are we Mainline Protestants or are we Evangelical Protestants? Neither, again we would say. We're *Lutheran.* But what kind of Lutheran?

This definitional tension has been a hallmark of Missouri since its arrival on the American scene. We were drawn to America specifically because of the religious freedom—the confessional freedom—that the United States offered. And yet, the practical results of that religious freedom—every denominational flavor one could imagine, coupled with, strangely enough, unionistic practice that made such denominations largely superfluous—put Missouri in a strange spot. Even the greatest Missourian of all from our German period, C.F.W. Walther, came to be called "The *American* Luther." Elsewhere, I have tracked the rhetoric of the early Saxon Missourians in regard to what they hoped for in America. And while their polity may not have been drawn directly from American democracy—their children would do that—they were not reticent about seeing the United States as a place particularly well suited to confessional Lutheranism.[1] As the argument sometimes goes, Luther's sixteenth-century German context did not offer him the opportunity to develop a polity consistent with Lutheran confessional teaching. America, however,

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[1] Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Demagoguery or Democracy: The Saxon Immigration and American Culture," *CTQ* 63 (1999): 247–268.

Lawrence R. Rast Jr. is Professor of Historical Theology and President at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

offered Lutheranism a new possibility to get polity right—and Missouri believed it had achieved that.[2]

This, then, suggests another problem. Stated directly: Is the LCMS, as some still claim today, a German church? My answer: Of course not! Nor have we been one for quite some time. Few of our pastors and even fewer of our laity read German well, and even fewer speak the language. And fewer still actually care about the issue.

But that leaves us with yet another problem: *Were* we a German church? Linguistically, perhaps. But what about culturally? That is a far more nuanced question. I would like to answer that we were never a German church in the strictest sense. We have always been an American church; but for a significant period of time, we spoke the German language and struggled with its role in creating our self-understanding within the American, denominational setting. To put it another way, the LCMS has always been deeply submerged in American culture, even as it questioned that culture and, at times, tried to hold itself aloof from it.

The *Christian Century*, perhaps unintentionally, captured this tension in 1926 when it wrote:

> The Missouri Lutheran church has its strength in the middle west. . . . It represents a distinctly American development in Lutheranism for which there is practically no parallel in Europe. It has isolated itself from other churches with an effectiveness which may be equaled by the southern Baptists but is not surpassed by any other body. Its discipline is iron and it enforces conformity to a theology which may best be described as an ossified seventeenth century orthodoxy. Its conception of salvation is highly magical and the instruments of redemption are the sacraments and "pure doctrine." Like Catholicism it perpetuates itself through the parochial school. The rigid discipline of the church seems to be under the control of the theological seminary faculty which has become a kind of corporate pope. . . . The denomination has had a remarkable growth in America and numbers almost a million communicants. It has the missionary energy which unqualified denominational zeal always supplies. Its social influence on American life is very slight and its ministers are prevented by the many restrictions which hedge them about from assuming positive social leadership in the various communities where they labor. The

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[2] See Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod: The Genesis of Decentralized Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947).

church is almost as rigid and unbending as Rome and it consciously isolates itself from the other portions of American protestantism [*sic*].[3]

To put the question another way: if the LCMS was truly isolated, how could it have grown into one of the largest American denominations within a century of its founding? The usual answer—immigration!—is insufficient. There were other immigrant churches that shared the same doctrinal platform, fellowship practices, and potential clientele—here I am thinking especially of groups like the Wisconsin Synod—and while they grew, they grew neither as quickly nor as much as Missouri.[4]

What, then, was the key? To twist the old phrase *cur alii, alii non* just a bit, why Missouri and not others? My modest first answer to this question is simply this: Missouri was willing to submerge itself fully in American culture even as it maintained a distinct and unique—some might even say peculiar—theological identity.

To demonstrate my point, I will explore a recent example of this long-term Missouri struggle, namely, a limited consideration of the situation in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Missouri itself was in theological and institutional turmoil.

I.

There are many who still have vivid memories of the profound changes that the United States experienced during the mid-1960s through the early 1970s. The Civil Rights Movement, protests over the war in Vietnam, the Summer of Love, Feminism, Woodstock, Wounded Knee, and plenty of other events all made the time a period unmatched in terms of turbulence and change. Some of my earliest and most distinct memories of this time are of unrest on the campus of The Ohio State University—where my parents were professors and where I first started school—that reached a peak in the wake of the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970. That event merely underscored the visible divisions within American culture, as aptly described by one historian:

> Obviously, the nation was becoming so divided by August 1968 that entirely different worldviews were emerging. Some people respond to frustration with anger, some with humor, some with silence; some ignore the issue, others get drunk or stoned, and some use repression against those considered the enemy. Such responses were becoming

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[3] "What Is Disturbing the Lutherans," *Christian Century* 43 (1926): 909–910.

[4] Mark A. Granquist, "Exploding the 'Myth of the Boat,'" *Lutheran Forum* 44 (Winter 2010): 15–17.

apparent in mainstream society and in the movement. In a sense, then, yippies were the most outrageous movement response to the over-burdening frustration of 1968, and for the Establishment the most outrageous response would be from Mayor Daley.[5]

One of the ways in which the divisions within American culture show-ed themselves occurred on college and university campuses, where students began to initiate a series of strikes. One of the most noteworthy was the student uprising at Columbia University from April 28, 1968, to May 5, 1970. Other instances of unrest followed both in the United States and abroad, with students increasingly declaring "strikes" and simply refusing to attend class. One lesser-known but significant instance of this occurred at San Francisco State College in Mill Valley, California.

 After Columbia, the San Francisco State College strike was one of the longest lasting student strikes of the 1960s.[6] It started when African American students confronted the college administration and demanded the establishment of an Ethnic Studies program. For nearly five months in late 1968 and early 1969, near-anarchy at San Francisco State played out on national television as repeated confrontations between students and au-thorities reached the level of overt violence. As Anderson summarized, "It was amazing that no one was killed."[7]

The strike had its genesis in the discontent of minority students who were angered over their lack of representation on campus and the fact that there was no ethnic studies department at the college. It began on Nov-ember 6, 1968. At its opening, most students went to class.[8] But strikers

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[5] Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in American from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 220.

[6] Dikran Karagueuzian, *Blow It Up! The Black Student Revolt at San Francisco State College and the Emergence of Dr. Hayakawa* (Boston: Gambit, 1971). A detailed chronology of the strike may be found at "The San Francisco State College Strike Collection: Chronology of Events," last accessed November 30, 2015, http://www.library.sfsu.edu/about/collections/strike/choronology.html; a video documentary can be found on Youtube: "Activist State (Documentary: 1968 San Francisco Student Strike)," *Youtube*, last accessed November 30, 2015, http://youtu.be/aoPmb-9ctGc. See also Strike Commemoration Committee, "40th Anniversary Commemoration of the SF State 1968 Student-led Strike," September 24, 2008, http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/09/24/18541121.php.

[7] Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, 299.

[8] Anderson claims there was an ebb and flow to the student participation in the strike. Immediately prior to the end of the first semester, only about twenty percent of students were in class. However, when the new semester started about fifty percent of students attended class. When hostilities broke out again, class attendance plummeted. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, 293–299.

spread chaos on the campus by banging on classroom doors and threatening to remove students and teachers forcibly if they did not leave. Strikers also cut the cords on typewriters, telephones, and photo copiers in academic offices and clogged toilets and bathroom sinks. The campus was thoroughly disrupted.

Robert Smith, president of the college, responded by calling in hundreds of police in full riot gear. On November 13, police interrupted a student demonstration and began to arrest students and other participants.[9] Students responded by throwing rocks, and the situation quickly deteriorated. Smith quickly closed the campus.

Governor Ronald Reagan and the California State University Board of Trustees, however, wanted the campus to remain open and ordered Smith to make arrangements. He refused and resigned. S.I. Hayakawa, a professor of semantics, replaced Smith on November 26. Declaring that "I'm in this job for the continued existence of San Francisco State College, and *I'm prepared to fight all the way*,"[10] Hayakawa immediately banned protests, picketing, and sound amplification. A self-described "liberal," Hayakawa had no patience for what he believed were the theatrics of the protestors. He is quoted as saying, "In the age of television, image becomes more important than substance," and it seems he thought many of the student protestors were simply posing for the cameras.[11]

Hayakawa closed the school early for Thanksgiving.[12] On Monday, December 2, 1969, Hayakawa reopened the campus under a "state of emergency."[13] The event that made him famous occurred that same day. Students had outfitted a truck with a public-address system and were using that system to broadcast their condemnations of the college leadership. Wearing his trademark tam-o'-shanter, Hayakawa climbed aboard the truck and pulled the wires out, rendering the system useless. Governor

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[9] Tanya Schevitz, "S.F. State to Mark 40th Anniversary of Strike," SFGate, October 26, 2008, http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/S-F-State-to-mark-40th-anniversary-of-strike-3264418.php.

[10] John Dreyfuss, "Strike-Torn College Will Reopen Today," *Los Angeles Times*, December 2, 1968, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/thedailymirror/files/1968_1202_cover.jpg (emphasis added).

[11] "Colleges: Permanence for Hayakawa," *Time Magazine*, July 18, 1969, http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,901065,00.html.

[12] Daryl J. Maed, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 53.

[13] Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, 297.

Ronald Reagan is reported to have said, "I think we have found our man."[14]

The following day, Tuesday, December 3, which came to be known as "Bloody Tuesday," Hayakawa ordered police to remove strikers who had assembled. What was to become an all-too-familiar scene at U.S. colleges and universities followed, with students denouncing the administration, police seeking to disperse the students, and police and students clashing in increasingly violent fashion.

Over the course of the next several months, the standoff continued. Finally, the college agreed to establish an Ethnic Studies program and to populate it with a reasonably robust number of faculty, some twelve at its inception. In 2008, the College of Ethnic Studies celebrated its fortieth anniversary at what is now San Francisco State University. [15] One historian has summarized the incident this way:

> Calm returned to San Francisco State during the spring semester, but the affair demonstrated how divided the campus, and the nation, had become by 1969. While there was some compromise, there was also little middle ground. Both sides now were digging in for the remain-der of the second wave: an increasingly frustrated and bold student movement versus a more irritated silent majority that was demanding more repression.[16]

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[14] Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, 297. See also Diane Carol Fujino, "Third World Strikes," in *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, eds. Xiaojian Zhao and Edward J. W. Park, 3 vols., (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2014), 3:1102. Regan is also reported to have called Hayakawa "my samurai." See John P. Diggins, *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom, and the Making of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 144.

[15] "Ethnic Studies 40 Years Later: Race Resistance and Relevance," last accessed November 30, 2015, http://ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu/fortieth. Interestingly enough, S.I. Hayakawa went on run for the U.S. Senate, succeeded, and served from 1977 to 1983. He died in 1992. For details on Hayakawa's life and career, see Gerald W. Haslam and Janice E. Haslam, *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S. I. Hayakawa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); and J.Y. Smith, "Obituaries: Outspoken U.S. Senator S.I. Hayakawa Dies at 85," in *From Semantics to the U.S. Senate: Oral History Transcript*, S.I. Hayakawa and Julie Gordon Shearer (Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, University of California, 1994), http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb5q2nb40v&chunk.id=div00215&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text. For an interview with Hayakawa the day after the "speaker incident," see also "Student Unrest at SF State College and S.I. Hayakawa," *Youtube*, last accessed November 23, 2015, http://youtu.be/rYeCIaVGM9E.

[16] Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, 299.

Indeed, San Francisco State was not alone—not among colleges and universities, and not among seminaries, either. Throughout the spring of 1969, moratoriums were held around the country. They were, however, largely ad hoc. By October, there was a formal movement toward a moratorium. On October 15, 1969, a planned day off of classes for reflection on the war and how it might end was held. Bernard Weinraub of the *New York Times* reported that "the day of moratorium on hundreds of college campuses began in the chill autumn dawn with memorial services and ended last night on city streets and college towns with silent candlelight marches to honor the nearly 40,000 American dead in Vietnam." The title of the report is to the point: "Bells Toll and Crosses Are Planted Around U.S. as Students Say 'Enough!' to War."[17]

II.

And perhaps here is the best point to transition back to LCMS events. Weinraub's title, "Bells Toll and Crosses Are Planted," anticipates events that would occur at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, on February 19, 1974, when Luther Tower's bells tolled over a quad filled with crosses.

Figure 1 — Students exit the cross-filled Quad of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, as they prepare to leave the campus, February 19, 1974.

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[17] Bernard Weinraub, "Bells Toll and Crosses Are Planted Around U.S. as Students Say 'Enough!' to War; Campuses Remember Slain G.I.'s," *New York Times,* October 16, 1969.

The moratorium on classes called by the Saint Louis seminary's students that began on January 21, 1974, is well known. However, when students took that action, they were continuing a tradition that not only had played out at places like San Francisco State, but had, in fact, been part of the seminary's experience since at least 1969.

In *Memoirs in Exile,* John Tietjen notes that students held a "Day of Theological Reflection" in December 1973, as "a practice that had been followed from time to time since 1969."[18] This is somewhat misleading. In fact, on February 10, 1969, Concordia Seminary students petitioned for a three-day moratorium on classes. Some 250 students sought the opportunity "to discuss a number of student issues and grievances." The process they proposed included:

> 1) to respect the position of the students, 2) to begin discussions February 18 in small groups, 3) to extend discussions up to the Communion service February 19, 4) to assess the program through a faculty-student committee Tuesday and Wednesday which will undertake a further process if necessary, 5) that the graduate school continue with such modifications as the instructor will deem possible.

The minutes of the faculty sum things up this way:

> After much discussion the motion was made and seconded that the faculty offer up to three days for a procedure of discussion to be used at the discretion of the committee. The amendment was moved and seconded that the first phase of this be up to Wednesday chapel and the procedure thereafter be suggested by the committee. The amendment was lost; the motion was carried.

Dr. Martin Scharlemann, also known as "The General," requested that his negative vote be recorded.[19] Later minutes showed a concern on the part of faculty with student unrest and the historical record. President Fuerbringer "recommended that the Department of Historical Theology provide record of student unrest, the moratorium, and its context, for future reference."[20]

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[18] John H. Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile: Confessional Hope and Institutional Conflict* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 180.

[19] The preceding summary and quotes are from "Special Faculty Meeting of February 12, 1969," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal,* 1968–1969, 60.

[20] "Faculty Meeting of February 25, 1969," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal,* 1968–1969, 64. A sound recording was ultimately produced. *Class Moratorium at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis: A Documentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Media Services, 1969).

As student unrest over the United States' role in Vietnam increased, it is not surprising to find that the chief question in the moratorium discussion revolved around the seminary's certification to Selective Service of "full time" students. The seminary reduced "full time" to at least twelve hours, yet there were questions over whether it was necessary that students carry "an average load of twelve hours, uninterruptedly." In the end, the faculty resolved to "authorize IV-Year men who drop two three-hour courses, if necessary, to add additional credits reaching twelve hours through supplementary work in the courses which they are taking." Further, President Fuerbringer was directed to "check with Selective Service on the legitimacy of averaging the course hours" and to do so "by next Tuesday if at all possible."[21] Clearly there was anxiety and a sense of urgency about the matter.

The moratorium came and went. Many of the questions raised during the moratorium were pushed into the Student Life Committee for further consideration. There a request for an annual "moratorium" was rejected. Instead, the faculty encouraged the entire campus community to "rededicate ourselves to the primary task of theological education and service and personal Christian growth." For their part the students admitted that "part of the responsibility for the conditions we dislike lie with ourselves, and that we pledge in Christian love to rededicate ourselves to the goal of preparing to become ministers of the Word, acting in love and honesty toward one another, whatever his position may be."[22] Student life went on as before at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, calmed down—at least for the time being.

However, the larger synod experienced a significant change in its leadership. In May 1969, Dr. John Tietjen was elected president of the Saint Louis seminary. Tietjen came from the public relations office of the Lutheran Council USA (LCUSA) and was a well-known leader among the synod's moderates. In July, J.A.O. Preus, then president of Concordia Theological Seminary at Springfield and a well-known leader among the synod's conservatives, replaced Oliver Harms as Synod President.[23]

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[21] "Faculty Meeting, March 11, 1969," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal,* 1968–1969, 72.

[22] "Seminary Life Committee, May 19, 1968," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal,* 1968–1969, 111.

[23] There has been a fair amount of speculation over the margin of victory in J.A.O. Preus's election in 1969. John Tietjen is uncertain. Fred Danker, in *No Room in the Brotherhood*, is convinced it was minimal. It was not. These numbers (see below) are attached to a personal note of J.A.O. Preus to his younger brother, Robert. Robert Preus Papers, CTSFW Archives.

Tietjen described himself as "troubled" by Preus's election because he "had expected to work closely with Harms." But everything had changed. "Now I was to work with a president whose candidacy had been proposed by people within the Missouri Synod whose understanding of the church's theology and mission were different than mine."[24]

In reality, however, more immediate troubles confronted Tietjen. First, he faced hostility within the faculty. At the faculty's fall retreat in 1969, Tietjen's recently published article, "The Gospel and the Theological Task," formed the basis of reflection and discussion.[25] At least one professor, Martin Scharlemann, expressed distress over the article's method and message.[26] Yet, even prior to his formal inauguration as the sixth president of Concordia Seminary in November, Tietjen was also pressed by the student body on another matter. David Carter, one of the editors of the student newspaper, *Spectrum*, sought feedback from the administration on participating in the nationwide moratorium to be held October 15, 1969, which we noted above. Tietjen temporized and asked that any such moratorium be postponed until at least November when he might "evaluate this matter with the faculty." Carter and the students respected Tietjen's advice, but remained dissatisfied. They felt "detached from the outside" and expressed a "need to be tuned in on in the world."[27]

PRESIDENT

	Primary		1		2		
Preus	436	48.6%	465	49.8%	471	∗	50.1%
Harms	417	46.4%	400	42.8%	416		44.3%
Behnken	11		28		27		
Nickel	10		30		25		
Weber	9		9				
Streufert	5						
Heckmann	3						
Wiederaenders	3						
R. Preus	3						
etc.	877 897		933 933		939 939		

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[24] Tietjen, *Memoirs*, 4.

[25] John H. Tietjen, "The Gospel and the Theological Task," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 40 (1969): 434–443.

[26] Martin H. Scharlemann, "SOME ANIMADVERSIONS on the Theme of the Retreat: 'The Gospel and the Theological Task.'" Cited in Tietjen, *Memoirs*, 20.

[27] Student Guidance Council, October 2, 1969, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal*, 1969–1970, 15.

The faculty, somewhat ironically in light of later events, was uncomfortable with the word "moratorium," which they felt was a loaded term and too tied to the question of Vietnam.[28] One person went so far as to suggest that "perhaps at least a total of twelve different books would have to be read before one could really know sufficiently about the war in Vietnam to make judgment." The faculty also wondered about "the genuine concern that church people have re[garding] the actions of Seminary students and the effect these actions may have upon their respect for the Seminary and their support of same" and worried whether this matter was "something in which the Seminary should be involved?"[29]

On October 21, 1969, just after the national moratorium, the faculty considered a plan titled: "A PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE NOVEMBER 13, 1969, AS A 'DAY OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON ISSUES OF WAR AND PEACE'" (that would be just three days after Tietjen's inauguration, which occurred on November 10, 1969). It read as follows:

> WHEREAS President John Tietjen has appointed a special student-faculty committee for a Day of Theological Reflection on Issues of War and Peace, and
>
> WHEREAS the President has outlined the objectives of this committee as follows: "To devise and implement a day's program, approved by the faculty, that will produce reflection on major current issues related to the Vietnam war and their implications for the church and its theology and ministry," and
>
> WHEREAS the committee has agreed to recommend that Thursday, November 13, 1969, be designated as the date for the proposed Day of Theological Reflection (after learning that the Registrar is ready, at the request of the Faculty, to reschedule II-Year winter quarter registration from November 13 to November 14, thus clearing the schedule on November 13), and
>
> WHEREAS the committee has designated, with the help of a questionnaire circulated among members of the campus community, four major topics which in its opinion "will produce reflection on major current issues related to the Vietnam War and their implications for the church and its theology and ministry," and
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> WHEREAS the Proposal to provide this type of "concentrated educational experience relating the task of the seminary to a particular issue of major current concern" is in keeping with the approach which

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[28] Tietjen later embraced the word. See Tietjen, *Memoirs,* 189.

[29] "Student Guidance Council, October 2, 1969," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal,* 1969–1970, 15.

favors utilizing this year of the Seminary's "Interim Curriculum" as a year "in which experimental approaches to the curriculum will be encouraged," therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty designate Thursday, November 13, 1969, as a "Day of Theological Reflection on Issues of War and Peace" on the campus of Concordia Seminary; and be it further

RESOLVED that the program on that day include the following four topics: A. (Selective) Conscientious Objection; B. Civil Disobedience; C. The Church's Ministry to People Who Differ on Issues of National Policy; D. The War in Vietnam;

RESOLVED that the special student-faculty committee appointed by the President be authorized to implement the program in a practical way.

After "considerable" discussion, the motion carried.[30]

My reason for citing this at length is that seminary students, like their colleagues at colleges and universities throughout the United States, were deeply involved in contemporary cultural questions and issues. Further, it showed that they were moving in directions that challenged at least some of the faculty and, in fact, the students' efforts revealed differences within the faculty.

Divisions were also apparent within the broader LCMS when members of the Ohio National Guard opened fire on students protesting the war at Kent State University on May 4, 1970. Four students were killed. Concordia Seminary students reacted by planning a vigil to recognize the seriousness of the event. They may have also connected this to the killing of students at Jackson State College in Mississippi.

In fact, whether this event actually occurred or not became a point of contention. The original draft of President Preus's Fact Finding Committee Report, that of June 1971, *may* have addressed this issue. This edition of the Fact Finding Committee's report was never publicly disseminated. When the official Report was published on September 1, 1972, the so-called "Blue Book," the Kent State/Jackson State matter was not a part of the Report. Strangely, John Tietjen's response to the "Blue Book," which was titled *Fact Finding or Fault Finding* and appeared on September 8, 1972, actually did address the issue.[31] To put it another way, because *Fact Finding or Fault*

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[30] "Faculty Meeting, October 21, 1969," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, *Faculty Journal,* 1969–1970, 29.

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

Finding was 1) largely prepared as a response to the unpublished first draft of the Fact Finding Committee Report; and 2) issued hurriedly before revisions were made on the basis of President Preus's published report, the result was that President Tietjen put on the table an issue that was absent from the Blue Book and at the very least made the seminary appear to be engaged in radical activities.[32]

An Addendum on the Kent State and Jackson State Memorial Service in *Fact Finding or Fault Finding*, Tietjen claimed:

> The president's Committee did not even do us the courtesy of finding out the "facts" on which it is supposedly reporting. It is reporting as fact what did not in fact occur. There was no "all night vigil." There was no service in "the Central Quadrangle." There was no joint worship. The announced event was cancelled. Why didn't the Committee find out what really happened? They would have had one less case against the seminary.[33]

Pastor Tom Baker later contested Tietjen's assertion. He noted that "when several students read what had been written [in *Fact Finding*], they sent a letter to the persons most affected by Dr. Tietjen's charge."[34] Here is what they said, as cited by Baker:

> That a service of worship (speaking to God, hearing Him respond) took place cannot be denied. Although technically it did not take place in the Quad, such a cop-out seems to miss the real issue. It did take place. President Tietjen and other professors (Kalin, Klein) were present and took part in speaking the worship litany, women presumably from Fontbonne, were present (unionistic), and there were those present who continued to remain awake during the whole night discussing the issues and taking action (witness—I myself remained with one group until six in the morning while another group spent their vigil in enclosing the Quad with barbed wire).

> By the way, after the service, one of the speakers thanked President Tietjen for attending. At that time, President Tietjen made comments to the effect that he thanked this group for their work and thought that more of the students should be made aware of the war and its effects. His amiable personality and smiling countenance gave witness to the fact that he certainly did not disapprove of what was going on.[35]

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[32] Tietjen, *Memoirs,* 110–113.

[33] Tietjen, *Fact Finding or Fault Finding?*, 34.

[34] Thomas A. Baker, *Watershed at the Rivergate: 1,400 Vs. 250,000* (Sturgis, MI: [n.p.], 1973), 67.

[35] Baker, *Watershed at the Rivergate*, 67.

Whether the event occurred as advertised or not, what is clear, however, is a picture that appeared in the *Spectrum* on Wednesday, May, 6, 1970 (see below). In an act that mirrored what was happening in institutions of higher education throughout the U.S., Concordia students placed crosses in the Quad of the campus in honor of those slain at Kent State.
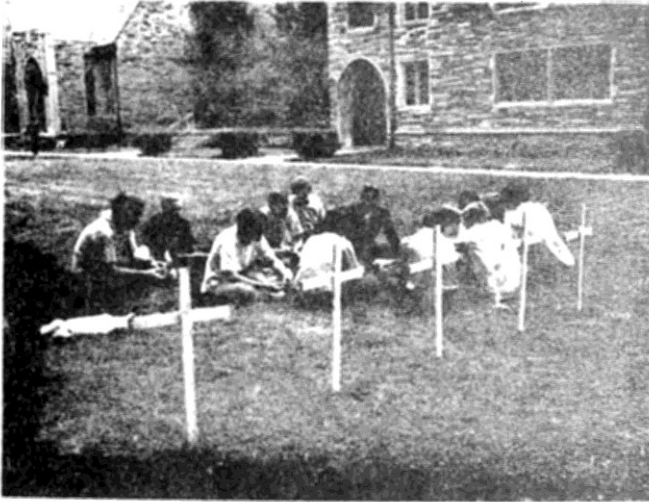
Students gather around the crosses erected in the Quad in memory of the slain Kent University students to discuss problems of war and oppression.

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STUDENT DEATHS OBSERVED

    The slaying of Kent State University students
was observed quietly at Concordia Seminary.
    Students carrying five white crosses led a
procession into the regular chapel service.
Afterwards a small group gathered in the quad
for a service of prayer and meditation.
    The five crosses were then erected on that
spot.  Throughout the day smaller groups gather-
ed around the crosses for discussion.
    The students were slain by National Guards-
men during demonstrations protesting against
American military involvement in Vietnam and
Cambodia.
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Figure 2 — *"Student Deaths Observed," Spectrum, May 6, 1970, 1.*

As the 1969–1970 academic year moved towards its close, the *Spectrum* continued to feature calls for action and, increasingly, expressions of frustration on the part of some students. To the first, for example, a letter co-authored by Mark O. Hatfield (R-Oregon), Charles Goodell (R-New York), Alan Cranston (D-California), and Harold Hughes (D-Iowa) encouraging students to "do all in your power to generate public support" to cut off further funding for the war, withdraw the troops, exchange prisoners, and offer asylum to those who felt threatened in the face of the proposed U.S. withdrawal appeared in the May 8, 1970, *Spectrum.* Commentary on the letter expressed exasperation with the student body. "Everybody's talking but no one is acting. Here's the chance to be a constructive participant. . . . Act for once!"[36]

The same issue featured the announcement that Bill Durkin, a member of the Chicago 15 anti-war protesters, would be speaking on the campus that same day. The article also included a long statement by Durkin, which read in part: "Every court struggle is the same battle, between those who want to be free and those who want to keep them enslaved. The dialogue is different but the struggle is the same."[37] In the same issue, correspondent R. Balint answered the question posed by an earlier

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[36] *Spectrum* (May 8, 1970): 1.

[37] "Chicago 15 Member Speaks Friday," *Spectrum* (May 8, 1970): 4, 5. The "Chicago 15" entered the Federal Building in downtown Chicago on May 25, 1969 and burned I-A draft files. See "Group Burns Draft Files in Chicago," *Janesville Daily Gazette*, May 26, 1969, http://www.newspapers.com/newspage/11077393/.

correspondent, "Won't someone bring us together?" "They've tried," he responded. "Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King; but we didn't listen. . . . We have God's own Son; the Mahatma; a twentieth-century saint; and many, many more. Even if someone were to return from the dead we would not hear him."[38]

Subsequent editions encouraged students to participate in the boycott march against California table grapes, to work for social justice, and to help fight discrimination.[39] One strong indication of the level of students' immersion in contemporary culture is the following:

> I went to Washington on the dollars of friends. I joined in rallies, got tear-gassed, took pictures, talked to policemen and demonstrators, visited Senators, Representatives and their offices, slept on floors, walked blocks and returned. The S.E. Asian war still goes on in the green paddies and brown hills and the muddy waters. Concordia Seminary still goes on behind the green lawns and brown walls and the muddy minds of us all. Will there come a time when saying <u>no</u> to one means saying <u>no</u> to the other? Or am I to retreat once again behind church and state, rich and poor, establishment and movement, professor and student, violence and non-violence, Law and Gospel— simply because life is that way? I saw graves of dead men in Washington beside the Potomac and the Pentagon. I'm sorry, but I returned to see the walking dead between the DeMun and Big Bend in Clayton. It's not that I don't have some perspective. It's my eyes. They're tiring under the strain of constant short-sightedness. I guess I'm just not the right type for handling the Seminary's vision for the world. There's just too many minutes for thinking between the Pentagon and 210 N. Broadway. I'm sorry brothers and sisters. The greens and the browns and muddy waters around here keep showing Pax Amerikana.[40]

All of this occurred four years before the actual "walkout." It was, however, contemporaneous with the catalyst for the walkout, namely, President J.A.O. Preus's announcement in July 1970 that he intended to investigate the seminary, after having received Martin Scharlemann's letter

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[38] "Letters to the Editor," *Spectrum* (May 8, 1970): 6.

[39] "Grape Boycott March Tomorrow," *Spectrum* (May 15, 1970): 1; "Work for Social Justice," *Spectrum* (May 20, 1970): 1; "Students Help Fight Discrimination," *Spectrum* (May 27, 1970): 1.

[40] Dan Kunkel, "Letters to the Editor," *Spectrum* (May 18, 1970): 4. 210 North Broadway was the location of the Lutheran Building, headquarters of the LCMS and location of President Preus's office.

of April 9, 1970.[41] For many students, it simply seemed that Nixon and Preus were one and the same.

Temperatures rose to the boiling point over the next several years. The *Spectrum* shows how deeply seminarians were submerged in their culture. That is not a theological assessment; it is a historical one and is not intended to be pejorative. They reflected their deep immersion in the cultural upheaval of their time.

The *Spectrum* continued to be a vibrant place of interaction between "moderate" students, "conservative" students, professors, seminary administration, and even Board of Control and Synod administration. The whole campus was in on the act—a model of the engaged community. As Preus's Fact Finding Committee continued its process, tensions heightened. A popular young professor's contract was not renewed and demands that the Board of Control explain its action were not addressed. The faculty responded to Preus's *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles.* The Board of Control exonerated all faculty members—some by the barest of margins.[42] The 1973 New Orleans Convention resolved that the faculty held positions that "cannot be tolerated in the church of God, much less excused and defended."[43] The faculty issued a formal "Declaration of Protest and Confession" on July 24, 1973. The protest read:

> We protest the convention's judgment that we teach false doctrine which "cannot be tolerated in the church of God."
>
> We protest the convention's violation of the procedures for evangelical discipline clearly outlined in the Synod's constitution and bylaws.
>
> We protest the convention's breach of contract in judging and condemning us by a doctrinal standard different from the doctrinal article of the Constitution (Article II),
>
> We protest the convention's violation of the principle of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone) in elevating tradition above Scripture.
>
> We protest the convention's use of coercive power to establish the true doctrine of the Scriptures.

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[41] Robert Teuscher broke the story in the St. Louis *Globe Democrat* on July 13, 1970. Scharlemann's letter may be found in Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, *Exodus from Concordia: A Report on the 1974 Walkout* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1977), 151–153. See Tietjen, *Memoirs,* 33, and "Hunting Lutheran Heretics," *Newsweek,* August 3, 1970, 43.

[42] For a tally of the votes, see Tietjen, *Memoirs,* 135–136.

[43] LCMS 1973 *Proceedings,* 40, 133–139.

We protest the convention's unconstitutional act of altering the Synod's confessional standard.[44]

The Board of Control (BOC) suspended John Tietjen in August 1973, then vacated the suspension shortly thereafter. In November 1973, Paul Goetting's contract was not renewed and five seasoned professors were retired—one of them, Arthur Carl Piepkorn, died in the midst of the controversy. To say that things were tense would be an understatement.

And then matters came to a head. On Sunday, January 20, 1974, at about 10:00 p.m., the news emerged that the Board of Control had formally acted to suspend John Tietjen as president of Concordia Seminary, effective immediately. Martin Scharlemann was named as Acting President.

The following day, Monday, January 21, 1974, Tietjen issued his document titled "Evidence," in which he sought to demonstrate the duplicity of the Board of Control and, especially, J.A.O. Preus. More importantly, however, that day the students gathered together at about 10:00 a.m.[45] "Almost 300 students," just about a half of the student body, declared a moratorium on attending classes.[46] The resolution reads:

A STUDENT RESOLUTION by students of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

1. Because members of the "faculty majority" of Concordia Seminary have been publicly accused of teaching doctrine which is "not to be tolerated in the Church of God,"

2. Because members of the "faculty majority" have publicly protested these accusations and have declard [*sic*] "teach what the Scriptures teach,"

3. Because Dr. John H. Tietjen, who defended the "faculty majority" against these accusations, has now been suspended from his office as president of Concordia Seminary,

4. Because the members of the "faculty majority" are either guilty of teaching false doctrine and, therefore, not fit to be our teachers or innocent of these accusations and, therefore, worthy of exoneration [*sic*],

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[44] The entire document may be found in *Exodus from Concordia*, 163–164. See also Tietjen, *Memoirs,* 169–170.

[45] Tietjen, *Memoirs,* 187–189.

[46] Michael W. Friedlander, Karlfried Froelich, and Walter H. Wagner, "Concordia Seminary (Missouri)," *AAUP Bulletin* (Spring 1975): 52, http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/Concordia-Seminary.pdf.

5. Because The Seminary Board of Control has not yet decided which, if any, of the members of the "faculty majority" are guilty of teaching false doctrine,

6. Because we, as students of Concordia Seminary, are currently being taught by members of the "faculty majority,"

7. Because we, as students, have the right to know which members of the "faculty majority," if any, are false teachers and what Scriptural and Confessional principles, if any, have been violated, before we continue our theological training,

8. And because our whole theological education has been seriously disrupted and jeopardized because these issues have not been resolved,

We, the undersigned students of Concordia Seminary, therefore resolve:

I. To declare a moratorium on all classes until such time as the Seminary Board of Control officially and publicly declares which members of the faculty, if any, are to be considered as false teachers and what Scriptural and Confessional principles, if any, have been violated.

II. To spend our class hours, until The Seminary Board of Control informs us of its decisions, communicating to The Board of Control and to the synod at large what we have been taught at this seminary, especially the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. To complete our academic requirements for those classes which we will miss according to procedures which are acceptable to those who are responsible for course accreditation.

We make this resolve mindful of the possible consequences of our actions and asking God's blessings upon our labors.[47]

The faculty followed the students. On Tuesday, January 22, 1974, the faculty of Concordia Seminary wrote to President Preus, stating, "The Board of Control of Concordia Seminary has emptied the classrooms and silenced the teaching of the Word of God on our campus." It tacitly recognized the students' moratorium but largely defined the catalyst in terms of the person of John Tietjen. "By condemning President Tietjen's confessional stand and suspending him from office," they stated, "the

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[47] "A Student Resolution by Students of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis," January, 21, 1974. Robert Preus Papers, CTSFW Archives.

Board of Control has condemned our own confession and has suspended all of us from our duties as teachers and executive staff members."[48]

The Board disagreed. When the faculty majority did not return to the seminary classrooms by 12:00 p.m., Monday, February 18, 1974, their contracts were terminated. In what in some ways might be viewed as one of the last flowerings of the 1960s protest movement, the majority of students, faculty, and administration of Concordia Seminary "walked out" of the campus at 801 DeMun Avenue at midday, February 19, 1974. The event was well choreographed, and the tolling of bells and planting of crosses linked this event to the earlier protests of "The Movement."

III.

The examples we have considered are only that—examples. I could have multiplied them and chosen any number of different cases to make my point about Lutheranism being submerged in culture. A few samples that could serve as case studies of the LCMS interacting with its culture might include Walther's Fourth of July Address of 1853, Franz Pieper's wonderful "The Laymen's Movement and the Bible," the Synod's move from German to English as the waves of German immigrants began to wane, or P.E. Kretzmann's *While It Is Day: A Manual for Soul Winners*, just to name a few.[49]

But I chose Concordia Seminary purposefully. Why? It has now been more than forty years since the bells in Luther Tower tolled and crosses were planted in the seminary quad as students, in what might be construed as the last act of the 1960s, declared themselves "Exiled" from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and walked out of the campus to establish Concordia Seminary in Exile, or Seminex. The intervening years have produced a considerable number of analyses of these events. Whether my interpretation of events is plausible or not is certainly fair game for debate. The wonderful thing about history is that it allows for many readings of the same events.[50]

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[48] Members of the Faculty and Executive Staff of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis to the Rev. J.A.O. Preus, January 22, 1974.

[49] "Fourth of July Speech to a Christian Youth Group, July 4, 1853," John Drickamer, trans., *Christian News*, June 30, 1986, 16–18. (A translation from *Lutherische Brosamen*, 362–369).

[50] There are a number of works that address the controversy. Kurt Marquart's *Anatomy of an Explosion* remains, in my opinion, the most helpful theological treatment of the controversy in the Missouri Synod written from the perspective of a leading "conservative." John Tietjen's *Memoirs in Exile* is an invaluable resource as an

However, whatever one's reading of those events, my purpose has been to show that they are fully engaged in the flood waters of American consumerist culture. What does this mean for our present situation? By now we know that the fastest growing religious category in the United States is "none." Where previously Protestants (including Lutherans) comprised a majority of Americans, today we are a culture of religious minorities. Things have changed and are changing. This, of course, is nothing new. The church always has and always will face change in its life in this world. And it will do so from within the context of being submerged in the prevailing culture. The challenge for us is to face those challenges critically, first of all examining our own posture within/against our culture. It is too easy to point the finger and say "why can't those people see what they are doing?" The first question must be to ourselves; we must challenge ourselves to consider the ways we have we embraced our culture—for good and/or for ill. Only when we've done that can we begin to see whether we are up to our necks or in over our heads in the cultures in which the Lord has given us the opportunity to serve.

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historical/theological treatment provided by one of the key participants, which is also the case with Paul Zimmerman's *A Seminary in Crisis*. James Burkee's *Power, Politics and the Missouri Synod* has been criticized for only treating these events from a political point of view, and that from only *one* of those political viewpoints. However, it is a far more valuable treatment than Frederick Danker's very subjective *No Room in the Brotherhood*. And there are many other useful studies: James Adams' *Preus of Missouri,* Tom Baker's *Watershed at the Rivergate,* The Board of Control's *Exodus from Concordia,* as well as a number of dissertations and theses.

Satis est: AC VII as the Hermeneutical Key to the Augsburg Confession

Albert B. Collver

When one thinks of the Augsburg Confession, the Luther proverb[1] reported by Balthasar Meisner, "*justificatio est articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae,*"[2] ("justification is the article by which the church stands and falls") comes to mind. Justification has been understood as the hermeneutical key to understanding the Augsburg Confession, the church, and in fact all of theology. Of course, if justification is misunderstood or not confessed correctly, everything it touches also will be skewed. However, misunderstandings do not always begin with justification but sometimes begin in another article, just as a flywheel can be thrown off balance not because the central shaft is bent, but because the flywheel itself has become distorted. In a similar way, distortions in other articles can result in the loss of the gospel. In light of the close connection of the church with the government in Europe, some have suggested that a loss of two-kingdoms (two regiments) theology expounded in AC XXVIII has weakened the church's view of the Scriptures and wreaked havoc with the gospel. "If the church follows the various paths of theological monism, it cannot be content with its particular calling to preach the gospel as well as

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[1] "This is the chief article of our faith; and if you either do away with it, as the Jews do, or corrupt it, as the papists do, the church cannot exist." Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis" (1535–1545/1544–1554): vol. 4, p. 60, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009–), hereafter AE.

[2] Arthur Carl Piepkorn writing to John Tietjen on February 23, 1971 traces the origin of this phrase to Balthasar Meisner in *Anthropôlogia sacra* (Wittenberg: Johannes Gormannus, 1615), disputation 24. Meisner calls it a "*Lutheri proverbium.*" Piepkorn was not able to identify an exact quote matching the *Lutheri proverbium*, but found something similar in the Genesis commentary in AE 4:60 and *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [Schriften], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), vol. 43, p. 178. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Sacred Scriptures and The Lutheran Confession: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn,* ed. Philip J. Secker, vol. 2 (Mansfield, CT: CEC Press, 2007), 260.

Albert B. Collver III is Director of Church Relations—Assistant to the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This article was originally presented as a plenary paper during the LCMS Theology Porofessors Conference which took place in Irvine, California, on May 23–25, 2016.

administer the keys of heaven and the holy sacraments."[3] According to this view, if two-kingdoms theology is lost, the gospel is lost. This is particularly seen in areas of social-ethical and moral issues. The church cannot speak clearly about social-ethical issues when it is under the thumb of a government that is promoting a view contrary to that of the Scriptures. If the bishops and pastors are government agents, then these governmental agents will be hard pressed to go against the will of the government.

Indeed, this contributed to the problems the church faced in Europe. But as a universal paradigm, it does not seem to hold. The churches in the United States today are facing challenges similar to those in Europe in speaking to social-ethical issues in society. No doubt the United States government has implemented policies encouraging positions contrary to the Scripture in recent years. And despite the government's attempt to intrude further on religious liberty, the churches in the United States are still separate from the government. Many of the mainline churches in the United States capitulated long before the government changed its policies. One might be able to make a better historical case by arguing that the government entered areas when and where the churches abrogated their responsibility. The question seems to be: what, then, caused the church to cease to be church by abrogating its responsibility to proclaim God's law and gospel?

While not rejecting or diminishing the centrality of AC IV's confession on justification, I would like to suggest that for the past two centuries (especially during the ecumenical era of the twentieth century), the understanding of AC VII, particularly the phrase, "it is enough to agree on the doctrine of the Gospel," has served as the hermeneutical key to understanding not only article IV but the entire Augsburg Confession.

I. AC VII: A Brief Historical Background and Development

The basis or source for Augsburg Confession article VII can be found in Martin Luther's *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528), which predates the Schwabach Articles by a year.[4] In this document, Luther confesses the church.

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[3] Anssi Simojoki, "Potestas in Ecclesia, Potestas Episcoporum: Confessio Augustana XXVIII and the Life of the Church" *CTQ* 69, no. 2 (2005): 119–131, 123.

[4] Hermann Sasse, "Article VII Of the Augsburg Confession in the Present Crisis of Lutheranism," trans. Norman E. Nagel, in *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison, vol. 3 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 253. "The reason why the Augsburg Confession had to speak on the matter is clear. The article goes back to Article 12 of the Schwabach Articles, and behind that lies Luther's *Great Confession* of 1528."

> I believe that there is one holy Christian Church on earth, i.e. the community or number or assembly of all Christians in all the world. . . . The Christian Church exists not only in the realm of the Roman Church or pope, but in all the world. . . . This Christian church, wherever it exists, is to be found the forgiveness of sins, i.e. a kingdom of grace and of true pardon. For in it are found the gospel, baptism, and the sacrament of the altar, in which the forgiveness of sins is offered, obtained, and received. Moreover, Christ and his Spirit and God are there. Outside this Christian Church there is no salvation or forgiveness of sins, but everlasting death and damnation.[5]

Luther's confession on the church from 1528 has many of the elements found both in the Schwabach Articles of 1529 on the church[6] and AC VII of 1530. For example, Luther, the Schwabach Articles, and AC VII confess that there is one holy church. All three state that the church is composed of believers, or the saints in the case of AC VII. All three locate the church where the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered.[7] Wilhelm Maurer states, "These three basic principles again form the foundation of the evangelical concept of the church: universality, essential connection with Christ, and dependence on Word and Sacraments."[8]

In distinction to the Schwabach Article 12 and AC VII, Luther weds the doctrine of the Antichrist to the doctrine of the Church.[9] In the *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528), he writes:

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[5] Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), *AE* 37:367–368.

[6] John Michael Reu, *The Augsburg Confession: A Collection of Sources* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Press, 1966), 43. "Article XII. That there is no doubt that there is and remains upon earth until the end of the world a holy Christian church, as Christ declares, Matt. 28:20: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' This church is nothing else than believers in Christ, who hold, believe and teach the above-mentioned articles and parts, and for this suffer persecution and martyrdom in the world; for where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments used aright, there is the holy Christian church, and it is not bound by laws and outward pomp, to place and time, to persons and ceremonies."

[7] Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, trans. by H. George Anderson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 378. "A literary comparison of Schwab. 12 shows it to be an abstract of the Confession of 1528. Three theses reappear: (1) There is a 'holy Christian church' on earth. (2) It is nothing else than 'believers in Christ.' (3) It is where 'the gospel is preached and the sacraments used rightly.'"

[8] Maurer, *Historical Commentary*, 378.

[9] Sasse, "Article VII Of the Augsburg Confession," 254. "Even if we were to disregard the doctrine of the Antichrist, which was for Luther a part of the doctrine of the church, this quotation shows why the Reformation had to ask and answer the question: 'What is the church?' The highest office in the church had rejected the holy Gospel, and those who proclaimed this Gospel had been put out of the fellowship of the

> Thus this Christian Church is physically dispersed among pope, Turks, Persians, Tartars, but spiritually gathered in one gospel and faith, under one head, i.e. Jesus Christ. For the papacy is assuredly the true realm of Antichrist, the real anti-Christian tyrant, who sits in the temple of God and rules with human commandments, as Christ in Matthew 24[:24] and Paul in II Thessalonians 2[:3 f.] declare; although the Turk and all heresies, wherever they may be, are also included in this abomination which according to prophecy will stand in the holy place, but are not to be compared to the papacy.[10]

For Luther, the doctrine of the Antichrist was tied to the doctrine of the church because the church is where the gospel is proclaimed and those who proclaimed the gospel (Luther and those who followed in the Reformation) were cast out of the fellowship of the Roman Church. AC VII had to address primary opponents, the Church of Rome and the Anabaptists. The question of the church and where it is located was essential for the Reformation.

AC VII confesses that the church is located or found where the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered (Latin text).[11] The question this phrase asks is what is meant by "rightly" (*recte*) and what is meant by "gospel." The definition of the "gospel" also becomes key for understanding the *satis est*. In Apology VII–VIII 20, when Melanchthon discusses the marks of the church as the gospel and the sacraments, he references 1 Corinthians 3:11–13, "For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest." He writes: "For it retains the pure Gospel, and, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 3, 11, the foundation, i.e., the true knowledge of Christ and faith. Although among these there are also many weak persons, who build upon the foundation stubble that will perish, i.e., certain unprofitable opinions, which, nevertheless, because they do not overthrow the foundation, are both forgiven them and also corrected."[12] With this quote Melanchthon seems to suggest that his

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church. For this reason Luther and those with him had to say why they could not recognize the papal excommunication as exclusion from the church. Thus the ecclesiological question was put, and an answer had to be given."

[10] Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), AE 37:367–368.

[11] AC VII Latin: "Est autem ecclesia congregatio sanctorum, in qua evangelium recte docetur et recte administrantur sacramenta." W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente, eds., *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 46.

[12] Dau and Bente, *Triglot Concordia*, 233.

understanding of the gospel in AC VII and Apology VII–VIII is broad rather than narrow. For Melanchthon in AC VII, the word "gospel" is more than simply "justification by grace through faith" but rather the "gospel and all her articles," that is, both the law and the gospel. This point will become more important in connection with church fellowship and ecumenical discussions in the twentieth century.

Regarding the word "rightly" in AC VII, some have suggested that Melanchthon made a slip of the pen by adding it to the teaching on the church.[13] It is true that drafts of the Augsburg Confession prior to its presentation on May 25, 1530, did not contain the word "rightly." Some have tried to dismiss the word with the interpretation that "the Church of Christ does not exist where the teaching of the Gospel is not pure."[14] Yet this is not the point Melanchthon was making. The foundation and content of the pure gospel is that Jesus the Son of God died and rose again (Romans 4:25). Another theme picked up by Melanchthon that is present in Luther is that "the pure doctrine is the old; every new one is heretical."[15] According to Maurer, the ancient Christian approach to heresy was normative for Luther, although the standard by which heresy was measured was, for Luther, Holy Scripture, rather than traditional dogma. For Luther, the old, traditional dogma is identical with that of the apostles.[16] For Luther, then, this standard identifies also the antichrist, who adds to the gospel or subtracts from it, making it impure, not rightly taught.

Although AC VII does not use the language "kingdom of God," it does use language reminiscent of Psalm 149:1, calling the church "the assembly of the saints." The saints or the godly dwell in the kingdom of God. Apology VII–VIII 16 calls the church "the kingdom of Christ, distinguished from the kingdom of the devil."[17] In this context, the "kingdom of Christ" is the "kingdom of God" and is the "kingdom of Israel" in Acts 1:6. However, here is perhaps where AC XXVIII comes in helpful. From the perspective of the Confessions, the kingdom of Christ contains both regiments: the one exercised by the church and the one exercised by the

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[13] Juergen Ludwig Neve, *A Guide to The Augsburg Confession: Its History and Its Theology* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1927), 102–103. "Some have been disposed to discount the serious intention of this word 'rightly', and have preferred to treat it as a slip of Melanchthon's pen. But that cannot be done."

[14] Neve, *A Guide to The Augsburg Confession*, 102.

[15] Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, 386.

[16] Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, 386.

[17] Dau and Bente, *Triglot Concordia*, 231.

secular authorities. The kingdom of Israel, at least imperfectly in the Old Testament, represented the two regiments of God existing coterminously. In Acts 1:6, when the disciples to asked whether Jesus would restore the kingdom to Israel, he explained that his kingdom and the church on earth would be about "being witnesses," that is proclaiming the gospel to the entire world. In this way, the kingdom of Christ is his reign by which he redeems fallen mankind from sin, death, and Satan, while at the same time giving him righteousness and eternal life.[18] Melanchthon explains that "the kingdom of Christ is the righteousness of the heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Apology VII–VIII 13).[19] The righteousness of the heart comes from the forgiveness of sins. The gift of the Holy Spirit receives this gift through the preaching of the word and the administration the sacraments. The Holy Spirit, even as portrayed in the Scriptures, does not act apart from means. Christ gives his righteousness and exercises his rule through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, in seeming weakness, though with assured victory over Satan's kingdom.[20]

Prior to AC VII, the confession of the church was found in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church." According to Hermann Sasse, this article was Christendom's first doctrinal statement about the definition of the church and wherein her unity lies.[21] Elements of AC VII entered into the confessional documents of nearly every Protestant church that began in the sixteenth century. The great schism of the Western church prompted the clear confession of the AC VII, but that confession could not settle all questions about the church. These questions only intensified in subsequent centuries, perhaps culminating in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the rise of forced unionism among the Lutheran churches, the Vatican's attempt to define the church, and the rise of ecumenism in the twentieth century.

II. AC VII within Contemporary Ecumenical Dialogue

Hermann Sasse noted that in the middle of the nineteenth century that "article VII of the Augsburg Confession came to occupy the center of the discussion."[22] With the expansion of the Prussian Union, the existence of

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[18] Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. Paul F. Koehneke and J.A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 196.

[19] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 175.

[20] Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, 197.

[21] Sasse, "Article VII of the Augsburg Confession," 252–253.

[22] Sasse, "Article VII of the Augsburg Confession," 251.

the Lutheran territorial churches in Germany was at stake. Adolf von Harless wrote, "Only with the profoundest grief can one think such thoughts through to the end, that the Lutheran Church . . . would have her lamp cast aside in Germany."[23] Harless' prediction from 1870 has essentially come true in the early twenty-first century as The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (German: Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands, abbreviated VELKD), which boasts 9.5 million members and was founded on July 8, 1848, draws closer and closer to The Evangelical Church in Germany (German: Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, abbreviated EKD). The VELKD and the EKD share a common administration. This occurred when Horst Gorski was appointed President of the VELKD and a Vice President of EKD in September 2015. In the not too distant future, Lutheranism may no longer exist in Germany, both in name and in substance, as Harless feared. Among Lutherans in Germany, the potential loss of the territorial churches in the nineteenth century to the Union drove an intense study on the church. The rise of the ecumenical movement and the desire to unite various churches into a visible unity also drove the study of the church. Among Lutherans, AC VII has been central to these studies in an effort to discover *satis est*, what is enough for fellowship and unity.

During the nineteenth, twentieth, and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries, the key phrase discussed related to AC VII is *doctrina evangelii* ("doctrine" or "teaching of the gospel"). What exactly does this term mean? The answer to that question helps to demonstrate how AC VII has become a hermeneutical key to understanding Article IV on justification, Article V on the ministry, and Article X on the Lord's Supper. How the phrase *doctrina evangelii* is interpreted determines if a Lutheran church body can have fellowship and communion with other churches like the Anglicans or with the United Church of Christ. How "the doctrine of the gospel" is understood determines how various Lutheran church bodies might enter into fellowship with one another. How "the doctrine of the gospel" is understood also explains how the 144 church bodies that compose the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) can be in communion fellowship despite vastly different positions on the Scripture, and ethical issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and the ordination of practicing homosexuals into the office of the ministry. Ever since Albrecht Ritschl in the nineteenth century, many Lutherans have seen AC VII, and particularly the phrase *doctrina evangelii* ("doctrine of the gospel"), as a plastic text, malleable and able to be shaped and changed, and in this way to serve as the key to interpreting the rest of the Augsburg Confession.

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[23] Sasse, "Article VII of the Augsburg Confession," 251.

Lutherans are not united by church polity, nor do they have a uniform liturgy to unite them. "What keeps them together, according to their self-understanding, is unity in doctrine, and what drives them apart is disunity in doctrine."[24] The key to defining that "unity in doctrine" is found in AC VII and the phrase *doctrina evangelii* ("doctrine of the gospel"). The German text mentions "preaching" (*Evangelium gepredigt*) which has led some to say all that is needed for unity is preaching the gospel and administrating the sacraments. Again, depending upon what that "gospel" is, the bar for fellowship can be low or high. Also, how restrictive is "preaching," and does that only occur in the pulpit? The Latin text would suggest not only preaching but also teaching. The German text ought not be understood restrictively. If one thinks that preaching and administering the sacraments in a narrow sense is intended by AC VII, doctrine is no longer divisive of church fellowship. Nearly any Protestant church that preaches the "gospel" and administers the "sacraments" can be in fellowship, according to that view. Note that the "gospel" is rarely defined. Usually, Lutherans read "gospel" through the lens of AC IV, justification. What then is justification? Good news? A glad tiding? For many, the effect of justification is determined by how great one's sin is. If one's sin is intolerance toward transgendered people, then the gospel becomes the acceptance of them. When sin as traditionally defined in the Scriptures has been deconstructed away, then the gospel acquires a new definition or form. There is a temptation to say that such a view is simply another form of gospel reductionism, or to suggest that this problem is caused by the understanding of Article IV on justification rather than Article VII on the church. Yet in many cases, the understanding of Article VII is influencing or changing the understanding of Article IV.

For instance, David Bosch, in his book *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, speaks about Augsburg Confession VII. He writes:

> The most famous of the sixteenth-century definitions of the church is the one to be found in the (Lutheran) Augsburg Confession of 1530. Its Article VII describes the church according to two distinguishing marks, namely as "the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly." . . . The Protestant preoccupation with right doctrine soon meant that every group which seceded from the main body had to validate its action by maintaining that it alone, and none of the others, adhered strictly to the "right preaching of the gospel." . . . In all these instances the

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[24] Roland F. Ziegler, "Doctrinal Unity and Church Fellowship," *CTQ* 78, nos. 3–4 (2014): 59–79, here at 60.

> church was defined in terms of what happens inside its four walls, not in terms of its calling in the world. The verbs used in the Augustana are all in the passive voice: the church is a place where the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. It is a place where something is done, not a living organism doing something.[25]

Bosch affirms something previously noted, that AC VII initiated the desire to define the church in the sixteenth century. He regards locating the church in the Word and Sacraments as static, causing the church to be "passive," hence not being missional. He also regards an emphasis on doctrinal agreement to be problematic and sees doctrine as the source of church schisms. Bosch says, "The church of pure doctrine was, however, a church without mission, and its theology more scholastic than apostolic."[26] Bosch begins with the state of the church. Is it missional or not? Is the church following *missio dei? Missio dei* in Bosch's system is based upon the non-classical attribute that God is a sending God. Bosch writes, "In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God."[27] In classical dogmatics, "sending" is not listed as an attribute of God. Bosch continues to explain what it means to participate in the *missio dei*, "To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love."[28] This leads to a missionary ecclesiology, which casts aside classical categories, and locates the church not where the Word is preached and the Sacraments are administered, but where the church is sending and engaged in mission activity. In fact, the *missio dei* is seen as larger than the church. Bosch writes, "Mission is God's turning to the world in respect of creation, care, redemption, and consummation. . . . It takes place in ordinary human history, not exclusively in and through the church. 'God's own mission is larger than the mission of the church.'"[29] "The *missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate."[30] Bosch's explanation at best confuses the two regiments described in AC

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[25] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 20th Anniversary Edition,* American Society of Missiology series 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 237–238.

[26] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 238.

[27] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 382.

[28] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 382.

[29] Lutheran World Federation, "Together in God's Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission," *LWF Documentation* 26 (1988): 8.

[30] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 383.

XXVIII, that God works through the secular realm and in world history primarily through the law, while the Lord works through the churchly realm through the gospel. The move that Bosch presents opens the door toward environmental theology where the sending of God causes us to work to stop climate change and the gospel is the saving of the environment.[31] In fact, there are some "Christian" pastors who preach such a message. What this example might show is how starting with the definition of the church and redefining it has an effect on the gospel and may in fact change it.

From the state of the church (Article VII) the gospel (Article IV) is shaped. Bosch writes, "There is no such thing as a 'pure' gospel, isolated from culture."[32] The trouble with Bosch's statement is not that Lutherans disagree that the Scriptures need to be presented and applied contextually, that is, dividing law and gospel for a given people group in a given place, but that Bosch presents a dichotomy between 'pure' gospel on the one hand, and gospel enculturated on the other. The Lutheran Confessions, particularly AC VII, make no such dichotomy. The pure gospel is first and foremost the message of the forgiveness of sins on behalf of Christ's death and resurrection. The pure gospel in AC VII is not dependent upon the culture even if it needs to be taught and explained to a people of a given culture. The certainty of the gospel involves its locatedness. That is to say, the forgiveness of sins given at a particular place, to a particular people, at a particular time—this is culture.

While Bosch provided one example of how beginning with the definition of the church might alter the gospel, the desire for unionism and ecumenism continued to shift the definition of the church, and subsequently impacted the gospel, at least as it had been understood in an orthodox sense. Roland Ziegler outlines several different interpretations of the phrase "doctrine of the gospel."[33] Albrecht Ritschl's view has been previously mentioned. For Ritschl, "The doctrine of the gospel is the human effort to speak the gospel, that is, the divine, gracious will. As such, it is the mark and foundation of the church."[34] Where the human effort exists to speak the gospel then the church is present. Ritschl argued against the confessional Lutherans of his day in the nineteenth century, such as Theodosius Harnack, who believed doctrinal agreement was necessary for

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[31] Karen L. Bloomquist, ed., *God, Creation and Climate Change: Spiritual and Ethical Perspectives* (Geneva, Switzerland: Lutheran World Federation, 2009).

[32] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 288.

[33] Ziegler, "Doctrinal Unity and Church Fellowship," 60–66.

[34] Ziegler, "Doctrinal Unity and Church Fellowship," 61.

fellowship. Harnack wrote, "It is the essence of the Lutheran church to be a church of the Confession, and based on the Word of God, to be the church of the scriptural confession."[35] The problem of the union prompted much discussion in German lands over the nature of the church. Karl Barth adopted Ritschl's viewpoint, and this would play out to some extent in the missional church movement as mentioned above regarding David Bosch.

Among the various understandings of the "doctrine of the gospel," Ziegler highlights a key distinction: the distinction between the narrow and broad interpretation of the "doctrine of the gospel." Essentially, the narrow interpretation limits or reduces the "doctrine of the gospel" to something like "the human attempt at proclaiming the gospel," or "preaching a message of justification, hope, or good news," or "having consensus on what the gospel is in the narrow sense,"[36] which could include the views above or other viewpoints as long as there is consensus of what that definition of the gospel is. This is the approach taken by the Leuenberg Concord of 1973, which allowed for communion fellowship between Lutheran, Reformed, and Union churches.

The broad definition of the "doctrine of the gospel" is essentially the position held by the Missouri Synod and her partner churches. The broad definition holds that "that the consensus necessary for the unity of the church consists in everything that the Scriptures teach."[37] Francis Pieper proposed this approach in his essay "On the Unity of Faith," delivered to the convention of the Synodical Conference in 1888. There he connects AC VII and FC SD X. Pieper writes, "By unity in the faith we understand the agreement in all articles of the Christian doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture."[38] The "doctrine of the gospel" as understood by the Missouri Synod includes not simply the doctrine of justification but all articles of Christian doctrine. Fellowship requires agreement in all the articles, not only regarding justification.

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[35] Theodosius Harnack, *Die Kirche, Ihr Amt, Ihr Regiment* (Nürnberg: Bertelsmann, 1862), 88: "Es ist der lutherischen Kirche wesentlich, Kirche des Bekenntnisses zu sein, und sie ist sich dessen aus Gottes Wort gewiß, die Kirche des schriftmäßigen Bekenntnisses zu sein."

[36] Ziegler, "Doctrinal Unity and Church Fellowship," 63.

[37] Ziegler, "Doctrinal Unity and Church Fellowship," 65.

[38] Francis Pieper, "On Unity in the Faith, 1888," trans. Matthew C. Harrison, in *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era Unity and Growth*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison (Fort Wayne, IN: Lutheran Legacy, 2009), 572.

George Lindbeck touches on the issue of the interpretation of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession. He notes how "Most Lutheran churches are in communion with each other, and many have moved or are moving toward establishment of some degree of official Eucharistic fellowship with various non-Lutheran bodies."[39] He notes that the only major Lutheran church not in fellowship with the Lutheran World Federation member churches is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Lindbeck writes about how Lutherans have differentiated themselves on the nature of "agreement in the gospel." He writes:

> The first, exemplified by the Missouri Synod, has, as we have already mentioned, restrictive consequences. Agreement must be comprehensively spelled out in detailed doctrinal formulations, and furthermore, what is actually taught in the churches must conform to these formulations. One cannot be in communion with churches which, even if officially orthodox, nevertheless tolerate error. Such criteria, when rigorously adhered to, lead to a progressive narrowing of the circle of Eucharistic fellowship. All non-Lutheran churches, and most Lutheran ones, fail to qualify.[40]

In contrast to the position of the Missouri Synod, Lindbeck speaks about how the Swedish Lutherans approach the situation, in particular in their discussions with the Anglicans. He writes, "What is important for intercommunion is that 'the two communities agree . . . as to the content of the message of salvation, founded on the divine revelation, which has been committed to both of them.'"[41] The content of the message of salvation is usually defined as justification by faith. In this case, the "message of salvation" would be similar to how it was formulated in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ).[42] Lindbeck notes that the Anglicans apparently do not oppose what the Lutherans teach. The Anglican Church does not try to impose its doctrines on the Lutherans, nor do Lutherans do this to Anglicans, for that matter. Lindbeck concludes, "intercommunion with Anglicans is possible, not because of shared doctrinal formulations, but because Anglican and Lutheran teaching and life are not in conflict."[43] In response to Lindbeck's paper, Avery Dulles provided a Roman Catholic perspective. He agreed with Lindbeck in many

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[39] George A. Lindbeck, "A Lutheran View of Intercommunion with Roman Catholics," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 13, no. 2 (1976): 52–58 [242–248], here at 52 [242].

[40] Lindbeck, "A Lutheran View of Intercommunion," 53 [243].

[41] Lindbeck, "A Lutheran View of Intercommunion," 53 [243].

[42] The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

[43] Lindbeck, "A Lutheran View of Intercommunion," 54 [244].

areas and expressed a desire to have "a middle course between the Missouri Synod, which would insist on virtual theological unanimity, and the Church of Sweden which, by his account, would be satisfied with a minimal 'agreement in the gospel.'"[44] This middle course between the Missouri Synod's position and that of the Leuenberg Concord is the road more traveled than the less traveled path of complete agreement in doctrine. In fact, the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)'s search for this middle path so far has been futile. As Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matt 7:13–14). There is no middle path between the wide and narrow gates.

III. Conclusion

Article VII of the Augsburg Confession has become a hermeneutical key to interpreting AC IV. The interpretation of Article VII has influenced how justification is understood, how the office of the ministry is understood, and the practice of the Lord's Supper. With the goal of unity as the operating principle, the definition of the church must restrict or reduce the scope of justification to, at a minimum, being the proclamation of some sort of good news from a sin or malady that the Lord himself may not actually regard as sin. In the ecumenical context, AC VII has become the key to allowing fellowship not only among Lutherans who in the past could not be in altar and pulpit fellowship together but also with non-Lutheran church bodies. For the past century, this way of redefining the church has dominated.

A hope for change comes in part from the Global South, which cannot quite accept the ethical positions accepted by the Western churches. This has caused many to seek the Missouri Synod and her partners worldwide. Whether this tsunami of change will continue or whether the narrow view of the doctrine of the gospel will triumph in world Lutheranism remains an open question. Nevertheless, with AC VII we confess that the Lord will preserve for himself a church forever. A church of the AC VII will continue to exist even if it no longer bears the name Lutheran because the Lord has promised that the gates of hell will not prevail. May the Missouri Synod and her partners remain faithful to their confession, and may the churches of the Global South continue to seek this path.

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[44] Lindbeck, "A Lutheran View of Intercommunion," 58 [248].

Slaves to God, Slaves to One Another:
Testing an Idea Biblically

John G. Nordling

My interest in New Testament slavery goes back to graduate school days at the University of Wisconsin—Madison whence emerged a paper that was published in a New Testament journal.[1] Since then, I have had the privilege of writing *Philemon* for the Concordia Commentary Series[2] and several articles and book reviews on ancient or biblical slavery that have appeared since.[3] At seminary I have bounced my ideas off hapless students who express a polite interest in slavery sometimes, though colleagues are much more guarded on the topic, I notice. Not only are they busy with their own projects and preoccupations, of course, but slavery remains a contentious issue in polite society. Nevertheless, given the green light to hold forth on whatever I please at this, my inaugural lecture, I am prepared to provide as the title of today's lecture, "Slaves to God, Slaves to One Another: Testing an Idea Biblically." The idea to be tested, of course, is whether biblical slavery pertains in any way to being a Christian

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[1] John G. Nordling, "*Onesimus Fugitivus*: a Defense of the Runaway Slave Hypothesis in Philemon," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 41 (1991): 97–119. This article is based on research conducted for a doctoral seminar in Roman law under the direction of Dr. John Scarborough, completed in fall 1988. I would like to thank the Revs. Roger Peters, Richard Lammert, and Robert Smith for their help with finding the sometimes widely scattered materials (articles and texts) that went into the article below.

[2] John G. Nordling, *Philemon*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004).

[3] John G. Nordling, review of *Slavery in Early Christianity*, by Jennifer Glancy, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73, no. 4 (2005): 1212–1215; "Slavery and Vocation," *Lutheran Forum* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 12–17; "A More Positive View of Slavery: Establishing Servile Identity in the Christian Assemblies," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19, no. 1 (2009): 63–84; "Some Matters Favoring the Runaway Slave Hypothesis in Philemon," *Neotestamentica* 44, no. 1 (2010): 85–121; review of *The Slave in Greece and Rome*, by Jean Andreau and Raymond Descat, *CJ-Online*: accessed Jan. 18, 2017, http://cj.camws.org/files/reviews/2012/2012.12.07%20Nordling%20on%20Andreau%20and%20Descat,%20The%20Slave%20in%20Greece%20and%20Rome.pdf; review of *Onesimus Our Brother: Reading Religion, Race, and Culture in Philemon*, edited by M.V. Johnson, J.A. Noel, and D.K. Williams, *CTQ* 78, nos. 1–2 (2014): 186–188.

John G. Nordling is Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. This article was his public lecture in recognition of being advanced to the rank of full professor, delivered on September 28, 2016.

nowadays—or whether, perhaps, it is best to let sleeping dogs lie. I shall argue that slavery should be studied by Christians yet today on account of its pertinence to vocation—that is, to one's life "in Christ" amid the varied circumstances wherein God has set each Christian in this world to be faithful. The sanctified life of a Christian, then, consists not only in a freedom by which Christ sets one free (e.g., Gal 5:1, 13) but also in being all but a slave to others among whom God has set one to be of service (e.g., Gal 5:13; Rom 6:16, 18; 1 Cor 9:19). Naturally, the "metaphorical nature" of biblical slavery is evident in such discussion,[4] yet not so metaphorical as to obscure the essentially servile nature of Christianity itself when carefully considered.

I. The Servile Taint[5]

Slaves and servitude were on the minds of those who wrote the canonical New Testament originally, as even casual acquaintance with the New Testament demonstrates. Take a seemingly random New Testament text that speaks volumes not only to the telltale presence of slaves among the Christians at Corinth, for example, but also Greco-Roman society's contemptuous estimation of the same. Paul writes:

> For consider your calling, brethren, that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many are powerful, not many noble-born [εὐγενεῖς]. But God selected the foolish things of the world [τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου] to shame the wise, and the weak things of the world [τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου] God chose out to shame the strong, and the low-born/ignoble things of the world [τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου] God chose out, and the despised things [τὰ ἐξουθενημένα]—indeed, the things that are not [τὰ μὴ ὄντα]—in order to set at naught the things that are, so that no flesh may boast before God (1 Cor 1:26–29; my translation).

The servile taint is revealed by the neuter plural phrases that Paul uses rhetorically to adorn the passage: "the foolish things" (τὰ μωρά), "the weak things" (τὰ ἀσθενῆ), "the low-born things" (τὰ ἀγενῆ), "the despised things (τὰ ἐξουθενημένα), and "the things that are not" (τὰ μὴ ὄντα). We may fairly conclude that Paul did not write merely about "things" here, but the phrases likely represent tags for slaves in the original situation.[6] As

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[4] A. A. Rupprecht, "Slave, Slavery," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, and D.G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 882.

[5] This section is based on arguments presented earlier in Nordling, *Philemon*, 115–116; and Nordling, "A More Positive View of Slavery," 78–79.

[6] "The *neuters* . . . indicate the category generally, it being evident from the context that what is meant is the *persons* included under that category." H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to the Corinthians*, 6th ed., trans., rev., and ed. D. D.

nonbeings, slaves apparently comprised a significant portion of the epistolary audience at Corinth, for why else would Paul have kept repeating the phrase, "not many of you . . . not many of you . . . not many of you" (οὐ πολλοί . . . οὐ πολλοί . . . οὐ πολλοί, verse 26)?[7] Later pagans opined that educated persons could not be Christians, for that religion appealed only to "foolish, dishonorable and stupid" people—indeed, to "slaves [ἀνδράποδα], women, and little children."[8]

In short, the preceding passage from 1 Corinthians demonstrates aptly enough that slavery was never too far removed from the thought world of the earliest Christians. Moreover, the passage argues against a tenet strenuously put forward by Martin Hengel that early Christianity "was not particularly a religion of slaves."[9] Hengel's argument was that the ancients were all too aware of what it meant for a criminous slave to bear a cross through a city and then be nailed to it: *patibulum ferat per urbem, deinde offigitur cruci* (Plautus, *Carbonaria*, fr. 2).[10] The very horror of the routine, as well-known as it was, would have turned people off, supposed Hengel, so that Christianity could not have attracted the lower classes of Greco-Roman society.[11] I would argue, on the contrary, that the vigorous Christianity revealed in the New Testament was quintessentially a slaves' religion in that so much of it—epitomized by the death of Jesus on a cross—could not help but strike a responsive chord in countless slaves

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Bannerman and W. P. Dickson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884; repr., Winona Lake, IN: Alpha, 1980), 35; original emphases. Also, "the use of the neuter for persons emphasizes the attribute, Blass-Debrunner §138 (1), §263 (4) (with genitive)." H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia, trans. J. W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 50 n. 15.

[7] "In saying 'not many,' of course, Paul is well aware that some of their number were in fact well off by human standards (e.g., Crispus, Gaius, Erastus, Stephanas). Some of them indeed had their own houses and, according to 11:17–22, were abusing the 'have-nots' at the Lord's Table. But primarily the community was composed of people who were not 'upper class,' although from this statement one cannot determine how many would have belonged to the truly 'poor'—slaves and poor freedmen—and how many would have been artisans and craftsmen, such as Paul was himself." G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 82.

[8] The view of Celsus, as cited by Origen, *Cels.* 3.44, my translation. See Nordling, *Philemon*, 115 n. 49.

[9] Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 62.

[10] In Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 62.

[11] So Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 61–62.

who chafed under constant threat of crucifixion in the early centuries AD.[12] Hengel himself admits as much toward the end of his study, where he comments on the significance of the death of Jesus and how, in his opinion, the "passion story" formed a "solidarity" between the love of God and anyone who has ever experienced "unspeakable suffering."[13] Hengel envisioned, in particular, slave experiences in the early centuries AD:

> In the person and the fate of the one man Jesus of Nazareth this saving "solidarity" of God with us is given its historical and physical form. In him, the "Son of God," God himself took up the "existence of a slave" and died the "slaves' death" on the tree of martyrdom (Phil 2:8), given up to public shame (Hebrews 12:2) and the "curse of the law" (Gal 3:13), so that in the "death of God" life might win victory over death. In other words, in the death of Jesus of Nazareth God identified himself with the extreme of human wretchedness, which Jesus endured as a representative of us all, in order to bring us to the freedom of the children of God:
>
> > He who did not spare his own Son,
> > but gave him up for us all,
> > will he not also give us all things with him? (Romans 8:32).[14]

At the same time, the gospel was presented to the world in those days as a bold invitation to anyone and to everyone—regardless of social status—to become a slave of God in Christ by faith and baptism, taking up one's metaphorical "cross" and following Jesus into a new life and destiny as a disciple of the Crucified One. Consider the "take-up-your-cross-and-follow-me" statements in the synoptic gospels, for example.[15] The historical origins of this language may derive from the carrying of a cross to public execution by condemned malefactors, opined Johannes Schneider (who wrote the article on crucifixion in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*).[16] That horrific act may possibly have suggested to onlookers "a beginning of [Christian] discipleship," which would then become "a lasting state" for anyone who had been baptized into the death and

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[12] The slaves' punishment (*servile supplicium*) hovered like a pall over ancient society in general. See Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 86–89.

[13] The quoted portions are taken from Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 88.

[14] Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 88–89.

[15] "Let him take up his cross [ἀράτω τὸν σταυρόν] and follow me" (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34). In Luke 9:23, the evangelist appends "daily" (καθ᾽ ἡμέραν) to the saying.

[16] Johannes Schneider, "σταυρός, σταυρόω, ἀνασταυρόω," *in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976), 7:572–584, especially 578; hereafter *TDNT.*

resurrection of Jesus: "The disciple of Jesus is a cross-bearer, and [this] he remains . . . his whole life."[17] Thinking of this type likely penetrated the depths of society during the first centuries AD. The first Christians did not minimize the death of Jesus upon a cross but rather proclaimed it boldly before the unbelieving world, reveling in its scandal: "We preach Christ crucified [Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον], a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God [Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν]" (1 Cor 1:23–24).

II. Modern Considerations of Ancient Slavery

I would like to suggest that slavery should be studied in light of the ancient evidence and New Testament depictions of that institution— instead of, as so often happens, dismiss it out of hand, or labor under the impression that slavery as such is "utterly incompatible with Christian beliefs and values."[18] Indeed, New Testament slavery is compatible with Christian beliefs still today, as I hope overwhelmingly to demonstrate. Theologically speaking, of course, it ought to be conceded that slavery is one of the many results of original sin—that is, it came about as an unfortunate adjustment to life in a fallen world which is inherently unjust, brutish, and short. However, as I think it can be demonstrated, slavery in its New Testament guise (as a subset of ancient slavery) was far removed from that racist institution by the same name that brutally exploited dark-skinned Africans in the American South and elsewhere in early modernity. Before taking up biblical slavery's pertinence to Christian vocation, it would be helpful to address some questions that might naturally suggest themselves to any thoughtful person who reflects a moment on slavery, an institution quite far removed from the experience of most of us.

First, why did western society require some 1,900 years to do away with slavery, and did Christianity really provide a leaven toward eman-cipation as many assume?[19] Taking the last point first, the Marxist historian de Ste. Croix argued that Christianity did not lead to the dissolution of slavery but in fact intensified it:

> Whatever the theologian may think of Christianity's claim to set free
> the soul of the slave, . . . the historian cannot deny that it helped to

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[17] Schneider, "σταυρός," 578.

[18] Richard A. Horsley, "The Slave Systems of Classical Antiquity and Their Reluctant Recognition by Modern Scholars," *Semeia* 83/84 (1998): 22.

[19] An earlier form of this argument exists in John G. Nordling, "Christ Leavens Culture: St. Paul on Slavery," *Concordia Journal* 24, no. 1 (January 1988): 48.

rivet the shackles rather more firmly on his feet. It performed the same social function as the fashionable philosophies of the greco-roman world, and perhaps with deeper effect: it made the slave both more content to endure his earthly lot, and more tractable and obedient.[20]

Why western society required so many centuries to get rid of slavery poses indeed a difficult question—and the question presumes that slavery has in fact vanished, whereas horrific forms of servitude continue in many parts of the world and have made an unfortunate comeback.[21] A plausible response to the question might run along the following lines: the economy of the Greco-Roman world depended upon large numbers of slaves in bondage to master classes and also upon the specialization inherent in slave labor.[22] Ancient peoples, like us, considered themselves to be civilized, and ancient civilization—in Greece and Rome, at any rate—relied heavily upon the enslavement of persons in the lower social orders or, indeed, marginalized outsiders. In a word, the ancients engaged in a slave economy.

Because the ancients were on the whole so accepting of slavery, a certain analogy follows—which, I admit, has not met with wholehearted approval by everyone who reads my work. Nevertheless, I think it works, so here goes: expecting ancient slave holders to give up slaves and lead "slave-free" lives makes about as much sense as expecting today's average American to give up his automobile, electricity, and paper products rolled into one. Certainly such things *can be* sacrificed by moderns *to some extent*—temporarily, on a weekend camping trip, perhaps, or by the back-to-nature fringe of modern society. But for untold millions of people it simply will not do to go without gasoline-burning cars, microwave ovens,

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[20] G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, "Early Christian Attitudes to Property and Slavery," in *Church, Society and Politics: Papers Read at the Thirteenth Summer Meeting and the Fourteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society,* ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 20.

[21] See M. A. Klein, *Historical Dictionary of Slavery and Abolition* (Lanham and London: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 25, 107–108; A. Cockburn, "21st-Century Slaves" *National Geographic* 204, no. 3 (2003): 2–25.

[22] W. W. Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1965), 205–206; Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 79; C. Osiek, "Slavery in the New Testament World," *Bible Today* 22 (1984): 152; Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Rebellion in the Roman World, 140 B.C. – 70 B.C.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 26–30; N.R.E. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993); Klein, *Historical Dictionary*, 48; J. Andreau and R. Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome*, trans. M. Leopold (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 12.

or hand-held electronic devices for any appreciable length of time. Thus, in analogous fashion, did our cultural ancestors come to depend upon vast numbers of slaves for day-to-day existence. Slavery was everywhere; it was as much a part of ancient life as those technological gadgets one takes so much for granted nowadays. Only the Essenes at Qumran and the Egyptian Therapeutae appear to have rejected slavery in principle[23]—and, to be sure, Jesus and his immediate disciples did not keep slaves, according to the available evidence, nor Paul, Barnabas, or Timothy. Nevertheless, it is "agonizingly clear" that neither Paul himself, nor any other early Christian, called for the abolition of slavery as such,[24] and its inclusion in emerging Christianity merely "mirrored the reality of the time."[25] Indeed, as Christianity expanded into the Gentile communities, became an urban phenomenon, and entered the social mainstream, there were many Christians who owned, had close dealings with, or were themselves, slaves.

Here is a second question moderns might do well to ponder: may one learn anything about ancient slavery by studying modern (North American, antebellum) slavery? And the answer is: of course one may, but that answer comes easy, both to modern Christians and to social historians nowadays. To be sure, both forms of slavery relied upon "compulsory labor in which part of the population legally owned other human beings."[26] And certainly one may form some accurate ideas about what it meant to be sold, run away, or avoid recapture in antiquity by studying North American antebellum parallels.[27] However, slavery was a bewilderingly complicated phenomenon in both its ancient and modern guises, so careful interpreters of either ancient or early modern evidence should not assume any facile equivalencies. In fact, Bartchy observed that one's awareness of modern slavery—and by this he meant, in particular, antebellum slavery in the American South—has done more to hinder than to help achieve "an appropriate, historical understanding" of ancient slavery.[28] Therefore, while the argument lacks credence that modern

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[23] S. Scott Bartchy, "Slavery (Greco-Roman)," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, D. N. Freedman, ed., vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 69; Andreau and Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome*, 135.

[24] G. Feeley-Harnik, "Is Historical Anthropology Possible? The Case of the Runaway Slave," in *Humanizing America's Iconic Book,* ed. G. M. Tucker and D. A. Knight (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 102.

[25] G. Corcoran, "Slavery in the New Testament. I.," *Milltown Studies* 1 (1980): 3.

[26] Bartchy, "Slavery (Greco-Roman)," 66.

[27] See the examples in Nordling, *Philemon*, 88 nn. 287–291.

[28] Bartchy, "Slavery (Greco-Roman)," 66.

slavery does not pertain *at all* to ancient (and, by extension, to biblical) slavery, moderns by-and-large are hard-wired to regard all forms of slavery with a considerable suspicion on account of the largely negative impact that racism—antebellum slavery's bitter legacy—continues to exert on modern society.[29] Nevertheless, I submit, ancient slavery existed many centuries before the racist institution did and so ought not, necessarily, be lumped together with modern antebellum slavery. Fair-minded persons should be able to see that there are important differences between ancient (and biblical) slavery and the racist institution by the same name that terrorized dark-skinned persons in the American South and elsewhere in early modern times.

I would like to point out, moreover, that the New Testament has had much to say about slavery overall,[30] so it would seem unusual if those many biblical passages—to which more could be added—have nothing to do with Christianity as it exists today. Indeed, the argument can be made that—in certain critical respects—biblical slavery is *paradigmatic for actually being a Christian* in every time and place including our own. In making the point I cannot, to be sure, deny that there have been those in the church who have maliciously used the biblical texts to keep slaves and oppressed persons "in their place;"[31] nevertheless, it seems plausible that—along with everything else—God placed biblical slavery within the canon of Scripture for a Christian's "learning" (paraphrasing 1 Cor 10:11). Thus, there could be *theological* dimensions to slavery for modern Christians to consider, not merely incidental or historical dimensions. I submit that Christians should study slaves in the New Testament because, in so many ways, they resemble us and we resemble them. Paul's portrayal of himself several times as a slave[32] suggests that the apostle strove to maintain an identity with epistolary audiences, a large percentage of whom were undoubtedly servile;[33] so it seems quite possible that Paul regarded Christianity itself as

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[29] So Klein, *Historical Dictionary of Slavery and Abolition*, 24–26.

[30] E.g., Matt 18:23–35; Matt 24:45–51 (Luke 12:42–48); Matt 25:14–30 (Luke 19:12–27); Luke 16:1–8; 1 Cor 7:20–24; Eph 6:5–8; Col 3:22–25; 1 Tim 6:1–2; Titus 2:9–10; Philemon; 1 Pet 2:18–21, etc.

[31] See, e.g., J.W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York,: Oxford University Press, 1972), 61–63; Osiek, "Slavery in the New Testament World," 154; Klein, *Historical Dictionary of Slavery and Abolition*, 64; A. G. Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church: a Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 128.

[32] E.g., Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1. See also 1 Cor 9:19; 2 Cor 4:5.

[33] Nordling, "A More Positive View of Slavery," 66–69. Of course, at this remove it is impossible to determine just what proportion of an ancient Pauline assembly was

a kind of "religion of the slaves," and every Christian—including those who were legally free and so fully enfranchised—to assume the servile position.[34]

And as Paul's "I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10) indicated a confidence in God's grace that allowed him henceforth to be a new person "in Christ,"[35] so Christian slaves would come to think of themselves as considerably more than "just slaves" in spite of past sins, current problems, and what would have been a wretchedly low estimation of slaves and the lower classes in the eyes of the world. There was now, in baptism, a new life and destiny for all believers, including the most down-trodden, despised, and desperate members of the human race as may have frequented a Pauline assembly. The early assemblies were expected to keep separate from the surrounding darkness and reflect the light of Christ into surrounding society: "For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8).[36] Preaching in the early assemblies consisted mainly of helping all the assembled—both great and small, both named Christian and anonymous person at lower societal levels—to see that Jesus, the supreme *Kyrios*, had died a slave's death upon a cross, risen triumphantly from the dead, and so had brought about a new destiny "in Christ" for any as had died to past sins baptismally and risen from the font in faith to receive the body and blood of the Lord Jesus in the Holy Communion—actions conceived of more corporately than individ-ualistically.[37] Also urged upon the indeterminate masses was "the cross" that God gives: "let him take up his cross and follow me," Jesus urges

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servile, freed, or free. See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: the Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1983), 64.

[34] See Nordling, "A More Positive View of Slavery," 68. Also, F. Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul—The Slave and the Freedman," *New Testament Studies* 17 (1970–71): 73–79.

[35] The phrase seems connected to baptism, although this possibility is not recognized by some of the authors of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*: A. Oepke, "ἐν," *TDNT* 2:541; W. Grundmann, F. Hesse, M. de Jonge, and A. S. van der Woude "χρίω, χριστός, κτλ," *TDNT* 9:550–551. Nevertheless, several of the "in Christ [Jesus]" formulations seem redolent of baptism, most importantly, ". . . as many of us as were baptized *into Christ Jesus* [εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν] were baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3, added emphasis). For the formulations ἐν Χριστῷ and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ see Rom 6:11; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:4; Gal 3:28 (cf. 3:27); 2 Tim 1:9.

[36] See K. R. Snodgrass, "Paul's Focus on Identity," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168 (2011): 262.

[37] See Nordling, "A More Positive View of Slavery," 78–80; Snodgrass, "Paul's Focus on Identity," 269, 270–271; S. Muir, "Vivid Imagery in Galatians 3:1—Roman Rhetoric, Street Announcing, Graffiti, and Crucifixions," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 44, no. 2 (2014): 78–79.

identically in both Matthew (16:24) and Mark (8:34), and Luke adds "daily" (καθ' ἡμέραν) to the saying (9:23). Such a "cross" is all but code for what the Lutherans would later call "vocation": "the disciple of Jesus is a cross-bearer, and [this] he remains . . . his whole life."[38]

III. Slavery as Vocation

Simple observation reveals that there is nearly always a balance of power between overlings and underlings in complex human societies, and that those in power best accomplish goals through persuasion and skill, not brute force, violence, or intimidation. This balance is as true today as it ever was thousands of years ago, both among the redeemed at church and among quite worldly people in secular situations. Some do not see matters thus and so argue (implausibly, I believe) that there must be a "threat of force" to maintain inherent inequalities,[39] and certainly many examples can be produced to document dominical savagery—if not outright sadism—against recalcitrant slaves.[40] Nevertheless, "cracking the whip" was hardly the only way available to ancients to motivate slaves, nor was it ever the best way. Thus, attempts to redefine all slavery as a perpetually violent institution[41] are mistaken in principle and can be shown at many points to contradict the evidence. Much more was it the case that the person in charge was not so much a cruel taskmaster as an encouraging coxswain (κελευστής, as described by Xenophon)[42] who urged a crew to row with utter abandon upon the seas; either rowers concluded such voyages jubilantly, dripping with sweat and congratulating each other, or they pulled into port hours later, sullenly hating their leader as much as he hated them. Xenophon, writing his *Oeconomicus* five centuries before Paul, indicates that military generals, commanders, bailiffs and other persons set into power were required to inspire a certain "love of work" (φιλοπονία τις)[43] in their charges; once that objective had been met, troops followed

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[38] Schneider, "σταυρός," 578.

[39] So, e.g., de Ste. Croix, "Early Christian Attitudes," 16.

[40] See the many examples in Nordling, *Philemon*, 57, nn. 109–110. Also, B. Cho, "Subverting Slavery: Philemon, Onesimus, and Paul's Gospel of Reconciliation" *Evangelical Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2014): 104–105.

[41] So Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1982), 13, and many subsequent interpreters.

[42] *Oeconomicus* 21.3, my translation. The term was so named because the coxswain gave the rowers their time, their beat (κέλευσμα). See Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon* Oeconomicus*: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 343.

[43] *Oeconomicus* 21.6, my translation.

commanders through every danger, "even through fire,"[44] and slaves could be counted upon to be "enthusiastic, eager for work, and persevering."[45] Xenophon obviously had the "gentleman farmer" in mind[46] as he wrote movingly of good family life on the farm and harmonious relationships, and it is true that this idealized picture pertained especially to the very rich.[47] Nevertheless, the more positive view must also have rubbed off on many—including those who, of course, were not quite so well off and did not manage their estates as well (and so never reached the harmonious ideal). While slaves were, to be sure, more liable to physical punishments than members of the citizen class,[48] masters at Athens could not punish slaves with complete impunity (as is often imagined) for under the law, women, children, and slaves received some minimal protections.[49] Likewise, prefects at Rome investigated complaints set before them by slaves concerning the injustice of their masters.[50]

Hence, many of the modern assumptions lack insight into the very *psychology* of slavery, for even the most docile slave *could be*—and often *was*—motivated to take pride in his or her work, do it to the best of his or her ability, and live for no other purpose than to please the master—heart, soul, mind, and body.[51] Modern treatments that reduce the genuineness of a slave's devotion to mindless automatism (e.g., "extension of a master's power;"[52] "stereotyped slave personality"[53]) quite miss the point. Certainly there is evidence of the type of "dilatoriness and poor work performance"

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[44] *Oeconomicus* 21.7, my translation.

[45] *Oeconomicus* 21.9, my translation.

[46] Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 42.

[47] Andreau and Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome*, 68. To be sure, Keith R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: a Study in Social Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 24, and S. Swain, *Economy, Family, and Society from Rome to Islam: A Critical Edition, English Translation, and Study of Bryson's* Management of the Estate (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 268, mention excessive cruelty to rural slaves by such ancient agronomists as Columella.

[48] Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire*, 113–137; Swain, *Economy, Family, and Society from Rome to Islam*, 263.

[49] See Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 58–65.

[50] See J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940), 57, on the basis of Justinian, *Digest* 1.12.1.

[51] Andreau and Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome*, 109; J. K. Goodrich, "From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God: Reconsidering the Origin of Paul's Slavery Metaphor in Romans 6," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 23, no. 4 (2013): 528 n. 64.

[52] Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 4.

[53] Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire*, 35.

that indicates dissatisfaction on the part of slaves,[54] and some indication that kindliness to slaves made them work harder.[55] Nevertheless, it seems clear that slaves and masters were capable of getting along quite well together—and that their relationship had staying power.[56] In the Greek, Roman, and also Jewish worlds, capable slaves regularly represented their masters' interests and so represented them as trusted agents.[57] It was in this sense, then—an extremely positive understanding—that slaves came to be thought of as physical extensions of the master's body: "the hand of a slave is as the hand of his master."[58] Thus, modern attacks against slavery rather resemble attempts to denigrate the employer-employee relationship of today—or any of the other human relationships, for that matter—that make the world go round: husbands-wives, fathers-sons, teachers-students, etc. Most can see that such bedrock relationships are part of human life "here below" and that dispensing with them will come only at the Last Day when, as Christians suppose, the Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory to judge the living and the dead.[59] Then, to be sure, human life as we know it will cease, and there will be no further need of dealing with each other in the stations of life wherein each finds him- or herself.

The argument can well be made, therefore, that the first Christians also conceived of their standing before God in quite servile terms, before whom every human being—regardless of relative status in human society—is but

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[54] Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire*, 32. Cf. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 79–80.

[55] Swain, *Economy, Family, and Society from Rome to Islam*, 264–265.

[56] So, e.g., R. H. Barrow, *Slavery in the Roman Empire* (London: Methuen, 1928; repr. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), 48–49; Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 72–73; Nordling, *Philemon*, 49–51.

[57] U. Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus: a Christian Design for Mastery," *Zeitschrift für die Newtestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105, no. 1 (2014): 121.

[58] From the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Baba Mesi'a, at *b. B. Mesi'a* 96a): "R[abbi] 'Ilish asked Raba: . . . Or, on the other hand, even on the view that a man's agent is not as himself, that may hold good of an [independent] agent, but as for a slave, 'the hand of a slave is as the hand of his master'?—He replied: It is logical that 'the hand of a slave is as the hand of his master.'" *Hebrew English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1986), no page. For more on a slave's ability to represent his master's interests in Judaism see C. Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), particularly chapter 12: "Slaves as Intermediaries in Business Transactions," 275–284. For this aspect of Greco-Roman slavery see E. Harris, "Were there Business Agents in Ancient Greece? The Evidence of some Lead Letters," *The Letter: Law, State, Society and the Epistolary Format in the Ancient World*, ed. U. Yiftach (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 105–124; and A. Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 105–106.

[59] Stanley K. Stowers, "Paul and Slavery: a Response," *Semeia* 83/84 (1998): 307.

a slave: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:5).[60] Indeed, it can be maintained that at least quasi-servile relationships exist today, in the very midst of the western democracies' marked tendencies toward egalitarianism and fairness.[61] For example, university professors wield the awesome power of the grade—and hence of the future career—over every college student. Yet wise holders of that power realize that grades should be used as a stimulus for genuine learning (never as an end in themselves), and certainly not to cow surly or disagreeable students into submission. Indeed, the best teachers motivate initially reluctant students to learn quite difficult subjects with joy and aplomb so that, over time, only a small amount of coercion—or even no coercion—is necessary. Likewise, pastors possess in their office that frightful power of the keys (Matt 16:19; John 20:22–23; cf. Rev 1:18; 3:7), by which they must admonish manifest sinners, retain the sins of the impenitent, and even hand such over to Satan (1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20)—that is, remove them from the congregation and participation in the means of grace.[62] However, excluding the impenitent is only part of the pastoral office, and the "alien" part at that, for the principle task of a pastor is "rightly to divide the Word of Truth."[63] This obligation consists, above all, of presenting the gospel clearly and winsomely to the entire congregation and, in particular, of absolving penitents.[64] Finally, police officers, soldiers, and magistrates are required by God to wield the sword—not, of course, to advance personal interests, but rather to execute God's wrath on evil-doers.[65] Yet the most worthy wielders of the sword would prefer not to have to wield it at all—who, were it up to them, would walk away from a fight if they could, or even suffer wrong themselves before dealing out death and destruction to others. However, the wicked are a constant reality in this world, and so

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[60] See also Matt 22:37; Mark 12:33. For some other scholars who have made the connection between Deut 6:5 and biblical slavery see G. Corcoran, "Slavery in the New Testament," *Milltown Studies* 1 (1980): 4; Feeley-Harnik, "Is Historical Anthropology Possible?" 114–115; Goodrich, "From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God," 524 n. 48.

[61] An earlier form of this argument appears in Nordling, *Philemon*, 103–105.

[62] "I believe that, when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, especially when they exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, . . . this is as valid and certain . . . as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself." Martin Luther, *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1943), 18 (on the Office of the Keys and Confession).

[63] C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel,* trans. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia, 1929), 286.

[64] Luther, *Small Catechism*, 18.

[65] Rom 13:4; cf. Luther, *Small Catechism*, 59.

competent police officers and soldiers had better ply their metaphorical swords aggressively when called upon to do so, carrying out their God-given vocations:

> Wait until the situation compels you to fight when you have no desire to do so. You will still have more than enough wars to fight and will be able to say with heartfelt sincerity, "How I would like to have peace. If only my neighbors wanted it too!" Then you can defend yourself with a good conscience, for God's word says, "He scatters the peoples who delight in war" [Ps 68:30]. Look at the real soldiers, those who have played the game of war. They are not quick to draw their sword, they are not contentious; they have no desire to fight. But when someone forces them to fight, watch out! They are not playing games. Their sword is tight in the sheath, but if they have to draw, it does not return bloodless to the scabbard.[66]

It seems, then, that certain members even of the egalitarian-tending societies of the west have been entrusted with varying amounts of power, authority, and influence in order to serve (from Lat. *servio –ire*)[67] others, not "lord it over" them—although, to be sure, many casual observers fail to see it thus. A genuinely Christian doctrine of vocation holds, however, that "God grants office so that you may serve" (*Deus dedit officium, ut servias*).[68] Thus, the rare Christian prince is, at the same time, a "servant of all" because he genuinely puts the affairs of subjects ahead of his own—as Elector Frederick did, for example, who harbored Luther at great personal risk.[69] Indeed, those opportunities in life that seem at first to be so beguiling—educational opportunities; love for one's spouse; aspirations for money, power, prestige, etc—end up placing greater burdens on Christians in the end than if they had not been realized in the first place. In this back-handed way God assigns the tasks of creation to everyone on earth, including the most humble Christian:

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[66] Martin Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can be Saved" (1526), trans. C. M. Jacobs, revised by R. C. Schultz: vol. 46, pp. 118–119, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009–), hereafter AE.

[67] "To be subject to (with dat[ive]), to be a servant or slave," D.P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 550.

[68] Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. C. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 128–129.

[69] Martin Luther, "Psalm 101," AE 13:157–159; cf. Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 126–127.

He hustles young people into matrimony with pipes, drums, and dancing. They enter the marital estate joyfully and think that it is nothing but sugar. In the same way He also confers great honor and glory on princes and lords, hangs golden chains about their necks, seats them on velvet cushions, lets people genuflect before them and address them with "Your Grace," gives them large castles, and surrounds them with splendor. As a result people who do not know better suppose that this is nothing but joy and pleasure. But in this way God must lure them into a net before He throws the rope over their horns.[70]

There is much more to Christian vocation than can be considered here, but how it works, basically, is that God the Father calls the sinner to faith through the humble means of grace (the gospel and sacraments), which is all Christ and the Holy Spirit's doing. Thus, I "look above" to see what Another (Christ) has done in my place: how he lived; how he fulfilled the law perfectly in my place; how he has defeated sin, death, and the devil; how he intercedes for me before the heavenly Father, etc. Thus, it is with "an upward look" to heaven with which the Christian is concerned while here on earth and whither he directs his gaze.[71] At the same time, God sets the Christian very much into specific contexts "here below" to be to others of genuine service by which God the Father "channels" his copious and manifold gifts to all people on earth, whether Christian or unbeliever.[72] None of the mundane circumstances amid which the individual Christian has been set are ever arbitrary or coincidental; no, struggling with inborn tendencies toward pride, ambition, arrogance, a reluctance to serve others, etc., is the means by which the "old Adam" dies daily with Christ and the "new" man or woman of faith comes daily into being, fellowships with other Christians, and serves even persons who are far outside the fellowship of faith. Although Christ does everything for my salvation, the Christian "cooperates" with God in matters here below and submits to his will, a submission that always involves the death of the "old Adam" and the resurrection of the "new" man or woman of faith.[73] Thus, Christians of even quite lofty status—princes, kings, the wealthy, burgomasters, the learned, etc.—are genuinely "slavish" in that each (like Jesus) serves others

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[70] Martin Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of John, Chapters 14–16," AE 24:377.

[71] Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 124–125.

[72] Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 126.

[73] Synergism, which misuses the language of "cooperation," was roundly condemned by the Lutheran confessors in the Formula of Concord: FC SD II 5–15, 77. Nevertheless, the word may be used more positively in Scripture of regenerate man's "cooperating" with God solely through the operation of the Holy Spirit. See, e.g., Rom 16:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 1:24; 8:23; Phil 2:25; 4:3, etc.

amid the mundane affairs of this life, not just the self (e.g., Matt 11:29; 18:4; 23:12).

Thus, passages directed to slaves in New Testament congregations are surprisingly relevant to Christians of diverse vocations still today, and shall be so until the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory:

- "... so that we would no longer be *enslaved* to sin [τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ]" (Rom 6:6);

- "do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient *slaves* [δούλους], you are *slaves* [δοῦλοί ἐστε] of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (Rom 6:16);

- "but thanks be to God, that you who were once *slaves* of sin [δοῦλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας] have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed" (Rom 6:17);

- "but now that you have been set free from sin and have *become slaves* of God [δουλωθέντες... τῷ θεῷ], the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Rom 6:22);

- "for you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love *serve* one another [δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις]" (Gal 5:13).

Italicized words in preceding passages indicate that much of the Pauline paraenesis was intended *for slaves* in the original situation, and that the metaphorical nature of slavery was early understood: "the one who is enslaved to Christ is ultimately free ... from sin and death and free to do the will of God and live."[74] A robust theology of vocation would maintain, however, that such language continues to hold currency in the sanctified lives and callings of common Christians yet today. Proper study and explication of such passages might genuinely help today's church as she wrestles with such potentially divisive matters as, for example, the role of women in families and the church, the way Christians worship together, vocation, sexuality, or any of a number of other issues. One should study the slave passages diligently, therefore, and learn from them rather than assume—incorrectly, I believe—that they are outmoded relics of an earlier age and no longer applicable to us. Indeed, they do apply to Christians still today, and always have. To cite Paul once more: "For whatever was written in former days was written *for our learning* [εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν], that through endurance and through the encouragement of

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[74] Rupprecht, "Slave, Slavery," 882.

the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15:4 added emphasis). Early it was understood that the word of God would stand forever, and that Scripture is rightly read as a word of address to the eschatological community of God.[75] So the church continues to hear the word of God in every age, and pastors strive to apply the word to Christians of every time and place, including their own. Although one could certainly overlook slavery as a cultural artifact of the first and following centuries AD, biblical slavery—as has been shown—remains remarkably pertinent today to varying types of Christians who become mindful of their standing before God and others in contemporary society. And although Christians of the west are set today within radically egalitarian societies, this article has shown—at the very least—that such has not always been the case historically, so perhaps the church ought to resist tendencies to "go with the flow" of increasingly radicalized social agendas.[76] At its best, the church is healthily countercultural, standing with God and his word against the passing dictates of society and culture whose norms vary widely (Acts 5:29). Mature Christians see themselves in relationship to the redeemed community through baptismal incorporation into Christ (Rom 6:3–4; cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27), rather than as autonomous persons involved in highly emotional—and therefore unstable—"relationships" with Jesus Christ. Corporate Christianity values rather steadfastness, continuity with the past, and maturity—lest one be "tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14; cf. Matt 11:7; Heb 13:9; James 1:6; Jude 12).[77] Still, the faith of the apostles can hardly be reduced to a kind of doughty conservatism. The center consists rather of the community's sharing in the forgiveness of sins and of extending that through the church's ministry to outsiders (Matt 6:14; 2 Cor 2:7, 10; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12–13; 1 Pet 3:8).

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[75] R. B. Hayes, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 166.

[76] Contra Cho, "Subverting Slavery," 114.

[77] For the idea recently, see Paul S. Cable, "*IMITATIO CHRISTIANORUM:* The Function of Believers as Examples in Philippians," *Tyndale Bulletin* 67, no. 1 (2016): 105–125. Christ is the ultimate exemplar and source of the content of the exhortation (especially Phil 2:6–11; cf. 3:21), but also Paul himself (throughout the letter), Timothy (1:1; 2:19–23), and Epaphroditus (2:25–30; 4:18). For earlier forms of essentially the same idea see Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation, A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York: HarperOne, 1996), 374–375; J.G. Samra, *Being Conformed to Christ in Community,* Library of New Testament Series 320 (New York: T & T Clark, 2006); and James W. Thompson, *Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 43–63.

IV. Conclusion

Professors at Concordia Theological Seminary—while true academicians in every sense of the word—never stop being pastors to the many clients we find ourselves serving in this place: students, colleagues, other pastors and entities of Synod, and also laypersons in many and varied capacities. Before coming to the seminary in early August 2006, I had been a full-time parish pastor for not quite four years[78] and a professional classicist at both Valparaiso and Baylor Universities for twelve years in toto. As I considered the call to the seminary, it dawned on me that I was at risk of forsaking the hallowed halls of academe for duties much more closely related to the office of the ministry. Would I be up to that challenge, given my previous twelve years as a classics recluse?

Well, I can honestly say that the past ten years have been the best of my life, professionally speaking, for which I owe my wife Sara my gratitude for allowing us to make the move to Fort Wayne. Sometimes, to be sure, I miss reading Caesar for Caesar's sake, or any of the other great classical authors I was privileged to read and teach during my years as a professional classicist; however, the Greek New Testament is a wonderful document to be working on as a classicist, and Paul has been a much more satisfying author to be studying than Caesar ever was. The New Testament is a text that many millions hearken to as the word of God, not some dusty museum piece a few specialists dally with to satisfy their own and others' intellectual curiosities. Likewise, in spite of many shortcomings I now get to join my seminary colleagues in forming pastors and deaconesses for the present and future generations. In my case, I mainly introduce fresh students to the Koine Greek of the New Testament they will be studying and preaching upon for the rest of their lives.[79] I am scarcely worthy of this undertaking, given my past track record; truly there is fulfilled in me Paul's statement that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, "of whom I am the worst [ὧν πρῶτός εἰμι ἐγώ]" (1 Tim 1:15 NIV).

Then there is the whole concept of the pastoral ministry itself which God in his mercy has brought me to have a greater appreciation for in late career. Matthew's Jesus states that "whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake [ἕνεκα ἐμοῦ] will find it" (Matt 10:39). Nothing about the passage indicates the presence of slaves necessarily, but that possibility exists given the servile taint perceptible in so many other

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[78] At Grace English Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Chicago, IL, 1990–1994.

[79] For some sense of what is involved, see John G. Nordling, "Teaching Greek at the Seminary," *Logia* 21, no. 2 (2012): 69–75.

New Testament passages, as we have seen: the logion follows hard upon Jesus's statement about not taking up one's cross and so being unworthy of him (Matt 10:38; cf. 16:24).[80] Also, who more than slaves would have understood what it meant to "lose" one's life, and by losing it so to "find" it?[81] Slaves were the ones quintessentially who lacked personhood in antiquity. As Justinian's *Digest* states, summarizing the legal opinions of several earlier jurisprudents: "we compare slavery closely to death" (*servitutem mortalitati fere comparamus*).[82] The ministry and death of Jesus upon a cross offered such non-persons hope and the prospects of salvation. So the point of Matthew 10:39, as all should see, is that to be Jesus's disciple requires a constant dying-to-self, impossible to achieve by one's own reason and strength. Such death-to-self and the lack of any personhood whatsoever for the slaves who presumably heard Jesus' statement originally provides a point of contact for the hearer of today— or, for that matter, anyone who really would be a Christian.

Still, the stark logion contains a promise too: "Whoever loses his own life for my sake *will find it*" (Matt 10:39; cf. Luke 14:33; John 12:25). I submit that any slaves who were within earshot of Jesus originally would have been particularly susceptible to the dynamics of "losing" oneself and "finding" the new life in Jesus. That same dynamic obtains today, not only for pastors and deaconesses, of course, but for anyone and everyone who really would be a Christian. Authentic Christianity consists in a perpetual dying-to-self and being-raised-to-Christ through the things of God that are shared at church and in this place: holy Baptism; the preaching of Christ crucified, risen, and ascended; the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper; the consolation of fellow believers, and so much else that we nearly take for granted. Hence, if you will permit me, we are all slaves in this place and in the congregations of our synod where our students are headed to serve for the remainder of their lives: slaves to the Lord Jesus Christ pre-eminently, of course, who is the Christian's true κύριος (slave master); but also slaves to one another in the vocations so essential to godly living here below: husband to wife; father to son; professor to

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[80] The idea of taking up one's cross and following Jesus has been associated with servility earlier in this article. See notes 15 and 17 above.

[81] For the notion of "losing one's life" (ἀπολλύναι τὴν ψυχήν) see Matt 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33; and John 12:25. For the possibility that behind such passages lies a martial context see the following aphorism: "One who risks his life in battle has the best chance of saving it; one who flees to save it is most likely to lose it." Tyrtaeus (7th cent. BC), frag. 8, in E. Diehl, *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* (1936–42), in Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. ἀπόλλυμι, 3.

[82] *Digest* 50.17.209, in Nordling, *Philemon*, 44 n. 30.

student; pastor to congregant; employer to employee, and so on, and reciprocally: wife to husband; son to father; student to professor; congregation to pastor; employee to employer. Such vocational ties mirror accurately enough the master-to-slave and slave-to-master relationships that transpired routinely between many millions of persons in the ancient world, several glimpses of which we have considered today. Indeed, our serving of others, and being served so magnificently by the Lord Jesus Christ in the humble means of grace, is suggested by a memorable line from the *Te Deum Laudamus* that we sing often together in chapel:

> We therefore pray You to help Your servants,
>   whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood.
> Make them to be numbered with Your saints
>   in glory everlasting.[83]

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[83] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 225.

Waiting and Waiters:
Isaiah 30:18 in Light of the Motif
of Human Waiting in Isaiah 8 and 25

Ryan M. Tietz

We are people who wait. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Paul even broadens the perspective to include that "All creation groans" (Rom 8:22). Pastors even spend much of their ministry with those who wait and struggle with the challenges of this world. We wait with those who struggle with grief and loss. Waiting factors significantly into the writings of Isaiah. We see a unique tension in Isaiah 30:18 when it states, "YHWH is waiting to show you grace. He will arise to show you compassion because YHWH is a God of justice. Blessed are those who wait for him." This verse functions as a transition between the message of doom in Isaiah 30:1–17 and the message of restored Zion in 30:18–26. Waiting in this verse is merely mentioned without further elaboration. Waiting is simply stated in the beatitude without further elaboration before the text proceeds to its message of salvation. Rather, Isaiah 30:18 is the culmination of the theme of waiting anticipated earlier in Isaiah, namely in 8:17 and 25:9. The nature of the waiting in Isaiah 30:18 will be examined first and then these two other texts will be studied to demonstrate how they elaborate on the human waiting mentioned in Isaiah 30:18's beatitude.

Isaiah 30 is a woe oracle directed against a proposed Egyptian alliance by Judah's leadership against the Assyrian threat during the late eighth century BC. The issue of sin is a lack of trust. The people are described as stubborn sons, בָּנִים סוֹרְרִים (Isa 30:1). This language is significant because it repeats the language of Deuteronomy 20:18–25 that prescribes capital punishment for the stubborn son. Doom is thus immanent for the people. Their rebellion is later described in Isaiah 30:9 with the adjective מְרִי that is much more common in the description of the wilderness.[1] Isaiah 30:15 culminates the theme of the lack of trust by emphasizing the role of the

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[1] The exact adjective appears in Deut 31:27 where Moses uses it to describe the people in wilderness wanderings. Num 17:25 uses it at the conclusion of the Korahite rebellion when Aaron's staff sprouted.

Ryan M. Tietz is Assistant Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

people in refusing salvation. This passage contains one of the clearest expressions of the prophet's message that is met with the tragic "but you refused" (Isa 30:15b).

Isaiah 30:19–26 moves on to describe the future hope of the people. This is a fairly complex collection of interwoven images. These include the attentive listening of Yahweh (Isa 30:19), the people's listening to a divinely given teacher (Isa 30:20–21), the ridding of idols as menstruous garments (Isa 30:22), agricultural abundance of restored Zion (Isa 30:23–24), and the transformation of the heavenly bodies (Isa 30:26). Thus, Isaiah 30:19–26 moves the reader into a description of the eschatological culmination at the end of the age with these motifs of extravagant abundance. The chapter concludes with the description of the fiery destruction of Assyria which functions as the paradigmatic archenemy.

Isaiah 30:18 acts as the transition between the age of the eighth century and the eschaton. It contains elements of both doom and hope. The chief challenge is that it is the only place in which Yahweh is the subject of the verb חָכָה as well as the function of וּלְכֵן. For example, Beuken argues that Isaiah 30:18 introduces salvation, claiming that it expresses Yahweh's eagerness to show grace rather than any sort of delay.[2] However, Seitz views Isaiah 30:18 as connected with the preceding verses. Yahweh's waiting is caused by the ongoing failures of each generation to heed (Isa 30:15). These failures of the people thus lead to the ongoing judgment of the people.[3] Watts captures a further tension well when he observes, "The phrase 'rises up to show you mercy' contains an inner tension. ירום 'rise up', usually refers to YHWH's rousing himself for war on his enemies. Here it is paired with לרחמכם, 'to show you mercy.' YHWH is forced to a violent course of action because Israel refused the quiet course that he had planned, for he is 'a God of justice.'"[4] Oswalt perhaps has the fairest assessment of these verses. He writes, "'Therefore'" (in Isa. 30:18) "introduces a statement which is admitted on all sides to be transitional. . . . All of these factors suggest that the case is at least as strong for

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[2] Willem A. M. Beuken, *Isaiah II*, trans. Brian Doyle, vol. 2 Historical Commentary on the Old Testament (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 136.

[3] Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 219.

[4] John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33 (Revised)*, vol. 24, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2005), 466.

the verse to be read in the light of the foregoing as of the following."[5] Within this transition between doom and hope, we find the beatitude of people waiting.

The beatitude functions in conjunction with Yahweh waiting. The force of the beatitude is to provide comfort to those experiencing the delay. After observing that אַשְׁרֵי functions to introduce a beatitude, Sweeney sees a beatitude as functioning to describe, "one who is fortunate by reason of upright behavior or blessings already derived from God."[6] Blenkinsopp further comments on the force of the beatitude. He writes, "Waiting for God is therefore waiting with God, the justification for which is not subject to verification but can only take the form of a blessing on the one who waits even while not free of doubt."[7]

As the flow of Isaiah 30 is examined, one observes how Isaiah 30:18 transitions between doom and hope and describes the dynamic waiting of both Yahweh and the people. Yahweh waits because of the faithlessness of the people. After a time, however, Yahweh will act to restore the inhabitants to Zion. The prophet draws upon a rich collage of images to describe this salvation and cast it in undefined future terms. The experience of human waiting is not described. If attention is turned backwards to Isaiah 8, there an explicit description of the experience of waiting is encountered.

In fact, Isaiah 8 anticipates many of the themes in Isaiah 30. Isaiah 8 appears both chronologically and sequentially earlier than Isaiah 30 by interacting with the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. The political issues during this period are congruent with the political issues addressed in Isaiah 30, namely the intersection between political and theological allegiance. By the repetition of חָכָה, Isaiah 8 connects us to the beatitude in Isaiah 30:18 that uses the same word. While Isaiah 30:18 describes the waiting with a plural participle, Isaiah 8 describes the experience of waiting from the prophet's perspective. Childs observes, "However, he does not retreat in despair or self-introspection. Rather, continues to hope in God with full confidence and chooses to wait until God no longer 'hides his face' from Israel in anger. Moreover, Isaiah has been given signs of the promise of a new

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[5] John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 557.

[6] Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, Forms of the Old Testament Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 515

[7] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, vol. 19, Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 420.

age."[8] Thus, in this brief statement of the prophet, an image is presented of the quiet confidence of Isaiah who waits even while God is hiding his face. The prophet does not portray himself as upset, but rather withdraws as part of divine judgment. This gives us a personal picture of what it means to wait from the perspective of the prophet living in an irretrievably corrupt age. The experience of waiting is heightened because Yahweh is hiding his face from the people. The image of God hiding his face is a familiar one from the Psalms where it is used often in the context of laments to express the people's despair that God is not acting graciously to them (e.g. Ps 13:2; 27:9; 44:25; 69:18; 88:15; 89:47; 102:3; 104:29; 143:7).

Isaiah 8 does place a limit on the delay of salvation. Here it differs from Isaiah 30:18 because rather than looking to the far future, it is more focused in the events of the eighth century BC. This is seen in Isaiah 8:1–4 where the salvation of מַהֵר שָׁלָל חָשׁ בַּז will happen before the child will be able to say אִמִּי and אָבִי. Isaiah 8 shows, therefore, both a delay of salvation and also the end of the delay. The end of the Syro-Emphraimite crisis, however, is not the final word of salvation. Within Isaiah 2–12, there is testimony to the breakdown of the human Davidic line that leads to the expectation of a decisive divine intervention that will accomplish what the human leader could not (cf. Isa 9 and 11). The chapters that elaborate on the salvation terms in Isaiah 8 again move to the eschatological horizon. Vindication in Isaiah 8 is ultimately incomplete and anticipates Isaiah 9.

Isaiah 8 provides us with the tension of waiting that happens when the people are not ready for salvation. The passage emphasizes the contrast between the prophet and the people. Isaiah depicts himself through this fairly infrequent example of first-person narrative in the book as the one who remains faithful along with his children. He and his children function as signs contrasted with the people around them. This is a fairly strong distinction that results in God hiding his face and the prophet being forced to wait. This anticipates the dynamic within Isaiah 30:18 of both Yahweh and the people waiting. Isaiah 8 shows the tension that exists while the people remain not ready. Yahweh approaches them with grace and compassion, but they refuse. Isaiah 8 shows the tension of the prophet who must remain waiting.

The other text that assists in understanding Isaiah 30:18 is found in the thoroughly eschatological vision of Isaiah 25 in which the people are again in a waiting mode. This vision is important because of the similarity of

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[8] Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 76.

vocabulary that is congruent with Isaiah 8 and 30, but shifts the emphasis to the distant eschatological horizon. Isaiah 25:9 anticipates the waiting of Isaiah 30:18. Set within Isaiah 24–27, this passage shares an emphasis on eschatological culmination of the divine plan that is congruent with the imagery of Isaiah 30:19–26. It provides a perspective that differs from Isaiah 8 in that it is placed in the eschatological future. Like Isaiah 30:19–26, Isaiah 25 consists of a vision of restored Zion here described in terms of the eschatological banquet on the mountain. Isaiah 25:9 uses the more common verb for waiting קָוָה rather than חָכָה. These words are synonyms and appear elsewhere in parallel (e.g. Isaiah 8:17). Isaiah 25:9–10a is a victory song in response to Yahweh's establishment of his reign on Zion.

The preceding verses, Isaiah 25:6–8, depict salvation in decisive terms. This text describes a coronation banquet in which the great enemy death is destroyed. The banquet is unique to Yahweh and set in the future.[9] This emphasis upon the dominion of Yahweh culminating in the end of the age is a helpful counterpoint to the problems of the eighth century that plague the prophet and the people. Isaiah 8 and 30 both represent a breakdown of the human monarchy that results in looking towards a future divine inter-vention. Furthermore, the destruction of death in Isaiah 25 anticipates the language of healing that is present in Isaiah 30:26.

The waiting described in Isaiah 25:9 is that of triumph after a victory. It does not contain tension of not-yet-fulfilled expectations like Isaiah 8. The joy that is experienced is the result of God's action. Childs captures this joy well in his exposition. He notes that waiting is a typical Old Testament expression for worship, especially in the Psalter. He then writes, "The joy expressed in 25:9 is that period of waiting is finally over as God's salvation is experienced. The divine blessing on those who have waited has been indeed realized."[10] This joy fills out what waiting means for those experiencing the restoration in Isaiah 30:19–26. Thus it gives voice to the final hope implied in Isaiah 30:18 and actualized in Isaiah 30:19–26.

Set in the eschatological future, Isaiah 25:9 anticipates the beatitude of waiting that one encounters in Isaiah 30:18. To be sure, Isaiah 25:6–8 contains language that in some ways is more vivid than the language of restoration, but both it and Isaiah 30:19–26 describes salvation in terms of restoration and healing in cosmic terms. It gives a fallen voice to waiting

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[9] For helpful discussion consider "'Il engloutit la mort à jamais': remarques sur Esaïe, 25, 8 a α." *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M Mathias Delcor* (1985): 283–296.

[10] Childs, *Isaiah*, 185.

after the transition in Isaiah 30:18 has happened and helps the hearer of this text to better appreciate waiting in light of the rest of Isaiah 30.

This study of these three pericopes has demonstrated the interlocking images within the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 8 described the faithlessness of the people facing of the Syro-Emphraimite coalition. This faithlessness and rejection of stillness anticipates much of the description of sin in Isaiah 30:1–17. In the midst of this threat, Yahweh promised through the sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz that deliverance would come within the child's lifetime. The people, however, were described as recalcitrant. The result was that the prophet leaves it as a written record and withdraws as part of the divine instruction of judgment. Isaiah thus waits for a God who hides his face until such a time in which his face is again revealed. Isaiah 25 gives a picture of waiting realized that anticipates the eschatological imagery of Isaiah 30:19–26. These two pericopes lead to Isaiah 30 where the tension is seen that exists as Yahweh both judges and promises salvation, but delays the salvation until the people are ready. Waiting in Isaiah 30:18 involves both God and people. Waiting permeates much of the Christian life as we live after God's climatic coming in salvation through Jesus Christ but before Christ's return to bring all things to their consummation. This foray into Isaiah shows how the prophet captures different facets of the waiting experience that encompass our lives.

Michael as Christ in the Lutheran Exegetical Tradition: An Analysis

Christian A. Preus

And war broke out in heaven, Michael and his angels, waging war with the Dragon, and the Dragon and his angels waged war, but he was not able nor was place found for them any longer in heaven. And the great Dragon was cast out, the Serpent of old, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world—he was cast down to earth and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7–9)

The identification of Michael as Christ in Revelation 12:7 has a long history in the Lutheran exegetical tradition. Both Luther and Melanchthon make the identification and the Lutheran exegetes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries follow suit with apparent unanimity.[1] But why? Given that many church fathers identified him as a created angel,[2] one would expect that there would be more disagreement amongst Lutheran exegetes. More than this, the identification appears to be problematic, since Michael's appearance in Daniel 10 lists him as one of the other leaders in Israel and seems clearly to distinguish him from the manlike figure who appears at the beginning of the chapter and who is to be identified with the pre-incarnate Christ.[3] Moreover, we see near unanimous agreement

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[1] For Luther's sermon dealing with Michael, see his *Predigt am Michaelistage* (September 29, 1544), in Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [Schriften], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 49:570–587 (hereafter WA). For Melanchthon, see *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius* (Basel: Bartholomaeus Westheimer, 1543), esp. 148. I have not been able to find a single Lutheran exegete of Reformation or Post-Reformation times who says that the Michael of Revelation 12 is not Christ. In his posthumously published notes on Jude, John Gerhard (or Gerhard's son who edited the notes) calls it the opinion of the "orthodox," by which he means, the Lutherans. See John Gerhard, *Annotationes Posthumae in Epistolam Judae* (Jena: George Sengenwald, 1660), 29.

[2] See, for example, the quotation of Primasius in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Revelation*, ed. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 186.

[3] For the man appearing to Daniel as the Divine Man in Daniel 10–12, see Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel* (St. Louis: CPH, 2008), esp. 496–507; cf. Louis Hartman and Alexander Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1978), esp. 279–280.

Christian A. Preus is Pastor of Mount Hope Lutheran Church and School, Casper, Wyoming.

even among Lutherans that the Michael of Jude 9 is a created archangel.[4] Why this insistence that the Michael of Revelation 12 is Christ? Were later Lutheran exegetes simply following the opinion of Luther and Melanchthon, the two great fathers of the Reformation? Or was their identification of Michael with Christ in Revelation 12 due to other factors? In the Lutheran exegetical tradition as it relates to Michael's identity in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation, there were several factors that contributed to the identification of Michael as Son of God by the Lutheran exegetes of Reformation and Post-Reformation times.

After the sixteenth century, there are few references to Luther as an authority on this question in the Lutheran exegetes.[5] But his arguments for reading Michael as Christ in Revelation 12 are quite consistently repeated by later Lutherans, as we shall see. So while it is certainly true that Luther started a strong tradition of interpretation among Lutherans in identifying Michael as Christ, we must also note that the later Lutherans followed Luther on this issue not merely because of his authority as Reformer, but rather because they were convinced by his exegetical arguments, upon which they built and developed further. Theirs was not a slavish mimicry but a reasoned conclusion that Luther's explanation of Revelation 12 fits best with the context of Revelation and Scripture as a whole.

In fact, the considerations and issues that drove Luther and Melanchthon to identify Michael as Christ remained issues also for later Lutheran interpreters. The theological concern and interpretative decision that drives most identification of Michael as Christ is located not merely in the meaning of Michael's name in Hebrew and Aramaic: "Who is like God?" Although many exegetes, including Luther and Melanchthon, do cite the name of Michael as an indication of his divinity, most of these same interpreters, Luther included, find no problem with speaking of two Michaels, one a created angel who appears either in Daniel 10 or Jude 9, and the other the Son of God who appears in Daniel 12 and Revelation 12. In fact, Luther and some later Lutherans frankly admit that "Michael" is an

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[4] An exception is the disputation held under Sebastian Schmidt by M. J. Ulrich Geissler, *Epistola D. Iudae Apostoli Catholica*, (Strassburg: Johann Pastorius, 1695), 18, 26–27, where Michael is argued to be Christ consistently in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation.

[5] The sixteenth century commentary of Selnecker, however, cites Luther extensively. Nikolaus Selnecker, *Der Prophet Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis* (Leipzig: Jacob Berwaldt, 1567), passim. The later Lutherans cite the Fathers frequently and Luther only infrequently. See John Gerhard, *Adnotationes in Apocalypsin D. Johannis Theologi* (Jena: Johann Ludwig Neuenhahn, 1665), 101–102; Abraham Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata* (Dresden and Leipzig: Johann Christoph Zimmermann, 1719), 1837–1838.

angel's name.[6] For Luther and others, the meaning of Michael's name could not have been decisive in identifying Michael with Christ in Revelation 12:7. Nor is the primary reason for identifying Michael as Son of God the fact that Michael is given very high honors as chief over the angels, though this again is an important consideration for most. Nor is the opinion of some venerable church fathers on this issue the reason for their insistence that the Michael of Revelation 12 is Christ himself, though this again is often mentioned and is considered important by most Lutheran exegetes.[7] Rather, the primary reason for the Lutheran insistence on Michael's identification with Christ lies in the nature of the battle that Michael wages. What does it mean that Michael casts Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12)? What does it mean that Michael fights against God's enemies in the last days (Daniel 12)? The Reformation and Post-Reformation Lutheran exegetical tradition is unanimous in its answer: it means that Christ conquers false teaching and false teachers through his word. The battle between Michael (Christ) and Satan pictured in Revelation 12 and Daniel 12 is not a one-time occurrence, but a continual battle, as Christ through his word conquers false teachers and false teaching, and every force, physical and spiritual, that militates against his word. A created angel simply cannot do this. It is God who works through his word and also God who works through angels.[8] Thus it was their understanding of Michael's work that led Lutheran exegetes to identify him with Christ, and to insist vehemently on this designation.

It is hard to disconnect this conviction that the battle of Revelation 12 centers around the victory of God's saving gospel against heresy in the church from the polemical context of Luther, Melanchthon, and their heirs. The polemical context is quite clear with Luther. Since he views Michael in Daniel 10 and 12 and Revelation 12 as Christ, Luther can preach Revelation 12 as Christ himself fighting against the devil and those false teachers who manifest him in the world. More than this, if Michael is Christ, then Christ is the Christian's *Feldheubtman, (the commander of the battlefield),* the one who fights for us. Thus Christians must not hope for peace against their

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[6] See Selnecker, *Der Prophet Daniel*, at Rev. 12:7: "*Wiewol Michael eines Engels name ist (spricht Lutherus in der Vorrede uber Danielem), doch verstehen wir hie den Herren Christum selbst.*" "Although Michael is an angel's name (as Luther says in his preface to Daniel), we understand him here as Christ himself." On "Michael" as an angel's name, see also below.

[7] See note 5 for examples.

[8] See especially Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata* (Frankfurt am Main: Balthasar Christoph Wustius, 1672), 626, who argues that in Daniel 8:15–18 the Son of God (later identified with Michael) uses Gabriel to appear to Daniel and puts his words in Gabriel's mouth.

spiritual foes, but must consider themselves *Kriegsleute* (people of war). The war Michael wages, after all, is in the church. And Michael's and the church's enemies are the Anabaptists, the Sacramentarians, the Pope, and the Turk.[9] In Luther's mind, the interpretation of Michael as Christ makes Michael's war immediately applicable to the present problems of the church, and, besides this, it is certainly rhetorically effective. We find this same application in Melanchthon, who pictures Michael's fight against the enemies of the church in Daniel 10 and 12 as a fight against the Pope and the Turks.[10] John Conrad Dannhauer likewise relates the battle in heaven in Revelation 12 to a fight within the church, but goes further by asserting that it is Luther's fight with the Antichrist, seeing Michael as Christ accomplishing his will through Luther.[11]

John Gerhard notes that Christ has waged this battle throughout history, and quotes several church fathers who confessed likewise. Whether against Nero or Simon the Magician (Acts 8), Christ prevailed through his word and through preachers of it (the Apostles and their successors) against the devil and the heathenism and false worship he inspired.[12] Thus the battle in Revelation 12 and Daniel 12 extends to all faithful preachers through whom Christ continues to cast Satan out of heaven, that is, to reveal him as the liar he is through the preaching of the pure word of God.[13] So also Victorin Strigel, a devoted disciple of Philipp Melanchthon, connects Michael's (Christ's) battle against Satan with Jesus' promise to his disciples in Matthew 28:20, "Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age." That is, he is with his church in his word, by which he fights together with his angels (both heavenly beings and teachers of the church) against the lies and heresies of the devil.[14]

The Lutheran polemic is also closely associated with a desire to locate the climax of the battle fought by Michael in Daniel 12 and Revelation 12 in Reformation times. Well known is Luther's and his associates' belief that the world would quickly come to an end. And since Michael is to appear at

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[9] Luther, *Predigt am Michaelistage*, 578–579.

[10] Melanchthon, *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius*, 149.

[11] Cited in Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1838.

[12] It is interesting to note that Abraham Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1837 vehemently condemns Hugo Grotius for interpreting the dragon as representing Simon the Magician, despite that fact that Gerhard cites this opinion as a valid application of the text.

[13] Gerhard, *Adnotationes in Apocalypsin*, 102.

[14] Victorin Strigel, *Hypomnemata In Omnes Libros Novi Testamenti* (Leipzig: Ernst Vögelin, 1566), 345.

the end according to Daniel 12, the identification of Michael's battle also as the historical battle against Pope, Turk, and other enemies of Lutheranism seemed a natural application of the text. Since Christ works through his word, through teachers who preach his word, Michael's identification as Christ goes well with an ecclesiological interpretation of the cosmic battle fought by Michael in Revelation 12 (Pope and false teachers) and the earthly battle he fought in Daniel 12 (Turk and Pope).

This polemical context continues through the seventeenth century. Abraham Calov's identification of Michael as Christ in Revelation 12 is polemical by nature, since Calov's great *Biblia Illustrata* is a reply and rebuttal to the pre-modern liberal and syncretist, Hugo Grotius, who identifies Michael as a created angel. Calov responds by calling him, along with a host of Roman Catholic commentators, as well as Philipp Melanchthon himself, an "angelolater" (a worshiper of angels).[15] Since this angel is given an *epinikion* (victory song) and because he is credited with casting Satan out of heaven, to call him a created angel is to attribute divinity to him. Calov makes clear that he considers Michael to be Christ, and that Christ wages his war with Satan and his angels by sending preachers of the word to defend his church against the fiery attacks of Satan, made manifest by false teaching and physical persecution.[16] Satan's power is in lying and accusing. Through the preaching of the truth, especially the Gospel that forgives sins, Satan's power to accuse is destroyed and his lies are revealed for what they are. As Paul states, "Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies" (Rom 8:33). By the preaching of the gospel, Michael and his ministers silence the only power Satan has left, the power of slander and accusation.

How can this heavenly battle in Revelation 12 be interpreted as the battle fought on earth? John Winckelmann gives a concise answer to this question, stating that John saw the battle in a heavenly vision and that, moreover, the church is the very kingdom of heaven on earth.[17] The battle pictured in Revelation is a vision, and like the rest of Revelation, these visions are not to be interpreted as literal occurrences. Rather, God accomplishes on earth what is pictured in heaven, where Satan holds no literal place. Luther himself rejects the idea that Satan or even his accusations

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[15] Since Melanchthon identifies Michael with Christ in his 1543 Daniel Commentary, it is hard to explain why his name is listed with such Roman Catholics as Bellarmine and Cornelius à Lapide.

[16] Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1837–1838.

[17] Aegidius Hunnius and John Winckelmann, *Thesaurus Apostolicus Complectens Commentarios in omnes Novi Testamenti Epistolas Et Apocalypsin Iohannis* (Wittenberg: Meyer and Zimmerman, 1705), 1245.

could be thrown out of a literal heaven at any time other than before the fall into sin. Since the fall of Satan, war is not waged in heaven, but on earth, where the church is.[18] Victorin Strigel even makes the claim that "heaven" in Revelation always signifies the church, and that it is only natural to take it as the church here in Revelation 12.[19]

But some Lutheran commentators are aware of the difficulty in simply identifying Michael with Christ. This is seen especially in several Lutheran commentators distinguishing the Michael of Daniel 10 or Jude 9 from the Michael of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12. As mentioned previously, there is a problem with identifying the Michael of Daniel 10 with the Son of God. In fact, when Revelation 1:13–16 first introduces Christ, it describes him with the same characteristics as those that are attributed to the Man who appears to Daniel (10:5–6). This includes a description of his golden belt or sash, his eyes as flames of fire, his feet/legs like brass, a face like the sun or like lightning, and a mighty voice.[20] The identification of this Man as the Son of God is affirmed both by Revelation and the context of Daniel 7:13–14, where the Messiah is clearly referenced and described as "one like a son of man." In Daniel 10, the one who appears to Daniel is described similarly to the one who is clearly identified in Daniel 7 as the Son of God, and the description of Christ in Revelation 1:13–16 draws from both Daniel 7 and Daniel 10 to picture him. Clearly John identifies the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7 and the "man clothed in linen" of Daniel 10, and identifies them as one man, Christ.[21] In fact, the Lutheran interpreters from the period of Orthodoxy all acknowledge this much. All agree that the Man who appears to Daniel in Daniel 10:5–6 is no one but the Son of God.[22] The Lutherans were, of course, eager to see that the Old Testament pictured the Son of God as constantly present to his church. They saw the Son

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[18] Luther, *Predigt am Michaelistage*, 574–576: "*Diabolus ab initio mundi ist ex caelo heraus gefallen. Er hat uns ex paradiso auch gerissen per suum casum. In coelo ergo supra non est Diabolus, pugna, proelium.*" "The devil has fallen from heaven from the beginning of the world, and through his fall he has torn us also from paradise. In heaven above there is therefore no devil, no fight, no battle."

[19] Cf. Strigel, *Hypomnemata*, 345: "In this book, heaven is universally (*universaliter*) used to designate the Church, which is truly the kingdom of the heavens." So also Selnecker, *Der Prophet Daniel,* at Rev. 11:19: "*Der Himmel ist allhie nicht anders, den das Reich Christi hie auf Erden.*" "Heaven is nothing else in this passage than the Kingdom of Christ here on earth."

[20] See the helpful chart comparing Daniel 10, Ezekiel 1, and Revelation 1 in Steinmann, *Daniel*, 499. See also Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 279–280.

[21] Cf. Steinmann, *Daniel*, 357; Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 49–50.

[22] See especially Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata*, 672–673.

of God appearing in angelic form to Abraham, to Jacob, and to others. Melanchthon makes this one of his main proofs for understanding Michael as the Son of God—because Christ is always present, even in the Old Testament, fighting for his church.[23] But this is precisely the problem with identifying Michael as the Son of God in Daniel 10. The problem is that this Man of Daniel 10 is the very one who speaks about Michael as a separate and lower being in the following verses. How could this same messenger, identified already in Daniel 7 as the pre-incarnate Christ, be speaking of Michael as a separate being if Michael were the pre-incarnate Christ himself?

Lutheran interpreters like Winckelmann and Dannhauer saw this problem. But instead of concluding that Michael cannot in fact be the Son of God, they distinguished two different Michaels. The Michael of Daniel 10, it is claimed, must be a created angel, but other occurrences of Michael, they argue, are appearances of Christ.[24] The same view is approved as a valid interpretation by John Pappus.[25] But it seems that the Michael identified as a "chief prince" in Daniel 10 should be identified with the Michael who is mentioned as the "great prince" in Daniel 12.[26]

Others, like Pappus and Calov, see no real problem in identifying the Man who appears in Daniel 10:5–6 and the Michael who is spoken of later in this chapter as the same Messiah. In fact, Calov finds the identification to be suggested by the context. After the appearance of the divine Man in Daniel 10:5–6, Daniel falls into a deep sleep. He awakes to the touch of a hand. Calov sees this as the hand of Gabriel, and points to Daniel 8:15–18 as a parallel. And the parallel is quite striking. In Daniel 8:15 Gabriel appears to Daniel with "the appearance of a man," when suddenly a man's voice comes and commands Gabriel to explain a vision to Daniel. Then in v. 18, this same Gabriel touches Daniel, awaking him from a deep sleep and standing him on his feet. Calov sees the parallel language in Daniel 10 as signifying that it is Gabriel who is waking Daniel again and again explaining a vision to him—this time the vision of the Son of God in vv. 5–

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[23] Melanchthon, *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius*, 147–150.

[24] Hunnius and Winckelmann, *Thesaurus Apostolicus*, 1245; John Conrad Dannhauer, *De Custodia Angelica* (Strasbourg: Johann Mülbius, 1641), 34.

[25] John Pappus, *In Omnes Prophetas* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Spiessius, 1593), 235–236. Pappus mentions the opinion of other interpreters who try to solve the problem that Daniel 10 poses for interpreting Michael as Christ by arguing that the divine man who appears to Daniel in 10:5–6 disappears and is replaced by a created angel, who talks about Michael (the very Man who had just appeared to Daniel). This is Calov's opinion, as noted below.

[26] This problem is handled more fully below in dealing with Jude.

6. Just as Gabriel's hand touched Daniel and stood him up in Daniel 8:18, so now the reader is to understand that it is Gabriel who touches Daniel and makes him stand up in Daniel 10:10–11. Further, just as Gabriel was described in Daniel 8:15 as having the appearance of a man, so we are to understand that it is Gabriel here in Daniel 10:16 who is described as having the likeness of the son of man. Just as Gabriel explained a vision to Daniel in Daniel 8, so we are now to understand that it is Gabriel explaining this vision.[27]

The difficulty in this position is the change of person without explicitly introducing a new subject. But Calov is convinced that the parallel with Daniel 8 suffices to show the reader that a new subject, Gabriel, has appeared. It should be noted, however, that even if Calov is correct in his interpretation of Daniel 10 here, this does not mean that Michael is *eo ipso* the divine Man of 10:5–6. Rather it means only that the divine Man disappears after appearing to Daniel. Calov still has to prove that the Michael spoken of by the messenger in Daniel 10:13 should be identified with the divine Man in 10:5–6. What of the fact that Michael is here in Daniel 10:13 called "one of the chief princes"? Calov explains that "one" can often signify "first," so that this phrasing (especially in analogy to Michael's epithet of the "great prince" in Daniel 12:1) would designate Michael as chief over the chiefs.[28] Thus Calov interprets Daniel 10:13 in light of Daniel 12:1, where he sees Michael doing the work that Calov believes belongs to God.

Here in Calov we have probably the strongest and most contextually defensible argument for taking Michael as Christ in Daniel 10 and 12 and Revelation 12. It does, however, involve what most would consider an awkward switch of subject, with no explicit indication to the reader that the divine Man has left and Gabriel has arrived. But this is certainly a more acceptable position than denying that Michael is Christ in Daniel 10 only to confess that he is Christ in Daniel 12.

But though Calov is insistent in his commentary on Daniel and Revelation that Michael is the uncreated Angel, God himself, he finds the Michael of Jude 9 to be "in the number of the created angels."[29] Calov cannot see the Son of God in his glory speaking to Satan in the way

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[27] Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata*, 626, 674. Modern scholars have also argued that because of the parallel with Gabriel in Daniel 8, the interlocutor in Daniel 10 must also be Gabriel, though they would then identify the man in 10:5–6 also as Gabriel, not the divine Man. Cf. Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 279.

[28] Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata*, 674.

[29] Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1699.

Michael the Archangel speaks to Satan in Jude 9: "The Lord rebuke you." This was the position of most Lutherans.[30] Luther, Gerhard, Calov, Pomarius, and the majority of Lutheran commentators find no problem with taking Michael as a created archangel in Jude and yet asserting that Michael is the Son of God in other occurrences.[31] Jude, of course, presents its own problems for those who contend that Michael is the Son of God. The Michael of Jude opposes Satan not as if he were God but as being unable to speak as God. This, as Pomarius asserts, is unworthy of Christ, who is not afraid to say even in his humiliation to Peter, a mere mortal, "Get behind me, Satan."[32] While Luther does not attempt to reconcile his taking Michael as a created angel in one book of Scripture while claiming him as Christ in others,[33] Calov's, Gerhard's, and Pomarius' distinction between Michaels is colored by a polemic against the ecclesiology and Christology of Roman Catholics and Calvinists, as their commentaries make clear. They give no explanation of their inconsistent appellation except to state that the identification of Michael in Jude does not need to accord with his identification as Christ in other Scriptural passages. So they are willing to live with the inconsistency, and simply restate that the work of Michael in Daniel and Revelation marks him as Christ.

Luther and the Lutheran exegetes are not vitiating the unity of Scripture. They are not suggesting that Revelation and Daniel or Jude come out of different traditions, so that the same Michael can be viewed as a created angel in Jude or Daniel 10 and as the Son of God in Revelation and Daniel 12. Rather, they are suggesting that Michael is a name given both to a created angel and to Christ. As mentioned previously, this invalidates any argument that the meaning of Michael ("Who is like God?") demands his divinity. But is not the thought of two Michaels problematic when a better option seems obvious—that there is only one Michael and he is a created angel? This was the opinion of most Roman Catholic exegetes, who mock-

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[30] It should be noted that there is precedent for the Lord himself speaking, "The Lord rebuke you!" to Satan in Zechariah 3:2, "And the Lord God said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan!'" The issue for Calov and others is not the words of the rebuke itself but the context of Michael speaking it in Jude. Schmidt is open to the interpretation of Michael being a created angel in Jude, but sees no problem with identifying the Michael of Jude with Jesus. See note 4 above.

[31] Martin Luther, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude Preached and Explained By Martin Luther*, trans. and ed. by John Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1904), 373–374.

[32] Samuel Pomarius, *Plenus Et Perspicuus In Epistolam S. Judae Catholicam Commentarius* (Wittenberg: August Brüningius, 1684), 255–256.

[33] Luther's sermon was delivered more than two decades after his notes on Jude.

ed the Lutherans for what they saw as a clear and laughable inconsistency.[34]

But this phenomenon of two Michaels in the Lutheran tradition shows that, for Lutheran minds, paramount in assessing the identity of Michael is not his name or the honor given to him, nor the opinion of church fathers, but his actions—even if this means dealing with the inconsistency of having two Michaels in Scripture. It is primarily because Michael is leading a war against Satan, against his false teachers, and protecting the church on earth that he is identified as the Son of God in Daniel and Revelation. But since he is acting and speaking like a subordinate creature in Jude 9, there he cannot be the Son of God.

With this brief analysis of the Lutheran exegetical tradition concerning the identity of Michael, it becomes clear that if we wish to adopt the opinion of Luther and the Lutheran tradition on the identity of Michael as Christ, we must take into account the exegetical and theological reasons for this identification. In fact, since the identification of Michael depends not on his name but on the work that he does, it follows that to affirm Michael as Christ in Jude vitiates the very exegetical principle that establishes Michael as Christ in Daniel and Revelation. The Michael of Jude does not act and do as Christ does.[35] The argument from Michael's name to the divinity of Michael cannot then be used. We would then have to live with the seemingly bizarre coincidence of having two Michaels, one God and one a created angel, in Scripture. Most Lutherans, as we have seen, were happy to live with this. Are we?

There is, of course, an exegetical alternative, and that is to interpret Michael as one created angel, like Gabriel, who appears in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation at the Lord's bidding. His work is that of an angel, carrying out the work of God; he is not the Son of God, working through his word to preserve his church. This interpretation has been set forth by many. Charles Gieschen, for example, argues that Michael is a created angel whose actions are at the bidding and by the power of the Lamb, who made atonement for sin once and for all and thereby silenced Satan's accusations against the children of God in heaven, so that Michael was commanded to cast Satan and his accusations forever out of heaven, from the court of

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[34] See Gerhard, *Annotationes in Epistolam Judae*, 29. The Jesuits John Lorinus and Jacob Gretser call the Lutherans "delirious innovators" for their inconsistency, and speak of their position as "unheard of."

[35] This is, again, the majority position. But Schmidt, *Epistola D. Iudae*, 18, 26–27 argues that Zechariah 3:2 shows that the Michael of Jude is not acting in a way inconsistent with divine character.

God.[36] Thus the vision of Revelation 12 would be an image representing the objective result of Christ's atonement (reconciliation with God and justification) instead of an image of Christ fighting with his word in the church.

In concluding, the Lutheran insistence that both Old Testament and New Testament present Christ to the reader as constantly present to defend his church is most definitely comforting and correct, as is the insistence that Christ does this through his Word. The traditional Lutheran interpretation of Michael's identity in Revelation 12, though it suffers from apparent inconsistency in relation to Jude and Daniel 10, seeks to be true to this reality.

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[36] Charles A. Gieschen, "The Identity of Michael in Revelation 12: Created Angel or the Son of God?" *CTQ* 74 (2010), 174.

Justification:
Set Up Where It Ought Not to Be

David P. Scaer

The more significant the person, the greater the disagreements about the value of his life's work, and in the case of Jesus, his existence. From a religious perspective the three greats are Jesus, Paul, and Luther, and if by measure of the number of books written about them, Luther is surpassed only by Jesus, a position of honor that will be re-enforced in the five-hundred year Reformation celebration. At issue with Jesus is how much do we know about him or whether we know anything at all. Should the latter be the case, the creators of the Gospels created, in the incredibly short period of twenty to forty years, the most successful and complex hoax of all times. Should the Gospels prove to be a hoax, yes, even fiction as David Friedrich Strauss proposed in the nineteenth century and more recently by Robert M. Price, the third quest for the historical Jesus should immediately be aborted so that it does not shift into fourth gear, and our attention should be diverted to a quest for the historical conspirators who came up with the Jesus idea.[1] To reference Paul, if Jesus did not exist, we are of all men to be the most pitied (1 Cor 15:19). In comparison to Jesus, Luther (as does Paul) has a more secure place in history. With Luther we have the near certainty that he is securely entombed in the floor of the church behind the doors on which once hung the ninety-five theses—and that's debated too.

Lest we think the quest for the historical Jesus is of no value, a faith focused on the God who became incarnated in the man Jesus requires that we first know him in history—what Paul calls knowing Jesus after the flesh (2 Cor 5:16). Resurrection is subsequent to incarnation, but from an evidential point of view, Jesus' resurrection is the touchstone for the veracity of Christianity. Without the resurrection having a fixed place in history, we are caught between agnosticism and fideism. Basing the existence of Jesus on faith comports with the doctrine of justification by

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[1] James K. Beibly and Paul Rhodes Eddy, eds., *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009). The radical view is offered by Robert M. Price, "Jesus at the Vanishing Point," 55–83.

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

faith so that the one question is easily confused with the other. Matters are not helped by heralding that justification is the doctrine by which church stands or falls, the one doctrine that serves and interprets all others. So with good reason one suspects that some who reference Luther find in his doctrine of justification by faith an excuse for not coming to terms with what place Jesus has in history. Such Luther research allows for a self-contained Reformation neo-orthodoxy, a Barthianism of sorts, that does not bother to come to terms about what we can know about Jesus.

At the other end of spectrum from any skepticism about Jesus is the common piety that finds security in the doctrine of justification by faith. Any doubts about the place of Jesus in history can be resolved by faith. Fideism is the universal cure-all for uncertainty. Those who fear examining the historical data from what might be uncovered can find support in Martin Kähler, who held that "faith does not rely on guarantees created by external authorities."[2] In this case Luther's doctrine of justification not only defines the believer's relationship to God through Christ but replaces concerns about his historical existence. Justification is made to exist in a self-contained bubble so that scholars are relieved of coming to terms with the origins of Christianity in the man Jesus. Justification becomes the one-size-fits-all doctrine. Problematic with this perspective is that faith is made to feed upon itself in a continuous recycling, never having to touch the historical reality set in motion by God becoming man.

Those who see faith as determinative for the content and certainty of Christianity belong to the heritage of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, who saw Christianity springing from the heightened religious self-consciousness of Jesus transmitted through the community of his followers. In making justification by faith the controlling indispensable theological principle, Christianity is gutted. Hence the title of this essay, "Justification: Set Up Where It Ought Not to Be" (Mark 13:14). It might have just as easily carried the title "The Overuse of Justification in Biblical Interpretation, Theology and Preaching." Bringing the past into the present, the approach popularized by Karl Barth,[3] relieves us of coming to terms with the past and allows for multiple and even contradictory options of who Jesus was. Attempting to cross Gotthold Lessing's ditch, that

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[2] Carl Braaten, "Martin Kähler (1836–1912)," *Lutheran Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 411.

[3] Karl Barth, *Christian Dogmatics,* trans. and ed. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961), 1/1:143–162.

historical truth cannot be demonstrated,[4] leads to despair, so it is better to stand on the side of faith, content with the "Word," and avoid looking down into the abyss.

A faith-based piety as the foundation for Christianity in not coming to terms with the past is now more likely to rely on Karl Barth, who substituted the proclaimed "Word" for past historical events. A theology of the "Word" that presents itself as a Reformation theology can be a cover for historical agnosticism, or at least it relieves us of having to determine what happened to Jesus. Diverse as the piety characterized by Schleiermacher's theology of religious consciousness and Barth's "Word" theology are, both share in the heritage of Immanuel Kant, in that we can never get closer to past events than the impressions left on the minds of those who claimed to be observers. With Kant we only know the noumena but not the phenomena. So we are left in the dilemma of never knowing what really happened or even if anything happened at all—what the Germans call *wie es eigentlich geschehen ist*. So we no longer have to wrestle with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as historical events in our theology and preaching. For those following Barth, faith no longer finds certainty in a something or a someone, like the person of Jesus, but in proclamation of the "Word," in which the hearer finds himself justified, a position that is purported to make generous use of Luther's theology of the Word.[5]

Paul ranks second in importance in the triumvirate of Jesus-Paul-Luther, but no scholar, at least in my reading, has ever questioned his existence, though Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles are removed from his curriculum vitae and assigned to an anonymous first century Christian who took advantage of the apostle's prestige and who arguably rivaled him as a theologian. In Paul's willingness to die for Jesus, there exists a pathetic irony in giving his life for a man whose claim to fame by being raised from the dead is now seen beyond the grasp of historical certainty. But for the sake of argument, suppose that Jesus really existed. This would mean Jesus and Paul were contemporaries, or may be

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[4] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power," in *Lessing: Philosophical and Theological Writings*, trans. by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 87.

[5] See for example Timothy J. Wengert, *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013). In a sub-chapter entitled, "The Self-Authenticating Scripture," Wengert argues that the Scripture "is God's Word because 'it does God to me.' . . . Or, to put it another way, God's Word makes believers in Christ out of us. When a word does not do that, no matter who the author may be, it is not God's Word and has no—or only limited authority" (10).

even the same age. To take the argument further, there would be good reason to hold that Paul would have been in Jerusalem during the last week of Jesus' life. There Gamaliel groomed his prize pupil to be a Pharisee (Acts 5:34; 27:3). So if Paul did not confront Jesus at his trial, which is a plausible view, he engaged in intense study of who he was when Christians became temple nuissances.

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4) is interpreted as Paul's persecution of the church as Christ's body, even though this doctrine is not found in Luke or Acts, but if the words are taken literally—or as some would say, "literalistically"—he may have been a backbencher at the trial of Jesus. Here we fall into the horrors of anachronism, that if anyone should have had a stake in quests for the historical Jesus yielding positive results, it had to be Paul. If he had indiscriminately accepted the oral tradition that was in its birth throes in the mid 30s, that Jesus had been raised from the dead, without examining the evidences of the Jerusalem tomb, he was not the scholar he or others thought he was. If questioning whether Paul ever lived has never been a serious option, determining what his theology really was has in recent years captured scholarly imagination. The New Perspective argues that Paul is best understood as a mediator in breaking through the exclusivity of Jewish Christians in getting them to accept Gentile newcomers as equal partners in the covenant.[6] This debate has consequences for Luther research. If the New Perspective proves to be right, then Luther's definition of justification as one's accountability for sin before God and declaration of acquittal by the same God—what some Lutherans call "law" and "gospel"—is a misinterpretation of Paul and so the entire Reformation enterprise is called into question.

An equation mark cannot or should not be placed between how Paul and Luther each understood justification. Understanding Luther does not translate into understanding Paul. One cannot be superimposed upon the other. Paul, in his own words, was a Pharisee and a son of the Pharisees, and in his own mind he did religion better than others (Acts 26:5). In Reformation terms he performed works of supererogation. Had purgatory existed at his time, he would have been given a pass. His was a righteousness of the law. Now compare Paul's religious self-confidence with Luther's search for certainty, which was a factor in leading him to the

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[6] For a critique of recent reinterpretations of Paul's doctrine of justification, see Stephen Westerholm, *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Paul Theme* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). See also also Arland J. Hultgren, review of *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Paul Theme*, by Stephen Westerhom, in *Lutheran Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Autumn 2014): 358–359.

doctrine of justification by faith. Coming from opposite ends of the personality and theological spectrums—Paul's overconfidence and Luther's lack of it—each arrived at the same destination, that justification has to do with one's standing before God, to be condemned by the law and acquitted by the gospel.

Justification is a matter of the first great commandment of fearing, loving, and trusting in God above all things, so Luther's explanations of the First Commandment in the Large and Small Catechisms. Sanctification has to do with the second great commandment in how we deal with others, but its secondary position makes it no less necessary than the first (Matt 22:36–38). The New Perspective on Paul reverses the order and gives first place to the second great commandment requiring love for others, especially those who are racially, culturally, or ethnically different. Good relations between Jewish and Gentile Christians replaces the longstanding view that Paul's concern was how individuals, by faith in Christ, are received by God. To be clear, the second great commandment, that of loving the neighbor, in what we call "sanctification," derives its life from the first great commandment of faith in God, what we call "justification." Sanctification is logically dependent on justification, but this does not mean that loving the neighbor is inferior to loving God—quite to the contrary! To express the matter in biblical terms, how can one love God whom one has not seen and hate one's neighbor whom he has seen (1 John 4:20). Reformation beliefs have a stake in still-current scholarly studies. Should the historical quest for Jesus continue to give birth to uncertain and mixed results, Christianity would have to be reconstituted and of course this began in earnest with the Age of the Enlightenment. If the New Perspective on Paul trumps the traditional Reformation doctrine of justification by faith, the Reformation can be celebrated as a cultural or historical phenomenon in the West, but not as one that correctly under-stood Paul. It would also mean that even if Rome may not have entirely grasped Paul's understanding of justification, its inclusion of an ethical component in justification places it closer to the heart of the apostle's theology.

Here we rehearse our arguments. More fundamental to Christianity and so also for Lutheranism than anything else is securing a firm place in history for Jesus. Without this there is no incarnation, and without incar-nation there is no resurrection, and without the resurrection justification by grace through faith is no more than a theological abstraction. Paul places makes our justification (Rom 4:25) and his apostleship as dependent on Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor 15:8, 17–18). The one who is unfit to be called

an apostle witnessed the resurrection. In this trinity of resurrection, in-carnation, and justification, to borrow a phrase from the Athanasian Creed, one is not before or after another, but as in the divine Trinity, in which one divine person depends on the others in a specific way, so justification depends on Jesus' resurrection, which in turn depends on the incarnation. Just as the place and function of each of the three divine persons cannot be shifted to another, so justification, resurrection, or incarnation each has its own order in the economy of salvation. Each is essential, but the function of one cannot be given to the other.

A shuffling or a reassignment of the functions of these core Christian teachings was at heart of the theology of the faculty majority at Concordia Seminary in their February 1974 walkout. Justification, the doctrine expli-cating one's standing before God, was assigned the role that in theology belongs to the resurrection as the historical foundation for Christianity. Resurrection, like other events, is one we can get our hands on, an event subject to historical critique in a way that justification is not. Incarnation is inaccessible to historical examination. However, the virgin birth of Jesus as the sign of the incarnation was to Mary a real event in her life, though only she knew that a male was not involved.[7] The presence of justification is verifiable not by historical critique as the resurrection is but by observation of the works that faith performs, an argument put forth by John the Baptist: faith produces visible works (Matt 3:8). This was essential to the preaching of Jesus as for example in the judgement of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31–46) and helps us to come to terms with James, who argues that faith is seen by its works (Jas 2:14–16).

Although the 1974 St. Louis seminary conflict might have appeared to some to be over biblical inerrancy, it was really over the negatives conclusions of the quests for the historical Jesus. Although most did not share these doubts and some seemed to be less than fully informed, they allowed those who did to continue as teachers of the church as long as they held to a doctrine of justification which claimed that by faith God justifies sinners. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith was the doctrine that unified both sides of the controversy and so in that moment, justification

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[7] For Wengert, "The fundamentals of the Christian faith, to use [the fundamentalists'] terms for it, are such things as the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection, the bodily resurrection, the substitutionary theory of the atonement, along with such doctrines as the Trinity and the two natures of Christ": *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther*, 9.

by faith was assigned the role that belongs to the resurrection of Jesus as the basis of Christianity.[8]

The position of the St. Louis seminary faculty majority in February 1974 was rooted in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment reinterpretation of miraculous events as ordinary ones or as never having happened at all. To save the day, Schleiermacher shifted the foundation of Christianity away from what was observable to the consciousness of the community of the followers of Jesus, a view that was given a Lutheran hue by the Erlangen theologians and strongly opposed by Francis Pieper, the Missouri Synod's premier theologian of the early twentieth century.[9] In the theology of the St. Louis faculty, justification by faith took the place of the Scriptures as the basis of the theological task. Pieper had provided a rarely recognized variant in that while insisting on belief in the entire Bible for salvation, justification by faith sufficed. Thus two principles stood side by side: the Bible determined what must be believed but only faith was required for justification. The inadequacy of this division was resolved in using the distinction of fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. Fundamental doctrines were further subdivided into primary and secondary ones. In the last century, Rudolph Bultmann produced his own bifurcation. He affirmed an existential interpretation of justification by faith and at the same time he proposed a historically-agnostic method of demythologizing.[10] Both he and Paul Tillich defined justification as finding one's authentic existence.

An existential definition of faith hardly fit the classical Lutheran Reformation definition that saw a flesh-and-blood Jesus as the object of faith, but those who assented to the traditional view were in some cases not agreed on the role faith played in justification, a matter that came to the fore in American Lutheranism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries' election controversy. On one side, the Missouri Synod held that election and justification were prior to faith. On the other side the Ohio Synod held that God elected to salvation those whom he knew would

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[8] Wengert holds to the same view. "To put it most radically, Luther and those who follow his approach prefer saying that the Hebrew Scriptures, like the New Testament, gain authority when they too support Christians in their faith—that is, in their trust of God in Christ. And do they ever do that!" *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther*, 12.

[9] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 3–7.

[10] Bultmann's demytholgizing was a variant of the eighteenth-century Rationalist view that Jesus and the apostles accommodated their teachings to common erroneous beliefs. For Bultmann this was done by anonymous early Christians.

come to faith, a position abbreviated by the Latin *intuitu fide*, that is, "in view of faith." This view had similarities to ones held by Pietism, Fundamentalism, and now Evangelicalism, that faith is substance-like, almost a thing, which through spiritual exercise and prayer could be strengthened and increased.[11]

Neo-orthodoxy's "Word" theology appears in those interpretations of Luther that locate the certainty of salvation not in the Scriptures but in the act of being justified by faith, an act which was understood as coming to terms with the preached or proclaimed word. With this, the history of Jesus is given a secondary role to the "Word" in action[12] and the Latin or Anselmic view of the atonement in which Christ stands in mankind's place before God to be condemned fades. Both views, the one that holds to justification by faith apart from what can be known historically of Jesus and the other, that God justifies believers only after or because they come to faith, attribute to faith the defining role. As diverse as these views are, they locate the determinative theological moment in the believer's faith, in which the entire theological reality is encapsulated and gives believers certainty.[13] Although in its original context of St. Louis in the year 1974, "gospel reductionism" referred to favoring proclamation over biblical history as the foundational theological principle, the phrase is applicable to any program that places justification within the moment that faith grasps the proclamation.

Ironically, the doctrine of justification, the doctrine on which the church stands or falls, is without an agreed-upon definition among Lutherans, so its function as a standard for theology and an outline for preaching has been compromised, though in practice this discrepancy is not recognized. Thus a typical Lutheran sermon is recognized in making

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[11] Its popularity among Lutherans is found in preferring those hymns in which the believer with his faith is placed in the center of the theological program.

[12] Oswald Bayer understands absolution, baptism, and the Lord's Supper as the same kind of speech acts as preaching. "Twenty Questions on the Relevance of Luther for Today," *Lutheran Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2015): 441. Karl Barth, following Calvin, held that the workings and the effects of the word and the sacraments were the same. See David P. Scaer, *Baptism*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics 11 (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 1999), 175. In this essay as in some of his other writings, Bayer does not explicate how the proclaimed word is rooted in the history of Jesus.

[13] During the presidency of the late Robert D. Preus, this seminary had to address what was understood as a denial of objective justification, that is, that there was no justification prior to the moment of when faith is engendered. The Lutheran World Federation that was established with great promise could not come to agreement on justification at its July 1963 Helsinki Convention.

its hearers aware of their moral inadequacy before God and concludes with the assurance that the gospel rectifies their miserable condition. Such law-gospel sermons work into the homiletical twenty minutes all the years between Luther's vow to St. Ann in being struck with divine terror in a thunderstorm to his discovery of his doctrine of justification by faith. Each sermon becomes the Reformation in a nutshell and achieves its purpose in the hearer's self-awareness that he has been accepted by God for Christ's sake. Such a sermon has met the Lutheran law-gospel paradigm and it can be preached without coming to terms with the history of Jesus or the atonement or, for that matter, the text which it intends to expound. In such law-gospel sermons, faith created by the preached or proclaimed "Word" takes on a life of its own and can be preached by both those who take the biblical history seriously and those who do not. Neo-orthodoxy is administered in the form of a Lutheran homiletical pill. Belief in the message is all that matters. So it was with the St. Louis faculty in 1974, who located justification in the preached "Word" apart from any prior, necessarily-held historical reality.

Gospel reductionism, the Missouri Synod's provincial version of neo-orthodoxy, relegated the historical reliability of biblically reported events to "adiaphora," the dogmatical term for what is expendable.[14] Proclamation of the gospel accomplishes its purpose in creating faith as the encounter with God quite apart from whether what the Gospels report actually ever happened. Since preaching or proclamation possesses an importance in itself, gospel reductionism might also be called "justification reductionism." Justification, quite apart from how it is defined, provides foundation, content, and purpose for the entire theological enterprise. Calling this method "gospel reductionism" gave the impression that the Lutheran law-and-gospel paradigm of preaching in condemning and rescuing the sinner remained in place. However, justification was given an

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[14] David P. Scaer, "The Law Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod," *Springfielder* 36 (December 1972), 156–171; "The Law Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod Continued" *Springfielder* 40 (September 1976), 107–118; Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life and Lving God: The Third Use of the Law in Modern American Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 103–107. Brought forth as an example of how the method worked was the Old Testament prophet Jonah's encounter with a large fish. Tossing that account to the winds as little more than a fish story eliminated only two sides of one page in the Hebrew Bible and with thirty-eight books in the old canon, its loss would be negligible. Problematic was that Matthew and Luke have Jesus using Jonah as the point of comparison for his own resurrection. The thing by which another thing is compared has the greater value. Jonah was the whipping boy for putting the resurrection of Jesus up for grabs. Gospel reductionist proponents were less interested in Jonah than they were in the virgin birth of Jesus, his miracles, and the resurrection.

existential twist in that it was no longer what God first accomplished in the man Jesus by his death as atonement, but what was accomplished in the hearer by preaching. Now justification was seen as the hearer's own consciousness or awareness of his condition in being accepted by God. Preaching allowed the hearer to come to terms with his own existence.[115]

Placing faith in the moment of justification surfaced in the Missouri Synod less than two decades after the dust in St. Louis had settled. Justification followed faith and was dependent on it. Lutherans traditionally had spoken of universal or objective justification, in which God accepts all humanity in Christ, and of subjective justification as the individual appropriate of justification by faith. The new position held only to subjective justification. There was a prior redemption but no universal act of God by which he accepts all of humanity in Christ. This view resembled gospel reductionism and neo-orthodoxy in making faith in the proclamation primary. It differed from the Lutheran form of neo-orthodoxy in that it did not make the Bible as word of God dependent on the believing hearer. Since the hearer was not forgiven until he believed, justification was dependent on faith. This view is better understood as sanctification and resembles Roman Catholicism in that justification is understood as what God works in believers through baptism.[16]

Although the St. Louis faculty lobbied and received widespread support for its position from the guild of scholars, gospel reductionism was nevertheless a Lutheran idiosyncrasy developed by Rudolph Bultmann. On one hand it incorporated what purported to be Luther's doctrine of justification into the hermeneutical task, but on the other hand it allowed the demythologizing method of biblical interpretation. Little was left of the historical Jesus. Since then this particular method has fallen into disuse. Historical criticism, philosophy, and theology each has its own principles and so in an ideal world historical critical scholars should not be driven by ideology, but they are. By placing its understanding of justification at the center of the hermeneutical task, the St. Louis faculty was no different than others in introducing an external principle into the biblical task, but this is how the scholarly game is played. Consider the title of this recent publication: *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation*. It purports to combine both African and feminine interpretations of the Bible.[17] In this

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[15] Pieper speaks of this as the *fides reflexa*, but holds that only *fides directa* is saving: *Christian Dogmatics* 3:444–445.

[16] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994), 481–483.

[17] Nyasha Junior, *Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westinster John Knox Press, 2015).

approach the culture in which the Bible is read takes precedence over the culture in which it was written. In any event, according to this view, the culture of the author and his first readers may never be fully recovered and if it is, it is secondary in importance to how the reader now understands it. Therefore, whether it should be called historical criticism remains a question. Gospel reductionism's deceptively Lutheran appearance was the Trojan horse that opened the door for its reception into the Missouri Synod, where justification was hailed as the chief doctrine.[18] Justification was intended to serve Christology and not the other way around, but Luther's understanding of justification gave him reason to take exception to Hebrews, Revelation, and most famously to James.

Luther's writings are not "bible" for Lutherans, even in lower case, though in some cases it seems so. What he said about this or that book in his Prefaces to the New Testament[19] are at least the bluebook that is consulted for value, and his comments that "St. James' epistle is really an epistle of straw" have not escaped notice and have given reason for some to suggest that he was on cutting edge of historical criticism.[20] In deference to the Reformer, Lutheran commentators explain that since straw has a purpose, this is not as uncomplimentary as it looks; however with this sentence matters go from bad to worse. "Therefore St. James' epistle is really an epistle of straw, compared to these others, for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it."[21] By evaluating James with what he holds to be Paul's doctrine of justification, Luther makes Paul's epistles canonically determinative. Luther has replaced the authority of the apostles, in their being witnesses of the resurrection, with the doctrine of

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[18] See Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 514: "Thus Christology serves merely as the substructure of the doctrine of justification." Lutheran theology was conceived in the caldron of the confrontation with Roman Catholics who allowed works into their understanding of justification, in how the believer stood before God; and so it became the pivotal organizing principle of the Augsburg Confession. Attributing justification to works diminished the work of Christ, so the confession argued.

[19] Martin Luther, "Prefaces to the New Testament" (1546 (1522)): vol. 35, pp. 395–397, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009–), hereafter AE.

[20] Wengert uses Luther's comments on James to foster his own program of biblical interpretation and places it in his first chapter, "Authority," with the subtitle "Putting James in Its Place": *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther*, 1–21.

[21] Luther, "Prefaces to the New Testament," AE 35:362.

justification. Paul's epistles, 1 Peter, and 1 John met Luther's standards. Then he winnowed the true books down to Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians as "the true kernel and marrow of all the books."[22] Luther's preferences do not prevent him from adding this caveat that "in them you do not find many works and miracles of Christ described, but you do find depicted in masterly fashion how faith in Christ overcomes sin, death, and hell, and gives life, righteousness, and this salvation. This is the real nature of the gospel, as you have heard." Luther says he would rather do without the works of Christ than his words. Perhaps Luther is at his hyperbolic best, but should it not be the other way around, that the deeds of Christ through which God accomplished salvation take precedence in providing the substance to what is preached?

What Luther said could be put to good use and perhaps was by the proponents of gospel reductionism, who elevated preaching the gospel above the deeds of Christ, and who placed the latter on the back shelves of inconsequential adiaphora. This is what neo-orthodoxy was all about and still is when it appears in scholarly Luther research.

Luther's preference for John over the other three Gospels cannot escape notice. "So too, the epistles of St. Paul and St. John far surpass the other three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke." These books "show you Christ and teach all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know, even if you were never to see or hear other books or doctrine."[23] Some scholars cite Luther's favoring one book over another in support of their own critical views, but rarely note that Luther's conclusions came from his own personal dilemma of being confronted with an avenging God, for which he found relief in a doctrine of justification articulated by Paul. Historical criticism, as it was conceived in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, reinterpreted miraculously reported events as natural ones or denied them altogether. These methods use different and opposing programs and so the expression "the historical critical method" would best be dropped, but it won't be. One method accepts only those things in the Bible that have correlations to other events and another approach holds only what is unique in the life of Jesus is authentic. In the past three centuries the criteria have shifted, as have the results, which have contradicted one

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[22] Luther, "Prefaces to the New Testament," AE 35:361–362.

[23] Luther, "Prefaces to the New Testament," AE 35:362. Luther's immodest preference for John is counterbalanced by his sermons on Matthew. Favoring one book over another is not unusual. Scholars can give good reason for their favored gospel, but unmatched is Matthew's preservation of the trinitarian formula or Luke's look into inner trinitarian function: "And behold, I send the promise of my Father" (Luke 24:49).

another, making claims to objectivity suspect. Speaking of Luther as a historical critic is inappropriate, but this does mean that his making justification the one determinative principle for interpretation is above critique?

Luther making Paul and John canonically normative stands at odds with the early church's near total dependence on Matthew with little use of Paul until the end of the second century.[24] Romans, Ephesians, Galatians— books Luther says holds "the true kernel and marrow of all the books"— have no reference to the Lord's Supper. John, the favored gospel, also has no reference to the Lord's Supper unless one concedes that John 6 offers a discourse on this sacrament, which Luther's gnesio-followers are unlikely to do. None of his favored books provides the Lord's Prayer or the baptismal formula. Cause for the alleged biblical lack of clarity in any book resides not in the Spirit-inspired writer but in the hearers who at the first hearing often seemed not to have gotten things straight. Misunderstandings are not without a purpose. Without them 2 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, and 2 Peter may have never seen the light of day. Nor would our sermons.

The inadequacies that Luther finds in James should not go unanswered. Here they are: 1. James disagrees with Paul and the rest of the Scripture on justification. 2. James speaks of a general faith in God, not faith in Christ specifically. 3. James does not teach or mention the suffering and resurrection of Christ, nor does he mention the Holy Spirit. 4. James knows only the law, which, Luther concedes, he preaches vigorously. 5. James throws things together chaotically. 6. James calls the law "the law of liberty."[25] Basic to Luther's critique of James is making Paul canonically determinative,[26] but had he applied the same measuring rod to the teaching of Jesus, he may have had to exclude most of it, as he did James. Take, for example, the last judgment scene where eternal bliss is awarded to those who tended to the hungry, thirsty, homeless, poorly clothed, sick, and imprisoned brothers of Jesus (Matt 25:36–37). This parallels James' concerns about Christians who favored the rich in the congregation and ignored the poor. By this they dishonored Jesus, who is the poorest of men (Jas 2:3–6). James, like Jesus, was speaking not in Pauline terms of how

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[24] See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, The Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985), LXXX–LXXXVI.

[25] See Luther, "Preface to the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude" (1546 (1522)), AE 35:395–397.

[26] Wengert, *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther,* 1–21.

believers find the certainty of their own salvation in Jesus, but eschatologically in terms of how God and others determine that faith is present.[27] Forensic justification describes the Pauline perspective that on account of Christ believers in him are declared righteous, but forensic justification can also describe the last step in the legal process of being sentenced to either eternal bliss or damnation on the last day. James provides two examples of forensic justification in this sense: Abraham sacrificing his son and Rahab providing refuge for the spies. They are recognized as being justified primarily by what they did and not only by what they confessed. At issue here is not how these two Old Testament figures knew they were justified, but how others know that they were justified. This we know by what they did. By putting his son's life at risk, Abraham was risking the promise God gave him that his descendants would be as plentiful as the stars of the heavens. Rahab risked her own life. Their faith reached completion not in the garden variety of good works that belong to Christian vocation or the silly good works of the pope, like walking through the front doors of cathedrals to merit a half-century of indulgences. Their works risked life and limb and were like the works of Christ who sacrificed his life for others. In these self-sacrificial works Christ was working and they were recognized as justified. Had Luther read James in the light of how justification was presented in the synoptic gospels, he may have seen things differently. Should it be any consolation, while Luther subjects Jesus to Pauline standards and fails, Roman Catholics in allowing works a place of the justification of the believer before God reverse the order, subordinating Paul's doctrine of justification to their misunderstanding of James.

Now to the specifics of Luther's concerns, of which the first is that James "only speaks of general faith in God."[28] This flies right in the face of James 2:1: "My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory" and by extension James 1:1, where Jesus is called "Lord" and "God," in terms matching the confession of Thomas. Next, Luther says James does not contain a narrative of Christ's suffering. For that matter neither does Paul, as Luther concedes, who does not go much more beyond the bare-bones creedal outline that Christ died and rose. James resembles the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7) in presenting Christ's suffering and that of the church as one thing. For example, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt 5:10) bears a resemblance to "Blessed is the man who endures trial,

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[27] Cf. the explanation of Jas 2:24 in Ap IV 244–253 (III 123–132).

[28] Luther, "Preface to James and Jude," AE 35:396.

for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him" (Jas 1:12). The accusation that James preaches only the law suggests that perhaps Luther did not recognize that such statements as the promise of a crown of life (Jas 1:12) are as much gospel as Revelation 2:10. God's promise to hear prayer offered in faith (Jas 5:15) is a passage that has an uncanny resemblance to Matthew 21:22: "whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." Since James speaks of dead faith, the word "faith" by itself is living. Demons have a lively faith fully aware of what is in store for them. For Luther to speak of the disorderly style of another writer is ironic. For the record, James takes up one topic at a time and spares us the agony of transitional sentences. Finally, in Luther's taking exception to James speaking of the law as giving liberty (Jas 1:25), he might have censured Paul for speaking of "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2). In both cases Paul and James are using the word as reference to the gospel. For Paul the law that gives life is the gospel, as it is for James, for whom the law that gives liberty is the gospel. In James' phrase, "perfect law of liberty" (Jas 2:12), he is speaking primarily not of law without moral imperfection, but of the law reaching its goal in what Christ did. This law, namely the gospel, frees the Christian to do good works. Luther in his *Freedom of the Christian Man* could have taken his cue from James, but of course he did not. Exaggeration serves to make the point and so this may explain Luther saying, "Again, whatever preaches Christ would be apostolic, even if Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod were doing it." This might apply to Caiaphas saying it is expedient for one man to die for the people (John 11:50), but he did not know what he was saying. James did. Luther had played the Pauline justification card against James.

The title for this essay is taken from Mark 13:14. "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains," a passage for which there is no agreed interpretation. Whatever the desolating sacrilege was, it was so horrid that one should get out of town right away. Putting aside at least five other interpretations,[29] I favor the view

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[29] The options are: 1. Paul's man of lawlessness, i.e., the end-time antichrist. 2. The erection of a statue of Jupiter after the destruction of Jerusalem, where once the temple stood. 3. The aborted attempt of the Emperor Caligula to set up his own statue in the temple precincts around 40 AD. 4. The destruction of Jerusalem. 5. Bringing the Roman military standards into the temple before Jerusalem's destruction. Three things are clear: First, those who see it are to head for the hills. Second, whatever and wherever it is, it does not belong there. Third, the one reading the sacred text in the church service should take into account that he is reading something of extraordinary importance.

that in the abominable ugliness of Golgotha God is manifesting himself as the God of love. Here is the last place anyone would expect to find a merciful God. By inserting the rubric, "let the reader understand," Matthew and Mark alert the lector that he is about to speak about the most incomprehensible mystery of all time.

In this essay the phrase "where it does not belong" does not refer to a historical event, but to the introduction of the doctrine of justification as a theological principle where it does not belong, as Luther did in James. We do not have the wherewithal to tackle Hebrews 6:5–6, where Luther could not come to terms with the statement that those who have fallen from the faith have no chance of returning. Jesus seems to have spoken similarly of Judas (Matt 26:24). In facing alleged problems, it might be the wiser course of action to take the writer on his own terms rather than applying the Pauline measuring stick. Then there is the matter of whether justification by faith—what Lutherans also call the law and gospel principle—is the only homiletical principle, in such a way that each sermon begins with condemning the hearer of real or fictive transgressions and concludes with a divine pardon. Coming to mind is a sermon on the servant who acquired such an enormous debt that he could have never repaid it in real time. To fit the law-gospel paradigm the sermon concluded that God forgives our inability or refusal to forgive others, a conclusion that flies diametrically contrary to intentions of the parable and Jesus' own interpretation of it (Matt 18:23–35), as well as to the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:12, 14–15). For Lutherans, forensic justification means God's declaring the sinner free from sin; however, the word "forensic" applies to any step in the judicial process including imposition of the sentence and being taken to prison. This process Jesus outlines in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:25). One biblical writer should not be made to march to the tune of another, and Jesus (like James) should not be made to sway to the Pauline rhythm. Forty-three years have passed since the Concordia Seminary faculty majority elevated the doctrine of justification to the determinative role of what the church confesses. To reference Mark 13:14, justification was "set up where it ought not to be." In more recent disguise this has found support in the allegation that for Luther all that mattered was the faith that the "Word" created, a position hard to distinguish from gospel reduc-

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None of these proposals for identifying the abomination of desolation fit, since with the resurrection of Jesus, Jerusalem and its temple lost their importance for Christians. Years before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies, its temple had long faded from their sight. They had heard and believed in the one who said that if "this temple" were destroyed, in three days he would raise it up (Mark 14:58; 15:29).

tionism. The word or the gospel matters not because of itself, but because its origin is in an historical *something* that God accomplished in the incarnation and made accessible to us in the virgin birth, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of the man Jesus Christ. In that word the past history of Jesus Christ is brought into the present, but that history remains intact and becomes the standard for world judgment. That is a wider understanding of what forensic justification should be and is. The honor of the standard of faith, the *norma normans,* will forever belong to the apostles as witnesses of the resurrection, who saw and touched the word of life (1 John 1:10) and had dinner with him.

Culture and the Vocation of the Theologian

Roland Ziegler

I. Definitions

Which Culture?

The term "culture" has a wide range of meaning. Originally coming from farming (hence the term "agriculture"), it has to do with working the soil, or in a metaphorical sense, working a human being—to cultivate certain skills and abilities, so that a cultured human being come about. This can be intellectual, artistic, or physical—think of the term "physical culture." In this sense, culture is the process and the result of human effort on nature. A human being thus can have culture or he or she can be uncultured. Culture is thus a value term.[1] But the term "culture" obtained a wider meaning in anthropology. The antonym to "culture" is not "barbarism" or *Unkultur*, but "nature." "Culture," as an anthropological term, describes "everything that people have, think, and do as members of society."[2] Nature is that which is given to man; culture is that what man makes out of it. In this sense, there is no man without culture. Culture is the world which man has created and in which he finds himself living. Thus, even the concept of "nature" as opposed to culture is a cultural concept. Culture is thus a basic feature of being human, it is also a distinct feature of being human. We do not use the term culture to describe what animals do. To be without culture would be to give up humanity, something man cannot do.

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[1] Jaques Barzun uses the term in this sense: "In the present discussion I mean by culture the traditional things of the mind and spirit, the interests and abilities acquired by taking thought; in short, the effort that used to be called cultivation—cultivation of the self." *The Culture We Deserve* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 3.

[2] Such is the definition in a recent textbook of Cultural Anthropology: Susan Andreatta and Gary Ferraro, *Elements of Culture: An Applied Perspective* (Belmont, CA: Wadworth, 2013), 34. Compare also the definition by Clifford Geertz (*Interpretation of Cultures* [New York: Basic Books, 1973], 89): "The culture concept to which I adhere . . . denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."

Roland Ziegler is the Robert D. Preus Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Confessional Lutheran Studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Culture thus is a comprehensive concept that includes language, social and political structures, economic behavior, religion, the arts, intellectual pursuits, but also habits of eating, etc.[3] Culture gives structure to human life, and thus it determines certain things we do, and can serve man as a help so that there are things he does not have to decide every day. Instead of deciding everything anew every day, we simply do certain things because they are culturally expected, and thus are free to concentrate on important things without suffering a decision overload. Culture with its rules and expectations can also be a straitjacket, however, stifling personal freedom.

Culture, though, is not universally monolithic. First, cultures are regional. One can talk about cultures of different countries, or of different ethnic groups. Even different regions might have different cultures. The midwest United States might not have the same culture as the northeast or the west coast. Secondly, even in the same locale or in the same ethnic group there are different subcultures. Youth culture is an obvious example, which then can be even more subdivided, as an ethnological look at U.S. high schools shows.[4]

Then there is the fact that there is "high culture," "pop culture," and "folk culture." Christianity has an ongoing relationship with "high culture" as the numerous past and present works of art and music show. Classical instruments have been included in the worship of the church, as has the language of classical music. This is also true, of course, of pop music in many churches. To favor the musical idiom of Bach over Andrew Lloyd-Webber is favoring one part of culture over another part of culture. Why and when one should favor one form of music over another is a question that will be differently answered according to the evaluative framework one has.[5]

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[3] It is not "natural," for example, that there are certain foods that are eaten for breakfast, while not eaten for supper. It is cultural what kind of food is eaten for breakfast. Few Americans start the day with kippers or rice for breakfast.

[4] These groups can appear or disappear. Thus, a German newspaper recently declared the death of Emo. Dennis Sand, "Emo, die verhassteste aller Jugendkulturen, ist tot," *Die Welt,* 12 December 2014, http://www.welt.de/kultur/pop/article135309844/Emo-die-verhassteste-aller-Jugendkulturen-ist-tot.html, accessed 20 January 2015.

[5] For a collection of viewpoints from formal liturgical worship to charismatic, see *Exploring the Worship Spectrum: Six Views* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004). The classical conservative Reformed view has a rather strict view of the "regulative principle of worship," accusing Lutherans, who do believe that many things in worship fall under

Another such subculture is U.S. church culture: potlucks with Jello salad, cheese balls, and tuna casserole, for example; and as a sub-subculture, there is LCMS church culture, with celebrations of Reformation Day with brats and sauerkraut and enacting communal fellowship with mostly rather thin coffee after services.

Mainstream culture influences subcultures, and subcultures influence mainstream cultures. Thus, the idea of "*a culture*" or "*the culture*" can be problematic if it is taken as an opposition to the individual's or the group's position. In 1959, C.P. Snow, British physicist, novelist, and politician, gave his lecture "The Two Cultures," deploring the fact that in Great Britain there were two cultures: the traditional literary humanist culture, and the scientific culture, each content in their realm, each ignorant of the other's achievement. Forty years later, in 1999, Gertrude Himmelfarb published "One Nation, Two Cultures," an analysis of contemporary U.S. culture. According to her, there are two camps: the one originating in the traditional virtues of American republicanism, the other in the counterculture of the 1960s. But in both cases, in spite of the stark dichotomies described, they can also be viewed as facets of one culture, either modern western culture or postmodern western culture. Thus, both are true: there is one culture of a social entity, and there are many cultures in that cultural entity.

What this disquisition on culture means for our topic is this: "culture" is not as monolithic as we may think. While there are certain things people of one country may share, there are also significant differences. Second, a person may be part of several subcultures. In modernity, there is on the one hand a homogenization of culture through mass media and communication, on the other hand a diversification and fragmentation in subcultures that are chosen, not inherited.[6] So, if one asks the question "Culture—friend or foe?" my question is: "Which culture?" Is Bach friend or foe? Is Jello salad friend or foe? Is the English language friend or foe?

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the category of adiaphora, of deserting *sola scriptura* and of inconsistency: Brian M. Schwertley, *Sola Scriptura and the Regulative Principle of Worship* (Southfield, MI: Reformed Witness, n.d.), 47–60. But Lutherans, believing that many questions concerning the form of worship are not divinely mandated, have to first discuss what a true adiaphoron is and then apply the test of FC SD X 9–10 to these true adiaphora.

[6] The idea, for example, that a young family develops its own traditions would baffle, I surmise, a person from a truly traditional culture. Tradition is that which is handed down, in which one finds oneself *nolens volens,* not that which one invents.

Any discussion of culture has to be mindful of the "radically pluralist world" in which we live.[7]

Church and Culture

We can see how church culture is influenced by the surrounding culture: government flags in the sanctuary are a very U.S. thing. Writing mission statements and vision statements, plus an identity statement is also something that is cultural, just as putting musical notation in hymnals, and especially four part harmonies in the hymnal, is part of the American church culture, as is the end of the parsonage in many congregations, because there has been an IRS ruling that exempts cash housing allowance for the pastor from income tax.[8] Another example would be the fact that parishes of the LCMS are not geographically defined (i.e., one is not automatically a member of a certain congregation because of one's place of residence, but rather because of one's choice, especially in urban areas). Lutheran congregations in the southern United States were once segregated—a rather visible cultural influence—and integration happened because of cultural shifts. The influence of culture on churches is complex and unavoidable. Even the Amish are not simply living in eighteenth century Swiss culture. The task of churches is therefore neither to avoid present culture nor to retreat in some supposedly unchanging church culture, since both are impossible. It is rather a reflected relationship with culture. This is more difficult than a radical "yes" or "no" to the culture in which we live. Churches will always be enculturated. Otherwise one would have to say that to be a Christian and to be an American, for example, are mutually exclusive. In modern societies that are religiously pluralistic, churches also will not simply dominate culture—not to speak of something like a "Christian culture," which is impossible anyway. Christianity, taken broadly, has of course influenced society. True Christianity, known here on earth as Lutheranism, has not been a dominant cultural force in any society since at least the Enlightenment. And even then, one does not have "a Christian culture," because not everything in a culture is a direct outflow of Christianity. There is, for examples, no Christian food culture, even though books like *What Would Jesus Eat* are published. But the reason lies deeper than the lack of dietary laws in Christianity. As Gene Veith states: "There can be no such thing as a Christian culture as such,

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[7] J. Wenzel van Huysteen, "Tradition and the Task of Theology," *Theology Today* 55 (1998/1999), 213.

[8] The German tax code does not allow such an exemption, and thus the parsonage is still an almost universal feature of church life.

because Christianity comes from faith in the Gospel, not works of the law."[9]

Culture and the Bible

"Culture" is an anthropological term, not a theological one. What concept in Scripture would correspond to "culture"? As a contrast to "nature," there is no real term. There is κόσμος in the New Testament.[10] Κόσμος can mean the whole creation, or it can mean humanity (cf. Matt 5:14; 13:38; 18:7; 2 Pet 2:5; 3:6; 1 Cor 4:13). It also can be opposed to God: the κόσμος is that which is opposed to God and that which is reconciled in Christ, that is, sinful humanity (1 Cor 1:20–21; Rom 3:19; 2 Cor 5:19). Κόσμος can also be the opposition to the Christian (Col 2:20). Paul is crucified to the "world" (Gal 6:14). Christians are to be undefiled by the world (Jas 1:27). In the Johannine corpus, this dialectical understanding of Christians and "world" is summarized in the formula: Christians are in the world, but not from the world (John 17:11, 14). Κόσμος thus does not mean what culture expresses. If κόσμος and "culture" are taken as synonyms, then the result is that one puts Christ against culture, which means actually "Christ against the majority culture," and one becomes blind to the fact that one cannot be rid of culture and also that the majority culture is not simply sinful. We are not redeemed from culture—the most obvious point is that Christians do not have a language of their own, but that they use the vernacular. They might have a sociolect, and languages might change due to the influence of Christianity, but unlike in Islam or in Judaism, there is no specific holy language that is privileged against all other languages. Additionally, the world of culture is also the world of the orders of creation: the government and family, which are corrupted by sin, but not simply sinful. Seeing government and family as part of the κόσμος (the world opposed to God) leads to a form of asceticism that marred so much of church history.

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[9] Gene Edward Veith, "Two Kingdoms Under One King: Towards a Lutheran Approach to Culture," in *Christ and Culture in Dialogue*, ed. by Angus Menuge (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 135.

[10] There is no equivalent to *kosmos* in the OT. Hermann Sasse, "κόσμος," in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938), 867–896, here at 880, line 17.

The Vocation of the Theologian

Theology is the God-given aptitude to teach—so goes the definition of Lutheran Orthodoxy.[11] A theologian is a teacher of the faith, and as such he should know two things: what he is to teach and whom he is to teach. What he has to teach, namely the Christian faith, requires the ability first to interpret the Scriptures, and second to understand the doctrines of the Christian faith in their historically developed articulation. This understanding of the vocation of the theologian will suffice for the present.

Their Interrelation

The "What" of Faith. Culture comes into the theological enterprise already at the beginning: the interpretation of Scripture is done in different cultural settings differently. A history of biblical interpretation will show that there is an interaction between how Scripture is interpreted and general trends in hermeneutics and literary criticism, besides the obvious fact that theology also has had a cultural influence. Not by accident do the names of Flacius and Schleiermacher—two theologians!—loom large in the modern history of hermeneutical thinking. In recent times, for example, discussions about reader-response criticism have entered the exegetical discussions. Reader-response criticism has its origin in literary studies. Whether such an influence from literary criticism is beneficial or not cannot be decided by asking the genetic question, meaning one cannot simply say that since it comes from outside our theological world, therefore it is wrong. After all, literary criticism can help us to be sensitive to the different genres in the Bible. Rather, such a concept has to be evaluated on its own merits.

The challenge for the theologian is thus to reflect on his preconceived notions and to reflect on which hermeneutical approach is the most appropriate to Scripture. The early Missouri Synod saw the problem here when it emphasized that the rules for interpreting the Scriptures must be found in Scripture, taking up the claim of the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture from the time of the Reformation.[12]

What this and other examples show is that culture comes into play in the very heart of the theological enterprise, not simply later when the

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[11] Cf. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, ed. David W. Loy, trans. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), ch. 1, art. 1, p. 7.

[12] See Charles Philip Schaum, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Early Missouri Synod" (STM Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2008).

question is asked: "to whom are we talking?" Theology is not done in a cultureless environment, nor is it done in such a way that is completely uninfluenced by culture. This is, like all historical conditions, much more obvious in hindsight than when we reflect on our own situation. To just use one example: Lutheran Orthodoxy (ca. 1580–1700) adopted to a great extent an Aristotelian philosophy. In its analysis of dogmatic topics, it used the distinction between substance and accident, form and matter, and the scheme of the four causes.[13] Most of us do not do theology like that any-more, because Aristotelianism no longer works as a common scientific or scholarly approach. The big question here is if such an adoption of a certain methodology is neutral in respect to content or if it in some sense distorts content. But even the most fervent friends of Lutheran scho-lasticism might concede that it perhaps prevents one from saying and seeing everything—which is true for any theological unfolding of the teaching of Scripture.

To sum up: the question the theologian has to face is, "In what way has the articulation of the Christian faith been influenced by present or past cultures in such a way that the biblical message has either been faithfully articulated or been distorted?" To ask this question presumes of course that somehow we can evaluate our culture and others versus the biblical text, instead of being completely culturally imprisoned. The task of the theologian in regard to culture is thus one of critical evaluation of church tradition in the light of Holy Scripture and, where appropriate, to show against unjustified attacks and modern heresies the scriptural nature of the church's teaching.

To Whom the Faith is Taught. Regarding the people to whom the faith is taught, the aspect of culture is obvious and undisputed. Non-Christians are part of their culture, a culture that as a majority culture might be influenced to certain degree by Christianity, as is the case in western cultures, or not, as is the case of, for example, India. Certain aspects of the faith have to be stressed in one culture that are not an issue in another. Ancestor worship is an important topic in many traditional Asian cultures; it is not an issue in majority North American culture. Thus, the reflection on culture, what cultural aspects have to be taken into account in teaching

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[13] See, for example, Johann Gerhard, "Method of Theological Study," part 2, section 2, in *On Interpreting Sacred Scripture and Method of Theological Study*, Theological Commonplaces I–II (St. Louis: Concordia, forthcoming).

the faith and also the question in what way Christianity changes culture, are standard missiological topics.[14]

The present project to revise the synodical catechism is a documentation that catechesis has to change with the times if it wants to address the current situation. And what else is the "current situation" but a subset of culture? All the favorite controversial topics among Missourians have to do with culture: the debate on the roles of men and women in the church are to great extent caused by changing sociological facts. Worship styles always reflect culture, since there is no timeless expression of worship, and thus the question is not whether cultural expressions may be assimilated into worship, but rather which ones and why. The debates on church fellowship, too, have cultural dimensions: decreased institutional loyalty and identification with denominations, greater mobility, and the weakening of the importance of tradition in the lives of people make the teaching on closed communion (as it is the official position of the Missouri Synod), though never popular, increasingly unpopular and increasingly more difficult to communicate.

Thus, we must understand the present culture or cultures in order to understand also what must be emphasized, and in order to understand the challenges we face presently with regard to teaching the full counsel of God. Only in this way can we see where we are in danger of being silent due to cultural pressures. These are the places and times in which we should speak.

II. Modernity and Postmodernity

One of the grand narratives of our time is the claim that there is a change from modernity to postmodernity.[15] An epochal shift would certainly be of interest to any theologian. The topic is, I admit, not quite as fashionable as it was some time ago. Things seem to have cooled down a bit, after a time where the excitement about the perils of postmodernity caused many a conservative pundit to proclaim dire warnings. Nevertheless, in a recent newsletter of the "National Association of Evan-

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[14] See, for example, Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), especially 115–235. For an example how the reflection on culture influences missionary strategy, cf. Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 210–213.

[15] That there is such a change is denied by William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 18: "The idea that we live in a postmodern culture is a myth. In fact, a postmodern culture is an impossibility; it would be utterly unliveable."

gelicals," seven presidents of seminaries articulated their "Top Theological Issues for Seminaries." Three mentioned postmodernism as one of their concerns, two more pluralism, a topic closely associated with post-modernism.[16]

One of the first pundits to criticize the ideas of postmodernism was Allan Bloom and his *The Closing of the American Mind*, published in 1987.[17] Bloom, who was in his private life as a homosexual non-religious person maybe not the poster boy for conservative values, gave a spirited defence of modernity and its belief in universal values against the emphasis on distinct cultures and their right to define right and wrong intraculturally, not interculturally. His heroes were the thinkers of the Enlightenment. In 1994, Gene Veith published a book on postmodernism, and later on an entire cottage industry sprang up among conservative evangelicals providing ammunition in this latest theater of the culture wars. Gertrud Himmelfarb denounced postmodernism in 1999 in her book *One Nation, Two Cultures* as a relativistic manifestion of the other culture in America.[18] But there was and is also the "evangelical left" that did not see post-modernism as the present incarnation of the old evil foe, but rather as an ally to escape the prison of modernity.[19]

The discussion on postmodernism was not only an academic one. The "Emergent Church" is a movement of those in evangelicalism that favored a positive view of the postmodern condition. Even though this movement, too, might have crested, and the next new thing is in the offing, the Emer-

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[16] "Top Theological Issues for Seminaries," *Insight* (Winter 2014/15), http://www.nae.net/resources/nae-newsletter/winter-201415/1219-top-theological-issues-for-seminaries, accessed 20 January 2015.

[17] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). Bloom does not use the language of "postmodern."

[18] "The reluctance to be judgmental pervades all aspects of life. In the university, it takes the form of postmodernism. In scholarly books and journals, 'truth,' 'objectivity,' 'knowledge,' even 'reality,' commonly appear ensconced within quotation marks, testifying of the ironic connotation of such quaint words. If these concepts are dubious, moral judgments are still more so. The language of 'right' and 'wrong,' 'virtue' and 'vice,' are made to seem as archaic as the language of 'truth' and 'objectivity,' 'knowledge' and 'reality'." Gertrud Himmelfarb, *One Nation, Two Cultures* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 122.

[19] For example, Carl Raschke, *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004). For a critique, cf. Millard J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997).

gent Church is an interesting example of a very self-conscious embrace of cultural change.[20] Postmodernism was not only simply seen as an inevitable cultural shift one has to accommodate if one does not want to go out of business, but rather as a liberation to a more genuine and biblical form of Christianity.

For clarification's sake, let us narrow down the use of "modern" and "postmodern" to the history of philosophy here. In other areas, these terms mean different things. In literature, for example, modernism starts around World War I and ends somewhere around 1970. Similarly in architecture: modernist architecture is a purely twentieth century phenomenon. Philosophically, though, the modern age starts with Descartes (d. 1650), one of the fathers of postmodernity is Nietzsche (d. 1900). There are significant differences in time, and of course even more so in definitions of what "modern" means in each of these contexts.

Modernity

But before we go to postmodernity, let us first talk about modernity. Modernity is philosophically characterized by the turn to the individual, the preeminence of epistemology, and the belief in the powers of reason informed by experience. Science becomes the dominant paradigm: the pursuit of knowledge for the benefit of humanity by the manipulation of the environment. And modernity has been extremely successful in that. There are, of course, gainsayers. Already in the eighteenth century, the *siecle de la lumière*, Jean Jacques Rousseau saw civilization as the problem, not the solution.[21] But overall, modernity with clean water and indoor plumbing, medical progress, greater life expectancy, and better living through chemistry has been a success story—or so many would say. It has, though, not been an unmitigated success story for Christianity. Certainly, modernity as the "age of exploration" (from a western perspective) and the age of missions brought Christianity to the ends of the earth. But in its traditional strongholds, modernity has been a time of crisis for Christianity. In the '50s and '60s of the last century, the sociological theory of secularization was quite popular. It stated, that with the advance of

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[20] On the emergent church, see Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds., *An Emergent Manifest of Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007). On the interaction of the emergent church with postmodernism, see Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005).

[21] For the thesis that the critique of culture reached a new quality against the enlightenment and its view of progress, see Georg Bollenbeck, *Eine Geschichte der Kulturkritik* (München: C. H. Beck, 2007).

modernity, in a society that is built on technology and whose epistemological ideal are the natural sciences, religion will wither away. Europe seemed to be the prime case study for this tendency, whereas the U.S. seemed to lag behind.

But this thesis has been dismissed by one of its early proponents, the sociologist Peter L. Berger.[22] Berger does maintain, though, that modernity brings significant sociological consequences for religion. In a later essay he states: "Modernity does not necessarily secularize; however, probably necessarily, it does pluralize."[23] In pre-modern times, people lived in rather homogenous societies with "a very high degree of consensus on basic cognitive and normative assumptions."[24] There were, for sure, dissenters, but for the majority their beliefs were taken for granted and hardly questioned. Modernity has increased the pluralization or pluralism, which Berger defines thus: "pluralism is a situation in which different ethnic or religious groups co-exist under conditions of civic peace and interact with each other socially."[25] The reasons are urbanization that brings very diverse people together, general mobility, and mass literacy that spreads the "knowledge of other cultures and ways of life to numerous people."[26] This pluralization accelerates through modern communication and its effect is uncertainty. "Pluralism relativizes. It does so both institutionally and in the consciousness of individuals."[27] For sure, there is a certain consensus necessary in any society. "No society can

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[22] He wrote in 1999: "My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions to which I will come presently, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. . . .To be sure, modernization has had some secularizing effects, more in some places than in others, But it has also provoked powerful movements of counter-secularization. Also, secularization on the societal level is not necessarily linked to secularization on the level of individual consciousness. Certain religious institutions have lost power and influence in many societies, but both old and new religious beliefs and practices have nevertheless continued in the lives of the individuals, sometimes taking new institutional forms and sometimes leading to great explosions of religious fervor." Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 2–3.

[23] Peter L. Berger, "Introduction," in *Between Relativism and Fundamentalism: Religious Resources for a Middle Position* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2010), 3.

[24] Berger, "Introduction," 3.

[25] Berger, "Introduction," 4 (emphasis deleted).

[26] Berger, "Introduction," 5.

[27] Berger, "Introduction," 5.

tolerate a pluralism of norms concerning intracommunity violence."[28] But one of the consequences for religion is that churches become "voluntary associations." This is true even for the remnants of state churches in Europe. The Church of England or the Church of Scotland are not dis-established, but nevertheless it is a matter of personal choice if one belongs to the Church of Scotland or the Episcopal Church of Scotland. This is true even more so here in the States. People have "religious preferences." They go "church shopping." So, the old distinction between "free church" and "state church" loses its meaning.[29]

Characteristics of Postmodernism

What are characteristics of postmodernism? First, it is a critique of certain features of modernity. Jean-François Lyotard, who wrote "The Condition of Postmodernity," described it as a distrust of metanarratives.[30] Metanarratives are comprehensive systems of the world that give an explanation of everything and rest on universal principles. This universalism is characteristic of modernity, as is its foundationalism. Postmodernism distrusts both: that there exists one rationality, one way that can be proven to be true, whereas all others are deemed either primitive, irrational, or insane. The concept of foundationalism, that there are certain beliefs indubitable and certain to all, from which all other beliefs receive their justification, is also rejected.

Second, since language is not simply a picture of the world, but rather a form of life (Wittgenstein), our thinking cannot be neatly divided between facts "out there" and a linguistic form that merely reflects them, according to postmodernism. Rather, all facts are interpreted facts. Lan-

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[28] Berger, "Introduction," 5.

[29] Christianity can either embrace this pluralism and integrate it and thus relativize itself, or it can react against it and try to recreate a pre-modern environment—the project of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism "is the attempt to restore or create anew a taken-for-granted body of beliefs and values": Berger, "Introduction," 7. This is not simply a repristination, since in fundamentalism there is a certain aggressiveness against the pluralistic world that must be either converted, shunned, or eliminated. Berger, of course, does not want to go either way but projects a way "between relativism and fundamentalism," as the title of the book says. Berger does not think that postmodernism with its farewell to the project of modernity and its relativistic tendencies is a solution either.

[30] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* Theory and History of Literature, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward meta-narrative."

guage determines how man sees the world, and since there is not one universal language, different "language games" mean different perceptions of the world that are not reducible to one ruling "language game."

Third, since languages are never private, but communal, the individual sees the world not as an isolated individual, but rather as a part of a community. Indeed, the individual only exists as part of the community. This is the end of the Cartesian individual that finds truth and certainty in solitary reflection.

III. Case Studies

Foundationalism

In this section I want to look at one aspect of postmodern theology: to bid farewell to a foundationalist theology and establish—no, "establish" sounds too much like a foundationalist term—so, let's rather say, develop a non-foundationalist theology.

What is Foundationalism? First, we have to see again what the negative foil is. What is meant by foundationalism? Foundationalism sees knowledge like a building: Knowledge—for the moment let us use the definition that knowledge consists of justified true beliefs—starts with the foundation: beliefs that are fundamental or basic. All other beliefs are derived from these foundational or basic beliefs. In classical foundationalism, these fundamental beliefs are, in the summary of Alvin Plantinga, "for a person S, if and only if it is self-evident for S, or incorrigible for S, or evident to the senses for S."[31] Or, to put it even more comprehensively: "A belief is acceptable for a person if (and only if) it is either properly basic (i.e. self-evident, incorrigible, or evident to the sense for that person), or believed on the evidential basis of propositions that are acceptable and that support it deductively, inductively, or abductively."[32]

What is the Problem with Foundationalism Philosophically? Classical foundationalism has come under attack philosophically. Alvin Plantinga, for example, has pointed out that classical foundationalism is self-referentially incoherent, because it is not a basic belief itself nor are there good arguments for it as a statement derived from basic beliefs.[33] Additionally,

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[31] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 84.

[32] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 84–85.

[33] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 94–97.

many beliefs we hold do not conform to classical foundationalism, for example, memory beliefs: what you ate for breakfast this morning.

There are, nevertheless, different forms of foundationalism that avoid these defeaters and are put forth by philosophers and theologians. This then forms a moderate foundationalism that still believes in universal criteria and a view of knowledge that is the same for all of humanity, if all things go right.

The objections of postmodern theologians against foundationalism, though, go in a different direction. It is necessary for a foundationalist epistemology that there are things that present themselves, that there is something like primal beliefs, beliefs in which we simply perceive (or *are appeared to*).[34] Postmodern theologians reject this view. There is no such thing as pure experience, there is no such thing as brute fact, which could serve as a starting point to erect the house of knowledge. Since there is no thinking outside of language and language is not some kind of neutral set of labels that we put on things as they are but a way of life, all experience is already theory-laden. There is no such thing as merely seeing, but rather there is always only "seeing as." I see the world in the way my language enables me to see the world, but also in the way my language permits me see the world. Here the philosophy of language bears directly on epistemology. As Stanley Grenz and John R. Franke put it: "The simple fact is, we do not inhabit the 'world-in-itself'; instead, we live in a linguistic world of our own making. As Berger and Luckmann note, human reality is 'socially constructed reality'."[35] This view becomes important later for the understanding of what theology is.

This can be seen as a radicalized form of Kantianism. For Kant, the mind does not simply perceive the world as it is. The mind is not some kind of mirror. Rather, the mind shapes what we perceive. But for Kant, all men have the same kind of mind, and thus the way men perceive the world is identical. Now, though, because there is no such universally structured mind, or "transcendental ego," there is not just one way to see the world; thus also there are no such universally accepted basic beliefs.

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[34] Cf. Roderick M. Chisholm, *The Foundations of Knowing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 15–18.

[35] Stanley Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 53. The quote is from Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), 68.

Additionally, since there is not one language common to all of humanity in time or space, there is not just one way to see the world. People of different languages see the world differently and there is no universal way to adjudicate between them. There is no possibility to argue that one language is better than another to depict the world, for how would one decide that? One would have to stand outside the languages and have a direct access to reality without language—something that is impossible.

This does not mean that there is no reality outside of language. Postfoundationalists are not idealists who believe that there is only language, only mind. Grenz and Franke state: "At the same time, viewed from a Christian perspective, there is a certain 'objectivity' to the world. But this objectivity is not that of a static reality existing outside of and cotemporally with our socially and linguistically constructed reality; it is not the objectivity of what some might call 'the world as it is.' Rather, seen through the lens of the gospel, this objectivity is the objectivity of the world as God wills it to be."[36]

Parallel with this rejection of basic beliefs that are based on pure perception goes also a rejection of the correspondence theory of truth, most often associated with foundationalism. According to the correspondence theory of truth, a statement is true if and only if it corresponds to the state of affairs to which it refers. The statement "There is snow on the ground" is true if and only if there is snow on the ground. Undergirding such an understanding of truth is obviously a referential understanding of language. But if one rejects this, one also has to reject the correspondence theory of truth. With the understanding of language as a tool comes either an understanding of truth as coherence (hence the preference for the talk of the web of belief) or a pragmatic understanding of truth, in the provocative formulation of Richard Rorty: "Truth is that with which my peers let me get away."[37]

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[36] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology*, 53.

[37] This is the way the oral tradition transformed what Rorty had actually written: "For Philosophers like Chisholm and Bergmann, such explanations *must* be attempted if the realism of common sense is to be preserved. The aim of all such explanations is to make truth something more than what Dewey called 'warranted assertability': more than what our peers will, *ceteris paribus*, let us get way with saying," Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 175–176. For a critique of this view, cf. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 429–35. For a defense from a postmodern Christian point of view, cf. James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?: Community, Contingency, and Creaturehood* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 73–114.

What is the Problem with Foundationalism Theologically? Postfoundation-alist theologians first simply think that foundationalism is philosophically so discredited, that holding on to it is not an option. But they do not bewail the demise of foundationalism, since it had a hold on theology with negative consequences. Once the foundationalist outline of knowledge is accepted, true knowledge in theology has to follow the foundationalist scheme. It either is based on a universal, religious, *a priori*, or a universal religious experience—this is the way Schleiermacher went, and later on Rahner and others; or it has to be based on evidence. The way of evidence can be either liberal or conservative, depending on how much reliable evidence one has found. The conservative way was to build theology on the Bible, but since belief in the Bible was no longer plausible as a basic belief (if it ever was), there now had to be reasons why one trusted the Bible: one had to go to the epistemic bedrock, so to speak, namely "historical facts." One way to do it is the sensory experience of the witnesses of the resurrection, then from the fact of the resurrection to the reliability of everything Jesus says, and so on. Belief in what the Bible says is derived from certain beliefs about history. In a more liberal way, the foundation is the person of Jesus. What the person of Jesus is like and what he said has to be found out with the tools of historical scholarship—since this is the method to find out the facts about history—and these historical facts are the bedrock of Christianity. Any person who is both of good will and not insane could thus see the truth of Christianity.

Postfoundationalists decry this approach as naïve and Pelagian. It is naïve, because there is no such thing as a "fact" that simply can be seen, nor are there universal rules for what is accepted as truth. It is Pelagian because it assumes that a person can obtain Christian beliefs by the exercise of his noetic abilities.

What Does a Non-Foundational Theology Look Like? From the assertion that language is not simply a picture of the world but that it forms our reality, it follows that Christianity in its language also creates a world: the world according to God. "As the community of Christ, we have a divinely given mandate: to be participants in God's own will for creation, a world in which everything finds its connectedness in Jesus Christ (Col 1:17) who is the *Logos*, the ordering principle of the cosmos as God intends it to be. This mandate has a strongly linguistic dimension. We participate with God as we, through the constructive power of language, create a world that links our present with the divine future, or, should we say, as the Holy

Spirit creates such a world in, among, and through us."[38] The Holy Spirit is thought to do this through the "biblical narrative."

Truth, according to this approach, means to follow the inherent logic of the system. That is, effectively a belief is either true because it coheres with other beliefs, or it is true because it works (pragmatic). Thus, the sentence "Christ is Lord" is true if and only if it shapes the life of believers. Without believers it would make no sense to talk about Christ being Lord.[39]

But if truth is not a correspondence to some objective reality outside of language, why should any non-Christian believe Christianity to be true? For Grenz and Franke there can be an argument: a view of the world and of God that is based on a social understanding of the Trinity "provides the best transcendent basis for the human ideal of life-in-relationship, for it looks to the divine life as a plurality-in-unity as the basis for understanding what it means to be human persons-in-community."[40] Thus, they use communitarian and pragmatic thought to evaluate the truth of Christianity: Christianity is true because it is the basis for the desired outcome. What is assumed is that this desired outcome is somehow a consensus among those who ask. This is of course a difficulty: is there a common interest, a common search for the good community? And if the answer is yes, does this become somehow the new foundation? From a non-foundationalist point, one could probably only say that many in our time will agree that this is a desirable goal.

Example: Scripture. Rather than going through theological *loci* to see what is suggested as postfoundational, one example will suffice, staying with that which moderns might think is foundational: Scripture.

Modernity deformed the understanding in two ways, according to the postfoundationalist narrative. Liberals, building theology on experience, saw Scripture no longer in its entirety as authoritative. Scripture reflected authentic religious experience in the language of its authors, though not in all things. Scripture had to be evaluated. In exegesis, the search was what was behind the text, most prominently of course in the case of historical-critical exegesis.[41] The conservative position was not simply the premod-

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[38] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology*, 53.

[39] Philip D. Kenneson, "There's No Such Thing as Objective Truth, and It's a Good Thing," *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*, ed. Timothy R. Philipps and Dennis L. Ockholm (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 168.

[40] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 54.

[41] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 59–60.

ern position, but also a thoroughly modern position, differing from the liberal view only in what the foundation was, not in the structure of theological thinking.[42] Thus the conservative commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture is not a traditional position: "The foundationalist requirement of indubitability or incorrigibility also accounts for the modern invention of the doctrine of scriptural inerrancy."[43] There is, however, a difference between liberals and conservatives: conservatives were more interested in history as the anchor of the truthfulness of the text, whereas liberals were interested in the experience encoded in the text, not so much in the text as historical account.[44] Conservatives were also interested in doctrine as proposition and therefore the Bible as a source for doctrine or propositions. This meant that the Bible was primarily seen as a "storehouse of theological facts." In its effort to systematize the biblical content, the effect was not to exalt Scripture, but to replace it through a doctrinal system. "Why should the sincere believer continue to read the Bible when biblical truth—correct doctrine—is more readily at hand in the latest systematic compilation offered by the skilled theologian?"[45] Grenz and Franke thus accuse conservative theologians of not leaving the text in authority, but the true authority was the doctrinal system.

Thus, postfoundationalist theology claims nothing less than bringing back the Bible from the prison of modernity to its rightful place in the church, as a text through which the Spirit "performs the perlocutionary act of fashioning 'world' through the illocutionary act of speaking through Scripture, that is, through appropriating the biblical text. This world-constructing occurs as the Spirit creates a community of persons who live

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[42] "I suggest, however, that the conservative tradition is not a holdover from premodern thought, but is rather a development parallel to the modern liberal tradition." Nancey Murphy, "Philosophical Resources for Postmodern Evangelical Theology," *Christian Scholar's Review* (1996), 184–205; 184.

[43] Nancey Murphy, "Philosophical Resources," 187.

[44] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology*, 60–61: "Eventually liberal scholars were joined in the critical task by recruits of a more conservative persuasion, who differed with their liberal colleagues only in degree, not in substance. These folks simply had a higher estimation of the amount of 'real history' that was reflected in the biblical documents. Like the quest for the religious experiences that lay under the text, the attempts to reconstruct the underlying history treated the Bible as a problem rather than a solution. As a result, the voice of scripture was stifled as the Bible became the means to discover something more interesting than the text itself. In short, conservative biblical scholars often joined cause methodologically with their liberal colleagues, while differing radically with them over the results of that method."

[45] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 63.

out the paradigmatic narrative of the Bible, that is, who view all of life through the interpretive framework the text discloses.[46] In this, the text "'absorbs' the world of the reader."[47]

The Bible is thus considered authoritative because the Spirit speaks through it to the church. "As Christians we acknowledge the Bible as scripture in that the sovereign Spirit has bound authoritative, divine speaking to this text. We believe that the Spirit has chosen, now chooses, and will continue to choose to speak with authority through the biblical text."[48] This emphasis on the present speaking of the Spirit through the Bible means, though, that *what* the Spirit is saying now to the church is more than the meaning of the text as it is historically given.[49]

In regard to inerrancy, John Franke will on the one hand affirm the concept as a second order doctrine that "serves to preserve the dynamic plurality contained in the texts of Scripture by ensuring that no portion of the biblical narrative can properly be disregarded or eclipsed because it is perceived as failing to conform to a larger pattern of systematic unity."[50] He rejects, though, that the Scriptures are doctrinally one: "When notions of inerrancy are connected with the idea of absolute truth as a single system of doctrine revealed by God that can be grasped by human beings, the result is conflict and colonization."[51] Rather, "the notion of biblical inerrancy, wed to a pluralist notion of truth, functions to ensure that orthodox, biblical faith will be understood not as an entirely coherent, single, universal, and systematic entity but rather as an open and flexible tradition that allows for the witness and testimony of plural perspectives,

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[46] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 84.

[47] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 89, using George Lindbeck.

[48] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 65.

[49] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology,* 74: "The Spirit's illocutionary act of appropriation does not come independently of what classical interpretation called 'the original meaning of the text.' Consequently, we must draw from careful exegesis to seek to understand this 'original meaning,' that is, to determine 'what the author said' (to quote Wolterstorff's designation). At the same time, the Spirit's address is not bound up simply and totally with the text's supposed internal meaning. . . . The author's intention has been 'distanced' from the meanings of the work, although the ways in which the text is structured shape the meanings the reader discerns in the text."

[50] John R. Franke, "Recasting Inerrancy: The Bible as Witness to Missional Plurality," in *Five Views on Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 276.

[51] Franke, "Recasting Inerrancy," 278.

practices, and experiences as the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ is incarnated in the witness of communities from every tribe, nation, and ethnicity."[52]

IV. Postfoundationalism as a Challenge for Lutheran Theology

To proclaim the end of foundationalism has its allure. No longer is there a need to show that Christianity is not irrational, not ahistorical, since there are no universally acceptable canons of rationality or historicity. Rather, the playing field is levelled: everybody, if scientist, Christian, proponent of queer theory, are in the same boat; they tell stories that try to make sense of the world, that try to help people to cope with "things' obduracy," to use Richard Rorty's phrase.[53]

Postfoundationalism is first and foremost a philosophical position. As such it must be philosophically evaluated, a task far too large for this essay. Thus, I only want to raise some theological questions to those who think that postfoundationalist philosophy is not only compatible, but also liberating for Christian theology. The point here is not to make an argument for philosophical foundationalism, be it classic or modified. It is obvious that theology has problems with classical foundationalism (which is now defunct). If it also has difficulties with a modified foundationalism as it is proposed by Alvin Plantinga, for example, seems much less obvious.[54]

Language certainly does more than refer, and to reduce language to propositions would be a great misunderstanding. But even if one accepts that language works as a tool, is one of its uses not to picture the world? Without any referential use of language, how do we understand the phrase

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[52] Franke, "Recasting Inerrancy," 277.

[53] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

[54] For further reading, see *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*, ed. Myron B. Penner (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005); R. Scott Smith, Truth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Postmodernism in the Church (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005); Stewart E. Kelly, *Truth Considered and Applied: Examining Postmodernism, History, and Christian Faith* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011). For some of the philosophical issues, see R. Scott Smith, *Virtue Ethics and Moral Knowledge: Philosophy of Language after MacIntyre and Hauerwas* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Roger Trigg, *Reason and Commitment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Roger Trigg, *Understanding Social Science: A Philosophical Introduction to the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001); Paul A. Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge: Against Relativism and Constructivism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

in AC I: "Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea *concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons*, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God"?[55] I read this as affirming that when we say that God is triune, we are referring, we are making an ontological statement, we are saying what God is like, we are not just telling people how they should talk about God or that this is the best way to cope with the obduracy of things.

Second, a postfoundationalist view of Scripture focusses on the performative power of Scripture to the detriment of its informative power. The Scripture is more than information about God, certainly, and to reduce it to propositions to believe is an impoverished view of Scripture. Lutherans, in viewing the content of Scripture as Law and Gospel, have always seen the primary purpose of Scripture to convict man of sin and comfort the conscience. But in preaching and teaching there is also a cognitive aspect. I would strongly contend that in our preaching and teaching we must also truly say what God is like, what God has done, and what the condition of man is. Any appropriation of a reader-response hermeneutic is deeply problematic because then the question is "Which community is the best reading?" for there is no true reading. A Pentecostal community will read the Scriptures differently than a Coptic Orthodox community, and if there is no stable meaning of the text, then there is not even the opportunity for the Bible itself to adjudicate the conflict between opposing interpretations. How does this go together with the statement in the Formula of Concord that the Scriptures are the "only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged"?

Third, is there any place for "sound doctrine" that is identical through the ages in a postfoundationalist scheme? To me it seems not, and this does not agree well with the claim of the Lutheran Confessions to articulate the one true faith which is the same since biblical times.[56] It comes as no surprise that John Franke is very critical of creedal Christianity and opines: "As a consequence, the theology that often emerges in such circles routinely is little more than a confessional variety of the foundationalism that typifies modern theology in general. This is particularly the case among

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[55] W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente, eds., Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 43.

[56] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Augustinian Inerrancy: Literary Meaning, Literal Truth, and Literate Interpretation in the Economy of Biblical Discourse," in *Five Views on Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 307.

churches and institutions that maintain theological and doctrinal standards that require a strict confessional subscriptionism."[57]

V. Conclusion

The vocation of the theologian is the same through the ages: to preach and teach the full counsel of God. The message stays the same, and its stability is given in the unchanging word of God as it was given in Scripture. As theologians, we are thankful where the cultures in which we serve are reflections of the good orders of creation and the preserving goodness of God in his creation. From the word of God we have to identify corruption and the effects of sin in our cultures. We have to reflect critically on the life of the church, being open to see where corruption has crept into the church, where the word of God has been downplayed due to cultural influences, or where cultural traditions that are truly adiaphora have been elevated to the status of divine ordinances—or unedifying and scandalous cultural traditions have been declared to be adiaphora. The art of the theologian is to distinguish: to distinguish between law and gospel, of course, but also to distinguish between word of God and word of man, creation and corruption. The word of God that is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb 4:12) does this in faithful preaching and teaching.

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[57] John R. Franke, *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 110. For a critique of Franke from a confessional Reformed point of view, cf. Paul Helm, *Faith, Form, and Fashion: Classical Reformed Theology and Its Postmodern Critics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014).

American Lutherans and the Problem
of Pre-World War II Germany

John P. Hellwege Jr.

How does one analyze and evaluate the shifting scene of culture? To do so is always a difficult and somewhat dangerous position. It is hard to grasp where present trends are leading to, as well as knowing how one is to respond to them from a truly biblical perspective. This paper will present a case study of how our fathers here in American Lutheranism dealt with the rise of the culture and political realities of Nazi Germany.

This era, known as the Third Reich, not only brought the atrocities of the Holocaust and the Second World War, but also created a challenge for people of that day to understand what was happening in Germany. Especially difficult was evaluating what was going on in Germany before the invasion of Poland. After the start of the Second World War and then the Holocaust, it was easy to point to the evils of Nazi Germany; however, for the first seven years of Hitler's reign, this was not as clear. The people in Germany and those outside Germany, as well as historians ever since, have struggled to comprehend what was happening under the Nazi regime.[1] In particular, the Lutherans in America followed these events with great interest because many hailed from German ancestry and virtually all were in some form of church fellowship with at least one church in Germany.

I. Who to Believe?

While it is easy for modern observers to look back at this time and see Hitler's anti-Semitic and warmongering speeches as portents of what was to come, in that day it was not so easy to tell what was really a sign of trouble and what was simply political posturing. This was especially true for those in America. First of all, the information coming out of Germany

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[1] For instance, Steven Ozment used most of his fourteen-page introduction to chronicle how most historians view German history through the lens of the Nazi regime, in Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004).

John P. Hellwege Jr. is Assistant Professor of Theology at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

was confusing and varied. Martin Sommer wrote in the *Lutheran Witness* in 1934:

> One reason for this is that the information which comes to us from Germany, both through letters and through the press, varies from week to week, if not day to day. What we write to-day concerning occurrences may not harmonize exactly with conditions as they will be when our reader receives this paper.[2]

After the Great War, and the prodigious propaganda campaign that was carried out in North America regarding Germany during that war, many became skeptical about press accounts. J.T. Mueller and others stated flatly that "A man cannot always believe what he reads in the daily press."[3]

Added to this were attestations from many in Germany that things were improving greatly under Hitler. Hitler managed to increase employment and therefore helped clean up Germany. He cracked down on prostitution and some pornography. He restored dignity to Germany, highlighted by hosting the Olympics in Berlin in 1936.

However, even in the eyes of American Lutheran observers, things were not all good in Germany in the mid-1930s. More and more red flags arose, ranging from the Nazi attempt to control the *Landeskirchen* ("territorial churches"), known as the *Kirchenkampf* ("church struggle"), to Nazi anti-Semitism, to the Neopaganism of Nazi beliefs. Therefore, the 1930s displayed a shift in American Lutheran perceptions of Nazi Germany from what was initially seen as a mixed bag, to ultimately seeing it as nothing short of evil.

II. The Passion for Lutheran Orthodoxy

When we look at American Lutherans in the 1930s, the one concern that reigned over all others was the preservation of Lutheran orthodoxy in Germany. The preservation of proper Lutheran doctrine was the issue that underlay every other question. As J.E. Thoen explained in the *Lutheran Sentinel*:

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[2] Martin S. Sommer, "What is happening in Germany," *The Lutheran Witness* 53 (November 20, 1934): 402; hereafter *LuthWit.*

[3] J. T. Mueller, "Ein Zeugnis Für die Wahrheit," *Der Lutheraner* 89 (May 16, 1933): 168. Similar sentiments questioning the reliability of the press can be found in Ludwig Fuerbringer, "Nachrichten aus Deutschland," *Der Lutheraner* 89 (April 18, 1933) 137–138; and Martin S. Sommer, "What is happening in Germany," *LuthWit* 53 (November 20, 1934): 402.

> When we speak of *True Lutheranism* we mean nothing less than real Biblical Christianity. The two cardinal principles of the Lutheran Reformation were: Scripture alone is the source and rule of Christian faith and life, and Salvation is by grace alone through faith in Christ Jesus. Wherever and whenever one of these fundamental principles is mutilated or lost True Lutheranism is destroyed. If we desire that our church is to be and remain truly Lutheran it is necessary that we adhere strictly to these principles and refuse to affiliate with those who build on other foundations by tolerating doctrines and practices contrary to Scripture.[4]

It should be noted that while American Lutherans of all stripes were adamant about the need for orthodox Lutheranism, there were disagreements over what exactly this was.

This concern for orthodoxy led to two primary directions in their thought. First of all, they attempted to evaluate all of the different events and issues through decidedly theological lenses. Second, this concern for Lutheran orthodoxy manifested itself in a similar concern first and foremost for fellow Lutherans. This concern was hardly out of the ordinary, as virtually all North American Protestant bodies showed much more concern for their coreligionists than other Christians, let alone non-Christians.[5]

The one danger that came with the passion for Lutheran orthodoxy was that at times they used a one-dimensional approach to evaluating what was happening in Germany. Therefore, often problems in the German churches were simplistically blamed on theological errors. The events in the *Kirchenkampf*, however, were often very chaotic with some of the issues and party lines being blurred; the level of confusion and the difficult choices that Germans found themselves dealing with were regularly misunderstood by their American observers.

The biggest single theological disquiet that the American Lutherans had was the threat of liberalism and modernism. In fact, American Lutherans saw this problem as lurking behind virtually all other problems affecting the churches in Germany and all of German culture as well. It should be noted that American Lutheranism had far more unanimity on this point in the 1930s than it does today. In fact, out of the thirty major periodicals studied, only one defended the practice of Historical Criticism,

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[4] J. E. Thoen, "Will True Lutheranism Be Destroyed?" *Lutheran Sentinel* 18 (January 30, 1935): 35, italics original.

[5] William E. Nawyn, *American Protestantism's Response to Germany's Jews and Refugees, 1933–1941* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), 185.

and that was the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, published by the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Mount Airy in Philadelphia.

One of the more vivid ways that this played out was in how they viewed the pro-Nazi attacks on the Old Testament. While most people would see these assaults as anti-Semitism attacking the Bible, most American Lutherans saw this as Historical Criticism being applied in an extreme fashion. August Zich went so far as to declare: "If almost any American liberal were to listen to any of the comparatively few neo-pagan Nazi preachers he invariably would come away wondering what was wrong with it."[6]

III. The Events of the *Kirchenkampf*

The single greatest issue in the eyes of American Lutherans in the midst of the dramatic events in Germany was the *Kirchenkampf*. Hitler's master plan was for a complete *Gleichschaltung* or "coordination" of all German life in which virtually every aspect of German culture and society was to be bent to serving the whims of Hitler.[7] Hitler accomplished much of this at an absolutely dizzying pace. In September, 1933, American Lutherans were told that:

> Within a few months, all facilities, all organizations, all left-hand establishments, all terrestrial and church situations came under the reshaping of one man's hand, a man whose name until recently was unknown. I mean of course the present chancellor of the German Reich, Adolf Hitler.[8]

This movement for *Gleichschaltung* also included the German churches. When Hitler rose to power, there were twenty-eight different *Landeskirchen*, each operating independently of the rest. However, Hitler's master political theory included the *Führerprinzip* which was the basic principle that the German people, in any area of life, could best be led by a single leader, or *Führer*, who personified the *Volk*[9] and therefore could lead the

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[6] August Zich, "Nazi Pagans and Liberal Pastors," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 21 (October 28, 1934): 340.

[7] William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 196–204.

[8] C. Mueller, "Die Jugend des neuen Deutschlands," *Lutherischer Herold* 11, no. 52 (September 28, 1933), 4; hereafter *LiH*.

[9] Since the term *Volk* for the Nazis meant more than just a "people," but was wrapped up in their idea of a united race, blood, and culture, I have chosen to keep the

people via their embodiment of the people. In applying the *Führerprinzip* to the church, this meant that the divergent *Landeskirchen* should be united into one *Reichskirche* ("imperial church") under the leadership of a single *Reichsbishof* ("imperial bishop").

Simply describing the different parties in this battle is actually harder than it sounds. On the one side is a movement known as the *Deutsche Christen* or "German Christians." However, this is not so much one movement as a series of movements that were in some ways intertwined and replacing each other. The *Deutsche Christen* intended to be the Christian soul of the Nazi party, while most of the Nazi leadership saw the *Deutsche Christen* more like useful idiots that could be used to bring the churches under Nazi control.[10]

The resistance to the *Deutsche Christen* was, from the beginning, somewhat fractured and disorganized. The resistance was headed by a series of groups that have been come to be known as the "Confessing Front," often with much of the same leadership shifting from one to the next. However, while the leadership was essentially the same within these groups, the membership was very fluid, rising and falling as the situation changed within the Protestant Church.

Further confusing matters, there was a core of more confessionally-minded Lutherans who never found themselves at home within the Confessing Front. This included the theological faculty of the University of Erlangen and the "intact" churches which were those that were never taken over by the *Deutsche Christen*, namely the Lutheran churches of Bavaria, Hanover, and Württemberg. At times there was cooperation between this "Confessional Church" and the Confessing Front, however even this was spotty and varied.[11]

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term *Volk* untranslated rather than lose some of the meaning by trying to bring it over into English.

[10] For further study of the "German Christians" see James A. Zabel, *Nazism and the Pastors: A Study of the ideas of Three Deutsche Christen Groups*, American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series 14, ed. H. Ganse Little, Jr. (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976) and Kurt Meier, *Die Deutsche Christen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1964).

[11] A number of scholars including Klaus Scholder, Ernst Christian Helmreich, and Arthur C. Cochrane consider the later development of the Lutheran Confessional Church as a splinter from the Confessing Front. However, it has been shown that the Confessional Church really was a separate group that sometimes worked with the Confessing Front, but even made their own Lutheran response to the *Deutsche Christen* in the "Bethel Confession" before the Confessing Front created the "Barmen Declaration." For more on the Confessional Church see Lowell Green, *Lutherans Against*

For those in North America, while there was great concern over the events of the *Kirchenkampf*, the determination over which group or groups were in the right was based entirely on the perceived theological orthodoxy of the respective groups. There were a few who initially saw the *Deutsche Christen* as a misguided attempt to reform the church through politics.[12] However, the vast majority of American Lutherans judged the *Deutsche Christen* as theologically wanting. They saw the *Deutsche Christen* as being theologically liberal and therefore wrongheaded.[13] A few authors went so far as to say that the *Deutsche Christen* had left true Christianity or were outright heretics.[14]

What proved more difficult to analyze was the inherent strengths and weaknesses with the Confessing Front and the Confessional Church. As a whole, the North Americans were much more closely aligned with the Confessional Church, with the exception of the Synodical Conference who argued that due to theological liberalism the Lutheran *Landeskirchen* were Lutheran in name only and the only real Lutherans in Germany were in the Saxon Free Church.[15] What are especially of interest for this study are the lenses that the American Lutherans used to try to sort out all of this.

Hitler: The Untold Story (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007) and Guy C. Carter, "Confession at Bethel, August 1933—Enduring Witness: The Formation, Revision and Significance of the First Full Theological Confession of the Evangelical Church Struggle in Nazi Germany" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1987).

[12] E. Theodore Bachmann, "Protestantism in the Nazi State," *The Lutheran Church Quarterly* 8 (January 1935): 1–12; hereafter *LCQ*; "With Lutherans in Other Lands: Germany," *The Lutheran Companion* 41 (June 17, 1933): 750–751; hereafter *LCmpn*; and "Observing the Times," *Lutheran Standard* 92, no. 14 (April 7, 1934): 3; hereafter *LStd*.

[13] "German Church Delegates Denied Passports," *Lutheran Herald* 21 (August 10, 1937): 783; herafter *LH*; Frederic Wenchel, "Nazi Germany and the Church II," *LuthWit* 56 (November 16, 1937): 390; and M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 61 (April, 1937): 251–256; hereafter *KZ*.

[14] M. Hulsemann, "Die politische und religiose Gestalt des dritten Reiches," *Kirchenblatt* 77, no. 8 (February 24, 1934): 8–9, 14; hereafter *KB*; M. Willkomm, "Zur Kirchliche Lage in Deutschland (Fortsetzung)," *Evangelisch Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt* 70 (January 27, 1935): 23–25; hereafter *ELGB*; and M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 61 (March, 1937): 188–192.

[15] W. Bodamer, "Die kirchlichen Zustände in Deutschland," *ELGB* 71 (October 4, 1936): 310–313; W. Bodamer, "Die kirchlichen Zustände in Deutschland (Schluss)," *ELGB* 71 (October 18, 1936): 328–331; and August Zich, "The Church in Germany," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 24 (March 28, 1937): 100–101.

IV. The Threat of Unionism

For the Lutheran writers in America who feared that liberalism was undermining the true Lutheran faith in Germany, one significant area was the prospect of unionism in the German Churches. For most of the American Lutherans, this threat was shown most vividly in the formation of a united *Reichskirche*, since this meant that the Lutheran *Landeskirchen* would now be a part of the same church as the smaller Reformed churches and the large Church of the Old Prussian Union (*Kirche der Altpreußischen Union*). There was a further concern that the Confessing Front also expressed a form of unionism, since it was made up of Lutherans, Calvinists, and members of the Church of the Old Prussian Union.

In general, most of the writers feared unionism as an evil that would undermine the true faith. This was a theological concern that predated the attempts to create a united *Reichskirche* in Germany, since there were articles written in 1932, as well as later, warning of the dangers associated with unionism in the United States.[16] This shows an overall concern about unionism, which was further reflected in their concerns over the events in Germany. A couple of articles explained their stance further by arguing that for churches to have any form of union they must first have unity in doctrine.[17] The clearest statement of this sentiment was a quote by Hermann Sasse in response to the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

> The Lutheran Church has a special task laid upon it, now that the movement for union has reached this point. It must reaffirm and win recognition for a principle which has exposed it to contempt and to the charge of impenitent confessionalism, namely, that true Church unity is utterly impossible without unity of faith, teaching and confession.[18]

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[16] M.C. Waller, "Unionism: What Does the Bible Say about Church Union?" *Lutheran Sentinel* 15 (January 20, 1932): 27–28; H.A. Preus, "What is Unionism?" *Lutheran Sentinel* 15 (April 27, 1932): 137–141; and J. T. Mueller, "Theological Observer—Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches: The Blindness of Modernistic Unionists," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 3 (March 1932): 217; hereafter *CTM*.

[17] Arndt, "Theological Observer—Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches: Ein gewaltiges Zeugnis gegen Irrlehre," *CTM* 7 (November 1936): 869–871; "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland. Ein Wort der Ev.luth Kirche Altpreussens an ihre Glieder," *KZ* 58 (May 1934) 319–320; and "Wird es Deutschland zu einer evangelischen Reichskirch kommen?" *LiH* 11, no. 32 (May 11, 1933): 13.

[18] Hermann Sasse, "Church Unity and the Lutheran Confessions," *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* 1, no. 11 (November, 1936): 31–34.

Because of this, it is hardly surprising that the Lutheran writers in America reacted with tremendous concern in 1933 when it appeared that all of the *Landeskirchen* might be placed together into a *Reichskirche* formed from the different confessions. These concerns were raised from a number of sources across the American Lutheran spectrum. Most of the American Lutheran writers saw this *Reichskirche* as a new, expanded version of the Prussian Union.[19]

As the decade wore on, there was a growing concern that even if the initial *Reichskirche* was not really unionistic, there was a growing pressure for unionism within the *Reichskirche* as the differences between the confessions were being downplayed. Some writers further lamented that often there were pressures on the Lutheran pastors to soften distinctive Lutheran teachings in the church.[20] Many of the authors were upset by the pressure created by the *Deutsche Christen*, who from the beginning pressed to make the *Reichskirche* into a union church.[21] Then later it was lamented that the "Thuringian German Christians" were pushing to create a "Confessionless National Church."[22] However, more of the authors actually laid the blame for the pressure for unionism right at the feet of Hitler and the Nazis.[23] In particular, there was a concern that the Nazis were insisting that the ideology of Nazism was to override all Christian teachings.[24]

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[19] M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 57 (December 1933): 759–767; H-n, "Miscellenea: Genesis der Union in Deutschland," *CTM* 8 (November 1937): 860–861; and "German Protestantism Under Nazi Government," *LH* 17 (June 27, 1933): 587.

[20] W. Bodamer, "Die kirchlichen Zustände in Deutschland," *ELGB* 71 (October 4, 1936): 310–313; "Um die Einheit der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche," *LiH* 15, no. 45 (August 5, 1937): 10–11; and J.T. Mueller, "Theological Observer—Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches: Union als Gewissenslast," *CTM* 9 (January 1938): 66–67.

[21] W. Hoenecke, "Noch einmal zur Lage der Kirche in Deutschland," *ELGB* 68 (July 9, 1933): 215; "Wohin treibt die deutsche Reichskirche?" *KB* 77, no. 15 (April 14, 1934): 5–7; and "Die 'Deutsche Evangelische Reiskirche' (Fortsetzung)," *LiH* 11, no. 34 (May 25, 1933): 8–11.

[22] "Thüringen," *LiH* 14, no. 44 (July 30, 1936): 13.

[23] M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland" *KZ* 61 (December, 1937): 762; "German Church Delegates Denied Passports," *LH* 21 (August 10, 1937): 783; and Ek., "Ako to dnes vyzerá v Nemecku v kresťanskom živote?," *Svedok* 30 (August 1, 1936): 346–350.

[24] August Pieper, "Hitler und die Protestantische Kirche Deutschlands," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 31 (January 1934): 45–52; hereafter *TQ*; August Zich, "Church News from Germany," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 25 (March 27, 1938): 99–100; and

Since there was a great deal of concern about the *Deutsche Christen* and their advocating for unionism, it is of little surprise that the leaders of the church resistance movements were also evaluated in regards to their own responses to this unionism. A fairly common assessment of the Confessing Front is that it was inherently unionistic since it was made up of Lutherans, Reformed, and members of the Prussian Union.[25] The Barmen Declaration was specifically singled out as an example of a new declaration of faith that did not take into account the varying confessions.[26] However, these criticisms were not entirely without some moderation. Several of the writers, while not overly happy about the unionism found in the movement, understood it as a possibly necessary evil in order for these churches to work together against the far greater evil of the *Deutsche Christen*.[27]

For many of the Lutherans in America, especially those in fellowship with the Lutheran *Landeskirchen*, there was some hope and pride that the Confessional Church was avoiding unionism. In particular, there was a certain amount of encouragement that came from the fact that the Lutheran bishops of the intact churches refused to allow their churches to be swallowed up in a union within the *Reichskirche*.[28] There was also a fair amount of praise for the Lutheran leaders in Germany who refused to join

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interview with President Knubel in "At a Fork in the Road: World Lutheranism Reaches Place of Choice in Sphere of Duty to World Christianity," *The Lutheran* 20, no. 37 (June 15, 1938): 13; hereafter *Luth.*

[25] "Ein evangelisches Bekenntnis in den Kirchlichen Wirren der Gegenwart," *LiH* 12, no. 37 (June 14, 1934): 12–13; August Zich, "The Church in Germany," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 24 (June 20, 1937): 195–196; and W. Bodamer, "Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse in Deutschland," *ELGB* 74 (June 25, 1939): 198–201.

[26] W. Ösch, "Der Höhepunkt des Kirchenkampfes," *CTM* 6 (December 1935): 881–888; M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland: Kirchliche Konsolidierung?" *KZ* 61 (June 1937): 383–384; and J. T. Mueller, "Theological Observer—Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches: Ein ernstes Wort gegen die Barmer Unionsplattform," *CTM* 9 (September 1938): 708–709.

[27] Arndt, "Theological Observer—Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches: Die Stellung der Bekennenden Kirche verurteilt," *CTM* 7 (December 1936): 945–946; M. Hulsemann, "Die politische und religiose Gestalt des dritten Reiches (Schluss)," *KB* 77, no. 9 (March 3, 1934): 7–8; and Max Monsky, "Zur Kirchlichen Lage in Deutschland," *LiH* 12, no. 47 (August 23, 1934): 4–6.

[28] M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 59 (December 1935): 745–761; August Pieper, "Die Zustände in der protestantischen Kirche Deutschlands," *TQ* 31 (October 1934): 270–278; and L.W. Boe, *LH* 18 (January 2, 1934) "Europe of Today,": 5–6, 20–22.

in the unionistic Confessing Front. A number of writers expressed their joy when the Confessional Church and the Confessing Front parted ways.[29]

V. The Separation of Church and State

When trying to unravel the Gordian knot that was Nazi Germany, one of the first theological distinctions that the North American Lutherans made use of was the distinction of the Two Kingdoms or Two Realms.[30] However, during this time period, the term "The Two Kingdoms" is conspicuously absent from the discussion, as most of the American Lutherans referred instead to the doctrine of the "separation of Church and State."[31]

Many of the American Lutherans saw the American political ideal of the Separation of Church and State as an ultimate example of the way it should be.[32] It appears that they were conflating the American political dogma of the separation of church and state with Luther's distinction of the two kingdoms. Yet it was clear that there was a real concern that the separation of Church and State must be properly maintained and this was reflected in a number of articles and books.[33]

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[29] W. Ösch, "Der Höhepunkt des Kirchenkampes," *CTM* 6 (December 1935): 881–888; M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland: Kirchliche Lage," *KZ* 60 (October 1936): 627–632; and Th. Buehring, "Kirchliche Nachrichten: Lehre, Gestlad und Ordnung der Lutherischen Kirche: Eklärung des „Deutschen Lutherischen Tages" in Hannover," *KB* 78, no. 35 (August 31, 1935): 11.

[30] Luther actually spoke of this as two kingdoms, two realms, and even at times spoke of there being more kingdoms including a kingdom of the devil. Kenneth Hagen, "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," in *God and Caesar Revisited*, Luther Academy Conference Papers 1, ed. John R. Stevenson (Shorewood, MN: Luther Academy Conference, 1995), 28.

[31] This is not as surprising when one realizes that the term "the Two Kingdoms" had only been developed in Germany as recently as 1922. Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 188.

[32] "Editorials and Comments: Church and State," *The Ansgar Lutheran* 10, no. 15 (April 11, 1938): 3, 7; hereafter *AnL*; C. H. Becker, "The Relation Between Church and State," *The Pastor's Monthly* 10 (October 1932): 579–587; Theodore Graebner, "Separation of Church and State," *CTM* 4 (April 1933): 249–255; and "The U.S. Constitution and the Augsburg Confession," *LH* 21 (September 14, 1937): 904.

[33] Robert Fortenbaugh, review of *Seven Centuries of the Problem of Church and State,* by Frank Gavin, *LCQ* 12 (January 1939): 97–98; Walter A. Maier, review of *Seven Centuries of the Problem of Church and State,* by Frank Gavin, *Walther League Messenger* 47 (November, 1938): 192; hereafter *WLM;* Olaf Lysnes, review of *Church and State,* by G. T.

While there were more than a couple of absolutely shocking endorsements of Hitler and Nazism during the 1930s, much of the praise that American Lutherans had for Hitler was explained in terms of how he was fulfilling his responsibility in the civil realm to take care of the German nation, its culture, and its people. In this, the North American Lutheran publishers reminded their readers regularly of the terrible state that Germany had been in when Hitler came to power.[34]

The publishers gave the greatest support for Hitler in response to how quickly he turned around the German economy. There was amazement at just how positive things were starting to look for the German people within the first couple years of Hitler's tenure.[35] This included an emphasis on unemployment and how the German nation was working to uphold the value of labor as Lars Boe observed:

> Judging superficially, they seem to be solving many of their difficulties in Germany and the other European lands far better than we are here. Unemployment is not as great. One gets the impression that they are approaching their problems not merely from the negative standpoint of relief, but on the more constructive platform of trying to get everyone on an earning and self-sustaining basis. [36]

One great fear that gripped the North American Lutheran publishers was the spread of communism. There were numerous articles expressing fear over the possible spread of communism in the United States. This led to a collective sigh of relief from them that Hitler had saved Germany from the specter of bolshevism. In this regard, Hitler was certainly seen as a savior in the left-hand realm by keeping communism out of Germany and often even beyond Germany as he was considered the first to truly stem the rising red tide.

Lee, *LH* 16 (October 18, 1932): 1182; Theodore Graebner, review of *American Church Law,* by Carl Zollmann, *CTM* 4 (April 1933): 249–255; and review of *American Church Law,* by Carl Zollmann, *Luth* 15, no. 30 (April 27, 1933): 16.

[34] "The Church in General: The Churches Helping in Germany," *AnL* 5, no. 5 (February 3, 1932): 10; "Across the Desk: Worthless Money," *Luth* 15, no. 24 (March 16, 1933): 15; and Eugen Kühnemann, "Das neue Deustchland," *KB* 76, no. 49 (December 9, 1933): 4–5.

[35] Interestingly, the only reference to Germany in *The Lutheran Layman* was praising how beautiful, orderly, and clean Germany had become: Herman Wellensieck, "A Visit to Germany," *The Lutheran Layman* 5 (December, 1934): 48.

[36] Lars W. Boe, "Impressions of Germany," *AnL* 7, no. 53 (December 31, 1934): 5.

The writers were also concerned about the rampant immorality they saw in Germany until Hitler eradicated it when he came to power. This included the problem of the widespread publication of pornography in Germany.[37] There was also a concern about the widespread publishing of Bolshevik and anti-Christian literature in Germany. To this end, some of the authors even endorsed or at least expressed understanding of the Nazi book burnings as a legitimate means of cleaning up the society.[38] Others, however, were rather concerned about this and especially how widely the Nazis appeared to be casting their nets regarding which books were legitimate for burning.[39]

This did not mean that all that the Nazi government did was seen as good; however for many of the American Lutherans much of what was being done in the civil realm in Germany was seen as very positive. For instance, when asked by a reader in 1933 how the *Lutherischer Herold* could speak so positively about the Nazi regime, C.R. Tappert responded that what Hitler was doing in the secular realm was good and the problems only arose when he meddled in the churches.[40] Concerns were also raised about the treatment of the Jews. The greatest concern that the Lutheran writers in America had, however, was that the Nazi government was mixing Church and State. Yet for many what was going on in the civil realm in Germany was praised and a few even offered glowing support for Hitler in the very early 1930s. The most vocal praise was found in the *Walther League Messenger* where Walter A. Maier in April 1933 described Hitler as "a natural-born leader, accentuated by serious and sober judgments and moved by a rare understanding of Germany's essential needs."[41] Then in July 1933, Hans Kirsten, a Lutheran pastor in Germany praised Maier's article as "calm, unprejudiced opinion" and referred to Hitler as "one of the great men of our history, but who, up to this time, has

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[37] "Conditions in Germany," *LH* 19 (November 12, 1935): 1100; Theo. Buehring, "Kirchliche Nachrichten—Aus anderen Kreisen: Neuer—und doch alter—Geist in Deutschland," *KB* 76, no. 19 (May 13, 1933): 12; and Walter A. Maier, "Editorials: 'Hitler Shows the Way,' " *WLM* 41 (April 1933): 461.

[38] "Hitler Burns Bolshevist Books," *LH* 17 (June 20, 1933): 564–565; "With Lutherans in Other Lands: Germany," *LCmpn* 41 (September 16, 1933): 1181; and J. T. Mueller, "Hitlers Bücherverbrennung," *Der Lutheraner* 89 (August 8, 1933): 267–268.

[39] "Ueber die feierliche Verbrennung undeutscher und schmutziger Literatur in Berlin," *LiH* 11, no. 39 (June 29, 1933): 5.

[40] C. R. Tappert, "Antworten auf allerlei Fragen," *LiH* 11, no. 45 (August 10, 1933): 8–10.

[41] Walter A. Maier, "Editorials: 'Hitler Shows the Way,'" *WLM* 41 (April 1933): 461.

been maligned and dragged through the dirt of the streets by the unscrupulous foreign press under Jewish control."[42] However, these statements were questioned by readers and within a couple of years Maier repudiated Hitler and his totalitarianism.[43]

For most of the Americans it was hard to miss the antagonism that existed between the two kingdoms in Nazi Germany. For some, these tensions were seen as unavoidable since there was a strong church and a strong government involved, and especially when elements such as nationalism are injected into both.[44] The readers of the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* were advised that the nature of the massive upheaval that Germany had experienced naturally placed a great stress on the church and it warned German churches as well as North Americans that they should not fall into the extremes of quietism on one hand or getting caught up in the movement of the hour on the other side and thereby fail to rightly distinguish the two kingdoms.[45]

Some of the writers saw the clash of the church and state in Germany as inevitable, because both were making totalitarian claims on the individual. This was a radical clash of worldviews that each claimed to give total meaning to one's life and therefore the two must ultimately battle each other.[46] Karl Barth was cited in *The Lutheran Companion* as pointing out this unavoidable conflict: "Nazism, he says, is not only a political experiment, but is maintained as a religious institution of salvation; the Church cannot, therefore, adopt a neutral attitude."[47] As a result, many saw the Nazi program of *Gleichschaltung* as a real threat to the church since

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[42] Hans Kirsten, "Hitler Shows the Way," *WLM* 41 (July 1933): 662.

[43] Walter A. Maier, "Editorials: The Old Game," *WLM* 46 (March 1938): 422.

[44] Nathan R. Melhorn, "That Which We Call Nationalism," *Luth* 15, no. 40 (July 6, 1933): 3–4; "Germany's Church Problems," *Luth* 20, no. 13 (December 29, 1937): 2; and J. Jenny, "Observations and Impressions of Church and Religious Life in European Countries," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 19 (November 6, 1932): 361–364.

[45] D. Schöffel, "Das Luthertum und die religiöse Krise der Gegenwart," *KZ* 60 (March 1936): 129–134.

[46] Arthur von der Thur, "Gleichschaltung des Evangeliums," *LiH* 11, no. 39 (June 29, 1933): 2–3; and Daniel Nystrom, "The Spectator: A Review of Current News and Opinion," *LCmpn* 47 (February 16, 1939): 199.

[47] Daniel Nystrom, "The Spectator: A Review of Current News and Opinion," *LCmpn* 47 (December 14, 1939): 1576.

the church was seen as being forced into the Nazi program and world-view.[48]

There were, however, a few voices that said that there really was no problem between the Two Kingdoms in Germany. These writers insisted that Hitler and the Nazis were actually in favor of a Lutheran separation of the Church and State. While this might seem incredible today, there was some evidence in favor of this position. As proof, they pointed to the numerous statements by Hitler and other Nazi leaders that they were actually in favor of this type of separation. The most common source cited was how Hitler argued in *Mein Kampf* that a political leader cannot be a religious reformer.[49] They also cited Hitler's various speeches in which he declared that he was not interested in meddling in the church's affairs.[50] There were some writers that even held out hope that Hitler was going to step in and preserve the separation.[51] Beyond just Hitler, some of the Nazi leaders, including Gottfried Feder, Joseph Goebbels, Herman Goering, and Hanns Kerrl were also quoted to show that they were truly in favor of keeping a proper separation between church and state.[52]

Many were greatly concerned that the Nazi government was attempting to make the German churches subservient to the state via the *Reichs-kirche* and particularly through the *Deutsche Christen* and thereby mixing Church and State.[53] Henry Smith Leiper went so far as to say that in

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[48] Arthur von der Thur, "Vor neuen Entscheidungen im deutschen Kirchenstreit," *LiH* 13, no. 52 (September 26, 1935): 11; and "At a Fork in the Road: World Lutheranism Reaches Place of Choice in Sphere of Duty to World Christianity," *Luth* 20, no. 37 (June 15, 1938): 13.

[49] M. Lehninger, "Zur kirchlichen Lage in Deutschland," *TQ* 33 (July 1936): 195; M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 57 (June 1933): 377–378.

[50] "Ueber die kirchliche Lage in Deutschland," *LiH* 16, no. 33 (May 19, 1938): 10–11; M. Lehninger, "Zur kirchlichen Lage in Deutschland," *TQ* 33 (July 1936): 195–197.

[51] "Do We Appreciate the Blessings of Religious Liberty?" *LH* 18 (March 13, 1934): 244.

[52] M. Lehninger, "Zur kirchlichen Lage in Deutschland," *TQ* 33 (July 1936): 197–198; M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland. Aus Generalfeldmarschall Görings Rede," *KZ* 62 (May 1938): 319–320.

[53] E. C. Fendt, "An Estimate of the Religious Situation in Germany," *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* 1, no. 1 (January 1936): 61. The same article was also printed in: *LCmpn* 43 (November 2, 1935): 1382–1384; *LH* 19 (October 29, 1935): 1056–1057; and *LStd* 93, no. 44 (November 2, 1935): 6–7.

Germany God was allowed only if He salutes Hilter.[54] Michael Reu, in light of Hitler's call for church elections in 1937, stated that one of the three main questions facing the German Church was "Should the Protestant Church become an instrument of the Nazi State?"[55]

While it seemed clear to virtually all North American Lutherans that the *Deutsche Christen* were guilty of mixing the Church and State some went a step further and saw all of the *Landeskirchen* as guilty, too. This was so seen primarily by those who were in fellowship with the Saxon Free Church in Germany, most notably the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod. They viewed any form of state-supported church as an improper mixing of the Church and State and therefore viewed all sides in the *Kirchenkampf* as equally guilty on this count. It was made clear to the North American Lutheran public that the problems in the fights between the Church and State in Germany were all confined to the *Landeskirchen*.[56]

VI. Direct Threats to Christianity in Germany

Since the preservation of pure Christianity was of foremost concern for the American Lutheran Churches, it is also important to understand their concern over the existential threat to Christianity in Europe that was being posed by Communism. Not only was Communism seen as a force for evil, but it was also considered to be synonymous with atheism. This was no idle concern, for as historian James Kegel describes it:

> During the same period that the *Kirchenkampf* was raging in Germany, the entire Russian Lutheran Church was wiped out. It is important to keep this backdrop in mind as we investigate American Lutheran reaction to Hitler. What often appears as approval of National Socialist aims and an apparent excusing of excesses in religious policy or antisemitism is often based upon the contrast with Stalinism in Russia. It seems likely that American Lutherans would have been less for-

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[54] Henry Smith Leiper, "The Issues in the German Church Struggle," *AnL* 7, no. 25 (June 18, 1934): 5–6.

[55] M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 61 (March 1937): 188–192. The article was also reprinted as "Staat und Kirche in Deutschland," *LiH* 15, no. 27 (April 1, 1937): 13–14.

[56] Geo. O. Lillegard, "The Church and the World," *Lutheran Sentinel* 21 (January 26, 1938): 20–21.

bearing and willing to excuse German government claims without the example of Stalinist terror.[57]

For the American Lutherans, the Soviet Union's persecution and systematic attempts to eradicate Christianity and all religion was the greatest single threat to all Christianity. These concerns overshadowed all reports of persecution of Christians and even that of Jews in Germany during this era.[58] There were a number voicing outrage at how the American press was busy lamenting the persecution of the Jews in Germany while overlooking the widespread murder and destruction of Christians in the Soviet Union. Walter A. Maier, who was one of the most vocal critics of this perceived injustice, wrote of communism:

> The Christian must renew his vow of hostility to this enthroned blasphemy and redouble his interest and prayers in behalf of the oppressed millions of Christians in Russia concerning whom we have heard far less than the allegedly persecuted Jews of Germany.[59]

This concern led to a general agreement that Hitler's rise to power was good in that it stopped communism from spreading into Germany. However, the perceptions of how good this was varied greatly. A number stated that Christians should be thankful for Hitler because he stopped communism from spreading in Germany and therefore to other areas of Europe as well.[60] Nevertheless, others were more concerned that, while the stopping of communism in Germany was good, Hitler was not much better, as the *Lutheran Herald* editorialized: "The issue was between the choice of a red or a brown dictator, and the German people decided for Hitler, who was at least in favor of some form of religion as against the atheistic communists."[61]

Next to Marxist atheism, the rise of neo-paganism in Germany was the greatest threat to the continued existence of Christianity in the eyes of the American Lutherans. Their concern was over the series of movements that sought to undermine the Christian church in Germany and even supplant

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[57] James David Kegel, "A Church Come of Age: American Lutheranism and National Socialism, the German Church Conflict, and the reconstitution of the church: 1933–1948" (ThD diss., Lutheran School of Theology, 1988): 18.

[58] "The Bible in Germany," *Lutheran Sentinel* 22 (August 12, 1939): 238.

[59] Walter A. Maier, "The Church Will Never Recognize Atheism," *WLM* 42 (December 1933): 239.

[60] "Hitler Burns Bolshevist Books," *LH* 17 (June 20, 1933): 564–565; Martin Ulbrich, "Brief aus der alten Heimat," *LiH* 11, no. 21 (February 23, 1933): 4–5.

[61] "Religious Liberty in Germany Threatened," *LH* 17 (December 12, 1933): 1139.

it.[62] As a result, the editors of these periodicals commented on the various neo-pagan movements and reported with alarm their growth in power and prestige.

While every North American Lutheran group was concerned about this German neo-paganism, the assessments of how rampant it was and even the nature of it varied greatly. There were a few who saw the neo-pagans as a vocal, yet largely powerless, minority.[63] Others explained that these groups were small, but wielded a disproportionately large amount of power.[64] Still others saw this neo-pagan movement as a fairly large and quickly growing threat to the existence of orthodox Christianity.[65] Of those that saw it as a real threat, there were a number of citations of how the neo-pagans were calling for the end of Christianity in Germany.[66]

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[62] The power and prevalence of neo-paganism in Nazi thought has been debated over the years. A number have argued that Nazi thought was based on Christian anti-Semitism. This argument has been most recently put forth in Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). However, a larger body of work has pointed to the inherent neo-paganism in Nazi thought: from Klaus Scholder, "Judaism and Christianity in the Ideology and Politics of National Socialism, 1919–1945" in *A Requiem for Hitler and Other New Perspectives on the German Church Struggle*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 168–181; to George L. Mosse, "The Mystical Origins of Nazism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 81–96; to the most recent work: Karla Poewe, *New Religions and the Nazis* (New York: Routledge, 2006). The debate between Steigmann-Gall and Poewe was also analyzed by Uwe Siemon-Netto, review of *The Holy Reich*, by Richard Steigmann-Gall, and review of *New Religions and the Nazis*, by Karla Poewe, *Lutheran Quarterly* 21 (Winter 2007): 479–482. Siemon-Netto points to Poewe as having the better researched and better defended stance in explaining the Nazi regime as based on neo-paganism.

[63] H. Dierks, "The New Germany II," *LuthWit* 55 (October 20, 1936): 346–347; Walter A. Maier, "Turret of the Times: Neo-pagan propaganda in Germany makes no appreciable gains," *WLM* 46 (February 1938): 384; and E. C. Fendt, "An Estimate of the Religious Situation in Germany," *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* 1, no. 1 (January 1936): 61. This same article was also printed in: *LCmpn* 43 (November 2, 1935): 1382–1384; *LH* 19, no. 44 (October 29, 1935): 1056–1057; and *LStd* 93, no. 44 (November 2, 1935): 6–7.

[64] Frederic Wenchel, "Nazi Germany and the Church II," *LuthWit* 56 (November 16, 1937): 390; and "The Younger National Socialists in Germany," *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* 3, no. 12 (December 1938): 70.

[65] "Will das deutsche Volk noch christlich sein?" *LiH* 16, no. 25 (March 24, 1938): 11; and John Aberly, "Notes and Studies: Religion in the Third Reich," *LCQ* 11 (October 1938): 386.

[66] Th. F., "Das Ende des Christentums?" *LiH* 17, no. 45 (August 17, 1939): 5–6; Hugo von Gaffan Perdelwitz, "Protestant Germany Today," *AnL* 7, no. 17 (April 23, 1934): 4–7;

While there was never unanimity amongst the North American Lutherans as to whether or not there was a uniform persecution of Christians by the Nazis, most did see at least sporadic examples of persecution of the Church. This was most keenly felt by those who were in fellowship with one or more of the *Landeskirchen*, as those in fellowship with the Lutheran free churches tended to see these persecutions more as punishments for political meddling by pastors and church leaders. Those that did perceive actions by the Nazi government as the persecution of Christians, faithful pastors, and bishops were quick to sound the alarm and denounce those measures. By late 1938, even Michael Reu, who was the last major North American Lutheran apologist for the Nazi government, saw Nazism as anti-Christian and demonic—not that it was trying to destroy the church; rather, it was trying to control it.[67]

VII. Wrestling with Pro-Nazi Theology

Related to the neo-pagan ideas that were spreading in Germany there were new theological ideas which made their way into the German churches as well, and American Lutheran theologians were forced to wrestle with these new constructs. These ideas were at least partially connected to the neo-pagan ideas, yet were also given a distinctly Christian hue making them all the harder to evaluate. Furthermore, these ideas were supported by some of the greatest German theologians of the time, who therefore offered their support to the Nazi cause.[68]

In 1926, Adolf Hitler declared Article 24 of the Nazi Party Program to be unalterable. This article stated:

> We insist upon freedom for all religious confessions in the state, providing they do not endanger its existence or offend the German race's sense of decency and morality. The Party as such stands for a positive Christianity, without binding itself denominationally to a particular confession. It fights against the Jewish-materialistic spirit at home and abroad and believes that any lasting recovery of our people must be

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and Martin S. Sommer, "The Church in Germany," *LuthWit* 53 (March 27, 1934): 121–122.

[67] M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 62 (December 1938): 750–760.

[68] Robert P. Eriksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emmanuel Hirsch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

based on the spiritual principle: the welfare of the community comes before that of the individual.[69]

This raises the question of what is meant by "positive Christianity." Hitler and the Nazis shrewdly left the term undefined, thereby allowing others to pour into it whatever meaning they wanted.

At first, many American Lutherans thought that this was good; for instance, August Pieper defined "positive Christianity" as not Liberalism.[70] The most thorough and glowing review of "positive Christianity" argued that there really is no "negative Christianity," rather it is positive in that it is in favor of holding firm to the faith. The author pointed to Luther and how the crucified and risen Christ is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls; therefore "positive Christianity" holds to this with no compromise. The editors applauded what they perceived as a firm stand for the truth of the Gospel.[71]

As the 1930s went on, more and more Lutherans became skeptical due to the nebulous nature of "positive Christianity." First, there was suspicion that this might be a means of manipulating people. By the end, most came to conclude that this was essentially a social-Gospel type of idea to support the Nazi reforms.[72]

One of the most central aspects of the Nazi ideology was that there was something unique and vital in the nature of the German people as a *Volk*. Karla Poewe adroitly defines the concept of *völkisch* as a term that

refers to the sense of being grasped by the reality of nation that arises out of the unity of space, blood, and spirit and that constrains all into one community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Here nation is the concrete spiritual mediator between providence and individual. And note, this definition assumes the fusion of religion and politics, religion and nation, biology and spirit, as well as tragedy and heroism. These are

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[69] Peter Matheson, *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1981), 1.

[70] August Pieper, "Hitler und die Protestantische Kirche Deutschlands," *TQ* 31 (January 1934): 45–52.

[71] Joh. Jeremias, "Positives Christentum," *LiH* 12, no. 49 (September 6, 1934): 6; and J. T. Mueller, "Theological Observer—Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches: Positives Christentum," *CTM* 6 (January 1935): 70–71.

[72] "Persecution of Christians," *LH* 22 (November 29, 1938): 1200–1201.

all aspects that made German faith so compelling to those who regarded Christianity as part of the demise of Western civilization.[73]

Poewe further points out that this is not a Christian notion, but a neo-Pagan idea based on the *Volk*.[74]

In the extreme form, *völkisch* thought was a type of dualism that viewed the world as embattled in a struggle between good and evil with the German *Volk* being the representatives of good and the Jewish *Volk* as being the representatives of evil forces in the world.[75] While this is really a form of neo-paganism, there were some Christian thinkers in Germany, such as Emmanuel Hirsch and Paul Althaus, who attempted to moderate this by arguing that one of the orders of creation that God placed in the world was the *Volk* and that therefore the church in a given part of the world had a special responsibility to its *Volk*.

Some of the North Americans who took a more sympathetic view of the *völkisch* theology saw it as a way of explaining how the Church had a responsibility to the people to which they were called. This was therefore seen as an extension of the traditional Lutheran teaching on the orders of creation.

In particular, a fair bit of attention was paid to Althaus' work on the orders of creation. Many applauded this emphasis of Althaus, especially how he emphasized the Lutheran understanding that the orders of creation, while divinely ordained, are nonetheless tainted by human sin.[76] Some of the writers echoed Althaus' teaching that since God placed us within these orders, one has a duty to live within and serve these orders. Michael Reu and others argued that the church in a given area has a specific call to serve the *Volk* in which it has been placed.[77] Althaus was

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[73] Poewe, "The Völkisch Origins of National Socialism," 2.

[74] Poewe, "The Völkisch Origins of National Socialism," 3.

[75] Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, vol. 1, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 74–87; and Scholder, "Judaism and Christianity in the Ideology and Politics of National Socialism, 1919–1945."

[76] Review of *Theologie der Ordnungen,* by Paul Althaus, *KZ* 59 (April 1935): 248–249; review of *Theologie der Ordnungen,* by Paul Althaus, *KZ* 61 (March 1936): 180; and E. E. Fischer, review of *Theologie der Ordnungen,* by Paul Althaus, *LCQ* 8 (January 1935): 96–97.

[77] M. Reu, "Kirchliche Chronik—Ausland: Deutschland," *KZ* 59 (October 1935): 617–640; and "Grundsätze und Forderungen," *LiH* 11, no. 48 (August 31, 1933): 14.

particularly praised for insisting that while he felt bound to his *Volk*, he was first and foremost a Christian and would not give that up.[78]

While there were some who applauded the extension of the orders of creation to include the *Volk*, others were rather skeptical about it. There were some rather strong denunciations of this theological move. In particular, this was seen as undermining the Gospel, since the advocates of understanding a *völkisch* aspect to theology tended to make the church subservient to the *Volk*.[79] Some writers were further concerned that in Germany the civil leaders were attempting to force the church to be subservient to its neo-pagan *völkisch* thought. This concern came particularly later in the 1930s, especially from 1937 on.[80] The German theologian that some authors highlighted for his criticism of *völkisch* theology was Hermann Sasse. Sasse was praised not only for rejecting the notion that Lutheranism was somehow a Germanic religion rather than universal Christianity, but he was also praised for arguing that in the Bible the only *Volk* that mattered was the people (*Volk*) of God.[81] Sasse further argued that the idea of *Volk* would have been foreign to the reformers, since it came out of rationalism.[82] He pointed out that the Confessions give the "Natural orders as a) Natural law, b) marriage (family), c) economy," and correct order of priority as "a) marriage (family), b) economy, c) politics."[83] Sasse concluded: "Within these orders, the *Volk* has no place."[84]

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[78] Paul Althaus, "Germanische Religion, deutsche Art und Christusglaube," *LiH* 13, no. 15 (January 10, 1935): 4–5.

[79] Th. Engelder, "Kirche, Staat, Obrigkeit, Volk, Rasse, Familie—und Gottes Wort," *CTM* 6 (December 1935): 881–888; M. Reu, "Wer sind die "deutschen Christen? Schluss," *KZ* 57 (December 1933): 720–739; and "Christentum und Germanentum," *KB* 78, no. 14 (April 6, 1935): 5–6.

[80] "Church and State Relationship in Germany," *Luth* 20, no. 18 (February 2, 1938): 2.

[81] J.T. Mueller, review of *Here we Stand: The Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith,* by Hermann Sasse, *CTM* 9 (August 1938): 634–637; Hermann Sasse, "Das Volk nach der Lehre der evangelischen Kirche," *KZ* 58 (April 1934): 193–218; and Hermann Sasse, "Die lutherische Kirche der Welt in der Gegenwart," *KB* 78, no. 41 (October 12, 1935): 5–6.

[82] Hermann Sasse, "Das Volk nach der Lehre der evangelischen Kirche," *KZ* 58 (April 1934): 196.

[83] Sasse, "Das Volk nach der Lehre der evangelischen Kirche," 210.

[84] Sasse, "Das Volk nach der Lehre der evangelischen Kirche," 212.

VIII. Nazi Anti-Semitism

The one aspect that is most often discussed and questioned was how the North Americans viewed Nazi anti-Semitism.[85] In this regard, the record is decidedly mixed. On the one side, there were two multi-part articles published which were chillingly entitled "*Die Judenfrage*" ("The Question About the Jews"), which was the very term used in Nazi propaganda, and these articles read like something that could have been published under Goebbels' direction.[86] However, the majority of the North Americans rejected these views, and by the middle of 1934 these ideas were no longer put into print in American Lutheran circles.

A common theme that was echoed time after time was that Christians should show love towards the Jews as neighbors and therefore as people included in the biblical command to "love your neighbor as yourself." The writers from a variety of Lutheran church bodies all agreed that Christians have a duty towards all, including the Jews, to treat them with respect and love. They then pointed out that this duty eliminates all possibility for racial hatred.[87]

Elias Newman of the Zion Society for Israel was the one who took the lead in defending Luther from charges that he was anti-Semitic and that Lutheran ideas were behind Nazi anti-Semitism. Newman, a Christian Jew, was able to stand up and argue from a stronger perspective than the Gentiles that Luther was distinguishing between the Jewish race and the Jewish religion. He pointedly insisted: "Luther was no anti-Semite. His

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[85] Examples include Kenneth Barnes, "American Lutherans and the Third Reich," in *What Kind of God? Essays in Honor of Richard Rubenstein*, ed. B. Rubenstein and M. Berenbaum (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1995), Frederick I. Murphy, "The American Christian Press and Pre-War Hitler's Germany," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1970), William E. Nawyn, *American Protestantism's Response to Germany's Jews and Refugees, 1933–1941* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), and Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

[86] W. Reinecke's two part article, "Die Judenfrage," in *KZ* 57 (July, 1933): 412–417; "Die Judenfrage: Schluss," *KZ* 57 (August, 1933): 473–479 and R. Joh. Flierl's three-part article "Die Judenfrage," *KB* 77 (January 13, 1934): 4–7; *KB* 77, no. 3 (January 20, 1934): 6–9, 14; *KB*, 77, no. 4 (January 27, 1934): 6–8.

[87] "Anti-Semitism," *LH* 22 (November 29, 1938): 1199; J. A. Pfeiffer, "Church News: The Christian Frame of Mind toward the Jew," *LStd* 95, no. 42 (October 9, 1937): 11–12; and Osborne Hauge, "Diplomat Condemns Nazi Rule," *LCmpn* 46 (March 17, 1938): 330–331.

violent language was always directed against the Jewish religion, which he considered false, and never against the Jewish race."[88]

IX. Conclusion

Years later, Hermann Sasse wrote to Kurt Marquart that confessionally Lutheran professors at first

> sympathized with the Nazi Movement because they did not understand its revolutionary and anti-Christian character. They lacked the great gift of discerning spirits. . . . They did not know that Hitler was a criminal. . . . Unfortunately, some of our Free Church brethren were also blind. . . . Hitler would never tolerate a church which did not accept his program, including all the laws against the Jews and even faithful Jewish-Christians. But the Lutherans in Germany were blind. . . . Nothing has done more damage to the name of Lutheranism in Germany than this complete failure to see the realities of Nazism and to apply the eternal Law of God also to Hitler and the political powers of the world.[89]

In some ways, this same charge can be leveled at North American Lutherans as well. However, as we have seen, their physical distance did help them to do a better job of analyzing what was happening in Germany.

More than anything else, when they utilized their theological tools of concern about liberal thought, and unionism, as well as applying the correct limits of the state according to the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and the need to love one's neighbor, they ended up coming to the right answers. In fact, it appears that the more the North Americans were mesmerized by purely secular concerns, the more trouble they had in giving a proper analysis of the situation in Germany. But when they leaned more on their theological standards, they were better able to see clearly.

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[88] Elias Newman, "Martin Luther and the Jews," *LH* 23 (May 23, 1939): 489.

[89] From a letter to Kurt Marquart dated Sept. 10, 1967, quoted in John R. Wilch, "Hermann Sasse and Third Reich Threats to the Church," in *Hermann Sasse: A Man for Our Times?: Essays from the 20th Annual Lutheran Life Lectures, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada (30 October–1 November 1995): an International Theological Symposium Marking the Centennial of the Birth of Dr. Hermann Sasse,* eds. John R. Stephenson, and Thomas M. Winger (Saint Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 1998).

Research Notes

The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife:*
An Obituary for a Forgery

From time to time, sensational news and fiction about Jesus and the Bible appear in the media. Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*, for example, misled and confused some Christians. A more serious and seemingly scholarly article published in a Harvard journal argued for the legitimacy of a text that mentioned "Jesus' wife." This "find" has since been debunked by scholars, and now the story of how this historical fiction developed has been told.

On 18 September 2012, the discovery of a small papyrus fragment with a Coptic text was announced, which came to be entitled *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* (*GJW*) and which garnered world-wide media attention. Not long after that, I wrote a short response which argued that the manuscript was a modern forgery on an ancient piece of papyrus.[1] Because subsequent research and articles confirming that it is indeed a forgery have not received much attention by the news media here or abroad, this short update on research related to this text may help shed more light on the evolving saga surrounding this fragment.

In spite of serious doubts about the authenticity of *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* that were expressed by numerous scholars, *Harvard Theological Review* went ahead in April 2014 with publishing the article written by Karen L. King, the Harvard Divinity School scholar who announced the manuscript in 2012 with much fanfare.[2] *Harvard Theological Review* also published two accompanying pieces by scholars whom King had called upon to substantiate the authenticity of the papyrus and ink.[3] To the credit of

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[1] Charles A. Gieschen, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: A Modern Forgery?" *CTQ* 76 (2012): 334–337. I follow the practice of rendering the possessive form of "Jesus" as Jesus' (rather than Jesus's as in some of the works cited below); see William Struck Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3rd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 1. Rendering the possessive form as Jesus's is especially problematic in oral communication (e.g., as heard in some sermons).

[2] Karen L. King, "Jesus said to them, 'My wife . . . '": A New Coptic Fragment," *Harvard Theological Review* 107 (2014): 131–159.

[3] Malcolm Choat, "*The Gospel of Jesus's Wife*: A Preliminary Paleographical Assessment," *Harvard Theological Review* 107 (2014): 160–164; Joseph M. Azzarelli, John B. Goods, and Timothy M. Swager, "Study of Two Papyrus Fragments with Fourier

Harvard Theological Review, they also published an article by Leo Depuydt of Brown University in the same issue which challenges and critiques King's position that the fragment could be from an ancient Gnostic Gospel.[4] He concludes "it is out of the question that the so-called *Gospel of Jesus's Wife*, also known as the Wife of Jesus Fragment, is an authentic source."[5] King, however, was given the last word in her response printed immediately following the Depuydt article. She concludes with this re-affirmation of her position that the fragment is authentic: "Depuydt's essay does not offer any substantial evidence or persuasive argument, let alone unequivocal surety, that the *GJW* fragment is a modern fabrication (forgery)."[6]

It is noteworthy that several articles related to the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* were published in a 2015 issue of the journal *New Testament Studies*.[7] Even though a widespread scholarly consensus had already developed by the end of 2012 that the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* was not authentic, it is commendable that *New Testament Studies* invited six authors to contribute articles concerning or related to the fragment, some of whom had done research on it in the months after its announcement, in order to have careful studies in print that expose it convincingly as a forgery. The *New Testament Studies* editorial introducing these articles expressed this purpose:

> [I]t is now widely accepted that the Jesus' Wife fragment is in reality a recent forgery. That is the view taken by contributors to this issue of

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Transform Infrared Microspectoroscopy," *Harvard Theological Review* 107 (2014): 165–171.

[4] Leo Depuydt, "The Alleged *Gospel of Jesus's Wife*: Assessment and Evaluation of Authenticity," *Harvard Theological Review* 107 (2014): 172–189.

[5] Depuydt, "The Alleged *Gospel of Jesus's Wife*," 189.

[6] Karen L. King, "Response to Leo Depuydt, 'The Alleged *Gospel of Jesus's Wife*: Assessment and Evaluation of Authenticity,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 107 (2014): 190–193.

[7] Simon Gathercole, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife:* Constructing a Context," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 292–313; Christian Askeland, "A Lycopolitan Forgery of John's Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 314–334; Andrew Bernhard, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: Textual Evidence of a Modern Forgery," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 335–355; Myriam Krutzsch, "Material Criteria and their Clues for Dating," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 356–367; Christopher Jones, "The Jesus' Wife Papyrus in the History of Forgery," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 368–378; and Gesine Schenke Robinson, "How a Papyrus Fragment Became a Sensation," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 379–394. Bernhard's article is an expansion of his very significant earlier online article that I cited in Gieschen, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife:* A Modern Forgery?" 336.

the journal, not because they are predisposed to reject the papyrus fragment on ideological grounds but because of quite specific features which appear wholly incompatible with an ancient origin. Forgeries corrupt—and are intended to corrupt—the scholarly work of those who may be deceived by them, and they need to be exposed as conclusively as possible.[8]

Two of these articles are especially noteworthy. Andrew Bernhard, whose early research was already mentioned in my earlier research note,[9] has demonstrated convincingly that the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is "undeniably dependent" on Coptic phrases from an interlinear version of the *Gospel of Thomas* that was posted online in 2002.[10] He argues that the grammatically problematic features in the fragment "can be explained well by a forger's reliance on the English of the same modern edition of the text" and the repetition of a typographical error that was made when creating the PDF version of the Coptic text of this online version *Gospel of Thomas*.[11] Second, Christian Askeland has examined images that Harvard posted of a supposed ancient Coptic fragment of the Gospel of John that arrived on 13 November 2012 from the same anonymous individual who gave Karen King the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* fragment. Here is what Askeland discovered about the relationship between the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* and this fragment of the Gospel of John to support his conclusion that both are modern forgeries:

> The two Coptic fragments clearly shared the same ink, writing implement and scribal hand. The same artisan had created both essentially at the same time. The John fragment was in fact a crude but almost exact copy from Herbert Thomson's 1924 publication of the Qua codex.[12]

If these and other critical assessments by scholars who looked at the fragment are not enough to judge this fragment as a forgery and remove it from study as an authentic ancient text, we can now read about the modern history of the fragment in a fascinating investigative article by Ariel

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[8] "Editorial," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 290.

[9] Gieschen, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: A Modern Forgery?" 334–337.

[10] Bernhard, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: Textual Evidence of a Modern Forgery," 354.

[11] Bernhard, "The *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*: Textual Evidence of a Modern Forgery," 355.

[12] Askeland, "A Lycopolitan Forgery of John's Gospel," 315.

Sabar, appropriately titled "The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus's Wife."[13] In spite of Karen King honoring the owner of the fragment's request to remain anonymous, Sabar was able to use the few details about the prior history of the fragment that were provided in King's article in order to identify and track down the owner, Walter Fritz. In her investigative odyssey, she discovered a host of things raising red flags that would cause one to doubt the authenticity of this scrap of papyrus without even looking at it. These assorted details included Fritz's previous academic training in Coptic, the discrepancies related to Fritz's account of the prior ownership of the fragment in the twentieth century, his anger towards the Roman Catholic church because he was allegedly raped by a priest when he was a nine-year old boy, his opinion that the Gnostic Gospels are better witnesses to the historical Jesus than the canonical Gospels, and his desire to have an entertaining book written about Mary Magdalene that would uncover the suppressed female element in the church and promote the priority of the Gnostic Gospels.[14] This journalist did the careful research on the previous ownership of *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* that the Harvard scholar should have insisted be done before her sensational announcement of the manuscript.

The positive news four years later is that the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* fragment was exposed as a modern forgery before it garnered much of a following. It is neither from an ancient "Gospel" nor does it contain authentic testimony about anything, much less Jesus' marital status. In spite of these findings, there is at least one instance in print where the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* fragment has already been used to support the unfounded thesis that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.[15] Karen King's approach of keeping the manuscript out of the sight of other scholars before its announcement to the public and preserving the anonymity of the owner has totally backfired. She should have sought input from other scholars on the fragment and thoroughly researched its provenance (i.e., history of ownership) *before* it was given global publicity. Because we cannot turn back the clock to 18 September 2012, I agree with the following suggestions made by Gesine Schenke Robinson:

> It is time for Harvard to offer an official statement of disavowal. Also necessary is the unconditional disclosure of all relevant materials,

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[13] Ariel Sabar, "The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus's Wife," *The Atlantic* (July/August 2016), accessed 2 November 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/07/the-unbelievable-tale-of-jesus-wife/485573/.

[14] Sabar, "The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus's Wife," 41–46.

[15] Simcha Jacobovici and Barrie Wilson, *The Lost Gospel: Decoding the Ancient Text that Reveals Jesus' Marriage to Mary the Magdalene* (New York: Pegasus, 2014), 294.

including the document allegedly proving a valid acquisition. If there is an owner who purchased several fragments, his or her identity has to be revealed and all the fragments made available to the public. As Depuydt stated, "not doing so is an act of obstruction." We have wasted enough time due to all the covertness and wrongly applied confidentiality. And last but not least, the media should no longer be manipulated into taking up this affair every Easter, when it is ready for a new sensation no matter how ludicrous.[16]

<div align="right">Charles A. Gieschen</div>

Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Comparison Chart

Most parts of the Book of Concord have a numbering system for articles and paragraphs that is uniform, no matter what edition or translation is used. But the Apology of the Augsburg Confession is different. A Bible study or reading group on the Apology could be confusing if different translations are used, because the numbering systems vary from one edition to the next. The following chart shows how the enumerations of the Apology in the two major English traditions of the Book of Concord (Dau-Bente and Tappert) relate.[17]

The enumeration of articles and paragraphs for the Apology of the Augsburg Confession has changed over time. The *Book of Concord* (German 1580, Latin 1584) had no article or paragraph numbers at all in the Apology, only subtitles. By 1677, the Apology had been divided up into fourteen articles, but these articles did not correspond with the Augsburg Confession's articles.[18] By 1827, paragraph numbers had been added.[19] By 1848, a new system of numbering the articles had been introduced, a system that tried to match the articles of the Apology with the articles of

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[16] Robinson, "How a Papyrus Fragment Became a Sensation," 394.

[17] W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente, eds., *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921); Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959).

[18] Adam Rechenberg, ed., *Concordia. Pia Et Unanimi consensu Repitita Confessio Fidei Et Doctrinae Electorum, Principum Et Ordinum Imperii . . . Qui Augustanam Confessionem amplectuntur . . . accessit Declaratio . . . Cum Appendice Tripartita Et Novis Indicibus* (Lipsiae: Grossius, 1677).

[19] Carolus Augustus Hase, ed., *Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Evangelicae Sive Concordia,* vol. 1 (Lipsiae: sumtibus Joannis Suehringii, 1827).

the Confession.[20] In 1930, the paragraphs were renumbered to start at 1 for every article of the newer article enumeration.[21] As a result, English translations of the *Book of Concord* have different enumerations for the Apology. The Dau-Bente and McCain-Engelbrecht editions[22] follow the enumeration systems of 1677 (Roman numerals inside parentheses), 1827 (Arabic numbers in the margin), and 1848 (Roman numerals outside of parentheses), while Tappert follows the 1930 enumeration.[23] The Kolb-Wengert edition[24] has adopted a different version of the Apology (the "octavo" edition of September 1531), which in many places presents a completely different text than what the Lutheran Church received and used in the Latin Book of Concord of 1584 until the end of the twentieth century, though it is similar to the German translation of the Apology by Justus Jonas, which was included in the German Book of Concord of 1580.[25] Where Kolb-Wengert's Apology matches the 1584 text, Tappert's enumeration is followed; otherwise no paragraph numbering is given there. The LCMS has not adopted the octavo text of the Apology as its confession, but hitherto has remained, at least officially, with the 1580 (German) and 1584 (Latin) Book of Concord.

Benjamin T.G. Mayes

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[20] J. T. Müller, ed., *Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, deutsch und lateinisch* (Stuttgart: Samuel Gottlieb Liesching, 1848).

[21] *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche: Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930*, 11th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

[22] Paul Timothy McCain and Edward Andrew Engelbrecht, eds., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

[23] The newest German-Latin edition of the Lutheran confessions lacks all paragraph and article numbers in the body text of the Apology, though article numbers following the 1930 enumeration are included in running headers. The Latin text of the Apology is that of the late 1531 "octavo" edition. Irene Dingel, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche: Vollständige Neuedition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

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

[25] The case for this change was set forth by Christian Peters, *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae: Untersuchungen zur Textgeschichte einer lutherischen Bekenntnisschrift (1530–1584)* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1997); summarized in English in Charles P. Arand, "The Texts of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession," *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (1998): 461–484. But cf. Roland F. Ziegler, "The New Translation of the Book of Concord: Closing the Barn Door After," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2002): 145–165.

	Triglot/ McCain-Engelbrecht	Tappert/ Kolb-Wengert
Of God	I 1–2	I 1–2
Of Original Sin	II (I) 1–51	II 1–51
Of Christ	III (I) 52	III 1
Of Justification	IV (II) 1–121	IV 1–121
Of Love and the Fulfilling of the Law	IV (III) 1–279 (Article V in McCain- Engelbrecht!)	IV 122–400
Of the Church	VII and VIII (IV) 1–50	VII and VIII 1–50
Of Baptism	IX (IV) 51–53	IX 1–3
Of the Holy Supper	X (IV) 54–57	X 1–4
Of Confession	XI (IV) 58–67	XI 1–10
Of Repentance	XII (V) 1–97	XII 1–97
Of the Number and Use of the Sacraments	XIII (VII) 1–23	XIII 1–23
Of Ecclesiastical Order	XIV (VII) 24–28	XIV 1–5
Of Human Traditions in the Church	XV (VIII) 1–52	XV 1–52
Of Political Order	XVI (VIII) 53–65	XVI 1–13
Of Christ's Return to Judgment	XVII (VIII) 66	XVII 1
Of Free Will	XVIII (VIII) 67–76	XVIII 1–10
Of the Cause of Sin	XIX (VIII) 77	XIX 1
Of Good Works	XX (VIII) 78–92	XX 1–15
Of the Invocation of Saints	XXI (IX) 1–44	XXI 1–44
Of Both Kinds in the Lord's Supper	XXII (X) 1–17	XXII 1–17
Of the Marriage of Priests	XXIII (XI) 1–71	XXIII 1–71
Of the Mass	XXIV (XII) 1–99	XXIV 1–99
Of Monastic Vows	XXVII (XIII) 1–70	XXVII 1–70
Of Ecclesiastical Power	XXVIII (XIV) 1–27	XXVIII 1–27

Theological Observer

Lutherans and the Lure of Eastern Orthodoxy

The narrative has become all too familiar: a young man discovers the treasures of the Lutheran Church. He comes to delight in her doctrine and her practice, to exult in the power, the beauty, the antiquity, the genuine catholicity of her liturgy, to rejoice in the objective certainty of salvation that comes through the Sacraments, bolstered by the knowledge that the men who minister to him in the stead of Christ have in fact been divinely appointed to the task. His passion for that which is best in the Lutheran Church drives him to seminary, where his appreciation is only deepened. And yet, the more he learns, the more doubts arise. Is the Lutheran liturgy as ancient and catholic as it could be? Is it not possible that Luther and his colleagues carried their reforming program too far? Could it not be that the legitimacy and objective certainty of the Office of the Holy Ministry depends upon more than just the Word of God and the call issued by means of a fallible, sinful congregation?

These doubts, however, are set aside for the time being. Our young man has been trained for the Office of the Holy Ministry and receives a call to serve Christ's sheep in a particular congregation. He brings to his flock an eagerness to put the best of the Lutheran heritage into practice, but finds steadfast resistance from those under his charge, from some of his fellow pastors, and seemingly from the Synod at large. It seems that however lovely the ideal of Lutheranism may be, that ideal never finds concrete expression in a real community of believers. His doubts from before return with redoubled force.

In his desperation, he casts his eyes upon the Eastern Orthodox Church (hereafter "the Orthodox" or "the Orthodox Church"). Here surely is the genuine Church of the Apostles. Here is a community that continues to embrace her heritage in its fullness. Here are the faithful who still worship according to the ancient forms. Here there are no "worship wars." Here the holy and ecumenical synods are upheld in their entirety. In a way, the Orthodox seem more Lutheran than the Lutherans.

Of course, the Orthodox have their problems. For one thing, they deny the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone. But do they really? Are they not just laying a slightly different emphasis than Lutherans are wont to do? In fact, does not the more ancient Greek East

approach the question of salvation from an entirely different perspective than the more recent and corrupt Latin West?

The Orthodox administer the Lord's Supper to infants, who are incapable of examining themselves, which St. Paul lays down as a requirement for a worthy communion (1 Cor. 11:28–29). But has the Lutheran Church really understood St. Paul aright? Is not faith the only criterion for a worthy communion, and do not baptized infants possess such faith? And does not John 6 make bodily reception of the Sacrament a requirement for salvation? How can the Lutheran Church deny salvation to infants by withholding from them the body and blood of the Savior in whom they trust?

The Orthodox pray to the saints, particularly to Mary. But is that really so bad? After all, their prayers do not necessarily constitute worship. They are simply asking fellow Christians to pray for them, and surely the fellowship that exists within the communion of saints cannot be broken by death. And ought we not to honor the very Mother of God? By singing her praises, are we not really extolling him whom she bore?

As the teaching of the Orthodox Church comes to seem reconcilable with Lutheranism, the thought begins to develop: can I not leave the Lutheran Church and, without apostatizing from the true Church, join myself to the ancient and apostolic Orthodox Church? I will not have to sacrifice anything that I love about Lutheranism, but I will gain so much. There I will not have to rely on such a shaky foundation as the written Word of God, which, after all, is open to interpretation. Rather than being required to demonstrate to my people the benefits of the historic, liturgical worship of their church, I can simply require them to accept what the Church has practiced for centuries. Rather than rely on the Words of Institution, I can trust that through the apostolic succession I have received power from on high to consecrate the bread and wine and call down the Holy Spirit to change the earthly elements into Jesus' body and blood. Rather than wait for my children to reach the age when they are capable of learning doctrinal formulae, even from infancy I can give them the medicine of immortality.

Eventually, rather than viewing Orthodoxy as reconcilable with Lutheranism, our young man begins to view Orthodoxy as upholding the truth over against Lutheran error. Finally, after a few years in a Lutheran parish, he announces his intention to be received into the Orthodox Church. The devastation wrought upon the affected congregation can take years to heal, and the man's departure can have a pronounced demoral-

izing effect upon his brother pastors, but his personal journey is complete. He is finally home in the arms of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

The number of pastors in the Missouri Synod who have gone this route is not very high. Nevertheless, cases of our pastors leaving for the Orthodox Church have occurred. This raises the question of what more we could have done and taught to help these pastors remain faithful to their ordination vows.

I write this from the perspective of a Lutheran pastor who is willing to stake his eternal salvation on that which is publicly confessed in the Book of Concord. I also write with great affection for the Orthodox Church. I myself was raised Greek Orthodox by a mother who continues to be a faithful member of that church. I have heard many edifying sermons preached from Orthodox pulpits that I am convinced are capable of saving their hearers. Such preaching, however, is not what draws Lutheran pastors to Orthodoxy. I fear that those who knowingly forsake the clarity of the Lutheran confession for Orthodoxy cannot do so without denying the truth. I write this as an appeal to hold fast the confession that we have received on the basis of Scripture alone, and as an encouragement that, whatever the problems with our fellowship, one need not forsake the Lutheran Church in order to be in the one Church of Christ.

I. A Brief Overview of the Orthodox Church

The history and theology of the Orthodox Church will already be quite familiar to many readers of this essay, and I cannot do it justice in an article of this scope. Still, to tackle the problem of Lutheran temptations to Orthodoxy, some background is in order. I will here attempt a brief and grossly over-simplified sketch of the Orthodox Church in the hope that the claims I make further on may thereby be better understood.

Institutionally, if not doctrinally, the Orthodox can rightly claim to trace their church back to the apostles. Never has the Orthodox Church broken off from a more ancient tradition. The mutual split between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic communions, conventionally dated AD 1054, was more an instance of two equals going their separate ways than of one party splitting off from the other. Of course, institutional continuity does not necessarily entail continuity in doctrine. Still, the Orthodox pedigree should be taken seriously as far as it goes.

During the apostolic generation, to which the Orthodox Church can trace her institutional roots, Christianity pierced deeply into the heart of

the Roman Empire, both the Greek-speaking East and the Latin-speaking West. The Empire was an urban culture, and so Christianity began as an urban religion, particularly since the synagogues where the apostles first preached the Gospel as they entered a new region were all located in the cities. Though in the Scriptures there are no strict gradations within the clergy, the terms "elder/presbyter" and "overseer/bishop" being interchangeable, within the post-apostolic generation a model developed according to which the bishop would be the head of a given urban center, while the presbyters who led the congregations in the city and the surrounding country would be subject to his authority. As this hierarchical structure crystalized, rivalries developed between the bishops of the most prominent cities as they vied for preeminence. The chief rivalry was that between Rome in the Latin West and Constantinople in the Greek East. Though the Roman see could claim, based on tradition, to have been founded by the apostles, while Constantinople could not, realistically the rivalry was based upon the secular importance of those cities, though religious importance served a rhetorical function. Constantinople's claim to be the "new Rome," founded by the Christian emperor Constantine, was a direct challenge to the authority of "old Rome," founded by pagans.

Tensions between the pope in Rome and the patriarch in Constantinople were exacerbated by the cultural rift that was growing between East and West. The language barrier between Latin and Greek speakers made communication and mutual understanding difficult, particularly in matters as delicate and precise as theological discourse. Furthermore, while the Latin Church struggled to survive in the midst of barbarian onslaughts and a decaying secular regime, the Greek Church played host to innumerable doctrinal controversies as heresies arose one after another. The theological stagnation that characterized the West, and that was largely responsible for allowing the pope to serve as the standard of orthodoxy in Eastern controversies, stood in stark contrast to the theological vitality of the East. The East produced Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and countless other fathers of great theological brilliance; the West produced Augustine and a few others.

With the fall of the Western Roman secular regime and the rise of the papacy as a secular power, coupled with the Islamic invasions in the East, tensions between Roman pope and Constantinopolitan patriarch increased to the breaking point. In AD 1054, a papal legate to Constantinople placed a bull of excommunication upon the altar of the Hagia Sophia. The response of the excommunicated patriarch was to retaliate with an

excommunication of his own. The "Great Schism" thus initiated was never healed, and communication between the Greek East and the Latin West effectively ceased. The crusades, which included the shameful sack of Constantinople by Western armies, did nothing to help the situation.

To make matters worse, during the century before the Reformation an iron curtain descended upon Europe: Constantinople, and with it the remnants of the once glorious Byzantine Empire, fell to the Turks. By the time of the Lutheran Reformation, the Greek Church had taken on an almost mythical quality. The Greeks were assumed to be the pure, ancient church, free of the abuses that characterized the kingdom of Antichrist in the West. In fact, in a few instances, the Lutheran Confessions used the example of the Greek Church to prove their points against their Roman opponents. When the patriarch of Constantinople sent a representative to Wittenberg, the Reformers were eager to open communication. Philipp Melanchthon prepared a Greek translation of the Augsburg Confession, which was sent off to Constantinople in the hope that the Greek Church might embrace the Lutheran faith. Unfortunately, it seems that the document never reached its destination, and the patriarch, who may have been sympathetic to the Reformation, was deposed due to financial irregularities in his administration.

Communication between the Lutherans and the Greek Church was successfully established in the next generation, when some of the men behind the Formula of Concord initiated a theological correspondence with Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople. Two things became clear as a result of this correspondence. First, the Greek Church was not what the Lutherans had hoped it would be. It was fundamentally works-righteous, and was endlessly concerned with minutiae in externals. Second, argument on theological points was effectively impossible because of the authorities involved. The Lutherans insisted upon arguing from Scripture alone, with support from the Church Fathers as read in their original context, while the patriarch insisted upon the authority of the Fathers *as understood by the Church*. The Lutherans and the Greeks went their separate ways.

In the centuries following, both churches experienced their own up-heavals. The Lutherans suffered greatly in the Thirty Years' War, and their church was devastated by Pietism and Rationalism. The Orthodox flour-ished with their center in Moscow until a new iron curtain descended in the form of the militantly atheistic Communist regime. Particularly in the United States, the embattled churches found themselves in similar circumstances. Both were immigrant churches, and both were underdogs

to the dominant mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. In a way, both the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Church have had to reconstitute themselves. In the case of the Missouri Synod, the Saxon immigrants eschewed the dominant rationalism of their day and instead attempted to return to the Lutheran Confessions as viewed through the lens of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians, always making the case that the Lutheranism of the Missouri Synod is authentic Lutheranism.

The Orthodox, on the other hand, had a greater challenge. In the absence of a clear confessional standard on the order of the Book of Concord, there was an astonishing wealth of theological tradition from which to draw. What proved definitive for twentieth-century Orthodoxy was the reappropriation of the mystical theology of the Greek Fathers, particularly St. Gregory Palamas and St. Symeon the New Theologian, by Russian Orthodox refugees in Paris, among whom were such renowned figures as Vladimir Lossky, Georges Florovsky, Alexander Schmemann, and John Meyendorff. This mystical theology intentionally replaced the increasingly scholastic tendencies that had characterized much of the Orthodox theology of the nineteenth century. Rather than works righteousness strictly speaking, this mystical theology emphasized the well-known, if not well-understood, concept of "theosis," or "deification," an organic process by which man becomes more and more like God. Through a combination of good actions, such as fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, with the reception of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, man comes to participate in the divine nature. The "hesychast tradition" ("hesychast" coming from the Greek ἡσυχία, meaning "calmness" or "quiet"), which combines ascetic practices with the meditative recitation of the "Jesus Prayer" ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner") in hopes of bringing about a mystical vision of the "uncreated light," is seen as an important route toward deification. The idea that Jesus Christ died as the sinless substitute for the sinful human race, thus earning God's favor toward sinners, is rejected as too merit-based. Surely the God who is love would not require payment at the hands of his creatures, no matter how sinful they are. It is thought the problem of the human race is not sin, and the consequent wrath of God, but the state of mortality, of actually being unsuited for God's presence. In this view, what God accomplishes in the life of the faithful is not, at least primarily, the forgiveness of sins, but the transformation of our nature so that we become worthy of dwelling with him. This, and not the straightforward works-righteousness of Jeremiah II, is typically the theology that Lutherans now encounter when they begin delving into the Orthodox Church.

Something else that characterizes the Orthodox Church in North America is that it is a more recent immigrant community. Whereas the Missouri Synod sprung and grew from German immigration in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Orthodox Church is characterized more by immigration in the first half of the twentieth century. While most Missouri Synod congregations have been thoroughly Americanized and have largely lost their German identity, a Greek Church, for example, continues to be self-consciously Greek. A Greek festival, complete with loukoumades and baklava, is a regular and welcome fixture in any town fortunate enough to be home to a Greek Orthodox congregation.

As a result of these developments over the past century, a Lutheran exploring Orthodoxy is likely to encounter one of several churches. There is what I would call the "faithful Orthodoxy" of those laity who take their church seriously and appreciate the generally conservative social stance, the reverent worship, and the historical groundedness of their ancestral church. Adherents of this manifestation of Orthodoxy, both cradle Orthodox and refugees from liberalizing mainline Protestantism, have been influenced by their Protestant neighbors and would likely deny that their church teaches salvation by works. Then there is the "homeland Orthodoxy" of eastern Europe, where protestantizing influences are practically nonexistent and superstition holds powerful sway. There is also what I would call "classical Orthodoxy," the form espoused by Jeremiah II in the sixteenth century and whose development continued until the dawn of Communism. "Classical Orthodoxy" upholds the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, but cannot accept the formula of justification by grace alone through faith alone, insisting upon the place of works not just as a fruit of faith but as a means by which man becomes worthy of eternal life.

But the Orthodox Church that is most likely to hold the attention of any interested Lutheran observer is what I would term "academic Orthodoxy." By "academic" I do not mean in any way divorced from day-to-day experience. Academic Orthodoxy flourishes within the context of regular worship within an Orthodox parish, and indeed depends upon the beauty and mystery of the liturgy for much of its power and impact. Academic Orthodoxy is the Orthodox Church as reimagined by those thoughtful theologians of the twentieth century, with a narrative of smooth progression from the apostles through the Cappadocians to the hesychast tradition, with a disruption of a few centuries caused by the intrusion of Western scholastic tendencies. The focus of academic Orthodoxy is on peeling back the layers of scholasticism to reclaim authentic Orthodoxy, which is seen as centering on the teaching of *theosis*, with a supposed

radical gulf between Eastern and Western ways of thinking being brought forth as the cause for the vast difference between the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* and the Lutheran doctrine of justification—and, I would emphasize, sanctification. Academic Orthodoxy is different in some fundamental ways from the classical Orthodoxy encountered by the Lutherans of the sixteenth century. It is a much more mysterious and attractive church, and, I would assert, a more dangerous one.

II. Lutheran Paths to Orthodoxy

If the Orthodox Church, particularly in its academic manifestation, is so doctrinally and culturally alien to the Lutheran Church, then why are some Lutheran pastors attracted to it? What could be powerful enough to draw a man away from the pure confession of justification by grace alone through faith alone for the sake of Christ alone into a community whose doctrine is so notoriously difficult to pin down? Though the answer cannot but be anecdotal, I will attempt at least to entertain the question.

The Liturgy

Looming over this entire discussion is the liturgy. To clarify, when I speak of "liturgy" in this context, I do not mean the divinely prescribed liturgy, namely, the preaching of the Word in its purity and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution (AC VII). The liturgy in that sense is completely non-negotiable, its form set for all time. I mean rather the body of man-made ceremonies that for centuries has adorned the divinely ordained worship. In this sense, the Lutheran Church is heir to a rich liturgical tradition. One would be hard-pressed to find aesthetic fault with the liturgical resources available to the Lutherans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even in the English language we possess an embarrassment of liturgical riches.

The problem is not with Lutheran liturgical resources, but with their appropriation. Those who appreciate the richness of our liturgical heritage are bound to be disappointed when they attempt to put it into practice. The common experience of the pastor who is passionately dedicated to the Lutheran liturgy is that many Missouri Synod congregations seem to be far more enamored of the songs of their mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbors than the hymns of Luther and Gerhardt. The reverence that so characterized the Lutheran worship of four centuries ago seems at times to be all but missing from the modern American scene. And then we behold the Orthodox Church, where such a thing as a praise band has never been imagined. The Orthodox Church in any given American city

uses largely the same service as would have been used in Constantinople fifteen hundred years ago. Reverence, dignity, beauty—all are characteristics routinely found in Orthodox liturgical practice. The prospect of a church with an intact ancient liturgy that is not under constant assault from within its own ranks can be tempting indeed.

The question for Lutherans who are tempted to Orthodoxy on the basis of her liturgy is this: for what purpose has the liturgy been handed down to us? For the Lutheran Church, the liturgy is a servant. The man-made ceremonies that adorn the word and the holy sacraments exist for the purpose of extolling the truly divine liturgy—that is, the Word purely proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered—presenting it in a consistent, intelligible, and reverent manner to those who are gathered to receive the Lord's gifts. Like a ring whose setting encloses a precious gem, the rites and ceremonies enclose that which Christ has committed to his Church. What is of real value in the ring is the gem, and what is of real value in the liturgy is the doctrine of Christ. The liturgy, when practiced as intended, sets forth the benefits of Christ. If we are inclined to introduce a liturgical custom but cannot explain to our people and to our colleagues how it serves the doctrine of Christ, it may be that the liturgy has usurped the place of Christ and his teaching. We then risk adoring the setting, while in the meantime casting away the precious stone that the setting was originally intended to enclose and protect.

It is my conviction that this is exactly what happens when one leaves the Lutheran Church for the Orthodox Church on the basis of her liturgy. One may have left behind a community with liturgical disarray and entered a community where the liturgy is pristine and unchallenged, but in the course of this transition one has embraced all of the baggage that comes attached to the Orthodox liturgy. One has embraced a liturgy that directs a great deal of prayer and praise to the creature rather than the Creator. One has entered a fellowship that, despite her liturgy with its constant reminders of the need for divine forgiveness, teaches that man enters into eternal life, not through faith alone, but through a multitude of ascetic practices and good works. For the sake of the beautiful setting that is the Orthodox liturgy, one has discarded the precious gem that is the Lutheran confession of faith. The Lutheran who is tempted to Orthodoxy for the sake of her liturgy must ask himself whether the beautiful liturgical customs and lack of opposition to the Church's historic form of worship are worth the abandonment of Lutheran teaching, drawn from Holy Scripture. It is sobering to consider whether the answer to that question

reveals that we have made an idol of the very liturgy that was intended to bring to us the precious teaching of Christ.

If the liturgy that we have inherited from our fathers is precious to us, then we ought to have the courage and the willingness to learn to defend that heritage. We ought not to attempt to impose it without explanation. We ought to recognize that, yes, the man-made pattern of the divine liturgy *is* an adiaphoron, but that of course does not mean that it does not matter. All it means is that in the absence of an explicit divine command to retain the liturgy of our fathers, we are given the difficult but rewarding task of having to be able to show *how* our liturgy benefits the Church, and how irreverent forms of worship harm her. Better to fight for the liturgy and fail than to give up the fight and join an alien confession. If we do not achieve the level of beauty and reverence for which our heart longs, we may rest assured that the liturgy of heaven, which we will enter in due time, far surpasses in every respect any man-made liturgical service, even the best of the Lutheran tradition, and, yes, even the beauty and splendor of the Byzantine liturgy at its height. The emissaries of Prince Vladimir, who, when they beheld the liturgy of the Hagia Sophia, could say, "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth," are surely convinced now that they had underestimated the glories of the life to come.

Infant Communion

Another feature of the Orthodox Church that has drawn Lutherans is her practice of infant Communion. This practice naturally appeals to the Lutheran spirit. After all, we can be certain that a child who has been baptized into Christ has faith in him. How can we deny to that child, of whom Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them" (Matt. 19:14), the very body and blood of the Christ into whom that child has been baptized? Does not the Orthodox practice better affirm the purely gracious nature of God's free gifts?

Lutherans, however, are bound solely to the word of God, and that word of God teaches, "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor. 11:28–29). When Jacob Andreae and Martin Crucius were confronted with the Orthodox practice of infant Communion, they responded with the word of God:

> Since the children are not able to examine themselves and, thus, cannot discern the Lord's body, we think that the ceremony of the baptism is sufficient for their salvation, and also the hidden faith with

which the Lord has bestowed them. For through this faith they spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, even if they do not, in the communion of the supper, physically eat It. That spiritual eating, which Christ speaks of in Saint John's Gospel, is always necessary; but the other, the mystical one [the Lord's Supper], is not always necessary.[1]

Andreae and Crucius saw the eating of Jesus' flesh and the drinking of Jesus' blood, spoken of in John 6 as necessary for eternal life, as taking place spiritually by the faith given to infants in their baptism. Thus the denial of the bodily eating and drinking until such time as St. Paul's required self-examination can take place does not constitute exclusion from the kingdom of God. This denial was taken very seriously by the Lutherans responsible for the Formula of Concord.

There is little of value that I can add to the ongoing discussion of infant Communion, but one point that I have not seen made elsewhere is that when our Lord instituted his holy Supper, he did so with food and drink that a newborn would not have been able to consume. In order to accommodate infants, the Orthodox have had to change the manner in which the Supper is administered: they use leavened bread, which is soaked in the wine and administered by spoon, similar to baby food. Infants and adults alike are spoon-fed the Lord's Supper, and chewing is unnecessary. Of course, that does not invalidate their suppers any more than using prefabricated wafers or individual cups invalidates ours, but it is worth considering that no infants, had they been present at the first Supper, would have been physically able to commune.

Such a cursory overview of the Lutheran argument against infant Communion will, I am sure, be hopelessly unconvincing to those who are tempted by the Orthodox practice. I would only urge that we bind ourselves to the word of God. If a teaching or practice seems to be a natural outgrowth of our theological system, as may well be the case with infant Communion, but nevertheless contradicts a clear testimony of Holy Scripture, we must be prepared to humble ourselves before the word of God and adjust our conclusions accordingly. If we enter the Orthodox Church so that our infant children may be admitted to the altar, then we

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[1] *Augsburg and Constantinople: The Correspondence between the Tübingen Theologians and Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople on the Augsburg Confession*, tr. George Mastrantonis (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982), 143.

are rejecting the biblical teaching of the Lutheran faith and, I would argue, endangering the souls of our children.[2]

Authority

The Lutheran draw toward the Orthodox approach to liturgy and the practice of infant Communion is understandable, but once the inves-tigation of Orthodoxy progresses further, an informed Lutheran is bound to come upon some teachings that are difficult to accept. In particular, the denial of justification by grace alone through faith alone, together with the practice of offering prayers to the departed saints, runs contrary to Holy Scripture. In discussion with academic Orthodoxy, however (or classical Orthodoxy, for that matter), referring to the authority of Scripture is useless. This statement by Timothy Ware is typical:

> The Bible . . . must not be regarded as something set up *over* the Church, but as something that lives and is understood *within* the Church (that is why one should not separate Scripture and Tradition). It is from the Church that the Bible ultimately derives its authority, for it was the Church which originally decided which books form a part of Holy Scripture; and it is the Church alone which can interpret Holy Scripture with authority.[3]

This view of Holy Scripture makes fruitful argument with the Orthodox practically impossible. For example, academic Orthodoxy tends to view with suspicion the Western doctrine of original sin. Should a Lutheran attempt to affirm the doctrine of original sin by citing Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," an Orthodox apologist would likely respond by denying the right to cite Scripture as if the meaning of a given passage can be objectively deter-mined and therefore used to demonstrate the truth or falsehood of a theological assertion. Though a Lutheran would claim to be relying upon Scripture alone, the Orthodox tend to insist that when Protestants do this, they are cloaking their own human traditions (in our case, a tradition of Lutheran interpretation) with a veneer of objectivity. The Orthodox, on the other hand, are honest about not relying upon Scripture alone.

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[2] For a far more thoughtful and convincing discussion of the Lutheran position on infant Communion, see John T. Pless, "Theses on Infant/Toddler Communion," available at www.logia.org/logia-online/617.

[3] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1980), 207.

One is no better off referring to the writings of the Church Fathers. There is a substantial body of references from the Fathers that support Lutheran theology over against Orthodoxy (and, of course, much that does the opposite), but should such passages be brought forth in an argument, a Lutheran is likely to be accused of "cherry picking" the Fathers. When the Orthodox say that they regard the Fathers as a source of authority, what they finally mean is that they take the "consensus of the Fathers" as authoritative. How is that "consensus of the Fathers" determined? By the current theologians of the Orthodox Church. If both Holy Scripture and the Fathers are to be understood only as interpreted by the teachers of the Orthodox Church, then the only effective authority is actually the Church herself, and there is no such thing as genuine argument with the Orthodox.

That is why, I suspect, many Orthodox do not attempt to argue Lutherans into their church. They will cut off all argument by referring to their own authority, then invite the inquirer to experience Orthodoxy for himself by attending the Divine Liturgy and finally undergoing chrismation. One cannot understand Orthodoxy, it is claimed, without first having entered into and experienced Orthodoxy. The best course is to take the plunge and submit to the authority of the Church. Only then will one begin to understand what the Church teaches.

To a Lutheran who is being tempted in this way, I would urge that he look again to the Scriptures. "To the Law and to the testimony!" (Isaiah 8:20). Turn to our God who in his word speaks clearly to those who have ears to hear.

The Denial of Justification by Faith Alone: Mere Culture Clash?

One of the most striking ways in which modern academic Orthodoxy differs from classical Orthodoxy is in its approach to justification by faith alone. Classical Orthodoxy was content simply to deny it. When one reads Jeremiah II's response to the Lutherans, one gets the impression that the Orthodox of that era simply affirmed what Scripture said without making any attempt to reconcile seeming contradictions. Thus the same theologian can say in the same passage that sinners are freely forgiven for Christ's sake through faith in him, and that faith alone is not enough, but to justify it must be accompanied by prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and various works. The Lutherans, on the other hand, largely through the discipline of rightly distinguishing Law from Gospel, were able to speak clearly on just how it is that faith justifies apart from the works of the Law.

With modern academic Orthodoxy, however (exemplified by Vladimir Lossky, Georges Florovsky, Alexander Schmemann, and John Meyen-

dorff), the situation is quite different. No longer are works put forth as a means of placating God. Instead, the entire system of salvation as taught by the Lutherans on the basis of Holy Scripture is rejected. Several reasons are given for this. One is the historical claim that the question of how one is justified before God simply never came up in the Greek East. After all, Pelagius was a Western heretic. Another is the cultural claim that the Eastern mind functions differently than the Western, and so we think differently about how salvation takes place.

As to whether the question of how one is justified before God ever came up in the Orthodox Church (aside from the astonishing nature of the suggestion that no one in the East ever struggled with a bad conscience in all those centuries), a simple answer is to point to the undeniable fact that the Lutherans brought the question up in the sixteenth century! When the Lutherans forced the Orthodox to reckon with the question, the Orthodox came down on the side opposite the Lutherans. Whereas the Lutherans claimed that one is justified by faith alone, apart from the works of the Law, the Orthodox claimed that one is justified by faith *and* by the works of the Law. It is as simple as that.

Far more dangerous is the assertion that the Eastern way of thinking invalidates the entire Lutheran system of salvation. The Lutheran system is denounced by prominent theologians as hopelessly Western, bound up with ideas of Roman law that are foreign to the genuine Christian spirit. Lutherans think in terms of *quid pro quo*: God needed payment for sin, and since man could not render such payment, God sent his Son to pay for man. The idea that God would account one righteous for the sake of another is a lifeless legal fiction. The East, on the other hand, thinks much more vibrantly. The East does not regard God as a cosmic bookkeeper who requires payment from man. God is rather the *Philanthropos* who cares not for payment but only for relationship. The Son came not to render payment for man but to bind man mystically to himself. The great moment in salvation history was not the death of Jesus but his incarnation, in which man was already saved through union with God in the person of Christ. The death of Christ was significant not as a payment for sin but as a way to unite Christ to the dead, and his resurrection was the resurrection of all men in him.

Thus the Orthodox beat the Lutherans at their own game. The Lutherans are still bound to a Romanist way of thinking, regarding Jesus as a sacrifice to pay for sin. They went part of the way back to the East by denying that man must render works to God in order to earn merit, but they are still working within a merit system: Christ, not man, earns merit

before God. The Orthodox, on the other hand, are entirely free of the Roman system. For them there is no merit, either on man's part or Christ's. God delights not in man's merit, but in his own mercy. There is no divine wrath to be assuaged, only death to be overcome. Tragically, many remain bound in death by continuing to focus on the things of this corruptible world, but those who cooperate with God by directing their gaze upward and undergoing the process of *theosis* will finally enter into the joy of their Master. Finally, eternal damnation is not the wrath of God burning in punishment against human sin, but the love of God as experienced by those who have not become habituated to it through *theosis*.

This, of course, may be a simplification, but I believe it to be a fair representation of the way this topic is often dealt with among the Orthodox. At first the Orthodox view of salvation asks permission to exist alongside the Lutheran view because it is only a matter of cultural, not doctrinal, differences. Then the Eastern cultural view takes for itself the status of being "right" as opposed to the "wrong" and lifeless Western view. Thus some Lutherans have been brought through a gradual process of accepting the Orthodox view and finally rejecting the Lutheran view.

We must guard against any attempt to dismiss the Lutheran soteriology as merely "Western." It is not Western, but scriptural. It is based on the acknowledgement that God is indeed just, and that the justice of God is not just a legalistic Western construct, but a fundamental teaching of Scripture. Perhaps the clearest testimony to God's justice with reference to salvation is Romans 3:25–26, in which St. Paul writes that God put forth Christ "as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." According to St. Paul, for thousands of years God had patiently refrained from punishing the sins of the penitent. King David comes to mind, who by all rights should have been killed and damned for eternity for his crime with Bathsheba. When he repented, however, God "passed over" his sin. This makes God complicit in David's sin, but God is righteous and just, punishing all sin. The death of Jesus showed that God still punishes sin. In fact, he did punish David's sin in the fullness of his just, divine wrath, punishing it in Christ by putting him to death on the cross. The death of Jesus allows God to be both fully just and fully merciful, one who punishes sin and one who justifies the ungodly. Of course, if a Lutheran were to argue this way with the Orthodox, he would be denied the right to interpret St. Paul himself, but if we look honestly at St. Paul

here, we can see that the Lutheran system of salvation is not just a product of the Western imagination, but fully informed by the teaching of the apostles.

If one is tempted to relinquish the Lutheran soteriology as too sterile or inadequately grounded in reality, one might consider that when the Lutherans speak of justification by faith alone, they are not denying the vivifying power of faith, the blessedness of good works, or the trans-formative activity of God. Faith in so far as it justifies is indeed alone, but the faith that justifies is a divine work that brings about an actual new creation, the actual birth of the new man, and the actual fruit of good works. God indeed "makes us righteous" through faith. By believing in his Son, we are righteous with the imputed righteousness of Christ, which alone is the cause of our salvation, and righteous with our own righ-teousness, which God works in us and which is the fruit, not the cause, of our salvation. The exclusion of the fruits of faith from justification is not the denial of their existence, but the ordering of things in their proper place.

Classical Orthodoxy denied justification by faith alone but upheld the vicarious atonement. Modern academic Orthodoxy denies both. It makes sin the wages of death rather than death the wages of sin. It softens and even denies the wrath of God. It offers a form of salvation that is satis-fyingly cooperative and refreshingly guilt-free. A Lutheran who is drawn to Orthodoxy ought to consider this seriously and soberly, before he has reached the point of conceding all authority to the Orthodox and thus relinquishing his basis for affirming a scriptural view of salvation.

III. Conclusion

The Orthodox Church has preserved Christian faith during very dif-ficult times, such as the Islamic invasions and the more recent persecution under Soviet communism. I do not intend to disparage the Orthodox Church as a whole. There are many faithful Christians within her, and there is much to admire in her teaching and practice. I only intended to point out that no Lutheran can leave our fellowship and enter into her fellowship without first abandoning that which is most important: justification before God by grace alone through faith alone for the sake of Christ alone.

Each one should read the Orthodox authors for himself; compare them with the authorities they cite; consult the liturgies and prayer books of the

Orthodox Church and consider whether one can in good conscience make those hymns and prayers his own.

The splendor of Christ's Bride is hidden in this life, only to be revealed in the day of his appearing. God keep us steadfast in his word. Amen.

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Christopher J. Neuendorf
Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Davenport, Iowa

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Showing the Mercy of Christ as a Deaconess

[*This speech was given by Deaconess Sara Smith on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, at the Graduating Deaconess Banquet on May 19, 2016. It is a vivid witness concerning what the deaconess program at CTSFW and the office of deaconess is all about. The Editors*]

Let me share with you a little about my call as the Director of Human Care to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Cincinnati. We are in an urban setting, and I'm called to mercy care in the congregation and in the surrounding community, known as Madisonville. I serve the members of my church and our neighbors. As we receive the mercy of Christ, we share that mercy with each other and with our community. Our mercy care goes out in the name of Christ, caring for our neighbors in body and soul. This is *diakonia*.

Diakonia is serving others in mercy. The one true Deacon is Christ. Our diakonia can only be a sharing in His service. It's Christ's sacrificial love that lives in us and serves others in mercy. We are instruments through which God gives mercy.

In our congregation, I'm present for those in need; present for the members of St. Paul who experience loneliness, illness, brokenness—especially the women. I show love to those that no one else seems to have time for.

The community of Madisonville is in the city of Cincinnati. It's urban. It's diverse. In the past few years we've seen progress, revitalization and growth in Madisonville. There's also sin and brokenness. I see drug addiction, abuse, prostitution and murder; families torn apart; people living in unlivable conditions; sin—the ugly, deadly condition we all face.

Our neighbors are sinners and we love them. We care for people regardless of their struggles, regardless of their actions. They need Christ. It's the gospel of Christ that changes people. We recognize their true worth—a very high price has been paid for them. God the Father gave His Son for them. Christ died for them. Our community should know we care and that it's the mercy of Christ that we share. I can't tell people that God loves them, that I love them, if I don't also care about what they need.

These dear neighbors come to the door of the church. They are usually looking for help with a physical, bodily need. They may be facing hunger, eviction, or some other hardship. Assisting with these basic needs provides opportunities for me to share the Gospel of Christ with our suffering neighbors. God is giving us the opportunity to show mercy to our neighbors. While meeting basic needs, I point to the true comfort found only in Christ.

Often those coming to my office have a lot of brokenness in their lives. They need a compassionate listener as much as they need the physical help for which they are asking. Sometimes we can't meet the physical need. Mercy care at St. Paul is funded by donations. As the Director of Human Care, I disperse these funds at my discretion. A reason for denying financial assistance could be because there there is not enough money for every need. Often a request is denied because it may do harm—situations in which giving financial assistance would seem to enable destructive behavior, or maybe even just encourage irresponsibility.

It's difficult to deny a neighbor's request for financial assistance. It's much easier to take someone's hand and say "We'll help you with this." When I must deny someone's request, he or she is treated with dignity. Whether or not they receive what they are asking for, they will receive what they truly need—the mercy of Christ, maybe in physical/practical assistance and maybe not—but always through His Word.

I see Christ in those I serve. In his words from Matthew 25, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matt 25:40). To serve the hurting and suffering is to serve Christ. I see Christ in them. And I see myself in them. We are the same: sinners in need of a Savior. Christ is found in the suffering.

We proclaim Christ to our neighbors. Where we see the hurting, suffering and broken we proclaim Christ. They see and hear the mercy of Christ in what we say and do.

St. Paul frequently receives requests from transients, people passing through Cincinnati and requesting money for gas, food, or car repair. It's difficult to verify these requests and I suspect that in a lot of these cases the story is not entirely true. They are almost always wanting cash. I never give cash. These requests usually end with me putting gas in their car to get them on their way. I meet them at the gas station on the corner. A couple times a month, I stand at a gas pump praying with someone. It's important in these cases that the recipient of our assistance understands this is from our church and from the mercy we receive in Christ. When I suspect that they have knocked on the door of the church to get some quick cash, I want to be sure they know what they are receiving from us—the love and mercy of Christ.

Most of the time, I serve a few homeless people. I see individuals living in abandoned buildings, living on the street or living in a car. There is an immediate, sometimes a desperate need that can't always be immediately met. Mercy care of the homeless begins by meeting them where they are, sometimes with the honor and privilege of walking with them, moving through stages—often very slowly. It takes time to build a relationship of trust. Frequently there are other issues that need address—mental illness, addiction, criminal activity.

There was James, homeless and living in his car, the only place he felt safe. James has social anxiety and paranoid-schizophrenia. He came to St. Paul for prayer. It took over a year before he was ready for me to assist him in finding housing. During that time he came to the church weekly, met with me and with the pastor. I frequently put gas in his car and fed him. I was building a relationship of trust with him. Eventually, he trusted me enough to allow me to assist him in getting the proper treatment for his mental illness. I still take him to the clinic every month to receive an injection. He is now a member of our church, has an apartment and is doing well, although, of course, some struggles still remain. But he knows where to take his burdens. He knows where to receive the mercy of Christ.

Sometimes, maybe permanent housing is not possible. But no matter what else I do, I bring the gospel of Christ to those I serve. They are receiving Christ's mercy though my church. Lives are transformed through hearing God's Word and receiving Christ's mercy.

Darrell was forty-two years old and had been living on the street for over fifteen years. He grew up in our church. His mom is still a very active member, and has long been my sister in Christ and friend. Before I became the Director of Human Care, I didn't know she had this son. Darrell was

homeless and addicted to crack (and also suffering with mental illness) living on the streets in downtown Cincinnati. At first, I didn't know what to do, how to serve him—or even where to find him. Eventually, I was going downtown once a month and walking around trying to find him— usually I did. The first time I found him, I still didn't know what to do. So I talked to him—a difficult conversation in which he didn't make much sense. And I prayed with him. I did this every month. Sometimes he was out of it. Sometimes he was happy to see me. Sometimes he wasn't. I tried—unsuccessfully—to get him connected with services that would help.

Then, after a couple years, the court system sent him to the state psychiatric hospital where he still is. I still visit once a month. He told me how much my visits on the street helped him. All I ever did was talk for a few minutes and pray with him. The presence of someone who loves him in Christ—just being present, bringing Christ, was what I could do for him. Now he's clean and sober. We read the Bible and devotions and have better conversations (although still a little out-there sometimes).

God works in His own time. With our presence we bring the comfort and assurance of hope to those who wait. "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!" (Ps 27:14).

Occasionally a crisis affects the entire community. Last summer, seven people were shot late one night in Madisonville. One of the two who died was the shooter. The other one was Barry, a friend of mine. He was a frequent visitor to the church office and attended church occasionally. I didn't know his family when he was alive, but now I know his mother and sister well. I've cried with them and prayed with them. Through this suffering, I have the opportunity to show them the love of Christ.

One morning a little over a year ago, I heard on the radio during my drive into my office—an early morning fire at an apartment complex in Madisonville. This complex is low-income housing. The forty-three people who were displaced from their home did not have resources to recover. St. Paul serves her neighbors. What are we called to do at a time like this? We pray for our neighbors . . . and we take action. We are present during crisis.

I was there for our neighbors when it was time to reenter the building to retrieve whatever soot-covered belongings they could. I went into the building and helped pack and carry things down the stairs. I could be found hanging out in the parking lot at the times when the building would be open. People began to refer to my car as my "office." They could sit in

my car with me to talk. I heard about the terror of waking to the burning building, about the loss—and about a lot of other things. In times of tragedy, past suffering comes back. While serving in practical ways, addressing physical and emotional needs, we point to the true source of comfort and recovery, to Christ, His forgiveness and eternal love.

I'll tell you about my friend Lora. I received a call from the social worker at a community agency wanting me to come offer spiritual counseling to a woman. I recognized Lora right away when I walked in the room. I'd seen her recently walking down the street with a man who befriends prostitutes. Now she had been beaten and was in a panic. In these situations, people usually open up and tell you everything—and she did. I soon became someone that she would run to when things became too difficult, but so far she hasn't taken the steps to get out of the lifestyle—to leave behind the drugs, the abusive boyfriend, and the ugly things she does for the drugs and the boyfriend. It can be discouraging. But she knows I'm there for her. And she knows why I'm there.

I see the sin and its results and the brokenness. I also see the love of Christ and the hope that is in him. *Diakonia* brings love to the unlovable and hope to the hopeless.

To address the brokenness of sin in the city, the church must be in the city. We must be visible in the midst of the community, must be present in and be a part of the community. The presence of Christ can be found within the walls of our church right there in the midst of the brokenness. Christ comes to the broken through his church and into the community. God has not abandoned us, he dwells with us. We do not abandon our neighbors. We dwell in the city. The inner-city is a mission field that we must support.

Physical care must flow from the church and all its members. It's good and right to reach out with bodily care and assistance, while always pointing to the solution to sin. Our assistance is connected to Christ. Our mercy care always points to Christ. Our neighbors learn that St. Paul Lutheran Church is a loving, caring place proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, inviting them in for care of body and soul.

Sara Smith
Deaconess, St. Paul Lutheran Church
Cincinnati, Ohio

David's Son

[*This homily was delivered during the Fall Faculty Forum at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on September 1, 2016. —The Editors*.]

> It is the Glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings to search things out. (Prov 25:2)

> Do not put yourself forward to the King's presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of the noble. (Prov 25:6–7)

And so it is, Solomon sounds an awful lot like Jesus. Makes sense. They're both kings. Both sons of David. One received wisdom as a gift, the other was himself the very Wisdom from on high. And it may just be that in the wisdom of Solomon, the One greater than Solomon was already speaking to our vanity.

And so it is, we live in a world of knowledge and folly, of upgrades and degradation, technology and triviality. Our stunning advances are matched only by our slide into the abyss. Pardon the polytheism, but those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.

Our GPS system can take us anywhere we want to go, without a map or even a care in the world, but we're no longer able to navigate our way to the proper bathroom. The gold and bronze medal winners in the Olympic women's five thousand meter race were both men. I have a friend who teaches political science at Eastern Michigan University, and his students are demanding to be addressed according to their new gender neutral pronouns: "zir" and "hir" and all the rest. One particular student demands to be addressed in the plural: a good sign that demons exist, and that our problems are legion.

So it is, in every sphere of our LGBTQ life, we celebrate orientation, only to find ourselves more disoriented than ever.

And here we are, once more, at Fall Faculty Forum, our own annual orientation. New faculty members have joined us. We get to know one another again, along with new rules and regulations by which we live our life together. And, if I hear rightly, we're even getting new computers, along with updated classrooms. But tomorrow, there's a more important orientation. A new batch of students will join us here at CTS. More tax collectors and fishermen, centurions and tentmakers, lawyers and scribes. Some a bit like the Pharisees, others more Epicurean. And yet they are

coming to this campus because they know, perhaps better than we, that the world has gone mad. And we hope to send them out again, armed with a word of wisdom, to equip them with a compass that points true north, a word of truth, a slice of reality in a mad hatter's world.

So, what do we have to offer them? Even if all our classrooms are updated, and even if our computers are top notch, we'll still be behind the times. What with our devotion to the Scriptures, a God called Father, and a chapel that demands that every wedding have one boy and one girl, we are located on the very fringe of our culture's map. Tucked away between Clinton Street and the St. Joe River, we might just hope that no one ever finds us, that we might happily live in the past, quietly taking the Benedict Option of monastic retreat from the world. But we shouldn't kid ourselves. Our students will have to face a new and dangerous world, and there'll be no hiding. And in a world of lawyers, lawsuits, and loans, we'll all be made to care.

But we should not despair. Never despair. For it was through Wisdom that the heavens were established, the skies made firm, and the fountains of the deep were established. And Wisdom still rejoices in his inhabited world and delights in the children of men. And every Lord's Day, Wisdom still beckons, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed" (Prov 9:5). And the Lord has put us here precisely for such a time as this. Other cars may have passed us, but we can learn from the skid marks and potholes, crashes and collisions that litter the road ahead. And we're sure to pick up refugees, stragglers, and the walking wounded along the way.

While others build their towers, we'll shore up the foundations. While others look for life on Mars, we'll dig deeper wells. Rather than drink the Kool-Aid, we'll quench our thirst with the living water. That's, after all, why we insist that our students learn ancient Greek (a quaint old language where the pronouns are stable, and we learn of the one who says "ἐγώ εἰμι"). As we reach back to Hebrew also, we tap into the ancient wisdom, enabling our students to ground themselves in the Aleph that they might make it to Omega.

And so our students come in search of hidden treasures, to see beyond the cultural veil to that which is true and lasting. For it is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings to search things out. And so also, it is the glory of the King's men.

But, then, it's not enough to live in the past. Like every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven, we must be like the master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And that is, in the best sense, to know your place in the world. Adam strove to be like God, and Eve like Adam. And so it has always been. Those claiming to be wise are made fools, exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles, exchanging the truth of God for a lie, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, and are given up to dishonorable passions.

Now, here at CTS, we love our gift theology. But it doesn't take a Lutheran to figure out that it's a gift to come down where we ought to be. And when we are in the place just right, we will be in the valley of love and delight. And, as our liturgists would appreciate, "to bow and bend will be our delight." Or as Solomon said, "Do not put yourself forward to the king's presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, 'Come up here,' than to be put lower in the presence of the noble" (Prov 25:6–7).

And that is a truth the One Greater than Solomon lived out: Leaving the seat of honor to wash the feet of others. Leaving his throne to wear a thorny crown. Humbling himself even unto death. Yes, this one, crucified by the hands of lawless men, God raised up, so that at his name every knee would bow, and every tongue might confess that he is Lord.

While progress promises without delivering, it's the wisdom of the ages to play the part of the lowly, as did our Lord. And so we make our case to the world—not in arrogance, but in solidarity, not on our high horse, but as those who have been knocked off our perch, as if by a lightning bolt from heaven.

We have no rush to take our neighbor to court, to indict him. "What your eyes have seen do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame?" (Prov 25:7–8)—which is to say, we're all in this together. There is a judge whom we all must stand before. And there is one King, who made himself low, in whom alone we'll find a verdict we can live with. 'Tis a gift to be free.

Peter J. Scaer

Book Reviews

John 1:1–7:1. **By William C. Weinrich. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015. 863 pages. Hardcover. $54.99.**

The Concordia Commentary series has proven to be a real treasure for the church. Pastors do well to own the whole series. Where else can you find such scholarship that is so faithful to the Scriptures and so immersed in the sacramental life of the church? That having been said, Weinrich's volume stands out. It is what we might call a weighty tome, covering some six chapters of John in 863 pages. You do the math. But its weight might better be expressed in its depth of argument and its groundedness in history. For the past couple of decades, the church has recognized the need to dig deeper wells and to learn again from the early church fathers. We have seen this trend, for instance, in the *Ancient Christian Commentary Series*, for which Weinrich has (not surprisingly) also offered a volume. The problems of our present age call for a renewed discovery of wisdom and a return not only to our fathers, but to our grandfathers and great-grandfathers in the faith. Weinrich's commentary provides just such an opportunity. Not only has Weinrich read the church fathers, he's clearly taken them into himself, so that upon reading the commentary you feel like you are sitting at the table with Weinrich and Chrysostom, Clement and Irenaeus, and all the rest. This hardly means Weinrich is an anti-quarian. He engages deeply with Raymond Brown and Oscar Cullmann, John A.T. Robinson and Francis J. Maloney. All of this is to say, Weinrich knows of what he speaks, not to mention what others have spoken in the near and distant past. All of this scholarship, combined with Weinrich's own intellectual gravitas, love of the church, and close attention to the Greek, makes this a commentary to be reckoned with.

But enough of such weighty matters. What does Weinrich think of the fourth gospel? For him, it was written early, within the context of the persecuted church of Jerusalem, as depicted in the first chapters of Acts. The evangelist composed his narrative in synagogue debate, as he hoped to convince his fellow Jews to become followers of Christ. At the heart of this debate was the true understanding of the Old Testament. Funda-mental to Weinrich's presentation is that he sees Jesus as much more than the fulfiller of the law. "The claim made by the Gospel of John is that the divine Torah, present eternally with God, has become flesh and is the man named Jesus" (15). Weinrich places a heavy emphasis on the baptismal character of John's gospel. Since Jesus' own life and ministry are baptismal, John is much more than a biography. As Weinrich puts it, "The gospel

story is the story of all the baptized by way of the only story that could be such—the story of Jesus, who is *the Way*; for Jesus, the Torah was the way to live according to the divine will" (16). Weinrich concludes, "In the Gospel of John, Jesus is the Way/Torah, and to walk in the way is to be his disciple."

Refreshingly, Weinrich recognizes the intricate, even organic unity between the text of John and the church in which and for which it was written. This commentary, like the Gospel of John, is soaked in baptismal waters. Weinrich fights against generic calls to faith, asking where precisely a reader/hearer might find the object of his faith today. He asks rhetorically, "Did the evangelist, a member of the Christian community, bring forth a Gospel text in which the symbols and themes remained, so to speak, on the literary and symbolic level?" (309). In other words, while we might speak about the gospel as having the power of purification, we do well to ask where this power is exhibited and exercised today. The gospel must be more than history, or the record of past events. It must point us to the work of Christ within the church. It does us no good to see Jesus in the past if we cannot see him today, and if we cannot believe in the miracles he is even now performing in the midst of the church. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that Weinrich is drawn to an early dating of the fourth gospel. He is determined to demonstrate that the church and all its rituals did not rise years later, as if created as a kind of symbolic remembrance. Instead, he sees the sacramental life, and the ecclesial life, precisely within the life and ministry of Jesus. What makes this commentary so different? Commenting on the miracle at Cana, Weinrich writes, "There is a remarkable, and to my mind unwarranted, hesitancy in much modern commentary to seek and, yes, to find realities and practices in the life of the church to which such symbols as water and wine refer" (309). Weinrich is quick to note that this is in no way reading into the text, but is simply a deep reading, based upon the fact that the church is in fact the body of Christ. Abstract truths have no place in the flesh-and-blood reality of the fourth Gospel. As Weinrich summarizes, "The story of Christ is the story of the life of the church" (309).

Readers may quibble here or there as to how this sacramental and ecclesial reality plays out within the commentary, but they will always come away richer for the engagement. Concentrating on the purifying quality of water and blood, Weinrich tends to see the marriage at Cana (John 2:1–11) in baptismal terms. He writes, "Thus, wine too is indicative of a purifying act. That act of purification is the death of the Lamb of God. It is a fact that the early church located this purification of the forgiveness

of sin through the death of Christ in the washing of Christian Baptism" (322). This reader, noting the joy of the celebration and the eucharistic link to marriage, thinks of this miracle more in terms of the sacramental wine, the blood of Christ, which indeed has a cleansing property at work in the Lord's Supper. We might note that this miracle corresponds to the multi-plication of the loaves. In the bread, there is satisfaction and fullness, and in the wine, there is joy and celebration. Is this simply a baptismal miracle? Having read Weinrich's take on it, you will want to invite him as a speaker and engage him more in the question.

Reading John requires an attentiveness to irony. Indeed, the fourth evangelist recognizes the incongruity of a world in which the Word came into his own but his own knew him not. Weinrich demonstrates this keen sense of irony in the story of the "living water" (John 4:1–26), which he portrays as a delicate dance between a potential bride and groom. Many, naturally, will want to see how Weinrich tackles John 6. He does not disappoint. In an excursus on "The Multiplication of Loaves as a Eucha-ristic Symbol," he lays out in systematic fashion the links between this meal in the desert and the meal which he would give to his church (649). This section, which represents Weinrich at his most direct, should prove a helpful guide for many a pastor.

Here and there, Weinrich may take things too much at face value. For instance, he struggles with the seeming contraction that Jesus' carried out a baptismal ministry (John 3:22), though he himself did not baptize (John 4:1–2). Weinrich concludes, "Perhaps the best that we can say is that for a short period of time Jesus himself baptized with John's baptism (John 3:22–26)." More likely, to this reader, John is making a more fundamental point, namely that though every baptism is conducted by one of Jesus' disciples, it is nevertheless Jesus himself who is doing the baptizing. This tendency of John we also see in the "Feeding of the 5000" (John 6:1–13), in which Jesus himself is said to distribute the bread. For John, Jesus and Jesus alone is the true apostle sent by God, in which the apostleship and the apostolic ministry resides.

That having been said, this commentary will stand for years. It is the enduring work of a man immersed in the Scriptures, the fathers, and what seems like every bit of scholarship since. His answers often run deeper than our questions. Such thoughts might seem too flattering, but if you have had him as instructor, you will know it to be true. And if you have not, once you begin reading this commentary, you will see what I mean. Weinrich is intent on bringing Christ to the reader, not in some abstract way, but in the fleshly ways in which Christ now appears within the

church's life. As he writes, "Faith unites itself to Christ where he is and where he works" (732). Weinrich's commentary, in that sense, is a GPS locator, connecting us to the life and work of Jesus today, engaging us in the eternal truth.

Admittedly, reading Weinrich is a little bit like going to the gym. Sometimes his sentences are deceptively simple, at other times they are lengthy, with words used in unexpected ways. On first reading, the muscles of your mind are sure to ache. But take heart. Allow Weinrich to be your trainer, and after a few sessions the reading becomes more satisfying, even exhilarating. Indeed, this commentary is worth a life-long membership.

Peter J. Scaer

Singing The Church's Song: Essays and Occasional Writings on Church Music. **By Carl Schalk. Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2015. 272 pages. Hardcover. $20.00.**

Carl Schalk's whole career has been to teach the church, especially the Lutheran Church, about the role of music in her life. Because he is so knowledgeable, always insightful and practical, and a wonderful teller of jokes and stories, he has been a very popular public speaker throughout his career in a wide variety of forums. *Singing the Church's Song* is a beautiful compilation of some of his finest writing, speeches, and essays.

This is the organization of the collection in Schalk's own words: "While these essays were written at different times and for widely different occasions over an entire career, they are grouped here for convenience in five categories: three are general essays on the tradition of the Church's song; six deal specifically with the Lutheran tradition of worship and church music; three essays discuss different aspects of Lutheran hymnody; three are on the composer of church music in the Lutheran tradition; and several miscellaneous items address acoustics in worship, appearing together with several brief homilies and other devotional writings."

Some highlights for this reviewer are the essays on three of the giants in Lutheran hymnody: Martin Luther, Paul Gerhardt, and Fredrich Layriz. While they are all extremely well done, I especially appreciate Schalk's insightful treatment of Dr. Fredrich Layriz. He calls him, "the forgotten influence on congregational singing in America." Schalk's essay teaches matters that are rarely discussed, such as the Layriz influence on C.F.W.

Walther and the confessional revival, and the Layriz influence on chorale rhythms found in today's Lutheran hymnals.

Another highlight is a paper first delivered to the South Wisconsin District in 2007 called, "A Primer for Lutheran Music and Worship." I find this to be a masterful overview of the whole subject in which the confessional, sacramental, and liturgical foundations of our Lutheran identity are applied to Lutheran church music practice.

A reoccurring theme throughout the book is the role of church music as a servant in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Music serves, composition serves, hymns serve, musicians serve, acoustics serve. In other words, everything is to be seen as servant, not master, when it comes to this task of Gospel proclamation. I highly recommend *Singing the Church's Song* and believe it is important reading for all Lutheran pastors and musicians.

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Richard C. Resch
St. Paul, Minnesota

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An Introduction to Biblical Ethics. **By David W. Jones. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013. 226 Pages. Paperback. $24.99.**

Jones' approach to biblical ethics is oriented around the divine law. In Jones' introductory chapter, he addresses distinctives of biblical ethics, including the depravity of fallen man, morality as a fruit of justification, and the significance of assigning moral praise or blame in reference to God's character. There he also acknowledges the broad field of Christian ethics, including deontological, teleological, and virtue-related structures of ethical thought. From chapter two on, however, the work reads like a treatise on the divine law with sections connecting ethical methodologies and non-legal factors to the law itself.

There are interesting and accessible discussions throughout the work. Jones offers a readily understandable explanation of the relationship between God and the law: the law is not good simply because God commands it, nor are God's commands good because they conform to some ideal of law, but the law is good as the expression of God's good will and character (42–51). Chapter four is perhaps the most helpful as he gives a clear account of various methods for addressing apparent conflicts between commands in the law. His final two chapters expositing the Ten Commandments are adequate, but do not match the treasure of Luther's

catechisms in practicality and in awareness of the positive extension of the Commandments.

Because of the emphasis on the law, he does not give adequate attention to developing teleological and virtue-oriented methods, although he does devote chapter five to integrating goals and character with the biblical law. There is also very little discussion of the role and work of the Holy Spirit and the regenerate life stemming from the power of the gospel. Throughout the book, the emphasis remains on the norming function of the law for the Christian life, a somewhat limited view both in terms of the law-gospel relationship, and also for a work claiming to introduce the full scope of biblical ethics.

This volume can be helpful in summarizing particular points with respect to the law and Christian ethics, but for a general introduction to theological ethics, other resources, such as Robin Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Abingdon, 2011) are preferable.

Gifford A. Grobien

It's Dangerous to Believe: Religious Freedom and Its Enemies. **By Mary Eberstadt. New York: Harper, 2016. 158 pages. Hardcover. $25.99.**

Mary Eberstadt does a great service to the church by collating and organizing a dizzying array of actions and incidents around the world which impinge upon religious freedom. The title invites one to think that faith itself is in danger, but this is not the thesis of the book. Rather, it is only the Christian faith which is under attack. What is more, it is not being attacked by some neutral secular ideology, but by an opposing religion all its own.

This opposing religion is both new and old. It is new in that it has taken on the form of the sexual revolution and has developed creeds, sacraments, and institutions over the course of the past half-century. It is old in that it is a resurgence of the same Gnosticism which threatened the ancient church of Ignatius and Irenaeus.

For the Lutheran pastor, Eberstadt's work can serve as both a primer and a research compendium. As a primer, it can help one to see the thoroughly religious contours of today's culture wars. It is a stark reminder that culture is, at its root, a *cultus*. One of the greatest deceptions that Satan has been able to orchestrate in twentieth-century western civilization is the idea that public life is neutral ground, extrinsic to the Gospel. Mary

Eberstadt goes a long way toward removing Satan's mask and reminding us what earlier generations knew intuitively.

As a research compendium, this book can be an excellent starting point for learning the details and facts of the assaults against our parochial schools, our university system, our adoption agencies, and all of our local and synodical charitable work. It can equip a pastor to engage his congregation in the struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world.

Eberstadt's central thesis is that the witch hunts of old and those of the modern variety have much more in common than a name. Hence, the history of the Salem witch trials, McCarthyism, and other such phenomena can equip us to foresee how progressive witch hunts against Christian orthodoxy will play out.

Key is her observation that witch hunts can only be brought to an end by the purveyors themselves. For this reason, she calls on Christians to engage directly with the high priests of the sexual revolution. Our strategy can be to find resonance with their own sense of freedom and justice to help them see how progressive assaults on Christian orthodoxy are contrary to their own dearest principles.

Her critics wonder if she is overly influenced by a scholastic affinity for natural law arguments. Perhaps this makes her naively optimistic that the unbelieving mind can be cured of its blindness. Only time will tell. In the meantime, *It's Dangerous to Believe* has much to offer. Among the growing corpus of works examining the modern assault on Christian orthodoxy, this one stands out. It offers a theological analysis of its cause as well as a plausible prescription for a healthy society.

Jonathan G. Lange
Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church
Evanston, Wyoming

Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians' Responses. **By Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 2015. 348 pages. Softcover. $35.00.**

Like a cup of cold coffee on a cold morning, this book is timely and provides a much-needed jolt. As American Christianity seems to be heading into an age of persecution, Bruce Winter takes us back into the first century, where Christians' lives and livelihoods were threatened. While the Roman Empire offered many advantages to the early Christians

in terms of roads and channels of communication and transportation, the very nature of the empire posed real challenges to the Christian conscience. As Winter shows, the emperors, beginning with Augustus himself, increasingly portrayed themselves as gods and demanded from the people requisite honors, temples, and sacrifices. Augustus portrayed himself as a "savior." As the heir of Julius Caesar, he called himself a "son of a god" (67–71). As the Romans colonized various regions, the people expressed devotion to the emperors through various acts of worship. As Winter notes, "Multiple cultic activities were not only alive but thrived in the era of the first Christians, as divine honours were skillfully woven into the cultic and festive activities of inhabitants in the East of empire" (47). These cultic activities involved "sacrifices and prayers to the gods to the emperor as a divinely venerated 'god' and 'son of god'" (48). This turned the Greco-Roman landscape into a spiritual minefield. Emperor worship became the price of doing business, as well as the entry pass into the great shows and feasts of the empire.

Winter's approach is especially captivating as he sifts through primary evidence, including numerous inscriptions in public places and temples. Winter likewise leads us through the writings of Josephus, Philo, Cicero, Tacitus, and Seneca. What emerges is a profoundly pervasive emperor cult. For a while, it seems, the Christians had some immunity, as they presented themselves as what we might call messianic Jews. It was generally agreed that the Jews would not be compelled to offer sacrifices to the emperor. As a type of compromise, they set up altars on which they offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the emperor. In light of such pressure, we can well understand why Paul urged obedience to the government (Romans 13), as well as prayers for leaders (1 Timothy 2). Christians wanted to express their allegiance without selling their soul. Likewise, when Paul explained to Roman leaders that Christianity was the true continuation of the Jewish faith, he was not only evangelizing but making the case that Christians had the right of the law's protection.

After a general introduction to the problem, Winter leads the reader through various New Testament documents, analyzing each according to the template of emperor worship. Winter shows how the evangelist Luke portrayed Christ as the true Savior and Son of God, titles the emperor had appropriated for himself (67–70). The author also offers a fascinating analysis of Paul at Athens, in which the apostle chides the philosophers for not living up to their own standards. When Paul claimed that God does not dwell in temples, nor does he have need of anything, he was saying that which the philosophers also believed, but was also contradicted by

their participation in the empire cult. Likewise, Winter's take on the Christians in Galatian is intriguing, if not entirely convincing. He contends that many of the Galatian Christians were tempted towards circumcision precisely because of the immunity such an act would offer from Roman persecution. It is worth pondering that "not being 'Jewish' meant that Galatian Christians would have to operate in the wider culture without enjoying the identity and concessions that the Claudian decree had recently verified as the right of all Diaspora Jews" (242). This, Winter argues, is what Paul meant when he claimed that Christians were being circumcised "only in order that they not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" (Gal 6:12). Part of the temptation for the congregation of the Hebrews, likewise, was that a return to Judaism would have meant a return to safety.

Perhaps most fascinating, and jarring, is Winter's analysis of Revelation and the mark or name of the beast. At the time, Winter notes, "As a prerequisite to engaging in any commercial transaction they had to give specific divine honours to the Caesar" (286). Even more, they would have to be inked with the imperial seal upon their forehead or hand. Thus, one could neither buy nor sell without offering up a kind of confession to the divinity of the emperor. Many, of course, would die for their faithfulness to God, and many others, more tragically, lost their faith.

As Winter helps lead us through such challenges, we cannot help but think of the pressures that Christians face and will face in the coming days. In what ways will Christians bow, or refuse to bow, to the secularism of our day, offering acknowledgment to it by flying the rainbow flag? But, as Winter reminds us, the Book of Revelation reveals to us what really matters. We are encouraged to remain faithful, that we might stand among the 144,000. The wrath of God comes upon anyone who "worships the beast and his image and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand" (Rev 14:9). Those who remained faithful, bearing the name of the Lamb and his Father, will be given the crown of life. Timely indeed.

Peter J. Scaer

The Pastor. **By Wilhelm Loehe. Translated by Wolf Knappe and Charles Schaum. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015. 363 pages. Softcover. $39.99.**

Wilhelm Loehe (1808–1872) cannot be understood apart from his commitment to the pastoral office. Like others in the nineteenth century, Loehe was engaged in debates over church and office. *The Pastor*, however, is not about those skirmishes; it is rather a repository of ministerial wisdom gleaned from the author's careful study and his own often painfully acquired experience as a shepherd of Christ's flock. It was not written in a detached academic environment but in the setting of a small, Bavarian village pastorate. Loehe writes as a working pastor. He is not content to present a theoretical or scientific study of pastoral theology, but as a learned, pious, and seasoned pastor he writes for his brothers in office, covering the topics of pastoral care, rooted in Confession and Absolution, homiletics, liturgics, catechetics, and the visitation of the sick.

The Pastor is actually a compilation of two books by the Neuendettelsau pastor published under the title *Der evangelische Geistliche*. The first volume, published in 1852, was gleaned from articles Loehe had published in 1847–1848 in the *Zeitschrift für Protestantimus und Kirche*. These essays deal mostly with the formation of the pastor and his relationship in the office, including his marriage. The second volume appeared in 1858 and covered particular aspects of the pastoral craft, such as preaching, catechesis, liturgy, and the care of souls. Taken together, these two volumes form *The Pastor*, reflecting the mature Loehe at the height of his career.

Like C.F.W. Walther, who also wrote a pastoral theology, Loehe draws on the earlier work of Johann Ludwig Hartmann (1640–1680). Loehe was obviously well acquainted with Hartmann and other writers in classical Lutheran pastoral theology and he incorporates their insights into his own presentation. Likewise, he draws on both the dogmatic writings and what he calls the "aesthetic literature" (59) of the Lutheran fathers.

The bulk of the first part of *The Pastor* is devoted to the life of the pastor. Here Loehe writes of both the public and hidden conduct of the pastor. Both dimensions are necessary. In these pages Loehe not only offers practical advice and guidance for rookie pastors but also seeks to provide spiritual care and direction to men who hold the office. He offers his opinions on a variety of topics, including the relationship of the pastor to his predecessors and successors, the place of the "interim pastor," and the behavior of clergy emeriti. Naturally, this material bears the marks of its context in the German territorial church of the nineteenth century. Yet

there is significant wisdom in these pages that is not bound by time or place.

The second section is devoted to practice. Here Loehe outlines an approach to preaching, incorporating an appropriate use of rhetoric and warning against "Methodistic" techniques that would deny the fact that the office is dependent on the power of God's word alone. Catechesis is seen as "mouth to mouth" (251), as Loehe attends to both the content and form of this teaching. Known for his interest in reverent, liturgical worship, Loehe engages liturgics, including treatments of sacred times, sacred space, sacred vessels, as well as the parts of the Lutheran ordo. In this section, Loehe also carefully examines the dynamics of pastoral care, using medicinal and pharmaceutical images as the pastor must render an accurate diagnosis of the soul's condition and prescribe a corresponding remedy. Special attention is given to Confession and Absolution and the care of the sick and dying.

In contrast to contemporary approaches to pastoral theology that have been heavily influenced by the psychological and social sciences, *The Pastor* represents a churchly approach to pastoral theology that needs to be retrieved in our day. A careful and reflective reading of this text by one of the master pastors of the Lutheran tradition will edify and enrich ministers and strengthen them for faithful service to Christ's flock.

John T. Pless

The Paradox of Church and World: Selected Writings of H. Richard Niebuhr. **By Jon Diefenthaler. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. 534 pages. Softcover. $44.00.**

Helmut Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962) has been described as a "public intellectual" in an era when the church enjoyed a privileged place in North America. His writing career reflects the realities of the Depression, World War II, and the post-war years. With astute criticisms of his work by theologians as diverse as John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, George Marsden, William Willimon, and D. A. Carson, Niebuhr's work has largely been dismissed as a relic of the middle part of the last century. Persuaded that Niebuhr still has something to say to the church in our day, Jon Diefenthaler, formerly district president of the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and more recently an adjunct professor at Concordia Seminary, has set out to retrieve a sampling of Niebuhr's many writings and suggest ways in which they might serve contemporary

Christian reflection and mission. In Diefenthaler, Niebuhr has found a sympathetic interpreter.

Over a forty-two year period, Niebuhr was the author of twenty-one books and over 2,600 articles. Diefenthaler has divided this anthology into three parts. Part 1 embraces the formative years of 1914 to 1929 when Niebuhr was serving in institutions of the Evangelical Synod (which would merge in 1934 with the German Reformed Church to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church; this body would become a component in another merger in 1957 that would create the United Church of Christ), the American counterpart to the German Prussian Union. Part 2 includes writings from 1930–1940, the time of the Great Depression. Part 3 covers 1941–1962, World War II, and its aftermath. It was during this period that Niebuhr authored what is perhaps his most well-known but highly debated book, *Christ and Culture* (1951). Diefenthaler surveys numerous critics of *Christ and Culture* but overlooks Robert Kolb's fine essay "Niebuhr's 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' Revisited," published in the autumn 1996 issue of *Lutheran Quarterly* (259–279). Kolb points out significant flaws in Niebuhr's use of Luther and thus the inadequacy of "paradox" as an accurate description of Luther's position.

Niebuhr was not able to incorporate the picture of Luther emerging from the Luther Renaissance and its leading scholar, Karl Holl's rejection of Ernst Troeltsch's critique of Luther. Niebuhr broke with the older liberalism's rejection of original sin, but his overall theological orientation remained marked by the nineteenth century. He remained committed to the so-called "Social Gospel," even as he attempted provide a theological foundation for it that would transcend the modernist/fundamentalist debates. The essays assembled in this reader demonstrate that Niebuhr's version of the Christian faith accented ethics but paid much less attention to dogma. Like his contemporary, Paul Tillich, Niebuhr was interested in the symbolic value of doctrinal themes.

The book concludes with an Epilogue, "Niebuhr and Post-Church America," which is Diefenthaler's recommendation of Niebuhr for the challenges of the present day. Given the fact that Niebuhr's United Church of Christ, which in many ways was shaped by his theological vision, has experienced drastic numerical decline and ever-increasing cultural irrelevance, while its trajectory moves further away from any semblance to biblical or Reformational orthodoxy, it is unlikely that an enthusiastic embrace of Niebuhr will offer much help.

John T. Pless

The Nazi Spy Pastor: Carl Krepper and the War in America. **By J. Francis Weber. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014. 208 pages. Hardcover. $48.00.**

This book presents what facts we have about the life of a Lutheran pastor who became a Nazi spy. Born in Germany in 1884, Carl Krepper studied at the Ebenezer Seminary, also known as the Kropp Seminary, in order to serve as a German speaking Lutheran pastor in America. He arrived in America in 1909 and served as a pastor in various congregations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. These congregations were of the Pennsylvania Ministerium in the General Council, which later became part of the United Lutheran Church of America. These twenty-six years were a time in which the Lutheran churches in America were moving away from German language and identity, a trend that Krepper fought. He supported the use of the German language in the church and promoted German identity and heritage, yet at the same time became an American citizen and even served in local governmental roles. His stress between German and American identity paralleled the problems with the German speaking church as a whole. Krepper also became active in many German organizations such as the German-American Bund, the Association of the Friends of New Germany, and the German-American Business League which boycotted Jewish owned stores. Eventually, Krepper became so overt in his pro-Nazi stance that he hung a Nazi flag in his church in New Jersey and used Nazi orders of service.

In 1935, Krepper returned to Germany to serve as a pastor in a congregation of the German Lutheran Church. While there, he was recruited into the *Abwehr* to return to America and to be a contact person for a group of saboteurs. This was all part of Operation Pastorius, in which the saboteurs were sent to destroy factories and transportation hubs. Krepper returned to America in 1942, and the operation started soon thereafter. Yet from the beginning, Pastorius was plagued by problems, and eventually all the saboteurs were captured. Krepper played no real role in the Operation and spent most of his time until his capture living off the stamp collection he brought with him from Germany and leading a rather dissolute life. He was taken in by the FBI in New York City in 1944, and condemned as guilty during his subsequent trials.

Watson, who is himself a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, tries to unveil the sinister influences on Krepper as best he can. He traces the different friends and acquaintances that Krepper knew and the different societies that he was a part of. Nevertheless, one can only wish that there were more materials to flush out what Krepper believed, confessed, and preached as a pastor. This would help us understand why

and how German identity was so important to Krepper. The clearest glimpse we have into the mind of Krepper is the last line of the book, a quote from Franklin Clark Fry, "Yes, Krepper was strongly pro-Nazi in sentiment. God and the Reich were closely identified in his mind."

<div align="right">Roy Axel Coats
Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore</div>

True Faith in the True God: An Introduction to Luther's Life and Thought, Revised and Expanded Edition. **By Hans Schwarz. Mark Worthing, trans. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. 295 pages. Softcover. $7.99.**

This new edition of Hans Schwarz's discussion of Luther's theological approach comes nearly two decades after its original publication. With the addition of new chapters, it is not only a reliable theological entry to Luther's thought as we approach the coming Reformation jubilee, but also an avenues for those without a religious bent to find areas of interest.

Schwarz begins with a chapter tracing Luther's biography. In forty-odd pages, it's impossible to plumb the depths of Luther's career, but the task here is to lay out the historical context for the discussion that follows, and Schwarz's narrative is wise in his choice of details to include.

Each of the remaining thirteen chapters (and two excurses) takes up a single theological question or topic and gathers evidence from across Luther's works to show how the reformer's evangelical insight answered the *locus*. This volume includes the original edition's chapters on epistemology, faith and reason, God's divinity, theodicy, two kingdoms, scriptural authority, law and gospel, ecclesiology and sacraments, marriage and family, and vocation. In addition, we have three new chapters on matters that, while worthy of discussion, seem to be included for secular readers: education, economics, and music.

In his first excursus, Schwarz tends all too briefly to Luther's view of Christology, free will, sin, and eschatology. Each of these essential topics in Luther's thinking merits its own chapter, and it would have been a pleasure to see how Schwarz's nimble mind would distill these facets of Luther for today. The second excursus makes Luther's scurrilous writing on the Jews, if not palatable, at least understandable.

This book is a wholly readable primer to Luther's thought and a solid review for those already familiar with his theological stance. It could make for a fertile congregational book study for the coming Luther anniversary.

<div align="right">Ken Sundet Jones
Grand View University, Des Moines</div>

Books Received

Aderman, James A. *A Chosen Land for a Chosen People: Exploring the Promised Land Jesus Called Home.* Bible Discovery Series. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2016. 152 pages. Softcover. $17.99.

Bingham, D. Jeffrey and Glenn R. Kreider, eds. *Eschatology: Biblical, Historical, and Practical Approaches.* Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2016. 512 pages. Hardcover. $36.99.

Bird, Michael F. *An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016. 322 pages. Softcover. $28.00.

Braun, John A. *Luther's Protest: From 95 Theses to Reformation.* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2016. 189 pages. Softcover. $18.99.

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